



UNITED NATION DAY OF VESAK 2025



CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Volume 2



Editors **THICH DUC THIEN**
THICH NHAT TU



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FOREWORD

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn

President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

The anthology “*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*” – Volume 2 stands as a remarkable academic contribution within the framework of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 Academic Conference, under the overarching theme “*Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development*.” As the first of five thematic pillars, *Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace* not only lays a foundational basis for deepening Buddhist philosophical engagement with the discourse on peace but also expands interdisciplinary dialogue—bridging the realm of personal spiritual cultivation with the broader goal of global stability and collective well-being.

This volume brings together 46 scholarly papers authored by venerable monastics, professors, researchers, and Buddhist social activists from around the world. Under the editorial leadership of Venerable Thích Đức Thiện and Venerable Thích Nhật Từ, the anthology reflects the exceptional commitment of the Editorial Board in crafting a multidimensional academic space that harmoniously integrates Buddhist ideals with contemporary research methodologies. Each paper testifies to the intersection of tradition and modernity, of contemplative insight and global issues—affirming the fundamental truth that world peace begins with the peace cultivated within each individual.

A distinctive feature of this collection lies in the diversity of its methodological approaches. The contributing authors explore core Buddhist teachings such as the four noble truths, the noble eightfold path, *vipassanā*, and *karuṇā*, *mettā*, while simultaneously drawing on the insights of modern disciplines—Buddhist psychology, peace education, affective science, medicine, psychotherapy, and cognitive science—to reexamine the significance of inner transformation. This volume demonstrates clearly the interdisciplinary evolution of Buddhist studies and its applicability in the contemporary world.

Far from being confined to doctrinal analysis, this anthology also reflects the forward-looking vision of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in its role as the host of the 2025 United Nations Day of Vesak. The event bears historical significance, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the founding of the

modern Vietnamese state and the 50th anniversary of national reunification. The choice of *Cultivating Inner Peace* as the philosophical axis of action represents a profound message from Vietnamese Buddhism to the global community—a message of wisdom and compassion that affirms: in a world fraught with uncertainty, the true path to peace must begin with transformation from within.

This anthology also serves as an academic platform for future advancement in Buddhist research. Emerging directions—such as the integration of Buddhist principles with humanistic education, emotional healing, compassionate leadership, community building through meditation, and the application of technology and artificial intelligence to support mindfulness—offer expansive potential for scholarly development. Of particular note is the presence of many young contributors from across continents, reflecting the dynamic reach of Buddhism’s timeless message of compassion, wisdom, and peace.

With its rich content, coherent structure, and high academic caliber, this anthology is a vital resource for scholars, policy-makers, social activists, and all who seek a sustainable pathway to peace through inner cultivation. It is not only a timely Buddhist response to the challenges of our age but also a concrete act of contribution toward deepening the spirit of unity and inclusivity—two indispensable pillars for the advancement of humanity.

FOREWORD

By Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Brahmapundit

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 Royal Family and the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand, has played an 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.

The present volume, "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*," one of the five thematic proceedings under the overall conference theme, represents a powerful Buddhist response to the spiritual and humanitarian crises of the 21st century. Its significance is further underscored by the sobering reality that warfare and conflict still ravage human lives, while humanity grapples with economic inequality, ecological degradation, and moral disorientation. In this context, the Buddhist message of inner transformation as a foundation for global peace offers both timely wisdom and practical direction.

This thematic collection features five English-language forums with more than 600 scholarly papers and five Vietnamese-language forums with over 350 research contributions. The high-quality submissions from monastics and scholars alike highlight the academic depth, intellectual diversity, and cross-cultural values of the Buddhist world in dialogue with modern global issues. The volume *Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace* brings together 46 scholarly contributions that exemplify Buddhist insight, interfaith understanding, and interdisciplinary engagement.

As we approach UNDV 2025, I warmly welcome the expected participation of above 1,200 international delegates from 80 countries and 5 territories. Furthermore, I commend the cultural dimensions of UNDV 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, *"Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace"*, forms a foundational contribution to the official proceedings of the 2025 United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration, held in Vietnam at the Vietnam Buddhist University, Ho Chi Minh City from 6-8 May 2025. This significant anthology reflects the central theme of the conference - "Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development" - a theme resonating deeply with both the philosophical core of the Buddha's teachings and the United Nations' strategic vision for a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable global community.

This volume is the first of five thematic collections, each corresponding to a central pillar of the Vesak 2025 forum: (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*. Together, they represent a multidimensional exploration of Buddhist responses to the contemporary human condition - amid planetary crises, global inequities, and a prevailing deficit of ethical leadership and collective spiritual vision.

Amidst the backdrop of the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the 50th anniversary of national reunification, this fourth hosting of the United Nations Day of Vesak in Vietnam holds both historical gravitas and spiritual symbolism. Vietnam stands at a unique intersection - where ancient Dharma wisdom and modern national development converge - offering an auspicious ground for the global Sangha and lay communities to reflect, renew, and reconsecrate the Buddha's message of peace in a suffering world. In this context, inner peace is not merely a psychological state; it is a spiritual imperative and a moral precondition for genuine global harmony.

The present volume showcases 46 scholarly essays drawn from a broad spectrum of Buddhist traditions - Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna - and geographies spanning Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Oceania. These contributions offer both theoretical depth and practical insight, weaving together canonical exegesis, contemplative psychology, ethical reflections, and contemporary applications of meditative and moral cultivation. The authors

- eminent scholars, monastic leaders, and experienced practitioners - explore the transformative potential of inner serenity as the seedbed of societal peace, examining Buddhist concepts such as *samatha-vipassanā*, *mettā-karuṇā*, *bodhicitta*, and *citta-visuddhi* in light of current challenges including war, ecological collapse, social alienation, and moral disorientation.

What emerges from this collection is not a utopian vision, but a grounded and pragmatic proposition: that world peace cannot be legislated from without, but must be cultivated from within. The Buddhist path - from suffering to cessation, from delusion to insight - is not only individual but civilizational. This echoes the UN Charter's own affirmation of the dignity and worth of the human person, and its call for a culture of peace rooted in education, dialogue, and non-violence. In this convergence of Dharma and diplomacy, Vietnam's hosting of Vesak 2025 becomes a sacred offering to the world: a call to pause, reflect, and rediscover the still point within which all authentic peace must begin.

II. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED RESEARCH PAPERS

2.1. Interdependence in Buddhist Thought

1. "*Cultivating inner peace for world peace related to Buddha's Cause and effect*" by -Most Ven.Dr.Prof. Jinabodhi Bhikkhu explores how inner peace, rooted in the Buddha's doctrine of Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*), serves as the foundation for enduring world peace. Emphasizing ethical conduct, mental cultivation, and wisdom, it links personal transformation with societal harmony. Through analysis of the Five Precepts, the Brahmavihāras, and the twelve links of dependent origination, the author presents a Buddhist framework in which cause and effect govern both suffering and liberation. True peace, he argues, begins with the individual and extends outward to global unity and universal human rights

2. Ven. Bhikkhuni Dr. Hang Lien's "*Nurturing Inner Peace to Contribute to World Peace*" presents how inner peace, as cultivated through Buddhist doctrines and meditative practice, serves as the cornerstone for establishing sustainable world peace. Drawing on foundational teachings such as the Threefold Training, the Four Brahmavihāras, and Vipassanā meditation, the author emphasizes the transformation of the individual mind as key to harmonizing with external conditions. By fostering mindfulness, compassion, and self-awareness, individuals develop equanimity and ethical conduct, which ripple outward to reduce societal conflict. The paper affirms that a peaceful world is only possible when built upon the serenity and wisdom of each awakened heart.

3. In the article "*Kāmacchanda (the Desire for Sensual Objects): A Philosophical Understanding*" Bhikkhu Dr. Sopaka haa offered a rigorous philosophical examination of *kāmacchanda* (desire for sensual objects) within the framework of early Buddhist thought. Drawing upon canonical sources, the author analyzes *kāmacchanda* through the lens of the Second Noble Truth and dependent co-origination, emphasizing its centrality as a root cause of *dukkha* and *samsāric* existence. The study contrasts Buddhist causality with eternalist

and annihilationist doctrines, asserting that suffering arises from conditioned phenomena rather than from a self or creator. Through detailed textual analysis, the work affirms *kāmacchanda* as a fundamental hindrance to liberation and highlights the necessity of uprooting it for spiritual emancipation.

4. “*Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development*” by Ven. Dr. Buddha Priya Mahathero explores the interdependence between inner peace and ethical leadership through the lens of Buddhist teachings. Drawing upon the Four Noble Truths, *Brahmavihāras*, and principles of right mindfulness and wisdom, the author examines how personal transformation serves as the foundation for sustainable global harmony. Using historical and contemporary examples - including King Ashoka, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness - the study highlights engaged Buddhism as a powerful force for collective healing, governance, and ethical transformation in today’s fractured world.

5. Rev. Dr. Thich Thanh An’s research “*Cultivating Inner Peace and Mental Well-being: Foundations for Peaceful Society*” presents that in an era of rapid transformation and existential uncertainty, Buddhism offers a profound path toward cultivating inner peace and mental well-being. This article explores how foundational Buddhist principles - rooted in mindfulness, compassion, and non-attachment - can serve as antidotes to the chaos of modern life. Mental and spiritual health are viewed not merely as personal achievements but as the moral pillars of a harmonious society. Through integrating meditative practices and ethical awareness into daily living, individuals can foster emotional balance and clarity. Such inner transformation contributes to collective peace, nurturing a joyful and compassionate global community grounded in sustainable harmony.

6. “*Cultivating inner peace for world peace with reference to Metta Sutta in Theravada Buddhism*” by Rev. Kudakathnoruwe Vineetha Thero explores the Buddhist path to global peace through the cultivation of inner peace, emphasizing the significance of loving-kindness (*mettā*) as taught in the *Metta Sutta* of Theravāda Buddhism. Through qualitative analysis of both primary and secondary sources, the study illustrates how Buddhist *mettā* transcends caste, race, and nationality, serving as a universal practice rooted in ethical living, spiritual cultivation, and social harmony. It concludes that inner peace, nurtured through daily mindfulness and compassion, becomes the foundation for true and lasting world peace, promoting not only harmony among individuals but also across nations and cultures.

7. Rev. Raniswala Sunanda Thero has explored in his paper “*Cultivating the Qualities of the Karaniya Metta Sutta for world Peace and Sustainable Development*”; the practical application of the *Karaniya Metta Sutta* as a Buddhist framework for addressing contemporary global challenges. Emphasizing compassion as a transformative force, it demonstrates how the *sutta*’s teachings can foster sustainable development, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making. The research underscores the relevance of loving-kindness in promoting social justice, harmonious communities, and global solidarity. By bridging inner

cultivation and outward action, the study advocates for integrating metta into personal conduct, public policy, and international relations as a path toward lasting peace and collective well-being.

8. *“Sīla Pāramī: The Quintessential Example of Ethical Conduct for World Peace”* by Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh examines the transformative role of the ten Pāramīs in Theravāda Buddhism as a foundation for both personal and societal well-being. It emphasizes that these perfections, especially Sīla (moral conduct), provide enduring values that surpass fleeting worldly achievements. By cultivating virtues such as generosity, patience, and determination, individuals build inner resilience and transcend the fluctuations of daily life. Sīla, as the second perfection, is presented as crucial for both monastic and lay practitioners, serving as a moral compass that restrains misconduct and fosters inner peace. Ultimately, the cultivation of Pāramīs leads to a meaningful, harmonious, and enlightened life.

9. The article *“From Inner Transformations to Global Change: Buddhist Insights for Creating a More Peaceful World”* of Dr. Shravan Kumar has presented the paradox of rapid external advancement and inner deterioration in modern society. While technological progress has led to unprecedented innovation, it has also contributed to widespread psychological unrest. Quoting the Dalai Lama, the author argues that true peace cannot be achieved through material development alone. Drawing upon the Buddha’s teachings, the article highlights meditation and ethical living as key to uprooting mental defilements and cultivating inner peace. It concludes that sustainable world peace is only possible when individuals first attain inner peace, which then radiates into families, communities, and global society.

10. *“Emulating the Buddha: Insightful Lessons from His Birth, Enlightenment, and Parinibbāna for a Peaceful World”* by Dr. Ashin Revata examines the Buddha’s life and Dhamma as a transformative path to overcome suffering (dukkha) and attain liberation (nibbāna), situating these insights within contemporary calls for world peace and sustainable development. By contemplating the sacred events of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and parinibbāna, the study highlights the Four Noble Truths as a universal framework for inner and outer harmony. It further underscores the Saṅgha’s emphasis on unity, inclusivity, and compassionate action as a model for global solidarity. The Buddha’s timeless teachings are presented as a spiritual compass for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

11. The article *“Inner Peace is as a Foundation for World Peace: A Buddhist Perspective”* of Dr. Indra Chandramali has presented the Buddhist understanding that inner peace - defined as a state of mental and emotional tranquility - forms the foundation for global harmony. By examining the Middle Path (sīla, samādhi, paññā), the Five Precepts, and meditative practices, the study highlights how individual transformation contributes to world peace. Drawing upon canonical texts and modern research, it argues that sustainable peace arises not merely from external agreements, but from inner ethical cultivation, mindfulness, and compassion. The research concludes that

nurturing inner peace is essential for preserving human dignity and fostering a peaceful, sustainable global society.

12. In the paper “*An Analytical Study of Insight Vehicle (Vipassanāyāna) Based on Susimasutta*”, Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Như Phước (Nguyen Thi Hoa) has explored the theoretical and practical dimensions of the insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*) in *Theravāda* Buddhism. It examines the significance of *vipassanā* and *bhāvanā* as central meditative principles for self-cultivation and liberation. The study clarifies controversies surrounding the necessity of *jhāna* in the path to arahantship, arguing that insight practice can operate independently of absorption states. Highlighting the revival of *vipassanāyāna* in twentieth-century Myanmar, the author affirms its authenticity and transformative potential. Emphasis is placed on moment-to-moment awareness as a means to cultivate inner peace and realize *Nibbāna* in daily life.

13. “*Reducing Unethical Actions through Meditative Concentration: A Focus on a Peaceful Society*” by Ven. Revata introduces Amid rising global ethical decline and social unrest, this study explores the Buddhist proposition that morality (*sīla*) is foundational for social harmony and spiritual development. Rooted in the *Pāli Nikāyas*, *Abhidhamma*, and *Visuddhimagga*, it highlights how meditative concentration (*samādhi*) effectively curbs unwholesome roots-greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) - thereby purifying the mind and reinforcing ethical conduct. Through qualitative analysis, the research demonstrates that the cultivation of concentration supports moral integrity, offering a practical path to reduce unethical behaviors and promote peace in contemporary society.

14. Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Liên Kinh’s “*Comparison between Modern and Buddhist Perspectives in The Cultivation of Inner Peace for World Peace*” explores inner peace as a foundational element for sustainable world peace through a comparative analysis of Buddhist philosophy and modern frameworks. While contemporary approaches emphasize empirical validation and adaptability, the Buddhist path offers a holistic transformation of consciousness rooted in ethical discipline and mindfulness. The study highlights how individual serenity contributes to collective harmony and peaceful coexistence. Despite methodological differences, both perspectives converge on the essential role of inner peace in addressing global crises. Bridging these views can yield innovative, integrative strategies for peacebuilding in a divided world.

15. “*A Study on Cultivating Inner Peace and World Peace with Reference to Buddhism*” by Bhikkhuni An Dieu (Le Thi Thanh Thuy) examines the Buddhist path to cultivating inner peace as the essential basis for global harmony. Emphasizing personal transformation through the eradication of defilements such as anger, hatred, and delusion, it draws on key teachings including *akuppā cetovimutti* (unshakable liberation of mind). The study argues that wisdom and compassion are not only personal virtues but catalysts for social healing. Through doctrinal analysis and historical examples from the Buddha’s life, it affirms that inner serenity is a powerful force for peaceful coexistence, offering a practical model for conflict resolution and sustainable global peace.

16. Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Diệu Trí (Dương Thị Kim Uyên)'s "*Vegetarianism Fosters Inner Peace in Modern Society*" presents that the vegetarianism today transcends religious boundaries, becoming a global movement rooted in health awareness, non-violence, and respect for sentient life. From a Buddhist perspective, abstaining from killing and consuming flesh is a manifestation of compassion (*karuṇā*) and mindfulness (*sati*). The Buddha's ethical precepts encourage equality and harmony among all beings. Thus, Buddhist vegetarianism is not merely dietary restraint but a powerful support for inner peace cultivation and spiritual awakening, fostering peace within and beyond the individual.

17. "*The Ethical Dimensions of the Noble Eightfold Path: Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace Through Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood*" by Bhikkhuni Như Liên (Tran Thi Hieu) explores the ethical core of the Noble Eightfold Path, focusing on Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood as essential dimensions of inner transformation and social harmony. It presents Right Speech as a path of healing communication, Right Action as engaged compassion rooted in nonviolence, and Right Livelihood as a mindful lifestyle free from exploitation. Emphasizing their interdependence, the study reveals how these elements function collectively to uproot greed, hatred, and delusion. The work revitalizes classical Buddhist ethics as a dynamic force for personal liberation, collective healing, and sustainable coexistence in today's complex world.

18. "*Nurturing Inner Peace - the Necessity of Applying Buddhist Methods in Modern Society*" by MA. Nguyen Van Tien has presented how Buddhist methods - particularly meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity - foster inner peace and social harmony in modern society. It highlights how stabilizing the mind, cultivating present-moment awareness, and developing empathy contribute not only to mental well-being but also to healthier interpersonal relationships. By integrating these practices into families, schools, and workplaces, communities enhance resilience, reduce conflict, and promote ethical living. Ultimately, the study affirms that the Buddhist path serves as a transformative approach toward building a peaceful, compassionate, and sustainable global society

19. Mrs. Anula Maharjan's "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*" offers a research-informed synthesis of Buddhist and psychological perspectives on inner peace as a foundational path to social harmony and global peace. Highlighting mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and gratitude as active sources of personal empowerment, it argues that inner transformation fosters interpersonal empathy, resilience, and ethical decision-making. Through case studies such as Quiet Time and UNESCO Peace Education, the study underscores inner peace as a pragmatic and scalable approach to peacebuilding. It proposes inner cultivation as not only therapeutic but vital to building a compassionate and sustainable world.

20. "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace in Buddhist Perspective*" by Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Liên Bốn explores the urgent need for cultivating inner peace amidst the rapid advancement of modern technologies and material

comforts, which have paradoxically led to greater isolation, emotional imbalance, and societal conflict. Rooted in Buddhist principles, the study argues that sustainable development must begin with moral and mindful individuals. Inner transformation is essential not only for personal well-being but also for global harmony. The article advocates for Buddhist teachings as a timeless path to foster peace, compassion, and ethical behavior in contemporary society.

21. *"Is the internal crisis also an external war? A Buddhist perspective on the transformation of internal peace to the external peace"* by Bhikkhuni An Ngoc (Tran Thi Cam Van) introduces Most.Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh (2014) eloquently illustrates, the connection between personal inner peace and global peace is inseparable. Building upon this insight, the present research aims to examine the contribution of Buddhist teachings to the establishment of peace within society. In today's world, peace has become more essential than ever, as countless beings suffer due to the pervasive sense of insecurity and unrest. Upon examining the root causes of this decline in peace, it becomes evident that attachment (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) have severely eroded the quality of human life. Early Buddhism affirms that unwholesome mental states directly affect both the internal and external dimensions of human existence. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how the teachings of the Buddha offer a transformative vision of peace and how such insights may contribute to the holistic development and well-being of humanity. By engaging early Buddhist texts, the research aims to reveal a dynamic and integrative framework for understanding and cultivating peace.

22. *"First step for Achieving the Ultimate goal of Enlightenment is peace"* by Mr. Sumedh Boudh Gadpaile underscores that world peace can only emerge through the cultivation of inner peace. True transformation begins within, as war cannot end war - only peace can. Drawing from Buddhist teachings, it emphasizes the rarity and purpose of human birth as an opportunity to transcend suffering and attain liberation. The physical world becomes a field of Dhamma practice, where inner serenity is vital for social harmony. Inner peace is portrayed as both the foundation and the path toward global peace, ending ignorance, fear, and turmoil through awakened awareness.

23. Mr. Ashok Nanda Bajracharya in his paper *"Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace: A Buddhist Perspective with Special Reference to Nepal"* has introduced In a world marked by division, unity and inclusivity are vital to addressing global challenges. Rooted in Buddhist wisdom, this paper explores how cultivating inner peace can advance global harmony and human dignity. It highlights the causes of conflict and proposes ethical, meditative practices as solutions. Focusing on Nepal's unique role as a Buddhist nation, the study examines how its spiritual legacy can serve as a model for promoting sustainable peace worldwide.

2.2. Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence

24. *"Faith and Tolerance, Peace withing and Peace Without"* by Most. Ven. Prof. Dr. Gallele Sumanasiri Thero has explored the origins of religion as a rational human response to existential challenges - particularly suffering

and the pursuit of happiness. It identifies three primary approaches to these challenges: metaphysical, intellectual, and empirical. Theistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam emphasize metaphysical belief systems, while non-theistic traditions like Buddhism and Jainism adopt an intellectual, experiential path. While world religions are typically classified by scale and geography, the study also acknowledges the global influence of traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

25. Most. Ven. Bhante Jinalankara's "*What the Buddha taught for sustainable peace in the world*" had presented the Buddha, in sending forth the first sixty arahants, emphasized the compassionate mission of spreading the Dhamma for the welfare and happiness of the many (*bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya*). His teaching offered not only the means for worldly well-being but also a path toward the supreme peace of *Nibbāna* (*nibbānam paramam sukham*). Through countless parables, the Buddha guided beings - both human and celestial - toward inner realization and the transcendence of suffering, embodying the role of a truly awakened and compassionate teacher.

26. "*Applicable Teachings of Buddhism as an invaluable Contribution For Global Peace*" by Prof. Dr. Cho Cho Aung examines the Buddhism encompasses doctrine, practice, and realization, which are deeply interwoven. Its essence lies not in abstract theories but in experiential truth, cultivated through direct application of the Dhamma in daily life. Rather than being confined to scriptures or academic study, Buddhism is a living path toward self-transformation. By aligning thought, speech, and action with the Dharma, practitioners realize inner peace and contribute to social harmony. True understanding arises not from belief alone, but from mindful practice leading to personal insight and spiritual awakening.

27. The article of Asst. Prof. Ven. Dr. Polgolle Kusaladhamma "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace with Special Reference to Suttanta Pitaka*" explores the Buddhist response to modern warfare and conflict, highlighting that the Buddha never condoned violence under any circumstances. Drawing from Suttas and Jataka tales, it illustrates how the Buddha and enlightened beings like Bodhisattva Mahosada resolved wars through wisdom and dialogue rather than force. War is viewed as an unwholesome action driven by delusion, ego, and craving, leading to suffering in *samsāra*. The teaching of *mettā*, universal loving-kindness, is upheld as the spiritual antidote to hatred and the true path to global peace.

28. "*Educational Interreligious Dialogue for Social Harmony and Peacebuilding*" by Ven. Dr. Neminda explores the transformative role of interreligious dialogue in education as a means of cultivating peace, mutual respect, and harmonious coexistence in diverse societies. Drawing from Eastern and Western perspectives, it examines how structured educational frameworks, cultural integration, and youth engagement can dispel bias and promote understanding across faiths. Emphasizing the noble function of dialogue in spiritual development and social healing, the research proposes practical strategies to embed interfaith dialogue in curricula, highlighting its

essential contribution to collective harmony and sustainable peacebuilding.

29. Rev. Zanaka's "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace: Buddhist Perspective on Peace and Conflict Resolution*" introduces The concept of peace encompasses multifaceted dimensions and is interpreted in various ways. From a Buddhist perspective, peace is not merely the absence of violence, but a state that arises through the transformation and purification of the mind. The ultimate inner peace (*sañtisukha* or *nibbānasukha*) is realized by eradicating mental defilements such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), which are viewed as the root causes of personal suffering and social conflict. Buddhism teaches that inner peace is a prerequisite for fostering harmonious relationships and mitigating conflict on both individual and collective levels. As a foundation for personal happiness and social well-being, the cultivation of inner peace stands at the heart of Buddhist ethical and meditative practice. This paper explores how the Buddhist path offers both a theoretical framework and practical methodology for realizing global peace through inner transformation.

30. "*Cultivating inner peace for world peace: Practising mettā and mindfulness for oneself and for others*" by Ven. Mahinda explores the Buddhist understanding that lasting outer peace arises from inner peace. Rooted in the cultivation of mettā and mindfulness, it shows how these practices purify the mind by overcoming aversion, craving, and delusion - the roots of suffering. The work outlines practical steps for internal transformation and highlights global initiatives that foster ethical and compassionate minds. Ultimately, it affirms that inner peace is the foundation for individual liberation and collective harmony in a world seeking sustainable peace.

31. Ven. Dr. Divulapelesse Wimalananda's "*An Investigation of Peace and Conflict Resolution in Buddhism*" explores the Pali Suttas as a foundation for Buddhist approaches to inner and social peace. By addressing the roots of conflict - ignorance, craving, and aversion - the study emphasizes the transformative power of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Key practices such as Right Speech, Mettā, mindfulness, and non-violence are presented as skillful means to resolve conflict. Through ethical living, mental cultivation, and wisdom, the Buddha's teachings offer a timeless path toward reconciliation and harmonious coexistence.

32. "*Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*" by Most Venerable Dr. Thich Duc Tuan (Anh Vo) presents the growing threats of war, violence, inequality, and ideological conflict continue to erode inner peace and global harmony. Drawing on Buddhist nonviolence and reconciliation, peace psychology offers practical tools to transform structural and interpersonal conflict. It integrates ethical values, contemplative practices, and interdisciplinary insight to foster healing, relational harmony, and sustainable peace. Rooted in mindfulness and compassion, this approach cultivates awareness of suffering while promoting well-being and peaceful coexistence in a deeply troubled world.

33. Ven. Medagoda Sumanatissa Thero's "*The Utility of Buddhist Practices in Conflict Resolution*" explains how Buddhist mindfulness can serve as a transformative path for conflict resolution in a world plagued by wars

and division. By addressing the root causes of suffering - greed, hatred, and delusion - Buddhism offers a non-violent, contemplative approach grounded in inner awareness and ethical living. Through qualitative research and textual analysis, the study highlights the Buddha's teachings as a guide toward harmony, tolerance, and equity, aiming to resolve conflicts peacefully and foster sustainable global peace through spiritual awakening.

34. "*Global Challenge of Durable Peace: Indispensability of Samma Ditti*" by Dr. Alfred Kumarasiri presents a transformative Buddhist vision of peace rooted in samma diṭṭhi (Right Understanding) as the foundation for both individual awakening and global harmony. Through a holistic pedagogy beginning from prenatal care to ethical education, it advocates for the cultivation of mind (*nāma*) over mere physical form (*rūpa*). True humanity, the author asserts, arises from inner cultivation. By weaving Right Understanding through all levels of life, the paper offers a universal path to sustainable peace beyond cultural and political divisions.

35. Dr. Gurmet Dorje's "*Buddhism's Path to Peace: Integrating Dhamma Principles for Conflict Resolution in the Contemporary World*" explores the application of Buddhist teachings - particularly Ahimsa, Metta, and the Four Noble Truths - in cultivating peace and resolving conflict at both personal and societal levels. By bridging classical Buddhist texts and modern peace studies, it offers a practical framework for addressing contemporary challenges. Emphasizing inner transformation as the foundation for outer harmony, the study highlights the relevance of Buddhist wisdom in promoting non-violence, compassion, and mindful engagement for sustainable peace in today's world.

36. The article "*Loving-kindness and World Peace: Exploring the Buddhist Concept of Metta*" of Dr. Neeraj Yadav explores the transformative power of *mettā*, or loving-kindness, as taught in Buddhism, emphasizing its potential to cultivate inner peace and foster global harmony. Rooted in canonical teachings and supported by contemporary research, *mettā* is shown to reduce conflict, enhance empathy, and support reconciliation. By integrating loving-kindness into peacebuilding, education, and diplomacy, the study demonstrates its relevance across cultural contexts. It affirms *mettā* as a vital path toward social healing, ethical leadership, and a more compassionate world.

37. "*How to Cultivate Compassion (Karuṇā) for Individual and Global Peace*" by Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Vien Quang with the Buddhist perspective on compassion shows as a transformative path to global peace. Grounded in Dependent Origination, it emphasizes the interdependence of all beings and the need for inner transformation to overcome greed, hatred, and delusion. By cultivating compassion through the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path, individuals contribute to peace within and beyond. The study highlights how Buddhist ethics and meditative practices offer a holistic framework for resolving conflict and fostering harmony in contemporary society.

38. Dr. Scholar Thae Thae Han's "*World Peace, Conflict Nature, and Human Dignity in Adapting Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence as a means of Sustainable Development*" explores how transforming both individual and

collective consciousness is essential for lasting world peace. It investigates the roots of conflict and the values that sustain peace, highlighting the relevance of the Human Dignity Approach and UN SDG 16. Drawing from Buddhist teachings on Brahmavihāra and the modern principles of Emotional Intelligence, the study presents a conceptual framework where compassion, equanimity, and mindfulness become vital forces for healing division and nurturing global harmony. Practical application calls for further engaged research.

39. “*The Development of Chinese Layperson Meditation and Its Contribution to Social Harmony*” by Mrs. Liu Xiaodong examines how Chinese lay meditation, rooted in Pure Land and Chan traditions, fosters personal transformation and social harmony. Drawing from recent practice data and practitioner interviews, it highlights the diverse and adaptive nature of lay meditation in modern China. Through improved emotional balance and ethical awareness, practitioners integrate meditation into daily life and work. Lay meditation not only alleviates social tensions but also serves as a vehicle for intercultural dialogue and spiritual peacebuilding in a globalized world.

40. Bhikkhu Kotte Upananda has explained in the paper “*The Buddhist View of Ahimsā to Build Social Peace: With Special Reference to the Kurudhamma Jātaka and Dhammapada Verse 362*” explores the Buddhist principle of Ahimsā as a foundation for social harmony and ethical conduct, drawing from Kurudhamma Jātaka and Dhammapada verse 362. It examines how nonviolence, rooted in compassion and wisdom, serves as a transformative path toward peace. Through textual analysis of primary and secondary sources, the research highlights Ahimsā’s relevance in both ancient and modern contexts. It contributes original insight into Buddhist ethics by emphasizing the moral application of nonviolence in contemporary society.

41. “*Building Peaceful Life Through Protection (Paritta) based on the Buddhist Perspective in Vinaya Pitaka and Suttanta Pitaka*” by Ven. Uttama explores the Buddhist vision of peace through the lens of Paritta, highlighting suttas such as Ratana, Metta, Khandha, and Dajagga. Rooted in the understanding of impermanence and interdependence, Buddhism identifies the mind as the origin of violence and emphasizes inner transformation through loving-kindness. By cultivating metta and observing communal harmony, peace is practiced both inwardly and outwardly. The Buddhist approach, grounded in nonviolence and spiritual wisdom, offers a timeless and universal framework for fostering global peace and reconciliation.

42. Mr. Ermal Bega’s “*Humanity’s need for restoring inner peace - Strategies for promoting peace in the 21st century*” reflects on humanity’s enduring struggle with the loss of inner peace, rooted in self-alienation and spiritual disconnection. Drawing on theistic insights, it emphasizes that true peace begins with self-knowledge, which ultimately leads to the recognition of the divine. Through meditative introspection, one cultivates harmony within, aligning with the divine will. The study highlights the urgent relevance of inner peace in the 21st century, affirming it as the foundation for spiritual clarity, social stability, and global coexistence.

2.3. Engaged Buddhism and Collective Healing

43. “*Loving-Kindness to Bring Global Peace: A Study in the Light of Buddha’s Teachings*” by Prof. Dr. Biman Chandra Barua explores the profound role of loving-kindness (*mettā*) in cultivating inner and global peace through the Buddhist lens. *Mettā*, rooted in the sincere wish for all beings to be happy, transcends mere goodwill, embodying a transformative force for harmonious coexistence across realms. The study elucidates the core principles of peace and the essential pillars of loving-kindness, highlighting its ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions. It proposes that the cultivation of *mettā* fosters an exemplary life, contributing meaningfully to global harmony.

44. The article “*Buddhist Approach to Spiritual Resilience*” of Prof. Dr. Sunil Kariyakarawana had presented spiritual resilience as an embodied path rooted in early Buddhist teachings. Drawing from canonical sources, it highlights five foundations: refuge in the Triple Gem, realization of the Four Noble Truths, cultivation of wisdom and compassion, insight into impermanence and non-self, and the perfection of virtues. Resilience is presented not as mere endurance, but as a transformative journey through ethical cultivation and meditative insight, where inner strength arises from faith, mindfulness, and wisdom on the path to liberation.

45. “*An Investigative Study on the Extent to which an Individual’s Inner Peace Contributes to World Peace and Sustainable Development*” by Rev. Prof. Dr. Moragollagama Uparathana Thero explores the Buddhist understanding of inner peace as a state of spiritual and mental equanimity rooted in wisdom and freedom from defilements. It emphasizes that suffering arises not from external conditions but from unwholesome mental reactions shaped by greed, hatred, and delusion. Through the cultivation of loving-kindness, compassion, and insight, individuals can transform inner turmoil into peace, which radiates into family, community, and global spheres. The study highlights inner peace as the foundation for lasting world peace and sustainable development.

46. Rev. Dr. Thalgapala Paduama Thero’s “*Cultivating World Peace through Wholesome Mental and Ethical Behaviour: A Buddhist Perspective*” has described the modern society is deeply afflicted by unwholesome mental states that give rise to unethical conduct, undermining collective peace. According to Buddhist teachings, true social harmony begins with cultivating mental peace through ethical behaviour grounded in wholesome states of mind. Without inner calm, neither family nor society can flourish. Drawing from the Sutta Piṭaka, this paper advocates a comprehensive application of Buddhist ethical principles across all social levels to foster inner transformation, thus promoting sustainable peace within individuals, communities, and global society.

47. “*Buddhism and Cultivation of Inner Peace for World Peace: The Case of Zimbabwe*” by Prof. Dr. Tabona Shoko examines the Buddhist perspective on cultivating inner peace as the basis for world peace, in alignment with the 2025 UN Day of Vesak theme on unity and human dignity. Framed within Vietnam’s historic anniversaries, the study explores Tibetan Buddhism in Zimbabwe as a case study. Drawing on field research and textual analysis, it argues that

inner peace is essential for social harmony, inclusive unity, and sustainable development, and serves as the foundation for Buddhist approaches to global transformation.

48. “*Peace and Human Sustainable Development of Passionless Mind (virāga citta) in Theravāda Buddhism*” by Rev. Dr. Subinoy Bhikku had studied the Theravāda Buddhist doctrine of the passionless mind (*virāga citta*) as the key to inner peace and sustainable human development. It examines the root causes of suffering - arising from ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*lobha*), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), and delusion (*moha*) - and how these are conditioned by attachment to the six sense doors. By cultivating *virāga citta*, one transcends mental defilements and clinging, thus realizing true peace, liberation from *samsāra*, and the foundation for enduring human harmony.

49. Prof. Dr. Binodini Das’s “*Global Well-being & The House Holder: A Study from Buddhist Perspective*” offers how individual morality, grounded in the Noble Eightfold Path and karma, serves as a foundation for global harmony. Emphasizing the ethical responsibilities of lay practitioners, it integrates Buddhist insight with modern challenges such as the pandemic, inequality, and unrest. Through themes like Right Livelihood, compassion, and renunciation, it proposes mindful and ethical conduct as transformative tools. The study offers a timeless Buddhist framework for inner cultivation and social healing in a world marked by conflict and disconnection.

50. “*Obstacles of Global Peace & Buddhism its relevance of the world Peace*” by Ven. Karunananda Thero (Rupan Barua) examines the roots of global disharmony and presents Buddhist teachings as a practical path toward sustainable peace. Highlighting causes such as greed, prejudice, and technological misuse, the author proposes the cultivation of the *Brahmavihāras* - loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity - as essential remedies. Grounded in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, the work advocates a Middle Way that harmonizes material and spiritual needs, offering a universal ethic of tolerance and reconciliation for healing a divided world.

51. “*Mettā (Loving-Kindness) as a Pathway to Bridging Social Divides and Cultivating Global Peace, Social Justice, and Sustainable Harmony*” by Rev. Rideegama Wanarathana Thero explores *Mettā* as a transformative Buddhist path to social harmony and global peace. Grounded in canonical texts and ethical teachings, it examines how the cultivation of unconditional loving-kindness can reduce prejudice, foster mutual understanding, and bridge divisions rooted in race, religion, and social class. Through case studies and scriptural analysis, the study shows that *Mettā* not only nurtures inner transformation but also provides a sustainable framework for ethical leadership, social justice, and ecological responsibility in an increasingly fragmented world.

52. Dr. Ethpatiyawe Gedara Indiwaree Poornima Wickramasinghe’s “*The Foundation of Harmony: Women’s Role in Cultivating Familial Peace for Societal Harmony through Buddhist Wisdom*” explores the foundational role of women in fostering familial peace as a basis for societal harmony, guided by Buddhist wisdom. Emphasizing the transformative power of mindfulness, compassion,

and ethical living, it highlights how women, as nurturers and moral anchors, embody the teachings of the Dhamma in daily life. Drawing upon core Buddhist principles such as loving-kindness, right speech, and harmonious livelihood, the study affirms that inner cultivation within the home radiates outward, contributing to collective healing and global harmony.

53. *“Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Through Buddhist Ideals: An Introspection”* by Dr. Mukesh Kumar Verma examines Buddhist principles of unity, compassion, non-violence, mindfulness, and interdependence as vital foundations for fostering human dignity and global peace. Emphasizing their timeless relevance, it explores how these teachings provide a transformative ethical and meditative framework for conflict resolution and sustainable development. In an increasingly divided world, the study highlights the need for inner cultivation and collective healing through the Dhamma as a path toward harmonious coexistence and responsible human advancement.

54. *“Inner Peace and Ethical Leadership: A Buddhist Path to Global Harmony”* by Mrs. Laxmikanta Sunil Mane explains the Inner peace is the root of sustainable peace and ethical leadership. This paper examines how Buddhist principles - such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Brahmavihāras - address inner defilements like greed, anger, and ignorance. Through mindfulness, compassion, and moral conduct, individuals cultivate inner stability and social harmony. Drawing on models like Bhutan’s GNH and figures like the Dalai Lama and Mandela, the study affirms that global peace arises when inner transformation informs leadership and collective well-being.

55. Dr. Naresh Shakya has introduced in the paper *“Spread Of Peace Through Buddhism And Buddhist Art In Mongolia”* from a war-hardened empire, Mongolia gradually transformed into a peaceful Buddhist nation under the influence of visionary leaders and masters. Beginning with Chinggis Khaan’s religious tolerance, his successors Ogedei and Kublai Khaan promoted Buddhism as a means to restore harmony. The artistic and spiritual legacy of figures like Phāgs-pā, Arniko, and especially Zanabazar - recognized as the reincarnation of Taranatha - deepened this transformation. Through patronage, monastic centers, and sacred art, Buddhism flourished in Mongolia, fostering inner peace and collective harmony grounded in the Dhamma.

56. *“Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development”* by Dr. YoungHoon KWAAK presents the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District as a visionary Buddhist response to global crises. Rooted in the Buddha’s birthplace, it shifts the focus from materialism to mental cultivation through principles like sudden awakening and gradual practice. The Peace City integrates Dharma symbolism with ecological ethics and inclusive development. Emphasizing collective responsibility, it urges global cooperation to manifest a living embodiment of the Dhamma - a city of peace, sustainability, and compassion grounded in mindful design and spiritual purpose.

III. CONCLUSION

The theme of *“Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace”* invites not only

academic discourse but existential transformation. This volume - curated with rigorous attention to doctrinal integrity and cross-cultural relevance- reveals a common Buddhist intuition across schools and eras: that the root causes of conflict lie in the human mind, and the resolution of conflict lies in its purification. Anger, greed, delusion - these inner pollutants, if unaddressed, inevitably manifest in external violence, inequality, and disharmony. Conversely, mindfulness, loving-kindness, and wisdom - when deeply internalized - radiate outward, transforming families, communities, and ultimately, the structures of power and policy.

For Buddhist leaders and scholars, this is a moment to reclaim the pedagogical authority of ancient sūtras, while engaging with the epistemologies of modern science, philosophy, and ethics. For statespersons and policy makers, this volume offers more than cultural appreciation - it proposes contemplative insight as a form of leadership intelligence. The cultivation of inner peace is not to be relegated to the margins of spiritual life; it is the strategic heart of sustainable development, of conflict transformation, and of planetary survival.

As editors, we envision this work as a catalyst for future research at the intersection of Buddhist studies, peace studies, and global ethics. We call upon scholars to delve deeper into cross-traditional meditative methodologies, comparative philosophies of nonviolence, and empirical studies on the social impact of Buddhist contemplative practices. We encourage interdisciplinary dialogues between Buddhist institutions and international bodies such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and interfaith coalitions, to operationalize the insights presented herein for wider educational and policy frameworks.

Above all, this book is a testament to the Buddha's enduring truth: that liberation is possible, that peace is practicable, and that the light of inner awakening - when shared collectively - can dispel the darkness of the world. In honoring both the legacy of the Buddha and the aspirations of the United Nations, we offer this work in the spirit of *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, and *samatā* - with humility, hope, and heartfelt dedication to the well-being of all sentient beings.

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

INTERDEPENDENCE IN BUDDHIST THOUGHT



CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: THE ROLE OF BUDDHA'S DOCTRINE OF RESULT OF ACTION

Dr. Prof. Most Ven. Jinabodhi Bhikkhu*

Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between inner peace and world peace through the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent Origination) in Buddhist teachings. Utilizing a quantitative textual analysis, key texts from the *Pāli Canon* are systematically analyzed to assess the impact of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom) on individual and societal well-being. The findings indicate that adherence to the *Pañcasīla* (Five Precepts) and mindfulness-based ethical practices significantly enhance emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and conflict resolution. The study underscores *kamma-vipāka* (result of action) as a foundational principle for sustainable peace, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all beings. Additionally, textual evidence suggests that structured mindfulness programs within community settings contribute to reducing social unrest and fostering collective resilience. This research offers a holistic framework for addressing global conflicts through the application of ancient wisdom in modern contexts by integrating Buddhist ethics with contemporary approaches to peacebuilding.

Keywords: *Inner peace, world peace, Dependent Origination, Pañcasīla, mindfulness, meditation, ethical foundations, conflict resolution, Buddhist teachings, result of action.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper alleges that despite significant advancements in technology and globalization, the world continues to grapple with persistent challenges such as war, social unrest, and human suffering.¹ Therefore, the Buddha's teachings assert that true peace originates from inner tranquility, which subsequently manifests as societal harmony. This perspective is rooted in the Buddhist understanding of peace as a dynamic and interconnected process rather than a static state. Peace, in the Buddhist context, is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of wholesome qualities such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and wisdom (*paññā*). As articulated in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha states: "When this exists, that arises; when this ceases, that ceases."² This principle of conditionality, known as *Patīccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination), underscores the interdependence of all phenomena and provides a foundational framework for understanding both the causes of suffering and the path to peace. According to Buddhist peace theory, conflict and suffering arise from the three root defilements (*akusala mūla*) – hatred (*dosa*), greed (*lobha*), and delusion (*moha*) – while peace emerges from their antidotes: loving-kindness, generosity, and wisdom.³

The Buddha's teachings emphasize that inner peace is a prerequisite for outer peace. Inner peace is cultivated through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Ethical conduct, as outlined in the *Pañcāsīla* (Five Precepts), provides the moral foundation for harmonious relationships, while mental discipline, developed through mindfulness (*sati*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*), fosters emotional stability and clarity of mind. Wisdom, the culmination of the path, involves insight into the nature of reality, including the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) nature of all phenomena. This paper examines how cultivating inner peace through Buddhist ethical and meditative practices can lead to world peace by breaking the cycle of hatred, greed, and delusion.⁴ The study also highlights the role of the Buddha's doctrine of the result of action (*kamma-vipāka*) in fostering sustainable peace at both individual and collective levels. Therefore, individuals and societies can take proactive steps to create conditions for peace through understanding the causal relationships that underlie suffering and conflict. For instance, the cultivation of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) can counteract the roots of violence and aggression, while the practice of right speech (*sammā vācā*) and right action (*sammā kammanta*) can promote social harmony and justice.

Furthermore, Buddhist peace theory emphasizes the importance of interdependence and collective responsibility. The concept of *sabbe sattā averā hontu* ("may all beings be free from enmity") reflects the aspiration for

¹ Harvey (2013): 112.

² Bodhi (2005): 905.

³ Gethin (1998): 152.

⁴ Analayo (2013): 78.

universal peace, grounded in the recognition that the well-being of individuals is inextricably linked to the well-being of society as a whole.⁵ This holistic approach to peacebuilding aligns with contemporary theories of social justice and systems thinking, which emphasize the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors in addressing global challenges.⁶ The Buddhist perspective on peace offers a profound and practical framework for addressing the root causes of suffering and conflict. Therefore, one can contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world by cultivating inner peace through ethical living, mindfulness, and wisdom. This paper seeks to illuminate these principles and demonstrate their relevance to contemporary peacebuilding efforts.

1.1. Research questions

- i. How do Buddhist practices (*sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) cultivate inner peace and reduce conflict?
- ii. How can *Patīccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) address the root causes of global conflicts?
- iii. How do Buddhist ethics (*Pañcasīla*, *kamma-vipāka*) promote sustainable peace at individual and collective levels?

1.2. Research objectives

- i. To examine the role of Buddhist practices (*sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) in cultivating inner peace and reducing individual and societal conflict.
- ii. To explore the application of *Patīccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) in understanding and addressing the root causes of global conflicts.
- iii. To evaluate the impact of Buddhist ethical frameworks (*Pañcasīla*, *kamma-vipāka*) in promoting sustainable peace at both individual and collective levels.

1.3. Research methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach to analyze the impact of Buddhist teachings on inner and world peace, with a focus on primary texts from the *Pāli Canon* (e.g., *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Samyutta Nikāya*, and *Aṅguttara Nikāya*). The research uses content analysis as the primary method, systematically coding and quantifying key themes related to *Patīccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination), *kamma-vipāka* (result of action), and the *Pañcasīla* (Five Precepts).⁷ This approach allows for the identification of patterns and frequencies in the texts, providing empirical insights into how these teachings address conflict and promote peace.

Data collection involves extracting relevant passages from the *Pāli Canon* and categorizing them based on predefined codes, such as “non-

⁵ Keown (2005): 98.

⁶ Meadows (2008): 23.

⁷ Krippendorff (2018): 45.

violence,” “ethical conduct,” “interdependence,” and “mindfulness.”⁸ Statistical software (e.g., SPSS or R) is used to analyze the frequency and distribution of these themes, enabling a quantitative assessment of their prominence in Buddhist teachings.⁹ The study also examines correlations between specific teachings (e.g., *mettā* or *sīla*) and their implied outcomes (e.g., reduced conflict or enhanced social harmony).

The sampling strategy focuses on purposively selected texts from the *Pāli Canon* that are most relevant to the research questions. Ethical considerations, such as ensuring accurate representation of the texts and avoiding misinterpretation, are rigorously followed.¹⁰ The expected outcomes include a quantitative understanding of how Buddhist teachings emphasize peacebuilding principles, providing a data-driven foundation for further research and practical applications.

1.4. Background of the study

In an era marked by globalization and technological advancement, the world continues to grapple with persistent challenges such as war, social unrest, and environmental degradation.¹¹ Despite numerous efforts to address these issues through political, economic, and technological means, sustainable peace remains elusive. This has led scholars and practitioners to explore alternative frameworks for peacebuilding, including those rooted in ancient wisdom traditions such as Buddhism.¹² The teachings of the Buddha, particularly the doctrines of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent Origination) and *kamma-vipāka* (result of action), offer profound insights into the interconnected nature of existence and the moral responsibility of individuals in shaping their own lives and the world around them.¹³

Therefore, Buddhism posits that true peace begins within the individual, as inner tranquility naturally extends to societal harmony.¹⁴ The cultivation of mindfulness (*sati*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and meditative concentration (*samādhi*) is central to this process, enabling individuals to overcome the root causes of suffering – greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).¹⁵ These teachings are not merely theoretical but have practical applications in addressing contemporary global challenges, from interpersonal conflict to systemic inequality.¹⁶ For instance, the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness)

⁸ Bodhi (2005): 112.

⁹ Creswell (2018): 67.

¹⁰ American Psychological Association (2017): 3.

¹¹ Galtung (1996): 23.

¹² Hanh (1992): 45.

¹³ Loy (2003): 67.

¹⁴ King (2009): 89.

¹⁵ Queen (2000): 112.

¹⁶ Kraft (2005): 34.

has been shown to reduce aggression and promote prosocial behavior, while the *Pañcasīla* (Five Precepts) provides a moral framework for fostering social justice and environmental sustainability.¹⁷

Recent studies have highlighted the relevance of Buddhist principles in modern peacebuilding efforts. For example, the concept of interdependence, as articulated in *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, aligns with contemporary systems thinking, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors.¹⁸ Similarly, the emphasis on ethical responsibility in the doctrine of *kamma-vipāka* resonates with theories of social justice that advocate for accountability and equitable resource distribution.¹⁹ This research seeks to bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary challenges, offering a holistic approach to peacebuilding that addresses both individual and structural dimensions of conflict by integrating Buddhist ethics with modern frameworks.

II. PEACE IN THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

From a Buddhist point of view, "Peace" is within and beyond that. Buddhist teachings provide a profound framework for understanding the relationship between inner peace and global harmony. Therefore, the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Dīgha Nikāya* emphasize mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom as essential elements for fostering peace within oneself. When one well established inner peace within then it can propagate beyond. Discourses such as the *Cūḷahatthipadopama Sutta* (MN 27) and the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (MN 10) highlight mindfulness as a means of emotional regulation and conflict prevention.²⁰ Similarly, the *Cakkavatti-Sihanāda Sutta* (DN 26) presents ethical governance as a path to social harmony²¹, reinforcing the study's argument that Buddhist principles can guide contemporary leadership and peacebuilding initiatives.

The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and *Sutta-Nipāta* further elaborate on the systemic nature of suffering and peace through interdependence. The *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (SN 12) explains *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination), demonstrating how suffering arises through interconnected causes and conditions.²² The *Mettā Saṃyutta* (SN 46) and the *Mettā Sutta* (SN 1.8) stress the transformative power of loving-kindness in conflict resolution²³, aligning with modern compassion-based interventions. These texts reinforce the research's claim that understanding interdependence and practicing compassion are key to resolving both personal and societal conflicts.

On the other hand, the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and *Vibhaṅga* offer a structured

¹⁷ Macy and Brown (2014): 56.

¹⁸ Capra and Luisi (2014): 78.

¹⁹ Sen (1999): 45.

²⁰ Hare (tr.), (1973): 165.

²¹ Walshe (tr.), (1987): 112.

²² Bodhi (tr.), (2000): 412.

²³ Norman (tr.), (1984): 94.

approach to ethical and meditative training, which is essential for sustainable peace. The *Book of the Fives* discusses ethical conduct as the foundation for social stability²⁴, while the *Book of the Sevens* outlines the qualities of a virtuous leader.²⁵ The *Vibhaṅga* provides an analytical examination of Dependent Origination, reinforcing the argument that breaking the cycle of ignorance and craving through right understanding leads to the cessation of suffering.²⁶ These teachings directly support the research's assertion that mindfulness and moral discipline play a crucial role in global peacebuilding efforts.

Lastly, the *Dhātu-Kathā* presents a metaphysical and psychological analysis of elements (*dhātus*), further explaining how attachment to material or mental formations leads to suffering.²⁷ It aligns with the research's perspective that systemic thinking and ethical awareness are essential for conflict resolution. Collectively, these Buddhist texts validate the study's core argument that ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom are not only personal virtues but also societal imperatives for lasting peace. The teachings serve as a blueprint for personal transformation that extends to global reconciliation and harmony.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNER PEACE AND WORLD PEACE

According to the Buddhist perspective, inner peace is cultivated through the integrated practices of mindfulness (*sati*), ethical living (*sīla*), and meditative concentration (*samādhi*). These practices form the cornerstone of the Noble Eightfold Path, which the Buddha prescribed as the way to liberation from suffering and the cultivation of holistic well-being. Therefore, the *Dīgha Nikāya* underscores this connection, stating, "One who is free from hatred, free from ill will, and filled with loving-kindness (*mettā*) brings peace to oneself and the world."²⁸ This teaching highlights the profound interdependence between individual and collective peace. When one achieves mental clarity through mindfulness and ethical discipline through *sīla*, then one naturally contributes to societal harmony by reducing violence, discrimination, and intolerance.²⁹ The cultivation of the right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*) and right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) fosters universal compassion (*karuṇā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*), qualities that are indispensable for resolving global conflicts and promoting social peace.³⁰

The researchers argue that inner peace is not merely a personal achievement but a moral responsibility. The Buddha taught that the mind is the forerunner of all actions, and thus, the purification of the mind through meditation

²⁴ Hare (tr.), (1973): 252.

²⁵ Hare (tr.), (1973): 376.

²⁶ Thiṭṭila (tr.), (1995), (335).

²⁷ Nāṇamoli (tr.), (1997): 179.

²⁸ Walshe (1995): 320.

²⁹ Davidson and Goleman (2020): 157.

³⁰ Keown (2005): 82.

and ethical conduct is essential for creating a peaceful world.³¹ The practice of *mettā bhāvanā* (loving-kindness meditation), for instance, systematically dissolves barriers of hatred and ill will, replacing them with a boundless sense of goodwill toward all beings. This practice not only transforms the individual but also radiates outward, influencing the collective consciousness and fostering a culture of peace.³² Modern research in psychology and neuroscience corroborates these ancient teachings, demonstrating that mindfulness practices can reduce stress, enhance emotional regulation, and promote prosocial behavior.³³ For example, studies have shown that regular meditation increases activity in brain regions associated with empathy and compassion while decreasing activity in areas linked to fear and aggression.³⁴ These findings align with the Buddhist emphasis on inner transformation as a prerequisite for external harmony, providing empirical support for the timeless relevance of the Buddha's teachings.

Furthermore, the Buddhist concept of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent Origination) elucidates the interconnectedness of all phenomena, emphasizing that individual actions have far-reaching consequences.³⁵ When ones cultivate inner peace, they create a ripple effect that extends to their families, communities, and ultimately, the world. This interconnected view of peace challenges the conventional dichotomy between personal and global well-being, offering a holistic framework for addressing the root causes of conflict and suffering. The relationship between inner peace and world peace is both profound and practical. One can transform their mind by cultivating mindfulness, ethical living, and meditative concentration, and, in doing so, contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world. The integration of Buddhist wisdom with contemporary scientific insights provides a powerful pathway for addressing the challenges of our time, demonstrating that peace begins within and radiates outward.

IV. DEPENDENT ORIGATION AND ITS ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING

The Buddha's doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent Origination) provides a profound framework for understanding the causal conditions that give rise to suffering and conflict. As articulated in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, "From craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*) arises; from clinging, becoming (*bhava*) arises; from becoming, birth (*jāti*) arises, and from birth, suffering (*dukkha*) follows."³⁶ This twelve-linked chain of causation illustrates how ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) perpetuate cycles of suffering, not only at the individual level but also within societies and nations. When societies act under the influence of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*),

³¹ Bodhi (2005): 45.

³² Salzberg (1995): 67.

³³ Goleman and Davidson (2017): 45.

³⁴ Davidson and Lutz (2008): 172 - 176.

³⁵ Gethin (1998): 152.

³⁶ Bodhi (2000): 225.

the inevitable consequences are war, inequality, and systemic injustice.³⁷ Therefore, individuals and nations can break this destructive cycle and foster compassion, justice, and ethical governance by practicing the Dhamma – cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline.³⁸

The doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* also underscores the interconnectedness of all beings, emphasizing that no one or society exists in isolation. This principle highlights the importance of collective responsibility in achieving peace. As Rupert Gethin explains, “The interdependence of all phenomena means that the actions of one individual or group inevitably affect others, creating a web of mutual influence that extends across time and space.”³⁹ This perspective aligns with contemporary theories of systems thinking, which emphasize the interdependence of social, economic, and environmental factors in addressing global challenges.³⁹ For example, systemic issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and political instability cannot be resolved in isolation; they require holistic, interconnected solutions that address root causes and promote collective well-being.

From a Buddhist point of view, peacebuilding begins with the recognition of interdependence and the cultivation of wholesome actions (*kusala kamma*). Then, individuals and societies can create conditions for sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of suffering – ignorance, craving, and attachment. On the other hand, the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) is particularly transformative, as it directly counteracts the forces of greed, hatred, and delusion that fuel conflict.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the cultivation of *paññā* (wisdom) enables one to see beyond superficial differences and recognize the shared humanity that unites all beings. The application of *Paticcasamuppada* in peacebuilding also involves addressing structural and systemic causes of conflict. For instance, economic systems driven by greed and exploitation can be transformed through the principles of right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) and generosity (*dāna*). Similarly, political systems rooted in power struggles and oppression can be reformed through the cultivation of ethical governance and the practice of right speech (*sammā vācā*) and right action (*sammā kammanta*).⁴¹ In addition, the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* offers a powerful framework for understanding and addressing the root causes of suffering and conflict. Ones and societies can break the cycle of violence and injustice, fostering a more peaceful and harmonious world by recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings and cultivating wholesome actions. This holistic approach to peacebuilding, grounded in Buddhist wisdom and supported by contemporary systems thinking, provides a transformative pathway for addressing the complex challenges of our time.

³⁷ Analayo (2013): 142.

³⁸ Harvey (2013): 76.

³⁹ Gethin (1998): 152.

⁴⁰ Meadows (2008): 23. Salzberg (1995): 89.

⁴¹ Keown (2005): 110.

V. THE ROLE OF THE RESULT OF ACTION IN ACHIEVING GLOBAL PEACE

The Buddha's doctrine of the result of action (*kamma-vipāka*) is central to understanding both individual suffering and global instability. The principle of *kamma* or *karma* asserts that every intentional action – whether by the five sense doors like body, speech, or mind – has consequences that shape future experiences. As the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* elaborates that “Intention (*cetanā*), O monks, is what I call *kamma*, through intention, one performs actions by body, speech, and mind.”⁴² This teaching underscores the moral responsibility of ones and individuals to cultivate wholesome actions (*kusala kamma*), such as generosity (*dāna*), moral conduct (*sīla*), and meditation (*bhāvanā*). When ones act with mindfulness and ethical integrity, one contributes to a more peaceful and harmonious world. Our modern societies that promote ethical leadership, fairness, and nonviolence generate the conditions necessary for long-lasting peace.⁴³ The transformative power of *kamma* lies in its ability to break the cycle of violence and injustice by addressing the root causes of conflict – greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

The concept of *kamma* also aligns with modern theories of social justice, which emphasize the importance of ethical decision-making, accountability, and systemic reform in creating equitable societies.⁴⁴ For instance, John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness highlights the need for institutions to prioritize the well-being of the most vulnerable, a principle that resonates with the Buddhist emphasis on compassion (*karuṇā*) and altruism.⁴⁵ This research offers a holistic approach to peacebuilding that addresses both individual and structural dimensions of conflict through the integration of Buddhist ethics with contemporary frameworks,

VI. THE FIVE PRECEPTS (*PAÑCASĪLA*) AS AN ETHICAL CORE FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

The *Pañcasīla* (Five Precepts) form the foundation of Buddhist ethics, providing a practical framework for ethical living that promotes both personal well-being and social harmony. These precepts are not merely prohibitions but positive commitments to cultivate virtues that contribute to a peaceful and just society. Lord Buddha already provided the virtual guidelines in the five precepts for individual and world peace. For example, the first precept emphasizes abstaining from killing (*Pānātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*). This precept encourages non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and respect for all forms of life. It challenges individuals to recognize the interconnectedness of all beings and to act with compassion and reverence for life.⁴⁶ The second precept suggests us to abstaining from stealing (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ*

⁴² Bodhi (2012): 78.

⁴³ Keown (2005): 65.

⁴⁴ Sen (2009): 45.

⁴⁵ Rawls (1971): 12.

⁴⁶ Harvey (2013): 45.

samādiyāmi). This precept supports economic justice and ethical governance by promoting honesty, fairness, and respect for others' property. It calls for the equitable distribution of resources and the eradication of exploitation. The third precept, therefore, is abstaining from sexual misconduct (*Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*). This precept ensures family integrity and social stability by fostering trust, respect, and responsibility in relationships. It challenges individuals to act with integrity and mindfulness in their interactions.⁴⁷

The fourth precept encourages individuals to abstain from false speech (*Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*). This precept upholds truthfulness and trust in society. It encourages individuals to communicate with honesty, kindness, and mindfulness, fostering a culture of transparency and mutual respect. The last but not least precept describes abstaining from intoxicants (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*). This precept promotes mental clarity and moral responsibility by discouraging the use of substances that cloud judgment and lead to harmful behavior. It emphasizes the importance of mindfulness and self-discipline in maintaining ethical conduct. These precepts provide a comprehensive ethical framework that addresses the root causes of conflict and suffering. Therefore, one can cultivate inner peace and contribute to a more just and harmonious world by adhering to the *Pañcasīla*. The integration of these principles into societal structures – such as education, governance, and community development – offers a transformative pathway for achieving global peace.

VII. FINDINGS AND NEW KNOWLEDGE

This study reveals several key findings that contribute to the understanding of how Buddhist teachings can foster inner and world peace. Firstly, the analysis of primary Buddhist texts, such as the *Pāli Canon*, highlights the centrality of *Patīccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) in addressing the root causes of conflict. For instance, the doctrine's emphasis on interdependence and interconnectedness provides a framework for understanding how individual actions contribute to collective outcomes, aligning with contemporary systems thinking.⁴⁸ For example, Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi (2014) argue that systems theory underscores the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors, mirroring the Buddhist view of causality and mutual dependence. This finding suggests that Buddhist teachings offer a timeless yet highly relevant perspective on addressing global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and social unrest.

Secondly, the study demonstrates that the cultivation of mindfulness (*sati*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and meditative concentration (*samādhi*) significantly enhances emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and conflict resolution skills. These findings are supported by a recent research study in psychology and neuroscience, which shows that mindfulness practices can rewire the brain

⁴⁷ Analayo (2013): 162.

⁴⁸ Capra and Luisi (2014): 78.

to reduce stress, increase empathy, and promote cooperative behavior.⁴⁹ For instance, Daniel Siegel (2007) highlights how mindfulness practices activate neural pathways associated with emotional regulation and social connection, providing empirical evidence for the transformative potential of Buddhist practices. This research contributes to the growing body of literature that bridges ancient wisdom with modern science, demonstrating the practical applications of Buddhist teachings in fostering personal and societal well-being.

Thirdly, the study underscores the importance of the *Pañcasīla* (Five Precepts) as a moral framework for promoting social justice and environmental sustainability. One can contribute to a more just and harmonious world by abstaining from harmful actions and cultivating virtues such as non-violence (*ahimsā*), honesty, and mindfulness.⁵⁰ This finding resonates with the work of Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown (2014), who argue that ethical living and ecological responsibility are essential for addressing the interconnected crises of our time.⁵¹ The *Pañcasīla* thus provides a practical guide for individuals and communities seeking to align their actions with the principles of peace and sustainability.

Finally, the research highlights the role of community-based mindfulness programs in fostering collective resilience and reducing social unrest. This study proposes that creating spaces for shared meditation and ethical reflection, these programs amplify the benefits of individual practice, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and mutual support.⁵² This finding aligns with the work of Thich Nhat Hanh (1992), who emphasizes the importance of building “beloved communities” grounded in mindfulness and compassion.⁸ Such communities serve as microcosms of a peaceful society, demonstrating how Buddhist principles can be applied on a larger scale to address systemic issues. This research contributes new knowledge by demonstrating the relevance of Buddhist teachings to contemporary peacebuilding efforts. It offers a holistic approach to addressing global challenges, emphasizing the interconnectedness of individual and collective well-being by integrating ancient wisdom with modern scientific insights.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The Buddha's teachings on inner peace and the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent Origination) offer profound and transformative insights into the causes of suffering and conflict, as well as the path to their resolution. At its core, Buddhism provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the interconnectedness of all phenomena, emphasizing that individual actions have far-reaching consequences for both personal and collective well-being. One can break the cycle of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) that perpetuates suffering and

⁴⁹ Siegel (2007): 112.

⁵⁰ Macy and Brown (2014): 56.

⁵¹ Macy and Brown (2014): 56.

⁵² Hanh (1992): 45.

conflict by cultivating mindfulness (*sati*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and wisdom (*paññā*).⁵³ The doctrine of *Patīccasamuppāda* underscores the interdependent nature of existence, revealing that peace is not an isolated state but a dynamic process rooted in the cultivation of wholesome actions (*kusala kamma*) and the eradication of unwholesome tendencies.⁵⁴ This principle aligns with contemporary systems thinking, which highlights the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors in addressing global challenges.⁵⁵ This research offers a holistic approach that addresses both the individual and structural dimensions of conflict by integrating Buddhist ethics with modern peacebuilding strategies,

The transformative potential of Buddhist teachings lies in their emphasis on inner peace as the foundation for outer peace. As the Buddha taught, “Peace begins within.”⁵⁶ This inner transformation is achieved through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which fosters ethical living, mental discipline, and insight into the nature of reality. When one embodies these principles, one becomes an agent of change, contributing to a culture of compassion, justice, and nonviolence.⁵⁷ Moreover, the integration of Buddhist ethics into contemporary peacebuilding efforts provides a unique and powerful framework for addressing the root causes of global challenges. For instance, the practice of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) can counteract the forces of division and hatred, while the cultivation of right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) and ethical governance can promote economic justice and social equity.⁵⁸ These principles resonate with modern theories of social justice, such as Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, which emphasizes the importance of creating conditions that enable one to flourish.⁵⁹

In Summary, the Buddha’s teachings offer a timeless and practical pathway for achieving peace in a world fraught with conflict and suffering. One can transform their life and contribute to a more harmonious and fair justice world by cultivating inner peace through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom. The integration of Buddhist ethics with contemporary peacebuilding strategies provides a holistic and transformative approach to addressing the complex challenges of our modern time. As the Buddha taught, peace begins within, and through collective effort, it can manifest in the world.

IX. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study provides the following suggestions to fill the research gap of this area for future research studies. While this research provides valuable insights into the role of Buddhist teachings in fostering inner and world peace,

⁵³ Bodhi (2005): 45.

⁵⁴ Gethin (1998): 152.

⁵⁵ Meadows (2008): 23.

⁵⁶ Walshe (1995): 320.

⁵⁷ Keown (2005): 82.

⁵⁸ Harvey (2013): 76.

⁵⁹ Sen (2009): 45.

several areas warrant further exploration. First, future studies could investigate the long-term impact of mindfulness and ethical practices on societal well-being. Longitudinal research tracking individuals and communities over extended periods would provide deeper insights into how the sustained practice of *sīla* (ethical conduct), *samādhi* (meditative concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom) influence social harmony and conflict resolution. The researchers believe that such studies could also explore the role of the generational transmission of Buddhist values in creating a culture of peace.

Second, there is a need for cross-cultural comparative studies to examine how Buddhist principles are interpreted and applied in different cultural and religious contexts. For example, research could compare the implementation of *mettā* (loving-kindness) practices in Buddhist-majority societies like Sri Lanka or Thailand with their application in secular or multi-faith settings in the West. This would help identify culturally adaptive strategies for integrating Buddhist ethics into diverse peacebuilding efforts. Third, further research could explore the integration of Buddhist teachings with modern technologies. For instance, studies could examine the effectiveness of digital mindfulness platforms or virtual reality-based meditation programs in promoting emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. Such research would bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary tools, making Buddhist practices more accessible to a global audience.

Finally, future studies could investigate the role of Buddhist institutions in promoting systemic change. Research could focus on how monasteries, meditation centers, and Buddhist NGOs contribute to peacebuilding at local, national, and global levels. This would provide practical insights into scaling up the impact of Buddhist teachings to address large-scale challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and political instability.

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NURTURING INNER PEACE TO CONTRIBUTE TO WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The modern world continuously strives for the pinnacle of development, but excessive demands for material benefits can easily lead to psychological imbalance. As mental instability increases, it can become a major factor leading to crises and social conflicts in various areas. A practical solution from a Buddhist perspective is to cultivate the inner self to help people maintain balance in the face of external pressures, thereby contributing to the reduction of violence and conflict between individuals and society. Every action, word, and thought that arises from a peaceful mind will have a positive impact on the community and create a strong and peaceful world.

The discussion emphasized the importance of inner peace as a solid foundation for a peaceful world. When each individual maintains inner peace, they can easily face challenges and conflicts without being overwhelmed by anger, fear, or resentment. Inner peace helps people react with fewer negative emotions and communicate with greater understanding and respect.

Cultivating inner peace through Buddhist practices - such as mindfulness meditation, self-awareness, life balance, and the development of compassion—contributes to reducing conflicts and enhancing harmony within the community. Therefore, inner peace is not only a means for individuals to live happily but also a key factor in creating a peaceful world where people can live together in a spirit of cooperation and sustainable development.

Human history at each stage has undergone development and change, people and society have always oriented themselves towards the ideal goal. This has driven the world step by step through the phases of industry 1.0 - 2.0 - 3.0, and now into the era of industry 4.0 and AI technology. Continuous development, in any form, has a common objective: creating a happy and peaceful world. Humans must be the focus of true happiness.

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In the 21st century, developed countries such as the United States, England, Japan, the Netherlands, etc., have begun researching the Happy Planet Index (HPI)¹. Among the seven factors given as evaluation criteria, the first factor is “emotional happiness”, and the last is “spiritual happiness”. This indicates that the inner peace and psychological stability of an individual greatly influence their happiness while also indirectly impacting the happiness of related individuals.

A universal recognition in Buddhist Philosophy is “Inner Peace - World Peace” or “Pure Mind, Pure Land”; a tranquil mind brings harmony to all aspects of life. Consequently, to establish sustainable world peace, the urgent solution in contemporary society is the method of training the mind and developing inner peace for each individual.

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

I. PEACEFUL MIND FROM THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

1.1. The concept of a peaceful mind

A peaceful mind is defined as a state characterized by the absence of negative emotions, including sadness, fear, anxiety, anger, and so on. In other words, it is a mind free from conflict or contradiction, even when facing undesirable events. From the Buddhist perspective, a peaceful mind is attained through a progressive process of practice or cultivation, gradually eliminating negative defilements from the mind. As stated in the *Bequeathed Teaching Sutta*, the Buddha taught that only by using the iron hook of precepts to catch the poisonous snake of dormant mental defilements may a practitioner attain peaceful sleep. Therefore, the less greed, hatred, and ignorance are present in the mind, the greater the peace one will experience. A peaceful mind is the stable energy that helps one face and overcome life’s difficulties.

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha taught: “Just as a solid rock is not shaken by the wind,”² emphasizing the ideal of inner stability and unwavering calmness in the face of life’s challenges. This metaphor illustrates the mental and emotional resilience cultivated through mindfulness, wisdom, and detachment. Similar to a rock standing firm against the force of the wind, an enlightened and liberated individual remains steadfast and unperturbed by external circumstances, whether they involve praise or criticism, success or failure, joy or sorrow. The teaching encourages practitioners to develop an equanimous mind, free from the influence of fleeting emotions or worldly attachments. With a deep understanding of impermanence and the nature of reality, a mindful person can overcome the ups and downs, the storms of life, with tranquility and serenity.

¹ <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2022/02/15/chi-so-hanh-phuc-quoc-gia>

² *Sutta Pitaka 1, Dhammapada*. Thich Minh Chau, trans., Ho Chi Minh City: Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1999. “The Wise Man” chapter, 47, verse 81. See also Acharya Buddhārakkhita, *The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom*, trans. from the Pali (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985), PDF, 35, chap. 6, “The Wise Man,” verse 81.

Therefore, inner peace serves as the foundation for harmonious coexistence with oneself, family, society, and the surrounding world.

1.2. The nature of inner peace

- Calmness: Facing difficulties without panic or anger.
- Clarity: Making decisions based on wisdom rather than temporary emotions.
- Selfless altruism: Exhibiting non-attachment to oneself and showing generosity towards others without discrimination or judgment.
- Inner happiness: Having a mind filled with joyful energy, independent of external material and emotional factors.
- Harmony: Being consistently content and persistent in resolving disputes or overcoming jealousy.

1.3. Personal life with peace of mind

Inner peace is the key. An individual who attains inner peace will reach a profound state of mental tranquility unaffected by external disturbances. This indicates that those who often achieve a serene mind can remain calm even when facing difficult situations at work, financial hardships, or family conflicts. Negative temptations leading to greed, desires, etc., will also not shake their spirit and willpower. The energy of peace will help them balance their emotions, thereby establishing harmony in personal and family relationships, maintaining a happy life.

According to Buddhism, an individual with a tranquil mind possesses the wisdom to make the right decisions. When the mind is less influenced by negative emotions, it minimizes undesirable consequences in life. As we know, everything follows the natural law of impermanence; therefore, no one can control external circumstances or demand happiness from external objects. However, through the practice of wisdom, one can attain inner peace and true happiness. This state of calm and unwavering mind is not temporary but must be nurtured to become stable. From there, an enlightened person lives in unity with the true nature of all beings. In such a state, all internal and external phenomena of an individual are interconnected and unified without discrimination. The absolute tranquility of an enlightened person encompasses all phenomena as they truly are. Therefore, a peaceful mind is not only essential for personal happiness but also for spreading the benefits of peace to all.

1.4. The relationship between a serene mind and world peace

1.4.1. Correlation between the mind and the external environment

According to the natural law, whenever the six senses come into contact with their respective objects, emotions and reactions arise in either a positive or negative direction. This depends on the previously accumulated emotional seeds or an individual's psychological habits. If an external object brings satisfaction or pleasure, people tend to feel happiness; conversely, they experience discomfort or suffering. This natural process shows that if the mind is not trained, it will be easily controlled by emotions, making it difficult to

maintain inner peace. These frequent psychological instabilities accumulate substantial distress, exerting pressure on life and surrounding relationships, ultimately generating a series of dormant negative psychological effects.

Once the inner self is trained and nurtured, people can handle external circumstances and unexpected situations from a position of always maintaining control over their own emotions. Viewing everything with an optimistic attitude will help us navigate and resolve difficulties with ease. Therefore, the mind plays a central role in the way an individual thinks and interprets situations, which subsequently influences how an individual responds. The Dalai Lama once said, “Happiness does not only come from external circumstances. It mainly comes from inner attitudes,”³ or “Happiness is determined more by a person’s state of mind than by external events.”⁴ For example, failure can be seen as an opportunity to learn or as a reason for discouragement, depending on the psychological strength or weakness of the person experiencing it. External events and circumstances are inherently neutral. They do not naturally bring happiness or suffering. The mind perceives and reacts, assigning or labeling everything external as good or bad. When the mind is calm, even difficult circumstances do not cause suffering. Conversely, when the mind is disturbed, even good things do not bring happiness. The Buddha taught: “The mind precedes all mental states. The mind is their master; all are created by the mind.”⁵ This indicates that it is the mind that determines how each individual perceives the external world.

External factors can be stimuli or influences on the mind, but how we react depends on the cultivation of our mind. A person with a well-trained mind always maintains calmness and clarity when facing adversity. Therefore, in the first stage, although external factors may have a minor impact on the mind, the mind will not be entirely dependent on them if we achieve mastery in the techniques of mind control. The relationship between the mind and external circumstances shows that happiness does not come from controlling the outside world but from managing our mind. Therefore, Buddhism encourages us, instead of trying to change external circumstances, to turn inward and cultivate a calm, clear, and compassionate mind. When the mind is at ease, even the chaos of external conditions cannot take away our true peace and happiness.

1.4.2. Peace and Tranquility

Normally, a peaceful mind or a person with a calm mind can easily adapt to living in harmony with all things in the universe, from the natural environment

³ <https://quote fancy.com/quote/790989/Dalai-Lama-XIV-Happiness-does-not-come-about-only-due-to-external-circumstances-it-mainly>

⁴ Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, *The Art of Happiness*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2009, chap.2, “The Sources of Happiness,” pdf 103.

⁵ *The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom*, Acharya Buddhārakkhita, trans. from the Pali. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985, PDF, 35, chap. 1, “The Pairs,” verse 1 - 2.

to the social community. Harmonious relationships in various aspects of communication are the key that nurture inner peace within oneself and the world around. Therefore, a nation with many individuals possessing a peaceful mind will naturally foster harmony, reducing conflicts and instability from families and communities to society as a whole. The peaceful mind of each individual is the foundation for creating a peaceful world. Peace is not merely the result of foreign policies or international interventions; rather, it originates from the tranquil mindset of each individual.

II. INTERNAL CULTIVATION METHODS AND PRACTICAL BENEFITS

2.1. Buddhist meditation follows the path of the threefold training⁶

Meditation is an important method that helps people achieve tranquility by recognizing mental disturbances, not only relieving stress but also enhancing awareness and inner peace. The Threefold Training of Morality - Concentration - Wisdom are the core elements of Buddhist practice, guiding people toward self-improvement. In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha taught that there are three crucial things a practitioner needs to do:

- (1) Undertake the training in higher virtue.
- (2) Undertake the training in higher concentration.
- (3) Undertake the training in higher wisdom.⁷

2.1.1. Precepts – The foundation of morality

The first step on the path of practice is to uphold moral precepts, adhering to righteous principles of living to prevent the mind from becoming disturbed or committing wrongdoings. Purity and tranquility of the mind help gradually reduce restless thoughts, agitation, and remorse; they lay the foundation for cultivating mental strength (future concentration) to subdue the mind's fluctuations. The precepts enable practitioners to control their actions of body, speech, and thoughts, preventing the creation of unwholesome kamma. "A wise man guards the mind, which is difficult to detect and extremely subtle, grasping whatever it desires. A well-guarded mind brings happiness."⁸

Practicing the Five Precepts —abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and consuming intoxicants —purely helps the mind become calm and reduces conflicts and distress. From there, one can gradually transform the mind to align with the practice of meditation.

⁶ The Threefold Trainings (the three higher training) means threefold path of Morality - Concentration - Wisdom.

⁷ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* 2015 - Volume I, IX. *Samaṇa Vagga*, Thich Minh Chau. Ton Giao, Hanoi, 2015, p. 260. See also *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Āṅguttara Nikāya* Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012, p. 315-316, Verse 83.

⁸ *Khuddaka Nikāya* 2015 – Volume I: *Dhammapada* Thich Minh Chau. Hanoi: Ton Giao, 2015, Chapter: The Mind, Verse 36, p. 46. See also Buddharakkhita, *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, trans. from the Pali (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985), PDF, 28, chap. 3, "The Mind," verse 36.

2.1.2. Concentration – A concentrated mind

Concentration is the capacity to direct one's mental faculties towards a single object, calming the mind and preventing distractions from useless thoughts or sudden fleeting emotions. In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa explained that "It is the concentration (*ādhāna*) of consciousness and concomitant mental factors that are simultaneously (*sammā*) and correctly (*sammā*) focused on a single object"⁹. Concentration is described as "the beneficial unification of the mind."¹⁰ When the mind attains stillness, it enables a practitioner to clearly perceive the true nature of reality through the path of inner contemplation. With a tranquil mind, one is not dominated by anxiety, fear, greed, or anger. The practice of *samatha* meditation is a way to direct the mind toward a single object, such as the breath, to attain stillness and facilitate the development of wisdom. Once the mind has sufficient concentration, clear wisdom will arise.

2.1.3. Wisdom – Realization

Wisdom is the deep understanding of the true nature of life, encompassing three fundamental characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). These are the inherent qualities of all phenomena. Understanding this evident truth leads to enlightenment and liberation from suffering. In the *Vissuddhimagga*, wisdom is defined as "knowing (*jānana*) in a specific way, distinct from perception (*sañjānana*) and cognition (*vijānana*)"¹¹.

- Perceiving reality: Wisdom allows one to see clearly that all phenomena are impermanent, without a fixed essence, and not belonging to a "self".

- Liberation from suffering: When the nature of reality is clearly understood, the mind lets go of craving and aversion, leading to liberation.

2.1.4. The practice of wisdom

*Vipassanā*¹² meditation is the process of deeply observing all phenomena in the body and mind, realizing impermanence, suffering, and non-self based on the four aspects of body, feeling, and mind. "This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for attaining the true path, for the realizing of *Nibbāna*..."¹³

⁹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), PDF p. 82.

¹⁰ Ibid., 81

¹¹ Ibid., 432.

¹² "Paññatti ṭhapetvā visesena passat' ti vipassanā. Paññatti ṭhapetvā means "having removed the apparent truth." Then Vipassana sees (*passati*) things by their characteristic (*visesena*). By piercing, penetrating the apparent, solidified, intensified truth, which has to be dissected, disintegrated, dissolved, you move towards the ultimate truth..."

- S. N. Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses: Talks from a Course in Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, condensed by Patrick Given-Wilson. Onalaska, WA: Vipassana Research Publications, 1998.

¹³ *Majjhima Nikāya*, ed. and rev. Bhikkhu Bodhi. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995, 145.

The practice and cultivation of mindfulness and equanimity serve as the foundation for practitioners to transform their inherent habits and limitations. The essence of meditation is to touch the truth through wisdom, attaining understanding through directly experiential processes, recognizing the true nature of physical and mental phenomena or their arising and cessation, and overcoming obstacles to eradicate defilements. *Vipassanā* is the process of observing and seeing the true nature (essence) of all phenomena as the ultimate truth. *Vipassanā* is not related to seeing conventional truth according to worldly conventions. The process of attaining the ultimate truth through investigating the fundamental natural structure of body and mind is a key factor.

The widespread application of this meditation practice in the modern world is and will continue to create positive transformations for each individual as well as for society as a whole. It promotes the development of virtuous moral qualities in the younger intellectuals, who will become the future leaders of society. Meditation helps people stay present, continuously maintaining mindfulness, while awareness enables practitioners to recognize negative and unwholesome emotions right from the very first moment they arise, minimizing potential mistakes. Therefore, the meditative lifestyle is a method of transforming consciousness, helping people cleanse worries and impurities, and attain true happiness through inner peace. A community with many meditators is a community of connection, sharing, and love, bringing people closer together and creating a peaceful and non-violent society.

2.2. Develop compassion and forgiveness

In Buddhism, the Four Immeasurable Minds- loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) are essential elements for attaining inner peace and happiness.

- Loving kindness: Expanding the heart of love, wishing to bring joy and happiness to oneself and others.

- Compassion is a desire to help those who are suffering and unfortunate. When we practice compassion, we learn to expand our loving hearts and treat others with unconditional kindness, without discrimination. Infinite compassion means that our empathy for others is nurtured from self-love after experiencing altruism.

- Sympathetic joy is genuine joy in witnessing the happiness and success of others. It helps us overcome feelings of jealousy or envy and instead brings us admiration and encouragement.

- Equanimity is the state of calmness, letting go, not clinging to happiness, sorrow, victory, defeat, success, or failure. It also involves the willingness to forgive what causes us suffering. Forgiveness is an inner healing method to eliminate anger, hatred, and negative emotions. When we forgive others, we free ourselves from emotional burdens, making our hearts lighter. "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. Only non-hatred can appease hatred.

This is an eternal law.”¹⁴ Therefore, cultivating compassion and forgiveness is a way to maintain peace of mind and create harmony in relationships.

Meditation is not only about expanding the mind with wisdom but also about opening the heart to develop deep compassion for oneself and others. This is true love, free from attachment to the ego or the need to be loved in return. One of the popular meditation practices related to loving-kindness is *Mettā Bhāvanā* meditation.

When practicing loving-kindness meditation, we learn how to love and appreciate the values of our own lives. This allows us to share and spread positive energy to our family, relatives, and friends, even direct our mind towards strangers. It also helps us open our hearts to understand those who have wronged us or hurt us. This is the most challenging step but also the most crucial for attaining inner peace. A generous heart wishes for peace and happiness even for those we dislike or those who have caused us pain. Love and forgiveness represent boundless compassion cultivated by those who nurture selfless love for all sentient beings in the universe, including humans, animals, and all living creatures (sentient beings).

2.3. Self-awareness and self-development

In Buddhist practice, each individual is always encouraged to cultivate self-awareness, as maintaining mindfulness in meditation helps one recognize their true nature. By realizing that true value, one can recognize their strengths and weaknesses; understand their emotions, thoughts and actions clearly. Through the process of observing the inner self, understanding the motivations and causes of negative emotions, individuals develop the ability to control and adjust their behavior. Self-awareness is also a way to cultivate positive qualities such as humility, patience, and honesty, thereby living in harmony with oneself and others. Overall, the process of self-awareness not only prevents greedy and hateful reactions in the mind but also helps individuals develop and enhance liberating wisdom.

- Recognize emotions: Practicing meditation helps you recognize and accept emotions without being controlled by them. Instead of reacting immediately, you can choose to respond appropriately with the wisdom of understanding impermanence.

- Understand self-worth: In a state of meditative stillness, you can connect with what is truly important, discovering core values that are sometimes forgotten in a busy life.

- Consider before acting: When you achieve self-awareness, you clearly understand the causes of your actions and their consequences, allowing you to make wiser choices.

In a busy life, self-awareness for personal growth brings inner freedom, allowing you to live in alignment with your values and goals. Diligent daily

¹⁴ *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Buddharakkhita, trans. from the Pali. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985, PDF, 28, chap. 3, “The Pairs,” verse 5.

meditation practice is a form of self-awareness that not only brings inner peace but also enhances one's ability to live a happier and more meaningful life.

2.4. Transforming inner conflicts and balancing life

Inner conflict is a state of internal struggle that occurs when people are torn between conflicting thoughts and emotions. These conflicts can lead to stress, anxiety, and a decline in life quality. Living a meditative life is a practical and effective practice to help you identify, accept, and transform these conflicts.

- Recognizing inner conflicts through meditation: Meditation allows us to pause and observe the thoughts and emotions occurring within, helping you understand the origin of conflict. When the mind is calm, we can delve deeper into the root cause of conflict.

- Accepting conflict without judgment: Instead of trying to avoid or suppress past conflicts, meditation is a practice of accepting and facing them with calmness. Observe conflicts without judgment or self-blame. After accepting the conflict, treat yourself with love and understanding. Loving-kindness meditation will increase positive energy within you, reducing the stress caused by conflict.

- Balancing and releasing negative energy: Balancing work, family, and personal time is crucial for maintaining mental and physical well-being. Only when people create balance in their lives can they avoid stress and exhaustion. True happiness does not come from obtaining what you want but from letting go of unnecessary attachments.

The pressures that cause inner conflict often come from worries about the future or regrets about the past. When we practice mindfulness regularly, we stay present in the moment, unaffected and unburdened by those negative thoughts or emotions. The ability to remain unattached, developed through meditation, will transform and release negative energy. Achieving tranquility in life not only brings happiness to an individual but also fosters harmony within the family and community.

2.5. A harmonious and healthy relationship between individuals and society

2.5.1. The nature of the relationship between the individual and society

The relationship between individuals and society is an essential and inseparable connection. Individuals exist and develop within society, while the progress of society depends on the contribution of each individual. A harmonious and healthy relationship between the two sides brings comprehensive benefits, not only to individuals but also to the entire community. This relationship is based on a balance between individual needs and the common interests of society. The key elements include:

- Mutual respect: Individuals and society must respect differences in ideologies, values, and lifestyles.

- Dual responsibility: Individuals have a duty to contribute to the community, while society has the responsibility to create conditions for individual development.

- Balance of interests: Individuals are free to express their opinions but must ensure they do not harm the common good.

“Peace does not mean the absence of conflict; differences will always exist. Peace means resolving these differences through peaceful means, through dialogue, education, knowledge, and humanitarian approach.”¹⁵ A harmonious and healthy relationship between individuals and society does not arise naturally; it requires effort from both sides. Individuals must cultivate themselves, live responsibly, and contribute positively to the community. In return, society is an environment that enables people to develop fair and healthy relationships. When harmony is achieved, both individuals and society move towards sustainable happiness and prosperity.

2.5.2. The importance of a harmonious relationship

For Individuals

- Comprehensive development: A healthy society provides opportunities for education, employment, and a good living environment, allowing individuals to reach their full potential.

- Happiness and peace: Living in a positive social environment helps individuals feel safe and loved.

- Sense of responsibility: Relationships with society help individuals understand their roles and responsibilities toward the community.

For Society

- Strengthening unity: When individuals live in harmony, society becomes stable and develops sustainably.

- Promoting progress: Individual creativity and contributions bring new values, driving society forward.

- Reducing conflict: Harmonious relationships help reduce conflicts, injustice and create a peaceful living environment.

Healthy relationships play a crucial role in maintaining peace of mind. People are aware of building relationships based on respect, love, and mutual support. When each individual lives with honesty and tolerance, they create a harmonious environment that reduces conflicts and tensions in society. A harmonious relationship not only benefits each individual but also helps the community thrive, creating a peaceful society.

III. The principle of inner peace to world peace

Inner peace leading to world peace is not merely a quote from Buddhist scriptures but a natural principle formed through the practice of the Buddha's teachings. To attain the ultimate goal of liberation from suffering, every Buddhist practitioner must transform their inner self to experience true peace. A concrete proof of this is the pure *Saṅgha* during the Buddha's time, which was always described as virtuous and harmonious, living together “like water

¹⁵ <https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/buddhistdoor-view-israel-and-iran-pursuing-peace-amid-conflict/>

and milk.”¹⁶

3.1. The importance of inner peace in creating a peaceful world

It is an undeniable truth that individuals with a tranquil mind tend to interact with others calmly and empathetically, fostering a harmonious and positive environment. Inner peace prevents overreactions during conflicts and eliminates obsessive thoughts, allowing one to navigate situations smoothly and cultivate better, more harmonious relationships.

The modern world relentlessly strives for the pinnacle of development, yet the greater the material benefits, the more pressure they exert on various aspects of life. This leads to personal psychological conflicts, a state in which an individual experiences contradictions in thoughts, emotions, or values. When mental instability increases, it can become a major factor leading to social crises in various fields. A practical solution is to cultivate the inner self to help individuals maintain balance against external pressures, contributing to the reduction of violence and conflict between individuals and society. Every action, word, and thought that arises from a peaceful mind will have a positive impact on the community and create a more peaceful world.

3.2. Inner peace is the key to creating sustainable world peace

If every individual in society can live with compassion, forgiveness, and harmony, they will not engage in violence, criticism, judgment, or discrimination. When each person's mind is nurtured in peace, society will naturally become a peaceful place, free from war, division, or conflict. Peace is not merely the absence of war or violence but the presence of love, forgiveness, and mutual respect among all people.

In general, inner peace is not just a psychological state of satisfaction with life's needs but rather a process of cultivating a kind heart and maintaining a mindful lifestyle in daily life. Nurturing a peaceful mind serves as a strong foundation for creating a peaceful life at the individual, family, community, national, and global levels, ultimately achieving true happiness. Inner peace is the key to creating sustainable world peace. Therefore, cultivating inner peace not only benefits individuals but also contributes to creating world peace. Creating world peace begins with each awakened and loving heart filled with inner tranquility. When every member of society lives with inner peace, generosity, and tolerance, they not only attain personal happiness but also contribute to creating a peaceful world where people coexist with mutual respect and harmony.

¹⁶ “I hope, Anuruddha, that you are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes. Surely, venerable sir, we are living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes”.

- *Majjhima Nikāya*, ed. and rev. Bhikkhu Bodhi. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995, *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* (Sutta 31), *The Shorter Discourse in Gosiṅga*, 301.

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KĀMACCHANDA

(THE DESIRE FOR SENSUAL OBJECTS): A PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING

PhD. Bhikkhu Sopaka*

Abstract:

The thorough exploration of *kāmacchanda* (the desire for sensual objects) from the Buddhist philosophical concept has not been interpreted by scholars in the field of Buddhist studies yet. The article tries to explore the Buddhist philosophical understanding of *kāmacchanda* and its impact on suffering and existence. In this article, we are going to discuss how the desire for sensual objects relates to metaphysics and contrasts Buddhist views with those of other philosophies at the time of the Buddha. On this account, the Buddhist philosophy scrutinizes eternalism and annihilationism and focuses on causally conditioned phenomena.

To comprehend this idea, the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and dependent co-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) are the key factors in Buddhist philosophy. *Kāmacchanda*, a central cause of suffering and rebirth, from the Buddhist philosophical perspective, is mainly related to these two factors. Thus, this article attempts to address the following research question that is still adequately unaddressed. How can *kāmacchanda* (the desire for sensual objects) be looked at from the Buddhist philosophical perspective?

To formulate the research question, the present study is a qualitative method that is used in Humanities, and it is done based on Pali Buddhist exegetical works. At first, data related to *kāmacchanda* as depicted in Theravada Buddhist literature will be collected. Secondly, the collected data will be analyzed systematically. Thirdly, a scholastic discussion will be done based on the analyzed data. Finally, a conclusion is expected to be made to formulate the Buddhist philosophical understanding of *kāmacchanda*.

Keywords: *kāmacchanda*, Buddhist philosophy, Second Noble Truth, and Dependent Co-origination.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The thorough exploration of *kāmacchanda* (the desire for sensual objects) from the Buddhist philosophical concept has not been interpreted by scholars in the field of Buddhist studies yet. Pertaining to the philosophical element, *kāmacchanda* is not concerned with metaphysics as depicted in Western philosophy. In fact, it has a direct relationship with metaphysics which refers to 'the systematic interpretation of experience' as depicted in any other Indian philosophical system (Edward J Thomas, 2005,192) and the fundamental cause for predicaments and existences. In this connection, the contemporary religious philosophers at the time of the Buddha also emphasized the ways of solutions and reasons for the arising of suffering and becoming existence. In the *Acelakassapa-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, *Kassapa*, a naked ascetic, asked the Buddha the four following questions:

I. Is suffering created by oneself? (*sayamkataṃ dukkhanti*)

II. Is suffering created by another? (*paramkataṃ dukkhanti*)

III. Is suffering created both by oneself and by another? (*sayamkatañca paramkatañca dukkhanti*)

IV. Has suffering arisen fortuitously, being created neither by oneself nor by another? (*asayamkāraṃ aparamkāraṃ adhiccasamuppannaṃ dukkhanti*) (S. II. 20).

These four statements could be widely interpreted in several ways. In brief, however, they could be comprehended as 'talking of cause in terms of externality and internality.' (Chandima Wijebandara, 1993) From the Buddhist point of view, among these four questions, the first one is eternalism (*sassatavāda*) (Tilakaratne, 2020, 34). The reason is that it believes the existence of an external soul or substance continuously going from life to life or in the round of birth and death (Li Xia, 2015, 17.) The second one is annihilationism (Tilakaratne, 2020, 34.) It is because this philosophy accepts that some external divine creator generates suffering (Li Xia, 2015, 17.), and its existence ceases after the present life ("Definition of Annihilationism," n.d.). Additionally, this philosophy believes that cause and effect are two different things but not interrelated. It attempts to explore the reason for the arising of suffering in non-identity (Chandima Wijebandara, 1993). The third one is the combination of the above two wrong views. The fourth one is a denial of causation characterized by conditionality (Tilakaratne, 2020, 34.) Accordingly, the first three notions accept some causations for the origin and arising of suffering. In other words, the last one explores the arising of suffering as an accidental happening without any conditional causes and reasons.

Furthermore, the Brahmin tradition reveals that human being means the individual soul and its relation to the universal soul, known as the Creator God (Bhikkhu Ñāṇanda, 1986, 140.) 'The creation process is thus conceived as a real emanation from God, who is the One Controller behind the world of multiplicity.' (Bhikkhu Ñāṇanda, 1986, 140.) Therefore, at the time of the Buddha, the religious philosophers also underlined the answers to the causes

of suffering and existence from their particular perspectives.

II. UNDERSTANDING BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

In this regard, the Buddha explains that the world and religious philosophers primarily disclose the origins, causes of suffering, and existences depending upon duality, namely the notion of existence (*atthitaṇca*) and the notion of non-existence (*natthitaṇca*) (S. II 17.) From the philosophical perspective, the idea of dualism could be understood as the two religious trends: ‘eternalism (*sassata-vāda*), the view that a human being lasts forever in some form or another, and annihilationism (*uccheda-vāda*), the view that a human being does not survive death [sic] and is annihilated.’ (Tilakaratne, 2020, 33-34.). On a general outlook, it can be concluded that most religious leaders and philosophers, except in Buddhism, attempt to explain the cause of the arising suffering and existences depending on the above duality.

Concerning the Buddhist philosophy, God or a creator who controls individuals and the world behind them is not accepted; the self or core self does not exist internally or externally. As Y Karunadasa demonstrated, ‘Buddhist philosophy shows why the idea of a self-entity is a wrong assumption.’ (Y Karunadasa, 2021, 47.) Only physical and mental factors with interrelationship and interdependency between causes and effects occur. A being can be categorized into two: mentality and matter; they continuously arise and cease. In this sense, the *Uppāda-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya* shows the occurrence and manifestation of both physical and mental factors as the arising of suffering (*dukkha*) (S. III 32.). Even these two categories could be more widely categorized into five types. They are matter, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness. These five categories are not static entities but constantly changing processes, and they are dynamic and causally conditioned phenomena (Tilakaratne, 2020, 35.) Therefore, according to the Buddhist philosophy, being does not mean the concept of self-entity but just the combination of physical and mentalities.

Generally speaking, Western philosophy could be considered a mere theoretical structure as it acquires knowing how the world goes around. However, the four noble truths (*cattāri-ariya-saccāni*) and dependent co-origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) that are the central teachings in the Buddhist philosophy are not merely intellectual, but through intellectual understanding to cultivation and realization (Tilakaratne, 2020, 167.). Then, they are mainly concerned with occurrences and cessation of suffering in the Buddhist soteriology. On this account, *kāmacchanda* is directly related to these two contexts of Buddhist philosophy. It will be examined based on these two Buddhist philosophical contexts.

III. KĀMACCHANDA IN TERMS OF THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH (SAMUDAYASACCĀ)

Of these two philosophical concepts, in the expositions of the four noble truths (M. I. 48.) as depicted in several places in Pali Buddhist texts, craving is explored as the second noble truth, the cause of suffering and one of the

fundamental causes of becoming. Therein, craving is revealed as follows: It is craving, which brings renewal of being, is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for being, and craving for non-being. This is called the origin of suffering (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2009, 135.) Craving accompanied by delight and passion generates rebirth, and finding fresh delight here, and there is explored as the source of all suffering. Therein, the Pali phrase ‘*yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobbhavikā*’ denotes that *taṇhā* is liable to bring about a new existence again. It is elucidated as *bhavanetti* (Vin. I 231.), which means a potentiality to carry existence. It is capable of bringing one existence to another. In this context, craving is explored as the cause of the arising of suffering. It is the most central term and central problem in the sense of demonstrating a cause for suffering to arise and becoming again and again. On seeing such words, acceptance of a new existence in the Buddhist tradition is obvious, but it is not created by God or Godheads.

As discussed above, the second noble truth identifies the cause of the arising of suffering and occurring existences. It is just the immediate cause for the arising suffering but not the first cause or the beginning cause of existence (Walpola Rahula, 2017; Kalupahana and Malalasekera, 1996). Craving, ‘which is the instinct nature of all animate bodies,’ is clarified as a leading force for producing existences (Minh Hoa (Bhikkhuni Dhammanandā), 2007, 220.). In this respect, Aristotle’s developmental Philosophy also demonstrates that reducing attachment and extermination of passion for unstable elements of the world produces happiness (Aung Myint, 2007, 178.). In Western philosophy, desire is considered as the degree of preference and intensity in those rankings (Craig, 1998, 31.). It is an evaluative attitude to sensualities (Ibid. 31.). It is explained depending upon an agent, which refers to a being with the ability to perform. It is interpreted that the desires attract the agent to how things are not but can be made to be. In this way, the agent desires (Ibid. 30.). Thus, the above elucidation asserts that craving is the origin and the cause of suffering, whereas eradicating craving could be comprehended as the cessation of the renewal of existence and the end of suffering.

Moreover, according to the *Paṭhama-bhava-sutta* of the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, craving is one of three main factors that produce renewed existence in the future life. These three factors are volitions (*kamma*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*), and craving (*taṇhā*) (A. I 224.). *Kamma* volitions are similar to the field, and consciousness is like the seed. Then, craving and moisture are alike. These three mental factors establish the rebirth process and nourish renewed existence in the future life. In the first words of the Buddha, craving is compared with the builder of the house. Herein, the house refers to the combination of five aggregates (Dhp. 23.). In this figurative explanation, the body is compared to a house, whereas craving is similar to the builder of that house. The Buddha highlights that he had searched for the house builder innumerable times. He found out that craving is the fundamental root cause of arising suffering and continuously turning the wheel of birth and death. In

this matter, the commentary on the *Dīgha-nikāya* explicates that craving has the characteristic of the root cause (DA. I 64.). Thus, it could be borne in mind that craving is the origin of suffering and renewed existence from the Buddhist philosophical angle.

IV. KĀMACCHANDA IN TERMS OF DEPENDENT CO-ORIGINATION (PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA)

On the one side, the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*¹ (S. II 105-106.) mainly discusses the way of arising and the cessation of suffering in the individual depending on various causes and conditions (Tilakaratne, 2020, 31.). It transcends the binary opposition between the above duality (Y Karunadasa, 2021, 21.). It is recognized as the central position in Buddhist philosophy (W. S. Karunaratne, 1956); (Li Xia, 2015), 22.) It abides in the middle position between dualities: spiritual eternalism and materialist annihilationism, existing and non-existing, absolute identity and absolute diversity, strict determinism, and strict indeterminism (Y Karunadasa, 2021, 24 - 26. In the *Mahāvagga Pali* of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and the *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pali* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, a set of twelve conditions beginning with ignorance and ending with aging as well as death has been thoroughly illustrated in a regular order and a reverse order (*anuloma-paṭiloma*) (Vin. I 2; M. I 262.). Of these two connections, it is believed that the regular order of appearing dependent co-origination is a detailed explanation of the second noble truth (Sutta-Pitaka, 1968, 20.). Both of them highlight that causes and conditions produce effects without the intervention of any other agent. Causes and conditions are present; invariably, specific effects come out depending on those causes and conditions. It points out a relationship between conditions and effects. Therefore, from Buddhist philosophy, it could be suggested that suffering and existence arise depending on conditions, but they are not created by oneself or an external creator.

According to the process of dependent co-origination, it could be comprehended that craving arises with ignorance, volitional constructions, consciousness, mentality-materiality, six-fold sense-base, contact, and feeling as conditions in phases. Reciprocally, craving as a condition causes clinging, becoming, birth, and aging as well as death in sequences. Grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair arise as their consequences. A permanent self-entity or substance could not be observed at this particular point. In this connection, David J. Kalupahana reveals the dependent co-origination as the nature of existence that occurred in the Buddha's teachings. (Kalupahana, 1994, p. 53) Therefore, from a Buddhist philosophical angle, the dependent co-origination in a regular order typically highlights the origin and arising of the suffering and the rebirth process.

In this relation, a person generally obtains six sensual organs. These six sensual organs are the six internal and personal sensitive bases (Peṭ. 113.). The sensitive material spheres are named six external bases (M. III 281.).

¹ From the Buddhist perspective, *paṭiccasamuppāda* is not a creation or an invention of the Buddha. However, it is discovered the Buddha himself without others' help.

Depending on the six sensual organs into the arrangement of the six sensual organs, six classes of consciousness arise. As reflected in the *Chachakka-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, based on the above three categories, the emergence of the six classes of craving from the process of cognition is explained as follows: the meeting of the three kinds of phenomena is called contact. Six types of contact arise depending on the above three phenomena. With the contacts as a condition, six classes of feeling appear. With the feeling as a condition, six types of cravings arise (Ibid.). In this regard, the *Brahmajāla-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* expounds that ‘contact conditions craving, which leads to clinging, to rebecoming, to birth, aging and death and all manner of suffering.’ (Maurice Walshe, 1995, 55.). Thus, craving is one of the most fundamental causes of arising suffering and existence.

On the basis of the above explorations, it could be safely said that these two philosophical concepts (the four noble truths and dependent co-origination) point out craving as the most fundamental cause for arising suffering and existence. In the context of the four noble truths, existence (*bhava*), which is not merely here but any form of existence in the universe, is unsatisfaction (the first noble truth). The unsatisfaction has its cause (the second noble truth). It leads to the development of thoughts that constitute Buddhism’s chief claim to be called a philosophy (Thomas, 1949, 193.). These two connections have been explored in the regular order (*anuloma*) of the dependent co-origination, which consists of twelve factors. Thus, the two philosophical elements have an interrelationship with each other.

In this respect, the desire for sensual objects is directly related to them. Hence, it could be assumed that *kāmacchanda* is mainly concerned with the reason for occurrences and the cessation of suffering and existence. However, therein, only the term ‘*taṇhā*’ could be discovered. Indeed, it resembles ‘*kāmacchanda*,’ and it is interchangeable with unwholesome desires such as the desire for sensual objects, greed, and covetousness. Herein, craving means hunger for sensual objects. It is an increasingly insatiable desire; it is not satisfied with sensual, pleasurable things. Human beings strive to get and cherish enjoyable, sensuous objects based on their desire. Then, the desires gradually increase to exceed desires. They grasp and cling to pleasant sensual things based on exceeding desires. Herein, clinging and grasping means nothing but *upādāna* that leads to the birth and death cycle. Thus, *kāmacchanda* is one of the fundamental reasons for suffering and existence.

To support this fact, in the *Bhadraka-sutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, the headman named Bhadraka approached and asked the Buddha about the origin of suffering. What do you think of the origin of suffering? The Buddha responded to Bhadraka. Are there any people for whom you would feel sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair if they were executed, imprisoned, fined, or condemned? ‘There are such people, sir.’ Is there anyone who would not give you sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair if they were executed, imprisoned, fined, or condemned? ‘There are such people, sir.’ ‘What is the reason and cause for their arising, Bhadraka?’ ‘It is because I adore and

desire them.’ ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair would not come to me if I did not love and desire them, sir.’ (S. IV 327-328.). This is easy to understand: whatever suffering arises is all rooted in desire, and desire is the cause of suffering and the reason for their arising. Overwhelming desire can lead to endless suffering (Dhammapiya, 2019, 116.).

V. CONCLUSION

To sum up the above Buddhist philosophical discussion on *kāmacchanda*, it has been found that there is no internal agent (*atta* or the creator) or external agent (God or Brahma) for creating beings other than just a mental process that is causally conditioned. Everything from all over the world has causes and conditions. The four noble truths and dependent co-origination highlight the becoming of beings, the arising existence, and the appearance of human predicaments based on conditions. In this matter, the desire for sensual objects is one of the causes of suffering; the desire for more wealth and a higher position brings about suffering; struggling to obtain sensual objects brings about suffering; the nature of craving is not satisfied with what one has already received; dissatisfaction with what one has acquired brings about suffering. The more one gets, the more the person desires. Pursuing wealth and position also causes suffering; safeguarding the properties one has already obtained produces suffering; losing prosperity causes suffering. In this way, the desire for sensual objects increases to exceed craving.

The craving naturally and gradually increases to clinging to pleasurable things. In this way, it causes suffering. One cannot be liberated from suffering if the paths (*maggā*) have not eradicated the desire for sensual objects. It causes one to establish a renewed existence in the future life, and it bounds beings to an endless cycle of rebirth and death. Therefore, from the Buddhist philosophical perspective, concerning the four noble truths and dependent co-origination, the desire for sensual objects is one of the fundamental causes for rebirths and predicaments but not the self. According to these three perspectives, *kāmacchanda* has negative impacts on individuals and society. In the following section, the harmful impacts of *kāmacchanda* on individuals based on these three different perspectives will be investigated in greater detail.

Abbreviations

A.	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
DA.	<i>Dīgha-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Dhp.	<i>Dhammapada</i>
M.	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Peṭ.	<i>Peṭakopadesa</i>
S.	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya</i>
Vin.	<i>Vinaya-piṭaka</i>
Ibid.	Ibidem (from Latin) (in the same book)

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE AND MENTAL WELL-BEING FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACEFUL SOCIETY

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Abstract:

In an era marked by rapid change and uncertainty, where the rhythm of life can often feel both overwhelming and chaotic, the pursuit of a joyful society becomes critically vital and increasingly crucial. At the heart of this noble quest lies the profound and transformative idea of inner peace and methods to achieve mental well-being. Buddhism addresses health care in a multifaceted manner, emphasizing not only mental health but also spiritual awareness. From a Buddhist viewpoint, inner peace and mental well-being transcend mere personal satisfaction or individual happiness; they form the essential cornerstone that upholds a harmonious community. This article explores the insights of Buddhist teachings, examining how they can aid individuals in their journey towards inner peace and mental wellness. By grasping these teachings and weaving them into daily life, individuals can nurture a sense of calm and stability within themselves, ultimately contributing to the growth of a compassionate and joyful society. This pursuit of inner tranquility enriches personal well-being and enhances the shared happiness and interconnectedness of all community members. Through this exploration, we can reveal the vital role that inner peace and mental well-being play in fostering a more harmonious world, one where joy, compassion, and understanding can thrive, laying the groundwork for a sustainable and peaceful society.

Keywords: *inner peace, mental well-being, peaceful society, mental culture.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing world filled with chaos, the quest for a joyful society becomes urgent. Central to this pursuit is the concept of inner peace, which, from

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a Buddhist perspective, is essential for fostering a harmonious community. This article explores Buddhist teachings that guide individuals toward achieving inner peace. By adopting these principles in daily life, individuals can cultivate calm and stability, contributing to a compassionate society. Inner tranquility enhances personal well-being and collective happiness, promoting interconnectedness.

Furthermore, rising mental health disorders have severe implications globally. Conditions like depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder diminish happiness and affect physical health, leading to issues such as fatigue and heart disease. Thus, nurturing both mental and physical health has been a long-standing human goal. Buddhism emphasizes aligning thoughts and actions to create peace. Mindfulness, a key practice embraced across cultures, encourages a natural positive attitude in line with Buddhist philosophy.

We may therefore inquire: do Buddhist practices such as *sīla* (moral discipline), *samādhi* (meditation), *paññā* (wisdom), and *karuna* (compassion) provide solutions for mental disorders in contemporary society? Fostering inner peace and utilizing various techniques to achieve good mental health through Buddhist therapeutic methods – like *citta-bhāvanā* (mind development), *kāya-bhāvanā* (body development), *mettā-bhāvanā* (development of loving-kindness), *paññā-bhāvanā* (development of wisdom), and *samādhi-bhāvanā* (development of concentration) – involves actively engaging positive emotional systems and cultivating qualities such as kindness, strength, and courage. The “Buddhist *bhāvanā* is, in essence, a comprehensive form of mental cultivation. It focuses on purifying the mind from disturbances and impurities such as lust, hatred, laziness, anxiety, and skepticism, while nurturing qualities like concentration, awareness, intelligence, willpower, energy, analytical thinking, confidence, joy, and tranquility. Ultimately, this practice leads to the attainment of the highest wisdom, enabling an understanding of the true nature of reality and the realization of the Ultimate Truth, *nibbāna*.”¹

In addition, Buddhism views meditation as a tool for spiritual growth. It serves as an empirical science of psychology and represents a lifestyle characterized by positivity. Individuals seeking to alleviate mental illness must cultivate a mindset of openness, joy, compassion, and equanimity, which contributes to a relaxed and unburdened state of mind. As suffering diminishes, mental health improves. The teachings of the Buddha provide guidance on managing emotions and psychological instability, helping to alleviate stress and eliminate harmful thoughts that can lead to mental disorders. Training the mind to avoid negative psychological states such as greed, hatred, and delusion is essential for practicing morality and meditation.

Buddhist *bhāvanā* embodies the quest for happiness, as well as mental and spiritual well-being. We aspire for this work to guide individuals toward living spiritually fulfilling and meaningful lives. Through synthesizing and analyzing data from primary and secondary sources, we aim to illuminate the cultivation of inner peace and mental well-being in contemporary life, while

¹ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 68.

demonstrating the practical relevance of the Buddha's teachings in mitigating mental disorders and fostering a healthy, non-violent society.

II. MENTAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL DISORDERS

2.1. Buddhist view in mental wellbeing

A peaceful society is created only when every individual addresses their psychological challenges, fosters mental well-being, nurtures themselves, and attains inner peace. Consequently, tackling mental health issues is crucial. This lays the groundwork for dispelling negative mindsets and promoting mental wellness. This part presents the Buddhist attitude to mental wellbeing in Buddhist discourses. It will divide into different categories of Mental wellbeing of human happiness. The purpose of this part will comprise various discourses related to wellbeing toward a psychological approach.

According to Buddhism, mental well-being is defined as having a mind free from all forms of defilements. This state is greatly valued and represents the purity of the mind. Buddhism places a greater emphasis on mental well-being than on physical health. An example of this can be found in the *Nakulapita Sutta*, where Nakulapita, during his old age, visited the Buddha, who advised him to prioritize his mental health despite his frail body. Mental illness and mental health are significant concerns in Buddhism. Lord Buddha said in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

“Monks, there are to be seen, beings who can admit freedom from bodily illness for one year, for two years, for three years, four, five, for ten, twenty, thirty, forty and fifty years; who can admit freedom from bodily illness for even a hundred years. But monks, those beings are hard to find in the world who can admit freedom from mental illness even for one moment, save only those in whom the āsavas are destroyed.”²

There can be no doubt that Buddhism approaches health care in many different ways; it does not only focus on only mental health but also on spiritual awareness. The concept of health and disease in Buddhism is founded on the principle of dependent origination and the law of cause and effect. There is no doubt that Buddhism addresses health care through various perspectives, emphasizing not just mental well-being but also spiritual awareness. The Buddhist understanding of health and illness is based on the principles of dependent origination and the law of cause and effect; when one condition exists, another follows. The emergence of one element brings forth the emergence of another. When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. In *Mijjhiṃha Nikāya*, the Buddha taught: “*iti imasmim sati idaṃ hoti, imassuppāda idaṃ uppajjati; imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.*”

“When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.”³ Accordingly, it is essential to comprehend this issue

² R. Morris et al (1885), p. 157.

³ V. Trenkner et al (1948 - 1951), p. 655.

comprehensively, considering the interconnectedness of human relationships with the environment, encompassing economic, social, and cultural dimensions. From a Buddhist perspective, mental wellbeing is linked to the accumulation of positive *kamma* from the past and present. This connection underscores the relationship between ethics and health, indicating that our health is influenced by our lifestyle, which encompasses our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Illness often stems from unhealthy habits, such as excessive desire. This ethical aspect of Buddhism significantly informs spiritual and religious practices aimed at promoting health and healing.

This perspective sharply contrasts with the analytical approach, which tends to compartmentalize the individual, separating the body from the mind. In this fragmented view, health is defined narrowly as the mere absence of disease, which can be quantified. On the other hand, the holistic approach of Buddhism emphasizes the individual as a whole, recognizing that a person is not merely a physical entity but also encompasses emotional, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing. In this integrated psycho-physiological framework, physical ailments can impact mental and emotional states, just as psychological and social issues can affect physical health. Therefore, when addressing human health, it is crucial to consider the entire individual – body, mind, emotions, and social environment. Because. “Mental wellbeing is a dynamic state in which the individual can develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to their community.”⁴ Achieving optimal human health ultimately requires a collaborative effort that involves medical, personal, and related social services.

In Buddhism, mental wellbeing encompasses not just a healthy mind but also mental liberation, which involves freeing oneself from the controlling influences of self-identity, possessiveness, and arrogance. *Āṅguttara Nikāya* mentioned:

A *bhikkhu* thinks thus: This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna*.” and he would enter and dwell in that liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, through which there is no more I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit for one who enters and dwells in it.⁵

A Buddhist perspective presents a psychological framework grounded in the idea of no-self; a shift toward an other-centered viewpoint occurs when an individual becomes less preoccupied with preserving their identity and the associated worldview. This approach emphasizes the significance of understanding the true nature of reality. By embracing things as they truly are, one sees the self merely as a collection of transient, painful, and non-self elements (name and form), along with other beings, leading to a disinterest in gratifying self-centered desires and a release from attachment to any object,

⁴ Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008), p. 10.

⁵ R. Morris et al (1885), p. 228.

Culasaccaka Sutta about the Three Marks of Existence.⁶

“Material form is impermanent, feeling is impermanent, perception is impermanent, formations are impermanent, consciousness is impermanent. Bhikkhus, material form is not-self, feeling is not-self, perception is not self, formations are not-self, consciousness is not self. All formations are impermanent; all things are not self.”⁷ Liberated from selfish desires and attachment to material possessions, our minds will find peace, resulting in the elimination of both mental and physical suffering, ultimately fostering mental wellbeing.

Buddhism defines mental wellbeing as a mind free from defilements, emphasizing its importance in achieving mental purity. This state is attained through right concentration and meditation, which the Buddha endorsed as beneficial for both this life and the next. To maintain a healthy mind, individuals must develop a right view (*sammaditthi*) of reality, acknowledging the Three *Dharma* Seals: impermanence, non-self, and suffering. Misperceptions create desires for permanence and false happiness, leading to disappointment. Recognizing the self as a mere label for psycho-physical factors helps liberate the mind from attachments, reducing mental suffering and enhancing overall mental health. The direct and indirect effects between physical and mental health.⁸ Therefore, Buddhism prioritizes mental health and emphasizes mind training as essential for wellbeing.

Buddha’s teachings offer practical guidance for living well, with Sila representing the moral discipline in life. His advocated lifestyle, which remains a model for many, emphasizes caring for others and fosters a healthy mental state. Following the Buddha’s views on the mind’s conditioned nature, a virtuous life is crucial for mental wellbeing. A tranquil body and mind aim for the monastic life, Buddha discussed. Depression disrupts thought control and focus – essential for meaningful practice. Buddha criticized both excessive asceticism and the dangers of overexertion, highlighting the need for a peaceful body to maintain a focused mind.

Buddhism links mental wellbeing with the harmony of mind, body, and environment. Optimal health arises when these dimensions interact efficiently. Key to Buddhist health is mental resilience and purpose through compassion. Buddhism promotes self-reflection to cultivate joy, address negative emotions, and nurture states like loving-kindness and compassion for individual and societal well-being. Good health and happiness stem from mind regulation, with mastery of thought leading to Enlightenment. While psychologists encourage challenging negative thoughts, Buddhists advocate detachment from thoughts to achieve stillness, self-awareness, and enlightenment.

⁶ “*rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ, vedanā aniccā, saññā aniccā, saṅkhārā aniccā, viññāṇaṃ aniccaṃ. Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā, vedanā anattā, saññā anattā, saṅkhārā anattā, viññāṇaṃ anattā. Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā, sabbe dhammā.*”

⁷ R. Morris et al (1885), p. 322.

⁸ Fichera, E. et al (2017), p. 42 - 49.

2.2. Mental disorders in Buddhist perspective

2.2.1. What is mental disorder or abnormal behavior?

Mental disorders are psychological conditions that influence human thoughts, emotions, moods, and behaviors. They manifest in a variety of forms, encompassing a range of distinct mental disorders. Among these are psychiatric disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dementia, and developmental disorders like autism, among others. Currently, mental disorders are on the rise, resulting in considerable health impacts along with significant social, human rights, and economic repercussions worldwide.

According to Derek Bolton, a mental disorder is also called a mental illness or psychiatric disorder, that is a behavioral or mental pattern that causes significant impairment of personal functioning⁹. Or as the American Psychiatric Association (APA) redefined mental disorders in the DSM-5 as “a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning.”¹⁰ Mental health problem is called mental illnesses when the signs and symptoms of the illness are chronically stressful and interfere with daily living activities. Mental disorders cause directly abnormal behaviors.

In Buddhism, mental disorders are viewed as psychological or behavioral issues that arise within an individual, leading to unanticipated suffering or disability that is not considered part of normal development or cultural expectations. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* identifies two categories of mentally ill individuals: those who cannot recall proper conduct and those who are completely unaware. This distinction pertains to individuals who forget or are unable to arrive at the correct time and place for participating in the observances and formal activities of the community.

According to *Nāḷakālāpa sutta*¹¹, the human being is the reciprocal combination of both psychological (*nāma*) and physical (*rūpa*) aspects. Due to such a reciprocal combination of these two aspects, the illness, either mental or physical, cannot be separated from the man. *Dukkha* and *Domanassa* are two important terms. The term *dukkha* can be understood as physical pain (*kayika dukkha vedana*) while the *Domanassa* can be understood as mental pain (*cetasikaṃ dukkhaṃ domanassaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti*). The term *Domanassa* (“du” = bad or painful + “manas” = mind) has to be understood as mental pain (*cetasikaṃ dukkhaṃ domanassaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti*).¹² And what, friends, is *domanassa*? Mental pain, mental discomfort, painful, uncomfortable feeling born of mental contact – this is called *domanassa*.¹³ In *Roga Sutta*, *Domanassa* is associated with a version

⁹ Bolton D (2008), p. 06.

¹⁰ American Psychiatric Association (2013), p. 20.

¹¹ L. Feer (1884 - 1904), p. 608.

¹² Nyanatiloka T. (1980), p. 189.

¹³ V. Trenkner. et al (1948 - 1951), p. 1099.

(*Paṭigha*) and is accompanied by unhappiness and therefore unwholesome (*akusala*).¹⁴ Rogasutta mentioned that “It’s very hard to find any sentient beings in the world who can claim to be free of mental illness even for a moment, apart from those who have ended the defilements.” “*sattā sudullabhā lokasmim ye cetasikena rogena muhutt ampi ārogyaṃpaṭijānanti, aññatra khīṇāsavehi*.”¹⁵ The mental pain, the mental distress (*dukkhaṃ*), which, on that occasion, is born of contact with the appropriate element of representative intellection; the painful, distressful sensation which is born of contact with thought; the painful, distressful feeling which is born of contact with thought—this is the distress that there then is¹⁶. Human psychology is unpredictable and ever-evolving. Life can be seen as an ongoing sequence of predetermined connections between positive and negative experiences, where we tend to favor the good and disdain the bad. It is filled with a blend of joy and sorrow that ultimately transforms into suffering. Mental health issues can impact physical health, resulting in nervous tension, emotional disturbances, and anxiety, which can lead to additional health problems. When feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and fear emerge, they signify a state of psychological insecurity. Therefore, individuals need to minimize negative and harmful thoughts.

According to Buddhist psychology, mental pain or mental illness occurs in individuals when the mind is upset (*khitta-citta*) or psychotic (*ummatta-citta*). The Pāli - English Dictionary defines “*khitta-citta*” as “one whose mind is thrown over, upset and unhinged” and “*ummatta-citta*” is defined as “out of one’s mind, mad.”¹⁷ Defilements in an individual’s mind are the expression of the existing mental illness. In the Abhidhamma, mental defilements are state unwholesome states (*akusalā dhammā*) that afflict and defile the mind of beings. Such consciousness is called unwholesome because it is mentally unhealthy, morally blameworthy, and productive of painful results¹⁸. Unhappy mind (*dummano*) means an irritated mind or someone who has that. That is the consciousness (itself) or the person with that consciousness. The state of that (consciousness or person) is unhappiness (*domanassa*). It is a term for unpleasant mental feelings. This is being accompanied by unhappiness striking against the object, is aversion or hate: because of its violent nature, it occurs as if striking against an object.¹⁹ *Devadatta*, *Ajātasattu*, *Āṅgulimāla* are the examples of psychopaths; *Patācāra* and *Kisāgotamī* are the examples of psychotics and so on.

The analysis of mental dispositions preoccupied with previous habits and their relevance to present problematic behaviors and mental disorders is a very unique teaching in the field of psychotherapy revealed by Theravāda

¹⁴ Wijeratne, R.P., et al (2007), p. 16.

¹⁵ R. Morris et al (1885), p. 157.

¹⁶ C. A. F. Rhys Davids (1990), p. 216.

¹⁷ Rhys Davids, T. W. (1993), p. 550.

¹⁸ Bodhi, B. (2006), p. 31.

¹⁹ Wijeratne, R.P. (2007), p. 16.

Buddhism.²⁰ The unpleasant mental feeling is always associated with unwholesome states rooted in aversion.

The negative psychodynamic elements of mind known as unwholesome mental states such as stream (*ogha*), intoxicants (*āsava*), proclivities (*anusaya*) fetters (*saṃyojana*), defilements (*kilesa*), hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and the temptations (*māra*) are important in the analysis of the causes, signs and symptoms of mental disorders and abnormal behavior.²¹

All kinds of negative mental status identify in the *Pāli* canon by the word “*Kilesa*”. In Buddhism, the word “*Āsava*”. The meaning of the word *Āsava* gives such as: defilement, taints, cankers, influxes, influence, outflows, effluents, mental intoxicants, stress, and pressure.²² Accordingly, as mentioned above, all those facts are Buddhism leading to the cause of stress.

2.2.2. Types of illness

The teachings of the Buddha categorize illness into two types. The *Roga Sutta* discusses these two kinds of diseases. What are these two? They are bodily illness and mental illness, “*Dveme, bhikkhave, rogā. Katame dve? Kāyiko ca rogo cetasiko ca rogo.*”²³

Physical pain and discomfort refer to the distressing sensations that result from bodily contact, which we simply term pain “*Yam kho, bhikkhave, kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ kāyikaṃ asātaṃ kāyasamphass ajaṃ dukkhamasātaṃ vedayitaṃ, idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ.*”²⁴ Illness can stem from internal imbalances, prior karma, and everyday habits. A healthy body relies on the proper functioning of its systems and the harmonious relationship between its internal organs. When an organ weakens or fails to operate effectively, disease can develop.

When we are in good health, we often overlook illness; in the absence of sickness, our minds are less inclined to dwell on pain. However, when illness strikes, negative thoughts, physical discomfort, and a troubled mind can lead to feelings of sorrow, grief, affliction, suffering, anger, pessimism, and boredom. This may result in a tendency to view oneself negatively or act detrimentally, perpetuating a cycle of suffering in the transient nature of life. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, an individual's physical elements are composed of earth (*paṭhavi*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and wind (*vāyo*).²⁵ The proper functioning of the body relies on the balance of three bodily humors: phlegm, wind, and bile. Disruptions in these four elements and three humors can lead to problematic

²⁰ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (1975), p. 104.

²¹ Kumara, P (2016), p. 36.

²² *Dhammasangani* (1885), p. 218.

²³ *Anguttara Nikāya* 4.157.

²⁴ *Dīgha Nikāya* (1890 - 1932), p. 290.

²⁵ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (1975), p. 380.

behaviors and mental health disorders.²⁶

The second type is mental illness. Early Buddhism acknowledged various forms of abnormal behavior. A thorough examination of Buddhist teachings reveals a distinct understanding of the different types of abnormal behavior exhibited by individuals. For example, figures such as *Devadatta*, *Ajātasattu*, and *Aṅgulimāla* serve as illustrations of psychopaths, while *Patācāra* and *Kisāgotamī* represent examples of psychotics. Additionally, the *Darimukha Jataka* identifies eight categories of *Unmada* (psychiatric disorders), which include:

- (1) *Kāma Ummada* - sexual dysfunction. (2) *Dassana Ummāda* - hallucinosis, schizophrenia and delusional disorders. (3) *Moha Ummada* - mental retardation/ development disorders. (4) *Krodha Ummada* - mania and personality disorders. (5) *Yakkha Ummada* - possession disorders/mental disorders due to organic diseases. (6) *Pitta Ummada* - Melancholia/depressive mood disorder. (7) *Surā Ummada* - Disorders due to alcohol/ psychoactive substances. (8) *Vyasana Ummada* - depression, anxiety, neurotic and stress-related disorders.²⁷

Moreover, in the *Vatthūpana Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, sixteen kinds of mental sickness have been explained by the Lord Buddha. There are: “(1) Covetousness and unrighteous greed are a defilement of the mind; (2) ill will is a defilement of the mind; (3) anger is a defilement of the mind; (4) hostility...(5) denigration...(6) domineering...(7) envy...(8) jealousy...(9) hypocrisy...(10) fraud...(11) obstinacy...(12) presumption...(13) conceit...(14) arrogance...(15) vanity...(16) negligence is a defilement of the mind 118).

These mental illnesses are often present in the minds of unenlightened individuals and can escalate into serious conditions when the aforementioned issues occur repeatedly. Mental illness, categorized as “*agate*,” can be divided into four types: *Chanda*, *dosa*, *bhaya*, and *moha*. Additionally, they manifest as *nīvaraṇa*, *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda*, *thinamiddha*, *uddhaccakukkucca*, *vicikicchā*, and also as *Soka*, *parideva*, *dukkha*, *domanassa*, and *upāyāsa*.²⁸

External influences like societal norms, environmental conditions, and personal relationships contribute to stress, but it's negative thought patterns that lead to mental disorders. Our current challenges often stem from past karma. While these external factors create indirect pressure, our internal responses can result in negative behaviors, leading to conditions like depression and anxiety. Thus, mental disorders root from our thoughts and spirits. It's essential to differentiate between physical pain and mental suffering, as both represent distinct experiences affecting our well-being. Suffering (*Dukkha-dukkha*) includes all forms of anguish from birth and aging to illness and loss representing the everyday challenges we face.

²⁶ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (1975), p. 80.

²⁷ Harischandra, D. V. J. (1998), p. 128 - 129.

²⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (1948 - 1951): 530.

2.2.3. The causes for the existence of mental disorders

There are many different reasons for the existence of mental disorders or mental illnesses. This may be due to the combination and interaction of several factors, including genetic predisposition, brain biochemical imbalance, manic life, having a serious medical condition like cancer, having few friends and feeling lonely or isolated, etc. In addition, constitutional factors, social development can affect the formation of mood disorders and anxiety.

According to Buddhism, a being whose mind is pure at the beginning but due to the defilements that are coming from the outer world through the six senses or organs, the pure mind became defiled or impure. Luminous, Bhikkhus, is this mind, and it is freed from adventitious defilements, “*Pabhassaram idam bhikkhave cittam tan ca kho agantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilittam.*”²⁹

In *Mahānidāna Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, the problems that arise in an individual’s mind and within society stem from a mental state characterized by desire (*lobha*) and hatred (*dosa*). Buddhist psychology identifies three primary causes - greed, hatred, and delusion - that lead to suffering. There is a clear correspondence between the first two root causes and Freud’s instincts: the erotic drive aligns with greed, while the aggressive drive corresponds to hatred. Both psychodynamic theory and mindfulness meditation shed light on how these forces disrupt mental well-being and propose methods for comprehending and mitigating their impact. However, they diverge in their ultimate interpretation of these forces.³⁰

According to the Buddhist canon, it is evident that when one is consumed by desire (*lobha*), filled with anger (*dosa*), and blinded by delusion (*moha*), an ensnared individual seeks their own destruction as well as that of others, resulting in mental anguish and sorrow. Such a person indeed treads a misguided path. They lack awareness of their own well-being, the well-being of others, and the well-being of both. These factors contribute to their blindness and ignorance, preventing their knowledge from guiding them towards peace. Those who are governed by cravings, anger, and the illusion of a permanent self will experience anxiety, depression, and profound dissatisfaction, which may lead to mental and behavioral disorders.

III. MENTAL CULTIVATION FOR A HAPPY LIFE

In this context, the practice methods aimed at improving mental health will be introduced systematically and sequentially. This structured approach is designed to progressively enhance the mental well-being of individuals, laying a solid foundation that is essential for attaining lasting inner peace. Achieving this state of tranquility is crucial, as it not only benefits the individual but also serves as a catalyst for fostering the creation of a joyful and harmonious society as a whole. When individuals experience improved mental health and inner

²⁹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (1885 - 1990), p. 97.

³⁰ Germer, C. K., et al (2005), p. 43.

peace, they can contribute more positively to their communities, leading to a collective atmosphere of happiness and support. Ultimately, the integration of these practice methods has the potential to transform not just personal lives but also the larger societal fabric, promoting a culture of well-being and joy for everyone.

3.1. Self-treatment capability

Self-treatment, or self-healing, involves managing oneself to achieve a balanced life and desired goals. It includes controlling behaviors and emotions to restore mental and physical health naturally, transforming negative thoughts into positive ones. Rather than relying solely on medication, Buddhist psychotherapy uses various methods to improve psychological well-being and communication, addressing barriers to mental health. Buddhism emphasizes self-healing potential, aiding in symptom relief.

Self-healing is a personal recovery process from psychological issues and trauma, guided by instinct. Though outcomes may vary, individual motivation is a major asset. The value of self-healing lies in its customization to each person's unique needs, and techniques like meditation can further enhance this process.

Self-treatment capability is the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's emotions, especially negative ones, self-awareness, mood management, empathy, and conflict management. This is an important aspect of emotional intelligence and essential to living a good life. Treatments in Buddhist Psychotherapy is clear that all psychotherapy emphasizes introspection for self-understanding and is based on the principle of dependent origination.

Benefits of the Healing Self: (1) It's non-invasive and independent of outside therapies. (2) It enhances natural balance and immunity through lifestyle choices. (3) Healthy choices can prevent cancers and Alzheimer's and may reverse dementia symptoms. (4) Successful aging involves both long health and lifespan. (5) Early intervention can reduce the need for medications in advanced illnesses like heart disease and cancer.³¹

Buddhism teaches that spiritual enlightenment is the key remedy for humanity's core afflictions, achievable through self-discovery. Each person possesses inner tranquility and self-healing abilities, which can be accessed through meditation. The Buddha offered various methods to help individuals overcome mental challenges, with compassionate support being the most impactful.

In the face of life's stresses, many struggle with depression and mental health issues, seeking ways to find hope and peace. Our perceptions of problems significantly shape our emotions, and suppressed negative feelings can lead to mental disorders. While external factors contribute to stress, it is our negative thinking that often results in unhealthy behaviors. Buddhism encourages confronting suffering rather than avoiding it, as facing our challenges helps

³¹ Deepak Chopra (2018), p. 7.

reveal the true nature of our distress, allowing us to alleviate mental disorders through understanding.

Buddhist psychology encompasses two primary therapeutic objectives: achieving a healthy and virtuous existence as a householder (*Samacariyā*: harmonious living) and attaining the ultimate goal of *nibbāna*, which signifies the complete cessation of dissatisfaction and suffering (*dukkha*).³² Certain actions aid in the pursuit of enlightenment and alleviate suffering, while others hinder enlightenment and contribute to suffering. Actions are frequently evaluated through the lens of whether they are ethical or unethical based on these criteria. Virtuous conduct arises from a mind that is enlightened. Within Buddhism, there is considerable emphasis on cultivating a skilled mind, which is adept at avoiding actions that may lead to suffering or regret.

According to *Sabbāsavasutta* (All the taints), the Buddha taught: “Monks, I assert that eradicating impurities is for those with knowledge and insight. This refers to wise versus unwise attention. Unwise focus leads to new impurities and intensifies existing ones, while wise focus prevents new impurities and discards the old. Certain impurities should be overcome through observation, restraint, usage, endurance, avoidance, direct elimination, or cultivation.”³³

Self-reflection and understanding one’s mental states are vital for practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. The Right effort consists in suppressing the rising of evil mental states, in eradicating those which have arisen, in stimulating good states and perfecting those which have been brought into being.³⁴

This process helps avoid unhealthy behaviors and promotes mental well-being, known as self-healing. We observe our mental state during meditation and in daily life. When wholesome thoughts (*kusalacittas*) are absent, we strive to cultivate them. Once established, we nurture them. Conversely, we must eradicate unwholesome thoughts (*akusalacittas*) if they arise or prevent them from emerging. Ultimately, the choice to nurture or eliminate these states lies with the individual.³⁵ We resolve negative emotions as follow: “A man with good self-esteem is not dependent on the praise of men or gods and able to enjoy what he had without guilt but also a person who did not hanker after what he did not have. In other words a man with sound mental health.”³⁶

Meditation and mindfulness enhance mental health, happiness, and overall quality of life by alleviating symptoms and restoring normalcy. Positive psychology helps cultivate happiness and protect against harmful behaviors. Mindfulness practices are accessible to all and support recovery and personal growth, whether standing, walking, sitting, or reclining. This approach, known as “Noble Living,” promotes virtuous behavior and insight while overcoming

³² De Silva, Padmasiri (2005), p. 107.

³³ MN 143 - 144 (PTS. M. III, p. 530).

³⁴ Prof. O. H. De A. Wijesekera (1962), p. 12.

³⁵ MN 152 (PTS. M. III, p. 1100)

³⁶ Dr. Raveen Hanwell (2014), p. 30.

sensory desires to escape the cycle of rebirth.

Buddhist *bhāvanā* aids personal development and promotes a more positive outlook on life. Research shows it can reduce stress and anxiety. Meditation serves as mental exercise, enhancing focus and clarity of thought, which improves memory. This practice deepens self-understanding and encourages growth. By reducing stress and anxiety, we can embrace positive energy. Through self-reflection, we learn to value our emotions and become attuned to our needs. The Buddha praised: “He who sees with the discernment the abandoning of greed and distress watches carefully with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves-ardent, alert, and mindful-putting aside greed and distress concerning the world. This is how mindfulness of in-out breathing is developed and pursued to bring the four frames of reference to their culmination, *Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikāṭā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikāṭā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrent.*”³⁷ Or as Bhikkhu Bodhi states: “Wholesome consciousness (*kusalacitta*) is consciousness accompanied by the wholesome roots non-greed or generosity, non-hatred or loving-kindness, and non-delusion or wisdom. Such consciousness is mentally healthy, morally blameless, and productive of pleasant results.”³⁸

Firstly, that is a method of investigation, as the best way to realize what mind exists. To take full control of the mind, we can attain the liberation of suffering. The way to get out of suffering that we need to analyses and investigate our mind as follows: “by such self-examination, a *bhikkhū* knows: “I am often without longing, without ill will, free from dullness and drowsiness, calm, free from doubt, without anger, undefiled in mind, unagitated in body, energetic, and concentrated,” he should base himself on those same wholesome qualities and make a further effort to reach the destruction of the taints.” (*Sacitta sutta*)

Second, it uses the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. “... Also, it is because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having comprehended them with my mind. I understand mind with greed as “mind with greed”... I understand the unfreed mind as “unfreed mind.” (*Cetopariya Sutta*)

To achieve a purified mind that transcends the self, one must cultivate a mind free from suffering by overcoming negative states and nurturing positive ones through virtue, meditation, and wisdom. This is the path to liberation from suffering, as taught by Buddha. The mind governs our creation of happiness or suffering, and even in the absence of mental illness, we may still face frustration, confusion, and stress. These challenges can be managed through mindful training and consistent mental care.

³⁷ MN 118 (1948 - 1951), p.78.

³⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi 2006, p. 31.

In Tibetan, “lo” means “mind” and “jong” means “training”, and this training is regarded as the most important single teaching in Buddhism. Based on developing a deep compassion for ourselves and other beings, it gives us a simple method of learning to be less self-centered and selfish.³⁹ Meditation tutorials are simple and accessible, rooted in everyday life. Anyone can learn to train their mind. A positive mindset transforms our perceptions, allowing us to face life’s challenges with confidence and resilience. Instead of fighting negativity, we embrace it, turning obstacles into opportunities. Striving for the welfare of others gives our lives meaning. Lojong teaches us to confront our ego, a major source of pain, and provides insights into its demands. Self-absorption hinders happiness, and Buddhism offers techniques to alter our attitudes and interactions. The Buddha’s lessons provide practical strategies for overcoming life’s challenges.

Buddhist psychology is a way of life based on self-healing.. Its immediate purpose is to hit the root of suffering in everyday life. To speak of “*taking Buddhism seriously*” means making an earnest effort of trying to apply it by keeping its precepts and amplifying them through the Noble Eightfold Way, which is dynamically positive.⁴⁰

Additionally, mindfulness meditation (*Satipaṭṭhāna*) serves as a mental training technique that aids in slowing down racing thoughts, releasing negativity, and calming both the mind and body. This practice of mental training empowers us to remain resilient and proactive when confronting life’s challenges. Through this training, we can transform any adverse circumstance into a chance to foster love, compassion, and understanding. Meditation promotes a healthy mindset by alleviating stress and dissatisfaction, relieving pain and restlessness, and fostering a mind free from impurities and distractions. In Buddhism, the mind is paramount and has the power to create. By nurturing mindfulness, we can enhance our happiness through inner transformation rather than attempting to change others or our external circumstances. Cultivating mindfulness allows individuals to lead a fulfilling life in the present while achieving a sense of peace.

3.2. The interdependence of the mind and body

Early Buddhism states that a human being is the interconnected union of both psychological (*nāma*) and physical (*rūpa*) elements. The significance and the relationship of mind with physical and social aspects are evident when we consider the fact that mental wellbeing strongly affects physical wellbeing, and at the same time physical wellbeing affects mental wellbeing heavily. These two are interdependent and interrelated.⁴¹ Buddhist teachings prioritize addressing mental and physical challenges to achieve a fulfilling life. Buddhism perceives the mind and body as fundamentally interdependent. Health stems from the balance between mind and body. A tranquil mind fosters a positive mental

³⁹ Ringu Tulku (2007), p. 12.

⁴⁰ Natasha Jackson, et al (2014), p. 05.

⁴¹ Chris Heginbotham, et al (2014), p. 55.

outlook, which in turn contributes to good physical well-being.

“Mental influences physical perception make a person sick in the mind. Therefore, the importance of maintaining mental health with the correct perception is given a predominant place in the Buddha’s dialogues.”⁴²

Buddhism does not endorse the identity hypothesis, which posits that the mind and body are the same entity, nor does it support the dualistic hypothesis, which asserts that they are entirely distinct and separate. The groups of *nama* and *rūpa* derive their names from one another, indicating their interdependence. This insight enhances the Buddhist perspective on the mind-body relationship, emphasizing the concepts of conditionality and relativity in experiences. Breathing encompasses both physical and mental aspects and serves as an excellent foundation for the integration of body and mind, contributing to overall health. If we link up the mindfulness on breathing with the mindfulness on feeling, we enter a rich territory of “emotions and body”. When initial pain signals get converted into anger and fear, breathing patterns change - there is bodily turbulence and agitation. When there is calm and collectedness and joy breathing patterns and their rhythm are different.⁴³

Mindful breathing, or the “mindful way,” enhances mental and physical well-being. Research shows that brain areas processing bodily signals significantly impact emotions, linking body and mind in new ways for modern medicine. This aligns with Buddhist views on their integration, emphasizing that mental health relates closely to virtuous living.

Engaging in meditation offers numerous remarkable benefits, including stress reduction, mood enhancement, increased creativity, the improvement of positive relationships and understanding, and assisting individuals in finding solutions to challenges such as depression. It fosters mental development and encourages physical well-being.

Meditation is not only thought to alleviate stress and bolster resilience, but it also plays a direct role in healing physical ailments. Additionally, it promotes the release of chemicals such as serotonin and dopamine, which help alleviate pain and are associated with feelings of happiness and mental relaxation.

The mind of a person profoundly influences the body. If it is allowed to dwell on harmful thoughts, it can lead to detrimental consequences, even harm; however, the mind also possesses the power to heal ailing bodies. When directed towards positive thoughts and guided by proper understanding, the mind’s potential for positive change is vast.

In essence, the mind can both cause illness and facilitate healing. To have a happy life, it is essential to be healthy both physically and mentally.

3.3. Building a peaceful society and reducing conflict

In today’s world, there is a notable increase in conflict and violence,

⁴² Jenny Quek (2007), p. 131.

⁴³ Padmasiri de Silva (2005), p. 147.

including shootings, bombings, and murder. This violence harms others and disrupts communities, while also affecting the perpetrators by creating insecurity and distancing them from moral values. Conflict stems from troubled mental states, highlighting the need for individuals to not only change their behavior but also improve their mental well-being through emotional training. Additionally, rising mental disorders exacerbate social issues, as people pursue material possessions while neglecting their mental and physical health.

Anger causes everyday problems such as quarrels, fights, domestic violence, school violence, causing many bad consequences for society. “In the ethico-psychological analysis of emotions that we find in Buddhism, several terms are used to describe the existence and expression of anger and hatred: *dosa* (hate), *vyāpāda* (ill-will), *paṭigha* (aversion), *kodha* (anger), and so on. Hatred is also related to states such as *issā* (envy), *macchhariya* (jealousy) and *hīnamāna* (sense of inferiority).⁴⁴

Consequently, managing anger is crucial for both personal and social development. When an individual can regulate their emotions in various situations, they are likely to lead a mentally healthy life; additionally, this ability fosters relationships with others and contributes to the creation of a peaceful and non-violent society. From the Buddhist viewpoint, one should eliminate anger to lessen mental discomfort, avoid future negative karmic results, and prevent harming others.⁴⁵

It is evident that the mental and physical health of individuals influences and shapes the overall welfare of society, and conversely, social welfare has an impact on individuals’ mental and physical well-being. Buddhism emphasizes morality and the cultivation of the individual spirit, rooted in the five precepts, with the aim of fostering a peaceful, content, and suffering-free society.

The Buddha is regarded as a revolutionary social reformer who challenged the prevailing beliefs surrounding the caste-based, class-divided system of the secular aristocracy. Buddha taught that: “refrained from the onslaught on creatures, from taking what had not been given, from wrong enjoyment of the sense-pleasures, from being a liar, from slanderous speech, from harsh speech, from being a gossip, were not covetous.”⁴⁶

Buddhism emphasizes fostering positive emotions while discarding unwholesome ones. Many Western scholars also adopt the practice of nurturing positive emotions to counteract negative feelings. This approach aligns with the Buddha’s teachings on cultivating the Four Sublime States (*Brahma Vihāras*), which include *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). In the words of Ven. Nyanaponika: “They are the great removers of tension, the great peace-makers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence: levelers of

⁴⁴De Silva, Padmasiri (2005), p. 52.

⁴⁵Aronson, HB (2005), p. 110.

⁴⁶*Majjhima Nikāya* (1948 - 1951), p. 756.

social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakeners of slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revivers of joy and hope.”⁴⁷

Buddhism has taught people not to do evil, foster goodness and purity of mind.⁴⁸ Just acting in compliance with norms and norms of social culture is a healthy mentality. “The teachings of love, kindness and tolerance, the conduct of non-violence, and especially the Buddhist theory that all things are relative can be a source of that inner peace.”⁴⁹ With greater self-knowledge, satisfying relations with others become possible. Thus instead of developing relations based on greed, domination, dependence, and power, there are productive relationships of care, friendship, trust, and compassion.⁵⁰

Scientific research identifies three stages: the subjective level, individual level, and group level. The subjective level explores positive experiences like joy, contentment, and happiness, focusing on emotions rather than morality. The individual level examines elements of a “good life” and essential personal qualities for being a “good person,” such as strengths, virtues, and interpersonal skills. The group level addresses community-focused aspects like civic virtues, social responsibilities, and altruism, promoting citizenship and community development.

In Buddhism, positive psychology is nurtured through the four sublime qualities: loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These qualities promote positive emotions, kindness, and courage, guiding ideal interactions with all beings. They effectively alleviate tension, resolve social conflicts, and heal life’s wounds. They level social barriers, build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revive joy and hope long abandoned, and promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.⁵¹

Mettā meditation is a practice that starts by cultivating kind thoughts and feelings towards oneself. As individuals continue to practice, they learn to expand this kindness and forgiveness to others, including family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

One excited by lust, overcome by lust, with mind obsessed by it, intends for his affliction, for the affliction of others, or the affliction of both, and he experiences mental suffering and dejection. But when lust is abandoned, he does not intend for his affliction, for the affliction of others, or the affliction of both, and he does not experience mental suffering and dejection.”⁵² And, “A very pleasant environment will make little difference if we are mentally depressed, but inner peace or mental

⁴⁷ Nyanaponika Thera (1960), p. 07.

⁴⁸ *Dhp.* 183.

⁴⁹ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (1975), p. 24.

⁵⁰ De Silva, Padmasiri (2005), p.127.

⁵¹ Paul Gilbert & Choden (2013), p. 325.

⁵² AN. III. 251

happiness will make it easier to face any challenge.⁵³

Buddhism teaches that inner peace must be cultivated within individuals before it can benefit others and society. Mindful individuals recognize and manage their emotions, which helps prevent greed, anger, and delusion – key causes of violence. With a positive mindset, people can engage peacefully.

Buddhist principles are interconnected, focusing on *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). These principles enable individuals to give generously and make thoughtful choices about their generosity, impacting behavior, mentality, and spirituality.

The foundation of social development is *sīla* (moral conduct), promoting harmony and security within communities. Addressing global inequalities requires transforming our desires (*pariyesanā*) to create a world based on tolerance (*dāna*), loving communication (*peyyavajja*), beneficial actions (*atthacariyā*), and social equality. The Buddha emphasizes moral and spiritual advancement as essential for a joyful and fulfilling society aligned with sustainable development.

IV. CULTIVATING INNER PEACE – CREATING A HAPPY SOCIETY

Happiness is a universally shared goal that resonates deeply across different cultures and societies around the globe. People from all walks of life, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs, actively seek out lives that are not only devoid of suffering but also enriched with profound tranquility and contentment. This quest for happiness, while deeply personal, often transcends individual experiences and reflects a collective aspiration for a more harmonious existence. From a Buddhist perspective, the foundation of a genuinely happy society is heavily rooted in the nurturing and cultivation of inner peace. This profound inner tranquility is considered essential for fostering a society where individuals can coexist in harmony, supporting one another in their journeys toward fulfillment.

In this section, we will delve into an exploration of various methods and practices that are aimed at attaining such inner peace. With a particular emphasis on *Bhāvana*, a term that pertains to the intentional cultivation and personal development of individuals, we seek to illuminate its significance in the pursuit of happiness. This exploration will be systematically organized into five distinct segments, each addressing a specific aspect of *Bhāvana* and its applications. These segments include:

- (1) *Kāya-bhāvanā* - development of the body, emphasizing the importance of physical well-being and its impact on one's overall sense of happiness.
- (2) *Citta-bhāvanā* - development of the mind, which focuses on enhancing mental clarity and emotional resilience.
- (3) *Mettā-bhāvanā* - development of loving-kindness, which aims to cultivate compassion and goodwill toward oneself and others.

⁵³ Dalai Lama, et al (2001), p. 29.

Overall, the objective of this section is to demonstrate how various Buddhist practices, rooted in the principles of *bhāvana*, can significantly assist individuals on their journey toward cultivating a deeper state of inner peace. By engaging with these practices, one can aspire to not only enhance their happiness but also contribute positively to the well-being of the broader community. Ultimately, this intricate interplay between personal development and societal harmony plays a crucial role in the broader context of human flourishing. This is the foundation for creating a harmonious society.

Furthermore, “The Buddhist *bhāvanā*, properly speaking, is mental culture in the full sense of the term. It aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, hatred, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, skeptical doubts, and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, joy, tranquility, leading finally to the attainment of highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they are, and realizes the Ultimate Truth, *nibbāna*.”⁵⁴ And, “Meditation in Buddhism is not only aimed at helping to calm our mind but also towards the purification and removal of defilements in the mind. In addition, meditation in Buddhism is also to nurture and develop good qualities such as compassion, confidence, wisdom, etc. to help practitioners achieve a positive mental state and gain new insights about life. By cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, analytical faculty, confidence, and joy the meditator can gain mental calmness or tranquility in terms of inner peace or happiness.”⁵⁵

In addition, *samatha* and *vipassanā* are two key elements in the “development of the mind” highlighted in the *Nikāya Sutta*. Both meditation practices are regarded as exceptional means for achieving concentration and enhancing wisdom. *Samatha* cultivates joy, happiness, and focused attention by halting sensual and unwholesome mental states. In contrast, *vipassanā* fosters liberation through the observation of phenomena as they truly are, eliminating ignorance and impurities, which results in liberating wisdom. Together, they facilitate the “liberation of mind,” “liberation of wisdom,” the attainment of the path to liberation, and the cessation of suffering associated with birth and death. In *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha taught: “*These two qualities have a share in clear knowing. Which two? Tranquility (samatha) and insight (vipassanā).* When serenity is developed, what benefit does one experience? The mind is developed. When the mind is developed, what benefit does one experience? Lust is abandoned. When insight is developed, what benefit does one experience? Wisdom is developed. When wisdom is developed, what benefit does one experience? Ignorance is abandoned.

Buddhist meditation can contribute to the development of a peaceful mind and enhance mental well-being in our lives. It goes beyond the limits of religion, ethnicity, skin color, gender, and age. By practicing meditation, we

⁵⁴ Rahula, Walpola (1959), p. 68.

⁵⁵ Mirisse Dhammika (2013), p. 03.

can release stress, worry, sadness, and anxiety, while simultaneously cultivating peace, focus, and happiness. To effectively manage and improve our mental state, it is essential to adopt a healthy lifestyle, engage in meditation, and strive to embody positive personality traits. Our actions significantly influence our lives. Meditation fosters mindfulness, provides clarity about reality, frees us from feelings of anxiety, depression, and fear, and can be viewed as an art form that promotes relaxation, reduces stress and pain, fosters a sense of peace, harmonizes the mind and body, and aids in addressing mental health issues, ultimately leading to inner tranquility.

4.1. *Kāya-bhāvanā*, development of the body

Kāya-bhāvanā refers to meditation or training related to action. The *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* states that “pleasant feeling arises in a well-taught noble disciple. Touched by that pleasant feeling, he does not lust after pleasure or continues to lust after pleasure. That pleasant feeling of his ceases. When that pleasant feeling has arisen in him, it does not invade his mind and remains because the body is developed.”⁵⁶

The Blessed One taught Rahula to contemplate with right wisdom the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, and the space element, both internally and externally, to see that “This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.” He analyzed the conduct of earth, water, fire, wind, and space; He then advised Rahula to practice according to the conduct of those characteristics. When you practice “peacefulness of earth” meditation, then sensations that arise – whether pleasing or displeasing – will not dominate your mind ... practice “peacefulness of earth” meditation.⁵⁷ The elements of water, fire, wind, and space are equally important. If the meditator experiences physical restlessness, mental fatigue, or distraction while focusing on the body, he should redirect his thoughts to something uplifting. By doing this, feelings of joy will emerge within him.

4.2. Contemplate the body through the breath

In *Ānāpānāpabba*, the Buddha taught: “There is the case where a monk — having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or an empty building — sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect and setting mindfulness to the fore lit: the front of the chest. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out. ... He trains himself, “I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.”⁵⁸ In *Ānāpānassati Sutta* mentioned that Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. (*Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikāta cattāro satipaṭṭhāne pari pūreti*). The four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. (*Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā*

⁵⁶ MN. III. 334.

⁵⁷ MN. 62 (PTS. M. III. 529).

⁵⁸ DN. III. 290

bahulikātā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti). And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom. (*Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulikātā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti*).

4.3. Contemplate the body through active gestures

This is a form of body contemplation through walking, standing, sitting, lying down, and other body activities to control body activities with mindfulness. That means using right view to maintain and promote right speech (*sammā-vācā*), right bodily action (*sammā-kammanta*), right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*).

4.4. *Citta-bhāvanā*, development of the mind

Citta-bhāvanā was translated as “development of mind” or “development of consciousness.” The Buddha taught: “You should train yourself: “Even though I may be afflicted in body, my mind will be unaffiliated.” That is how you should train yourself” (*Nakulapita Sutta*).

Ordinary states of mind can be transformed into more advanced states through the development of five ethical mind groups: receptive, adaptable, and truth-seeking *citta*; tranquil, serene, and passion-free *citta*; composed *citta* alongside devoted *citta*, proactive *citta*, awareness (*vipassana*) *citta*, *citta* in *samādhi*, as well as *vitakka* and *vicāra*; loving-kindness *citta*; and liberated *citta*. This process is the pathway to elevating ordinary states of mind to noble or advanced states, often referred to as the purification of one’s mind.

In the *Mahādukkakkhanda sutta*, it is related to derangement management of the mind. One has to reflect on the three natures of an evil thought. *Assadsa* (enjoyment), *Ādīnava* (danger) *Nissaraṇa* (escape).

The Buddha’s teachings present a fundamental doctrine about the nature of the human mind, addressing both the mind itself and its liberation as the objective for psychological freedom. The ultimate goal of these teachings is to achieve complete happiness and peace for all beings, enabling them to perceive phenomena as they truly are. Buddhism acknowledges that the human mind significantly influences the creation of a life filled with either happiness or suffering.

Venerable Ñānapōnika Thera, commenting further on the Buddhist analysis of mind and its development through the practice of mental culture (*bhāvanā*), says: “The Buddha-Message, as a Doctrine of the Mind, teaches three things: to know the mind, that is so near to us, and yet is so unknown; to shape the mind, that is so unwieldy and obstinate, and yet may turn so pliant; to free the mind, that is in bondage all over, and yet may win freedom here and now.”⁵⁹ Presenting a similar idea, Y. Karunadasa assumes that “Both bondage and freedom have mind as their common locus. To free the mind from bondage, it is necessary to develop the mind; to develop the mind, it is necessary to know the mind. Here we find the rationale for Buddhism’s preoccupation with psychology and the relevance of psychology to Buddhism

⁵⁹ Venerable Nyanaponika Thera (2005), p. 17.

as a religion.”⁶⁰ Buddha has mentioned the luminous mind (*pabhassara citta*), like that: “Luminous, bhikkhus, is this mind, and it is freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed noble disciple understands this as it is; therefore I say that for the instructed noble disciple, there is development of the mind.”⁶¹

By adhering to the development of the mind, we can shape our thought processes and foster a mindset that leans toward positivity. Eliminating unwholesome thoughts and actions can prevent detrimental effects for both ourselves and others. This illustrates the relationship between psychology and ethics; a mindful individual refrains from actions that may lead to pain or regret.

The Buddha’s teachings, particularly in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya, present various methods for managing emotions. In this sutta, the Buddha outlines seven approaches to overcoming *āsava*, or cankers: overcoming through insight, overcoming through restraint, overcoming through mindful use, overcoming through endurance, overcoming through avoidance, overcoming through removal, and overcoming through development or cultivation.⁶²

In *Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha identifies five methods to emotional management: reflect on another object, examine the danger, non-attention, distract thought reduction, and apply every effort to defeat.⁶³

Master Thich Nhat Hanh outlines three steps to foster inner peace:

(1) Indirect transformation: Letting them lie quietly in our store consciousness while we sow new (positive) seeds and nourish the existing seeds of peace, joy and happiness. (2) Continuous practice of mindfulness: “Get ready to recognize and embrace all kinds of mental disorders when they arrive”. (3) Deliberately inviting: To get rid of or transform the deeply rooted mental afflictions for a longer period with the strength of mindfulness.⁶⁴ Therefore, controlling our mind is the key to liberation, a concept modern scientists refer to as mindfulness, and it is considered the best way to achieve happiness in the present moment.

4.5. *Mettā-bhāvanā*, development of loving-kindness

Mettābhāvanā can help reduce psychological disorders and problematic behaviors related to hatred (*dosa*). *Suttas* like the *Mettā*, *Kakacūpama*, *Mahāhatthipadoma*, and some *Jātaka* tales demonstrate how to cultivate self-love for oneself and all beings. Loving-kindness promotes friendliness, aiming to eliminate ill-will and build kindness. When successful, it removes negativity; if ineffective, it may turn into selfish affection.

Engaging in loving-kindness meditation allows us to radiate love, kindness, and positive intentions toward everyone, hoping that all beings experience

⁶⁰ Y. Karunadasa (2015), p. 53.

⁶¹ AN. II. 97.

⁶² MN. 26 (PTS. M. I, p. 160 - 175)

⁶³ MN 58 (PTS. M. I, p. 392 - 396)

⁶⁴ Thich Nhat Hanh (2006), p. 219.

peace, happiness, and harmony. “*mettā*” represents an expression of positive energy and selfless love, rooted in the genuine affection found within our hearts. The primary aim of loving-kindness meditation is to cultivate positive emotions and awaken feelings of love from within, fostering greater love for ourselves and others. Additionally, it contributes to diminishing negative emotions such as low self-esteem, anger, jealousy, and criticism.

When you practice “loving-kindness” meditation, hostility will be abandoned... practice “compassion” meditation, cruelty will be abandoned... practice “rejoicing” meditation, discontent will be abandoned... practice “equanimity” meditation, aversion will be abandoned... practice “non-beauty” meditation, lust will be abandoned.⁶⁵

Loving-kindness meditation can help us expand and improve social relationships, increase life satisfaction, and reduce stress and anxiety. Because after learning to love ourselves, we will easily love and empathize with people. In particular, it also helps people better understand the feelings of those around them, know how to sympathize and understand, from which relationships will become better.

Loving-kindness meditation can enhance and strengthen our social connections, boost life satisfaction, and alleviate stress and anxiety. Once we cultivate self-love, it becomes easier to love and empathize with others. This practice also enables individuals to better comprehend the emotions of those around them, fostering empathy and understanding, which in turn improves relationships.

The initial step in nurturing compassion is to enhance your empathy towards others. Fundamentally, we share a common humanity; we all require food, shelter, and love. Every individual longs for care, acknowledgment, affection, and, above all, happiness. When we can empathize with someone and grasp their nature and pain, the subsequent step is to desire for them to be liberated from suffering. This practice of compassion can be applied in any setting – at work, home, while traveling, on business, and beyond.

“Our minds will remain unaffected. We will blurt out no bad words. We will remain full of compassion, with a heart of love and no secret hate. We will meditate spreading a heart of love to that person. And with them as a basis, we will meditate spreading a heart like a catskin bag to everyone in the world – abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.” That’s how you should train.⁶⁶

Love serves as an essential and fundamental basis for both personal growth and purification, as well as for fostering a peaceful, progressive, and healthy society. True love does not seek to possess and is free from ego, recognizing that the concept of “self” is merely an illusion. It is unconditional, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. It embraces all beings – whether they are small or

⁶⁵ MN 143, 144 (PTS. M. III, p. 530).

⁶⁶ MN 50 (PTS. M. I, p. 223).

large, distant or close, living on land, in water, or the air. This profound love, representing the highest nobility of heart and mind, is understanding and always willing to extend a helping hand. This is the highest love according to *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*:

“May all beings be happy and secure, may they be happy-minded. Whatever living beings there are feeble or strong, long, short or medium, small or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born or those who await rebirth may all beings, without exception be happy minded. Let none deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place; in anger or ill will let them not wish any sufficing to each other. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life.”⁶⁷

Buddhism highlights the interdependence of all sentient beings, illustrating that we exist within an interconnected web of life where our suffering and joy are deeply intertwined. Individual experiences of pain or happiness are not solely personal; rather, they are shared within the collective community.

Loving-kindness is among the forty objects of meditation that are conducive to concentration meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*). Through the practice of loving-kindness meditation, the practitioner can cultivate mental concentration that reaches the third level of fine material absorption (*rūpa jhāna*). This achievement is possible by overcoming the five mental obstacles: sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*vyapada*), sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*), restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and skeptical doubt (*vicikicca*). The meditator can utilize the strong foundation of concentration established through mindfulness of loving-kindness to engage in insight meditation (*vipassāna bhāvanā*), exploring the nature of the five aggregates of clinging.

Loving-kindness, with its boundless ability to embrace all, is akin to compassion; it makes no distinctions based on class, religion, race, gender, age, lineage, attire, or status, whether noble or affluent. Wherever suffering exists, compassion is ready and willing to assist, share, and support with an open heart. It embodies empathy for the pain of sentient beings, yet requires a pure mind, untainted by troubles; this is the compassion that the Buddha speaks of. Through compassion, as a catalyst for kindness, when faced with difficult situations or events, tolerance and empathy for surrounding sentient beings naturally emerge.

Practicing *mettā-bhāvanā* effectively prevents hatred and helps dissolve resentment over time. Compassion involves a loving attitude towards all, aiming to bring joy and alleviate suffering without personal gain. To cultivate compassion, we begin by directing love towards cherished ones, benefactors, friends, and even those who have wronged us. Reflecting on their love and kindness helps foster sympathy.

⁶⁷ SN 22.101 (PTS. S. III, p. 511).

Nurturing loving-kindness is crucial. As we develop love for those who bear animosity towards us, their hostility will lessen. Compassion encourages us not to inflict suffering, leaving no room for hatred, which only causes pain for everyone. Love and hatred are like light and darkness; when compassion shines brightly, hatred is dispelled.

V. CONCLUSION

Cultivating inner peace and mental wellbeing is essential for leading a fulfilling life and creating a harmonious society. Individuals with robust mental health are more equipped to tackle challenges. Nurturing inner peace and mental wellbeing is vital for overall health, closely linked to happiness and self-confidence. A positive mindset encourages healthy relationships and fosters personal and community development.

Nevertheless, physical ailments can obstruct mental wellness, and even a physically healthy individual can experience negative thoughts. From a Buddhist standpoint, mental suffering signifies a lack of wellness, whereas those free from inner turmoil enjoy mental health. The Buddha highlighted that attaining enlightenment necessitates a healthy body, illustrating the connection between mind and body.

The swift changes in modern society exert pressures that impact mental health and influence both familial and community decisions. Buddhism adopts a holistic approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of emotional, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing. Buddhism aims to eliminate suffering by identifying its sources, establishing a reliable foundation for happiness. It links the understanding of suffering to the pursuit of true happiness, emphasizing that all existence involves *dukkha*, or mental dysfunction. This philosophy focuses on the mind's illusions and desires but offers a path to liberation through awareness and mindfulness. The Noble Eightfold Path provides the necessary tools for attaining happiness.

Mental Cultivation facilitates the transformation of the client's unwholesome behavioral patterns. In the context of Buddhism, managing the mind to enhance one's way of life involves meditation practice and striving to embody virtuous qualities of character. Through meditation, individuals cultivate mindfulness, gain insights into reality, and liberate themselves from anxiety, depression, and fear. It serves as an art of relaxation, alleviating stress and pain while fostering inner peace, harmonizing the body and mind, and addressing mental health issues.

Buddhism promotes virtuous actions rooted in love and understanding, emphasizing self-confidence rather than reliance on a divine power. The practice of Buddhist *bhāvanā* empowers individuals with the spiritual resilience to overcome material temptations and life's challenges, guiding them towards a selfless, virtuous way of living. This belief system cultivates a sense of direction among Buddhists, encouraging a lifestyle characterized by humility, charity, and compassion for all sentient beings. Such convictions underpin moral self-discipline, autonomy, and freedom, while love and compassion help mitigate

selfishness and relinquish greed, hatred, and delusion - the root causes of harmful habits, societal conflicts, and violence.

Comprehensive development encompasses the advancement of the mind, body, and benevolence. The practice of *bhāvanā* enables individuals to heal themselves from mental afflictions, promoting the overall health of both mind and body. Ultimately, it contributes to the creation of a non-violent society. A clear mind fosters healthy behavior, paving the way for nurturing family ties, friendships, and community connections, thereby laying the groundwork for a peaceful and fulfilling life.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE WITH REFERENCE TO METTĀ SUTRA IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

World peace has always been a fundamental desire of humanity, and people continue to make various efforts toward achieving it. Among these efforts, some are rooted in religious teachings. This study examines the importance of a religious approach to attaining world peace through inner peace. The research focuses on the necessity of cultivating inner peace to promote global harmony. The primary objective is to explore how inner peace and world peace can be promoted through Buddhism. The research is based on a qualitative method, with a particular focus on the *Mettā Sutra* of Theravāda Buddhism. Relevant primary and secondary sources were utilized in the study. The loving-kindness concept of the *Mettā Sutra* is a special practice in Buddhism. It is applied in daily life, spiritual practice, social development, and the path to liberation. Buddhist loving-kindness is not dependent on caste, color, race, or nationality. According to the *Mettā Sutra*, every person possesses qualities that they should develop within themselves. It describes fifteen qualities related to both worldly and spiritual aspects. A personality developed accordingly embodies positive self-confidence. A person cannot cultivate compassion for others unless they first develop a positive attitude toward themselves. Furthermore, the *Mettā Sutra* lists fourteen types of beings that should be treated with compassion. This includes not only beings in this world but also all sentient beings throughout the universe, both physically and conceptually. Accordingly, the Buddhist concept of *mettā*, as expressed in the *Mettā Sutra*, fosters not only world peace but also universal peace through inner peace.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, Mettā Sutra, Theravāda Buddhism, loving-kindness.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

All living beings naturally desire to maintain their freedom and identity according to their own will. This often leads to conflicts within their groups or with outsiders. Compared to humans, other beings lack the same cognitive abilities and comparative skills. However, they often fail to fully utilize their natural potential in this aspect. Nevertheless, humans are special because they are more organized than other animals. Despite their cognitive superiority, humans are becoming increasingly uneasy - not only with each other but also with other animals and the environment. As a result, they struggle to find inner peace, creating a complex situation that affects every aspect of human existence.

According to scholars, religions were formed as a response to humanity's fear of nature. The rain, lightning, thunder, and even the sun and the moon probably brought people apprehension and fear.¹ At the same time, philosophical ideas emerged from doubt and the search for understanding. Throughout history, outstanding thinkers, philosophers, teachers, and scholars have influenced society in their own ways.² Philosophers were diverse and generally a free-thinking group. Both religious and philosophical teachings are intended to help humans control their minds. However, different groups of people, shaped by their unique cultures and environments, developed varying religious and philosophical concepts. This suggests that most religious and philosophical teachings are influenced by the limitations of the specific cultures they arose from, often focusing on the needs and concerns of their own communities. Such cultural limitations can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and divisions in the world.

According to sources such as the *Aggañña Sutta*, the minds of people with defilements are inherently restless.³ The evolution of the entire human race is unfolding accordingly. Furthermore, in Buddhism, the pursuit of mental peace dates back to ancient times. Inner peace, or peace of mind, has been identified as an essential quality for achieving world peace by psychologists and spiritual coaches in contemporary society. People continue to explore and test various methods to attain it. Religious practices play a significant and popular role in this pursuit, though non-religious approaches are also followed. Most religious techniques and teachings primarily focus on inner peace as a means to achieve world peace. However, the Buddha's teachings emphasize not only inner peace for world peace but also universal peace.

There has been extensive research related to inner peace and world peace. According to the literature review, studies on this topic have been conducted from religious, political, medical, and cultural perspectives. Therefore, the research problem addressed here is the necessity of further Buddhist studies related to this theme, as well as the development of essential solutions for achieving world peace today. The primary objective of this research is to

¹ Dhammadassi Naimbala Bhikkhu and Keneth B. Genarathne (2010), p. 22.

² Dhammadassi Naimbala Bhikkhu and Keneth B. Genarathne (2010), p. 22.

³ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2017), p. 81-88 (D. III p/ 84-93).

examine the significance of inner peace from a Buddhist perspective. This study follows a qualitative research methodology, compiling data from both primary and secondary sources relevant to the theme. The *mettā sutra* serves as a key Buddhist source for this study, and the collected data is analyzed in relation to it.

II. INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Peace of mind refers to a state of being free from worry or distress. Additionally, it signifies the absence of war and violence, particularly when people live and work together harmoniously without conflict.⁴ The above definition, however, is limited to peace among human beings. A common understanding of peace is the absence of disturbance and the presence of harmony in society. Peace is a fundamental factor for personal survival and security, as any disruption to it has both direct and indirect effects on everyone. Laws have been established by civilized societies to regulate human behavior, with their primary purpose being the preservation of peace. Time and again, laws and regulations are formulated in response to issues or circumstances that threaten peace.

Inner peace refers to a state of being mentally and spiritually at peace. The mind is the forerunner of all mindful actions of beings.⁵ An unsettled mind creates suffering for both itself and others. Naturally, the human mind is not easily calmed when influenced by lust.⁶ According to Buddhism, all beings are bound to the cycle of existence due to their own craving.⁷ A deeper explanation in the Dhamma states that greed, hatred, and delusion - elements of craving - are the root causes of harmful actions.⁸ This implies that the mind is shaped by these defilements. People who are selfish, overly attached to their desires, and aggressive are driven by craving. The karmic experiences of past lives contribute to the physical and mental differences among individuals. Because of this, Buddhism encourages people to cultivate a peaceful mind through the practice of the path, which is not limited to Buddhists but is open to all who seek world peace.

World peace refers to a state of harmony and happiness shared by all people. While everyone desires a peaceful world, most do not think on a global scale. This suggests that the primary issue lies in the limited perspective of individuals. Several factors contribute to the loss of world peace, including: (1) the division of people based on race, religion, caste, ethnicity, language, culture, and nationality; (2) struggles for power and dominance; (3) adoption of an excessively competitive lifestyle; (4) decline in respect for human morals; (5) lack of understanding about the true nature of life.

⁴ Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2012), p. 525.

⁵ *Dhammapada* (2021), p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁷ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001), p. 1053. (M. III, p. 203).

⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001), p. 523. (M. I, p. 415).

Examining the above matters, it becomes clear that the primary cause is an individual's mental imbalance. Accordingly, inner peace plays a crucial role in achieving world peace. Furthermore, humans are an integral part of the world and the most powerful beings on Earth. Therefore, it is essential for humanity to commit to world peace without delay.

The Pāli words *Sāma*⁹, and *Sāmaggi*¹⁰ are used to denote peace. In Buddhism, the most meaningful term for peace is *Mettā* (loving-kindness), as it fosters both inner peace and harmony among people. The word *Mettā* is derived from *Mitta*, which literally translates to “friend.” In essence, loving-kindness is a state of mind that regards all sentient beings as friends.

Loving-kindness is a broad and essential teaching in Buddhism. According to the teachings of the Four Noble Attitudes (*Brahmavihāra*)¹¹ in the Visuddhimagga, it is a form of meditation. In the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), Venerable Buddhaghosa describes loving-kindness as follows: “Loving-kindness has the mode of friendliness for its characteristic. Its natural function is to promote friendliness. It is manifested as the disappearance of ill will. Its footing is seen with kindness. When it succeeds, it eliminates ill will. When it fails, it degenerates into selfish affectionate desire.”¹² It is also an unlimited quality known as *appamāṇya*. This is confirmed by the phrase, “*Sabbe satta, sabbe pāṇa, sabbe bhūta, sabbe puggala....*”¹³ Thus, the Buddhist source discusses peace in various senses, particularly within the broader and deeper context of *Mettā*. The *Mettānisansa Sūtra* in the Aṅguttara Nikāya outlines eight benefits of loving-kindness,¹⁴ detailing the positive results that can be attained in this life and the next. Accordingly, it is further confirmed that there are various explanations related to loving-kindness in Buddhism. Additionally, Buddhism seeks both individual peace and world peace.

III. INTRODUCTION TO BACKGROUND OF *METTĀ SŪTRA*

The *Mettā Sūtra* is very popular in Theravāda Buddhist countries. Its main teaching is *Mettā* meditation, and it is mostly used as a blessing sermon. By studying the background and content of this *sūtra*, its usefulness for world peace can be identified. The primary text contains only a short sermon addressing relevant doctrinal matters. The background story is elaborated in the Commentary.

The historical background of the *Mettā Sūtra* is explained by Venerable Buddhaghosa in his commentary.¹⁵ It is said that five hundred monks went to the Himalayan Forest after receiving instructions or meditation objects from the Buddha for the four-month rains retreat (*Vassāna*). The site they chose

⁹ Dematapitiya Pali- Sinhala- English Dictionary (2010), p. 460.

¹⁰ Pali - Sinhalese Dictionary (1998), p. 538.

¹¹ Visuddhimagga (1955), p. 321 - 353.

¹² Visuddhimagga (1955), p. 321 - 353.

¹³ Patisambhidamagga (1991), p. 434.

¹⁴ Aṅguttara Nikāya (2012), p. 1111.

¹⁵ Paramatthajothika (2009), p. 202 - 221.

was located at the foothills of the Himalayas, rich in natural beauty and ideal for meditation. The monks were captivated by the sight, but the deities living in that forest did not welcome them. The deities then discussed the situation among themselves and decided to frighten the monks away by showing them terrifying objects, making dreadful noises, and creating a sickening stench. Again and again, they harassed the monks.

After a few days, the monks went to the Buddha and informed Him of the terrible situation in their forest. The Supreme Buddha, through His supernatural powers, searched all around but found no place other than the same spot where they could attain spiritual liberation. He told them: “Monks, go back to the same spot! It is only by striving there that you will accomplish the destruction of inner taints. Fear not! If you wish to be free from the harassment caused by the deities, be taught this *sūtra*. It will be a theme for meditation as well as a formula for protection (*paritta*).” This was the *Mettā Sūtra*. As there are several discourses known as *Mettā* or *Mettā Sūtra*, this popular text is specifically known as the *Karaṇīyamettā Sūtra*, with *karaṇīya* (“should be done”) being its first word. The monks returned to the same place, and as they neared their forest dwellings, they recited the *Mettā Sūtra*, thinking and meditating on its underlying meaning. The deities understood and helped the monks without insulting them.

The *Mettā Sūtra* is one of the main objects of meditation as well as the blessed teachings of the Supreme One. The *Sūtra* has three purposes, namely: (1) the cultivation of loving-kindness, (2) spiritual protection, and (3) the attainment of *dhyāna* as the basis for insight. The *Mettā Sūtra* was taught to help a person develop a peaceful mind.

The *Mettā Sūtra* has been categorized into four parts with details by Bhikkhu Gñanamoli. The architectural plan is, in fact, as follows: The first half of stanza 1 to the first half of stanza 3 describes the basic virtues. The second half of stanza 3 to the end of stanza 6 gives direct speech regarding the loving-kindness thoughts of one practicing those virtues. Stanzas 7-9 describe the qualities of loving-kindness practiced to the full as Concentration (*samādhi* or *samatha*), which is called “Divine Abiding” (*brahmavihāra*) in this life since it leads to rebirth in the High Divinity (*Brahmā*) Heavens. Stanza 10 describes the development of insight (*vipassanā*), which leads out from the world of existence/non-existence to liberation or nirvana.¹⁶

It is clear from the above division that the *Mettā Sūtra* presents several sections in ten stanzas. As a summary, it highlights the basic virtues, loving-kindness practice, calmness practice, and insight practice. It is very important to examine the way of inner peace in the *Mettā Sūtra* and its applicability to world peace.

¹⁶ Piya Tan, *Karaniya-Mettā Sutta*, accessed on (February 20, 2025), available at: <https://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/38.3-Karaniya-Mettā-S-khp-9-Sn-1.8-piya.pdf>

IV. FIFTEEN QUALITIES FOR INNER PEACE IN *METTĀ SŪTRA*

People are born with different physical and mental characteristics. According to Buddhism, the reason for this diversity is the karma that people have accumulated in previous lives. It also involves the karmic results of this life. According to Buddhism, noble qualities should be practiced and cultivated by those who wish to develop a perfect personality. Furthermore, the discourse instructs people on how to live a balanced spiritual life. It is necessary to practice spiritual virtues to live well in this life and the universe and ultimately to realize nirvana. Buddhism provides the path for this.

Sutra sermons that are consistently popular among Theravada Buddhists are all those that include teachings for personal mental peace and world peace. For example, the *Mangala Sūtra*¹⁷ points out the ethics that a person should follow from childhood to adulthood and the realization of nirvana. It helps with inner peace as well as social harmony and world peace. The *Parābhava Sūtra*¹⁸ indicates the loss of personal reputation, affecting both this world and the hereafter. An individual's personal weaknesses are also a cause of social unrest. The *Vasala Sūtra*¹⁹ explains how a person's attitudes and behaviors can lead to a "black character" or bad character, determined by the way individual attitudes work in social contexts. Thus, the psychological distress of the individual is an example of how social distress can affect society.

Compared to the *sutras* exemplified above, the *Mettā Sūtra* is more comprehensive and profound in guiding inner harmony and world peace. As the first part of the *Sūtra*, the *Mettā Sūtra* highlights 15 qualities that should be cultivated with an understanding of the *dhamma*, such as:

Sakko (skillful) – One needs to be skillful and possess the talents necessary to achieve one's goals. The eight worldly concerns (*Aṭṭha-loka-dhamma*) in Buddhism refer to eight basic matters that are common human preoccupations: gain (*lābha*) and loss (*alābha*), fame (*yasa*) and obscurity (*ayasa*), praise (*pasansā*) and blame (*nindā*), happiness (*sukha*) and suffering (*dukkha*).²⁰ Looking at the world in these terms, however, is regarded as inherently unsatisfying, and perfect happiness (*paramasukha*) is not attainable until these concerns are abandoned. People should be able to move towards their goals, despite various obstacles that may arise. It is essential to cultivate a personality that remains unshaken by the eight worldly concerns.

Uju (Straight) – You should be honest and consistent in the things you do, the words you speak, and the thoughts you think. Honesty is essential for a person. According to Buddhism, being truthful is crucial for both spiritual and worldly advancement. This quality is emphasized through the perfection of truthfulness (*Sacca Pārami*).²¹

¹⁷ *Paramatthajothika* (2009) p. 75 - 135.

¹⁸ *Sutta Nipāta* (2015), p. 13.

¹⁹ *Sutta Nipāta* (2015), p. 15 - 18.

²⁰ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012), p. 1117. (A. IV. 159).

²¹ *Pāramitha Prakarana* (2016), p. 229 - 245.

Suju (More Straight) – You need to be single-hearted. You should do what you say and say what you do. You can be straight if your actions are honorable. According to Buddhism, people are fickle-minded because they are filled with defilements, especially the four unprofitable directions (*Satara Agati*), which are bad ways. These are *Chanda agati* (the bad way through desire), *Dosa agati* (the bad way through hate), *Bhayā agati* (the bad way through fear), and *Mohā agati* (the bad way through delusion).²² This quality is necessary to develop a more honest character, not an extremist.

Suvaco (Gently Spoken) – Take good advice from wise people and practice good deeds. Accepting advice from elders, teachers, parents, and clergy is a valuable virtue. Moreover, one should be humble enough to accept advice, even from someone younger. To become a complete and advanced person, it is essential to be someone who embraces advice. There is no age or time barrier to receiving guidance.

Mudu (Soft-hearted) – Be strong enough to help others in their difficulties. Speak kind words and practice generosity. A person's gentleness is a highly valuable quality, essential for earning respect in society. The loss of gentleness leads to a lack of respect. We should be kind people who help others, not cruel with harsh attitudes.

Anatimāni (Humble) – Do not take unnecessary pride in your talents or possessions. Excessive pride is a negative quality. It is spiritually harmful to act with pride based on wealth, power, caste, skin color, country, etc. The greatest weakness of the monk Channa was his pride.²³ Because of his pride, he often suffered mentally and was shamed by others. For the peace of both the individual and society, one should practice humility.

Santussako (Satisfied) – Happy with what you have. Being content with what one has is a rare human quality. Humans are not naturally satisfied with what they receive, as evidenced by the saying, “*Na kahāpana vassena titthikāmesu vijijati*”.²⁴ This dissatisfaction often leads to the emergence of negative thoughts. According to Buddhism, true satisfaction comes when a person is content with real wealth, real power, and so on.

There are three types of happiness: (1) Real wealth – being content with what one receives. (2) Real power – being happy with the resources one obtains based on one's strength. (3) True happiness – being content even when sacrificing things like positions if others are more deserving. As the Dhammapada says, “*Santutthi paraman dhanam*”²⁵ – the greatest wealth a person can have is happiness.

Subharo (Easily Supportable) – Live a simple life. Some people cannot be easily satisfied. The reason is that some individuals are not content with what

²² *Dīgha Nikāya* (2017): 174. (D. III. 182)

²³ *Cullavagga Pāli* (2013), p. 402.

²⁴ *Dhammapada* (2021), p. 28.

²⁵ *Dhammapada* (2021), p. 30.

they enjoy or receive. This condition arises from a lack of mental satisfaction, not from the quantity of things a person possesses. Being able to be satisfied with the treatment one receives, with understanding, is a noble quality.

Appa-kicco (Free from unnecessary work) – You need to be talented enough to be free from unnecessary work. Overwork causes restlessness and mental distress in the individual. People's physical and mental endurance varies from person to person. In Buddhist meditation, special objects are prescribed for everyone to keep the mind focused on one goal, rather than allowing it to wander to various destinations.

Sallahuka-vutti (Simple in livelihood) – You should practice living a simple life. Having a simple lifestyle is a valuable quality in life. People often imitate others, but imitating others' lifestyle, fashion, consumption, etc., can cause psychological discomfort to the individual. This can lead to chaos in what should be a normal life. Every person has a unique economic, political, and social background, which cannot be imitated. Turning to things that do not suit you can lead to destruction.

Santindriyo (Controlled in senses) – The actions you perform with your five faculties need to be righteous. Humans have six sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. External information is received through the senses, and how we use them can either help maintain or disturb our mental peace. Controlling the senses is a fundamental teaching of Buddhism. It leads to the development of both worldly and spiritual aspects. This is considered a fundamental quality to be trained.

Nipako (Intelligent/Wise) – Wisdom to take the rightful action at the right occasion. Wisdom is an essential quality. Without wisdom, one cannot achieve anything. Wisdom here is not merely knowledge about general subjects; it is the ability to distinguish between good and bad. Accordingly, it means having the wisdom to do good things and to avoid bad things. It also refers to being wise for the advancement of both this life and the next, in both worldly and spiritual aspects. This is confirmed by the saying, "*Dvi chakkhung pana sevatha settham purisa puggalo*."²⁶ One should be wise not only for this life but also for the advancement of the next life.

Appa-gabbho (Non-belligerent) – The virtue of non-aggressiveness. It is a sin to deceive others through body language or speech. Being honest without deceiving others is essential for social peace. It is a noble human virtue for a person not to harm others with both body and words. The word *sīla* in Buddhism refers to the discipline of body and speech. It has two meanings: not doing wrong and doing the right thing. It encourages people to do the right thing. This directly creates personal inner peace, which in turn promotes world peace.

Kulesu ananugiddho (Not greedily attached to families) – No unnecessary attachments to individuals or groups. This is a warning to monks who have abandoned lay associations. This virtue is described in two ways. First, it is

²⁶ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012) 225. (A. I. 130).

a weakness for someone to associate with inappropriate society. Second, ordained people should avoid maintaining excessive associations with laypeople. In either sense, focusing on a specific group and becoming overly attached to them is detrimental to a person's social character.

Na ca khuddham samacare kiñci Yena viññu pare upavadeyyum (Do not get blamed by wise people) – One must always conduct oneself well and avoid getting blamed by wise people.²⁷ Humans are naturally inclined to live in society, and it is impossible to live outside of it. While a small group of ascetics may live separately for spiritual purposes, most people live in society. The individual is an integral part of society. Once socialized, a person must adhere to the ethics and norms generally accepted by that society. This includes following the conventions related to various religious, cultural, political, and social aspects. Buddhism emphasizes the need to act in accordance with social morality. Additionally, the response of intelligent people acts as a measure of an individual's ability to recognize and correct their shortcomings. In the teachings on “*Adhipathaiya Dhamma*,” “*Lokadhipathaiya*” refers to the response of intelligent people, which is also highlighted in the *Kalama Sutta* as a criterion for determining matters of Dharma.

If someone practices the above 15 virtues in their life, as Lord Buddha taught, they can become a great person. The sutta begins with a command given by the Supreme One: “*Karaṇīyamattha kusalena yam tam santam padam abhisamecca*.”²⁸ He who is skilled in good and wishes to attain that state of peace should act thus. This is the main objective of the *sutta* as well as its goal. Anyone who desires world peace should follow this perfect path. Intelligent people can ascend to higher stages by perfecting these virtues. For a person who does not possess these qualities, the foundation for physical, verbal, and mental peace is not prepared.

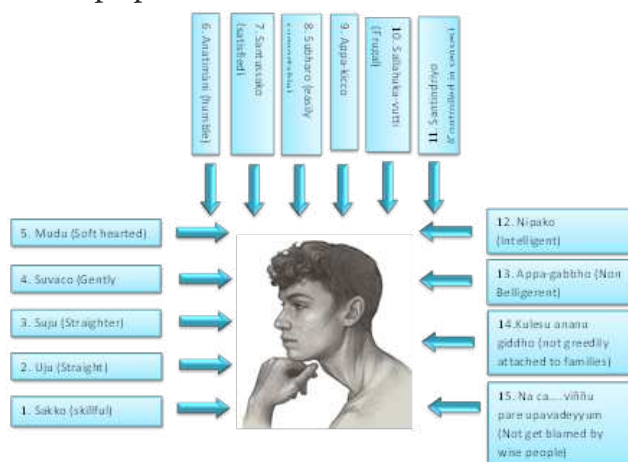


Figure 01

²⁷ *Sutta Nipāta* (2015), p. 19.

²⁸ *Sutta Nipāta* (2015), p. 19.

As shown in Figure 01 above, there are fifteen qualities that a person should adopt according to the *Mettā Sutra*. As indicated by the *Paññāvuḍḍhi Sutra*, the association with good friends, wise attention, hearing the Dhamma, practicing the principles according to the Dhamma, etc.²⁹, should be fundamentally prepared in one's life. The purpose of these 15 virtues is to create a suitable background for practicing loving-kindness and achieving inner peace. The issues mentioned above represent the complex background that a person should develop in any society. If a person does not possess the qualities described here, it is unlikely that they will act with a loving-kindness attitude towards their loved ones or any other living being

V. LOVING-KINDNESS

The Pāli word *Mettā* is a multi-significant term that means loving-kindness, goodwill, non-violence, friendliness, and universal love. In Buddhism, it is used in various ways. According to one interpretation, *Mettā* means “loving-kindness”, but not the ordinary, sensual, emotional, or sentimental type of love. In the teachings of the Buddha, *Mettā* has a much broader significance, with far-reaching implications beyond just loving-kindness, harmlessness, and sympathy. Overall, its essence is directed toward guiding individuals toward inner peace.

Pali	English
<i>Tasā</i>	weak
<i>Thāvarā</i>	strong
<i>Dighā</i>	long
<i>Mahantā</i>	big
<i>Majjhimā</i>	medium-sized
<i>Rassakā</i>	short
<i>Anuka</i>	small
<i>Thula</i>	Fat
<i>Ditthā</i>	visible
<i>Aditthā</i>	invisible
<i>Dūre</i>	far
<i>Avidūre</i>	near
<i>Bhūtā</i>	born
<i>Sambhavesī</i>	yet to be born
Chart - 01	

According to Buddhism, developing loving-kindness is not an easy task. Therefore, it emphasizes the importance of practicing it through meditation. As Rev. Rerukane Chandavimala states, “Loving-kindness is the joy found in the

²⁹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012), p. 460. (A. II. 77)

absence of suffering in others, the pleasure of others, fulfilling the expectations of others, the prosperity of others, and the improvement of others. Repeatedly spreading such loving-kindness, wishing that others be free from suffering, be healthy, and achieve well-being - this, expressed another way, is the meditation of loving-kindness.”³⁰ Thus, Buddhism places great value on loving-kindness as a meditation practice.

The *Mittanisamsa Sutra*³¹ explains the usefulness of compassion in social practice. According to the Four Brahma Viharas, *Mettā* was a universal concept in Indian society. However, the Supreme One imparted a deeper spiritual value to it. The Pāli term *Appamañña Dhamma*³² refers to boundless loving-kindness. It serves as a meditation object on the path to purification in Buddhism. In the *Mettā Sutra*, it is emphasized that loving-kindness should encompass all living beings, covering the entire universe. No one in the universe is excluded from this compassion.

Chart 01 provides the Pāli and English meanings of 14 kinds of beings in the universe. It does not highlight any caste, color, race, religion, or country. This reflects the Buddhist perspective on loving-kindness. In contemporary society, there are some issues caused by religious extremism. However, the Buddhist teachings outlined above are very clear - they are not meant to be a cause of unrest among human beings.

Figure 02 below illustrates that one who cultivates compassion views the entire universe as an extension of their inner quality. It encompasses all realms of earth, sky, and space, as well as all directions. According to Buddhism, compassion extends to all the *Rūpa*, *Arūpa*, and *Kāma* worlds. In this way, the *Mettā Sūtra* demonstrates the concept of universal loving-kindness in Buddhism. Specifically, it guides individuals toward inner peace, contributing to universal peace.



Figure 02

³⁰ Chandawimala Rerukane (2018), p. 163 – 164.

³¹ Paramatthajothika (2009), p. 202.

³² Paramatthajothika (2009), p. 208.

VI. SPIRITUAL LEVELS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

Growing compassion is not just a personal psychological need. Verse six explains how one who cultivates compassion should respond to others in body, speech, and mind: “Let him not deceive another nor despise anyone anywhere. In anger or ill will, let him not wish for another’s illness.”³³ The following stanza highlights the importance of individual responsibility for peace: “Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.”³⁴ How does a mother protect her child? This example illustrates the deep commitment needed for world peace. “Let him radiate boundless love towards the entire world - above, below, and across - unhindered, without ill will, without enmity.”³⁵ Verse eight points to the universal nature of loving-kindness, guiding one’s thoughts in all directions. Loving-kindness is a key object of meditation in Buddhism and requires constant mindfulness. The next stanza emphasizes the importance of this mindfulness: “Standing, walking, sitting or reclining, if he is awake, let him develop this mindfulness. This, they say, is “Noble Living” here.”³⁶ In the final stanza, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has achieved peace within himself, is described. This represents the embodiment of both inner and world peace: “Not falling into wrong views - being virtuous, endowed with insight, lust in the senses discarded - verily, never again will he return to conceive in a womb.”³⁷ Thus, the Buddhist approach to world peace through inner peace is affirmed by the *Mettā Sūtra*. According to this teaching, Buddhist loving-kindness not only fosters world peace but also contributes to universal peace.

VII. CONCLUSION

Everyone desires a peaceful environment, and various approaches are being sought to achieve this goal. These include religious, political, and social solutions, but the desired outcomes have not been fully realized. This research paper explores how Buddhism fosters world peace through inner peace. It confirms that world peace cannot be attained without internal peace. Buddhism emphasizes the importance of self-study before studying the world or the universe. According to this philosophy, world peace is achieved through inner peace. The teachings of Buddhism provide clear guidance in this regard, with the *Mettā Sūtra*, or *Karaniya Mettā Sūtra*, serving as a vital teaching. It outlines how one’s physical, mental, and social environment should be adjusted through several steps and highlights the qualities that should be developed. The virtues mentioned in the first part of the *Mettā Sūtra* are crucial for both spiritual and worldly progress. A deeper examination reveals that a person must embody these qualities to be truly peaceful. As a result, boundless compassion naturally manifests. Without these qualities, it is unlikely that a

³³ *Sutta Nipāta* (2015), p. 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*,

³⁵ *Ibid.*,

³⁶ *Ibid.*,

³⁷ *Ibid.*,

person will act compassionately towards others or even towards themselves. The *Mettā Sūtra* emphasizes the importance of basic virtues, loving-kindness practice, calmness practice, and insight practice. According to the findings, these teachings help establish universal peace, extending beyond world peace through the cultivation of inner peace.

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CULTIVATING THE QUALITIES OF THE *KARAṆĪYA METTĀ* SUTTA FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The research explores the application of the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* (Discourse on Loving-Kindness) in addressing global challenges. This significant Buddhist text offers guidance on cultivating compassion and encourages actions that promote the well-being of all living beings. The findings suggest that the principles of the *Mettā sutta* can foster sustainable development, resolve conflicts, and contribute to a more peaceful world. Emphasizing the role of compassion in ethical decision-making, community harmony, and social justice, the study advocates for the widespread integration of these principles into personal life, policymaking, and international relations.

Keywords: *Buddhism, loving-kindness, world peace, Mettā Sutta, sustainable development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* holds immense significance in Buddhism, both as a spiritual guide and as a framework for addressing contemporary social dilemmas. Found in the Pāli Canon, this *sutta* provides guidance on cultivating *mettā*, as loving-kindness is a fundamental Buddhist value that fosters goodwill toward all beings. By transcending social boundaries with its unconditional and all-encompassing love, the *sutta* promotes deep and universal peace, embracing every being without distinction.

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According to the *Sutta*, loving-kindness extends beyond simple well-wishes for others' welfare. It encourages followers to actively contribute to the happiness of all beings while striving to alleviate their suffering. This doctrine transcends personal and spiritual growth, addressing critical global challenges such as conflict resolution, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Integrating *mettā* principles into daily conduct enables individuals to uphold ethical responsibilities by making choices that promote long-term well-being for others and the health of the planet.

The guiding principles of the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* offer a transformative framework for leadership and community engagement, addressing the challenges of contemporary global issues, including ecological concerns and social inequalities. *Mettā* transcends societal divisions and competition, promoting an alternative model that integrates empathy, cooperative leadership, and mutual understanding. Resolving complex global challenges requires these qualities, as they foster inclusive and holistic approaches to problem-solving (Schramm, 1962).

Sustainable development greatly benefits from the practice of *mettā*. The principles of sustainability align to maintain balanced relationships among social needs, economic vitality, and environmental preservation as they strive to create a healthier world for future generations. A loving-kindness perspective shapes the quality of actions by considering both their immediate impact and their broader effects on all living beings. Shifting our perspective is essential in developing strategies that support sustainability while promoting social equity and justice.

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* provides guidance for self-development while offering valuable insights into building a sustainable world rooted in compassion. Through its daily practice and integration into global policies, the *sutta* has the potential to reshape social systems and human relationships, fostering lasting peace and sustainability.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITIES DESCRIBED IN THE *METTĀ SUTTA*

People should cultivate virtuous character through the essential Buddhist text, the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, which serves as a guide to peaceful development. According to this scripture, compassionate practitioners must develop both the skill of being proficient in goodness and the pursuit of inner peace. These virtues require not only religious commitment but also genuine moral dedication, expanding from personal growth to the achievement of global communal well-being. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: "One should be skilled in goodness and seek the state of peace".¹

The practice of ethical standards enables individuals to attain proficiency in goodness through deliberate and consistent effort. Ethical compliance

¹ Ariyaratne, A. T. (2003) - "Buddhism and International Humanitarian Law", *Sri Lanka Journal of International Law*, 15, p. 11.

naturally fosters the development of compassionate feelings, extending to all living beings. This process represents a mental framework that balances personal well-being with the welfare of others. Making decisions that generate positive outcomes is essential for establishing harmonious and sustainable communities. Such an approach is especially crucial in addressing global climate challenges, as unethical practices often prioritize profit over ethical responsibility. By engaging in ethical actions, individuals contribute to sustainability goals, equity among all life forms, social justice, and the overall well-being of the planet.²

The *sutta* cultivates principles of peace through “*santam padam abhisamecca*”, extending individual peace to foster communal and global harmony. Through meditation and mindfulness, individuals develop an awareness of life’s interconnectedness, a fundamental element of this journey. This practice enhances one’s understanding of their social impact on others, leading to more conscious and ethical decision-making in daily life. With the aid of mindfulness, individuals recognize the consequences of their actions and choose to adopt peaceful and sustainable behaviors. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should understand the impact of their actions and seek peace for oneself and others.”

Individuals who actively promote peace implement measures to reduce conflicts while fostering mutual understanding between opposing communities. The path to peace involves various actions, such as facilitating public dialogues to initiate peace efforts and engaging in compassionate acts to heal the wounds of past conflicts. Individual contributions to peacebuilding create a profound impact, shaping social systems that cultivate peaceful coexistence worldwide. True global peace extends beyond the mere absence of conflict, requiring justice among nations and mutual respect among all human beings. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should radiate loving-kindness to all beings, without exception.”

The pursuit of peace and the practice of mindfulness have direct impacts on sustainable development for those striving toward “*santam padam abhisamecca*”. Lasting peace creates conditions that enable sustainable initiatives to flourish. During conflicts, societies lose essential resources for sustainable development, as these are diverted toward destructive activities. In contrast, peaceful nations allocate their resources to environmental sustainability plans, equitable resource distribution, and economic stability. Systems that cultivate peace play a crucial role in helping diverse communities achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty reduction, addressing inequality, environmental protection, and fostering universal peace and justice. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “Let all beings be happy and free from suffering, living with a sense of balance.”

² Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003) - *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and the Clinical Applications of Mindfulness*. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 59 (2), p. 139 - 153.

III. FUNDAMENTAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING *METTĀ*

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* presents a structured teaching on the fundamental practice of *mettā*, or loving-kindness. This *sutta* emphasizes that the practice begins with developing capability and integrity while fostering open communication, maintaining a gentle nature, and demonstrating humility in one's behavior. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, "One should be capable, upright, straightforward, and gentle, approachable and humble in character."

The first essential principle, *sakko*, represents life competency, encompassing both practical skills and emotional intelligence to navigate life's challenges effectively. Mastering emotional intelligence, a crucial skill, enables individuals to regulate emotions constructively, fostering meaningful social connections and nurturing compassionate communities. Humans possess an innate ability to recognize emotional cues, enhancing empathy and deepening social bonds. Upholding upright actions and equitable behavior serves as a manifestation of the *mettā sutta*'s teachings.³

The principles of upright conduct (*ujū*) and straightforward conduct (*sūjū*) are deeply interconnected, as both represent sincerity in behavior. Moral integrity guides individuals to treat others with fairness and rationality, ensuring that their actions reflect ethical values. Honest and transparent communication lies at the core of these principles, preserving truth and sincerity in interactions. These interconnected virtues enable individuals to approach their responsibilities with kindness and justice, fostering safe and respectful communities. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* teaches that honesty and integrity define both spoken words and overall conduct (Scharmer, 2009).⁴

To cultivate open and approachable communication, one must embody the trait of *suṇaco*, which signifies being receptive and easy to engage with. This quality fosters safe emotional environments by strengthening personal connections through deeper understanding. Being approachable facilitates strong community relationships by reducing intimidation and creating space for meaningful dialogue. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* emphasizes that cultivating an open and accessible attitude fosters mutual respect through speech.⁵

The principle of *mudu* embodies gentleness, transforming unpleasant circumstances into harmonious encounters that foster strong human connections. Sacred gentleness cultivates individuals who communicate with tenderness, preventing destructive conflicts and promoting peaceful relationships. Practicing gentleness enhances one's ability to understand others, leading to compassionate actions and peaceful dispute resolution. In

³ Buddhārakkhita (1995), p. 35.

⁴ Scharmer, C. O. (2009) - *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges: The Social Technology of Presencing*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, p. 120 – 7.

⁵ Bateson, G. (1972) - *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publishing, p. 56.

contrast, narcissistic tendencies and ego-driven behavior oppose the value of humility (*anātimānī*), necessitating mindful management. This approach fosters equality by removing barriers created by social status perceptions. A culture of mutual respect serves as the foundation for cooperative community relations, as collective efforts naturally reinforce this respect (Hopkins, 2001). According to the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, the Buddha instructs: “One should be gentle by refraining from harsh words and actions.”

The *sutta* conveys essential lessons on life satisfaction (*santussako*), benefiting others (*subhāro*), embracing a simple lifestyle (*appakicco*), and completing tasks with minimal effort (*sallāhukavutti*). Contentment imparts fundamental principles of a fulfilled life, as it counteracts the relentless desire for material goods driven by consumer culture. A shift in mindset is crucial, as unchecked materialism harms both the environment and social relationships. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* emphasizes that individuals should cultivate contentment through a simple lifestyle while generously sharing their resources with others (Buddharakkhita, 1995).

Subhāro represents our capacity for generosity and assistance, which strengthens community bonds and enhances communal resilience. A willingness to help others fosters a shared sense of support, contributing to social cohesion and overall well-being. According to the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should be ready to provide help whenever others require assistance without hesitation.”

Simplicity in life (*appakicco*) encourages individuals to minimize excessive consumption while practicing sustainable resource management. Those who embrace sufficiency with minimal possessions not only reduce environmental harm but also deepen their connection with nature. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* emphasizes this principle, stating that one should cultivate simplicity by renouncing excessive desires.

The principle of *sallāhukavutti* emphasizes strategic resource management to create the freedom necessary for positive and sustainable actions. The efficient use of resources, combined with proper time management, enhances personal productivity while minimizing waste, leading to more equitable resource distribution. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* teaches that wisdom in resource management contributes to the well-being of all beings.

Established disciplinary systems support the functioning of social structures while encouraging behaviors that preserve both the community and the broader natural environment. The character traits embedded in these teachings equip individuals with essential tools to cultivate peaceful societies. When integrated into personal life and community practices, these principles serve as practical instruments for fostering meaningful social and environmental change. Through these virtues, individuals contribute to a world that upholds both peace and harmony for all.

IV. EXPANDING METTĀ TO ALL BEINGS

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* outlines essential qualities for cultivating the

practice of *mettā*, also known as loving-kindness. An individual who excels in practicing *mettā* must embody uprightness, simplicity, and gentleness while maintaining humility. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “One should be capable, upright, straightforward, easy to speak to, and gentle in essence”.⁶

The first characteristic, *sacca*, signifies life competency through the integration of skills and emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to navigate life’s challenges effectively. Emotional intelligence, defined by the ability to regulate emotions, fosters positive social relationships and creates supportive social environments. This competency extends beyond the mere completion of tasks, as it allows individuals to recognize emotional cues that strengthen empathy and compassion. As emphasized in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “One should be skilled in goodness and cultivate emotional intelligence.”

The concepts of *ujū* and *sūjū* collectively represent genuine behavior rooted in unwavering integrity. A morally upright individual adheres to ethical principles, ensuring fair and rational treatment of others. A key aspect of this virtue is honest and transparent communication in one’s native language. These qualities empower individuals to act with kindness and fairness, fostering trust and mutual respect within their communities. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should be honest, upright, and straightforward, always speaking with integrity.”

Suvaco signifies approachability as a fundamental trait for fostering open and meaningful communication. By creating emotionally safe spaces, individuals enhance mutual understanding and cultivate respect among others. Community relationships strengthen when individuals are approachable and perceived as friendly and receptive speakers. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: ‘One should be easy to approach and speak to, offering kindness to all’ (Schramm, 1962).

The concept of gentleness, as expressed in *mudu*, involves transforming challenging situations into considerate and compassionate interactions, thereby strengthening social connections. A gentle approach not only fosters peaceful communication but also aids in resolving conflicts effectively. By practicing gentleness, individuals cultivate deeper understanding, leading to more empathetic and harmonious resolutions. However, ego and narcissistic tendencies must be regulated as they contradict the principle of humility (*anattā*). This humility fosters social equality by dissolving barriers created by perceived or actual social hierarchies. In cooperative communities, mutual respect flourishes through collective efforts that nurture humility. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should be gentle in all encounters, avoiding conflict and embracing humility.”

This text provides valuable lessons on contentment (*santussako*),

⁶ Schärmer, C. O. (2009) - *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges: The Social Technology of Presencing*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, p. 134.

generosity (*subhara*), the sufficiency of basic needs (*appakicco*), and the seamless management of responsibilities (*sallahukavutti*). Contentment plays a crucial role in assessing human desires, encouraging individuals to resist the relentless consumerism that defines modern markets. By fostering an appreciation for existing possessions, individuals can minimize destructive consumption patterns. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* emphasizes the importance of this approach, as unchecked materialism not only depletes natural ecosystems but also weakens human relationships. As stated in the *sutta*: “Be content with what you have, practice simplicity, and live a life of service.”⁷

Subhara embodies the spirit of selfless service, fostering strong bonds among community members and establishing a resilient social foundation. A person’s willingness to assist others cultivates a sense of mutual support, reinforcing essential social ties and promoting collective well-being. As emphasized in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “Be ready to help all beings, offering kindness and support.”⁸

Appakicco, or the principle of life simplicity, encourages individuals to embrace minimalist consumption habits, fostering sustainable resource management. By seeking only what is necessary, individuals cultivate a deeper connection with their environment while reducing their ecological footprint. As emphasized in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “Live simply and practice mindful consumption for the welfare of all beings.”

The proper practice of *sallahukavutti* requires effective resource management to ensure the availability of resources for sustainable and beneficial practices. Wise resource allocation enhances personal well-being, improves efficiency, and minimizes waste. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, “One should manage resources wisely for the benefit of all.”

Through these behavioral teachings, communities cultivate fundamental character traits essential for maintaining both social harmony and environmental balance. These virtues serve as foundational principles that empower individuals to contribute to the development of lasting, peaceful communities. By integrating these teachings into their personal lives and community practices, individuals can become agents of social and environmental transformation, as emphasized in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “One’s actions should promote harmony, peace, and sustainability for all beings.”⁹

⁷ Thich Nhat Hanh. (1999) - *The Heart of the Buddha’s Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace and Joy*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, p. 39.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Ariyaratne, A. T. (2003) - “Buddhism and International Humanitarian Law”, *Sri Lanka Journal of International Law*, 15, p. 11.

V. THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF *METTĀ*

Mettā (loving-kindness) has universal applicability, exerting tangible influence on individual lives, ethical decision-making, and public policies. The phrase “*sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*” embodies an essential ethical principle that guides policy development and personal actions. Since the world is interconnected, the well-being and security of others are intrinsically linked to our own. Practicing *mettā* fosters a global community where collective happiness is achieved by supporting all beings. This principle encourages policies that prioritize the common good over individual gain or short-term benefits. Rooted in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, it advocates for global peace and sustainable development by addressing systemic issues beyond fragmented, short-sighted approaches that benefit only a few. As the *sutta* expresses: “May all beings be happy.”

Conflicts continue to escalate alongside environmental degradation and increasing social divisions, highlighting the urgent need for *mettā* in the modern world. *Mettā* transcends cultural, religious, and national boundaries, serving as a universal practice. It actively fosters interpersonal understanding and empathy - both essential for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence. In today’s world, there is a pressing need for policies that prioritize collective well-being rather than favoring isolated interest groups. *Mettā* serves as an inspiration for leaders to establish governance systems that emphasize social welfare, environmental protection, and sustainable economic planning, ensuring harmony in international relations. The core principle, “*sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*”, “may all beings be happy”, underscores the necessity of embedding compassion into societal systems at every level, from inception to execution. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “Let no one deceive another, nor despise anyone anywhere.”¹⁰

The *mettā* practice, expressed in the verse “*ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi... sambhavesi va*”, embraces all living beings - those visible and invisible, within or beyond the Earth’s limits, whether presently alive or yet to be born. This verse signifies that compassionate benevolence knows no exclusions, conditions, or limitations. The teaching is profoundly relevant in addressing social inequality, environmental degradation, and discriminatory practices. By embodying *mettā*, one dismantles the structures of social hierarchy and prejudice that restrict access to resources and opportunities. This principle transforms *mettā* from mere sentiment into a policy framework that supports individual advancement regardless of race, gender, nationality, or economic status. As stated in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.”

Due to the flexibility of *mettā*, which embraces all life forms, from humans to animals, it fosters complete harmony with the principles of sustainable

¹⁰ Buddhārakkhita, A. (1995) - *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta: The Hymn of the Universal Love. Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism*. Available at: [insert URL if applicable] (Accessed: 21/01/2025).

development. Sustainable development seeks a holistic balance between its three core pillars: environmental protection, social equity, and economic progress. *Mettā* aligns with this vision by promoting compassion and ethical responsibility, ensuring that human development occurs within a socially just and ecologically sustainable framework.

Biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem are essential for human survival, and the perspective of *mettā* aligns with this understanding. Every living organism, including humans, suffers when the environment is misused. The overexploitation of natural resources, coupled with industrial pollution and deforestation, disrupts the balance of *mettā*, severing the connection between present and future generations and the well-being of Planet Earth.¹¹

Societies that acknowledge the intrinsic value of all forms of life are more likely to establish laws for nature conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable consumption. The practice of *mettā* fosters resilience, helping individuals accept disappointments with grace while also inspiring environmental protection and climate initiatives. This understanding expands *mettā* beyond human-centered concerns, aligning with the teaching from the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “Let no one harm another.”

Policies related to social well-being, economic efficiency, and sustainability undergo profound transformation through the practice of *mettā*. This ethical framework plays a crucial role in reducing inequality, fostering peace, and ensuring the well-being of every community member - aligning closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Those who prioritize compassion in addressing global challenges such as poverty, healthcare, and education are best equipped to create lasting solutions. A *mettā*-based economic system integrates financial success with social values, ensuring that development remains both profitable and socially responsible. When businesses apply ethical standards, social responsibility, and fair trade principles, they contribute to worker protection, environmental sustainability, and equitable economic growth, reflecting the teaching of the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: “May all beings live in peace.”¹²

From a personal perspective, those who adopt a *mettā* mindset experience inner peace, which enhances interpersonal bonds and fosters social harmony. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* also provides valuable guidance on addressing mental health issues and emotional and social difficulties, which have grown increasingly prevalent in modern societies. Research has shown that loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*) not only reduces anxiety but also promotes positive emotions, contributing to overall life satisfaction.

¹¹ World Health Organization (WHO). (2018) - *Mindfulness and Meditation for Stress Reduction: Benefits and Techniques*. Available at: <https://www.who.int> (Accessed: 08/03/2025).

¹² Buddharakkhita, A. (1995) - *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta: The Hymn of the Universal Love. Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism*. Available at: [insert URL if applicable] (Accessed: 21/01/2025).

The integration of *mettā* in education systems, workplaces, and healthcare settings encourages the development of resilient, emotionally intelligent, and compassionate communities. By practicing *mettā*, workplace hostility and social segregation decrease, leading to more connected and supportive environments.

On one hand, *mettā* practice is both a spiritual and ethical doctrine, and on the other hand, it serves as a practical path to universal peace. If nations adopt *mettā* as the guiding principle in their global relations, it could provide a foundation to transform diplomatic interactions worldwide. *Mettā* is rooted in collaboration and diplomatic solutions. This approach calls for fair trade standards, the provision of charity, and the equitable distribution of nature's resources as the basis for global well-being, benefiting all, not just restricted classes. In this way, *mettā* aligns ethical principles with practical political frameworks, demonstrating that peace-building goes hand-in-hand with the pursuit of sustainable development, as envisioned in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: "May all beings be happy and peaceful."¹³

VI. PRACTICAL STEPS FOR NON-CONFLICT AND HARMONY

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* offers profound instructions on preventing strife and fostering unity for the sake of peace and sustainable development. The *sutta* conveys this through the phrases, "*na paro paraṃ nikubbetha/ nāṇṇamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya*", which highlight the importance of not deceiving others, wishing harm upon them, or engaging in conflict. These essential teachings are designed to promote peace and mutual respect, both of which are crucial for the success of sustainable development. *Mettā* (loving-kindness), when practiced according to the *sutta*'s guidance, serves as a transformative social force that improves individual and communal relationships. These timeless principles help build resilience through cooperation and protect sustainability, especially in times of global tension, misunderstandings, and environmental crises.

Successfully avoiding disputes goes beyond mere conflict avoidance. Individuals must cultivate habits and mindsets that foster understanding and cooperative relationships. To achieve this, one must develop empathy skills, along with active listening and the ability to accept multiple interpretations of a situation beyond personal viewpoints. When people practice empathy, they enable coexistence, as this mindset helps them understand others' experiences before reacting defensively or aggressively. Empowered communities achieve better outcomes through collective action when they engage in dialogue with constructive feedback, rather than resorting to criticism or confrontation. The world today demands a focus on this principle, as social and political conflicts hinder communities from collaborating on critical global issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and humanitarian emergencies.¹⁴

¹³ Gollwitzer, P. M. (1990) - "Action phases and mind-sets", in Higgins, E. T. and Sorrentino, R. M. (eds.) *Handbook of Motivation and Cognition: Foundations of Social Behavior*. New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2, p. 53 - 92.

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, T. & Cutler, H. C. (1998) - *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*.

Sustainable peace and development hinge on the elimination of deception in all its forms. The *sutta*'s emphasis on “*na paro param nikubbetha*”, meaning “do not deceive others”, highlights the critical role of honesty and integrity in interpersonal and societal relationships. Trust is essential for the flourishing of all kinds of relationships - whether personal, professional, or political. Trust forms the foundation of business dealings, governmental affairs, and international diplomacy. In the age of digital media, the widespread propagation of misleading information underscores the need for absolute truth and transparency, which have become vital pillars for our world today.¹⁵

Deceitful societies are fragile because the practice of manipulation deepens societal rifts rather than fostering beneficial partnerships. In contrast, the practice of truthfulness enables individuals and institutions to build strong, trust-based collaborative networks, which are essential for addressing global challenges effectively. The principle of integrity supports the functioning of democratic institutions, corporate ethics, and social justice movements, contributing directly to sustainable development.¹⁶

The *sutta* advises practitioners to avoid harboring negative feelings toward others and to refrain from wishing harm upon anyone, reflecting the values of compassion and nonviolence. The Buddhist teaching expressed in “*nāṇṇamañṇassa dukkhamiccheyya*” clearly prohibits inflicting suffering upon others, emphasizing that peace can only be achieved through mindful speech, actions, and contemplation. This core principle helps prevent future conflicts, as negative emotions often fuel endless cycles of violence, revenge, and hostility. Non-injury, as represented by Ahimsa, goes beyond the mere absence of harm - it calls for consistent good deeds, active peacebuilding efforts, and the restoration of injuries rather than their escalation. When adopted by leaders, policymakers, and community organizers, this principle fosters greater social cohesion and lasting stability through reconciliation processes.

This metaphor, “*mātā yathā niyaṃ puttā āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe*”, illustrates the immense protection and care that mothers offer their only child, symbolizing our duty to safeguard every entity in the world. Our relationships with each other, as well as our interactions with the natural world, should mirror the unconditional, selfless nurturing love that mothers show toward their children. This love highlights our responsibility to protect all forms of life and the natural environment. We come to understand that every element in nature supports a single, unified system. This principle urges us to fundamentally change our attitudes toward nature, especially given the environmental challenges and climate change we face today. To preserve resources for future

New York, NY: Riverhead Books, p. 12.

¹⁵ Shrivastava, P., Kothari, A., & Kothari, A. (2016) - *Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility: In Global Context. Sustainability Science*, 11(2), p. 115 - 128.

¹⁶ Buddhārakkhita, A. (1995) - *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta: The Hymn of the Universal Love. Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism*. Available at: [insert URL if applicable] (Accessed: 21/01/2025).

generations, societies must adopt sustainable practices that prioritize the well-being of upcoming populations. The spirit of *mettā* should guide governmental actions that protect biodiversity, reduce waste, and promote sustainable consumption to maintain the natural environment for all beings.

VII. DAILY PRACTICE AND MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness and awareness are vital foundations for the development of *mettā*, according to the *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta*. The spiritual teachings emphasize the importance of maintaining mindfulness at all times - whether standing, walking, sitting, or sleeping - without succumbing to drowsiness so that loving-kindness becomes a continuous state. *Mettā* should extend beyond formal meditation, as these teachings establish loving-kindness as a constant practice that permeates all aspects of daily life.¹⁷

When people practice mindfulness in every activity, they can establish loving-kindness as an automatic response in their thoughts, speech, and actions. *Mettā* involves a conscious effort to cultivate benevolent feelings towards all beings in every moment of daily life, as taught in various spiritual traditions. Mindfulness helps individuals respond with calm, empathetic care rather than reacting with anger or impatience. Such ethical living arises from heightened awareness of the consequences of one's actions, providing a solid ethical foundation. The practice of *mettā*-mindfulness leads to inner peace for the practitioner, which then radiates outward, positively impacting family relationships, professional environments and ultimately contributing to the well-being of society as a whole.¹⁸

Being mindful during *mettā* practice involves staying mentally aware of your thoughts, emotions, and attitudes throughout your daily activities. Those who embody *mettā* carefully monitor how they speak, ensuring their words remain gentle and harmless. Through mindfulness, they observe their mental processes, preventing negative emotions like jealousy, resentment, and ill will from taking root. In physically demanding situations, mindfulness helps individuals maintain compassionate and non-harmful actions. When practicing *mettā*, individuals use understanding to resolve workplace conflicts rather than resorting to hostility, fostering peaceful work relationships. Mindful communication enhances relationship quality by reducing miscommunication, leading to deeper connections between people.¹⁹

To cultivate awareness of *mettā*, individuals must train their minds to consistently focus on virtues such as loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These qualities help combat harmful mental

¹⁷ UNESCO. (2015) - *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> (Accessed: 08/03/2025).

¹⁸ Babbitt, D. D. (ed.) (1936) - *The Dhammapada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ Hofmann, S. G., Grossman, P. and Hinton, D. E. (2011) - "Loving-kindness and compassion meditation: Potential for psychological interventions", *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(7), p. 1126 - 1132.

states like greed, ignorance, and anger, which lead to personal suffering and relationship discord. Through mindfulness, one's perspective shifts toward the practice of the "*brahmavihāra*", fostering a mindset of kindness toward both oneself and others. Loving-kindness is expressed through consistent well-wishing toward others in all situations. Compassion strengthens empathy and enhances the ability to reduce others' distress. Sympathetic joy encourages genuine happiness for the success of others, replacing envy. Equanimity allows individuals to face adversity without succumbing to emotional turmoil.

VIII. THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As outlined in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, the principles of loving-kindness provide a comprehensive framework for fostering both peaceful world conditions and sustainable development. These principles guide individuals in achieving personal transformation while empowering them to collaborate towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the practice of *mettā*, which promotes peace, empathy, and mutual respect, individuals contribute directly to the achievement of SDGs, particularly in reducing inequality, promoting peace and justice, and ensuring good health for all.

Mettā's core principles of universal love and non-harm align perfectly with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which promotes peace, inclusivity, and equal access to justice, as well as the development of effective and accountable institutions nationwide. By fostering a respectful outlook toward all life forms and a dedication to helping others, communities can reduce violence and strengthen their institutions' mediation and justice delivery systems. The broader adoption of *mettā* practice across communities will reduce tension and encourage more harmonious cohabitation among people.

The *mettā* philosophy directly aligns with SDG 3 by promoting healthy lives and well-being across all age groups through empathy and kindness. Numerous studies show that loving-kindness meditation offers mental and emotional wellness benefits, reducing stress markers, anxiety, and depression symptoms while boosting positive emotions and psychological resilience. These benefits are particularly significant in today's world as mental health conditions continue to rise, impacting both social and economic well-being.²⁰

The principles of *mettā* serve as key elements in numerous global case studies and projects that effectively foster sustainable growth and peace. One such example is the Tzu Chi Foundation, based in Taiwan, which provides humanitarian services worldwide. The foundation implements Buddhist humanitarian practices through its extensive disaster relief efforts, as well as its medical and educational programs. Tzu Chi's volunteers follow a compassionate relief principle, offering immediate help with empathy while maintaining the dignity of all recipients. This approach not only alleviates immediate suffering but also empowers communities to rebuild and achieve long-lasting stability.

²⁰ Schramm, W. (1962) - "Mass communication", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 13(1), p. 251 - 284.

The concept of *mettā* is embedded within community development programs in Thailand. Thai villages employ *mettā*-based interventions to address community conflicts and environmental challenges in various settlements across the nation. By fostering empathy and mutual respect, these initiatives encourage community members to engage in dialogues that enhance their collaborative efforts in water management and forest conservation. *Mettā*-based initiatives demonstrate the effectiveness of *mettā* in transforming into practical environmental protection strategies that unite communities.²¹

Global educational institutions are now incorporating *mettā* alongside mindfulness training into their curricula to address conflicts and foster unity. These educational programs teach students how to maintain kind and considerate relationships, as social and emotional learning for children helps produce workforce members who are more compassionate and understanding.

IX. CONCLUSION

The *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta* offers a transformative philosophy that extends beyond an individual's mental growth. The combination of *mettā* (loving-kindness), ethical standards, mindfulness practices, and peace-building methods creates a system for developing both internal peace and universal wellness. Through the cultivation of “*atthakusalena*” (skilled in goodness) and “*santam padam abhisamecca*” (seeking the state of peace), individuals can build a compassionate and ethical lifestyle, benefiting not only their personal lives but also their communities and the global sphere. By prioritizing honesty, humility, and gentleness, social environments that foster mutual trust, respect, and teamwork are created, promoting the development of lasting, peaceful communities.

The *sutta* shows that the practice of *mettā* extends beyond meditation, as it creates meaningful change in interactions with others. People are encouraged to actively practice by showing kindness and generosity while maintaining mindfulness in their daily communication. The goal of mindfulness through loving-kindness applies to all situations, whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down. As stated in “*Tiṭṭharāṃ carāṃ nisinno va sayāno vā yāvatassa vigatamiddho*” and “*Etaraṃ satiraṃ adhiṭṭheyya*”, a mind free of oblivion remains vital. This continuous spiritual practice helps individuals overcome harmful feelings such as anger, selfishness, and ignorance while fostering kindness, patience, and mental steadiness. These qualities are needed more than ever today as the world faces increasing tensions between groups and environmental decline.²²

The widespread implementation of *mettā* has a significant impact on both establishing global peace and advancing long-term development. The teachings of the *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta* support global initiatives for social justice while also promoting environmental sustainability and economic equity through

²¹ Babbitt, D. D. (ed.) (1936) - *The Dhammapada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 98.

²² Hopkins, J. (2001) - *Cultivating Compassion*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, p. 67.

the cultivation of unconditional respect and kindness. The principles of *mettā* transform into ethical leadership that enables peaceful conflict resolution and compassionate decision-making when applied in policies, governance, and daily practice. The core goal of sustainable development is to improve the quality of life for all beings, ensuring dignity, security, and happiness for all. The *mettā sutta* serves as a moral guide, leading diverse communities toward a world that unites justice, sustainability, and compassion.

Nevertheless, the *Karaṇīya Mettā sutta* transcends its Buddhist origins to serve as a universal guide, urging us to choose love over hatred, peace over conflict, and sustainable practices over exploitation. Both individuals and leaders must integrate *mettā* practice into their daily lives and policy implementations to ensure that the future world embraces peace and sustainability. This ancient *sutta* teaches principles that remain just as relevant today as they were centuries ago, emphasizing universal values of kindness and harmony.

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SĪLA PĀRAMĪ: THE QUINTESSENTIAL EXAMPLE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The concept of *pāramī(s)* transcends the merely superhuman, suggesting that what one can achieve with concerted effort and dedication, another can also accomplish. The concept of perfections in Buddhist philosophy presents a profound and enduring method for evaluating personal achievements, transcending the often transient and material markers of success typically associated with careers and interpersonal relationships. Perfections, or *pāramī(s)* in Theravāda Buddhism, once developed, provide a robust foundation that not only withstands but also transcends the vicissitudes of daily life. These qualities, including generosity, patience, and determination, among others, are not only dependable but also enhance one's resilience against the inevitable challenges and fluctuations of life. As such, they represent a more substantial and enduring form of accomplishment that can guide an individual toward a life of deeper meaning and purpose.

The text explores the ten *pāramī(s)*, which are perfections cultivated deliberately by those pursuing the path toward Buddhahood, with a special focus on *sīla pāramitā*. These perfections are deeply embedded in the Buddha's doctrine, emphasizing the transcendence from a mundane existence to enlightened states. The second perfection, *sīla* (morality), is the focus of a substantial portion of the text. Moral conduct or *sīla* represents the second of the *pāramī(s)* (perfections) essential in the development of a Bodhisattva, whether leading a monastic or a lay life. The text explores the characteristics, functions, proximate causes, and applications of *sīla* in Buddhist teachings. Overall, the text argues that *sīla*, or moral conduct, plays a critical role not only in the individual practitioner's life but also in fostering peace and order within society. This moral framework restrains individuals from engaging in physical and verbal misconduct, guiding them to act gently and calmly. Those who embed *sīla* into their daily lives experience tranquility, reflecting a serene atmosphere in their communities.

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Keywords: *pāramī(s)*, *sīla pāramitā*, *Bodhisattva*, *moral conduct*, *transcendence*.

I. INTRODUCTION

Within Theravada Buddhism, the term “*sīla*” stands as a cornerstone of ethical conduct, encompassing a wide range of moral practices and precepts. It is often translated as “morality,” “moral practice,” “good character,” or “moral code,” reflecting its multifaceted nature. *sīla* plays a central role in various aspects of Buddhist life. It forms the foundation of the ethical framework for all Buddhists, regardless of their social status or monastic affiliation. This is evident in the observance of the five precepts, a basic code of conduct that includes abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and consuming intoxicants. For those seeking deeper spiritual practice, such as during Sabbath observances or on other special occasions, the eight precepts offer a more rigorous ethical framework, adding prohibitions against eating after midday, engaging in entertainment and adornment, and sleeping on comfortable beds. Novice monks, in turn, adhere to ten precepts, which further include the prohibition of handling money.

II. WHAT IS SĪLA (KIM SĪLAN TI)?

In Buddhist philosophy, a comprehensive understanding of morality is presented through a fourfold classification detailed in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (1.44). This classification can be visualized diagrammatically. The first two divisions of this framework encompass the Ten Good Paths of Action (*dasakusalakammāpathā*):

- (1) Abstention from taking life (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*): Refraining from harming any living being. (2) Abstention from taking what has not been given (*adinnādānā veramaṇī*): Respecting the property and possessions of others. (3) Abstention from sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*): Cultivating responsible and ethical sexual behaviour. (4) Abstention from lying (*musāvādā veramaṇī*): Speaking truthfully and honestly in all situations. (5) Abstention from abusive speech (*pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī*): Refraining from harsh, divisive, or hurtful language. (6) Abstention from slanderous speech (*pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī*): Avoiding speech that harms the reputation or well-being of others. (7) Abstention from idle talk (*samphappalāpā veramaṇī*): Engaging in meaningful and constructive communication. (8) Non-covetousness (*abhijjhā*): Cultivating contentment and freedom from greed and desire. (9) Non-malevolence (*avyāpāda*): Cultivating compassion and goodwill towards all beings. (10) Right views (*sammā-ditṭhi*): Holding to wholesome and beneficial beliefs about the nature of reality.¹

Beyond these specific sets of rules, *sīla* permeates various aspects of Buddhist moral ideals and values. It guides both monastics and lay practitioners

¹ Keown, D. (1983). *Morality in the Vissudhimagga*. The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, p. 63

in cultivating ethical conduct in all aspects of their lives. Importantly, *sīla*, alongside *samādhi* (meditation) and *paññā* (wisdom), constitutes one of the three pillars of the Noble Eightfold Path, the core path to liberation from suffering as outlined by the Buddha. *Sīla* is recognized as an essential virtue for achieving higher states of spiritual realization. In Theravāda Buddhism, the attainment of *arahatta* – the state of an enlightened being who has been liberated from suffering – is contingent upon the cultivation of *sīla*. Similarly, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the path of the bodhisattva, who vows to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, emphasizes the cultivation of *sīla* as a crucial step towards achieving this noble goal.²

Sīla, encompassing moral conduct, good character, and ethical discipline, occupies a central position within the intricate tapestry of Buddhist thought. Numerous scholars, including the esteemed Venerable Nārada Thera, have emphasized the profound significance of *sīla* as a cornerstone of the Buddhist path. Venerable Nārada Thera, in his seminal work *Buddhist Ethics*, intricately connects *sīla* to the core tenets of the Buddhist tradition. He elucidates that *sīla* is not merely a set of rules but rather a profound engagement with the essence of Buddhism itself. He demonstrates this by linking *sīla* to the revered “Triple Gem” – the Buddha, the Dhamma (teachings), and the *saṅgha* (community) – highlighting its integral role in the foundation of Buddhist belief and practice. Furthermore, Venerable Nārada emphasizes the profound connection between *sīla* and the doctrine of dependent origination, the core teaching that explains the interconnectedness of all phenomena and the cessation of suffering.

This emphasis on *sīla* is further solidified by its central position within the Noble Eightfold Path, the practical guide to liberation from suffering outlined by the Buddha. As one of the three essential pillars of this path, alongside *samādhi* (meditation) and *paññā* (wisdom), *sīla* provides the ethical foundation upon which the entire path rests. It guides practitioners toward a life of virtuous conduct, fostering inner peace and paving the way for deeper spiritual development. The significance of *sīla* transcends specific schools of Buddhist thought. In both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions, *sīla* is recognized as an indispensable virtue for achieving higher states of spiritual realization. For Theravāda Buddhists, the attainment of *arahatta*, the state of enlightenment and liberation from suffering, is contingent upon the meticulous cultivation of *sīla*. Similarly, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the path of the Bodhisattva, who vows to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, necessitates the unwavering practice of *sīla* as a fundamental cornerstone of their compassionate endeavours.

The profound importance of *sīla* is further underscored by its early prominence within the Buddhist canon. The first thirteen *Suttas* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, collectively known as the “collection on moral practices,” offer invaluable insights into the Buddha’s early teachings, emphasizing the paramount

² Swearer, D. K. (2005). Buddhist Virtue, Voluntary Poverty, and Extensive Benevolence. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 26(1), p. 77.

importance of ethical conduct. This early focus on *sīla* within the *Pāḷi* Canon highlights its foundational role in the development of Buddhist ethics and its enduring significance in contemporary Buddhist practice. Drawing parallels with Western philosophical thought, scholars like Damien Keown have drawn illuminating comparisons between Buddhist ethics, with its emphasis on *sīla*, and Aristotelian virtue ethics. Both traditions emphasize the cultivation of moral character and the pursuit of eudaimonia – a life of flourishing and well-being. However, Buddhist ethics, with its unique focus on liberation from suffering and the cultivation of compassion, offers a distinct perspective on the human condition and the path to a meaningful and fulfilling life.³

Several scholars emphasize the profound significance of *sīla*, not merely as a set of rules but as a cornerstone for the holistic well-being of both the individual and the community. They argue that *sīla* is integral to the overall plan for human flourishing within the Buddhist framework, encompassing not only individual ethical conduct but also contributing to a harmonious and just society. This perspective challenges earlier interpretations of Buddhism that often presented it as an otherworldly and amoral philosophy. Scholars like Venerable Nārada Thera and S. Tachibana have actively countered these misinterpretations, emphasizing the centrality of *sīla* within the Buddhist tradition. They argue that the early emphasis on ethical conduct, as evidenced in the early *Suttas*, demonstrates the Buddha's profound concern for moral living and its crucial role in human flourishing. These scholarly efforts can be seen as a response to earlier interpretations that presented Buddhism as primarily focused on individual salvation and detachment from the world. Notable among these earlier interpretations is Max Weber's influential work, which characterized early Buddhism as a form of otherworldly mysticism. Weber further posited a dualistic interpretation of Buddhism, suggesting a dichotomy between a popular Buddhism of the masses, primarily concerned with karmic retribution, and an elite Buddhism of the monks, focused on achieving *nirvāṇa*. This Weberian interpretation, which influenced subsequent scholars such as Winston King and Melford Spiro, has been subject to critical scrutiny. Scholars like Damien Keown have challenged this dualistic framework, arguing that it misrepresents the nuanced and holistic nature of Buddhist ethics. Keown, building upon the earlier critiques of Harvey B. Aronson, contends that *sīla* plays a central role in both individual and societal well-being and that a focus solely on *nirvāṇa* to the exclusion of ethical conduct within the world is a misrepresentation of the Buddha's teachings. By emphasizing the importance of *sīla* as a foundation for both individual and societal well-being, these scholars offer a more nuanced and holistic understanding of Buddhist ethics, highlighting its relevance to the contemporary world.⁴

³ Morality in the Vissudhimagga. *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, p. 73.

⁴ See Swearer, p. 78.

In his seminal work, *The Ethics of Buddhism*, S. Tachibana offers a valuable framework for understanding Buddhist ethics. He systematically categorizes Buddhist virtues into two distinct categories: self-regarding virtues and other-regarding virtues. Self-regarding virtues, as outlined by Tachibana, prioritize individual ethical development and include qualities such as self-restraint, abstinence, contentment, patience, celibacy, and purity. Conversely, other-regarding virtues emphasize the cultivation of compassionate and altruistic qualities, encompassing humility, benevolence, liberality, reverence, gratitude, and tolerance. Notably, some virtues, such as veracity and righteousness, are considered to transcend these categories, contributing to both individual and societal well-being. By emphasizing the cultivation of virtues, Tachibana draws attention to the concept of *paramī* (perfections), a cluster of moral and spiritual qualities that are essential for the path to enlightenment. This concept is deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition, with its origins found in texts such as the *Cariyāpiṭaka* (Basket of Conduct) and the Jātaka tales, which recount the previous lives of the Buddha. These texts present the *paramīs* not merely as a list of virtues but as a developmental process, acquired gradually over numerous lifetimes. This understanding underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of ethical cultivation, emphasizing the continual refinement of character and the gradual progress toward higher states of consciousness. From a logical perspective, the *paramīs* can be viewed as necessary conditions for the realization of the ultimate telos of Buddhist practice: the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, the state of liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth. This highlights the profound connection between ethical conduct and the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, emphasizing that the cultivation of virtue is not merely an ethical imperative but also a crucial step on the path to enlightenment.⁵

III. PĀRAMĪ(S)

The concept of *pāramī(s)* transcends the merely superhuman, suggesting that what one can achieve with concerted effort and dedication, another can also accomplish. The concept of perfections in Buddhist philosophy presents a profound and enduring method for evaluating personal achievements, transcending the often transient and material markers of success typically associated with careers and interpersonal relationships. Perfections, or *pāramī(s)* in Theravāda Buddhism, once developed, provide a robust foundation that not only withstands but also transcends the vicissitudes of daily life. These qualities, including generosity, patience, and determination, among others, are not only dependable but also enhance one's resilience against the inevitable challenges and fluctuations of life. As such, they represent a more substantial and enduring form of accomplishment that can guide an individual toward a life of deeper meaning and purpose.

pāramī are traditionally enumerated as ten virtues that must be perfected over lifetimes by those aspiring to reach Buddhahood (Bodhisatta). The *pāramī(s)* in the technical sense of perfection, according to ten numbers,

⁵ Ibid, p. 79.

occurs for the first time in the Buddhavaṃsa of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* in the Pāli tradition. The ten *pāramī(s)* according to the Buddhavaṃsa, are as follows: (1) *Dāna* (generosity/giving), (2) *sīla* (virtue/morality), (3) *nekkhamma* (renunciation), (4) *paññā* (wisdom), (5) *vīriya* (energy), (6) *khantī* (patience), (7) *sacca* (truthfulness), (8) *adhiṭṭhāna* (Determination), (9) *mettā* (Loving-kindness), (10) *upekkhā* (Equanimity).⁶ The Pāli Canon and its commentaries, particularly the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, provide the foundational texts for these doctrines⁷.

IV. PĀRAMĪ(S) (PERFECTION) IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

In the Buddhavaṃsa of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, the Buddha describes the *pāramī(s)* (perfections) necessary for attaining noble qualities. Fulfilling these *pāramī(s)* is essential for anyone aspiring to reach noble statuses. The practice of *pāramī(s)* aligns closely with core Buddhist doctrines such as *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anattā* (non-self). Each *pāramī(s)* cultivates qualities that counteract the root causes of suffering and promote the realization of non-self, steering the practitioner towards *nibbāna*. For example, the *pāramī(s)* of *nekkhamma* (renunciation) directly addresses the attachment and desires that bind beings to *samsāra*, the cycle of rebirth and suffering. The *pāramī(s)* are the noble qualities exemplified by actions such as generosity, which are conducted with compassion and skilful means. These virtues are distinctly characterized by their purity, being free from the influences of craving, conceit, and rigid views. The *pāramī(s)*, serving as a blueprint for the spiritual journey towards enlightenment, are examined not just in isolation but as an integrated framework, essential for those on the path to Buddhahood.⁸

The intrinsic qualities of the *pāramī(s)*, known as their characteristics, are defining features that make these virtues indispensable to the practitioner's moral and spiritual development. The functions of these virtues extend beyond the individual, offering assistance (*kicca rasa*), fostering contentment and success (*santutthi rasa*), and ensuring the fruition of wholesome efforts (*sampatti rasa*). The manifestation of the *pāramī(s)*, often observed in the persistent quest for the welfare of all beings, is a testament to the commitment of practitioners to the attainment of enlightenment.⁹ The concept of proximate cause (*padatthāna*) in the context of the *pāramī(s)* refers to the immediate and compelling reasons that give rise to the practice of these virtues. In Theravāda Buddhism, a proper mental attitude – marked by compassion and the aspiration for Buddhahood¹⁰ – is identified as the most powerful contributor

⁶ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2005). *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 235.

⁷ Horner, I.B. (Trans.). (1975). *The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon* (Part III): Chronicle of Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa) and Basket of Conduct (*Cariyāpiṭaka*). London: Pāli Text Society, p. 167.

⁸ Jinalankara, (n.d.). Sub-commentary, Interpretation of *vipassanā* and *pāramīs*, p. 41.

⁹ Jinalankara, (n.d.). Overview of *pāramī* Functions and Manifestations, p. 42.

¹⁰ Ibid., Analysis of *pāramī* Characteristics, p. 42.

to the emergence of true meritoriousness. This attitude serves as a catalyst, propelling practitioners toward the ultimate goal of transcending *saṃsāra* and realizing *nibbāna*.¹¹

V. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PĀRAMĪ(S)

The *pāramī(s)* represent key virtuous qualities cultivated deliberately by those pursuing the path toward Buddhahood. These perfections are deeply embedded in the Buddha's doctrine, emphasizing the transcendence from a mundane existence to enlightened states. According to the Pāli Canon, the Buddha himself stated: "Perfections (*pāramī(s)*) are for peace and end up leading to enlightenment"¹² (Bodhi, 2005, p. 112). These qualities are not merely ethical guidelines but philosophical commitments that challenge and refine one's character and consciousness. Theravāda Buddhism emphasizes the cultivation of specific virtues, known as the *pāramī(s)*, which are deemed essential for spiritual progress. These perfections form a framework that guides practitioners in developing the qualities necessary for profound spiritual transformation. In the Buddhavaṃsa of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, ten distinct perfections (*pāramī(s)*) are delineated, which are essential for the cultivation of noble qualities leading to supreme spiritual achievements. The perfections listed are as follows:

The ten perfections (*pāramī(s)*) of Buddhism:

Dāna: This Perfection Encompasses Acts of Giving, Ranging From Charitable Donations To Acts Of Selfless Service. (2) *Sīla*:

This Perfection Emphasizes Ethical Conduct, Including Adherence To Moral Precepts And Cultivating Virtuous Habits. (3) *Nekkhamma*:

This Perfection Involves The Detachment From Worldly Desires And Attachments, Cultivating A Sense Of Inner Freedom. (4) *Paññā*: This

Perfection Signifies The Cultivation Of Deep Insight, Understanding Of The True Nature Of Reality, And The Path To Liberation. (5) *Viriya*:

This Perfection Emphasizes The Importance Of Consistent Effort, Diligence, And Perseverance In The Pursuit Of Spiritual Goals. (6) *Khantī*:

This Perfection Encompasses Qualities Such As Tolerance, Acceptance, And The Ability To Endure Suffering With Equanimity. (7) *Sacca*:

This Perfection Emphasizes Honesty And Integrity In Thought, Word, And Deed. (8) *Adhiṭṭhāna*: This Perfection Highlights The

Importance Of Unwavering Resolve And Commitment To The Path Of Spiritual Development. (9) *Mettā*: This Perfection Emphasizes The

Cultivation Of Universal Love And Compassion Towards All Beings. (10) *Upekkhā*: This Perfection Emphasizes The Cultivation Of Mental

Balance And Equanimity In The Face Of Both Pleasant And Unpleasant Experiences. *Sīla pāramī(s)* (perfection of morality): Moral conduct or *sīla* represents the second of the *pāramī(s)* (perfections) essential in the

¹¹ Ibid., Discussion on Functional Aspects of *pāramīs*, p. 42.

¹² Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2005). *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*. Wisdom Publications, p. 112.

development of a Bodhisatta, whether leading a monastic or a lay life. For a Bodhisatta practicing as a recluse, there is a stringent adherence to the monastic codes of conduct. In contrast, a lay Bodhisatta commits to the five precepts: Abstaining from taking life, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants which impair clarity of mind. In the Jātaka tales, which recount the previous lives of the Buddha as a Bodhisatta, numerous instances demonstrate his commitment to *sīla* under extreme conditions. For example, in the Bhuridatta Jātaka, the Bodhisatta, born as a great serpent king, exhibits unwavering moral fortitude. Despite facing severe physical threats, he vows, “I would preserve my morality even if it required sacrificing my bones, my flesh, and my soul.”¹³ This episode is vividly illustrated when he remains non-violent while being attacked by a snake charmer, a testament to his profound commitment to non-harm.

The concept of *sīla* reaching the level of *paramattha pārami(s)*¹⁴ (supreme perfection) is highlighted in the Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā, where the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of morality is glorified. The *Sanḥapāla Jātaka*¹⁵, referenced in the text, narrates the Bodhisatta enduring torture by village youths without harboring any resentment. He states, “I was not annoyed with the village lads, even while they pricked me with stakes and hacked me with weapons - this is my perfection of morality.”¹⁶ This narrative emphasizes that true moral perfection involves maintaining integrity and compassion even in the face of direct harm, showcasing the Bodhisatta’s exceptional dedication to ethical principles. These narratives underline the profound moral challenges a Bodhisatta faces and overcomes, highlighting that *sīla* is not merely about following ethical guidelines but involves deep internalization of these principles to the extent of influencing one’s reactions under the most adverse circumstances. The stories from the Jātakas and the exegesis on these tales provide crucial insights into how moral conduct is intricately linked to the spiritual maturation of a Bodhisatta, setting a paradigm of ethical excellence. According to the commentary on the *Buddhavaṃsa*, morality (*sīla*) is depicted as the cornerstone upon which all skillful states are built. The text states, “*silānissāyakusalādhammānahāyanti, vaḍḍhanti ca*”¹⁷. This perspective underscores the significance of morality as an essential foundation for spiritual progress and ethical conduct within Buddhist practice.

Morality in this context is structured around four key disciplines that facilitate the development of a virtuous life: (1) Restraint of the *pāṭimokkha*

¹³ Bhuridatta Jātaka “*Ahaṃ kira me attabhāvo, hadayaṃ maṃsalohitaṃ, sabbametaṃ dajjāmi, sīlena me sītibhūtaṃ.*”

¹⁴ Bv-a.60.

¹⁵ Bv-a.60.

¹⁶ Ja V.172, “*Na kho panāhaṃ, bhikkhave, tadā sāhasikānaṃ kumārakānaṃ kujjhiṃ, yadā maṃ sīse pādena ca kesehi ca ākoṭeṣuṃ.*”

¹⁷ Buddhavaṃsa Commentary, “*silāni nissāya kusalā dhammā na hāyanti, vaḍḍhanti ca,*” explains the foundational role of morality in enhancing and maintaining skillful states, p. 82.

(*pāṭimokkhasaṃvara*): This involves adherence to the code of monastic discipline that governs the conduct of monks and nuns, ensuring actions remain aligned with the Dhamma. (2) Restraint of the senses (*indriyasaṃvara*): This principle refers to controlling one's sensory faculties to prevent the mind from being swayed by external stimuli. (3) Complete purity of one's mode of livelihood (*ājīvaparissuddhi*): Emphasizes the importance of ensuring that one's means of earning a living do not cause harm and are ethically sound. (4) Relying on requisites (*paccayasannissita*): Teaches moderation and detachment from material possessions by using life's necessities only to the extent needed.¹⁸

These four pillars of moral habits highlight the comprehensive approach Buddhism takes towards ethical living, illustrating how morality pervades every aspect of a practitioner's life, from personal conduct to social interactions and livelihood. This holistic approach ensures that morality is not just a personal virtue but a societal benefit, contributing to the overall well-being and harmony of the community. The *Cariyāpīṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* portrays *sīla* not merely as ethical conduct but as a profound practice of restraint and purification. It defines *sīla* as the comprehensive control over both physical actions and verbal expressions, the moderation of sensory perceptions, and maintaining a life of purity, particularly about food consumption. This discipline is recognized as Bodhisatta *sīla*, the virtues specific to a Bodhisatta.¹⁹

The text metaphorically compares the virtues of *sīla* to the purifying qualities of water and the medicinal properties of herbs. It suggests that while even the sacred waters of the Ganges cannot wash away the stain of hatred, the 'water of virtue' – *sīla pāramī(s)* – can cleanse these deep-seated defilements. Furthermore, it posits that while yellow sandalwood, known for its cooling properties, cannot quell the fever of lust, the practice of virtue effectively eradicates such desires. This analogy emphasizes the unmatched purifying power of *sīla* in the spiritual practice.²⁰ The text elaborates on the pivotal role of *sīla* in attaining higher states of consciousness, such as the *jhānas* and direct knowledge, describing it as a 'highway leading to the great city of *nibbāna*.' It underlines that *sīla* forms the foundation for the enlightenment not only of the Bodhisatta but also for disciples, *paccekabuddhā*, and the fully enlightened Buddhas. This highlights *sīla*'s universal importance across different spiritual paths within Buddhism.

In parallel with its discussion on *dāna*, the *jātakāni dāna* asserts that the Bodhisatta's pursuit of moral perfection spans countless lifetimes, illustrating the enduring commitment required to cultivate *sīla* to its highest level. To bring this concept to life, the text recounts tales from the Bodhisatta's previous existences, such as those of *sīla vanarājā*, Campeyyanāgarāja, Chaddanta, and Saṅkhapāla. These stories serve not just as moral lessons but as testaments

¹⁸ Ja V.106.

¹⁹ Cp-a. 273.

²⁰ Ibid., metaphorically compares *sīla*'s purifying power to natural elements, underscoring its efficacy in overcoming spiritual defilements, p. 46.

to the Bodhisatta's unwavering dedication to ethical living, regardless of the life form or circumstances he encountered.²¹ This expansive view of *sīla* encapsulates its crucial role in the Buddhist path, portraying it as essential for cleansing karmic impurities and as the bedrock upon which higher spiritual achievements are built.

In Buddhist teachings, the discussion of *sīla* (morality) typically follows *dāna* (generosity). This sequence emphasizes the importance of morality in purifying both the giver and the recipient. Morality is highlighted immediately after generosity to illustrate its dual role: Enhancing the benefits of giving by ensuring no harm is done and establishing a foundation for future favourable states immediately after promoting material prosperity. Morality involves adherence to ethical precepts, which include abstaining from actions that cause harm, such as stealing, lying, and killing. It is the foundation for personal and social harmony and is essential for advancing on the spiritual path. The Buddha emphasized, "*sīlavāhoti sīlasampanno*" – "One who is virtuous possesses morality"²² (AN 10.176).

Sīla, a foundational concept in Buddhist ethical practices, involves more than just abstaining from negative actions; it encompasses both the restraint of harmful behaviors and the cultivation of positive, virtuous habits. In the traditional exposition, *sīla* is divided into two main aspects: *Vārittasīla* and *cārittasīla*.²³ *Vārittasīla* refers to the control and abstention from three bodily misdeeds – killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct – and four verbal misdeeds – lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter. This form of *sīla* is about restraining oneself from actions that are considered morally reprehensible in Buddhist teachings. It serves as a protective measure that prevents individuals from causing harm to themselves and others, thus maintaining harmony within the community.²⁴ *Cāritta sīla*, on the other hand, involves actively cultivating virtuous habits. This includes practices such as *apacāyana*, which involves showing respect and reverence towards the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha), as well as to parents, teachers, and elders who are respected due to their age, status, or moral standing. It also encompasses *veyyāvacca*, which means engaging in acts of service and assistance to others, treating these deeds as if they were one's responsibilities. This aspect of *sīla* fosters a proactive approach to building and reinforcing communal and interpersonal

²¹ N. A. Jayawickrama, op.cit, p. 58.

²² AN 10. 176 .

²³ C. P. A. 301. "*Tayidaṃ sīlaṃ vārittaṃ, cārittanti duvidhaṃ.*" *Visuddhimagga*.1.11. "*Cārittavārittasena duvidhaṃ. Tathā ābhisamācārikaādibrahmacariyakavasena, virātiavirātiavasena, nissitānissitavasena, kālapariyantaāpāṇakoṭikavasena, sapariyantāpariyantavasena, lokiya lokuttara vasena ca.*"

²⁴ C. P. A. 301. "*Tatthāyaṃ bodhisattassa vārittasīle paṭipattikkamo – sabbasattesu tathā dayāpannaccittena bhavitabbaṃ, yathā supinantenapi na āghāto uppajjeyya. Parūpakāraniratātāya parasantako alagaddo viya na parāmasitabbo. Sace pabbajito hoti, abrahmacariyatopi ārācārī hoti sattavidhamethunasamyogavirahito, pageva paradāragamanato.*"

relationships through positive actions.²⁵ The comprehensive understanding of *sīla* in Buddhism, involving both avoidance of misdeeds and the active pursuit of good deeds, illustrates a balanced approach to ethical living. This dual focus not only prevents harm but also actively promotes the welfare of all beings, aligning closely with the ultimate goal of reducing suffering and fostering enlightenment.

VI. QUALITIES OF SĪLA

Sīla, or moral conduct, in Buddhism encompasses a comprehensive approach to cultivating ethical behavior. This ethical behavior manifests through actions of the body, speech, and mind. The primary characteristic of *sīla* is its ability to maintain wholesome bodily, verbal, and mental actions. Pāli texts describe this quality as “*lakkhaṇa*,” emphasizing *sīla*’s role in guiding individuals toward positive actions.²⁶ The function of *sīla*, known as “*rasa*,”²⁷ is to eliminate unwholesome or harmful actions. This purification process is vital as it helps to prevent behaviors that can cause suffering to oneself and others. The manifestation of *sīla*, referred to as “*paccupaṭṭhāna*,” is evident in the purity of one’s body, speech, and mind. This state of purity is not merely the absence of negative actions but the presence of a consciously cultivated positive ethical stance.

The proximate causes of *sīla*, “*Paḍaṭṭhāna*,” are moral shame (*hiri*) and moral dread (*ottappa*). These two factors play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of virtue. *Hiri* can be understood as an internal sense of ethical integrity that recoils from moral transgression due to an innate respect for oneself and one’s values. *Ottappa*, on the other hand, represents an awareness of the social and karmic consequences of one’s actions, acting as a deterrent against misconduct due to fear of external reproach or karmic

²⁵ C.P.A. 303 “*Cārittasīle panapaṭipatti evaṃ veditabbā – idha bodhisatto kalyāṇamittānaṃ garuṭṭhāniyānaṃ abhivādanaṃ paccuṭṭhānaṃ añjalikammaṃ sāmīcikkammaṃ kālena kālaṃ kattā hoti, tathā tesam kālena kālaṃ upaṭṭhānaṃ kattā hoti, gilānānaṃ kāyaveyyāvaṭikaṃ. Subhāsitaṭṭhānāni sutvā sādhuṭṭhānaṃ kattā hoti, guṇavantaṇaṃ guṇe vaṇṇetā paresaṃ apakāre khantā, upakāre anussaritā, puññāni anumoditā, attano puññāni sammāsambodhiyā pariṇāmetā, sabbakālaṃ appamāḍavihārī kusalesu dhammesu, sati ca accaye accayato disvā tādisānaṃ sahadhammikānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ āvikattā, uttari ca sammāpaṭipattiṃ sammadeva paripūretā.*”

²⁶ *Visuddhimagga*, p. 8. *Idāni kānassa lakkhaṇarasapaccupaṭṭhānapadaṭṭhānānīti ettha – sīlanaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ tassa, bhinnassāpi anekadhā, Sanidassanattaṃ rūpassa, yathā bhinnassanekadhā. Yathā hi nilapitāḍibhedena anekadhā bhinnassāpi rūpāyatanassa sanidassanattaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ, nilāḍibhedena bhinnassāpi sanidassana bhāvānatikkamanato. Tathā sīlasa cetanāḍibhedena anekadhā bhinnassāpi yadetaṃ kāyakammāḍinaṃ samādhānavasena kusalanāṇca dhammānaṃ paṭiṭṭhānavasena vuttaṃ sīlanaṃ, tadeva lakkhaṇaṃ, cetanāḍibhedena bhinnassāpi samādhānapaṭiṭṭhā-nabhāvāna-tikkamanato.*

²⁷ *Visuddhimagga*, p. 7. 8 - 9 *Evaṃ lakkhaṇassa panassa. Dussilyaviddhaṃsanatā, anavajjagūṇo tathā. Kiccasaṃpattiatthēna, raso nāma pavuccati. Tasmā idaṃ sīlaṃ nāma kiccaṭṭhēna rasena dussilyaviddhaṃsanarasam, sampattiatthēna rasena anavajjarasanti veditabbam.*

repercussions. The Pāli canon states, “*hirīottappānithambhā, sīlaṃ tesam adhivacanam*” (Moral shame and moral dread are the pillars; virtue is their expression).²⁸ This foundational understanding is further emphasized by the doctrine that the presence of *hirī* and *ottappa* gives rise to and sustains *sīla*, while their absence leads to the non-arising and non-persistence of virtue. This dynamic underscores the active role that individual moral consciousness plays in ethical behavior. Thus, *sīla* in Buddhist practice is a dynamic and multifaceted aspect of spiritual development. It is not static but deeply interwoven with psychological and emotional states that encourage individuals to act virtuously. By understanding and applying the principles of *hirī* and *ottappa*, practitioners can strengthen their moral conduct, which in turn supports their progress on the path to enlightenment.

VII. PRACTICING SĪLA: METHODS AND MORAL DISCIPLINE

The practice of *sīla*, or moral virtue, is foundational in the pursuit of Buddhist ethical perfection. To effectively cultivate *sīla*, one must approach it through a systematic process of purification and commitment. This process is articulated through four key modes:

Purification of inclinations (*ajjhāsayavisuddhi*): This first mode involves refining one’s underlying motivations. A person driven by personal ideals naturally develops an aversion to wrongful acts, propelled by the purity of their inclinations and an internal sense of shame. This internal moral compass guides them toward virtuous behavior. (2) Undertaking of precepts (*samādāna*): This involves formally committing to precepts, which serve as practical guidelines to abstain from negative actions. Individuals who are more influenced by societal expectations may find motivation in this external structure, using it to foster a sense of moral dread and accountability. (3) Non-Transgression (*avītikkamana*): Both types of individuals, whether motivated by internal ideals or external considerations, stabilize their virtue through diligent adherence to these precepts, avoiding any actions that would breach their moral commitments. (4) Making Amends for Transgressions (*paṭipāṭikarāṇa*): In instances where transgressions occur, possibly due to human error or forgetfulness, individuals should actively make amends. This restoration is guided by their sense of shame and moral dread, utilizing appropriate methods to reconcile their missteps and realign with their ethical commitments.²⁹

²⁸ *Visuddhimagga*, p. 9. *Lakkhaṇādāsu hi kiccameva sampatti vā rasoti vuccati. Soceyyapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, tayidaṃ tassa viññuhi, ottappaṇca hirī ceva, padaṭṭhānanti vaṇṇitaṃ. Tayidaṃ sīlaṃ kāyasoceyyaṃ vacīsoceyyaṃ manosoceyyanti* (a. ni. 3.121) *evaṃ vuttasoceyyapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, soceyyabhāvena paccupaṭṭhāti gahaṇabhāvaṃ gacchati. Hirottappaṇca panassa viññuhi padaṭṭhānanti vaṇṇitaṃ, āsannakāraṇanti attho. Hirottappe hi sati sīlaṃ uppajjati ceva tiṭṭhati ca. Asati neva uppajjati, na tiṭṭhatīti. Evaṃ sīlassa lakkhaṇarasapaccupaṭṭhāna-padaṭṭhānāni veditabbāni.*

²⁹ C. P. A. 300. *Sīlapāramiyā pana ayaṃ paṭipattikkamo – yasmā sabbaññusīlāṇāṅkāre-*

Sīla is categorized into two forms: Avoidance (*vāritta*) and performance (*cāritta*). *vārittasīla* focuses on abstaining from harmful deeds, while *cārittasīla* involves actively engaging in positive actions. Both forms are essential for a comprehensive practice of morality.

VIII. TYPES OF SĪLA

In the *Visuddhimagga*, various types of *sīla* (morality) are meticulously categorized according to actions, doctrine (Dhamma), and time, which provide a nuanced framework for understanding the multi-faceted nature of ethical practice in Buddhist tradition.

Virati sīla pertains to morality encompassing right speech, action, and livelihood – key abstentions that form the bedrock of ethical conduct. (2) A *virati sīla* involves broader ethical commitments that include other mental concomitants like volition, extending beyond the fundamental abstentions.³⁰ (3) The text further delineates *sīla* based on doctrinal understanding into four types: *Nissitasīla*, which depends on personal desires or misconceptions. *Anissitasīla*, practiced without such dependencies and is aimed purely at cultivating noble qualities. *Lokiyasīla*, everyday moral practices influenced by worldly desires and ignorance, and *Lokuttarasīla*, transcendent morality leading directly to liberation from the cycle of rebirths.³¹

In Buddhist teachings, *sīla* (morality) is meticulously classified by the duration over which it is observed, capturing both the depth and adaptability of moral practices to individual spiritual journeys. The classification includes *kālapariyantāsīla*, which is morality observed for a specifically defined period. This is described in the Pāli Canon as *kālaparicchedaṃ katvā samādinnaṃ sīlaṃ kālapariyantaṃ*, highlighting the time-bound nature of such ethical commitments. On the other end of the spectrum is *āpāṇakoṭikāsīla*, a lifelong commitment to ethical living, which continues as *yāvajīvaṃ samādiyitvā tatheva pavattitaṃ āpāṇakoṭikaṃ ti evaṃ kālapariyanta āpāṇakoṭika vasena*

hi satte alaṅkaritukāmena mahāpurisena ādito attano eva tāva sīlaṃ visodhetabbaṃ. Tattha ca catūhi ākārehi sīlaṃ visujjhati – ajjhāsayavisuddhito, samādānato, avitikkamanato, sati ca vitikkame puna paṭipākatikakaraṇato. Visuddhāsayaṭāya hi ekacco attādhipati hutvā pāpajigucchanasabhāvo ajjhattaṃ hiridhammaṃ paccupaṭṭhāpetvā suparisuddhasamācāro hoti. Tathā parato samādāne sati ekacco lokādhipati hutvā pāpato uttasanto ottappadhammaṃ paccupaṭṭhāpetvā suparisuddhasamācāro hoti. Iti ubhayathāpi ete avitikkamanato sīle paṭiṭṭhahanti. Atha pana kadāci satisammosena sīlassa khaṇḍādibhāvo siyā. Tāyayeva yathāvuttāya hirottap-pasampattiyaṃ khippameva naṃ vuṭṭhānādinaṃ paṭipākatikaṃ karoti.

³⁰ Vsm.1.12. *Pāṇātipātādihi veramaṇimattaṃ viratisīlaṃ. Sesam cetanādi aviratisīlanti evaṃ viratiavirativasena duvidhaṃ.*

³¹ Vsm.1.12. *Catutthaduke nissayoti dve nissayā taṇhānissayo ca diṭṭhinissayo ca. Tattha yaṃ “imināhaṃ sīlena devo vā bhavissāmi devaṇṇātaro vā”ti (dī. ni. 3.320, ma. ni. 1.186, a. ni. 5.206, 7.50) evaṃ bhavasampattiṃ ākaṅkhamānena pavattitaṃ, idaṃ taṇhānissitaṃ. Yaṃ “sīlena suddhi”ti evaṃ suddhiditṭhiyā pavattitaṃ, idaṃ diṭṭhinissitaṃ. Yaṃ pana lokuttaraṃ lokiyaṅca tasseva sambhārabhūtaṃ, idaṃ anissitanti evaṃ nissitānissitavasena duvidhaṃ.*

duvidham. – observed for the duration of one’s life. This structured approach to morality not only aids practitioners in maintaining proper conduct but also facilitates the cultivation of inner qualities essential for spiritual advancement and ultimate liberation, thereby reflecting the profound adaptability of Buddhist moral teachings to meet the varied needs and circumstances of individual practitioners.³²

IX. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF *SĪLA*: FROM INDIVIDUAL ETHICS TO WORLD PEACE

Sīla, the Buddhist principle of ethical conduct, transcends mere adherence to rules; it cultivates a profound inner transformation, guiding individuals toward a life of integrity and ethical action. At its core, *sīla* emphasizes the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, kindness, nonviolence, and compassion, fostering a deep sense of personal responsibility and ethical awareness. By practicing these principles, individuals cultivate inner peace and harmony, which in turn radiates outward, influencing their interactions with others and contributing to a more peaceful and just society. The cultivation of *sīla* transcends individual benefit, fostering a profound impact on the collective well-being. By cultivating ethical conduct, individuals develop greater self-awareness, mindfulness, and compassion. This inner transformation fosters a ripple effect, encouraging individuals to act with kindness, empathy, and respect towards all beings. As ethical behavior becomes more prevalent within a society, it strengthens social bonds, reduces tensions, and promotes a culture of cooperation and mutual understanding.

The Five Precepts, a cornerstone of *sīla* practice, provide a practical framework for navigating daily life ethically. These precepts – refraining from harming others, abstaining from lying, respecting the property of others, maintaining faithfulness in relationships, and avoiding intoxicants – serve as ethical guidelines that encourage individuals to cultivate positive habits, resolve conflicts constructively, and build harmonious relationships with others. By consciously adhering to these precepts, individuals can cultivate a compassionate and mindful approach to their interactions, fostering trust, understanding, and a sense of interconnectedness within their communities. The practice of *sīla* encourages individuals to cultivate a deeper awareness of their impact on the world around them. By recognizing their interconnectedness with all beings and the environment, individuals are motivated to act with responsibility and compassion, minimizing their negative impact and contributing to the well-being of the planet. This awareness fosters a sense of shared responsibility and encourages individuals to actively participate in creating a more just and sustainable world.

In contemporary practice, many individuals take precepts without specifying duration, implicitly assuming a lifelong commitment. However, traditionally, as outlined in the commentaries and sub-commentaries, the

³² *Vsm.1.13.*

duration of the precept should be clearly stated, aligning with the intention of temporary or fixed-period morality. Even if the period isn't mentioned, such an omission doesn't invalidate the practice, which remains a form of temporary morality. *Sapariyantasilā* is described as a type of morality that is vulnerable to external circumstances such as coercion or temptation, which may lead to its premature cessation. Despite its interruption, the practitioner still retains the merit accumulated during the period of adherence, demonstrating that the efforts are not nullified by subsequent events.³³ *Apariyantasilā*, in contrast, represents a more steadfast form of morality, one that is observed continuously until the originally intended end date without being swayed by external pressures. This form of *sīla* showcases a high level of dedication and resilience in moral practice.

For all practitioners, whether monastic or laypersons, living in accordance with *sīla* means maintaining a compassionate heart towards all beings, abstaining from any form of harm even in thought, and engaging in actions that are in harmony with Buddhist teachings. The speech should be truthful, beneficial, and harmonious, adhering to the principles of Dhamma. Mental states should be free from greed, ill will, and wrong views. Understanding the ownership of one's actions (*karma*) and fostering a settled faith in righteous living are vital. Practitioners should strive to avoid actions leading to negative states and cultivate those that contribute to positive outcomes, including heavenly rebirth and ultimate liberation.³⁴ In essence, the practice of *sīla* is both a protective measure and a proactive strategy for spiritual growth, enhancing one's journey toward enlightenment while contributing to the welfare of the broader community.

X. MOTIVATIONS AND QUALITY IN SĪLA PRACTICE

(1) *Hīna sīla* involves morality practiced primarily for superficial reasons such as gaining fame or social approval. This form of morality is considered low because it is driven by egoistic desires rather than genuine altruistic intentions. (2) *Majjhima sīla* is a mid-level form of morality where the practice is motivated by the desire for a favorable rebirth. While still influenced by personal desires, this form is seen as more commendable because it aligns with wholesome outcomes. (3) *Paṇīta sīla* represents the highest form of

³³ *Chaṭṭhaduke lābhayaśāñātiaṅgaṇijīvitavasena diṭṭhapariyaṇtaṃ sapariyaṇtaṃ nāma. Viparītaṃ apariyaṇtaṃ. Vuttampi cetāṃ paṭisambhidāyaṃ "katamaṃ taṃ sīlaṃ sapariyaṇtaṃ? Atthi sīlaṃ lābhapariyaṇtaṃ, atthi sīlaṃ yasapariyaṇtaṃ, atthi sīlaṃ nātipariyaṇtaṃ, atthi sīlaṃ aṅgapariyaṇtaṃ, atthi sīlaṃ jīvitapariyaṇtaṃ. Katamaṃ taṃ sīlaṃ lābhapariyaṇtaṃ? Idhekacco lābhahetu lābhapaccayā lābhakāraṇā yathāsamādinnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ vītikkamati, idaṃ taṃ sīlaṃ lābhapariyaṇtaṃ"nti (paṭi. ma. 1.38). Eteneva upāyena itarāṇipi vitthāretabbāni. Apariyaṇtavissajjanepi vuttaṃ "katamaṃ taṃ sīlaṃ na lābhapariyaṇtaṃ? Idhekacco lābhahetu lābhapaccayā lābhakāraṇā yathāsamādinnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ vītikkamāya cittampi na uppādeti, kiṃ so vītikkamissati, idaṃ taṃ sīlaṃ na lābhapariyaṇtaṃ"nti (paṭi. ma. 1.38). Etenevupāyena itarāṇipi vitthāretabbāni. Evaṃ sapariyaṇtāpariyaṇtavasena duvidhaṃ.*

³⁴ A Treatise on the *pāramīs*. (1996). Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, p. 41.

morality, practiced not for personal gain or recognition but out of a genuine understanding of the virtues of moral conduct. This type of *sīla* is aimed at pure spiritual cultivation and is considered the true perfection of morality. (4) The *Visuddhimagga* further differentiates morality based on the broader context in which it is practiced:

In Buddhist ethics, the classification of *sīla* (morality) is deeply rooted in the practitioner's motivations and the aspects of their life they hold in reverence. This can be categorized into three distinct types:

(1) *Attādhīpateyyasīla* focuses on personal ethics, where the individual adheres to moral precepts driven by personal integrity and self-respect. This form of *sīla*, as described in the Pāli texts, is *attano ananurūpaṃ pajahitukāmena attagarunā attanigāravena pavattitaṃ attādhīpateyyaṃ.*, indicating morality driven by one's respect and serious consideration for one's ethical standards. (2) *Lokādhīpateyyasīla* is practiced primarily out of concern for societal norms and expectations, aiming to sidestep public censure and contribute to societal harmony. This is captured in the phrase *lokāpavādaṃ pariharitukāmena lokagarunā loke gāravena pavattitaṃ lokādhīpateyyaṃ.*, highlighting the importance of societal respect and the avoidance of social blame in guiding moral behavior. (3) *Dhammādhīpateyya sīla* represents the highest form of morality, which is practiced out of a profound reverence for the teachings of the Buddha. Practitioners are motivated by *dhammamahattaṃ pūjetukāmena dhammagarunā dhammagāravena pavattitaṃ dhammādhīpateyyaṃ.*, indicating a dedication to honor the greatness of the Dhamma, driven by a deep respect for the Buddhist teachings and the aspiration to achieve liberation as outlined in the Buddhist Path.

These categories illustrate the adaptability of Buddhist ethical practices, reflecting how individual motivations – from personal integrity to societal concerns and spiritual aspirations – shape the practice of morality, thereby catering to a diverse range of spiritual needs and life circumstances. These diverse forms of *sīla* illustrate that in Buddhism, morality is not a monolithic practice but a dynamic and adaptable path that caters to different levels of spiritual development and personal circumstances. Each type of *sīla* serves distinct purposes, from improving personal character to fulfilling the broader spiritual goals of Buddhist practice, thereby enriching the practitioner's journey towards enlightenment.

XI. ROLE OF SĪLA IN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL HARMONY

Sīla, or moral conduct in Buddhism, plays a critical role not only in the individual practitioner's life but also in fostering peace and order within society. This moral framework restrains individuals from engaging in physical and verbal misconduct, guiding them to act gently and calmly. Those who embed *sīla* into their daily lives experience tranquility, reflecting a serene atmosphere in their communities, regardless of their environment – urban or rural, bustling city or quiet forest. This sense of peace discourages negative behaviors such as theft, violence, and other societal vices. (2) The Buddhist texts, such as the

Visuddhimagga and various *Suttas*, emphasize that *sīla* is indispensable for achieving higher spiritual realms and escaping the cycles of suffering inherent in rebirth. The *Sigālovāda Sutta*, for instance, discusses *cārittasīla*, which highlights duties that enhance societal well-being, encouraging virtues like loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. These virtues foster healthy interactions within key societal relationships – between parents and children, teachers and students, spouses, friends, employers and employees, and between monks and laypeople. (3) Practicing *sīla* leads to profound personal benefits such as joy (*pāmojja*), contentment (*pīti*), calmness (*passaddhi*), and happiness (*sukha*), which collectively contribute to deeper concentration (*samādhi*). This state of concentration paves the way for the development of true insight into the nature of reality (*yathābhūta-ñāṇa*), leading to detachment from worldly desires and, ultimately, to liberation (*vimutti*) and the realization of *nibbāna*. (4) In the *Ekaṅkheyya Sutta* from the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha outlines several benefits of maintaining *sīla*, including gaining respect from others, a good reputation, and the confidence to engage in various social settings without fear or inferiority. Furthermore, a person established in *sīla* lives life fully and faces death without confusion or regret, often reborn in realms that reflect the purity of their conduct.

Ultimately, the practice of *sīla* is essential not only for personal ethical development but also for aiding in spiritual liberation, demonstrating its dual role in enhancing both mundane and supra-mundane aspects of life. Ten perfections (*pāramī(s)*) are the things that Bodhisattvas practice before becoming Buddha. Also, general people can practice ten perfections for purifying to good bodily, speech, and mind in our life to develop happiness, success, and peace in the world. In-depth exploration of these *pāramī(s)* will reveal their integral roles not only in personal spiritual growth but also in contributing to the well-being of others, establishing a causal framework where serenity leads to equanimity and skillful interaction with the world. Buddhism posits ethical conduct as a cornerstone for achieving both inner and world peace. Central to this philosophy is the concept of “Right Conduct,” a key component of the Noble Eightfold Path, which emphasizes living in a way that avoids harming others while cultivating kindness and compassion. Compassion, a core Buddhist value, encourages individuals to empathize deeply with the suffering of others. This empathy motivates compassionate actions, fostering a more peaceful and harmonious environment. Furthermore, the principle of “*ahimsa*,” or non-harming, emphasizes that causing suffering to any being ultimately leads to conflict and disharmony. By practicing nonviolence, individuals contribute to a more peaceful and just society.

XII. CONCLUSION

Sīla, the Pāli term for ethical conduct, acts as the foundation for a community’s flourishing. It cultivates a multifaceted approach that fosters not only individual virtue but also a harmonious social environment. At its core lies the development of inner virtues, such as truthfulness, non-violence, and generosity. By adhering to these ethical principles, individuals experience a

transformation of the mind. Negative emotions like anger and greed diminish, replaced by compassion and inner peace. This psychological transformation fosters a sense of well-being that extends outwards. *Sīla* translates these virtues into action, encouraging individuals to engage in acts of kindness and helpfulness. This creates a ripple effect, inspiring others to behave similarly and fostering a more positive and supportive social environment. Additionally, by promoting ethical conduct, *sīla* reduces the potential for conflict within the community. When individuals act with honesty, compassion, and respect, misunderstandings and disagreements are less likely to arise. Furthermore, *sīla* fosters a sense of mutual respect and understanding. Individuals are encouraged to support one another, creating a strong social fabric where cooperation thrives. In essence, the interconnected elements of *sīla* work together synergistically. Inner ethical development translates into outward acts of virtue, contributing to a harmonious and flourishing community. *Sīla* promotes not only individual well-being but also the collective good of society. In conclusion, the ten perfections (*pāramī(s)*) are the things that Bodhisattvas practice before becoming Buddha. Also, general people can practice ten perfections for purifying to good bodily, speech, and mind in our life to develop happiness, success, and peace in the world. According to Buddhist teachings, *sīla* is not merely about following a set of rules or avoiding negative actions. It is a way of life that cultivates inner peace, compassion, and kindness. By practicing *sīla*, individuals learn to restrain from harmful behaviors and develop positive qualities such as generosity, honesty, and patience. *sīla* is seen as essential for promoting world peace because it fosters a sense of harmony and respect for others. When individuals act with compassion and kindness, they are less likely to engage in conflict or violence. Additionally, *sīla* encourages individuals to take responsibility for their actions and to work towards resolving conflicts peacefully.

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FROM INNER TRANSFORMATIONS TO GLOBAL CHANGE: BUDDHIST INSIGHTS FOR CREATING A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD

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Abstract:

Today, humans are advancing rapidly in all fields, reaching new levels of modernization. Innovation and progress are evident in every domain, whether in science, medicine, or technology. Driven by technological advancements and curiosity, scientists have explored the Earth in depth and are now investigating other planets in the solar system to satisfy their thirst for knowledge. While developments in science and technology have introduced various gadgets for faster decision-making, they have also made life increasingly complex – like a spider web in which we are entangled. Externally, we are progressing at an unprecedented rate, yet internally, we are deteriorating due to a lack of peace.

On one hand, this era is marked by discoveries, the information age, the internet, science and technology, consumerism, globalization, and digitalization, among many advancements. On the other hand, it is also defined by terrorism, nuclear threats, war, global warming, environmental crises, exploitation, racism, discrimination, and, most importantly, mental unrest.

The Dalai Lama XIV has aptly stated, “Science and technology have worked wonders in many fields, but the basic human problem remains. There is unprecedented literacy, yet universal education does not seem to have fostered goodness, but only mental restlessness and instant discontent. There is no doubt about the increase in our material progress and technology, but somehow, this is not sufficient, as we have not yet succeeded in bringing about peace and happiness or overcoming suffering.”

Buddha’s teachings emphasize that attaining inner peace is a prerequisite for achieving world peace. Through meditation and the eradication of mental defilements, individuals can transcend suffering and cultivate inner tranquility.

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This inner peace then radiates outward, fostering harmony within families, communities, and society at large. This article explores the potential of achieving global peace through inner peace, grounded in Buddhist principles. The Buddha's attainment of mental serenity serves as a profound inspiration, demonstrating the possibility of transcending suffering and cultivating compassion.

Keywords: *Inner peace, modernization, technology, mental unrest, Buddhist principles.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is intrinsically linked to the pursuit of inner tranquility and the broader aspiration for global harmony. The meditative image of the Buddha, seated in profound stillness, serves as an enduring symbol of balance, equanimity, and liberation from afflictive states. As a philosophical and ethical system, Buddhism has long been recognized as a foundational framework for peace research, offering deep insights into the nature of human suffering (*dukkha*), the cessation of conflict, and the cultivation of compassionate action. Central to Buddhist ethics is the principle of *ahimsā* (non-violence), which extends beyond the mere avoidance of harm to encompass an active commitment to kindness, understanding, and the alleviation of suffering in both personal and societal contexts.

Despite the growing academic and practical interest in Buddhism as a source of wisdom for conflict resolution and peace-building, many individuals continue to struggle with attaining genuine inner peace, while systemic violence and social unrest persist across communities and nations. This paradox – where the philosophical and ethical frameworks of peace are well-articulated, yet their realization remains elusive – underscores the necessity of critically examining the intersections between Buddhist thought and peace studies.

This research endeavors to bridge this gap by exploring the conceptual and applied dimensions of Buddhist approaches to peace. Specifically, it seeks to address key inquiries: What are the primary psychological and existential barriers preventing individuals from attaining inner peace? How do the core Buddhist teachings on suffering, impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anattā*) inform contemporary understandings of human restlessness? Why do violence and unrest persist despite the widespread recognition of peace as an ethical and political imperative?

A central focus of this study is the role of Buddhist meditation – particularly *vipassanā* (insight meditation) – in uprooting the deep-seated causes of suffering and fostering a state of inner peace that can extend outward into society. By analyzing the intricate relationships between personal transformation, social cohesion, and global harmony, this study aims to illuminate the missing links in contemporary peace-building efforts.

The research is structured around three primary objectives: (1) To identify the fundamental causes of human suffering and inner turmoil as articulated

in Buddhist philosophy, (2) to examine the efficacy of Buddhist meditative practices, particularly *vipassanā*, in alleviating afflictive mental states and fostering a sustainable sense of peace, and (3) to explore how individuals who cultivate inner peace can contribute to broader social and global harmony.

Methodologically, this study is grounded in rigorous textual analysis, drawing upon classical Buddhist scriptures, contemporary scholarly discourse, and existing research in the fields of peace studies and contemplative practices. By synthesizing these diverse sources, the study aims to offer a nuanced perspective on how Buddhist principles, when authentically embodied, can serve as a transformative force not only for the individual but also for the collective well-being of society. Ultimately, this research asserts that the attainment of inner peace is not an isolated endeavor but rather an interconnected process that aligns with the Buddhist vision of interdependence (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). It suggests that the realization of peace must extend beyond theoretical discourse and manifest in tangible ethical and meditative practices that actively contribute to the reduction of suffering at both personal and societal levels.

This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by exploring the intersection of Buddhism and peace. Through a critical examination of existing research, Buddhist scriptures, and scholarly articles, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the role of Buddhism in promoting inner peace and global harmony. The research questions guiding this study are multifaceted. What are the primary obstacles that hinder individuals from experiencing inner peace? What are the root causes of human suffering and restlessness? Why do violence and unrest persist within individuals and society, despite the growing awareness of the importance of peace and conflict resolution?

This study undertakes a critical examination of the role of Buddhist meditation, particularly *vipassanā* (insight meditation), in uprooting suffering (*dukkha*) and cultivating a state of profound inner peace (*samatha*). By exploring the intricate connections between personal tranquility, social harmony, and the broader pursuit of global peace, this research seeks to illuminate the underlying mechanisms through which Buddhist contemplative practices contribute to the alleviation of suffering at multiple levels of human experience. One of the fundamental questions driving this inquiry is whether inner peace, as cultivated through meditative discipline, can serve as a foundational element in addressing societal discord and fostering collective well-being.

The objectives of this research are threefold. First, it aims to analyze the root causes of human suffering and existential restlessness, with particular attention to the role of mental afflictions (*kleśa*) such as craving (*taṇhā*), aversion (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). Drawing from the discourses of the Buddha (*sutta*), this study seeks to contextualize these afflictions within the broader framework of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), examining how habitual patterns of thought and emotion perpetuate suffering both at an individual and collective level. Second, this study explores the transformative potential

of Buddhist meditation in eradicating suffering and actualizing inner peace. The practice of *vipassanā* is not merely a passive exercise in contemplation but a disciplined process of cultivating mindfulness (*sati*) and deep introspection (*yoniso manasikāra*), leading to a direct realization of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). By critically engaging with both textual sources and contemporary research on meditation, this study highlights how Buddhist contemplative practices contribute to psychological resilience, emotional regulation, and overall mental well-being. Third, this research examines how individuals who attain inner peace can become catalysts for social transformation, emphasizing the ethical imperative of compassion (*karuṇā*), empathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) in fostering global harmony. The study argues that the cultivation of these qualities is not only central to personal liberation but also instrumental in conflict resolution, social cohesion, and the broader vision of non-violent engagement with the world. Methodologically, this study is grounded in rigorous textual analysis, drawing upon classical Buddhist scriptures, contemporary academic research, and interdisciplinary perspectives from peace studies and psychology. By adopting a multidisciplinary approach, this research endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between Buddhist thought, meditative praxis, and the broader pursuit of peace. It ultimately contends that the realization of peace must extend beyond theoretical discourse, necessitating an embodied commitment to ethical living, sustained mindfulness, and a deep engagement with the realities of human suffering.

II. WHAT IS PEACE?

The concept of peace has been a subject of extensive philosophical inquiry and academic discourse, yet its precise definition remains elusive. Like happiness, justice, and well-being, peace is a universally cherished ideal, yet its realization continues to be fraught with challenges. This paradox raises fundamental questions: Why is peace so earnestly sought after yet so difficult to attain? How do individual and collective efforts intersect in the pursuit of a harmonious existence? While conventional discourse often equates peace with the mere absence of violence or conflict, such a perspective is inherently limited. In the realm of social order, peace is frequently understood as the absence of hostilities, an essential foundation for political justice, economic equity, and social cohesion. However, this study seeks to move beyond these external constructs, delving into the deeper relationship between inner peace and the realization of global harmony.

Buddhist philosophy posits that true peace is not merely a condition imposed upon societies through political or economic structures but an intrinsic state cultivated within the individual. Central to this understanding is the role of Buddhist meditation, particularly its emphasis on the purification of the mind. Rooted in the teachings of the Buddha, meditation serves as a direct means of uprooting mental afflictions (*kleśa*), such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), which are considered primary obstructions to inner tranquility. The Buddhist path underscores that by transforming the

mind, one simultaneously transforms one's external reality, thereby fostering an environment conducive to peace at broader societal and global levels.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama eloquently observes, "through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved... an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually expanded to include our families, communities, and ultimately the whole planet".¹ This notion aligns with the fundamental Buddhist assertion that peace begins with the individual and radiates outward in concentric circles, influencing ever-widening spheres of human interaction. Meditation, particularly *vipassanā* (insight meditation), is regarded as a profound tool for this transformation, enabling practitioners to cultivate mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), which together form the foundation for a stable and harmonious mind.

Historically, contemplative practices akin to Buddhist meditation predate even the formal establishment of Buddhism itself. The Buddha's journey to enlightenment was marked by intensive meditative absorption (*jhāna*), through which he directly realized the transient nature of all phenomena (*anicca*), the unsatisfactory nature of conditioned existence (*dukkha*), and the absence of a fixed self (*anattā*). It was through this profound realization that he identified meditation as the most direct means of uprooting mental afflictions and attaining lasting inner peace.

The mind, as both Buddhist philosophy and contemporary psychological research affirm, is the origin of peace and its antithesis – hatred, disharmony, and violence. As the Indian spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy insightfully notes, "Peace is first an individual achievement. Then it grows into a collective achievement. Finally, it becomes a universal achievement"². This progression underscores the deeply interconnected nature of personal and collective transformation. True peace is not merely the absence of external strife but a state of inner equilibrium that must be cultivated, nurtured, and extended outward, forming the foundation of a more just, compassionate, and harmonious world.

By critically engaging with Buddhist scriptural sources, meditative traditions, and interdisciplinary perspectives, this study endeavors to elucidate the profound interdependence between individual inner peace and global harmony. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of peace – not as a passive state, but as an active, dynamic process requiring deep self-inquiry, ethical commitment, and the sustained practice of mindfulness and compassion.

While Western perspectives often view peace as something achieved between adversaries, Eastern spirituality posits that peace begins within and reflects outward. This dichotomy highlights the complexity of peace and the need for a nuanced understanding of its various dimensions.

In "International Journal of Peace Studies", Theresa presents the Buddhist

¹ Webel, Charles and Galtung, John. (2007), p. 5.

² Dorn, Walter (2001), p. 156 - 166.

vision of peace in the light of peace studies. The author has stated, “Buddhism has long been celebrated as a religion of peace and non-violence”.³ The author further states, “The true value of nonviolence, compassion, and altruism advocated by Buddhism would also inspire all people on the path of peace”. Theresa has applied Buddha’s key principle of understanding life and the world, namely the teachings of Dependent Origination. Understanding this concept would help people see things as they are and, consequently, they abstain from violence.

Vietnamese Buddhist Monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who was actively working for maintaining social peace, says, “The peace we seek cannot be our possession. We need to find inner peace, which makes it possible for us to become one with those who suffer and to do something to help our brothers and sisters”.⁴ Peace begins in an individual and it expands to the family, the neighbors, and to the larger society. Spiritual quests focus on how to bring peace to an individual.

The Buddhist approach from inner peace to external peace has yet to be explored in its overall dimensions in academic research. It is worth exploring from where peace emerges and how this happens inside a person and how it ultimately reflects to the outer world. In the west, this concept is emerging in the writings of a few authors. “A philosophical theory of outer peace and a depth psychological comprehension of inner peacefulness seems as desirable today as they did thousands of years ago”.⁵ The modern peace and conflict studies identify structural mechanisms responsible for violent and nonviolent behaviors in a society. Social differentiation and inequality in the variety of concerns play a significant role in violent and nonviolent behaviors. “Peace is a linchpin of social harmony, economic equity and political justice, but peace is also constantly ruptured by wars and other forms of violent conflict. Like happiness, peace remains so near ... and yet, like enduring love, so far...”⁶

III. INTERNAL PEACE: BUDDHISM

According to Buddhist teachings, the attainment of inner peace is contingent upon the practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation.⁷ Buddha emphasized that this practice is the sole means of purifying the mind, overcoming sorrow, and realizing *nibbāna*.

Buddha’s teachings also highlight the importance of cultivating tranquillity and insight in order to abandon lust and achieve mental purification. As the mind becomes free from cravings, an inner transformation takes place, giving rise to a state of peacefulness.⁸

³ Theresa, Der-lan Yeh (2006), p. 91 - 112.

⁴ Hanh, Thich Nath (1988), p. 127.

⁵ Webel, Charles and Galtung, John. (2007), p. 5.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5 - 6.

⁷ Jotika and Dhamminada (1986), p. 16.

⁸ *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttar Nikaya*, Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.) and (ed.), 2000. Sec. II, 2.7, p. 123.

In Buddhist scriptures, peace and *nibbāna* are often used interchangeably. Buddha taught that the path to peace and *nibbāna* involves cultivating morality, concentration, and insight wisdom.⁹

In *Mettā Sutta*, Buddha shows that peace and *nibbāna* are the states of awakening. “If a person who fully knows the real advantages that can be accrued, is desirous of achieving and realizing the peaceful and blissful *nibbāna*, he must invariably indulge himself in the practice of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (insight wisdom). He must be capable of taking up this practice.”¹⁰

Buddha’s commitment to peace is evident in his teachings and actions. His famous saying, go forth, oh Bhikkhus, on your wandering for the good of many, for the happiness of many, in compassion for the world, underscores his concern for promoting peace and well-being.

The practice of mindfulness enables individuals to develop moment-to-moment awareness of their internal states, thoughts, and emotions. This awareness allows practitioners to transform their consciousness and attain inner peace and tranquillity. The Dalai Lama emphasized the importance of inner peace in his Nobel Lecture, stating that peace begins with each individual and can then be shared with others.¹¹

Research has explored the dimensions of Buddhist inner peace, highlighting its interdependence with outer peace. The dynamics of peace arise from interior self-transformation, which is, transcending the fixed ego-self and freeing the self for others, to realize and enact compassion. This article examines interdependence between inner peace and outer peace. Explaining Buddhist inner peace, Tanabe writes, “Inner peace means an awakening to an ultimate inseparability between our well-being and happiness and that of others, which inspires us to make an effort to gratify the basic needs of all and promote our freedom and justice and that of others equally.”¹²

In the canonical text of *vipassanā*, Buddha identifies craving as the root cause of suffering. He teaches that the cultivation of mindfulness and insight can help individuals overcome craving and attain inner peace.¹³

IV. FROM INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE

The Buddhist approach to achieving world peace fundamentally rests upon the principle that true and lasting peace must originate from within the individual. This perspective is rooted in the understanding that one cannot

⁹ *Dhammapada* (English Translation), Bhikkhu, Thanissaro. 1998. Metta Forest Monastery, CA, p. 1134.

¹⁰ Sayadwa, Mahasi. 1996-2012. *Brahmavihara Dhamma* Part III, The Metta Sutta Paritta, <http://www.buddhanet.net/brahmaviharas/bvd039.htm>

¹¹ Lama, Dalai. Noble Lecture, December 11, 1989. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/acceptance-speeches/nobel-peace-prize/nobel-lecture>

¹² Tanabe, Juichiro (2006), p. 1 - 14.

¹³ DN 22.

cultivate, share, or propagate that which one has not personally realized. Just as a flame cannot ignite another without first burning brightly itself, the journey toward global harmony necessitates an inner transformation, where an individual cultivates a profound state of inner peace before extending its influence outward. This notion is not merely a philosophical abstraction but an experiential truth underscored in Buddhist teachings, particularly through the practice of *vipassanā* (insight meditation), which serves as a means of uprooting defilements (*kleśa*) and realizing genuine tranquility.

The practice of *vipassanā* holds a central place in the Buddhist meditative tradition, offering a structured path to introspection, wisdom, and mental purification. By systematically observing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of all phenomena (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*), practitioners cultivate heightened awareness, leading to a dissolution of attachment, aversion, and ignorance. This, in turn, fosters an innate sense of compassion and empathy, which are indispensable for interpersonal and societal harmony. When inner peace is attained through direct experiential insight rather than intellectual abstraction, outer peace naturally emanates, transforming not only the individual but also their interactions with the world at large from the wellspring.

Although meditation is a deeply personal and subjective practice, certain foundational principles and universal truths underpin its transformative process. The Buddhist path does not prescribe a singular meditative experience but rather provides a framework through which practitioners, guided by ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), gradually refine their minds and liberate themselves from suffering. While individual experiences may differ, the fundamental trajectory remains the same, progressing from scattered awareness to deep concentration, from intellectual comprehension to direct realization, and ultimately from self-centered existence to boundless compassion.

One of the inherent challenges in engaging with Buddhist meditative traditions is the necessity of grappling with specialized terminology, much of which originates from Pāli and Sanskrit. For instance, the term *dhyāna* (Sanskrit) or *jhāna* (Pāli) refers to a state of deep meditative absorption, characterized by profound concentration and tranquility. This concept, though distinctly Buddhist in articulation, has permeated multiple spiritual and philosophical traditions across Asia, finding linguistic and conceptual adaptations in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese. Such terminological evolution underscores not only the historical transmission of Buddhist thought but also the universality of contemplative practice in the human pursuit of peace and liberation.

Thus, the Buddhist vision of world peace is not merely a theoretical ideal but an actionable, experiential path one that begins with the individual, deepens through meditative insight, and extends outward through ethical engagement, wisdom, and compassion. It invites a paradigm shift in peace-building efforts, moving beyond external negotiations and structural reforms to address the very roots of conflict within the human mind. By fostering inner transformation,

individuals do not merely contribute to peace; they embody it, creating ripples that extend beyond themselves and into the collective consciousness of society.

Buddhism defines peace as a state that begins within and expands outward through the practice of compassion. By understanding the principles of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, individuals can overcome their suffering and realize inner peace. This, in turn, leads to greater compassion and concern for the well-being of others. Buddha, as quoted in *Dhammapada*, says “All conditioned phenomena are impermanent, when one sees this with insight-wisdom, one becomes weary of dukkha (i.e., the *khandhas*). This is the path to purity”. As individuals cultivate inner peace, they become more sensitive to the suffering of others and are inspired to help alleviate it. In this way, inner peace has a ripple effect, expanding into social peace and promoting greater harmony and understanding in the world.

V. MEDITATION BRINGS PEACE

In Buddhist studies, it is widely accepted that peace is a direct result of meditation. This study aims to explore the relationship between *vipassanā* meditation and peace, examining the classical understanding of meditation, modern scientific research, and sociological findings.

Vipassanā meditation is a systematic practice that helps individuals attain peace. However, merely knowing about meditation is insufficient; one must apply it in practical life to experience its benefits. Theoretical knowledge of meditation can provide external wisdom, but it is not enough to attain inner peace. To experience peace, one must cultivate wisdom through contemplation, analysis, and personal experience.¹⁴ The core practice of *vipassanā* involves being mindful of four domains: the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. By observing sensory experiences constantly, practitioners can prevent cravings from arising and ultimately achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirths.

Through meditation, individuals learn to detach from worldly experiences and identify with their true nature. This realization brings infinite peace, bliss, and a sense of oneness with everything. Meditation provides a clearer understanding of what is real and significant in life, and what is mere illusion. As Buddha emphasized, “A hundred years of life of a heedless person is less worthy than a meditative person’s life of one single day.”¹⁵ This underscores the importance of meditation in achieving peace and a fulfilling life.

Vipassanā meditation can lead to peace, happiness, social justice, and harmony, fostering a sense of unity with existence. Our focus is on the connection between meditation, social justice, and peace. The common thread among these concepts is the practice of meditation, which cultivates hearts and minds that work towards positive change.

Buddha’s teachings emphasize that true wealth lies not in material possessions, but in recognizing our inherent capacity to connect with others.

¹⁴ Piyadassi (1978), p. 35.

¹⁵ *Dhp* 110.

Real poverty is not just the lack of necessities, but a sense of disconnection from others and oneself. As Monk Thich Nhat Hanh succinctly puts it, “Peace in oneself, peace in the world”.

Buddha’s words remind us that we are not separate from the world. As we cultivate peace within ourselves, we contribute to a more peaceful world. Venerable Hanh echoes this sentiment, stating that producing peace and happiness within ourselves is the first step towards creating peace in the world. Venerable Hanh writes in *The Heart of Understanding*: “When you produce peace and happiness in yourself, you begin to realize peace for the world. With the smile that you produce in yourself, with the consciousness you establish within yourself, you begin to work for peace in the world.”¹⁶ This understanding transcends religious traditions. A rabbi quotes the Bible, emphasizing the importance of finding peace within oneself before seeking it in the world. When we make peace with ourselves, we become capable of making peace with others and the world around us.

The concept of peace is often misunderstood as a destination, when in fact, it is a way of being. A society cannot achieve peace until its means and ends are aligned. Ultimately, peaceful ends can only be achieved through peaceful means, as the quality of the means determines the quality of the ends. Peace is often defined as the absence of conflict, tension, or disturbance. However, this definition is limited. A deeper understanding of peace reveals it as a state of stillness, certainty, and openness, encompassing reconciliation, goodwill, and justice for all sentient beings.

According to Buddhist teachings, the key to achieving inner peace is through meditation. By practicing meditation, one can realize peace and happiness within, which can then be shared with the outer world. The teachings of Buddha emphasize the importance of cultivating compassion and clarity in the face of suffering.

As one’s consciousness expands, they begin to see the interconnectedness of all struggles. There is no single-issue struggle, as individuals’ lives are complex and multifaceted. Through meditation, one can gain a broader perspective on the world, recognizing the need for equal distribution of resources and the importance of promoting justice and equanimity.

The practice of *vipassanā* meditation helps individuals eliminate the roots of their suffering, achieving inner peace and liberation. As this inner peace grows, it reflects outward, contributing to a more peaceful world.

VI. ELIMINATING SUFFERING

Buddha’s teachings on the cessation of suffering are rooted in the Four Noble Truths. These truths instruct practitioners to acknowledge suffering, identify its causes, understand its cessation, and follow the path leading to its cessation. Human turmoil stems from mental impurities, which create suffering and intensify turmoil.

¹⁶ Hanh (1998), p. 65.

Buddha identified the root cause of suffering as craving for impermanent things, which breeds dissatisfaction and pain. This cycle of suffering can be eliminated through the Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths form the foundation of Buddhist philosophy, highlighting the role of craving and repulsion in causing suffering.

A fisherman's hook serves as a metaphor for the hidden suffering that arises from seeking sensual pleasure. Just as the fish is unaware of the suffering that follows biting the bait, humans often fail to recognize the perils of their desires. Buddha advocates for practicing *vipassanābhāvana* to develop awareness of these hidden dangers.

Another simile illustrates the allure of pleasure, where ants become stuck in honey, unaware of their predicament. Similarly, humans indulge in pleasurable experiences, becoming trapped in the process. Mindfulness and observation skills can help individuals develop clarity, wisdom, compassion, love, connectedness, and inner peace.

VII. BRAHMA VIHĀRA

The Four Sublime States, also known as *brahma vihāra*, are four elevated mental states that arise from meditation, according to Buddha. These states are: (1) *maitrī* (Love or kindness), (2) *karuṇā* (Compassion), (3) *muditā* (Sympathetic Joy), (4) *upēkṣā* (Equanimity).

As practitioners cultivate these states, they experience greater calmness and peace. Moreover, these qualities promote social harmony when individuals love and accept all beings equally, show compassion, rejoice in others' success, and remain even-minded in the face of challenges.

The Four Sublime States serve as ideal social attitudes, promoting harmony, cooperation, and understanding. They counteract negative emotions like hatred, cruelty, and envy, which are prevalent in modern society¹⁷. As Deepak Chopra notes, these values arise when we connect with our pure being, leading to a more harmonious existence.¹⁸

The practice of *vipassanā* meditation can transform the brain's architecture, developing areas that foster kindness, altruism, and non-violence. This practice enables individuals to detach from pleasant experiences and refrain from condemning unpleasant ones, promoting flexibility and social harmony.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Vipassanā helps a practitioner to eliminate mental defilements and realize inner peace. And, inner peace ultimately leads to world peace. An analysis of the four states of mindfulness reveals that the surest way to realize inner peace is through the practice of *vipassanā* meditation. The Buddhist way of meditation helps practitioners to purify the mind by eliminating craving, aversion, and

¹⁷ *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttar Nikaya*, Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.) and (ed.), 2000. p. 14 - 20.

¹⁸ Chopra, Deepak (2009), p. 53.

ignorance. During the course of meditation, a practitioner realizes the nature of things as impermanent and leading to suffering and away from self. Seeing things as they are is a great liberation. As a person realizes inner peace; his or her suffering ends. He or she starts dwelling in the four sublime states. This deepens the peace of mind. The practitioners thus devote themselves to creating harmony in society, or world peace.

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EMULATING THE BUDDHA: INSIGHTFUL LESSONS FROM HIS BIRTH, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND PARINIBBĀNA FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD

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Abstract:

This paper examines the life and teachings of the Buddha through the perspectives of suffering, rebirth, and liberation, highlighting their lasting significance in promoting world peace and sustainable development. By reflecting on the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and passing away (*parinibbāna*), this paper explores His core teachings on suffering (*dukkha*) and its cessation (*nirodha*), offering insights into how these principles provide a transformation path toward inner peace and global harmony. Additionally, the paper investigates how the Buddha's emphasis on life's impermanence and the interdependence of all beings establishes a compelling foundation for addressing contemporary issues such as climate change, social inequality, and mental health crises. The importance of unity, inclusivity, and collective effort – fundamental principles of the Buddha's community, the *Saṅgha* – is also analyzed as a model for global cooperation, transcending divisions of race, culture, and creed. Drawing from Buddhist scriptures and philosophical reflections, this paper argues that the Buddha's message of liberation through the cessation of suffering offers valuable guidance for sustainable development, collective well-being, and harmonious coexistence. Furthermore, the paper explores the historical and cultural significance of Vesak as a global commemoration of the Buddha's life and teachings, along with the vital role of the *Saṅgha* in preserving the Dhamma across generations. By applying Buddhist principles to modern global challenges, this paper seeks to illustrate the practical relevance of the Buddha's timeless teachings in fostering peace, equity, and environmental stewardship in the 21st century.

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Keywords: *Buddha, suffering (dukkha), liberation, sustainable development, Saṅgha.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Vesak Day, celebrated on the full moon of the lunar month of Vesak (usually in April or May), is one of the most significant and sacred days in the Buddhist calendar. It commemorates the three pivotal events in the life of the Buddha: His birth, His enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, and His passing away (*parinibbāna*). Historically, Vesak has been observed for over two millennia, with its origins dating back to the 1st century BCE. Over time, Vesak evolved from a regional observance in India to a global celebration, uniting Buddhists across cultures and sects. The day is marked by various ceremonies, including offerings to the Buddha, meditation, and acts of charity. It serves as a moment for reflecting on the Buddha's life and teachings, particularly His profound insights into the nature of suffering and the path to liberation.¹

The Buddha's life, which encompasses His birth, enlightenment, and passing away, offers profound teachings on the nature of suffering and the path to liberation. These key events – Vesak, celebrated as the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death – serve as markers for reflecting on the interrelatedness of suffering, rebirth, and peace. In the Dhamma, suffering is identified as a universal truth (*dukkha*), and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*) is both the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice and the key to creating a harmonious world. The Buddha's teachings highlight not only the importance of personal liberation but also the collective responsibility of all beings to transcend suffering and foster peace, equity, and environmental stewardship in the world.

This paper examines the Buddha's teachings, specifically focusing on His reflection of the cycle of rebirth and suffering. The connection between the Buddha's appearance in the world and His role in alleviating suffering is explored. In doing so, the paper also emphasizes the universal applicability of the Buddha's insights, showing how they offer profound solutions to the contemporary challenges facing our global community, such as social injustice, ecological degradation, and the mental health crisis. Drawing from key Buddhist texts, including the Pāli Canon, especially the *Dhammapada*, this paper highlights the Buddha's wisdom regarding the nature of suffering and the potential for human transformation. Through examining these texts, the paper seeks to bridge Buddha's ancient wisdom with modern-day practices, advocating for a more inclusive and compassionate global society. The paper also explores the historical and cultural significance of Vesak, the role of the *Saṅgha* in preserving the Dhamma, and the application of Buddhist principles

¹ Vesak, Buddhist festival, Also known as: Vaishakha, Vesakha, Wesak, Written by Charles Preston, Fact-checked by. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Last Updated: Jan 20, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vesak>, Accessed 29 January 2025.

in addressing contemporary global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and mental health crises.

II. THE SUFFERING OF REBIRTH: THE BUDDHA'S BIRTH AND THE CYCLE OF SAṂSĀRA

The Buddha's birth is a significant event, not only in the historical context but also symbolically within the Buddhist worldview. According to the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha reflects on the repeated cycle of birth and suffering that all beings endure: "Through many a birth in *saṁsāra* have I wandered in vain, seeking the builder of this house (of life). Repeated birth is indeed suffering!"²

This stanza encapsulates the central Buddhist teaching on the inevitability of suffering within the cycle of *saṁsāra*. While ordinary people may view birth as a kind of joyful occasion. However, the Buddha's teachings reveal that birth itself is not a blessing but rather a continuation of suffering. In this reflection, the Buddha presents a profound paradox: While birth is universally celebrated as a joyous event, it also marks the beginning of the journey of suffering that all beings must face. In the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, the Buddha stated as follows: This, O *bhikkhus*, is the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*): Birth is suffering, again is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, and lamentation, pain grief, and despair are suffering, association with the unloved or unpleasant condition is suffering, separation from the beloved or pleasant condition is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering, in brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering.³

Here, in the context of the Buddha's life as well, His birth marks the beginning of the human journey toward understanding the causes of suffering and how to transcend it. His life reminds us that every birth, while celebrated, continues the cycle of aging, sickness, and death. This cyclical nature of existence is foundational to the Buddhist view of life, reminding us that each birth brings with it the inevitable suffering of growing old, becoming ill, and eventually passing away. Thus, birth in itself is inherently linked to suffering.

For those not awakened to the truth, the cycle of rebirth perpetuates the continuation of suffering, often unnoticed or ignored. The Buddha's appearance in the world represents the rare opportunity for beings to break free from this cycle and to realize the path to liberation. The Buddha's birth is regarded not only as a historical event but also as the spark of an opportunity for transformation, signifying the possibility of liberation from the endless cycle of suffering and rebirth. It is also stated in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that it is extremely rare for a Buddha, worthy of veneration by all beings and self-

² *Dhp* 153. *Dhammapada Pāli*, Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā Edition, (Yangon: Department of Religious Affairs, 2001), p. 36: "Aneka jāti saṁsāraṁ sandhāvissaṁ anibbhisam, / Gahakāraṁ gavesanto, dukkhā jāti punappunam".

³ S. III. 367, Venerable Dr. Rewata Dhamma, *The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma*. Boston, USA: Wisdom Publications, 1997, p. 17 - 18.

enlightened, to appear in the world.⁴ His teachings point to the cessation of suffering, making this human life an invaluable opportunity to practice the path of virtue. The rarity of a Buddha's appearance highlights the preciousness of the teachings that accompany His birth, reinforcing the importance of utilizing one's human existence to cultivate wisdom and practice the Noble Eightfold Path. The concept of rebirth in Buddhism is often misunderstood. It is not a linear progression but rather a cyclical process driven by *kamma* (intentional actions), craving (*taṇhā*), and clinging (*upādāna*). Each rebirth is conditioned by past actions, and the cycle continues until one attains liberation. This cyclical nature of existence is governed by the principles of cause and effect, wherein actions in one life directly shape the conditions of the next. The Buddha's birth, therefore, is not merely a historical event but also a profound teaching on the nature of existence. It serves as a reminder that the cycle of birth and death is fraught with suffering and that the ultimate goal is to transcend this cycle through the realization of *nibbāna*. In this context, His birth functions as both a reminder and an invitation: it is a call for each being to break free from the constraints of *saṃsāra* and pursue the liberation that the Buddha's teachings offer.

III. ENLIGHTENMENT: THE PATH TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree represents the culmination of His quest to understand and transcend suffering. In His enlightenment, the Buddha uncovered the Four Noble Truths, which form the foundation of all Buddhist practice. Through this realization, the Buddha comprehended suffering (*dukkha*), the cause of suffering (*dukkha-samudaya*), its cessation (*dukkha-nirodha*), and the path to its cessation (*magga*). This profound moment in the Buddha's life marked the realization that suffering is neither random nor an inevitable fate but a condition that can be understood, transformed, and ultimately transcended.

The Buddha's discovery that craving (*taṇhā*) is the root cause of suffering and that through the elimination of craving, suffering can cease, forms the core of His teaching. This insight into the nature of craving represents a shift in the understanding of human existence, in which deep-seated desires and attachments that bind beings to the cycle of *saṃsāra* are recognized as the fundamental obstacles to liberation. The Buddha's enlightenment represents the complete eradication of ignorance and the realization of ultimate truth. It is this wisdom that forms the foundation of Buddhist practice, in which the realization of the Four Noble Truths leads to the transformation of consciousness and the ultimate cessation of suffering. This realization, often referred to as *nibbāna*, offers an end to the endless cycle of rebirth and suffering.

⁴ A. I. 22: "Ekapuggalassa, bhikkhave, pātubhāvo dullabho lokasamim. Katamassa ekapuggalassa? Tathāgataṃ arhato sammāsambuddhaṃ" //, "Bhikkhus, the manifestation of one person is rare in the world. Who is that one person? Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One." Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012, trans. *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 108.

Nibbāna is not merely a state of cessation but an awakened experience of peace and freedom – one that transcends the ordinary concerns of life and death.

The *Dhammapada* further articulates the cessation of suffering when it says: “O house-builder, you are seen! You will not build this house again. For your rafters are broken and your ridgepole shattered. My mind has reached the Unconditioned; I have attained the destruction of craving.”⁵

In this verse, the “house-builder” symbolizes craving or attachment, which, once understood and eradicated completely, ends the cycle of birth and death. The symbolic language used here suggests that once craving is eradicated, the very foundation of suffering – our attachments and desires – ceases to hold sway over us, allowing the mind to rest in a state of unconditioned freedom. This cessation, brought about by wisdom and practice, becomes the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice: The cessation of suffering through the cessation of craving. The Buddha’s enlightenment is not just a personal victory but a profound lesson for all beings, showing that liberation is attainable through understanding the nature of desire and attachment.

In the context of modern global issues, the Buddha’s teachings are profoundly relevant. As contemporary society grapples with rising levels of mental health crises, social unrest, and environmental destruction, the teachings on craving and attachment offer valuable insights. Craving, in its various forms – whether for material wealth, power, or status – not only fuels personal suffering but also contributes to collective societal ills. Craving not only fosters greed, exploitation, and inequality but also fuels the relentless destruction of the environment, leading to ecological collapse and the deepening of social divisions. In this context, the Buddha’s insights offer a holistic approach to healing, in which liberation from craving alleviates both individual suffering and the societal ills that arise from collective attachments.

The path to liberation, therefore, is not only an individual pursuit but also a collective one, urging humanity to reflect on its relationship with material possessions, power, and the environment. By transcending personal craving, society as a whole can move toward greater harmony, sustainability, and peace. The Buddha’s insights into the nature of suffering offer a roadmap for healing, both individually and collectively. Through meditation, ethical conduct, and the cultivation of wisdom, individuals can reduce their attachment to harmful desires, while society can establish systems grounded in compassion, equality, and the well-being of all beings. The Buddha’s teachings encourage us to create a world in which human flourishing is not rooted in materialism or greed but in understanding, compassion, and the pursuit of true happiness through the cessation of suffering.

IV. THE BUDDHA’S APPEARANCE AND THE UNITY OF THE SAṄGHA

As stated earlier, the Buddha’s appearance is regarded as a rare event in the

⁵ *Dhp* 36: “*Gahakāraka ditṭhisi, puna gehaṃ na kāhasi, Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā ga-hakūṭaṃ visaṅkhatam, Visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.*”

universe, bringing peace and wisdom to all who encounter His teachings. The stanza “*Sukho Buddhānamuppādo*”⁶ underscores the immense significance of the Buddha’s appearance in the world, emphasizing the great benefit of His presence. The appearance of a Buddha is considered an extraordinary event that occurs only once in countless ages, offering humanity the opportunity to awaken to the truth of existence and transcend suffering. The stanza highlights the happiness that derives from the Buddha’s teachings, emphasizing the role of the *Saṅgha* – the community of monks, nuns, and lay followers – in spreading the Dhamma: Happy is the arising or appearing of the Buddhas, happy is the teaching or preaching of the True *Dhamma*, happy is the unity of the *Saṅgha*, happy is the asceticism or practice of those who are united.⁷

The first line of this verse highlights the joy that the Buddha’s appearance brings to the world. It is not merely a historical event but a cosmic shift that illuminates the dark realms of ignorance with the light of wisdom. His birth, enlightenment, and presence serve as a guide to the cessation of suffering. The Buddha’s appearance, therefore, marks the opening of a path toward ultimate peace and freedom, one that can be followed by anyone willing to engage with His teachings. The second line reflects the significance of His teachings, which are free from bias and serve all beings equally, fostering peace and harmony. The Buddha’s teachings are universal, transcending time, place, and individual circumstances, offering a framework for understanding and overcoming suffering that applies to all living beings.

The third line underscores the importance of unity among the *Saṅgha*, as the practice of the Dhamma is most effective when the community is in harmony. The unity of the *Saṅgha* symbolizes the ideal of spiritual collaboration, where individual efforts align with the collective goal of ending suffering and achieving enlightenment. In Buddhist practice, the *Saṅgha* is not merely a group of followers but a dynamic and interconnected community in which each member supports the others in their pursuit of liberation. Through their shared commitment to ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom, the *Saṅgha* becomes a living embodiment of the Buddha’s teachings on interconnectedness and compassion. The final line highlights the happiness that arises from collective effort, where individuals work together in the pursuit of liberation. This collective effort is a powerful force for spiritual progress, as the combined energy of a united community accelerates the path toward enlightenment for all.

This unity within the *Saṅgha* is essential not only for an individual’s spiritual progress but also for the well-being of society as a whole. The harmony of the *Saṅgha* provides a model for how individuals can live in mutual support and respect, transcending divisions and fostering a sense of common purpose. In its collective effort to uphold and propagate the Buddha’s teachings, the *Saṅgha* exemplifies harmonious coexistence and cooperative efforts toward

⁶ Dhṛp 42: “*Sukho Buddhānamuppādo, / Sukhā Saddhammadesanā, / Sukhā Saṅghassa Sāmaggī, / Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho.*” (verse 194).

⁷ Dhṛp 42.

alleviating suffering. When members of the *Saṅgha* live in alignment with the Dhamma, they serve as a testament to how a community can function in accordance with wisdom, compassion, and ethics, offering a blueprint for broader society. By cultivating compassion, wisdom, and ethical conduct, the *Saṅgha* becomes a living embodiment of the possibility of a society rooted in peace and collective well-being. The unity within the *Saṅgha* reflects the potential for all communities to achieve harmony and mutual support when grounded in shared values and a commitment to the welfare of all beings.

The *Saṅgha*'s role extends beyond spiritual guidance, it also functions as a social institution that promotes ethical living and community welfare. In addition to its spiritual function, the *Saṅgha* plays an integral role in shaping the moral and social fabric of society. In contemporary times, the principles of the *Saṅgha* can inspire organizations and communities to prioritize collective well-being over individual gain, fostering a culture of mutual respect and cooperation. By embracing the *Saṅgha*'s values of altruism, harmony, and selflessness, modern communities can develop systems that nurture both individual growth and collective flourishing. These principles also serve as a foundation for addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, promoting sustainable solutions that benefit all members of society. Ultimately, the *Saṅgha* exemplifies the transformation power of unity in the pursuit of peace, both on an individual level and within the broader world.

V. THE BUDDHA'S PASSING: IMPERMANENCE AND THE WAY TO PRACTICE MARAṆĀNUSSATI

The Buddha's passing away, or *parinibbāna*, is an event laden with profound philosophical significance. It serves as the final chapter in the life of the Enlightened One, illustrating the ultimate truth that even the Buddha, despite having attained liberation, was not exempt from the law of impermanence (*anicca*). Even the Buddha, despite His profound wisdom and enlightenment, had to face the inevitable nature of death. For ordinary beings, this truth is often veiled by the illusions of permanence, but the Buddha's passing offers a stark reminder that death, as part of the cycle of *saṃsāra*, is an inescapable truth for all. As earlier emphasized, the Buddha's teachings are deeply entwined with the recognition of impermanence, and His *parinibbāna* marks the culmination of His life's teachings, encapsulating the importance of accepting the transient nature of all phenomena.⁸

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha's last words emphasize the importance of mindfulness in one's practice: *Vayadhammā saṅkhārā*,

⁸ Dhṛp 53: "Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā"ti yadā paññāya passati. Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā." "All conditioned things are unsatisfactory" – when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification. "Maggavagga: The Path" (Dhp XX), translated from the Pāli by Acharya Buddharakkhita. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013,

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.20.budd.html>.

appamādena sampādetha,⁹ meaning “All conditioned things are subject to decay. Strive on with mindfulness.” These final words are not merely a reflection on His passing but a directive for His followers to remain vigilant in their practice, as the opportunity to end suffering is fleeting and uncertain. The Buddha’s passing serves as a powerful call to each practitioner, urging them to dedicate themselves fully to the path of liberation, even in His physical absence. The impermanence of all things reminds us of the preciousness of the present moment – there is no guarantee of tomorrow, and thus, no time to delay the pursuit of the cessation of suffering. The Buddha’s *parinibbāna*, therefore, does not signify an end to His influence; rather, it affirms the continuity of His teachings, which continue to guide practitioners toward enlightenment.

In the face of impermanence, the Buddha’s *parinibbāna* urges humanity to embrace mindfulness, recognizing that life’s transient nature calls for immediate action and dedication to one’s spiritual path. As the world grapples with distractions, materialism, and attachment, the Buddha’s teachings on impermanence prompt individuals and societies to realign their priorities toward long-term well-being, spiritual fulfillment, and ethical living. His final moments exemplified this, as He remained composed and focused, imparting His wisdom even amid physical suffering. The wisdom He shared during His passing encourages all of us to maintain equanimity in life, regardless of the challenges that may arise.

VI. HOW TO PRACTICE MARAÑĀNUSSATI

In light of the Buddha’s teachings on impermanence, one of the four protective meditation practices (*caturārakkha-kammaṭṭhāna*)¹⁰ that helps practitioners internalize this truth is *marañānussati*¹¹ – the recollection of death. This practice invites individuals to reflect deeply on the certainty of death and the uncertain timing of its arrival. *Marañānussati*, through regular contemplation, cultivates a sense of urgency, or *saṃvega*, which encourages practitioners to abandon procrastination, prioritize their spiritual progress, and engage fully in the Dhamma. This practice fosters a sense of deep awareness that aligns with the Buddha’s final exhortation: to practice with mindfulness and diligence, as life is uncertain and fleeting. The structured methods of *marañānussati* allow practitioners to integrate impermanence into their daily lives, fostering a balanced and insightful approach to their spiritual path.

Verbal contemplation: Practitioners often begin by reciting phrases that remind them of the inevitability of death, such as “death will come”, “the life-

⁹ D. II. 128.

¹⁰ Vl-ṭ. I. 415: “*Caturārakkhaṃ ahāpento’ti buddhānussati mettā asubhaṃ marañānussati’ti imaṃ caturārakkhaṃ ahāpento*” meaning meditations on the virtues of the Buddha, Loving-kindness, Foulness and Death are collectively called “*caturārakkha*” because they protect dangers.

¹¹ Vsm. I. 191: “*Maraṇaṃ ārabha uppannā anussati marañānussati, jīvitindriyupacchedārammaṇāya satiyā etamaddhivacanaṃ.*”

faculty will cut”, “death, death”,¹² “death is unavoidable”¹³, and “there is none who does not die after being born”¹⁴. This verbal contemplation grounds practitioners in the reality of death, transforming the fear or avoidance of it into a tool for spiritual development. By repeating these words, one begins to internalize the certainty of death, cultivating a heightened sense of urgency in one’s practice. (2) Visualization: Another effective method is visualization, where practitioners imagine the decay of the body after death. This visualization, commonly linked with cemetery meditations (*asubha bhāvanā*¹⁵ or *navasivathika*¹⁶), helps practitioners detach from the physical form and material attachments, recognizing that the body is impermanent and ultimately subject to decay. Through such practices, the transient nature of the body becomes vividly clear, helping practitioners to distance themselves from superficial desires and to focus on the development of the mind. (3) Analytical reflection: Practitioners may also engage in analytical reflection on the certainty of death, paired with the uncertainty of its timing. By contemplating how death could arrive at any moment, practitioners are encouraged to develop mindfulness and moral vigilance, ensuring that they do not squander precious time. This reflection is a vital part of the Buddha’s teachings, which often reminded His followers of the fragility of human life, urging them to prioritize spiritual development over the distractions of worldly pursuits. (4) Mindfulness of the present moment: Another aspect of *marañānussati* involves cultivating mindfulness in the present moment, recognizing that each moment could be the last. This practice strengthens focus, reduces attachment, and nurtures a balanced sense of urgency. When one fully embraces the present, free from the worries of the past or future, it is easier to practice with diligence, letting go of distractions and committing to spiritual practice with sincerity.

VII. MARAÑĀNUSSATI AND SAṂVEGA

The practice of *Marañānussati* leads to the development of *saṁvega*¹⁷ – a sense of urgency that propels the practitioner to abandon procrastination and commit fully to the path of liberation. Buddhist texts highlight how *saṁvega* becomes the driving force that encourages individuals to leave behind worldly distractions and focus solely on the cultivation of wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditation. The awareness of mortality, far from inducing despair, fosters a deep, motivating sense of urgency to realize the cessation of suffering. However, *saṁvega* is balanced by *pasāda*, which refers to serene confidence in the Dhamma, preventing practitioners from falling into despair or panic and allowing them to approach their practice with stability and joy.

¹² Vsm. I. 222: “*Maraṇaṃ bhavissati, jīvitindriyaṃ upacchijjissati, maraṇaṃ, maraṇaṃ.*”

¹³ D. II. 22, M. III. 221, A. I. 139

¹⁴ D. II. 197, S. I. 109, A. II. 501

¹⁵ A. II. 388, A. III. 165.

¹⁶ D. II. 235.

¹⁷ M-ṭ. III. 324 *Samvego’ti sahotappañāṇaṃ vuccati* meaning it is stated that *Samvega* is a wisdom or understanding arising together with *Ottappa*, a mental factor.

The Buddha's discourse, *Abhiñhapaccavekkhitabbaṭṭhāna Sutta*,¹⁸ illustrates how awareness of death sharpens diligence in practice. When individuals reflect earnestly on the brevity of life, they begin to see their spiritual journey as an urgent task. The realization of life's fragility directs their energies toward spiritual growth, prioritizing the Dhamma over the distractions of everyday life. This sense of urgency, rooted in the awareness of death, compels practitioners to move beyond procrastination and engage fully with the present moment.

VIII. ATTAINING A SENSE OF URGENCY FOR WORLD PEACE

The transformation power of *marañānussati* extends not only to the individual but to society as a whole. When individuals grasp the transient nature of existence, they naturally develop compassion for others and a commitment to the well-being of all beings. The Buddha's teachings on death were never meant to evoke fear but rather to inspire a life of virtue, free from attachment and conflict. By internalizing the awareness of mortality, practitioners cultivate a more profound sense of urgency to alleviate suffering, not just for themselves but for the entire world.

A society grounded in *marañānussati* acknowledges the futility of attachment to power, wealth, and status. Recognizing impermanence leads to the dissolution of ego-driven conflicts, opening the door for dialogue, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. The Buddha's interactions with rulers and laypeople offer a powerful example of how the contemplation of death can redirect priorities toward ethical governance and compassionate action. The awareness of death encourages leaders and individuals to act with integrity, compassion, and wisdom, addressing the needs of society and fostering peace. By embracing *Marañānussati*, individuals and communities can foster a shared vision of peace rooted in the wisdom of impermanence. In this way, the practice of *marañānussati* aligns with the broader Buddhist goal of reducing suffering and promoting a compassionate, awakened society, where the awareness of mortality catalyzes positive change and collective well-being.

IX. SUFFERING, REBIRTH, AND THE DHAMMA: ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

The Buddha's teachings on suffering (*dukkha*) and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*)¹⁹ offer profound guidance that remains highly relevant for addressing the multifaceted challenges of contemporary society. As discussed earlier, the Buddha's profound insight into the nature of suffering encompasses not just individual experiences but also the collective suffering borne out of societal conditions. The metaphor of the "builder of the house," as found in various Buddhist texts, such as the *Dhammapada*²⁰ and other *Suttas*,²¹ reinforces the critical importance of recognizing the causes of suffering – craving,

¹⁸ A. II. 5.57.

¹⁹ D. I. 231, S. III. 373.

²⁰ *Dhp* 36.

²¹ *Thig* 256.

ignorance, and attachment. The *paticca-samuppāda* (dependent origination) framework elaborates how these causes perpetuate the cycle of suffering, or *saṃsāra*, which governs not only individual lives but societal patterns as well. Thus, recognizing these root causes allows individuals and societies to transform suffering by cutting off these chains of attachment and ignorance. The Buddha's teachings offer a road map forward, providing practical tools to address suffering through the cultivation of ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), all of which contribute to the well-being of both individuals and communities. These teachings provide a framework for societal transformation, fostering peace, collaboration, and sustainable development.

In today's era of globalization and growing interdependence, Buddha's teachings on interconnectedness and compassion (*karuṇā*) are more relevant than ever. Global challenges such as widening inequalities, environmental degradation, and political fragmentation call for a paradigm shift – a shift that embraces compassion and collective responsibility. The Buddha's teachings stress that the well-being of the individual is intricately linked to the well-being of others and the environment. The current global crises – such as climate change, economic instability, and social injustice – are direct consequences of human greed, hatred, and delusion, which the Buddha explicitly identifies as the root causes of suffering. In this sense, the Buddha's emphasis on interconnectedness presents a compelling vision for modern society. The Dhamma calls for us to view the suffering of others, regardless of nationality, race, or status, as our suffering and to act with empathy, compassion, and wisdom.

The Buddha's call to “strive on with mindfulness” (*appamādena sampādettha*)²² is a timeless reminder that the liberation of individuals is intimately linked with the liberation of all beings. This teaching is not merely about individual enlightenment or liberation, it is about collective liberation, where the liberation of one serves as a foundation for the liberation of many. In the modern context, where divisions between nations and peoples have grown more pronounced, this interconnectedness is a powerful antidote to the fragmentation of society. The Buddha's message challenges us to embrace a universal responsibility for the well-being of all beings, emphasizing that true liberation occurs when one recognizes that all beings, regardless of their circumstances, are interconnected in the web of existence.

The Buddha's teachings on the cessation of suffering and the end of *saṃsāra* offer solutions not just for the individual but for the global community. By addressing the root causes of suffering – greed, hatred, and delusion – through mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct, humanity can break free from cycles of conflict, poverty, and environmental destruction. These are the same cycles that keep humanity trapped in patterns of exploitation, violence, and environmental degradation, which perpetuate suffering not only for individuals but for societies as a whole. The practice of the Dhamma provides practical

²² D. II. 100, 128, S. I. 217.

solutions for promoting peace, human dignity, and a sustainable future, offering a clear path toward a just, compassionate, and eco-friendly world. In practical terms, the cultivation of ethical conduct promotes fairness, nonviolence, and justice in social and economic systems, while mental discipline helps mitigate harmful patterns of thought and behavior, enabling individuals and societies to work in harmony toward the common good.

The Buddha's teachings emphasize that peace cannot be attained through superficial means or mere material wealth; it requires a deep commitment to understanding the impermanence of all things, letting go of attachment, and working collectively for the welfare of others. As such, the Dhamma encourages us to develop a sense of shared responsibility and solidarity in the face of global challenges. This approach calls for a collective effort, a unity of purpose, in transcending the limitations of individual ego. It urges societies to look beyond national borders, ethnic divides, and personal desires to embrace a global vision of compassion and interconnectedness. The Buddhist principle of *mettā* (loving-kindness) can be a guiding force in forging connections between disparate groups, encouraging them to work together for the common good. In a world where individualism and competition often dominate, the Dhamma offers a refreshing alternative – one rooted in collaboration, empathy, and a shared commitment to alleviating suffering.

The transformation potential of the Buddha's teachings lies not only in their capacity to uplift individuals but also in their ability to guide collective human efforts toward a harmonious and sustainable world. The Buddha's message is clear: Only by transforming our internal states—through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom – can we hope to address the external challenges that plague society today. The solutions to the crises we face are not external but internal. They require us to change the way we relate to ourselves, to others, and the environment. Through this holistic transformation, the Dhamma offers not just a path forward for the individual but a blueprint for a peaceful, compassionate, and interconnected world where all beings can live in harmony with one another and with nature. By embracing the Buddha's teachings on suffering, rebirth, and the path to liberation, we can begin to forge a future that is not dominated by cycles of conflict and destruction but one that is rooted in wisdom, compassion, and a collective commitment to the well-being of all.

X. CONCLUSION

The Buddha's teachings on suffering, rebirth, and the cessation of suffering offer profound and transformational insights into how humanity can transcend the many challenges it faces today. His life – marked by birth, enlightenment, and death – serves as a living example of the path to liberation. This path, intended not only for individual well-being but for societal harmony, provides a clear guide to alleviating suffering and fostering peace. In the Buddha's teachings, we find a universal message that transcends time and culture, inviting humanity to reflect deeply on the nature of suffering, its root causes, and the possibility of overcoming it.

Central to the Buddha's message is the importance of the *Saṅgha*, the

community of practitioners who, through unity and collective effort, embody the values of the Dhamma. By practicing ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, the *Saṅgha* becomes an instrument of peace and transformation, offering a model for how communities can work together to overcome division, greed, and hatred. This unity within the *Saṅgha* exemplifies how cooperation and compassion, grounded in shared practice, can heal not only individual suffering but also collective societal wounds. It is through this united effort that humanity can cultivate the values of inclusivity, peace, and sustainable development, leading to a harmonious future for all.

As we continue to face unprecedented global challenges – such as environmental degradation, social unrest, and growing inequality – the Buddha’s teachings provide an enduring source of hope. By reflecting on the impermanence of life, as demonstrated by the Buddha’s passing, we are reminded of the urgency with which we must address these issues. His call to “strive on with mindfulness” highlights the need for continuous, diligent effort in the face of adversity. The Buddha’s message urges us to act with compassion, wisdom, and mindfulness, not just for personal liberation but for the collective well-being of all beings.

The Dhamma offers a framework for individual and collective transformation, providing practical solutions that address the root causes of suffering – greed, hatred, and delusion. If applied with sincerity and diligence, the Buddha’s teachings have the potential to guide all beings out of suffering and toward the ultimate realization of liberation. In a world where so much remains uncertain, the Buddha’s wisdom stands as a beacon of clarity, offering a pathway to a future grounded in compassion, equity, and sustainability.

Thus, as we confront the challenges of the modern world, Buddha’s timeless teachings provide not just a spiritual guide for individual practice but a blueprint for a more compassionate, equitable, and sustainable future. By integrating mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom into our daily lives, both as individuals and as a global community, we can work toward a future where suffering is alleviated, peace is nurtured, and all beings are allowed to realize their full potential. The Buddha’s path remains ever-relevant, offering hope and direction for humanity as we navigate the complexities of the present and move toward a more harmonious future.

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INNER PEACE IS A FOUNDATION FOR WORLD PEACE: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Inner peace is a state of mental and emotional tranquility. It means peace of mind. World peace refers to a state of global harmony where nations, cultures, and people live without conflict, violence, war, etc. Buddhism envisions that inner peace is the state of mental tranquility that contributes to cultivating outer peace. The purpose of this research is to show that world peace can be achieved through inner peace. Data is collected from primary and secondary sources and relevant research articles to foster the research. The Buddha admonished the first sangha community to propagate his teachings to guide humanity in order to lead a peaceful life and to maintain human dignity. They proclaimed the doctrine that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, which leads to developing spiritual life and liberation. Buddhism has pointed out that the clear path to achieving the serene state of mind is the Middle Path, which includes *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. Further, Buddhism emphasizes that peace should be developed based on ethical conduct. In order to sustain social dignity and peaceful living, Buddha formulated a code of behaviour common to all men. This Code of Behaviour is popularly known as “*Pañca Sīla*,” or five precepts. The root of conflict lies within the individual mind, and by practicing meditation, one can then encompass the peace outwards to society. Therefore, world peace is cultivated by inner peace through mindfulness, compassion, and ethical living. Cultivating inner peace is considered the foundation for achieving world peace. It is pertinent to mention that to accomplish a peaceful and sustainable world for future generations, we should cultivate inner peace.

Keywords: *Inner peace, world peace, tranquility, harmony, ethical conduct.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines Buddhist inner peace as a foundation for world peace. Inner peace is the key principle for world peace. Inner peace is a very essential aspect for a better, harmonious society without conflicts. It is often described as a state of mental and emotional stability, free from anxiety, fear, and inner turmoil. However, peace at a global level is deeply rooted in the internal state of individuals. Peace is a wide concept. Peace is a subjective or intersubjective concept, as different individual actors or groups of individuals define it in distinctive ways.¹ There is no ontologically predetermined peace; rather, it is a contested concept with no single fixed meaning.²

According to the Buddhist point of view, peace is an internal and relational concept that arises from compassion, wisdom, and the elimination of mental and emotional turmoil. Further, Buddhism explains it as a pragmatic aspect. This research paper is dedicated to exploring the concept of inner peace as a foundation for world peace, arguing that true harmony among nations and societies begins within the minds of individuals.

1.1. Objectives

The research is to explore the idea of peace in Buddhism and the necessity of cultivating inner peace in a social framework to promote global peace. The next purpose of this research is to point out that both inner peace and world peace should be cultivated based on the ethical system.

1.2. Out come

Although world peace has become the central theme of mankind, it is not yet become a reality with conflict, political instability, social unrest and unethical attitudes in local and international contexts. It should be mentioned that peace can be preserved through conflict resolution. Therefore, this research is devoted to showing how cultivation of sustainable world peace can avoid current conflicts prevalent in society in a Buddhist perspective.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

K. N. Jayatillake, in his work “Buddhism and Peace,” discusses peace in Buddhism. He points out that peace is a central theme, quoting some aspects in Buddhism. The text mentioned below is quoted from his book.

“Peace is a central concept in the teachings of the Buddha, who came to be known as the *“santi-rājā”* or the “Prince of Peace.” For, on the one hand the aim of the good life, as understood in Buddhism, is described as the attainment of a state of “Peace” or *“santi,”* which is a characteristic of *Nibbāna* or the Transcendent Reality. On the other hand, the practice of the good life is said to consist in *“sama-cariyā”* or “harmonious (literally: peaceful) living” with one’s fellow beings. It was this doctrine, which gave “inward peace” (*ajjhatta-santi*)³³

¹ Richmond, 2008: 5.

² Richmond, 2008: 5.

³ Sn 837.

and resulted in “harmonious living” (or “righteous living” – *dhammacariyā* – as it is sometimes called), which the Buddha for the first time in the known history of mankind sought to spread over the entire earth when he set up, as he claimed, “the kingdom of righteousness” (*dhamma-cakkaṃ*, literally, rule of righteousness) or “the kingdom of God” (*brahma-cakkaṃ*). The Buddha, who in the earliest texts is said to have been “born for the good and happiness of mankind” (*manussaloka hita-sukhatāya jāto*)”⁴

“What the Buddha Taught,” written by Walpola Rahula Thera, explains the greatness of ethical conduct (*sīla*) as the foundation of the Buddha’s teachings.

“Ethical conduct (*sīla*) is built on the vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings, on which the Buddha’s teaching is based. It is regrettable that many scholars forget this great ideal of the Buddha’s teaching, and indulge in only dry philosophical and metaphysical divagations when they talk and write about Buddhism. The Buddha gave his teaching for the good of many for the happiness of many out of compassion for the world. (*bahujaṇahitāya bahujaṇasukhāya lokānukampāya*).”⁵

2.1. Methodology

Because this paper discusses peace from a Buddhist perspective, the primary sources related to Buddhism have been used for collecting data. Additionally, secondary sources had also been used.

2.2. Buddha and inner peace

Buddha, originally Ascetic Gautama, began cultivating inner peace by first recognizing the suffering (*dukkha*) inherent in this life. *Ariyapariyesana sutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* mentions that prince Siddhartha Gautama (name of the Buddha prior to attainment of Buddhahood) renounced from home to homelessness in order to find a path to end up the suffering of birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), disease (*vyādhī*) and death (*marāṇa*). He wanted to seek a satisfactory answer free from suffering for the welfare and happiness of both him and many people in the society. Therefore, after enlightenment, making the first community of Saṅgha including 60 Arahants, the Buddha gave his message to them. His message is included in the *Mahāvaggapāli* in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

*Atha ko bhagavā bhikkhu āmantesi muttohaṃ bhikkhave sabbapāsehi ye dibbā yecamānūsā tumhepi bhikkhave muttā sabbapāsehi ye dibbā yeca mānūsā. Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ bahujaṇa hitāya bahujaṇa sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hithāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ mā ekena dve agamitta. Desetha bhikkhave, dhammaṃ ādikalyanaṃ majjhe kalyanaṃ pariyosānakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyanjaṇaṃ kevalaparipunnaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ pakāsetha. Santi sattā apparajakkhajātikā, assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanthi. Bhavissanti dhammassa aññatāro. Ahampi bhikkhave, yena uruvelā senāninigamo thenupasankamissami dhammadesanāyā; ti.*⁶

⁴ Buddhism and Peace, K. N. Jayatilleke (1983): 5 – 6.

⁵ What the Buddha Taught, Walpola Rahula (1978): 46.

⁶ *Mahāvaggapāli* (1976): 42.

Then the Buddha addressed those monks: “I’m free from all snares (defilements), both human and divine. You, too, are free from all snares, both human and divine. Go wandering, monks, for the benefit and happiness of humanity, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, happiness of gods and humans. You should each go a different way. Proclaim the Teaching that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, that has a true goal and is well articulated. Set out the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life. There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are ruined because of not hearing the Teaching. There will be those who understand. I too will go to Uruvela, to Senānigama, to proclaim the Teaching.” In this way, the Buddha and His first sixty disciples began their mission of cultivating inner peace among people by spreading the Dhamma.

In the *Kosalavagga Sutta* (The Chapter on Kosala) in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha discusses the causes of peace and conflict, emphasizing that peace arises from understanding, non-greed, and non-hatred. King Pasenadi of Kosala learns about the impermanence of power and war, leading to a more peaceful outlook.

On one occasion, the Sākyaans and the Koliyans prepared to go to war for water from Rohini river. The Buddha, surveying the world with his supernormal powers, saw his relatives on both sides of the river coming out to meet in battle and he decided to stop them. The Buddha went to them. His relatives seeing him, powerfully and yet peacefully sitting above them in the sky, hid aside all their weapons and paid obeisance to the Buddha.

Then, the Buddha explained to them, “For the sake of some water, which is of little value, you should not destroy your lives, which are of so much value and priceless. Why have you taken this stupid action? If I had not stopped you today, your blood would have been flowing like a river by now. You live hating your enemies, but I have none to hate; you are ailing with moral defilements, but I am free from them; you are striving to have sensual pleasures, but I do not strive for them.”

The *Dhammapada* (a revered collection of the Buddha’s sayings) emphasizing the cultivation of inner peace through ethical living, mindfulness, and wisdom. It shows how personal transformation can influence societal harmony.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma - verinesu averino
verinesu manussesu - viharāma averino

Indeed, we live very happily, not hating anyone among those who hate; among men who hate, we live without hating anyone.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma - āturesu anāturā
āturesu manussesu - viharāma anāturā

Indeed, we live very happily, in good health among the ailing; among men who are ailing, we live in good health.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma - ussukesu anussukā

*ussukesu manussesu - viharāma anussukā*⁷

Indeed, we live very happily, not striving (for sensual pleasures) among these who strive (for them); among those who strive (for them), we live without striving.

*The Metta Sutta*⁸² is found in the *Sutta Nipāta* and the *Khuddakapatha* of the Pali Canon. The Sutta, also known as the “Discourse on Loving-Kindness,” offers profound guidance on cultivating loving-kindness (*mettā*) towards all beings, serving as a foundation for inner peace and harmonious relationships.

On one occasion, five hundred monks went into the forest to practice meditation. The deities residing in the trees made fearful sights and sounds at night to frighten the monks so that they would go away. The monks were so disturbed that they got sick and could not make any progress in their meditation. According to the Buddha’s advices, they returned to the forest and practiced the Metta Sutta as an object of meditation, as well as for their protection. By doing so, the deities then had good-will towards the monks and looked after them. At the end, all the five hundred bhikkhus attained Arahantship.

The *Mettānisaṃsa sutta* presents eleven benefits that arise out of the practice of loving kindness (*mettā*)

1. One sleeps in comfort – *sukhaṃ supati*
2. One wakes in comfort – *sukhaṃ paṭibujhati*
3. One has no bad dreams – *na pāpaka supinaṃ passati*
4. One is dear to human beings – *manussānaṃ piyo hoti*
5. One is dear to non-human beings – *amanussānaṃ piyo hoti*
6. One is protected by deities – *devatā hoti*
7. One is not harmed by fire, poison, and weapon – *nāssa aggi vā viṣaṃvā satthaṃ vā kamati*
8. One can concentrate easily – *tuvaṇṇaṃ cittaṃ samādhiyati*
9. One’s facial complexion is calm and serene – *mukhavaṇṇo vipasīdati*
10. One dies unconfused – *asammūḷho kālaṃ karoti*
11. If one does not attain anything higher, one will be reborn in the Brahma world after death *uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokūpago hoti*⁹

Karaṇiya mattha kusaleṇa - Yantaṃ santaṃ padaṃ abhisamecca

*Sakko ujū ca sūjū ca - Suvaco cassa mudu anatimāni*¹⁰

He who is skilled in good and wishes to attain that state of Peace should act thus: he should be able, upright, perfectly upright, amenable to corrections, gentle and humble.

⁷ Dhammapada (*Sukha vagga*) (1993): verses- 197, 198, 199.

⁸ *Sutta Nipāta* (2005): 44 – 47.

⁹ *Agguttara Nikaya*, (2012): 1573.

¹⁰ *Sutta Nipata* (2005): 44.

The *Metta Sutta* serves as a practical guide for developing unconditional love and compassion. Regular practice of *mettā* meditation fosters inner peace, reduces negative emotions, and promotes harmonious relationships. It is a timeless teaching that addresses the universal need for love and understanding in the world. Loving kindness is spread to all beings, whether weak or strong, large or small, visible or invisible, near or far, born or yet to be born. This sutta emphasizes not deceiving or despising others and advises against harboring anger or ill will. It encourages viewing all beings with the same protective love, a mother has for her only child. Practitioners are encouraged to radiate boundless loving-kindness in all directions – above, below, and across – free from hatred and enmity. By cultivating these practices and maintaining a heart free from fixed views and sensual desires, one purifies the mind and progresses towards liberation.

Attadaṇḍa Sutta in the *Sutta Nipāta* emphasizes that true peace comes from abstaining from aggression. The title of the Sutta is translated as “Arming Oneself.” According to the scholarly opinion, it conveys the image of a person taking up a stick (*daṇḍa*) – the stick being a common symbol in Indian literature for both violence and punishment. It delves into the origins and repercussions of violence, offering insights into the cultivation of non-violence. However, the Sutta in Buddhism represents the final sermon of the Buddha, which sought to promote peace and reconciliation, particularly after narrating the Jatakas to resolve conflicts between tribes. The Buddha observes that taking up arms stems from fear, which in turn perpetuates further fear and conflict. The Buddha emphasizes that by removing and overcoming desires and attachments, one can attain peace and a harmonious life. For personal development, one should eradicate unwholesome qualities such as deceit, arrogance, and anger. And by cultivating truthfulness, humility, and comprehension, individuals can align themselves with the principle of ahimsa. Then, individuals can contribute to a more peaceful and non-violent society.

The *Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta* is a significant early discourse in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, and it illustrates the power of skillful action with moral conduct. The Sutta presents an ideal ruler (*Cakkavatti* or Wheel-Turning King) who maintains peace by ruling with wisdom, generosity, and nonviolence. When the king rules by righteousness, the people of the country are virtuous. The country becomes prosperous. It leads to longevity. Then, it protects the peace of society. Over time, morals gradually corrupt, leading to social decline, poverty, and the destruction of human life. It warns that neglecting righteousness leads to social decay and conflict.

The *Cakkavatti-Sihanada sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* clearly states that poverty (*dāliddiya*) is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, etc. Kings in ancient times, like governments today, tried to suppress crime through punishment.¹¹¹

The *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (The Fruits of the Contemplative Life) of the

¹¹ What the Buddha Taught, Walpola Rahula (1978): 82.

Dīgha Nikāya describes how a peaceful, moral life rooted in meditation and wisdom leads to inner peace, which in turn influences society positively.

As far further, *Aggañña Sutta* (The Origins of Society) of the *Dīgha Nikāya* explains that peace and harmony in society decline when greed and selfishness arise. It shows that ethical living, humility, and wisdom restore peace.

III. THE BUDDHIST WAY TO INNER PEACE

After training the first sixty of his disciples to attain the highest spiritual goal in this life itself, and then sent them to propagate the unique vision to society, requesting that no two of them were to go in the same direction. They were “to preach this good doctrine, lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely in its consummation.” It is necessary to emphasize the importance of this training, which was intended to bring about the morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom or understanding (*paññā*) development of the person. On the other hand, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are known as the three-fold training system in Buddhism. These three aspects are connected with the Noble Eight-Fold Path (*Majjhimā Paṭipadā* in Pali), which is the correct path to achieve liberation.

• Right Understanding (<i>sammā diṭṭhi</i>)	}	<i>paññā</i>
• Right Thought (<i>sammā saṅkappa</i>)		
• Right Speech (<i>sammā vācā</i>)	}	<i>sīla</i>
• Right Action (<i>sammā kammanta</i>)		
• Right Livelihood (<i>sammā ājīva</i>)		
• Right Effort (<i>sammā vāyāma</i>)	}	<i>samādhi</i>
• Right Mindfulness (<i>sammā sati</i>)		
• Right Concentration (<i>sammā samādhi</i>)		

The Noble Eightfold Path guides others toward inner peace and liberation.

3.1. Ethical base of Buddhist peace

According to Buddhist philosophy, “*sīla*” refers to moral or ethical conduct. It’s often considered the foundation for the development of both mental clarity and spiritual aspects. The *Ākaṅkheyya sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* explains that the monk who desires to attain *Jhānās* should fulfil moral virtues. As *sīla* is a fundamental aspect of Buddhism, it implies all good qualities that are included in its ethical teachings. Further, it develops love and compassion for all living beings.

Morality, or *sīla*, means “*kāyavācānaṃ samodhānaṃ sīlaṃ*” – bodily and verbal retainment. Virtuous behavior, or *sīla*, means moral conduct of physical (bodily) and verbal (oral) action. The minimum moral obligations of lay people are the Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*). Further, *sīla* is connected with the right speech, right action, and right livelihood of the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

3.2. Verbal morality

Abstention from telling lies

Abstention from slandering
 Abstention from harsh words
 Abstention from useless words.

Right speech

3.3. Physical morality

Not to destroy life – living beings
 not to steal things that belong to others without any permission
 not to commit adultery or refrain from sexual misconduct

Right Action

One should abstain from making one's living through a profession that brings harm to others. The Buddha has prohibited five kinds of trades for the lay people.

Trading in arms and lethal weapons
 Trading in flesh
 Trading in Intoxicating
 Trading in poisons
 Trading in living beings

Drinks Right Livelihood

Right Livelihood

Right speech, right action, and right livelihood are all related to ethical conduct, guiding persons to cultivate honesty, integrity, and responsibility in their daily lives. The practice of morality is based on prescriptive guidelines. The prescriptive guidelines entail abandoning negative actions of body, speech, and mind that bring harm to oneself and others, such as killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, intoxicating oneself, or actions inspired by anger or greed. The prescriptive guidelines entail cultivating virtuous actions of body, speech, and mind, such as generosity, patience, gentle speech based on compassion and loving kindness, etc., all of which lead towards developing inner peace and social harmony.

Further, the *Samyutta Nikāya* records that on one occasion, a certain deity came to meet the Buddha and asked thus:

*Anto jaṭā bahi jaṭā jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā
 taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi ko imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭanti*¹²

The inner tangle and outer tangle – this generation is entangled. And so, I ask of Gotama this question – who succeeds in disentangling this tangle? The Buddha gave the answer in the following stanza to explain the problem of the deity.

*Sīle patiṭṭāya naro sapañño cittaṃ paññaṇca bhāvayaṃ
 ātāpi nipako bhikkhu so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭanti*¹³

When a wise man, established well in virtue
 Develops consciousness and understanding

¹² *Samyutta nikāya* I (*Devatā Samyutta*), P.T.S., 165.

¹³ *Samyutta nikāya* I (*Devatā Samyutta*), 13.

Then, as a bhikkhu, ardent and sagacious
He succeeds in disentangling this tangle.

The term tangle means craving. Craving is caused to arise defilements (*kilesa*). Defilements are greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). These three unwholesome roots cause harmful mental functions to arise. Because of this harmful condition, it is caused to arise mental and emotional turmoil is caused. Therefore, the Buddha encourages the disciples to avoid unwholesome actions and perform wholesome actions instead. The main purpose of Buddhism is the spiritual development of the person. The entirety of the Buddha's teachings is summarized concisely.

*"Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ, - kusalassa upasampadā;
Sacitta pariyaḍapaṇaṃ, - etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ"*¹⁴
Not to do any evil,
To cultivate merit (good),
To purify one's mind,
This is the Teaching of the Buddhas."

According to the Buddhist interpretation, peace can be preserved through conflict resolution. Buddhism proposes peace as an inner state of mental tranquility that spreads outward. Attaining a state of inner peace could be an inspiration to all. Buddha attained inner peace through the practice of meditation, which inspired him to work for world peace. The Buddha referred to two kinds of meditations as *samatha* (concentration meditation) and *vipassanā* (insight meditation). The aims of Buddhist meditation are to cultivate perfect mental health, happiness, inner peace, tranquility, equilibrium, etc. *Samatha* meditation, cultivating concentration (*citta-ekaggatā*), suppresses mental defilements. In most of his teachings, Buddha has emphasized that the practice of *vipassanā* uproots mental defilements, which are the causes of suffering and restlessness. Further, the Buddha has pointed out that *sīla* is an essential foundation of Buddhist meditation. Venerable Paravahera Vajirañāṇa, in his work called "Buddhist Meditation-In Theory and Practice," mentions that meditation as a means of mental purification presupposes the possession of moral purity (*sīla visuddhi*), which forms its essential foundation.¹⁵¹

Samatha bhāvanā or concentration meditation means nothing else; it is connected with the *samādhi* aspect of the Buddhist path. Also, *Vipassanā bhāvanā* or insight meditation is related to the *paññā*, or wisdom of the Buddhist Path. morality is the foundation of Buddhist meditation.

Inner peace, as well as world peace, can be built based on Buddhist meditation. Mindfulness meditation and insight are considered practical tools that help to develop greater emotional resilience and a more balanced perspective on the challenges of human life.

¹⁴ *Dhammapada*, 1993, 165.

¹⁵ Buddhist Meditation-In Theory and Practice, Paravahera Vajirañāṇa (1975): 76.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF FOUR SUBLIMES AS A KEY APPROACH TO CULTIVATE BOTH INNER PEACE AND OUTER PEACE

4.1. *Catur Brahmavihāra* – The four modes of sublime conduct

The *Brahmavihāra* are a series of four Buddhist virtues. It has occupied a central position in the field of mental training in Buddhism. Its exercises include the development of the four higher sentiments. According to Buddhist interpretation *Brahma* means sublime or noble and *vihāra* means mode or state of conduct or state of living. They are also termed *appamaññā* (boundless or limitless) because these thoughts are radiated towards all beings without limit of obstruction.

The *Brahma-vihāras* are:

mettā - loving-kindness or benevolence

karuṇā - compassion

muditā - empathetic joy

upekkhā - equanimity

According to the *Metta Sutta*, the cultivation of the four immeasurable has the power to cause the practitioner to be reborn into a “Brahma realm.” From the ethical point of view, these four aspects emphasize the moral foundation of every form of religious life. They are considered to be indispensable to spiritual development.

According to the interpretation given by the Buddhaghosa Thera, *Brahma* means sublime, excellent, or highest in the sense of faultless, clean, and pure. In a further explanation, the Thera adds that these states are the best on the ground, that they are the proper and perfect conduct of one being towards other beings. “*Brahmaṃ etaṃ vihāraṃ idha māhu*” Here it is said that this mode of living is *Brahma*, excellent or supreme. The word *Vihāra* implies a mode of spiritual or religious life, as in the phrases “*Dibba-vihāra*,” the “Deva, or Divine mode of living,” “*Ariya-vihāra*,” and “the Noble mode of living,” and the meditation practices made to cultivate them.

4.1.1. *Mettā* – Loving-kindness

Mettā – *Maitri* in Sanskrit. According to the interpretation of Buddhaghosa Thera, *mettā* literally means “friendliness” signifies the state of a friend. (*mittassa bhāvo mettā*). Further, loving-kindness, or benevolence, or goodwill, is defined as that which softens one’s heart. But it is not meant for carnal love or personal affection. The direct opposite state of *mettā* is hatred, ill will, or aversion (*kodha*). Its indirect enemy is personal affection (*pema*). *Mettā* embraces all beings without exception. The practice of “*mettā*” or compassionate love is thus an essential part of the training. The word *mettā* is the abstract noun from the word *mitta*, which means “friend.” It is, however, not defined just as “friendliness” but as analogous to a mother’s love for her only child. “Just as a mother loves her only child even more than her life, you extend a boundless love towards all creatures.” Further, *mettā* – loving kindness can be elucidated as a sincere and genuine wish for the welfare and happiness of all living beings

without exception, without any selfish motive or expectation. In other words, it is unconditional love towards oneself and friends as well as foes without any preferential love. It is the antidote to anger and hatred.

4.1.2. *Karuṇā* – compassion

Karuṇā is defined as that which makes the hearts of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering or that which dissipates the suffering of others. Its main feature is the wish to remove the sufferings of others. The practice of the “highest life” (*brahma-vihāra*) is said to consist in the cultivation of compassionate feelings towards all beings, sympathy (*karuṇā*) towards those in distress who need our help. Its direct enemy is wickedness (*hiṃsā*). Its indirect enemy is passionate grief (*domanassa*). Compassion embraces sorrow-stricken beings, and it eliminates cruelty. Karuna or Compassion One helps others without expecting anything in return, shares sorrows with others and shows compassion to those who are misfortunate. This counteracts cruelty and harmfulness towards others. Compassion removes the suffering, opens the door to freedom, and makes the narrow heart as wide as the world.

4.1.3. *Muditā* – Sympathetic Joy

It is not mere sympathy but sympathetic or appreciative joy or gladness. *Muditā* implies the ability to rejoice at others happiness or prosperity. Its main feature is happy acquiescence in others prosperity and success (*anumodanā*). Its essence is the absence of envy. Its manifestation is the destruction of dislike. Its proximate cause is the sight of the prosperous condition of other beings. Therefore, *Muditā* embraces all prosperous beings. It eliminates dislike (*arati*) and is the congratulatory attitude of a person.

Mudita, or sympathetic joy, means one feels happy when they see others being successful, prosperous, and happy. This is an antidote to jealousy and envy, especially towards enemies.

4.1.4. *Upekkhā* – Equanimity

Upekkhā is generally rendered as “equanimity.” Equanimity is a perfect, unshakeable balance of mind, rooted in insight. Looking at the world around us and looking into our own hearts, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain and maintain a balance of mind. Our life continually moves between contrasts: rise and fall, success and failure, loss and gain, honour and blame. In such a case, if one can completely balance his mind, it is called equanimity. Actually, *upekkhā* means to view impartially, that is, with neither attachment nor aversion. It is not hedonic indifference but perfect equanimity or a well-balanced mind. It is the balanced state of mind amidst all vicissitudes of life, such as praise and blame, pain and happiness, gain and loss, and repute and disrepute. Its direct enemy is attachment (*rāga*), and its indirect enemy is callousness. *Upekkhā* discards clinging and aversion. Its main characteristic is an impartial attitude. *Upekkhā* does not mean a mere neutral feeling but implies a sterling virtue. Equanimity and mental equilibrium are its closest equivalents. *Upekkhā* embraces the good and the bad, the love and the unlove, the pleasant and the unpleasant.

The four sublime abodes are the center of moral virtues in Buddhism,

and these virtues are answers to world peace. Happiness and peace must first be established in one's own heart before he can bring peace to others and to the world at large. Metta embraces all beings, karuna embraces the sufferers, *muditā* embraces the prosperous, and *upekkhā* embraces the good and bad, the loved and unloved, the pleasant and unpleasant.

When the Buddha's disciple Ānanda therā suggested to him that half of the teachings of the Buddha consisted in the practice of friendliness, the Buddha's rejoinder was that it was not half but the whole of the teachings.

Buddhism and Peace (written by K. N. Jayatillake) mentions that this emphasis on compassion made it possible for Buddhism to spread its message over the greater part of Asia without resorting to military force or political power. It is the proud boast of Buddhism that not a drop of blood has been shed in propagating its message, and no wars have been fought for the cause of Buddhism or the Buddha. It was able to convert people to its view by its reasonableness and the inspiring example of those who preached it. Differences of opinion there were with regard to the interpretation of the texts among the Buddhists themselves, and this was inevitable in a religion that gave full freedom of thought and expression to man. But these differences did not result in fanaticism and an attempt on the part of one party to persecute the other.

V. CONCLUSION

Peace encloses happiness and harmony among living beings. In a wider meaning, peace is the nature and goal of every sentient being. Being peaceful is living in friendship with oneself and with every creature. Bottom of Form According to Buddhist history, as a prince, Siddhartha lived in luxury, shielded from suffering by his father. However, when he encountered an old man, a sick person, a corpse, and a renunciant (the "Four Sights"), he realized that suffering was unavoidable in life. This realization sparked a deep desire to find the truth about existence and the path to liberation from suffering. Siddhartha left his royal life and became an ascetic, practicing extreme self-denial, fasting, and meditation under various teachers. He sought enlightenment through harsh asceticism but found that neither indulgence nor extreme austerity led to true peace. Through deep meditation, Siddhartha observed the nature of reality, overcoming desires, fears, and attachments. He experienced profound insights into the causes of suffering and the way to liberation. He attained enlightenment (*Nirvāṇa*) and became the Buddha, "the Awakened One." He realized the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, which guide others toward inner peace and liberation. Buddha attained inner peace through the practice of meditation, which inspired him to work for world peace. He spent the rest of his life teaching others for their benefit and happiness and guiding how to cultivate inner peace through mindfulness, ethical living, and wisdom. The teachings of the Buddha on nonviolence are pervasive throughout Buddhist scriptures, emphasizing the importance of inner transformation as a means to foster external peace. Several Buddhist sutras that emphasize peace and focus on both inner peace and peace in society have been shown as key principles under this research. Further, the word morality, or *sīla*, is considered

“discipline” or “restraint,” which has a philosophical connotation. On the other hand, practicing *sīla* – acting with discipline and restraint in daily life – lays an essential foundation in order to harmonious society.

A person who identifies the correct path of life can realize inner peace. Inner peace projects itself outward, towards the family, friends, and society. This ensures peace and harmony in the outer world. Thus, world peace can be achieved through inner peace. Therefore, world peace, or outer peace, is impossible to have without individuals being at peace with themselves.

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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF INSIGHT VEHICLE (VIPASSANĀYĀNA) BASED ON THE SUSIMASUTTA

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Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to analyze the insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*) to fully understand its method and significance. The primary purpose of this exposition is to explain the interpretations of *bhāvanā* and *vipassanāyāna*, ensuring a clear and comprehensive understanding of these terms. Once one fully grasps their benefits, one will naturally engage in self-cultivation through the practice of *vipassanāyāna*. Another reason for this study is the historical development of the insight vehicle. Since the early 20th century, *vipassanāyāna* has been revived and widely propagated by renowned meditation teachers in Myanmar before spreading to other Buddhist countries. However, some scholars question its authenticity, arguing that *jhāna* (absorption concentration) is traditionally required for attaining *arahantship* or even stream-entry. To address these concerns, this paper examines the possibility of *arahants* who have attained liberation without achieving the first form-sphere *jhāna*. Furthermore, this study explores the practical application of *vipassanāyāna* in daily life - every hour and every moment - demonstrating how insight practice, even without deep meditative absorption, can bring peace and happiness in this very life and ultimately lead to *nibbāna*. Beyond individual benefits, the cultivation of insight and inner peace has broader implications for society. When individuals develop insight meditation, they naturally contribute to a more peaceful and compassionate world. By eliminating greed, hatred, and delusion within oneself, one helps reduce conflicts, misunderstandings, and violence in society. Thus, the practice of *vipassanā* is not only a path to personal liberation but also a foundation for world peace. Through the transformation of individual minds, a society rooted in wisdom, ethical conduct, and harmony is cultivated - aligning with the Buddha's vision that inner peace leads to the cessation of suffering for all beings.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As everybody knows, there are many meditation methods practiced in Buddhism. Mostly, two vehicles - tranquility vehicle (*samathayāna*) and insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*) - are used by meditators striving to attain true happiness in this life and ultimately reach *nibbāna*. These vehicles have been practiced by Buddhists from ancient times until now. In this context, the *Susīmasutta*, found in the *Nidānavagga* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, explains how to cultivate the meditator's mind through the insight vehicle. The *Susīmasutta* is one of the most interesting among various *vipassanā* suttas because it illustrates the path to becoming an *arahant* without any *jhāna* or supernormal powers (*abhiññā*). The sutta emphasizes the insight vehicle or the way of pure insight (*suddhavipassanā*). Another intriguing aspect of this sutta is its central figure, Susīma. Susīma was a wanderer (*paribbājaka*), a person who held a different view. He approached the Buddha intending to steal the *Dhamma* to teach it to his followers for the sake of gaining the four requisites. However, in the end, he became an *arahant* through the practice of the insight vehicle without any absorption concentration. After that, he realized the truth illuminated by the Buddha. According to the *Susīmasutta*, in the doctrine of *vipassanāyāna*, insight is described as “dry” because it lacks the “moisture” of *jhāna* absorption. Therefore, *vipassanāyāna* enables a practitioner to achieve the final goal of enlightenment without *jhāna*. However, some assume that this doctrine of *vipassanāyāna* is not explicitly expressed in *Pāli* texts, whereas *samathayāna*, which emphasizes *jhāna* attainment as a requirement for enlightenment, appears more dominant. From this perspective, some scholars have cast doubt on the authenticity of *vipassanāyāna*, arguing that it is a later development, neither taught by the Buddha nor found in *Pāli* texts. These arguments, however, are refuted by the authority of the *Susīmasutta*. This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*), highlighting key aspects that inspire practitioners to seek freedom from suffering and attain happiness in this very life. The study includes significant points to encourage those who follow the insight vehicle to cultivate wisdom and inner peace, ultimately leading to liberation from suffering. To achieve this, descriptive, explanatory, and analytical methods are applied, ensuring clarity in defining the meaning of the insight vehicle and its role in both daily practice and the ultimate attainment of *nibbāna*. The exploration of its practical applications demonstrates how consistent practice in everyday life fosters inner peace, wisdom, and liberation from suffering. Furthermore, this paper emphasizes that cultivating inner peace through *vipassanā* practice not only benefits individuals but also contributes to world peace. When practitioners develop mindfulness, equanimity, and ethical conduct, their actions naturally promote harmony in society. By eliminating greed, hatred, and delusion, individuals help reduce conflict, misunderstanding, and suffering in the world. This aligns with the Buddha's vision that true peace arises when inner transformation leads to compassionate and wise engagement

with others. Thus, the practice of *vipassanāyāna* is not only a path to personal liberation but also a foundation for a more peaceful and harmonious society. Through the transformation of individual minds, a world rooted in wisdom, ethical conduct, and compassion can be cultivated, demonstrating that inner peace is the key to the cessation of suffering for all beings.

II. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SUSIMA SUTTA

The *Susīmasutta* is the 12th sutta in *Nidānavagga*, *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Suttanta Piṭaka*. The preacher of this sutta is the Buddha.¹ The sutta's style is a catechetical dialogue (*pucchā vissajjanā* - questioning and answering). The Buddha is the questioner (*pucchaka*), and Susīma answers the Buddha's questions. Then, Susīma becomes the questioner, and several mendicants answer his questions. Susīma inquires whether the newly attained *arahants* have achieved any supernormal powers and *jhāna*, but he is confused when they reply that they have not attained any supernormal powers or *jhāna*. At that time, the wanderer Susīma was residing in *Rājagaha* together with a large community of wanderers. He was the leader of that community. Then, the community of wanderers said to Susīma: "Reverend Susīma, please live the spiritual life with the ascetic Gotama. Memorize that teaching and have us recite it with you. When we have memorized it, we will recite it to the laity." At that time, monks declared their attainment of *arahantship* in the presence of the Buddha. Susīma asked them whether they had attained the supernormal power of the divine eye, the knowledge of past existences, and the formless attainments, to which they replied in the negative. Susīma's questions were related to the five mundane superknowledges and the formless attainments, and the replies were all negative. In response to Susīma's questions, the *bhikkhū* identified themselves as arahants liberated by wisdom or understanding (*paññāvimutti*).² Susīma asked the arahants to explain in more detail, but their second reply simply restated their identities as wisdom-liberated arahants without clarifying the meaning for him. When Susīma questioned the Buddha, he was given a catechism on the five aggregates and dependent arising. The Buddha's detailed explanation to Susīma's questions contained an exposition on the non-self nature of the five aggregates before elaborating on the doctrine of dependent origination. After the exposition of the doctrine of dependent origination, Susīma acknowledged that though he knew and saw the law of dependent origination, he had not attained any mundane superknowledge or formless *jhāna* experiences. Listening to the Buddha's *Dhamma*, he realized the truth. After becoming an arahant, he confessed his erstwhile evil intentions. The theme of this sutta is the person who follows the pure *vipassanā* vehicle (*vipassanāyānika*), which means they can attain arahantship by wisdom (*paññāvimutti*) without *jhāna*, psychic powers, or supernormal powers. Arahants achieve liberation by understanding the *Dhamma* without

¹ S. II. 340.

² DR. Ottaranyana, *The Essence of the Path of Purification*. Chino Hills: Triple Gem Publication, 2011, p. 339.

gaining any superpowers or formless attainments. Susīma attained the purified vision of the *Dhamma* while listening to the *Dhamma* from the Buddha. This sutta also makes it clear that the knowledge of the true nature of reality - namely, the five aggregates and dependent origination - precedes the knowledge of *Nibbāna*. The purpose of this discourse is to encourage people to practice *vipassanā* meditation even if they do not attain any *jhānas*. If one considers concentration essential for meditation, it may be momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*).³ This type of concentration is the most important in *vipassanā* practice. The main theme of the *Susīmasutta* concerns the insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*). Throughout the entire *Susīmasutta*, it is emphasized that those monks became arahants without any *jhāna*. Therefore, the commentary on the *Susīmasutta* denies all forms of access and absorption concentration.⁴ That is why a meditator can practice meditation following the insight method to gain benefits and reach *Nibbāna*, even if they do not attain any *jhāna*, superknowledge (*abhiññā*), or formless attainment (*āruppa*). In any case, the sutta does not provide further explanation to distinguish the *paññāvimutta* arahant from other arahants who possess the six *abhiññā*, etc. It simply describes a person who has destroyed their impurities but does not experience the eight deliverances. However, the practice of *vipassanā* meditation requires certain levels of concentration, such as momentary concentration, to effectively continue on the path of insight. Momentary concentration is the type of concentration referred to in the Eightfold Path as right concentration (*sammā samādhi*). In the context of *vipassanā* meditation, this concentration is developed on a moment-to-moment basis rather than through sustained, deep meditative absorption as seen in *samatha* meditation. Therefore, in *vipassanā* meditation, momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*) plays a crucial role in developing mindfulness and insight. While traditional interpretations of right concentration (*sammā samādhi*) in the Eightfold Path often emphasize the attainment of *jhāna*, some *vipassanā* traditions consider momentary concentration a sufficient form of mental stability to support insight meditation.⁵ To clarify the differences between the two, the meditator can compare them as follows: Both involve mental focus and serve the same function of destroying defilements. Both are states of concentration where the mind remains focused on an object without distraction. When practiced correctly, both forms of concentration contribute to wisdom and help develop insight into the nature of reality, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Whether deep or momentary, these states of concentration support mindfulness and insight, ultimately leading to liberation.

³ Sayadaw U Pandita, *The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1992, p. 151.

⁴ S-a. II. 115. Pali text: “Paññāvimuttā kho mayaṃ, āvusotī, āvuso, mayaṃ nijjhānakā sukkhavi-passakā paññā-matteneva vimuttāti dasseti,” - “Friend, we are without *jhānā*, dry-insight practitioners, freed merely by wisdom.”

⁵ U Ko Lay, *Manual of Vipassana Meditation*. Maharashtra: Vipassana Research Institute, 2002, p. 33.

In short, right concentration is like a candle burning steadily, while momentary concentration is like flashes of light - both illuminate the path but in different ways. In *vipassanā*, the meditator gradually cultivates mindfulness (*sati*), a clear, non-reactive awareness of bodily sensations, feelings, consciousness, and mental objects. As mindfulness deepens, the meditator becomes more attuned to the impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) nature of all phenomena. This growing awareness directly contributes to the destruction of mental defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion, which are the root causes of individual suffering and conflicts in society. When individuals develop inner peace through *vipassanā*, they cultivate a mind free from agitation, attachment, and aversion. This inner transformation extends beyond personal well-being - it fosters compassion, patience, and wisdom, qualities that contribute to harmonious relationships and social harmony. As more people engage in self-cultivation through mindfulness and insight, the collective consciousness of society shifts toward peace and ethical conduct. As the meditator observes these changing phenomena, momentary concentration arises naturally, following the development of mindfulness. This concentration does not require prolonged focus on a single object but instead involves brief, focused attention on each momentary experience, allowing the mind to stay present and clear. Through continuous mindfulness and the moment-to-moment development of concentration, the meditator begins to purify the mind, gradually leading to deeper insights and the eventual cessation of suffering. This dynamic process of mindfulness and momentary concentration is foundational to *vipassanā* meditation, as it leads to the destruction of defilements and fosters the development of wisdom (*paññā*), which is essential for attaining *Nibbāna*. The Buddha also taught that true peace begins within the individual mind, and only when inner conflicts are resolved can one contribute meaningfully to world peace. By eliminating greed, hatred, and delusion at the personal level, *vipassanā* practitioners lay the foundation for a more peaceful world - one where understanding, non-violence, and wisdom guide human interactions. Thus, cultivating inner peace through insight meditation is not just a personal pursuit but a crucial step toward achieving lasting world peace.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MENTAL DEVELOPMENT (*BHĀVANĀ*)

The whole teachings of the Buddha contain two main purposes: knowing suffering and the way to be free from suffering, leading to freedom and realizing *Nibbāna*. For this reason, the Buddha taught mental development (*bhāvanā*) for all living beings to cultivate and to destroy all defilements and suffering. The combination of the word *bhāvanā* is *bhū + ṇe + yu + ā*.⁶ In Sanskrit, it is also called *bhāvanā*.⁷ *Bhāvanā* means mental development. It refers to producing, dwelling on something, putting one's thoughts to, applying, and developing

⁶ Buddhappiya Ācariya, *Padarūpasiddhi*. Yangon: Myanmar Kāyasukha Piṭaka Press, 1980, p.217 - 570.

⁷ Monier-Williams. "*Bhāvana*" and "*Bhāvana*." Accessed on [January 4, 2025], accessed at: <http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScanpdf/mw0755-bhAvodaya.pdf>.

through thought or meditation.⁸ Meditation consists of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation, both of which must be based upon moral conduct of body and speech.⁹ Besides, meditation also carries another meaning: it aims for the attainment of tranquility of mind, inner quietness, and saintly awakening. The word *bhāvanā* is generally translated as “meditation,” but it is better called mental development. It is a process of mental culture that produces significant benefits, so it should be developed repeatedly in one’s mind. The term meditation encompasses many different techniques that facilitate the cultivation of calmness, relaxation, one-pointed concentration, loving-kindness, compassion, a sense of well-being, and insight into the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), non-self (*anattā*), and interconnected nature of reality.¹⁰ Meditation also means mind-culture, to cultivate oneself from bad to good, from an unhappy life to a happy life, from negative thinking to positive thinking, and from an impure mind to a pure mind. Here, the meditator needs to distinguish two kinds of development: development of tranquility (*samatha bhāvanā*) and development of insight (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). These two important terms, tranquility and insight (*samatha vipassanā*), are frequently mentioned in the *suttas* and explained in the *suttas*, as well as in the *Abhidhamma*.¹¹ Therefore, meditation or mental development is also a powerful tool for transforming individuals and societies. By cultivating inner peace, people develop the wisdom and compassion needed to create a more harmonious world. As more individuals engage in meditation, collective consciousness shifts toward harmony, non-violence, and global peace, aligning with the Buddha’s vision of a world free from suffering. In addition, to attain inner peace, one must practice, and the two vehicles - the tranquility vehicle and the insight vehicle - serve as essential tools to help practitioners cultivate inner peace, contribute to world peace, and ultimately attain *Nibbāna*.

IV. TWO VEHICLES INSTRUCTED BY THE BUDDHA

Meditation is divided into two vehicles: the tranquility vehicle (*samathayāna*) and the insight vehicle (*vipassanāyāna*). Here, *yāna* means vehicle. However, while the *samatha* vehicle can be found in other traditions outside the Buddha’s dispensation, the *vipassanā* vehicle is unique to the teachings of the Buddha. As stated in the Handbook of *Abhidhamma* Studies, *vipassanā* is a distinct Buddhist form of meditation that cannot be found in non-Buddhist traditions, whereas *samatha* meditation is found in various non-Buddhist schools.¹² Both vehicles - *samatha* and *vipassana* - are *dhammas* to be

⁸ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pali - English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993. p.503.

⁹ Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, *Knowing and Seeing*. Kuala Lumpur: Wave Publications, 1999, p. 29 - 30.

¹⁰ Wildmind Meditation. “About Buddhist Meditation.” Accessed on [January 4, 2025], accessed at: <https://www.wildmind.org/background/buddhist-meditation>.

¹¹ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1952, p. 36.

¹² Venerable Sayādaw U Silānanda, *Handbook of Abhidhamma Studies*, Vol. III. Selangor:

developed and practiced. The mind of an ordinary person is often restless and shaken. To stabilize the mind, *samatha* should be practiced. To see ultimate realities as they truly are, *vipassanā* should be practiced. Moreover, *samatha* practice is like the experience of a person who stays indoors, enjoying *pīti* and *sukha* in a closed manner, whereas *vipassanā* practice is like the experience of a person who goes out to explore and learn all aspects of knowledge.¹³ However, these two practices, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, have different objects. *Samathayāna* means the vehicle of serenity. *Samatha* is calm, quietude of heart, tranquility, and serenity, and it is a synonym of concentration (*samādhi*).¹⁴ Nevertheless, it cannot denote all kinds of concentration. This is because momentary concentration and right concentration cannot be attained through *samatha* meditation. When a person practices the *samatha* method, he or she has to take one among the forty meditation subjects as the object of practice. These forty *samatha* meditation subjects, according to the commentary, are: ten *kaṣiṇa* subjects, ten loathsome subjects (*asubha*), ten recollection subjects (*anussati*), four subjects of immaterial states (*arūpa*), four subjects of divine abiding (*brahmavihāra*), one subject of perception of repulsiveness (*āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*), and one subject of defining the four primary elements (*catudhātuvavattāna*).¹⁵ Then, *vipassanāyāna* means the insight vehicle. One who practices the insight vehicle is called *vipassanāyānika*. It is also called *suddha-vipassanāyānika*. *Suddha-vipassanāyānika* means one who uses solely insight meditation as the vehicle of conveyance leading to deliverance and *nibbāna*. The *vipassanā* vehicle is the practice of observing mental and physical phenomena with the three characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). It is said that seeing conditioned things in this manner is called *vipassanā*. When the meditator sees mind and matter as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, it is *vipassanā*. *Vipassanā* is also knowing and seeing correctly. The Pāli word *vipassanā* is derived from two parts: *vi*, which means “in various ways,” and *passanā*, which means “seeing.” In Sanskrit, it is *vipasyanā*. *Vi* is a prefix, and *passati* is a verb meaning “to see clearly,” “to have intuition,” or “to obtain spiritual insight.”¹⁶ Thus, *vipassanā* means “seeing in various ways” or “seeing specially.” When the meditator applies this to meditation, it refers to seeing all objects or phenomena as impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). The following sentences explain the meaning of *vipassanā*: we have to observe reality by dividing it into small parts; we have to see reality specifically; we have to see reality from

Selangor Buddhist Vipassanā Meditation Society, 2012, p. 288.

¹³ Mya Thauung, trans., *On the Path to Freedom*. Selangor: Buddhist Wisdom Centre, 1987, p. 193.

¹⁴ Henepola Gunaratana, *The Path of Serenity and Insight*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992, p. 146.

¹⁵ *Vsm.* Vol. I. p.106. Pali text: “*Cattālisa kammaṭṭhānāni dasa kaṣiṇā, dasa asubhā, dasa anussatiyo, cattāro brahmavihārā, cattāro āruppā, ekā saññā, ekaṃ vavattānanti.*”

¹⁶ T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Question of King Milinda*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1890, p. 503.

different angles; and we have to see it with minute observation.¹⁷ Both *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation practices contribute significantly to cultivating inner peace. *Samatha* brings calm and emotional stability, while *vipassanā* provides deep insight into the nature of reality, reducing attachment, suffering, and ego-driven behaviors. As more people develop inner peace through these practices, it has the potential to create a ripple effect that contributes to a more harmonious and peaceful world. Peace begins within each individual, and when nurtured, it can spread throughout communities and across nations, ultimately fostering global peace. However, a meditator can attain enlightenment through *vipassanā* alone. There is substantial evidence in the texts to support this.

V. THE EVIDENCE FOR ATTAINMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT WITHOUT JHĀNA

The evidence for the attainment of enlightenment without *jhāna* (meditative absorption) primarily comes from various teachings and stories found in Buddhist scriptures, particularly in the early texts of the Theravāda tradition. While *jhāna* is considered a helpful and powerful tool for deep meditation and insight, there are cases where individuals attained enlightenment without relying on it. Here are some points and examples supporting this idea mentioned in the Buddha's teachings. In this sutta, the Buddha also explained to Susīma that there were arahants without any supernormal (*iddhi*) powers because they were *paññāvimutti* arahants. Once attaining *arahantship*, they had no desire to cultivate *iddhi* (*abhiññā*) powers. Another prominent example is the story of Cūḷapanthakaththera. He almost disrobed because he could not even memorize a single verse (*gāthā*) after trying hard for months. But with the Buddha's help, he was able to attain *arahantship* in a day and simultaneously achieved *abhiññā* powers as well. This story is mentioned in the Cūḷapanthakaththeragāthā.¹⁸ The story of Santati, the king's minister, is also relevant. It is mentioned thus: "Whatever in the past was produced by excellence, let there be for you no ownership afterward. And if in the present you will not grasp at all, you will fare on to perfect peace."¹⁹ The story of Paṭācārā also mentions her attainment through the practice of insight meditation. The Buddha taught her the method of meditation with these verses: "No children will be a refuge, nor any relations at all/ The one who is taken by death./ Will find no shelter among kin./ Knowing this, understanding this,/ The wise one, restrained by virtue,/ Quickly clears the obstacles on the path that leads to freedom."²⁰ In *Abhidhamma*, the explanation of enlightenment without *jhāna* becomes even clearer when one looks at the *citta vīthi* leading to *magga-phala*. The process is described as: "*Bha-Na-Da- Ma-Pa-U-Nu-Go-Mag-Pha-Pha-Pha - Bha-Bha*." When one of the three characteristics of existence enters the

¹⁷ Anand S. Krishna, *The Buddha*. Mumbai: Samrudh Bharat Publications, 2002, p. 152.

¹⁸ *Thera*. P. 303.

¹⁹ *Dhp*. Verse 142, *Collected Wheel Publications*. Vol. XXI. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2012, p. 298.

²⁰ *Therī-a*. p. 114.

avenue of the mind-door of a meditator, the life continuum vibrates twice and becomes arrested.²¹ Then, by observing and considering the characteristics of existence, the process follows this sequence: “*Bha* = *bhavaṅga*; *Na* = *bhavaṅga calana*; *Da* = *bhavaṅga upaccheda*; *Ma* = mind-door (*manodvāravajjana*); *Pa* = *parikamma* (preparatory thought); *U* = *upacāra* (proximate thought); *Nu* = *anuloma* (adaptation thought); *Go* = *gotrabhu* (change of lineage); *Mag* = *magga citta* (path consciousness); *Pha* = *phala citta* (fruition consciousness).” So, there is no *jhāna citta* preceding *magga* or *phala citta* in the *citta vīthi* leading to *magga-phala*. Once a meditator reaches *upacāra samādhi* (which is *sammāsamādhi*), the process transitions through *anuloma* and *gotrabhu* to *magga* and *phala citta*. This is why *upcāra samādhi* (which is *Sammāsamādhi*) is enough to attain even the *arahanthood*. All the evidence for the attainment of enlightenment without *jhāna* suggests that enlightenment can be achieved without reliance on *jhāna* (the meditative absorptions). The path of *vipassanā* itself, as taught by the Buddha, emphasizes the cultivation of insight through mindfulness, which can lead to profound self-awareness and liberation without the need to attain *jhāna* states. The focus on direct experience, moment-to-moment awareness, and deep insight into impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) offers transformative benefits. This approach still fosters qualities such as compassion, inner peace, and mindfulness. When these qualities arise, they naturally influence the world around the practitioner. As understanding is refined, the contribution to collective well-being grows. Besides that, mindfulness also plays an important role in both practice and peace.

VI. THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN THE INSIGHT VEHICLE

The Pāli word *sati* means mindfulness.²² It also refers to a leading or chief factor that guides, guards, and sustains the mind in developing other essential qualities such as concentration (*samādhi*) and direct knowledge (*paññā*). Mindfulness is a fundamental factor throughout the meditation practice, from beginning to end. The meditator must establish mindfulness because the mind naturally tends to wander. Mindfulness plays a key role in *Vipassanā* meditation. It is important to clearly understand what *sati* is in terms of its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause. Mindfulness has two defining characteristics: (1) The characteristic of not drifting or not floating away (*apilāpana-lakkhaṇā*); (2) The characteristic of taking up or keeping up (*upaggaṇhana-lakkhaṇā*). Regarding the first characteristic, mindfulness prevents the mind from moving up and down or floating away. It does not let the object slip but keeps it steady, like a rock. The function of mindfulness is the absence of confusion, distraction, and forgetfulness, ensuring that the mind does not lose sight of, miss, or let the observed object disappear. In general, the function of mindfulness is to keep the object always in view, neither forgetting

²¹ Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, *The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma*. Yangon: Mehm Tay Zar Mon Yadanar Min Literature, 1995, p. 168.

²² Sayadaw U Jotika, *Snow in the Summer*. Penang: Buddha Dharma Education Association, 1998, p. 11.

it nor allowing it to vanish. When mindfulness is present, the occurring object is noted without forgetfulness. Mindfulness manifests two ways, namely, coming face to face with the object and protecting the object. When one practices the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*), the previous moment of mindfulness becomes the proximate cause or condition for the arising of the next moment of mindfulness. Thus, one moment of mindfulness supports another, creating continuity in practice. That is why it is said that the Four Foundations of Mindfulness serve as the proximate cause for the arising of mindfulness. In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, it is established that *sati* is the foundation for practice and the path leading to *Nibbāna*.²³ The Buddha declared: “This is the only way, *bhikkhus*, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the Noble Path, for the realization of *Nibbāna* - namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.”²⁴ Mindfulness, central to the Insight Vehicle (*Vipassanāyāna*), cultivates inner peace by fostering awareness of impermanence (*anicca*), non-self (*anattā*), and suffering (*dukkha*). As individuals practice mindfulness, they develop qualities such as compassion and equanimity, which can positively influence the world. By reducing inner conflict and promoting harmonious relationships, mindfulness contributes to world peace. Ultimately, cultivating inner peace through mindfulness not only leads to personal enlightenment but also supports a more compassionate and peaceful world. Every great world religion preaches love for humanity and seeks to provide peace of mind.²⁵ Moreover, in the *Susīma Sutta*, the knowledge of *dharmatṭhitiñāṇa* also plays a crucial role in enlightenment, inner peace, and world peace.

VII. THE ATTAINMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF DHAMMATṬHITIÑĀṆA THROUGH PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA

The Buddha said thus, “One who sees *paṭiccasamuppāda* sees the *Dhamma*. One who sees the *Dhamma* sees *paṭiccasamuppāda*.”²⁶ This understanding is called seeing the *Dhamma*. Seeing the *Dhamma*, there is no more ignorance, no craving or aversion, no attachment, no selfishness, no conflict, no suffering. Therefore, the meditator should go inside his body and mind to contemplate and understand the law of dependent origination. When he can understand the law of dependent origination, he can see the *Dhamma*. Seeing the *Dhamma* is seeing the Buddha, because the Buddha is born from the seeds of *Dhamma*, and *Dhamma* is spread by the Buddha. The nature of living beings is governed by the law of dependent origination. This is because some beings remain in an unwholesome state of mind and delusion, such as wrong view (*diṭṭhivipallāsa*). This refers to perceiving what is impermanent, painful, non-self, and foul

²³ D. II. 230.

²⁴ Sayadaw U Silānanda, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1990, p. 8.

²⁵ Nikkyo Niwano, *A Buddhist Approach to Peace*. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co, 1977, p. 73.

²⁶ M. I. 306.

as permanent, pleasant, self, and beautiful.²⁷ When *ditṭhivipallāsa* occurs in people's minds, it increases the unwholesome root of delusion (*moha*).²⁸ Because of wrong views, conflicts arise when opinions differ, disturbing a person's peace of mind and negatively affecting the surrounding environment. In addition, it is said thus: Whether Buddhas arise in this world or do not arise in this world, this law of dependent origination has always been there. The Buddhas only discover it and then reveal it to the world. Whoever develops the insight vehicle to contemplate *paṭiccasamuppāda* sees the *Dhamma*, and finally, he can see the Buddha. It is said thus: "One who sees the *Dhamma*, sees me. One who sees me, sees the *Dhamma*."²⁹ Therefore, the path is not an issue of concentration; it is an issue of insight. In this regard, the knowledge of the persisting nature of *Dhamma* (*dharmatṭhitiñāṇa*) is defined as follows. Again, rooted in ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, it is through a continued confused and deluded wrong view that *atta* continues to establish itself in every object, event, view, or idea that arises. This is known as continued I-making or, simply, conceit (*māna*). The importance of these teachings is to understand that the origination of all clinging views of an ego-self is rooted in ignorance. Once understood, craving and clinging can be abandoned, and the twelve causative links in the chain of dependencies are unbound. The process of ongoing confusion and stress comes to an end. At this stage, the meditator understands *anattā* (non-self) and stops clinging to self, person, or sentient beings. Hence, the ego is not present in his explanation of the chain of twelve states of dependent origination. This is the understanding of the persisting nature of *Dhamma*. This understanding might be the starting point of *dharmatṭhitiñāṇa*, by the *Susīma Sutta*. When one understands and abandons craving and clinging, as described in the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, the cycle of suffering (*saṃsāra*) is broken. This leads to a profound shift in the mind, where inner peace arises from releasing attachment and the causes of stress. As individuals cultivate this inner peace by recognizing the impermanent nature of all things and letting go of desires, they naturally move toward a state of equanimity and compassion. This process not only benefits the individual but also contributes to the greater good, fostering world peace. When people cease to be driven by craving, anger, and ignorance, they act from a place of understanding, kindness, and patience. This shift in individual consciousness can ripple outward, creating a more harmonious and peaceful society. Cultivating inner peace through the abandonment of craving and clinging is a vital step toward resolving external conflicts and bringing about collective well-being. By unbinding the chains of dependency, both personal and collective peace can flourish.

²⁷ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Discrimination (Paṭisambhidāmagga)*. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2009, p. 277 - 8.

²⁸ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Piṭaka-Disclosure (Peṭakopadesa)*. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1964, p. 24.

²⁹ S. III. 97.

VIII. CONCLUSION

An analytical study of the Insight Vehicle (*Vipassanāyāna*) based on the *Susima Sutta* reveals that a meditator can practice insight meditation (*vipassanā*) without necessarily attaining *jhāna* (meditative absorption). This is because, with mindfulness (*sati*) and wisdom (*paññā*), a practitioner can progress directly on the path of *dry insight meditation* (*sukkhavipassaka*), leading to enlightenment. The *Susima Sutta* demonstrates that wisdom alone can be sufficient for insight and eventual liberation, without requiring deep absorption in *jhāna*. In *dry insight meditation*, the practitioner cultivates mindfulness and direct insight into the true nature of reality - impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) - without relying on the deeper absorptions of *jhāna*. Insight itself is a transformative practice, and when undertaken with sharp mindfulness and wisdom, it leads to the cessation of suffering. Unlike *jhāna*, which involves deep concentration and mental stillness, insight meditation focuses on direct observation of the body and mind. By examining the arising and passing away of phenomena, the meditator gains insight into the Three Marks of Existence (*tilakkhaṇa*), which naturally leads to the abandonment of craving and attachment - ultimately breaking the cycle of suffering (*saṃsāra*). This process does not necessarily require *jhāna* but instead relies on a focused, sharp awareness of the present moment. Although *jhāna* is beneficial for developing concentration (*samādhi*) and mental stability, it is not always necessary for insight. The *Susima Sutta* emphasizes that one can attain liberation through the development of wisdom (*vipassanā*), without depending on deep concentration states. This approach is often called the *dry insight path* because it focuses purely on insight, in contrast to the *wet path* that includes *jhāna* as a supporting factor. Many *suttas* in the Buddha's teachings highlight the necessity and benefits of concentration in supporting *vipassanā* meditation. However, a meditator practicing dry insight meditation can rely on momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*), which is sufficient for progressing toward enlightenment. This concentration, though not as deep as *jhāna*, enables continuous mindfulness and insight, allowing the practitioner to reach the final goal. The origin of the *Vipassanāyāna* concept is not explicitly stated in *Pāḷi* texts, and it became a subject of debate among scholars in the 20th century. This has led to further exploration of the relationship between the *Vipassanā* and *Samatha* vehicles. In reality, these two paths are interdependent aspects of the same Buddhist method rather than separate doctrines. By understanding this interconnection, a meditator can appreciate the role of both *samatha* and *vipassanā* while still acknowledging the possibility of attaining enlightenment without *jhāna*. Practicing insight meditation directly brings happiness here and now, without waiting for higher concentration. By starting with wisdom (*paññā*), mindfulness (*sati*), or any factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*), a practitioner can embark on the journey of insight meditation and reap its profound benefits. Starting with wisdom, mindfulness, or any element of the Noble Eightfold Path, one can practice insight meditation and achieve its profound benefits. Each factor plays a role in cultivating inner peace. By focusing on any one of them - such

as wisdom (*paññā*) or mindfulness (*sati*) - a practitioner can develop insight into the nature of existence. This insight leads to a deeper understanding of impermanence, suffering, and non-self when applied consistently. Following the *Susima Sutta*, a meditator emphasizes the cultivation of wisdom and mindfulness to directly observe the arising and passing away of phenomena. This leads to the realization of: *Magga* (the Path), *Phala* (the Fruition of the Path), and *Nibbāna* (liberation from suffering). The *Susima Sutta* highlights that *jhāna* absorptions are not a prerequisite for these attainments. Instead, insight can be cultivated through continuous mindfulness and wisdom, focusing directly on reality as it is. When a meditator attains *Magga*, *Phala*, and *Nibbāna*, it brings about profound inner transformation. The practitioner experiences freedom from craving, attachment, and ignorance, leading to a state of equanimity, compassion, and inner peace. These qualities not only transform the individual but also contribute to a broader vision of world peace. As more individuals cultivate inner peace through *Nibbāna*, their actions and interactions become more harmonious, compassionate, and wise. This positive transformation influences collective consciousness, fostering peace, understanding, and cooperation in society. Thus, the personal journey of insight meditation and the attainment of liberation are deeply connected to the larger goal of cultivating world peace.

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REDUCING UNETHICAL ACTIONS THROUGH MEDITATIVE CONCENTRATION: A FOCUS ON A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

Ven. Revata*

Abstract:

Today, moral values are visibly declining in many parts of the world. Daily news headlines report incidents of killing, aggression, robbery, violence, and various frauds, reflecting the moral crisis that afflicts social stability. Unethical behaviors have reached an alarming level, disturbing the peaceful living of society. The rising prevalence of immoral actions has become an issue that cannot be neglected. From a Buddhist perspective, committing crimes or social conflicts is grounded in breaking moral principles, particularly the five precepts (*pañcasīla*). Hence, upholding moral rules is essential for resolving social conflicts associated with immoral actions. Morality serves as the foundation for the development of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). However, it is necessary to explore effective ways to cultivate moral virtue. In the Buddhist teachings, it is indicated that the root causes of such immoral events are unwholesome mental states of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). The cultivation of concentration plays a key role in reducing these fundamental causes of unethical actions, leading to the purification of the mind. Therefore, this study aims to examine how morality can be strengthened, through the cultivation of concentration. This study employs qualitative research to investigate the practice of concentration in fostering a stronger foundation for morality, which contributes to mitigating harmful actions promoting societal peace in modern times. It draws upon Pāli *Nikāyas*, the Abhidhamma, their commentaries, and the *Visuddhimagga* to underscore meditative concentration's significance in reducing immoral actions.

Keywords: *Buddhism, unethical actions, meditative concentration, peaceful society.*

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I. BACKGROUND ON SOCIAL CONFLICTS CONCERNING UNETHICAL ACTIONS

Several conflicts are ongoing in various parts of the world today, impacting millions of lives and vast amounts of property. These events often disrupt societal harmony and escalate aggressive actions, diminishing the overall well-being of society. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the causes and underlying factors of these issues from a Buddhist perspective.

Based on Buddhist teachings, immoral actions can be subsumed under the five precepts. Breaking the first precept (killing) leads to violence, war, and retaliation that creates revenge, insecurity, and a breakdown of social harmony. Breaking the second precept (taking what is not given) results in increased theft, corruption, robbery, and scams, leading to mistrust and economic instability. Breaking the third precept (sexual misconduct) gives rise to adultery and destroys trust in a relationship and a peaceful family, leading to interpersonal conflicts such as revenge and physical violence. Breaking the fourth precept (false speech) causes a lack of trust in communication, increases deceit and discord. Breaking the fifth precept (intoxicating) diminishes self-control and mental clarity, fostering harmful behavior, damaging responsible duties within the community.

Violating the five precepts leads to the degradation of individual moral values and the breakdown of a peaceful society. It disrupts community harmony, increasing social conflicts. Therefore, from a Buddhist perspective, it is possible to highlight that social conflicts occurring in several places of the world have been arising due to breaking the five precepts. In contrast, adhering to these five precepts helps us to reduce immoral actions and to foster a peaceful society. Although the five precepts are moral rules that Buddhists have to observe, these are universal ethics because violations of the five virtues are crimes that are punishable by the world's law. Therefore, Buddhist teachings emphasize observing the five precepts in building a beautiful environment.

The aforementioned social conflicts related to unethical conduct are problems that must be solved by the ruler (government) based on law. The *Kūṭadanta-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*¹ describes the close connection between poverty and crime. It means that poverty is a fundamental cause of moral destruction. A solution presented in this sutta is that the ruler should perform good business to benefit the people and reduce crime. Controlling by law and making a better business are the ruler's responsibilities. It is a means of coping with this moral issue. Furthermore, the *Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*² points out the economic and social welfare of the people as the king's duty. Based on the analysis of the referenced *suttas*, moral violations are attributed to a lack of economic development. To address this issue, it is incumbent upon the ruler to mitigate immoral problems by fostering economic growth and creating employment opportunities. It is one way to solve a moral

¹ D I 127 ff.

² D III 58 ff.

issue, but it is not easy to cope with all the sinful actions in their regions. Public people should value moral conduct and refrain from breaking the five precepts.

A strong legal system and a stable economy in a country can significantly reduce many social conflicts arising from unethical conduct. This is a mandatory duty of the ruler. This statement can be confirmed by the two *suttas*: *Kūṭadanta-sutta* and the *Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta*. However, even if the ruler (government) can provide the country with economic stability and enforces laws effectively, if people do not adhere to the five precepts, this socially immoral behavior will still disrupt world peace. Hence, observing the five precepts of public people is an essential way to overcome social conflicts in the world. It highlights that we should emphasize the cultivation of morality that mitigates harmful actions and fostering societal peace. In this regard, to observe the five precepts or have good moral conduct, it is interesting to study how to behave to improve morality. According to the *Kālāma-sutta* of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, the root causes of breaking the moral precepts are greed, hatred, and delusion.³ Accordingly, reducing these three defilements becomes a reason to observe the five precepts. The *Visuddhimagga* informs us that the development of concentration (*samādhi*) purifies the mind (*cittavisuddhi*), which can suppress mental defilements.⁴ Thus, the main objective of this research is to reveal how to improve morality and how the cultivation of concentration plays a crucial role in the Buddhist ethical framework, highlighting a deeper understanding of the relationship between mental purification and morality. It will propose an application in which concentration helps improve moral conduct, which contributes to a peaceful society.

II. EFFECTIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE MORALITY

From a Buddhist perspective, if we break the five precepts, there will be more social conflicts, violence, and crimes in several places. Conversely, observing moral rules can reduce these conflicts and lead to a peaceful society. In Buddhism, morality (*sīla*) refers to verbal and bodily actions guided by wholesome mental states. These moral actions protect against social conflicts while fostering non-harm and social harmony. Hence, it could be believed that morality is the fundamental basis of societal peace. In this context, it is worth examining moral guidelines to improve morality.

Buddhist teachings provide numerous guidelines to prevent immoral actions that may harm society. At first, it could be understood through the perspective of the noble eightfold path leading to liberation. The noble eightfold path can be summarized into three: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).⁵ Accordingly, right speech, right action, right livelihood, categorized in the aggregate of morality, are indispensable prerequisites for concentration. Likewise, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration contained in the aggregate of concentration are essential

³ A I 190.

⁴ *Vism* II 222.

⁵ *MI* 301.

requisites of wisdom that refer to the right view and right intention.

However, the noble eightfold path begins with the right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*), as the forerunner of the path (*pubbaṅgama*). The right view is the direct opposite of the wrong view,⁶ and is defined by the Buddha as knowing the wrong view as the wrong view and the right view as the right view.⁷ One should start the path with knowledge. It is the same way that when we go on a trip, we need to know the direction of how to go first. Likewise, when cultivating the noble eightfold path, the right view is the forerunner of the path. This statement is evident in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the *Majjima-nikāya*. Venerable Sāriputta explains that when one understands the unwholesome (*akusala*) and the root of the unwholesome (*akusalamūla*), the wholesome (*kusala*) and the root of wholesome (*kusalamūla*), he is one of right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*).⁸ It could also be called the right view, believing in kammic actions and their results (*kammasakatasammādiṭṭhi*).⁹ It implies that before cultivating the aggregate of morality, one should have right view of understanding the unwholesome, the root unwholesome, wholesome, the root of wholesome. Ethics and knowledge are interdependent with each other. Thus, in the *Soṇadaṇṭa-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, it is informed that wisdom is purified by morality, while morality, in turn, is purified by wisdom as if one washes hand with the other.¹⁰ Given this evidence, it is necessary to comprehend right and wrong, or good and bad, regarding morality in detail. Because that knowledge is a guide to avoid unwholesome deeds, it is a good support to improve one's moral conduct.

According to the training of the noble eightfold path, the right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) is fundamental as a guide in practicing the moral path. Buddhism offers a profound and nuanced framework for understanding good and bad, right and wrong. The right view refers to the knowledge that distinguishes between what should be done and what should not be done in cultivating virtue. That knowledge helps a lot to improve morality. These guidelines illuminate the Buddhist criteria for determining good and bad or right and wrong. Understanding good and bad is grounded in ethical principles that focus on the consequences of action, intentions of action, and roots of action.

In *Pāli* Buddhism, it is generally known that what is indicated by the term 'good' or 'right' is wholesome (*kusala*), while what is indicated by the term 'bad' or 'wrong' is unwholesome (*akusala*). Their effects are very distinct. The *Theragāthā* states: "Indeed, dhamma and adhamma are unequal in their effects. Adhamma leads to hell (*niraya*), while dhamma brings one to a good destination (*sugati*)."¹¹ It emphasizes the distinction between righteous (*dhamma*) and unrighteous (*adhamma*) actions, highlighting their contrasting consequences

⁶ Karunadasa, Y. (2015): 96.

⁷ M III 71.

⁸ M I 47.

⁹ Ps I 198.

¹⁰ D I 125.

¹¹ The 35.

regarding spiritual outcomes, therefore, *kusala* or good and *akusala* or bad are totally against it. What is good or right should be pursued and accomplished, whereas what is bad or wrong should be condemned and avoided.

The criteria of good and bad can be distinguished by understanding the consequences of behavior. The *Kālāma-utta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* explains how to judge the wholesome aspect and the unwholesome aspect. It states that if actions are rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion, they are unwholesome (*akusala*), blameworthy (*sāvajja*), criticized by the wise (*viññugarahita*), and, when undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering. On the other hand, if actions are rooted in non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion, they are wholesome (*kusala*), blameless (*anavajja*), praised by the wise (*viññuppasatthā*), and, when undertaken and practiced, lead to welfare and happiness.¹² As this statement informs, actions that are blameworthy and criticized by the wise can be understood as bad or wrong, whereas actions that are blameless and praised by the wise are recognized as good or right. What is bad (wrong) leads to blameworthy and suffering, however, what is good (right) gives rise to blamelessness (*anavajja*) and happiness (*sukha*).

Additionally, the *Bāhitika-sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* is highly significant for understanding the Buddhist perspective on good and bad. It points out that bodily, verbal, and mental actions censured by the wise, associated with unwholesomeness lead to one's affliction (*attabyāpāda*), the affliction of others (*parabyāpāda*), or the affliction of both (*ubhayabyāpāda*). In contrast, wholesome actions do not cause affliction to anyone.¹³ Therefore, to determine what is good or what is bad, we can distinguish them by focusing on the consequences of actions. It is significant to notice whether any behavior brings affliction to oneself or others.

The above statement highlights that determining good and bad is based on the consequences of actions. Fundamentally, these actions are rooted in the mind. The mind leads all activities. This principle is clearly explained in the *Dhammapada*, where the Buddha states: "All phenomena have the mind as their forerunner; they have the mind as chief, and they are mind-made (*mano pubbaṅgamā dhamma, mano seṭṭhā manomayā*)."¹⁴ Among the three types of actions, verbal and bodily actions follow mental behavior patterns. In this regard, a key factor in determining the nature of any action is intention (*cetanā*). It suggests that any performance will be judged through intention or volition. Good intention leads to proper behavior, while bad intention leads to wrong behavior. Here, intention can be comprehended as purposeful action. For instance, although Venerable *Cakkhupāla* unintentionally stepped on insects, his act was accidental and without harmful intent. Therefore, it was not considered evil. Therefore, it is possible to say that actions rooted in wholesome intentions are regarded as good, but those arising from

¹² A I 190 - 1.

¹³ M II 114 - 5.

¹⁴ *Dhp* 1.

unwholesome intentions are deemed wrong.

As mentioned above, the mind or intention plays a central role in understanding the Buddhist criteria for determining right and wrong or good and bad. Indeed, the mind is naturally luminous, but adventitious defilements defile it.¹⁵ Right and wrong intentions depend on whether the mental defilements are strong or not. This principle is closely linked to the description of the *Kālāma-sutta* of the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* again, which provides a moral framework for evaluating ethical behavior, highlighting the fundamental root of good and bad. From a moral perspective, the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Kālāma-sutta* identify greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) as the roots of unwholesome actions.¹⁶ Actions arising from these negative mental states lead to harm, suffering, and blameworthiness, whereas actions rooted in generosity (*alobha*), loving-kindness (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*) foster welfare and happiness, benefiting oneself and others over the long term.¹⁷ The distinction is clear: negative mental states result in harm, suffering, and blame, whereas positive mental states lead to happiness and blamelessness. Therefore, according to Pāli literature, greed, hatred, and delusion, collectively known as mental defilements, are the fundamental roots of evil. In contrast, non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion are the foundations of good. Intentions driven by defilements result in wrongful actions, while those inspired by their opposites lead to virtuous conduct.

What is more, the *Ambalaṭṭhika Rāhulovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* provides a profound knowledge of the Buddhist criteria for good and bad in terms of awareness. In this *sutta*, the Buddha uses the simile of a mirror to illustrate the importance of self-reflection in ethical conduct. Just as a mirror is used to examine one's physical appearance, introspection should be used to examine one's actions. This metaphor underscores the need for continuous self-awareness and ethical scrutiny, making the process of distinguishing good from bad an ongoing practice. The Buddha emphasizes the need for thorough self-examination before, during, and after performing any action. He advises Rāhula to reflect carefully on the intention, process, and outcome of his actions to determine their ethical nature:

(1) Before Acting: Reflect on whether the intended action might lead to harm for oneself, others, or both. If harm is anticipated, the action should not be undertaken.

(2) While Acting: Observe whether the action is causing harm. If harm arises, the action should be stopped immediately.

(3) After Acting: Evaluate the consequences of the action. If harm has occurred, resolve to avoid such actions in the future.¹⁸

¹⁵ A I 10.

¹⁶ M I 47; A I 189 - 90.

¹⁷ A I 190 - 1.

¹⁸ M I 414 ff.

This threefold reflection indicates that good actions are free from harm and promote well-being, while bad actions cause harm and suffering. If an action is blameworthy and criticized by the wise, we should stop performing it immediately. Focusing on intention, reflection, and the consequences of actions establishes a practical and ethical framework that guides individuals toward wholesome behaviour and spiritual development.

Based on the description given in *The Ambalaṭṭhika Rāhulovāda-sutta*, W. G. Weeraratne proposes a six-limbed standard to judge some action as good or bad:

- (1) An act harmful to the doer, but beneficial to the other is a bad act;
- (2) An act beneficial to the doer, but harmful to the other is a bad act;
- (3) An act harmful to the doer and the other is a bad act;
- (4) An act beneficial to the doer, but ineffective to the other, is a good act;
- (5) An act beneficial to others, but ineffective to the doer, is a good act;
- (6) An act beneficial to both the doer and the other is a good act.¹⁹

The above statement sheds light on the fact that we should examine the consequences of action before doing, while doing, and after doing. If an action harms the doer, the other, or both, this action should be avoided. If any behavior leads to the benefit of the doer, or the other, or both, we should act on them. The discussion above shows that the behavior of the three actions can be considered a good deed if it has not harmed oneself or others, whereas it can be assumed a bad deed if it has harmed someone else.

Concerning the unwholesome action, in the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says, “Here he suffers, and hereafter he suffers; the doer of evil suffers in both worlds. Thinking, ‘Evil has been done by me,’ he suffers. And he suffers even more when he goes to a bad destination.”²⁰ This verse points out the consequences of unwholesome actions (*pāpakamma*), highlighting how they lead to regret and suffering in this life and future existences. It emphasizes the importance of mindfulness and ethical conduct to avoid such outcomes. In other words, “Here he rejoices, and hereafter he rejoices; the doer of good rejoices in both worlds. Thinking, ‘I have made merit,’ he rejoices. And he rejoices even more when he goes to a good destination.”²¹ This verse stresses the joy and positive outcomes that arise from performing wholesome actions (*puñṇakamma*) in this life and beyond. It emphasizes the satisfaction of reflecting on one’s virtuous deeds and the happiness associated with a favorable rebirth.

III. DISTINCTION BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

Aspect	Right - Kusa- la (Wholesome)	Wrong - Akusa- la (Unwholesome)
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¹⁹ Weeraratne, W. G. (2009): 50 - 1.

²⁰ *Dhp* 17.

²¹ *Dhp* 18.

Roots	Non-greed (<i>alobha</i>), Non-hatred (<i>adosa</i>), Non-delusion (<i>amoha</i>)	Greed (<i>lobha</i>), Hatred (<i>dosa</i>), Delusion (<i>moha</i>)
Intentions	Pure, compassionate, kindness	Self-centered, harmful, ignorant
Consequences	Happiness, blamelessness, spiritual progress	Suffering, blame, spiritual decline
Effect on Self/Others	Beneficial to self and others	Harmful to self and others
Karmic Results	Leads to good rebirths and liberation	Leads to bad rebirths and continued suffering

Right and wrong, which refer to *kusala* and *akusala*, point out the importance of cultivating skillful actions and avoiding harmful ones. By cultivating *kusala*, one develops positive habits and a peaceful mind, creating the conditions for spiritual liberation. Avoiding *akusala* prevents harm to oneself and others, reducing suffering and regret. By understanding their distinctions and implications, individuals can live a more ethical, peaceful, and meaningful life. When we distinguish what should be done and what should not be done based on the consequences of actions, the intentions behind actions, and their roots, it tends to be challenging to break morality.

The Buddhist teachings include many guidelines in addition to the above instructions. The most apparent guideline is self-comparison (*attūpamā*). The principle of self-comparison plays a crucial role in Buddhist thought, emphasizing moral reasoning based on comparing oneself. It indicates a moral reflection in which one uses personal experience to understand others' suffering. A verse given in the Dhammapa illustrates this moral guideline by saying thus: "All tremble at punishment, all fear death. Comparing oneself to others, one should not hurt nor cause to hurt."²² Accordingly, one fears harm, and so does the other. One loves happiness and so does the other. Thus, he or she should refrain from causing harm to others. One values kindness, so they should share loving kindness. Self-comparison makes us fair and empathetic, leading to personal and societal well-being. In improving morality, moral shame (*hiri*) and moral dread (*ottappa*), known as the two guardians of the world (*lokapāla dhammā*)²³ are also the proximate causes of moral action.²⁴

²² *Dhp* 129.

²³ *A I* 51.

²⁴ *Vism I* 9.

It makes a person feel ashamed of engaging in unwholesome actions. These moral dhammas prevent unethical acts and promote self-discipline and social harmony. A person with moral shame and dread avoids misconduct because they observe it as dishonorable and harmful outcomes. Understanding what is morally right and wrong helps us in avoiding unwholesome deeds. Moreover, self-comparison, moral shame, and moral dread provide a profound ethical framework for improving morality. However, a mind surrounded by greed, hatred, and delusion can easily break moral conduct.

IV. BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF MIND

From the Buddhist perspective, the mind is both the cause of the problem and the key to its solution. The famous teaching from the *Dhammapada* encapsulates this principle: “The mind is the forerunner of all things” (*Manopubbaṅgama dhammā*).²⁵ When the mind is unguarded and dominated by defilements, it leads to harmful actions that perpetuate conflict. Conversely, a purified and well-regulated mind promotes ethical behavior, understanding, and peace.

In the *Samyutta-nikāya*, the Buddha says thus: “The mind leads the world, the world is guided by the mind; all things are under the sway of one thing—the mind.”²⁶ It suggests that all actions, whether right or wrong, are rooted in the mind. We respond to the world through the way we experience it. Our thoughts and intentions play a key role in determining any actions. A beautiful mind provides doing good deeds in bodily and verbal manners. In this regard, it is necessary to know a further statement given in the *Dhammapada*, where it is said that “the mind delights in evil” (*pāpasmim ramatī mano*).²⁷ And the mind is very swift and very hard to check, it falls on what it wants (*dunniggaḥassa lahuṇo, yatthakāmanipātino*).²⁸ It is very subtle and very hard to see (*sududdasaṃ sunipunaṃ*).²⁹ Our mind is constantly influenced by hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) and other defilements. As a result, the mind wanders from one object to another and is inflicted with unwholesome thoughts, leading to weakness and powerlessness. If we do not try to guard our thoughts or mental states, we will associate with society in a bad manner. An untrained mind cannot discern the true nature of things. In this context, the Buddha says that the wise mind guards his mind, and a guarded mind brings happiness (*cittassa damatho sādhu, cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ*).³⁰

V. THE CULTIVATION OF CONCENTRATION AND THE PATH TO PEACE

According to Pāli literature, concentration (*samādhi*) is a tool to tame or

²⁵ *Dhp* 1.

²⁶ *SI* 39.

²⁷ *Dhp* 116.

²⁸ *Dhp* 35

²⁹ *Ibid.* 36

³⁰ *Ibid.* 36; Norman, K. R. (2000): 6.

guard the mind. Cultivating concentration *keeps* the mind from wandering across various objects. It aids in developing our minds by temporarily suppressing hindrances or mental defilements (*vikkhambanapahāna*).³¹ Consequently, it purifies the mind, allowing us to see things as they truly are (*yathābhūtañāṇa*), which serves as a foundation for developing insight meditation. Therefore, the Buddha encourages monks to cultivate concentration by stating, “O Monks, strive to develop concentration. The concentrated mind can comprehend things as they truly are.”³² Thus, it can be concluded that concentration (*samādhi*) is instrumental in cultivating insight meditation and reducing mental defilements that lead to moral violations. For long-term moral improvement, mental defilements causing these violations must be decreased through the practice of concentration.

Concentration gives rise to a greater awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. This self-observation enables individuals to recognize unwholesome thoughts before they lead to harmful actions. A concentrated mind can discern the implications of one’s actions more effectively, enhancing the ability to access what is morally right and wrong based on principles. It is not just a practice for mental clarity but lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of morality.

As mentioned earlier, greed, hatred, and delusion are the root causes of breaking ethics. As long as we do not reduce these mental defilements, it is probably challenging to purify ethical actions completely. It is plausible to observe that good moral actions can be expected by guarding the mind. To clarify this proposition, the story of *Aññataraukkaṇṭhita bhikkhu* provides a compelling example. In this account, a wealthy layperson relinquished material wealth and adopted a monastic life to attain liberation. However, he was unhappy to be a monk due to many *Vinaya* rules. Knowing this situation, the Buddha instructed him to protect only the mind. As a result, while preserving the mind, he became a stream-enterer by practicing meditation.³³ This story provides that guarding the mind is the fundamental cause for moral action and purifying morality.

The word “*samādhi*” is derived from the combination of the prefixes *saṃ* (together/with) and *ā* (towards), the root $\sqrt{dhā}$ (to put together or collect), and the suffix *i* (*‘saṃ+ā+√ dhā+i>samādhi’*), which means the act of the fixing of the mind on an object.³⁴ *Samādhi* represents the collecting or fixing (*samādhāna*) in the sense of stability or composure of the mind. According to these Pāli Canonical texts, “*samādhi*” can be generally comprehended as “one-pointedness of mind” or “unification of mind.” (*cittassa ekaggatā*).³⁵ *Samatha* (serenity), *samāpatti* (attainment), *jhāna* (absorption), *ekaggatā* (one-

³¹ *Vism* I 5.

³² *S* IV 80.

³³ *Dhp* 297 - 9.

³⁴ Thera, Nyanatiloka. (2016): 182.

³⁵ *MI* 301.

pointedness), *adhicitta* (higher consciousness), and so forth are interrelated with the term “*samādhi*”. Understanding the meanings of *samatha* and *jhāna* increases the knowledge to comprehend the role of *samādhi*.

The term “*samatha*” means an ability to calm the mind. In early Buddhism, “*samatha*” often appears with the term “*vipassanā*”. The *Āṅguttara-nikāya* informs us that *samatha* overcomes lust (*taṇhā*), whereas *vipassanā* removes ignorance (*avijjā*).³⁶ It is known that *samatha* represents concentration (*samādhi*), while *vipassanā* refers to wisdom (*paññā*).³⁷

The wider meaning of *samatha* can be found in the commentaries. For example, the commentary to the *Paṭisambhidhāmaggā* and the *Aṭṭhasālinī* mention that *samatha* calms down the opposing conditions, such as sensual desires, anger, and so forth; hence, it is called *samatha* (serenity).³⁸ Fundamentally, the nature of the mind is frequently disturbed by mental defilements, which makes it difficult to control. If the cultivation of *samatha* does not suppress the hindrances, the mind wanders like a monkey and clings to sensual desires. The main function of *samatha* is to develop concentration (*samādhi*), allowing the practitioner to achieve a focused, one-pointed mind. This mental calm is foundational for achieving the *jhānas* (meditative absorptions). The *Papañcasūsanī* indicates *samatha* as the attainment of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) and absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*).³⁹ Accordingly, *samatha* indicates the four material *jhānas*, and the four immaterial *jhānas*, together with access concentration (*upcārasamādhi*).

Ācariya Buddhaghosa mentions the two possible meanings of “*jhāna*” based on verbal forms. The first definition of *jhāna* is etymologically derived from the verb *jhāyati*,⁴⁰ (Skt. *dhyāyati*, *dhyāti* derived from *dhyai*), which means ‘to think’ or meditate or contemplate.⁴¹ According to the derivation from the verb, to contemplate closely upon an object is called *jhāna*.⁴² On the other hand, *jhāna* is defined with the verb ‘*jhāpeti*,’⁴³ which means ‘to burn up’ (*dahati*)⁴⁴ or “destroy”⁴⁵ the opposite *dhammas*. The term “*jhāpeti*” gives rise to a meaning called “to burn opposed states is called *jhāna*.”⁴⁶ Contemplating

³⁶ A I 61.

³⁷ S III 982: *samatho samādhi, vipassanā paññā*.

³⁸ *Paṭis-a* I 124; *Dhs-a* 131: *kāmacchandādayo paccanīakadhamme sameti vināsetitī samatho*.

³⁹ *Ps* I 108: *idhekacco paṭhamam upacārasamādhiṃ vā appanāsamādhiṃ vā uppādeti, ayaṃ samatho*.

⁴⁰ *Sp* I 145: *jhāyati- upanijjhāyatitī jhānam*.

⁴¹ PED 287.

⁴² Vajirañāna, Paravahera. (2008): 23.

⁴³ *Sp* I 145: *paccanīakadhamme jhāpetitī jhānam*; Gunaratana, Henapala. (1980): 18.

⁴⁴ *Paṭis-a* I 237: *jhāpetitī ca dahatitī attho*.

⁴⁵ PED 286.

⁴⁶ Vajirañāna, Paravahera. (2008): 23.

closely is its characteristic mark.⁴⁷ Accordingly, burning the opposite things is called *jhāna* (*paccanikadhamme jhāpetīti jhānaṃ*).⁴⁸ The opposite things are said to be defilements (*jhāpetīti kilese*).⁴⁹ Based on these facts, *jhāna* means that since *jhāna* meditates the *dhamma*, the opposite *dhamma* or hindrance will be burned or suppressed.

The *Samaññaphala-sutta* indicates that the absence of the five hindrances leads to the attainment of *jhānas*.⁵⁰ When achieving the first *jhāna* or access concentration (*upcārasamādhi*), the meditator possesses the five *jhānic* factors such as applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), and so on. The *Visuddhimagga* informs us that these *jhānic* factors are the opposite of the five hindrances. *Samatha* develops while the five obstacles are being overcome.⁵¹ Accordingly, one-pointedness counters sensual desire, rapture counters ill will, initial application counters sloth and torpor, happiness counters restlessness and worry, and sustained application counters doubt.⁵² This statement amounts to saying that each *jhānic* factor functions its opposite *dhammas* by way of suppressing. According to the definitions given above, the cultivation of concentration suppresses the five hindrances, which, in turn, pacify the mind.

The cultivation of morality helps reduce mental agitation caused by remorse and guilt and allows the mind to settle easily in meditation. Therefore, morality is the foundation of concentration. The *Visuddhimagga* describes forty types of meditation subjects to develop concentration. They are ten devices (*kaṣiṇas*), ten types of foulness (*asubha*), ten recollections (*anussati*), four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*), four immaterial *jhānas*, perception of the nutriment on food, and analysis of the four elements.⁵³ Among the forty meditation subjects mentioned above, the ten *kaṣiṇas*, the ten foulness, the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna*), the mindfulness of body (*kāyagatāsati*), the four divine abidings lead to *jhānas*, along with the appearance of three signs (*nimitta*): the preliminary sign (*parikamma nimitta*), the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) and the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). The eight recollections, the perception of repulsiveness in food, and the analysis of the four elements do not lead to *jhānas*, only to access concentration. The immaterial *jhāna* will be developed through the fourth *jhāna*. Therefore, the forty types of meditation subjects involve two levels of concentration: access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) and absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*, *jhāna*). When cultivating a meditation, he or she will achieve either access concentration or *jhāna*. It is recorded in the *Visuddhimagga* that access concentration can sufficiently

⁴⁷ Abhivi-ṭ Be 93; *upanijjhānakiccavantaṭāya*; Mp II 241.

⁴⁸ Sp I 145: *paccanikadhamme jhāpetīti jhānaṃ*.

⁴⁹ Paṭis II 245: *jhāpetīti kilese*.

⁵⁰ D I 171.

⁵¹ Saitanaporn, Phramonchai. (2008): 15.

⁵² *Vism* I 137: *tathāhi samādhi kāmacchandassa paṭipakkho, pīti byāpādassa, vitakko thina middhassa, sukhaṃ uddhaccakukkuccassa, vicāro vicikicchāyāti peṭake vuttaṃ*.

⁵³ *Vism* I 107.

suppress the hindrances because it can gain the purification of the mind (*cittavisuddhi*).⁵⁴

To address mental defilements or negative thoughts effectively, it is crucial to select and diligently practice one of the previously discussed meditation techniques. In the *Rāga-sutta* of the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, the Buddha instructs us meditation subjects to overcome lust, aversion, and delusion. It states that foulness (*asubha*) or foulness meditation should be cultivated to overcome lust (*rāga*), loving-kindness or *brahmavihāras* meditation should be developed to overcome aversion (*dosa*), and wisdom should be practiced to overcome delusion.⁵⁵ Regarding this, the *Visuddhimagga* advises us to choose a suitable meditation subject in terms of temperament (*carita*).⁵⁶ Accordingly, foulness and mindfulness of the body are instructed for the temperament of lust (*rāga*), while loving-kindness or the divine abidings and *kaṣiṇas* are associated with hatred temperament. A person with a delusion should select the contemplation of mindfulness of breathing. Although the *Rāga-sutta* instructs wisdom to overcome delusion, the *Visuddhimagga* guides us to mindfulness of breathing for delusion temperament.

Other temperaments, faith (*saddhā*), intellect (*Buddhi*), and speculation (*vitakka*), are mentioned in conjunction with the rest of the meditation subjects as well. However, lust, aversion, and delusion are the most common, so meditation subjects, foulness (*asubha*), mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*), divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*), and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna*) should be emphasized to purify the mind. In other words, greed, hatred, and delusion, which are the root causes of moral violation, can be reduced by practicing foulness (*asubha*), mindfulness of the body, divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*), and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna*). The following meditation subjects are mentioned in the *Visuddhimagga* under temperament (*carita*).

	Temperament (<i>carita</i>)	Meditation subjects
1	Lust (<i>rāga</i>)	Ten <i>asubhas</i> and <i>kāyagatāsati</i>
2	Anger (<i>dosa</i>)	Four <i>brahmaviharas</i> , Four <i>vaṇṇa kaṣiṇas</i>
3	Delusion (<i>moha</i>)	<i>ānāpānassati</i>
4	Faith (<i>saddhā</i>)	Six recollections (<i>Buddha</i> , <i>Dhamma</i> , <i>Sangha</i> , <i>sīla</i> , <i>cāgā</i> , <i>devatā</i>)
5	Intelligence (<i>Buddhi</i>)	<i>marañānussati</i> , <i>dhātumanasikāra</i> , <i>upasamānussati</i> , <i>āhārepaṭikulasaññā</i>

⁵⁴ *Vism* I 124; II 222.

⁵⁵ *A* III 445 - 6.

⁵⁶ *Vism* I 110.

6	Speculative (<i>vitakka</i>)	<i>ānāpānasati</i>
	All temperament	The rest of <i>kasiṇas</i> , and the four <i>ārūppas</i> .

Choosing a meditation subject following temperament and cultivating that meditation may weaken mental defilement that commonly occurs in the meditator’s mind. By following it, one can attain a level of concentration that can suppress the hindrances, possessing the five *jhānic* factors. Indeed, these hindrances are mental defilements that disrupt mental peace and ethical behavior. When one achieves access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) or absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*), his mind is purified, reducing the influence of mental defilements.⁵⁷ This mental state promotes ethical values such as generosity, patience, kindness, and wisdom, offering to respond to challenges with patience and understanding. Therefore, the concentrated mind is essential for suppressing the mental defilements that lead to social conflicts.

From the Buddhist perspective, the failure to observe the five precepts has contributed to various social issues. Indeed, society is faced with conflict because it cannot observe the five precepts. When people fail to maintain the five precepts, that situation can lead to various harmful outcomes, such as violence, crime, poverty, insecurity, Etc. The five precepts, thus, are considered fundamental instructions in Buddhism to be harmonious and peaceful in society. These moral conducts provide the development of concentration.

It is found that morality and concentration are mutually interdependent. With the development of concentration, the practitioner becomes peaceful in his mind due to reduced mental defilements. The purification of the mind prevents one from committing physical and verbal unwholesome actions. In other words, the concentrated mind helps observe the five precepts easily. Therefore, the development of concentration provides moral purification in turn. It suggests that the mind should be trained by cultivating concentration to improve ethical conduct. This often leads to a reduction in harmful actions, promoting a more harmonious society. By doing so, social conflicts related to immoral actions will be reduced within society. Thus, in the *Abhisanda-sutta*, the Buddha states that: by abstaining from killing, taking what is not giving, doing sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicants, the noble disciple gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear (*abhayaṃ deti*), enmity (*averaṃ deti*), and affliction (*abyāpajjaṃ deti*).⁵⁸ This shows that the observance of the five precepts dramatically affects society. It offers to release fear, and enmity, providing social harmony, mutual respect, personal well-being, and peaceful, compassionate societies. When individuals maintain mental well-being, they are better equipped to contribute positively to society and support others. Therefore, concentration is a tool to reduce the root causes of immoral actions and overcome social conflicts related to unethical actions.

⁵⁷ *Vism* I 5, 188 - 9; *Pat*is I 21.

⁵⁸ *A* IV 246.

VI. CONCLUSION

Social conflicts related to unethical actions that occur in various parts of the world are grounded in ethics, particularly the five precepts. Abstaining from the five precepts offers the reduction of social conflicts. However, it is hard to observe the five precepts because they cannot suppress mental defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion, which are the root causes of unwholesome actions. To foster ethical conduct, it is essential to apply the moral principles attributed to Buddhist literature. A thorough understanding of the Buddhist framework for discerning right from wrong plays a vital role in achieving moral refinement.

Additionally, self-comparison, moral shame, and moral dread are fundamentally mind attitudes that can enhance moral rules. According to the Buddhist perspective, an unguarded mind causes suffering or social conflicts, while a trained mind brings happiness and mental peace. The meditative concentration purifies the mind so that mental defilements are suppressed. The concentrated mind offers to reduce the root causes of immoral actions, improving moral principles. Morality and concentration mutually help develop their roles. Hence, concentration can be applied as a sustainable solution to foster peace and harmony in a conflict-ridden world.

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COMPARISON BETWEEN MODERN AND BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES IN THE CULTIVATION OF INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The pursuit of inner peace is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone for fostering world peace. This study explores the comparative approaches, highlights the synergies and contrasts between modern frameworks and Buddhist philosophy in cultivating inner tranquillity and their broader implications for global harmony.

While modern frameworks prioritize empirical evidence and adaptability to diverse cultural contexts, the Buddhist perspective offers a timeless, holistic lens, emphasizing the transformation of consciousness. Furthermore, it examines the ripple effects of individual serenity on collective peacebuilding efforts, asserting that cultivating inner peace is a critical precursor to achieving sustainable world peace. Herein, the comparative analysis reveals that while modern and Buddhist approaches differ in techniques and foundational philosophies, they converge on the necessity of inner peace as a precursor to global harmony. Bridging these perspectives can inspire innovative strategies for addressing the complexities of contemporary global conflicts.

Keywords: *Buddhist perspective, inner peace, world peace, modern perspective.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected yet conflict-ridden world, the pursuit of inner peace has emerged as a cornerstone for achieving global peace. The cultivation of inner peace is a vital keystone for achieving world peace, bridging the realms of secular methods and Buddhist practices. Both approaches

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share a recognition of the individual's role in fostering harmony but diverge significantly in their methods and philosophical underpinnings. Modern frameworks are rooted in empirical evidence and often target stress reduction and emotional balance, whereas Buddhism offers a spiritual path, advocating ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom as tools for achieving lasting serenity.

On account of clarifying the topic's purpose, comparing modern and Buddhist cultivation of inner peace for world peace, analytical, comparative, qualitative methods are applied during the two principal parts of this paper: 1. Etymological survey of 'inner peace' and 'world peace', 2. The way to cultivate inner peace and world peace in both perspectives. This paper investigates the synergies and contrasts between these two perspectives, analysing how they converge in their goal of nurturing inner tranquillity and diverge in their approaches to realizing peace. By examining these paradigms, it becomes evident that the integration of the wisdom of Buddhist teachings with modern methodologies for cultivating inner peace, ultimately contributes to world peace.

II. DEFINITION OF INNER PEACE AND WORLD PEACE

Peace is a fundamental pillar of human existence, fostering harmony, stability, and well-being. In fact, 'peace' is a word, which has multiple meanings with several dimensions used in varying contexts. Many philosophers, sociologists, religious teachers, psychologists, ... have offered several definitions for this term. In this context, two aspects of peace will be examined: inner peace and world peace.

2.1. Worldly view

2.1.1. Inner peace

Inner peace has been studied and written about for centuries in religious, philosophical, and academic contexts. Although the specifics may differ from definition to definition, a couple of themes appear again and again. For instance, peace can be used in macro as well as micro contexts. Micro context can be understood as individual or personal, interpersonal peace, and inner peace, while global peace (e.g., peace treaties between countries; the harmonious relationship between societies) is an example of macro context usage. Accordingly, inner peace is a state of tranquillity where you feel at ease with yourself, others, and the world around you. It's about being fully present and comfortable in your skin. Less impacted by anxiety, worry, and stress.¹

Generally, inner peace is psychologically defined as a low-arousal positive emotional state coupled with a sense of balance or stability. Such low arousal includes feelings of calmness, serenity, tranquillity, and contentment, in contrast to feelings like exuberance, ecstasy, or euphoria. But low-arousal positive emotions shouldn't be taken to imply that inner peace means being indifferent, passive, forgoing joy, resigning yourself to a bad situation, avoiding all confrontations, or disengaging from the world. It rather implies an active

¹ Chris Mosunic, *12 essential mindfulness practices for cultivating inner peace*, accessed on January 2, 2025, <https://www.calm.com/blog/inner-peace>.

state of mind and mindful engagement with the world in a way that is balanced and that maintains internal harmony and stability.²

2.1.2. World peace

Equally, the United Nations declared that the peace in the worldwide scope not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. The values needed for a culture of peace. These include respect for life, human rights and fundamental freedoms; the promotion of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts; and adherence to freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations.³

Therefore, in one way, it can be said that opposite to inner peace is global or world peace. This idea just emphasizes the locational aspect of peace, linking to the subjective proportion either internal or external. Eventually, if taking a person's peace as a frame of reference, family, or group community or society or the whole world is external or global peace. However, the later notion reflects a wider range of peace that has closed relations with inner peace only, it does not go against the primary purpose of individual or personal or interpersonal peace.

2.2. Buddhist view

In Buddhist doctrine, the mind and its concomitants, recognized as 'mentality', which is the most important central factor that creates the whole world, including inside and outside worlds. So, most of the Buddha's teaching focuses on the training of mental states for the ultimate goal, which is to attain the supreme peace or liberation – *Nibbāna*. Briefly said, peace in Buddhist point of view refers to the absence or cessation of unwholesome deeds including physical, verbal, and mental states because those evil deeds are the factors destroying personal and global peace.

Corresponding to the term 'peace' in English, there are many words but, in this paper, some Pāli terms will be analysed as '*santa*', '*passaddhi*', '*vūpasama*', '*samatha*'.

- '*santa*' as feminine noun, is formed from the root \sqrt{sam} and the suffix 'ta', meaning 'still; calm; at peace; tranquil; lit. calmed'

- '*passaddhi*' as feminine noun, is constructed by the prefix 'pa', the root \sqrt{sambh} and the suffix 'ti', in the sense of 'calm; tranquillity; tranquillization; peace; stillness; serenity'

² Nathalie Boutros, *Inner Peace: Definition, Examples, & How To Find It*, accessed on January 2, 2025, <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/inner-peace.html>.

³ *Cultivating a Culture of Peace*, accessed on January 1, 2025, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>

- '*vūpasama*' as a masculine noun, is made up by prefixes 'vi' and 'upa' before the root $\sqrt{\text{sam}}$ followed by the suffix 'a' also covers the meaning of 'peace (of); calming (of); subsiding (of); settling (of)' or 'settling (of); appeasement (of); conciliation (of)' often used in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

- '*samatha*' is the term having the meaning equivalent to *sītibhāva* (state of peace or tranquillity).⁴ It is usually preceded by the term '*adhikaranā*': *adhikaraṇasamatha*, meaning 'way of settling of a dispute; method of resolving a legal issue'. This compound is commented as inseparable when referring to the ethical training among a community.

The meaning of '*santa*' is given as 'settling defilements or calming of unwholesome mental states'⁵. It also denotes an emancipated mental state⁶ or one who has calmed the lust, aversion or hatred and all unwholesome formations.⁷ The attribute of '*santa*' can be found in the discourses referring to the state of peaceful dhamma: 'I have attained to this dhamma which is profound, hard to see, hard to grasp, peaceful, excellent, beyond reasoning, subtle, to be apprehended by the wise'.⁸ It can be combined with the term '*vūpa*' in the '*vūpasanta*',⁹ or combined with '*pada*' in the word '*santipada*' (state of peace; tranquillity; epithet of *Nibbāna*).¹⁰ As for '*passaddhi*', it is defined as calming down sensual desires by renunciation, hatred by kindness... all defilements through the *arahant* path.¹¹ These first two terms mostly describe the state of mind, however, the last two terms play both functions: as method and as state.

In a resume, both modern and Buddhist perspectives share the same view that inner peace encompasses the mental peace within a person, and world peace is that on the familiar, communal, and social dimensions.

III. HOW TO CONSTRUCT PEACE?

3.1. Secular point of view

3.1.1. Creating inner peace

As inner peace, a state of mental and emotional harmony, is essential for personal well-being and a foundation for fostering external harmony. Achieving

⁴ *samathatthoti sītibhāvattho*: Psm-a. II. 84.

⁵ *santoti sabbakilesavūpasamena santo*: M-a. II. 183.

⁶ *santoti nibbuto*: D-a. II. 55 (*Mahāpadāna sutta aṭṭhakātha*).

⁷ *santoti rāgasantatāya santo, dosamohasantatāya sabba akusalasabbābhisāṅkhārasantatāya santo*: D-a. III. 26.

⁸ D. II. 31. (*Mahavaggapali*); Walshe, *Mahāpadāna Sutta - The Great Discourse on the Linage*, accessed on January 2, 2025,

https://www.digitalpalireader.online/_dprhtml/index.html?loc=d.1.0.0.0.11.m|bt://dn/dn_e_14.htm

⁹ *vūpasantoti phalena vūpasanto* = calmed, subsided, settled by means of fruition: Mnd-a. 147.

¹⁰ *yo jātamucchijja na ropayeyya, jāyantamassa nānuppavecche, tamāhu ekaṃ muninaṃ carantaṃ, addakkhi so santipadaṃ mahesi*: Sn. 309 (*Muni sutta*).

¹¹ *passaddhīti nekkhammena kāmacchandaṃ paṭippassambheti, abyāpādena byāpādaṃ paṭippassambheti... pe... arahattamaggena sabbakilese paṭippassambheti*: Psm. 416.

this balance requires deliberate effort and consistent practice is the chief purpose of the psychotherapeutic field. Mindfulness and meditation are powerful tools in cultivating inner peace. By focusing on the present moment, individuals can reduce stress, quiet mental chatter, and develop a deeper understanding of their thoughts and emotions. Regular practice promotes clarity and resilience, enabling individuals to navigate life's challenges calmly. Equally important is self-compassion. Accepting oneself, including flaws and imperfections, fosters a sense of self-worth and reduces inner conflict. By embracing kindness toward oneself, individuals can replace self-criticism with patience and positivity. Simplifying one's environment and priorities also contributes to peace of mind. A cluttered life often mirrors a cluttered mind. Decluttering physical spaces, managing time effectively, and setting realistic goals create room for reflection and balance. Nurturing positive relationships is another cornerstone. Healthy connections with others provide emotional support and reduce feelings of loneliness or anxiety. Acts of kindness and gratitude further reinforce a sense of fulfillment. In short, fostering inner peace is a journey requiring the techniques covers all activities, thus: 1) Spending time in nature, 2) Meditate, 3) Be grateful, 4) Take responsibility for your actions, 5) Do not let past mistakes define you, 6) Love oneself, 7) Practice acceptance and contentment, 8) Decluttering.¹²

3.1.2. Cultivating world peace

World peace is made up of individual peace as the smallest unity, then a couple, a family, next is bigger groups as a workplace or any communities, companies, associations, organizations, as religious communities, or the whole society. Wherefore, individual peace is the foundation for a wider scope of peace. Such peace is made by individual discipline and psychosomatic well-being. When an individual lives according to basic morality, there is calmness that spreads to the environment, making a peaceful ambiance.

Regarding world peace, the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) starts with the notion that: "... wars begin in the minds of men so it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." For that reason, the ideas of peace, and the culture of peace need to be cultivated in the minds of children and communities through formal and informal education, across countries and generations.¹³

Cultivating world peace remains one of humanity's paramount aspirations, necessitating multifaceted approaches that address underlying causes of conflict and promote harmonious coexistence. Primarily, education plays a pivotal role in fostering understanding and tolerance among diverse populations. By integrating curricula that emphasize cultural awareness, conflict resolution, and global citizenship, individuals can develop empathy and respect for differences, thereby mitigating prejudices that often lead to disputes.

¹² *How to Find Your Inner Peace*, accessed on January 3, 2025, <https://kentuckycounseling-center.com/how-to-find-inner-peace/>

¹³ *Cultivating a Culture of Peace*, accessed on January 1, 2025, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>

Furthermore, economic stability is essential in sustaining peace. Disparities in wealth and resources frequently breed resentment and competition, which can escalate into violence. Therefore, implementing equitable economic policies and ensuring fair distribution of resources can reduce tensions and create an environment conducive to collaboration. International organizations, such as the United Nations, must continue to champion initiatives that promote sustainable development and address socioeconomic inequalities on a global scale.

On the other hand, diplomacy is another critical component in the cultivation of world peace. Effective diplomatic efforts can prevent conflicts from arising and provide frameworks for peaceful resolution when disputes occur. Strengthening international institutions and encouraging dialogue between nations fosters mutual understanding and cooperation. Additionally, disarmament initiatives and the regulation of arms trade are essential in decreasing the potential for armed conflicts. Next, cultural exchanges and collaborative projects also contribute to building bridges between nations. By engaging in joint ventures in science, art, and technology, countries can create interdependencies that discourage aggression and promote mutual benefits. Such interactions not only enhance goodwill but also highlight the shared human values that transcend national boundaries.

In a resume, world peace is achievable through a synergistic approach that integrates education, economic equity, cultural exchange, effective governance, and individual commitment. While challenges persist, humanity's shared vision of a harmonious future can guide efforts toward a more peaceful and prosperous world. That is the ordinary secular perspective.

3.2. Buddhist point of view

In the *Tipiṭaka* scripture, there are many suttas recorded from the stories since the Buddha's lifetime, such as *Sīṅgalovāda sutta*,¹⁴ *Maṅgala sutta*,¹⁵ etc. Where the Buddha teaches how to cultivate happiness within oneself, the family, among teacher and pupil, among the *Saṅgha* community, morality is the most often foundation practice to be taught before further steps in the procedure of mental cultivation.

3.2.1. Observance of morality

As regards the virtue practitioner who is aware of the benefits of virtue, there are 4 kinds of person: The one who practices for his benefit but not for that of others. The one who practices for the benefit of others but not for his own. The one who practices neither for his benefit nor for that of others. The one who practices for his benefit and for that of others.¹⁶ In addition, the origin of promulgation of *Vinaya* rules is known in Buddhist doctrine after twenty

¹⁴ D. III. 146.

¹⁵ *Khp.* 3.

¹⁶ A. III. 254; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Sikkha Sutta: Trainings*, accessed on January 2, 2025, <https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/an/an04/an04.099.than.html>

years of the establishment of the *Saṅgha* community. There are ten purposes of promulgating *Vinaya* rules: for the well-being of the Order, for the comfort of the Order, for the restraint of bad people, for the ease of well-behaved monks, for the restraint of corruptions in the present life, for avoiding corruptions in future lives, to give rise to confidence in those without it, to increase the confidence of those who have it, for the continuation of the true Teaching, and for supporting the training.¹⁷

There are two types of ethical training: monastic and non-monastic rules. For lay people, it is called fivefold, eightfold, ninefold or ninefold precepts. The lay *Vinaya* means avoidance of the ten unwholesome *kamma*. A lay person shuns these ten evil *kamma* with a pure heart and humble attitude. With the aim of not spoiling his morality, he respectfully observes the training in full. This is the meaning of the term 'well-trained'.¹⁸ On the other hand, observance of the five basic precepts also leads a virtuous one to freedom from danger, from animosity, from oppression to limitless numbers of beings by observance of the 5 precepts.¹⁹ For *Saṅgha* members, there are four types of morality rules: *paṭimokkha* rules for monks and nuns practiced based on faith, *indriyasamvara* (restraining faculties) based on mindfulness (*sati*), *ajīvapārisuddhi* (purification of livelihood) based on effort (*virīya*) and *paccayasammissita* (the moderation of using requisites) on wisdom (*paññā*).²⁰

Morality is an observance for not only self-well-being but for the harmony of living with other people. It also brings many benefits for the mentality, such as: 1. Free from remorse, 2. Joy, 3. Rapture, 4. Tranquility, 5. Happiness, 6. Concentration, 7. Vision and knowledge of reality, 8. Turning away and detachment, 9. vision and knowledge about deliverance;²¹ or fivefold blessings: 1. great increase of wealth through his diligence; 2. a favourable reputation; 3. a confident deportment, without timidity, in every society, be it that of nobles, brahmins, householders, or ascetics; 4. a serene death; 5. at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a happy state, in a heavenly world.²² Apart from moral practice, meditation is the foremost predominant practice

¹⁷ V. I. 24.

¹⁸ Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw, *A Manual of Dhamma*, accessed on January 1, 2025, <https://thienvipassana.net/a-manual-of-the-dhamma-should-lay-persons-learn-the-vinaya-ledi-sayadaw/>

¹⁹ S. III. 251; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Abhisanda Sutta: Rewards*, accessed on January 2, 2025, <https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/an/an08/an08.039.than.html>

²⁰ *evaṃ sante ettha vutte catubbidhe sile pātimokkhasaṃvarasīlaṃ saddhā maṇḍeti. saddhāsādhanaṃhi taṃ. indriyasamvarājīvapārisuddhipaccayaparibhogasīlāni paṭimaṇḍenti sativirīyapaññāyoti yathāyogaṃ veditabbaṃ: Vb-ṭ. 581. (Vajirabuddhiṭika)*

²¹ A. III. 257.

²² A. III. 107; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Dighajanu (Vyagghapajja) Sutta: To Dighajanu*, accessed on January 3, 2025, <https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/an/an08/an08.054.than.html>

3.2.2. Practicing meditation as a tool to attain inner peace

By engaging with these two types of meditation, individuals can develop not only peace of mind but also a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* are two fundamental forms of meditation rooted in Buddhist tradition, each serving distinct purposes in cultivating mental clarity and insight. While *samatha* focuses on calming the mind, *vipassanā* seeks to transform it through insight. The two practices are often complementary, with *samatha* providing the concentration needed to sustain the deep mindfulness required for *vipassanā*. Together, they form a comprehensive approach to meditation, balancing mental tranquillity with profound self-awareness.

3.2.3. Tranquil meditation (*samathabhāvana*) as temporary or periodical cultivation of inner peace

The tranquility meditation is a kind of mental development based on the forty meditative objects or subjects. When practicing, the practitioner focuses on one single object only, till he attains concentration. The choice among such objects has huge importance in this practice because it closely relates to the temperament of individuals or practitioners. And the result of this practice is the state of concentration that is of threefold stage: preliminary, access, and absorption developments. Corresponding to those stages, there are threefold signs: preliminary, learning, and counterpart signs. When one achieves absorption, it is said that the person has *jhāna*.²³ Regarding the stage of absorption, there are fivefold (according to the *Suttanta* perspective)²⁴ or fourfold levels (by the *Abhidhamma* view)²⁵ with fivefold *jhana* factors.²⁶ The spheres of *jhāna* cover from fine material to immaterial planes, briefly named the eight attainments. On the other hand, when one attains the fifth *jhāna*, is skillful in the five kinds of mastery of *jhāna* and wishes to gain any of the fivefold direct knowledge (*abhiññā*),²⁷ one can continue with a specific method. A noteworthy point is that among the forty objects,²⁸ the stages of concentration achieved are not similar. That is why the choice of suitable meditative object is significant for the separate temperaments and for the wish of attainment. Moreover, practicing tranquil meditation, the practitioner has to follow a gradual step-by-step process, it is impossible to skip any step. The map of tranquil meditation, those who practice tranquil meditation (*samathayānika*) are included in the list.

²³ Bhikkhu Bodhi trans., *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society: 1999), 340.

²⁴ *D. I.* 69; *M. II.* 290.

²⁵ *Dhs.* 297.

²⁶ *Dhs.* 30.

²⁷ *Vsm.* II. 1.

²⁸ *Vsm.* II. 106.

3.2.4. Insight meditation (*vipassanābhāvana*) as long-term or permanent cultivation of inner peace:

This is the meaning of *vipassanā* (literally means ‘seeing in various ways’) and is the crucial teaching and practice that makes Buddhism different from other religious or philosophical systems. Insight meditation is a kind of contemplation of the changing mental and material processes in one’s own experience. As this contemplation gains in strength and precision, the mind becomes naturally concentrated upon the ever-changing stream of experience with a degree of concentration equal to that of access concentration. In fact, it can be practiced without absorption concentration, just needs momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhi*) that fixes on the material and mental process in their present immediacy. It is called purification of mind for the *vipassanāyānika* meditator, who is called a ‘dry insight worker’ (*sukkhavipassaka*).

The object of insight meditation is the five aggregates that are merely the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) or those which are objects of clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandha*) or not objects of clinging. Such five aggregates are merely mundane physical and mental phenomena, generally known as *nāmarūpa*, material or corporeal phenomena – *rūpa* and immaterial phenomena – *nāma* consisting of four elements (feelings – *vedāna*, perception – *saññā*, volitional formation – *saṅkhāra*, and consciousness – *viññāṇa*). Those phenomena are observed through mindfulness, can be either past, present, future, internal or external, near or far, gross or subtle, inferior or superior.²⁹ In many discourses, the Buddha instructed insight meditation with either the five aggregates or aggregates of clinging, but actually, all refer to the aggregates of clinging.

The crucial aim of contemplation on the five aggregates of clinging is to see and understand that all psychosomatic phenomena are conditioned, and their true nature is of threefold: impermanence – *anicca*, pain – *dukkha*, non-self – *anatta*.³⁰ In expanded dimension, those three characteristics can be viewed as eleven aspects³¹ and as forty aspects.³² Although it is said that insight meditation is for mundane level but the Noble Ones from *sotāpanna* to *arahant* also can practice to upgrade or matures their insight (for *sekkhā* – trainees as *sotāpattimagga* to *arahantamagga* stages) or establishing their mental states in a peace when their life does not come to the end (for *arahantphala* stage).

Practicing insight meditation requires all threefold training: morality, concentration, and wisdom. The final attainment is from the understanding of the real characteristics of all phenomena, detachment or cutting of craving for them via wisdom leading to supreme peace – *nibbāna*. The procedure of a *sukkhavipassaka* can be summed up with the seven stages of purification and sixteen kinds of insight knowledge.

²⁹ S. II. 136.

³⁰ M. I. 295.

³¹ S-a. II. 305 - 6.

³² Psm. 415; Vsm. II. 248.

Accordingly, the procedure of practicing insight meditation is to see, understanding and comprehend the mind-matter phenomena by various ways: in group, in general characteristics, in separate characteristics: rising and falling, as conditioned, as danger, as fearful, as impermanent, as unsatisfactory, as non-self or no core, as over control of human's wish, as imperfections, as loathsome, etc. such seeing leads to the detachment and discernment towards those conditioned things, to recognize the suffering, the causes leading to suffering at first. As a consequence, the willingness to escape from such suffering motivates the seeking of the cessation of suffering, then searching for the ways and means leading to that cessation. In brief, this is the realization of the four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha.

The key point to break up the craving for the objects of clinging is to understand the mental process that is naturally impersonal and then is transformed into personal. During this procedure, there is the presence of mental proliferations as the chief causal factor. Firstly, the contact between sense organs and sense objects gives rise to sense consciousness at the point of contact. Due to the contact and that consciousness, feelings either pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral arise. Following such feelings, perceptions of this experience are formed. The perceptions may be right or wrong, and the formation of the notion of 'self, I, mine', appears during this step. Then the reaction, called volitional formations accompanied by this perception, comes to be. The manifestation of those formations is clearly recognized through the body, speech or even latently occurring inside one's mind. That is the reason why it is said that to know one's mind or one's character, just observing one's reactions.

Indeed, this process is largely driven by the mind's tendency to seek patterns, assign meaning, and protect the ego. Once neutral stimuli are filtered through personal lenses, they often trigger emotional responses and reinforce existing narratives. This shift transforms the event from an impersonal observation into a deeply personal interpretation, which may not reflect the reality of the situation. Mental proliferation can perpetuate cycles of emotional distress and misunderstanding, as individuals become entangled in their subjective interpretations. However, mindfulness practices can mitigate this process by fostering awareness of the mind's tendency to proliferate, allowing individuals to observe thoughts without attaching personal significance. This awareness helps preserve the impersonal nature of neutral stimuli, reducing unnecessary emotional and cognitive burdens. In essence, mental proliferation is the mechanism through which the mind converts impersonal processes into personal experiences, significantly shaping our perceptions and emotional landscapes. Therefore, knowing this process and seeing the danger of mental proliferation is significant knowledge for cultivation of inner peace.

The supportive factors for cultivation of inner peace: faith, effort, wisdom, mindfulness, and other elements of the seven enlightenment factors (*sattabojjhaṅga*),³³ In real practice, the balancing between faith and

³³ S. III. 73.

wisdom, concentration and effort is an important technical experience, only mindfulness is needed for all cases and the more stronger mindfulness the more firm and matured concentration and wisdom.³⁴ Additionally, on account of suitability for practice and for separate individuals, the impediments or obstacles of meditation³⁵ either for *samathabhāvana* or *vipassanābhāvana* should be carefully followed, otherwise one will encounter slow progress or many disturbances leading to inefficiency. It is better to approach or associate with experimental meditation teachers or good friends (*sappurisasamseva*); to learn the theory - dhamma first (*saddhammassavana*), then to develop wise intention (*yonisomanasikāra*), choose proper objects and to practice according to the true dhamma (*dhammānudhammappaṭipatti*).³⁶ This is the right path to cultivate inner peace on the personal or individual layer to attain the Stream of Noble stage. As for wide scope, when one is skillful in practice, can share and teach back such good experiences to others in order to spread the peaceful ambiance to people around the world, like family, colleagues, friends, workmates, even to enemies. This is how to contribute to world peace.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, inner peace plays a crucial role in achieving global peace. From both secular and Buddhist perspectives, fostering inner peace at an individual level is essential for creating harmony in the world. It is the primary practice before performing global harmony. In secular contexts, this can be accomplished by adhering to lawful rules and engaging in activities that promote physical and mental well-being. However, from the Buddhist standpoint, achieving profound inner tranquillity requires following a path grounded in morality and mental development. This pathway often involves the practice of tranquil meditation, insight meditation, or a combination of both. Unlike fleeting solutions, the Buddhist perspective offers a valuable methodology rooted in centuries of practical application, enabling individuals to address the psychosomatic dimensions of their being. By eliminating mental proliferation and cultivating mindfulness moment by moment, this practice fosters a sustained state of peace within. Together, worldly and Buddhist approaches highlight the interconnectedness of personal and collective well-being, demonstrating how the journey toward inner peace can resonate outward, influencing societal harmony on a global scale.

Distinguished from abstract theories, Buddhist teachings are practical, rooted in the lived experiences of the Buddha and his followers over centuries. Inner peace, according to Buddhist doctrine, is cultivated by addressing psychosomatic dimensions, which involves eliminating mental distractions through sustained mindfulness. This moment-to-moment awareness is key to

³⁴ *Abhs.* 50; Bhikkhu Bodhi trans., *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society: 1999), 281.

³⁵ *Vsm.* I. 86; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli trans., *The Path of Purification*, (Colombo: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), 87.

³⁶ *D.* III. 227 (*Saṅgīti sutta*).

overcoming mental proliferation and fostering a stable, peaceful mind. Thus, both secular and Buddhist approaches underscore the transformative power of inner peace in contributing to a harmonious and peaceful world.

Table 1. Map of Samathabhāvana

Meditative sub- ject	Tempera- ment	Development	Jhāna	Direct knowledge
10 kasiṇa				
Earth	All	3 levels: Preliminary Access Absorption	1 st to 5 th jhāna	X
Water				X
Fire				X
Air				X
Blue	Hateful			X
Yellow				X
Red				X
White				X
Space	All			X
Light				X
10 foulness				
Bloated corpse Discolored corpse Festering corpse Dismembered corpse Eaten corpse Scattered corpse Mutilated corpse Bloody corpse Worm-infested corpse Skeleton corpse	Lustful	3 levels: Preliminary Access Absorption	1 st jhāna only	
10 recollections				

Buddha	Faithful	Only 2 levels: preliminary and access concentra- tion	None	
Dhamma				
Saṅgha				
Generosity				
Deva				
Peace (Nibbāna)	Intellec- tual			
Death				
Body	lustful	All 3 levels of concentra- tion	1 st jhāna	
Breath	Deluded, discursive		1 st to 5 th jhāna	X
4 Illimitables				
Loving-kindness	Hateful	All 3 levels of concentra- tion	1 st to 4 th jhāna	
Compassion				
Appreciative joy				
Equanimity				5 th jhāna only
Perception: food as loathsome	Intellec- tual	Only 2: preliminary and access concentra- tion	None	
Analysis of the four elements				
4 Immaterial states				
Infinite space	All	All 3 levels	1 st jhāna	
Infinite con- sciousness			2 nd jhāna	
Nothingness			3 rd jhāna	
Neither-percep- tion-nor non-per- ception			4 th jhāna	
40	6	3	27	12

Table 2. Map of vipassanābhāvana

	Purification		Insight knowledge	Description	Threefold full understanding – <i>pariññāṇa</i>
<i>Sīlabhāvana</i>	Purification of virtue - <i>sīlavisuddhi</i>		4 kinds of purified virtue	<i>Paṭimokkha</i> (training rules for saṅgha members) <i>Indriyasaṁvara</i> (restraining faculties) <i>Ajīvapārisuddhi</i> (purification of livelihood) <i>Paccayasannissita</i> (the moderation of using requisites)	
<i>Samādhibhāvana</i>	Purification of mind - <i>cittavisuddhi</i>		Attainment of access - <i>uppacāra samādhi</i> and absorption concentration (<i>appanā samādhi</i>)	<i>Khaṇīkasamādhi</i> = <i>uppacāra samādhi</i> (access concentration)	
<i>Paññābhāvana</i>	Purification of view - <i>nāmarūpapavattāna ñāṇa</i>	1	Helps to purify one of a permanent self by understanding the fourfold aspects of mental and material phenomena	the fourfold aspects are characteristics (<i>lakkaṇa</i>), function (<i>rasa</i>), manifestation (<i>paccupaṭṭhāna</i>) and proximate cause (<i>padaṭṭhāna</i>)	Full understanding of known - <i>ñātapariññā</i>
	Purification by overcoming doubt - <i>kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi</i>	2	Remove doubt about conditions for mental and material phenomena	Discernment of conditions: ignorance, craving, clinging, and <i>kamma</i> during the three periods of time (past-present-future)	
	Purification by knowledge and vision of path and not path - <i>maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi</i>	3	Distinguishing the wrong path from the right path of contemplation: 1. knowledge of comprehension – <i>sammasana ñāṇa</i>	-discernment of threefold planes of formations together with their conditions by grouping them in aggregates of threefold time – <i>kalāpasammasana</i> (comprehension by group) => Inductive insight - <i>nayavipassanāya</i>	Full understanding as investigating - <i>tiraṇapariññā</i>

		4	2a. knowledge of rise and fall (tender phase) – <i>udayabbaya ñāṇa</i>	- comprehends the three universal characteristics by way of duration, continuity, and moment: seeing the rising and falling of formations by way of condition and moment)	
Purification by knowledge and vision of the way - <i>paṭipadāñāṇa dassanavisuddhini</i>			2b. Knowledge of rise and fall (mature phase) - <i>udayabbaya ñāṇa</i>	- when the imperfections have been overcome, it matures and develops with increased strength and clarity	Full understanding as abandoning - <i>pahānapariññā</i>
	5	3. Knowledge of dissolution - <i>bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa</i>	- seeing their cessation, destruction, fall, and breakup		
	6	4. Knowledge of fearfulness - <i>bhayatupaṭṭhāna ñāṇa</i>	- seeing all such dissolving things in all realms of existence is fearful		
		7	5. Knowledge of danger – <i>ādinavānupassanā ñāṇa</i>	- seeing all formations as destitute of any core or any satisfaction and as nothing but danger	
		8	6. Knowledge of disenchantment – <i>nibbidānupassanā ñāṇa</i>	- After seeing the danger of formations, one becomes disenchanted with them, takes no delight in the field of formations belonging to any realm of existence	
		9	7. Knowledge of	- desire to be delivered	
	10	8. Knowledge of reflective contemplation - <i>paṭisaṅkhānupassanā ñāṇa</i>	- re-examining formations, attributing the three characteristics to them in various ways, so clearly review those formations as marked by the three characteristics		

		11	9. Knowledge of equanimity towards formations - <i>saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa</i>	- seeing nothing on formations to be taken as “I” and “mine” => abandoning both terror and delight, and becomes indifferent and neutral towards all formations	
		12	10. Knowledge of conformity – <i>Anuloma ñāṇa</i>	- knowledge in the sense-sphere cittas that arise preceding the change-of-lineage citta in the cognitive process of the supramundane path, it conforms to the functions of truth both in the preceding 8 kinds of insight knowledge and in the path attainment to follow	
	Between 6 and 7	13	11. Change of lineage		
	Purification by knowledge and vision - <i>vuṭṭhānagāminīvipassanā</i>	14	Knowledge of four supramundane paths: 12. Knowledge of the path – <i>magga ñāṇa</i>	<i>vuṭṭhānagāminīvipassanā</i> – insight leading to emergence 12. <i>paṭhamamaggañāṇa</i> – fourfold	
		15	13. Knowledge of the fruition – <i>phala ñāṇa</i>	Arising of fourfold <i>phala citta</i>	
		16	14. Knowledge of reviewing – <i>paccavekkhaṇa ñāṇa</i>	- process of reviewing the attained <i>magga</i> and <i>phala citta</i> s or the residue defilements (<i>kilesas</i>) for the Noble Ones	

Abbreviations

A. III.	<i>Aṭṭhaka Navaka Dasaka Ekādasaka Nipāta Pāḷi</i>
Abhs.	<i>Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha</i>
D. I.	<i>Sīlakkhandhavagga Pāḷi</i>
D. II.	<i>Mahāvagga Pāḷi</i>
D. III.	<i>Pāthikavagga Pāḷi</i>

<i>D-a. III.</i>	<i>Pāthikavagga Aṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>Dhs.</i>	<i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī Pāḷi</i>
<i>Khp.</i>	<i>Khuddakapātha Pāḷi</i>
<i>M. I.</i>	<i>Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i>
<i>M. II.</i>	<i>Majjhimapāṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i>
<i>M-a. II</i>	<i>Mūlapaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhakathā. Vol. II</i>
<i>Mnd-a.</i>	<i>Mahāniddeśa Aṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>Psm.</i>	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāḷi</i>
<i>Psm-a. II</i>	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā. Vol. II</i>
<i>S. II.</i>	<i>Khandhavagga Saḷāyatanavagga Pāḷi</i>
<i>S. III.</i>	<i>Mahāvagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi</i>
<i>S-a. II.</i>	<i>Nidānavagga Khandhavagga Saṃyutta Aṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>Sn.</i>	<i>Suttanipāta Pāḷi</i>
<i>V. I.</i>	<i>Pārājika Pāḷi</i>
<i>Vb-ṭ.</i>	<i>Vajirabuddhi Tīkā</i>
<i>Vsm. I, II.</i>	<i>Visuddhimagga. Vol. I, II</i>

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A STUDY ON CULTIVATING INNER PEACE AND WORLD PEACE WITH REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

This study examines the Buddhist approach to cultivating inner peace as the foundation for world peace. The Buddha taught that true harmony arises from purifying the mind, emphasizing that overcoming internal defilements is more meaningful than external victories. In a world divided by conflicts of religion, ethnicity, and class, his teachings remain profoundly relevant. The research highlights how eliminating anger, hatred, and ignorance fosters peaceful coexistence.

By cultivating wisdom (*paññā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*), individuals contribute to societal well-being, countering the notion that personal liberation is selfish. Drawing from key Buddhist principles, the study explores how inner transformation leads to unshaken peace (*akuppācetovimutti*) that benefits both individuals and communities. Historical examples, including the Buddha's interactions with diverse groups and rejection of metaphysical disputes, illustrate the practical relevance of his teachings. Ultimately, this study advocates for a mindful, compassionate approach to conflict resolution and global peacebuilding based on Buddhist principles.

Keywords: *Cultivating, inner peace, compassion, Buddhism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Before 2500 years ago, Buddha preached the methodology for world peace by cultivating individual inner peace. It is very important today than in the past because the present world is full of conflicts among the various groups of people connected to religions, nations, ethnicities, cultures, casts, class, and color in need of peace. It is highly appreciated by the educated people in

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the world due to its applicability and suitability for the modern society. Many people attempt to build up the world peace, not concerning their inner peace. However, with the patience and calmness by purifying the mind, people can live with the entire world in peace. Buddha has said that winning our mind is better than defeating thousands of people in the battlefield. “Better than a hundred words useless words is one word of the dhamma self-conquest is the best of all conquests.”¹ As far as understanding of this bitter truth, the real peace cannot be expected in the world. The peaceful mind creates the peaceful world, which is able to live all the human beings as one family.

Before attempting to change the external world, the internal changing of our mind should be practiced. One’s mind is forerunner in all the actions. Controlling the anger, hatred, craving, and jealousy, a pleasant and joyful environment can be established in the world. According to Buddhism revolution should be commenced from the mind of oneself “*attānaṃēva paṭhamam*.”² Respecting each other, we can create a good society which is endowed with good mental conditions developing loving-kindness as a great quality. To achieve this noble attempt, everyone should have an actual sacrifice for the lives and tolerate some difficulties for the sake of human beings and all the other beings in the world. In this difficult achievement, the wisdom and compassion, which are considered as the great qualities, have to be cultivated in the minds of the people. The mere wisdom (*paññā*) or head and mere compassion (*karuṇā*) or heart is not sufficient for this. Balancing personality and controlling feelings towards each other is so important in this issue.

Before preaching the dhamma to the world, Buddha became a qualified person and advised to create inner peace in the mind of people. Some scholars criticize that personal liberation is private and selfish. But this idea is baseless since the Bodhisattva or the person who is practicing for the achievement is wholly sacrificing his life for the betterment of all beings. When we investigate the ten perfections (*pāramitā*), it is able to understand the great physical and spiritual service of the Bodhisattva. Firstly, one who personally cultivates the spiritual development and discipline with a peaceful mind has a sincere intention to build up a peaceful society. So, the personal inner peace is very important to build up a peaceful world. Bhikkhu Bodhi has made a very valuable explanation on this issue:

“From the Theravāda perspective, while social work is certainly praiseworthy, of all benefits that can be conferred on others the most precious benefits is the gift of the Dhamma. Thus the quest for liberation as an arahant is not a purely private undertaking but has a far-reaching influence and can make its impact felt upon a whole society.”³

¹ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 97.

² Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 144.

³ Bodhi Bhikkhu., *The Bodhisattva Ideal - Essays on the Emergence of Mahāyāna*, Buddhist

Buddha realized and makes realize others, Buddha released and releases others. Buddha crossed over and crossed over others, which is so fearful stream of the ocean. In this way, becoming the Buddha, others are also free from the suffering and fear. At first, the Buddha became an example and invited people to follow him, which is manifested by himself. Here, the welfare of the human beings and beneficial attitude of the world and intention to build up the peaceful world is the prime intention of the Buddha. Buddha has sacrificed his whole life for the inner peace and world peace of the entire human beings for 45 years. After the enlightenment of the Buddha, he thought to cultivate the inner peace and the social peace through his noble teaching.

The Buddha realized the nature of life and the defilements which are disturbing to mental peace, and then eradicated them and achieved the permanent peace in life. That inner peace is mentioned in the term '*akuppā cetovimutti*' or unshaken peace. The term '*akuppā me cetovimutti*' is defined as the peaceful nature of the liberated person. He is completely freed from the defilements and never originates the defilements after the enlightenment. In the *Mahavedalla sutta* mentions three characteristics of the person who achieves permanent mental peace and freedom.

1. He has completely ceased the craving, hatred and ignorance.
2. The deliverance of mind of the arahant is greater than all other liberation.
3. The vitality of this liberation is an unshaken, unchanging nature.

Commentary defined the term '*akuppā*' as a fruit of arahantship or liberation. In the Buddha's first sermon, he mentioned that the vitality of his liberation is not changing and shaken. "Unshaken is the liberation of my mind".⁴ It concludes that the Buddha achieved the permanent peace, eradicating every defilement, obstructing the peace. Having manifested the truth, Buddha decided to preach his dhamma for the liberation of multi-behavioral people with great kindness. The inner peace cultivated by a person is a great contribution to the entire society. The doctrine which was evolved before two thousand five hundred years had a profound impact on the peaceful world and the Buddhist history is written without tear and bloodshed. Buddha never permitted war or conflict in the name of Buddhism, and peace and harmony are emphasized for his name.

All the people who meet us are not good and peaceful. But we have to live this diverse society so patiently to achieve the peaceful world. Buddha understood this truth and lived in this uneven and diverse society for their peace and happiness, not abandoning the society. The variety or diversity of the mankind correctly identified by the Buddha in this way, they are with little dust defilements (*apparaṇakkhā*), with much dust of defilements (*mahāraṇakkhā*), with keen faculties (*tikkhindriya*), with dull faculties (*mudhindriya*), with good, faculties (*svākāra*), with bad faculties (*dvākāra*), easy to teach (*suvinñāpaya*),

hard to teach (*duviññāpaya*), some who seeing fear and blame in next world (*paralokabhayaḍassāvino*), not seeing fear in next world. This is the nature of the world. Under this circumstance, Buddha wanted to make them peaceful people. To achieve this purpose, primarily he achieved the peace or enlightenment. Although the society is composed of different characters, Buddha did not abandon the society and his spiritual and righteous war is continued in this polluted society itself by understanding diverse characteristics and applying the correct methodology for their mental progress. “Human beings in different stages of moral and spiritual development, are generally compared to lotuses growing in a pond. Those that attain the highest stage of moral perfection are like the lotuses that grow in the muddy water but rise above and remain unsmeared (*anupalitta*) by the water.”⁵

As a first step, Buddha’s personal spiritual development was achieved, and then makes the society peaceful and serene. The purpose of propagating the teaching of the Buddha is to make the society peaceful with personal discipline and peace. In the *Cūlasaccaka sutta*, it mentions that firstly Buddha achieved the peaceful nature spiritually, and then makes others peaceful.

Blessed One has enlightened and he teaches the dhamma for the sake of enlightenment (*buddho so bhagavā bodhāya dhammam deseti*).

Blessed One has restrained and he teaches the dhamma for the sake of restraining others (*Danto so bhagavā damatāya dhammam deseti*).

Blessed One is peaceful and he teaches the dhamma for the sake of peace (*Santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammam deseti*).

Blessed One has crossed over and he teaches the dhamma for crossing over (*Tinno so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammam deseti*).

Blessed One has attained nibbāna and he teaches the dhamma for attaining nibbāna.

In this way, before advising others, the Buddha fulfilled his inner peace with the correct understanding and then preached to others to be peaceful. Aforesaid four factors are nature of a person who is calm and serene. Basically, the peace of mind of the people is obstructed by the defilements, and by controlling the mind with concentration and wisdom, the real peaceful mind can be achieved. The two terms ‘*santa*’ and ‘*danta*’ are very important in this issue. ‘*Santa*’ is appeasement of all the defilements which pollute the mind and obstruct to the peace (*santoti sabbakilesavūpasamena santo*). *Danta* is appeasement and control of all the poisonous defilements. In this way, Buddha has preached many discourses appeasement of the defilements and methodology for the appeasement.

The war and peace don’t originate outside of the people’s minds, and they are originated in the minds of human beings. So, the man has a responsibility to select the correct factor which is better for the world and the entire mankind.

⁵ Kalupahana, David. J., *Buddhist Philosophy*, The University Press of Hawaii, Hawaii, 1977, 58.

In this way, man can start or stop the destructive war and build up the peaceful or destructive world. For the selection of the better option for mankind, the minds of the human beings have to be trained and cultivated with the wholesome feelings or volitions. But unfortunately, the wrong and harmful decisions are so popular, and are favored among the people and believe the power of weapons and nuclear bombs due to the ignorance (*avijjā*) instead of selecting the peace. Extremism is the main and most dangerous reason individually and collectively for world peace.

Religion is vital and a forerunner for making the world peaceful, though it becomes a first reason for the war, conflicts, and social distractions. But the Buddha never permitted the war for the name of Buddhism or religion. In making solutions for the international problems, the world leaders endowed with pride, dogmatism, extremism, anger, hatred, fear, ignorance, nepotism, and racism, instead of kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity like noble qualities. One who takes the decisions, endowed with above bad mental conditions, the best and human-friendly solutions are never to be expected.

Firstly, the factors that are obstructing mental health have to be identified and the positive mental conditions are to be applied. In the society, every individual's character is much affected by the society, and sometimes their behavior is followed by the people who are living around them. So, peaceful person as well as hateful person also followed by the society, and thereby the Buddha advised to accompany with the good friends and abandon the bad friends "*na bhaje pāpake mitte*".⁶ The world follows not only his behavior but also his fashions. So, the peaceful person firstly affects his family and then the society, much concerned with his peaceful behavior and attitudes. Such a contented and peaceful family environment exemplifies the ideal family to the society. This individual family becomes a good example and is much affected by the village where he is living. The secret of their happiness is followed by the people who are living with them. By following this ideal family by neighbors, village, cities, and countries, the whole world becomes a one village which is suitable for living for every being as a one, family making the concept globalization meaningful. Therefore, this peaceful process should be commenced individually, and if it is not, the peaceful society is not materialized, being it is a dream.

The spiritual peace is identified by others in his first sight itself. They quickly react to it and are tempted to follow and characterize it. When the Buddha became the Buddha, he left to Isipatana, a temple in Banaras, to preach his doctrine, and on the way, he met ascetic Ājīvaka Upaka. In his first sight he identified the Buddha's serenity and peaceful concentration or inner peace. The discussion between the Buddha and Upaka explained how he identified the inner peace of the Buddha at his first appearance. He said that his senses are so calm and pleasant, skin is purified, brilliant, under whom have

⁶ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 74.

you gone forth? Who is your teacher? Whose dhamma do you profess? “To whom should I first teach the Dhamma? Who will understand this Dhamma quickly?”⁷. This questionnaire implied that the Buddha’s inner peace, serenity, and discipline were externally displayed and others also identified, admired, and fascinated. It is proved that one individual peace is much effective for the peace and calmness of many people in the world. One who is endowed with the loving-kindness and concerns others is his fellow beings, the reaction of the other beings is also similar and able to expect the peaceful and friendly reaction. Although it is clear that Upaka is not the Buddhist follower he was so attentive to the calmness and peaceful nature of the Buddha. If every person concerns themselves with the spiritual calmness and concentration, the news about conflicts in the world might be so different. Buddha again explains the nature of his spiritual liberation and calmness.

Once the prince Siddhartha was riding by the chariot to the park, one of the ladies called Kisāgotami introduced him as a calm person in his external appearance. That means the appearance of the Buddha before his enlightenment or Buddhahood was so calm and peaceful. Basically, internal calmness and peace are much affected by the external peace. So, his internal and external calmness inspired and satisfied. This is one of the examples that one’s calmness can be calmed and peaceful, those who are living around us. She further inferred that not only the prince Siddhartha, his mother, father, and wife, but also so calm and peaceful.

Without seeing the prince’s parents and wife, she guessed that all of them are so peaceful.

Once, minister Santati passed away with his lay attire, and bhikkhus doubted how he was introduced whether as a monk, or lay person. A nice explanation is made by the Buddha in this way. “Though gaily decked, if he should live in peace, (with passion) subdued, (and senses) controlled, certain (of the four paths of sainthood), perfectly pure, lying aside the rod (in his relations) towards all living beings, a Brāhmaṇa indeed is he, an ascetic is he, a bhikkhu is he”⁸.

Here are several reasons to identify the peaceful and calm life. Peace is originated, internally and not outside by attempting it. The wearing whatever dressing is not the reason for the peaceful mind, internally discipline is much needed for it. Another important factor mentioned here is abandonment of the rod towards every being and being so compassionate to all living beings. Cessation of craving (*abhijjhā*) and hatred (*vyāpāda*) are basic factors for the peaceful and calm life.

In the discourse Buddha was in search of the noble, serene, and liberation

⁷ *Majjhima Nikāya*, translated by Bodhi Bhikkhu and Nāṇamoli Bhikkhu, Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2009, 263.

⁸ Narada Bhikkhu., *The Dhammapada*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1993, 130-131.

(*anuttaram santivarapadam*). This indicates that the Buddha wanted to discover the noble serene or the liberation. That means the inner peace is unable to achieve arguing and debating with the world, disputing unnecessarily, which is not directly affected by the serenity or liberation. Such unnecessary metaphysical explanations or debates are rejected by the Buddha, which is not affected for the peacefulness of the people. Once a bhikkhu asked ten metaphysical questions and the Buddha refused to answer those questions because it would not affect the liberation or peace. The simile is given that a person who has been shot with an arrow and questions the person who is shot, his clan, the direction from which the arrow came, the conditions, etc. If those questions are not answered, they are not permitted to take out the arrow. What will happen to the patient? Patient will be killed. In this way, the Buddha did not involve himself in solving the unnecessary questions that are making the mind confused, and getting upset. Buddha explained why did the Buddha not explain these questions that they are not meaningful (*na atthasamhitam*), not helpful to the ascetic life (*na ādibrahmacariyakam*), not affect to aversion (*na nibbidaya*), not affect to absence of desire (*na virāgāya*), for liberation (*na nirodhāya*), calmness (*na upasamāya*), for the understanding (*na abhiññāya*), for the enlightenment (*na sambodhāya*), for emancipation (*nibbānāya*). This is implied that the Buddha does not permit unnecessary conflicts and struggles that lead to the destruction of mental peace.

II. CONCEPTUAL ATTACHMENT AND INNER PEACE

Again, amidst the complicated philosophical and religious environment in his time, the Buddha wanted to discover the methodology and nature of peaceful and calm mentality in mankind instead of confusing people. The methodology practiced by the Buddha to achieve this purpose is introduced as ‘noble investigation’ (*ariyapariyesana*). In the time of the Buddha, all the religious teachers were in search of the truth in the world, and it was defined in many ways according to their knowledge. Buddha selected different methodologies for this purpose, what is the skillfulness or talent in mankind, and by using skill, the liberation can be achieved (*kiṃ kusala gavesi*). Rationally religious teachers disputed and made arguments with other teachers, and attempted to prove their teaching itself is truth, and all others are wrong. This situation is an obstruction to discovering the reality and real peace in one’s life. Its final conclusion is creating unnecessary metaphysical problems and forgets the real problem, which is the suffering experienced by every being. In the *Kālāma sutta*, it mentions how the people were confused among the religious teachings or philosophies and unable to identify which teaching is the correct and true teaching. They had doubt and perplexity in every religion and it is appreciated by the Buddha “*alam kaṅkhitum alam vicikicchitum*”.⁹

Under this circumstance, the conflict among the religious teachers and followers was originated. In the *Kosambi sutta*, Buddha mentions that if the

⁹ *Āṅguttaranikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tīpiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 336.

members of the Bhikkhus are not endowed with mental, verbal, and bodily loving-kindness, the various conflicts and troubles are originated in the same group, and what about the different groups. Five factors that cause destruction and making confusion in the mind are mentioned by the Buddha and they are called the five hindrances (*pañcanivarāṇa*). Sensual passion (*kāmarāga*), malevolence (*paṭigha*), lethargy and drowsiness (*thīnamiddha*), excitement and remorse (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*). One who is endowed with these five mental factors behaves in a biased way and loses his temper, disputes and blames each other “*bhaṇḍanjāto kalahajāto vivādapanno aññamaññaṃ mukhasattihi vitudanto viharati*”.¹⁰ Dogmatism or attachment to the concept and ideas is the main cause for the origination of the conflict individually and collectively, extending it to the world war. That is why the Buddha emphasizes to be free from the dogmatism or philosophical attachment “*ditṭhiṇca anupagamma*”.¹¹ Having understood the danger of an attachment to the religious teaching, Buddha abandoned and was free from all the concepts, even his teaching used only to cross over the stream of reincarnation.

Another important concept associated with the social peace is ‘papañca’ or conceit. Due to the conceit, the various mental conflicts are originated. Conclusion of every sense - cognition is conceit and then grasps the objectives of the external world as permanent, pleasant and substantial. This nature is contradicted with the reality in the world. ‘The diseases in the case of the individual, are lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), while some of their symptomatic manifestations in the society are quarrels (*kalaha*), stseeks rife (*viggaha*), dispute (*vivāda*), conceit (*mānatimāna*), slander (*pesuñña*), jealousy (*issāmacchariya*)”¹²

Once Einstein says, “in my youth I appreciated the wisdom and at my matured age I appreciate the compassion”. Buddha also performed not to make confusion by using his teaching and attempted to build up a peaceful and kind society for the benefit of all the beings, not only the human beings. The man who is endowed with the skill and talent, a good balance of personality as explained in the *Karaṇīyametta sutta* (*atthakusalena*), makes the society peaceful and serene with loving-kindness to himself and others.

Covetousness (*abhijjhā*) and ill-will are two concepts that obstruct the peace process of the society. Personally, it disrupts the mental peace and thereafter destroys the world peace by interrupting others. Expecting others’ properties, wealth, and destruction of others is expecting the majority of the people, and this is a major cause of the social disturbance. *Abhijjhā* is expecting others properties with desire (*yaṃ taṃ parassa paravittūpakaraṇaṃ taṃ*

¹⁰ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 758.

¹¹ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 152.

¹² Nānānanda Kaṭukurunde Bhikkhu., *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, Dharma Grantha Mudrana Bhāraya, Sri Lanka, 1912, 33-34.

abhihiṭṭā. aho vata yaṃ parassa taṃ mama assāti). *Vyapāda* is intention of hateful mental condition which may these beings killed, punished, destroyed (*paduṭṭhamanasañkappo. Ime sattā hanantu vā vajjhantu vā ucchijjantu vā vinassantu vā*). Here, it is clear that humans have lost their peace due to the bad and harmful mental condition that they created themselves. Originating this kind of mentality is a natural condition. But as an intelligent being, this must be understood and tried to suppress or control for the sake of peace.

In the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, it is advised to identify the volitions which are harmful to the mental peace. The craving must be understood as the craving (*sarāgaṃ cittam sarāgaṃ cittanti pajānāti*). The hatred should be understood as the hatred "*sadosaṃ cittam sadosaṃ cittanti pajānāti*".¹³ Instead of following the natural mental process, going against the stream is prescribed by the Buddha. He does not expect others' properties and valuables and living without hatred wishing others to be happy and maintaining the happy life (*ime sattā averā abyāpajjhā anighā sukhi attānaṃ pariharantu*). According to this definition, it clearly explains that these two concepts are associated with each other. *Kaccānagotta sutta* explains that people in the world associated with the extremism exist and non-exist "*atthīti kho kaccāna eko anto sabbamnatthīti kho kaccāna dutiyo anto*".¹⁴ Under this circumstance, the Buddha prescribes the opposite reaction and advises to replace the generosity and loving-kindness which are caused to the peace.

III. PEACEFUL LIFE IN THE WORLD CONDITIONS

Usually, people get involved in unnecessary problems that are really and directly affected in their life and make their minds upset. Due to this reason, they are always unhappy and quarrel and fight with the people who are living with them. Sometimes, in the same way their important and most valuable problems in their lives are purposely forgotten. But, one who has a calm and peaceful mind understands the reality in the world and the life, not getting upset when the nature is going unfavorably to him. Peaceful minded person correctly understands there is nothing to be upset and confused because the world is always changing and subjected to the eight world conditions (*aṭṭhalokadhamma*). Gain and loss (*lābho alābho*), disgrace and success (*ayasa yasoca*), blame and praise (*nindā pasansā*), happiness and unhappiness (*sukhaṇca dukkhā*). People are so much tremble and get upset when these eight kinds of factors are invading their lives. Because they expect only the good and pleasing side of life, and the unpleasing and bad sides are rejected, and even do not think of them for a moment. But if the bad and unpleasant factors are dominating the life so much, the person suffers while being pleased about the good sides that are dominating in the life. But the Buddha always advises to be equal and cultivate equanimity, (*upekkhā*) in each factor that is

¹³ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 144.

¹⁴ *Samyuttanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. II (2006), 28.

operating in our lives. The technique is introduced by the Buddha to be calm and settle in this situation that all these eight conditions are always changing and impermanent.

People are getting upset and confused when they are facing unfavorable conditions. But they are not thinking that that situation also impermanent non-eternal and changing (*ete aniccā manujesu dhamma - asassatā viparināmadhammā*). If the people realize the real nature of these eight world conditions, they do not get upset and confused. Here, it is very important to note that all the factors, which are good and bad sides, are subjected to constant change. So, if the bad side is changing, that is good and reason to be happy. By changing the way one thinks in this way, people can settle and calm their mind and spend a peaceful life being an example to the people who are living around them. Here, the very vital verse is mentioned to explain the calm and intelligent person in this way. “*Eteca ñatvā satimā sumedho- avekkhati viparināmadhamme. Itthassa dhamme na mathenti cittaṃ- anitthato no patighāmeti*”¹⁵

The wise man sees these factors through the wisdom. The factors like gain are not suppressed by the mind and not repulsion with unpleasant factors.

These contradictory mental conditions disrupt the inner peace and the calmness of the man. When pleasant conditions are received, overjoyed, and unpleasant things are depressed. These two types are not caused by the maintenance of a good mental condition, and the first one is caused by the attachment (*lobha*), and the second one is for the detachment (*dosa*). When gain, success, praise, and happiness are received, they expect and plan to stabilize at day and night vigilantly breaking the rest. On the one hand, when the loss, disgrace, blame, and unhappiness are received so painfully, spend the life. That is why the Buddha instructed to abandon the two extremes which are suppression (*mathenti*) and repulsion (*patighāta*). If a person lives with the understanding of these eight conditions and their real nature, any conditions are unable to make him hesitate, tremble, and shake his mind, and so calmly and peacefully spend his life. In the Maṅgala sutta also mentions that it is blessing not trembling the mind in eight world conditions “*phutthassa loka dhammehi cittaṃ yassa na kampati*”¹⁶. “*Selo yathā ekaghano - vātena na samīrati. Evam nindāpasamsāsu – na samīñjanti paṇḍitā*”¹⁷.

Here also emphasizes that a person who is endowed with equanimity does not shake or tremble in any world conditions. Every man has a right to experience the good and pleasant conditions in the world, abandoning bad conditions in the world. But the nature of the world is that the bad conditions

¹⁵ *Āṅuttaranikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. V (2006), 16.

¹⁶ *Samyuttanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 262.

¹⁷ (As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, even the wise are not ruffled by praise or blame). Narada Thera, *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 76.

also have to be experienced at an unexpected moment. If the mind is not prepared to face that unfortunate and unfavorable situation, much suffering and pain have to be experienced. That is the Buddha instructs to maintain a balanced mind bearing up the unbearable situation in life.

In the *Dutiya Lokadhamma sutta* also explains the nature of the eight world conditions which are dominating the life of every human being and how to be calm and settle the mind at the critical moment. Irrespective of the status and position, every human being has to face and experience these conditions, even the noble persons. The *sutta* mentions that worldly or unlearned people (*assutavā puthujjanā*) and noble learned people (*sutavā ariyasāvaka*) equally have to face these conditions. Here, the Buddha questioned what is the difference and intention between these two people while facing the eight world conditions. Usually, an unlearned person does not understand that these eight world conditions are impermanent, suffering, and changing constantly. Due to this reason always, he suffers and feels pain (*uppanno kho me ayaṃ lābho, so ca kho anicco dukkho viparināmadhammoti*). As a primary preparation of the mind, it is better to understand the nature of the world conditions to avoid the disturbances and confusion of the mind. Since he understood the real nature of everything, he has nothing to be unhappy in this life and spends his life without any fear and suffering. Another nature of the unlearned person is excessive attachment in the world conditions happily or unhappily (*tassa lābhopi... alābhopi... cittaṃ pariyādāya tiṭṭhati*). His mind attaches to the pleasant side (*anurujjhati*), and is contradicted with the bad or unpleasant side (*paṭivirujjhati*). This mental condition is introduced as the practice of agreement and disagreement (*anurodhavirodhapaṭipadā*). Due to this extremist mental condition people lost their inner peace and happiness and disturb the people who are living around him (*na parimuṇcati... sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi, na parimuṇcati dukkhasmāti vadāmi*).

In the second step, the learned person correctly understands its impermanence, suffering, and constant changing and does not tremble or feel unhappy regarding the world conditions. He abandons attachment and detachment in any condition and an equal perspective on the conditions is made. It is called the practice of abandonment of agreement and disagreement (*anurodhavirodhavippahīna*). Under this mental condition, a learned person does not tremble or feel unhappy when the world conditions are changing, and so free from the grief, lamentation, suffering, unhappiness, and tribulation.

“Here, a bhikkhu is (1) not desirous of gains, (2) honor, and (3) reputation; (4) he is one who knows the proper time and (5) who knows moderation; (6) he is pure; (7) he does not speak much; and (8) he does not insult and revile his fellow monks. Possessing these eight qualities, a bhikkhu is pleasing and agreeable to his fellow monks and is respected and esteemed by them.”¹⁸

¹⁸ *Anguttara Nikāya*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2012, 1115 - 1116.

In this way, Buddha explains how to build up the mental calmness even in the bad and unfortunate situation in life, and spending life peacefully and calmly. According to the discourse, it is clear that realizing the ultimate truth is the main cause for maintaining peace and calmness in the mind. It is so easy to live when the life is flowing like a song. But when the life is not flowing in a favorable manner, much diligence and energy have to be maintained in the mind and feelings. To achieve the purpose, the pre-preparation of the mind for these world conditions is so important and much needed.

IV. SOCIAL CONFLICT AND WORLD PEACE

Buddha preached dhamma with the intention of creating a peaceful society. To achieve purpose, the individual peace is a much needed factor. Due to the defilements originating in the mind individually, various contradictory and problematic situations are created in the society. Once, a Deity questioned the Buddha how to untie the ties which are internally and externally dealt with by the people. The answer was, “*Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañṇu - cittaṃ paññaṇca bhāvayaṃ. Athāpi nipako bhikkhu - so imaṃ vijaṭṭaye jaṭanti*”.¹⁹ 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.”²⁰

Establishing virtue, developing concentration, and wisdom cease the mental confusion and perplexity. Wisdom and compassion are the two most important factors for world peace. These two factors are spiritual and dealing with the mind. Mind is forerunner for every volitional action “*mano pubbaṅgamā dhamma*”²¹. Therefore, the peace is not coming to us without our sheer effort to achieve it. In the present world, we believe in academic knowledge inventing various scientific instruments for the destruction of mankind than for the benefit of mankind. If the scientists don’t have a kind heart, their creation will be much harmful to the entire world. That is why the Buddha emphasizes the compassion and the wisdom to be balanced. The nuclear bombs produced by the scientists cause much damage to the world, whether it is a scientific invention or a discovery. By updating and developing their conditions, powerful world leaders challenge and attack each other to show their power, forgetting real problems of mankind. The real intelligent person discovers a scientific instrument for the betterment of mankind and abandons every destructive issue and harmful means. His sole purpose is to make the society peaceful and happy. So, the aforesaid verse emphasizes the ethical and spiritual development of the member to society, who is guaranteed the security and friendly environment in the world.

¹⁹ *Samyuttanikāya, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā*, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 13.

²⁰ *Visuddhimagga*, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1997, 01.

²¹ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 01.

Hatred, anger, and excessive desire are making limitless problems in the world, and loving-kindness, compassion, and generosity can make the world peaceful and minimize the problems in the world. Hatred firstly kills and destroys the person who hates himself. So, the peaceful mind should be established by people for their goodness, and then its natural consequence is decreasing the hatred that those who live around us.

*“Ayaśāva malarī samuṭṭhitā - taduṭṭhāya tameva khādati”*²² as rust sprung from iron eats itself away when arisen. So, the volitions which are arisen in the minds of the people destroy themselves firstly, and not others, even their enemies, also not destroyed. By understanding this remarkable truth, the intelligent person makes up his mind to free himself from the negative attitudes and cultivate the compassionate feelings towards himself and the people who are living around. If he does not understand this truth, his natural reaction to the society is much harmful and disturbs the people and their peaceful livelihood.

Another advice of the Buddha is to abandon the hatred (*kodha*) and pride (*māna*) which are poisonous feelings originated in the mind in a friendly face. Give up hatred and pride *“kodham jahe vippajaheyya mānaṃ”*.²³ The serious situation in the society is that some persons are thinking that others are inferior and they are superior. This extremist position is so harmful to the world peace. A proud man is performing aggressively when others challenge his position, name, ideas, and near-dear people, and so angry and hating, blaming, doing character assassination, slinging mud, finally killing. If the world leaders are taking decisions based on hatred and pride, the destruction is impossible to calculate for the entire society. That is why in Buddhist political philosophy prescribes that the political decisions must be taken righteously and patiently as well as ruled without violence (*dhammena mochehi asāhasena*). Many domestic problems arise due to the pride and anger of the husband and wife, nor being flexible with each other. This is caused by the disunity and barrier to the peaceful environment of the house. That is why the Buddha advised to respect and be flexible towards each other for a peaceful family. Husband must respect to (*sakkaronto* wife, and wife must be compassionate to *her* husband. The loss temper and the attempt of defeating each other are making many problems in the family, destroying the peace of mind. Due to the war power, the power of population, nuclear power, economic power, the powerful world leaders invade the other weak countries, and these decisions pave the way to the national conflicts, international conflicts, wars, and struggles among the world.

In the *Cakkavattisihanāda sutta*, the ruler practices and observes the policy of five precepts, and primarily he is peaceful, and then imposes his power to make peaceful his subjects and the neighboring countries. By practicing this

²² Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 199

²³ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 189.

policy, his intention is not to transform these countries into his colony. Because of the policy, the five precepts are not allowed to take such a decision. If the ruler rules his country based on an ethical policy, it is helpful to world peace. The ‘*cakkavatti rāja*’ or Universal Monarch is performing based on the ethical policy. So, he is not eager to invade others’ kingdom or countries by force and harm their people to establish his power. In the present world, the powerful countries practice various methodologies to invade other countries, in addition to the weaponry powers, and they aim to make insoluble conflicts among people and between countries. Looking at other countries in the attitudes of imperialism, trying to grab their properties and resources, and that system is totally rejected by Buddhism. This policy is directly affected by the making of problems in the people and creates a poor society in the world, which has much effect on the confused and troublesome world. Instead of invading using weapons, the modern imperialism practices the economic invasion, funding a large sum of money in the form of donation, putting them into a debt trap. So, powerful countries take other poor countries under their control to steal their properties. Religious invasion is also another system of invasion in other countries. But, according to the *Cakkavattisihanāda sutta* this kind of system is not permitted.

Buddhism prescribes the war of dhamma for the peaceful world. That policy is mentioned in this way, this policy permitted friendly family life, good governance, and righteous economic policy. The agreement is negotiated with neighboring countries based on five precepts or *pañcasīla*.

1. Right of living and respect each other (*pāno na hantabbo*).
2. Protecting possessives or properties (*adinnam nādetabbā*).
3. Mutual understanding between wife and husband and establishing cultured society (*kāmesu micchā na caritabbā*).
4. Verbal communication and reliability (*musā na bhāsitabbā*).
5. Heedfulness and abandonment of intoxication (*majjam na pātaṃ*).

“...the Buddha merely speaks of ‘a king who is endowed with qualities’ his exposition not only embraces the personal characteristics and virtues of the king, but also the basic state affairs.”²⁴

Religion is a sensitive issue in the world and people sometimes fight each other to promote one’s own religion, despising others’ religions. But religion is not the issue of making chaos and problems in the world. Its only responsibility and duty are to make the society unite and peaceful for the name of mankind. When we are investigating the history of the religions, thousands of people have sacrificed their lives for invisible gods, not visible to mankind. But if the man makes up their mind with inner peace, the unfortunate incidents for the name of religion do not happen in this world. Tolerating diversity of religions, whether they are wrong, is not very helpful to maintain world peace. Because everyone or the majority of the people in the world represented any religion

²⁴ Abeynayake, Oliver., *Fundamentals of Buddhist Polity*, Ti-sarana Buddhist Association, Singapore, 1995, 47.

and observed. The right to decide the truthfulness of the religion is not the duty of the religious leader, and it must be given to the intelligent follower with an open mind. "Because of the application of dry intellect and technology, we face greater problems and threat today than had been faced by our ancestors in the past. All over the world people are fighting each other. Buddhism teaches us that killing for any reason is unjustifiable. It is worse when people fight and kill in the name of religion."²⁵

Winning through the dhamma is the Buddhist perspective regarding the inner peace and world peace. The confidence in neighbor countries that the powerful country will not invade and grab their resources by force is confirmed by this system. By following every country, powerful or powerless, ensure a peaceful environment in the world, and doubtless the world is created by man himself for the benefit of all human beings. In the present world, various organizations, fronts, and foundations are established for the name of peace and signing of the weapons, peace agreements, and negotiation table have become meaningless steps until the people make up their minds sincerely to restore the peace in the world forgetting the unnecessary pride.

In the *Upāli sutta*, it emphasizes the friendly attitudes towards other religions and good relationship and negotiation must be built up with them. A follower of Nīghanthanāthaputta requested the Buddha to accept him as a follower, and the Buddha at first rejected the proposal, mentioning an intelligent person like you must further think of the decision. But due to his repeated request, Buddha accepted him as a follower and advised him to serve his former teacher with four requisites. This is to be understood that the Buddha had taken every step to stop the religious conflict and accepted the right to hold any religious view, whether they are wrong or right. The purpose of this religious friendship is to live as a peaceful human being as one family.

The restraint or discipline of the three doors is highly reiterated by the Buddha, and their purification, calmness, and peacefulness are expected. "*Santaṃ tassa manam hoti- santā vācā ca kamma ca. Sammadāññāvimuttassa –upasantassa tādino*."²⁶

Calm is his mind, calm is his speech, calm is his action, who rightly knowing is wholly freed perfectly peaceful and equipoised. "The Buddhist view discipline implies both inward and outward control of oneself with care, alertness and dedication."²⁷

Being virtuous is very helpful to inner peace. In the noble path firstly, the noble ethical behavior is prescribed. Because the mind restraining the external

²⁵ Dhammananda, Sri. K., *Meditation the Only Way*, Publication of the Buddhist Missionary Society, Malaysia, 1996, 39.

²⁶ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 90.

²⁷ Weerasighe, H., *Education for peace: the Buddha's Way*, Sarvodaya Book Publisher, Ratmalana, 1992, 46.

behavior has to be restrained. The mental concentration and the wisdom are established based on the behavioral foundation. This calm and peaceful behavior is much attractive and inspires the people who are living around us. King Ajāsatta killed his father and was deeply depressed over his bad action and was searching for a way of being free from this mental depression. He was guided to the Buddha by his royal doctor Jīvaka to make up his mind by receiving the advice from the Buddha. When he went to see the Buddha, he saw one thousand and two hundred fifty bhikkhus were sitting around the Buddha so calmly. He was so pleasant and inspired the scene which was seen. Those monks are so calm, peaceful, and silent, like a calm and unshaken pond (*rahadamiva vipasannam*). My son Udāyibhadda may also follow this manner was his wish “*upasamena udāyibaddo kumāro samannāgato hotu yenetarahi upasamena bhikkhusaṅgho samannāgato*”.²⁸ The inner peace and calmness were so fascinating to the king, and he expected his son to also follow this calm behavior.

Calmness of a person much affected by other social members, and the peace can be gained with his inner peace to the world. Especially, if rulers change their minds and become calm, the world peace is ready to be handed to the people. Due to the calm and peaceful appearance of novice Nigrodha, much affected the Emperor Asoka. When the emperor saw the novice was walking near the palace so calmly and so pleasantly, he invited him to the palace. The cause of the pleasantness of the emperor is none other than the external behavior conducted by the inner peace or mental calmness. Emperor Asoka propagated Buddha’s teaching throughout the world and made the world peaceful by sponsoring the third Buddhist council. Due to the propagation of the Buddha’s serene teaching, world peace is stabilized. Emperor Asoka and Emperor Kaniska equally. Buddha’s one of the first five disciples, Assaji was wandering on the road. Buddha’s future chief disciple Upatissa saw the Thera and was fascinated by his calm and peaceful external appearance. Upatissa searched his teaching, teacher, and restrained senses, which is pleasant to the world. At the end of the discussion made with Thera Upatissa manifested the truth and entered the Order of the saṅgha with his close friend Kolita and appointed as Buddha’s chief disciples. This proves that personal inner calmness and peacefulness of the person can be extended to the world peace. He might be a pioneer for the gaining of peace to the world.

Once, one of the deities questioned the illumination and brightness as well as calmness of senses of the Buddha’s disciples who taking one meal a day. The answer made by the Buddha is so important with regard to the spiritual calmness and peacefulness. “*Atītaṃ nānu soceyya – nappajappantīnāgataṃ. Vattamānena yāpentī - tena vaṇṇo pasīdatī*”.²⁹ Not lamenting on past, not desire to future, contented in the present, that is why pleasant complexion.

²⁸ *Dīghanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 88.

²⁹ *Samyuttanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 10.

The same explanation is made in *sutta nipāta* in this way, cause to the calm and peaceful mind. “*Purāṇaṃ nābhinandeyya- nace khantim na kubbaye. Hiyamāne na soceyya- akassam na sito siya*”. Not enjoyed at past, not attaché in present, when the objectives are decreased not repent and not endowing the craving.³⁰

In this way, the Buddha introduces the simple and positive methodology for the calm and peaceful life. According to Buddhism one of the main reasons for the mental imbalance is discontentment what already we have. If people do not content and happy what they already have is never contented and happy what will to be received. Worldly persons naturally and always discontented, deficient and slave of craving says the Buddha “*uno loko atittho tanhā dāso*”³¹. Due to this nature discontentment people fight and making conflicts each other for the power, money, wealth and fame. Powerful world leaders or political authorities are planning various methods to invade other countries to grab their natural resources and the lands to be more and more powerful. Emperor Asoka in India also followed this discontented exercise and finally abandoned due to the unhappiness and meaninglessness by killing thousands of people. Another Emperor Alexander also invaded the land and widened his kingdom so widely due to the excessive craving. Finally, he understood nothing can be carried while he said good bye to the life. His one of the requests was displaying empty both hands to the people that he doesn’t carry anything in his death bed.

A person who has inner peace never expects any gain or advantage with wrong manner. Righteous manner is followed at any situation. “*Na attahetu na parassa hetu – na puttamicche na dhanam na raṭṭham. Na iccheyya adhammena samiddhimattano- sa silavā pañña vā dhammiko siyā*”.³² “Neither for the sake of oneself nor for the sake of another (does a wise person do any wrong); he should not desire son, wealth, or kingdom (by doing wrong); by unjust means he should not seek his own success. Then (only) such a one is indeed virtuous, wise and righteous.”³³

It is a reality that worldly people cannot live without physical resources and wealth. But consummation of this wealth should be done by understanding its real nature not to be unhappy later. People are so happy when they are enjoying with the sensual pleasures until the wealth bringing the unhappiness. But inner calm and peaceful person maintains his mind while the wealth what he has is vanishing. So, the Buddha’s advice to consume the wealth is

³⁰ *Samyuttanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 948.

³¹ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. II (2006), 446.

³² Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 79.

³³ Narada Bhikkhu., *The Dhammapada*, Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1993, 79.

not to be a cause to mental retardation of happiness. In Vyagghapajja sutta makes the foundation for the contented consumption that fundamentally the wealth should be earn and accumulate fair and righteous manner and energetically “*uṭṭhānaviriyādhigatā bāhābalaparicitā sedāvakkhittā dhammikā dhammaladdhā*”.³⁴ So, in the accumulation and earning the wealth the fair and righteous methods must be practiced and, in the consumption, it should be maintained making the mind peaceful.

In the *Rāsiya sutta*, Buddha explains how to consume the wealth without harming the mental peacefulness. The main reason for the discontentment consummation of the wealth is excessive attachment in the wealth. He consumes the wealth with attachment, infatuation, smearing, not seeing disadvantages and without freedom “*teca bhoge gathito mucchito ajjhāpanno anādinava dassāvī anissaranapaṇṇo paribhuñjati*”.³⁵ Here, ‘*gathita*’ means attachment with desire (*gathitoti tanhāgedhena gathito*), ‘*mucchita*’ is infatuated with desire (*mucchitoti tanhāmucchanāyayaeva mucchito*), ‘*ajjhāpanna*’ is smearing with desire (*ajjhāpannoti tanhāya gilitvā pariniṭṭhāpetvā pavatto*), ‘*anissaranapaṇṇo*’ is consuming with excessive desire “*chandarāgaṃ apakaddhitvā paribhuñjanto anissaranapaṇṇo*”.³⁶ Under this mental atmosphere, if the wealth is vanished he is so painful, repent, getting upset, depressed and confused due the attachment in the wealth. But one who follows the opposite way of aforesaid nature even at the destruction of the wealth so patiently settle his mind by understanding reality in the world and the nature which is impermanent. That nature is explained in this way that, the wealth is consumed without attachment (*aghathito*), infatuation (*amucchito*), smearing (*anajjhāpanno*), and with accomplishment (*pariniṭṭhāpetvā*), seeing its disadvantages (*ādinava dassāvi*), and with the knowledge of escape or abandoning “*anissaranapaṇno paribhunjati*”.³⁷

By investigating these two methodologies consuming the wealth without disturbing the mentality is much affective and effective individually and collectively to the entire society. Those who are much desire to earn and accumulate the wealth any harmful means are followed to achieve their targets by occupying five kinds of wrong occupations which are selling flesh, animals, intoxicants, weapons, poisons etc. aforesaid businesses are the means able to earn much money in one night by harming the people’s health, wealth, family and finally entire society. In the consumption of the wealth its real nature has to be understood for the meaningful consummation. Some people committed

³⁴ *Āṅuttaranikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. V (2006), 234.

³⁵ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. IV (2006), 604.

³⁶ . *Āṅuttaranikāyaṭṭhakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol. I (2007), 457.

³⁷ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. IV (2006), 604.

suicide when their wealth and business are loss due to not expecting such a situation with regarding the wealth. That is why the Buddha emphatically advises the excessive attachment is not helping to gain the real enjoyment of the consummation of the wealth. Having understood that the everything in the world not only the wealth is subjected to the changing cultivating equanimity with regarding the wealth is much helpful to make up the balance mind and peaceful mind. The person ‘*anissaranapaññā*’ correctly understands this nature and practice the middle position in consummation of the wealth. Buddhism does not refuse the importance of the wealth and the defects dealing with wealth is excessive attachment and consummation without correct perspective.

Another danger dealing with wealth is development of the pride and disturbs it to the calm mentality instead of making peacefulness. It is no matter possession of the wealth and money, but its excessive attachment is not recommended by the Buddha. Another specific nature of the wealth is ‘*mada*’ or intoxication, conceit with the pride. This term defined in many places as so strong bondage and it is associated with pride (*madam āpajjissantīti mānamadam*). This nature is connected with the negligence or discharging the mindfulness ‘*pamāda*’ “*pamādanti vissaṭṭhasatibhāvaṃ*”³⁸ and it is defilement to the mind “*madam cittassa upakkilesa*”.³⁹ Much intoxicate nature is *mada*, “*madagahanakāro mado*”.⁴⁰ In this way intoxication in the wealth so proudly despise others and upgraded him. This nature is so dangerous for the social existence and barrier for the social harmony. So, the wealth and its maintenance are so important factor affected to the person and so carefully should be maintained by saving one’s own mental peace.

The people who are living in the world consume the aforesaid manner without attachment the big wars, conflicts are not originated in among the nations. Whatever reasons are mentioned for the wars in the world the main reason for the wars is excessive attachment and expecting the possession of others wealth and properties.

Accusing, blaming, struggling and attacking each other are consequence of excessive desire (*chandarāga*). The quarrel and dispute originated due to the attachment to the wealth or desirable materials “*piyā pahutā kalahā vivadā*”.⁴¹ In *Mahānidāna sutta* explains the process of attachment to the wealth and its origination of the war as a result of it. By searching and of wealth and power world leaders have constant struggle. Making security for the material sources and desire or them is primary cause for the conflicts (*esa paccayo arakkhassa yadidaṃ macchariyam*). If the wealth and properties are not maintained

³⁸ *Majjhimanikāyatthakatha*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol. II (1943), 133.

³⁹ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 84.

⁴⁰ *Majjhimanikāyatthakatha*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol. I (1933), 54.

⁴¹ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 866.

systematically robbers and powerful people will be taken by force and stolen. Due to attachment the desire arises when desire arises grasping the wealth (*macchariyassa yadidaṃ pariggaho*), when the wealth grasping so attach in them (*pariggahassa yadidaṃ ajjhosānaṃ*), due to the attachment excessive desire arise (*ajjhosānassa yadidaṃ chandarāgo*), due to excessive desire judge the condition of good and bad pleasant and unpleasant (*chandarāgassa yadidaṃ vinicchayaṃ*), here the struggle arises for the good quality goods or wealth. It is nature of the mankind to grab the best thing for their lives. Due to the judgment hardly work for gaining of the wealth (*vinicchayassa yadidaṃ lābho*), and much eager to investigate the means to earn and accumulate wealth "*lābhassa yadidaṃ pariyesanā*".⁴² Individually all the people are much desire to the wealth and try to possess the large portion to his family and quarrel, blame and struggle with entire society with mental depression. But one who understands that at the final conclusion all these wealth and properties are to be abandoned at the death bed consume what he has without attachment in them and not struggle or being impatient.

"It is show that the principle of dependent arising can be used to understand the origins of social disorder just as effectively as it can be used to understand the origins of individual suffering. Like all other problems, the ailments of society arise from causes and these can be traced in a sequence leading from the manifestation to the underlying roots. The conclusion drawn from this inquiry is highly significant; the causes of social disharmony lie in the human mind and all stem ultimately from craving."⁴³

The nature of stingy, desirable and avarice person is discontentment whether he possess the wealth in the entire world. "*Na kahāpaṇa vassena –titti kāmesu vijjati. Appassādā dukhā kāmā- iti viññāya paṇḍito*".⁴⁴

Not by a shower of gold coins does contentment arise in sensual pleasures, of little, and sensual pleasure, knowing thus, the wise man finds no delights. This is the nature discontentment of worldly person as well as sensual pleasures. So, the intelligent person consumes the wealth without any attachment and experience the real happiness by abandoning them. Gandhi says, the wealth in the world good enough to the all the people in the world, but not desire to one man. That is why the Buddha says sorrow, and fear arises due to the craving. If a person free from the desire where is the sorrow and fear. "*Taṇhāya jāyati soka-taṇhāya jāyati bhayaṃ. Taṇhāya vip̐pamuttassa- natthi soko kuto bhayaṃ*".⁴⁵

So, for the peaceful mind the craving has to minimize as worldly people

⁴² *Dīghanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. II (2006), 86.

⁴³ *The Mahānidāna Sutta*, translated by Bodhi Bhikkhu, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy 2000, 14.

⁴⁴ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 167.

⁴⁵ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 186.

though we cannot eradicate completely. If it is not so, the vast suffering follows us constantly destroying our inner peace. The *Rāsiya sutta* again explains that accumulating or earning wealth based on the three unwholesome roots craving, hatred and ignorance badly affected to the oneself and the entire society. When these three factors ceased much benefits receive the both sides "... *rāge pahīne... dose pahīne... mohe pahīne...*"⁴⁶ This proves that wisely maintaining wealth with good management builds up one's inner peace and social peace, where one can live peacefully with others as a part of a family.

In the *Ambalaṭṭhika Rāhulovāda sutta* explains how peaceful and harmless society is to be built. Actions which are expressed through three doors bodily, verbally and mentally have to be purified so mindfully not harming oneself and others in the world. If people concern every action doing by their three doors the obstruction and disturb to the peace for the people can be avoided. Buddha says the actions which are done by three doors should be carefully and thoroughly observed and repeated contemplation must be done. The importance of the contemplating the actions what we are doing through body, word and mind can be identified in this way.

1. The correct action can be identified.
2. The bad behavior and actions can be avoided.
3. The benefit of the action can be identified.
4. It is able to decide whether the action harmful or harmless to oneself.
5. And whether they are harmful to the entire society.
6. With the pre-identification, the action can be changed and good actions can be replaced.
7. If good actions are done, the happy and peaceful mind is maintained.
8. If bad actions are done, they can be corrected in the future.
9. If good actions are done, they can be repeatedly followed.
10. Finally, the good actions build up the calm and peaceful society where the people can live peacefully and unitary.

It is important to here that the actions which are done by the people must be good not only to others but also to himself is emphasized (*neva attavyābādhāyapi saṃvatteyya*). On the other hand, others are also not to be harmed (*neva paravyābādhāyapi saṃvatteyya*) and good for the both parties are ought to be "*neva ubhayvābādhāyapi saṃvattati*."⁴⁷ In this way, if all the people in the world concern on their behavior and try to make their actions be good the peaceful atmosphere of the world is natural circumstance.

Again, Buddha advised not to do the wrong action which is to be repent after contemplating and looking back it (*nataṃ kammaṃ kataṃ sadhu yaṃ*

⁴⁶ *Samyuttanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. IV (2006), 608.

⁴⁷ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 132.

katvā anutappati) and the action should be done when it to be happy when it is contemplated and looking back “*tañca kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu yaṃ katvā nānu tappati*”.⁴⁸ So, the actions which are done should be good for oneself and others and ought to be enjoyed with the consequence of them.

In the *Dvedhāvitakka sutta* explains the three thoughts (*vitakka*) which are harmful to others and oneself as well as how the mind becomes polluted and perplexity. The concepts of sensual desire (*kāma vitakka*), thoughts of ill-will (*vyāpāda vitakka*), and thoughts of cruelty (*vihiṃsā vitakka*). These three thoughts are causes for the obstruction of the calmness and serenity of the mind. These three thoughts are harmful and affliction to oneself, others and both and obstruct the wisdom (*paññānirodhikā*), causes difficulties (*viḥātāpakkhikā*), lead away from liberation “*anibbāna saṃvattaniko*”.⁴⁹ These three kinds of thought are harmful to both sides and destroy the peace, and finally the highest goal is also obstructed. On the other hand, their opposite sides of thoughts do not affect the affliction to oneself and others, and both. They aid to wisdom (*paññāvuddhiko*), do not cause difficulties (*aviḥātāpakkhiko*), lead to the liberation “*nibbāna saṃvattaniko*”.⁵⁰

In this way, the negative attitudes which are harmful to the human beings and their positive attitudes provide much benefit to the entire human beings. When the wholesome thoughts are originated, the mind becomes steady (*cittaṃ ūhaññeyya*), quieted (*samādhīyati*), and singleness (*ekodibhāvaṃ*). The internal peace is developed by practicing non-sensual thought (*nekkhamma vitakka*), non-ill will (*avyāpāda vitakka*), non-cruelty (*avihiṃsā vitakka*). Out of the three thoughts, the two thoughts are dealing with the harmfulness and affliction to oneself and others. These thoughts are an obstruction to the inner peace and destroy others’ peace also. By developing non-cruelty and non-ill will, the inner peace and the world peace can be achieved.

Another sutta, the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna sutta*, explains the methodology for the purification of the mind, the way of making peace individually for the benefit of many. This sutta also mentions the three factors that pollute the mind and they are to be abandoned by practicing the five kinds of methodologies. The factors that affect the confusion and contamination of the mind are desire (*chandupasaṃhitā*), hatred (*dosupasaṃhitā*) and ignorance (*mohūpasaṃhitā*). To suppress or control the unwholesome volitions based on these three basic unwholesome factors, the five methodologies are introduced.

First one is when the unwholesome volition arises in the mind, the opposite wholesome objective or sign is to be applied. It is a reasonable step to replace the opposite object to avoid the unnecessary volition. People can

⁴⁸ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada - Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 67.

⁴⁹ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 288.

⁵⁰ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 290.

think one volition at a time. When replacing the wholesome volition for the unwholesome volition is better treatment to purify the mind. This methodology is introduced as '*aññanimitta pabba*' or giving attention to another sign, the mind can be avoided from the unwholesome volitions.

Second one is when the unwholesome volition is arisen, its danger or disadvantages are to be considered. When the pleasant unwholesome volitions are arisen, attention must be paid to their loathsomeness and then the mind can be purified from unwholesome volitions. This methodology is introduced as '*ādinava pabba*'.

The third one is not thinking that the object reaches the mind based on the aforesaid three unwholesome are not to be thought and contemplated. If the unpleasant signs are reaching the eye, look away and leave the object. In the same way, the unwholesome object must not be paid attention to. This is called '*asati pabba*'.

Fourth one is identification of the causes or roots of the unwholesome volition. By identifying the cause, the treatment for the wholesome volition can be done. Sometimes we can see the consequence of the action, but the underlying cause is hidden. So, mindfully the cause is to be identified for the purification of the mind. This methodology is introduced as '*vitakkamūlabheda pabba*'.

The fifth one is suppressing the unwholesome volitions by the wholesome volition. The energy or '*virīya*' is so important in this effort. To prevent the entering, a great deal of dedication and effort must be made to the person. And this is introduced as '*abhiniggaṇha pabba*'.

Above explanation is defined as how the mind prevents the unwholesome volitions which are causing stresses and pollution. According to this discourse, people must always pay attention to the volitions which arise in the mind to identify the mental nature correctly. Having selected the unwholesome volition, the due treatment and maintenance for the peaceful mind can be practiced. That is why time to time aforesaid methodologies are to be practiced (*kālena kālaṃ manasikātābbanti*). When making constant contemplation on the volitions, the mind stands still, settled, concentrated, and calm to achieve the peaceful mental culture "*tesaṃ pahānā ajjhataṃeva cittaṃ santiṭṭhati sannisīdati ekodi hoti samādiyati*".⁵¹

In this way, when the person restrains the mind, ceasing the unwholesome volitions, the people who are living with him also follow his behavioral pattern, and the conflicts can be minimized in that atmosphere. Their association with pure and purified minds, the entire social system will be stabilized and peaceful. It is very important to note here that the above three factors are taught in Buddhism as four extremes, which tempt people to take wrong and partial decisions, causing social distraction.

⁵¹ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 300 - 306,

V. LOVING KINDNESS AND WORLD PEACE

Metta or loving-kindness is a vital mental factor to build up the peaceful environment in the world. Due to not considering others' happiness and the respect, as well as not thinking all beings are our relations, people quarrel and fight with each other unnecessarily. The good and remarkable aspiration of Buddhism is 'may all beings endowed with kind or good minds' "*sabbeva bhūtā sumanā bhavantu*".⁵² Bhūtā is defined as all the beings living in the sky, the earth, and space everywhere. Sumana means happy mind and endowing with joy "*sukhitamanā pīṭisomanassajātābhavantu*".⁵³ So, the intention of happiness of all the beings is much pleasurable mental atmosphere than hateful mind culture. If a person is hateful and seeks revenge on others, the attitudes of dealing with that mentality are so painful and harmful to him, spiritually disturbing to his usual lifestyle. For the betterment of mankind, the mutual understanding and friendly relationship with all the human beings, irrespective of the nationality, caste, class, dress, color, region, country, male and female, are so vital. To achieve this noble purpose, everyone must work hard and collectively without separation. There are many reasons for the separation of the human beings instead of association, which are created by them themselves as mentioned earlier. "Buddha emphasizes that he has eradicated all the declarations, beliefs and acceptances made by the world with regard to the beings."⁵⁴

How many persons interfere to narrow this huge gap in the world, and only the person who has a great, wide, and kind heart.

"*Anūpavādo anūpaghāto*"⁵⁵ is a vital attitude on the other beings. Anupavādo is insulting others (*anupavādanamceva anupavādapānam*) Anupaghāta is attacking others "*anupahanatam ceva anupaghātapaṇāṇca*".⁵⁶ Not insulting and not harming or killing is the heartiest reaction to mankind prescribed by the Buddha. These two factors are major reasons for the social disharmony, disunity, and depression. The irresponsible statements which are made to defame others with a hateful mind pave the way to social imbalance. Such harmful actions disturb the freedom of mankind. "From lust springs grief, from lust springs fear; from him who is wholly free from lust there is no grief, much less fear."⁵⁷ Furthermore, the Buddha emphasizes that one who harms others is not a bhikkhu or a religious priest.

⁵² *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 224.

⁵³ *Suttanipatattakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, 1991, 206.

⁵⁴ Silva Sumith, P.D., *The Buddhist Critique of the Attachment to the Concept*, Godage and Brothers, Colombo, 2019, 343.

⁵⁵ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 165.

⁵⁶ *Dhammapadatthakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol.II (2006), 463.

⁵⁷ Narada Thero., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 184.

Compassionate living, a kind person does not expect only his goodness, and expects the goodness of the entire mankind, and even the enemy's goodness and happiness are also expected. In the *Karaṇīyamettā sutta*, it is advised to spread loving-kindness to every being. They are categorized in this way, long, large, medium, small, thin, fat, visible, invisible, far, near, born, unborn, which are size, distance, and visibility like that. These groups are represented by all types of beings, not only the human beings. Sometimes, some may think that cultivating loving-kindness to the animals. But they are so helpful to balance the biodiversity in the environment. Therefore, protecting animals and the environment is protecting the lives of human beings. On the other hand, loving-kindness only for the human beings, forgetting animals and harming them, is not the perfect perspective of loving-kindness. If a man doesn't have friendly attitudes towards the environment, how are human beings living in this world? But man destroys the environment brutally and badly due to not having the perfect understanding of loving-kindness. That is why the Buddha advised cultivating the loving-kindness to all the beings "*mettaṅca sabba lokasmiṃ mānasambhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ*".⁵⁸ Here the loving-kindness should be unlimited and immeasurable irrespective of the status of any being.

Usually and naturally, people are jealous and unhappy about others' success. But, one who is endowed with the loving-kindness, he maintains his mentality well and controlled not to arouse the defilements like hatred, craving, cruelty, etc. In this inner peace, make the other beings' happiness. He never expects the others suffering and their happiness always wished and expected "*nāññaṃaṇṇassa dukkhamiccheyya*".⁵⁹ A person who hates always lives with mental stress and his inner peace is destroyed. Such a mentality is harmful to himself, not others. Buddha says, an ill-directed mind is harmful to him than a hater is harming. "Whatever (harm) a foe may do to a foe or a hater, an ill-directed mind can do one far greater (harm)."⁶⁰ The well-directed mind makes happiness and benefit than parents and relatives are doing him. "What neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative can do, a well-directed mind does and thereby elevates one."⁶¹

"One should finally pervade the whole world with all embracing kindness, and not only human beings, but also animals down to the tiniest insect, all should be embraced with kindness. Identifying ourselves with all that lives, we should pervade the whole world with all embracing kindness, above, below, to all sides, and should rise in our innermost heart the

⁵⁸ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 150.

⁵⁹ *Samyutta nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 148.

⁶⁰ Narada Thero., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 44.

⁶¹ Narada Thero., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 45.

fervent wish.”⁶²

Hatred or ‘*paṭigha*’ is a verse mental condition for the destruction of the entire society. One who suppresses by hatred followed by hatred doesn’t know how to escape from the hatred and not knowing the benefit and goodness of his own and others cannot be reminded and memorized, what he has studied and what about the unstudied. According to this explanation, several reasons are missed due to the hatred.

1. The benefit of his own and others is that they are unable to understand.
2. Mentality is so confused.
3. Inability to understand how to escape from this verse mental condition.
4. Forgetting the learned thing.
5. Unlearned things never to be understood.

This is clearly explained that stress created by the bad mental condition due to the hatred does much damage to the inner peace. Inner-peace is so useful to be a very popular person in the world. Naturally, he is popular among the people due to his compassionate attitudes and behavior towards the social members. Human beings and animals, all beings identify their loving attitudes and so are inspired and fascinated their association. Because they feel that any harmful reaction is not coming from him and are fearlessly and doubtlessly able to live in this world. *Metta sutta* mentions that one who is endowed with loving-kindness is popular not only among human beings but also among the non-human beings “*manussānaṃ piyo hoti amanussānaṃ piyo hoti*”.⁶³ If these kinds of people are living in the society, a peaceful, beneficial, and benevolence society can form.

One who does not destroy and kill nor conquer, being loving-kindness, no hatred with anyone. It is clear that a person who has inner peace doesn’t have hatred with anybody, and nobody has to defeat or conquer him, and he has abandoned loss and win both. This mentality of avoiding extremism is the balanced and calm mind, not harmful to any being. Commentary defined it that he has not unwholesome hatred, hatred of person both “*tassa kenaci saddhim akusala veraṃ vā puggala veraṃ vā natthi*.”⁶⁴ His internal and external equality is mentioned here, and the absence of hateful feelings in the mind and the external unfavorable persons is also absent.

Loving-kindness, and compassion are not limited beyond the privacy and extended to the beyond the world to the universe. Other concept dealing with loving-kindness is humanity or non-violence (*avihiṃsā*). Not thinking even, a feeling of violence towards the beings. Non-violence is defined as compassion

⁶² Ñyanatiloka Mahathera., *Fundamentals of Buddhism*, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1994, 63.

⁶³ *Anguttara Nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padana-ma, Taiwan, vol. V (2006), 336.

⁶⁴ *Anguttaranikāyaṭṭhakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol. II (2006), 738.

and showing compassion to the beings “*yā sattesu karuṇā karuṇāyaṇā karuṇāyitattaṃ karuṇācetovimuttiṃ*”.⁶⁵ This is the second factor of the eightfold path, the right concept. These qualitative feelings are noble feelings shared with the people who are living with us. By cultivating these volitions, and its natural consequence is a mutual relationship and friendship with all the people who are different internally and externally, physically and mentally. The two concepts which are dealing with non-violence are loving-kindness and compassion “*Ahiṃsaṃkā ye munayo – niccaṃ kāyena samvutā. Te yanti accutaṃ ṭhānaṃ - yattha gantvā na socare*”.⁶⁶

Those sages who are harmless and are ever restrained in body go to the deathless state (*Nibbāna*) whither gone they never grieve. According to this verse, the final destination of Buddhism, *Nibbāna* can also be achieved through non-violence and endowing with loving-kindness and compassion. His worldly nature is not being grief and a pleasant life is spent. A non-violent person does not have any reason for repentance due to his kindness to mankind. It is impossible to originate hatred or killing others or harm those who are endowed with loving-kindness. He free from the hatred due to liberation of mind “*byāpāda cittaṃ ṭhassaṭṭi nettaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati. Nissaraṇaṃ hettaṃ āvuso vyāpādassa yadidiaṃ mettā cetovimutto*”.⁶⁷

The loving-kindness is not a temporary attitude of person must be maintained in the mind and cultivated anytime, by every person, everywhere, and every direction limitlessly for all the beings in the world. In this way, it has so wide and deep meaning by cultivating the loving-kindness. “*Tiṭṭhaṃ caraṃ nisinno vā sayāno vā yāvatassa viḥatamiddho. Etaṃ satiṃ adhiṭṭheyya brahmametaṃ vihāraṃ idamāhu*”.⁶⁸

Brahma vihāra or four sublime abode, loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic-joy, and equanimity are cultivated and be alert while standing, walking, sitting, and lying down. So, every posture we function have to be so pure and kind nature and every moment is maintaining for the benefit of others and not polluting his mind. If a person lives in this behavioral nature, their every moment and sheer ambition is to serve people and make their lives upgrade and develop. This calm and peaceful mental condition is much helpful to the peaceful society and peaceful world. As mentioned above, every being is included in his world of loving-kindness and does not leave even the tiny creature. In another angle, every direction is to be concerned and coverage for his net of loving-kindness. In this way he lives with large, great unlimited non-hatred consciousness spreading top, bottom, across, everywhere, all around

⁶⁵ *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, vol. II (1992), 717.

⁶⁶ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 191.

⁶⁷ *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. IV (2006), 20.

⁶⁸ *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 151.

and throughout the world “*iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbattatāya sabbāvantam lokam... cetaso vipulena mahaggatena appamānena averena avyāpajjhena pharitvā viharati*”.⁶⁹ Now the depth, width, and length of loving-kindness and nature of the human quality can be understood clearly.

The four sublime abodes are very effective and effective factors for inner peace and world peace. If the minds of people are fulfilled with these four factors, insoluble conflicts and struggles can be solved for a peaceful world. “Four sublime abodes primarily make calm and peaceful and as a result of this mental condition the friendly attitudes to mankind are extended. Inner-personal, inter-social and inter-religious relations are so important for avoiding war and conflicts.”⁷⁰

Those who endow with the spiritual settlement, peace and contentment correctly realized the reality in the world and see that nothing to be grasped I, MY and MY SELF. By practicing Satipaṭṭhāna, a practitioner understood the true nature of the world. It explains the contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), sensation (*vedanānupassanā*), consciousness (*cittānupassanā*) and sense of sphere (*dhammānupassanā*) and by investigation of these four-section practitioner correctly understands that nothing is to be attached or detached with the world. “With this state of independence and equipoise, characterized by the absence of any sense of ‘I’ or ‘mine’, the direct path of satipaṭṭhāna gradually approaches its culmination. It is in this balanced state of mind, free from ‘I’-making or ‘my’-making, that the realization of Nibbāna can take place”.⁷¹ So, he doesn’t have the reason for attachment and detachment in anything and any person in the world. His attitude on everyone is that they are not special and that every being is equally concerned as equally. In such situation, any conflict and struggle with any person is impossible. Following is the nature of those who understood the real nature of the world.

The calm and peaceful person doesn’t say inferior, superior, and equal, and has eradicated envy, and is neither attached nor detached.

While avoiding the two extremist positions as mentioned earlier, no option to attach and detach. The status of the people that are made by the people themselves creates uncountable problems in the world. If these criteria are avoided by the people, much peace reaches the society. Much trouble is caused by this status of the people considering their brothers people inferior, superior, and equal to each one. I ness MY ness is another big barrier for the world peace as well as inner peace, Buddha emphasized. If this eternalist concept is eradicated, many problems in the world can be minimized. In explaining the Buddha’s compassion to the world mentioned in this way. “*Paṭhavi sadisā Buddhā tasmā*

⁶⁹ *Majjhimanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. I (2006), 462.

⁷⁰ Dhammadassi, Naimbala., *Buddhism and Modern World*, Turbo Publicity Service, Colombo, 2008, 47.

⁷¹ Analayo Bhikkhu., *Satipaṭṭhāna - The Direct Path to Realization*, Windhorse Publications, Cambridge, 2003, 116.

te na virodhiyā. Devadatteca vadhake core āṅgukimalake. Rāhule dhanapāleca sabbesaṃ samako muni. Etesaṃ paṭigho natthi rāgo tesam na vijjati".⁷²

Buddha has equal mind to executioner Devadatta, robber Āṅgulimāla, animal Dhanapāla or Nālāgiri and even his son Rāhula. It is said that Buddha has an equal attitude for every being and even his enemy is considered as equally. Buddha doesn't have desire or hatred with anyone. Many people question whether a worldly person can practice this difficult task. But, concerning the world conflicts and struggles mankind must follow this teaching for the name of peace. Human beings have developed a more developed mind than animals and so this difficult conclusion must be achieved. If it is not so, we are digging our pit by ourselves and create a world that is not suitable to live in. Buddhist aspiration and wish is none other than "may all beings be happy, free from suffering".

"It aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desire, hateful, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, skeptical doubts, and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, joy, tranquility leading finally to the attainment of highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they are..."⁷³

Tolerance is a much supportive factor for inner-peace and world peace. Due to the intolerance in the world, many wars are operating, harming every being and destroying the properties and resources that are essential to the human and the animal. The arbitrary decisions taken by world leaders with impatience have already done harm to the world. So, the Buddha prescribes to the world to be patient and functioning with presence of mind, tempting others also to be patient.

Buddha always restrained the people without weapons and rods (*asthena adaṇḍena*). Āṅgulimāla, who was tamed by the Buddha without any weapon or the rod, and the Tera later mentions his rapturous joy statement that although some person tames with sticks, with a hook guide an elephant, but the Buddha restrained me without weapons and sticks.

This is clear that the Buddha does not have any harmful measure for the restraint, even the murderer who is doing much harm. The reformatory methodology is recommended and his character development is expected. Even the Universal Monarch also spread his power not by weapons and sticks or by war and through the non-violence manner "*so imaṃ paṭhaviṃ sāgarapariyantam asaṭṭhena adaṇḍena dhammena abhivijjiya ajjhāvasanti*".⁷⁴ The reason for that is the defeated person always lives with hatred and without true happiness.

⁷² *Theragāthāṭṭhakathā*, Saimon Hevavitarana Publishers, Colombo, 1918, 369.

⁷³ Rahula, Walpola., *What the Buddha Taught*, Buddhist Cultural Centre, Dehiwala, 1996, 68.

⁷⁴ *Dīghanikāya*, Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka Granthamālā, Dharmacara Lamā Padanama, Taiwan, vol. II (2006), 130.

In the *Subhāsitaṭṭaya sutta*, it explains how to be calm among the impatient people who are harming and attempting to fight with us. The Sakka or king of God is represented in the correct aspect and Buddhist perspective, and the Vepacitti Asura represented the wrong aspect. Here, Vepacitti explains how to settle the conflict with weapons and sticks (*sadandāvacara sasatthāvacara*). This is the way of quarrelling (*iti bhandana*), dispute (*iti viggaha*), fight (*iti kalaho*) and Sakka explains its opposite side the way of not quarreling (*iti abhandanaṃ*), not dispute (*iti akalaho*), not fighting (*iti aviggaho*) without weapons and sticks (*adandāvacarā asatthāvacarā*).

The Vepacitti expresses his idea that if there is no one to prevent the fool from involved in many troubles. So, the intelligent person should prevent him by punishment. *Bhiyyo bala pabhijjeyyūṃ - no cassa paṭisedhako. Tasmā bhusena dandena dhiyo balaṃ nisedhayeti*. The reply made by Sakka is so different and represents the Buddhist aspect.

Having known that the enemy is getting angry, one who is patient and performs mindfully is itself a prevention of the foolish. “*Etadeva ahaṃ maññe balassa paṭisedhanaṃ. Paraṃ saṃkūpitaṃ ñatvā yo sato upasammati*”. Several verses are mentioned by the Sakka which are useful in our issue. If someone is so strong so patience with the weak person, and it is said great patience. Because weak person is always patient. Being angry when others are angry is not receiving the benefit, but one who is not angry with the angry man has won the struggle that was unable to win.

Comparing the discussion, the popular and common attitude, also represented Vepacitti and Sakka, is its opposite. It is very easy to follow and practice the bad actions instead of practicing good actions. Buddha said, “*Sukarāṇi asādhūni - attano ahitāṇica-yaṃ ve hitaṇica sādhuṇica-taṃ ve parama dukkharaṃ*”.⁷⁵ Easy to do are things that are hard and not beneficial to oneself, but so difficult, indeed, to do is that which is beneficial and good.

Buddhism has a specific qualification for establishing world peace due to not attempting to spread the doctrine by force in the world. Because of Buddhism, which presented the freedom of thought and free will and emphasized that a human being has the power of thinking and selects the action to be done. Human beings are not indebted to any external power or God, and wrong action or correct actions can do it themselves. So, the thought process can be controlled and modified according to his intention. In this way, the human being can form an impartial and sociable society to achieve world peace. Buddhism sees the world from the perspective of non-substantiality or “*anatta*” and everything in the world is considered free from the craving, pride, and dogmatism. The properties in the world are consumed in the perspective of consummation without attachment and detachment. If the world pays attention to this attitude, the resources in the world are more than enough for the mankind to share equally.

⁷⁵ Narada Thera., *The Dhammapada-Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, 1993, 163.

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VEGETARIANISM FOSTERS INNER PEACE IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract:

This paper explores vegetarianism from a Buddhist perspective, emphasizing its profound connection to inner peace, ethical living, and environmental sustainability. While rooted in religious and philosophical traditions like *Ahimsa* (non-violence), vegetarianism is now gaining global recognition as a path toward better health, compassion for all beings, and ecological responsibility. The paper contrasts the views of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism on vegetarianism, highlighting Mahāyāna's strong advocacy for a meat-free lifestyle as a key element of the Bodhisattva path. It also examines historical influences, such as King Asoka's edicts and Emperor Liang Wu Di's reforms, that institutionalized vegetarianism within Buddhist communities. Modern relevance is illustrated through global events like the Paris 2024 Olympics' emphasis on plant-based diets. Additionally, the study presents vegetarianism as a means to promote mental clarity, emotional balance, and non-harming practices while offering effective solutions to climate change and animal suffering. It concludes that adopting a vegetarian lifestyle is not only beneficial for personal well-being but also essential for creating a peaceful, compassionate, and sustainable society in the modern age.

Keywords: *Vegetarianism, inner peace, modern society, Buddhism, sustainability.*

In Buddhism, vegetarianism is not simply a popular diet in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism but also a journey of practice leading to enlightenment. Vegetarianism shows compassion for all living beings, helps people train their character and purify their body and mind. Adhering to a vegetarian diet requires perseverance and strong will. When overcoming temptations and challenges, people will train their will and courage to practice. As we know, at the Paris 2024 Olympics, to raise environmental and social ambitions, six key commitments were built, the top of which is the policy of providing vegetarian dishes for athletes. Vegetarian food accounts for 60%, of which Concorde is the first venue in Olympic history

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to offer 100% vegetarian options to athletes and spectators, demonstrating that major sporting events can accelerate the transition of food service to vegetarian cuisine.¹ Of course, our research will encounter controversy with non-vegetarian Buddhist practitioners, so the research will provide the basis for how the Buddha encouraged us to be vegetarian.

I. ISSUES RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

1.1. The concept of vegetarianism

The original word vegetarian appeared in 1842. It was popularized after the founding of The Vegetarian Society in 1847 in England by secular followers of Metcalfe.²

Vegetarianism is the practice of abstaining from eating meat, seafood, and the flesh of any other animal, and may also include avoiding by-products of animal slaughter³.

In fact, vegetarianism dates back to the 7th century BC in ancient Indian society, originating from the Ahimsa views of Jainism of the 23rd & 24th Tirthankaras: Parshwanatha and Mahavira, who advocated and practiced the most comprehensive and strict forms of vegetarianism⁴.

In the time of the Buddha, as well as in the *Thervāda* tradition, monks didn't need to be vegetarian, but it was also not encouraged to kill animals for meat. With the *Bodhisattva* ideal in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, vegetarianism became compulsory out of compassion and loving kindness.

1.2. Kinds of vegetarianism

- **Vegetarianism according to Mahāyāna Buddhism:** is not eating all animal products as well as five pungent vegetables: garlic, chive, scallion, leek, and onion⁵

- Ovo-vegetarian: may eat eggs but not dairy products.

- Lacto-vegetarian: may eat dairy products but not eggs.

- Ovo-lacto-vegetarian: may eat some animal or dairy products such as eggs, milk, and honey.

- Vegan: excludes all animal meat and animal products and may also exclude any products tested on animals or use of clothing made from animals (such as leather shoes, leather jackets, fur coats, feathers, etc.)⁶.

¹ <https://olympics.com/en/paris-2024/our-commitments/the-environment/food-vision>

² Richard D Ryder (2000), *Animal revolution: changing attitudes towards specialism*, New York: Berg, p.92

³ "What is a vegetarian?." Vegetarian Society. Archived from the original on March 18, 2018. Retrieved Jan-13, 2025.

⁴ Anand M. Saxena (2013). *The Vegetarian Imperative*. Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 201 – 202.

⁵ 梵網經：盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品卷下-CBETA,T24. Thich Tri Tinh(2008), *Brahma Net Sutra of Bodhisattva Precepts*, Religion Publishing House, p. 27.

⁶ Jennifer Horsman& Jain Flowers (2007), *Please don't eat the animals: All the reasons you*

There are also other views on vegetarianism, such as not eating tubers, roots, or anything that stops the life of plants in Jainism. Some vegetarian religions may allow eating eggs, milk, and meat from animals that do not have red blood, such as shrimp, chicken...

Recently, the school of raw vegetarianism, which means eating fresh vegetables and fruits without cooking, has become popular. With this trend, they believe that this is a very effective treatment method.

II. BUDDHIST VIEW ON VEGETARIANISM

Buddhism aims at loving-kindness and compassion towards all living beings. Therefore, the idea of “Ahimsa” or Non-Violence is applied as a barrier to prevent all unwholesome actions.

2.1. Buddhist concept of non-violence

The word *Ahimsa* or *Ahimsa*⁷ is a word derived from the Sanskrit root word *hiṃs*, which means to attack; *hiṃsā* means to injure or harm, while *a-hiṃsā* means non-harm or non-violence. The idea of non-harm had always played an important role in Indian religions before the time of the Buddha. Non-harming, or *ahimsa* is a central principle in Buddhist ethics. The first precept, “not to kill,” encompasses all other ethical commitments. Buddhism aims not to create more suffering but to end suffering. In other words, to do the least harm. In the deepest sense of *ahimsa*, there is no presence of even the impulse to kill. Such compassionate action is said to arise naturally from the open loving between sentient beings. According to Buddhism, killing not only causes suffering to the person killed but also causes suffering to the family and friends who have lost a loved one. It is also the result of future suffering deeds with bad karma for the killer.

Therefore, practicing “*Ahimsa*” is the path of goodness that brings “good karma” leading sentient beings to a peaceful realm, and conversely, violence in any form will bring “bad karma” that drags sentient beings into the six realms, endlessly in the suffering cycle of birth and death. For Buddhism, the idea of *Ahimsa* is seen as a solution to resolve conflicts, contributing to preventing war and maintaining peace.⁸

The motivation for practicing *Ahimsa* is compassion and understanding of the Law of Cause and Effect, Karma. Therefore, vegetarianism is an effective way to practice this.

2.2. *Theravāda* tradition insights with vegetarianism

In the precepts of the *Theravāda* tradition, there is no prohibition against eating meat or fish, although there is a prohibition against killing. *Theravāda* Buddhism does not pay attention to this issue⁹ depending on circumstances,

need to be a vegetarian, USA: Quill Driver Books, p. 3.

⁷ Phillips, Stephen H.; et al. (collaboration) (2008). Kurtz, Lester (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict* (Second ed.). Elsevier Science. pp. 1347 – 1356, 701 – 849, 1867.

⁸ <https://ijrpr.com/uploads/VSISSEUE9/IJRPR3318.pdf>

monks eat to have enough strength to practice the Dharma. They think that being a vegetarian while the body and spirit is weak is very harmful. The path of spiritual practice is not only non-progressed but also hinders the practice. They believe that vegetarianism did not exist in the early period of Buddhism, and the Buddha himself was not a vegetarian⁹. *Theravāda* Buddhism believes that the Buddha himself did not make a vegetarian diet rule; liberation does not come from eating, but from purifying the three karmas of body, speech, and mind. If one is a vegetarian but the body and speech are not pure, the mind is full of evil, and the precepts are not followed, then it is not called vegetarianism. The Buddha and his disciples ate whatever they begged. They thought that “eating to live to practice the Dharma”, not “eating to enjoy”¹⁰. All Southern Buddhist monks in Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and part of Vietnam continue to maintain this tradition. However, their food must meet three conditions: they do not kill, do not incite others to kill, and do not rejoice in killing. That means they are allowed to eat meat but must follow the Rule of *Tikotiparisuddha*, known as the three pure meats: not seeing, not hearing, not suspecting the animal killed for their food.¹¹ In early Indian Buddhism’s attitudes towards meat eating and non-violence seem to have been somewhat contradictory. The Rule of *Tikotiparisuddha* was a solution to help monks avoid sin, but killing was severely criticized.¹²

Offering or accepting food that is not by The Rule of *Tikotiparisuddha*, the Buddha told *Jivaka* that it is demerit: Whoever kills a living being for the sake of the *Tathagāta* or the sake of a disciple of the *Tathagāta*, he accumulates much demerit due to five causes. When he says, “Go and lead this animal,” that is the first cause. That animal, when being led, because it is being dragged by the neck, feels pain and distress - that is the second cause. When he says, “Go and kill this animal,” that is the third cause. When that animal is killed, it feels pain and distress - that is the fourth cause. When he makes offerings to the *Tathagāta* or a disciple of the *Tathagāta* illegally - that is the fifth cause, he accumulates much demerit¹³.

As in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha taught the *Bhikkhus* that if one kills oneself, encourages others to kill, and rejoices in killing, one will fall into hell. On the contrary, if one abstains from killing oneself, encourages others to abstain from killing, and rejoices in the abstinence from killing, one will be born

⁹ <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/qanda08: Good Question, Good Answer with Ven. S. Dhammika>.

¹⁰ Henepola Gunaratana (2001), *Eight mindful steps to happiness: walking the path of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publication, p. 115.

¹¹ C. S. Singh (1979), “Meat-Eating and the Rule of *Tikotiparisuddha*” A. K. Narain (ed), *Studies in Pāli and Buddhism*, Delhi, pp. 289.

¹² A. K. Singh (2006), *Animal in Early Buddhism*, Easter Book Linkers, p. 86.

¹³ Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi(trans) (1995), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, Wisdom Publications, p. 474.

in heaven.¹⁴ The fundamental purpose of Buddhism in terms of precepts is to refrain from all evil, to do all good, and to keep the mind pure.¹⁵ Enlightenment and liberation do not come from being vegetarian or eating meat but from the purity of body, speech, and mind. All actions that are harmful to the body and mind, family, society, nation, humanity, and all sentient beings are governed by the five basic precepts, of which the precept against killing is the first precept of Buddhism.

In *Vinaya Piṭaka*, after hearing Devadatta's request to promulgate a rule prohibiting the monks from eating fish and meat in any cases¹⁶, the Buddha did not agree and taught that: "Eating fish and meat can be considered pure in three cases: the eater does not see, does not hear, and does not have doubts that the animal was killed specifically for him. So, eating meat and killing living beings to eat meat are two different things. Buddha Shakyamuni himself ate whatever was offered to him. Those who only eat meat will also lack the intention to kill¹⁷.

The above is a summary of the *Theravāda* Buddhist view on the issue of vegetarianism. They have reasons to believe that being vegetarian or not is not important in practicing Buddhism. They believe that attachment or non-attachment in the mind is the key thing; when the mind is too attached to the notions of good and evil or eating vegetarian food, it brings with it insecurity because of the fear of not knowing whether one's actions are wrong or whether one has created bad karma. For example, when sweeping the house, one is afraid of killing ants, or when walking, one is afraid of stepping on insects or harming plants.

2.3. Mahāyāna tradition insights with vegetarianism

Mahāyāna Buddhism monks (especially Chinese) mostly strictly adhere to the mandatory vegetarianism rule and remain in many countries until today.¹⁸ Vegetarianism in Buddhism may have become popular when Buddhism was introduced to China in the 2nd century AD, and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism had not yet been established at that time. Buddhism was faced with a different social context from India, when the daily life of monks did not depend on begging, and the choice of food at that time was a problem. In China, it was impossible for monks to live permanently in monasteries and produce their own food in the social context of that time without violating The Rule of *Tikotiparisuddha*. The important milestone for vegetarianism in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism up to today

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2012), *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya*, Wisdom Publications, p. 374.

¹⁵ Acharya Buddhārakkhita (transl), *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Buddhist Publication Society, Dharmapala, 183.

¹⁶ H. Oldenberg (ed.) (1879), *The Vinaya Piṭaka, (The Book of the Discipline)*, Vols. I and V, London: PTS, p. 335.

¹⁷ Henepola Gunaratana (2001), *Eight Mindful steps to happiness walking the path of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publication, p. 115.

¹⁸ Holmeswelch (1967), *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, p. 112.

was the appearance of *Emperor Liang Wu Di*, a king who deeply believed in Buddhism. Because he wanted to apply the spirit of compassion of Buddhism to the lives of the people, began from all the monks. Therefore, he issued an absolute edict to *stop killing animals in monasteries*. With a clear regulation prohibiting all Buddhist monasteries from using animal meat for sacrifices, and prohibiting all imperial physicians from using the lives of living animals as medicine to treat illnesses, including treating the king. Next, the *Emperor Liang Wu* wrote the “斷酒肉文: *Prohibition of Wine and Meat*”¹⁹, which clearly presented the reasons for cutting off wine and meat, to prevent those who used the excuse of killing animals to make offerings to the gods. In the 斷酒肉文-*Prohibition of Wine and Meat* work, in addition to citing evidence from *Mahāyāna Sūtras* such as the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, *Emperor Liang Wu* also gave many reasonable reasons to convince monks to observe vegetarianism: “If monks do not abstain from fish and meat, they will be similar to other religions; and when they are compared and criticized by other religions, they are unworthy of the Three Jewels. If monks do not abstain from fish and meat, they will have the attitude and behavior of a layperson, they will be far from the teachings of the *Sravakas*, *Pratyekabuddhas*, and *Bodhisattvas* and will be forever far from Buddhahood. If monks do not abstain from fish and meat, they will be the same as demons, suffer the sufferings of hell, and be terrorized by evil causes.”²⁰

In *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, the Buddha explained the harm of eating meat for cultivating: Meat eaters are shunned by the gods, their breath often smells bad, they have restless dreams, they wake up fearful, their vital energy is sucked away by evil demons, they are often frightened, they do not know enough to eat, they develop diseases, they are prone to scabies and boils, they are often eaten away by bacteria, they cannot give rise to a mind of aversion and want to stay away from meat.²¹

In *Śūraṅgama-samādhi-sūtra*, the Buddha said that:²² If a *Bhikkhu* does not wear silk, does not wear sheepskin shoes, does not eat ghee, yogurt... which are body parts of living beings, then this *Bhikkhu* is called truly liberated in the world, when his bad karma is exhausted, he will not be born in the three realms. Because he uses body parts of living beings to eat and wear, he must repay his debt to living beings. Just as a person who eats rice that grows from the ground does not leave the ground. Likewise, you who do not eat or wear body parts of living beings, I say this person is truly liberated.

¹⁹ 《釋門自鏡錄》卷2：「斷酒肉文」(CBETA 2022.Q1), T51, no. 2083, p. 816a23.

²⁰ 《釋門自鏡錄》卷2：「斷酒肉文」(CBETA 2022.Q1, T51, no. 2083, p. 816a23.

²¹ Śikṣānanda, 《大乘入楞伽經》 *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Dasheng Ru Lengjia Jing), Vol. 16, No. 食肉品第八, No. 0672, *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 《大正新脩大藏經》, Takakusu Junjiro, ed., (Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Kankōkai, 1988), p.623, Accessed 2025-01-17, <http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T16n0672>

²² Bhikkhu Thich Duy Luc (1991), *Śūraṅgama Sutra*, Tu An Thien Duong published, pp.162 – 163.

In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the Buddha clearly stated the prohibition of eating meat before entering *Nirvāṇa*: “Hey *Kasyapa*! From today onwards, *Tathagāta* does not allow the disciples of the *Sravakas* to eat meat. If the lay people bring it as an offering, they must consider that meat as the flesh of their own children. *Tathagāta* forbids the disciples from eating all kinds of meat.”²³ Because all sentient beings have Buddha nature, the eternal Buddha that exists within each person, every sentient being has the potential to become a Buddha.²⁴

Buddhists in Mongolia and Tibet also eat meat. However, Mongolia and Tibet are livestock-raising countries (unlike India and China which are agricultural countries). With their harsh climate conditions, it is difficult to grow plants or vegetables, so the main foods are beef and goat meat. In such circumstances, not eating meat is very difficult to do. If one has to beg for food because of means and one can avoid killing oneself or asking others to kill, then Mongolia and Tibet’s meat-eating is acceptable, and does not violate the precept against not killing.

In fact, vegetarianism has existed since the time of King Asoka. It is reflected in the policies engraved on the pillars, which especially emphasize compassion and the inviolability of life, both human and animal. He treated all living beings with compassion without discrimination. He built not only hospitals to care for the sick but also hospitals to care for animals. In a Rock Edict, the following lines are engraved: “Life should not be used to nourish life. Even straw, if there are insects in it, should not be burned.”

Not only did he practice vegetarianism, he also encouraged others to practice vegetarianism like him. In the Edict No. 1 carved in stone (the current edict), he forbade all acts of killing animals for sacrifice to the gods. In another edict, he forbade any act that could cause suffering to animals. All hunting on land, in the air, and under water was absolutely forbidden²⁵.

III. THE BENEFITS OF VEGETARIANISM

3.1. Avoid eating the relative

All Buddhist traditions share the basic view that as long as humans have not attained enlightenment, they will continue to reincarnate and may have many rebirths as animals.

In this vast world of *saṃsāra*, it is difficult to find anyone who has not been a relative of all living beings... and those who have been our mothers are as numerous as all the grass and trees in this world... Likewise, we cannot count the number of people who are our fathers.²⁶ Furthermore, the *Brahmajala*

²³ Bhikkhu Thich Tri Tinh (1990), *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, volume 1, Minh Dang Quang monastery, pp. 137 – 138.

²⁴ Saillie B.King (1991), *Buddha Nature*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 104.

²⁵ Kallidaikurichi Aiyah Nilakanta Sastri, (1988), *Age of the Nandas and Mauryas*, Motilal Banarsidass, pp. 238 – 238.

²⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000), *The connected discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the*

*Sutta*²⁷ says that all men are our fathers, all women are our mothers. In our rebirths they have given us life. All living beings are our parents in the six realms. Killing one's own child to eat is like killing one's own parents, directly killing the source of one's own body. Not only the original *Sūtras* but also the *Mahāyāna* view says that all sentient beings in this world are our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. Therefore, if we eat meat, we may also be eating our relatives from the past. Therefore, the *Bodhisattva* of *Mahāyāna* arouses compassion, sees sentient beings as his own children, and vows to help them escape suffering and attain enlightenment.

3.2. Nurturing the loving kindness

Mahāyāna Buddhism of *Bodhisattva* vows to attain the enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings and he must practice six perfections such as *Dāna*, *Sīla*, *Kṣānti*, *Vīrya*, *Dhyāna* and *Prajñā*. So, *Bodhisattvas* seek ultimate enlightenment not only for themselves but also for all sentient beings. Therefore, a *Bodhisattva* will never eat meat. The *Bodhisattva* precepts help increase loving kindness. Besides the precept of not killing, there is also the precept of not eating meat. This means that those who practice the *Bodhisattva* path must completely prohibit eating meat for monastic life. This precept clearly states that one must not eat the flesh of any living being. Those who eat meat lose their great compassion and cut off their Buddha nature; all living beings should stay away from them. Those who eat meat commit countless sins. Therefore, all Buddhists must not eat the flesh of any living being.²⁸ The loving kindness towards sentient beings must go hand in hand with not eating sentient beings' flesh. This loving kindness is also mentioned first in the *Jivāka sutta*.²⁹

In the *Dhammapada*, it is said:

Everyone is afraid of punishment,

Everyone is afraid of losing life.

Example yourself to judge others,

Do not kill, do not order to kill. (Dhp.129)³⁰

There is no reason to kill animals for human food when there are so many alternatives. Humans can live without eating meat. The Buddha said that for countless reasons, *Bodhisattvas*, who have a compassionate nature, do not eat any kind of meat. Then the Buddha repeated: Eating meat extinguishes the great seed of compassion.³¹

Samyutta Nikāya, Wisdom Publications p. 651.

²⁷ Hsing Yun (2007), *Protecting our environment*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, p. 11.

²⁸ Thich Tri Tinh (2008), *Brahma Net Sutra of Bodhisattva Precepts*, Religion Publishing House, p. 27.

²⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995), *Majjhima Nikāya, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Wisdom, p. 55.

³⁰ Acharya Buddhārakkhita (1990), *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Buddhist Publication Society, p. 15.

³¹ Jennifer Horsman & Jain flowers (2007), please don't eat animals: All the reason you

Those who have seen the eyes of animals in slaughterhouses or animals being caught and transported on trucks to be sold for human consumption will not want to eat meat anymore. We become vegetarians, indirectly helping to reduce the killing of animals as well as the industry of raising and slaughtering animals for human consumption.

3.3. Maintaining health and longevity

We are vegetarians not only out of compassion, but it also helps us to be healthy and live long. Good health comes from keeping precepts, proper nutrition and regular exercise. We are practicing vegetarianism out of compassion for living beings. This right awareness and attitude not only helps us to be mentally healthy but also gradually increases our physical health.³² The way to longevity is to give up killing living beings, put down the stick and knife, be cautious, compassionate and have mercy for the happiness of all living beings.³³

Green vegetables and ripe fruits in a vegetarian diet are a rich source of antioxidants that help strengthen the immune system and protect health. Antioxidants have the effect of preventing and reducing cell damage caused by free radicals. Fiber in a vegetarian diet has the ability to prolong life, not only fruits and vegetables but also the fiber in whole grains has the ability to reduce factors that are harmful to health. In addition, vegetarianism also helps slow down the aging process of the body, contributing to increasing human life expectancy. Studies have shown that vegetarians, especially vegans, have lower blood pressure than those who eat meat. Plant-based foods tend to be lower in fat and cholesterol than animal-based foods. Fruits and vegetables are also high in potassium, which helps to improve blood pressure. A high-fiber diet has been shown to be effective in reducing the risk of overweight and obesity. Therefore, a healthy vegetarian diet rich in green vegetables, fruits and whole grains will provide you with a rich amount of fiber, including both soluble and insoluble fiber, helping us prevent the risk of obesity and protect our overall health. A vegetarian diet rich in healthy foods can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes and its related complications. Of course, vegetarians should prioritize foods with a low glycemic index in their vegetarian diet to maintain stable blood sugar levels, which will improve healthy. Vegetarians have a 32% lower death rate from heart disease than those who eat a normal diet. This benefit comes from the fact that vegetarians tend to consume foods that are good for the heart such as whole grains, beans, fruits, green vegetables, etc. Thereby helping to improve heart health and limit dangerous diseases. The antioxidants found in a plant-based diet also help to reduce oxidative stress, which helps the body fight disease and promotes healthy skin, as plant-based foods are often rich in

need to be a vegetarian: USA: Quill driver books, p. 94.

³² Hsing Yun (2005), *Opening the mind's eyes: clarity and spacious in Buddhist Practice*, New York: Lantern Books, p. 3.

³³ Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995), *Majjhima Nikāya, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Wisdom, p. 135.

important nutrients for the skin, including antioxidants, vitamin C, vitamin E, zinc and selenium. These nutrients help produce collagen, protect the skin from sun damage, fight inflammation and help promote smooth, healthy skin. In addition, Vegetarians have lower levels of neuroticism and their moods tend to be more stable and less volatile than those who eat a conventional diet. A plant-based diet can help you feel lighter in both body and mind, which can help soothe and alleviate symptoms of depression.

When we use food, it will absorb nutrients to regenerate dead cells, while the killed animal will have feelings of fear, anger, despair, and anger. If humans use it more or less, it will also change the human psychology and cause some diseases.^{34,35} This can be clearly seen in places where people eat vegetarian food more, they will be gentler and more peaceful.

Dalai Lama said:³⁶ vegetarianism is one of the most significant moral improvements we can make in our lives from the amount of effort it takes. All we have to do is eat a healthy diet and suddenly we are on the path to a healthier, more ethical and more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Not to satisfy one human being's stomach, many lives are taken. We must promote vegetarianism. This is extremely important.

3.4. Vegetarianism helps solve environmental problems

As we know, France hosted the 2015 UN climate talks with the “*Paris Agreement*” – the most important global climate agreement to date. Therefore, the new move by the *Paris 2024 Olympic Organizing Committee* is unprecedented, helping to raise awareness about climate change. They have made 60% of their menu vegetarian as part of a global strategy to combat climate change.

According to the *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*, livestock production has a significant impact on virtually all aspects of the environment such as air, climate change, land, soil, water and biodiversity.³⁷ **FAO** has shown that livestock production generates 18% more greenhouse gas emissions than all transport. Livestock production is also a source of land and water degradation. The rapid growth in demand for livestock products has led to a large increase in animal populations and the exploitation of natural grasslands or forests for livestock farming. Currently, 70% of the world's arable land is used to produce feed for livestock.³⁸ *World-watch* estimates that livestock farming and the production of by-products actually emit at least 32.6 million tons of carbon dioxide each year, equivalent to 51% global greenhouse gas

³⁴ Thu Trang (1991), *A Miraculous Healing Method*, Technical Publishing House.

³⁵ Thu Trang (1993), *Vegetarian Science*, Cultural Information Publishing House, pp. 27 – 28.

³⁶ Dalai Lama (2001), *Live a better way: Reflection on Truth and happiness*, NY: Viking Compass, p. 68.

³⁷ H Steinfeld (2006), *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, Roma: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, p. 3.

³⁸ op cit., p xxi.

emissions.³⁹ According to the *Greenpeace* study: “Agriculture, what do we want to eat?” was pointed out that to produce a kilogram of meat, a lot of food is needed to feed the animal. The product harvested from one hectare of land can directly feed 30 people, but if this food is used to feed livestock, the amount of meat from the animal raised is only enough to feed 7 people.⁴⁰ In addition, the livestock industry also uses a lot of water and discharges waste that pollutes the environment. *Nohr* (2005) listed livestock products annually emit more than 100 million tons of methane (NH₄), of which 85% is caused by the digestive mechanism of ruminants and 15% is from the landfills of manure, urine and untreated livestock waste products. With this report, methane emissions tend to increase.⁴¹

Environmental issues are also an aspect of Buddhist ethics. It is the Buddhist view of things that are not part of the human world such as forests, animals, ecosystems, nature; and the Buddhist view of sustainable economic development. And there are two principles in Buddhist ethics that are raised here related to this issue: compassion and avoiding harm (*ahimsa*).

It should be noted that the environmental issue is a problem of today, not a problem that was raised during the time of the Buddha, so there are no teachings of the Buddha that directly relate to this issue. Therefore, here we can only consider the implications of the Buddha’s teachings on the natural environment and the attitude of Buddhists towards what is not part of the human world. Respect for life is highly valued in Buddhism. The prohibition of killing and harming animals is one of the basic precepts for all Buddhists. Respect for life is not only due to compassion, belief in reincarnation and karma, but also due to the awareness that all living beings have an equal right to live and that the living environment is for all species on this earth, not just for humans⁴². The Buddhist attitude towards living beings in this way has formed an ethical perspective on non-human species: humans need to give up the view of themselves as living beings that determine all other species; they need to see themselves and other living beings as “neighbors” of each other⁴³.

In short, in this 4.0 era, with the rapid development of science and technology and increased production, we cannot request people to return to primitive times in their daily lives or factories to stop emitting pollutants into the environment, but each of us can indirectly join hands through vegetarianism.

Vegetarianism was originally practiced for religious purposes. In the past, when *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was dominant in Vietnam, people thought that Buddhists must be vegetarian. Nowadays, some in the *Theravāda* tradition

³⁹ Robert Goodland and Jeff Anhang(2009), *Livestock and Climate Change*, Worldwatch, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Greenpeace(2009): *Landwirtschaft, was wollen wir essen?* Hamburg, p. 9.

⁴¹ A sustainable dairy sector, Global, regional, lifecycle facts and figures on greenhouse-gas emissions. Delft, CE. September 2008. Commissioned by European Dairy Association.

⁴² David J. Kalupahana(2008), *Ethics in Early Buddhism*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, pp. 137 – 142.

⁴³ Peter Harvey (2000), *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge, New York, p. 185.

monasteries have also started to be vegetarian or have limited meat consumption. The non-mandatory vegetarianism in some aspects is like an open door for those who want to enter the monastic life but cannot be completely vegetarian. Because of the benefits of vegetarianism, more and more people are becoming vegetarians these days not for religious reasons. Cooking vegetarian food has become easier, and we can easily find vegetarian restaurants everywhere. Out of compassion for all living beings and to build a sustainable world of peace. For people to have perfect living conditions now and to contribute to preserving the environment for now and the future, we call on everyone to be vegetarian. If those who cannot be completely vegetarian can practice the habit starting from a few days a month and then increase it. Of course, vegetarians need to pay attention to a suitable diet to avoid nutritional deficiencies.

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THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH: CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR GLOBAL HARMONY THROUGH RIGHT SPEECH, RIGHT ACTION, AND RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Bhikkhuni Tran Thi Hieu (Nhu Lien)

Abstract:

The paper focuses on right speech, right action, and right livelihood. I. It emphasizes the role of these principles in fostering internal peace and global harmony. It examines the meaning of ethical conduct according to Buddhist teachings, citing various Buddhist scriptures and scholars to highlight the importance of living an ethical and non-harmful life. Finally, the paper discusses the practical application of these principles in modern society and their importance for spiritual development.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EIGHTFOLD PATH IN BUDDHISM

One of the significant messages in Buddhism is the doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path. It gives people who want to end their suffering and become enlightened a way to get there. Its completeness as a path for spiritual growth is shown by the fact that it includes morality, intelligence, and spirituality.

From an ethical perspective, the Eightfold Path distinctly delineates ethical conduct through its three components: right speech, right action, and right livelihood. According to *Vibhaṅgasutta's* Right Speech, it means not lying, saying things that make people angry, or being rude. Instead, individuals should be honest and kind and foster harmony through their words.¹ Not killing, stealing, or sexual misconduct are also examples of bad behavior that should not be tolerated within Buddhist principles. People should live a

¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Vibhaṅgasutta: Analysis," (SN 45.8) *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 1539 - 42.

peaceful, honest, and moral life.² People can capacity modify their behavior and make real change possible by ensuring that their actions and way of life align with these moral principles.

With ideas like “Right Effort,” “Right Mindfulness,” and “Right Concentration,” the Eightfold Path also talks about ways to improve the mind and its afflictions. Paying attention, working hard, and being aware of the present moment are all qualities that these aspects push Buddhist practitioners to develop.

According to researcher Bronkhorst, regularly developing these mental abilities can help people let go of negative feelings, find inner peace, and make room for deeper insights to come up.³ Mind discipline is also covered in the Eightfold Path. Buddhism’s fundamental truths, like the Four Noble Truths and the concept of non-self, can be deeply understood through these. To reach enlightenment, people must develop this knowledge. Only then can they rise above the ignorance and delusions that keep them suffering.⁴ The Eightfold Path encompasses many subjects, including philosophies, mental health, and Buddhist wisdom. The significance of this entire system in transforming individuals and alleviating pain lies in its comprehensiveness. People may apply the Eightfold Path to navigate life’s challenges and progress toward their ultimate objective of liberation. This is achieved by following explicit guidelines and engaging in a systematic practice.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPLORING ETHICAL DIMENSIONS IN BUDDHISM

When studying Buddhism and discussing the significance of ethics for contemporary spiritual development, it is beneficial to keep in mind the moral components of the Eightfold Path. The prohibition against harming others (*ahimsā*) is one of the Four Noble Truths. The idea that people strive to act morally is another. For Buddhists, it is crucial that they consider and act upon these principles. Considering the moral precepts of the Eightfold Path, particularly Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, can be beneficial in this situation.

Good morals, nonviolence, and honesty can be learned through the Eightfold Path. These concepts can benefit individuals, their relationships, and society. The moral aspects were the focus of this study, which is very important given current conversations about ethics and faith.

² Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), “Mahācattārīsakasutta: The Great Forty,” (MN 117) *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 925 - 57.

³ Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhist Teaching in India* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 17 - 19.

⁴ Carol S. Anderson, “Pain and Its Ending: The Four Noble Truths in the Theravāda Buddhist Canon,” in *Buddhist Studies Review* 21 (June 2004): 91-94, doi: 10.1558/bsrv.v21i1.14253.

Buddhist teachings on ethical conduct give individuals and society practical insight and direction for solving complex moral issues. This paper can provide insight into understanding and application of the Eightfold Path, a set of traditional Buddhist moral rules, in modern, cross-cultural settings. It could contribute to the discussion on the adaptability and significance of Buddhist ethics in addressing the demands and concerns of contemporary individuals and societies. This analysis aims to show how important Buddhist lessons on righteous behavior in understanding the interdependency of the self and others.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Eightfold Path is a central tenet of Buddhist teachings, spanning various traditions and schools. Consequently, a rich body of scholarly literature examines the Eightfold Path from diverse perspectives. The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* is regarded as the Buddha's first teaching on the Eightfold Path and holds significant importance in the Pali Canon. Scholars have also delved deeply into the Three Moral Principles of the Eightfold Path: right speech, right action, and right livelihood. In *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion* by T Bhikkhu outlines the elements of the Noble Eightfold Path as right view, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration, emphasizing this as the Middle Way.⁵ In another book titled *The Chinese parallels to the Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, the author V Anālayo compares interpretations and mentions the Eightfold Path, comprising right view, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. In addition, in a book titled *The Nature of the Eight-factored Ariya, Lokuttara Magga in the Suttas* by P Harvey explores how the Eightfold Path is detailed in the sutta, focusing on the ethical, meditative, and wisdom aspects and how they collectively aim to end suffering.

Researchers like Damien Keown⁶ and Saddhatissa⁷ have highlighted the key of these ethical precepts in promoting virtuous behavior and alleviating suffering.

IV. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The ethical aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism emphasize a practical approach to spirituality that profoundly connects with the spiritual and daily life practice focused on the importance of Right Action, Right Speech, and Right Livelihood - key elements of the Noble Eightfold Path. These moral principles were applied to address the social and cultural troubles of war. Emphasizes that ethical principles are not merely abstract concepts but

⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma" (SN 56.11), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 1843 - 47.

⁶ Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

⁷ Hammalawa Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics: The Path to Nirvāna* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 58 - 63.

essential guidelines that direct one's actions, speech, and way of life toward reducing suffering and fostering moral clarity by encouraging people to develop an ethical way of life to enhance their personal and collective spiritual welfare.

4.1. Definition of right speech

The Noble Eightfold Path outlines Right Speech (P. *sammā-vācā*) is a central ethical component of speech and our worldly communication.⁸ This factor emphasizes the cultivation of speech that aligns with the principles of the Dhamma.

Right Speech can be defined in several ways. Firstly, as *Mahācattārisakasutta* noted, it involves speaking truthfully, refraining from falsehood, deception, and any form of speech that can cause division or harm to others.⁹ The practice of Right Speech requires the practitioner to cultivate honesty, even in challenging situations where conveying the truth may be difficult.¹⁰ Secondly, Right Speech encompasses language that is kind, helpful, and conducive to harmony and understanding among individuals and within society.¹¹ This means not using rude, angry, or harsh language that can make things worse. Speech plays a vital role in life, serving as a means of communication, imparting knowledge and experiences, and expressing human thoughts, emotions, and feelings. The impact of speech on the recipient of information is substantial, and the Right Speech is a crucial component in this regard.

Right Speech entails the use of speech that is appropriate, meaningful, and beneficial, steering clear of idle chatter, gossip, or discourse that serves no constructive purpose. Consequently, Right Speech is not merely speaking truthful words or maintaining noble silence.

Reflecting on the early Buddhist texts, in the *Paṭhamakathāvatthusutta* the Buddha taught ten topics that following the Right Speech:

There are mendicants, these ten topics of discussion. What ten? Talk about fewness of wishes, contentment, seclusion, aloofness, arousing energy, ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and the knowledge and vision of freedom. These are the ten topics of discussion.

Mendicants, if you bring up these topics of conversation again and again, then your glory could surpass even the sun and moon, which are so mighty and powerful, let alone the wanderers of other religions.¹²

⁸ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Saccavibhaṅgasutta: The Analysis of the Truths," (MN 141) *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Kandy: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 1109 - 18.

⁹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Mahācattārisakasutta," 925 - 57.

¹⁰ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 83 - 84.

¹¹ Maurice Walshe (trans.), "Sāmaññaphalasutta: The Fruits of the Ascetic Life," (DN 2) *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 91 - 109.

¹² Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Paṭhamakathāvatthusutta: Topics of Discussion," (AN 10.69)

Further, it develops the aspect of salvation, using speech for salvation, which further develops based on the Bodhicitta or the mind of a Bodhisattva. In other words, it is the spirit of non-violence in parallel with the spirit of relieving suffering and bestowing the joy of a Bodhisattva. The significance of refraining from using language that may lead to conflict, such as divisive, defamatory, or destructive words, and instead cultivating communication that fosters harmony and comprehension by spoken word.

4.2. The significance of right speech

Speech exerts an immensely significant influence, affecting the happiness of each individual's life and potentially impacting the functioning of society. If approached with mindfulness and proper guidance, speech through daily discourse and interactions can yield numerous benefits for spiritual cultivation. Right Speech can be metaphorically likened to an invisible yet harmful weapon containing a toxin capable of destroying the harmony and happiness between individuals, communities, and society. Simultaneously, it is also a root cause of conflict, war, violence, and disunity. On the other hand, it is a method to ensure that words spoken are virtuous, bringing happiness and peace to all.

Right Speech is essential as it guides individuals in conducting themselves ethically, nurturing harmonious relationships, and fostering harmony within communities. By aligning their speech with the principles of the Dhamma, individuals practicing it can cultivate virtues such as honesty, compassion, and mindfulness.¹³ Through the practice of Right Speech, individuals uphold the values of Buddhism and contribute positively to their communities, promoting understanding, empathy, and mutual respect among all beings.

These principles subsequently influence their interactions with others and their engagement in the community. Practitioners of Right Speech are more inclined to alleviate tense situations by engaging in considerate and compassionate communication, rather than exacerbating matters with harsh or divisive language. In essence, this can facilitate individuals in comprehending and appreciating one another to a greater extent, both inside their own factions and in the broader society. Advocates of Freedom of Speech foster trust and enhance interpersonal relationships by abstaining from lies or trickery.

Furthermore, the practitioner of Right Speech actively uses their words to uplift others, encourage positive actions, and share the transformative teachings of the Buddha.¹⁴ Speaking with intention and adhering to the principles of the Dhamma facilitates the spiritual development of others in proximity.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 1424.

¹³ Jonardon Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 47 - 48.

¹⁴ Robert E. Buswell and Robert M. Gimello, "Paths to Liberation: The Marga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought," in *Studies in East Asian Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 313 - 14.

The significance of refraining from engaging in speech that can create conflict, such as insults, falsehoods, or offensive language, and instead prioritize communication that fosters harmony and comprehension. The practitioner can facilitate conflict resolution and promote harmony and prosperity within the community by refraining from using divisive language and fostering mutual understanding among individuals. The Noble Eightfold Path prescribes that practicing the Right Speech is crucial for moral development and spiritual growth. Ensuring that one's speech aligns with the principles of Dhamma is a means by which individuals can contribute to the cessation of suffering, fortify interpersonal connections, and enhance society's overall well-being.

4.3. The contrast between right speech and wrong speech

Practitioners of Right Speech are expected to educate and lead others by imparting profound Buddhist teachings. It is crucial to impart the teachings of the Dhamma and provide guidance to others through speech. This reflects the primary objective of Right Speech in the *Vācāsutta's*¹⁵ Eightfold Path, which aims to cultivate truthful, beneficial, and harmonious speech actions.

Disseminating the teachings of the Buddha and providing guidance to others through verbal communication aligns with the primary objective of Right Speech in the Eightfold Path, as seen in the *Cundasutta*.¹⁶

Traditional Buddhist understanding of unwholesome verbal actions, as seen in the *Mahācattārīsakasutta*,¹⁷ where the Buddha says that lying, spreading false stories that cause arguments, being rude, and idle talk are all examples of unacceptable speech.

4.4. The Relationship between right speech and the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path

The concept of Right Speech in the Noble Eightfold Path is an integral part of the entire path, creating a comprehensive and integrated method for ending suffering and achieving enlightenment. Right Speech goes beyond merely avoiding certain types of Speech. Instead, it plays a more significant role by serving a communicative function, conveying profound philosophical content.

Right speech and Right Action are tightly interconnected, as moral discourse forms the basis for moral behavior. One can observe this by including right speech as one of the five precepts, which serve as the essential moral principles for Buddhist practitioners. Refraining from false, divisive, abusive, and idle chatter lays the groundwork for engaged actions rooted in nonviolence, honesty, and respect for others. By abstaining from deceitful

¹⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Vācāsutta: Well-Spoken Words," (AN 5.198) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 777 - 78.

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Cundasutta: With Cunda," (AN 10.176) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 1637 - 39.

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Mahācattārīsakasutta," 925 - 57.

speech and defamation, individuals can prevent the negative consequences of disseminating incorrect information or tarnishing someone's reputation. This way, they follow the ideals of non-harm and honesty. Moreover, the Right Speech is closely connected to the Right Livelihood.

When one's livelihood avoids harming others or engaging in unethical conduct, upholding honest and beneficial communication becomes easier. Conversely, practicing the right speech reinforces the commitment to virtuous and ethical living, as one's words and actions align with the principles of nonviolence and compassion. Practicing this element while developing virtue, mental discipline, and wisdom is a potent means for personal and spiritual growth, culminating in enlightenment and the cessation of suffering. Individuals can progress toward a liberated state of being by integrating the right speech with the other path factors.

In conclusion, Right Speech plays a crucial role in the Noble Eightfold Path. Beyond merely avoiding wrong speech, Right Speech is an active means to propagate the Dharma, embodying the compassionate spirit of alleviating suffering and bestowing joy.

V. RIGHT ACTION IN THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

5.1. Definition of right action

Right action (P. *Sammā-kammanta*), is a fundamental principle of the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddhist way to enlightenment. It encompasses ethical conduct and wholesome actions that are central to attaining liberation. This principle is practiced in everyday life by abstaining from causing harm to oneself or others. This involves refraining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. The focus is on ethical conduct that avoids causing harm to sentient beings.¹⁸

This directly aligns with the traditional Buddhist understanding of Right Action as outlined in the *Vibhaṅgasutta*, where the Buddha states: "And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from unchastity. This is called right action."¹⁹

Right Action and the early Buddhist texts found in the *Vibhaṅgasutta*, seeing how the ethical framework was firmly grounded in the core precepts of the Buddhist path. Emphasis on abstaining from the three unwholesome bodily actions is the foundation for cultivating virtuous conduct and aligning one's life with the Dhamma. However, Right Action is not merely the absence of negative actions but also the active cultivation of virtues that promote the well-being of oneself and others.

5.2. Significance of right action

The importance of Right Action lies in its ability to establish a foundation for a harmonious and fulfilling life. One can alleviate their karmic consequences

¹⁸ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Saccavibhaṅgasutta," 1100.

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Vibhaṅgasutta," 1539 - 42.

and foster opportunities for personal and spiritual development by refraining from harmful activities and engaging in positive actions.

Free from greed, attachment, and exploitation, this way of life is a deep example of the Noble Eightfold Path's moral principles. Asking for food instead of pursuing wealth, for instance, facilitates the cultivation of non-attachment, humility, and a reliance on the benevolence of others, all of which are significant attributes on the Buddhist path. Similarly, the ascetic's minimalist lifestyle exemplifies the wisdom of renouncing material possessions and the illusion of a lasting identity.

This transformation may impact the practitioner's internal state and their interactions with the external world. Moreover, the text underlines that Right Action extends beyond the realm of the physical and encompasses the field of the mind as well. Various negative mental states can contribute to undesirable behaviors, and abandoning these moods is a crucial aspect of addressing them.

According to the Dhamma, individuals can synchronize their actions with its principles by cultivating virtuous mental states such as compassion, generosity, and wisdom. Ethical behavior is very important in Buddhist teachings and gives people useful advice on how to clean up their actions and build a good, peaceful, and spiritually advanced life.

5.3. The contrast between right action and wrong action

What Right Action is all about is not doing bad things like murder, theft, and sexual transgression. Respecting life, not being violent, and always doing the right thing are some of the most important Buddhist ideals that this principle stresses.²⁰

In stark contrast, Wrong Action is described as engaging in unwholesome activities that cause harm to oneself and others. Wrong Action is the path of using greed, hatred, and delusion as wealth, giving rise to all kinds of deceitful means of livelihood. All of these bad mental states include greed, hate, delusion, acts of violence, theft, and sexual impropriety.

Making this clear distinction between Right Action and Wrong Action, stresses the moral basis of the Buddhist road. It emphasizes that inner and outer cleansing are necessary for real spiritual change. For easing suffering and reaching enlightenment, it is thought that practicing Right Action in line with the other aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path is important.

5.4. The relationship between right action and the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path

When one's means of sustenance align with the principles of non-harm and non-exploitation, it becomes easier to maintain ethical conduct in daily life. Conversely, emphasize seeking alms and living a simple, unattached lifestyle as a manifestation of Right Action, which in turn fosters a right and virtuous way of living.

²⁰ Christopher Gowans, *Philosophy of the Buddha: An Introduction* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 177 - 78.

The development of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration – the factors related to mental discipline – also contribute to and are enhanced by the cultivation of Right Action. Maintaining mindful awareness of one's physical actions, exerting effort to overcome negative tendencies like greed and hatred, and cultivating concentration to avoid heedless behavior all work together to refine one's ethical conduct.

Furthermore, Right Action is deeply intertwined with the wisdom factors of the Noble Eightfold Path – Right View and Right Intention. Living in harmony with nature and simplicity reflects a clear understanding of the nature of suffering and its causes, as well as the intention to renounce greed, hatred, and delusion, which informs one's ethical conduct.

People can understand how holistic and life-changing this Buddhist teaching is by seeing how deeply Right Action is linked to the other parts of the Noble Eightfold Path. To reach enlightenment and end suffering, the practice of Right Action must be combined with the cultivation of moral speech, the right way to make a living, mental discipline, and wisdom.

By living a monk life of simplicity, seeking alms, and renouncing material possessions, one can embody the principles of Right Action and transform moral behaviour into a tangible manifestation of the Buddha's teachings.

VI. DEFINITION OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Right Livelihood (Pali. *Sammā-ājīva*), is a crucial component of the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddha's instructions on the Right Livelihood, as found in the *Vibhaṅgasutta*.²¹ In this discourse, the Buddha defines Right Livelihood as the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps life going with the right livelihood, emphasizes the fundamental Buddhist principle of non-harm (*ahimsā*) and non-exploitation in one's means of livelihood.

This is consistent with the teachings of the Buddha, which emphasize the significance of refraining from dishonest or unethical ways of making a living and instead supporting oneself by righteous and non-harmful means. Instead, individuals should embrace a lifestyle characterized by simplicity, detachment, and dependence on the community's generosity to fulfill their basic needs.

An ideal Right Livelihood practitioner relies on charitable donations and exclusively wears an essential pair of robes made from used clothes. Living by relying on others for food and mutually helping each other while rejecting the concepts of self, possessions, greed, and wrongdoing is the way to live. The absence of worldly belongings and the absence of attachment to luxuries are regarded as manifestations of the moral principles of the Noble Eightfold Path.

6.1. Significance of right livelihood

The significance of Right Livelihood lies in its ability to create the necessary conditions for cultivating virtue, mental discipline, and wisdom. By

²¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Vibhaṅgasutta," 1539 - 42.

refraining from detrimental vocations and adopting a lifestyle characterized by minimalism and disengagement, individuals can cleanse their karmic impact and lay the foundation for spiritual growth.²²

Furthermore, the practice of Right Livelihood is not merely a matter of physical actions but also encompasses the cultivation of wholesome mental states development of qualities such as compassion, contentment, and non-attachment, which then inform and guide one's means of sustaining one's life, Right Livelihood means living with a pure and equanimous mind, being unattached to the existence or non-existence of the body, considering A pure death is preferable to an impure living.

By aligning one's way of living with the principles of the Dhamma, an individual can establish the conditions for a more harmonious and purposeful life, ultimately resulting in the end of suffering and the achievement of enlightenment.

6.2. The contrast between right livelihood and wrong livelihood

The idea of a Right Livelihood is avoiding jobs that cause violence, exploitation, or deceit the Right Livelihood prohibits the trading of weapons or poisons, the purchasing or selling of animals, the trafficking of persons, and the profit-driven sale of narcotics. A key Buddhist concept is *ahimsā*, which means non-violence or do not harm and refrain from engaging in professions that may cause harm to others.

The Right Livelihood is exemplified by a life of simplicity, detachment, and reliance on the community's generosity.²³ In contrast, Wrong Livelihood is associated with pursuing wealth, status, and sensual pleasures through unethical means.²⁴ One lives by begging for food from others, and others learn from us to live by mutually supporting each other, abandoning the notion of self and possessions, greed and wrongdoing, and means of livelihood driven by greed, hatred, and delusion. The significance of developing spiritual qualities such as renunciation, charity, and non-attachment in how one obtains their means of nourishment.²⁵ Right Livelihood involves transcending the egoistic pursuit of material gain and instead embracing a life of simplicity, mutual aid, and ethical integrity.

It is important to note that the distinction between Right Livelihood and non-right Livelihood extends beyond actions and also includes thoughts and emotions. Right Livelihood refers to cultivating mental clarity, peace, and non-attachment. Conversely, an unethical means of earning a livelihood is

²² Martine Batchelor, *The Spirit of the Buddha* (Cumberland: Yale University Press, 2014), 59.

²³ Tilmann Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 12.

²⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Vaṇijjāsutta: Trades," (AN 5.177) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 759 - 60.

²⁵ Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 83.

characterized by avarice, attachment, and illusion, manifesting as an unethical pursuit of sensuous pleasures and material luxuries. This mode of thought, rooted in desire and attachment, fundamentally contradicts the spiritual dimension of a righteous means of earning a living.

One's way of life with the moral precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path presents this striking contrast. It is more than just behavior on the outside; it reflects one's moral character, mental clarity, and dedication to achieving enlightenment and ending suffering.²⁶

6.3. The Relationship between right livelihood and the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path

The concept of Right Livelihood is intricately linked to the remaining seven components of the Noble Eightfold Path. Collectively, they constitute a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach to alleviating suffering and attain enlightenment. It is also observed that the ethical principles that govern individuals' means of earning a livelihood are inherently manifested in their behavior.

Right Action and Right Livelihood are inherently interconnected. Individuals cultivate virtues such as nonviolence, honesty, and compassion by refraining from engaging in occupations that harm, exploit others, or involve deception. Regarding the Right Livelihood, the text emphasizes the significance of seeking alms and leading a modest, unattached lifestyle. The concept of rejecting wealth and material possessions aligns with the ideals of Right Action, which advocates against theft, greed, and other morally reprehensible actions.

The concepts of Right Livelihood and Right Speech are intricately intertwined. The text emphasizes the significance of cultivating a virtuous and principled lifestyle by advocating for the regular practice of truthful, kind, and meaningful speech. People are more inclined to engage in ethical business practices when they can synchronize their communication with the principles of Dhamma. Moreover, engaging in Right Livelihood not only aids but also enhances the development of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration, all of which pertain to the cultivation of mental discipline. Practicing mindfulness, cultivating detachment from desires, and developing focused attention are all effective strategies for aligning one's life with the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Right Livelihood can be attained by cultivating the wisdom aspects of the path, namely Right View and Right Intention. An individual's choice of occupation and the employment opportunities that align with the principles of the Dhamma are influenced by their understanding of suffering and its causes and their inclination to relinquish greed, hatred, and delusion. The practitioners need to comprehend the dynamics of change and the interconnectedness of all phenomena. Based on this understanding, individuals make informed decisions regarding their livelihoods, ensuring that their actions do not cause harm to others and instead opting for

²⁶ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 2007), 53.

occupations that contribute to society's overall well-being.

To fully comprehend the potential impact of this Buddhist doctrine on an individual's life, it is crucial to grasp the deep interdependence between the concept of Right Livelihood and the other aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path. Engaging in the appropriate Livelihood, alongside the development of morality, right speech, mental training, and wisdom, offers a powerful method to improve oneself and achieve enlightenment, ultimately ending suffering.

Conclusion, the contrast drawn between Right Livelihood and Wrong Livelihood elucidates the ethical and moral distinctions shaping one's livelihood, emphasizing the cultivation of virtues such as simplicity, detachment, and ethical integrity. This distinction extends beyond mere actions to encompass thoughts and emotions, highlighting the interconnectedness between moral character and mental clarity. Moreover, Right Livelihood is intricately linked to the other components of the Noble Eightfold Path, collectively forming a comprehensive approach to alleviate suffering and attain enlightenment. Through the cultivation of morality, mental discipline, and wisdom, individuals can establish the conditions for a more harmonious and purposeful life, ultimately contributing to the end of suffering. In essence, the practice of the Right Livelihood serves as a transformative path toward personal development and spiritual enlightenment, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct, mental clarity, and dedication to the principles of the Dhamma.

In conclusion, the contrast drawn between Right Livelihood and non-right Livelihood elucidates the ethical and moral distinctions shaping one's livelihood, emphasizing the cultivation of virtues such as simplicity, detachment, and ethical integrity. This distinction extends beyond mere actions to encompass thoughts and emotions, highlighting the interconnectedness between moral character and mental clarity. Moreover, Right Livelihood is intricately linked to the other components of the Noble Eightfold Path, collectively forming a comprehensive approach to alleviate suffering and attain enlightenment. Through the cultivation of morality, mental discipline, and wisdom, individuals can establish the conditions for a more harmonious and purposeful life, ultimately contributing to the end of suffering. In essence, the practice of the Right Livelihood serves as a transformative path toward personal development and spiritual enlightenment, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct, mental clarity, and dedication to the principles of the Dhamma.

VII. THE ROLE OF RIGHT SPEECH, RIGHT ACTION, AND RIGHT LIVELIHOOD IN THE PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST ETHICS

The principles of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood are central to the ethical framework of Buddhist teachings. These three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path play a crucial role in cultivating moral discipline, guiding the practitioner towards the cessation of suffering, and attaining enlightenment.²⁷ It emphasizes that the practice of moral discipline, or *sīla*, is

²⁷ Barbara E. Reed, "Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (New

the foundation upon which the entire spiritual path is built.²⁸ By cultivating ethical conduct through the diligent observance of precepts, the individual lays the groundwork for developing deeper meditative practices and realizing wisdom.²⁹

Right Speech, emphasizing truthful, kind, and purposeful communication, starts this ethical cultivation.³⁰ By refraining from false, divisive, harsh, and idle chatter, the practitioner begins to purify their karmic influence and create the conditions for more wholesome actions. Right Speech then naturally leads to the manifestation of Right Action, where the individual abstains from harmful deeds such as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. By engaging in occupations free from exploitation, deception, and harm, the practitioner aligns their means of sustenance with the principles of the Dhamma, further reinforcing their ethical conduct.

The interplay between these three moral factors creates a synergistic effect, where each element supports and strengthens the others.

The teaching of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood principles are fundamental to moral discipline, leading the practitioner towards achieving the end of suffering and fulfilling the spiritual path.³¹

VIII. THE INFLUENCE OF THESE FACTORS ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

People who practice begin to eliminate the evils of greed, hatred, and delusion that cause suffering by giving up harmful speech, actions, and ways of making a living. For example, Right Speech, emphasizing truthfulness, compassion, and mindfulness, helps individuals develop self-discipline, emotional intelligence, and the ability to navigate social relationships with care and wisdom. This, in turn, enhances their overall well-being and creates the foundation for deeper meditative practices and the realization of enlightenment.

Similarly, the observance of Right Action, such as abstaining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, not only purifies the individual's physical conduct but also cultivates virtues like non-violence, honesty, and ethical awareness.³² This ethical grounding manifests in the practitioner's interactions

York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 261.

²⁸ Daniel A. Getz, "Precepts," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 673.

²⁹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Cūḷavedallasutta: The Shorter Classification," (MN 44) *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 382 - 389.

³⁰ Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul*, 47 - 48.

³¹ Martin Seeger, "Theravāda Buddhism and Human Rights: Perspectives from Thai Buddhism," in *Buddhist Approaches to Human Rights: Dissonances and Resonances*, ed. Carmen Meinert and Hans-Bernd Zöllner (Bielefeld Germany: Transcript, 2010), 63 - 92.

³² Gowans, *Philosophy of the Buddha*, 177-78.

with others and engagement with the world.³³

By embracing a lifestyle of simplicity, detachment, and reliance on the generosity of the community, the practitioner cultivates qualities like contentment, humility, and compassion, which can serve as powerful examples for others.³⁴

At the societal level, the widespread adoption of these ethical principles can profoundly impact the well-being and harmony of the community, as seen in the laypeople's Vinaya, which is the *Sīgalovāda Sutta*.³⁵ When individuals in a society adhere to the principles of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, it becomes simpler for them to have faith, collaborate, and comprehend one another. Reducing the probability of individuals engaging in conflicts or exploiting others.³⁶ Fostering these traits can help lower crime, theft, and sexual misbehavior while encouraging honest and moral business practices.³⁷ Consequently, this can facilitate the group's stability, prosperity, and spiritual growth, and these ethical values influence individuals outside the immediate society. Their capacity for transformation can propagate, igniting inspiration in others and enhancing the overall well-being of humanity.³⁸

IX. THE ROLE OF RIGHT SPEECH IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Individuals can disseminate their acquired knowledge through active listening, critical thinking, practical application, and verbal communication. To cultivate mindfulness, it is essential to pause and contemplate before articulating one's thoughts.³⁹ The importance of not only refraining from harmful speech but also actively cultivating a deep understanding and use of considerate communication. Developing this practice enables individuals to enhance their self-control and refrain from engaging in detrimental forms of communication, which are referred to as the path of wrong speech, such as lies, gossip, impolite words, or aimless conversation. Right Speech instructs individuals on communicating truthfully, compassionately, and considerately, adhering to the guidelines established by him and the ancient Buddhist scriptures. They strive to be truthful and refrain from distorting or altering the facts, emphasizing the significance of telling the truth. In addition, they speak with kindness and refrain

³³ Keown, *Buddhism*, 5.

³⁴ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 239.

³⁵ Maurice Walshe, "Sīgālasutta: To Sīgāla Advice to Lay People," (DN 31) *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 461 - 69.

³⁶ Prayudh Payutto, *Buddhist Economics: A Middle Way for the Market Place* (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1994).

³⁷ Russell F. Sizemore and Donald K. Swearer, "Introduction," in *Ethics, Wealth and Salvation: A Study in Buddhist Social Ethics* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 2.

³⁸ Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 198.

³⁹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), "Mahācattārisakasutta," 925 - 57.

from using impolite or offensive language that could potentially harm others. Communicating with intention and significance, refraining from engaging in trivial conversation or spreading stories that may result in negativity or discord, instead focusing on expressing the speakings of the Dhamma.

A crucial aspect of Right Speech entails practicing active and attentive listening. This alters how those individuals communicate. This approach facilitates interpersonal harmony, enhances communication efficacy, and fosters more tranquil exchanges.

Developing the Right Speech encompasses more than mere interpersonal communication; it also includes writing and speaking using technology. On social media, individuals may send messages and utilize various digital technologies that have a significant impact on a large number of people. By adhering to the Right Speech, individuals alter their communication with others and contribute to cultivating a kinder and harmonious community. They provide motivation, assistance, and guidance to others, enhancing the quality of ethics of people living in their region. On its fundamental level, Right Speech serves as a potent instrument for spiritual development, ethical conduct, and the cultivation of empathy and comprehension. In order to continue engaging in this activity, one must possess a conscious understanding, exert effort, and possess a profound sense of accountability for the impact of their words on the world.

Right Speech instructs individuals on communicating with others in a sincere, benevolent, and contemplative manner, adhering to the guidelines of the ancient Buddhist scriptures. For guidance on expressing benevolent language, one needs to speak kindly and refrain from using offensive or harmful words that may cause harm to others. For instance, refrain from engaging in idle conversations or disseminating rumors that could potentially create problems by discussing the teachings of Buddha.

X. THE ROLE OF RIGHT SPEECH IN ETHICS

Right Speech is the catalyst and embodiment of ethical principles, influencing intentions, behaviors, and relationships via honest, compassionate, and intentional speech. It is considered a requirement for leading a moral life by Buddhist teachings.

In addition, Right Speech entails fostering reverence for others by refraining from engaging in gossip, defamation, or speech that may harm one's reputation or incite conflict. By refraining from such harmful speech, individuals create an environment of trust and goodwill that fosters community understanding and cooperation. The practice of Right Speech also encourages individuals to engage in uplifting and constructive communication. Speaking kind words, speaking the Dhamma, advising, admonishing, and praising. By offering words of encouragement, guidance, and appreciation, individuals can inspire and uplift those around them, contributing to their personal growth and well-being.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ David J. Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2006), 105.

As the Buddha taught in the *Dhammapada*, “Just as a gorgeous blossom brilliant and sweet-scented, so fruitful the well-spoken words of one who acts as well.”⁴¹ By using these words, individuals can inspire others to embrace the path of right speech and ethical living. Right Speech is a powerful tool for cultivating mindfulness, self-discipline, and ethical behavior, making it an essential aspect of spiritual practice and the pursuit of enlightenment in Buddhism. It requires ongoing effort, mindfulness, and a deep sense of responsibility for the impact of one’s words on oneself, others, and the world at large. Through consistent practice, individuals can transform their communication patterns, cultivate positive qualities, and contribute to creating a more compassionate and harmonious society.

XI. PRACTICING RIGHT ACTION

One of the key practices is the act of seeking sustenance through virtuous means, such as begging for food. Individuals who follow Right Action should refrain from doing any job that attacks, deceives, or inflicts harm to others. The practitioner lives a simple, detached life and relies on the kindness of others to meet their basic needs. Live by begging for food from others, and others learn from us to live by mutually supporting each other, abandoning the notion of ‘self’ and ‘possessions,’ greed, and wrongdoing. This way of life, devoid of personal possessions and attachment to material comforts, manifests the ethical principles of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Achieving mental clarity and cultivating positive mental states are significant. Right Action is the absence of greed, anger, and delusion before, during, and after any action. In summary, ethical conduct extends beyond simply refraining from harmful activities and encompasses a more profound transformation of one’s inner state. The practitioner must cultivate virtues such as kindness, charity, and knowledge. Weddle said that mental purification is an important part of Right Action, this way of life, where people don’t care about financial things or taking advantage of other people, includes this way of living.⁴² The practitioner starts to reflect the non-dual awareness at the heart of the Dhamma by choosing to live a simple, humble, and respectful life for nature.⁴³

Instead of selfishly pursuing money-making possibilities, begging for food is a tangible illustration of relinquishing ego-driven desires and embracing interdependence with all sentient beings. Apply the principles of Right Action to daily life through the use of practical, real-world illustrations. It presents an image of ethical conduct that surpasses mere modifications in behavior and

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Sujato (trans.), “Pupphavagga: Flowers,” *Khuddaka Nikāya*, accessed April 5, 2024, <https://suttacentral.net/dhp44-59/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=sidebyside&reference=none-es=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin>.

⁴² David L. Weddle, *Miracles: Wonder and Meaning in World Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 118.

⁴³ Steven M. Emmanuel, “The Coherence of Buddhist Ritualism,” in *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015), 440.

demands a profound transformation in how individuals perceive themselves, interact with others, and connect with the natural world.

The role of mental purity in realizing moral excellence must be rooted in actualizing the highest human virtues and spiritual attainments, guiding the practitioner toward the ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering.

XII. PRACTICING RIGHT LIVELIHOOD IN MODERN SOCIETY

Applying the principles of Right Livelihood to contemporary culture poses challenges and is replete with temptations that might divert individuals from the righteous path. Despite the prevailing materialistic and consumeristic nature of modern society. The practitioner is advised to seek sustenance by begging rather than engaging in occupations that enable the exploitation, deception, or harm of others. The Noble Eightfold Path instructs individuals to cultivate humility, contentment, and dependence on the benevolence of others.

This practice ensures that our manner of life aligns with these moral standards. Right Livelihood primarily targets monastic practitioners who dedicate their lives solely to pursuing awakening and developing the Dhamma. In order to prevent oneself from being overcome by cravings, attachments, and false views of necessities, refrain from amassing excessive money and belongings. Practitioners are advised to lead a modest lifestyle, possessing only the necessities for sustenance and spiritual development.

The practitioner is satisfied with living in a simple and basic hut or under a tree, depending on donations for daily sustenance. Their robes are made from repurposed clothing. Developing contentment, detachment, and tranquility are mental attributes crucial for attaining enlightenment in the Dhamma. This lifestyle, which lacks the materialistic aspects of contemporary consumerism, is seen as a method to cultivate these qualities. The religious leader also advises against engaging in professions that involve the manufacturing, trade, or dissemination of detrimental substances such as firearms, narcotics, and toxins.

These occupations are seen as contradictory to the Noble Eightfold Path and hinder the attainment of enlightenment. These tangible instances and principles derived from the teachings demonstrate how a practitioner might maintain the moral principles of the Dhamma in the intricate contemporary world. People are faced with the task of surpassing the materialistic inclinations of contemporary society and embracing a lifestyle that is in harmony with the ideals of ethical concepts.

CONCLUSION

Moral virtues, as expounded through insightful words and vivid illustrations, are indispensable for spiritual development. These qualities foster purity in speech and behavior, ensuring that one's means of livelihood aligns with the precepts of the Dhamma. By contrasting these positive qualities with their antithetical counterparts, the study reveals how embracing Buddhist philosophy can initiate profound and impactful transformation. Moreover, it elucidates the interdependence of these three components and their collaborative function in aiding the practitioner's path toward liberation.

Practicing the Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood in promoting social ideals, enhancing interpersonal relationships, and cultivating a positive communal environment is important.

The Noble Eightfold Path - that foundational framework underpinning all Buddhist spiritual paths - rests on integrating these crucial ethical elements. By illuminating how the purification of one's speech, actions, and means of making a living can catalyze truly transformative inner change.

Ethical injunctions around Right Action, like refraining from harming living beings and embracing a simple, peaceful way of life, reflect the Buddhist belief that moral conduct is the bedrock for genuine spiritual growth. Its contrasting of the Right Livelihood with society's materialistic obsessions reinforces the Buddhist view: aligning our livelihood with Dhamma's principles is essential for achieving authentic freedom and ending suffering.

This holistic ethical approach, spanning all arenas of human existence, epitomizes the profound depth and breadth of the Buddhist moral framework.

In a world increasingly mired in moral relativism and self-interest, highlighting ethics' paramount importance so vividly serves as a poignant wake-up call. Underscoring ethics allows this inquiry to venture into an enriched exploration of the Buddhist tradition itself - elucidating how aligning our speech, actions, and livelihood with the Dhamma's tenets can be the catalyst for radical transformation.

Understanding unlocks the potential to metamorphose individual lives and whole communities by fostering moral conduct, thereby reducing suffering while cultivating a world imbued with greater spiritual connectedness and inner peace. In essence, the ethical dimensions illuminated in this masterwork offer a compass for navigating our modern landscape to rediscover the wisdom and liberty innate to the Dhamma's profound insights.

Contemporary concerns - from environmental stewardship to ensuring equitable treatment for all to the ethical quandaries posed by emerging technologies - may find greater clarity and guidance. Regarding the Right Livelihood and pursuing a simple, non-attached life could shed valuable light on sustainable development models for nations and cultivating contentment amidst material possessions. Furthermore, the principles of Right Speech and Right Action have profound relevance for constructive communication approaches, conflict resolution, and fostering harmonious community dynamics.

Applying these moral precepts across the varied arenas of life stands to yield manifold benefits. Incorporating the teachings on Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood into educational curricula, professional realms, and personal spiritual practices could enrich moral understanding, moral reasoning abilities, and the embodied realization of the Dhamma. Practitioners and the broader community alike can engage in this noble endeavor - exploring how Buddhist ethics can transform individual lives while unearthing novel ways to bring these timeless insights to bear on the most pressing modern challenges.

By sustaining this inquiry and implementing the wisdom, it becomes possible to cultivate a more compassionate, equitable, and spiritually harmonized world grounded in the ethical foundations of the Buddhist faith.

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NURTURING INNER PEACE - THE NECESSITY OF APPLYING BUDDHIST PRACTICES IN MODERN SOCIETY

Nguyen Van Tien*

Abstract:

The article analyzes the role of Buddhist practices in nurturing inner peace and evaluates their applicability in the modern context. Meditation helps stabilize the mind, eliminate distracting thoughts, and enhance focus, enabling individuals to face stress calmly and effectively. Mindfulness, or the ability to live fully in the present moment, reduces anxiety, improves mental health, and strengthens adaptability. Moreover, compassion and equanimity encourage individuals to expand empathy, build sustainable relationships, and enhance community harmony. These practices provide psychological support and foster positive social connections, creating a healthy and harmonious community. The application of meditation and mindfulness in organizations, families, and schools has demonstrated clear effectiveness in reducing stress, increasing productivity, and developing positive life skills. Notably, companies and schools in many countries have implemented mindfulness courses, which help employees and students cope with pressure while improving relationships and mutual understanding. Finally, the article emphasizes that applying Buddhist values benefits individuals and contributes to building a peaceful and sustainable society. The spread of values such as meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity helps people overcome the challenges of modern life, creating a harmonious community where everyone lives with inner peace and kindness.

Keywords: *Inner peace, mindfulness, meditation, compassion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern society, the fast pace of life and increasing workload intensity create a stressful living environment, making individuals prone to stress, anxiety, and psychological imbalance. Pressures from work, complex social

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relationships, and the intrusion of technology and social media have profoundly changed lifestyles, thoughts, and perspectives. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence of psychological disorders and depression is rising globally, with daily stressors being one of the main contributing factors. Modern life imposes high expectations for success, status, and social recognition, while interpersonal relationships have become fragile and prone to breakdown. This creates a significant void in the spiritual lives of many people.

The hustle of material life causes individuals to lose touch with themselves and their deep inner values, leaving them often feeling empty and spiritually deprived. Studies show that people living under high-pressure environments or experiencing psychological turmoil often struggle to find inner peace, leading to severe physical and mental health issues. In this context, an increasing number of people are turning to methods that nurture inner peace through practices like meditation, yoga, and particularly Buddhist spiritual practices.

Buddhism, with over 2,500 years of history, is a philosophical and spiritual system emphasizing wisdom, compassion, and inner peace. Buddhist methods such as meditation (*samatha and vipassāna*), mindfulness, compassion (*metta*), and equanimity (*muditā*) are valued for their ability to help individuals understand and transform negative emotions, thereby achieving genuine inner peace. Beyond its religious scope, Buddhist practices are increasingly recognized and widely applied in fields like psychology, education, and healthcare to improve mental health and quality of life. Meditation and mindfulness, in particular, have been studied and implemented in treatment centers, schools, and businesses worldwide, showing positive results in stress reduction, productivity enhancement, and personal relationship improvement.

Thus, researching and applying Buddhist practices is not only a potential direction but also a necessary solution in modern society. These practices are not merely tools for individuals to find peace in life but also a means to build a sustainable, united community oriented toward high humanistic values.

In the face of increasing stress and anxiety in modern society, this article aims to identify the role of Buddhist practices in nurturing inner peace and evaluate their necessity and effectiveness in contemporary life. To achieve these goals, the article focuses on two objectives:

(1) Identify the role of Buddhist practices in nurturing inner peace: Based on Buddhist philosophy and practices, this article deeply analyzes methods like meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity, clarifying how these practices influence the process of regaining psychological peace and balance. Buddhism emphasizes transforming the mind, replacing negative emotions like anxiety, anger, and attachment with more positive ones such as empathy, gratitude, and equanimity in the face of life's ups and downs. The article highlights the critical role of these methods in fostering inner peace, enabling individuals not only to cope with but also to transform the challenges of daily life.

(2) Evaluate the necessity and effectiveness of applying these methods in modern society: The article delves into analyzing and assessing

the effectiveness of Buddhist methods in the modern social context. Based on research and practical applications, the article examines how these methods help reduce stress, improve mental health, and enhance quality of life. Evidence of the effectiveness of meditation and mindfulness in psychology and healthcare will be presented, emphasizing the applicability of Buddhist methods in daily life. The article also highlights the necessity of these methods, as they help individuals restore balance between body and mind and serve as effective tools for creating a harmonious and sustainable society.

By identifying and evaluating the role of Buddhist practices, this article hopes to contribute to raising awareness and providing methods to help individuals confront and transform the challenges of modern life. At the same time, the article affirms that regardless of how quickly society changes, deep spiritual values such as compassion, inner peace, and self-understanding remain fundamental to happiness and sustainable development for individuals and communities alike.

II. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW & RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Theoretical overview and Buddhist spiritual practices

Buddhism is an ancient system of philosophy and spiritual practice, originating in India over 2,500 years ago, with the primary aim of guiding individuals towards enlightenment and liberation from suffering. The core of Buddhism lies not only in religious faith but also in practical methods to achieve inner peace and spiritual freedom from life's afflictions. These methods, considered tools for transforming the mind, include meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity.

Meditation is one of the most important spiritual practices in Buddhism. It is categorized into two main forms: *samatha* (calming meditation) and *vipassāna* (insight meditation). *Samatha* focuses on calming the mind, enabling practitioners to attain tranquility and concentration. This process purifies the mind, eliminating negative thoughts and freeing it from distractions. On the other hand, *vipassāna* fosters a profound understanding of the nature of the mind and reality through nonjudgmental observation. It provides an opportunity for individuals to perceive their emotions, thoughts, and surroundings with greater clarity. Research by Aspy and Michael (2017) reveals that meditation not only enhances focus but also strengthens one's connection to humanity and the natural world.¹ Regular meditation practice allows individuals to understand and master their emotions, enabling them to remain composed amid daily challenges and stresses.

Mindfulness, or the ability to fully experience each moment without judgment, helps individuals focus on the present rather than being entangled in past regrets or future anxieties. While mindfulness originates as a Buddhist practice, it has evolved into a scientific field, especially within clinical

¹ Aspy, D. J., & Michael, P. (2017). Mindfulness and compassion meditation: Impacts on connection with humanity and the natural world. *Psychological Reports*, 120(1), 102 – 117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116685867>

psychology. According to Baer (2003), mindfulness has been proven effective in treating psychological disorders, reducing stress, enhancing focus, and improving mental health.² Bishop et al. (2004) further argue that mindfulness develops natural self-awareness without coercion, enabling practitioners to reduce mental strain and achieve relaxation, leading to better emotional regulation.³

2.2. Application of Buddhist methods in modern contexts

In the modern social context, Buddhist methods such as meditation and mindfulness have become widespread and are applied across various fields, including psychology, education, and healthcare. Recent studies demonstrate that meditation and mindfulness are recognized as effective tools for managing stress and achieving mental balance, not only in religious settings but also in secular environments.

A notable study on the benefits of mindfulness in psychology showed that mindfulness enhances mental well-being, self-awareness, and supports the treatment of mental health disorders.⁴ Moreover, mindfulness practices have successfully helped patients overcome anxiety, depression, and even chronic pain. Mindfulness can alter brain structures, increasing resilience to life's pressures and challenges. In healthcare settings, mindfulness and meditation have become integral parts of treatment programs, assisting patients in coping with physical and psychological pain.⁵ Shonin et al. (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of incorporating Buddhist practices into clinical psychology, improving mental health, and teaching patients to manage their emotions.⁶

Beyond healthcare and psychology, Buddhist methods have also shown value in education and workplace environments. According to Howells et al. (2016)⁷ and Flynn (2023)⁸, integrating mindfulness into educational programs not only enhances students' concentration but also creates a positive and sustainable learning environment. Mindfulness teaches children

² Baer, R. A. (2003). Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 125 - 134.

³ Bishop, S. R., et al. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 11(3), 230 - 241.

⁴ 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 - 834.

⁵ Congleton, C., et al. (2015). Mindfulness can change your brain. *Harvard Business Review*, January 8, 2015. <https://hbr.org/2015/01/mindfulness-can-literally-change-your-brain>

⁶ Shonin, E., et al. (2014). The increasing role of Buddhism in clinical psychology: Toward effective integration. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 6 (2), 123 - 137.

⁷ Howells, A., et al. (2016). Putting the 'app' in happiness: A randomized controlled trial of a smartphone-based mindfulness intervention to enhance well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17 (1), 163 - 185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9589-1>

⁸ Flynn, J. E. (2023). Integrating mindfulness and social justice: Walking the path of change. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 25(2), 1 - 12. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v25i2.3597>

and adolescents to identify and process emotions healthily, laying a strong foundation for future mental well-being. In the workplace, mindfulness applications have boosted employee productivity, improved interactions, and minimized conflicts. Studies by Davidson (2008) highlight that mindfulness can enhance stress management, reduce burnout, and increase job satisfaction.⁹ Major global companies have actively implemented mindfulness and meditation programs for employees, enabling them to improve mental health and achieve higher work performance.

One prominent figure exemplifying the integration of Buddhism into modern life is Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh. Through methods like meditation, mindfulness, and the philosophy of “interbeing,” Thich Nhat Hanh has spread the profound spiritual values of Buddhism across all social strata, from young people to the elderly, and from East to West. In works such as *Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise* (Thich, 2015), he encourages individuals to pause, listen to themselves, and build harmonious relationships with the surrounding world. His philosophy has inspired millions worldwide, helping them find inner peace and reduce conflicts in modern life.¹⁰

2.3. Research methods

To analyze and evaluate the necessity and effectiveness of Buddhist practices in nurturing inner peace, this article employs the following research methods:

- **Document analysis:** This primary method involves collecting and analyzing existing literature on meditation, mindfulness, and Buddhist spiritual practices. Scholarly articles, empirical studies, and theoretical works by authors such as Brown and Ryan (2003)¹¹, Germer & Christopher (2005)¹², Keng et al. (2011)¹³, Aspy and Michael (2017)¹⁴, as well as the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh, will be referenced. This method will systematize foundational knowledge and update the latest applications of Buddhist practices in modern society.
- **Case study analysis:** Real-world examples of applying Buddhist methods in psychology, education, and workplaces will be examined.

⁹ Davidson, R. J. (2008). Scientists unravel the secrets of meditation. *BBC News*, March 31, 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7319043.stm>

¹⁰ Thich, N. H. (2015). *Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise*. London: Random House.

¹¹ 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), 843 - 841.

¹² Germer, C. K., & Siegel, R. D. (2005). What is mindfulness? Why is it important? In *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* (pp. 3-27). New York: The Guilford Press.

¹³ Keng, S. L., et al. (2011). The effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. *Clinical Psychological Review*, 31(6), 1041 – 1056.

¹⁴ Aspy, D. J., & Michael, P. (2017). Mindfulness and compassion meditation: Impacts on connection with humanity and the natural world. *Psychological Reports*, 120(1), 102 – 117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116685867>

This method clarifies how meditation and mindfulness help individuals and organizations achieve inner peace and improve life quality. For instance, Congleton et al. (2015)¹⁵, Howells et al. (2016)¹⁶, and De et al. (2021)¹⁷ Studies on the impact of mindfulness on brain structure and stress resilience in professional settings will serve as typical cases illustrating these methods' effectiveness.

- **Qualitative analysis:** This method explores the meaning and value of Buddhist practices in human life. Qualitative analysis delves into personal experiences and the spiritual impact of meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity. Thich Nhat Hanh's writings on the philosophy of "interbeing" and "silence" will provide qualitative data illustrating the profound effects of Buddhist practices on individual psychology and spirit.
- **Comparative analysis:** This method contrasts the effectiveness of Buddhist methods in nurturing inner peace with other approaches in modern psychology. Studies by Davidson (2008)¹⁸ and Shonin et al. (2014)¹⁹ will be compared with other therapeutic techniques, highlighting the uniqueness and efficacy of meditation and mindfulness in achieving internal balance and peace.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. The concept of inner peace and Buddhist methods for nurturing it

In Buddhism, inner peace is not merely the absence of suffering but a state of balance between body and mind, where all emotions are transformed into a light and tranquil state. From a Buddhist perspective, inner peace does not stem from external factors but rather from the ability to master one's mind and emotions. Buddhist scriptures emphasize that while humans constantly face suffering and dissatisfaction, inner peace is a state attainable through spiritual practice and self-discipline.

Buddhism teaches that inner peace arises from understanding the impermanence of life and viewing things objectively, without clinging or resistance. This philosophy encourages individuals to develop the awareness that peace comes from mental mastery and living fully in the present,

¹⁵ Congleton, C., et al. (2015). Mindfulness can literally change your brain. *Harvard Business Review*, January 8, 2015. <https://hbr.org/2015/01/mindfulness-can-literally-change-your-brain>

¹⁶ Howells, A., et al. (2016). Putting the 'app' in happiness: A randomized controlled trial of a smartphone-based mindfulness intervention to enhance well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17 (1), 163 - 185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9589-1>

¹⁷ De, L. F. A. R., et al. (2021). Reflections on anger and mindfulness: Mediating effects on forgiveness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18 (5), 2668.

¹⁸ Davidson, R. J. (2008). Scientists unravel the secrets of meditation. *BBC News*, March 31, 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7319043.stm>

¹⁹ Shonin, E., et al. (2014). The increasing role of Buddhism in clinical psychology: Toward effective integration. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 6 (2), 123 - 137.

unentangled by desires or anger. As Thich (2005²⁰; 1996a²¹; 1996b²²; 2015²³) highlighted in his works, inner peace is achieved when we learn to listen to and recognize our emotions, fostering a harmonious connection between ourselves and the world around us.

Meditation is a fundamental practice in Buddhism for nurturing inner peace, divided into two primary forms: *samatha* (calm-abiding meditation) and *vipassāna* (insight meditation). *Samatha* focuses on calming the mind, guiding practitioners toward stillness and concentration on a specific object, such as the breath. Research by Aspy and Michael (2017) shows that *Samatha* helps individuals achieve psychological stability and reduce internal conflicts, leading to a state of peace. Conversely, *vipassāna* allows practitioners to observe reality deeply without judgment, fostering a profound understanding of the nature of the mind and existence.²⁴ *Vipassāna* enhances emotional and cognitive awareness, helping individuals grasp life's essence and avoid being swept away by negative emotions. As Baer (2003) noted, *vipassāna* effectively reduces stress and enhances self-awareness, enabling practitioners to maintain inner peace even in life's upheavals.²⁵

Mindfulness, or *sati* in Buddhism, involves complete awareness of the present moment without judgment. Practicing mindfulness enables individuals to reduce anxiety and stress by fully engaging with the present rather than dwelling on past regrets or future worries. According to Brown and Ryan (2003), mindfulness improves mental health, eases life's pressures, and strengthens adaptability to unexpected changes.²⁶ Hui (2021) further argues that mindfulness develops self-awareness and reduces psychological stress, allowing individuals to find tranquility amidst life's turmoil.²⁷ Through mindfulness, individuals can recognize and transform negative emotions, achieving long-lasting inner peace.

²⁰ Thich, N. H. (2005). *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation*. New York: Doubleday.

²¹ Thich, N. H. (1996a). *Breathe! You Are Alive: Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.

²² Thich, N. H. (1996b). *Cultivating Compassion: A Buddhist Perspective*. Delhi: Full Circle.

²³ Thich, N. H. (2015). *Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise*. London: Random House.

²⁴ Aspy, D. J., & Michael, P. (2017). Mindfulness and compassion meditation: Impacts on connection with humanity and the natural world. *Psychological Reports*, 120(1), 102–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116685867>

²⁵ Baer, R. A. (2003). Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 125 - 137.

²⁶ 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), 847 - 848.

²⁷ Hui, L. G. I. (2021). Mindfulness and motivation in self-transformation: Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on interbeing. *Manusya: Journal of Humanities*, 24(3). <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-02403004>

Compassion and equanimity are vital Buddhist practices fostering interpersonal connections and harmony with life. Compassion extends beyond love, encompassing genuine empathy and concern for others' well-being. Studies by Thich (1996b)²⁸ and Mascaro et al. (2013)²⁹ indicate that compassion meditation enhances empathetic accuracy and improves neural activity associated with sensitivity. Equanimity, on the other hand, embodies gratitude and the release of negativity, encouraging non-attachment to success or failure, thus attaining serenity. Through compassion and equanimity, individuals gradually eliminate negative emotions, finding profound inner peace irrespective of external circumstances.

3.2. The impact of modern society on inner peace

Modern society, while offering conveniences, also subjects individuals to intense pressure. Factors such as work stress, competition, social media's influence, and consumerism create environments that erode mental health. Research by Wen et al. (2017) highlights how these elements lead to psychological imbalance, increased anxiety, and stress.³⁰ Furthermore, social media fosters dependency on external validation, often disconnecting individuals from themselves. Studies show that social comparison and insecurity induced by social media contribute to emptiness and spiritual deprivation. Farhan (2023) asserts that people in modern society increasingly struggle to find peace, caught in the whirlwind of busy lives and societal pressures.³¹

Amid these challenges, there is a growing demand for methods to alleviate stress and foster positive mental health. Buddhist practices such as meditation and mindfulness have become popular solutions, transcending Asian countries to gain global recognition. Research by Kabat (2003)³² and Shapiro et al. (2006)³³ demonstrates the widespread appeal of mindfulness programs, yielding significant results in stress reduction and mental health improvement. Many large corporations have incorporated mindfulness and meditation into the workplace, aiding employees in stress management and enhancing productivity. Similarly, the integration of meditation and mindfulness into education is gaining momentum, aiming to enhance focus and emotional intelligence among students. Baer (2003) confirms that participants in

²⁸ Thich, N. H. (1996b). *Cultivating Compassion: A Buddhist Perspective*. Delhi: Full Circle.

²⁹ Mascaro, J. S., et al. (2013). Compassion meditation enhances empathic accuracy and related neural activity. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 8 (1), 848.

³⁰ Wen, L., et al. (2017). Encouraging mindfulness among healthcare workers via smartphone applications: A pilot study. *Academic Psychiatry*, 41(5), 646-650. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-017-0768-3>.

³¹ Farhan, A. (2023). The benefits of Buddhist compassion in educational settings. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering, Technology, and Science*, 5 (7), 2989 - 2990.

³² Kabat, Z. J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 144 – 156.

³³ Shapiro, S. L., et al. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62(3), 373–386.

mindfulness programs experience reduced stress, emotional balance, and improved performance in academics and work.³⁴

3.3. Relevance of Buddhist methods in modern society

In the fast-paced, high-pressure modern world, Buddhist practices like meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity offer effective tools for stress management, mental health improvement, and fostering harmonious relationships. This section evaluates how these methods align with daily life, emphasizing their value in the modern context.

Meditation, a core Buddhist practice, serves as a practical life skill for managing stress, enhancing awareness, and maintaining composure in difficult situations. Meditation stabilizes the mind, reducing distractions—a critical need in today's world, where people are inundated with thoughts and pressures. Aspy and Michael (2017) demonstrate that meditation not only improves focus but also strengthens connections with oneself and the world, enabling natural and effective stress-coping mechanisms.³⁵

Mindfulness, widely recognized in medicine and psychology, teaches individuals to live in the present moment, fully aware of their emotions and actions without judgment. According to Vu (2023), mindfulness reduces stress, improves psychological health, and enhances adaptability. Daily mindfulness practice allows individuals to identify and regulate emotional reactions, avoiding entrapment by negative thoughts or societal pressures.³⁶

In the workplace and education, practical applications of mindfulness have proven effective in enhancing focus and productivity. Davidson (2008) emphasizes mindfulness as a crucial method for managing workplace stress.³⁷ Many companies now offer mindfulness and meditation programs, fostering calmness, reducing stress, and building a positive work environment.

Beyond meditation and mindfulness, compassion and equanimity enhance personal well-being and community cohesion. Compassion fosters altruism and acceptance, reducing conflicts and strengthening social bonds. Mascaro et al. (2013) affirm that compassion meditation enhances empathy and neural sensitivity to others' emotions, fostering genuine and meaningful relationships.³⁸

³⁴ Baer, R. A. (2003). Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 128 - 143.

³⁵ Aspy, D. J., & Michael, P. (2017). Mindfulness and compassion meditation: Impacts on connection with humanity and the natural world. *Psychological Reports*, 120(1), 102–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116685867>

³⁶ Vu, H. X. (2023). The impact of mindfulness-based interventions on university students' well-being. *International Journal of Psychological Science*, 3 (1), 6 - 11. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijps.20230301.12>.

³⁷ Davidson, R. J. (2008). Scientists unravel the secrets of meditation. *BBC News*, March 31, 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7319043.stm>

³⁸ Mascaro, J. S., et al. (2013). Compassion meditation enhances empathic accuracy and related neural activity. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 8 (1), 849 – 850.

Equanimity, promoting gratitude and non-attachment, reduces unnecessary competitiveness and jealousy. Flynn (2023) states that equanimity encourages a positive, open-minded attitude, aiding in conflict resolution and emotional stability.³⁹ In personal life, these practices cultivate self-esteem and forgiveness, establishing lasting inner peace. Compassionate and equanimous individuals tend to forgive themselves and others, eliminating prolonged negativity and fostering harmony within themselves and their communities.

3.4. Application and recommendations for practicing Buddhist methods in modern society

Buddhist methods such as meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity not only provide significant benefits for individuals but also hold the potential to foster positive changes in organizations, families, and communities. These methods can reduce stress, enhance mutual understanding, and improve mental health for individuals in an increasingly pressured living environment. This section focuses on how to integrate these Buddhist practices into specific aspects of modern life and offers suggestions to promote their positive impact.

3.4.1. Application of Buddhist methods in the workplace and family in the workplace

Modern workplaces demand high efficiency, productivity, and adaptability, which often lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout among employees. Meditation and mindfulness are effective tools for mitigating these negative effects. Regular meditation practice calms the mind and improves focus. Studies by Davidson (2008)⁴⁰ and Goleman et al. (2017)⁴¹ show that meditation not only reduces stress but also enhances creativity and job performance. Mindfulness can help employees minimize distractions, increase concentration, and maintain composure in stressful situations. Kabat (2003) emphasizes that mindfulness enables practitioners to manage stress effectively and boost productivity by keeping the mind in a state of readiness to tackle challenges.⁴²

Many leading companies, such as Google and Apple, have adopted mindfulness and meditation programs for their employees as part of their mental health strategies. These programs help employees achieve a balance between work and life while enhancing performance and job satisfaction.

In the Family

The family is the primary and most critical environment for building mental and emotional well-being. Buddhist practices such as mindfulness and

³⁹ Flynn, J. E. (2023). Integrating mindfulness and social justice: Walking the path of change. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 25 (2), 13 - 15. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v25i2.3597>.

⁴⁰ Davidson, R. J. (2008). Scientists unravel the secrets of meditation. *BBC News*, March 31, 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7319043.stm>

⁴¹ Goleman, D., et al. (2017). *Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body*. New York: Penguin Random House.

⁴² Kabat, Z. J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 147 – 151.

compassion can help family members understand each other better, reduce conflicts, and foster sustainable relationships. Practicing mindfulness in the family teaches members to listen, respect, and empathize with one another. According to Brown and Ryan (2003), mindfulness helps family members reduce irritability and resolve conflicts calmly and wisely.⁴³

Compassion plays a vital role in families by fostering feelings of love and respect among members. Research by Mascaro et al. (2013) shows that compassion practice not only strengthens family relationships but also reduces stress and anxiety, enhancing emotional bonds.⁴⁴ Parents can apply compassion in raising their children, teaching them kindness and an appreciation for positive values in life.

3.4.2. Recommendations for organizations and individuals on applying Buddhist methods

Organizational Initiatives

To effectively incorporate Buddhist methods into daily life, organizations can implement programs, courses, and workshops on meditation and mindfulness. These initiatives can cater to diverse audiences, including office workers, students, and community members.

Research by Flynn (2023) highlights how integrating mindfulness into schools reduces stress, improves focus, and enhances academic outcomes for students.⁴⁵ In the workplace, meditation and mindfulness courses can help employees relax and better handle work-related pressures. Communities can also benefit from such programs through meditation and mindfulness classes, enabling individuals to improve mental health and build positive social relationships. These workshops can be hosted at community centers, cultural venues, or online, making them accessible to all.

Community Engagement

Practicing compassion and equanimity extends benefits beyond individuals to create positive impacts within communities. Compassion inspires people to open their hearts to others' struggles, care for their happiness, and foster community solidarity. Charitable organizations and volunteer groups can organize activities rooted in compassion, such as aiding those in difficult circumstances, caring for the elderly and children, and supporting economically challenged families. These activities not only bring joy to those involved but also create a ripple effect, encouraging others to live compassionately and share generously.

⁴³ 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), 848.

⁴⁴ Mascaro, J. S., et al. (2013). Compassion meditation enhances empathic accuracy and related neural activity. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 8 (1), 851 – 853.

⁴⁵ Flynn, J. E. (2023). Integrating mindfulness and social justice: Walking the path of change. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 25(2), 16-19. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v25i2.3597>.

Equanimity—the ability to let go of negative emotions—teaches individuals to forgive others' mistakes and foster a harmonious and friendly social environment. Organizations can incorporate equanimity practices into social education programs or community discussions, helping people recognize the value of forgiveness and learn to release negative emotions for inner peace.

IV. CONCLUSION

Through the analyses presented in this article, it is evident that Buddhist practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and compassion play an essential role in cultivating inner peace — a necessary state for achieving harmony between mind and body. Meditation, especially *samatha* (calm-abiding meditation) and *vipassāna* (insight meditation), has proven effective in calming the mind, enhancing focus, and fostering clarity. These skills are not only essential for personal well-being in daily life but also serve as a foundation for coping with stress and challenges in professional settings and relationships.

Mindfulness, the ability to live fully in the present moment, significantly contributes to inner peace by helping individuals avoid being swept away by worries about the past or future. Maintaining mindfulness improves mental health and fosters a balanced and sustainable psychological state. Mindfulness is not merely a meditation technique but a valuable life skill, teaching individuals to accept and fully embrace the present moment.

Moreover, compassion and equanimity are key Buddhist methods that enhance interpersonal relationships and foster harmonious communities. Compassion encourages individuals to extend love, empathy, and unconditional support to others, reducing conflicts and misunderstandings while strengthening bonds within families, workplaces, and society. Equanimity, on the other hand, teaches people to let go of negative emotions such as envy and resentment, maintaining peace of mind and reducing internal conflicts.

These Buddhist methods go beyond personal benefits, positively impacting communities as well. By applying these practices, individuals not only achieve inner peace but also radiate positive energy to those around them. In summary, meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity are not only effective tools for reducing stress and anxiety but also for helping individuals discover meaning and value in a fast-paced, ever-changing modern life.

In the context of an increasingly complex and rapidly developing society, integrating Buddhist methods into daily life is not only beneficial for individuals but also contributes to building healthy and sustainable communities. Modern society places immense pressure on productivity, success, and external validation, often leading to stress, anxiety, and imbalance. Buddhist practices offer effective solutions to these challenges. Practices like meditation and mindfulness have been scientifically proven to improve mental health, reduce stress, and enhance quality of life.

The positive effects of Buddhist methods on psychological health and contemporary social life have been confirmed by numerous scientific studies. For example, Kabat (2003) demonstrated mindfulness's effectiveness in

reducing stress and improving mental well-being.⁴⁶ Meditation and mindfulness have been widely implemented in educational programs, workplaces, and healthcare settings, bringing positive changes to individuals and communities. By applying mindfulness and meditation, employees, students, and patients achieve psychological stability and develop essential skills to face life's pressures.

Compassion and equanimity, meanwhile, not only improve social relationships but also encourage individuals to adopt positive lifestyles characterized by empathy and generosity. These values play a critical role in building harmonious communities where people are willing to support one another. Promoting compassion and equanimity through social and charitable activities creates a ripple effect, fostering a more socially responsible and humanistic community.

In conclusion, applying Buddhist practices offers both psychological benefits and the potential to create a more meaningful and peaceful society. From organizations to families, individuals to communities, the values of meditation, mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity enable individuals to achieve balance and inner peace while developing meaningful lives. Buddhist practices provide a pathway for overcoming the difficulties of modern life, maintaining a peaceful mind, and becoming the best version of oneself.

In an era where stress and pressure are prevalent, encouraging and spreading Buddhist values benefits not only individuals but also the sustainable development of society. These methods have demonstrated enduring value across time and cultures, remaining effective tools for helping individuals find inner peace—a vital component of happiness and holistic growth in the modern world. By fostering awareness of and access to these practices, society can collectively advance toward a future of compassion, harmony, and sustained well-being.

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⁴⁶ Kabat, Z. J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), 152 – 156.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Mrs. Anula Maharjan*

Abstract:

The paper presents a comprehensive and research-informed exploration of how individual mental and emotional stability forms the foundation for societal harmony and global peace. Drawing on psychological and Buddhist principles, the paper outlines the characteristics of inner peace, its effects on stress reduction, emotional resilience, and decision-making, as well as its role in promoting empathy, social cooperation, and conflict resolution. Inner peace as personal power: The author demonstrates that inner peace is not a passive state but an active cultivation of mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and gratitude that empowers individuals to respond with wisdom and compassion. From self-care to social care: By integrating practices such as meditation, loving-kindness, and emotional regulation, individuals develop resilience and awareness that ripple into their families, communities, and workplaces. Peace as praxis: Through extensive case studies of educational and community-based programs, including Quiet Time, Roots of Empathy, and UNESCO Peace Education, the paper highlights scalable models of peacebuilding beginning with inner transformation. Its unique contribution lies in synthesizing empirical research with real-world applications, proposing inner peace not only as a therapeutic ideal but as an essential condition for fostering a compassionate and sustainable global society.

Keywords: *inner peace, mindfulness, emotional resilience, conflict resolution, global harmony.*

I. INNER PEACE

Inner Peace refers to a state of mental and emotional calmness, stability, and equilibrium, where an individual experiences a profound sense of well-being, free from anxiety, stress, or inner conflict. This state is often associated with mindfulness, self-awareness, and acceptance of the present moment. Achieving

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inner peace involves mastering one's thoughts and emotions, responding to challenges with resilience, and maintaining a balanced perspective regardless of external circumstances.

1.1. Mental and emotional calmness

At the heart of inner peace is the ability to maintain mental clarity and emotional balance. This means that a person can manage their thoughts without being overwhelmed by them. Inner peace involves an awareness of one's emotions without allowing those feelings to dictate actions. It requires understanding and managing both positive and negative emotional states, leading to a stable, composed mental state.

i. According to *Psychology Today*, individuals who achieve inner peace often cultivate mindfulness, which encourages a non-judgmental awareness of thoughts and feelings, allowing for greater emotional regulation and well-being.

ii. Inner peace also implies emotional stability. In this state, a person does not react impulsively to life's ups and downs but maintains a sense of control and perspective. This emotional equilibrium is supported by a range of psychological practices such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). Both focus on changing negative thought patterns and enhancing emotional regulation. According to research from the *National Institute of Mental Health* (NIMH), emotional stability involves the ability to understand and control emotional reactions, which directly contributes to mental resilience and the ability to cope with adversity.

1.2. A stress or anxiety

A crucial element of inner peace is the reduction of stress and anxiety. 3. It is not merely the absence of negative feelings but the capacity to be at peace with oneself regardless of external factors. Research shows that reducing stress through techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and relaxation exercises can lower cortisol levels (the stress hormone) in the body, promoting physical and emotional well-being (Heffner et al., 2017). Additionally, it is fostered by accepting uncertainty and imperfection. In this sense, individuals who cultivate inner peace are less likely to be overwhelmed by life's unpredictability, instead responding with a grounded sense of confidence and calm.

1.3. The path to inner peace

Achieving inner peace is often a gradual process that involves various practices. 4. Meditation, mindfulness, self-reflection, and even spiritual practices are commonly employed to cultivate a peaceful state of mind. These practices focus on building self-awareness, cultivating self-compassion, and addressing the mental patterns that cause emotional turbulence. For instance, mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to decrease anxiety and stress while improving emotional regulation and overall well-being (Hoge et al., 2013)

In summary, inner peace lamination of mental clarity, emotional stability, and a reduction in stress and anxiety. It involves a deep understanding of oneself and the ability to respond to life's challenges from a place of calm and balance.

Achieving inner peace is a journey that involves self-awareness, emotional regulation, and practices that promote mental and emotional resilience.

II. IMPORTANCE OF INNER PEACE: CONTRIBUTION TO INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING AND BROADER SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Inner peace is essential not only for personal well-being but also for fostering harmony in society. When individuals experience mental and emotional calmness, they are better equipped to navigate life's challenges, contribute to positive social interactions, and engage in cooperative, peaceful environments. The benefits of inner peace extend far beyond individual tranquility, influencing broader societal dynamics by promoting tolerance, empathy, and mutual understanding.

2.1. Contribution to individual well-being

2.1.1. Reduction of stress and improvement in health

One of the most direct benefits of inner peace is the reduction of stress, which plays a crucial role in maintaining physical and mental health. Chronic stress is linked to a variety of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, weakened immune function, and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Inner peace, achieved through mindfulness practices, meditation, or relaxation techniques, has been shown to lower cortisol levels, reduce inflammation, and improve overall health (Heffner et al., 2017). This stress reduction supports a person's ability to manage daily challenges more effectively, contributing to a sense of well-being.

2.1.2. Emotional balance and mental clarity

Inner peace promotes emotional balance by enabling individuals to respond to emotions in a thoughtful, deliberate manner rather than reacting impulsively. This balanced emotional state improves mental clarity, helping individuals make better decisions, reduce emotional reactivity, and foster healthier relationships. *Psychology Today* highlights that emotional regulation is a key aspect of inner peace, allowing individuals to manage negative emotions like anger or fear without letting them escalate into harmful behaviors (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2018).

2.1.3. Resilience and coping skills

People who cultivate inner peace develop resilience, allowing them to cope more effectively with adversity. Research suggests that mindfulness and meditation practices enhance individuals' ability to bounce back from difficult situations by encouraging a non-judgmental acceptance of challenges. This resilience not only improves mental health but also provides individuals with the emotional strength to face life's inevitable setbacks without losing their sense of peace (Baer, 2003).

2.2. Influence on broader social environments

2.2.1. Promoting tolerance and understanding

Inner peace has profound implications for interpersonal relationships and broader social interactions. When individuals experience inner peace, they are

more likely to approach others with empathy and understanding. This open-mindedness fosters tolerance by reducing judgmental attitudes and increasing the capacity to appreciate diverse perspectives. As noted by the *American Psychological Association*, emotional regulation helps reduce impulsive reactions and supports more thoughtful and respectful interactions, thereby enhancing social harmony and decreasing conflict (Gross, 2002). In societies where individuals practice inner peace, the likelihood of social division and misunderstanding diminishes, as individuals are more inclined to embrace differences and seek common ground.

2.2.2. Conflict resolution and cooperation

Inner peace encourages individuals to approach conflicts with a calm, balanced mindset, reducing the likelihood of escalations and promoting peaceful resolutions. Research suggests that when people practice mindfulness, they are better able to remain composed in tense situations and engage in cooperative problem-solving (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). In a societal context, this can lead to more peaceful communities where individuals work together to resolve conflicts without resorting to aggression or division.

2.2.3. Social and emotional intelligence

Inner peace enhances social and emotional intelligence, which is crucial for healthy social interactions. Emotional intelligence (EI), which includes self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills, is nurtured by inner peace. As individuals become more in tune with their own emotions and the emotions of others, they are better able to engage in constructive dialogue and forge stronger, more cooperative relationships. According to Daniel Goleman, a pioneer in emotional intelligence, individuals who possess a high level of EI are not only more successful personally but also contribute positively to the social environment by fostering connection and understanding (Goleman, 1995).

2.3. Creating positive social environments

Communities that prioritize well-being, mental peace, and emotional health tend to be more supportive and cooperative. For example, in workplace environments, employees who cultivate inner peace are likely to demonstrate greater teamwork, less interpersonal conflict, and higher levels of job satisfaction. This creates a more positive, productive atmosphere that benefits not only individuals but also the organization as a whole (Achor, 2010). In broader society, the practice of inner peace can result in more harmonious neighborhoods, workplaces, and nations, as individuals with greater emotional stability and understanding contribute to social cohesion and collective well-being.

2.4. Methods to cultivate inner peace

Achieving and maintaining inner peace involves integrating practices that support mental clarity, emotional balance, and overall well-being. Among the most effective methods to cultivate inner peace are mindfulness and meditation, gratitude practices, and emotional intelligence. These approaches not only help reduce stress and enhance emotional regulation but also foster positive relationships and contribute to a harmonious social environment.

III. MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION: TECHNIQUES FOR FOSTERING MINDFULNESS, REDUCING STRESS, AND ENHANCING EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Mindfulness refers to the practice of paying focused attention to the present moment without judgment, allowing individuals to experience their thoughts, emotions, and sensations fully. This practice is a cornerstone of mindfulness-based interventions and has been shown to improve emotional regulation, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being.

Meditation, particularly mindfulness meditation, is a technique that supports mindfulness by training the mind to focus and remain anchored in the present moment. Studies show that mindfulness and meditation can significantly reduce anxiety, depression, and stress while improving attention and emotional resilience. *Kabat-Zinn* (1990) explains that mindfulness meditation encourages acceptance of thoughts and feelings, which helps reduce the impact of negative emotions and fosters emotional balance.

Some common techniques for fostering mindfulness include:

Focused Attention Meditation (FAM): In this practice, individuals focus on a single point of attention, such as the breath or a sound, to bring attention to the present moment and reduce distractions.

Body Scan Meditation: A body scan involves mentally scanning the body from head to toe, bringing attention to sensations and promoting relaxation and self-awareness.

Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM): This type of meditation involves silently repeating phrases of goodwill toward oneself and others, promoting empathy, compassion, and emotional regulation.

Research indicates that mindfulness and meditation reduce the activation of the body's stress response, lower cortisol levels, and increase the size of brain regions related to emotional regulation (Hölzel et al., 2011). These benefits support greater emotional balance and resilience, reducing the impact of stressors and enhancing overall inner peace.

IV. GRATITUDE PRACTICES: HOW EXPRESSING GRATITUDE CAN SHIFT PERSPECTIVES AND PROMOTE POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Gratitude is the practice of recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life. Research has shown that regularly expressing gratitude can shift perspectives, promote positive emotions, and improve relationships, all of which contribute to inner peace.

Practicing gratitude involves intentionally acknowledging the good things in life, whether they are large (e.g., good health or a fulfilling job) or small (e.g., a kind gesture from a friend). Several gratitude practices can foster inner peace:

- **Gratitude Journaling:** Writing down things you are grateful for regularly can promote a positive mindset, reduce negative thought patterns, and enhance emotional well-being.
- **Gratitude Letters:** Writing and delivering a letter expressing

appreciation for someone's kindness can deepen relationships and increase feelings of connection.

- **Gratitude Reflection:** Taking time each day to reflect on positive experiences helps reinforce feelings of contentment and gratitude, contributing to a more peaceful and grounded mindset.

Studies demonstrate that practicing gratitude leads to increased happiness, better physical health, and greater life satisfaction (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Moreover, gratitude enhances emotional resilience by encouraging individuals to focus on the positive, which reduces stress and negative emotions. According to *The Greater Good Science Center* at UC Berkeley, gratitude fosters prosocial behaviors, such as kindness and cooperation, which improve relationships and enhance social harmony (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008).

V. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: THE ROLE OF UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING ONE'S OWN EMOTIONS IN FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY HARMONY

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to identify, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the ability to recognize and influence the emotions of others. Cultivating emotional intelligence is a powerful method for fostering inner peace and promoting positive, harmonious relationships in social settings.

EI is composed of several key components:

- **Self-awareness:** Understanding one's own emotions and how they influence thoughts and behavior.
- **Self-regulation:** Managing one's emotions in healthy and constructive ways.
- **Empathy:** Recognizing and understanding the emotions of others, which supports compassion and social connection.
- **Social skills:** Building strong, positive relationships and communicating effectively with others.

Individuals with high EI are better equipped to handle stress, manage interpersonal conflicts, and maintain emotional balance. They are also more likely to contribute to community harmony by fostering understanding and cooperation. Research by *Daniel Goleman* (1995) has shown that emotional intelligence leads to improved relationships, higher job satisfaction, and more effective leadership, all of which contribute to personal and social well-being.

For example, in a social or work environment, individuals with high EI are more likely to resolve conflicts constructively, demonstrate empathy in challenging situations, and build trust with others. This contributes to a more peaceful and cooperative community. Additionally, practicing EI enhances self-regulation, which helps reduce impulsive reactions and increases emotional resilience.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, cultivating inner peace is a multifaceted process that can be

achieved through a variety of methods. Mindfulness and meditation help foster awareness and emotional regulation, reducing stress and promoting clarity. Gratitude practices shift perspectives toward positivity, enhancing well-being and social harmony. Emotional intelligence supports self-awareness, empathy, and effective relationship-building, all of which contribute to more peaceful and harmonious communities. By integrating these practices into daily life, individuals can enhance their well-being and foster a more peaceful world.

6.1. Connection between inner peace and world peace

The connection between inner peace and world peace is deeply rooted in the idea that individual transformation can lead to broader social and global change. When individuals experience inner peace, they are more likely to act with compassion, tolerance, and understanding, which can reduce conflict and foster peace in their communities. This concept is integral to various peace movements throughout history, where inner transformation served as the foundation for collective social change. In this section, we will explore how individuals with inner peace contribute to a more peaceful society and provide examples of peace movements rooted in personal transformation.

6.2. How individuals with inner peace contribute to a peaceful society

6.2.1. Compassionate action and conflict reduction: Inner peace encourages individuals to approach the world with empathy and compassion, reducing the likelihood of engaging in conflict or aggression. When people are at peace with themselves, they are better equipped to manage their emotions and reactions in difficult situations. As a result, they tend to engage in more peaceful interactions, responding to disagreements with understanding and dialogue rather than violence or hostility.

Empathy, a key component of inner peace, is vital for fostering understanding between individuals and groups. Research shows that individuals who practice mindfulness or cultivate inner peace are better at empathizing with others and are less likely to engage in conflict (Goleman, 1995). These individuals are more likely to approach others with an open mind and a willingness to listen, which helps defuse tense situations and promote peaceful resolutions.

Moreover, individuals with inner peace tend to embrace **forgiveness** and **nonviolence**, key principles that reduce social tension and contribute to collective peace. For example, when people learn to forgive themselves and others, they let go of resentment and anger, which can perpetuate cycles of violence and revenge. Compassionate action and forgiveness help break these cycles, promoting social harmony and reducing the likelihood of conflict.

6.2.2. Building Compassionate Communities: Inner peace fosters an ability to connect with others on a deeper, more compassionate level. People who experience inner peace often engage in volunteer work, community service, or other altruistic acts that contribute to the well-being of society. These acts of kindness and support create a ripple effect, inspiring others to act with compassion, further promoting peace in their communities. In a

society where individuals are committed to fostering peace within themselves, collective peace becomes more attainable.

6.2.3. Promoting Social and Environmental Justice: Inner peace is also linked to a heightened sense of social and environmental responsibility. Many individuals who practice mindfulness or meditation are more likely to be attuned to global issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Their awareness of interconnectedness and compassion often motivates them to engage in social justice movements or advocate for sustainable practices. By recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings, individuals with inner peace are more likely to take actions that promote fairness, equality, and environmental stewardship, which are essential components of world peace.

6.3. Peace movements that began with individual inner transformation

Several influential peace movements have been inspired by the personal transformation of individuals who sought to cultivate inner peace. These individuals embodied the principle that **inner peace leads to outer peace**, and their work has had lasting global impacts.

6.4. Mahatma Gandhi and the philosophy of non-violence (*ahimsa*)

Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most notable examples of someone whose inner peace contributed to the transformation of society. Gandhi's commitment to **Ahimsa** (non-violence) and **Satya** (truth) was rooted in his own spiritual practice and inner peace. He believed that individuals must first achieve inner peace to combat societal injustices effectively. His commitment to nonviolence and inner harmony served as the foundation for the **Indian independence movement**, which employed peaceful resistance and civil disobedience to fight British colonial rule. Gandhi's ability to remain calm and peaceful in the face of adversity became a model for others, and his philosophy of **Satyagraha** (truth-force) inspired global movements for civil rights and social justice, including the American Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. (Fischer, 2011).

6.5. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and non-violent civil disobedience

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement was heavily influenced by Gandhi's principles of non-violence and inner peace. King, like Gandhi, believed that individuals must transform themselves internally to create lasting change in society. King's commitment to peaceful protests, even in the face of violent opposition, was grounded in his belief in the power of **love** and **compassion**. His famous philosophy of **non-violent civil disobedience** sought to promote social change without resorting to violence, emphasizing peaceful dialogue and reconciliation (King, 1963). Through his inner strength and peace, King became a beacon of hope for millions, demonstrating that personal transformation could lead to collective social change.

6.6. Thich Nhat Hanh and Engaged Buddhism

Vietnamese Buddhist monk **Thich Nhat Hanh** is another example of a leader whose inner peace sparked global movements for peace and

reconciliation. Thich Nhat Hanh's approach to peace, known as **Engaged Buddhism**, emphasizes the practice of mindfulness and meditation as tools for personal transformation and social action. He advocated for mindfulness not only as a way to attain individual peace but also as a means to address societal issues such as war, poverty, and injustice. His teachings during the Vietnam War promoted **compassionate action** and **reconciliation**, urging people to practice peace in their everyday lives as a means to create a peaceful world (Hanh, 1992).

6.7. The Dalai Lama and compassionate leadership

The Dalai Lama is another influential figure who advocates for inner peace as a foundation for global peace. His practice of **compassion** and **mindfulness** informs his work as a spiritual leader and advocate for Tibetan freedom. The Dalai Lama's approach to peace is rooted in the belief that individuals must develop inner peace through meditation and compassion to bring about a peaceful society. His teachings on **universal compassion** and **non-violence** have inspired global peace movements and continue to promote peace through inner transformation (Dalai Lama, 1999).

6.8. Educational and community initiatives: Promoting inner peace

Educational and community initiatives focused on promoting inner peace have been increasingly recognized as crucial tools in reducing conflict, enhancing emotional well-being, and improving interpersonal relations. These programs, which teach mindfulness, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and compassionate communication, are designed to equip individuals with the skills to cultivate inner peace and contribute to more peaceful, harmonious communities. By fostering awareness, empathy, and emotional intelligence, these initiatives have shown positive effects on individuals and society at large.

6.9. Programs and workshops teaching inner peace in schools and communities

6.9.1. Mindfulness-based programs in schools: Schools are increasingly adopting mindfulness and inner peace programs to help students cope with stress, manage emotions, and improve focus and well-being. Research shows that teaching mindfulness in schools not only enhances students' emotional regulation but also leads to improvements in academic performance, behavior, and overall mental health (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014). Some key examples of mindfulness-based programs include:

6.9.2. Mindful Schools: This nonprofit organization offers mindfulness courses to children, parents, and educators to help cultivate emotional intelligence, reduce stress, and promote emotional balance. The curriculum includes mindful breathing, body scanning, and compassion-based practices aimed at promoting inner peace.

6.9.3. The Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP): MiSP provides a program called "b" that is designed for secondary school students in the UK. The program teaches mindfulness practices to help students improve focus, manage stress, and enhance resilience. Studies of the program have shown that

it leads to significant reductions in anxiety and behavioral problems among adolescents (Weare & Nind, 2011).

6.9.4. The SEL (Social-emotional learning) movement: While not always explicitly focused on mindfulness, SEL programs in schools teach critical skills related to emotional intelligence, such as empathy, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution. These programs help children and adolescents navigate their emotions in healthy ways, creating a foundation for inner peace. Research by Durlak et al. (2011) has shown that SEL programs can result in improved academic performance, reduced aggression, and better emotional management.

6.9.5. Community-based initiatives: Community initiatives aimed at fostering inner peace seek to create environments where individuals of all ages can learn how to manage stress, practice mindfulness, and engage in peaceful conflict resolution. These programs often include workshops, retreats, or ongoing group sessions designed to promote personal transformation and social harmony.

6.9.6. The compassionate schools project: In the US, some schools have adopted the Compassionate Schools Project, which includes mindfulness training as part of a broader initiative to cultivate compassion in children. This project teaches students how to handle emotions constructively, practice empathy, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Studies indicate that students participating in these programs show improvements in social skills, emotional regulation, and academic performance (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

6.9.7. Peace education programs by the United Nations: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been actively promoting peace education globally, focusing on conflict resolution, social inclusion, and the cultivation of a culture of peace. UNESCO's Peace Education programs provide educational resources and frameworks for implementing peace-related curricula in schools and communities worldwide. These initiatives encourage young people to develop inner peace through practices of reflection, dialogue, and understanding (UNESCO, 2016).

6.10. Case studies of successful initiatives

6.10.1. The Quiet Time Program (USA): The **Quiet Time Program** is a widely recognized initiative that incorporates the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique into schools to improve students' mental health and emotional well-being. Originally implemented in inner-city schools in the US, the program teaches students a simple meditation technique designed to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and foster inner peace. Evaluations of the program have shown significant improvements in student behavior, academic performance, and emotional well-being. For example, students participating in the Quiet Time Program have exhibited reductions in anxiety, depression, and violence while showing improvements in attention and overall academic achievement (Maharishi University of Management, 2014).

6.10.2. The Inner Peace and Reconciliation Movement (Colombia): In

conflict-ridden Colombia, the **Inner Peace and Reconciliation Movement** has played an important role in promoting social healing after decades of armed conflict. The movement encourages individuals, especially in marginalized communities, to engage in mindfulness and emotional regulation practices to foster peace within themselves and, by extension, in their communities. This initiative includes workshops, dialogues, and group sessions that help people process their emotions, reconcile with others, and break the cycle of violence. Early results from community-based evaluations have demonstrated a reduction in violence and an improvement in local social cohesion (Binner et al., 2017).

6.10.3. The ‘Roots of Empathy’ program (Canada): The **Roots of Empathy** program is an innovative approach to teaching empathy and compassion in elementary schools across Canada. The program uses the unique approach of having a baby visit the classroom regularly, allowing students to observe the baby’s development and emotional responses. The program encourages children to reflect on their own emotions and develop empathy for others. Research has shown that children who participate in the Roots of Empathy program display increased empathy, reduced aggression, and a greater ability to resolve conflicts peacefully. The program is now used in several countries worldwide and is credited with contributing to improved school climates and stronger community relations (Gordon, 2005).

6.10.4. The Peace Circle Process (USA and Canada): The **Peace Circle Process**, used widely in schools and communities in the United States and Canada, offers a restorative approach to conflict resolution and community-building. The process involves bringing people together in a circle to discuss conflicts and issues in a safe, non-judgmental space. Participants share their feelings, listen to others, and collaboratively work toward peaceful solutions. This method has been shown to reduce suspensions and expulsions in schools, as it provides a more empathetic, constructive way of dealing with conflicts compared to traditional disciplinary actions. Case studies from schools that implement peace circles report lower levels of bullying and improved relationships among students (Zehr, 2002).

VII. CONCLUSION

Educational and community initiatives aimed at teaching inner peace are powerful tools for fostering personal transformation and reducing social conflict. Through mindfulness practices, emotional regulation, and compassion-based programs, individuals can develop the skills necessary to maintain inner peace and contribute to peaceful relationships in their communities. Successful case studies like the Quiet Time Program, the Inner Peace and Reconciliation Movement, Roots of Empathy, and the Peace Circle Process demonstrate the tangible benefits of cultivating inner peace in educational and community settings. These initiatives show that when individuals transform themselves, they help create a more peaceful and harmonious world.

7.1. Challenges to inner peace: Addressing obstacles and suggesting solutions

Cultivating inner peace is not a simple process. While many individuals aspire to achieve mental and emotional calmness, various external and internal

obstacles can make this goal difficult to attain. These challenges can stem from societal pressures, violence, economic instability, and personal mental health struggles. In this section, we will explore some of these key obstacles to inner peace and suggest potential solutions to help individuals overcome them.

7.1.1. Societal pressures and expectations

Obstacle: In modern societies, people are often subjected to intense societal pressures that can impede their ability to achieve inner peace. The expectations of success, material wealth, and social status can create feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and stress. The constant comparison to others on social media and in the workplace can further fuel self-doubt, leaving little room for peace of mind (Kross et al., 2013).

Solution: To address these societal pressures, individuals can engage in **mindfulness practices** that encourage present-moment awareness and reduce the impact of external judgment. Mindfulness allows people to become aware of their thoughts and feelings without attachment, fostering acceptance and compassion toward oneself. By recognizing that societal expectations are often artificial and externally imposed, individuals can work on **self-compassion** and embrace personal values that prioritize well-being over external validation (Neff, 2003).

Additionally, **community support systems** can help alleviate societal pressures. By fostering relationships in communities that value personal growth, emotional support, and collective well-being, individuals may feel less isolated and better equipped to navigate societal expectations. Creating environments that prioritize emotional health and well-being over mere achievements can also encourage a shift in cultural values.

7.1.2. Violence and Conflict

Obstacle: Violence and conflict, whether in the form of war, domestic violence, or societal unrest, can significantly disrupt an individual's ability to find inner peace. Exposure to violence can cause trauma, anxiety, depression, and a heightened state of alertness, all of which prevent emotional stability. Additionally, the ongoing conflicts in families, neighborhoods, or countries can lead to a sense of helplessness and despair, which hinders inner calm (van der Kolk, 2014).

Solution: One solution to addressing the impact of violence is through **trauma-informed care**. Programs and interventions that incorporate an understanding of trauma and its effects on the brain and emotional regulation can help individuals process their experiences and rebuild their sense of safety. **Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)** and **trauma-sensitive yoga** have been shown to help individuals with trauma develop coping mechanisms, regain emotional stability, and find moments of peace despite external violence (Khoury et al., 2013).

Furthermore, engaging in **peacebuilding and restorative justice practices** can provide individuals and communities with tools to resolve conflicts peacefully. Restorative justice emphasizes dialogue, healing, and repairing

relationships rather than focusing on punishment, offering a constructive path toward reconciliation in the aftermath of violence (Zehr, 2002). Promoting such practices in schools, communities, and workplaces can help reduce the cycle of violence and foster peace on both an individual and societal level.

7.1.3. Economic instability and poverty

Obstacles: Economic instability, poverty, and job insecurity are significant barriers to inner peace for many individuals. The constant worry about finances, unemployment, or the ability to provide for one's family creates stress, anxiety, and a sense of instability. Chronic economic hardship has been linked to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, making it harder for individuals to focus on emotional and mental well-being (McLoyd, 1998).

Solution: To address the challenge of economic instability, a **social safety net** and **financial literacy programs** can help alleviate the stress associated with economic hardships. Providing access to healthcare, education, and affordable housing can improve the overall quality of life, enabling individuals to focus on cultivating inner peace. **Mindfulness and financial well-being** programs have also been shown to reduce financial stress by encouraging individuals to approach their finances with awareness and thoughtful decision-making (Halliwell et al., 2017).

Additionally, fostering a sense of **community support** through cooperative economics and mutual aid networks can help reduce the individual burden of economic instability. By building networks of solidarity and collaboration, individuals can share resources and offer emotional support, helping to reduce stress and anxiety related to economic hardship.

7.1.4. Mental health struggles

Mental health struggles, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD, represent significant internal barriers to inner peace. Individuals dealing with mental health challenges often experience negative thoughts, emotional dysregulation, and overwhelming stress, which hinder their ability to attain calmness and emotional stability. These challenges may be exacerbated by external factors such as economic instability, societal pressures, or exposure to violence (Kessler et al., 2005).

Solution: Addressing mental health struggles requires a multifaceted approach. Therapy and counseling, including **cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)** and **dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)**, can help individuals manage symptoms of anxiety, depression, and emotional dysregulation. Additionally, **mindfulness-based therapies** such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have been shown to reduce relapse rates for depression and improve overall mental well-being (Segal et al., 2002).

For individuals with severe trauma or PTSD, **trauma-focused therapy** and **EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)** have proven effective in helping individuals process traumatic memories and restore emotional balance (Shapiro, 2001). It is essential for individuals struggling with mental health to seek professional support and develop self-

care practices, such as engaging in physical exercise, practicing meditation, and fostering social connections, to promote emotional healing.

7.1.5. Information overload and digital distractions

Obstacle: The constant bombardment of information through social media, news outlets, and digital devices can create a sense of mental clutter and overwhelm. This **information overload** can increase stress and make it difficult for individuals to maintain focus, calmness, or clarity of thought. The excessive use of digital devices has been linked to higher levels of anxiety and a diminished ability to relax and be present (Rosen et al., 2013).

Solution: To address the challenge of information overload, individuals can practice **digital detoxes**, where they take intentional breaks from technology and social media. This practice allows individuals to disconnect from external distractions and reconnect with themselves. **Mindful technology use**, where individuals set intentional boundaries around their screen time, can also help individuals maintain balance in a digitally connected world.

7.2. Conclusion: A call to action for cultivating inner peace as a foundation for world peace

In conclusion, inner peace is not just a personal aspiration; it is a vital foundation for broader social transformation and global peace. The challenges of modern life – societal pressures, economic instability, violence, and mental health struggles – often create barriers to inner tranquility. Yet, as individuals work to overcome these obstacles, they unlock their capacity to bring about meaningful change in their communities and the world. Cultivating inner peace offers not only personal benefits but also the potential to reduce conflict, foster empathy, and promote mutual understanding across diverse communities.

As we have explored, methods such as mindfulness, emotional intelligence, gratitude, and community-based programs have proven effective in helping individuals find peace within themselves. These practices contribute to improved mental and emotional well-being, enhanced relationships, and more harmonious environments, laying the groundwork for a peaceful society. The ripple effect of individual inner peace can be transformative, influencing families, communities, and eventually contributing to global peace.

7.2.1. For individuals: We all have a role to play in cultivating inner peace. It begins with small steps – practicing mindfulness, nurturing compassion, and embracing self-care. Individuals are encouraged to embark on this journey of self-awareness and emotional regulation, for it is through personal growth and healing that we create the conditions for a more peaceful world. In a world filled with external chaos, taking the time to develop inner peace provides a grounding force that radiates outward.

7.2.2. For communities: Communities have a collective responsibility to create spaces where inner peace practices can be learned and nurtured. By supporting programs that promote emotional well-being, conflict resolution, and empathy-building, we can help individuals not only thrive personally but also contribute to the harmony and growth of the community. Educating

younger generations in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods about the importance of inner peace and conflict resolution creates a lasting culture of peace that reverberates through generations.

7.2.3. For global peace: As we strive for world peace, it is essential to recognize that peace starts within. History has shown that transformative movements, such as those led by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and other peace leaders, began with an individual's commitment to inner peace. These leaders exemplified how inner peace, rooted in love and compassion, can lead to social and political change. The collective pursuit of inner peace is not only a path to personal fulfillment but also the cornerstone for a peaceful world.

By making inner peace a priority in our daily lives and actions, we are contributing to the creation of a world where tolerance, understanding, and compassion prevail. Let us commit ourselves to this journey – not just for our well-being but for the greater good of humanity. Together, we can build a future where inner peace is the foundation upon which lasting world peace is achieved.

The journey to world peace begins within each of us. The more we embrace inner peace, the more we can contribute to the transformation of our communities and, ultimately, the world. This is a call to action for all of us – to embark on this journey of cultivating peace, one moment at a time, and to inspire others to do the same. In this way, we can create a world where peace is not just a distant ideal but a lived reality for all.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE FROM BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Everyone aspires to lead a happy, peaceful, and harmonious life because it is the most important element for every human being to survive in this universe. The standard of life in the material world has grown due to the rapid development of modern technologies, including advanced technology, mobile devices, comfortable accommodations, etc. Despite having better financial lives, people do not appear to be happy or at peace. People tend to be far distant from one another and rely more on modern technological devices nowadays. In particular, people appear to be drawn toward all out-of-sight things, matters, objects, and phenomena in their lives. The rapid development of the global economy is also a factor that leads to a wealthy material life for people. However, there are also effects such as environmental pollution, profit distribution, and unbalanced income – all of this leads to contradictions and conflicts in communities, societies, and countries worldwide. The use of modern equipment today makes people more and more distant from each other, a desire for external material goods, and at the same time, arises many diseases such as depression, stress, etc.

Therefore, even if technology develops, people are still the core and center of development. A nation where citizens live with a standard lifestyle, morality, and good behavior will bring benefits to people, societies, communities, and the whole nation.

Since people are at the center of socio-economic growth across the decades, a country's sustainable development is ensured when its citizens live morally and peacefully as individuals, groups, families, and communities. Sustainable development, according to Buddhists, is the process of creating a sustainable human being that includes the cultivation of each individual, and awareness of Inner Peace since people have an impact on World Peace. In light of this, there has been an evolution toward Buddhist teachings as a means of peace and

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non-violence. This article contributes to the Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace in Buddhist Perspective.

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

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, human lifestyles are improved by modern science and advanced technology. People can work more productively and save labor through the use of modern tools and machinery. Furthermore, as science and technology advance, human lives are enhanced by immeasurable material conveniences, and living standards rise in line. Nevertheless, when the material world becomes more and more appropriate for the demands of humanity, morality within humanity degrades.

In particular, there is a lot of bad news about violence, war, conflict, and disasters every single day once you listen to the radio or read the newspapers. In addition to providing a threat to human life, these objects also cause suffering, anxiety, and stress.

Therefore, it is important to have a balance between the material world and spiritual development, so that the material values and morality of human values are focused and developed together. When referring to the moral lifestyle of human standards, Buddhism provides concepts that go beyond the material world, enriching the inner peace of morality development, non-violence, and the path of liberation to Nirvana (*Nibbāna*). This article outlines some key ideas in Buddhist practice as well as techniques to attain Inner Peace and contribute to World Peace.

II. UNDERSTANDING OF INNER PEACE

People are continually influenced by a variety of situations in life, including jobs, friends, positive and negative factors, fame, love, and so on; each individual always has a “monkey” mind. They are always reflecting, anxious about the past, and dreaming about future events that are still not happening. They must eventually balance their work and personal lives with a lot of responsibilities and anxieties, along with disease. This demonstrates that humans can be both happy and sad. There are a lot of illnesses, neurological problems, and sadness these days. Thus, pursuing Inner Peace and finding ways to address suffering encourages people to get closer to the Buddha’s teachings on living a healthy, happy life and being free from suffering.

The state of a pure, tranquil, and peaceful mind free from attachment, aversion, ignorance, or any other defilement is referred to as Inner Peace. It must be daily trained by leading a life of morality, abiding by precepts, living with a compassionate spirit, and practicing meditation. The concept of Peace has been explained in various ways by many scholars and peacemakers.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Peace is defined as “freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together happily

without disagreements.”¹

This is an important part of human life, and they live and work by happiness. In another explanation, promoting peace is an aspect of education in developing the human personality, one of the visions of the United Nations is as follows:

Education shall be directed toward the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.²

Peace refers only to the aspirations of life, such as happiness for everybody, a society free from conflict, people having a good education, harmony between nations worldwide, or between ethnic groups in the same country. In Buddhism, Peace is highly emphasized by the Inner Peace that numerous admirable qualities are possessed by those who lead ethical lifestyles, practice meditation, and abide in the Buddha’s teachings. The goal of cultivating these virtues is to bring the practitioner closer to the liberation and lifestyle associated with sainthood. According to Buddha’s teaching in *Dhammapada*:

“Peaceful his mind and peaceful his speech and actions too,
Perfect in knowledge of freedom, One Thus is of utmost peace.”³

The noble qualities that each individual possesses are obscured by the three poisons of ignorance, anger, and greed. In addition to meditation, preserving moral values and always aspiring for the two qualities associated with Buddhism are Wisdom (*Paññā*) and Compassion (*Karuṇā*) that will promote bringing out the good qualities that are inherent in every individual. Eventually, the positive deeds, words, and thoughts will increase our compassion for all individuals or small species of sentient beings in the universe. According to the Dalai Lama, world peace starts from the inner peace of each individual. This is not the absence of violence or any conflict but concentrates on the cultivation of Compassion, and will be explained further. The quoted as follows: “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.”⁴

The ultimate goal we all strive for is to find Inner Peace that facilitates individuals to attain liberation from a Buddhist perspective.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR ATTAINING INNER PEACE

When science and contemporary technology aid in saving human time, money, and labor, materials concerns are resolved. Shopping, listening to

¹ Cambridge Dictionary. *Peace*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/peace>.

² United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 217 A (III), 10 December, 1948.

³ *Dhp* 96.

⁴ Dalai Lama XIV, *Dalai Lama Quotes on Peace*, 2014, Retrieved from <https://www.inwardboundnetwork.com/meditation-blog/dalai-lama-peace-quotes>.

music, using a variety of contemporary entertainment technologies, and other activities are just a few of the ways people can amuse themselves and have fun. However, one must rely on mental or spiritual concerns in tangible ways and through real-world experiences. Individuals spend a great deal of time in life ruminating on the past to envision the future. They view everything as permanent and relate everything in life to things that haven't happened yet. People experience distressing feelings as a result of this, both in their current lives and in numerous futures. Most people continuously seek peace far away because they perceive it as something distant and untouchable. They don't realize that serenity is simple right now; it's much farther distant. People face a variety of difficulties as a result of their constant search for the future. Additionally, by staying in the past, they live as though they are dreaming. More than that, they continued to hang onto negative emotions since they made them feel unsatisfied. They imprint into their minds the specific identities of people that caused them to feel unpleasant, and they remember clearly every remark or action that made them uncomfortable.

Therefore, they can set the Motivation for "Here" and "Now" will allow people to conduct themselves more slowly, balance their lives, and conquer their mind.

3.1. Setting the motivation for "here" and "now"

Even one moment dedicated to spiritual practice is highly valued in Buddhism. This is especially so upon the practitioner realizing each kind of mind, such as a delusive quality, and one can discern this kind of mind is arising in that moment, and that is the wisdom of enlightenment. Awareness or mindfulness will be developed through the practice of *Dhamma*, which is reflected in the present moment. Buddha revealed in a disclosure that:

The fact that when a delusive quality is present within you, you discern that a delusive quality is present within you; and when a delusive quality is not present within you, you discern that a delusive quality is not present within you: that is one way in which the Dhamma is visible in the here-&-now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the wise for themselves.⁵

People with conventional views believe that material, possessions, love, and other things remain unchanged. This goes beyond the universal law, according to Buddha, he identified three characteristics: impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*). All conditioned phenomena are impermanent and change momentarily. When one realizes the truth, the practitioner returns to live in the present (now) and enjoys it with a positive attitude. In a book by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh noted about "Here" and "Now", the verse is as follows:

Twenty-Four Brand-New Hours

⁵ AN 6.47. *Sanditthika Sutta: Visible Here-&-Now*, Thanissaro Bhikkhu (trans.), 2004, retrieved from <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an06/an06.047.than.html>.

Every morning, when we wake up, we have twenty-four brand-new hours to live. What a precious gift!

We have the capacity to live in a way that these twenty-four hours will bring peace, joy, and happiness to ourselves and others. Peace is present right here and now, in ourselves and in everything we do and see. The question is whether or not we are in touch with it. We don't have to travel far away to enjoy the blue sky. We don't have to leave our city or even our neighborhood to enjoy the eyes of a beautiful child. Even the air we breathe can be a source of joy.⁶

As a result, when humans return to living "Here" and "Now", they will gradually stop their minds from wandering, reliving the past, or daydreaming about the future. People who try to live "Here" and "Now" also mean that they practice mindfulness in awareness in each moment that happens.

Despite any challenges or unpleasant situations, they sustain their calmness and equanimity, and this practice will bring them happiness and further is Inner Peace.

3.2. Practicing the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*)

The Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*) are among the most significant teachings disclosed by the Sakya Muni Buddha around 2,600 years ago. These truths are:

- (1) The Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkhaṃ Ariyasaccaṃ*)
- (2) The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering (*Dukkhasamudayaṃ Ariyasaccaṃ*)
- (3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkhanirodhaṃ Ariyasaccaṃ*)
- (4) The Noble Truth of the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkhanirodhagāmaṇi Paṭipadā Ariyasaccaṃ*).⁷

The Noble Truth of Suffering was initially disclosed by the Buddha, who had a profound awareness of the realities of life in the universe. Due to ignorance, they failed to realize the infinite number of sufferings, and they considered things to be permanent and could not realize the suffering. After explaining the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Buddha explained the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. In the Four Noble Truths that Buddha taught, the Path of Liberation is the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path (or Three Trainings of Morality – Concentration – Wisdom) to attain the ultimate goal of enlightenment and inner peace.

Morality (*Sīla*) is the foundation and first step that helps one to purify the three

⁶ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step - The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*, UK: Ebury Publishing, 1991, p. 12.

⁷ MN 141. *Saccavibhaṅgasuttaṃ*, Bhikkhu Ānandajoti (compiled), Oxford, accessed May 10, 2024, accessed at: <https://ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Reference/Four-Noble-Truths.htm>.

pure body-speech-mind, transforming from impurity to purity, from unpeace to peace. In this article, only mentions observing five precepts (*pañca-sīla*) as the foundation for the ordination to flourish morality and the factor that makes the community, or nations, develop morally.

The five precepts are the fundamental principles of ethics of Buddhism that must be observed in order to cultivate a moral way of life. The Five Precepts of Buddhism cultivate mindfulness and place significant emphasis on moral behavior. People who observe precepts and live with virtues benefit themselves and society in the present and the future. In Buddhism, the principle of nonviolence (*Ahiṃsā*) is an ideal of universal peace, which can be expanded to include the notion of a peaceful mind. According to the Noble Eightfold Path, Morality is included:

Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*), using kind, honest, and helpful language while staying away from hurtful or insulting words. This could help humans to make the environment more positive and peaceful.

Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*) means acting in a good and sensible way and avoiding doing things that hurt others. This could help an organization or community make sustainability and caring for the environment.

Right Livelihood (*Sammā-ājīva*) is living a life that is an occupation that doesn't hurt or inflict pain on other people. The Five Precepts provide a robust framework for developing moral conduct, empathy, and ethical discernment.

When one practices, the Concentration (*Samādhi*) includes:

Right Effort (*sammā-vāyama*) is to struggle power into doing good, changing things that help people get better, and get rid of bad traits like greed and anger while boosting the growth of good traits like mindfulness, kindness, and wisdom. With the Right Effort approach, each individual builds values like tolerance and empathy. In addition, develop concentration consistently without being worn out, as the right effort would lead one to overcome laziness and experience joy in wholesome actions, cultivating meditative concentration. Within the Buddhist scriptures, meditation is explained to be of two kinds - single-pointed meditation and analytical meditation. The most refined version of single-pointed meditation is called the Calm abiding (*Samatha*), and the most refined version of analytical-pointed meditation is called the Special Insight (*Vipassanā*). Both need to be cultivated if someone aspires to eradicate mental defilements.

Right Mindfulness (*Sammā sati*) focuses on encouraging full awareness and being present in the present moment without judging it. Adopting a mindful approach to thoughts, feelings, and experiences can help them better manage their emotions and biases, which can lead to better decisions and good outcomes. Mindfulness practices that are done right can improve general health, lower stress, and give more energy.

Right Concentration (*Sammā samādhi*) is a significant step on the path to cultivating wisdom. The ability to focus the mind on a single object or place leads to inner peace. This method can help human be more productive, get better results, and even feel more fulfilled and accomplished in their work by keeping

their attention on the tasks at hand. When the mind is calm and serene, the intention of doing anything and seeing the true natures of things as their nature of impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and the emptiness of phenomena become very clear.

It is practicable for one to calm the mind and transform any negative thoughts and defilement by developing a deeper awareness of the bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions. *Samatha* is a great technique for cultivating the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, or *Vipassanā*. “*Vipassanā*” is a *Pāli* phrase that combines two words: “*passana*” is derived from the verb “*passati*”, which means “seeing”, and “*vi*” is a prefix that indicates “clearly” or “variously”. As a result, “*Vipassanā*” refers to the experiencing of phenomena or objects in a clear condition. Here is a detailed description of “*Vipassanā*”:

Commonly, people see life as a happiness or their property. Contradictory, a knowledge which sees life as impermanent, suffering, and uncontrollable, is called *vipassanā*. In the texts, it is explained: “*Aniccā divasena vividhehi ākārehi dhamme passatīti vipassanā*”, meaning the knowledge that sees *saṅkhāra-dhammas* in various ways as impermanent, etc., is *vipassanā*.⁸

In particular, the Buddha taught very details in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* that opened the enlightenment door for practitioners. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness both help practitioners attain peace and increase mindfulness in each moment. The four kinds of Mindfulness include:

Mindfulness of the body (*Kāyānupassanā*): Contemplating the body requires the awareness of subjects like breathing, walking, lying, and sitting positions. Through the breath, awareness through the movement of each cell, the breath, and the flesh. Being aware of the movement of the body, this technique helps people breathe and accept any changes in their bodies with peace of mind.

Mindfulness of feelings (*Vedanānupassanā*): Contemplating feelings or sensations is the process of observing the nature of feelings through awareness without passing judgment or reacting with any of the three kinds of sensations: pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Because unpleasant feeling often leads to aversion, and pleasant feelings may lead to craving or clinging. The practice of equanimity of any kind of sensation helps one accept things that come unsatisfactorily. This can break the bonds of craving in the mind as well as bring more peace of mind.

Mindfulness of Mind (*Cittānupassanā*): to develop the awareness of mind by the absence of three poisons (attachment, aversion, and ignorance). In the end, practicing mindfulness involves developing an awareness of the fleeting nature of things, which can help people live more completely in the present and develop a stronger sense of inner peace and contentment. Buddha gave the

⁸ Ashin Dr. Nandamalabbhivasana, *Samatha and Vipassana: Concentration and Insight Meditation*. Mandalay: Institute of Dhamma Education, 2013, p. 2.

following explanation: “And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in & of itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns, ‘The mind has passion. When the mind is without passion, he discerns, ‘The mind is without passion.’ When the mind has aversion, he discerns, ‘The mind has aversion.’”⁹

Although in this context, the Buddha taught to Monks, but all practitioners can practice and transform their minds to attain the ultimate goal of peace and liberation. In another teaching, the Buddha emphasized that the three poisons are greed (*lōbha*), anger/ hatred (*dōsa*), and delusion (*mōha*), which are the main factors in several causes that lead the human mind to be defiled. The methods mentioned above can help the practitioner to purify the mind. The Buddha noted as follows:

Mendicant is a person who is beset by concepts of identity that emerge from the proliferation of perceptions. If they don’t find anything worth approving, welcoming, or getting attached to in the source from which these arise, just this is the end of the underlying tendencies to desire, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, the desire to be reborn, and ignorance. This is the end of taking up the rod and the sword, the end of quarrels, arguments, and fights, of accusations, divisive speech, and lies. This is where these bad, unskillful qualities cease without anything left over.

That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One got up from his seat and entered his dwelling.¹⁰

Mindfulness of phenomena (*Dhammānupassanā*) is the last of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which involves cultivating awareness of the significant and subtler objects of experience, including the five hindrances (*Pañcanīvaraṇa*), the five aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*), Internal and External Sense Sources (*Salāyatana*), Seven limbs/factors enlightenment (*Bojjhaṅga*), the Four Noble Truths (*Ariya-sacca*).

Mindfulness of phenomena helps to develop greater clarity and insight into the nature of reality. Observing the impermanence and interdependence of all phenomena leads to the realization of the true nature of things and develops a greater understanding of the interconnections of all beings. Humans cultivate compassion and skills and improve family and social relations by acknowledging the universal nature of suffering, the impermanence of composite phenomena, and the interdependent nature of all phenomena. This attains the last of Three Trainings – Wisdom. Right View (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*) is a deep and clear understanding of the reality of things in this universe, such as understanding the Cause and Effect, the Four Noble Truths. The Right View

⁹ MN 10. Thānissaro Bhikkhu, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta -The Establishing of Mindfulness Discourse*, Dhammatalks, accessed Jan 10, 2025, accessed at: <https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN10.html>.

¹⁰ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.) Wisdom Publications, 2000, p. 97.

helps humans to understand the insight and have equanimity when facing bad or unsatisfying conditions. The *Visuddhimagga* explained the Right View as follows: “when a meditator is progressing towards the penetration of the four truths, his eye of understanding with *Nibbāna* as its object eliminates the inherent tendency to ignorance, and that is right view. It has the right seeing as it’s characteristic. Its function is to reveal elements. It is manifested as the abolition of the darkness of ignorance.”¹¹

Right Intention (*Sammā saṅkappa*) is a mental aspect that involves dedication to moral and intellectual development. Three types are renunciation, non-violence, and thoughts of goodwill. The idea of renunciation involves equanimity of attachments and the tranquil mind. Non-violence refers to protecting and being unharmed to others, whereas thoughts of goodwill refer to the safety and kindness to others. During cultivation, observing precepts and meditation to develop wisdom leads to awareness based on wisdom, and the mind becomes calm and peaceful.

People can apply the Noble Eightfold Path to their daily lives by practicing mindfulness or meditation, making ethical decisions through relationships, and participating in training and development programs that focus on developing positive traits such as empathy, compassion, comprehension, and insight. This strategy may enable leaders to develop better measurements, more ethical and long-term company practices, and success based on honesty, wisdom, and shared peace.

3.3. Practicing four immeasurable (*Cattāri Brahmavihārā*)

Sīla has the role of preventing bad deeds or conflict at the lowest level of peace and is the foundation for developing the *samādhi* and *paññā* (insight) for having the right perspective that supports the highest level of inner peace through meditation. However, humans who live in society need to develop a universal love towards other human beings and animals that helps to reduce conflicts and develop peace in the community. The four divine abodes, Four Immeasurable (*Cattāri Brahmavihārā*), include Loving-kindness (*Mettā*); Compassion (*Karuṇā*); Sympathetic joy (*Muditā*); and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*).

Loving-kindness is the unconditional and limitless state of mind for someone’s suffering. This measurable spread to all directions universally to beings both tranquil minds, and develop boundless love without hatred or ill-will to other beings. This means that one develops insight meditation, eradicates mental defilements, and realizes the truths and reality of all phenomena in the universe.

Compassion is a state of mind that wishes to take responsibility in empathy for those suffering and take action for many methods to make all beings free of suffering. This Immeasurable method is conducted by both mental and bodily actions to help beings account for their disease of suffering.

¹¹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.) Wisdom Publications, 2000, p. 524.

If worldly joy is based on wealth, materials, and love, for example, it will fade over time due to impermanence. Joyfulness is being pleased with the joy of others, that is, being happy with others without feeling jealous. In contrast to the third Immeasurable, Sympathetic joy of the Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, who is on the path of enlightenment by his mental state of love, wishes all beings to be at peace and endowed with the source of happiness. The joyfulness is that when one observes others being peaceful, happy, and successful, the mind becomes filled with delight, recognizing the fulfillment of others as one's own. Furthermore, witnessing people doing good things, good deeds, and diligence is an immeasurable discipline. On the other hand, one can sustain inner peace through the state of meditation.

The most significant aspect of the Four Immeasurable meditation route is equanimity meditation. All meditative attainments should be equanimity, beginning with insight meditation. It is very important for people who attain the highest meditative absorption. Furthermore, this is the state of love, wishing others to be free of attachment and aversion by the peace and serenity of mind.

IV. PRACTICING INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE

Nowadays, more and more violence and conflict happen every day in the world newspapers. This violence or conflict is caused between a person, family, community, religion, belief, political, etc., for many reasons such as different points of view, incompatible interests, economic profit shared is different, etc. This is among the things that lead to social conflict, violence happens when disagreements cannot be settled, and there are conflicting goals. Although material and social life have improved due to the market economy and socio-economic progress, separate from that are things like materialistic values, degradation of morality, a pragmatic lifestyle, a devalued traditional culture, etc.

There are countless reasons for conflicts, but the result is often loss, harm, and suffering to individuals, communities, and sometimes even an entire country. To find a solution, many peacemakers have worked to be able to reconcile for peace through many options and solutions, but the optimal solution is still non-violence. In a book written as follows:

Peace and conflict are not antagonists, especially if the conflicting parties use nonviolent, less violent, and non-lethal means of conflict resolution and transformation. Even peace and war are not always antitheses if parties who find themselves reluctantly pulled into war make every effort to reduce the incidence and lethality of violent conflicts and operations during a war and in good faith resolve to end the violence as expeditiously as possible and not to inflict violence.¹²

From the Buddhist perspective, conflict comes from an impure mind, with each individual like a fire that causes conflict and mutual suffering. Buddha

¹² Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data of 423, 2007, p. 9.

taught the impure mind as well as the bad fruits of action for those who conduct bad seeds through body, speech, and mind, and as a result, they can never escape from suffering. The teaching is as follows:

- (1) “Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief;
They are all mind-wrought.
If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts,
Suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.”¹³

It is said that the body and speech perform unwholesome or evil actions, however, the root is generated from the mind. The mind determines all good or bad actions of humans. The Buddha pointed to the impure mind as a reminder to his disciples to know and avoid doing unwholesome actions or sinful things because the law of Cause and Effect is fair and inevitable to all beings. In addition, victory or defeat is also changed by impermanence; victory leads to attachment, and defeat leads to aversion. Those feelings trap humans in the cycle of rebirth, only the practice to attain Inner Peace and liberation is the ultimate truth.

“Victory begets enmity, the defeated dwell in pain. Happily, the peaceful live, discarding both victory and defeat.”¹⁴

In fact, the Buddha’s teachings have been preserved for generations and thousands of years, particularly during the flow of history. The teachings provide the path for all beings to live in harmony and peace, which becomes essential for resolving conflicts that arise between people, groups, and countries. Buddha’s teaching places a strong emphasis on non-violence, compassion, and mindfulness that each individual has the practice, observe the morality of transforming the body, speech, and mind, and share compassion to all people and all kinds of animals or insects in the universe. Furthermore, the training of each individual’s wholesome mind and actions will contribute to the inner peace and harmony of society, the country, and the world.

V. CONCLUSION

On the path to enlightenment, meditation is the key that opens the door to attaining the stages of meditation. Each individual should live a moral lifestyle based on observing precepts, cultivating mindfulness, and always practicing the Noble Eightfold Path, which gradually helps to attain Inner Peace and open the door of liberation. When humans cultivate a wholesome lifestyle, develop compassion, and change selfishness, they will develop the compassion and always feel love for one another. Each practitioner is a torch on understanding the truths in life, realizes that the root cause of suffering will take effort in overcoming the bondage of all afflictions, defilements, and attain a pure state of mind.

¹³ *Dhammapada - The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Buddhārakkhita (trans.), Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2003, p. 21.

¹⁴ *Dhammapada - The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Buddhārakkhita (trans.), Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2003, p.71.

Human life is facing global climate change, natural disasters, and wars that threaten world peace nowadays. Therefore, sharing the loving-kindness and compassion according to the teachings of Buddha will transform some unwholesome mind to the calm mind. By observing the precepts, meditating, and sharing Inner Peace to all sentient beings and World Peace.

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IS THE INTERNAL CRISIS ALSO AN EXTERNAL WAR? A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNAL PEACE TO EXTERNAL PEACE

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Abstract:

As Thich Nhat Hanh (2014) shows us the connection between personal inner peace and peace on earth, on top of the aforesaid opinion, the ultimate aim of this research is to examine the contribution of the teaching of Buddhism for the establishment of peace in society. The concept of peace has become very essential concept than ever before in our society; this is because every living being on this earth suffers abundantly due to the influence of insecurity in life. When we examine the leading causes of the decline of peace in human society, attachment, anger, and delusion have been endangering the quality of human life. As early Buddhism confirms, unhealthy human behavior highly affects the decline of the internal and the external life of a human being. Hence, this study expects to investigate the contribution of the teachings of the Buddha on the concept of peace and how such teachings shall impact the development of human life. Hence, this study expects to examine how early Buddhist texts present a dynamic picture of the concept of peace.

Keywords: *Peace, teaching of Buddhism, human society, attachment, anger and delusion, early Buddhist texts.*

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I. THE CONCEPT OF PEACE AND THE AIM OF BUDDHISM

Juichiro Tanabe (2016) conceptualizes the concept of peace “as subjective and inter-subjective concept”¹ while James J. Hughes examines² the concept of peace in Buddhism: “Buddhism a philosophy of life the search for a permanent state of peace separate from conflict.” Tatsushi Arai (2017) is with the view on the Buddhist concept of peace in the following manner: “A sustained, integrated process of realizing equity, social harmony, and conflict-handling capacity.”³ Peace is not a reified something out there to be achieved. Peace is not a fixed or final state of being but an experimental and evolving process, necessarily imperfect and always tending toward a harmony that it may never fully attain.⁴ At this point, it is possible to conceptualize the concept of peace in Buddhism as a subjective transformation process.

Afore said opinions confirm that the concept of peace is an operative process within us than beyond of human experience. However, in Buddhist texts, the terms *kalahā* (quarrels, *viggaha* (disputes and *vivāda* (contentions as such different levels of social contentions and often refer to speak of conflict from a Buddhist point of view. According to *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta* in *Majjhimanikāya*, the following section has been translated by Nānamoli and Bodhi (2009), thus: “The Buddha illustrates how conflicts come into being as consequences of sensual pleasures: With sensual pleasure as the cause... men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge slippery bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing and there they are wounded by arrows and spears and splashed with boiling liquids and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now this tool is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures, a mass of suffering here and.”⁵

In line with the above context, the origin of the conflict comes into being as a result of obsession with sensual pleasure. In another context, the same discourse continues to say how conflicts begin. Sensual pleasures as the basis, the cause being simply sensual pleasures, kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, *Brahmins* with *Brahmins*, householders with householders, mother quarrels with son, son with mother, father with son, son with father, brother

¹ Juichiro Tanabe (2016), *International Journal of Peace Studies*, volume 21, number 2, Fall 2016, pp. 123 – 9.

² It is a way of dealing with change and conflict...peace is not Peace is not something where in the sky above us where we have always expected to find it, but more at eye level in many of the processes, institutions, and events we take most for granted. Peace is not the rarified and unblemished state of our fondest imaginings, but a more common experience that includes conflict but is not consumed by it.

³ Arai, Tatsushi (2017), “Toward a Buddhist Theory of Conflict Transformation: From Simple Actor-Oriented Conflict to Complex Structural Conflict,” *Peace and Conflict Studies*: vol. 24: No. 2, Article 5, p. 10.

⁴ Hughes, James J. “World Buddhism and the Peace Movement.” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 18, no. 3 (1987), p. 449–68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44481451>. 10/1/2025

quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And here in their quarrels, brawls, and⁵ disputes they attack each other with fists, clods, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now, this too is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures.

In the foregoing pages, we have explained systematically in the case of sensual pleasure and the nature of unsatisfactory shall be causing conflicts. In support of the aforesaid opinion, James J. Hughes (1987) suggests that “our attachment to concepts of what ‘war’ is, and what it is not, interfere with our ability to develop a peaceful way of life. The structural violence of poverty, the isolated violence of death squad terrorism, the domestic violence of wife and child battering, the profound violence against the earth, and therefore humanity, of environmental destruction: All these forms of violence exact as much pain and horror as conventional warfare, and their pacification should be as much as a part of the ‘vision of the peace movement’ as strategic arms limitation.” At this point, James J. Hughes (1987) suggests that the building of peace in our society must operate at the level of the home.

II. HOW CONFLICT BEGETS WHILE ADHERING TO DOGMATIC BELIEFS?

As further notes in the teachings of the Buddha, the origin of the conflicts can be interpreted from a psychological point of view. In other words, during the period of the Buddha, the spiritual sages had talks “to the binary opposition between two perennial world-views, spiritual eternalism (*sassatavāda*) and materialist annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*) ...” These two perennial worldviews have constituted ideological conflicts in the soteriological path. According to what the Buddha says, people who adhere to dogmatic beliefs will experience suffering (*dukkha*). Hence, the Buddhist way of life is free from adhering to beliefs and dogmatical views. Therefore, the role of Buddhism works as an ethical system of independent self-development by not relying upon any forces. As pointed out by David R. Loy, “According to the abrahamic understanding, my violence against a fellow human being is not primarily an offense against him or her, but it is rather a violation of God’s law...” Buddhism understands that everything, both physical and mental phenomena, operate in the world as consequences of causes and conditions *paticcasamuppāda*. Further, the *Ratthapāla Sutta* of MN shows that the world has no shelter and protector, “*loko anabhisāro*.” From a theistic point of view, suffering comes from the violation of God’s rules or commandments. The Buddhist theory of causality shows suffering as a conditional process rather than determinism.

⁵ M I. 86: “*Bhikkhave, kāmahetu kāmanidānaṃ kāmādhikaraṇaṃ kāmānameva hetu asicammaṃ gahetvā, dhanukalāpaṃ sannayhitvā, ubhatobyūḷhaṃ saṅgāmaṃ pakkhandanti usūsupi khippamānesu, sattīsūpi khippamānāsu, asīsūpi vijjotalantesu. Te tattha usūhipi vijjhanti, sattiyāpi vijjhanti, asināpi sīsam chindanti. Te tattha maraṇampi nigacchanti, maraṇamattampi dukkhaṃ. Ayampi, bhikkhave, kāmānaṃ ādīnava sandiṭṭhiko, dukkhakkhandho kāmahetu kāmanidānaṃ kāmādhikaraṇaṃ kāmānameva hetu...*”

As noted by Lama (1974), “suffering is no longer felt as coming from outside, from a hostile world, but as coming from within.” His clarification of the genesis of Dukkha may not be exactly similar to the actual teaching of Buddha: “*Acela-Kassapa Sutta of Samyutta Nikāya* teaches us,

acela-kassapa recluse questions from Buddha “*bho gotama, ‘sayamkatam dukkha’nti?...bho gotama, paramkatam dukkha’nti?...bho gotama, sayamkatañca paramkatañca dukkha’nti?...bho gotama, asayamkāram aparamkāram adhiccasamuppannam dukkha’nti?...Ete te, kassapa, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti ...*”⁶ The Buddha answered this question, showing that the *tathāgata* teaches Dhamma in the middle position. In this context, Buddhism takes into account the importance of the Eightfold Path as a means for the development of intercommunity and Intra-community peaceful behavior. There is no doubt that Buddhism presents the relevance of the Eightfold Path as steps in the management of humans in society.

The extensive clarification of the origin of *dukkha* is mentioned in *Aññatitthiya Sutta of Samyutta Nikāya*: “It is said by me that suffering is arisen conditionally due feeling...”⁷ This theory of causality is central to Buddhism. From Jayatilleke’s point of view, he says that “The Traditionalists, The Rationalists and The Experientialists, among those thinkers Buddha belongs to the category of experientialists. His teachings are potential and connected with human experiences depending on the capability of personal experience rather than personal faith. The process of peace building is a long-term process that can be dynamically established through the understanding of personal choices and the collective choices of human beings. In this case, the Buddha instructs the *Kesaputtiyā Kālāmā* through the rejection of ten grounds.”⁸ At this point, the Buddha tries to bring attention to malicious, deluded, and hateful thoughts. All these thoughts will produce unhappiness and will cause a decline in behavior, both internally and externally. Hence, Buddhism takes into account the importance of moral behavior in physical, verbal, and mental behavior. Thus, Buddhism explains dogmas or adhering to the dogmatism is a major source of social and individual conflict. Juichiro Tanabe (2016), very correctly analyzes how conflicts emerge whenever human beings are subject to “the conditioned mind a mind shaped by a frame of reference that is conventionally accepted as valid and effective in the practical matters of daily life – and analysis of how it turns into a root cause of conflict.”⁹ At this point, he

⁶ Suffering created by oneself?.by another?.by oneself and another? being created nether by oneself nor by another? is there no suffering?

⁷ Sn 12, Bodhi Bhikkhu, (2000), (English Translation). Wisdom Publication, p. 546.

⁸ AN 1.181: “*mā anussavena, mā paramparāya, mā itikirāya, mā pitakasampadānena, mā takkahetu, mā nayahetu, mā ākārāparivitakkena, mā ditthinijjhānakkhantiyā, mā bhābbarūpatāya, mā samano no garūti. Yādā tumhe, kālāmā, attanāva jāneyyātha – ‘ime dhammā akusalā, ime dhammā sāvajjā, ime dhammā viññūgarahitā, ime dhammā samattā samādinā...*”

⁹ Juichiro Tanabe (2016), *International Journal of Peace Studies*, volume 21, number

tries to indicate that the operational process of peace generates at the function of a peaceful mind. As further Bhikkhu Anālayo (2003) observes: “When questioned on his epistemological position, the Buddha placed himself in the third category... he was keenly aware of their limitations.” In this context, it is possible to argue that Buddhism tries to identify the breaking of peace as a consequence of grasping the ideas and opinions dogmatically. It is there that the Buddha teaches the importance of being away from holding into erroneous views in the discourse of *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*. For example, as the *Anguttara Nikāya*.3.95 *Parisā Sutta*¹⁰ illustrates that to resolve the conflict, the understanding of the role of two assemblies is important. The aforementioned *Sutta* that was translated into English by Bhikkhu Sujato goes on to say: What are two assemblies? A shallow assembly and a deep assembly, the first group will only be confined to the behavior of restless, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, For example, as the *Anguttara Nikāya*.3.95 *Parisā Sutta*¹¹ illustrates that to resolve the conflict, the understanding of the role of two assemblies is important. The aforementioned *Sutta* that was translated into English by Bhikkhu Sujato goes on to say: What are two assemblies are? A shallow assembly and a deep assembly: The first group will only be confined to the behavior of restless, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, loose-tongued, unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds and undisciplined faculties. And the second category, what is a deep assembly: An assembly where the mendicants are not restless, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, or loose-tongued, but have established mindfulness, situational awareness, immersion, unified minds, and restrained faculties. This is called a deep assembly. These are the two assemblies. The better of these two assemblies is the deep assembly. This section very correctly posits the Buddhist position on the emergence of conflicts. Hence, the Buddha suggests that to resolve any conflicts among individuals, the cultivation of positive psychological thoughts is a must. In this regard, we could see the well-presented discourse in MN. 31 in response to the conversation that took place between the Buddha and Venerable Anuruddha. At this stage, the Buddha praises the beauty of harmonious living in such a way that “You are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing,

2, Fall, p. 1.

¹⁰ AN. 3. 95: “*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, vaggā parisā? 3.2Idha, bhikkhave, yassaṃ parisāyaṃ bhikkhū bhaṇḍanajātā Kalahājātā vivādāpannā aññamaññaṃ mukhasat-tihi vitudantā viharanti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, vaggā parisā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, samaggā parisā? 4.2Idha, bhikkhave, yassaṃ parisāyaṃ bhikkhū samaggā sammodamānā avivadamānā khīrodakībhūtā aññamaññaṃ piyacakkhūhi sampassantā viharanti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, samaggā parisā...*”

¹¹ AN. 3. 95: “*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, vaggā parisā? 3.2Idha, bhikkhave, yassaṃ parisāyaṃ bhikkhū bhaṇḍanajātā Kalahājātā vivādāpannā aññamaññaṃ mukhasat-tihi vitudantā viharanti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, vaggā parisā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, samaggā parisā? 4.2Idha, bhikkhave, yassaṃ parisāyaṃ bhikkhū samaggā sammodamānā avivadamānā khīrodakībhūtā aññamaññaṃ piyacakkhūhi sampassantā viharanti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, samaggā parisā.*”

blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes. As further discourse goes to say that living with companions in the holy life, maintaining bodily acts of loving-kindness... both openly and privately... maintaining verbal acts of loving-kindness... maintaining mental acts of loving-kindness towards them... we are differently in body, venerable sir, but one in mind..."¹² In respect to the aforesaid discourse, it is possible to understand that in a situation of conflicts can be manageable through the cultivation of virtuous behavior. Premasiri suggests "the Buddhist virtue of abstaining from the destruction of life is violated. The Buddhist principles of non-injury and non-violence and the ideal of a life full of mercy and compassion towards all living beings are violated. Lying, slander, and mutual accusations with abusive language take place. Situations of conflict generate numerous unwholesome and unskilled states (*papakā akusalā* Dhammā), Premasiri (2006). It is, therefore, Buddhism that does not admit the contention as a means of maintaining social justice. Furthermore, the ultimate aim of Buddhism is to get rid of individual suffering. Further, Tatsushi (2017) recognizes that human suffering (*dukkha*) is both the ultimate source of conflict and its most important effect. While nothing in the proposed Buddhist approach to conflict transformation precludes consideration of interpersonal and intergroup relationships that are "external" to the human mind and spirit, it is concerned first and foremost with the inner realm of human life.¹³ According to Buddhism, the root cause of conflicts is ignorance (*avijjā*). To further support this, Tatsushi (2017) goes on to say that "in many conflict-affected societies, cultural and structural violence such as racism and gender-based violence is so deep-rooted that conflict parties remain unaware of it."¹⁴ It is further stated that "Three interrelated types of violence are identified. These are: Direct violence (physical attack), cultural violence (cultural influence that justifies violence), and structural violence (systematic denial of access to opportunities and resources), in many conflict-affected societies, cultural and structural violence such as racism and gender-based violence is so deep-rooted that conflict parties remain unaware of it."¹⁵ On the other hand, according to Buddhism, resilience is one of the most beneficial procedures to manage the conflicts. As a matter of addressing to the concept of peace, Premasiri (2006), holds the opinion that

¹² *Tassa mayham, bhante, imesu āyasmantesu mettā kāyakammam paccupatthitam āvi ceva raho ca; mettā vacīkammam paccupatthitam āvi ceva raho ca; mettā manokammam paccupatthitam āvi ceva raho ca. Tassa mayham, bhante, evam hoti: 'yannūnāham sakam cittam nikkhipitvā imesamyeva āyasmantānam cittassa vasena vatteyyan'ti. So kho aham, bhante, sakam cittam nikkhipitvā imesamyeva āyasmantānam cittassa vasena vattāmi. Nānā hi kho no, bhante, kāyā ekañca pana maññe citta'*ti. <https://suttacentral.net/10/1/2025>

¹³ Arai, Tatsushi. "Toward a Buddhist Theory of Conflict Transformation: From Simple Actor-Oriented Conflict to Complex Structural Conflict," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: vol. 24, no. 2, (2017), 7.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 2

¹⁵ Arai, Tatsushi. "Toward a Buddhist Theory of Conflict Transformation: From Simple Actor-Oriented Conflict to Complex Structural Conflict," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: vol. 24, no. 2, (2017), 2.

the ultimate purpose of Buddhism is aim at the attainment of peace through the ending of unwholesome thought as the attainment of peace (*santi, vūpasama*). He further goes on to say about the peace that we are more accustomed to think of war and conflict, peace and harmony as conditions that apply to the larger society. The conflicts and wars that occur in society are seen in Buddhism as an unavoidable part of samsaric misery (*dukkha*). In connection to this opinion, it is possible to note that the eradication of samsaric suffering is the biggest challenge that obstructs the peace of mind. The Buddha very often illustrates the psychological roots of war, violence, and unrest behavior outflow into the society as a consequence of lack of peace of individual minds. In other words, the war that exists in the external world is nothing other than the war that springs up in the unhealed minds. In this context, we were able to identify two concepts that relate to the emergence of war. Hence, the attachment to the ideological concept and the attachment to the psychological emotions will become the largest symptoms of war.

In a Buddhist context, the effect of actions on the welfare of others is itself a key consideration, as is the effect of an action on spiritual progress, and what the Buddha is seen as having said on it¹⁶ when we go through the early Buddhist teaching concerning MN *Rāhulovāda Sutta* shows that “Rāhula...you should reflect upon that same action thus: Would this action that I wish to do with the body lead to my affliction, or the affliction of others, or the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences? With painful results?”¹⁷ at this junction, Buddhism highly appreciates ethically perfected actions which conducive to cultivating wholesome thoughts. “This action that I have done with the body does not lead to my affliction, or the affliction of others, or the affliction of both, it was a wholesome bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, you can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states”¹⁸ Hence, Buddhism provides vivid picture of how ideological concepts lead for the emergence of diverse conflicts. From the next point onwards, we shall examine a psychological aspect of the conflicts.

III. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

From the Western point of view, when we hear the sound of peace, it refers to the absence of armament conflicts within a particular group of people. Although we generally understand the nature of peace, it always defines the absence of war. In contrast to this opinion, Wijesekera (1978) defines it in such a way that the notion of peace refers to the absence of strife among groups whether they are regarded as classes, communities, races, or nations. It is not customary in the

¹⁶ Peter Harvey (2000), *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 2-3.

¹⁷ *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu and Bodhi Bhikkhu (1995), Wisdom Publication, p. 524-525,

¹⁸ *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu and Bodhi Bhikkhu (1995), (English Translation), Wisdom Publication, p. 525.

idiom of the West to speak of peace as between individuals within the same group. In Buddhism and other Indian religions' emphasis is on the individual aspect of peace, and its social consequences are held to follow only from the centre of the individual's psychology. This expression indicates the opinion that peace is not only concerned about the external aspect of life, and this peace concept is further possible to extend to psychological behavior. The historical teachings of the Buddha emerged more than 2500 years ago in India. The dawn of Buddhism symbolizes the development of the socio-moral aspect of human life.

When we carefully examine the socio-ethical aspect of Buddhist teaching, it impresses with the wealth of information regarding social well-being. This is because, at the contemporary period of the Buddha, the entire social and political system in India was ideologically corrupted. Therefore, to address this matter, Buddhism very often uses the concept of *dukkha*. On the other hand, the Buddha instructs the fact that one has to establish moral behavior for the progress of spiritual development. In this case, Wijesekera (1987) holds the view that man's primary concern is with his inner purification... inner purification involves for the wellness of human and non-human. As Buddhism explains at the outset of the human realm on this earth, all of them were treated, and those beings were known as *Satta*, and the availability of discriminative behavior has not presented. However, through the lapse of time, the diversity of behavior among the beings sprang due to the sparking of psychological afflictions such as attachment, anger, and delusion. Moreover, in the *Suttanipāṭa*, the question is discussed: How do conflicts arise? (*kuto pahūtā kalahā vivādā?*).

To address the above question, let us examine the *Mahānidāna Sutta* where the Buddha explains to Venerable Ānanda the danger of craving and its evil behavior in the following manner: Ānanda, that feeling is a cause of craving. Craving is a cause of seeking. Seeking is a cause of gaining material things. Gaining material things is a cause of evaluation. Evaluation is a cause of desire and lust. Desire (lust) is a cause of attachment. Attachment is a cause of ownership. Ownership is a cause of stinginess. Stinginess is a cause of safeguarding. Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: Taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, disputes, accusations, divisive speech, and lies. The underlying reality of conflicts depends on the pleasing of personal interest therefore "every conflict, large and small, is a human relationship in which one party's desire to attain a certain goal ("I want this land!") stands in the way of the other party's (or multiple parties') pursuit of his or her goal I also want this land... goal-seeking behavior that creates a dilemma for all sides." To end such a dilemmatic situation, Buddhism presents the concept of freedom. On this matter, Hermann (1923) holds the view that "by renouncing outward freedom...the man of genius acquires inner freedom... The lofty spiritual freedom and then was the prerogative of the Buddha. Thus, to transform conflict attitudes, Hermann (1923) widely understands the difference between how Buddhist doctrine and Western thinking deal with the concept of conflict. You cannot change human nature. The Buddhist answer is, of course, you can if you learn how. That knowledge of the possibility and

method of changing human nature is in its essential aspect.” Hence, Buddhism teaches about the possibility of changing the inner nature of human behavior rather than confining to the human conflicting nature. However, the path of freedom in Buddhism, which is known as nibbānic realization, very correctly states that “it is the final cessation, however, of the five aggregates which were the product of greed, hatred and delusion. We may think of it as a state of utter peace, and perhaps we can leave it at that. It is the Deathless State.” At this point, Buddhism holds the view that complete freedom of a conflicted mind shall be transformed at the cessation of all evil roots of the mind.

Let us look at some references presented by the Buddha upon the resolution of conflicts, according to the Vinayapitaka seven principles for settling issues and disputes that have arisen in the community of monks have admitted. For example, whenever a dispute arises among the monastic members, they need to resolve the dispute through the administering of Dhamma and Vinaya. In a situation of contention, the senior monk/s needs to have careful attention to resolve the issue. To do this, the following methods have been recommended by the Buddha. Resolution face-to-face to be applied (*sammukhāvinayo dātabbo*), Resolution through recollection to be granted (*sativinayo dātabbo*), Resolution because of past insanity to be granted (*amūlhavinayo dātabbo*), Acting according to what has been admitted (*patinñātakaranam dātabbam*), Majority decision (*yebhuyyasikā dātabbā*), further penalty (*tassapāpiyasikā dātabbā*) and Covering over as if with grass (*tinavatthārako dātabbo*). These are the seven principles for the settlement of any disciplinary issues that might arise. What is more important at the implementation of all these disciplinary acts, the maintaining of humanistic character is very necessary. As Buddhism admits, the ultimate aim of Buddhist punishment is to release the individual from physical punishment. However, Buddhism, in some situations, admits mentally effective punishments as remedial measures for inner character transformation. In summary, it is no doubt that the entire path of liberation in Buddhism is evolving a viable pragmatic program of moral development for the cultivation of individual freedom from the samsaric existence.

IV. CONCLUSION

The basic aim of the Buddha’s teaching during the 6th century is that the Buddha shows the ideological vacuum that exists in the spire of social, political, and religious institutions. Hence, the Buddha initiates a spiritual development programme. From this journey, he realized through his experience the importance of admitting the peaceful environment among fellow human beings. Especially from a Buddhist soteriological point of view, the Buddha teaches how peace is an important concept: It is because the entire liberation path operates as a consequence of a peaceful mind. Buddhism tries to extend the concept of peace as a way of transformation of emotive and cognitive roots of human behavior. Hence, it is possible to note that war in the external world is nothing other than a consequence of an unhealed mind. To heal such a wounded mind, Buddhism admits the importance of developing positive psychological thoughts: nonattachment, non-hatred, and non-delusion.

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THE FIRST STEP FOR ACHIEVING THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS PEACE

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Abstract:

To manifest world peace, we must first cultivate inner peace. The path to a harmonious world begins within. War cannot be stopped by war – it only ceases through peace. History has shown us time and again that peace, and peace alone, can end conflict. But how does peace arise? It begins within the hearts and minds of individuals. Inner peace is a profound and transformational force, capable of making the world a more favorable and harmonious place. It serves as the foundation for the higher purpose of human existence. Human birth is rare and precious – a result of accumulated merit over countless lifetimes. It is only in the human form that one has the opportunity to transcend the cycle of birth and death, to break free from the chains of suffering. The physical world is the stage upon which human beings must practice the Dhamma, and for this to happen, the world must become a sanctuary of peace. Only through the cultivation of inner peace can we establish and maintain world peace. It is imperative to guide people out of suffering, ignorance, fear, anxiety, doubt, and turmoil. These afflictions keep individuals trapped in bondage, slaves to negative forces that thrive on war, violence, and wrongdoing. Evil seeks to expand its roots through these destructive means, perpetuating chaos and unrest.

Keywords: Peace, inner peace, *Dhamma*, suffering, ignorance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of peace has long been a central theme in human history, cutting across cultures, societies, and religions. However, among the many approaches to peace, the Buddhist philosophy presents a unique and profound method

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for achieving both personal and global tranquility. The centrality of peace in Buddhist teachings is evident from the very moment one engages with the Buddha's words. Inner peace in Buddhism is not simply a mental or emotional state but a transformation process that leads to the cessation of suffering and liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth – known as *samsara*. In this paper, we will examine the Buddhist perspective on cultivating inner peace and how such a state, when realized by individuals, has the potential to foster world peace.

At the core of Buddhist philosophy is the idea of overcoming suffering, a state called *dukkha*, and the path to its cessation. Buddhist teachings offer a pathway to the cessation of suffering by transforming the mind. The process of inner transformation – through mindfulness, meditation, compassion, and ethical conduct – is fundamental not only for personal peace but also for collective global peace. The Buddha's teachings offer a solution that transcends personal conflict and extends to societal and global peace. This paper aims to explore the relationship between cultivating inner peace and creating a peaceful world, rooted in the Buddhist principles of non-violence, loving-kindness, and mindfulness.

By delving into these principles, we will highlight how Buddhism provides practical tools and timeless wisdom for transforming the self, which in turn can impact the broader society. This is particularly important in the context of modern challenges such as war, poverty, environmental degradation, and social injustice, where global peace seems elusive. The practice of cultivating inner peace through Buddhist teachings offers not only a path toward resolving individual inner turmoil but a framework for building a more harmonious, compassionate, and peaceful world.

Buddhism's teachings on inner peace are rooted in the recognition that the mind is the source of both suffering and liberation. According to the Buddha, suffering arises from ignorance (*avijjā*), attachment (*tanhā*), and aversion (*dosa*). The Buddha's insight into the nature of suffering is encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths, which form the foundation of his teachings. The First Noble Truth acknowledges the reality of suffering, while the Second Noble Truth identifies its causes, the Third Noble Truth declares that there is a way to end suffering, and the Fourth Noble Truth outlines the Eightfold Path, the method by which suffering can be transcended.

Central to the concept of inner peace in Buddhism is the idea that peace is not an external state or condition but a result of internal transformation. It is not something that is bestowed upon an individual by others or external circumstances. Rather, it arises from an individual's ability to cultivate a calm and serene mind, free from the afflictions that cause suffering. The Buddha states: "Mind is the forerunner of all things, mind is their master. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows one, as the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart."¹

¹ *Dhp* 1.

This verse encapsulates the profound insight that inner peace can only be achieved by transforming the mind. When the mind is tainted by negative emotions such as greed, hatred, and delusion, the resulting actions lead to suffering. Conversely, when the mind is cultivated through mindfulness and meditation, it becomes a tool for liberation, leading to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of inner peace.

Through practices such as mindfulness meditation (*sati*), practitioners train their minds to be aware of the present moment, to observe thoughts without attachment, and to cultivate a sense of equanimity in the face of life's inevitable ups and downs. This process of mental training is crucial in fostering a mind that is free from the disturbances that lead to suffering.

The teachings of the Buddha highlight the idea that inner peace is not a passive state but an active process. The cultivation of peace requires intention, effort, and consistent practice. The practice of meditation is one of the most effective tools to achieve this, as it allows the practitioner to gain insight into the nature of their own mind, to recognize the causes of suffering, and to cultivate states of mental clarity, tranquility, and concentration. Through meditation, individuals can directly experience the cessation of inner turmoil, leading to peace and liberation.

II. MEDITATION AND ITS ROLE IN CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is perhaps the most essential practice in Buddhism for achieving inner peace. The Buddha placed significant emphasis on meditation as a means of training the mind and transforming it into a vessel of peace and wisdom. Meditation in Buddhism is divided into two primary categories: *Samatha* (calmness) meditation and *vipassanā* (insight) meditation. Both practices play a crucial role in cultivating inner peace, and they complement each other in the path towards liberation.

2.1. *Samatha* meditation (calm abiding)

Samatha meditation is a practice that focuses on developing concentration and tranquility. In *samatha* meditation, the practitioner focuses their attention on a single object, such as the breath, a mantra, or a visual object, in order to still the mind. The goal of *samatha* meditation is to achieve a state of mental calm and clarity. This practice helps the practitioner become more aware of the present moment and less distracted by the endless stream of thoughts, emotions, and sensations that often cause unrest.

In the *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification), the Buddhist scholar Buddhaghosa writes: "Through the practice of concentration, the mind becomes unified, still, and peaceful, and thus, the practitioner is able to overcome the distractions that lead to suffering." As the mind becomes more focused and concentrated, the individual experiences a sense of mental stillness and tranquility. This mental calm allows the practitioner to develop the clarity needed for the next step in the meditation process: insight.

2.2. *Vipassanā* meditation (insight meditation)

Vipassanā meditation, also known as insight meditation, goes beyond

concentration and aims to develop wisdom (*prajñā*) by understanding the true nature of reality. In *vipassanā*, the practitioner observes the impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) of all phenomena. Through direct observation of the body, sensations, thoughts, and emotions, the practitioner gains insight into the nature of existence and the causes of suffering. This insight leads to the cessation of attachment and aversion, which are the root causes of suffering.

The Buddha's teachings on *vipassanā* meditation are outlined in the *Satipatthāna Sutta* (The Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness), where he teaches how to observe the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. By cultivating mindfulness in these areas, the practitioner develops a deep understanding of the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things. In the *Satipatthāna Sutta*, the Buddha states: "And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* practice mindfulness of the body? Here, a *bhikkhu*, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down, folds his legs crosswise, sets his body erect, and establishes mindfulness in front of him."² Through the practice of *vipassanā*, individuals come to understand that suffering is not an inherent part of reality but arises due to ignorance and attachment. As attachment diminishes and wisdom increases, the mind becomes more peaceful, leading to the cultivation of inner peace.

III. BUDDHIST ETHICS AND THE CULTIVATION OF INNER PEACE

Ethical conduct is one of the key elements in the Buddhist path to inner peace. In Buddhism, the moral framework is encapsulated in the Five Precepts, which are ethical guidelines that serve as the foundation for cultivating a peaceful mind and fostering harmonious relationships. These precepts form the basis of the moral training needed to attain the mental clarity required for meditation and wisdom. They include refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and consuming intoxicants. Observing these precepts helps to purify the mind and minimize the disturbances that arise from unwholesome actions.

The Buddha emphasized that ethical conduct is essential for the development of mental discipline and the attainment of peace. Buddha teaches: "The one who has mastered themselves and their actions is the true conqueror, the true hero. They have conquered anger, greed, and ignorance, and thus achieve peace."³

The Five Precepts, when practiced consistently, create a foundation of moral integrity that allows individuals to engage in their lives with a clear conscience. The practice of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, as part of the Noble Eightfold Path, supports the cultivation of a peaceful mind by reducing the mental afflictions that arise from unethical actions.

Additionally, the practice of *karunā* (compassion) and *mettā* (loving-kindness) plays a crucial role in the ethical framework of Buddhism.

² DN 22.

³ Dhṛp 223.

Compassion is the ability to empathize with the suffering of others, while loving-kindness is the wish for others to be happy and free from suffering. These qualities are cultivated through meditation and ethical conduct and serve as antidotes to the negative emotions that lead to conflict and unrest. The Buddha's teachings in the *Metta Sutta* (The Discourse on Loving-Kindness) encourage practitioners to radiate loving-kindness to all beings: "May all beings be happy, may all beings be without disease. May all beings experience the sensation of auspiciousness."⁴

When individuals practice compassion and loving-kindness, they foster not only their own inner peace but also contribute to the peace of those around them. By cultivating these virtues, individuals develop a sense of interconnectedness with all living beings, which leads to a more harmonious and peaceful world.

3.1. The role of mindfulness in cultivating inner peace

Mindfulness (*sati*) is one of the central practices in Buddhism, particularly emphasized in the teachings of the Buddha as a way to cultivate inner peace. It involves paying close attention to the present moment with awareness and without attachment or aversion. Mindfulness is the foundation for both concentration meditation and insight meditation, as it allows practitioners to observe the mind and its fluctuations without being swept away by them.

Mindfulness is practiced in many aspects of life, including eating, walking, working, and interacting with others. In every action, one can practice mindfulness by being fully present and aware of what is happening, without being distracted by past regrets or future worries. This kind of focused attention helps reduce mental clutter and promotes a sense of calm and tranquility. The *Satipatthāna Sutta* is a key text that describes the foundations of mindfulness practice, breaking it down into the contemplation of the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. Through mindfulness of the body, practitioners become aware of their physical sensations and movements. Through mindfulness of feelings, they become aware of their emotional states. Through mindfulness of the mind, they recognize the nature of their thoughts. And through mindfulness of mental objects, they understand the impermanent nature of all phenomena.

The Buddha said in the *Satipatthāna Sutta*: "Mindfulness is the path to the deathless, unmindful is the path to death. The mindful do not die; the unmindful are as if dead."⁵ In the context of inner peace, mindfulness enables practitioners to observe their thoughts and emotions with equanimity, preventing them from becoming overwhelmed by them. It helps to break the cycle of reactive thinking and allows individuals to respond to situations with clarity and composure rather than being driven by habitual reactions.

Furthermore, mindfulness is an essential tool for overcoming the mental afflictions that disturb inner peace. By observing thoughts without attachment

⁴ S. I. 201.

⁵ S. V. 321.

or judgment, practitioners can see the transient nature of all phenomena, including their emotions, thoughts, and perceptions. This realization reduces the grip of negative mental states such as anger, jealousy, and fear, allowing for a more peaceful and balanced mind.

3.2. The interdependence of inner peace and world peace

Buddhism teaches that all phenomena are interconnected, and this interdependence is crucial to understanding how cultivating inner peace contributes to world peace. In the *Māhāsatipatthāna Sutta*, the Buddha emphasizes that the mind and the world are not separate, the mind shapes the world, and the world influences the mind. Therefore, achieving peace within oneself is not an isolated endeavor but one that has profound implications for the world at large.

The principle of *dependent origination* (*pratītyasamutpāda*) illustrates this interconnectedness. It teaches that everything arises in dependence upon conditions and that nothing exists in isolation. Similarly, inner peace arises in dependence upon mental training and ethical conduct, and when individuals cultivate inner peace, they create the conditions for peace to arise in the world. As the Buddha taught in the *Anguttara Nikāya*: “If a person speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows them, as the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart. But if a person speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows them, like a shadow that never leaves.”⁶

When individuals cultivate inner peace, they contribute to the overall well-being of society. Peaceful individuals are less likely to engage in harmful actions, and their positive actions – motivated by compassion, kindness, and wisdom – serve to create a peaceful environment. Furthermore, the practice of cultivating inner peace encourages individuals to recognize the interconnectedness of all beings, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for global peace and sustainability.

In this sense, the cultivation of inner peace is not only an individual pursuit but a collective one. As more individuals achieve inner peace through the practice of Buddhist teachings, the collective energy of peace grows, creating a ripple effect that can contribute to larger societal and global peace. The Buddha’s teachings offer a practical and spiritual framework for overcoming the root causes of conflict and suffering, which are often found in the mind. By addressing these root causes, the cultivation of inner peace can serve as a foundation for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the healing of social divides, and the creation of a harmonious world.

In today’s fast-paced and often chaotic world, the practice of cultivating inner peace is more important than ever. The demands of modern life, including work, social pressures, and technological distractions, often lead to stress, anxiety, and a sense of inner turmoil. However, the teachings of Buddhism provide a timeless framework for navigating these challenges and fostering peace in one’s life.

⁶ A. III. 65.

One of the key practices for cultivating inner peace in the modern world is mindfulness. With the rise of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs and mindfulness meditation, the practice has gained widespread popularity as an effective tool for reducing stress and promoting emotional well-being. Mindfulness can be practiced in various settings, from the workplace to home life, and is particularly beneficial for individuals dealing with the pressures of modern living.

In addition to mindfulness, compassion and loving-kindness are essential qualities for fostering inner peace. In the modern world, where conflict, inequality, and division are prevalent, the practice of compassion can create a more inclusive and understanding society. The Buddha's teachings on compassion encourage individuals to cultivate empathy for others, especially those who are suffering or marginalized.

The practice of loving-kindness, as outlined in the *Mettā Sutta*, can also be a powerful tool for healing societal divisions and promoting unity. By radiating loving-kindness to all beings, regardless of their background, beliefs, or actions, individuals can break down the barriers of hatred and prejudice that contribute to social unrest.

3.3. Meditation as a tool for inner peace

Meditation is at the heart of Buddhist practice and is considered one of the most effective methods for cultivating inner peace. Through meditation, practitioners can quiet the restless mind, cultivate concentration, and develop insight into the nature of reality. The Buddha's teachings on meditation are extensive, and they include both concentration (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) practices, which together lead to the development of a calm, clear, and balanced mind.

The practice of *samatha* meditation involves focusing the mind on a single object, such as the breath, a mantra, or a visual object. By concentrating the mind, the practitioner can achieve a deep state of tranquility known as *jhāna*. This state of deep concentration is accompanied by feelings of bliss and clarity, which provide a glimpse into the potential for mental stillness and peace. The Buddha's teachings on concentration are recorded in various scriptures, including the *Anguttara Nikāya*, where he describes the benefits of developing a concentrated mind: "One who is concentrated gains freedom from mental hindrances and experiences peace of mind."⁷

On the other hand, *vipassanā* meditation is the practice of insight, which involves observing the nature of reality with a direct and clear awareness. Through *vipassanā*, practitioners gain insight into the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of all phenomena. This wisdom leads to the cessation of craving and attachment, which are the root causes of suffering. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha explains that insight meditation leads to liberation: "By seeing the impermanence of all things, one becomes free from

⁷ A. V. 93.

attachment, and by seeing the cessation of suffering, one is liberated.”⁸

Vipassanā meditation is particularly effective in addressing the root causes of suffering, as it allows individuals to observe their thoughts, emotions, and experiences without becoming entangled in them. This practice cultivates a profound sense of peace by helping practitioners understand that all experiences – both pleasant and unpleasant – are transient and ultimately beyond their control. Modern mindfulness meditation is rooted in the traditional Buddhist practices of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. By incorporating mindfulness into daily life, practitioners can experience the benefits of meditation without needing to set aside extended periods of time for formal practice. This is especially relevant in today’s busy world, where finding time for meditation can be challenging.

3.4. The role of wisdom in cultivating inner peace

In Buddhism, wisdom (*prajñā*) is one of the key factors in the development of inner peace. Wisdom is not merely intellectual knowledge but a deep understanding of the nature of reality. Through the cultivation of wisdom, practitioners come to realize the impermanent and interdependent nature of all phenomena, which frees them from attachment and the suffering that arises from it. The Buddha’s teachings on wisdom are encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The first of the Four Noble Truths teaches that suffering exists in life, and the second truth identifies craving as the cause of suffering. The third truth teaches that suffering can be ended, and the fourth truth provides the path to the cessation of suffering. This path is known as the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes the practice of the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Right view, the first factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, is the foundation for the development of wisdom. It involves understanding the nature of suffering, its causes, and the possibility of its cessation. Right view also involves understanding the law of karma – the principle that every action has consequences and that our actions create the conditions for future experiences.

The states: “To understand the nature of suffering and to recognize its cessation is the path to wisdom and liberation.”⁹ As individuals develop wisdom, they begin to see through the illusion of a permanent self and understand the interconnectedness of all beings. This realization reduces attachment and the mental suffering caused by clinging to the idea of a separate self. Wisdom allows practitioners to navigate life with greater clarity, reducing confusion, anxiety, and fear. This clarity leads to inner peace, as individuals no longer react to the world through ignorance and misunderstanding.

Furthermore, wisdom also involves understanding the law of impermanence, which teaches that all things, including our thoughts, emotions, and physical bodies, are constantly changing. By recognizing that nothing is permanent, we

⁸ MN 10.

⁹ *Dhp* 211.

can reduce our attachment to the things that cause us suffering. This insight into impermanence is a crucial aspect of Buddhist practice, as it allows individuals to let go of their attachments and develop a sense of equanimity in the face of change and adversity.

3.5. Cultivating compassion and loving-kindness for lasting peace

In the Buddhist tradition, compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are integral qualities that contribute significantly to cultivating inner peace. These practices involve developing a heart of love and empathy for all beings, without exception, and are key to healing the suffering that exists in the world. Both of these qualities are vital in overcoming personal suffering as well as in building a peaceful and harmonious society.

The Buddha's teachings on compassion and loving-kindness emphasize the importance of extending care and goodwill to others, as this not only benefits others but also brings profound peace to the individual who practices them. In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, the Buddha teaches that compassion is a natural expression of one's inner peace: "The compassionate person is the one who cultivates peace of mind and helps others to be free from suffering."¹⁰

Loving-kindness meditation, often referred to as *mettā bhāvanā*, is a practice that involves silently repeating phrases that express wishes for the well-being and happiness of oneself and others. The Buddha encourages practitioners to expand their circle of loving-kindness from themselves to loved ones, to neutral people, and even to those with whom one may have conflicts. This expansion of goodwill and compassion toward all beings is a profound way to break down the barriers of hatred, anger, and resentment that cause suffering.

Through practicing *mettā*, individuals develop a heart of universal love that transcends boundaries, promoting a deep sense of peace and connectedness. The Buddha's teachings in the *Mettā Sutta* highlight the transformation power of loving-kindness: "Let one cultivate boundless love towards all beings and all living things."¹¹ This unconditional love leads to an experience of peace that arises naturally from the understanding that all beings share the same desire for happiness and the avoidance of suffering.

Moreover, compassion and loving-kindness are not merely practices for individual peace but also have a societal impact. When individuals engage in these practices, they create ripples of peace that affect the collective. A community that practices compassion is one that fosters understanding, reduces conflict, and builds an environment where harmony can thrive.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS ON MODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICES

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the value of Buddhist teachings in the field of psychology and mental health. Practices such as mindfulness and meditation, which have their roots in Buddhism, have

¹⁰ DN 22.

¹¹ Sn 1.8.

been integrated into modern therapeutic techniques and are widely used to treat conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. The fusion of Buddhist wisdom with contemporary psychological practices has led to the development of effective tools for cultivating mental well-being and inner peace.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is one such therapeutic approach that is rooted in Buddhist mindfulness practice. Developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn in the late 1970s, MBSR has become a widely recognized technique for reducing stress and promoting mental health. MBSR incorporates mindfulness meditation and awareness into daily life, helping individuals develop a greater sense of presence and emotional regulation. The effectiveness of MBSR in reducing stress and improving mental health has been extensively studied, with research showing significant improvements in conditions such as chronic pain, anxiety, and depression.

The *Satipatthāna Sutta*, one of the most important Buddhist texts on mindfulness, outlines the four foundations of mindfulness: the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. These foundations provide a framework for developing deep awareness and insight into the nature of one's experience.¹² The Buddha's teachings on mindfulness, as described in this *sutta*, form the basis for modern mindfulness practices, which have been shown to enhance emotional well-being and reduce psychological distress.

The practice of mindfulness cultivates a non-judgmental awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations, which can lead to a profound shift in how individuals relate to their experiences. Rather than reacting to stressors with anxiety or frustration, individuals who practice mindfulness learn to observe their thoughts and feelings with curiosity and acceptance. This allows them to respond more skillfully to challenges, reducing the impact of stress and promoting mental peace.

Additionally, compassion-focused therapy (CFT), developed by Dr. Paul Gilbert, draws upon Buddhist principles of compassion and loving-kindness. CFT aims to help individuals cultivate self-compassion and empathy for others, which has been shown to improve emotional regulation, increase resilience, and reduce feelings of shame and self-criticism. By integrating Buddhist teachings on compassion into therapeutic practices, CFT provides individuals with powerful tools for healing emotional wounds and cultivating inner peace.

V. TRANSFORMING SOCIETY THROUGH BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

The teachings of the Buddha not only provide a pathway for individual peace but also offer solutions for creating a more harmonious and compassionate society. The Buddha's vision of a just and peaceful world is based on the principles of interdependence, compassion, and wisdom. By fostering these values in our communities, we can address the root causes of conflict, injustice, and inequality.

¹² DN 22.

The Buddha's teachings on non-violence (*ahimsā*) are particularly relevant in addressing societal issues. In a world where violence, oppression, and discrimination are widespread, the practice of non-harm is a powerful tool for creating social change. The Buddha emphasized the importance of treating all beings with kindness and respect, regardless of their background or status. Buddha teaches: "All beings fear pain; all beings fear death. Putting oneself in the place of others, one should not kill or cause others to kill."¹³

The application of non-violence in social and political contexts can help address the root causes of conflict and promote a culture of peace. By embracing the teachings of compassion and wisdom, individuals and communities can work towards creating a society that values the well-being and dignity of all people.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the cultivation of inner peace is not only a personal journey but also a collective endeavor that has the potential to transform society. The Buddha's teachings provide a timeless and universal path for achieving peace, wisdom, and compassion. Through practices such as meditation, ethical conduct, mindfulness, and the development of loving-kindness, individuals can attain a state of mental clarity and equanimity that leads to lasting peace. Furthermore, by applying these teachings in society, we can contribute to a more compassionate, just, and harmonious world.

The challenges of modern life such as stress, distraction, and social disconnection can be overcome through the application of Buddhist principles. By cultivating mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom, individuals can transform their minds and hearts, leading to a more peaceful and fulfilling life. The teachings of the Buddha offer a profound and practical guide to navigating the complexities of modern existence, and by incorporating these teachings into our daily lives, we can contribute to the creation of a peaceful and compassionate world.

VI. THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT VIEW AND RIGHT INTENTION

The Buddha's path to enlightenment is often described through the Noble Eightfold Path, which provides a comprehensive guide to cultivating mental peace. Two key elements of this path are Right View and Right Intention, which lay the foundation for all other practices.

Right View involves seeing the world as it truly is, without the distortions of ignorance and attachment. In order to cultivate inner peace, one must first understand the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), its causes, and the path to its cessation. According to the Buddha, suffering is an inherent part of existence, but it is not permanent. By understanding the Four Noble Truths, individuals can transform their perception of reality. For example, understanding that all things are impermanent (*anicca*) can free the mind from attachment and reduce the suffering that arises from clinging to things that will eventually change or disappear.

¹³ *Dhp* 5.

The Buddha's teachings on Right Intention are equally significant. Right Intention involves the cultivation of wholesome thoughts and motivations, such as the intention to act out of compassion, kindness, and wisdom. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha says: "A person with right intention acts with goodwill, with kindness, and with compassion towards all beings, not causing harm in any way."¹⁴

By aligning one's intentions with the path of wisdom and compassion, individuals can generate inner peace that transcends external conditions. The mental clarity gained from cultivating right view and intention serves as a foundation for lasting peace. In modern life, this practice of right view and right intention can have transformative effects. By cultivating a correct understanding of the world and acting with clear, positive intentions, we can reduce personal anxiety and stress, improve our relationships, and contribute to a more harmonious society. For instance, mindfulness practices in daily life can help us become more aware of our thought patterns and mental states, allowing us to respond to difficult situations with wisdom and compassion.

VII. THE ROLE OF MEDITATION IN DEVELOPING INNER PEACE

Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is the most direct and powerful tool for cultivating inner peace in the Buddhist tradition. Through meditation, practitioners can still the mind, develop concentration (*samādhi*), and gain insight into the nature of reality. The Buddha recognized that the mind, when left unchecked, can easily become distracted, agitated, and filled with negative emotions. Meditation is a means of taming the mind and training it to remain calm, focused, and clear.

The Buddha taught many forms of meditation, each designed to develop different aspects of the mind. Mindfulness meditation (*vipassanā*) is one of the most well-known forms, and it involves developing awareness of one's breath, bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions. By observing these phenomena without attachment or aversion, practitioners can cultivate a deep understanding of the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things.

In the *Satipatthāna Sutta*, the Buddha outlines the four foundations of mindfulness, which serve as the basis for mindfulness meditation.¹⁵ These include mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. By practicing mindfulness in each of these areas, practitioners gradually reduce mental afflictions and develop a peaceful, balanced mind.

Insight Meditation (*vipassanā*) is another key practice that allows practitioners to gain insight into the nature of reality. Through deep meditation, individuals come to understand the impermanence of all things, the nature of suffering, and the interconnectedness of all phenomena. The Buddha's teachings in the *Mahāsātipatthāna Sutta* highlight the profound benefits of meditation: "By cultivating mindfulness, one can purify the mind, eliminate

¹⁴ MN 117.

¹⁵ DN 22.

suffering, and experience true peace.”¹⁶ This insight into the nature of existence provides the practitioner with a sense of liberation and inner peace.

In modern life, meditation offers a simple yet profound way to cultivate inner peace. Research has shown that regular meditation can reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and increase feelings of well-being. For individuals living in a fast-paced, stressful world, meditation offers a refuge from the noise and distractions of daily life. Mindfulness meditation, in particular, helps practitioners remain present and aware of their thoughts and emotions, leading to a sense of calm and clarity that persists even in challenging circumstances.

VIII. APPLYING BUDDHIST TEACHINGS TO MODERN SOCIETY

While Buddhism originated more than 2,500 years ago, its teachings remain highly relevant in today’s fast-paced, chaotic world. In the context of modern society, the application of Buddhist principles can help address many of the challenges we face, including stress, conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation.

One key aspect of Buddhist teachings that can be applied in modern society is the concept of interconnectedness (*paticca-samuppāda*). The Buddha taught that all beings and phenomena are interconnected, and that our actions have far-reaching consequences. This understanding can guide individuals and communities in making ethical decisions that promote the well-being of all, not just the self. For example, the principle of interconnectedness can inspire a more compassionate approach to environmental conservation, social justice, and global cooperation.

Buddhist teachings on non-violence (*ahimsā*) can also have a profound impact on modern society. In a world that is often torn apart by conflict and violence, the Buddha’s emphasis on kindness, tolerance, and respect for all beings offers a path towards peace. By embracing non-violence in our thoughts, words, and actions, we can contribute to a more harmonious world.

In modern society, individuals can apply Buddhist teachings in various ways. For example, practicing mindfulness in daily activities can help reduce stress and increase focus. Embracing the values of compassion and loving-kindness can improve relationships and create more harmonious communities. The teachings on interconnectedness can guide ethical decision-making in both personal and professional life, fostering a sense of global responsibility and compassion for the environment and future generations.

IX. THE ROLE OF COMPASSION AND LOVING-KINDNESS IN INNER PEACE

Compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are foundational virtues in Buddhist teachings, often considered to be the heart of the path to peace. The Buddha’s teachings emphasize the importance of cultivating these qualities not just for personal well-being but also as a means of alleviating the

¹⁶ DN 22

suffering of others. Compassion involves recognizing the pain of others and wishing to alleviate it, while loving-kindness involves wishing happiness and well-being for all sentient beings.

The Buddha taught that true peace arises when we transcend selfish concerns and develop a boundless love and compassion for others. The Buddha states: “May all beings be happy; may all beings be free from suffering; may all beings never be separated from the bliss that is without suffering.”¹⁷ This statement encapsulates the essence of *mettā* and *karunā* – a wish for the welfare of all beings, without any exceptions.

In practical terms, the cultivation of compassion and loving-kindness begins with the self. One must first develop compassion for one’s own suffering and limitations before extending this compassion to others. This is why meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*) is one of the core practices in Buddhism. By visualizing oneself and others in a state of happiness, free from suffering, one gradually increases the capacity to love unconditionally and selflessly.

The Buddha’s teachings on compassion are not confined to human beings alone. The compassionate attitude extends to all sentient beings, including animals and even those who may seem to be hostile or harmful. This broader scope of compassion helps eliminate the barriers of division and discrimination that often lead to conflict and suffering in the world.

In modern society, compassion and loving-kindness can be integrated into daily life through simple actions such as helping others in need, speaking with kindness, and approaching conflicts with empathy rather than anger. Research has shown that practicing compassion can improve mental health, reduce stress, and enhance emotional well-being. When applied collectively, compassion can reduce societal divisions, foster cooperation, and encourage a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

By practicing *mettā* meditation, individuals can cultivate an open heart that is not limited by personal biases, prejudices, or fears. This universal love can lead to a more inclusive society where people work together for the common good and strive for collective peace.

X. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL BEINGS: A PATHWAY TO GLOBAL HARMONY

The concept of interconnectedness (*paticca-samuppāda*) is one of the most profound teachings in Buddhism. It refers to the idea that all phenomena arise in dependence on causes and conditions, and nothing exists independently or in isolation. This principle of dependent origination is crucial to understanding both the nature of suffering and the path to its cessation. The Buddha taught that our actions, thoughts, and words have far-reaching consequences, not only for ourselves but also for others and the world around us.

The Buddha explains this concept in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, where he states: “All beings are interconnected, and one cannot cause harm to another without

¹⁷*Dhp* 223

also causing harm to oneself.”¹⁸ This teaching suggests that the well-being of one individual is intimately connected with the well-being of others. When we harm others, we are not only perpetuating suffering in the world but also undermining our own peace and happiness.

The realization of interconnectedness calls for a shift in perspective from a self-centered view of the world to one that acknowledges the shared responsibility we all have in creating a harmonious society. This interconnectedness is not only relevant to human relationships but extends to the natural world as well. The Buddha’s teachings can inspire a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with the environment, fostering a sense of responsibility for protecting the earth and all living beings.

In a globalized world, the realization of interconnectedness has profound implications. It encourages individuals, communities, and nations to recognize the impact of their actions on others. Whether it’s through environmental conservation, promoting social justice, or supporting economic policies that benefit the global community, the concept of interconnectedness calls for a cooperative approach to global challenges.

In practical terms, this interconnectedness can be seen in efforts to address global issues such as climate change, poverty, and human rights. By recognizing how our actions affect others and the world, we can adopt practices that promote global harmony and peace. Through education, advocacy, and policy changes, the understanding of *paticca-samuppāda* can inspire collective action toward a more sustainable and peaceful world.

XI. THE PRACTICE OF EQUANIMITY IN CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is another essential quality in Buddhist teachings that contributes significantly to inner peace. It refers to the ability to remain balanced and undisturbed in the face of both pleasure and pain, gain and loss, praise and blame. Equanimity is the capacity to maintain mental stability, even when external circumstances are challenging or when facing the vicissitudes of life.

The Buddha describes equanimity as an aspect of mental liberation, one of the highest qualities of the mind. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says: “The wise person, with equanimity, neither rejoices in pleasure nor mourns in pain. They understand the impermanent nature of all things.”¹⁹ By cultivating equanimity, individuals are better able to deal with life’s challenges without being overwhelmed by them. Whether facing hardship, success, or failure, equanimity allows one to maintain a calm and peaceful state of mind.

Equanimity is not indifference or detachment, rather, it is the ability to respond to life’s ups and downs with wisdom and understanding, rather than reacting out of attachment or aversion. By developing this quality, one can achieve a profound sense of inner peace, unaffected by the fluctuations of

¹⁸ MN 28.

¹⁹ Dhṛp 223.

external circumstances. In the modern world, equanimity is a crucial quality for maintaining mental and emotional stability. In a society where people are often driven by success, competition, and external validation, equanimity provides an antidote to the constant cycle of desire and disappointment. Practicing equanimity helps reduce anxiety, depression, and stress, as individuals are less likely to be swept away by the fluctuations of life. Mindfulness meditation is one effective method for cultivating equanimity. By observing one's thoughts and emotions without judgment, practitioners can develop the ability to remain calm and centered, regardless of external circumstances. Through regular practice, equanimity becomes a natural response to the ups and downs of life, leading to a more peaceful and resilient mind.

In conclusion, the path to world peace begins with inner peace. The Buddha's teachings provide a comprehensive framework for cultivating the qualities of wisdom, compassion, mindfulness, and equanimity that lead to lasting peace. By understanding the interconnectedness of all beings and the impermanent nature of existence, individuals can transcend their personal desires and ego-driven impulses, replacing them with a sense of collective responsibility and compassion for all sentient beings.

As we move forward in the 21st century, the application of Buddhist principles becomes increasingly relevant in addressing global challenges such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation. The wisdom of the Buddha offers timeless solutions for achieving peace—both within ourselves and in the world around us. By integrating Buddhist teachings into our daily lives, we can begin to transform ourselves and contribute to the creation of a peaceful, harmonious world. The cultivation of inner peace is not only a personal pursuit but a collective responsibility. As more individuals adopt the principles of mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom, we move closer to the vision of a world that is free from suffering, conflict, and division. Through the practice of Buddhism, we can achieve a deep, lasting peace that extends beyond the individual to encompass all sentient beings, fostering a world where peace, love, and wisdom prevail.

XII. MINDFULNESS AS A CATALYST FOR INNER PEACE AND GLOBAL HEALING

Mindfulness (*sati*) plays a central role in Buddhist practice and is recognized for its transformative power in cultivating inner peace. The Buddha defined mindfulness as the practice of being fully aware and attentive to the present moment, without attachment or aversion. Through the development of mindfulness, one can gain clarity of mind, reduce mental disturbances, and ultimately attain peace.

The Buddha's teachings on mindfulness are encapsulated in the *Satipatthāna Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 22),²⁰ where he describes the “four foundations of mindfulness”: Mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), mindfulness of

²⁰DN 22: *Satipatthāna Sutta* (2019), p. 150 – 155.

feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), mindfulness of the mind (*cittānupassanā*), mindfulness of mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*).

These four foundations guide practitioners in observing their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations without becoming entangled in them. Through regular practice, mindfulness allows individuals to develop a deep understanding of the impermanent nature of all things, leading to the cessation of suffering. In the modern world, mindfulness is often associated with stress reduction, emotional regulation, and improved well-being. However, its roots are deeply embedded in Buddhist philosophy. The *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* emphasizes that mindfulness is not merely a technique for relaxation but a profound path toward enlightenment. By cultivating mindfulness in all aspects of life—whether in daily activities, relationships, or work—one can attain lasting peace and clarity. In daily life, mindfulness can be applied to any activity, from eating to walking, to working. By staying fully present and aware of the moment, individuals can break the cycle of habitual thinking and emotional reactivity. This leads to a reduction in anxiety and stress, fostering a peaceful and calm mind. Furthermore, mindfulness encourages individuals to live in harmony with others, fostering understanding, patience, and compassion. Research has also shown that mindfulness practices have numerous health benefits, including improved emotional regulation, reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and better overall well-being. Mindfulness is increasingly recognized as a critical tool in managing the stress and chaos of modern life.

In Buddhism, ethical conduct (*sīla*) is considered an essential aspect of the path to liberation. The Five Precepts and the Eightfold Path outline guidelines for ethical living, which promote harmony, peace, and well-being. By adhering to ethical principles, individuals contribute not only to their own peace but also to the collective peace of society.

The Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) provide the foundation for ethical living: refraining from killing living beings, refraining from stealing, refraining from sexual misconduct, refraining from false speech, refraining from intoxicants that cloud the mind. These ethical guidelines help individuals cultivate respect for life, honesty, and integrity, while also fostering mindfulness and self-awareness. By practicing ethical conduct, individuals create the conditions for peace in their own minds and in their relationships with others.

The Buddha's ethical teachings also extend to the collective sphere. In the *Cakkavatti Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 26),²¹ the Buddha describes the ideal world in which rulers and citizens live according to the principles of justice, compassion, and non-harm. He emphasizes the importance of ethical leadership and governance, where leaders prioritize the welfare of all beings and promote the common good. Ethical conduct is not limited to personal behavior but extends to social responsibility. In today's world, individuals and institutions must take responsibility for their actions and decisions, considering their impact on the environment, human rights, and social justice. Governments and organizations

²¹ DN 26: *Cakkavatti Sutta* (2016), p. 200 – 205.

that prioritize ethical governance and decision-making contribute significantly to the well-being and peace of society. The practice of ethical conduct can also be applied to community-building efforts. By fostering environments of honesty, integrity, and respect, individuals can work together to build inclusive, just, and peaceful societies. Whether through local community initiatives, global human rights advocacy, or environmental protection efforts, ethical conduct is a cornerstone of both individual and collective peace.

XIII. TRANSFORMING CONFLICT THROUGH BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

One of the most profound ways in which Buddhism contributes to world peace is through its teachings on **forgiveness** and **reconciliation**. The Buddha recognized that conflict and suffering are an inherent part of the human condition. However, he also emphasized that forgiveness and the ability to let go of grudges are essential for healing both the individual and society. In the *Dhammapada* (Verse 223), the Buddha teaches: *"Hatred does not cease by hatred, but by love alone is healed. This is an eternal law."*²² This teaching underscores the importance of cultivating love and forgiveness as a means of overcoming conflict and division. In order to find lasting peace, individuals must let go of anger, resentment, and the desire for revenge. Only through forgiveness can true reconciliation take place. The Buddha's teachings on forgiveness are not only relevant on an individual level but also have profound implications for resolving societal conflicts. In situations of war, violence, and political strife, the principles of **forgiveness** and **reconciliation** can serve as powerful tools for healing and rebuilding relationships.

XIV. THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH: A GUIDE TO PEACEFUL LIVING AND GLOBAL UNITY

The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*) is the foundational ethical framework in Buddhism, guiding individuals toward the cessation of suffering and the realization of enlightenment. The Eightfold Path is not a rigid set of rules but rather a series of interconnected practices that, when followed, lead to personal transformation and societal harmony. These principles are a direct road map to creating a peaceful world.

The Buddha outlined the Eightfold Path as follows: Right View (*sammā ditthi*): Understanding the nature of suffering and its cessation. Right Intention (*sammā sankappa*): Cultivating the intention of renunciation, non-ill-will, and harmlessness. Right Speech (*sammā vācā*): Speaking truthfully, kindly, and without divisiveness. Right Action (*sammā kammanta*): Acting with compassion, honesty, and respect for all beings. Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*): Engaging in occupations that do not harm others or the environment. Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*): Making consistent efforts to cultivate wholesome states of mind and abandon harmful ones. Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*): Practicing mindfulness of body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. Right

²² *Dhammapada* (2018), p. 223.

Concentration (*sammā samādhi*): Developing deep meditative concentration and insight.

The Eightfold Path is an integrated approach to ethical living, mental discipline, and wisdom. The Buddha's teachings are clear: true peace arises when all aspects of life—thoughts, words, actions, and livelihood—are aligned with moral integrity and mindful awareness.

On an individual level, the Eightfold Path encourages mindfulness, self-discipline, and ethical conduct. Each of the eight aspects is interconnected, meaning that cultivating one path (e.g., Right Speech) will naturally help improve others (e.g., Right Intention and Right Action). Practicing these principles fosters inner peace and a deeper connection to others, as well as a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the world.

At a societal level, the Eightfold Path provides a framework for creating ethical and just systems. If governments, organizations, and communities embody the principles of Right Livelihood (ethical work practices), Right Speech (truthful communication), and Right Action (compassionate leadership), societies would naturally become more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous.

XV. OVERCOMING CRAVING AND ATTACHMENT FOR INNER AND GLOBAL PEACE

In Buddhism, craving (*tanhā*) and attachment (*upādāna*) are identified as the root causes of suffering. Craving arises from the mind's tendency to desire what it does not have and to avoid what it fears. Attachment, on the other hand, is the mental fixation on objects, experiences, or even relationships that we believe will bring us happiness.

The Buddha taught that the cessation of craving leads to the cessation of suffering. In the *Sanyutta Nikāya* (S. IV. 423), the Buddha explains: "It is craving that leads to suffering. By letting go of craving, one can attain peace and liberation."²³ When individuals cling to desires or attachments, they become entangled in cycles of dissatisfaction. The Buddha's teachings offer a way out—by letting go of attachments and cultivating detachment, we can experience freedom from suffering and peace of mind.

In the context of world peace, craving and attachment manifest as conflicts over resources, power, and control. Nationalism, greed, and competition all stem from the desire to possess more and dominate others. By reducing personal craving and attachment, individuals and societies can shift toward collective well-being and harmony.

On an individual level, reducing craving involves developing contentment and appreciation for what we have, rather than seeking fulfillment through material possessions or external validation. By practicing mindfulness and awareness, individuals can recognize the impermanence of desires and gradually release their attachments.

²³ SN IV (2014), p. 423–425.

On a societal level, reducing attachment can lead to greater cooperation and less conflict. Rather than focusing on individual or national interests, societies that prioritize collective well-being and mutual support can work toward shared goals of peace, sustainability, and social justice. Through global collaboration and the reduction of competition and greed, humanity can work together to address global challenges and build a peaceful future.

The teachings of the Buddha offer profound insights into the cultivation of inner peace, the transformation of individual lives, and the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious world. Through mindfulness, compassion, ethical conduct, forgiveness, and the realization of non-self, Buddhism provides a comprehensive framework for personal and global healing. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, the principles taught by the Buddha remain as relevant as ever. By integrating these teachings into our daily lives and collective consciousness, we can contribute to the creation of a world characterized by peace, understanding, and mutual respect. Let us walk the path of peace, guided by the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha, and strive to create a world where all beings can live in harmony.

XVI. EMBRACING IMPERMANENCE: THE PATH TO PEACE AND ACCEPTANCE

In Buddhist philosophy, impermanence (*anicca*) is a fundamental truth of existence. The Buddha taught that everything in life is in a constant state of flux. Nothing, not even our experiences, emotions, or material possessions, is permanent. By understanding and embracing the concept of impermanence, we can find peace within ourselves and foster a greater acceptance of the ever-changing world around us. Impermanence is not just a philosophical idea but a practical teaching with profound implications for how we approach life. When we cling to the idea of permanence, we set ourselves up for disappointment, anxiety, and suffering. The Buddha's teachings encourage us to let go of attachment to the fleeting nature of life and instead embrace it with a sense of awareness and acceptance.

In the *Dhammapada* (verse 277), the Buddha states: "Everything is temporary. The wise person recognizes this and is free from attachment."²⁴ This teaching reminds us that the impermanence of life should not cause despair but rather inspire a greater appreciation for the present moment. By accepting the transient nature of life, we can live more fully and without unnecessary suffering.

Embracing impermanence involves cultivating a mindset that appreciates the fleeting nature of experiences without clinging to them. When we learn to let go of our expectations and attachments, we free ourselves from the anxiety that often arises when things don't go as planned. This acceptance fosters inner peace, as we come to understand that life's changes are not threats but natural occurrences. On a societal level, recognizing impermanence can lead to greater

²⁴ *Dhp* (2009), p. 277.

harmony and cooperation. In times of conflict, whether personal or global, understanding that situations are temporary can encourage patience and forgiveness. Instead of viewing challenges as insurmountable, we can approach them with a sense of calm and openness, knowing that the cycle of change will eventually bring resolution.

Non-violence, or *ahimsā*, is a core tenet of Buddhist ethics. The Buddha taught that violence, whether physical or mental, stems from ignorance and delusion. When we are driven by greed, hatred, or delusion, we engage in actions that harm others. However, when we cultivate wisdom and compassion, we are able to act in ways that promote peace and healing.

In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha describes non-violence as follows: “The wise person refrains from causing harm to others, for the act of harming oneself or others only leads to suffering.” Non-violence is not merely the absence of physical harm, it extends to our thoughts and words. Harsh speech, hateful thoughts, and discriminatory actions are all forms of violence that perpetuate conflict and suffering in the world. To cultivate non-violence, we must first recognize the harm that arises from our actions, speech, and thoughts. By practicing mindfulness, we can become aware of our intentions and avoid actions that cause harm. This awareness allows us to choose kindness, patience, and understanding, even in the face of difficulty. On a larger scale, the practice of non-violence can bring about social and political change. Movements for justice, equality, and human rights often rely on the principle of non-violence to create positive transformation. Gandhi’s use of *ahimsā* in the Indian independence movement and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s advocacy for non-violent protest in the Civil Rights Movement are prime examples of how non-violence can lead to lasting societal peace.

XVII. COMPASSIONATE ACTION: THE FOUNDATION FOR COLLECTIVE HEALING

Compassion is a core value in Buddhism, and it holds immense significance when discussing the cultivation of inner peace and world peace. The Buddha’s teachings emphasize that compassion (*karunā*) is the antidote to suffering. Compassion is the ability to empathize with the suffering of others and the desire to alleviate that suffering. This quality not only promotes personal peace but also contributes to the healing of societies and the world as a whole. In the *Karunā-pañha Sūtra*, the Buddha expresses: “One who is truly compassionate cannot bear the suffering of others and will take every opportunity to relieve that suffering.” This teaching underscores the active nature of compassion. It is not merely a passive feeling but an intentional transformation force that leads to action. When we genuinely care for the well-being of others, our hearts open, and we become agents of positive change. Compassionate action can manifest in countless ways. On an individual level, it might involve offering support to a friend in need, volunteering in your community, or simply showing kindness to those around you. On a broader scale, compassionate action can lead to social movements that seek to alleviate suffering, whether through providing food to the hungry, healthcare to the sick, or education to the under-served.

One of the most profound examples of compassionate action in Buddhist history is the story of the Buddha's own life. He dedicated his existence to relieving the suffering of others, whether it was through teaching the Dharma or through the various acts of generosity and healing he performed during his life. The Buddha exemplified that true peace and healing come not from passive observation but through active involvement in the welfare of others. Compassion and conflict resolution: When societies embrace compassion, conflicts are less likely to escalate. Compassion fosters understanding and empathy, two essential components of resolving disputes peacefully. Whether it's a personal disagreement, a community issue, or an international conflict, the application of compassion can transform animosity into cooperation.

When individuals and nations prioritize compassionate responses to challenges, the potential for peace increases exponentially. For example, diplomatic efforts grounded in compassion often lead to more sustainable and meaningful resolutions, as opposed to conflict-based negotiations. Compassionate leaders, whether in political, social, or business spheres, are able to see the humanity in others, encouraging dialogue rather than conflict. The role of compassion in global healing: At a global level, compassion can guide us toward healing the deep divisions and disparities present in our world. Issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation often stem from a lack of compassion for others and the planet. By adopting a more compassionate approach to global challenges, we begin to see solutions not just for the problems of today but for the future as well. For instance, global initiatives that aim to tackle climate change or eradicate poverty often succeed when they involve compassionate action from all parties - governments, corporations, and individuals working together with the shared goal of collective well-being. By fostering a compassionate approach to these issues, we create a sense of interconnectedness and collective responsibility.

XVIII. THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN CULTIVATING PEACE

Mindfulness (*sati*) is a cornerstone of Buddhist practice, directly contributing to the cultivation of inner peace. The Buddha often spoke of mindfulness as an essential tool for overcoming distractions, defilement, and mental disturbances, allowing one to remain grounded in the present moment. In the *Satipatthāna Sūtra*, the Buddha describes mindfulness as the key to liberation, noting that when practiced sincerely, it leads to the cessation of suffering. *"Mindfulness is the path to the cessation of suffering, as it allows one to observe reality without distortion, to see things as they truly are."* This statement by the Buddha underscores how mindfulness helps individuals develop a clear and direct awareness of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. With mindfulness, we are not swept away by impulsive reactions but can maintain a peaceful composure amidst the chaos of life. Mindfulness and inner peace: Practicing mindfulness allows individuals to develop a deep sense of inner calm. By cultivating awareness of one's thoughts and emotions, a practitioner can notice mental states before they escalate into stress, anxiety, or anger. This early awareness provides an opportunity to choose a more peaceful, grounded

response instead of reacting impulsively. Through consistent mindfulness practice, an individual strengthens their ability to maintain a peaceful state of mind, even in challenging situations.

Moreover, mindfulness is integral in Buddhist meditation practices, such as *vipassanā* and *zazen*. In these meditative traditions, mindfulness is used to cultivate insight into the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things. By observing the changing flow of sensations, thoughts, and feelings, one gains deeper wisdom into the nature of suffering, which in turn leads to a reduction of suffering. This process of awakening through mindfulness ultimately helps practitioners move toward greater peace and liberation from the cycle of suffering.

Mindfulness and peace in society: On a societal level, the widespread practice of mindfulness has the potential to create more peaceful communities. Mindful individuals are less likely to engage in aggressive or harmful behavior. They are better equipped to resolve conflicts peacefully and with empathy. If more individuals, especially leaders, adopted mindfulness practices, we could see a significant reduction in societal tensions and polarization. In workplaces, schools, and family dynamics, the application of mindfulness can also promote harmony. Mindful listening, for instance, helps individuals truly hear and understand one another, reducing misunderstandings and fostering greater cooperation. Through mindfulness, we cultivate the patience and presence needed for peaceful interactions, fostering a culture of peace within communities.

Global mindfulness: On a global scale, mindfulness can also support peaceful international relations. Countries that promote mindfulness as part of their diplomatic efforts can engage in more thoughtful and compassionate negotiations. Mindfulness encourages decision-makers to pause and reflect before taking action, preventing rash decisions that may lead to conflict. Global leaders who practice mindfulness may become more attuned to the interconnectedness of all nations and peoples, helping to foster unity and collaboration in addressing pressing issues like climate change, war, and inequality.

Mindfulness and conflict resolution: In times of conflict, mindfulness can play a significant role in de-escalating tensions. By practicing mindfulness in the face of conflict, one can become aware of their own reactions and impulses, allowing space for a more thoughtful and measured response. This can prevent the escalation of violence and promote peaceful dialogue. Mindfulness also enables individuals to listen with an open heart and mind, helping them find common ground and mutual understanding, even in challenging situations.

Mindfulness is not only a path to personal peace but also a tool for collective peace. Its transformative effects on individuals can ripple out to influence communities, societies, and ultimately the world. When practiced sincerely, mindfulness fosters a deep connection to the present moment, reduces mental distractions, and cultivates a peaceful and harmonious way of living.

Non-attachment (*vītarāga*) is one of the most profound teachings in Buddhism. The Buddha described attachment as the root of suffering. In

the *Dhammapada*, he stated, “He who is free from attachment, who neither craves nor clings, will know true peace.” Attachment to people, possessions, and desires often leads to suffering because all things are impermanent and subject to change. When we hold on too tightly to anything whether it be a material object, a relationship, or a personal achievement we set ourselves up for inevitable pain when these things inevitably change or are lost.

According to the Buddha’s teachings, true freedom comes from relinquishing attachment. This liberation allows individuals to experience life fully, without fear or resistance. As the Buddha explained in the *Majjhima Nikāya*: “The person who clings to nothing, whose heart is free from desire, experiences the highest form of freedom.” This state of freedom brings profound inner peace as there are no attachments to disturb the mind. Without clinging to outcomes, one can live with equanimity, joy, and serenity.

Non-attachment is not about withdrawing from the world or renouncing joy but about engaging with life in a balanced, peaceful way. When we let go of the need for things to be a certain way or for our happiness to depend on external factors, we create space for inner peace and contentment. By practicing non-attachment, we cultivate a mind that is free from the turbulence of craving and aversion and, instead, filled with a deep sense of acceptance and peace. This allows us to face life’s challenges with grace and resilience, ultimately contributing to the peace of the world.

XIX. COMPASSION: THE HEART OF PEACE

Compassion (*karunā*) is one of the most central and powerful teachings in Buddhism. It is the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering and the willingness to help alleviate that suffering. The Buddha often taught that the practice of compassion is not just an emotional response but an active commitment to help others in need.

In the *Mettā Sūtra*, the Buddha outlined the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karunā*, highlighting their importance for both personal development and the well-being of the world. Compassion, according to the Buddha, is the antidote to hatred, violence, and discrimination, and it is essential for cultivating peace within ourselves and society. “May all beings be free from suffering, may all beings be free from fear.” These words of the Buddha encapsulate the essence of compassion: the sincere desire to see all beings liberated from suffering and its causes.

The Buddha teaches that the basis of compassion is wisdom. Without understanding the nature of suffering and its causes, compassion can become misguided or superficial. However, when compassion is rooted in wisdom, it is transformation—both for the person practicing it and for the world. Compassion with wisdom leads to skillful actions that alleviate suffering without creating further harm.

The cultivation of compassion leads to inner peace in several ways. First, it shifts the focus from self-centered desires to the well-being of others. This reduces the sense of isolation and selfishness, allowing a person to feel more

connected to the world around them. When we act with compassion, we transcend the barriers of ego and experience a deeper sense of interdependence with all living beings.

Moreover, compassion encourages forgiveness. By recognizing that all beings are subject to suffering, we become more empathetic and less likely to hold grudges. The Buddha emphasized that forgiveness is crucial for inner peace, as it frees us from the toxic emotions of anger and resentment. In this sense, compassion and forgiveness are mutually reinforcing qualities that contribute to a peaceful mind.

Compassion is a powerful tool for resolving conflicts. When we approach a conflict with empathy and a genuine desire to understand the suffering of others, we are more likely to reach a peaceful resolution. This requires active listening, a willingness to step into the shoes of the other person, and the ability to recognize their humanity despite differences. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of non-violent communication and respectful dialogue in resolving disputes. Compassionate communication fosters mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

In today's interconnected world, compassion extends beyond local communities and national borders. The challenges of global poverty, climate change, war, and human rights abuses call for a compassionate global response. Compassion can inspire individuals and nations to collaborate in addressing these global issues. Buddhist leaders, such as the Dalai Lama, have long advocated for global compassion, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a heart of compassion toward all beings, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion.

Through compassion, we can create a world where people prioritize the well-being of others, where resources are shared more equitably, and where the suffering of the marginalized is alleviated. Global peace and sustainability are possible when compassion is embraced as a guiding principle in international relations. The practice of compassion is an ongoing process. In Buddhism, there are several methods to develop compassion, such as meditation on loving-kindness (*metta bhāvanā*), where one silently wishes for the happiness and well-being of all beings. Another practice is tonglen, a Tibetan Buddhist practice where one visualizes taking in the suffering of others and sending out relief and compassion in return. Through these practices, individuals gradually develop a deep sense of empathy, and their actions become more aligned with their intention to alleviate suffering. It is important to note that true compassion does not expect anything in return; it is given freely, without attachment to any outcome.

Compassion is at the heart of the Buddha's teachings and is essential for cultivating inner peace and world peace. By practicing compassion, we not only transform ourselves but also contribute to the creation of a peaceful society. Compassion allows us to transcend our limited self-interest and recognize the interconnectedness of all beings. In embracing compassion, we find a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment, which in turn radiates outward, creating a ripple effect of kindness, understanding, and peace.

XX. THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN CULTIVATING PEACE

Mindfulness, or *sati* in Pali, is another cornerstone of Buddhist practice. It refers to the act of paying attention to the present moment with clarity, awareness and without judgment. Mindfulness allows us to observe our thoughts, emotions, and sensations without becoming attached to them. By cultivating mindfulness, we can achieve greater insight into the nature of our mind and emotions, leading to a more peaceful and harmonious life.

In Buddhism, mindfulness is the first step in developing deeper states of meditation and concentration. The *Satipatthāna Sūtra* (The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) outlines the practice of mindfulness through four primary foundations: Mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of the mind, and mindfulness of mental objects. By cultivating mindfulness in these areas, practitioners gradually gain control over their thoughts and emotions, which, in turn, fosters inner peace.

Mindfulness and inner peace: Mindfulness practice helps break the cycle of reactive behavior and habitual thought patterns that often lead to stress, anxiety, and anger. In moments of difficulty, when our minds become agitated, mindfulness enables us to pause, reflect, and respond with greater clarity and equanimity. By learning to stay present and fully engaged with the here and now, we are less likely to be overwhelmed by past regrets or future anxieties.

The Buddha taught that the mind is the source of both suffering and liberation. By practicing mindfulness, we can gradually eliminate the mental afflictions - greed, hatred, and delusion that bind us to suffering. The ability to observe our thoughts and feelings without becoming entangled in them is a powerful tool in cultivating inner peace. When we stop reacting impulsively, we create space for wisdom and compassion to arise.

XXI. THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness of the body: This includes practices such as mindful breathing and body scan techniques, where one directs their awareness to different parts of the body. The Buddha emphasized that the body is impermanent, and by observing it closely, we come to realize the transitory nature of all phenomena. This practice helps reduce attachment to the body and promotes a sense of acceptance and peace with our physical form.

Mindfulness of feelings: This foundation involves observing our feelings without attachment or aversion. Feelings are impermanent and change with time. By cultivating mindfulness of feelings, we can learn to navigate emotions without being overwhelmed by them. Whether experiencing joy, sadness, anger, or fear, mindfulness enables us to see these emotions as passing phenomena rather than identifying with them.

Mindfulness of the mind: This involves observing the mind's tendencies, whether they are positive, negative, or neutral. The Buddha taught that the mind is often filled with distractions and unwholesome thoughts. Mindfulness allows us to discern the nature of these thoughts and emotions and helps us refrain from acting on them impulsively. When we become more aware of

our mental states, we can cultivate a peaceful mind that is free from harmful influences.

Mindfulness of mental objects: This refers to the practice of observing phenomena, such as thoughts, memories, desires, and concepts, as they arise in the mind. By recognizing the impermanent nature of these mental objects, we can reduce attachment and delusion. This leads to greater clarity and peace of mind, as we understand that our thoughts are not who we truly are—they are simply transient mental events.

Mindfulness in daily life: While formal mindfulness practices, such as meditation, are essential, the true power of mindfulness lies in its application to daily life. The Buddha taught that mindfulness should not be confined to the meditation cushion but should permeate every aspect of our lives. Whether we are eating, walking, working, or interacting with others, mindfulness allows us to be fully present and engaged in each moment.

In everyday situations, mindfulness can help us respond to challenges with greater calmness and clarity. When we encounter difficult situations, instead of reacting impulsively, we can pause, observe our thoughts and feelings, and choose a thoughtful and compassionate response. This shift in approach helps reduce stress and fosters inner peace, even during life's inevitable difficulties.

On a global level, mindfulness can be a powerful tool for cultivating peace. In today's fast-paced world, many of the conflicts we face—whether they are personal, social, or political—are fueled by impulsive reactions, miscommunication, and a lack of understanding. By fostering mindfulness in individuals, we can promote greater empathy, reduce conflict, and create a more peaceful society. Mindfulness also encourages the recognition of shared humanity. By practicing mindfulness, we come to see that we are all interconnected, and that the suffering of one is the suffering of all. This recognition of interdependence fosters compassion and cooperation, which are essential for resolving conflicts and promoting peace.

Furthermore, mindfulness can help us become more aware of the impact our actions have on the environment and future generations. By practicing mindfulness concerning our consumption, our treatment of others, and our care for the planet, we can contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious world. The cultivation of mindfulness thus has far-reaching implications not only for individual well-being but for global peace and sustainability.

Mindfulness is a key aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path to enlightenment and liberation in Buddhism. The Eightfold Path is divided into three main sections: Wisdom (Right View and Right Intention), ethical conduct (Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood), and mental discipline (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration). Mindfulness, in particular, is essential for developing the wisdom and mental discipline necessary to free oneself from suffering. By following the Eightfold Path, practitioners gradually develop mindfulness in all aspects of life, leading to greater mental clarity, ethical behavior, and peacefulness. As mindfulness

deepens, one becomes increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of all things and the impermanent nature of reality. This insight leads to the cessation of craving and attachment, the root causes of suffering.

Mindfulness is a powerful practice that is central to Buddhist teachings. It offers a practical and transformational way to cultivate peace within oneself and in the world. By developing mindfulness, we gain insight into the nature of our thoughts, emotions, and actions, and we learn to respond to life's challenges with greater wisdom, compassion, and clarity. The practice of mindfulness, when extended to all areas of life, has the potential to bring about profound personal transformation and contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Compassion, or *karunā* in Pali, is one of the key virtues in Buddhism and a fundamental aspect of cultivating inner peace. It is the ability to empathize with the suffering of others and to wish for their liberation from that suffering. Compassion is not just a passive feeling, it requires active engagement and action to alleviate the suffering of others. In the Buddhist tradition, compassionate action is seen as a necessary step on the path to enlightenment. The Buddha taught that true compassion arises from understanding the nature of suffering, its causes, and the path to its cessation. Compassion is closely linked to wisdom (*paññā*), as it is through the realization of the Four Noble Truths that one develops the motivation to act compassionately. Compassion is not only about helping others but also about transforming one's mind to be more open, loving, and free from self-centeredness.

Compassion is an integral part of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path to liberation in Buddhism. Right Action, Right Speech, and Right Livelihood all play crucial roles in promoting compassionate behavior. Right Action involves refraining from harmful actions and engaging in actions that benefit others, such as helping those in need and acting with kindness and generosity. Right Speech encourages speaking truthfully, gently, and in a way that promotes harmony and understanding. Right Livelihood guides individuals to choose a profession or occupation that does not cause harm to others but rather contributes positively to society. By incorporating compassion into these aspects of the Eightfold Path, individuals can transform their daily lives into a constant expression of love and care for others. Compassionate action helps create a world that is more just, peaceful, and harmonious. It also contributes to the inner peace of the practitioner, as helping others fosters a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and connection with the world around us.

In Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal of the Bodhisattva exemplifies the highest form of compassion. A Bodhisattva is an enlightened being who has made a vow to remain in the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*) in order to assist all sentient beings in achieving liberation. This vow is driven by a deep compassion for all beings, recognizing their suffering and the desire to help them overcome it.

The Bodhisattva Path emphasizes the development of the six perfections (*pāramitā*): Generosity, ethical conduct, patience, joyous effort, concentration, and wisdom. These qualities are cultivated in the service of others, to alleviate

suffering and help others realize their true nature. The Bodhisattva ideal teaches that compassion is not only about helping others in the material sense but also about guiding them towards spiritual awakening. This selfless commitment to the welfare of others is the essence of compassionate action in Buddhism.

Compassion is not only a virtue to be admired from a distance but also a practice to be cultivated in our everyday lives. The Buddha encouraged his followers to develop compassion through meditation and contemplation. The practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness) meditation is one such way to cultivate compassion. In this meditation, practitioners focus on developing loving-kindness towards themselves and others. By repeating phrases such as “May all beings be happy,” “May all beings be free from suffering,” and “May all beings live in peace,” practitioners cultivate a mind that is open, caring, and non-judgmental. *Mettā* meditation helps to transform negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and fear into feelings of warmth and connection. As one practices this meditation, compassion becomes a natural response to the suffering of others. By extending loving-kindness to all beings, regardless of their actions or beliefs, we begin to dissolve the boundaries that separate us from others, fostering a sense of unity and interconnectedness. Suffering is an inherent part of the human experience. However, Buddhism teaches that suffering does not need to be a source of despair. Instead, it can be a source of compassion. When we experience our suffering, we develop an understanding of the pain that others also endure. This shared experience of suffering is the foundation of empathy and compassion.

In his teachings, the Buddha often emphasized the importance of developing compassion for those who are suffering. He taught that we should not only feel compassion for those who are close to us but also for those who are distant, those who may have wronged us, and even for our enemies. By cultivating an expansive heart, we can bring peace to ourselves and the world around us. True compassion transcends boundaries and includes all beings without discrimination. The transformational power of compassionate action extends beyond individual practice. When compassion is expressed collectively, it has the potential to change the world. In a society where conflict, injustice, and inequality are prevalent, compassionate action can bring about healing and reconciliation. In the Buddhist tradition, compassion is seen as a force for social change. The Buddha’s teachings encourage individuals to engage in social and environmental activism, particularly in areas where suffering is most pronounced. Whether through the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of human rights, or environmental conservation, compassionate action can create a world that is more just and peaceful. The practice of compassion also has a ripple effect. When we act compassionately, we inspire others to do the same. This creates a chain reaction of kindness and generosity, transforming communities and societies. By practicing compassion on a personal level, we contribute to the collective peace and well-being of humanity.

The cultivation of compassion is essential for global peace. The Buddha taught that the key to resolving conflicts, whether on an individual or global

scale, is the development of loving-kindness and compassion. In today's world, where divisions between nations, cultures, and religions often lead to violence and strife, compassion is the antidote to hatred and fear. By fostering compassion in all aspects of our lives, we can begin to bridge the divides that separate us from one another. Compassion promotes understanding, tolerance, and empathy, which are essential for peaceful coexistence. When we understand the suffering of others and respond with kindness, we pave the way for dialogue and collaboration. Compassion is the foundation for building a peaceful and harmonious world. Compassion is not merely an ideal to be admired but a practical virtue that can be cultivated and expressed in everyday life. By practicing compassion, we not only bring peace to ourselves but also contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and just world. Compassionate action is at the heart of Buddhist practice and is how we can alleviate the suffering of others and help them realize their full potential. Through the cultivation of compassion, we can transform both our own lives and the world around us, creating a ripple effect of peace, love, and harmony.

XXII. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL BEINGS: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

In Buddhism, the concept of interconnectedness (*pratītyasamutpāda*) is fundamental to understanding the nature of reality. This teaching asserts that all phenomena arise in dependence on other phenomena. Nothing exists independently, everything is interconnected and interdependent. This understanding is crucial in the cultivation of peace because it fosters empathy, compassion, and a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of all beings.

The Buddha taught that all beings are interconnected and that the suffering of one is the suffering of all. This realization leads to the development of compassion, as we recognize that the pain of others is also our own. By understanding the interconnectedness of all things, we can begin to dissolve the barriers that divide us and cultivate a sense of unity with all beings.

The web of life: The metaphor of the “web of life” is often used to describe the interconnectedness of all beings. Just as a spider's web is made up of countless threads that are all interwoven, so too are all beings connected by a vast network of relationships. Each action, no matter how small, has an impact on the whole web. The Buddha taught that our actions, thoughts, and words create ripples that affect not only ourselves but also others and the world around us.

This understanding of interconnectedness leads to the realization that our happiness and suffering are not isolated phenomena. Our actions have far-reaching consequences, and the well-being of others is intimately linked to our own. By cultivating awareness of our interconnectedness, we can act with greater consideration and care for others, knowing that their well-being is inseparable from our own.

XXIII. CONCLUSION

As we have explored throughout this paper, cultivating inner peace is not merely an individual pursuit but a collective one. The principles of Buddhism

offer a timeless and universally applicable path to peace, rooted in wisdom, compassion, and ethical conduct. By practicing mindfulness, meditation, compassion, and ethical living, individuals can create the conditions for lasting peace within themselves and in the world around them.

The journey to inner peace is a gradual process, but it is one that yields profound benefits. Through the cultivation of wisdom, ethical behavior, and loving-kindness, we can overcome the mental afflictions that lead to suffering and create a society that values peace, harmony, and respect for all beings. The Buddha's teachings offer a guide to achieving not only personal peace but also the peace of the world, and through collective effort, we can create a more compassionate and just society for future generations.

The journey to inner peace is not merely a personal pursuit but a collective responsibility that echoes across generations. The Buddha's teachings offer timeless wisdom on cultivating inner tranquility, emphasizing mindfulness, compassion, ethical conduct, and wisdom. By integrating these principles into our daily lives, we do not just attain peace for ourselves but contribute to the peace of the world.

The Buddha's emphasis on *sīla* (ethical conduct), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom) serves as a guiding framework for anyone seeking peace amidst the chaos of modern existence. Ethical conduct lays the foundation for harmonious living, mindfulness strengthens our capacity for awareness and non-reactivity, and wisdom leads us toward deeper understanding and enlightenment. The teachings of *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) reinforce that inner peace cannot be separated from our responsibility to others. By nurturing these qualities, we dissolve hatred, fear, and greed, replacing them with love, understanding, and generosity.

Buddhism teaches that peace is not external – it is cultivated from within. The external world, with its conflicts and sufferings, is a reflection of the collective human mind. If we transform ourselves, we contribute to transforming society. This profound interconnectedness (*pratītyasamutpāda*) reminds us that our efforts toward peace ripple outward, influencing the world in ways beyond our immediate perception. When we embody the virtues of patience, forgiveness, and non-attachment, we break cycles of suffering and contribute to a more harmonious world.

The relevance of these teachings extends beyond the individual. In a time where global conflicts, materialism, and social divisions are prevalent, Buddhism offers a path of reconciliation, wisdom, and universal harmony. Political leaders, social reformers, and individuals alike can draw from the Buddha's teachings to foster peace at all levels- personal, societal, and global. Dhamma is not confined to monastic life, it is a living practice meant for every being. As we conclude this exploration of inner peace, let us remember the Buddha's final words: "Be a lamp unto yourself." The pursuit of peace is a lifelong endeavor, requiring self-reflection, dedication, and continuous practice. True peace is not an end goal but an ongoing process- one that shapes our thoughts, actions, and relationships. By embracing the Dhamma, we step onto a path

that leads not just to personal enlightenment but to the collective awakening of humanity. May we all strive to cultivate inner peace and extend its warmth to the world, making it a place of greater wisdom, compassion, and harmony.

The journey to world peace may seem daunting, but it starts with each one of us. By committing to inner peace and collective efforts, we can create a world where compassion, empathy, and understanding prevail. Together, we can build a future that is not only peaceful but also just, harmonious, and full of hope. Hence its easier to achieve our ultimate goal – The Enlightenment via peace inner and of the world.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEPAL

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Abstract:

In today's interconnected yet divided world, the need for unity and inclusivity is crucial to tackling global challenges. Buddhism offers profound wisdom and practical insights for upholding human dignity, fostering world peace, and ensuring sustainable peace. It teaches that conflict, intolerance, and disharmony stem from desires, hatred, and ignorance. To cultivate peace, tolerance, and harmony, embracing Buddhist values and ethics is essential. This paper investigates how nurturing inner peace through Buddhist teachings can contribute to global peace, with a special emphasis on Nepal's role in promoting peace. It examines the Buddhist concept of inner peace, highlights specific practices to achieve it, and explores how Nepal, as a Buddhist nation, can exemplify a path to global peace.

Keywords: *World peace, sustainable peace, inner peace, compassion, non-violence.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era increasingly defined by division, violence, and environmental crises, the pursuit of peace remains more urgent than ever. Across the globe, issues such as war, political polarization, climate change, and social inequalities demonstrate that external peace is difficult to achieve without corresponding inner peace.

The cultivation of inner peace, however, is not only a personal matter but one that can transform societies and the global community. Buddhism, as a spiritual tradition, provides an integrated philosophy and practice that addresses the internal causes of conflict, which are greed, hatred, and delusion, and promotes the development of wisdom, compassion, and mindfulness. Central to the Buddhist worldview is the idea that peace begins from within

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and that by transforming our internal states, we can contribute to peace on a larger scale.

II. SUSTAINABLE PEACE

The resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 April 2017 recognizes that “sustaining peace... should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing the sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance.”¹

Sustainable peace goes beyond merely the absence of war; it encompasses social stability, justice, economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and the overall well-being of individuals and communities. Achieving this comprehensive peace demands collaboration among governments, civil society, and international organizations. Rooted in the Buddhist principle of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpāda*), genuine peace involves not only the prevention of conflict but also the creation of a harmonious environment where people and communities flourish collectively. This integrative perspective underscores the interconnected nature of peace, striving for a world where balance and harmony are foundational.

Over the centuries, Buddhism has attributed society, social customs, practices, and ways of thinking in the present and past to shaping morals and ethics. Nepal, the birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha, is deeply intertwined with Buddhist philosophy and culture. The teachings of Buddhism have shaped not only the spiritual lives of the Nepalese people but also the nation’s approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In the context of Nepal’s history, struggles, and triumphs, Buddhism provides a valuable framework for cultivating inner peace, which in turn can foster national and global peace.

III. CONCEPT OF PEACE IN BUDDHISM

The concept of peace, which has its roots in the Latin word “Pacisi,” has developed over time from merely signifying calmness and the lack of conflict to embracing broader concepts such as peace, reconciliation, and the well-being of society. Peace manifests in various dimensions, starting with inner peace that builds individual strength, and then extending to interpersonal peace that fosters positive relationships and community cohesion. On a larger scale, social peace serves as a foundation for political stability and economic advancement, promoting justice and inclusivity. At the national and global levels, peace aims to avert conflicts both within and among countries. The differentiation

¹ UN General Assembly (2017): 2.

between negative peace, characterized by the absence of violence, and positive peace, which strives for enduring justice and well-being, underscores the complex nature of peace. Furthermore, cultural peace emphasizes the value of diversity and the need for tolerance.

The teachings of the Buddha on peace, justice, and freedom hold significant relevance, especially in light of the contemporary global landscape shaped by advancements from the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As such, the Buddha is often referred to as the king of peace. Adopting a Buddhist lifestyle involves cultivating a harmonious and tranquil existence, characterized by *samācariya*, which translates to living in harmony and peace with others. This principle fosters inner serenity, enabling individuals to engage in a righteous way of life known as *dhammacariya*. The Buddha introduced these concepts to the world for the first time, establishing the 'kingdom of righteousness,' or *dhammacakka*, symbolizing the governance of moral integrity. In Buddhism, peace signifies the alleviation and resolution of all forms of suffering and distress. It also entails the end of suffering through the extinguishment of desire, which is the root cause of such pain.²

Buddhism, known as a religion of peace and non-violence, emphasizes inner transformation and resolving conflicts to alleviate suffering. The Buddha's initial teachings focus on suffering, its cessation, and the path to peace. The concept of peace holds significance both internally and externally, promoting non-violence (*ahimsā*) and peaceful coexistence within society. A powerful example of non-violence in Buddhist history is narrated in the *Angulimāla Sutta*, which describes the transformation of a serial killer into a follower of the Buddha. The Buddha's third turning of the wheel, the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha*, teaches that all sentient beings have the potential to attain Buddhahood, fostering peaceful coexistence among all beings and with the natural world.

In Buddhism, peace is more than just the lack of conflict or external upheaval; it represents a deep sense of inner balance, wisdom, and compassion that rises above personal cravings and attachments. In this view, peace is achieved when individuals liberate themselves from the ingrained reactions of greed, hatred, and ignorance that lead to suffering. Central to Buddhism is the pursuit of peace, which extends not only to humanity but to all living beings. The Buddha emphasizes that the initial step toward attaining peace is understanding its underlying causes. Buddhism teaches that a peaceful mind leads to peaceful actions, and conversely, peaceful actions contribute to a peaceful mindset.

In Buddhism, the idea of peace carries both negative and positive connotations. In its negative aspect, peace signifies the absence not only of war and conflict but also of systemic violence, including social injustices, inequality, violation of human rights, and the degradation of ecological balance. Conversely, in its positive aspect, peace embodies unity, harmony, freedom,

² Singh (2008): 55.

and justice. Therefore, the concept of peace integrates both the elimination of conflict and the cultivation of a positive and peaceful existence.³

In today's world, people are engulfed in persistent fear, suspicion, and tension. Scientific advancements have given rise to weapons capable of catastrophic destruction. Armed with these modern instruments of death, powerful nations confront and intimidate one another. In this climate of anxiety, stemming from the circumstances they have created themselves, individuals want a way to escape and seek solutions. However, the only true answer lies in the teachings of the Buddha: advocating for non-violence and peace, promoting love and compassion, fostering tolerance and understanding, and upholding truth and wisdom. Additionally, his message emphasizes respect for all life and liberation from selfishness, hatred, and violence.⁴

IV. THE ROLE OF BUDDHIST PRACTICES IN CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

The practice of cultivating inner peace is described as a fundamental teaching of Buddhism. It is noted that achieving inner peace is not merely a destination, but rather a continuous journey that involves embracing various teachings such as mindfulness, compassion, non-attachment, and contentment. To foster inner peace, individuals are encouraged to regularly seek silence and solitude to connect with their inner selves, as this practice is essential for achieving balance. Releasing the desire to control every outcome allows a focus on one's responses to situations, with an emphasis on practicing forgiveness and acceptance. This approach involves letting go of past grievances and embracing things as they are, which contributes to inner peace and is recognized by others as a demonstration of emotional maturity. Inner peace is characterized not only as a personal achievement but also as a quality that radiates outward, influencing the nature of one's relationships and interactions. Carrying a sense of calm and harmony is said to naturally command respect and admiration from those who observe one's transformative journey. Incorporating teachings of forgiveness, contentment, generosity, and equanimity into one's life, alongside the foundational principles previously discussed, is believed to create a significant shift in both character and interpersonal interactions.

4.1. Mindfulness and meditation

The practice of mindfulness (*sati*) is fundamental to the cultivation of inner peace in Buddhism. Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention in a particular way – on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment. Mindfulness brings clarity and insight into our experiences, allowing us to observe the arising and passing of thoughts, feelings, and sensations without becoming entangled in them.

In meditation, mindfulness helps us to cultivate a calm and clear mind, free from the distractions and disturbances that arise from attachment, fear, or anger. The cultivation of mindfulness allows us to experience impermanence

³ Thepsopon (2001): 88.

⁴ Rahula (2002): 86.

and non-attachment, key aspects of Buddhist wisdom, and ultimately leads to peace of mind.

In practice, mindfulness meditation is used to observe the flow of thoughts and feelings, understanding them as transient phenomena that come and go. By seeing things as they truly are – impermanent, suffering, and interdependent – we can develop a sense of calm detachment from both the pleasant and unpleasant experiences of life and feel peace of mind.

Vipassana meditation is one of the most widely practised forms of meditation in Buddhism. It involves observing the nature of the mind and body and gaining insight into the way suffering arises and dissipates. This practice of direct observation and awareness helps practitioners free themselves from the mental patterns of attachment, aversion, and ignorance that fuel conflict.

Through Samatha meditation, practitioners develop concentration and mental stability. In this practice, the mind is trained to focus on a single object, such as the breath, cultivating deep states of concentration and tranquillity. These deep states of meditative absorption are said to lead to mental clarity, allowing for a deeper understanding of the nature of the mind and reality itself.

Together, these meditative practices not only help individuals attain inner peace but also train them to act with wisdom and compassion in their daily lives.

The Noble Eightfold Path offers a roadmap to achieving peace both within and beyond the individual:⁵

(1) Right View (*sammā ditthi*) – understanding the true nature of reality, including the impermanence of all things and the interdependent nature of existence.

(2) Right Intention (*sammā sankappa*) – cultivating a mindset of renunciation, goodwill, and harmlessness toward all beings.

(3) Right Speech (*sammā vācā*) – speaking truthfully, kindly, and harmoniously.

(4) Right Action (*sammā kammānta*) – engaging in ethical behavior that does not harm others.

(5) Right Livelihood (*sammā ājiva*) – choosing a profession that does not harm living beings.

(6) Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*) – cultivating a mental attitude that seeks to overcome unwholesome states and develop wholesome ones.

(7) Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*) – practicing awareness of body, feelings, mind, and phenomena, leading to the cultivation of clarity and insight.

(8) Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*) – developing deep states of meditation that allow the practitioner to transcend the distractions of the mind.

The Four Noble Truths form the foundation of Buddhist teachings, guiding individuals to understand the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), its causes, and the

⁵ MN 1. 10; 135.

way to its cessation.⁶ The Buddha taught that suffering is not merely external but is rooted in the mind, particularly in our attachments and ignorance. Therefore, peace can only be achieved when one gains the wisdom (*prajñā*) to see beyond the illusions that create greed, hatred and delusion.

4.2. Five precepts

In terms of behaviour, individuals cultivate peace daily by adhering to the principles of *pañcasīla*. To avoid conflicts within groups, the Buddha imparts six principles of harmony (*sāraṇiyadhamma*) relevant to all communities. Regarding intergroup and international relations, Buddhist texts are filled with narratives that advocate for non-violent approaches. Buddhism has been widely recognized as a religion promoting peace and non-violence, gaining prominence in various regions worldwide. Today, many individuals seek solace and guidance from Buddhism, particularly as the hope for peace appears to be a distant aspiration amidst ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Russia – Ukraine, along with the spread of terrorist acts into unexpected places like Bali, London, and New York. Therefore, the practice of *pañcasīla* is crucial for world peace.

Interdependence and Global Peace: One of the most significant Buddhist concepts that contribute to a deeper understanding of peace is interdependence or *pratītyasamutpāda*. Buddhism teaches that all things arise in dependence upon conditions and that nothing exists in isolation. This interconnectedness implies that the well-being of one is tied to the well-being of all. The Buddha's teachings on interdependence reveal that our actions, thoughts, and words not only shape our own lives but also influence the lives of others, and indeed, the entire world. At a global level, this interdependence is particularly relevant when considering the global challenges we face, such as climate change, armed conflict, economic inequality, and migration. The impact of one nation's policies on the environment, for example, reverberates across the globe, affecting countless other nations. Similarly, inequality, greed, and political instability in one part of the world can have ripple effects, leading to violence, poverty, and suffering. When we recognize the interconnectedness of all beings and phenomena, we realize that global peace cannot be achieved through isolated or individualistic approaches. Peace must be cultivated in a way that respects the welfare of all, recognizing that peace for one is peace for all. By recognizing that our actions, whether of violence, harm, or kindness, reverberate throughout the interconnected web of life, we are motivated to cultivate peace – not only for ourselves but for the world.

4.3. Compassion and loving-kindness

Furthermore, the practice of the *Brahmavihārās* – loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) – serves as a blueprint for cultivating positive relationships. By developing these qualities internally, individuals naturally project peace and goodwill outward, influencing social harmony. In Buddhism, compassion (*karuṇā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are the essential qualities that transform the heart and

⁶ MN 1. 8; 9; 135.

mind, leading to inner peace. *Mettā* meditation involves sending out wishes of loving-kindness to oneself, loved ones, acquaintances, and even enemies, cultivating an expansive, unconditional love that transcends the boundaries of attachment and hatred and brings peace and harmony.

Compassion, in Buddhist thought, is not merely an emotional reaction but an active intention to alleviate the suffering of others. Compassionate action arises naturally when we recognize the interconnectedness of all beings. By fostering compassion through meditation and practice, we move beyond self-centered concerns and open our hearts to the suffering of others, seeking to alleviate it wherever we can. Compassion is the antidote to the destructive forces of anger, hatred, and revenge that fuel conflict. When individuals cultivate compassion within themselves, they naturally become agents of peace in their families, communities, and nations. Moreover, compassion teaches us to work for a collective well-being, promoting a sense of global interconnectedness and interdependence, and at the top of all global peace.

4.4. Wisdom

Buddhist wisdom (*prajñā*) is the understanding of the true nature of reality. It is the wisdom to recognize the impermanence of all things, the interdependence of all beings, and the emptiness (*sunyatā*) of fixed, inherent existence. By seeing the world through the lens of wisdom, practitioners let go of rigid concepts and attachments that fuel division, fear, and suffering. In the context of global peace, *prajñā* allows us to see beyond the superficial divisions of race, nationality, and religion, recognizing that all people share the same fundamental desires for happiness, safety, and well-being. By understanding the interdependent nature of reality, individuals are inspired to work for others, not just their interests.

The ripple effect of inner peace can be observed in historical and contemporary figures such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and other Buddhist leaders who have championed non-violence and compassion in the face of adversity. Their inner fortitude and clarity have inspired peace movements and mediated conflicts worldwide.

Buddhist leaders such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama have repeatedly stressed the importance of compassion in fostering peace. The Dalai Lama's philosophy of "secular ethics" advocates for compassion and kindness as universal values, regardless of religious background. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, he emphasized that "the more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our sense of well-being becomes." His message underscores the importance of compassion in creating a global community rooted in mutual respect and shared values. Consistently advocated for peace, compassion, and dialogue. His vision of "universal responsibility" calls for all individuals to recognize their duty toward the well-being of others. His global advocacy for compassion, nonviolence, and human rights has inspired movements around the world aimed at fostering unity and reconciliation and global peace.⁷

⁷Thondup (1999): 1 – 10.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen master, has been a tireless advocate for peace and environmental sustainability. His “Engaged Buddhism” philosophy integrates Buddhist practice with social action, calling on individuals and communities to address the suffering in the world through compassionate engagement. His teachings on mindfulness, peace, and social justice have inspired countless movements dedicated to global unity and environmental stewardship.⁸

Aung San Suu Kyi, a Burmese political leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has also drawn from Buddhist teachings in her commitment to democracy, human rights, and peacebuilding. Her message of nonviolence and reconciliation resonates with the Buddhist ideal of resolving conflict through understanding and compassion rather than force.

V. THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN NEPAL’S PEACEBUILDING

Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha, has a long-standing tradition of Buddhist teachings that emphasize peace, non-violence, and reconciliation. These teachings are woven into the cultural fabric of Nepal, influencing not only religious life but also the nation’s approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Nepal, like many countries, has faced periods of conflict, most notably the Nepalese Civil War (1996 – 2006), which caused significant loss of life and displacement. Buddhism has played a central role in the efforts to heal the wounds of the past and build a more peaceful and just society. Monastic communities, religious leaders, and Buddhist organizations have worked tirelessly to promote peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

The Buddhist principle of forgiveness is particularly important in the context of post-conflict healing. After the civil war, many individuals and communities turned to Buddhist teachings and practices to heal from the trauma of violence. Meditation, prayer, and Buddhist rituals were used to foster reconciliation between conflicting parties and help people overcome hatred and resentment. Buddhist monks and nuns played an essential role in guiding individuals through the process of forgiveness and healing.

VI. BUDDHIST PEACE INITIATIVES IN NEPAL

NEPAL-Zone of Peace was a proposition made by the late King Birendra during his coronation ceremony in 1975. King Birendra formally asked the international community to endorse his proposal that the United Nations should declare Nepal a Zone of Peace, to give a new dimension to the Nepalese non-alignment. The proposal had been endorsed by over 130 nations except India but stagnated with the fall of the Panchayat System in 1990.⁹

In the aftermath of the civil war, Buddhist leaders in Nepal were instrumental in advocating for peace and social justice. The Nepalese Peace and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2014, used Buddhist principles of

⁸ Nguyen (1999): 20.

⁹ Sharma (2004): 44.

forgiveness and reconciliation to guide its work. The Commission's goal was to facilitate dialogue between opposing factions, encourage national unity, and promote restorative justice.¹⁰

Buddhist teachings on compassion, loving-kindness, and interconnectedness have long served as a guiding force for grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nepal. Across the country, numerous Buddhist organizations have dedicated themselves to fostering religious tolerance, social equity, and sustainable peace. Groups such as the Nepal Buddhist Federation, Viswo Shanti Vihar, Anandakuti Vihar, Dharmodaya Sabha, YMBA, Dharmakirti Vihar, and Yubak Baudha Mandala have played a crucial role in promoting interfaith dialogue, resolving conflicts through non-violent means, and cultivating a culture of mutual respect. By engaging in community outreach programs, educational initiatives, and social advocacy, these organizations are actively working to dissolve sectarian divides and build an inclusive society where harmony and coexistence flourish.

One of the most significant aspects of Nepal's peacebuilding efforts is the role of Lumbini, the sacred birthplace of the Buddha. Lumbini has become not only a revered pilgrimage site but also a global center for peace initiatives. With its long-standing tradition of hosting international conferences and dialogues centered on the Buddha's teachings, Lumbini continues to be a beacon of non-violence and international brotherhood. These gatherings have been instrumental in reaffirming Nepal's commitment to fostering global peace and interfaith harmony. The First World Buddhist Summit, held in Lumbini in 1998, followed by the Second Summit in 2004, marked the beginning of a series of international conferences aimed at uniting Buddhist leaders, scholars, and practitioners from around the world in a shared mission of peacebuilding. Through these summits, Nepal has solidified its role as a custodian of the Buddha's message of non-violence and as a bridge between diverse spiritual and cultural traditions.

Beyond institutional efforts, the practice of meditation has emerged as a fundamental aspect of applying Buddhist teachings in real life. Over the past three decades, Nepal has witnessed a remarkable growth in meditation centers and monasteries, reflecting an increasing recognition of the transformative power of contemplative practice. Meditation, rooted in the Buddhist understanding of mental purification, serves as a direct path to inner peace by eliminating defilements of the mind and fostering clarity, wisdom, and equanimity. The impact of meditation, however, extends far beyond the individual level; it radiates outward, influencing communities, societies, and even international relations. A mind trained in mindfulness and compassion contributes to a more peaceful household, a more understanding community, and, ultimately, a more harmonious world.

The synergy between institutional peace efforts, pilgrimage-based spiritual gatherings, and personal meditative practice demonstrates that the Buddhist

¹⁰ Nepal Peace and Reconciliation Commission (2014).

approach to peacebuilding is deeply integrated and multidimensional. It operates on multiple levels, addressing both internal transformation and external societal change. As Nepal continues to nurture and expand its role in global peace efforts, its Buddhist institutions, leaders, and practitioners serve as living embodiments of the timeless wisdom of the Buddha - a wisdom that calls for universal compassion, ethical responsibility, and an unwavering commitment to non-violence.

At a time when the world is increasingly divided by conflict, misunderstanding, and social unrest, the Buddhist model of peace - rooted in meditative insight, compassionate action, and interfaith collaboration - offers a compelling roadmap for a more harmonious future. Through the combined efforts of grassroots organizations, international summits, and individual spiritual discipline, Nepal stands as a shining example of how ancient wisdom can be applied to modern challenges, ensuring that the pursuit of peace remains not only a spiritual ideal but a practical and tangible reality for generations to come.

VII. CONCLUSION

The pursuit of inner peace, deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy, offers a profound and transformative pathway toward achieving global peace. As this paper has explored, Buddhist teachings emphasize that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a dynamic and holistic state of being - one that arises from deep understanding, boundless compassion, and a recognition of the fundamental interdependence of all life. The cultivation of inner peace is not an isolated endeavor but a ripple that extends outward, influencing families, communities, and nations. Through the practices of mindfulness, meditation, and ethical conduct, individuals undergo an inner transformation that has far-reaching implications for collective harmony. Buddhist teachings provide a comprehensive framework for the realization of peace by addressing the root causes of suffering and conflict. The human mind, when clouded by ignorance, greed, and hatred, becomes a source of discord; conversely, a mind cultivated in mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom radiates peace, fostering environments of understanding and reconciliation. The concept of *right mindfulness* (*sammā sati*) teaches individuals to observe their thoughts and emotions with clarity, reducing reactivity and aggression. Meanwhile, *right speech* (*sammā vācā*) and *right action* (*sammā kammanta*) emphasize ethical interactions, ensuring that human relationships are built on mutual respect and non-harming. When individuals embody these principles, their interactions become more harmonious and constructive, creating a social fabric rooted in kindness and understanding. As Buddhist philosophy teaches, peace begins in the mind of each individual, but its impact reverberates outward. This interconnected reality means that fostering inner peace is not a retreat from worldly engagement but a powerful act of social transformation.

As the birthplace of the Buddha, Nepal holds a unique position in the global pursuit of peace, offering both historical significance and a living example of how Buddhist principles can be applied to peacebuilding on national and international levels. With its rich spiritual heritage and longstanding commitment to non-violence, Nepal stands as a beacon of hope in a world

often fractured by conflict. The country's historical journey - marked by both challenges and moments of reconciliation - illustrates how Buddhist ethics can guide conflict resolution, foster social justice, and inspire intercommunal harmony. Nepal's peacebuilding efforts can serve as a living testament to the power of Buddhist philosophy in governance, diplomacy, and grassroots activism. The principles of forgiveness, reconciliation, and social equity, deeply embedded in Buddhist traditions, offer a model for societies striving to heal from past divisions. Initiatives that integrate meditation, dialogue, and non-violent conflict resolution reflect the practical application of Buddhist teachings in contemporary settings, reinforcing the idea that peace is not an abstract ideal but a lived experience cultivated through mindful action. As humanity navigates an increasingly complex and divided world, the wisdom of Buddhism offers an urgent reminder of our shared humanity and collective destiny. In an age characterized by political polarization, ecological crises, and social fragmentation, Buddhist insights provide a roadmap for fostering unity, resilience, and ethical responsibility. The recognition of *interdependence* (*pratītyasamutpāda*) compels us to see that no action is isolated - what we cultivate within ourselves inevitably manifests in the world around us.

Global peace is not the responsibility of governments and institutions alone but a collective endeavor that demands the active participation of individuals, communities, and nations. Every act of kindness, patience, and understanding contributes to a culture of peace, while every instance of anger, intolerance, and violence reinforces cycles of suffering. Thus, the commitment to inner transformation is not merely a personal pursuit but a moral imperative for the well-being of our shared world. By nurturing our inner landscapes - developing patience, empathy, and ethical integrity - we facilitate a ripple effect of peace, one that can transform societies, dissolve barriers of hatred, and promote genuine tolerance and coexistence. This is not an abstract vision but a practical and necessary step toward creating a future where harmony prevails, illuminating our collective path through the challenges of our time. As the world faces unprecedented challenges in the 21st century, the need for inner peace as a foundation for global stability has never been more critical. The wisdom of Buddhism offers not only profound insights but also practical methods - through meditative discipline, ethical engagement, and the cultivation of compassion—to navigate these turbulent times. It teaches us that lasting peace is not achieved through external force but through inner clarity, moral courage, and collective wisdom. Therefore, embracing a Buddhist perspective on inner peace is not simply a philosophical exercise but an urgent necessity in shaping a world that is more just, compassionate, and sustainable. By aligning our lives with these principles, we take a meaningful step toward realizing a global society where peace is not an aspiration but a lived reality - a world in which the teachings of the Buddha continue to illuminate the path forward for generations to come.

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DIALOGUE AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE



FAITH AND TOLENCE, PEACE WITHIN AND PEACE WITHOUT

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Abstract:

Human beings as a rational being have invented various types of organizations to face the challenges of life, and religion is one of them. One of the main challenges he had to face is how to overcome suffering and how to achieve happiness. Human enterprises from the inception of mankind to present day revolved around finding solutions to these challenges. Historically, we can find three main approaches in this regard; metaphysical approach, intellectual approach, and empirical approach. Metaphysical and intellectual approaches are rather religious whereas the empirical approach is rather non-religious. On the other hand, theistic religions advocate a metaphysical approach whereas non-theistic religions advocate an intellectual approach. Taking this point into account, religions in the world can be divided into two categories; theistic and non-theistic. Among those theistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are considered monotheistic religions, whereas Buddhism and Jainism are non-theistic religions. Taking geographical expansions and the number of followers into account, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are considered world religions. Though not falling under the category of World religion, Zoroastrianism in Iran, Jainism and Sikhism in India, Confucianism and Taoism in China were and are popular religions in the world.

Keywords: *Buddhism, faith, inner peace, world peace, unity of mankind, interfaith dialogue, non-violence, moral conduct, spiritual enlightenment, ethical living.*

I. DIVERSITY OF RELIGION

Founders of those religions; Abraham in Judaism, Jesus Christ in Christianity, Mohammad in Islam, Shakyamuni Siddhartha Gautama in Buddhism, Zoroaster in Zoroastrianism, Mahavira in Jainism, Guru Nanak in Sikhism, Confucius in Confucianism and Tao-tze in Taoism are intellectual

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founders that are to be honoured by all equally as all them introduced some doctrines to lead mankind to overcome suffering of beings in this life, next life or forever. Different founders and different doctrines, all are for the benefit and well-being of mankind and not for their destruction. Therefore, thousands of people followed their doctrines while those founders were living, and millions and billions of people followed and still follow their doctrines. Those individual doctrines made great civilisations in the world. Their doctrines may be different from each other because they were taught in different backgrounds for different people in different locations.

Thousands of religions may have appeared in the world, but religions that are appealing to the needs of people remained, and some of those religions have been spread over the boundaries of their birthplaces. It means that the doctrines of those intellectual founders are universally applicable without the limits of nationality, ethnicity, geography, or whatever other divisions because those are humanistic teachings. Indeed, each religion possesses unique characteristics to identify the difference of one religion from the other, and there is no unity of religion. The beauty of the religions and their teachings depends on the uniqueness of the individual teachings. The development of transportation and information technology has shortened the world. Now we can know and see cultures, civilizations, and doctrines that we were unknown before. How interesting it is to study the diversity of the world and adapt accordingly while preserving one's own identity. As I understood, Sufism is there. Sufism is neither a religion nor a doctrine. It is not made up of a body of dogma which one must follow, and it does not require its constituents to reply upon specific, prescribed rituals or techniques as part of a spiritual practice. It is not distinctive of any particular race, nation, or church. Sufism is a way of looking at the world and a way of living in the world.¹ (At the end of this article, Buddhist analysis is given not in favour of Buddhism but in support of the objectives of Sufism).

II. IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNITE RELIGIONS?

People are conceptually divided. We all were born without religion. Religion of an individual depends on the practice of the individual and not on one's birth. An infant born in a society builds up concepts within from the society in he/she brought up. As human beings, religious beings, religious concepts are inculcated within individuals from childhood. Therefore, we have been religiously divided and tended to accept and uphold one's religion while rejecting and withholding the religion of others. The concept "my doxy is doxy, others' doxy is heterodoxy" makes conflicts. History of mankind is replete with wars and many of them were derived from conceptual differences. Religious scriptures mention and religious persons talk about the unity of mankind in the unity of God. Each religion tries to unite mankind under its religion. It is a utopia. It had never happened in the past and will not happen in the future. It was not the purpose of the founders of religion either. Abraham, Jesus Christ, Mohammad, Buddha, Zoroaster,

¹ www.centrum-universal.com

Mahavira, Confucius, Loa-tzu, or any other founders did not want to create Judaic, Christian, Islamic, Zoroastrian, Jaina, Confucian, and Taoist world. It is the purpose of conceptually bounded fanatic followers of religion. If you want to unite people under one religion, it may be possible to unite theistic religions, but it will not appeal to the people who belong to non-theistic religions. Unfortunately, most wars are reported within and among theistic religions, and those have a high possibility and potentiality to unite. Therefore, talking about unity of religion for unity of mankind is impractical and unnecessary. It is not respecting other religions. Each religion possesses identical characteristics, and each religion possesses identical teachings and practices. We all have to respect the religions of others as we respect our religion. This is the noble practice some intellectuals applied in the past and to be applied in the future. Now we are living in a technologically advanced world, and the world has been shortened to a global village. Thanks to the development of information technology, knowledge in various fields is open to the world without hiding and no exception to knowledge of religion. Now those who are interested can know about other religions as they know one's religion. This is a good opportunity for anyone who has an understanding of any religion independently without bias and personal entanglement. Religion is something to be practiced individually. Religion should not be taken as fact for prejudice and discrimination.

III. UNITY OF MANKIND

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam unanimously believe in the unity of mankind. According to Judaism, God created Adam, the first man, out of dust in the image of God and breathed into it. God put Adam into deep sleep and created the first woman out of Adam's rib. All the human beings are descending from Adam and Eve.² The creation story of Judaism is largely similar to that of Christianity and Islam. Creation story of these traditions conveys the nobility of mankind among other creatures as well as equality of mankind. Human beings without racial, ethnic, national, or whatever other differences possess. Divine nature within as all are descended from Adam, and therefore human beings are equal.

Individual must awaken the divine nature within. Judaism, the parental religion of Christianity and Islam, is expecting a righteous life. God is righteous and what God, the creator, desired of human beings is righteous behaviour. Therefore, an individual has to walk in the way of God, and to be righteous and perfect in moral. Knowledge of God within would prevent man from sin. Either the creation stories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are right or wrong, the idea of Godly nature within human beings is highly influential for the moral conduct of individuals. Though the creation story does not apply to Buddhism, what the Buddha expected from his followers is to follow the path that he had followed and attain the same moral and spiritual perfection that the Buddha had attained. Similar to the Godly nature of human beings, Buddhism accepts the possibility of human beings to attain the same state if

² www.inovationslearning.com.uk

one is diligent in the path. *Mahayana* Buddhism, going further ahead, says that every sentient being has Buddha nature within and points the way for awakening Buddha nature. Confucius was dreaming of a sage-like character, but he admitted that he was not a sage but was trying to be a superior man aiming at the sage, which is difficult to attain. He learnt the characters of Sagely rulers in the past and tried to teach them without class or clan distinction to produce superior characters to rule the country righteously to bring peace and order in the country.³ Taoism took a different attitude to reality and morality. Tao is the essence of everything. Everything in the universe evolved and is evolving from Tao, and people have nothing to do. Therefore morality (De) in Taoism is non-activity. Purposeful activity (attachment) is going against the nature. Let nature function, everything will be done by nature. We should not be involved in changing nature. All the sufferings are due to the result of trying to change nature as we want. If nature evolves for our wellbeing, no need for a moral code. Having a moral code means we are going against nature.⁴ Philosophical meaning behind this doctrine is non-attachment. Zoroaster, on the other hand, teaches to defeat the evil forces in the world. Jainism is for non-violence and non-attachment. Thus, looking deep into religions in the world, we can perceive that all those teachings are for the people, though each religion possesses unique characteristics of its own.

Unity of mankind is that all human beings are the same or one species, though they have been divided on different concepts, such as colour, caste, clan, status, nationality, ethnicity, beliefs, practices, and so on. Taking the unity of mankind into account, the Golden Rule “do unto others as you would have others do unto you” is applied as the key ethical foundation of many religions in the world. All have to think themselves in the position of others. More importantly, the creation story itself and the similarity of the creation story in three religions conveys the equality of human beings and the necessity of cooperation and loving each other. Though not accepting the creation story, Buddhism highly accepted the equality of human beings and the necessity of loving-kindness and compassion to others. Once conduct should be shaped by talking to oneself as a mirror and thinking of oneself in the position of others.⁵ Inferiority or superiority of an individual depends not on birth but on moral conduct and spiritual achievements.⁶ In Confucianism, too, the equality of human beings is accepted but individuals become wide apart through their moral conduct. Benevolence or human heartedness, righteousness, propriety, and sincerity, one becomes a sage or superior man while not having those qualities, one becomes a mean man.⁷ Those are a few examples of how different religions have applied Golden Rule as the key of morality. If all applied this rule

³ Sumanasiri, G., *Buddhism and Confucianism*, p. 143.

⁴ Sumanasiri, G., *Traditional Chinese Religions*, p. 20.

⁵ *Dhammapada*, Verse, 131.

⁶ *MN*, II, p. 196.

⁷ Sumanasiri, G., *Buddhism and Confucianism*, p. 147.

without the identity of separate religion, how beautiful, pleasant, and peaceful will be the world, especially for human habitation. In such a situation, no one will harm others; all will think of the happiness of others. Therefore, is it not the Golden Rule that has to be applied practically throughout the world where we are living with, craving, hatred, jealousy, enmity within and conflict, war, fight, bloodshed, shooting and looting, and destruction of lives and properties, destruction of living beings and environmental resources without?

IV. WHERE IS BUDDHISM?

Buddhism vehemently denied the socio-political and religious prejudices and discriminations that were contemporary to the Buddha and upholds the equality of human beings. There are many examples to the fact that Buddha accepted and applied the teachings of other religions into Buddhism, and also there are numerous examples of arguments and debates between Buddha and other religious practitioners. Those arguments and debates were not aimed at condemnation but convincing the reality out of loving-kindness or Metta. Buddhism is open to all for one's verification. Far and for the verification far the Glory of Buddhism will be and no place in Buddhism for blind faith. No religious conversion in Buddhism, and it is open to anybody without any type of discrimination.

To convince the equality of human beings, Buddha used historical, biological, and ethical arguments. *Agganna Sutta* explains how historically distinctive social classes appeared as a social need and how social distinction may disappear according to social recognition of individual action. Social distinction, therefore, is not divine origin and static. Human positions are liable to change according to the behaviour and practice of the individual. *Vasettha Sutta*⁸ explains the diversity of characters unique to identify numerous species individually, but there is no such distinctive character within human beings to separate one man from another. *Vasettha Sutta* is very important to refer to in the present context of disharmony among human beings as it clearly explains the biological unity of mankind. It denies any genetic basis for discrimination of any type. As mentioned above, all human beings are equally capable of attaining the highest spiritual goal irrespective of the distinctions made by man. All men are likewise equal before the moral law: men are judged in the hereafter according to the good and evil they did, and not by the station of life in which they were placed under birth. The reward and punishment are strictly in proportion to the good and evil done, distinctions made by man, do not matter in the least. Therefore, as members of a common human society, all men deserve to have equal rights and opportunities, and prejudices made by man and discriminations should be abolished. Such a state of equality is based on the collective effort of human beings.

What brought men together was the realisation of common lot and their common humanity. All men of whatever race, caste, religion, nationality and so on, are subject to disease, decay and death. All men are likewise impelled

⁸ MN, II, p. 196.

by the desire within them – the desire for sense gratification, the desire for life or personal immortality, and desire for domination over death. Man's quest for security and lasting happiness never ceases, but it is never satisfied by pandering to his desire as a result of which he is continually in a state of unrest.

V. PEACE WITHIN PEACE WITHOUT

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is the attainment of peace (*santi, vupasama*). It is the ending of misery, eradication of the cankers, destruction of the three roots of evil; desire, hatred, and delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*) and the attainment of enlightenment. Psychological roots are the main roots of war, conflict, and violence according to Buddhism. Disorder and disharmony in society are outward manifestations of the lack of peace in the minds of individuals and they are largely symptoms of diseased minds. Therefore, external treatment for the cause of war cannot be effective as the treatment for the inner cause. As the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to attain Nibbana, the everlasting peace, which is inner peace and tranquillity, one must strive for it. An individual who has attained the goal of peace is the one who has overcome all the conflict, put an end to misery, and lives unaffected by the vicissitude of nature. Such a person can live at peace even in an environment in which peace is absent. Buddhism speaks of the possibility of such inner transformation enabling the person to live at ease amidst people who are hateful, malicious, vicious, and intent to harm⁹. Attaining to such a state is possible only through dedication, though not easy for the people who are engrossed with desire, hatred, and delusion. The Buddha himself taught that He professes a teaching which enables a person to live without entering into conflict with anyone in the world.¹⁰ What does it mean is that an individual can live in peace without entering into conflict with others in society. We all like living in such a peaceful life without war conflicts and violence at any level, but the contradiction is that war conflicts and violence frequently occur. Once Sakra, the God of gods, put this confusion to the Buddha:

‘O’ Lord, gods, human being, Asuras, *Gandhabbas* and whatever other different types of communities are there desirous of living without enmity, without having arms, without having enemies and without hating others. But all of them live with enmity, hating each other, having arms, having enemies, and hating. Lord, what are the reasons for it?¹¹

In answering this question, Buddha says “Jealousy and stinginess derived from desire of the individual, the reason” (*Issamaccariya sannjanam kho devanamida - hetu*) for them to behave thus. The question made to Buddha in the 6th century BC is equally applicable to the 21st century too. National and international nations and peace lovers come to agreements for peace and dialogue for peace holds at national and international levels, but still many bitter wars are reported, civil wars are a common phenomenon in most countries,

⁹ *Dhammapada*, Verse 197.

¹⁰ ‘*Na kenaci koke viggayha tithati*’ MN, I, p. 109.

¹¹ DN, II, p. 276.

and religious, ethnic, and national wars are present in some parts of the world. Production of sophisticated weapons that can wipe out all the living beings from the earth and trading them has become a lucrative method of earning. Thousands and millions of people have died from war, and such a number may have been affected, properties have been lost in wars. Contradiction is that conflicts seem to be provoked by the people who are highly involved with peace.

Buddhism does not accept any kind of war. It is evil to be devoid. In war, the virtue of abstaining from the destruction of life is violated, non-injury, non-violence, and the ideal of a life full of mercy and compassion towards all living beings is violated. Lying, slander, and mutual accusations with abusive language take place. It generates numerous unwholesome and unskilled states. Buddhism sees war and its associated evils as morally debasing, dehumanizing and brutalizing man. Therefore, their causes are to be understood, and measures are to be taken to remove the causes of wars and conflicts. There are two sets of causes for arising such conditions, which are mutually dependent and have to be removed if lasting peace is to be achieved.

1. External socio-economic causes
2. The internal moral and psychological causes

It is when society is corrupt that unwholesome psychological traits become the motivational roots of human behaviour. When human behaviour is determined by unwholesome motives, institutional structures such as politics and the economic system also get adversely affected. This leads to a vicious circle involving a corrupt social, political, and economic order and a society consisting of morally debased individuals.

External socio-political causes are concerned, violation of peace could occur in a society when a section of people is deprived of the basic material needs to lead a decent life. People arm themselves and resort to criminal behaviour, rebellion and insurgency if equal opportunity is not given to them to lead a comfortable life with dignity. Buddhism seems to consider economic deprivation of any section of community as the most serious cause for the disturbance of peace. It is therefore, a foremost duty of the state to create the necessary conditions for the elimination of poverty.¹² But poverty is not the single factor for unrest, but religious, ethnic, and other differences, and the discriminations involved in them would be conducive to the factor. Therefore, provision of equal opportunity is essential in such conditions.

Internal moral psychological causes are concerned with jealousy and stinginess derived from the desire of the predominant individual. Once Brahmin Aranadanda asked the Buddha, What is the reason for having conflicts among householders and recluses? He replied that conflicts among householders are derived from sensual desire whereas conflicts among recluses are derived from *ditthi raga* (desire for views). Desire derives from reasoning (*vitakka*). Reasoning creates concepts and views which people

¹² DN, III, p. 58.

strongly grasp. Being grasped by concepts and views, naturally people become victims and slaves of the concepts and views they created in the process of reasoning. As a result of being grasped by concepts and views, debates and arguments, moving and lamentation, arrogant, conceit, and back biting come into being.¹³ Responsibility of the individual in peacekeeping largely lies in a moral psychological basis. Lusts are within the individual. Purification of lust is to be done individually. War and conflicts originate within the mind of the individual. If one is derived from amoral psychological motivations of desire, hatred, and delusion, evils prevail, whereas good prevails motivated by moral psychological motivations. So that inner purity and impurity determine the peace or conflicts of the individual and society.

According to the Buddha, unwholesome behaviour proceeds from the three psychological roots, desire, hatred and delusion. A transformation of attitudes based on wisdom is required to overcome the internal causes of conflict. The Buddhist path of *Nibbāna* is one, which has the consequences of gradually reducing and finally eradicating the internal causes of conflicts. From the Buddhist point of view, social unrest is a consequence of psychological maladjustment. Deluded or confused thinking and unwise reflection produce craving, greed, envy, jealousy, hatred, violence and aggression. The solution is wise reflection and genuine attempt to abandon those cankers of the mind which disturb the peace within and peace without. Anger, ill-will, malice, envy, and the like have to be replaced by loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

Those wholesome attitudes need to find practical expression in the willingness to give (*dana*), in the pleasant verbal communication with one's fellow beings (*piyavacana*), in equal treatment of others (*samanattata*) and personal commitment to the welfare of all beings (*attacariya*). Inner change of individual for lasting peace is an urgent requirement that can be achieved through a process of moral education. Implicit in the Noble Eight Fold Path (*ariya atthangika magga*) of Buddhism is a practical scheme which could be adopted as a basis for evolving a viable programme of moral education or education for peace. Method of mental culture (*bhavana*) has great psychological significance for having peace.

Buddhism is a system of thought which attaches great value and significance to human effort, the potency of the human will and human endeavour for overcoming suffering and achieving lasting happiness and peace without having the support of mysterious forces. One can escape numerous existential ills if the proper effort is made (*samma vayama*) with proper understanding (*samma ditthi*).

¹³ MN, III, 230.

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WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN THE WORLD

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to show how the teachings of the Buddha can contribute to the maintenance of sustainable peace in the world. The paper details the positive mind states that all can achieve by following the ancient Buddhist path of practice: both individuals and, in particular, leaders of communities and countries. Since war does not originate on the battlefield but in minds troubled by greed, hatred, and delusion, the paper sets out the Buddha's teaching on inner transformation. It seeks to show that the Buddhist path is not merely aspirational but specific, practical, and achievable and is thus able to contribute to world peace.

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

I. THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING TO FIND PEACE WITHIN

It is significant to discuss how peace can be achieved for the world from the Buddhist perspective, on Vesak Day on which the Buddha's birth, Enlightenment, and Passing Away are auspiciously celebrated.

At the beginning of the Buddha's Dhamma mission, the Buddha advised a group of sixty monks not to walk in a group of two or more to any village or town but to walk individually and travel by oneself, taking the *Dhamma* message for the well-being and happiness of many.¹ The Buddha wanted to reveal His newly discovered noble Dhamma to the world. That is the real mark of a great and compassionate teacher. The distinct attribute of the Buddha's teaching is to find peace within oneself and not outside. The Buddha gave many hundreds of examples to people to find peace within themselves.

Establishing the well-being and happiness of the mundane world is one approach. Beyond this worldly comfort, Buddhism offers a higher recommendation for another kind of peace called ultimate peace. The Buddha wanted to direct all human beings and celestial beings to attain higher peace or

¹ Mahavagga Pāli (2006): 156.

ultimate happiness.²

Buddhism has a noble and realistic path for achieving higher peace based on one's morality, concentration, and wisdom development. Morality, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*) bring forth both internal peace and safety directly related to the inner mind. At one time, a brahmin named Bhāradvāja approached the Buddha and asked: "Tangle inside, tangle outside this generation is entangled in a tangle/I ask you, venerable Gotama, who can disentangle these tangles."³

The Buddha replied to the brahmin, "A man established in virtue, wisely developing the mind and wisdom, a monk ardent and discreet, can disentangle this tangle."⁴ This statement of the Buddha clearly emphasizes that peace and happiness in this complicated world are possible by cultivating and developing the threefold spiritual training, which is known as training oneself in morality (*sīla*), developing concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). As advised by the Buddha, one should think about oneself before focusing on peace for the world. Let one first establish oneself in what is proper and then instruct others. Such a wise man will not be defiled: "*Attanameva pathamam - Patirūpe nivesaye / Athannamanusaseyya - Na kilisseyya pandito.*"⁵

Everyone indeed likes peace and happiness. Everyone wishes to be successful in various ways and advance in society. Thus, the main themes of the Buddha's teachings are truth, freedom, justice, loving-kindness, compassion, love, happiness, and emancipation. The fundamental teachings, such as the four noble truths, causality, *kamma* and rebirth, the three characteristics, and so forth, were preached by the Buddha to achieve the above spiritual objectives. Once, the Buddha advised the monks: The achievement of the above goals depends on oneself; the Buddha shows only the path and avenues to reach them.⁶ The path is practical and realistic since, without practicing, one can never achieve peace and freedom by merely praying or doing sacrifices or rituals.

Unconditional and unselfish Love, freedom, liberation, happiness, comfort, and peace are highly spoken of in Buddhism. However, these topics are very familiar to other faiths worldwide as well. Many teachers, religious leaders, and saints preached their doctrines for the well-being and happiness of all humankind. However, the doctrine of peace in Buddhism has unique features that distinguish it from other religions. One of such cardinal teachings of Buddhism is causality (*hetu-phala-vāda*). According to the Buddha's teaching, all conflicts and problems arise conditionally. Conflicts, disputes, issues, and other physical and psychological phenomena are dependently originated on conditions. The following formula emphasizes the conditionality of arising and cessation of disputes and all other phenomena. "Thus, when this exists,

² Dhṛp 203.

³ SN 7.6.

⁴ SN 7. 6.

⁵ Dhṛp 158.

⁶ Dhṛp 276; *Tumhehi kiccam ātappam, akkhātāraro tathāgatā.*

that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.⁷ This doctrine or formulation is the core part of the teaching of the Buddha. It was explained clearly in the first sermon of the Buddha when he was describing the four noble truths. In the discourse on the four noble truths, the Buddha clarified how problems and conflicts arise while showing the cessation of all such disputes.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD FRIENDSHIP FOR PEACE

In this paper I hope to discuss how we should focus on building sustainable peace in the world through Buddhism. When considering this point from the actual perspective, it is clear that the Buddhism always aims to foster peace among all living beings, not only humans but also towards animals.

The good friends' association is a fundamental recommendation in Buddhism. It is described as a primary root of mental development and a leading cause of the noble path to ultimate peace.⁸

Once, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha that half of the holy life (spiritual practice) is spiritual friendship. But the Buddha advised Ven Ananda not to say so and told him that the whole of the spiritual life depends on the blossoming of good friendship. The whole of the Buddha's dispensation depends on the blossoming of good friendship. Spiritual friendship is the ground for peace to spring up and spread in the world. "Not so, Ānanda, not so, Ānanda! This entire holy life is dependent on good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship. When a monk has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path."⁹

On every occasion, the Buddha stressed the importance of building friendship among monks, devotees, and all people since it is the direct cause for building sustainable peace among all living beings. Even adherents of other faiths who were given to chatting and noisy conduct quickly became silent when the Buddha visited them.

The leaders of those groups asked their disciples and followers to keep quiet since the Buddha appreciated peace and silence.

III. ETYMOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF PEACE

When talking about bringing sustainable peace to the world, it is essential to know what peace is. This is because the word 'peace' has been interpreted and used in different ways in different contexts. Since this article is about peace as a Buddhist concept, it is important to know what the relevant Buddhist concept

⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom publication, (2000): "Imasmim sati idam hoti, imasmim asati idam na hoti, Imassa uppāda idam uppajjati, imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati."

⁸AN 6: 11: "Mā hevam, ānanda, mā hevam, ānanda! Sakalamevidam, ānanda, brahmacariyam, yadidam – Kalyānamittatā kalyānasahāyatā kalyānasampavankatā. Kalyānamittasetaṃ, ānanda, bhikkhuno pātikankham kalyānasahāyassa kalyānasampavankassa – ariyam atthangikam maggam bhāvēssati, ariyam atthangikam maggam bahulīkarissati."

⁹ SN 45. 2.

is. Also, knowing how the word ‘peace’ has emerged and how it has been used will clarify its meaning to the reader and help the reader to understand peace from a Buddhist perspective.

The word ‘peace’ is used in today’s world to indicate a state of harmony and an absence of war. Since this article is presented in English, it is essential to know how the word ‘peace’ has been used in the English language. The word peace came from the Anglo-French word, *Pes* around the eleventh century. It was in the Old French term *Pais*.¹⁰ Even earlier, when looking for the place of origin, it shows a connection to the Latin language. That is, the word *pax* in the Latin language is cited as the source. The word ‘*pax*’ is used to convey the ideas of peace, compact, agreement, treaty of peace, tranquillity, absence of hostility, and harmony. It specifically refers to the absence of hostility.

The Buddha used the *Pāli* language, or a similar language, to preach the *Dhamma*. Therefore, it is important to understand how the word ‘peace’ is used in the *Pāli* language. The Buddhist concept of peace and its interpretation should also be considered. In this *Sāsana*, the monk who has attained the path and the fruition of *Arahantship*, free from desire and delusion, reaches the state of noble peace and liberation called *Amata*.¹¹

In this passage, *Nibbāna* is interpreted as the highest and noblest peace (*Santin*) and the path leading to the attainment of this highest peace (*Santin*) is also called peaceful path because it is endowed with peace. The peaceful path leads to a peaceful state. Hence, the Buddha’s teaching is said to be pure at the start, pure in the middle, and pure at the end. The entire *Dhamma* path to *Nibbāna* is peaceful.

Another helpful passage that speaks about peace (*Santin*) appears in the following stanza of the *Salla Sutta*: “*Na hi runnena sokena, santin pappoti cetaso;/ Bhiyyassuppajjate Dukkham, sariram cupahannati.*”¹²

Crying or mourning does not bring peace to the mind. The person who cries only becomes more sorrowful and the body is also exhausted. This stanza speaks about how mental peace cannot be gained from being sorrowful or crying.

The *Dhotaka Sutta* in the *Sutta Nipāta* provides a point of reference for peace (*Santi*) to be understood as follows: “*Dhotaka, I will teach you the peaceful path which is seeing the truth, living your life mindfully, realizing the Dhamma in this very life, and being free from craving.*”¹³

The Buddhist concept ‘*santi*’ thus designates the peace of *Nibbāna*. It is

¹⁰ Etymology Dictionary, *Peace*, [February 7, 2025] (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/peace>).

¹¹ Sn 11: “*Candarāgaviratto so, bhikkhu pannaānavā idha,/Ajjhagā amatam santin, nibbānam padamaccutam.*”

¹² Sn 34.

¹³ Sn 59: “*Kittayissāmi te santin, ditthe Dhamme anitiham;/Yam viditvā sato caram, tare loka visattikam.*”

referred to as ‘*Nibbānam paramam santim.*’ There is also the holy path for the attainment of ultimate peace. This is called the sacred path.

The word peace in English and the word *Santi* in *Pāli* are thus used in distinct contexts, and yet there is clear overlap in meaning, which will be explored in this paper.

IV. HOW PEACE IS IDENTIFIED IN THE MODERN WORLD

According to the actions recommended in a Culture of Peace adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, peace-building dialogue between societies is required. “Not only is the absence of conflict but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.”¹⁴

The above statement encourages mutual understanding in building peace in the world. The world is formed by many different societies and cultures. Mutual appreciation, discussions, and dialogue will help to solve conflicts between groups, societies, and countries.

“The UN General Assembly lays out the values needed for a culture of peace. These include: respect for life, human rights and fundamental freedoms; the promotion of nonviolence through education, dialogue and cooperation; commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts; and adherence to freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations.

The General Assembly has also recognized the importance of choosing negotiations over confrontation and of working together and not against each other.

Again, the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization states that “wars begin in the minds of men so it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”.

It is this notion that framed the theme and logo of this year’s observance of the International Day of Peace. The ideas of peace, the culture of peace, need to be cultivated in the minds of children and communities through formal and informal education, across countries and generations.

The International Day of Peace has always been a time to lay down weapons and observe ceasefires. But it now must also be a time for people to see each other’s humanity. Our survival as a global community depends on that.

V. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FROM THE BUDDHIST SUTTAS FOR WORLD PEACE

The *Pātama Sārāṇīyasutta Sutta* stresses the importance of mutual understanding and lists the ways that monks should follow virtuous principles wholeheartedly to resolve any contentious points in the monks’ community.

Monks, there are these six principles of cordiality.

¹⁴UN General Assembly, *Cultivation a Culture of Peace*, [February 7, 2025] <https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>

- (1) A monk maintains bodily acts of loving kindness toward his fellow monks both openly and privately.
- (2) Again, a monk maintains verbal acts of loving kindness toward his fellow monks openly and privately.
- (3) A bhikkhu maintains mental acts of loving kindness toward his fellow monks openly and privately.
- (4) A bhikkhu shares without reservation any righteous gains that have been righteously obtained, including even the contents of his alms bowl, and uses such things in common with his virtuous fellow monks.
- (5) A bhikkhu dwells both openly and privately, possessing in common with his fellow monks virtuous behavior that is unbroken, flawless, unblemished, unblotched, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration.
- (6) A bhikkhu dwells both openly and privately, possessing in common with his fellow monks a view that is noble and emancipating, which leads out, for one who acts upon it, to the destruction of suffering.¹⁵

The Buddha's kindness in laying out this cordial basis for the community of monks is apparent and can also be seen as a unique model for other communities. But the Buddha did not limit himself to setting down precepts, but always set an example of right conduct for all to follow. Examples are better and stronger in reaching out to other communities. This can be seen in the case of little children who follow the conduct of adults. Even some animals tend to copy and do what human beings do. The Buddha was clear that instructions had to be initiated by righteous conduct. This truth was formulated by the Buddha when he said: One should first establish oneself in what is right and appropriate and then instruct others.¹⁶ As we attempt to bring peace to the world, this advice of the Buddha is unique and truly practical.

By way of acts, the first step of peace building in the world through Buddhism is the first precept of abstaining from harming or killing other living beings. "I undertake abstaining from killing living beings".¹⁷ It guides people to be harmless and loving and to build up kindness for every living being in every nook and cranny in the world. All beings tremble at the rod. All beings fear death. Comparing oneself with others, one should neither strike nor cause to strike.¹⁸

This is another characteristic piece of advice to his disciples from the Buddha. We all know that we fear punishments, assaults and any kind of physical harassment. See yourself as an example and do not even think about harming others. Though this *Pāli* verse mainly speaks about physical harassment, it is applicable to verbal harassment too.

¹⁵ AN 8.55

¹⁶ *Dhp* 158; *Attānameva pathamam, patirūpe nivesaye*.

¹⁷ AN 4.21; "*Pānātipātā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi*".

¹⁸ *Dhp* 129: "*Sabbe tasanti dandassa – sabbe bhāyanti macchuno / Attānam upamam katvā – na haneyya na ghataye.*"

The Buddha's teaching discourages its followers from harming others either physically or verbally, or even in thought. Just as we do not like to be blamed or criticized, others are in the same position regarding blame. When one hurts anyone else, the negative karmic force in hurting others will return to oneself.

Some religions in the world, encourage their followers to destroy other religions and religious objects venerated by the followers of other religions. By contrast, Buddhism encourages its followers and disciples to respect others of other faiths and to live with them harmoniously.

The Buddha revealed his newly discovered teaching to the world at a time when sixty-two religions or views were adhered to in India. However, neither the Buddha nor any of his monks ever insulted any religious leaders. The Buddhist position is that everyone can follow any belief they wish. What the Buddha and his disciples did was to encourage followers of other faiths to think about what the Buddha taught.

The discussion between the Buddha and Upāli, the householder, is another example of this point of harmlessness. At that time, Upāli was a follower of the Jain Mahāvira. Every day, he offered food to Jain sādhu. Once, he met the Buddha and had a very deep conversation with Him about the elements of human life. After listening to the profound *Dhamma* factors explained by the Buddha, he was converted to Buddhism. He became a follower of the Buddha. Then, the householder Upāli changed his mind about offering food to Jain sādhu. However, the Buddha advised him not to stop offering food to Jain monks because they, too, were beings living on food. It is very rare to find such a compassionate teacher in the world.¹⁹

When the Sākya and the Koliya, the two royal clans, got very close to war because they could not skillfully manage and share the waters of the river Rohini, the Buddha went to them and explained the danger of the quarrel and the benefits of friendship and unity. Teaching *Dhamma* to them, the Buddha emphatically stressed the importance and value of peace and the danger of the bitterness of war. Then, the Buddha advised them not to quarrel with each other and to stop the war.

On another occasion, when King Vidudabha went to the Śākya kingdom with an army to kill Sākya and ruin the country, the Buddha intervened three times and stopped them going to killing his relatives. The Buddha advised the king not to go to war by explaining to him the danger of war and the serenity of sustainable peace. This is an example of one of the notable preachings of the Buddha, encouraging those who act to bring peace to the world.

Similarly, there are many notable Suttas which speak highly about loving-kindness, such as the *Metta Sutta*, the *Mettānisaṃsa Sutta*, the *Dhajaṃja Sutta*, the *Bharaḍvāja Sutta*, and others, where the Buddha emphasized the value of peace.

¹⁹ MN 56.

VI. ROOT CAUSES THAT BLOCK THE ARISING OF PEACE

When talking about sustainable peace in the world, it is necessary to consider the opposite of peace. Therefore, the following factors should be considered.

Three major root causes are directly responsible for causing inner conflicts and conflicts with others. These root causes are known as desire, hatred and delusion. (*lobha, dosa moha*). The latent disposition of these three unwholesome roots is submerged in the mind. With contact of external objects desire (*lobha*) becomes covetousness (*abhijjha*), hatred (*dosa*) turns into ill-will (*vyāpāda*), and delusion (*moha*) becomes wrong view (*micchaditthi*). Thus, covetousness, ill-will, and wrong views are the dynamic positions of the mind that reinforce the individual in making conflicts or problems in the outside world.

Thus, the psychological processes of the individual cause the arising of physical actions in the external world. However, external conflicts do not entirely originate within the mind itself because the mind is intrinsically pure and becomes impure through external contact. Luminous, bhikkhus, is this mind, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements.²⁰ Thus, according to the Buddha, the causes of internal or external conflicts are to be found both within the person and the outer world, arising due to the interrelation of the internal mind and the external world. This is the Buddhist theory of cause and effect.

The *Mahanidāna Sutta* is one of the great discourses that makes this point clear. It sets out the law of causation for the origin of different forms of conflicts. The Buddha, addressing Venerable Ananda, said, “Feeling conditions craving, craving conditions seeking, seeking conditions acquisition, acquisition conditions decision-making, decision-making conditions lustful desire, lustful desire conditions attachment, attachment conditions appropriation, appropriation conditions avarice, avarice conditions guarding of possessions. Because of the guarding of possessions there arise the taking up of stick and sword, quarrels, disputes arguments, strife, abuses, lying and other evil unskilled states.”²¹ This explanation of the Buddha stresses how internal mental defilements interact with the dynamic circumstances of the external world. Thus, in Buddhism, the origin and cessation of all forms of conflicts and problems are analyzed about causal conditions.

VII. THE BUDDHA’S ADVICE TO HIS DISCIPLES FOR WORLD PEACE

Peace is the main focus of many societies as it is essential for the survival of humans on this planet. The peaceful atmosphere of a society may degenerate because of the waging of conflicts that originate from religious, political, cultural, and ethnic differences. Conflict appears to be an inevitable feature in

²⁰ AN 1.49: “*pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkave cittaṃ, taṃ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilittan.*”

²¹ *The Great Discourse on Causation*, Bhikkhu Bodhi. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1984, p. 196.

human societies; therefore, the establishment of peace is vital for society. In the process of building peace, some important Buddhist discourses provide theoretical and practical advice. A prominent example of this is the advice given by the Buddha to his first sixty disciples.

Monks travel forth for the welfare of the multitude, for the happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans. Let not two monks go the same way. Teach O bhikkhus, the Dhamma, that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the correct meaning and phrasing. Reveal the perfectly complete and purified holy life.²²

The above advice clearly shows the main objective of the supreme Buddha and how the Buddha advises His disciples to walk carrying the precious Dhamma message to the world. The clear aim of the Buddha's teaching is to bring peace, harmony, and well-being to humankind.²³ "For the well-being and happiness of mankind." One of the main purposes of the Buddha and his disciples was to establish peace and happiness for society. Therefore, the Buddha is said to have been born for the goodness and happiness of the human world.

In the *Nālaka Sutta*, the Devas make this joyful utterance. "That Bodhisatva has been born in the Sākya's city, in lands along Lumbini. Precious gem beyond comparison, for the weal and welfare of those in the human realm. That is why we are delighted and completely overjoyed."²⁴

This verse proves how the birth of the Bodhisatva brought joy and peace not only to the human realm but also to the celestial worlds. Every step trodden, every word uttered, and every thought in the mind of the Buddha is solely for other beings' sake.

The real compassionate attributes of the "Great Compassionate One"

By precept and example, the Buddha was the Great Compassionate One (*Mahā Kārunika*). He radiated his great compassion towards all living beings. His actions were never divorced from compassion. The entire Dispensation of the Buddha is permeated with this sublime quality of *karunā*. Goodness and violence cannot co-exist; goodness constructs while violence destroys. Compassion cannot be cultivated by one who is obsessed with thoughts of selfishness. It is the self-sacrificing man who fills his heart with pure thoughts of pity and wishes to help and serve others. The selfish cannot be of genuine service to others, for their selfish motives prevent them from doing good. No sooner do they become selfish and self-possessed than they fail to soften their

²² Caratha, bhikkhave, cārikam bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam. Mā ekena dve agamittha. Desetha, bhikkhave, dhammam ādikalyānam majjhakalyānam pariyośanakalyānam sāttham sabyañjanam kevalaparipunnam parisuddham brahmacariyam pakāsetha

²³ bahujana hithāya, bahujana sukhāya.

²⁴ Sn 37: "So bodhisatto ratanavaro atulyo, manussaloke hitasukhatthāya jāto;/Sakyāna gāme janapade lumbineyye, tenamha tutthā atiriva kalyarūpā."

hearts. Hard-heartedness is overcome by pity, by sympathy. If you remove *karunā* from the teachings of the Buddha, you remove the heart of Buddhism; for all virtues, all goodness and righteousness have *karunā* as their basis, as their matrix. All the virtues (*pārami*) that a Bodhisatta or one bent on enlightenment cultivates are initiated by compassion. Compassion is tenderness, a quality of the heart, while understanding or wisdom is hard and penetrative. Compassion should be guided by understanding and understanding by compassion. They go hand in hand and are the backbone of Buddhism.”²⁵

He attained this irreversible, strong, and stable peaceful position by himself through the realization of the true nature of the world. Then the Buddha declared as follows: “There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, comprehension and light regarding things unheard before.”²⁶ Not only does the Buddha possess conceptual attributes of peace, but he was such a great human being who never physically, verbally even mentally caused any harm to himself or anyone else in the world. Every single word that the Buddha uttered is to establish the peace in oneself that flows out to society.

VIII. REAL PEACE SPRINGS FROM ONE’S HEART

People in modern society seek peace in the world by organizing different types of programs and conferences to discuss such matters as peace building and protecting human rights. However, any program organized on the matter of peace building will be ineffective without focusing on the necessity of building inner peace. Before establishing peace in the external world, one should establish inner peace first. Once, the Buddha said, “It is not possible, Cunda, for him who is stuck in the mud to pull out another person who is stuck in the mud. But, Cunda, it is possible for one who is himself not stuck in the mud to pull out another person who is stuck in the mud. In the same way, the person who is not established in discipline and peace himself cannot bring peace to others but a person who himself is established in inner peace can lead others to inner peace.”²⁷

The Buddha is the most excellent example of one who, first of all, developed and cultivated peace and calm within himself and then led others to gain peace. A person who expects to develop inner peace should practice self-effacement (*Sallekho karaniyo*). There are two methods of cultivating self-control and achieving peace of mind. One method is to remember any wrong things that one committed in the past and ponder upon their danger and resolve not to repeat them. The other method is to observe others who do wrong and unwholesome things and make a firm determination not to commit such unwholesome things by oneself. The *Sallekha Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* points out how one should observe others to abstain from unwholesome deeds and develop inner peace.

²⁵ *The Buddha’s Ancient Path*, Piyadassi Thera. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy. 1979, p. 87.

²⁶ SN 56. 11.

²⁷ MN 45.

Others will be cruel; we shall not be cruel here. Others will kill living beings, and we shall abstain from killing living beings.²⁸ Moreover, his mind should be inclined (*cittam uppadetabbam*) thus, “Others will be cruel, we shall not be cruel here, and others will kill living beings we shall abstain from killing living beings.” Thus, whoever mental practices peace and harmony must have an ability to tolerate any kind of violent situation.

As an example, the Buddha said to the Venerable Phagga, “If anyone should give you a blow with his hand, with a clod, with a stick, with a knife, you should abandon any desire and any thought based on the household life. And here you should train thus, my mind will be unaffected and I shall utter no evil words. I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with mind of loving kindness, (*mettacitta*) without inner hate.”²⁹ This is stable and unswerving inner compassion and loving kindness that should be developed by oneself to keep the peace in the world. As mentioned above, peace building in society can never be achieved without building peace in one’s own mind. Buddhism always emphasizes establishing inner peace rather than peace in society. It should be easy to understand that after establishing stable inner peace in individuals, it will not be hard to establish peace in society.

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

The word *mettā* means “friendliness”. The friendliness or loving kindness that Buddhism emphasizes is not just friendliness but that is the kind of friendliness that should extend towards all living creatures in the human world and non-human world. The *Metta Sutta* explains the way of cultivating loving kindness towards all creatures.³⁰

One who wishes to enjoy inner peace from practicing loving-kindness and attain the highest blessing, which is the ultimate peace, one should establish the following virtues in oneself and act accordingly so that a very serene ground is created for one’s practice.

The knowledge of loving-kindness meditation and to be able to follow it skillfully.

To be straight in doing wholesome deeds skilfully.

To be highly upright in the practice of loving-kindness meditation and other deeds.

One should be obedient and flexible to parents, teachers, and elders. One’s malleable behavior will create a serene atmosphere for the advancement of loving-kindness.

²⁸ MN 41.

²⁹ MN 21.

³⁰ Sn 1. 9.

To be gentle and open-minded with others will help one to win the hearts of others.

Becoming humble and not conceited, and not showing others one's status will prevent any negative words from others. It will soften the heart of the practitioner removing ego from one's mind.

To be contented with little things and easily satisfied is a great quality to generate loving-kindness without difficulty.

One must be skilful to maintain one's life with few duties and unburdened by duties.

One's simple and frugal life style avoids any burden and gives rise to a softness of the mind.

To keep one's senses calm and restrained to prevent any disturbances to one's practice.

To be discreet, diplomatic and prudent in daily practice avoid one's being regression from mistakes.

Not being a stubborn, harsh, or rude person is a source of joy for everyone.

One who practices loving-kindness meditation should not be attached to any families.

One should not do any slightest wrong thing that the wise would later reprove.³¹

When establishing these serene qualities in oneself by way of contemplation, one is able to focus on sending forth loving thoughts to others for their well-being and happiness as follows:

Whatsoever living creatures there are, moving or still (*tasā vā thāvarā vā*) without exception, whatever are long or large, or middle-sized or short, small or great, whatever are seen or unseen, whichever live far or near, whether they already exist or are going to be, may all creatures be happy.³² May all beings enjoy happiness.

One who seeks peace within should not humiliate another and should not despise anyone anywhere. One who wishes to bring peace to the world should not wish harm or misery to anyone because of anger or repugnance. Just as a mother who protects with her life, her son, her only son, so one should cultivate boundless loving kindness towards all beings, and loving kindness towards the entire world.

One should methodically cultivate boundless loving-kindness above and below, and across, without obstruction, without enmity, without rivalry.³³ If any confronted party in a conflict can transform their mental attitudes in accordance with the above level of loving kindness and forget all past bad experiences and agitation, peace will cease to be only a concept that cannot be

³¹ Metta Sutta Commentary Pāli.

³² *sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittatā.*

³³ SN 46. 54

put into practice.

The loving kindness or friendliness (*mettā*) to be spread towards all creatures is also mentioned in the Four Sublime Abodes (brahma vihāra). *Mettā* here means friendly feelings towards others. *Karunā* is the compassionate feelings that arises when one sees the misery and distress of others and responds to this distress with the purpose of assisting or helping them. *Karunā* is described as follows: *karunā* is that one's heart is melted or softened by kindness when one sees the misery of others.³⁴

In cultivating compassion properly, one should not think of others as people from a different country, a different race, a different religion, or as people who are not related to oneself. With such notions, one cannot develop genuine compassion. Compassion should apply to everyone.

Mudita comes as the third sublime practice. Mudita is sympathetic joy, which means the ability to accept and rejoice in others' happiness and success without any jealousy. One who bears such Mudita thoughts will never suffer from anyone else's greatness, achievements and successes of any kind.

Upekkhā means the equanimity or the ability to tolerate any happy or distressful conditions neutrally.

Loving kindness is the opposite of anger, enmity or ill will (*mettā*). Therefore, to overcome such evil negative thoughts of an individual, one must cultivate loving-kindness or compassion. The Buddha said that friendliness should be cultivated to eradicate ill will.³⁵

In addition to the above-mentioned accounts, other important points are found in the *Sallekha Sutta*.³⁶ In the Sutta, the Buddha said to Cunda that a person who is cruel must practice non-cruelty to abstain from it; the person who engages in killing must abstain from killing to avoid it. Again, it is not enough only to refrain from killing living beings; one must cultivate the practice of loving-kindness to keep a sustainable peace from loving-kindness in the mind.

IX. RESTRAIN FROM FIVEFOLD TRADES FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD

To establish peace and harmony in society, the Buddha recommended the right livelihood for both (Bhikkhus) monastic disciples and (*Sammā ājiva*) lay people.³⁷ Human life is dependent on earning a living through hard work. People should pursue various occupations for their livelihood. According to the Buddha, that method should be righteous. Encouraging people to pursue righteous occupations, the Buddha taught that all kinds of wrong livelihoods that cause harm and violation of peace in society should be avoided. Therefore, the Buddha recommended abstaining from five trades that are thoroughly

³⁴ *Patisambhidhā Magga commentary*: Ch: 1. The knowledge of the Great Compassion; *paradukkhe sati sādhunam hadaya kampanam karotiti karunā*.

³⁵ *Udāna Pāli*, (1960): 4: 31; *mettā bhavetabbā byapāda pahānāya*.

³⁶ *MN* 8.

³⁷ *MN* 17.

harmful to the peace of society.³⁸ They are:

The sale of arms (*sattha vanijjā*),

The sale of human beings or animals (*satta vanijjā*).

The sale of flesh (*mānsa vanijjā*).

The sale of intoxicating drinks (*majja vanijjā*).

And the sale of dangerous or poisonous drugs (*visa vanijjā*).

It is not hidden news that many countries experience human rights violations due to the fact of the drug trade. Crime rates are also very high in many countries because of drug dealings. It is hard to find any single country in which there are no drug sales or related businesses.

Economically developed countries may speak much about the peace of their people and the world and may organize peace programs and seminars to bring and establish peace. However, they are nevertheless directly or indirectly engaged in the trade of weapons and drug sales. It is the duty and responsibility of the leaders and rulers of a country to work for the welfare and protection of its people. The leaders must provide for the safety and welfare of their country's population. This duty is reinforced by the fact that the country's people regard their leaders as their protectors.

X. RULERS SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE TO A COUNTRY'S PEOPLE FOR PEACE-BUILDING

The householder has a role to play in maintaining peace in a household. The head of the home must take it. Similarly, the village leader has a particular role in maintaining peace in a village. To keep peace in a society, a significant role needs to be played by prominent members of that society. Similarly, the leader of a country must follow well-defined roles and functions to maintain peace and harmony within a country. Thoughtful leaders who appreciate this can bring peace to their domain and maintain peace so that every house, village, society, and country is permeated with peace.

There are ten duties that a leader of a country should abide by. These are as follows: charity or generous contributions, virtuous character, ability to sacrifice oneself for the welfare and happiness of the population, integrity, kindness, austerity, freedom from ill will and nonviolence, patience, and opposing the will of people. A skillful leader should, therefore, have these ten qualities: generosity, morality, dedication, straightness, gentleness, austerity, non-hatred, non-violence, patience, and non-conflict.³⁹

Generosity, morality, donation, straightness, gentleness, austerity,

Non-hatred, nonviolence, patience, and non-conflict.

I find these wholesome qualities are found in me,

³⁸ AN 5. 177.

³⁹ Jā 534.

So, I enjoy great pleasure and happiness from that.⁴⁰

Generosity: Generosity is the generous contribution of proper and beneficial goods to others, such as food, clothes, houses, and medication, when required, without expectation of reciprocal benefits. Generosity is expected to provide capital, money, and aid to people within industry, agriculture, and business for the development of such activities. As a result of a leader's generous practice, he can have an honest and trustworthy group of people around him who will help him in successfully achieving his goals. Also, the leader can find wise and intelligent guides and instructors.

Morality: means to restrain oneself from wrong physical and verbal actions. The Buddhist lay follower should observe and keep the five precepts, known as Āryan Sila, as his daily practice. The country's ruler must also be dedicated to observing this Āryan morality. There may be a question of how a ruler who completely abstains from killing and harming others can solve a problem such as an enemy who is about to invade his country. In such cases, the king or the ruler can tactfully and skilfully face the bitter reality, still not harming anyone on both sides, but helping the country and protecting his people. Some valuable accounts about such situations can be found in historical accounts.

Donation: Here, donation means dedication of the ruler's time, energy, and comfort for the benefit and good of others. It is a core attribute of leadership regarding the bond between the leader and his followers. It is a most valuable attribute that a goodhearted leader should continue to display throughout his life. The Apannaka Jātaka, the birth story of the Bodhisattva, is an example of how a leader should courageously dedicate his life, time and energy to the welfare and betterment of others. As the leader of a business group, the Bodhisattva traveled through a waterless desert, carrying carts full of goods. Being tired, and hopeless, they stopped at one place. The Bodhisattva found grass nearby and started to dig the ground, hoping to find water there. Though other people were discouraged and gave up, the Bodhisattva continued digging. Ultimately, He saw water. A leader should be heroic like this and dedicate his life to the benefit and comfort of others.

Straightness: Preserving truthfulness is what is meant by straightness. The ruler's significant role is straightness and fearlessness, without compromising his sincere principles due to bribes, cheap gifts, praise, and fame. He acts timely with good discipline and planning. He is busy and diligently engaged in his appointed role. He does not break promises even at the cost of his life.

He keeps the promises he has given to others. He impresses others and acts in such a way as to enhance the reputation and loyalty of his close ones. He is soft-hearted, like a flower, in the face of truthfulness. He is tough as a stone in the face of falsehoods and unrighteousness. He moves forward with unwavering determination and mindfulness, not backing down in adversity.

⁴⁰ *Dānam silam pariccāgam, ajjavam maddavam tapam; / Akkodham avihimsaṇca, khantiṇca avirodhanam. / Iccete kusale dhamme, thite passāmi attani; / Tato me jāyate pīti, somanassaṇcanappakam.*

Such a ruler can win this world and bring peace to his country and the people. His country becomes prosperous, and the population enjoys peace and happiness with such a ruler.

Gentleness: Gentleness is keeping the mind soft, mild, and gentle in the face of the suffering of others. A gentle-minded person is endowed with love, compassion, and empathy. He is free from attachment and impartial to everyone. His mind is not shaken in the face of the eightfold worldly conditions. His mind does not rise with ego in happiness or fall in sorrow. A gentle mind, which has the four sublime qualities known as loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity, is like a still surface of water in a deep lake. A complex mind with ego and hatred is easily shaken. A gentle mind is not easily shaken.

Austerity: Self-control is an ascetic practice. Those who practice generosity are not slaves to greediness. They live a pleasant life with what they have righteously earned from good works such as farming, business, and so on. They highly regard their simple and light life. The peaceful life of the leader advances day by day, and they are inclined to practice asceticism as well. The simplicity of life leads them to lead a self-controlled, mindful life. It is a valuable power for a ruler to have and an example for others.

An example is more effective than advice. Thus, a Buddhist leader is living for others but not for himself. Such a leader thinks much of his people and the country. The happiness and comfort of others are the aim of the life of such a peaceful, dedicated leader.

Non-hatred: The avoidance of thoughts of hatred, jealousy, anger, and ego. A ruler must possess the quality of happiness derived from seeing the happiness and success of others. He should also maintain the quality of dedication, speak gentle words, provide what others need for their development, and be impartial to all others.

Nonviolence: The practice of nonviolence is the development of harmlessness. For this purpose, the leader should practice positive thoughts such as loving-kindness, compassion, kindness, and so on. In loving-kindness, the leader should spread loving thoughts equally towards all beings, big or small creatures, just like a mother loves her only child.

Kindness or compassion is the sincere thought that arises in a mind which aims to free itself from suffering. It is a calm and gentle mind. This noble mind of kindness also causes thoughts of generosity and sacrifice to emerge. A righteous leader must practice loving-kindness to help the leader forgive others.

Patience: Patience is an essential quality for a leader. 'Patience is the highest austerity' as said by the Buddha.⁴¹ '*Khanti paramam tapo tithikkhā*'. The Bodhisattva was full of patience and forbearance. He went far beyond enduring suffering. The Buddhist ruler is also like a Bodhisattva. He can reach his goal with great patience and endurance.

⁴¹ *Dhp* 184.

Truthfulness: It is essential to avoid lying and to be truthful to others. Truthfulness helps a leader to govern the country properly, enhance the ruler's image, and increase his fame by avoiding speaking harsh words, derogative words, meaningless words, and gossip. When the ruler practices truthfulness, it gives him a wide range of good results. He gains the skilful ability to initiate wholesome activities. His reputation spreads far and wide, and he is naturally respectfully welcomed by everyone. He can end his life mindfully and is reborn in a happy world due to it.

Non-Conflict: Non-conflict is the art of avoiding conflict. It is an essential quality for maintaining harmony among rulers.⁴² Also, as explained in the *Ummagga Jātaka*, one should establish a good, friendly relationship with neighboring rulers through skilful ambassadors and the implementation an effective foreign policy.

Non-conflict is one of the main methods of defeating enemies. The republican system practised under seven *Aparihāna Dhamma* by Liccavis was appreciated by the Buddha.⁴³ Also, the Buddha preached and appreciated their seven undefeatable factors (*Aparihāna Dhamma*) maintained to govern the country and which were very important in maintaining harmony among the nations. It is one of the ways to avoid enemies. As stated in the *Satta Aparihāniya Dhamma*, that the Buddha preached to the Licchavi, non-conflict is essential for harmony.

Leadership should not be regarded as a status or a position given to a person. The leader and his followers should have a strong and friendly connection. Only then can the influence of the leadership on followers be possible. A close relationship with people is the foundation of leadership. For this, the Buddha has pointed out four means of sustaining a good relationship. "Bhikkhus, there are these four means of sustaining a favourable relationship./ Generosity, endearing speech, beneficent conduct, and impartiality."⁴⁴

These four factors can bring people together, creating love and peace. The Buddha's teachings always emphatically explained the importance of a moral life and spiritual practice for the betterment of a worldly life permeated with peace and happiness. These are some of the unique features that a leader should possess to bring peace to the country.

Generosity has a strong force in itself to please others and make them friends. It creates a sense of happiness and willingness in others while still making the generous person light-minded and filled with pleasure.

Endearing speech has the ability to soften the hearts of others and make them come willingly close to the speaker.

The beneficial conduct of a person has the effect of making people trust the person and rely on him because security is found in him.

⁴² *Jā* 542.

⁴³ *AN* 7. 21.

⁴⁴ *AN* 4. 32.

Impartiality can destroy any doubts in others. When others are distressed, one feels empathy; when others are successful, one can impartially share one's feelings.

Leaders should first follow the rules

To build peace in a country, leaders and rulers should set an example for the country's people. Righteous behavior has a beneficial effect on a country's people; thereby bringing peace and harmony. Ordinary people follow leaders and distinguished people.⁴⁵ The Rajovāda Jātaka shines a light on how a ruler of a country or a king should act in order to be an example to the country folk.

When the cattle are crossing a ford
 If the chief bull goes straight across,
 All the others go straight across
 Because their leader has gone straight.
 So, too, among human beings,
 When the one considered the chief
 Conducts himself righteously,
 Other people do so as well.
 The entire kingdom rejoices,
 If the king is righteous.⁴⁶

XI. NEGATIVE IMPACT AFTER WARS AND CONFLICTS

After a war, words are not enough to describe the devastation that has befallen a country and its people. Even little children can see it. It is very terrible. People are very sad in terms of illness and suffering. Food and drink are not available. Travel facilities are also difficult. The devastation caused by war is to be seen in every corner. Though the winning side celebrates a victory in a war, they have also created enemies.

After a war, words are not enough to describe the devastation that has befallen a country and its people. Even a little child can see it. It is very terrible. People are very sad in terms of illness and suffering. Food and drink are not available. Travel facilities are also difficult. The devastation caused by war is seen everywhere. Though one side celebrates the victory of a war, they have created enemies as well.

The victor creates enmity in the defeated,
 The defeated live in distress,
 The peaceful live happily,

⁴⁵ Jā 334.

⁴⁶ Gavam ce taramānānam, ujum gacchati pungavo;/Sabbā gāvī ujum yanti, nette ujum gate sati./Evameva manussesu, yo hoti settha sammato;/So sace dhammam carati, pageva itarā pajā;/Sabbam rattham sukham seti, rājā ce hoti dhammikoti.

Giving up both victory and defeat.⁴⁷

Conflicts and wars first begin in the minds of men. As humans living in the modern world, we should remember that we live on a speck of the universe called the Earth. We have everything that we need to live happily today. People in the modern era have even gone to the moon. They have brought almost everything under their sway and have material wealth, facilities, and comforts to gratify their senses. But why do we still bother about peace?

Even if material success is to be seen from outside, the human mind may lack the most important thing to enjoy: peace. What is the point of achieving material success when there is no peace and harmony in people's minds? sometimes, weak and feeble men affected by fear of struggle and war run to their leaders, asking for help, solace and satisfaction. The rulers should carefully consider such occasions because it is preferable that they should act in such a way that will avoid war. In its place, peace should be shared with everyone.

Love rests not on strife but on sympathy. The principle of love should be appreciated and applied in all spheres of human activity in order to bring about an increase in human happiness. Peace is not a negative phrase. It is something very positive. It consists of mutual understanding, cooperation and love. In an atmosphere of mutual understanding, true peace can arise. Peace has to be acquired by a sincere effort and struggle, but not by using weapons or rods. Also, it cannot be won by merely speaking about it. We should think peace, speak peace and act in peace. The leaders of a country will be successful when they understand these elements.

When the ruler and leaders of the country become unrighteous, the country's people also follow the same path. Therefore, rulers must be ideal examples to society by practising righteous things.

The accounts of ideal Buddhist concepts for rulers to build peace in the country are found in the *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutta*.⁴⁸ “*So, imam pathavim sāgarapariyantam adandena asatthena dhammena abhivijīya ajjhāvasati.*”

The Universal Monarch (*Cakkavatti Rāja*) rules his country meting out punishment for offences, but without using sticks and swords. (*adandena asatthena abhivijīya ajjhāvasati*).

He is a good ruler who practices moral virtue and righteousness. This ideal king advises his fellow men not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to tell lies, not to use intoxicants.

This fantastic concept of the ideal king in Buddhism was practically employed by some Buddhist rulers like King Dharmasoka for the purpose of establishing peace in society after war.

The Buddha was an ideal leader who engaged in the spreading of loving

⁴⁷ Dh 201: “*Jayam veram pasavati, dukkham seti parājito; / Upasanto sukham seti, hitvā jayaparājayam.*”

⁴⁸ DN 3.

kindness and compassion towards all living beings without any discrimination. In His daily routine, a few hours were spent devoted to his own practice but during the remaining periods of the day, he assisted people who wanted help. A few such people he assisted with Dhamma are found in Buddhist scriptures, such as Angulimāla, who was first an obedient pupil and later misguided by his own teacher for his ruin. Patācārā, a woman who lost her own children and relatives within a few days. Kisāgotami, who lost her son and went from house to house asking for medicine to cure her dead son. Sunita, who was a scavenger. Sopāka, an innocent child tied to a dead corpse by his step-father. Further examples are Radha Brahmana, and Cūlapantaka, as well as animals like snakes and elephants. These characters and others were held in the net of the compassion of the Buddha.

The concept of Buddhist peace has a very important practical value. The Buddha disapproved of any human or animal slaughter as he spread his non-violent teaching for the good of society. Nor did he allow fighting with another group of people. Nor did the Buddha ever recommend a holy war against any religion or nation. The Buddha followed a practical way by which His non-violent teaching was spread among the people in a non-violent manner. That noble example remains intact even today. Therefore, in establishing world peace, it is essential to point out Buddhist principles, and by following those Buddhist principles, peace can be guaranteed.

XII. CONCLUSION

The Buddhist path is ancient and yet it continues to be relevant to contemporary concerns, of which the maintenance of peace is one of the most pressing. I have attempted to show the ways in which it can contribute to the maintenance of peace.

The Buddhist teaching proceeds from the premise that human beings can change for the better through the training and cultivation of the mind. All individuals can attain inner peace and achieve the ideal of loving kindness towards all other beings.

While detailed training is set down in instruction for individuals, the Buddha also laid down guidelines for harmonious communal interactions. He also gave specific instructions for leaders on how to lead, encouraging them to set examples of virtuous conduct for their subjects.

The Buddhist path is characterised by tolerance of differences and encourages a culture of non-violence in a practical, sensible, and inspiring manner. It deserves careful consideration in the pursuit of peace.

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APPLICABLE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM AS AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION FOR GLOBAL PEACE

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Abstract:

Buddhism is a way of life, understanding the condition of life and practical method of life. Buddha's teachings emphasize building global peace by addressing the Four Noble Truth and Noble Eight Fold Path, The Basic Principle (Five Precepts) and The Four Modes of Sublime Living (*Brahmavihāras*). Also the law of cause and effect also applies to *Kamma*, the volitional actions. According to Buddha philosophy, greed, anger, and ignorance are seen as key abstracts to inner peace, harmony and a peaceful world. The Buddha's guidance on eliminating these negative states can be found in several key teachings. The Buddha taught that to achieve lasting peace in the world individuals must both eliminate the three Poisons (greed, anger, and ignorance) and cultivate the Four *Brahmavihāras*. These two aspects of the practice work hand in hand. The Buddha taught the transformation of the individual mind leads to the transformation of society. When individuals eliminate the three poisons and cultivate the *Brahmavihāras*. Their actions and intentions promote mutual understanding in the world. The spread of these practices through communities and nations can contribute to global peace, as individuals and groups work together to create a more compassionate just and balanced world. According to the Buddha, global peace is not merely the result of external conditions on political systems, but is fundamentally a product of inner transformations.

Keywords: *Four Noble Truth, Noble Eight Fold Path, Five Precepts, The four modes of sublime living, (Brahmavihāras) cause and effects, global peace.*

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INTRODUCTION

Buddhism consists of three aspects, the doctrinal, the practical, and the realizable, which are interdependent and interrelated. Buddhism is concerned with truth and facts, and has nothing to do with theories and philosophies which may be accepted as gospel truth today and may be thrown overboard tomorrow. Also, Buddhism is not merely to be preserved in books, nor is it a subject to be studied only from an historical or literary point of view: on the contrary, it is to be learned and put into practice in the course of one's daily life, for without actual practice one cannot appreciate truth. Study and practice come first, but all it is realization, self-realization, which is its ultimate goal.

That's why the starting point of Buddhism is the application of the Dharma to daily life, a way of life, reasoning, or understanding the condition of life and practical method of life. Buddhist may be able to live in harmony with other people.

I. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTH AND NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths in his very first sermon. They consists in four ways to resolve problem, namely, (1) suffering, (2) the cause of suffering, (3) the cessation of suffering, and (4) the way leading to the cessation of suffering. (1) Problems and conflicts are suffering, birth is suffering, aging is suffering, and sickness is suffering, death. The Buddha was motivated by suffering; he wanted to help relieve suffering among the many beings. (2) The cause of suffering defines the cause of problems or conflicts. (3) The cessation of suffering beings the solution of the problems. (4) The way leading to the cessation of suffering is the step leading to the solving of the problems, that is Noble Eightfold Path; right thought, right speech, right understanding, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentrations. If we follow the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, we will also be able to end this suffering ¹.

(1) Right thought is to recognize the problem and willing to solve it. (2) Right speech is the expression of truthfulness about the problem. The truthful and kind words are used to solve the problem. (3) Right understanding knows the root cause of problem. (4) Right action is to do right things and avoid wrong things (not to kill, steal, not to do sexual misconduct). (5) Right livelihood is the profession and professional conditions allowing resolving the problem (ethically one should not be involved in the profession which harms other beings directly or indirectly. e.g. killing and selling animals, selling poison, arms and ammunition dealing, human trading). (6) Right effort is to the problem one should gather the data to resolve the problem with putting constant efforts. (7) Right mindfulness means one must be aware of each and every action and its consequences. One should not harm or hurt others in the process. (8) Right concentration means the focus of one's effort should be on the existing problem. All these are eight ethical ways to solve the problems or conflicts.

The Buddha's teachings start with the Four Noble Truths, which outline

the nature of suffering (*dukkha*) and its cessation. Suffering arises from desires, attachments, and ignorance nature of existence and the interconnectedness of all beings.

By eliminating ignorance through wisdom, individuals can achieve enlightenment, and in turn, contribute to global peace. The Noble Eight Fold Path provides a practical framework for eliminating ignorance and anger: Right View: Understanding the nature of suffering and truth of impermanence, which helps eliminate ignorance. Right Intention: Cultivating thoughts of kindness and compassion, this helps to eliminate anger and ill-will. Right Speech: Speaking truthfully and kindly, avoiding harsh words and gossip, thus reducing the fuel for anger and divisiveness. Right Action: Acting in ways that contribute to harmony and peace, avoiding harmful behaviors driven by ignorance and anger. Right Livelihood: Engaging in work that promotes well-being and does not contribute to harm, promoting social peace. Right Effort: Striving to eliminate unwholesome states of mind like anger and ignorance and cultivating wholesome states like compassion and wisdom. Right Mindfulness: Being aware of one's thoughts and feelings, which helps to recognize and transform anger and ignorance. Right Concentration: Developing deep meditation and mindfulness practices that lead to wisdom and the cessation of anger and ignorance.

Samyuttar Nikaya 56-1724 (The way of peace begins with the liberation of the mind.)

II. THE BASIC PRINCIPLE AND THE FIVE PRECEPTS

Buddhism is not merely to be preserved in books, it is to be learned and put into practices in the course of one's daily life. Without actual practice, one cannot realize truth. In order to live a good life. Buddhism prescribes the three basic principles: Charity (giving), Morality (good Conduct), and Meditation (mental development).¹ **Charity** is the virtuous act of the good person. Morality is the basic foundation path. Every Buddhist should observe Five Precepts for Morality. They are- (1) To abstain from killing any living beings, (2) To abstain from stealing anything that is not given, (3) To abstain from telling lies, (4) To abstain from sexual misconduct, and (5) To abstain from taking intoxicating drinks or drugs. The five represents the preliminary ideals of virtuous life which a man is to accept whole heartedly, if he is to call himself a Buddhist.²

Meditation is prescribed for mental development. It is the only way to purify one's mind. This is a mental training and mental development. The main purpose of practice is to make the mind free from the mental defilements. By meditation, one can also develop the mind to gain the penetrative insight or wisdom.

¹ *Vinaya Pitaka*, Pali. Vol.1.3.13.

² *Dhamma* pl. 28. Verse 103.

III. THE FOUR MODES OF SUBLIME LIVING

Loving-kindness (*Mettā*), Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity play an important role in the Buddhist perspective and solution of the conflicts. **Loving-kindness** means benevolence, amity, friendship, kindness, and active interest in others. **Compassion** is the response to the suffering of others that motivates a desire to help. Compassion motivates people to go out of their way to help physical, spiritual, or emotional hurts or pains of another. **Sympathetic Joy** is the pleasure that comes from delighting in other people's well-being. **Equanimity** is a state of psychological stability and composure. If people have equanimity of mind, they regard all equally without discrimination.

The starting point of Buddhism is **reasoning or understanding**. The Buddha said that in the Kalama Sutra, "You should not accept as true by hearsay from others; should not accept as true that is handed down traditionally from religious teachers in succession; should not accept it thinking that it has occurred thus; should not accept by mere saying that it is the words of scriptures; should not accept by mere consideration with your own wisdom; should not accept by pondering and accepting it; should not accept because the person is worthy of revering; should accept it as true by endeavoring to know by oneself" Nowadays, many peoples are making problem and making bigger problem by using of here say.

In every country or community, there are two kinds of emotions, (1) negative or destructive, and (2) positive or constructive. Negative emotions are ill will, jealousy, bitterness, anger, hatred, fear, worries etc. These emotions cause troubles in the heart, brain, and blood vessels.

Positive emotions are pity, sympathy for others, appreciation of kindness, goodwill, etc. These should be encouraged and cultivated.

IV. A BUDDHIST VIEW OF WORLD PEACE

There are of course many other kinds of conflict such as racial, political, economic, even religious conflicts, and the cause of nearly all of them is the lack of the spirit of fellowship.

In a conflict each side has its own conceit, but to hide it both parties have their own nicely written labels such as, "New World Order", "Civilizing the Backward Peoples", "Co-prosperity in East Asia," etc., and in almost every conflict each side blames the other, both parties claiming that they are right. They even use the name of religion to justify their actions, and will try to persuade God to take their side, although without seeming to make any attempt to be on God's side. They claim that there is only one God, apparently forgetting that if there is only one God, there must be only one family of men, and they treat one another not just as strangers but as enemies.

Since the end of the First World War there have been many organizations called "international". Many authors have written on the subject of internationalism, and idealistic workers hoping for a better future have started many international movements, but all without exception have failed to maintain peace. In the **first** place they have not, for one reason or another,

been able to carry out their plans; **secondly**, they received insufficient support from the public; and thirdly, most of them have dealt only with the purely external, material adjustments, paying too much attention to the material side of life and too little to the spiritual side. The two sides are interdependent and interrelated, and the importance of both should be recognized.

Then came the Second World War, unparalleled in history for destruction. The world still in a state of chaos, devoid of peace and real happiness, and once again idealistic workers, lecturers and writers are producing books and introducing new international organizations. It is possible to predict whether they will be successful or not; they will be successful if the leaders and workers can carry through their plans in a spirit of world fellowship, otherwise they will never be successful, there will be further wars, even more dreadful than the last.

The peace which we all desire, peace in our hearts and in our minds, peace between neighbours and among nations, is not a miracle which it is God's task to perform, it can only come about as a result of a reconstruction of thought, feeling and action by means of the spirit of fellowship, and such is the duty of all mankind.

Taking all nations as one whole there is the world sufficient wealth and ability to abolish poverty, unemployment, hardship and cruelty of any kind from all countries. It is possible for all men to be able to do what work is necessary, if only they would learn to understand each other better by drawing closer. The discovery of power and energy could be of great service to humanity, and men could be inspired to noble conduct if only all the scientists, poets and artists of all countries would come together. A powerful spiritual influence, helping all men to make the world a happier place, could be given by every religion if all of them were to act together as members of one family.

Buddhism teaches that misery and suffering are not the result of the wrath of a god, or gods, but are the direct consequences of man's ignorance of his own nature and of his surroundings.

1. Dighanikaya Pali Vol.3.182.

In attempting to discover the way of appeal on which to base morality, Buddhism teaches that there is no such appeal to any external authority in the form of a deity, but only to the natural desire of the human heart. Therefore, knowing that certain actions such as selfishness, violence and laziness tend to disorganize society, and to cause unhappiness to its members, a man will try to avoid injuring others if he sees clearly that his interests are bound up with those of others.

The real spirit of fellowship which is lacking in the world today can be promoted only through religion. Religion is an education of the heart with a view to refining our nature and elevating us in the scale of human beings; it is not merely theory but practice, and the heart, like the body, becomes healthy and strong by practical exercise. No doctrine merely held in the mind as an intellectual belief has any driving force: no doctrine is of any value unless and until it is applied. The Buddha said, A beautiful thought or word which is not

followed by a corresponding action, is like a bright flower that has no scent. Such will bear no fruit.

Practice of the moral life is the very core and essence of religion, for it is action and not speculation, practice and not theory that count in life. The will to do, followed by the doing, is the actual virtue; the will of itself does not count much unless it is fulfilled. Thus to put one's high ideas and concepts into practice is religion in the best sense. Religion is obviously not confined to any one country or to any particular nation or race, it is universal; and it is certainly not nationalism which, in other words, is merely another form of caste system but founded on a wider basis.

The world has found itself as one body, yet the fact of physical unity and economic interdependence, though of very great value, is not by itself sufficient to create a united family; for this we require a human consciousness of community, a sense of personal interrelationship among men, the spirit of fellowship. To have this spirit of fellowship we must realize the oneness of all life, and understand that we are one family.

According to Buddhism life is a mighty wheel of perpetual motion, and this wheel contains within it numberless smaller wheels corresponding to the lives of individual men, each of which has a pattern of its own. The great wheel and the smaller wheel, the whole world and individual men are intimately and indissolubly linked; the whole human family is so closely knit together that every unit is dependent on the others for its growth and development. In all our thoughts, words and deeds we act and react upon each other, so in a very real sense each one of us is responsible for the whole community. Men, being in need of each other, should learn to love each other and bear one another's burdens. This mutual dependence is a perpetual call on humanity, for we are bound alike by the bonds of humanity.

Science proves that the fundamental structure of the human mind is uniform in all races, what differences there are, are due to historical circumstances and stages of development. Without recognition of the oneness of the world in all its aspects, spiritual as well as social, economic as well as political, there will never be peace. A genuine spirit of world fellowship is the only logical basis of all true and high civilization, and of world peace.

V. WORLD FELLOWSHIP THOROUGH BUDDHISM

We are living today in a world torn between despair and hope. Our despair is due to many causes, the most serious of which is the constant fear of war: for although humanity wills peace, and the desire for peace exists everywhere throughout the world, instead of trying to give effect to that almost universal desire for peace each country has been arming to the limits of its capacity. Already more than half the national incomes of the world are being used for the preparation of war, and the maximum of our energy, ingenuity finance and organization is being turned in the direction of discovering how we can kill our fellow beings more ruthlessly. To strengthen our military power is not to guard the blessings of peace, but to run in the armaments race which must

inevitably end in war. Many of us still remember the first great European war, and only recently country after country has been the victim of cruel, barbarous and unjustifiable tyranny. What will be the future of humanity if the present tendency of each country is continued? Nevertheless we are not without hope, for there are at the same time idealistic writers, lecturers and those who work for the general good of mankind and who dream and hope for a better future, and many present day publications bear the term 'international'. The World Congress of Faiths I regard as an important movement, because it deals not just with mere external adjustments in material needs, but with the fundamental spiritual realities of life. It is the aim of this congress to promote world fellowship through religion, and it is now my present task to show how Buddhism can help in achieving this aim.

Talks Involving Sila in Particular

*Sabbapapassa akaranam ,
Kusalassa upasampada ,
Sacittaparityodapanam .*

To refrain from all evil.

To do what is good,

To purify the mind, This is the teaching of the Buddhas.³

In order to understand the above verse we should first understand what is mean by evil, and evil, bad roots; also what is meant by good and good roots.

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Destruction of any living creatures is bad | } | Bodily action | |
| 2. Stealing is bad. | | (<i>kaya kamma</i>) | |
| 3. Sexual misconduct is bad. | | | |
| 4. Lying is bad. | } | Verbal action | |
| 5. Tale bearing is bad. | | | (‘ <i>vaci kamma</i>) |
| 6. Harsh language is bad. | | | |
| 7. Frivolous talk is bad. | | | |
| 8. Covetousness is bad. | } | Mental action | |
| 9. Ill will is bad. | | | (‘ <i>mano kamma</i>) |
| 10. False views are bad. | | | |

Greed (*lobha*) is a bad root: hatred (*dosa*) is a bad root: ignorance (*moha*) is a bad root: therefore the above ten kinds of bad actions are due to greed, hatred or ignorance. These three roots are lie three great currents of force, for

³Verse No. 183 in *Dhammapada*.

they are sweeping each one of us down along the road to misery, just as the swift current of a river will carry with it all the logs which have fallen into it.

Greed

The first mentioned root that of greed, is desire: desire for sensual pleasures, wealth, rank, etc. This greed is in all of us like a raging thirst. The greedy man always says. 'I want', 'I must have', 'I cannot do without'. He may well be heard to say that if he were as rich as some neighbor whom he envies, he would be perfectly satisfied; but give him the particular amount of wealth he has set his mind upon, and he will find some still richer man to envy, and be as discontented as ever. A certain Persian poet has written. A small coin of silver makes a beggar contented; Faridun, with his kingdom of Persia, is only half satisfied.

Our tendency to remain discontented in spite of success and prosperity is due to the insatiable nature of our desires: and we are depressed by the fear of losing our possessions, at the same time being dissatisfied so long as there is someone in the world richer than ourselves. What is beyond our reach seems valuable until we obtain it, but when possessed it loses its value. This, unfortunately, is the character of most men, greed making us selfish so that we think only of our own need for gratification. The selfish man aims at obtaining as much happiness as he can for himself, and does not care whether other people are happy or miserable. In order to acquire his object he tries to appropriate as large a share as possible of the good things of the world, and whenever he has an opportunity of doing so he enjoys himself, even when his enjoyment is obtained at the expense of his fellow men. All over the world we find the selfish taking an unfair share of everything, and trying their best to use others as a means of attaining their pleasure.

Greed is like a thick fog such as there is in London sometimes, when we cannot see our way clearly before us: or sometimes at sea on a foggy day when people cannot see what lies ahead and two ships may collide, perhaps both sinking. Men, when blinded by desire, are carried away by a powerful current, not realizing whither they are going, and where there are many who are blinded by desire for the same things, there is jealousy and rivalry. As they act to satisfy their desires, so they hurt and harm one another with resultant suffering.

Hatred

The second current which equally leads us to misery is hatred, ill will or anger. It is that tendency within us which resents an action of another which challenges our right to what we desire. Our general tendency is to try and dominate others, and we want others to obey our will while suppressing their own, so when someone opposes his will against ours action is like that of a dog with a bone when another dog approaches. We are irritated in many ways, and although our irritation may at first be slight. If it is allowed to go on day by day it grows into a deep hatred. When a man is angry he is 'beside himself', as the saying goes, being swept along by a torrent of hatred, and it is due to this anger that disputes arise between one individual and another, between one nation and another. Such people as are blinded by anger cannot see that 'hatred cease not by hatred, but by

love; they regard war as the only ultimate way of settling national disputes, and the armies of great nations are larger than they were ever before in the history of the world, yet there seems little prospect of the establishment of the reign of universal peace. Although the principle that 'might is right' no longer prevails in the relations between individuals, it is still considered natural to appeal to it when one nation quarrels with another; and although war remains as the greatest relic of barbarism in the midst of modern civilization, the 'progress' of science is every year leading to the discovery of more and more powerful instruments for the destruction of human life and property.

In many countries of the present day conscription prevails, and the younger members of every family are compelled by law to serve a term in the army. Under such circumstances war spreads for wider desolation than when it is waged between a limited number of men who have voluntarily adopted the profession of army life, as a consequence of which a countless number of families in every war are reduced to destitution by the destruction of their property, or by the loss of those on whom they depended for support. All this is the result of hatred.

Ignorance

The third current which carries us to misery is ignorance, delusion. The state of greed as well as that of hatred is always accompanied by ignorance, because ignorance is the primary root of all evil. It is far more subtle than greed and hatred, and when a man is hypnotized by it he cannot distinguish between right and wrong, he can see no good in any noble action; nothing is safe from his scoffing and sneers, neither a sense of duty, nor filial love, nor sacrifice in any form can win a word of praise from his lips. On the contrary, he wants to be praised, and he is hurt if he is not properly appreciated, for he thinks much of himself and continually plans to feed his ambitions for personal happiness. The spirit of loving-kindness and charity is absent from him, he is deaf to all prayers and appeals for mercy, he has no sense of duty towards his fellow men. If he helps others he does so in order that he may get them into his power and thereby increase his gains, for under the influence of delusion he is determined to have what he wants, no matter who suffers, and he dislikes all those who hinder him or get ahead of him. He may occasionally gain advantages from those who cannot avoid coming into contact with him and who fear to provoke his resentment, but such advantages are conferred without goodwill, and those who can do so will be inclined to avoid his society. When perhaps the majority of men turn against him, and the world does not want him any longer, he then blames them, saying, 'What I have done is perfectly right, but people are too ignorant to realize it or too wicked to agree to it', he does not know that it is the poison in himself which has upset the world.

An old story may serve as an illustration in connection with ignorance which arouses hatred. Once a big bear with her three little cubs was looking for something to eat in the jungle when they saw a beehive in a trough under a tree, from one branch of which a big log was hanging just over the trough. The bears wanted to get at the honey, but as the log was in the way the

mother bear pushed it away so that they could all get at it, and they began to eat. Suddenly the log swung out and came back, hitting the mother bear on the head. Growing very angry she knocked it away violently so that it went out much further than before, and causing it to come back with such force that it struck one of the little cubs, killing it. The mother, now furious, struck at the log with all her might, and swinging out it came back with a great rush striking her again the head and killing her.

Who killed the bear? Strictly speaking it was her ignorance, her delusion which made her think that the log was her enemy. Through her ignorance hatred arose to make her fight against the log which had hit her, although the log could not hurt her unless she set it in motion, but the poor old bear did not know that. When a man is carried away by the current of ignorance he becomes brutal and barbarous, any sense of a common humanity fades from his mind.

It is due to these raging torrents of greed, hatred and ignorance that nations fight with nations, kings fight with kings, priests with priests; the mother quarrels with the son, the son with the mother, the father with the son, the son with the father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, friend with friends. We talk about peace, yet we create confusion; we long for happiness, yet we obtain unhappiness, why? Because we are like logs carried helplessly along by the currents of greed, hatred and ignorance. If we are to revive the sense of a common humanity and find happiness, we must step outside these torrents. How may this be achieved? The Buddhist technique is to still the raging torrents of greed, hatred and ignorance by a careful self-culture; Save thyself by thyself are the words of the Buddha, and he laid down a specific course of practice in mental and physical actions for the successful outcome of this self-culture.

To plan our good actions we should first understand what is meant by good and good roots.

What, now, is that which is good?

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | To abstain from killing is good. | } | Bodily action |
| 2. | To abstain from stealing is good. | | (<i>kaya kamma</i>) |
| 3. | To abstain from sexual misconduct is good. | | |
| 4. | To abstain from lying is good. | } | Verbal action |
| 5. | To abstain from tale-bearing is good. | | (<i>vaci kamma</i>) |
| 6. | To abstain from harsh language is good. | | |
| 7. | To abstain from frivolous talk is good. | } | Mental action |
| 8. | Absence of covetousness is good. | | (<i>mano kamma</i>) |
| 9. | Absence of ill will is good. | | |
| 10. | Right understanding is good. | | |

What are good roots?

Absence of greed, unselfishness, is a good root; absence of hatred, love, is a good root; absence of ignorance, wisdom, is a good root. These three roots are also called the seeds of nobility, seeds within each one of us that with careful, determined cultivation will grow into sublime powers. These powers lie latent in us, but they cannot grow until we discover them and make our hearts soft and warm with love so that they may grow to fulfillment.

Absence of Greed

(Unselfishness)

For this we must forget ourselves and substitute the world for ourselves. There is no evil in wanting universal happiness and peace; the evil arises when our desires are only for ourselves and not for others, or not in the sacred interests of truth. When we desire such things as we can share with others, our desires become wiser and more unselfish.⁴

The cultivation of unselfishness includes not only a feeling in the heart, although that internal feeling is essential, but also the performance of those outward actions by which that feeling is manifested: and it also includes the desire to put others perfectly at their ease, to save them from every kind of discomfort and to do all that we can to promote their happiness. The unselfish man puts himself in the position of others and tries to identify himself with all, regretting what he has done wrongly or has omitted to do, having an earnest desire to do better in the future and make amends for the wrong that has been done. He desires not to make himself a burden on his fellow men, but to be a blessing to them by making them happy, so that his unselfish disposition promotes social intercourse and adds to the pleasure of others. He appreciates benefits conferred on him and feels joy at the kindness of his benefactor to whom he has a great desire to return those benefits, or to give something more when possible. By being unselfish we develop in ourselves the sense of sympathy, and we cannot enjoy happiness worthy of the name without being in sympathy with our fellow men. Our happiness soon palls upon us if we have no congenial companions for whom we can feel affection, for in every case our happiness is rendered more intense and more permanent by being share with friends. The best way to be happy, therefore, is to make others happy: every kind act is twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who takes. If we are to promote the spirit of fellowship we should forget our 'I' in the service of all, we should do everything we can for the sake of others. In short, whatever deed we do, whatever word we utter and whatever thought we think, should be for the good, peace and happiness not only of ourselves, but others. The result of this is peace, happiness and friendship.

Absence of hatred

(Love)

To promote the spirit of world fellowship we must make the sublime seeds, the seeds of loving-kindness, grow in our hearts and minds till we are all love.

⁴ *Samyutta Nikaya*. 56.11: "The way of peace begins with the liberation of the mind."

To love one another we should realize that we are all brothers, and brotherhood must be applied with justice, for justice is a natural law. No judge has the right to use his power over a criminal to a greater extent than that permitted by the law of the court, which should be the representative of the natural law of justice.

If we do any harm to someone we shall be paid back in the same coin; rather as when we throw a stone into a pond, causing ripples to spread out over the surface until coming up against the edge of the banks. The water then moves back again until reaching the stone that has disturbed it. In just the same way the effects of our actions come back to us, and if our actions are good we shall have good effects, while bad actions will likewise produce bad effects. To produce good actions love is essential, so we must love everyone, no matter what may be the colour of his skin, whether he is rich or poor, wise or foolish, good or bad; and we should love not only human beings but all beings in the world.

In the *Mettā* Sutta, the discourse on loving-kindness, the Buddha says. 'As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her child, her only child, so let a man cultivate goodwill without measure among all beings. Let him cultivate goodwill without measure towards the whole world, above, below, all around, unstinted and unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests. Let him remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting or lying down. This state of heart is the best in the world.

Most of us have not yet learned this lesson, and therefore the sense of a common humanity is absent from our minds, the world is full of pain and cruelty and all wild animals flee from us. There are a few who have learned this lesson, they love everybody and everything, no wild animal flees from them and even a tiger will roll at their feet as a pet cat does at ours. Why do our pet animals love us? Because we love them, if we learn this lesson our enemies will become our friends and wild animals our pets.

Wisdom

Wisdom is the power of seeing things as they truly are, and how to act rightly when the problems of life come before us. The seeds of wisdom lie latent in us, and when our hearts are soft and warm with love they grow into their powers.

When a man has stilled the raging torrents of greed, hatred and ignorance, he becomes conscientious, full of sympathy, and he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings. Thus he abstains from stealing, and is upright and honest in all his dealings; he abstains from sexual misconduct and is pure, chaste; he abstains from tale-bearing. What he has heard in one place he does not repeat in another so as to cause dissension; he unites those who are divided and encourages those who are united. He abstains from harsh language, speaking such words as are gentle, soothing to the ear and which go to the heart is soft by being equipped with this morality and mental development that the sublime seed, wisdom, grows. Knowledge of the properties of the magnetic needle enables the mariner to see the right direction in mind-ocean on the darkest

night when no stars are visible. In just the same way wisdom enables a man to see things as they truly are, and to perceive the right way to real peace and happiness, *Nibbāna* .

VI. CAUSE AND EFFECT

According to Buddhist philosophy, every cause produces due effect and every effect has its own cause. This law of cause and effect also applies to *kamma*, the volitional actions. Every action produces corresponding effect. It is the principle of “Good begets good, and Evil begets evil.”

6.1. The cause of evil action

There are many reasons why human beings and societies do not have peace in present world. From the Buddhist point of view, the causes are many. They include desire, arrogance, and delusion. Desire means the need to possess material good and also people. Aspirations concern the wish for status, power and position. The resources of the world be more than enough for the people of the world. However, greedy persons always want more, they wish to have unlimited problem can be solved to some extent. However, if they cannot agree to negotiate, the result will be conflict. Arrogance means that human beings generally assume that they are better than others in terms of property, education, personality, work or status. Due to competition in these characteristics enmity has appeared. According to the Buddha’s teaching, anyone who likes to say and think that he or she is better than others, it will lead to conflict within his society. When the people are arrogant, they do not like to listen to others. They need to know that listening to others means giving respect to others and it will lead to friendship. Appreciation of other’s view point means the ability to accept a diversity of views. Delusion is ignorance that prevents us from seeing things as they really are. In this way, good and evil can become confused. Advantages and disadvantages can be confused. According to the Buddha’s speech, if a person does not accept different views, conflict can arise very easily. Peace is essential to human beings and societies. Peace brings loving-kindness to human beings and societies. Peace brings happiness to human beings and societies.

6.2. The cause of violence and conflict

The Buddhism analysis of the cause of violence and conflict is arrayed along three domains: the external, the internal, and the root. Buddhism look at the external causes of violence or conflict as consequences derived from a general orientation common to all living beings: avoiding harm and obtaining happiness. Anything contrary to this would result in disturbing one’s peace and lead to violence or conflict. If people want to live an ultimately happy life with no harms toward them at all, Buddhism teaches, they should start with avoiding causing harm to others, physically and verbally at the personal level. In other word, physical and structural violence are the product of human mental status as fear, anger, and hate, which are considered in Buddhism to be internal causes to violence and conflict. Even when no threat of personal safety or collective interest is perfect, conflict may occur, from the Buddhism perspective, as a

result of our two major mental attachment to, first, subjective views, opinions and second, the desire for materials, relationships. The stronger the attachment is, the more obsessive one would be, the more external behaviors one would engage, and the more severe the conflict would become. Behind the mental, behavioral and structural causes of violence and conflict, Buddhism goes even further to the ultimate fundamental causes leading to all the suffering inflicted by violence and conflict.

6.3. The effect of violence and conflict

The Buddhism analysis of violence and conflicts distinguishes primary causes of violence or conflicts and internal causes of violence or conflicts. In other word, physical and structural violence are the product of human mental status such as fear, anger, and hate, which are considered in Buddhism to be internal causes to violence and conflict. Even when no threat personal safety or collective interest is conflict may occur, from the Buddhist perspective, as a result of our two major mental attachments. The first one is subjective views, opinions and the second one is the desire for materials, relationships. The stronger the attachment is, the more obsessive one would be, the more external behaviors one would engage, and the more severe the conflict would become. Behind the mental, behavioral and structural causes of violence and conflict, Buddhism goes even further to the ultimate fundamental causes leading to all the suffering inflicted by violence and conflict.

During the Buddha's life time, there was a dispute between the citizens of *Kapilavattu* and those of *Kollya*, over the distribution of water of river *Rohini* situated between the two countries, for agricultural purpose. They quarreled and at last the rulers of the two countries advanced with their armies to attack each other. Buddha went that place and seated on the sand bank in the middle of the two armies, delivered a sermon on peace. "Dear rulers! Why will you let your invaluable lives and blood lost for water which is of little value? Peace and tranquility should not be destroyed by means of quarrel" and Buddha prevented the war. The two rulers then repented and brought an end to their enmity.

6.4. The effect of global peace

For Buddhism, Peace does not only mean the absence of conflict between states and nations. It also implies feelings of compassion and loving-kindness between individual people.

Happiness cannot arise, if our minds do not have peace. Peace can build true happiness not only for our self, but also for other people who follow us or live beside us. Happiness and suffering are state of mind. So their main cause cannot be found outside the mind. The real source of happiness is **inner peace**. If our minds are peaceful, we will be happy all the time, regardless of what the external condition may be. External conditions can only make us happy, if our mind is peaceful. Then only we can have outer peace. Thus, peace is important for building happiness within human beings and societies. Without peace, our world will be permeated by conflict and violence.

Peace and the value of peace already exist in the hearts and minds of people around the world. Hence, the present call for continued cooperation among members of religious communities. Buddhists and non-Buddhists, represents an admirable effort to reengage the diverse religious communities in ongoing dialogues about the value of peace through cooperation. There are two levels to this cooperation, that is, intra-faith and **inter-faith cooperation**. Intra-faith cooperation refers to cooperation among the devotees of the different Buddhist traditions, which can be said to be based on the concept “One Buddhism, Many Traditions”. **Inter-faith** cooperation, on the other hand, refers to cooperation between adherents of different faiths or religions, which can be said to be premised on the concept “Many Faiths, One Peace.”

Among the religions in the world, Buddhism is one of the religions based on “peace”. Out of many ways to obtain peace, meditation is the first way. Meditation will make our mind calm and peaceful. So, no one can seek true peace outside his or her mind. It can be found in our mind by doing meditation. Buddhism has been viewed generally as associated with non-violence and peace.

The most venerable said that, “Every religion has its own outer shell and inner core. The outer shell consists of rites, rituals, ceremonies, beliefs, myths, and doctrines. These outer shells differentiate one religion from another. However, there is an inner core which is common to all religions. All human beings should be free to profess and follow their faith. However, they must be careful not to neglect to practice to practice the essence of their own respective religions, and not to condemn other faiths. In this diversity of faiths, when people of different views approached him, the Buddha said, “Let us set aside our differences, let us give attention to what we can agree on and let us put the common core which we agree on into practice. Why Quarrels each other? Such wise counsel still retains its value until today. The Buddha said. Animosity can be eradicated by its opposite which is pure love, patience, forgiveness and so on. Animosity cannot be eradicated by animosity. Violence is ceased by non-violence. Violence is never ceased by violence. Hatred never ceases with hatred, hatred ceases with love. This is the eternal law.”

That’s why, we need to mutually respect, understand, and practice non-interference, and non-aggressions of Contribution, which will lead to peaceful co-existence.

VII. BUDDHA’S TEACHINGS IN ASEAN REGION

The teachings of the Buddha contribute to the local peace for the ASEAN Region such as Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines, Indonesia, and neighboring countries. This is become, many countries of ASEAN Region are Buddhism devoted countries, they believe in Sublime Living. These four sublime living Loving-Kindness. Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity are essential for the global peace. In Non-Buddhist countries of ASEAN Region, there are Sympathetic love and peace.

7.1. The Four *Brahmavihāras* for global peace

The Four *Brahmavihāras*, also known as the “Divine Abodes” or “Immeasurable,” are a set of four virtues and attitudes in Buddhism and other spiritual traditions. They are considered to be the right way of living for a harmonious society and individual well-being. These four qualities are:

i. *Mettā* (Loving-kindness): *Mettā* is the practice of cultivating a boundless, unconditional love and benevolence towards all beings. When individuals practice loving-kindness, it fosters compassion, empathy, and a sense of connectedness with others. In society, *mettā* promotes harmony, understanding, and a sense of unity among people, leading to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

ii. *Karunā* (Compassion): *Karunā* is the quality of cultivating compassion and empathy towards those who are suffering. It involves a deep awareness of others’ pain and a desire to alleviate it. In society, *karunā* encourages individuals to be sensitive to the needs of others, offer help to those in distress, and work towards reducing the suffering of all beings.

iii. *Muditā* (Sympathetic Joy): *Muditā* is the practice of rejoicing in the happiness and success of others without jealousy or envy. It involves appreciating and celebrating the good fortune of others. In a society where *muditā* is cultivated, there is a sense of communal joy, support, and encouragement, leading to a positive and uplifting environment where people cheer for each other’s achievements.

iv. *Upekkhā* (Equanimity): *Upekkhā* is the quality of inner balance, composure, and equanimity in the face of life’s ups and downs. It involves accepting the impermanence of life and maintaining a sense of calm amidst changing circumstances. In society, *upekkhā* helps individuals remain steady in times of turmoil, make wise decisions without being swayed by emotions, and treat all situations with fairness and impartiality.

Cultivating these Four *Brahmavihāras* in individuals and society can lead to a more compassionate, supportive, and harmonious community where people care for one another, celebrate each other’s successes, and work towards the well-being of all beings.

The *Brahmavihāras*, or the “Four Divine Abodes,” are a central part of Buddhist teachings and focus on cultivating qualities of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karunā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These teachings are beneficial in both the “worldly” and “worldly” worlds, as they address both the individual inner world and the social or external world.

7.1.1. Loving-kindness (*Mettā*)

- Inner World: *Mettā* helps in cultivating self-love and reducing negative thoughts such as anger or resentment. It allows the practitioner to develop a sense of peace and warmth in their own mind, making them less reactive to life’s challenges.

- **Outer World:** Loving-kindness fosters deeper connections with others by promoting empathy and kindness. It creates a positive environment that encourages peace, understanding, and mutual respect, thereby enhancing social harmony and reducing conflict.⁵

7.1.2. Compassion (*Karunā*)

- **Inner World:** Compassion is the ability to feel for others' suffering without being overwhelmed. It helps the practitioner develop emotional resilience, making it easier to cope with personal struggles while maintaining a sense of empathy for others.

Outer World: Compassion extends to others by offering care and support. It inspires acts of kindness and service that alleviate suffering in the community and contributes to reducing inequality and injustice in society².

7.1.3. Sympathetic Joy (*Muditā*)

- **Inner World:** Sympathetic joy allows a practitioner to rejoice in the happiness and success of others, counteracting feelings of jealousy or envy. It brings contentment and cultivates an abundant mindset, fostering inner peace and happiness.

- **Outer World:** On a societal level, it helps to build a culture of mutual support, where collective joy and prosperity are celebrated. It reduces competition and promotes a spirit of togetherness, fostering positive community dynamics.

7.1.4. Equanimity (*Upekkhā*)

- **Inner World:** Equanimity helps the practitioner maintain emotional balance and clarity in the face of life's ups and downs. It leads to greater mental stability, making it easier to remain calm and composed during challenging times.

- **Outer World:** On a broader scale, equanimity leads to a balanced and impartial approach to external situations. It encourages fair judgment and calm reactions in the face of adversity, reducing social tensions and fostering long-term peace.

Brahmavihāra are four virtues or attitudes that are considered to be the foundation of Buddhist practice. They are loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*Karunā*), sympathetic joy (*Muditā*), and equanimity (*Upekkhā*). These virtues, when cultivated and practiced, can have various benefits for society:

- Promotion of Harmony and Understanding:** The practice of loving-kindness promotes a sense of goodwill and benevolence towards all beings. When individuals in society cultivate loving-kindness, it can lead to better relationships, increased empathy, and reduced conflicts. This can contribute to a more harmonious and understanding community.

⁵ *Dhammapada*. 223.

ii. Encouragement of Compassion and Empathy: Compassion involves recognizing the suffering of others and wanting to alleviate it. When individuals practice compassion towards others, they become more sensitive to the needs and struggles of those around them. In society, a culture of compassion can lead to increased social support, caring communities, and a more empathetic society.

iii. Fostering Joy in Others' Success: Sympathetic joy involves experiencing joy and happiness in others' successes and well-being. When people practice *Muditā*, it can lead to a more positive and uplifting environment. Celebrating each other's accomplishments and joys can create a sense of interconnectedness and mutual happiness within society.

iv. Development of Equanimity and Balance: Equanimity refers to maintaining a balanced and even-minded attitude towards all experiences, whether pleasant or unpleasant. Cultivating equanimity can help individuals navigate challenges with composure and stability. In society, this can lead to better decision-making, reduced reactivity to conflicts, and an overall sense of calm amidst uncertainties.

2. Dhammapada. 226.

By integrating the principles of the *Brahmavihāras* into daily life, individuals can contribute to the creation of a more compassionate, harmonious, and understanding society. These virtues can enhance relationships, build stronger communities, and promote well-being and happiness for all members of society.

VIII. CONCLUSION

- For the inner world, the *Brahmavihāras* guide the individual in cultivating mental peace, emotional stability, and positive qualities that foster personal well-being. For the outer world, they encourage compassionate action, positive social interactions, and a peaceful, harmonious society. By embodying these qualities, individuals contribute to reducing suffering and promoting the collective good, making the *Brahmavihāras* highly beneficial in both personal and social spheres.

Buddhists have a particular responsibility in this newly globalized world. As Buddhists, whatever school, or tradition we follow, we cannot be satisfied with finding inner peace only for ourselves, although this is a prerequisite for developing the necessary wisdom to be able to act in a way that may contribute to creating a better world. Without applying the Dharma in our own lives, and without having attained a certain degree of understanding of the real nature of our mind, we will not be able to find the contributions to peace and harmony in the present global society. As the Lord Buddha said that, human problems must be understood through human experiences and solved by developing of positive qualities. One should find the solutions through the purification and development of the human mind and not through outsiders.

According to the Buddha, global peace is not merely the result of external conditions or political systems, but is fundamentally a product of inner

transformation. By eliminating greed, anger, and ignorance, and by cultivating the *Brahmavihāras* (Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity), individuals can contribute to a peaceful society and world. These practices help individuals transcend the destructive emotions that lead to conflict and suffering, replacing them with the qualities that foster peace, unity and harmony both within oneself and in the world at large.

By eliminating greed, anger and ignorance, and by cultivating the *Brahmavihāras* individuals can contribute to a peaceful society and world. These practices help individuals transcend the destructive emotions that lead to conflict and suffering replacing them with the qualities that foster peace, unity and harmony both within one self and in the world at large.

May all beings be free from danger!

May all beings be free from mental suffering!

May all beings be free from physical suffering!

May all beings take care of them self and be happy!

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The United Nations defines military conflict as a major war in which at least 1,000 soldiers die on the battlefield per year. In 1965, there were 10 major wars, and in 2005, there were 8. Since 1960, more than 20 major wars have occurred in African countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Sudan, Liberia, and Burundi. According to this research paper, the world today continues to suffer severely from wars and conflicts. As we move into 2025, conflicts persist in regions such as Syria, Sudan, Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, Iran-U.S.-Israel tensions, Haiti, the U.S.-Mexico border, Myanmar, the Korean Peninsula, and China-U.S. relations.

Wars and conflicts are exceptional social issues in the contemporary world. Among the most critical issues, war is the most dangerous. The Buddha never encouraged his disciples to engage in war or conflict under any justification. He advised avoiding troublesome environments by refraining from association. During the Buddha's time, there were six major wars between powerful kings, four of which the Buddha prevented before the battles even began. Many *suttas* and *Jātaka* stories highlight that effective discussion among parties is a great solution to stopping war or conflict. Additionally, the Bodhisatta Mahosadha won a great war against 100 kings without injuring anyone, using only his wisdom. The Buddha regarded war as an unskillful, evil act that brings worry and sorrowful consequences in *saṃsāra*. He emphasized the importance of universal brotherhood, embodied in the concept of *mettā* (loving-kindness). He advised people to spread loving-kindness even to their enemies.

The Buddha is known as *Mahākaruṇiko*, the Great Compassionate One, because he never harmed even his enemies, not even to protect his own life. Today, wars around the world cause immense destruction. Wars lead to poverty, illiteracy, sickness, and numerous other social issues, bringing suffering to all living beings. Buddhism emphasizes that negative personal

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psychic conditions - such as anger, delusion, lust, jealousy, and others - are causes of disruption to world peace. Due to the human ego, powerful political leaders wage war over matters that could be resolved through discussion. They employ highly advanced weapons and technology, causing devastating effects on the environment, economy, ethics, and humanity.

Keywords: *Ajjhatta-santi, Conflict, Dosa, Issā, Mettā, Moha, Peace, War.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Buddha always emphasized the importance of a peaceful life. He consistently guided people toward peace. *Nibbāna*, the final goal for all Buddhists, is described as the “Incomparable Peaceful Noble Path” (*anuttaram santi vara padam*). When the Buddha was a young prince, he renounced the path that led to war and conflict. He realized that the path leading to ultimate happiness for people was one of peace. Many social problems need to be addressed, with special reference to the timeless doctrine of the Buddha: (1) War and conflicts; (2) Environmental crisis; (3) Problems based on gender relationship; (4) Problems relating to sexuality and family; (5) Social problems on good governing and justice; (6) Violating human rights; (7) Poverty; (8) Problems of youth; (9) Bioethical issues; (10) Problems of inter-religious harmony. War has caused immense economic and social problems in every country. Governments allocate vast sums of money to troops, supplies, and weaponry, including rockets, guns, bombs, and bullets. However, in war, enormous financial resources are expended while natural resources are depleted, and countless human lives are lost. Families are torn apart, and immoral behaviors such as theft and sexual violence increase. Additionally, food shortages, disease outbreaks, and homelessness become widespread. Every country engaged in war provides evidence of these devastating consequences. The money spent on war could instead be used to provide housing for the homeless, develop education, eradicate poverty, and improve healthcare for the people.

List of ongoing armed conflicts.¹

War or Conflict With year started	Location	Cumulative Deaths	Deaths in 2024	Deaths in 2025
Myanmar Con- flict - 1948	Myanmar	199000+	19715	813
Arab-Israeli – 1948	Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen	251000+	30386	1670

¹ Crisis Group (2025). *10 Conflicts to Watch in 2025*, accessed on [February 17. 2025]. available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2025>.

Insurgency in the Maghreb – 2002	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Benin, Togo, Algeria, Tunisia, Chad, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Libya,	464345+	20667	846
Sudanese Conflicts – 2008	Sudan, South Sudan	550000+	16575	998
Russo-Ukrainian War 2014	Russia, Ukraine	350000+	77633	4099
Ethiopian Civil Conflict – 2018	Ethiopia	610000+	10179	140
Colombian Conflict - 1964	Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador	457700+	2273	115
Afghan Conflict - 1978	Afghan – Pakistan	2697800+	3208	158
Somali Civil War – 1991	Somalia, Somaliland, Kenya	1000000+	6206	293
Civil Conflict in Nigeria - 1998	Nigeria	104200+	3374	150
Congolese Conflict - 20024	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda	211600+	4471	201
Mexican Drug War – 2006	Mexico	415200+	8260	365
Syrian Civil War – 2011	Syria, Israel	625800+	6887	554
Yemeni Civil War – 2014	Yemen, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Israel	382100+	1826	131
Anglophone Crisis – 2017	Cameroon, Nigeria	9200+	2228	24

Haitian Crisis – 2018	Haiti	10000+	5601	29
Kurdish Separatist – 1918	Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey	178150+	409	0
Jamaican Political Conflict - 1943	Jamaica	1700+	332	13
Indo-Pakistani Wars – 1947	India, Pakistan	2000000+	680	25
Balochi Insurgency in Pakistan - 1948	Pakistan, Iran	22200+	860+	25
There are 100 wars above the list.				

II. THE RELEVANCE OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS IN PREVENTING WARS AND CONFLICTS

Buddhist teachings primarily focus on training the mind to overcome negative emotions such as anger, sorrow, worry, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, delusion, fear, frustration, and mental unrest—emotions that disrupt both personal peace and harmony in the world. These negative states not only lead to inner turmoil but also contribute to harmful behaviours and habits that fuel conflict, war, and hinder sustainable development. In contrast, cultivating positive mental states fosters inner strength, wisdom, empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, and satisfaction. These qualities support compassionate relationships within society and contribute to the sustainable development of the world.

Wars and conflicts often arise from several common causes, including: (1) Greed, delusion, and hatred; (2) Lack of knowledge; (3) Economic interests and materialism; (4) Poverty; (5) Religious fanaticism; (6) Political attitudes. When we closely examine the underlying causes of conflict and war, we find issues such as territorial disputes, attempts to alter or expand borders, fundamentalism, resource competition, political power struggles, and revenge. Preventing conflict is a shared aspiration of all people. In light of current global challenges, Buddhism offers valuable principles to address and prevent conflict and war. As the Dhammapada teaches: “*Nahiverena verāni - sammantīda kudacana/ Averenca sammanti - esa dhammo santtano*”². Hatred is never overcome by hatred; it is only overcome by non-hatred. This is the core Buddhist teaching on hatred and revenge. The Buddha advised his followers to practice samacariya - harmonious behavior with others - which leads to inner peace (ajjhata-santi). Buddhism is deeply rooted in the principle of non-

² Dhammapada, Yamaka vagga, BJTS, 1972, pp. 2.

violence, a value that can be embraced by people of all religious backgrounds. The Buddha's teachings specifically aim to prevent and resolve wars and conflicts that arise both within the human mind and in society.

However, some later Buddhist texts, such as the Jātaka stories, introduce elements that diverge from the original teachings of the Buddha. In certain Jātaka narratives, the Bodhisatta is occasionally depicted as a warrior, responding to the societal needs of the time, such as foreign invasions. These adaptations were made to align with historical contexts and to shape people's understanding based on prevailing circumstances. Yet, the Buddha's fundamental teachings emphasize peace and non-violence, stating that: "*Anekā pāpakā akusalādhammā sambhavanti*". If someone engages in war or conflict, they accumulate numerous negative karmic consequences. The Brahmajāla Sutta of the Dīga Nikāya³ states: "He is a reconciler of those in conflict and an encourager of those already united, rejoicing in peace, loving peace, delighting in peace, and praising peace. Abandoning killing, the monk Gotama refrains from violence; he is without stick or sword. He lives with care, compassion, and sympathy for others."

The Buddha then explained two key concepts that must be practiced to live such a life. These concepts are crucial for maintaining peace in society, as conflicts and wars often arise from a lack of these qualities in the human mind. He stated: "*Yathā ca pana kāmehi viṣaṇyuttaṃ viharantaṃ taṃ brāhmaṇaṃ akathānikathim chinnakukkuccaṃ bhavābhavā vitataṇhaṃ saññā nānuseṇti*". Two concepts are: (1) *kāmehi viṣaṇyuttaṃ* - departing from the sensual pleasure; (2) *vitataṇhaṃ* - eliminated craving. The causes of both past and present wars in the world often trace back to human craving and sensual desires. The Buddha explains that a person who has mastered their senses and eliminated craving will not be prone to quarrels, harm, abuse, theft, or the destruction of others' wealth. He once emphasized that human desires and wants have no end, highlighting how unchecked craving can lead to conflict.

"*Kamesu loke na hi atthi titti*". After briefly sharing his teachings with the monks, the Buddha left the area. Once he had departed, the monks approached Mahā Kaccāna Thera for further clarification on his words. Mahā Kaccāna Thera then provided a detailed explanation. He explained that when people are driven by wrong views and craving, it leads to the formation of self-identification or ego. This ego, in turn, gives rise to seven other latent qualities that fuel conflict: (1) *Kāmarāga* - the latent tendency to sensual pleasure; (2) *Paṭiḡa* - the latent tendency to aversion; (3) *Diṭṭi* - the latent tendency to speculative opinion; (4) *Vicikiccā* - the latent tendency to speculative doubt; (5) *Māna* - the latent tendency to conceit and pride; (6) *Bhavarāga* - the latent tendency to craving to continue existence; (7) *Avijjā* - the latent tendency to ignorance.

Due to these seven kinds of latent arise taking up rods and bladed weapons, of arguments, quarrels, disputes, and accusations, divisive tale-bearing, and

³ Dīga Nikaya I, Brahmajāla Sutta. BJTS, 1972, pp. 15 - 18.

false speech. When people eliminate these latent through cultivating their mind in the right way, they can gradually stop taking up rods and bladed weapons, of arguments, quarrels, disputes, and accusations, divisive tale-bearing, and false speech. Due to these seven latent qualities, people resort to taking up rods and bladed weapons, engaging in arguments, quarrels, disputes, and accusations, as well as indulging in divisive tale-bearing and false speech. However, when individuals eliminate these latent tendencies by cultivating their minds in the right way, they can gradually stop engaging in such harmful behaviors. In the Madupindika Sutta, the Buddha highlights that people typically experience the world in two ways: attraction and repulsion. They seek to possess attractive things, leading to quarrels and conflicts over them, while they also try to push away things they dislike, creating further conflicts through this repulsion.

In the Mahadukkhakkanda Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya⁴, the Buddha points out that people go to battle and kill each other because of desire, lust, and craving. (*“kāmaheṭu, kāma nidāna, kamaṇamevaheṭu”*). Similarly, the Raṭṭapāla Sutta, it is stated, *“ūno loke atitto taṇhā dāso”*⁵ - the people of this world are slaves to craving, and it is difficult to let go of it. The causes of both past and present wars in the world can often be traced back to human craving and sensual desires, which are fundamental drivers of conflict. The Buddha explains that a person who has mastered their senses and eliminated craving will not be inclined to quarrel, harm others, abuse others, steal, or destroy another's wealth. Buddhist teachings primarily focus on understanding the root causes of conflict. Buddhism does not advocate temporary solutions to war or conflict. If the underlying causes are not permanently addressed, conflict will continue to arise repeatedly.

The Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta⁶ and the Kūṭadanta Sutta⁷ highlight another important aspect of wars and conflicts. According to these suttas, a major social cause of conflict or war is competition over natural resources and material wealth. When individuals, groups, or even nations seek to accumulate material wealth, it naturally leads to competition, which can gradually escalate into conflict. In response to this, Buddhism advises people to reflect on the impermanence of material things. By contemplating the fleeting nature of worldly possessions, individuals are less likely to engage in intense competition or conflict with others. In the Sakkapañha Sutta⁸, it is mentioned that Sakka, the King of the Gods, approached the Buddha with a question. He asked why both gods and humans aspire to live without quarrels and fighting, yet inevitably fall into conflict. The Buddha then explained two psychological factors that contribute to the emergence of conflicts. These factors are: (1) *Issā* – envy, dislike, aversion, jealousy; (2) *Maccariya* – miserly. The concept

⁴ Majjhima Nikaya, Mahadukkhakkanda Sutta, BJTS, 1972, pp. 204 - 206.

⁵ Majjhima Nikaya II, Ratthapala Sutta, BJTS, 1972, pp. 423 - 426.

⁶ Diga Nikaya III, Cakkavattisihanada Sutta, BJTS, pp. 102 - 104.

⁷ Diga Nikaya I, Kutadanata Sutta, BJTS, 1972, pp. 250 - 251.

⁸ Diga Nikaya II, Sakkapanha Sutta, BJTS, 1972, pp. 398 - 340.

of issā is defined as parasampattinaṃ usūyana lakkhaṇaṃ issā, which refers to the inability to tolerate the wealth or success of others. This feeling of envy, aversion, and jealousy can directly lead to conflicts and wars.

According to Buddhist teachings, religious and political leaders have a primary responsibility to prevent conflicts and wars. When responsible and virtuous leaders govern, a country will be filled with peace. However, when corrupt or unethical leaders are in power, the nation will be plagued by suffering. Therefore, in the Adhammika Sutta from the Pattakamma Vagga of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*⁹, the Buddha states:

*“gunnam ce caramānānaṃ - jinhaṃ gaccanti pungavo
Sabbe te jinha gaccanti - nette jinha gate sati
Evaṃ manussesu yo hoti samato - so ce adhammaṃ carati
sabbam rattaṃ dukkhaṃ seti - rājā ce hoti adhammiko”*

Just as when the leading bull goes astray, all the following bulls will also go astray, a leader's unrighteous behavior will influence others to follow the same path. A bad leader who neglects their duties brings suffering to the entire population. Therefore, leaders must righteously guide others.

When considering the causes of wars and conflicts, craving and pride are at the core. Throughout human history, wars and conflicts have often been ignited by the desire to protect one's pride and fulfill personal desires. The Buddha advises his followers to eliminate pride from their lives. Many social, civil, and armed conflicts arise due to poor leadership. The Buddha instructs leaders to free themselves from the four prejudices. “*Ababbo candā agatiṃ gantum, dosa agatiṃ gantum, bhayā agatiṃ gantum, moha agatiṃ gantum*”. (1) Lust, loyalty, or like; (2) Hatred; (3) Fear; (4) Illusion or ignorance. Leaders should not be influenced by factors such as gender, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, or nationality when making decisions. They must always strive to make fair and just decisions without any bias.

In society, it is often observed that powerful individuals engaged in unethical practices use political influence to evade the law. This leads to a loss of trust in institutions such as the courts, police, and political leadership. At times, these individuals seek political support to further their illegal activities. In many countries, wars have erupted due to the unfair treatment of other nations or religious groups. When one nation or religion is given preferential treatment while others are disregarded or disrespected, civil conflicts can arise. This inequality fosters division and unrest.

Craving and revenge have been recurring causes of war throughout history. The Buddha also identified another reason for war: some people believe they are superior to others based on their nation, religion, or caste. In the Dhammapada, the Buddha states: “*jayaṃ weram pasahati - dukkhaṃ seti parājito/ Upasanto sukhaṃ seti - hitvā jaya parājayaṃ*”¹⁰. The winner faces

⁹ *Anguttara Nikaya* iv, *Adhammika Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 143 – 144.

¹⁰ *Kuddhaka Nikaya*, *Dhammapada*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 57.

hatred from others, while the loser suffers from defeat. Both parties in a war endure mental suffering. According to Buddhism, no one truly wins through battle. The Buddha emphasized the importance of conquering one's mind, freeing it from defilements. As the Dhammapada states: “*yo sahaṣṣaṃ sahaṣṣena - saṅgāme mānuse jine/ ekañca jeyya attānaṃ - sace saṅgāma uttamo*”¹¹. The person who conquers their cravings achieves a greater victory than one who wins a thousand battles against others. The Buddha always advised people to focus on themselves rather than on others. When individuals fixate on others and their weaknesses, they often provoke conflict. The Buddha encouraged self-reflection, urging people to address their shortcomings.

Once, while the Buddha was meditating under a tree, a group of princes approached him and asked, “Venerable Sir, have you seen a woman who ran from here?”, the Buddha replied, “Search within yourselves, not in others”. As the Dhammapada further states: “*na paresaṃ vilomāni - naparesaṃ katākataṃ attanāva avekkeyya - katāni akatānīca*”. “Do not think about what others have or have not done; think about what you have done or have not done”. In everyday life, people often focus on the responsibilities, duties, and actions of others while failing to reflect on their responsibilities and duties toward others. This lack of self-reflection can lead to conflict. Therefore, the Buddha advises individuals to recognize their duties and fulfill them well for the benefit of others.

In Buddhism, followers are encouraged to spread loving-kindness, even toward their enemies, without harboring hatred. In the Kakacūpama Sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya*¹², the Buddha praises the patience of a monk who, despite being tortured by thieves who cut off his body parts, continued to radiate loving-kindness toward them. Similarly, in the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*¹³, there is a conversation between the Buddha and Bhikkhu Puṇṇa, in which the Buddha offers brief yet profound guidance.

“Punna, I have advised you in short. Now in which state will you abide?”

Venerable sir, now that I’m advised in short, I will abide in the Sunaparanta state.

Punna, the people of Sunaparanta are rough, if they scold and abuse you, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta scold and abuse me. It will occur to me, indeed the people of Sunaparanta are good, they do not hurt me with their hands.

Punna, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt you with their hands, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt me with their hands, it will occur to me, indeed the people of Sunaparanta are good, they do not hurt me with clods.

¹¹ *Kuddhka Nikaya, Dhammapada*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 48.

¹² *Majjhima Nikaya I, Kakacupama Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 310 - 312.

¹³ *Majjhima Nokaya III, Punnovada Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 548 - 560.

Punna, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt you with clods, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt me with clods, it will occur to me, indeed the people of Sunaparanta are good, they do not hurt me with a stick.

Punna, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt you with a stick, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt me with a stick, it will occur to me, indeed, the people of Sunaparanta are good, they do not hurt me with a weapon.

Punna, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt you with a weapon, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta hurt me with a weapon, it will occur to me, indeed, the people of Sunaparanta are good, they do not end my life with a sharp weapon.

Punna, if the people of Sunaparanta put an end to your life with a sharp weapon, what will you do?

Venerable sir, if the people of Sunaparanta would put an end to my life, it will occur to me thus. There are disciples of the Blessed One, who loathing the body and life search for an assassin. Here I have got an assassin even without a search.

Good! Punna, you can abide in Sunaparanta endowed with that appeasement in the Teaching. You may do the fit now."

The Buddha admired the monk's attitude and expressed his approval by saying "Sadhu" three times. The Buddha consistently highlighted the aftermath of war and the positive consequences of promoting universal brotherhood for all people. This message is not just for Buddhists, but for all living beings. In the *Mettānisaṇṣa Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*,¹⁴ it is said: "Oh monks, eleven advantages can be achieved from the Mind intellectually practicing loving kindness, which should be treasured in mind by living in conformity with the thoughts by putting into practice and by establishing them. Eleven advantages are: (1) The bliss of the ability to sleep in comfort: *Sukhaṃ supati*; (2) The bliss of the opportunity to awaken in comfort: *Sukhaṃ paṭibujjhati*; (3) The bliss of being free from evil dreams: *Na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati*; (4) The bliss of being dear to human beings: *Manussānaṃ piyo hoti*; (5) The bliss of being dear to non-human beings: *Amanussānaṃ piyo hoti*; (6) The bliss of protection from celestial beings: *Devatā rakkhanti*; (7) The bliss of protection from fire, poison, and weapons: *Nāssa aggi vā viṣaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati*; (8) The bliss of the ability to concentrate the mind instantly: *Tuvataṃ cittaṃ samādhiyati*; (9) The bliss of a bright and serene countenance: *Mukhavaṇṇo vippasidati*; (10) The bliss of having an unconfused mind at the time of death: *Asammulho kālaṃ karoti*; (11) The bliss of birth in the Brahma world after death if not yet virtuous enough to attain arahantship: *Uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokūpago hoti*.

¹⁴ *Anguttara Nikaya, Mettanisansa Sutta*, BJTS, 1972.

In some Jātaka stories, it is explained that when people encounter animals in distress, they spread loving-kindness toward them and free them from harm. In the Sūkara Jātaka, there is a story of a large boar trapped in a pit of excrement who challenges a lion king to a fight. The lion king, however, refuses to fight and says, “*Jayaṃ sammā dadāmi te*” (“I willingly grant you victory”). The Cullabodhi Jātaka teaches that revenge and hatred destroy the lives of those who engage in war driven by such emotions. It further illustrates this by saying that just as two sticks rubbing together create fire that destroys both, so too do hatred and revenge harm those who harbor them. The story emphasizes that there is no need for conflict and that victory can be granted willingly. To make such a sacrifice, one needs a developed mind, which is central to Buddhist teachings. Without such mental development, this level of self-restraint is difficult to achieve.¹⁵

The Buddha introduced the concept of ideal kingship, which does not seek to conquer countries but instead governs the entire world. This is the Cakkavatti monarch concept. In the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*¹⁶, the Buddha explains the qualities of such a monarch. The monarch renounces the use of weapons and rules with righteousness. All other kings and people respect his righteousness and willingly accept his leadership. The sutta outlines ten main duties of this monarch, among them maintaining his troops with righteousness and providing protection and care for both humans and animals without exception.

Buddhism does not reject the idea of maintaining an army, provided it is done justly. However, it firmly opposes the invasion of other lands driven by greed. King Ashoka, who ruled in the 3rd century BCE, is a historical example of a ruler who governed according to Buddhist principles. In his rock edicts, Ashoka writes: “No more shall the drums of war be heard in my territories, but the drums of dhamma shall reverberate throughout the empire”.

In the article “Norms of war in Theravada Buddhism” by Mahinda Deegala¹⁷ says,

One of the Mahāyāna Buddhist texts, the Dharmasamuccaya Sūtra, suggests a technique to prevent war: “Even if an army of another country should invade and plunder, a king should first determine whether the soldiers are brave or cowardly and then conclude peace through expediency.”

When the Indian monk Guṇavarman (367 – 431 CE) visited China in 424 CE, the Chinese emperor questioned him: “When foreign armies are going to invade my country, what should I do? If we fight, there will be many casualties. If we do not repulse them, my country will be imperiled. O Master, please tell me what to do?”

The monk answered: “Just entertain a compassionate mind; do not have a

¹⁵ *The Jātaka*, Vol. IV. Cambridge University Press, 1901.

¹⁶ *Diga Nikaya III, Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 105 - 106.

¹⁷ Deegalle, M. Norms of war in Theravāda Buddhism, 1992.

hurtful mind". The king followed his advice, and when the banners were about to be hoisted and the drums beaten, the enemies retreated.¹⁸

This passage suggests that one should not fight against enemies and that the use of force is not the solution. On the contrary, it advocates for the practice of benevolence. From the Buddhist perspective, the ideal of benevolence possesses its power to protect the righteous and prevent imminent dangers from conquering enemies.

In the *Abhayarajakumara Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*¹⁹, the Buddha asked Prince Abhaya what he would do if his infant child put a stick or pebble in their mouth. The prince replied:

"Venerable Sir, I would take it out. If I could not remove it immediately, I would hold the child's head in my left hand and use my right hand to crook a finger and remove it, even if it meant drawing blood. Why? Because I have compassion for the child."

Here, the Buddha teaches that if an action benefits all living beings, its nature—whether seemingly unkind or not - does not matter.

In the *Mahāvamsa*²⁰, the Sri Lankan chronicle written by Mahanama Thera in the 6th century CE, when recounting the war of King Dutugamunu, an arahant says:

"From this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven. Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. One had taken refuge in the Three Jewels, and the other had embraced the Five Precepts. The rest were unbelievers and men of evil life, not more esteemed than beasts. But as for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha in manifold ways; therefore, cast away care from thy heart, O ruler of men!"

Thus exhorted, the great king found comfort and reassurance in his actions.

The *Mahāvamsa* is not a Buddhist canonical text, but it reflects how Sri Lankan Buddhists sought to protect their land from foreign invasion. This war cannot be identified as a religious war. As a king, he was responsible for protecting his nation. However, as wise Buddhist leaders, they could resolve conflicts without harming others, even their enemies

Prof. Premasiri states in his publication *A Religious War in Sri Lanka* (2006):

"Where one of the parties engaged in war is considered righteous and the other unrighteous, the Buddhist canonical accounts highlight the ethical qualities of the righteous party by showing that, although they are compelled by circumstances to engage in war for self-defense, they do not resort to unnecessary acts of cruelty even towards the defeated. The righteous party in war avoids harm to the innocent and is ready to pardon even the defeated

¹⁸ *Taishō*, vol. 50, p. 340b.

¹⁹ *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Abhayarajakumara Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 94 - 96.

²⁰ *Mahāvamsa*, CH 25, BCC, 2000, pp. 109 - 112.

enemy. Skillful methods are adopted to cause the least harm. Texts such as the Ummagga Jātaka (J. IV. 329ff) illustrate cases where the enemy could be defeated without injury to or destruction of life.”

During the Buddha’s lifetime (566 - 486 BCE), there were six notable wars. Two were fought between King Kosala and King Ajātasattu, another occurred between the Sākya and Koliya clans, King Viḍūḍabha waged war against the Sākya clan, King Ajātasattu fought against the Vajjis, and the final one took place in Sri Lanka between King Cullodara and King Mahodara.

The Buddha played a pivotal role in preventing two of these wars entirely and in managing two others, helping to maintain peace until his passing. In the remaining two wars, the Buddha did not directly intervene.

The Buddha did not involve himself in the war between King Kosala and King Ajātasattu. Instead, he enacted a Vinaya rule prohibiting monks from even discussing wars. The *Paṭhama Saṅgāma Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya*²¹ mentions the war between King Ajātasattu and King Kosala, which was sparked by a dispute over the village of Kāsi. This village had been given by King Kosala’s father to his sister, who was married to King Bimbisāra. After King Ajātasattu ascended the throne, his mother - the sister of King Kosala - passed away. King Kosala then decided to reclaim the village. However, King Ajātasattu opposed him and waged war with his troops. The war ended with King Kosala’s defeat and King Ajātasattu’s victory. When the monks informed the Buddha of the news, the Buddha responded: “*Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati - dukkhaṃ seti parājito/ Upasanto sukhaṃ seti - hitvā jaya parājayaṃ*”. “Victory breeds enmity, while the defeated one sleeps with sadness. The peaceful one sleeps at ease, having abandoned both victory and defeat”.

This explanation from the Buddha reflects the Buddhist perspective on war. In battle, no one truly wins; both sides lose valuable lives and resources, and both must experience sorrow. According to this teaching, the victor gains hatred and enmity as a result of their triumph - feelings that cannot lead to happiness. Therefore, the winner cannot find true joy. The loser, on the other hand, constantly dwells on their defeat, suffering from it and harboring further enmity toward the victor. This, too, brings immense suffering to the defeated.

The *Dutiya Saṅgāma Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya*²² recounts the events of the second war between King Kosala and King Ajātasattu. In this conflict, King Kosala successfully reclaimed the Kāsi village, while King Ajātasattu was defeated. After hearing the news, the Buddha said: “*Villumpattaṃ puriso - yav’ssa upakappati/ Yadācaññe vilumpanti - so villutto vilumpati*”. “A man who on plundering so long it serves his hands, but when others plunder him, the plunderer is plundered”. “*Hantāra labhati hantāraṃ - jetāraṃ labate jayaṃ/ Akkosakoca akkoṣaṃ - rosetāraṃ ca rosakaṃ/ Atha kammavivaṭṭena - so villutto vilumpati*”. “The killer begets a killer, one who conquers begets a

²¹ *Samyutta Nikāya* III, *Aputtaka Vagga, Paṭhama Saṅgama Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 156.

²² *Samyutta Nikāya* III, *Aputtaka Vagga, Dutiya Saṅgama Sutta*, BPS, 1972, pp. 158 - 160.

conqueror, the abuser begets abuse, the reviler one who reviles. Then, through the unfolding of karma, the plunderer is plundered.”

These two suttas highlight the severe and far-reaching negative consequences of war and conflict. They emphasize that those who engage in acts of war or violent disputes inevitably become entangled in a cycle of hostility and suffering. Such individuals are bound to experience enmity, physical harm, and the inevitable destruction that comes with armed struggles. Additionally, they may find themselves subjected to verbal abuse, oppression, or even the loss of their possessions through plundering and looting. The teachings in these suttas serve as a profound reminder that war does not merely impact the battlefield but extends its suffering to all those involved, fostering long-term animosity, destruction, and pain.

Later, the Buddha directly intervened in the war between the Sākyaans and the Koliyans,²³ who were his relatives. The conflict arose over the sharing of water from the Rohiṇī River. Both the Sākyaans and the Koliyans had built a dam to use the water for agriculture, leading to a dispute over access, with both sides preparing for war. This conflict stemmed from a scarcity of resources.

Upon hearing of the situation, the Buddha visited the area and engaged with both sides to bring about peace. He asked, “What is more valuable - blood or water?”. The people responded that blood is more valuable than water. The Buddha then advised them to share the water periodically and establish an agreement to prevent further conflict. With the Buddha’s guidance, the war was averted, and harmony was restored.

King Viḍḍabha harbored anger toward the Sākyaans, who were his mother’s relatives. Once, Prince Viḍḍabha visited his mother’s family, but the Sākyaans insulted him, highlighting his mother’s low caste. The Sākyaans had deceived King Pasenadi Kosala into marrying a woman of low caste, Vasabhakhattiyā. After the death of King Pasenadi, his son, King Viḍḍabha, ascended the throne and sought revenge against the Sākyaans.

He attempted to wage war against the Sākyaans three times. On each occasion, the Buddha sat at the border of the Sākyaan territory and met with King Viḍḍabha, speaking with him and urging him to refrain from violence. Understanding the Buddha’s desire to protect the Sākyaans, King Viḍḍabha withdrew without fighting. However, after the Buddha’s passing, King Viḍḍabha eventually conquered the Sākyaan territory.

Another narrative appears in the Sri Lankan chronicle, where King Culodara and King Mahodara were preparing for war over a throne made of gems. At that time, the Buddha arrived in Sri Lanka and intervened to prevent the conflict before it escalated into war. The Buddha preached to the two kings, and both offered the throne to him. The Buddha advised them to build a stūpa to enshrine the throne and treat it as a relic used by the Buddha.

²³ Suttanipata Commentary L.P. 358.

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*²⁴, we see the Buddha working to prevent another war, this time between King Ajāsatta and the Vajjis. King Ajāsatta, the most powerful king of the time, sought to know whether he could defeat the Vajjis in battle. To find out, he sent his minister, Vassakara, to consult the Buddha. The Buddha replied that as long as the Vajjis followed the seven conditions of welfare that he had taught them, they could not be defeated by any enemy. These seven conditions are:

- (1) Foregather thus often, and frequent the public meetings of their clan,
- (2) Meet together in concord and rise in concord, and carry out their undertakings in concord,
- (3) Enact nothing not already established, abrogate nothing that has been already enacted, and act by the institutions of the *Vajjians*, as established in former days,
- (4) Honour and esteem and revere and support the *Vajjian* elders, and hold it a point of duty to hearken to their words ...
- (5) No woman or girl belonging to their clans are detained among them by force or abduction,
- (6) Honour and esteem and revere and support the *Vajjian* shrines in town or country, and allow not the proper offerings and rites, as formerly given and performed, to fall into desuetude.
- (7) So long as the rightful protection, defense, and support shall be fully provided for the Arahants (religious persons) among them, so that the Arahants from a distance may enter the realm, and the Arahants therein may live at ease.

Minister Vassakāra understood the Buddha's teachings and was able to influence the Vajjis to change their practices. However, despite these changes, King Ajātasattu eventually conquered the Vajjis' territory. This demonstrates that good practices within a nation provide protection and help prevent the need for war. Yet, when a nation weakens, it becomes vulnerable to the influence and aggression of others. If the Vajjis had continued to uphold the Buddha's nine factors of welfare, they might not have been defeated by King Ajātasattu. Buddhism does not condone actions such as the invasion of neighboring lands.²⁵

In the *Kosambī Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*²⁶, the Buddha outlines principles that can be applied to avoid conflicts and war while promoting harmony and unity within society. The Buddha emphasizes: (1) *Sāraṇīya* - Prevents The Conflicts; (2) *Piyakarana* - Like Each Other; (3) *Garukarana* - Mutual Respect; (4) *Sangahaya* - Coming Together; (5) *Avivādāya* - Without Disagreements; (6) *Samaggiyā* - Produce Unity; (7) *Ekibhāvaya* - Together; (8) *Mettaṃ kāyakamma, vaci kammaṃ, mano kammaṃ, paccupatṭhitam hoti*

²⁴ Dīghanikaya II, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 73 - 75.

²⁵ *Samyutta Nikaya* II, BJTS, 1972, pp. 268.

²⁶ *Majjhima Nikaya* I, *Kosambiya Sutta*, BJTS, 1972. pp. 754 - 760.

avi ceva raho ca". One principle introduced in Buddhism to prevent conflict and maintain harmony in society is the practice of compassionate bodily, verbal, and mental actions, both openly and secretly.

Another important teaching for fostering peace is the sharing of gains. The Buddha advised monks, when they receive something, to begin by sharing it. He said,

"Puna ca parami, bhikkave, bhikkhu ye te lābhā dhammikā dhammaladdhā antamaso pattapariyāpanamattampi, tatārupehi labhehi appativibhattabhogi hoti silavantehi sabrahmacārihi sadharanabhogi."

"A monk uses things in common with his virtuous companions in the holy life; without reservation, he shares with them any gain acquired righteously, even if it is merely the contents of his bowl."

The concept of *sādhāraṇa-bhogi* is a significant one in Buddhism. In today's society, leaders often fail to distribute wealth equitably among the people. The wealthy and powerful accumulate endlessly without sharing, while the poor continue to suffer from poverty. In the modern world, we witness instances where vast amounts of food are discarded into the ocean, even as millions of people in some countries suffer from hunger. Such disparities can directly lead to conflict.

The *Saṅgāma Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*²⁷ explains the causes and consequences of conflicts, highlighting how inequality and injustice contribute to social unrest. "*Chayimāni ānanda vivādamūlāni, katamāni cha? bhikkhū kodano hoti upanāhi, akkhi hoti palasi, issuki hoti maccari, saṭo hoti māyāvi, pāpicco hoti miccādiṭṭhi, sandiṭṭhiparāmasi hoti ādānaggāhi duppaṭinissaggi*". (1) *Kodano hoti upanāhi* - anger and thinking vengeance; (2) *Makkah, palāsa* - contemptuousness and malice; (3) *Issuki, maccari* - envious and miserly; (4) *Saṭho, māyāvi* - deceptive and dishonest; (5) *Pāpicco, miccādiṭṭhi* - evil desire and wrong view; (6) *Sandiṭṭhiparāmasi, ādānaggāhi* - clinging to one's own dogma and not willing to put aside dogmatic views. One of the key causes of war and conflict is *upādāna*, or clinging. When people become attached to a particular idea or belief, they are often willing to die for it and refuse to listen to or respect the views of others.

In the *Mahānidāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*²⁸, four types of *upādāna* are identified, which are directly related to conflicts. These are: (1) *Kāmupādāna* – Clinging to lust or desire; (2) *Diṭṭhupādāna* – Clinging to wrong views; (3) *Sīlabbatupādāna* – Clinging to religious rites and practices; (4) *Attavādupādāna* – Clinging to self-identity

In *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*²⁹ Buddha says, "*kullūpamaṃ vo bhikkhave dhammaṃ desissāmi nittaranattāya no gahanattāya taṃ sunāta sādukaṃ manasi karoṭha*". "Monks, I preach *dhamma* as comparing to a raft. It is only for travel, not for clinging".

²⁷ *Majjhima Nikaya III, Samagama Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 54 - 59.

²⁸ *Diga Nikaya II, Mahanidana sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp 84 - 90.

²⁹ *Majjhima Nikaya I, Alagaddupama Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, pp. 326 - 327.

The Buddha advised this because his teachings should not be taken as a form of clinging, which can lead to conflict. In the *Kalāha-vivāda Sutta*³⁰, the Buddha says: “*Kuto pahutā kalahā vivādā - Paridevasokā sahamacchirā ca/ Mānātimānā sahapēsunā ca - Kuto pahutā te tadingha brūhi*”. “Where do quarrels and disputes originate? And the sorrow, the grief and the selfishness, The pride, arrogance and slander that go with them – Where do these originate? Come on, tell me”. “*Piyā pahutā kalahā vivādā - Paridevasokā samaccharā ca/ Mānātimānā sahapēsunā ca - Macchiriyayuttā kalahā vivādā/ Vivādajātesu ca pesunāni*”. “From what is dear there have arisen quarrels, disputes, lamentation, sorrows, along with selfishness, conceit and pride, along with divisiveness. Tied up with selfishness are quarrels and disputes. In the arising of disputes is divisiveness”.

According to this *sutta*³¹, pride, arrogance, and slander are key causes of conflict. Buddhist teachings offer a path to eradicate these unwholesome roots from the mind. People often take pride in their nation, caste, wealth, and compare themselves to others, believing they are superior. This mind-set can lead to war and conflict. When these roots of pride and arrogance are eliminated, quarrels and disputes will not arise. In this *sutta*, the Buddha also notes that ordinary people tend to engage in quarrels and disputes even with their close relatives.

When the Buddha defined his followers, he said: “*pānatipāta paṭivirato hoti, nihīta-daṇḍo nihīta-sattho lajjī dayāpanno sabba-pani-bhūta-hitānukampi viharati*”. He refrains from killing, punishment, and the use of weapons, living with compassion for all beings. During the time of the Buddha, there were many religions, but most of them were centered on promoting good understanding. As stated in the *Udāna Pāli*, “*Idha bhante sambahula nānā tiṭṭhiyā samanā brahmanā paribbājaka sāvattiyam paṭivasanti. nānā diṭṭikā nānā khāntikā rucikā nānā diṭṭhi nissāya nissitā*”. “Master, there are various religious people in the *Sāvatti* live with harmony and they very like each other”.

The Buddha admired harmony among different religions. On many occasions, he visited the places of other religious teachers, such as Cullasakuludāyi and Vacchagotta Paribbājaka, to foster understanding. Today, however, religious groups often struggle to maintain good relationships. One main reason for this is that religious leaders frequently seek to convert others to their faith.

In contrast, the Buddha did not wish to convert people to Buddhism but instead aimed to guide them toward the right path. In the *Udumbarika Sihanāda Sutta*, the Buddha clearly states: “I do not want to convert you to Buddhism. Do

³⁰ *Khuddhaka Nikāya, Maha Niddesa, Kalaha vivada Sutta*, BJTS, 1972, Pp. 346 - 350.

³¹ *rajanopi rajūhi vivadanti. Khattiyāpi khattiyehi vivadanti, brahmanāpi brahmanehi vivadanti. Gahapatīpi gahapatehi vivadanti. Matāpi puttana vivadati. Puttopi matarā vivadati. Pitāpi puttana vivadati. Puttopi pitarā vivadati. Bhātāpi bhātārā vivadati, bhātāpi bhaginiyā vivadati. Bhaginīpi bhātārā vivadati. Sahāyopi sahāyena vivadati.*

Khuddhaka Nikāya, Maha Niddesa, Kalaha vivada Sutta, BJTS, 1972, Pp. 346 - 350.

not misunderstand me; you can still consider your teachers as your teachers”. Similarly, in the *Upāli Sutta*, the Buddha advised Upāli to continue respecting Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta as his teacher and to honor the practices he had followed before understanding Buddhism. Throughout history, Buddhists have upheld this principle. King Ashoka famously said: “One who insults other religions insults his religion”.

The Buddha used various methods and techniques to resolve conflicts and establish peace in individuals’ lives and the world. Once, while staying at Nigrodhārāma, two groups of monks began to quarrel over a *vinaya* rule. Despite the Buddha’s advice to resolve the issue, they refused to settle it. After three attempts to intervene, the Buddha chose not to engage further and went to the Parileyyaka Forest. Eventually, under pressure from the devotees, the monks changed their minds and reconciled. To prevent social issues, wisdom and knowledge are crucial. The Buddha once pointed out: “A person who stays in the dark without seeking a lamp is like someone who does not search for the truth”. Therefore, developing human knowledge and wisdom is vital for preventing problems and fostering global progress.

III. CONCLUSION

Buddhist teachings can be applied to address current social issues in a lasting way. Buddhism seeks to identify and treat the root causes of problems. Wars and conflicts often arise due to the political goals and ambitions of specific groups or individuals. To prevent these, the Buddha introduced numerous principles, among which righteousness, mutual respect, sharing of gains, compassion, patience, and discipline stand out as fundamental. Buddhists have never fought to protect their religion, nor have they harmed others in the name of Buddhism. Throughout history, Buddhists have never forced anyone to convert, always respecting the lives and beliefs of others. The Buddha emphasized that the life of an enemy is just as valuable as one’s own. War, which destroys lives and wealth, is one of the most destructive forces in the world. Buddhist teachings can be practiced by all people, regardless of their religious background. The Buddha did not seek to convert others to Buddhism but aimed to offer understanding and the right view. In today’s world, a significant problem is that some religious ideologies lead people toward conflict. In such a context, practicing Buddhist teachings becomes essential to fostering peace and harmony.

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EDUCATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FOR SOCIAL HARMONY AND PEACEBUILDING

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Abstract:

This research article seeks to investigate interreligious dialogue, examine educational and training initiatives in interreligious dialogue, and propose strategies for promoting educational interreligious dialogue to foster social harmony and peacebuilding. The study employs a qualitative research design, drawing upon data from the Interreligious Dialogue program, educational resources, and recommendations from scholars in Eastern and Western contexts. The article delves into the definition and classification of interreligious dialogue, emphasizing its role in education, fostering mutual respect, understanding, and coexistence among religions. Through dialogue, religions can enrich and complement each other, contributing to religious harmony. This harmony is paramount for the stability and prosperity of multicultural societies, as diversity increases, the need for interfaith understanding becomes paramount. The study proposes a structured approach to teaching interreligious dialogue in schools to address this need. This approach incorporates cultural elements to dispel religious biases and engages youth in this noble mission. Culture significantly influences societal norms and can serve as a potent medium for promoting interfaith dialogue. Encouraging religious leaders and cultural figures to actively participate in interfaith dialogue helps bridge misunderstandings and foster understanding of diverse beliefs and practices. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of youth engagement through volunteer activities, cultural programs, and public lectures on religious harmony. Such engagement can enhance their awareness and appreciation for diverse perspectives. Educational interreligious dialogue plays a pivotal role in peacebuilding, fostering global understanding and mitigating biases. This research underscores the significance of interreligious dialogue in peacebuilding and its potential application to education and training.

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Keywords: *Interreligious Dialogue (IRD), Understanding, Social Harmony, Peacebuilding, Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is inhabited by diverse cultures and individuals from various backgrounds. Consequently, it is imperative to recognize the significance of fostering interreligious relations. With unwavering resolve and courage, we must unequivocally affirm the necessity of transcending prejudices, delays, and obstacles to establish a harmonious society. The global prevalence of religious diversity has become an undeniable fact that demands the pursuit of peace and tolerance. However, it is pertinent to address the challenge of how individuals with divergent and, at times, conflicting perspectives on reality can coexist in peace. This coexistence necessitates mutual respect, mutual understanding, and coexistence among religions, and each religion needs to embrace its unique path.

The global community is currently grappling with a multitude of tensions stemming from religious conflicts and the proliferation of extremist and fundamentalist organizations. These conflicts pose a significant threat to social harmony and global peace. It is imperative to emphasize the paramount importance of International Relations (IRD) in fostering social harmony and promoting understanding among diverse religious and cultural groups. Without effective resolution of misunderstandings through dialogue and conversation, the potential for escalating conflicts, resentment, hatred, and trauma remains unchecked. Therefore, IRD emerges as a pivotal and indispensable avenue for promoting peace and cooperation among religious and cultural communities.

The researcher will employ a qualitative research design to analyze the field of education and interreligious dialogue. The analysis will be based on data collected by the IRD and the recommendations of scholars from Eastern and Western traditions, as well as their articles, books, and websites. This approach offers a means of addressing conflicts arising from religious differences.

This paper aims to elucidate the definition and classification of interreligious dialogue. It will emphasize the role of dialogue in fostering mutual respect, understanding, and coexistence among religions. Through dialogue, religions enrich and complement each other, leading to a more harmonious and inclusive society.

1.1. Objectives of Research

- To examine Interreligious Dialogue
- To pursue Education and Training in Interreligious Dialogue
- To propose ways for Educational Interreligious Dialogue for Social Harmony and Understanding of Peacebuilding

1.2. Review of Related Literature and Research Works

To comprehensively grasp the significance of Educational Interreligious Dialogue for the promotion of social harmony and peacebuilding, it

is imperative to conduct a thorough examination of the importance of interreligious dialogue, education, and training in fostering social harmony and peacebuilding. This review should draw upon relevant literature and research conducted by scholars and reputable sources within the domains of interreligious dialogue, education, and peace.¹

The scholarly article entitled “The Role of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue in the Post-Secular World,” authored by Biljana Popovska and collaborators, underscores the paramount significance of religious dialogue in an era where secularism no longer enjoys universal acceptance. The article explores the dynamic evolution of faith and elucidates the pivotal role of dialogue in navigating intricate interfaith dynamics. It contends that religion has, at times, been exploited to mobilize individuals for erroneous causes. Consequently, the authors advocate for interreligious and interfaith dialogue as a catalyst for cultural diplomacy. The article defines a secular and post-secular society, delves into the concept of dialogue from an interreligious and interfaith lens, and presents instances of the European Union’s initiatives in this domain. Furthermore, it explores the potential of dialogue in mitigating religion’s influence on global politics and emphasizes the paramount importance of structured and respectful dialogue in an interconnected world characterized by religious diversity.²

In their seminal work titled “Interreligious and Intercultural Education for Dialogue, Peace, and Social Cohesion,” Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Renáta Katalin Smith underscore the paramount significance of interreligious and intercultural education in fostering dialogue, social harmony, and peaceful coexistence. The authors contend that education transcends its role as a mere knowledge dissemination mechanism and serves as a pivotal instrument for cultivating inclusive attitudes and promoting social cohesion. Through a comprehensive analysis of case studies and theoretical literature pertaining to intercultural and interreligious education initiatives from diverse global contexts, the authors demonstrate that programs incorporating interreligious dialogue have a positive impact on students’ attitudes, fostering empathy and mitigating stereotypes. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the existence of challenges in its effective implementation, including cultural resistance and the absence of adequately trained educators. In response to these challenges, the authors propose policy modifications that would provide support for interreligious and intercultural education. They emphasize the need for governmental and institutional collaboration to establish sustainable programs. The study concludes that interreligious and intercultural education

¹ Biljana Popovska, ed tl, “The Role of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue in the Post-Secular World,” *Academicus - International Scientific Journal* www.academicus.edu.al, 2017; 8 (16): 33 - 44.

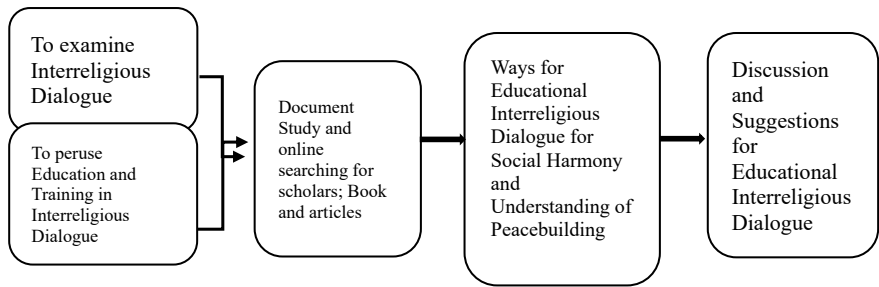
² Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Rena ‘ta Katalin Smith, “Interreligious and intercultural education for dialogue, peace and social cohesion”, *Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Int Rev Educ* (2016) 62:393 – 405, 2016.

holds the potential to significantly contribute to peace and social cohesion, but it necessitates unwavering commitment from educational institutions, policymakers, and society as a whole.³

This scholarly analysis explores the concept of interreligious dialogue, emphasizing its pivotal role in fostering harmony among diverse religions and faiths. It underscores the significance of interreligious dialogue in conflict resolution and highlights its potential to engage various social classes in constructive dialogue. The research draws upon secondary data, including scholarly works, research articles, and journals, to establish the correlation between interreligious dialogue and the promotion of harmony. The study advocates for the active involvement of educators in cultivating religious harmony among students and recommends that religious education be integrated into a government-approved curriculum. Cultural diversity plays a pivotal role in societal evolution, and the young generation possesses the greatest potential to contribute to the advancement of interreligious dialogue. Community-based initiatives, voluntary engagements, and public speaking platforms can serve as effective avenues for promoting interreligious dialogue. The study concludes that the collective responsibility of political leaders, religious authorities, governmental institutions, and the young generation lies in engaging in interreligious dialogue to establish sustainable peace and harmony. By addressing misunderstandings and misconceptions, interreligious dialogue facilitates the identification of shared ethical principles that contribute to social harmony.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research will employ a qualitative approach, utilizing the documentary research method. It will be conducted through analysis and interpretation, grounded in scholars’ books and articles related to Interreligious Dialogue and peacebuilding.



2.1. Research methodology

This research work is a qualitative research methodology that can be divided into four stages as follows;

³ Fazrin Huda and Mahmuda Islam, “Interreligious Harmony and Social Engagement”, *Jagannath University Journal of Arts*, Vol. 9, No. 2, July – December 2019.

1. Collecting data and analyzing the collected data from the books and articles written and composed by scholars,
2. Synthesis and Interpretation of Collected Data.
3. Applying from collected Data
4. Discussion and Suggestion

As a result, the research will be conducive to the advantages of the following:

1. Knowing about Interreligious Dialogue
2. Understanding Education and Training in Interreligious Dialogue
3. Applying Ways for Educational Interreligious Dialogue for Social Harmony and Understanding of Peacebuilding
1. Research Results
2. Examine about Interreligious Dialogue
3. Understanding Education and Training in Interreligious Dialogue

Applying Ways for Educational Interreligious Dialogue for Social Harmony and Understanding of Peacebuilding

2.2. Examining interreligious dialogue

To begin, it is crucial to define dialogue and interreligious dialogue. Dialogue is a conversation between two or more individuals, typically to exchange ideas, express opinions, or resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. Interreligious dialogue, on the other hand, refers to interactions between individuals or groups of individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. It encompasses cooperative and positive interactions between followers of various religious traditions, spiritual beliefs, or humanistic principles at both the individual and institutional levels.

As Tony Blair aptly stated, "There will be no peace in our world without an understanding of the place of religion within it."⁴ Consequently, numerous names can be used to describe interreligious dialogue, such as interbelief dialogue, interpath dialogue, transbelief dialogue, interreligious dialogue, or interfaith dialogue.

According to the World Council of Churches, "interreligious refers to actions between different Christian denominations, while interfaith refers to interactions between different faith groups, such as Muslims and Christians or Jews, for instance."⁵ In contemporary times, these terms have become widely used and understood, facilitating meaningful exchanges and fostering a deeper

⁴ Tony Blair, "Protection of religious freedom should be a priority for all democracies" (article), Saturday, 12 Nov. 2011, Reserved, Popovska, Zhanet Ristoska and Pablo Payet, "The Role of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue in the Post-Secular World", <https://academicus.edu.al/nr16/Academicus-MMXVII-16-033-044.pdf>, p.38.

⁵ "Called to Dialogue Interreligious and Intra-Christian Dialogue in Ecumenical Conversation, A Practical Guide", (World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, P. O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, 2016), p.5.

appreciation for diverse religious perspectives.

Interreligious dialogue goes beyond mere discussions; it represents a comprehensive approach to understanding and appreciating the religious traditions and perspectives of various communities. It involves thoughtful reflection, critical analysis, and open-minded engagement, enabling individuals to bridge gaps, foster empathy, and contribute to a more harmonious world. Partners concerned.⁶ Interreligious dialogue is a discussion between the people of different faiths and religions on specific issues to establish peace and harmony.⁷

Initially, it mentioned that the dialogue aims not to establish one universal religion, excluding other faiths and religions. Pritibhushan Chatterji described in his *Studies in Comparative Religion* that the possibility of a dialogue assumes the existence of many religions. Yet, simultaneously, it apprehends that as the core truth of all religions is the same, there is a common platform on which religion can assemble.⁸ Thus, interreligious dialogue develops tolerance towards other faiths and religions and creates harmony among all their followers. He also remarks- "Thus a dialogue is expected to remove fanaticism and intolerance, and at the same time, it will start a free flow of communication among religions."⁹

Interreligious dialogue and interfaith dialogue are distinct concepts, with the World Council of Churches clearly distinguishing between the two. Interreligious dialogue involves action between Christian denominations, while interfaith dialogue involves interactions between various faith groups. Interfaith dialogue aims to foster trust and understanding, not to convert or disprove beliefs. It is not a negotiation, debate, or discussion, but rather an engagement between rational arguments, emotive narratives, and personal experiences, leading to existential connections and mutual understanding.

Interreligious dialogue is pivotal for promoting peace and conflict resolution among adherents of diverse faiths and religions. It can effectively prevent catastrophic conflicts, wars, and the proliferation of armaments, and contribute to the elimination of fanaticism. This dialogue enhances interpersonal communication among followers, making it a valuable instrument in addressing global challenges. Raimundo Panikara, renowned as the "apostle of interreligious dialogue," emphasizes the purpose of interreligious dialogue as fostering understanding and bridging the gap between mutual ignorance and misunderstanding among diverse cultures. He advocates for the ideal of communication as the cornerstone of this dialogue. Allowing them to express

⁶ K. N. Islam, "Interreligious Dialogue: Some Rules and Assumptions", *Dialogue & Alliance*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2011, p. 3.

⁷ Professor Dr. Niru Kumar Chakma and Dr. A. K. M. Salahuddin (edt.), *Interreligious Dialogue: Chance for Peace*, (Dhaka, Goethe-Institute, 2004), p. 66.

⁸ Pritibhushan Chatterji, *Studies in Comparative Religion*, (Calcutta: Das Gupta and Co. Private Ltd., 1971), p. 422 - 423.

⁹ Pritibhushan Chatterji, "Studies in Comparative Religion", (Calcutta: Das Gupta and Co. Private Ltd., 1971), p. 424.

their insights in their languages, rather than seeking total agreement or a universal religion.¹⁰

III. TYPES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The existing classifications of types of IRD have limitations and shortcomings and do not allow us to describe this extremely complex, multifaceted phenomenon systematically and completely. Hence, the classification of forms of IRD becomes an urgent research task.

Many scholars classify IRD based on different points of view. For instance, Roman Catholic Church divides IRD into four types: dialogue of theological exchange or dialogue of study, dialogue of spirituality, dialogue of action, and dialogue of life¹¹ or Eric J. Sharpe: discursive dialogue, human dialogue, secular dialogue, and interior dialogue¹² or Paul O. Ingram: conceptual dialogue, socially engaged dialogue, interior dialogue¹³ or Jeannine Hill Fletcher: activist dialogue, parliament dialogue, and storytelling models of dialogue,¹⁴ or Oddbjorn Leirvik: spiritual dialogue and necessary dialogue.¹⁵

We can recognize that in describing IRD numerous separate approaches are used, resulting in the lack of certainty and clarity. IRD is, indeed, a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is characteristic that King concludes that given different factors of influence that must be taken into consideration, 'there can be no standard list of types of dialogue' at all.¹⁶ However, there is a classification that is close to the aim of IRD. It is based on 'intention', a motivation which encourages followers of different religions to come into contact with each other. Therefore, Sergey Melnik distinguishes four major types of IRD: polemical dialogue, cognitive dialogue, peacemaking dialogue, and partnership dialogue.

3.1. Polemical dialogue – Who is right?

Polemical dialogue is based on two principles: firstly, belief in one's religion's uniqueness and conviction that, in one way or another, followers of other traditions are mistaken and deluded; secondly, determination to defeat

¹⁰ Raimundo Panikara, "The Interreligious Dialogue", (New York, Paulist press, 1978), p. 115.

¹¹ Sergey Melnik, "Types of Interreligious Dialogue", *The Journal of Interreligious Studies* 31 (November 2020), p. 50.

¹² Eric. J. Sharpe, "The Goals of Interreligious Dialogue," in *Truth and Dialogue: The Relationship between World Religions*, ed. J. Hick. (London: Sheldon Press, 1977), pp. 81 - 82.

¹³ Paul O. Ingram, "Christian-Buddhist Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Interreligious Dialogue*, pp. 388 - 89.

¹⁴ Jeannine Hill Fletcher, "Women in Inter-religious Dialogue" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue*, pp. 168 - 84

¹⁵ Oddbjorn Leirvik, "Philosophies of Interreligious Dialogue: Practice in search of theory," *Approaching Religion*, Vol. 1 (2011), pp. 16 - 24.

¹⁶ Sallie B. King, "Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Oxford Handbook of religious diversity*, ed. Chad Meister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 102.

the opposing side in the dispute and to demonstrate superiority of one's religion and groundlessness of the opponent's position.¹⁷

3.2. Cognitive dialogue – Who are you?

Cognitive dialogue can arise out of intellectual curiosity, the striving to clarify some ideas and concepts of other religions, and to talk about truth and purpose of life. The principles of this dialogue are 1) ability to 'listen' to the dialogue partner, respect, competence, openness to changes in the perception of another religion by acquiring new knowledge, rejection of proselytism; 2) involvement of the 'heart' in the dialogue, striving to share to some extent another religion's experience; 3) I – You relations, respect for unique identity of the dialogue partner; 4) creation of the space for free expression of opinions and beliefs, objective discussion of problem facing participants in the dialogue.¹⁸

3.3. Peacemaking dialogue – How can we live peacefully together?

Peacemaking dialogue is hinged on the topic of strengthening peace among adherents of different religions. It can be aimed at settling particular social conflicts. Its principles are: 1) demonstrating positive relations between religious leaders as setting an example for ordinary believers, reference to pacifist religious values, demonstrating solidarity on various problems; 2) revealing and emphasizing similarities in religious worldviews, showing the peacemaking potential of religion; 3) intensifying constructive communication between believers, gaining knowledge of each other's religious worldviews and way of life, rejecting false stereotypes and prejudices, appealing to religion's pacifist values, promoting trust utilizing personal meetings.

3.4. Partnership dialogue – What can we do to make the world a better place?

The principles of this dialogue are 1) the common values of mercy and compassion in different religions; 2) awareness of humanity's responsibility for nature, rejection of consumerism in the attitude towards nature, and appeal to religious values as the basis for environment friendliness.

It is worth noting that the motivation behind peacemaking and partnership dialogue is very similar. The focus of peacemaking and partnership dialogue is on the interaction of religions as social institutions and the ways to ensure their harmonious coexistence. Besides, the strengthening of peace can be considered one of the possible problems that require the resolution of cooperation between believers within the framework of partnership dialogue. These two types of dialogue can be used in the course of interfaith meetings.¹⁹

¹⁷ Sergey Melnik, "Types of Interreligious Dialogue", <https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/download/499/521/>, p. 55.

¹⁸ Sergey Melnik, "Types of Interreligious Dialogue", <https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/download/499/521/>, pp. 58 - 64.

¹⁹ Sallie B. King, "Interreligious Dialogue", *Op.cit*, p. 57.

IV. EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Regardless of one's religious or non-religious beliefs, the Institute for Religious Diversity (IRD) serves as a platform where individuals can gain insights into the religious and non-religious stigmas, strengths, and differences that exist within society. The process of learning fosters an environment conducive to debate and dialogue, which are essential components of cooperation. However, one common source of misunderstandings and prejudices arises from the language employed to identify individuals. The tendency to generalize a subject into the same category as others facilitates the dissemination of bigotry. Historically, we have witnessed the use of generalizing language as a potent tool by some of the most influential world leaders to advance their agendas.

In the contemporary era, we must prioritize the education of young generations, as they will undoubtedly assume leadership roles in shaping the future. As Harvard Professor Fernando Reimers elucidated in an interview with The Global Citizens' Initiative, "We must prepare the next generation of leaders to address the challenges of the future, to envision and innovate solutions, and to achieve this, they must possess global competence, as their future is intrinsically linked to that of their fellow human beings on this small planet."

However, achieving this goal appears formidable and challenging. This is primarily attributed to the conservatism of certain religious beliefs and the extremism of their adherents, which often manifests in riots and other forms of violence that occur globally daily. Without proper upbringing, religious consciousness, and the fostering of unity, deep-rooted divisions within the subconscious minds of young people will persist, making it difficult to establish a harmonious religious alliance.

To address these challenges, leaders must adopt a more open-minded approach towards other religions. By promoting harmony and peace among religions rather than opposing and discriminating against them, leaders can pave the way for a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Interfaith and interreligious dialogue involves not only international organizations and countries but also relationships and human interactions between communities and individuals. In today's world, many countries and cities are home to people of various religious groups, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists. These dialogues can be linked to formal or informal relationships between these groups, such as neighbors, schools, and workplaces. Dialogue is not only an official or academic level, but also a part of daily life where religious and cultural groups merge, highlighting the tangible tensions between them.²⁰

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in fostering societal unity and

²⁰ Biljana Popovska, ed tl, "The Role of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue in the Post-Secular World", *Academicus - International Scientific Journal* www.academicus.edu.al, 2017; 8 (16): 33 - 44.

resilience by actively addressing opposing voices and forces that challenge pluralism and violence. They exert a profound influence on individual development, possessing the potential to either nurture prejudice or cultivate tolerance. Lessons learned in the classroom remain with us throughout our growth, making educators a central role in promoting cultural and religious diversity.²¹ Intercultural education encompasses the development of self-awareness of one's cultural background and the acquisition of the skills to engage in sensitive and effective interactions with individuals from diverse cultural contexts. Interreligious education is a component of this process, intending to foster understanding, tolerance, and social cohesion among religious communities. Factors such as migration, international work, and study-abroad programs have contributed to the increasing diversity within societies, but the existence of diverse classrooms does not necessarily imply intercultural competence.²²

Interreligious education, a crucial part of intercultural education, has often been overlooked due to taboo topics. However, an individual's religious identity remains intact when they participate in society. The integration of religious elements into intercultural integration gained prominence after the 9/11 attacks in Europe.²³

Many social and civic conflicts in schools and communities worldwide can be ascribed to religious differences among groups.²⁴ As previously emphasized, the significance of IRD cannot be overstated. Consequently, some argue that engaging in such a dialogue can facilitate learners' comprehension of diverse perspectives and religious beliefs, even reaching the profound spiritual dimensions of their existence. Notably, participants in IRD, particularly in educational institutions, not only adhere to pedagogical principles but also contribute to a deeper understanding of others at the spiritual level. This enhanced understanding can foster social and civic harmony within the broader pluralistic community.

Education and training in IRD can help individuals develop the skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate respectful and productive conversations between people of different faiths. But bringing IRD into schools is a difficult

²¹ Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Rena'ta Katalin Smith, "Interreligious and intercultural education for dialogue, peace and social cohesion", Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Int Rev Educ* (2016) 62:393 – 405, 2016, p. 395.

²² Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Rena'ta Katalin Smith, "Interreligious and intercultural education for dialogue, peace and social cohesion", p. 395.

²³ Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Rena'ta Katalin Smith, "Interreligious and intercultural education for dialogue, peace and social cohesion", p. 397 - 398.

²⁴ Although not strictly speaking a religious group, the agnostics in society should also be taken into account. Their presence can have an impact on the cultural relationships in schools. The proposed debate should also include this group, it only for the purpose of helping these young people to gain insight into their fatalistic outlook on life.

and sensitive issue, so it takes ingenuity and intelligence to integrate IRD in schools along with lessons or extracurricular activities. For instance:

1. Academic programs: many universities offer programs in IRD, such as degrees in interfaith studies, religious studies, or peace studies. These programs can provide a strong foundation in the principles and practices of IRD.
2. Workshops and seminars: there are many workshops and seminars offered by religious organizations, NGOs, and other institutions that provide training in IRD. These programs may focus on specific skills, such as active listening or conflict resolution, or on specific topics, such as interfaith marriage or interfaith relations in a particular region.
3. Online courses: there are also a variety of online courses available on IRD, ranging from short introductory courses to more in-depth programs. These courses can be a convenient option for individuals who cannot attend in-person programs.
4. Interreligious organizations: many interreligious organizations offer resources and training on IRD. These organizations may offer webinars, conferences, or other events focused on IRD and understanding.
5. Reading and self-study: individuals can also educate themselves on IRD by reading books, articles, and other resources on the topic. This can be a helpful option for those who prefer self-directed learning.

As mentioned above, religion is a sensitive field. So, when we want to apply IRD in schools, we need to create a safe space or respectful environment where students can share their beliefs and experiences without fear of judgment or criticism. From these activities, we can encourage students to be open-minded and to question their assumptions and biases. Students can explore different perspectives and be respectful of differences.

V. APPLYING WAYS FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FOR SOCIAL HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING OF PEACEBUILDING

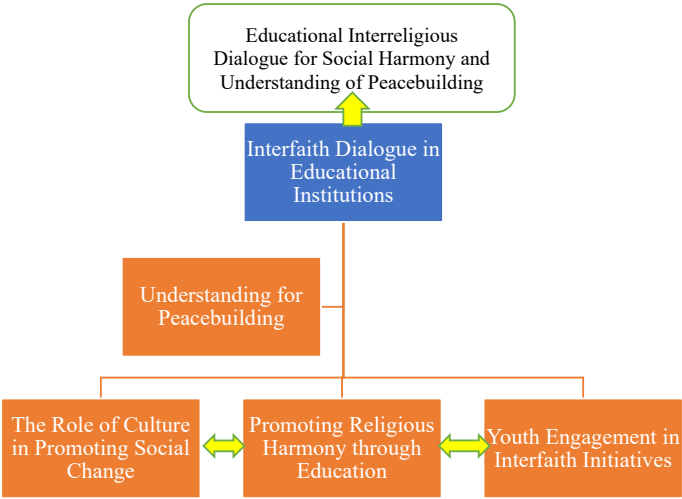
In our increasingly interconnected and diverse society, characterized by a multitude of races, cultures, and religions, personal and professional aspirations vary significantly from individual to individual. Consequently, societal goals often take a backseat for many people. To foster social harmony and understanding, it is crucial to identify the factors that contribute to its creation.

Social harmony is defined as the practice of valuing, expressing, and promoting love, trust, admiration, peace, harmony, respect, generosity, and equity towards others in a society, regardless of their national origin, weight, marital status, ethnicity, color, gender, race, age, and occupation. It is essential for being social and living harmoniously with each other.²⁵

²⁵ Mrs. Manisha Sharma, "Social Harmony for Being Social", *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: (C), Sociology & Culture*, Vol. 15, Issue 6, Version 1.0, 2015, p. 5.

This paper primarily focuses on religions’ role in achieving social harmony. It recognizes their profound influence on individuals’ spiritual lives and, particularly, their impact on interpersonal behavior. In today’s interconnected world, dialogue between adherents of diverse faith traditions has become an increasingly urgent necessity. Intercommunity harmony is of paramount importance in the contemporary world, and its absence has emerged as a significant challenge. The shared roots and issues that many religious communities have in common serve as the foundation for inter-religious cooperation. Moreover, it should strive to foster understanding between different communities and tackle misunderstandings that often contribute to inter-community conflicts.

The Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) transcends mere meetings between religious leaders. It can be conceptualized as a dialogue between individuals of diverse religious backgrounds residing within the same community, potentially neighbors, classmates, or colleagues. Given that even individuals within the same community may struggle to coexist, a society cannot hope to achieve inter-religious harmony. The message of peace is a universal principle shared by all religions, despite variations in worship and doctrine. The interreligious dialogue provides a robust foundation for a deeper comprehension of other religions. By consistently and unequivocally advocating for peaceful coexistence, society can ensure that acts of violence are not misconstrued as religious acts.



5.1. Promoting religious harmony through education

Religious harmony is paramount for the stability and prosperity of multicultural societies. As diversity expands in various regions, the imperative to foster interfaith understanding becomes increasingly pressing. This article advocates for a systematic approach to teaching interfaith dialogue within educational institutions. By integrating cultural elements, this approach aims to dispel religious biases and cultivate empathy, thereby promoting understanding among diverse religious communities.

5.2. The role of culture in promoting social change

Culture exerts a profound influence on societal norms and serves as a potent catalyst for interfaith dialogue. Literary works, artistic expressions, musical compositions, dramatic performances, and cinematic productions embody values and ideas, including those pertaining to religious harmony. By incorporating themes of interfaith dialogue into these cultural expressions, artists and cultural institutions can foster empathy and dispel misconceptions regarding various religions.

Nevertheless, cultural biases and stereotypes persist as challenges. It is imperative to encourage religious leaders and cultural figures to actively engage in interfaith dialogue to bridge misunderstandings. By demonstrating respectful interfaith interactions, these figures can serve as role models for audiences, fostering an appreciation of the diversity of beliefs and practices within society.

5.3. Youth engagement in interfaith initiatives

Young people are essential to the success of interfaith dialogue initiatives, as they are often open to new ideas and actively participate in social change. Engaging youth through volunteer activities, cultural programs, and public lectures on religious harmony can increase their awareness and appreciation for diverse religious perspectives. Organizing campaigns to promote social awareness about interfaith dialogue and holding public forums allows young people to participate actively in these efforts.

By empowering youth to lead interfaith initiatives, society ensures the longevity of peace-building efforts. As future leaders and influencers, young people who understand and value religious harmony will contribute to a more tolerant and cohesive world.

5.4. Understanding for peacebuilding

Nowadays, the majority of the prevalent causes of conflict between religions or between people of different faiths, are due to a lack of mutual understanding of one another's views or ideologies. Meetings, panels, and conferences for IRD assist in dispelling these myths and misunderstandings, and the outcomes of such dialogues can be very positive. As Smock states, 'when two or more faiths come together to explore or promote the possibility of peace, the effects can be especially potent'²⁶. When people can discuss differences, they can look past the content of those differences – the notoriously challenging theological content – and see another human being who is, like them, trying to find meaning and purpose in life by looking to a transcendent reality.

²⁶ Smock DR, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002, p. viii, Reversed (Hilal Guler, "Interfaith Dialogue: Necessity and Principles", https://fountainmagazine.com/all-issues/2014/issue-100-july-august-2014/interfaith-dialogue-july-2014?utm_source=chatgpt.com (assessed Jan 26, 2025)).

5.5. Interfaith dialogue in educational institutions

Education is a foundational tool for promoting religious harmony, as it shapes the perspectives of future generations. Integrating interfaith dialogue into the curricula of both government and non-government schools can create a culture of mutual respect and understanding from an early age. To achieve this, the development of curricula for religious studies and ethics should involve collaborative efforts between government bodies and religious institutions. This cooperation ensures that the content aligns with both secular standards and religious sensitivities, making it widely acceptable and effective.

Incorporating interfaith dialogue within a government-approved framework provides an institutional approach to building religious harmony. This approach should be standardized, inclusive, and flexible enough to reflect the diversity of students' backgrounds, creating an educational environment that emphasizes respect for all religious identities.

5.6. Educational interreligious dialogue for social harmony and understanding of peacebuilding

Interreligious dialogue (IRD) and religious harmony are crucial for fostering global understanding and reducing biases. By integrating interfaith education into school curricula, enriching cultural expressions with inclusive themes, using responsibility for peacebuilding, and empowering young people, society can build a foundation for lasting peace.

Dialogue between followers of different religious traditions helps shape one's identity and promotes tolerance for people practicing various religions. Parents, peer groups, religious leaders, educators, and the media play vital roles in fostering community and respect among individuals. Leaders should forbid language and writing that offends adherents of other religions.

The IRD facilitates the exchange of ideas among religious leaders and the development of peace projects, utilizing their various teachings to impact their faith communities. It can also be supported to protect society and territories from violence, extremism, and terrorism, and eliminate chances of clashes and warfare.

Peacebuilding aims to address the underlying causes of conflict, helping people to resolve their differences peacefully and lay the foundations to prevent future violence²⁷. Peacebuilding is a long-term, collaborative process that enables societies to manage differences without conflict, shifting attitudes and norms that drive violence,²⁸ involving changes in attitudes, behaviors, norms, and institutions. Peacebuilding as a reconstruction of life involves various actions that demonstrate care, belief, and dedication to a community.

²⁷ Conciliation Resource, "What is Peacebuilding?", <https://www.c-r.org/who-we-are/why-peacebuilding/what-peacebuilding>, (assessed Jan. 26. 2025).

²⁸ Pact, "Pact and Conflict", <https://www.pactworld.org/our-expertise/governance/peace-conflict> (assessed Jan. 26. 2025).

Religion has a significant impact on regional, societal, and global conflict, with religious prejudice on the rise and violent conflict often couched in religious terms. Governments and peacebuilding organizations are increasingly acknowledging the significance of religion in peace efforts.

Discussion

The discussion will explore the advantages of research in knowing about interreligious dialogue, understanding education and training in interreligious dialogue, applying ways for educational interreligious dialogue for social harmony, and understanding peacebuilding.

Knowing about Interreligious Dialogue

Dr. Teresa Dumasy said “there will be no peace between the civilizations without a peace between the religions! And there will be no peace between the religions without a dialogue between the religions! And there is no dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions.”²⁹

It is widely acknowledged that peace and happiness are fundamental human necessities. However, restoring trust, fostering livelihoods, establishing institutions, and nurturing relationships is a protracted and intricate process characterized by both progress and setbacks. Despite the challenges, we must initiate this endeavor, as inaction would perpetuate suffering and hinder the pursuit of a more harmonious society. Peacebuilding is a collective responsibility, and its absence would be a grave injustice to humanity. There are three reasons why we need peacebuilding:³⁰

- (1) because the effects of conflict are far-reaching,
- (2) because military answers alone to political problems do not work, and
- (3) because conflict shatters lives and stunts development.

Therefore, what we need is to sit together, acknowledge the problem, and find out the root cause of the conflict so that we can take measures to prevent war and violence. IRD for Peacebuilding amounts to all forms of IRD activities that foster an ethos of tolerance, non-violence, and trust. It is based on three principles: self-conscious engagement, self-critical attitude, and realistic expectations vis-a-vis³¹ IRD for peacebuilding.

(1) Understanding Education and Training in Interreligious Dialogue

Religious differences among groups often cause social and civic conflicts in schools and communities worldwide. Incorporating interfaith dialogue

²⁹ Dr. Teresa Dumasy, “Why Peace is More Important Than Ever”, (2015), <http://www.c-r.org/newsand-insight/why-peace-more-important-ever> (accessed 2nd April, 2023).

³⁰ Hans Küng, *Christianity: Essence, History, Future*, (New York: Continuum Press, 1995), p. 92.

³¹ Vis-à-vis is a loanword from French, and its literal meaning is “face-to-face.” From <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/vocabulary/vis-a-vis/#:~:text=Vis%2D%C3%A0%2Dvis%20is%20a,opposite%2E%80%9D%20or%20E2%80%9Cfacing.%E2%80%9D> (assessed Jan. 26.2025).

(IRD) can help learners understand others and their religious convictions, contributing to social and civic peace in the broader pluralistic community.

Fazrin Huda and Mahmuda Islam mentioned that religions aim to promote social harmony, and interreligious dialogue can help spread this harmony. It can help eliminate misunderstandings and false views by involving experts from different faiths. This dialogue can establish common ethical teachings for social harmony. Political, religious, governmental, and nongovernmental leaders, particularly the young generation, are responsible for engaging in interreligious dialogues to achieve sustainable peace in society.³²

Education and training in IRD can help individuals develop skills and knowledge to facilitate respectful and productive conversations between people of different faiths. However, integrating IRD into schools is a complicated and sensitive issue, requiring ingenuity and intelligence to combine with lessons or extracurricular activities.

(2) Applying ways for educational interreligious dialogue for social harmony, and understanding peacebuilding

IRD is more than just talking about theological similarities and differences. It is a verbal communication and a shared action to pursue identified common needs, in which people engage across religious and ideological boundaries. We can consider peacebuilding not only as a post-conflict meditation, reconstruction and rebuilding of society but also as a work to prevent future conflicts.

In short, IRD for peacebuilding is about social change, and our thinking thus corroborates Luke Bretherton's call to "reconceptualize interfaith relations as a civic rather than religious practice and common action between different faiths as directly political rather than as a humanitarian service provision."³³

Education serves as a pivotal instrument in fostering religious harmony among students. Implementing interfaith dialogue within educational institutions can nurture a generation imbued with mutual respect and understanding across religious divides. Collaboration between government and religious institutions is essential to curate curricula for religious studies or ethics within a government-approved framework. Incorporating interfaith dialogue into educational content can establish an early foundation for religious harmony.

Cultural media, encompassing literature, poetry, music, theater, and cinema, can be enriched with interfaith dialogue themes to challenge biases and promote understanding. Addressing misconceptions regarding diverse religions necessitates community engagement and the active participation of religious leaders. Organizing meetings, panels, and conferences for interfaith dialogue can dispel myths and misconceptions, leading to positive outcomes.

³² Fazrin Huda and Mahmuda Islam, "Interreligious Harmony and Social Engagement", *Jagannath University Journal of Arts*, Vol. 9, No. 2, July-December 2019, p. 247.

³³ Luke Bretherton, "A Post Secular Politics? Inter-faith Relations as a Civic Practice," *JAAR*, 79(2), 2001, p. 347.

Youth hold significant influence in advancing the mission of IRD, as their involvement in volunteer activities and community initiatives can mobilize them to become ardent advocates for religious harmony. By fostering IRD among the youth, communities can lay the groundwork for enduring peace and harmony on a global scale.

Knowledge from Research

Interreligious harmony is paramount for the stability and prosperity of multicultural societies. As diversity expands, it is imperative to foster understanding and eliminate religious biases. This research advocates for interfaith dialogue education in schools and proposes a systematic approach to involving youth in this endeavor. Culture exerts a profound influence on social norms and serves as a potent instrument for promoting interfaith dialogue. Encouraging religious leaders and cultural figures to actively participate in interreligious dialogues can bridge misunderstandings and facilitate comprehension of the diverse beliefs and practices within society.

Youth participation in interfaith initiatives is indispensable as they are often receptive to novel ideas and actively engaged in social transformation. Cultural programs, public lectures, and campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about interfaith dialogues and public forums can effectively dispel myths and misconceptions, leading to positive outcomes.

Education emerges as a fundamental instrument for promoting religious harmony and shaping the perspectives of future generations. Integrating interreligious dialogue (IRD) into the curricula of both government and non-government schools can foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding from an early age. Collaborative efforts between government institutions and religious organizations are essential to ensure the consistency of religious studies and ethics curricula with both secular norms and religious sensitivities.

Educational interreligious dialogue (IRD) and religious harmony are pivotal in promoting global understanding and mitigating biases. By empowering youth and integrating interfaith education into the school curriculum, society can establish a foundation for enduring peace.

VI. CONCLUSION

Dialogue among adherents of diverse religious traditions is not primarily focused on conversion. Instead, it serves as an effective practical expression of peace and harmony. It does not imply the acceptance of one's faith, but it is crucial to maintain racial and religious harmony within society. Furthermore, it fosters an understanding of various religions and contributes to our comprehension. Individuals from multiple religious backgrounds must actively engage in fostering a culture of dialogue to prevent intercommunal hostility and promote intercommunity harmony. Ultimately, cooperation among people of diverse faiths is essential for the betterment of the planet.

We should devise mechanisms to mitigate the challenges posed by contemporary technocracy, including environmental degradation, energy scarcity, issues affecting young people, starvation, violent radicalism, and

the erosion of moral values and faith. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and other religious traditions will benefit from eliminating prejudices and misunderstandings about one another through interreligious dialogue (IRD). This will facilitate the achievement of shared objectives such as establishing global peace and justice, preventing family dissolution, defending human rights, and advancing moral principles.

Additionally, we should recognize that interreligious dialogue provides an opportunity for mutual learning and the discovery of shared religious ideals. IRD enables us to confront the multifaceted challenges of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief that the world currently faces collectively. With the cooperation of all well-intentioned individuals, we can work towards addressing these issues and building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Abstract:

The concept of peace has multifaceted aspects and can be defined in various ways. From a Buddhist perspective, peace is not merely the absence of violence but can be achieved through the transformation and purification of the mind. The ultimate inner peace, *sañtisukha* or *nibbānasukha*, in the Buddhist teachings can be attained by overcoming mental defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion, and other negative mental impurities. Buddhism highlights that these mental defilements are the main causes of individual suffering and social conflict. On the other hand, Buddhism suggests that inner peace is an essential requirement for creating harmonious relationships and reducing conflict from the individual level to broader society. In Buddhist teaching, cultivating inner peace is emphasized as a source of personal happiness and social harmony. Therefore, this paper is designed to examine how the Buddhist path to inner peace offers a theoretical and pragmatic approach to world peace.

Keywords: *inner peace, harmony, Buddhist perspective, mental defilements.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite its advanced technology and standard lifestyles, the modern world is still full of conflict and turmoil. In this situation, the pursuit of peace has become a universal aspiration. Efforts and methods of promoting peace in contemporary society pay much attention to external factors, such as political agreements, economic reforms, and social injustices. However, these approaches overlook the underlying psychological roots of conflict. In this

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context, Buddhism offers a unique and effective perspective that emphasizes the cultivation of inner peace as a foundation for achieving lasting global harmony. This is precisely true because at the heart of the Buddhist approach to peace is the belief that the root causes of conflict lie within the human mind, in the form of greed, hatred, and delusion. Buddhism holds the view that by addressing these negative psychological roots and cultivating positive qualities such as mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity, individuals can not only find inner peace but also contribute to the creation of a more peaceful society. The principle of non-harming, *ahimsa*, in Buddhist teachings is directly related to this matter. As the Buddha advised in the *Dhammapada*, “All tremble at violence; life is dear to all. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.”¹ This ethical teaching highlights how Buddhism stands against any form of violence or harmful action. Moreover, the Buddhist standpoint on inner peace is addressed in the *Udumbarikasihanāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, signifying: “The Blessed One is awakened, tamed, peaceful, crossed over, and quenched. And he teaches *Dhamma* for awakening, taming, peace, crossing over, and extinguishment.”² This passage highlights that the Buddhist attitude toward peace is of paramount importance, and the ultimate aim of Buddhist practice is centered on cultivating peace. It is very fortunate to see that in contemporary times, the relevance of the Buddhist approach to peace has been increasingly recognized among scholars and practitioners. They have realized that the inner transformation delivered by Buddhist teachings addresses the root causes of personal and societal conflict. At the same time, research on mindfulness, compassion, loving-kindness, and other Buddhist practices has shown their effectiveness in reducing stress and improving emotional regulation, thereby promoting peace, empathy, and harmony. The cultivation of inner peace from the perspective of Buddhist teachings is not an isolated effort, for Buddhism considers that all beings are interconnected. Therefore, the effort toward peacebuilding should be related to both the individual and the broader community. There is no doubt that if individuals collaborate and collectively work together for inner cultivation, the potential for a peaceful world will certainly become tangible.

II. THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

Since peace is a universal quest and an essential requirement, it is understood as a state of harmony and the absence of conflict or violence. However, the concept of peace may be defined in various aspects, including psychological, social, political, and spiritual perspectives. According to Johan Galtung, a pioneer in peace studies, peace can be divided into two categories: positive peace and negative peace. Positive peace denotes the simultaneous presence of many desirable states of mind and society, such as harmony,

¹ *Dhp* 129. *SuttaCentral*. accessed on [January 4, 2025], available at: <https://suttacentral.net/dhp129-145/en/buddharakkhita>.

² *DN* 25. *Udumbarika-Sihanāda Sutta*. Sujato, B. (trans.) (n.d.). *SuttaCentral*. accessed on [January 4, 2025], available at: <https://suttacentral.net/dn25/en/sujato>.

justice, and equity. Negative peace is understood as the “absence of war” and other forms of widescale violent human conflict.³ From a psychological perspective, peace represents inner tranquility and emotional stability. Psychologists suggest that the importance of mental health and well-being stems from foundational elements of personal peace.⁴ Regarding this, Maslow, in his Hierarchy of Needs, remarks that once basic physiological and safety needs are met, individuals can pursue higher-level needs such as love, esteem, and a sense of inner peace. From a sociological view, peace is considered a social condition where individuals and groups coexist harmoniously within a community. Regarding this, the well-known French sociologist Émile Durkheim stated that social cohesion and collective consciousness play a vital role in maintaining social order and peace.⁵ From the political perspective, peace is regarded as a state of international relations where nations interrelate without dispute. The United Nations defines peace as the absence of war. It also addresses peace as an important factor in maintaining diplomacy, conflict resolution, and international law. The Democratic Peace Theory assumes that democratic states are less likely to go to war with one another, holding the view that democratic governance can pave the way for peaceful resolution.⁶ Peace in the spiritual realm is seen as an inner quality of non-aggression and non-attachment. Several religious traditions consider peace a core value of religious practice. For example, Christianity teaches the concept of “peace on earth” as a divine aspiration, while Islam derives its very name from the word *salaam*, meaning peace. In Buddhism, peace is the ultimate goal and is achieved through the cultivation of mindfulness and compassion.⁷ According to the 14th Dalai Lama, as he addresses, “Peace, for example, starts with each one of us. When we have inner peace, we can be at peace with those around us. When our community is in a state of peace, it can share that peace with neighboring communities and so on.”⁸ In the canonical texts, we see that the Buddha has used peace and *Nibbāna* synonymously. A passage in the *Dhammapada* clearly states the Buddhist attitude toward peace, saying: “Cut off your affection in the manner a man plucks with his hand an autumn lotus. Cultivate only the path to peace, *Nibbāna*, as made known by the Exalted One”⁹

³ Webel & Galtung (2007): 6.

⁴ McLeod, S. (2024) “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs”, *Simply Psychology*, accessed: [January 3, 2025]. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

⁵ Durkheim (1893): 5.

⁶ Doyle (1983): 205 - 235.

⁷ Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. Available at: <file:///Users/zanaka/Desktop/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20-%20Peace%20Is%20Every%20Step.pdf>. (Accessed: 5 January 2025).

⁸ Dalai Lama (1989) “Nobel Lecture”, *NobelPrize.org*, 11 December. Accessed on [January 9 2025]. Available at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1989/lama/lecture/>.

⁹ *Dhp.89*; SuttaCentral (n.d.) “What the Suttas Describe About *Nibbana*”, accessed on [January 9 2025]. Available at: <https://discourse.suttacentral.net/t/what-the-suttas-describe-about-nibbana/36787>.

III. NIBBANA AS THE ULTIMATE PEACE IN BUDDHISM

In Buddhist teaching, *Nibbāna* (Sanskrit: *Nirvāṇa*) is regarded as the ultimate goal and the highest peace (*paramasanti*). *Nibbāna* is central to Buddhist philosophy and is understood as the absence of all conflicts. It is frequently described in Pāli texts as the extinguishment of the fires of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), which are considered the root causes of all suffering. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha said that *Nibbāna* is the ultimate peace, characterized by the complete eradication of all mental defilements.¹⁰ Since *Nibbāna* is the most profound and highest bliss, seeking it is considered a noble search (*ariyapariyesanā*) in Buddhism. Here, the question may arise as to why *Nibbāna* is the highest peace and bliss. Unlike worldly peace, which may be temporary and dependent on external conditions, *Nibbāna* is an unconditioned happiness. The *Udāna Pāli* text, in this regard, mentions thus: “Unborn, unconditioned, and deathless.”¹¹ Again, the *Samyutta Nikāya* describes *Nibbāna* as the highest bliss (*paramam sukham*), not in the sense of sensual pleasure but as the profound peace that comes from the cessation of suffering. This ultimate peace is achievable when the cycle of craving and attachment is broken. Regarding this, Ledi Sayadaw, in his *Manual of Nibbāna*, remarks thus: “The obstacles to the bliss of peace (*santisukha*) are called *palibodha*. *Nibbāna*, being a non-appearing *dhmma*, has no *palibodha dukkha*, the trouble of exertion to make it appear. *Nibbāna*, not being an impermanent *dhmma*, has no *palibodha dukkha*, the trouble of repeated exertion to establish it.”¹²

In the academic field, scholars express *Nibbāna* in various ways, often presenting its experiential nature. Bhikkhu Bodhi describes *Nibbāna* as the ultimate goal that lies at the end of the Noble Eightfold Path, the perfect peace free from all fetters. Similarly, Walpola Rahula, in *What the Buddha Taught*, states that *Nibbāna* is the absolute peace, the absolute happiness, and the absolute truth.¹³ As discussed above, both the canonical texts and scholarly interpretations highlight that *Nibbāna* is not merely an abstract concept but an experienceable reality, achievable by following the right path and cultivating the mind.

IV. INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE

Buddhism firmly holds the view that peace in the outer world is attainable only when inner peace is cultivated. One cannot share something that one does not have. Similarly, as stated in the *Sallekha Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, it is impossible to take others out of the mud if one is drowned in the mud. This logic applies in the case of peace as well. Peace cannot be shared with the outer world without personal experience. Buddhism also claims that the conditions of the outer world are dependent on the internal conditions of human beings,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, v 204.

¹¹ *Udāna* 8.3: *Tatiyanibbānapaṭisaṃyutta Sutta*, Sujato, B. (trans.) (n.d.). SuttaCentral. Accessed on [March 3, 2025,]. Available at: <https://suttacentral.net/ud8.3/en/sujato>.

¹² Ledi Sayadaw (2006): 81.

¹³ Rahula (1959): 35.

both individually and collectively.¹⁴ On the other hand, Buddhism is fully aware that inner peace can neither be appreciated nor applied by those without appropriate food, clothing, and shelter, as well as those without proper access to social services such as basic education, healthcare, and political and economic opportunities.¹⁵ Inner peace in Buddhism is achieved through the purification of the mind, which involves overcoming the psychological causes of suffering: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). The Buddha's teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path provide a practical framework for this transformation. Meditation practices, particularly mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*), are essential tools for cultivating inner peace. As Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Vietnamese Zen master, asserts, "The peace we seek cannot be our possession. We need to find inner peace, which makes it possible for us to become one with those who suffer and to do something to help our brothers and sisters."¹⁶ The transformation from inner peace to world peace is necessarily required and should be a transition from the personal to the collective. A person who experiences inner peace is so powerful that he can influence their family, community, and society. The theory of interconnectedness (*paṭicca samuppāda*) in Buddhist teaching vividly explains that individual transformation leads to societal changes.

4.1. Challenges to peace

Although peace is a global aspiration, it remains a significant challenge. These challenges may arise from several factors, such as geopolitical tensions, military expansion, economic inequality, social issues, technological warfare, and environmental degradation. Geopolitical tensions, such as territorial disputes and resource exploitation, are major issues threatening global stability and peace. Military expansion and the increasing practice of dictatorship also exacerbate this issue. Economic inequality and resource competition are also significant threats to peace. Regarding economic issues, poverty is one of the underlying causes of conflict. In Buddhism, the ultimate goal is to attain enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of repeated *saṃsāra*. However, this does not mean that material well-being is neglected. Buddhism considers poverty a form of suffering.¹⁷ For survival, basic needs such as food, medicine, shelter, and clothing are essential. If these needs are not fulfilled, there will be challenges to spiritual practice and inner peace. The *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* clearly states this issue, explaining that when people are stricken by poverty and economic instability, crimes such as stealing, killing, and social unrest occur in society.¹⁸ On the one hand, Buddhism also holds that excessive reliance on material development and attachment to material possessions

¹⁴ MN 8: *Sallekha Sutta*, Bodhi, B. (trans.) (n.d.) *SuttaCentral*, accessed: 3 March 2025). Available at: <https://suttacentral.net/mn8/en/bodhi>.

¹⁵ Hershock (2006): 42.

¹⁶ Hanh (1988): 127.

¹⁷ A.III.352.

¹⁸ D.I. 136.

leads to negative consequences. This is because attachment is another form of craving and clinging. When individuals are driven by craving, they may bring conflict to society. Therefore, Buddhism encourages the practice of balancing material and spiritual well-being. By maintaining this balance, individuals can overcome the challenges of everyday life and cultivate inner peace, which contributes to world peace. Technological progress has also introduced new threats to peace and stability, such as cyber warfare, hate speech, and the spread of autonomous weapon systems. Disinformation and propaganda further threaten both regional and global stability. Environmental crises such as climate change, urbanization, deforestation, and resource shortages lead to displaced communities, migration, and increased geopolitical tensions.¹⁹ From a Buddhist perspective, addressing the factors mentioned above is considered an external challenge and should be approached through collaborative global initiatives that encourage communication, sustainable development, and efficient methods of resolving disputes. Indeed, Buddhism goes beyond external factors, revealing the underlying roots of all conflicts and challenges to peace.

4.2. Buddhist perspective on violence and conflict

The Pāli terms such as *kalaha*, *virodha*, *viggaha*, *bandhana*, and *vivāda* may be used to denote “conflict,” “dispute,” or “violence” in English. Conflict, in its ultimate sense, refers to any contradiction or clash of interests between two persons or groups. From a Buddhist perspective, it is an expression of hostility, negative attitudes, dispute, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. Conflict, from the Buddhist ethical standpoint, is seen as an unwholesome action stemming from negative thoughts. Therefore, conflicts are liable to arise due to differences in perception, values, working practices, and so forth. Regarding the root causes of conflict, the *Kalahavivāda Sutta* reveals the fundamental origins of disagreements and conflicts.²⁰

The Buddha identifies that “the cause of contentions and disputes and the concomitant social evils is *piyā* (dear things). *Piyā* are said to be rooted in *chanda* (impelling desire). *Chanda* is rooted in *sāta* and *asāta* (the pleasant and the unpleasant). *Sāta* and *asāta* are caused by *phassa* (sensory contact). In this sutta, the Buddha is seen delving deeper and deeper into the psychological springs of human action in explaining matters connected with individual and social behavior, realizing the uniqueness of the sphere of activity with which he is dealing. Here, the origins of human conflict are traced to sense perceptions and the complexity of mental acts that follow from them.”²¹

According to the *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*,

¹⁹ Institute for Economics and Peace (2023). *Global Peace Index 2023: Measuring Peace in a Complex World*. Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace. accessed on [January 5, 2025]. Available at: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org>.

²⁰ *Sn.169*.

²¹ P. D. Premasiri (2006): 6.

sensual pleasures are seen as the root cause of every conflict. The sutta describes how conflict and destruction occur due to the origin of sensual pleasure:

“For the sake of sensual pleasures, people engage in conflict at every level - rulers wage wars, families are torn apart, and friendships turn into enmity. Quarrels escalate into violence, leading to suffering, injury, and death. For the sake of desire, they take up arms, march into battle, and face the horrors of war - arrows flying, swords flashing, and countless lives lost. This relentless pursuit of sensual pleasures results in pain and destruction, showing that such desires do not bring lasting happiness but instead cause immense suffering in this very life.”²²

Again, in the *Cakkavatti-Sihanāda Sutta* and *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, the major causes of conflict are attributed to attempts to maximize resources and material wealth. When people strive to accumulate material wealth, competition naturally arises between individuals, groups, or nations. This competition gradually turns into conflict.²³ The *Sakkapañha Sutta* in the same *Nikāya* explains that beings are unable to live peacefully without conflict, as they are often dominated by jealousy and miserliness.²⁴ A particular reference to conflict and dispute is found in the *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The sutta explains that all conflicts and problems arise due to the actions of the fool:

Bhikkhus, whatever fears arise, all arise because of the fool, not because of the wise man; whatever troubles arise, all arise because of the fool, not because of the wise man; whatever calamities arise, all arise because of the fool, not because of the wise man. Just as a fire that starts in a shed made of rushes or grass burns down even a house with a peaked roof, with walls plastered inside and outside, shut off, secured by bars, with shuttered windows, so too, bhikkhus, whatever fears arise, all arise because of the fool, not because of the wise man.²⁵

According to the *Akusalamūla Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, all unwholesome actions, including conflict, violence, oppression, and other undesirable practices, have their psychological grounding in three unwholesome roots, namely, greed, hatred, and delusion. The sutta explains thus:

Monks, there are three roots of unwholesomeness: greed, hatred, and delusion. Any action - by deed, word, or thought - driven by these defilements is unwholesome. A person overpowered by greed, hatred, and delusion, seeking power, inflicts harm on others through killing, imprisonment, false accusations, or confiscation. Such actions arise

²² M. I. 86-88; Sutta Central, Accessed on [January 11, 2025] available at: <https://suttacentral.net/mn14/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=plain&reference=none¬es=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin>.

²³ D. II. 58; D. I. 127.

²⁴ D. II. 277.

²⁵ M. III. 63; “*Bahudhātuka Sutta*: The Many Kinds of Elements (MN 115).” Suttas.com, accessed on [January 12, 2025], available at: <https://www.suttas.com/mn-115-bahudhatuka-sutta-the-many-kinds-of-elements.html>.

from and perpetuate unwholesome states of mind, leading to further suffering. Thus, greed, hatred, and delusion are the true causes of evil and suffering.²⁶

4.3. Buddhist approach to conflict resolution

The Buddhist approach to conflict resolution emphasizes the transformation of unwholesome acts into wholesome ones. It includes the transformation of negative psychological roots into positive ones and harmful actions into skillful ones. This approach sheds light on individuals and communities, helping them to recognize the root causes of conflict. It also encourages individuals to forgive and accept the nature of conflict. This perspective is clearly expressed in a stanza from the *Dhammapada*, which highlights the Buddhist standpoint on conflict: “Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world, but it is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law.”²⁷ From a Buddhist point of view, as P. D. Premasiri remarks, social unrest or conflict is the consequence of psychological maladjustment.²⁸ These psychological roots can be transformed by applying the Buddhist approach to conflict resolution. Central to the Buddhist approach in this regard are the practices of *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), ethical living, mindfulness, and clear comprehension. These practices collectively cultivate inner peace and harmony, creating the conditions necessary for effective conflict resolution.

V. THE PRACTICE OF LOVINGKINDNESS (*METTĀ*)

Mettā in the Buddha’s teaching is one of the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) and is designed to develop a sound, peaceful relationship with other living beings.²⁹ It is a foundational practice in Buddhist teachings and serves as an effective technique for conflict resolution. The practice is understood as a way of cultivating deep and unconditional goodwill toward all sentient beings. It transcends gender discrimination, personal biases, and prejudices. The *Mettā Sutta* encourages practitioners to extend loving-kindness equally to friends, strangers, and even enemies or people with whom they feel annoyed. This practice reduces anger and builds trust because it focuses on recognizing the shared humanity in all individuals. Through the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness), individuals cultivate honesty and affection toward themselves and the world around them. In *mettā* meditation, practitioners generate wishes for happiness, safety, and ease, directing them first toward themselves and then extending them to others. The most widely practiced form of *mettā* meditation involves offering goodwill using simple, repeated phrases like “May I be well and safe. May all beings be well and safe too.” This allows practitioners to begin their loving-kindness practice with feelings most accessible to themselves and gradually work up to more difficult feelings, such as extending love to someone they find difficult to include in their *mettā*

²⁶ A. I. 202; Nyanaponika therā (2000): 140.

²⁷ *Dhp* 5.

²⁸ P. D. Premasiri (2006): 127.

²⁹ Ñānamoli Thera (1994): 291.

practice. This practice is clearly encouraged in the *Mettā Sutta*, which states that *mettā* should be extended toward all sentient beings, even those unseen. In this connection, a passage from the *Anguttara Nikāya* provides the Buddhist perspective on *mettā*: “Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu cultivates loving-kindness for as long as a finger snap, he is called a bhikkhu. He is not destitute of jhāna meditation, he carries out the Master’s teaching, he responds to advice, and he does not eat the country’s alms food in vain. So what should be said of those who make much of it?”³⁰

Since *mettā*, in its unique character, is the opposite of anger and hostility, extending loving-kindness toward adversaries enables practitioners to overcome negative emotional states and create space for understanding and reconciliation. In addition, the collective practice of *mettā* within communities can strengthen social harmony and reduce tensions. Since *mettā*, in other words, represents non-violence, it can be applied as a guiding principle of peacebuilding at the international level. *Mettā* is not merely a loving state of mind; it is also an effective practice for coexistence and peacebuilding within society. The *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* reveals how the practice of *mettā* enhances a firm and harmonious relationship among three of the Buddha’s most senior disciples, namely, Venerable Anuruddha, Venerable Nandiya, and Venerable Kimbila.³¹ The discussion mentioned above shows that the practice of loving-kindness or *Mettā* is an essential factor for a transformative approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. By understanding the emotional and psychological roots of conflict, individuals can apply *Mettā* as a principle of peacebuilding for both personal and societal levels.

VI. ETHICAL LIVING

Ethical living, or moral living, is a fundamental practice in Buddhist teaching. As it is grounded in morality, ethical living emphasizes establishing moral conduct, promoting peace, and resolving conflict. Despite diverse cultures and social norms, ethical behavior has been universally recognized as crucial for harmonious relationships and sustainable societies. In Buddhism, ethical conduct, known as *sīla*, is one of the integral aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, providing a framework for individual and collective well-being. *Sīla*, or ethical living, in other words, is the act of abandoning what is

³⁰ A. I. 10; “Helpful Meditation Similes.” Sutta Central, accessed on [January 11, 2025], available at: <https://discourse.suttacentral.net/t/helpful-meditation-similes/3411>.

³¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* 31: *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta*, Bodhi, B. (trans.) (n.d.) *SuttaCentral*. Available at: <https://suttacentral.net/mn31/en/bodhi> (Accessed: 9 January 2025). “Venerable sir, as to that, I think thus: ‘It is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me, that I am living with such companions in the holy life.’ I maintain bodily acts of loving-kindness towards those venerable ones both openly and privately; I maintain verbal acts of loving-kindness towards them both openly and privately; I maintain mental acts of loving-kindness towards them both openly and privately. I consider: ‘Why should I not set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do?’ Then I set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do. We are different in body, venerable sir, but one in mind.”

evil and cultivating what is good. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, in this connection, describes that *sīla* fosters a moral life free from remorse and regret.³² Moreover, the practice of ethical living makes wholesome contributions such as trust and reliability, which are essential for building cooperative relationships. When individuals and societies act with moral integrity and fairness, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding will certainly prevail in that society. In this way, society will be able to follow the practice of refraining from actions that cause harm to others. It should be noted here that the first precept of *Pañcasīla* (five precepts), the avoidance or refraining from killing any living being, is laid down based on empathy and compassion. In other words, its positive aspect is to develop loving-kindness, compassion, and goodwill toward all living beings. Ethical living, or *sīla*, in the commentary on the *Mahāniddeśa*, is identified as an effective antidote to desire and unwholesome actions.³³ Desire is the cause of all suffering and conflicts. When *sīla* is prioritized in society, individuals can curb desire and its negative consequences. Through moral discipline, they can make the right decisions and engage in right actions that are beneficial to themselves, others, and society as a whole. Moral discipline (*sīla*), from a Buddhist perspective, is the avoidance of unskillful or unwholesome actions and engagement in skillful or wholesome activities. In Buddhist teaching, unwholesome actions are based on the unwholesome psychological roots of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), resulting in harmful consequences for oneself and others. Wholesome actions, on the other hand, stem from the wholesome roots of generosity (*alobha*), loving-kindness (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*), with beneficial consequences for oneself and others. Therefore, every individual in this world is responsible for living an ethical lifestyle and curbing unwholesome actions so that conflicts and entanglements can be resolved. As stated in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, it is possible to overcome conflict and problems by establishing ethical conduct and practicing mental cultivation: “Tangled within, tangled without: these people are tangled in tangles. I ask you this, Gotama: who can untangle this tangle? A wise person grounded in ethics, developing the mind and wisdom, a keen and alert mendicant - they can untangle this tangle.”³⁴

VII. MINDFUL LIVING

In the modern world, beset by social, interpersonal, and global conflicts, the philosophy of mindful living is essential as a means of overcoming disputes and creating long-lasting peace. Mindfulness, which originated in the ancient Buddhist teachings, is the psychological practice of being fully present and aware of the current moment without judgment. This practice has become popular worldwide as a method for resolving conflicts and building peace at both individual and societal levels. In Buddhist teachings, mindfulness (*sati*)

³² Ps. I. 48.

³³ *Samyutta Nikāya* 1.23: *Jaṭā Sutta*, Sujato, B. (trans.) (n.d.) *SuttaCentral*. Accessed on [January 9 2025]. Available at: <https://suttacentral.net/sn1.23/en/sujato>.

³⁴ S. I. 166.

is one of the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, serving as *sammā-sati* (right mindfulness). This practice involves being fully attentive to thoughts, emotions, and actions while maintaining clarity and equanimity.³⁵ The Pāli term *sati* equates to mindfulness, recognition, awareness, and memory in English.³⁶ Etymologically, *sati* comes from the root *sara√*, which means “to remember” or “to move along.” Contextually, this term is described together with other words such as *indriya* (faculty), *bala* (power), *bojjhaṅga* (factor of enlightenment), and so forth. In Pāli texts, *sati* and eleven other terms are interchangeably used as synonyms. *Sati*, in its functional aspect, involves staying focused on objects and is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. Mindfulness is the intentional observation of every moment with curiosity and openness. It entails immersing oneself in the present moment and being aware of one’s actions with a non-judgmental attitude. Regular mindfulness practice enhances self-awareness and introspection. It also allows individuals involved in conflicts to better understand their triggers and biases. Conflicts arise from misunderstandings, emotional responses, and unexamined biases. Mindful living, in this case, can reveal the root causes and negative thought patterns that trigger conflict and dispute. According to the *Mahāsatiipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, practitioners are encouraged to be aware of every thought pattern, whether wholesome or unwholesome.³⁷ By being aware and mindful of the present moment, as scientific research reveals, individuals will enhance the following skills: (1) Cultivating Empathy: Empathy is a valuable ability that can aid in dispute resolution. Whether with a familiar or unfamiliar person, practicing empathy provides insight into their sentiments and a better understanding of their experiences. (2) Mindful Communication: Mindfulness encourages listening to situations and people without filtering them through judgments or past experiences. This openness allows for receptivity to fresh ideas and solutions that may not have been previously considered. (3) Navigating Emotions: One of the most important advantages of mindful conflict resolution is the ability to manage emotions effectively. It aids in preventing emotional reactivity and improves emotional regulation skills. (4) Finding Common Ground: Everyone has a unique viewpoint shaped by personal experiences, upbringing, and current circumstances. These differing perspectives often lead to conflict between parties. Mindfulness fosters an openness to understanding opposing viewpoints. (5) Relationship Repair: Learning and practicing relationship repair is a vital skill. Conflicts are unavoidable in life, but if they are not resolved in healthy ways, they can damage relationships. (6) Moving Forward After Conflict: Conflict does not have to be a negative experience; it can serve as an opportunity to learn more about oneself, maintain good relationships, and develop open communication.³⁸

³⁵ Gethin (1998): 187.

³⁶ PED (1921 – 25):745; Anālayo (2003): 5.

³⁷ D. II. 300.

³⁸ Nakhlé, E. (n. d.). “Mindful conflict resolution: How to manage conflict and build stronger relationships.” *LinkedIn*, accessed on [January 8, 2025], Available at: <https://www.linkedin>.

VIII. THE APPLICATION OF WISDOM (PAÑÑĀ)

Wisdom, referring to *paññā* or *sampajañña* in the Pāli texts, is an essential element in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In Buddhist teaching, wisdom ranges from general knowledge to deeper insight that can be applied to problem-solving and final liberation. Wisdom, in the context of peacebuilding, extends beyond intellectual understanding. It includes the ability to perceive the nature of conflicts, their root causes, and the ways to overcome them. The Buddhist concept of *paññā* (wisdom) provides a particularly relevant framework, emphasizing the importance of seeing reality as it is, free from distortions caused by greed, hatred, and delusion.³⁹ Again, the term *sampajañña* which is a combined word of *saṃ+pa+ññā* renders clear comprehension, conscious, thoughtful, understanding, alertness and clearly knowing in English.⁴⁰ The root +*ññā* meaning 'to know' can also be seen with other prefix words such as *vi* (i.e. *viññāti*), *saṃ* (i.e. *saṃññāti*), *ava* (i.e. *avaññāti*), *abhi* (i.e. *abhiññāti*) and so forth. In this context, the prefix *saṃ* carries meanings such as 'clearly' or 'well'. The combined word *sampajañña* can be translated as clear knowing or clear comprehension. In the *Dhammasaṅgāṇī* we see that this term is one of synonyms of *sammādiṭṭhi* (right view) together with other twenty-nine terms.⁴¹ Again, in the commentaries, we see that *sampajañña* is analyzed into four contexts as follow: (1) *Sāthaka-sampajañña* – knowing and refraining from activities irrelevant to the path, (2) *Sappāya-sampajañña* – knowing and pursuing activities in a dignified and careful manner, (3) *Gocara-sampajañña* – knowing and maintaining sensory restraint consistent with mindfulness, (4) *Asamoha-sampajañña* – knowing and seeing the true nature of reality.⁴² Wisdom, known as right view in the Noble Eightfold Path, offers an understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the nature of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). This understanding helps individuals cultivate a balanced perspective on life, reducing attachment and aversion. Such wisdom enables people to navigate conflicts with compassion and equanimity. As discussed above, the application of wisdom in peacebuilding and conflict resolution entails both theoretical and pragmatic tools for addressing the complexities of modern disputes and conflicts. By applying wisdom to global issues, individuals can overcome conflict and contribute to the creation of a peaceful society.

IX. CONCLUSION

From the Buddhist perspective, cultivating inner peace is an essential practice and a necessary foundation for external harmony. The final goal of the Buddhist path is emphasized as attaining the ultimate peace (*santisukha*) or *Nibbāna*. Buddhism holds that *Nibbāna* can be experienced by overcoming

com/pulse/mindful-conflict-resolution-how-manage-conflict-build-e-nakhlé.

³⁹ Gethin (1998): 98.

⁴⁰ PED (1912 - 25):764; Analayo (2003): 39.

⁴¹ *Dhs.*12.

⁴² S. V. 184 - 204; *M-a.I.* 253 - 255.

negative mental impurities such as greed, hatred, delusion, jealousy, miserliness, and so forth. These negative mental defilements, in Buddhist teachings, are understood as the root causes of conflicts, quarrels, disputes, and war, impacting not only smaller groups but also broader society. Buddhism also points out that external factors such as geopolitical tensions, economic inequality, territorial disputes, military expansion, and lack of education contribute to conflict and unrest in society. Buddhism is fully aware of these factors and acknowledges that they originate from negative psychological root causes. Furthermore, Buddhism highlights that these negative psychological roots should be reduced or gradually uprooted so that society can enjoy peace, stability, and happiness. In this regard, collaborative and collective practice is emphasized. Buddhism affirms that by cultivating inner peace and developing positive qualities such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), ethical living, mindfulness, and wisdom, individuals will be able to make the world more livable and peaceful.

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Abbreviation of Pali Texts

A	<i>Anguttara Nikāya</i>
D	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhs	<i>Dhammasaṅgani</i>
M	<i>Majjima Nikāya</i>
Md-a	<i>Mahāniddesa Aṭṭhakathā</i>
PED	<i>Pali English Dictionary</i>
Ps	<i>Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga</i>
S	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Suttanipāta</i>
Ud	<i>Udāna Pali</i>

CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: PRACTISING METTĀ AND MINDFULNESS FOR ONESELF AND FOR OTHERS

Ven. Mahinda*

Abstract:

Outer peace is not possible without inner peace. As the preamble to the UNESCO Constitution states: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” This paper first presents a Buddhist perspective on why outer peace depends on the inner peace of individuals. It then discusses how to build the “defenses of peace” in human minds through the cultivation of *mettā* and mindfulness as taught by the Buddha more than 2,500 years ago. *Mettā* and mindfulness complement one another in the development and purification of the mind. Whilst the cultivation of *mettā* helps in particular to reduce the tendency of aversion, which clouds and obscures the mind, the practice of mindfulness enables one to clear its underlying causes, such as craving and delusion. Together, *mettā* and mindfulness pave the way for holistic personal development, accompanied by the wisdom, compassion, and skills necessary to effectively benefit others. The paper continues with a detailed summary of how *mettā* and mindfulness are practised, and how they pave the way for complete freedom from the root causes of suffering, or ultimate peace. It concludes by introducing a number of initiatives that have been employed to encourage and support individuals to undertake the essential endeavour of overcoming the root causes of suffering in their minds, not only for their happiness, but also for peace, harmony, and stability at community, national, and international levels.

Keywords: *Four foundations of mindfulness, loving-kindness, meditation, Buddhist practice, grassroots.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Outer peace is not possible without inner peace. As the preamble to the UNESCO Constitution states: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” Peace in our world is not simply an absence of war or physical conflict. The suffering and instability throughout the world have numerous causes: the disparity between rich and poor, and between developed and developing nations; environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources; aging populations and generational issues; rapid technological advances; pandemics of infectious diseases, as well as mental health issues ... to name but a few. In Buddhism, the nature of the world is understood to be in a state of flux, a constant process of expansion and contraction (or integration and disintegration).¹ In other words, this world is not static; it is in a constant state of change and conflict. In order to live in peace in the ever-changing outer world, we need to pacify the ever-changing world within ourselves, within our own minds. While acknowledging both the outer and inner world, the Buddha laid greater emphasis on the inner world, within this ‘fathom-long’ body.²

According to the teachings of the Buddha, all war, conflict, and other problems besetting humanity are the result of three root causes in the minds of beings: greed, hatred, and delusion. Greed refers to craving, desire, grasping, and all their manifestations. Hatred refers to anger, aversion, ill-will, and all their manifestations. And delusion refers to ignorance of the true nature of life. All the vast teachings of the Buddha are aimed at liberating beings from the various forms of suffering by overcoming greed, hatred, and delusion. Therefore, in order to build peace, harmony, and stability within ourselves and in the world we live in, we need to uproot these root causes of suffering. As such, each individual has the responsibility, not only to ourselves but to humanity, to undertake the overcoming of greed, hatred, and delusion and put into practice values conducive to inner and outer peace. In the *Sedaka-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, the Buddha gave a simile of two acrobats who perform with the help of a bamboo pole, illustrating how ‘protecting oneself, one protects others’. It highlights that in order for the acrobats to be able to properly perform their feat, each individual must first ensure they themselves are balanced and centered, and in so doing, they will be able to protect each other.³

Ñāṇaponika explains further that, in particular from an ethical perspective, “self-protection will safeguard others, individuals and society, against our own unrestrained passions and selfish impulses... If we ourselves think of nothing else than to crave and grasp... then we may rouse or strengthen these possessive

¹ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavaṣṣe* 2500 (2005): KN *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*, *Nandavaggo*, *Lokasuttavaṇṇanā*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#1222> “*Saṅkhāro lujjati palujjati loko.*”

² *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavaṣṣe* 2500 (2005): AN *Catukkaniṭṭhā*, *Rohitassavagga*, *Rohitassasuttaṃ*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#250>

³ *Anālayo* (2012): 1 – 23.

instincts in others... If we protect ourselves against these evil infections, we shall to some extent at least also protect others.” He goes on to write, “If we leave unresolved the actual or potential sources of social evil within ourselves, our external social activity will be either futile or markedly incomplete.”⁴ In other words, it is not possible for one to effectively promote peace and harmony around one unless one is at peace and in harmony within oneself. Each individual therefore has a role to play in developing the qualities that will promote peace, harmony and stability – not only for ourselves, but for the world at large. We may not be able to change the world outside, but we can change our world within. If we, as individuals, transform ourselves, those around us and in the world at large will gradually be transformed. On a practical level, this can be achieved through the cultivation of *mettā* and mindfulness as taught by the Buddha more than 2,500 years ago.

From my own personal experience, *mettā* and mindfulness complement one another in the development and purification of the mind. Whilst the cultivation of *mettā* helps in particular to reduce the tendency of aversion which clouds and obscures the mind, the practice of mindfulness enables one to clear its underlying causes, such as craving and delusion. Together, *mettā* and mindfulness pave the way for holistic personal development, accompanied by the wisdom, compassion, and skills necessary to effectively benefit others. At the conclusion of the *Sedaka-sutta*, the Buddha recommends the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as the way to protect oneself and others. Bhikkhu Anālayo, in his insightful discussion of the *sutta*, states, “... mindfulness meditation [if developed in the balanced manner described in the *sutta*], while giving clear priority to self-development, concurrently fosters the benefit of others and society at large.”⁵ He also points out the potential connection between mindfulness and *mettā*. In the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*, after describing the radiation of *mettā* in all directions without obstruction, pervading the whole world with loving-kindness, the *sutta* enjoins that “one should practice this mindfulness”. As Anālayo writes, “This expression hints at a close relationship between the practice of mindfulness and the opening of the heart achieved through such boundless meditative cultivation of benevolence.”⁶ Bhikkhu Anālayo’s conclusions correspond with my own experience, gained from a lifetime of practice of *mettā* and mindfulness and sharing these practices with others. I have seen how these practices have transformed myself, and I have also seen their results in others: in those from whom I have received these teachings, and also in those with whom I have shared these teachings.

Nowadays, the scientific and academic communities have started studying the effects of mindfulness meditation as well as loving-kindness and compassion practices. They have found multiple benefits from these practices – including a reduction in burnout and stress; an increase in positive emotional

⁴ Nāṇaponika (1967/1990): 8.

⁵ Anālayo (2012): 10 - 11.

⁶ Anālayo (2012): 8.

states, prosocial emotions and behaviors; and improvements in interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction – all of which will positively contribute to inner peace and harmony within individuals, and consequentially, to peace in the world at large.⁷ However, from the Buddhist perspective, these practices are ultimately intended for something higher: complete freedom from the root causes of suffering, or ultimate peace. In the following sections, I will elaborate on the practices of *mettā* and mindfulness, and how they pave the way for inner and outer peace.

II. *METTĀ*

The word *mettā* in *Pāli* or *maitrī* in Sanskrit literally means “friendliness” (from the word *mitta*/ *mitra* or “friend”). It is the kind of friendship that arises through boundless and unconditional love, free from lustful attachment. *Mettā* is often translated as “loving-kindness” – a love that comes from the heart, through the genuine wish for all beings to be well and happy. It is a love that goes beyond the boundaries of race, language, nationality, caste, color, and creed. Hence, it may also be called ‘universal love’. In the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*,⁸ *mettā* is compared to the love of a mother towards her only child, protecting the child at the risk of her own life:

Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam/ Āyusā eka-puttam anurakkhe/ Evaṃ pi sabba-bhūtesu/ Mānasam bhāvaye aparimānaṃ/ Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam

Just as a mother would protect her only child/ at the risk of her own life/ even so towards all beings/ one should cultivate a boundless heart.

The *Pāli* commentaries define *mettā* as the strong wish for the welfare and happiness of others.⁹ In this sense, the words altruism, goodwill, and benevolence can also be used to describe *mettā*. *Mettā* is the antidote for anger, hatred, grudges, resentment and ill-will:

Na hi verena verāni, sammantidha kudācanaṃ/ Averaṇa ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano

Hatred is not overcome by hatred/ But by love and love alone/ This is an eternal law.¹⁰

Here, the Buddha points out that this teaching is an eternal law. That is, this principle exists for all times: past, present and future. It is not something that he invented; the Buddha only rediscovered it and promoted it, for peace and harmony within oneself, and within the family, society, nation and the world.

⁷ A number of such studies can be found in the Reference section of this article.

⁸ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): KN, *Khuddakapāṭha*, *Mettasuttaṃ*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#392>.

⁹ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): KN *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Cūlaniddesa-aṭṭhakathā*, *Khaggavisāṇasuttaniddeso*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#1421> “hita-sukhūpanayana-kāmatā mettā”.

¹⁰ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): KN, *Dhammapadapāṭi*, *Yamakavaggo*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#394>

2.1. The Practice of *Mettā*

The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* outlines the practice of *mettā*, beginning with the cultivation of certain virtues or wholesome qualities. There are fourteen qualities mentioned in the *sutta* for one's own development.¹¹ These virtues or wholesome qualities enable us to attain some peace of mind, calmness, and clarity so that we will be able to cultivate *mettā* more effectively. The commentaries explain the meditation on *mettā* or loving-kindness in a systematic manner, progressing step by step.¹² There are different techniques, but the underlying principle is the same. It is centered on the sincere wish for the well-being of all sentient beings. The two common methods are: (1) directing thoughts of loving-kindness towards individuals, and (2) directing our attention in different directions.

2.2. Directing thoughts of loving-kindness towards individuals

We start the practice of *mettā* with ourselves so that we are grounded and in the right frame of mind before we radiate to others. We then direct our attention towards someone whom we respect, such as our spiritual teachers, our parents (those who are living), and/ or someone who has touched our lives, so that *mettā* will flow smoothly and readily. It is always easier to think well of someone whom we respect and have gratitude towards. This will open our hearts, and as the momentum of *mettā* develops, we can move on to neutral people – those who are less well-known or even unknown to us. Finally, we direct our thoughts of loving-kindness towards those who are more difficult, such as our rivals or enemies, or those with whom we have had quarrels or misunderstandings.

As we radiate loving-kindness in this order towards different individuals, we gradually break the barriers between ourselves and others. That is how loving-kindness becomes boundless, transcending all boundaries. Radiating *mettā* and merely sending thoughts to others are two different things. When we radiate *mettā*, our minds should be grounded, as our aura of calmness, peace, and well-being expands and reaches out to others. When we simply direct our thoughts to others, if we are not properly grounded and at peace within ourselves, then others may also feel what we feel. They may also be affected by our stress and other gross emotions.

2.3. Directing our attention in different directions

The second common mode of practice involves directing our attention in different directions or spatial dimensions, i.e., directional radiation (*disā-pharaṇā*). Traditionally, we consider the ten directions: North, North-East, East, South-East, South, South-West, West, North-West, then above (Zenith) and below (Nadir). There are also other methods such as radiating loving-kindness to each of the six realms of existence and enlightened beings, and

¹¹ For details on the different qualities, see *Venerable Mahinda* (2024): 15 - 20.

¹² The various methods of developing *mettā* meditation are found mainly in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Visuddhimagga*. There are also effective methods that are practised in Sri Lanka and other places which are not recorded in the commentaries.

simply wishing all beings to be well and happy.¹³

The instructions given in the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* say:

*Mettān ca sabba-lokasmiṃ/ Mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ/ Uddham
adho ca tiriyaṇ ca/ Asambādhāṃ averaṃ asaṇṇaṃ*

Let thoughts of boundless love/pervade the whole world,/ above,
below, and all around –/ without any obstruction, without any hatred,
without any enmity.

In order to enjoy a true sense of wellbeing, firstly we need to be free from all forms of hostility, such as anger, enmity, hatred and grudges. This includes anger coming from others as well as from within ourselves. Secondly, our mind needs to be free from mental suffering such as fear, worries, and anxieties. Thirdly, we need to be free from physical pain and suffering, from sickness and ill health. It is only when one is free from hostility, from mental and physical suffering that one is able to live happily, with ease and harmony. The term ‘May you be well and happy’ therefore implies the wish for others’ wellbeing at all levels: mental, emotional, and physical. It is not confined to mere worldly happiness or pleasure that is experienced through our physical senses.

Hence, the traditional formula:

*Ahaṃ avero homi/ Abyāpajjho homi/ Anīgho homi/ Sukhī attānaṃ
pariharāmi/ Ahaṃ avero homi/ Abyāpajjho homi/ Anīgho homi/ Sukhī
attānaṃ pariharāmi.*

May i be free from hostility – from anger, aversion, hatred, and grudges/
May i be free from mental suffering – from fear, worry, and anxiety/ May
i be free from physical pain – from sickness and ill health/ May i dwell
with ease and happiness/ May I be free from hostility – free from anger,
aversion, hatred, and grudges/ May I be free from mental suffering – free
from fear, worry, and anxiety/ May I be free from physical pain – free
from sickness and ill health/ May I dwell with ease and happiness.

Just as we have these good wishes for ourselves, so do we wish others:

*Averā hontu/ Abyāpajjhā hontu/ Anīghā hontu/ Sukhī attānaṃ
pariharantu.*

May others be free from hostility – from anger and enmity, hatred and
grudges/ May they be free from mental suffering – from fear, worry, and
anxiety/ May they be free from physical pain – from sickness and ill
health/ May they dwell with ease and happiness.

2.4. The benefits of *Mettā*

In the *Mettānisamsa Sutta*, the Buddha mentioned eleven benefits of the practice of *mettā*.¹⁴ Amongst them, it mentions how *mettā* promotes the true

¹³ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipitaka Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): KN, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Yuganaddhavaggo, Mettākathā.* <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#630>

¹⁴ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipitaka Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): AN, Ekādasakanipāta, Paṭhamapaṇṇāsa, Anussativagga, Mettasuttaṃ.* <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#379>. The 11 benefits are: 1. the

spirit of friendliness “human beings will be near and dear to you” and that “wild animals and other non-humans will not harm you”. The well-known story of how the Buddha subdued Nālāgiri,¹⁵ the wild intoxicated elephant, is a good example of the power of *mettā* to pacify rage and anger. Personally, I have encountered devotees with marital and domestic issues, bullying at school or at work and so on, whom I advised to practise *mettā* for at least one session daily, and after each session, to seek forgiveness from whomever they think is causing the problem, and wish them well and happy. Many returned to inform me that their problems were resolved. I attribute this to the power of *mettā* and forgiveness. For us to reap the full benefits of *mettā*, we need to be consistent in our practice. Some of these benefits may be realised more quickly than others. In the early stages of practice, we may also experience certain obstacles. Instead of feeling calm and peaceful, we may become restless and agitated. This is often because we begin to notice and become more aware of our defilements – all the anger, hatred, and grudges we hold inside. This may seem to be a setback or something negative, but it is part of an awakening process.

2.5. The four *brahma-vihāras*

The cultivation of *mettā* will naturally lead to the development of three other qualities: *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic or appreciative joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). These four qualities are known as the *brahma-vihāra*, or the four “sublime abodes.” As we cultivate *mettā* – “May all beings be well and happy” – we will naturally become more aware of the suffering around us. This will prompt the thought of compassion to arise – “May all suffering beings be free from suffering.” As compassion or *karuṇā* develops in the mind, it will manifest in our speech and bodily actions. When others respond to our kind words and actions and overcome their problems, we will naturally feel happy. This is *muditā*, sympathetic or appreciative joy – rejoicing in the joy and happiness, the goodness and success of others.

Although *muditā* is the natural outcome of *karuṇā*, there are times when our acts of kindness may not be appreciated by others. Some people may even be suspicious of our actions and may blame or criticise us. When this happens, we should develop patience and try to understand the cause of such negative behaviour. When we begin to observe and understand the characters and behavioural patterns of different individuals, we will have a better understanding of how karma operates, thereby paving the way for equanimity to develop. Equanimity or *upekkhā* is born out of wisdom. We become truly

ability to sleep well and happily 2. the ability to wake up happily 3. no bad dreams or nightmares 4. one is dear to human beings (i.e. it is easy to make friends with others) 5. one is dear to animals and other non-humans 6. one will be protected by gods or devas 7. one will not be harmed by fire, poisons or weapons 8. concentration develops quickly 9. improved facial expression, good complexion and radiance 10. a peaceful death, with unconfused mind 11. a good rebirth (if the mind is not yet liberated).

¹⁵ Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavaṣṣe 2500 (2005): KN, *Jātakapāli-2*, *Asītinipāto*, *Cūḷahamsajātaka*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#605>

equanimous when we are able to go beyond the false notion of the self as “I, my, me, mine” and are no longer affected by the worldly conditions of profit and loss; praise and blame; fame and ill-fame; and happiness and sorrow. Our internal cultivation of the four sublime states of mind – *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā* – will naturally give rise to their outer manifestations, the four principles of service: generosity (*dāna*), courteous speech (*piyavācā*), helpful action (*atthacariyā*) and unbiased action (*samānattatā*).¹⁶ These external qualities are very important to promote and maintain harmony in our relations with others. The four sublime states of mind, together with their four external manifestations, promote emotional balance and emotional intelligence, based on insight into the nature of life. This will enable us to face suffering and conflict with the presence of mind to be able to act for the true happiness and benefit of all those involved, without any ulterior or selfish motive. All too often we segregate and divide our world, nation, society, family and more into “mine” and “not-mine,” and consciously or unconsciously we do more to help “my people” and less to help “not-my people.” The ability to be equanimous and unbiased in our efforts to help others is critical to maintaining peace and harmony at local and international levels.

2.6. The significance of practising *Mettā*

Just as we wish to be well and happy, others too wish to be well and happy. There is not a single being in this world that does not wish to be well and happy. Some people only care for themselves, their family members, and friends. Some care only for others without even caring for themselves. Some neither care for themselves nor others.¹⁷ With the cultivation of *mettā*, we learn to care both for ourselves and others. *Mettā* is the unconditional love that goes beyond boundaries of race, language, nationality, caste, colour, and creed; a love that heals the divisions between individuals, families, nations, and the world. The practice of *mettā* thus provides a firm foundation for us to build the “defences of peace” in our minds, and promotes many wholesome qualities that will positively influence our relationships and dealings with others, manifesting in outer peace. However, by itself, *mettā* is not enough to break through the latent root causes of greed, hatred, and delusion that generate all the suffering in our world. That is why we need to take *mettā* to another level by developing mindfulness meditation, which will lead us to develop the wisdom and insight to go beyond self.

III. MINDFULNESS

“Mindfulness” is generally understood as bare attention to the present moment or “the here and now.” In *Pāli*, the word is *sammā-sati*, which is related

¹⁶ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavaṣṣe 2500 (2005): AN, Catukkanipāṭapāḷi, Cakkavaggo, Saṅghasuttaṃ.* <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#249>. *SĀṄGAHA-VATTHU* – there are varied translations of this term, including the four means of support, or four principles of social integration.

¹⁷... *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavaṣṣe 2500 (2005): AN, Catukkanipāṭapāḷi, Asuravaggo, Chavālātasuttaṃ.* <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#255>

to the verb *sarati*, meaning “to remember,” and *anussati* meaning “recollection.” The presence of *sammā-sati* enables us to remember to keep the mind always in the present and not dwelling in the past or the future. From the perspective of Buddhist practice, we can say that *sammā-sati* combines two things: present-moment awareness as well as remembering what the Buddha taught, the teachings that lead to *Nibbāna*, or liberation from all suffering. This is a key point. While contemporary scientific investigation provides evidence that mindfulness practice does improve emotional and mental well-being, from the Buddhist perspective, practicing mindfulness focussed solely for our own individual well-being in this present life will only have a limited effect on inner and outer peace. Ultimately, we need to cut through the deluded idea of the self to achieve lasting peace, within and without. While it may seem like a very distant goal, it is important to start with the ultimate goal in mind to ensure that we make steady progress in the right direction and not get sidetracked by the temporary limited benefits of these practices.

3.1. Five Functions of Mindfulness

The teachings on mindfulness, taught by the Buddha more than 2,500 years ago, are found in the discourses known as the *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,¹⁸ and the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.¹⁹ These discourses explain the development of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. They are regarded as the most important *suttas* in the *Pāli Tipitaka* for one’s personal development.

In the opening verse of the discourse, the Buddha said:

Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo/ Sattānaṃ visuddhiyā,/ Soka-pariddavānaṃ samatikkamāya,/ Dukkha-domanassānaṃ atthangamāya,/ Nāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchi-kiriyaṃ./ Yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.

There is, O monks, this one way/for the purification of beings,/for overcoming sorrow and

distress,/ for the cessation of mental and physical stress,/ for the attainment of the right path,

and for the realisation of *Nibbāna*./ Namely, through the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

The practice of mindfulness accomplishes all these five functions, not simply the overcoming of mental and physical stress.²⁰ Underpinning these five functions is the main aim of the practice: to overcome suffering on all levels, thus contributing to both inner and outer peace.

¹⁸ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): DN, *Mahāvaggapāḷi*, *Mahāsati-ṭṭhānasuttaṃ*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#89>.

¹⁹ *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavasse 2500 (2005): MN, *Mūlapaṇṇāsapāḷi*, *Mūlapariyāyavaggo*, *Satipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#105>. Contains less detail than the Dīgha Nikāya sutta.

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the five functions, see *Venerable Mahinda* (2024): 32–35.

3.2. The four foundations of mindfulness

The Buddha outlined the practice of mindfulness in terms of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, involving the cultivation of mindfulness of: (1) the body, (2) feelings, (3) mind (or mental states), and (4) the dhamma.

3.2.1. Mindfulness of the body

There are six different aspects of mindfulness of the body: (1) mindfulness of the breath: breathing in and breathing out (known as *ānāpānāsati*); (2) mindfulness of the four body postures: sitting, standing, walking and, lying down; (3) clear comprehension of bodily activities: such as stretching, bending, eating, drinking, answering the call of nature, and so on; (4) mindfulness of the 32 parts of the body, or the loathsomeness or repulsiveness of the body; (5) mindfulness of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind; (7) the nine cemetery contemplations.

Mindfulness of the breath is the most common method of developing calmness of mind (*samatha*)²¹ which is the foundation for the development of wisdom and insight (*vipassanā*). Mindfulness of the breath as an object of meditation will lead to the development of *jhānas*, or mental absorptions. The term *sammā-samādhi*, or Right Concentration, in the Noble Eightfold Path is defined in terms of the first, second, third, and fourth *jhāna*.²²

It is important to note that these *jhānas* are conditioned states of mind. While they provide calmness and clarity, they are not yet liberated from greed, hatred and delusion. They arise as a result of the mental hindrances being temporarily checked or controlled. Cultivation of the *jhānas* provides a firm foundation upon which one can go on to cultivate *vipassanā* or insight meditation, which enables one to develop the wisdom to overcome greed, hatred, and delusion. The cultivation of these *jhānas* should always be undertaken under the guidance of an authentic master so that one will not go astray.

Besides *ānāpānāsati*, all the other aspects of mindfulness of the body serve to reinforce the continuity of mindfulness, which is very important, especially in retreat conditions. It is the continuity of mindfulness that provides the strength and power to break the habitual tendency of our minds to create thoughts. As we develop mindfulness of the body, it will naturally lead to the next foundation of mindfulness: mindfulness of feelings.

3.2.2. Mindfulness of feelings

There are three kinds of feelings: pleasant, unpleasant, and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Developing Right Mindfulness of feelings means that one should observe feelings as feelings, with just bare attention, neither clinging to pleasant feelings nor having aversion towards unpleasant feelings or painful sensations. The cultivation of mindfulness of feelings will naturally lead to the

²¹ In the *Pāli* tradition, there are 40 different objects of meditation that lead to the development of *samatha* or calmness and tranquillity of the mind.

²² *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka* Buddhavaṣṣe 2500 (2005): MN, *Uparipannaṣāpāli*, *Vibhaṅgavaggo*, *Saccavibhaṅgasuttam*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#120>

next foundation of mindfulness: mindfulness of the mind.

3.2.3. Mindfulness of the mind

Mindfulness of the mind, or mental states, is aimed at developing awareness of our own tendencies to greed, hatred, and delusion – the root causes of *dukkha*, or suffering. When there is greed or lustful desire, one is mindful of the presence of lustful desire. When there is no lustful desire, the mind is also mindful of the absence of lustful desire. Similarly, one is also mindful of the presence or absence of hatred and delusion. The *sutta* lists a number of other mental states which one should also become mindful of.²³

With regard to each foundation of mindfulness, the basic approach outlined in the *sutta* is the same. One trains oneself to be mindful of the nature of arising with regard to the body, to be mindful of the nature of cessation with regard to the body, as well as of the nature of both arising and cessation with regard to the body. And likewise for feelings, mind, and the *Dhamma*. In other words, through ‘bare attention’ to each aspect, one develops increasingly sharper mental awareness that will eventually lead to the knowledge of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā* (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self) arising naturally.

When there is just mindfulness of the body as body, without the idea of “I” or “my,” a sense of *upekkhā*, or equanimity, will be established – neither clinging nor having aversion to the body. And likewise for feelings, mind, and the *Dhamma*. In this manner, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness take us from mindfulness of the body, which is something relatively gross, to increasingly subtle levels through feelings, mind, and eventually the *Dhamma*, gradually transforming our conceptual knowledge of the truth into actual realisation.

3.2.4. Mindfulness of the *dhamma*

The term *Dhamma* can mean many things. In the context of mindfulness, it refers to five different aspects: (1) The Five Mental Hindrances; (2) The Five Aggregates; (3) The Six Sense Bases; (4) The Seven Factors of Enlightenment; (5) The Four Noble Truths.

The Foundation of Mindfulness of the *Dhamma* outlines the gradual development of wisdom (the knowledge that will enable one to overcome suffering) through the practice of mindfulness. In particular, it shows how Buddhist mindfulness practice is not simply to deal with emotions and enhance general mental and physical well-being, but is a means to develop increasingly subtle levels of understanding to uproot the deeper causes of greed, hatred, and delusion once and for all, to attain lasting peace – within and without.

3.2.5. The five mental hindrances

- (1) Sensual desire
- (2) Anger or aversion

²³ These are: a contracted/ distracted mind; a developed/ undeveloped mind; a surpassed/unsurpassed mind; a concentrated/ unconcentrated mind; a liberated mind/ unliberated mind.

- (3) Sloth and torpor
- (4) Restlessness and remorse (or worry)
- (5) Doubt

They are called mental hindrances because they hinder or obstruct the development of the mind. They also hinder the development of peace within oneself, and also with others. In particular, the first two – sensual desire, and anger or aversion – are hindrances to inner and outer peace. It is important to know that anger and hatred are directly related to desire or craving. When we are not able to get what we want, what we crave, anger and aversion will arise. That is how conflict and wars develop.

There are some specific antidotes for reducing the mental hindrances. For example, the antidote for anger and aversion is *mettā* or loving-kindness. We can also reduce and overcome the tendency of aversion by reflecting on the karmic consequences of our actions. This is very important for inner and outer peace.²⁴

The *sutta* describes how we should cultivate mindfulness of each of the five mental hindrances. When they are present, we need to know that they are present. When they are not present, we need to know that they are not present. For example, concerning sensual desire, when it arises in our mind, we should know that it is present. When it is absent, we know that it is absent. And we know how sensual desire arises and how it ceases, and upon its cessation, how it will no longer arise in the future. Likewise, we consider the other mental hindrances of anger; sloth and torpor; restlessness; and doubts.

Without mindfulness and clear awareness of the presence or the arising of a hindrance, there is little we can do to prevent or overcome it. That is how many problems arise at home, at work, in communities, and even at national and international levels, when our peace of mind is disturbed by such mental hindrances. But if the mind is alert and mindful, as soon as we become aware of any of these mental hindrances, it will immediately fade away. And when it is absent, we should know that it is absent. In order to know how the mental hindrances arise and cease, we need to know their causal factors – or what causes them to arise.

The main cause lies in improper reflection on sense objects. By failing to see sense objects as they truly are – impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self – we attach value to what we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. Then, we go on thinking and rethinking about them and we will experience pleasant feelings, which conditions desire to arise, or we will experience unpleasant feelings – which conditions aversion to arise. With mindfulness, and proper and wise reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*) we will be able to reduce and overcome the process of thinking and rethinking and observe how the arisen mental hindrances cease.

²⁴ For a more detailed discussion of how to overcome the five mental hindrances, refer to Venerable Mahinda (2024): 50 - 59.

IV. THE FIVE AGGREGATES

The five aggregates²⁵ comprise the following:

- (1) *rūpa* – physical body, material form, or appearance
- (2) *vedanā* – feeling
- (3) *saññā* – perception or cognition
- (4) *saṅkhārā* – mental formations or volitions
- (5) *viññāṇa* – consciousness

These five things make up what we call our “self.” When we analyse this self, we will understand that it is made up of *nāma* and *rūpa*. *Rūpa* refers to the physical process, which appears in the form of a physical body or material form. *Nāma* refers to the mental process: feelings, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. We use the term “process” because the five aggregates are in a constant state of flux or change. However, this impermanent nature of our self is not easily understood. We tend to think of this self as a permanent entity – an individual, a person, or a being. This gives rise to the false idea of “I, my, me, mine.”

The aim of the cultivation of mindfulness of the five aggregates is to break this deluded idea of the self. The practice involves two stages. First, we are instructed to contemplate the five aggregates, one by one, in order to understand and realise their impermanent and fleeting nature. Then at a later stage, we need to consider them as a whole – to see how they arise and cease together. This involves the contemplation of the six sense bases, as all our thoughts are conditioned by what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think.

In themselves, the five aggregates are not suffering, but our grasping or attachment to the five aggregates constitutes suffering (*dukkha*). Grasping onto something that is constantly changing will naturally lead to suffering. But if we are mindful and clearly aware of these five aggregates, we will see that they arise and fade away. The development of mindfulness of Dhamma in terms of the six sense bases involves a deeper level of investigation of how the delusion of the self arises in relation to the six senses. The seven factors of enlightenment describe the process of how mindfulness finally triggers the essential insights to break through the most subtle levels of delusion, paving the way for enlightenment to actually take place. This culminates in the experiential knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.²⁶

V. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The Buddha taught the profound knowledge he realised on the night of his

²⁵ The term “five aggregates” is the English version of the Pāli term *pañca-kkhandha*. *Pañca* means five, *kkhandha* literally means ‘heap’ – like a heap of straw or something that has been deposited layer upon layer. The word “aggregate” has several different meanings, but when used in the context of the five aggregates, it refers to a group of mental and physical energies. They arise together as a group or bundle, hence the term “aggregate”.

²⁶ For a detailed explanation of the different stages in the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, see *Venerable Mahinda* (2024).

enlightenment in terms of the Four Noble Truths:

- (1) *dukkha* – suffering or unsatisfactoriness
- (2) *samudaya* – cause (of *dukkha*)
- (3) *nirodha* – cessation (of *dukkha*)
- (4) *magga* – path (leading to the cessation of *dukkha*)

The First Noble Truth is the Truth of *Dukkha*, which is generally translated as suffering or unsatisfactoriness. *Dukkha* is firstly explained in terms of its physical aspect, or suffering conditioned by the body: birth, aging, and death.²⁷ Then, there is the mental aspect: sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress; association with unloved or unpleasant people and conditions; separation from loved ones and pleasant conditions; and not getting what one desires.

Finally, as a culmination of both the mental and physical aspects, *dukkha* is summarised in these words of the Buddha:

Saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhāpi dukkhā

In short, the five grasping aggregates are *dukkha*.

It is not the five aggregates themselves that are the problem, but the fact that we grasp or cling to them. Herein lies the more profound meaning of *dukkha*. We have already mentioned how the five aggregates contribute to suffering and how mindfulness will allow one to break through self-delusion. Mindfulness of the Four Noble Truths will allow one to finally break through the most subtle layers of the self. The Second Noble Truth refers to the cause of suffering, which lies in craving or the grasping of desires. Craving leads to clinging or attachment, and to aversion, anger, hatred, and grudges. Craving or desire is a mental force that drives us to get the things we want. When we get them, we are happy; when we cannot get what we want, we get upset and angry. The happiness or pleasure that we get through craving is fleeting. It does not last. Having fulfilled our desire for one thing, we will crave something more.

The mental force of craving actually comes from our own mind, through the process of thinking and rethinking. We ourselves can ‘discern’ this force of craving through the silencing of our mind, which comes about through the practice of meditation based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. This will lead us to the Third Noble Truth, that there is an end to suffering.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the path that leads to the end of suffering: the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path is commonly explained in terms of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. *Sīla* refers to moral or ethical conduct (Right Speech, Right Body Action, and Right Livelihood) which provides the foundation upon which we can develop the mind – *samādhi*. Development of the mind comprises the Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right

²⁷ The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (*Mahāsaṅgīti Tipitaka Buddhavaṣṣe* 2500 (2005): SN, *Mahāvaggapāli*, *Saccasaṃyuttaṃ*, *Dhammacakkappavattanasuttaṃ*. <https://tipitaka.org/romn/#183>) also includes “sickness” here. However, in the *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, sickness is included under ‘not getting what one desires’.

Concentration. Through the development of the mind, *paññā* or wisdom will arise, comprising the Right Understanding and Right Thought.

VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRACTISING MINDFULNESS

The systematic cultivation of mindfulness based on the Four Foundations not only provides a step-by-step guide to the development of mental stability and wellbeing, but a “road map” to lasting inner peace and liberation from the root causes of disharmony or suffering within oneself and within the world at large. Any meditation practice based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness can serve as the main focus of insight contemplation and lead to the realisation of the truth. What is given here is a very brief summary of the practice in the tradition with which I am familiar.²⁸ For those who wish to practise and develop this path, the guidance of authentic teachers is indispensable. For real transformation to take place, it is also essential to engage in prolonged intensive practice (such as in retreat conditions), in order to cultivate a continuity of mindfulness – from morning to night and from night to morning – generating a momentum of silence that will enable one to break the habitual pattern of the mind to create thoughts.

VII. METTĀ AND MINDFULNESS INITIATIVES FOR PEACE-BUILDING AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

The theoretical study of techniques for inner and outer peacebuilding is important, but there is no way to realize peace without their application on a practical level. And their practical application is ultimately an individual endeavor. As illustrated by the acrobat simile, harmonious cooperation depends on the individuals involved. In other words, unless every human being addresses the greed, hatred, and delusion in their mind, efforts to achieve peace on a global level will have limited effect. The task, then, is for leaders, teachers, and both the lay and monastic *Sangha* to encourage and support individuals in undertaking this valuable and essential endeavor.

In this next section, I would like to introduce several initiatives that have been employed with this goal in mind, in the hope that peace-loving global citizens – Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike – may be inspired to implement similar projects and initiatives in their communities for the benefit of individuals, nations, and the world at large.

Since 2012, the Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia and numerous like-minded organizations – including Aloka Meditation Centre (Australia), Aloka Foundation (Malaysia), and various organizations from Singapore, Malaysia, and around the world have been working together to promote and support the widespread practice of *mettā* and mindfulness at a grassroots level through the following initiatives:

7.1. 24hr Metta and Metta round the world

24hr Metta was initiated by the Aloka Foundation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 31 December 2011 to usher in the new year. Twenty-seven organisations

²⁸ A more detailed explanation can be found in *Venerable Mahinda* (2024).

from various Buddhist traditions participated, chanting the *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* in hourly sessions over a 24-hour period. The event, jointly organised by the Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia, has become an annual affair, including during the Covid lockdowns between 2020 - 2022, when more than 60 organisations from Malaysia and around the world participated via online channels. This project helped to spread awareness of the practice of *mettā* and brought together different organisations & different traditions with a variety of loving-kindness and compassion practices – not only chanting of the *Mettā Sutta* in the Theravada tradition but relevant chanting and prayers (such as the Great Compassion antra etc.) from the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions.

The initial 24-hour Metta event grew into a wider project called “Metta Round the World” gathering like-minded people throughout the world in the practice of loving-kindness for world peace, harmony, and stability. The project began with global meditations during Vesak and other dates in 2012 and branched out into the following initiatives:

7.2. One world, one time, one Metta

One World, One Time, One Metta is held annually in conjunction with 24hr Metta and gathers individuals and groups the world over to practise *mettā* meditation (at 8.00 pm local time from wherever they are) – effectively radiating *mettā* in every time zone throughout the world on the last weekend of the year. At the end of the practice, participants dedicate the merits generated for world peace, harmony, and stability.

7.3. Metta circles

The Metta Round the World project successfully reached out on the grassroots level to enable groups and communities to come together to learn and practise *mettā*. The organising team provides resources (such as recorded guided meditations, *mettā* chanting, Dhamma teachings and related short video clips, messages, and other resources) to support facilitators in creating and run their own “Metta Circles”. Metta Circles have been formed across the globe in at least six different countries. While the primary focus is for groups to come together to practise *mettā*, participants are also introduced to the practice of mindfulness and this becomes a platform for them to develop more serious practice in both *mettā* and mindfulness.

This project was particularly beneficial when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, as the foundation was already laid to enable Metta Circles to be formed online and become an important support for mental health and wellbeing, as well as connecting members to a physical and mental support network in times of need.

7.4. Million minutes of metta and mindfulness “MMMM”

The challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic shifted Metta Round the World into a new phase. On Vesak Day 2021, the Million Minutes of Metta & Mindfulness initiative was launched to rally people all over the world to practise *mettā* and mindfulness and offer their practice for the peace, harmony, and happiness of all. The aim was to inspire people to cultivate

loving-kindness and compassion to all, as well as to be more mindful and aware of their own thoughts, speech, and body actions – for their own benefit, for those around them, and ultimately to heal a world suffering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants were encouraged to practise *mettā* & mindfulness formally and informally – anywhere, anytime, including formal meditation on *mettā* and *ānāpānasati*; applying *mettā* and mindfulness in daily activities; chanting mantras, sutras or prayers; and/or any formal or informal practices that lead to calmness and clarity of mind. They then took note of the number of minutes spent and submitted them online. Over the 13 months of the project, a total of 6,135,667 minutes were clocked by participants from more than nine countries (including Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Portugal, and the USA), representing more than 20 organisations and numerous individuals.

7.5. Metta conventions

Another initiative of the Metta Round the World project is the Metta Conventions which bring like-minded people together at national and international levels to share and exchange experiences of wisdom and compassionate love.

The first Metta Convention, “Meeting of Hearts” held in Singapore in 2013, paved the way for a meeting of hearts and minds and ignited the fervour to embrace and inculcate *mettā* practice, and foster *mettā*-in-action.

The second Convention in 2014 was held in Sri Lanka, which was still emerging from a protracted civil war. With the theme “Healing of Hearts”, the Convention gained international patronage and prestige as renowned personalities shared the efficacy of the practice of *mettā* based on their personal and professional experiences.

Building on this, the third Metta Convention was held in Uluru, Australia in 2016 with the theme “Connecting of Hearts”, and provided a rare opportunity to connect Buddhist spiritual beliefs and practices with those of the local indigenous peoples.

This set the stage for the fourth Metta Convention, “Opening of Hearts” in Putrajaya, Malaysia in 2018, promoting *mettā* as a binding force for stronger inter-faith understanding and harmony among the diverse religious faiths practised in Malaysia, and also greater intra-faith collaboration among the various Buddhist traditions.

These conventions not only connected Buddhists across different traditions and cultures but also reached out to representatives from diverse faiths and traditions.

7.6. Aloka online *dhamma* course

To further cultivate the learning, practice, and realisation of the teachings and values of *mettā* and mindfulness, the Aloka Online Dhamma Course was conducted during and after the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 - 2023, reaching out to hundreds of participants in more than 14 countries around the

world. The course culminated in online, and later onsite, *mettā* and mindfulness retreats before evolving into *Samatha Vipassanā* practice groups that are still active around the region today.

These are just a few projects that have been implemented in order to promote the practices of *mettā* and mindfulness at local, national and international levels. Firstly, the aim of these projects is to give people inspiration – bringing people together to introduce them to the practice and inspire them with its benefits. Next, they provide a framework and ongoing encouragement for participants to continue their practice. Finally, they create opportunities for people to further their practice and take it to another level by applying it in action, as those who have practiced and benefitted bring their knowledge and example to others, becoming the facilitators and organizers of future projects.

Most of the projects start with the practice of *mettā*, which is more accessible to beginners, but they lead on to the practice of mindfulness, paving the way for the development of inner peace, which will, in turn, increase peace, harmony, and stability in communities, nations and the world at large.

VIII. CONCLUSION

As we have established at the beginning of this article, there is no way to achieve outer peace in our world without inculcating peace in the minds of individuals. The teachings of the Buddha provide a comprehensive method for building “the defenses of peace” in human minds. In particular, the teachings on *mettā* and mindfulness are essential for our own welfare and happiness as well as the welfare and happiness of the many. *Mettā* enables us to open our hearts, to engage with others in a spirit of universal friendliness. Mindfulness promotes the development of wisdom and insight that will enable us to overcome the root causes of suffering in our minds. Together, they pave the way for the transformation of suffering beings into peaceful beings, and ultimately, for the transformation of a hostile world into a peaceful world.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AN Aṅguttara-nikāya

Dhp Dhammapada

DN Dīgha-nikāya

MN Majjhima-nikāya

SN Saṃyutta-nikāya

AN INVESTIGATION OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

This paper explores principles of peace and conflict resolution in the Pāli Suttas, foundational texts of Theravāda Buddhism. It examines Buddhist teachings on addressing both internal and external conflicts, highlighting key Suttas such as the *Dhammapada*, *Sigālovāda Sutta*, *Sakka-Pañha Sutta*, and *Mettā Sutta*. Central to Buddhist conflict resolution is understanding suffering (*dukkha*) and its roots in ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*tanhā*), and aversion (*dosā*). The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path provide a practical framework for ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

Key elements include Right Speech (*sammā vācā*), which fosters social harmony, as well as Right Action (*sammā kammanta*) and Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*), which emphasize ethical behavior. Loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) encourage peaceful interactions, while mindfulness (*sammā sati*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) enhance self-awareness and emotional regulation. Non-violence (*ahimsā*), emphasized in the *Sakka-Pañha Sutta*, advocates resolving conflicts through peaceful dialogue. The *Sigālovāda Sutta* underscores the role of mutual respect and social responsibilities in maintaining harmony.

Ultimately, the Pāli Suttas offer profound guidance on both personal and societal peace-building. By cultivating ethical behavior, mental discipline, and wisdom, individuals and communities can navigate conflicts constructively, promoting reconciliation and harmony in an increasingly divided world.

Keywords: *Peace, conflict resolution, compassion, non-violence, reconciliation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *Pāli Suttas* are foundational texts in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, offering not only spiritual guidance but also a comprehensive ethical and philosophical framework. Central to these teachings is the notion of peace—both inner peace and peace within the broader societal context. Peace and conflict resolution are key aspects of the Buddha's teachings, aimed at transforming the minds of individuals and fostering harmonious communities.¹ The Buddha's instructions on how to handle conflicts, resolve disputes, and maintain peace among individuals are as relevant today as they were two millennia ago. This research aims to investigate these teachings in detail, focusing on how they provide strategies for resolving conflicts, both personal and communal, and promoting peace. The *Pāli Suttas*, though written in ancient times, offer timeless lessons on moral conduct, mindfulness, and compassion that can be applied in contemporary conflict resolution practices.²

The concepts of peace and conflict resolution are fundamental to human society, whether on a personal, communal, or global level. Across cultures and traditions, the quest for peace has been central to philosophical, religious, and ethical discussions. In the context of the Buddhist tradition, the teachings found in the Pāli Canon, also known as the *Tipitaka*, offer a rich framework for understanding the causes of conflict and the ways to resolve them.³ This investigation explores how the *Pāli Suttas* – one of the earliest and most authentic collections of the Buddha's teachings – address the dynamics of peace and conflict resolution. Buddhism, originating with Siddhārtha Gautama (the Buddha) in the 6th century BCE, provides profound insights into the nature of human suffering (*dukkha*), its causes, and the path to its cessation. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of inner peace, understanding, and ethical conduct, all of which play crucial roles in resolving conflicts at various levels.⁴ This exploration draws on the *Pāli Suttas*, a compilation of dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples, kings, and common folk, to investigate how the Buddha's principles guide the resolution of both internal and external conflicts.

This introduction presents an overview of the relationship between Buddhist teachings and conflict resolution, outlining the core concepts found in the *Pāli Suttas*, and the ethical, psychological, and philosophical tools they provide for resolving conflict. Central to this discussion is the Buddha's emphasis on mindfulness (*sati*), right understanding (*sammā ditthi*), right intention (*sammā samkappa*), and the cultivation of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*), all of which contribute to both personal and social harmony.⁵

¹ Gethin, R. (1998), p. 8.

² Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 126.

³ Harvey, P. (2013), p. 47 - 50.

⁴ Keown, D. (2013), p. 48.

⁵ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 45.

1.1. Research methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing textual analysis of the *Pāli Suttas*. A selection of key *Suttas* will be examined to understand how the Buddha addressed issues of peace, conflict, and reconciliation. The methodology will include: Textual analysis: Close reading of the *Pāli Suttas*, focusing on those that discuss ethics, conflict resolution, and peace-building. Key *Suttas* such as the *Dhammapada*, *Sangiti Sutta*, *Karaniyamettā Sutta*, and others will be analyzed in depth. Comparative analysis: Comparison of Buddhist teachings with modern theories of conflict resolution. This includes examining contemporary peace-building practices and contrasting them with the ethical teachings of the Buddha. Case studies: Application of Buddhist teachings to modern conflicts, such as those involving interpersonal disputes, political conflicts, and societal violence. Case studies will help contextualize ancient teachings in modern settings.

The data for this research will primarily come from translated versions of the *Pāli Suttas*, as well as secondary literature on Buddhist philosophy, conflict resolution, and peace studies. Interviews with Buddhist scholars and practitioners may also be conducted to gather contemporary perspectives on the applicability of these teachings.

1.2. Research problem

The main research problem centers on understanding how the ancient teachings of the *Pāli Suttas* can offer practical solutions to contemporary issues of conflict and peace-building. While much has been written on Buddhist philosophy, there is limited academic exploration of the specific application of Buddhist teachings from the *Pāli Canon* to modern conflict resolution methods.

1.3. Research objective

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating how Buddhist principles of peace, ethics, and nonviolence can guide individuals and societies toward conflict resolution. The research also seeks to address the challenge of adapting ancient wisdom to contemporary contexts, where the dynamics of conflict are often more complex and multifaceted. It examines whether the simplicity and depth of the Buddha's teachings can offer solutions to modern conflicts, especially in the fields of intercultural, interreligious, and political conflict.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The concept of peace and conflict resolution within the Buddhist tradition, particularly as outlined in the *Pāli Suttas*, has been widely explored by scholars across various disciplines. The *Pāli Suttas*, the earliest recorded teachings of the Buddha, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing conflict at both personal and societal levels.

Early studies focused on the Buddha's teachings on inner peace, mindfulness, and ethical conduct as key tools for resolving internal conflicts. For example, Gethin (1998) emphasizes the role of meditation and mental discipline in achieving peace, suggesting that personal tranquility is the foundation for resolving external disputes. Similarly, Bodhi (2005) underlines the importance

of mindfulness and right understanding in transforming the mind, which can lead to harmonious relationships and effective conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution in the *Pāli Suttas* is often contextualized within interpersonal relationships, with particular attention to the Buddha's instructions on how to manage disputes. Harvey (2013) explores how the Buddha encouraged direct communication and mutual understanding in resolving conflicts between individuals and communities. The emphasis on loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*) in the Pāli texts provides an ethical foundation for resolving disputes, as these qualities foster empathy and reduce the tendency toward aggression.

Additionally, more recent literature has expanded the understanding of the Buddha's teachings as tools for broader social conflict resolution. Keown (2013) discusses how the principles in the *Pāli Suttas* are not only relevant for personal transformation but also for resolving collective societal conflicts, such as those based on ethnicity, religion, and politics. This literature highlights the potential of Buddhist teachings to contribute to modern peace-building efforts.

Furthermore, Rahula (1978) asserts that the Buddha's approach to conflict resolution is grounded in practical steps that anyone can follow, regardless of their background or belief system. His teachings on right intention (*sammā samkappa*) and right action (*sammā kammanta*) are particularly relevant for contemporary conflict resolution practices as they encourage ethical behavior and the cultivation of peaceful intentions in all interactions.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that the *Pāli Suttas* offer both individual and collective solutions to conflict based on ethical conduct, mental discipline, and compassion. These teachings, though ancient, continue to provide valuable insights for resolving contemporary conflicts at all levels.

III. THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON PEACE

Peace, from the Buddhist perspective, is far more than just the absence of conflict. It is a deep, internal state of well-being that transcends mere physical or social harmony. Buddhist teachings provide a comprehensive framework for understanding both the nature of peace and the means by which it can be attained. This perspective on peace is rooted in the fundamental Buddhist insight into the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), its causes, and its cessation, as well as the path that leads to this cessation.⁶ The Buddhist path to peace emphasizes personal transformation, ethical living, mindfulness, wisdom, and compassion.⁷

IV. UNDERSTANDING PEACE THROUGH THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

At the heart of the Buddha's teachings lies the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, which explain the nature of human suffering and the way to overcome it. These truths provide a direct path to peace, starting from an understanding of suffering and ending with its cessation.

⁶ Gethin, R. (1998), p. 60.

⁷ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 127.

The Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*): The Buddha's first noble truth asserts that suffering is an inherent part of human existence. This suffering is not limited to physical pain but extends to emotional and psychological suffering, such as dissatisfaction, fear, frustration, and anxiety. It also includes the existential suffering tied to impermanence (*anicca*) and the inevitable process of aging, illness, and death. Understanding this truth allows individuals to accept suffering as a universal experience, a starting point for cultivating peace, since true peace can only arise from confronting and understanding suffering.⁸

The Truth of the Cause of Suffering (*samudaya*): The second truth identifies the cause of suffering as craving (*tanhā*) and attachment (*upādāna*), which arise from ignorance (*avijjā*). We crave pleasure, existence, and non-existence, all of which lead to dissatisfaction when they are impermanent. The mind's attachments to these cravings fuel both personal and societal conflict. This ignorance of the true nature of reality – the impermanence of all things – causes us to cling to transient phenomena, which only leads to more suffering. The cessation of suffering, therefore, can only occur when this craving and attachment are eradicated.⁹

The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Nirodha*):¹⁰ The third noble truth teaches that it is possible to end suffering through the cessation of craving and ignorance. This cessation is the state of *nibbāna*, a profound peace that comes from letting go of attachments and the false sense of self. *Nibbāna* is not merely an escape from pain but a transcendence of all dualities, where peace is not contingent on external conditions but is an intrinsic aspect of the mind's liberation from delusion. The realization of this peace is transformation, offering an end to the cycles of conflict and suffering that define ordinary life.¹¹

The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (*Magga*): The fourth truth outlines the Eightfold Path as the practical method for achieving the cessation of suffering and attaining peace. This path is divided into three core aspects: wisdom (*paññā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and mental discipline (*samādhi*). The Eightfold Path is the essence of the Buddha's teachings on how to live in a way that cultivates peace, both internally and externally.

Right View (*sammā ditthi*): Developing a deep understanding of the impermanent and interconnected nature of all phenomena. (2) Right Intention (*sammā samkappa*): Cultivating thoughts of renunciation, non-violence, and compassion. (3) Right Speech (*sammā vācā*): Speaking truthfully, kindly, and harmoniously, avoiding divisive, harmful, or false speech. (4) Right Action (*sammā kammanta*): Acting in ways that are ethical, non-harming, and beneficial to others. (5) Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*): Earning a living in ways that do not harm others or the environment. (6) Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*): Striving

⁸ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 16.

⁹ Harvey, P. (2013), p. 47.

¹⁰ Harvey, P. (2013), p. 60.

¹¹ Keown, D. (2013), p. 32.

to abandon negative mental states and cultivate wholesome ones. (7) Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*): Being aware of the present moment, observing the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena without attachment or aversion. (8) Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*): Developing deep concentration and mental clarity through meditation, leading to insight and inner peace.¹² Each aspect of the Eightfold Path contributes to the cultivation of peace by addressing the root causes of suffering and transforming the individual's mind, speech, and actions.¹³

V. MINDFULNESS AND PEACE

In Buddhism, mindfulness (*sati*) is central to cultivating peace. Mindfulness involves maintaining awareness of the present moment and observing thoughts, feelings, and sensations with equanimity. By practicing mindfulness, individuals can recognize the impermanent nature of their experiences and reduce the habitual tendencies that lead to suffering. Mindfulness helps in recognizing and releasing attachments and cravings, which are the root causes of both internal and external conflict.¹⁴

Mindfulness fosters a peaceful mind by preventing the mind from being overtaken by reactive emotions such as anger, jealousy, and greed. When mindfulness is cultivated, individuals can respond to challenging situations with wisdom and composure rather than reacting impulsively. This mental clarity enables the cultivation of the right understanding (*sammā ditthi*), a key aspect of the path that involves seeing the world as it truly is: Interconnected, impermanent, and free from the self-centered desires that drive conflict.¹⁵

With the right understanding, one develops an awareness that all beings experience suffering and are driven by similar desires for happiness and freedom. This insight into the shared nature of human experience fosters compassion and empathy, two essential qualities for creating peace within oneself and in relationships with others.¹⁶

VI. COMPASSION, LOVING-KINDNESS, AND PEACE

In Buddhist practice, compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are vital for cultivating peace, both internally and externally. Compassion involves an active desire to alleviate the suffering of others, while loving-kindness is the wish for others to experience happiness and well-being. These practices are not just theoretical ideals, they are actively cultivated through meditation and ethical action.¹⁷

The Buddha's *Mettā Sutta* (discourse on loving-kindness) emphasizes the cultivation of loving-kindness toward all beings, regardless of their behavior

¹² Rahula, W. (1978), p. 43.

¹³ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 51 - 55.

¹⁴ Gethin, R. (1998), p. 79.

¹⁵ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 239.

¹⁶ Keown, D. (2013), p. 50.

¹⁷ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 46.

or status. It encourages individuals to extend goodwill, not only to friends and loved ones but to strangers, and even those with whom one has conflicts. By developing this unconditional kindness, individuals reduce the likelihood of harboring anger, resentment, or fear, which are the emotional roots of conflict.¹⁸

Loving-kindness and compassion transform the mind and contribute to internal peace by shifting the focus from self-centered desires to the well-being of others. When individuals act with compassion, they foster peace in their relationships and help prevent the escalation of conflict. On a societal level, these qualities can inspire collective harmony and social justice as the desire for the welfare of all beings becomes a guiding principle.¹⁹

In Buddhism, peace is also closely related to the cessation of the illusion of a permanent, independent self (*atta*). The Buddha taught that the sense of a fixed, unchanging self is a delusion, one that fuels attachment and suffering. By cultivating right view and understanding the concept of no-self (*anatta*), individuals can let go of ego-based desires, fears, and insecurities that create conflict.²⁰

When the self is relinquished, peace arises naturally because there is no longer an attachment to personal gain, pride, or protection. This freedom from ego leads to a harmonious relationship with the world, where there is no desire to dominate, possess, or control others. The realization of no-self brings a profound sense of interconnectedness, where one sees all beings as equal participants in the cycle of existence. This insight is a crucial aspect of the Buddhist perspective on peace, as it dissolves the boundaries between self and other, creating an inclusive peace based on mutual respect and understanding.²¹

While the Buddhist path to peace focuses on personal transformation, it also has significant social implications. In Buddhism, peace is not only about inner tranquility but also about creating conditions for harmonious social relations. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of ethical conduct, right speech, and right action in interpersonal relationships, as well as in interactions with society at large.²²

The Buddha stressed that social peace requires the cultivation of ethical virtues such as non-harming (*ahimsā*), truthfulness, generosity, and respect for all life. A society that values these qualities is more likely to experience peace and cooperation as individuals work together for the common good. The teachings of the Buddha also encourage the fostering of harmonious

¹⁸ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 342.

¹⁹ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 58 - 9.

²⁰ See the Buddha's teachings on anatta in the Pāli Canon, particularly the Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta, which explains the doctrine of non-self. Samyutta-nikāya III, (1975), p. 66-8.

²¹ The interconnectedness and inclusive peace rooted in the absence of ego is also discussed in *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* by Thich Nhat Hanh, where he elaborates on the concepts of interbeing and non-self. Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 146.

²² The role of ethical conduct, right speech, and right action in Buddhist social harmony is outlined in the Dhp and elaborated in the Sila section of the Pāli Canon. Dhp, (1995), p. 31 - 32.

communities, where dialogue, respect, and mutual support are prioritized. Conflict resolution in such a community is approached with wisdom, patience, and compassion, preventing the escalation of disputes.²³

The Buddhist perspective on peace is deeply intertwined with the understanding of suffering, its causes, and its cessation. True peace, according to the Buddha, is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of wisdom, ethical conduct, and a heart full of compassion. By following the Buddha's teachings – particularly the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path – individuals can cultivate inner peace, transform their relationships with others, and contribute to the creation of a peaceful society. Ultimately, peace in Buddhism is about the liberation from attachment, ego, and ignorance, and the realization of the interconnectedness and impermanence of all things. It is a peace that arises from wisdom and compassion, leading to the end of suffering and the flourishing of harmony in all aspects of life.²⁴

VII. MINDFULNESS AND PEACE

Mindfulness (*sati*) is a core concept in Buddhism that plays a pivotal role in achieving peace and resolving conflicts, both within the individual and in interactions with others. In the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is not only a meditative practice but a way of being present, aware, and engaged with life in a balanced and non-reactive way. It is considered an essential tool in cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental clarity, which are central to the cessation of suffering and the establishment of peace.²⁵ This essay explores the role of mindfulness in promoting peace and conflict resolution within the context of Buddhist teachings.

In The Buddhist context, mindfulness (*sati*) is defined as the mental quality of being fully present and aware of one's thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surroundings in the moment. It is an awareness that is non-judgmental, non-reactive, and impartial. Mindfulness involves paying attention with clear comprehension, understanding, and insight while observing the impermanent nature of all phenomena.

The Buddha's teachings on mindfulness are clearly outlined in the *Satipatthāna Sutta* (The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness), where he describes how mindfulness can be applied to different aspects of experience: The body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. By observing these aspects of experience without attachment or aversion, practitioners develop a

²³ For a deeper exploration of virtues like non-harming (*ahimsā*), truthfulness, and generosity in social contexts, see the teachings of the Buddha in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta*. *Majjhima-nikāya* I, (1975), p. 254.

²⁴ The centrality of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to Buddhist peace and society can be found in foundational texts like the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. *Samyutta-nikāya* V, (1976), p. 420 - 4.

²⁵ The importance of mindfulness (*sati*) in Buddhism is discussed in key texts such as the *Satipatthāna Sutta*, which outlines the practice of mindfulness as a way to cultivate awareness and insight for liberation from suffering. *Dīgha-nikāya* II, (1966), p. 286 - 314.

deep understanding of the nature of reality, which reduces the suffering caused by ignorance, craving, and clinging.²⁶

Mindfulness is not confined to meditation, it is integrated into daily life, allowing practitioners to cultivate a steady awareness of their thoughts and actions. This mindful awareness is transformation, offering a foundation for ethical conduct, mental peace, and the resolution of internal and external conflicts.

Mindfulness is a powerful tool in this journey, as it allows individuals to calm the mind, cultivate clarity, and create space between stimulus and response. When we are mindful, we are able to observe our emotions and thoughts without being carried away by them. This ability to observe rather than react impulsively helps reduce internal conflicts that stem from attachment, anger, anxiety, and fear.

Mindfulness practices train the mind to become more stable and focused, leading to a reduction in the mental chatter that often leads to emotional reactivity. For example, when faced with a challenging situation or negative emotions like anger or frustration, a mindful person can pause and reflect before reacting. This pause allows for a more measured, thoughtful response, rather than a reactive or defensive one that may escalate conflict. By cultivating mindfulness, an individual can create an inner calm that serves as the foundation for outward peace.²⁷

The cultivation of mindfulness also helps individuals recognize the impermanent nature of their thoughts and emotions. This awareness allows them to understand that emotions such as anger, jealousy, or fear are not permanent states but passing phenomena. By realizing this impermanence, the individual is less likely to hold onto negative emotions, reducing internal conflict and facilitating peace.²⁸

VIII. MINDFULNESS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict often arises due to misunderstanding, miscommunication, and emotional reactivity. When individuals are caught up in their reactions and perceptions, it becomes difficult to resolve conflicts healthily. Mindfulness, however, provides a way to create space for clear communication, empathy, and understanding, which are all necessary for resolving conflicts.

Mindfulness helps prevent the escalation of conflict by allowing individuals to be less emotionally reactive.²⁹ When conflict arises, people often respond out of habitual patterns of anger, frustration, or fear. These reactive responses can exacerbate the situation and lead to greater discord. However, mindfulness encourages individuals to pause, observe their emotional reactions, and respond with awareness, rather than out of habitual emotion.

²⁶ *Dīgha-nikāya* II, (1966), p. 286 - 314.

²⁷ *Dīgha-nikāya* I, (1975), p. 46 - 85.

²⁸ *Samyutta-nikāya* III, (1975), p. 21.

²⁹ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 290.

For instance, in the heat of an argument, a mindful person might recognize the rising anger in their body and mind. Instead of immediately lashing out or engaging in defensive behavior, they can take a moment to breathe and reflect on the situation. This pause allows for a response based on wisdom and compassion rather than emotional impulses. By reducing emotional reactivity, mindfulness helps prevent conflict from escalating and fosters a more peaceful and constructive resolution.

Another crucial role of mindfulness in conflict resolution is that it fosters empathy. When we are mindful, we can fully listen to others without judgment or distraction. This presence and attention allow for deeper understanding and connection, which are essential for resolving disagreements. By being fully present with the other person, we can better understand their perspective, motivations, and emotions, which creates a foundation for mutual respect and cooperation.

In the Buddha's teachings, Right Speech (*sammā vācā*) is one of the key aspects of the Eightfold Path, and it is closely linked to mindfulness. Right Speech involves speaking truthfully, kindly, and constructively.³⁰ Mindfulness plays a central role in cultivating the right speech, as it enables individuals to choose words carefully, avoiding harmful speech that could escalate a conflict. When one is mindful of their speech, they are more likely to communicate in ways that are respectful and considerate, reducing misunderstandings and promoting peaceful communication.

Empathy, facilitated by mindfulness, also allows individuals to recognize the suffering of others. When we are mindful, we become aware of the pain or distress that may be driving another person's behavior. This awareness creates space for compassion, which can defuse conflict and lead to resolution.³¹ In Buddhist practice, the development of compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) is essential to resolving conflicts peacefully. Mindfulness serves as the foundation for these qualities, allowing us to recognize the shared humanity in others and respond to their suffering with kindness and understanding.

Mindfulness helps individuals let go of judgment and the tendency to view situations or people as "good" or "bad." In conflict situations, judgments can cloud our perception and make it harder to resolve disagreements. For instance, when we label someone as "wrong" or "bad," we become entrenched in a position that is hard to shift. This kind of mental rigidity is a major barrier to resolution, as it creates a sense of division between self and others.³²

Mindfulness teaches individuals to observe without judgment.³³ This means being aware of the situation as it is, without overlaying preconceived

³⁰ Narada, (1973), p. 178 - 185.

³¹ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 281.

³² Keown, D. (2013), p. 96.

³³ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 64.

notions or emotional biases. By observing a conflict from a place of non-judgment, individuals can approach the issue with greater objectivity, reducing the likelihood of escalating tensions. This kind of acceptance does not mean condoning harmful actions, but rather acknowledging the situation and the emotions involved without getting caught up in them. This creates the mental space necessary for finding solutions.

The Buddha's teachings on peace are intricately linked to mindfulness. According to the Four Noble Truths, the cause of suffering is craving, ignorance, and attachment, which are resolved through the development of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. Mindfulness plays a central role in all three of these aspects.

Wisdom (*paññā*): Mindfulness develops wisdom by allowing individuals to observe the impermanence of all things. This understanding of impermanence (*anicca*) helps individuals let go of attachments and desires, reducing suffering and creating space for peace. The realization that all things are temporary leads to a sense of ease, as one no longer feels the need to cling to anything. Ethical conduct (*sīla*): Mindfulness is also essential in cultivating ethical conduct as it enables individuals to be aware of their actions and their impact on others. When we are mindful of our speech, actions, and thoughts, we are more likely to act in ways that do not harm others, which is a prerequisite for peace. By practicing mindfulness, we are more likely to engage in the right speech, the right action, and the right livelihood, all of which contribute to peace. Mental discipline (*samādhi*): Mindfulness is the foundation of mental discipline, as it involves training the mind to focus and remain calm. Through the practice of mindfulness meditation, individuals develop concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*vipassanā*), which lead to deeper peace. The stability of mind that arises from mindfulness meditation allows individuals to remain composed in the face of challenges and to address conflicts with clarity and wisdom.³⁴

Mindfulness is a powerful tool for cultivating peace and resolving conflict in Buddhism. By fostering awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and non-judgment, mindfulness enables individuals to navigate life's challenges with wisdom and composure. Whether applied to internal struggles or external conflicts, mindfulness allows individuals to respond to difficult situations with clarity, kindness, and understanding. It is a central practice in the Buddhist path to peace, supporting the cultivation of ethical conduct, mental clarity, and compassion, all of which are essential for resolving conflicts and creating a harmonious world. Through mindfulness, individuals can transform their minds, heal relationships, and contribute to the creation of a peaceful society.

Ethical conduct (*sīla*) plays a central role in Buddhist practice, forming the essential foundation for both personal peace and the cultivation of peace in the world. In Buddhism, ethical conduct is not merely about following rules or avoiding harmful behavior; it is a transformation practice that leads to the development of moral wisdom, the reduction of suffering, and the creation

³⁴ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 46.

of harmonious relationships. The Buddhist ethical framework is deeply interwoven with the teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and it emphasizes the importance of virtue, mindfulness, and compassion as essential tools for achieving peace.³⁵

In Buddhist teachings, *sīla* refers to the cultivation of moral behavior that aligns with the principles of non-harm (*ahimsā*), compassion (*karunā*), and truthfulness. It involves acting in ways that benefit oneself and others, avoiding actions that cause harm or suffering. Ethical conduct is not enforced by an external authority but arises from the individual's awareness of the consequences of their actions and their desire to alleviate suffering for all beings.

Ethical conduct in Buddhism is rooted in the belief that actions, words, and thoughts have consequences (*kamma*) and that acting virtuously leads to positive outcomes, both for oneself and for the broader community. To establish peace in one's life and the world, ethical conduct must be practiced consistently, as it underpins the development of wisdom and the resolution of conflicts.

The Eightfold Path is the Buddha's prescription for ending suffering, and it consists of three core aspects: Wisdom (*paññā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and mental discipline (*samādhi*).³⁶ Ethical conduct is the second aspect of the path, and it involves the right way of living, acting, speaking, and thinking. The components of ethical conduct within the Eightfold Path are Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. These guide individuals toward moral actions that help establish internal peace and reduce external conflict.

Right Speech (*sammā vācā*): Right Speech involves speaking truthfully, kindly, and constructively. It emphasizes avoiding harmful speech such as lying, gossiping, divisive speech, or harsh words.³⁷ The importance of the right speech in establishing peace cannot be overstated, as words have the power to build or destroy relationships. Practicing Right Speech helps foster trust, harmony, and understanding, which are essential for peaceful coexistence. It also prevents the creation of conflict and division, as mindful speech avoids causing unnecessary harm to others.

Right Action (*sammā kammanta*): Right Action entails acting in ways that are ethical, non-harming, and beneficial to others.³⁸ This includes refraining from killing, stealing, and engaging in sexual misconduct. Right Action supports peace by encouraging respect for life and property and by discouraging behaviors that lead to suffering, both for oneself and others. When individuals act ethically, they promote trust and goodwill, which are the cornerstones of peaceful relationships.

³⁵ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 113.

³⁶ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 46.

³⁷ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 47.

³⁸ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 47.

Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*): Right Livelihood refers to earning a living in ways that do not cause harm to others or the environment.³⁹ This includes avoiding occupations that involve deception, exploitation, or harm, such as trading in weapons, intoxicants, or human trafficking. Right Livelihood fosters peace in society by encouraging economic practices that contribute to the welfare of all beings and do not perpetuate suffering.

These three elements of ethical conduct – Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood – are not only guidelines for personal moral behavior but also serve as the foundation for social peace.⁴⁰ By adhering to these principles, individuals create a positive environment where harmony, understanding, and compassion can flourish, reducing the likelihood of conflict and promoting peaceful interactions in both personal and social contexts.

Ethical conduct is not just about preventing harm to others, it also has a profound impact on the individual's mind and emotional state. When individuals act in line with ethical principles, they experience a sense of integrity, self-respect, and inner calm. The Buddha taught that acting virtuously reduces feelings of guilt, remorse, and anxiety, which are often sources of internal conflict. This inner peace is essential for personal happiness and well-being.

When ethical conduct is practiced consistently, it leads to the gradual purification of the mind. The mind becomes free from negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and jealousy, which are often triggered by selfish desires and attachments. With the reduction of these mental afflictions, peace arises naturally. The cultivation of virtuous actions, speech, and thoughts gradually brings the individual to a state of mental equanimity, where they are less affected by the ups and downs of life. This mental peace becomes the foundation for further spiritual progress, as it creates a clear and calm mind, capable of deeper insight and wisdom.

In addition to its role in personal peace, ethical conduct is essential for establishing harmony in society. The Buddha taught that individuals should not only refrain from harming others but should actively promote the welfare of all beings. The practice of ethical conduct, both individually and collectively, has the power to reduce social conflict, promote justice, and build more compassionate communities.

One of the key aspects of Buddhist ethics is **non-harming** (*ahimsā*). This principle calls for the recognition of the inherent dignity of all living beings, and it emphasizes compassion and care for others. In societies where individuals adhere to the principle of non-harming, there is a greater likelihood of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. When people act with compassion and treat one another with kindness, social tension and violence diminish, and the potential for conflict resolution increases.

The practice of ethical conduct can also prevent the arising of injustice and

³⁹ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 47.

⁴⁰ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 84 - 94.

inequality, which are often sources of conflict in society. By promoting fairness, honesty, and kindness, ethical conduct contributes to the creation of a just and peaceful society. In Buddhist communities, for example, monks and laypeople alike are encouraged to live according to high ethical standards, which include refraining from causing harm, being truthful, and supporting the welfare of others. These practices create an environment where peace and cooperation can thrive as individuals act with consideration for the well-being of the whole community.

Ethical conduct in Buddhism is deeply intertwined with the cultivation of **compassion** (*karuṇā*) and **loving-kindness** (*mettā*). These qualities are essential for creating lasting peace, both within the individual and in interactions with others. Compassion involves the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, while loving-kindness is the wish for all beings to experience happiness and well-being.⁴¹

Through the practice of compassion and loving-kindness, individuals develop the capacity to understand the suffering of others and respond with kindness and empathy. This helps to dissolve the barriers of division and conflict that often arise from misunderstanding, fear, and self-centered desires. By practicing these virtues in everyday life, individuals can create a peaceful and harmonious environment where all beings are treated with respect and care.⁴²

Loving-kindness and compassion are especially important in resolving conflicts. When individuals are motivated by these qualities, they are more likely to seek peaceful solutions rather than escalate tensions. Instead of retaliating or seeking vengeance, they approach conflicts with a mindset of reconciliation and mutual benefit. In this way, ethical conduct, rooted in compassion and loving-kindness, serves as a powerful tool for conflict resolution and peace-building.

In Buddhism, the ultimate goal is the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*),⁴³ and ethical conduct is one of the key means of achieving this end. The Buddha taught that ethical behavior helps to purify the mind, reduce the influence of negative mental states, and pave the way for spiritual progress. As individuals practice ethical conduct, they begin to see the interconnectedness of all beings and understand that their actions have far-reaching consequences.

By adhering to the principles of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, individuals not only reduce their suffering but also contribute to the well-being of others. This collective reduction of suffering creates a foundation for peace, as people live in accordance with moral principles that promote harmony and cooperation. Ethical conduct helps to create a world where the cycle of greed, hatred, and ignorance is gradually broken and where peace and wisdom can flourish.

⁴¹ *Karaṇīyametta sutta, sabbe sattā bhantu sukhittā; Khp*, (1978), p. 8.

⁴² *Mettānisamsasutta, AN. IV*, (1958), p. 150.

⁴³ Harvey, P. (2013), p. 47.

Ethical conduct is the foundation for peace in Buddhism because it aligns individual behavior with the principles of non-harm, compassion, and wisdom. By practicing Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, individuals cultivate personal integrity and contribute to the creation of peaceful and harmonious societies.⁴⁴ Ethical conduct not only reduces internal conflict and suffering but also serves as the basis for resolving social disputes and building compassionate communities. Through the cultivation of ethical behavior, the mind becomes purified, and individuals are able to experience both inner peace and contribute to the broader goal of world peace. Ultimately, ethical conduct is integral to the Buddhist path to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of true peace.

IX. COMPASSION AND LOVING-KINDNESS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are two of the most significant virtues in Buddhist practice, playing a critical role in the resolution of conflicts, whether internal or interpersonal. These qualities are not merely emotional responses but deeply transformational practices that have the power to heal, reconcile, and foster peace. In Buddhism, the cultivation of compassion and loving-kindness is not just for the benefit of the individual but also for the collective good and is seen as essential for both personal growth and social harmony.⁴⁵ This essay explores the vital role that compassion and loving-kindness play in conflict resolution, focusing on how these virtues can alleviate suffering, reduce hostility, and foster understanding in challenging situations.

In the Buddhist tradition, compassion (*karunā*) is the genuine wish for others to be free from suffering and the active desire to alleviate their pain.⁴⁶ It involves empathy and a deep awareness of the suffering of others, accompanied by a motivation to help. Compassion in Buddhism is not just an emotional response but a guided, intentional practice aimed at ending suffering in all forms.

Loving-kindness (*mettā*), on the other hand, is the unconditional wish for all beings to experience happiness and well-being. It is often described as an attitude of friendliness, goodwill, and love towards all sentient beings, without distinction. *Mettā* does not seek to control or possess others, rather, it is a pure, selfless love that seeks the best for others, irrespective of their actions or behaviors.

These two virtues are interlinked: Compassion focuses on alleviating suffering, while loving-kindness emphasizes fostering happiness. Together, they create a powerful combination of qualities that can guide individuals in their interactions with others, especially in times of conflict.

Conflict often arises from misunderstanding, hurt feelings, frustration, and perceived injustice. It can escalate due to negative emotions like anger,

⁴⁴ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p.113.

⁴⁵ *Karaṇīyametta sutta*, *Khp*, (1978), p. 8.

⁴⁶ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 9.

fear, jealousy, and resentment. When these emotions dominate, it becomes difficult to think clearly or respond appropriately to the situation. However, the practice of compassion and loving-kindness provides the necessary mental and emotional tools to resolve conflict constructively and peacefully.

At the heart of conflict is often the suffering of one or both parties involved. Whether caused by miscommunication, perceived wrongs, or emotional pain, suffering fuels the escalation of conflict. Compassion, by its very nature, focuses on alleviating this suffering. When one person practices compassion toward another, they are more likely to perceive the other's suffering and act with understanding and care.

In conflict resolution, the ability to recognize and empathize with the pain of others is crucial. Compassion allows individuals to step outside their perspectives and recognize the emotional and mental distress of the other party. This acknowledgment can break down barriers of anger and resentment, as both sides begin to see the shared human experience of suffering.

For example, in a heated disagreement, one person who practices compassion might take a step back and reflect on the emotional turmoil that their adversary is experiencing. This understanding can soften their response and open the door for dialogue. Rather than responding with blame or defensiveness, they may ask, "I understand that you're upset, and I would like to understand your feelings better." This response fosters a sense of connection, reducing tension and promoting reconciliation.

Compassion and loving-kindness are antidotes to the negative emotions that often fuel conflict, such as anger, hatred, fear, and frustration. In Buddhist teachings, these destructive emotions are seen as the result of ignorance and attachment, and they lead to suffering. By cultivating compassion and loving-kindness, individuals can transform these emotions into positive intentions.⁴⁷

Loving-kindness, specifically, encourages individuals to wish others well, even during conflict.⁴⁸ When one can maintain an attitude of loving-kindness during a dispute, they are less likely to engage in retaliatory or harmful actions. This is especially important in resolving conflicts where both parties may feel hurt or wronged. When individuals can respond to the other with goodwill and love, it creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, reducing the possibility of the conflict escalating further.

For instance, in the face of criticism or personal attack, one might respond with a mindset of loving-kindness, thinking, "May this person find peace and understanding," rather than reacting with anger or defensiveness. This shift in attitude can significantly de-escalate the situation, turning a potential conflict into an opportunity for healing and growth.

At the heart of many conflicts lies the need for forgiveness. Resentment, grudges, and the desire for revenge often perpetuate conflict, while forgiveness

⁴⁷ Gethin, R. (1998), p. 79.

⁴⁸ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 45.

and reconciliation can bring about resolution and healing. Compassion and loving-kindness play a key role in the practice of forgiveness.

The act of forgiving involves letting go of the desire for punishment or retaliation.⁴⁹ By cultivating compassion, individuals develop the ability to see others through a lens of understanding rather than judgment. This shift in perspective enables one to let go of negative emotions and extend forgiveness to those who have caused harm. Similarly, loving-kindness promotes the belief that all beings deserve happiness and well-being, even those who may have wronged us. This perspective allows individuals to let go of anger and resentment, creating the conditions for reconciliation.

Forgiveness is not only beneficial for resolving conflicts with others but is also crucial for one's mental peace. Holding onto negative emotions such as anger or hatred creates internal conflict, stress, and suffering. By practicing compassion and loving-kindness, individuals can release these harmful emotions, paving the way for healing and peace.

One of the main ways that conflict escalates is through reactive behavior. When people are upset, they often react impulsively, responding with aggression, defensiveness, or harsh words. This reactionary behavior further fuels the conflict and makes it harder to reach a peaceful resolution.⁵⁰

Compassion and loving-kindness, however, encourage non-reactivity. Instead of responding impulsively, individuals who practice these qualities take the time to pause, reflect, and act thoughtfully. In Buddhist meditation practices, individuals are taught to cultivate a mindful awareness of their emotions, enabling them to respond to challenging situations with clarity rather than reacting automatically.

For example, in the middle of a conflict, one who practices compassion might take a few deep breaths, acknowledging their feelings and the emotions of the other person. This pause allows them to respond in a way that is constructive rather than reactive. They may speak calmly and listen attentively, avoiding harsh or accusatory language. This creates a space for peaceful communication, enabling the conflict to be resolved with mutual respect.

Compassion and loving-kindness have the power to transform the atmosphere in any conflict.⁵¹ When one person brings a spirit of goodwill and empathy into a dispute, it can shift the entire dynamic of the interaction. These virtues create an environment where both parties feel heard, respected, and cared for.

This transformation is not just about resolving a single conflict; it can also have a lasting effect on relationships and communities. In a community or workplace where compassion and loving-kindness are valued, individuals are more likely to engage in peaceful communication and collaborative problem-

⁴⁹ *Attānam upamam katvā nahaneyya naghātaye; Dhp*, (1995), p. 19.

⁵⁰ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 67.

⁵¹ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 45.

solving. These qualities foster a sense of unity and shared purpose, where the well-being of all individuals is prioritized.

The practice of compassion and loving-kindness in conflict resolution can be cultivated through mindfulness and meditation. Buddhist meditation practices such as *mettā Bhāvanā* (loving-kindness meditation) and *karuṇā Bhāvanā* (compassion meditation) are designed to help practitioners develop these virtues.⁵² In these practices, individuals focus on developing feelings of love and compassion, first for themselves, then for loved ones, neutral people, and even those with whom they have conflict. These meditations help to break down barriers of judgment and self-centeredness, allowing the practitioner to cultivate a deep sense of empathy and connection with others.

Furthermore, compassionate listening is another powerful tool in conflict resolution. When individuals listen with full attention, without judgment or interruption, they create an environment of understanding. This kind of listening, paired with compassion, can help resolve misunderstandings and facilitate dialogue, fostering peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

Compassion and loving-kindness are essential qualities for conflict resolution in Buddhism, as they address the root causes of conflict – suffering, misunderstanding, and emotional reactivity. By cultivating these virtues, individuals can alleviate suffering, transform negative emotions, foster forgiveness, and create a peaceful atmosphere in times of conflict. Whether in personal relationships or broader societal contexts, the practice of compassion and loving-kindness serves as a powerful antidote to hostility and division, creating the conditions for true reconciliation, healing, and lasting peace.⁵³ In Buddhist philosophy, the development of these qualities is seen not only as a means of resolving conflict but as the very foundation for a peaceful and harmonious life.

Conflict is an inevitable part of human life, arising from differing perspectives, interests, and emotions. While conflict often carries negative connotations, it can also serve as an opportunity for growth, understanding, and transformation. In many traditions, including Buddhism, the concept of community plays a central role in conflict resolution. The presence of a supportive, harmonious community is essential for resolving conflicts peacefully and effectively. The role of community in conflict resolution is multifaceted, involving emotional support, collective wisdom, shared responsibility, and cooperative efforts to restore harmony. This essay explores how community functions in the resolution of conflicts and why it is indispensable for achieving long-lasting peace.

In many cultures and traditions, the community is seen as a collective entity that nurtures the well-being of individuals and ensures social harmony.⁵⁴ In the Buddhist tradition, the concept of *sangha* – the community of monks, nuns,

⁵² *Karaṇīyametta sutta*, Khp, (1978), p. 8.

⁵³ *Karaṇīyametta sutta*, Khp, (1978), p. 8.

⁵⁴ *Dhp*, (1995), p.19.

and lay practitioners – plays a crucial role in promoting peace and resolving conflicts. The *sangha* is regarded as a source of wisdom, support, and guidance for individuals on their spiritual journey. The community's role in conflict resolution extends beyond offering advice to acting as a mediator and fostering the collective well-being of all its members.

In the broader context, a community is any group of individuals connected by shared values, interests, or goals. Communities can range from small families or religious congregations to larger social groups, such as workplaces or even nations. The role of community in conflict resolution revolves around creating an environment where individuals are encouraged to listen, understand, empathize, and find common ground. Through these practices, the community becomes a powerful force for resolving disputes and maintaining peace.

One of the most significant ways in which community contributes to conflict resolution is through fostering open communication. In conflicts, misunderstandings, assumptions, and misinterpretations are often the root causes of the problem. A supportive community provides a space where individuals can share their perspectives freely, listen to others, and work toward understanding each other.

When a conflict arises, community members often serve as mediators or facilitators of communication.⁵⁵ By encouraging honest dialogue, a community can help individuals express their needs and emotions constructively, reducing the likelihood of escalation. In a harmonious community, people are more likely to listen attentively and approach disagreements with a mindset of curiosity and empathy rather than defensiveness or hostility. This creates a safe environment where conflict is not seen as a threat but as an opportunity for mutual understanding and resolution.

In Buddhist teachings, the importance of the right speech (*sammā vācā*) in resolving conflicts cannot be overstated. Right speech includes avoiding harsh words, gossip, and divisive language while promoting clear, truthful, and compassionate communication.⁵⁶ In a community that practices right speech, individuals are encouraged to speak thoughtfully and respectfully, fostering an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect. This open communication helps to prevent the deepening of conflicts and allows for the resolution of issues before they escalate into more significant problems.

X. RECONCILIATION

The presence of a community can significantly reduce the emotional toll of conflict. Conflict often brings feelings of isolation, frustration, and distress, particularly when individuals feel that they are alone in their struggles. In a supportive community, members are able to offer each other emotional support, encouragement, and empathy, which can help individuals cope with difficult situations and find peace.

⁵⁵ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 68.

⁵⁶ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 64.

Community members may offer counsel or act as mediators, providing an external perspective that can break the cycle of negative emotions. In many conflict resolution traditions, a neutral third party or mediator from within the community is tasked with facilitating reconciliation. This mediator does not take sides but helps the parties involved to express their concerns and understand each other's points of view.

In the Buddhist tradition, the idea of reconciliation (*sanghika-dhamma*) is fundamental. The *sangha* plays a key role in guiding individuals back to a state of harmony when conflicts arise within the community. This process is rooted in principles of forgiveness, mutual respect, and compassion, which help individuals overcome the emotional barriers that often prevent conflict resolution. Forgiveness, in particular, is a critical aspect of reconciliation; without it, conflicts cannot truly be resolved. Compassionate understanding within the community allows for the healing of emotional wounds and fosters an environment where individuals are empowered to move forward in a spirit of unity.⁵⁷

A community brings together individuals with diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge. This collective wisdom can be a powerful tool for resolving conflicts.⁵⁸ When individuals face conflicts, they often benefit from the guidance of others who have navigated similar situations or who can offer a broader perspective. A well-functioning community provides a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw upon, enabling individuals to approach conflicts with a greater sense of clarity and understanding.

In the context of conflict resolution, this collective wisdom can take many forms. Experienced community members, such as elders or spiritual leaders, can offer advice, counsel, and practical strategies for resolving disputes. For example, in a Buddhist *Sangha*, senior monks or nuns often serve as mediators in conflicts, helping to guide individuals back to the right path of peace. Their experience, coupled with their deep understanding of Buddhist principles such as non-harming (*ahimsā*) and compassion, enables them to approach conflicts with patience, insight, and wisdom.⁵⁹

Furthermore, the process of resolving conflicts within a community often involves collective decision-making. In Buddhist communities, this process is referred to as *vinaya*, which involves resolving disputes through collective agreement and shared values. When conflict is handled collaboratively, individuals are more likely to feel that their voices have been heard and that the solution is just. This creates a sense of fairness and unity, strengthening the overall fabric of the community.

A key element in community-based conflict resolution is the notion of shared responsibility. In many communities, there is an understanding that

⁵⁷ Hanh, T. N. (1999), p. 208.

⁵⁸ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 46.

⁵⁹ Narada, (1973), p. 182 - 183.

the well-being of each member affects the well-being of the whole.⁶⁰ Therefore, resolving conflicts is not just the responsibility of the individuals involved but of the entire community.

In a Buddhist context, the principle of interdependence (*paticcasamuppāda*) highlights that all beings are interconnected.⁶¹ When one individual is in conflict, it affects the peace of the entire community. This understanding encourages individuals to take responsibility not only for their actions but also for contributing to the well-being of others. In this sense, community members have a collective duty to ensure peace and harmony and to help resolve conflicts when they arise.

This shared responsibility is particularly important in preventing conflicts from escalating. In tight-knit communities, members are more likely to intervene early in the conflict, offering guidance or support before tensions spiral out of control. When individuals see that their actions and words impact the broader community, they are more likely to act in ways that maintain peace and avoid harm.

In communities that emphasize peace, conflict resolution becomes not just a reactive process but a proactive one. Through regular practices such as meditation, ethical conduct, and compassionate communication, communities foster a culture of peace. This culture encourages individuals to be mindful of their thoughts, words, and actions, preventing conflicts before they arise.⁶²

In the Buddhist tradition, **mindfulness** (*sati*) and **ethical conduct** (*sīla*) are key practices that help individuals become aware of their emotions and actions.⁶³ By cultivating mindfulness, community members can develop greater emotional intelligence, enabling them to recognize the early signs of conflict and address them before they escalate. The community, as a whole, benefits from this collective mindfulness, creating an environment where conflicts are less likely to arise and are dealt with effectively when they do.

XI. CONCLUSION

The paper further explores the application of Buddhist conflict resolution in contemporary settings, particularly in areas of modern peace studies, international relations, and social justice. Buddhist teachings on conflict resolution offer valuable insights into the nature of peace-building and reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of inner transformation, ethical conduct, and mindful engagement in addressing both personal and societal conflicts. In an era marked by political polarization, social unrest, and ongoing global conflicts, the principles of the Pāli *Suttas* provide a timely and relevant framework for addressing these challenges.

⁶⁰ Bodhi, B. (2005), P. 365.

⁶¹ Narada, (1973), p. 240, Harvey, P. (2000), p. 54.

⁶² *Dhammapada*, (1995), p. 19.

⁶³ Rahula, W. (1978), p. 66 - 67.

The investigation also considers the limitations and challenges of applying Buddhist conflict resolution principles in contemporary society. While the teachings of the Pāli *Suttas* offer profound insights into the nature of peace, conflict, and suffering, the practical application of these teachings in a complex, modern world presents certain difficulties. Issues such as cultural differences, political power dynamics, and the rise of secularism may present challenges to the widespread adoption of Buddhist conflict resolution practices. However, the paper argues that the core values of compassion, nonviolence, mindfulness, and ethical conduct remain universal and applicable across diverse contexts.

The role of community in conflict resolution is indispensable. A community provides the emotional support, wisdom, and collective responsibility necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. In Buddhist traditions, the *sangha* acts as a model for resolving disputes through compassion, understanding, and collaboration. By fostering open communication, offering guidance, and encouraging a shared sense of responsibility, communities create an environment where conflicts can be resolved without violence or division. In a broader sense, the presence of a harmonious, supportive community can prevent conflicts from escalating, helping individuals and groups navigate challenges with wisdom, empathy, and respect for one another. Through these efforts, the community becomes not only a space for conflict resolution but also a foundation for lasting peace and social harmony.

The ethical teachings of the Buddha, combined with mindfulness and meditation practices, provide a powerful framework for addressing the root causes of conflict, fostering understanding, and promoting peace.

In a world increasingly marked by divisions and conflicts, the wisdom of the Pāli *Suttas* offers timeless guidance. By applying the Buddha's teachings to contemporary conflicts, individuals and societies can work toward creating more peaceful and harmonious communities. This research underscores the relevance of ancient Buddhist wisdom in today's complex world and calls for further exploration of how these teachings can be integrated into modern conflict resolution strategies.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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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 and addresses some of the most urgent and critical issues on human well-being and world peace in the 21st century.

Keywords: *Buddhism, leadership, education, ordination, scholarship, dharma, monasticism.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly fast-paced and stress-laden world, the need for inner peace and world peace has become more critical than ever. Modern life is characterized by heightened levels of depression, anxiety, and social fragmentation, which are created by economic pressures, rapid technological advancements, and a growing disconnection from traditional families and communities (Twenge, 2017). Amidst this chaos, there has been a resurgence of interest in Vipassana meditation and mindfulness practices that generate inner peace and global harmony.

II. VIPASSANA MEDITATION

Vipassana meditation is a technique of mindfulness and self-observation that originated over 2,500 years ago in ancient Indian traditions (Goenka, 1997). Vipassana means to perceive things as they are. It is an insight into the true nature of all things rediscovered by Gotama Buddha more than 2500 years ago (Dhammananda, 2017). Vipassana is a Buddhist term combined with two words, Vi being one word and passana being the other. Vi refers to the three characteristics of mentality (*nama*) and physicality (*rupa*), such as impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), and no self or non-ego (*anatta*). Passana means proper understanding or realization through deep concentration or understanding of the three characteristics of mentality and physicality. When one practices Vipassana meditation or mindfulness meditation, the purpose is to realize the three characteristics of phenomena: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-ego (Sayadaw, 2019).

On a macro level, Vipassana meditation holds the promise of fostering global harmony and social interconnectedness. It has the potential to bridge cultural and religious divides, creating a shared humanity in a world often marred by conflicts stemming from greed, misunderstandings, and intolerance. Gopinath (2005) reports that Vipassana meditation is an effective tool for peace development and conflict resolution in the face of violence and social turmoil. By cultivating inner peace and extending compassion to others, vipassana meditation contributes to a more harmonious and peaceful world. The holistic integration of individual and collective benefits is deeply interconnected. Vipassana meditation fosters inner peace through emotional regulation, self-awareness, and ethical living, thereby contributing to social harmony and world peace. The psychological benefits of Vipassana practices include enhanced emotional resilience, reduced stress, increased empathy, promotion of social interactions, and the development of constructive and compassionate relationships.

Researchers reveal that individuals practice mindfulness in Vipassana, engaging in prosocial behaviors, such as cooperating within groups and helping others. Condon et al. (2013) also discovered that mindfulness meditation practice can increase compassion for others' suffering, fostering an empathetic and supportive social environment. Individuals who cultivate inner peace are ready to contribute to their communities positively. Therefore, practitioners not only strengthen their psychological wellness but also build

a more peaceful society. Hart (1987) also notes that the ethical precepts of Vipassana meditation help to alleviate interpersonal conflicts and accelerate a culture of mutual understanding and respect. Hence, the transformation process of Vipassana practices brings about positivity and cohesion within society. Therefore, Vipassana practice is an immediate response to modern society's challenges, such as stress, social isolation, and ethical dilemmas, that can support individual and collective well-being by discussing the original causes of psychological distress and developing a more harmonious environment.

Furthermore, Vipassana's practice emphasizes ethical behavior and community responsibility for the growing need for inner peace in world peace. When various communities become more interconnected, the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and nonviolence are required to foster mutual respect and cooperation. The cooperation of psychological and social benefits of Vipassana also stimulates global peace and conflict resolution. Gopinath (2005) reasons that by cultivating inner peace, Vipassana practitioners engage in peaceful and constructive dialogue by generating the resolution of conflicts for local and global issues.

The psychological benefits of Vipassana, such as improved emotional regulation and mental clarity, provide the foundation for ethical living and positive social interactions. In turn, these social benefits reinforce the psychological gains, creating a virtuous cycle of well-being. Shapiro et al. (2009) note that mindfulness practices, by promoting both intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness, can lead to more authentic and meaningful connections with others, enhancing both personal satisfaction and social harmony.

In *Practical Vipassana Meditation Exercises*, Mahasi Sayadaw (1996) claimed that insight meditation teaches practitioners to understand the psychophysical phenomena in their bodies. For instance, practitioners can learn to be aware by observing their seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. Similarly, practitioners can become mindful as they watch their abdomen rise and fall according to their breathing (Sayadaw, 1996). They will find that their abdomen rises when they inhale and falls when they exhale. Nevertheless, practitioners should refrain from breathing vigorously or slowing it down abnormally. They need to breathe as naturally and steadily as possible. Additionally, whenever practitioners' minds wander, they can learn to recognize that deviation and subsequently redirect their minds back to the cycle of breathing (Sayadaw, 1996).

III. THERAVADA VIPASSANA TRADITION AND MINDFULNESS BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY (MBCT)

The Burmese Theravada tradition is currently taught through the teachings of the master Mahasi Sayadaw. Most retreat practitioners who follow instructions authentically expect significant progress in the one-week stage (Sayadaw, 2019). Descriptions of the insight stages can be applied by first-generation Western mindfulness instructors, such as Kornfield (1979), Armstrong (2013), and Catherine (2011). Vedana, or sensation, is favorable,

unfavorable, or neutral when our internal or external environment meets our consciousness. Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) focus on these feelings and sensations regarding rumination and suffering (Segal et al., 2012a), which is essential for effective Vipassana practice (Analayo, 2003). For instance, in MBCT, pleasant and unpleasant feelings are introduced and observed in sessions two and three. In contrast, attachment and aversion are introduced in session four and continue in session five when the mitigation and solution to a challenge are developed (Segal et al., 2012a).

MBIs differ from traditional Vipassana practices because they need more clarity on impermanence, dissatisfaction, and non-self (Grabovac, 2015). For instance, a possible insight that may arise during Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is impermanence (Kabat-Zinn, 1990); in session three, practitioners learn to let all physical and mental phenomena arise and vanish (Segal et al., 2012b). Individuals also gain insight during the process and experience (Segal et al., 2012c). Due to the implicit nature of insight found in Western MBIs meditators, they can practice very similar to Vipassana practice with adequate training. The MBIs possess the prerequisite in theoretical knowledge and are found in the Vipassana meditation traditions (Crane et al., 2017). Also, MBIs have begun to make advancements within their curricula that mirror more closely to traditional practices. For instance, the second edition of the MBCT manual explicitly describes impermanence, Vedana, and its relationship to aversion, attachment, and suffering compared to the previous edition (Segal et al., 2002).

Progress through the insight stages can pose a challenge for most MBI practitioners, and potential adverse reactions should be cautious. MBI's instructions applying the insight stages should have the ability to pinpoint the specific stage a practitioner is in. Therefore, the instructors can adjust appropriate practice instructions (Armstrong, 2013). Jack Kornfield, a Vipassana instructor practicing for decades, has frequently seen students' complications experienced through the insight stages. Kornfield stresses the importance of well-trained instructors to effectively guide their students with limited side effects (Grabovac, 2015).

IV. BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS

The practice of Vipassana is a traditional mindfulness technique that has recently become a promising intervention for a variety of psychopathologies (Rao, 2024). Mindfulness meditation practices have existed since the Sakya Muni Buddha in India first became enlightened under the Bodhi tree (Dhammananda, 2017). Mindfulness meditation practices have influenced therapeutic professionals worldwide, as they have found these practices to be effective treatments and interventions for clients (Kristeller & Jordan, 2019). Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003) emphasizes the relevance of mindfulness practices and highlights their potential counteraction to stress and social disconnection in modern society. Vipassana's self-awareness and ethical living provide a comprehensive practice to regulate the complexities of contemporary life by supporting individuals to reduce their stress, manage

emotions, and develop a meaningful sense of purpose. Siegel (2007) also reports that mindfulness practices can strengthen social connectedness and reduce prejudices. Hulsheger et al. (2013) discovered that mindfulness meditation practices can improve teamwork and reduce workplace stress, and Vipassana can promote individual productivity and collective efficiency.

According to Kostanski and Hassed (2009), mindfulness is defined as a cognitive style that develops a heightened awareness of emotions and thought processes. Mindfulness meditation empowers people to release anxiety, stress, and depressive rumination in their daily lives. Consciousness is presented as a combination of awareness and attention. Researchers suggested that consciousness is mindfulness because they both describe the state of being mindful (Kostanski & Hassed, 2009). Langer (1997) described mindfulness as the perfection of mindlessness or emptiness. Kabat-Zinn (2003) added that mindfulness includes awareness, which stems from purposeful attention focus and non-judgment in the present moment. Mindfulness can be defined as returning to one's present intention and attention with an attitude of kindness and curiosity (Shapiro, 2020). Mindfulness meditation practitioners are naturally aware of various thoughts as they come and go during the practice. Although they concentrate on a specific stimulus and gently return to their focus after recognizing distractions from sensations or thoughts, the practitioners are receptive to all stimuli stemming from thoughts, sensations, and emotions (Kostanski & Hassed, 2009). As a result of the awareness resulting from mindfulness practices, individuals predisposed to negative experiences will be acutely aware of any physical sensations manifested during meditation (Shaw, 2020).

V. MINDFULNESS-BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY

During session 8 of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, practitioners are instructed as follows: When practitioners first wake up in the morning and get out of bed, they should bring attention to their breathing by observing five-minute mindful breaths (Segal et al., 2018). Practitioners should notice changes in their posture by being mindful of their bodies and emotions as they change positions from lying down to sitting, standing, and walking (Segal et al., 2018). They should notice each time they make a transition from one posture to the next one. Practitioners should be mindful of the sounds they hear, like a bird singing, a phone ringing, a train passing, a car horn, a burst of laughter, the wind, the sound of a door closing, and so on (Segal et al., 2018). All the sounds are reminders of the present moment and are disconnected from racing thoughts. Throughout the day, practitioners should take a few moments to bring their attention to breathing by observing five minutes of mindful breaths (Segal et al., 2018). Whenever they eat or drink anything, they should look at the food or drink and realize that the food and drink nourish their body and their insight to see the sunlight, the earth, the rain, the farmer, and the trucker in the food to evolve their spirituality (Segal et al., 2018). Therefore, they should consciously consume the food and realize the positive and negative effects on their physical health. Practitioners should bring awareness to see

the food, smell the food, chew the food, taste the food, and swallow the food (Segal et al., 2018).

Practitioners should notice their body's posture while they stand or walk. They should pay attention to their contact with the ground under their feet and feel the air on their face, arms, and legs as they walk (Segal et al., 2018). Practitioners should bring awareness to listening and talking without agreeing, disagreeing, liking, or disliking (Segal et al., 2018). When talking, they say what they need to say without overstating and notice how their mind and body feel at that moment (Segal et al., 2018). They can use this line whenever practitioners wait in a line to notice their breathing in and out or their standing posture (Segal et al., 2018). For example, how their feet contact the floor and how their body feels (Segal et al., 2018). Practitioners can also bring attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen and observe whether they feel impatient (Segal et al., 2018). Practitioners should be aware of any tightness in the body throughout the day as they breathe in and breathe out, letting go of excess tension in their face, neck, jaw, shoulder, stomach, or lower back, as well as may stretch or do yoga once a day (Segal et al., 2018). Practitioners can focus on their daily activities, such as brushing their teeth, washing up, putting on their shoes, or doing their jobs by bringing mindfulness to every activity (Segal et al., 2018). Before going to sleep at night, practitioners can observe the five-minute mindful breath and bring the intention to inhale and exhale in a joyful and peaceful state of mind (Segal et al., 2018).

VI. LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION PRACTICE

According to Dr. Welaratna (2016), the loving-kindness meditation rooted in traditional Buddhist meditation can help practitioners with stress and depression by decentering, developing self-care, and developing compassion. During these sessions, individuals sit comfortably in a chair or the lotus position with closed eyes and read silently as they learn to relax their minds and body. The objection is to induce feelings of happiness and serenity. During the first session, individuals will silently and mindfully 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 (Welaratna, 2016, p.1).

VII. DEEP RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

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

90 minutes after a heavy meal, you can begin this session by lying down 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.

Now, place your focus on your forehead and begin to relax the muscles on your forehead. 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 in your forehead.

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 your jaws. Follow the previous steps and continue to direct your focus downstream to other anatomical parts like your tongue and lips. We have much tension around our mouth area, so you may want to spend more time relaxing your jaws, tongue, and lips. If your lips open a little, do not worry, as it is an indication that you are relaxed.

Now move your focus gently to your neck and relax your neck. Bring an intentional relaxation as you did earlier to your neck and all other muscle groups as you move on.

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, too, 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.

From the chest area, move down to the abdominal muscles, 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 get up slowly, supporting 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 you are sitting and standing and relaxing the muscles with ease. (Welaratna, 2016, pp. 2 - 3).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This literature review highlights the profound impact of Vipassana meditation and mindfulness practices as both a psychological treatment and a tool for fostering social harmony. The evidence gathered from historical texts, empirical studies, and theoretical discussions demonstrates that Vipassana 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. Vipassana'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 Vipassana 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 Vipassana are equally compelling. By promoting qualities such as compassion, patience, and ethical behavior, Vipassana contributes to reducing social conflict and promoting community cohesion.

Siegel (2007) and Condon et al. (2013) report how mindfulness practices and Vipassana 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 Vipassana 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 Vipassana to contribute to global peace and conflict resolution and impact both personal and societal challenges. Vipassana offers a practical and effective technique in modern society, where stress, social fragmentation, and ethical dilemmas are prevalent. Vipassana focuses on mindfulness, self-regulation, ethical behaviors, and contemporary needs for balance and harmony in a fast-paced world. Vipassana's relevance extends beyond individual mental health to provide broader societal issues such as social inequality, environmental sustainability, and global peace. In summary, Vipassana meditation and mindfulness are powerful and integrative techniques for timeless and timely well-being. Future researchers should continue exploring how the Vipassana approach affects cultivating both inner and world peace.

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THE UTILITY OF BUDDHIST PRACTICES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Abstract:

Conflict resolution has become a critical topic in today's world, as disputes can emerge at various levels, from individuals to nations, and involve issues like religion, race, and beyond. The world is grappling with two active wars, and these conflicts have a direct impact on the prosperity of nations, posing a threat to global sustainability. How is Buddhist mindfulness important for modern conflict resolution? This is the research problem of the study. The study aims to find solutions for disputes through the spiritual teachings of the Buddha. This study is based on qualitative research using content analysis and reviewing various published and unpublished articles, journals, and digital and electronic sources, including websites. Buddhism addresses the root causes of conflicts, such as greed, hatred, and delusion. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to eradicate these root causes. The foundational principles of Buddhism revolve around spreading peace, tolerance, and equity among all human beings worldwide. Buddha's teaching provides advice for resolving conflicts and wars. In essence, Buddhism promotes non-violence, encouraging individuals and societies to seek harmony and consensus through peaceful means. The overarching goal is the cessation of conflicts, fostering inner and outer peace, and contributing to the world's sustainability.

Keywords: *Buddhism, conflict resolution, madhupiṇḍikasutta, nibbāna, peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The word “conflict” originates from the Latin term “Confligare,” which means to fight, engage in warfare, or experience incompatibility and opposition¹. Conflicts arise among people who have different beliefs, attitudes, customs, norms, and needs. Conflicts come to the surface in the form of disputes, quarrels, and sometimes even killing. In other words, conflicts mean resistance, disobedience, violation, persistence, and objections that are visible

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¹ The Oxford English Dictionary (1989): 713.

in society. Conflict theory was first developed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in the mid-nineteenth century to explain inequality and conflict resulting from struggle and competition between two antagonistic social classes.² Conflict means any contradiction or clashing interest between two persons or groups. It is an expression of hostility, negative attitudes, dispute, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. So, conflicts may arise due to different perceptions, values, working practices³, etc.

In Pāli literature, the term “conflict” is often used interchangeably with words such as *Virodha*, *Viggaha*, *Sanghattana*, and *Vivāda*. Additionally, the term “*Raṇa*” is also employed. When discussing ideological conflicts, particularly those common among different religious groups, three specific terms, *Kalaha* (Contention), *Viggaha* (Dispute), and *Vivāda* (Debate), are frequently used.⁴

The thoughts that arise in a person lead to action, and the results of that action affect him and others. Conflict is also such a situation. The order that causes conflict arises from the mind of the person. Its effect spreads to the entire society. Buddhism is a religion that teaches a philosophy of life based on *Nibbāna*. Its goal is to achieve *Nibbāna*, and it guides the development of qualities that are important for that. It has no room for conflict and values nonviolence, harmony, and coexistence. Therefore, the teachings based on personal character development shown in Buddhism are important to prevent the conflict that occurs when such thoughts arise in the person. This investigation is based on Buddhist teachings on how it is important to maintain peace between the individual and society without conflict.

II. ROOT CASE OF CONFLICT

The failure to meet fundamental human needs is often at the root of conflict. John Burton⁵ (1990) introduced the basic human needs theory, which highlights the essential requirements that every human being must have for survival and well-being. These needs can be categorized into three main types: material (such as food, shelter, healthcare, and employment freedom from want), cultural (including the right to practice religion, language, and other cultural expressions), and social needs (which encompass respect, dignity, and freedom from fear). Additionally, the need for a predictable and secure environment plays a crucial role in human well-being. These needs are considered universal, non-negotiable, and fundamental to human development and social stability. When these needs go unmet, the resulting frustration can lead to conflict.

Once again, sensual pleasures are seen as the root cause of every conflict. As per the Buddha’s teaching, disputes may occur at different levels, such as among kings (*Rājānopi Rājūhi Vivādenti*), religious groups (*Brāhmaṇāpi*

² What is conflict theory? Investopedia. (2022): 311.

³ The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi - Vols. 1, (1958 - 1994): 422.

⁴ The root cause of arising conflicts, (2015): 32.

⁵ Human needs theory (1990): 53.

Brāhmaṇehi Vivadanti), among villagers (*Gapahatipigahapatihi Vivadanti*), and within the same family (*Mātāpi Puttena Vivadati*)⁶ As per the Buddhist teaching there are six roots of conflict. Namely;

- (1) Angry and aggressive
- (2) Contemptuous and insolent
- (3) Envious and misery (*Issa – maccariya*)
- (4) Fraudulent and deceitful
- (5) Evil wishes and wrong views
- (6) He holds his view tenaciously

Buddha explains the two concepts that need to be practiced in our lives. This concept is very important to protect peace in society. The conflict arises due to the lack of two characteristics of mind; the first one is “*Kāmehivisamyuttam*,” that is, departing from the sensual pleasure, and the second is “*Vitatanham*,” which means eliminating the craving. As per the Buddha’s teaching, when we eliminate desires, war does not arise in the world. Conflict means a serious disagreement or clash, generally a protracted one, among individuals or groups of people. Sometimes, this clash arises out of incompatible and different goals among the parties that see the other as an obstacle or a competitor in achieving their own goal.⁷ Other times, it arises out of a different thought process, attitude, priorities, perception, and interests, even though both parties aim at the same goal.⁸ Conflicts can happen at a macro-level (i.e., among nation-states, ethnic groups, etc.) or a micro-level (within a family, an organization, etc.). Mahakaccāna Thero explains that when people have wrong views and cravings, it will be the reason for the occurrence of self-identification or ego. Because of self-identification or ego, There are another seven kinds of latent causes of conflict.

- *Kāmaraga* - The latent tendency to sensual pleasure
- *Patiga* - The latent tendency to aversion
- *Ditti* - The latent tendency to speculative opinion
- *Vicikiccā* - The latent tendency to speculative doubt
- *Māna* - The latent tendency to conceit and pride
- *Bhavarāga* - The latent tendency to crave continuous existence.
- *Avija* - The latent tendency to ignorance

Due to these 7 kinds of latent there arise taking up rods and bladed weapons, arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive tale-bearing, and false speech. When people eliminate this kind of latent and righteously cultivated mind, conflict can be stopped gradually. The *Madhupinḍikasutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha’s teaching, pointed out that people normally

⁶ How did the Buddha deal with conflicts during his life? A Theravāda perspective (2021): 86.

⁷ Conflict and conflict management 8 (6), (2013): 7.

⁸ Defining conflict and making choices about its management: 17(2), (2006): 87 - 95.

experience two ways, attraction and repulsion. People try to take ownership of attractive things and make quarrels and conflict to get everything. On the other hand, they repulsed unlike things. Through these dislikes arise the conflict.⁹ People go to battle and kill each other because of desire, lust, or craving. Buddhism does not admire temporary solutions for conflict or war.” *Unoloke Atiththo Thanha Daso*” the people of this world are slaves of the craving and it is difficult to give up¹⁰ that leads to a situation of conflict. However, as per the Buddha’s teaching, until someone attains the status of *Nibbāna*, the craving could be eliminated.

Digha Nikāya – *The Cakkavattisutta* and *the Kūṭadantasutta* mention conflict and war. According to this *sutta*, the major causes of the conflict or trying to maximize resources and material wealth. When people try to collect material wealth automatically competition between people or groups of people or countries. The competition gradually turns into conflicts. However, as per the Buddha’s teaching, people should think about the impermanence of material things, and when people think about the impermanence of everything, they do not engage in any conflict. The *Sakkapañhasutta* of *Samyutta Nikāya*, King of God Sakka, came to the Buddha and asked Gods and men always to plan to live without quarrelling and fighting each other. But they always tend to quarrel and fight. Buddha explained that two kinds of psychological reasons are related to the generated conflict;

- *Issa* - envy, dislike, aversion, jealousy
- *Maccariya* - misery

The concept of “*Issa*” is defined as dissatisfaction with others’ achievement of goals. Today, many people are very jealous of others’ improvement. “*Maccariya*” is unlike sharing knowledge with others (*Sakkapañhasutta*, *Samyutta Nikāya*). When considering reasons for war or conflicts, craving and pride are the basic reasons. Buddha’s advice to his followers eliminates pride from their lives. Many social conflicts, civil conflicts, and armed conflicts arise due to bad leadership of the rulers. The Buddha’s teaching for the leaders is to take away from prejudices.

Chanda, Dosa, Bhaya, Moha - Desire, Hatred, Fear, Illusion. The leader should not be concerned with facts such as gender, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, and nationality when they are going to make decisions. They always should get the right decisions without considering any other facts. Normally, in society, we can see powerful people who engage in the wrong business. They take political security and evade the law. Then, normal people do not trust the court, police, and political leaders. Sometimes, they get political power and do illegal things. In many countries, war arises due to the unreasonable treatment of other nations and religions. When one nation or religion takes more facilities based on their nation and

⁹ *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 108.

¹⁰ *Majjhima Nikāya* II (1977): 54.

religion and another puts away without giving any respect because of their nation or religion at the kind of occasion civil conflict arises.

III. BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In order to permanently solve conflicts, Buddhism would suggest that these unwholesome states be uprooted through mindfulness of our habitual behavioral patterns. Buddha tried to solve conflicts both by inviting people to analyze their mind process and by using external means of conflict resolution such as arbitration, mediation, and discussion to reach a consensus.¹¹ “*Jayamveram pasahathi, dukkham sethi parājito*”. The winner gets the hatred from the others, the loser suffers due to his loss. Both parties of the war suffer in their mind. According to Buddhism, through battle, no one wins. The Buddha emphasizes the importance of winning their mind from defilements. Buddhism is essentially a peaceful tradition; nothing in Buddhist scripture gives any support to the use of violence as a way to resolve conflict. Buddha points out, I do not make conflict fight with others “*Na Kenaci Loke Viggayha Tittati*”.¹² This is a very philosophical idea. Buddhism spread throughout the world very peacefully. There is no bloodshed in the history of Buddhism compared to other religions¹³. If a person or group of persons can protect their words, activities, and minds, there will never be conflict. So according to Buddhist teaching, we should protect the above three doors carefully. Then, we have to eliminate the conflict in the world.

The prevention of conflict is the wish of all people. According to the present global issue is a conflict which the Buddha’s teaching can provide suitable action for prevention of the conflict or war. Dhammapada mentioned that “*Nahi verani – sammanthida kudachanam. Averenaca samnathi – esa dhamma sananthano*”. Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world but it is appeased only by loving-kindness that is an ancient law.¹⁴ Hatred is never appeased by hatred. Hatred is appeased by non-hatred. That is the Buddhist teaching about hatred. If all people practice this attitude, people will not have conflict with others. Buddha advises followers to practice *samacariya* - harmonious behavior with others, which leads to inner peace among the others. The Buddha’s teaching is specially for preventing and stopping war and conflicts that occur inside of the human mind in society. What does the ascetic teach? What does he explain? (*Kimvādisamano, kimakhāki’ ti*). Asked by the King Dhandapani¹⁵ This teaching is such that one does not have conflict with anyone in this world with its Gods, *Māras*, and *Brahmās*, this population

¹¹ How did the Buddha deal with conflicts during his life? A Theravāda perspective (2021): 88.

¹² *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 110.

¹³ *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 414: “*Pacca Vekkhithwa Paccavekkithwa Kāyena Kammā Kātabbam, Pacca Vekkhithwa Paccavekkithwa Vācāya Dhammam Kātabbam, Pacca Vekkhithwa Paccavekkithwa Manasā Dhammam Kātabbam*”.

¹⁴ *Dhammapada* (1995): 02.

¹⁵ *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 110.

with its ascetics and *brahmins*, its gods and humans, and also it is such that perceptions do not underlie the Brahmin who lives detached from sensual pleasures, without doubting, stripped of worry, and rid of craving for rebirth in this or that state.

In the *Sāmaṅgāma Sutta*, the Buddha speaks about seven ways to settle disputes:

Ananda, there are these seven kinds of settlements of litigation. For the settlement and pacification of litigations whenever they arise: removal of litigation by confrontation may be provided, removal of litigation on account of memory may be provided, removal of litigation on account of past insanity may be provided, the effecting of acknowledgment of an offense, the opinion of the majority, the pronouncement of bad character against someone, and covering over with grass.

The *Raṭṭhapālasutta* – *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Dīgha Nikāya* – *The Cakkavattisutta* and the *Kūṭadantasutta* mention conflict and war. According to this *sutta*, the major cause of conflict or war is natural resources and material wealth; when people try to collect material wealth automatically competition between people or groups of people or countries arise. The competition gradually turns into a conflict. However, the Buddha advises people to think about the impermanence of material things. When people think about the impermanence of everything, they do not engage in any conflict. *Dhammapada* says, “*Yo sahaṣṣam sahaṣṣena – sangame manuse jine. Ekanca jeyya attānam – sace sangamauttamo*”. The man who won himself from the craving is the greater winner than the one who won the thousands of war against the others.¹⁶ Buddha always advises people to search about themselves not about others. When people search for others, they tend to start to conflict with others. Buddha always advises people to search for themselves and eliminate weak points. Once the Buddha was under a tree and meditating. Suddenly, a group of princesses came to the Buddha and asked, “*Bhanthe*, did you see the women who ran from here?” Buddha preached to them to search themselves, not others. Further *Dhammapada*: *Naparesam vilomāni – naparesam katākatam. Attanāwa awekkeyya – katani akatanica*. “Do not think about what others have done or done, think about what you did or did not do.” In normal life, people always think about the other’s responsibilities and duties which we have to do to others. It is also the reason for conflict. So, the Buddha advises people to identify their responsibilities and duties and do them properly.¹⁷ In Buddhism, the advice to Buddhist followers is to spread loving kindness without hating their enemies. In the *Kakacūpamasutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, Buddha admires a monk who spreads loving kindness to thieves who cut his body parts and severely tortured him.¹⁸

“From that day until now, war has begun in the mind of man. Therefore, peace must be established in the minds of men.” This is stated in the Constitution of the United Nations. This, which is considered a modern idea in recent history,

¹⁶ *Dhammapada* (1995): 28.

¹⁷ *Dhammapada* (1995): 14.

¹⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 122.

was also included in the teachings of the Buddha in the distant past. That is, the mind is the source of both good and evil. First, one must establish mental peace within oneself. Only then can one establish mental peace among others.

Everyone wants to live in peace. They talk about it in public. But the question is to what extent they are ready to do so in their hearts. Buddhism shows that the root of this is greed. When their good comes before the common good, people sometimes have to take up arms in hatred and competition. Then, those who have not taken up arms also have to take up arms to confront those who have taken up arms. Conflicts that arise at a micro level can sometimes develop into genocidal wars. Buddhism considers mental peace as the foundation. First, peace can be created within oneself and secondly within the family. For this, one must get rid of prejudices such as greed, hatred, and delusion. According to Western theories of conflict resolution, there are four types.

- (1) Mediation
- (2) Decisive mediation
- (3) Executive mediation
- (4) Informal mediation

It is also clear from Buddhism that this method was used long before these principles were identified and named. The *Veludvāreyyasutta* states that one should look at others from the perspective of oneself¹⁹. Accordingly, what is unpleasant to oneself is unpleasant to others. What is unpleasant to oneself is unpleasant to others. In the *Samyukta Nikāya*, those who dedicate themselves to society are classified as follows.

- (1) The person who protects himself and protects others
- (2) The person who protects others and protects himself

The first is the person who practices and develops his virtues and practices them in society, works hard, and spreads them. The second is the person who acts with great kindness, non-violence, compassion, and kindness towards society. It is wrong to carry out one's duties in a way that harms others. Individual actions should be beneficial to society.

The *Vāseṭṭhasutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta* describes Vasettha's attempt to subtly refute the argument advanced by the brahmin Bharadvaja that the high and low of man are determined by race. The *Assalāyana Sutta* elaborates on casteism and its discipline. Accordingly, no one is superior or inferior to anyone else based on class, caste, religion, or race²⁰, and to create conflicts based on these differences is completely contrary to Buddhist principles.

Buddhism teaches that human liberation lies within man himself and is rooted in the mind. The basic principles of Buddhism are the Middle Way and the Noble Eightfold Path. Accordingly, directing human life towards oppressive goals based on passionate, extremist ideas and anger is a path contrary to

¹⁹ *Samyutta Nikāya* V (1976): 342.

²⁰ *Majjhima Nikāya* II (1977): 147.

Buddhism. It seems that early Buddhism valued simplicity, prosperity, and free tolerance. Accordingly, the content of Gautama Buddha's sermons does not consider caste, ethnic, inferior, or superior distinctions. A rich discussion on the futility of caste distinctions is given in the *Assalāyana Sutta*, belonging to the *Majjhīma Nikāya*.

The Buddha asks, "To what caste does a child born from the union of a Kshatriya prince and a Brahmin woman belong?" Accordingly, the Buddha pointed out that the Brahmin view of being considered superior to others was futile.

The *Vāseṭṭhasutta* also states that the diversity seen in human society is not due to any other specific reason but is shaped by the activities of life carried out by humans. It is considered immoral in Buddhism to accumulate wealth and act with the desire to enjoy happiness alone. It has been stated on many occasions that all natural resources, as well as resources generated by humans, should be considered as common property and should be used jointly. Once the Buddha came to know that a monk named Upananda was accumulating robes received from laypeople and was making a profit from them. Then, the Buddha called the monk Upananda and gave him valuable advice. That is, "It is a vain thought to be attached to perishable clothes. All things are perishable. It is bad for you to hoard robes while there are monks who are struggling to procure robes. Distribute all those robes generously among monks who are struggling to procure robes." This is stated in the *Dhammapadattakata*.

It is a fundamental social principle of Buddhism that it is not appropriate to live solely for one's own economic and social advancement and that common goals should be considered important. Forestry, fruit cultivation, building roads and bridges, providing water tanks, and providing shade for the head are all seen in the *Vanaropasutta*²¹ as actions that increase merit both day and night.

*"ārāmaropā vanaropā - ye janā setukārakā;
papañca udapānañca - ye dadanti upassayaṃ.
tesaṃ divā ca ratto ca - sadā puññaṃ pavaḍḍhati;
dhammatṭhā sīlasampannā - te janā saggaḡāmino"*ti.

"Planters of parks or groves, those who build a bridge, a drinking place and well, and those who give monastic quarters. Their merit always grows by day and by night. Firm in principle, accomplished in conduct, they are going to heaven."

The *Aggaññasutta* provides a rich analysis of the factors that lead to the limitation of common resources and the suffering of the poor due to the competition that arose to use resources that were meant for common use for personal use, the emergence of 'the strong by exploiting the weak', the taking of other people's things for selfish gain, and the marking and dividing of common property for the sake of stability.

²¹ *Samyutta Nikāya* I (1991): 33.

Buddhism cannot be limited to a limited group. The importance of kings being righteous has often been emphasized, considering that when kings are unrighteous, the people of the country will follow the same path. The *Cakkavattisutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* in the Sutta Pitaka is a good example of this. It explains that the king should ensure the economic prosperity, security, and harmony of all the citizens by governing the country according to righteous principles²².

Accordingly, people of different castes, monks, brahmins, and animals should be protected. Unrighteous actions should be stopped. The poor should be given wealth and fed. The essence of these principles is seen in the *Sakkvitivata*. The anarchic situation that arises when this concept is deviated from is also well described in the *Cakkavattisutta*. It is like this.

And so, mendicants, from not providing money to the penniless, poverty, theft, swords, and killing became widespread. When killing was widespread, lying became widespread. And for the sentient beings among whom lying was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 40,000 years had children who lived for 20,000 years. And so, mendicants, from not providing money to the penniless, poverty, theft, swords, and killing became widespread. When killing was widespread, lying became widespread. And for the sentient beings among whom lying was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 40,000 years had children who lived for 20,000 years.

A king of the world is endowed with five wisdoms. They are as follows:

- (1) The wisdom of immediately understanding good and evil
- (2) The wisdom of governing the country according to the Dhamma
- (3) The wisdom of acting within one's limits
- (4) The wisdom of acting according to the occasion
- (5) The wisdom of fulfilling the wishes of one's subjects

The *Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovādasutta* states that the ruler of a country is like a charioteer, and if a leader leads the chariot in the wrong direction, the entire line of chariots will go in the wrong direction, and if the ruler of a country is unrighteous, the governed will also be unrighteous²³. Thus, a large amount of advice given by the Buddha to kings for good governance is found in Buddhist literature. In the *Kūṭadantasutta*, it is stated as follows:

“A righteous ruler gives wealth to the poor and supports them in starting businesses. If any citizen of the country is interested in farming and cattle breeding, he should be encouraged to do so. He should be provided with the necessary funds and equipment. A person interested in trading should be provided with facilities for that. Those who are interested in public service should be given rice salaries. When such benefits are provided, the citizens

²² *Dīgha Nikāya* III (1976): 58.

²³ *Majjhima Nikāya* I (1979): 392.

serve the country without being oppressed. Due to all these activities, the country prospers. The dangers of thieves and enemies disappear. People are happy with each other. They are friendly. They open their doors with their children and spend time happily and happily²⁴.” Accordingly, the existence of a good state should ensure economic prosperity, cultural revival, democratic values, and a harmonious existence.

There can be only one truth. There cannot be several truths. It is stated in the *Suttanipata* in the *Chulavaggasutta* that there cannot be a second truth. It goes like this: “*Ehi ekamhi sāncchaṃ na duthiyamānhi*.” Therefore, there cannot be different truths for different groups. Buddhist philosophy does not allow for the argument that ‘this is the absolute truth, and what is stated by other groups and individuals is false.’ Even if the truth is one, the paths to reaching the truth may differ depending on the identity and individual nature of the individual and the group of individuals. Therefore, there cannot be any obstacle to individuals and groups with different potentialities and capabilities in making decisions about the truth.

An occasion when the Buddha discussed this issue about the lay and the Sangha is mentioned in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*. While the Buddha was living in the Gijukula forest, the king of Magadha, Ajāsatta, wanted to attack the Vajjis and destroy them. He then sent his minister, the Magadha minister, to meet the Buddha to inform him of his intention. When the minister of Magadha met the Buddha, the Buddha addressed the venerable Ananda as follows:²⁵

“Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet in harmony, live in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis meet in harmony, live in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.

Then, addressing the Buddha, a Brahmin named Vassakara said that they could not be defeated by war, except by talking and changing their minds or by creating divisions among their friends. The virtue of meeting in large numbers, discussing, deciding, and dispersing in harmony was the basis for strengthening the Vajji economically and socially.

The Buddha appeared in the world at a time when there were many ideological conflicts and armed conflicts in India. It was a time when various

24 *Dīgha Nikāya* I (1975): 127.

25 *Dīgha Nikāya* II (1966): 72.

religious groups, surrounded by disciples, believed that only their religion was correct. Invasions, armed conflicts, and killings for the sake of kingdoms were not uncommon. The *Mahāparinibbānasutta* shows how the idea of King Ajatasattu to invade the Vajji country changed from the Buddha's words. One occasion when the Buddha intervened to stop a terrible bloodbath is mentioned in the Kunala Jataka, which belongs to the Jataka.

There was a beautiful river that flowed between the city of Kapilavastu and the city of Koliya. It was called Rohini. A great dispute arose between the Sakyas and the Koliyas regarding the ownership of the water of this river. Both these groups obtained water for agriculture from the same dam that was built across the river. The root of the conflict was this dam. The dispute gradually reached a violent end. The result was that the armies of both sides gathered on both sides of the river with weapons. The Buddha sensed that a fierce armed conflict was going to break out near the Rohini River. The Buddha went to the place of conflict.

"What is the purpose of your gathering here?" asked the Buddha.

"Venerable sir, for the sake of war."

"What is the cause of war?"

"Water."

"How much is water worth?"

"It is not much, venerable sir."

"How much is land worth?"

"Its value is priceless."

"What is the value of soldiers who are fighting?"

"Venerable sir, their value is priceless."

"Then, kings, why do you kill more valuable soldiers for worthless water?"

The long discussion that began thus ended with the kings deciding to give up war. The Buddha, citing the facts in the *Cakkavattisutta* about the bad results of the use of weapons, recommends three weapons that can protect both himself and society. These are education, leisure, and wisdom²⁶. The Buddha outlines six key points that are important for creating a society that preserves peace and coexistence without armed conflict. They are as follows.

- (1) Engaging in loving - kindness physical actions.
- (2) Using loving - kindness words.
- (3) Engaging in loving - kindness thoughts.
- (4) Sharing what one receives equally among those with whom one associates.
- (5) Living a moral life.
- (6) Acting based on a correct worldview.

²⁶ *Dīgha Nikāya* III (1976): 59.

An incident recorded in the *Mahavaggapaliyā* of the *Vinayapitaka* is as follows. A disagreement arose among the monks regarding disciplinary action to be taken for a minor offense committed by a certain monk. To resolve this disagreement, the Buddha gave a piece of advice. It is as follows.

There is harmony among kings who crush the bones of others, kill people, take away cattle, horses, and wealth, and plunder the country and kingdom. Why is there no harmony among you? The basis for this question is the story of King Dighayu. King Brahmadatta invaded the kingdom of Prince Dighayu, killed his soldiers, plundered his property, and even killed Prince Dighayu's parents. Prince Dighayu had more compassion for King Brahmadatta than compassion for him.

He set a great example by behaving without hatred among hostile people. However, even by giving these examples, it was difficult to eliminate the disagreement that had arisen between the monks who were Vinayadara and the monks who were Dharmadhara. After all efforts failed, the Buddha decided to go to the Parillya forest. Before taking leave, he said:

‘When everyone shouts together, no one thinks he is a fool. The same is true of the monks’ division. In the Pariliya forest, the Buddha met the great Arahant Anuruddha. ‘I feel more comfortable living in the forest than among monks who live in discord,’ the Buddha said to the great Arahant Anuruddha.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, conflict is a pervasive aspect of human existence, arising from differences in beliefs, needs, and values. It manifests in various forms, from individual and interpersonal conflicts to broader societal and international disputes. Buddhism offers valuable insights into conflict prevention and resolution by emphasizing inner peace, mindfulness, and the elimination of unwholesome mental states. The key principles include practicing loving-kindness, understanding impermanence, and focusing on one's responsibilities rather than others. Buddhism promotes nonviolence and encourages individuals and societies to seek harmony and consensus through peaceful means, ultimately aiming for the cessation of conflict and the cultivation of inner and outer peace.

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GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF DURABLE PEACE: INDISPENSABILITY OF SAMMĀ DIṬṬHI

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Abstract:

The study presents the role of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (right view) in establishing sustainable peace globally. It argues that lack of proper understanding of peace is the root cause of conflict, and the solution lies in cultivating the mind according to the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism. It proposes a comprehensive strategy, including comprehensive Buddhist education and meditation practice, to cultivate a healthy spiritual culture. The findings highlight the importance of a correct understanding of human nature and the mind-body connection. The study asserts that by cultivating the mind and practicing right view, we can create a more peaceful and prosperous world for all, citing historical examples and Buddhist principles to support its argument.

Keywords: *Buddhism, global challenge, durable peace, sammā diṭṭhi.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace has been deliberated since humans settled into communities centuries ago, as they advanced from being nomadic cave dwellers and hunters and adopted a sedentary agricultural life. As communities interfaced, misunderstanding and armed conflicts occurred, from time to time. Various thoughts, ideas and concepts on how to ensure peaceful coexistence between and among communities were postulated. Early peace efforts focused on negotiating a settlement of differences and facilitating future intercourse. A conducive environment was necessary to ensure the safety of designated representatives to move unharmed and negotiate an amicable settlement, without coercion or the threat or use of force. The need to resolve conflict and ensure its future non-occurrence formed the origins of today's sophisticated

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art and craft of diplomacy and conduct of international relations.¹ The quest to secure peaceful environments persists around the world, but the painful truth is that durable peace has remained as elusive as ever. Conflicts have become more complex and compound in the so-called modern world. This alarming global trend has been heightened by several factors. Besides increasing globalization and the consequent shrinking of the world so to speak, several other factors have raised their ugly destructive heads. These include the frightful abuse of science and technology in the theatre of warfare, which have escalated the destructive dimensions of conflicts. A proactive preventive pathway as provided in the *Buddha's teaching*, based on the sublime teaching of *sammā ditṭhi* or right understanding as enshrined in the noble eightfold path, thus merits high priority. The Pāli word "*ditṭhi*" has generally been translated as view, belief, opinion, or a way of seeing and is generally about the ultimate spiritual doctrine of the four noble truths the Supremely Self-Enlightened Buddha had unravelled for the benefit of all humankind, other living things and Mother Nature. In the context of mundane problems, issues and challenges, however, such as the challenge of durable peace; the Buddha's teaching of right understanding can be rationally applied.² This writer contends that a viable framework for securing durable peace globally can, and indeed must be gainfully formulated and implemented based on right understanding of the salient conditions and causal factors, especially the root cause of the phenomenon. The application of the Buddha's teaching of right understanding for securing durable peace will, beyond question, benefit all humankind, other living beings, and our one and only, planet Earth. It is worthwhile at the outset to remind world leaders that the atomic bombs unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were truly unnecessary as attested by numerous documentary evidences. They prove that there was no justification for inflicting such unspeakable deaths and horrific harm to millions of innocent Japanese since Japan was about to give up on the Pacific War.³ Another ignoble truth is that the horrifying destructive capability of the two atomic bombs tested on the Japanese had tragically paved the way for the production of more diabolical nuclear warheads by major powers. This tragic episode in human history has consequently triggered a vicious arms race and a vulgar eagerness among power-obsessed countries for membership into the satanic nuclear club.⁴ Even as this august gathering of peace-loving and peace-promoting leaders from among the *Buddha's teaching* fraternity, from around the world, deliberate on promoting greater understanding, goodwill, compassion and peace; teams of military experts in several countries are preoccupied with further upgrading and expanding their nuclear arsenal. They do so despite knowing full well that their dastardly abuse of science and technology is being pursued at the very risk of destroying humankind. Purely to illustrate the point, though it sounds

¹ Nicolson (1965): p. 56 - 80.

² Obeyesekere (2016): p. 1 - 9.

³ Cunningham (2022): p. 77 - 9.

⁴ Bunting (2014): 103 - 5.

shocking on first earshot, the avowed objective of possessing superior nuclear firepower is simply to possess the capability of inflicting maximum destruction of critical infrastructures of adversaries. The singular devilish objective also shockingly bespoke of the outright annihilation of fellow human beings. The nuclear arms race aside, the list of recent conflicts and wars between and among peoples around the world is already lengthy. Recent gruesome instances of wars and human suffering which readily come to mind are the ignominious war inflicted on Vietnam by the United States of America (the US), the bloody conflicts in Ireland, Afghanistan, Turkey, the Korean Peninsula, Syria, Sri Lanka, Kampuchea, Iran, Iraq, Falklands, Sudan, Myanmar, Yemen, Angola, Libya, Somalia, Mali, Venezuela, South Africa, Nigeria and the current wars unfolding in West Asia. These armed conflicts once again underline the dire need for humankind to urgently formulate a framework for durable peace.⁵ It is propitious for us to recall that the rationale for the formation of the United Nations was for countries to practise tolerance and unitedly maintain international peace and security for the common good of humankind. The global environment in our so-called modern world, however, is a far cry from the noble aspiration of the founding fathers of the United Nations.⁶ The brutal truth is that the international community of nations continues to be markedly impacted by conflicts and wars, both domestically and in the international arena. The madness of resorting to armed conflict must surely be arrested and eliminated forthwith. It is indeed a gross understatement to say that more than ever before in the history of humankind, we must ensure that durable peace prevails globally. Yet durable peace has remained as elusive as ever, despite the high importance this urgently demands. The failure on the part of leaders from all sectors and sections of society to secure durable peace has completely disheartened our younger generation. They have taken upon themselves the task that adult leaders are to do. Increasing numbers of youths have organised themselves under various international fora to establish a peaceful global environment and ensure progress and sustainable happiness for themselves and future generations who are yet to come. As concerned global citizens, and, in the true spirit of the insightful, timeless, universally relevant *Buddha's teaching* (Teachings of the Buddha, this author's preferred term than the conventional coinage, Buddhism); it is incumbent on *Dhammaputris* and *Dhammaputras* (this author's preferred term than the conventional coinage, Buddhists) to take the lead in actualizing this urgent global challenge. The proposed leadership is all the more compelling and justifiable because insightful, proactive strategies are embedded in the sublime *Buddha's teaching*.⁷

⁵ Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. *International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights: A Course on the Principles of International Law*. Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law, 2021. <https://www.geneva-academy.ch>.

⁶ United Nations (1945): p. 1 - 2.

⁷ Kumarasei (2000): p. 67.

II. HEIGHTENED RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

It is pertinent to draw attention to the fact that the global challenge of durable peace has been compounded by several significant, albeit rather incredibly irrational, developments in the recent past. Of all factors imaginable, the tragic situation has come about due to increasing inter-religious disharmony and religious intolerance, evidenced in several regions of the world. This tragic global trend, though incredible, is very real notwithstanding the primary thrust of religion and spirituality is the avowed promotion of greater understanding, rationalism, compassion and peace among fellow human beings. Religion, especially, is aimed at eschewing hatred, conflict, and destruction. But instead, irrationalism, animosity and outright killing of fellow human beings on religious grounds have come to roost. Such is the degeneration in our so-called modern society. One would not normally expect to envision such dangerously explosive human conflicts; especially given the unprecedented progress humankind has achieved in practically every other field of human endeavour. But truth be told, it is an undeniable fact that ever-increasing numbers of religious bigots have openly justified their propagation of hatred and advocacies of the destruction of places of worship and religious leaders, and even killing of people professing other belief systems. Further, increasing numbers of religious leaders have theorized and justified such barbaric deeds on the grounds of religious purity and other evil doctrines. Many have gone to the extent of propagating blood curdling, “Just Wars”, armed terrorism and the indiscriminate mass killing of innocent human beings. Of all justifications, these religious fanatics propagate such evil dogmas in the very name of their religion. Little do they know that their violent postulations bring ignominy to their religion and also upon themselves as leaders. One would instead expect religious leaders to be in the very forefront in championing peace, peaceful settlement of disputes and the promoting compassion, goodwill and understanding among people, regardless of differences. As a result of the propagation of warped dogmas and fanaticism, hordes of blind followers have spewed hatred instead of fostering greater understanding, harmony, and peace normally expected of religions.

III. CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

In reaction to the incredible extremist religious propagations of armed conflict, leaders from opposing quarters have advanced retaliatory counter-strategies, based on what they perceived as an inevitable, “Clash of civilizations”. According to the high-profile proponent, Samuel Huntington, (former White House Coordinator of Security Planning for the National Security), the most important distinction among peoples in contemporary times is no longer ideological, political, or economic, but difference of cultures.⁸ In line with this perception, Western Powers have justified armed counter-offensive as a key strategy of national security and defence. Their spate of retaliatory military actions has further escalated the already explosive global environment of mindless conflicts, bloodletting and all sorts of mayhem.

⁸ Huntington (1993): p. 21.

These and other unskilful thinking and resultant war-mongering advocacies, policies and misdeeds must surely be avoided forthwith, through embrace of right understanding, as taught by the Buddha. It is propitious at this juncture to remind world leaders and governments alike that the rationale for the formation of the United Nations was for countries to practise tolerance and unitedly maintain international peace and security for the common good of all humankind. The global environment in our so-called modern world, however, is a far cry from the noble aspiration of the founding fathers of the United Nations.⁹ The brutal truth is that the international community of nations is markedly impacted by conflicts and wars without relent, both domestically and in the international arena. Despite the horrific deaths and wanton destruction caused by wars for over several centuries, senseless bloody conflicts keep escalating around the world. Not a day passes without us witnessing such conflicts that are graphically portrayed via the print and electronic mass media and tele-journalism. The failure to secure durable peace is puzzling, more so given the fact that humankind has achieved remarkable progress in almost every field of human endeavour. In light of the deplorable warmongering mindsets prevailing in the world, we must frankly ask ourselves several pertinent questions: Whither durable peace? Where has humankind gone wrong? Is humankind cursed to live without durable peace? What is the true meaning of peace? Why has peace been elusive? How best are we to actualize durable peace? And so on. The answer to these and other seemingly imponderables is found in the Buddha's teaching of right understanding. As a matter of fact, right understanding is a requisite to also overcome other global problems, crises and challenges as well and not just for actualizing durable peace.

IV. ONUS OF BUDDHA'S TEACHING LEADERS

In the *Buddha's teaching*, peace is referred to as "*santi*" (inner peace and tranquillity). It is a sublime state of being mentally and spiritually at peace with oneself and the world around, and fortified with adequate understanding and forbearance in encountering discord or stress. On this thrice sacred day of the commemoration of the birth, Supreme Self-Enlightenment and *Mahā Parinibbāna* or passing away of the Buddha, it is incumbent upon this august congregation of *Buddha's teaching* leaders, to promote globally, a viable framework for durable peace, compassion, tranquillity and harmony. As taught by the Buddha, this goal of inner peace can be achieved by cultivating mindfulness, compassion and insight through *bhāvanā* or mindfulness meditation and other sublime teachings in the *Buddha's teaching*. Powered by *shraddha* (confidence as opposed to blind faith and dogmas) in this conviction, this brief expose proffers a proactive, preventive global strategy for effectively actualizing durable peace. The proffered global strategy is based on the indispensability of right understanding that is enshrined in the noble eightfold path, unravelled by the Supremely Self-Enlightened Buddha, for the benefit of all humankind. The proffered strategy is an indispensable rational, as

⁹ United Nations (1945): p. 1 - 2.

well as proactive and effective pathway to secure durable peace globally as well as overcome other challenges confronting humankind. Right understanding underlines the interdependence between humankind and all other living beings as well as the protection and safeguard of our precious mother nature on which humankind is inextricably intertwined and interdependent. There is every confidence therefore that the proactive, effective strategy proffered in this brief expose will also contribute appreciably towards addressing these and other global challenges as well.

V. PROFFERED PROACTIVE, PREVENTIVE GLOBAL STRATEGY

This writer contends that an underlying cause of conflicts around the world is the lack, and in some environments, even the absence, of right understanding of what peace is. The horrendous global trend of incessant conflicts and wars would not have arisen, if as pinpointed in the *Buddha's teaching*, a wholesome mental culture was cultivated among people and right understanding of the phenomenon of peace prevailed in societies. Based on this truism, the proactive cultivation of a wholesome mental culture among citizens should be adopted globally as an invaluable, universal ethos for ensuring durable peace. Having identified the lack of right understanding of peace as the underlying reason for the failure to ensure durable peace, it logically follows that our inquiry must first establish what exactly the phenomenon of peace is. Our investigation will then be in line with the Buddha's teaching of right understanding underlined in the noble eightfold path. Accordingly, it will proffer a proactive, comprehensive and effective strategy to overcome the global challenge. These and other contextual points are outlined as we progress in this expose. A wide range of subject-matters are invariably entailed in the proffered global strategy. Limitation on wordage, however, places constraints on elaborating all subject matters related to the proposition.

5.1. Misperception and misconception of peace

It is entirely logical that to secure peace, we must first have a correct perception of peace per se. An underlying misperception of peace held by most people, including leaders from various sections of society, is limited to a physical or tangible perspective. That is to say, peace is perceived simply as a situation where there is no conflict or war. This means that only if war is absent, peace exists and vice versa. The phenomena of peace and war consequently are perceived as two sides of the same coin. This merely physical or tangible perception of peace is erroneous and continues to remain an underlying hurdle for humankind to actualize durable peace. The fundamental misperception has also given rise to people perceiving peace as a phenomenon that falls outside of themselves and not one that is to be actualized from within oneself. As such, peace is looked upon as someone else's responsibility, with little or nothing to do with oneself, which regretfully implies that peace does not demand everyone's commitment and effort. The erroneous conceptualisation of peace, viewed through the prism of the physical manifestation of conflict, is entrenched among world leaders as well as governments and administrations around the world who continue to perceive the phenomenon of peace in the

circumscribed connotation. Whereas right understanding of peace, as taught by the Buddha, perceives peace to be experienced from within oneself and is not merely as the physical attributes of the absence of war. This holistic right understanding of peace thus compels one, to first and foremost, be at peace within oneself.¹⁰ A major reason for the underlying misperception of peace is because human beings are acculturized from birth to perceive life experiences, phenomena, issues, problems, etc. from a narrow, physical perspective. As such, only symptoms of these are perceived. The underlying conditions and causal underpinnings, and above all, the root cause is consequently overlooked. As such, the manifestations of the problem of peace may be addressed, but its root cause, which is quite critical to overcome naturally, persists. It is also to be recognised that misperception of peace has been inadvertently entrenched in the minds of most people due largely to drawbacks in contemporary secular education systems, which is essentially based on cognitive learning or rote learning. As such, peace continues to be taught through the circumscribed cognitive prism of the absence of war. This in turn further deepens the underlying misperception of peace. This vicious circle of the misperception of peace must therefore be addressed frontally. Moreover, just as the term betrays, cognitive learning manifests through the cognition of tangible subject-matters as they are easily recognised through their physical attributes. Aside from being the lowest mode of learning and teaching, cognitive learning does not incorporate the all-important elements of critical questioning, dispassionate inquiry, objective investigation, and evaluation, etc. The underlying misperception of peace is to be rectified by incorporating, what this writer terms as, holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy, into secular education systems as elaborated as we progress.

5.2. Overcoming bereftness of right understanding

Ad hoc, piecemeal measures to achieve durable peace will continue to prove unsatisfactory unless the depth of right understanding of the phenomenon of peace is squarely addressed. The Buddha's teaching of right understanding is indispensable to overcome any problem issues or challenge confronting humankind and not just securing durable peace. Moreover, the insightful teaching of right understanding is universally applicable, irrespective of time and geography. A diagnostic examination of peace will clearly establish the underlying conditions and causal factors for humankind's failure to secure durable peace. The Buddha had pinpointed that all phenomena are caused by conditions and causal factors and not by any External Power or an Almighty Supreme Being as many religious teachings insisted. This penetrative understanding of cause and conditions of phenomena is further reinforced in the Buddha's teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda*, that is, the fundamental reality of dependent origination and cause and effect.¹¹

¹⁰ Juichiro (2016): 9.

¹¹ Thanissaro Bhikkhu: (1997): p. 1.

5.3. The Buddha's holistic perception of peace

It is worthwhile here to draw attention to a major failing among leaders to possess a right understanding of the phenomenon of peace. The Buddha had underlined that all phenomena are caused by conditions and causal factors and not by an omnipresent external power or omnipotence. Being that it is unfortunately propagated by many religious leaders. His insightful perception underscores that peace extends well beyond the commonly perceived physical parameter of a mere absence of conflict and war. Equally significant is the Buddha's holistic perception of peace that is to be nurtured internally, that is, firstly within oneself. It is to be noted that the Buddha's holistic perception of peace had forestalled a bloody war which was about to flare up between the Sakyas and the Koliyas who were both related to him through his paternal and maternal royal lineages respectively. Their armies had assembled to wage war against each other over the waters of the Rohiṇī river, which both kingdoms shared and valued highly for their respective economies. The Buddha transformed the highly charged attitude of the two warring parties. He pacified them by advising them to transform their perception of their conflict by advising that the blood they were about to shed is thicker than the waters of the Rohiṇī river over which they had rallied to kill each other. The wisdom encapsulated in the Buddha's timely counsel at once struck a dramatic realisation in both warring kingdoms. A bloody war was thus timely averted by the transformation of the mind of the Sakyas and Koliyas.¹² Over the centuries the Buddha's holistic concept of peace became entrenched in many Asian civilizations. In several Asian cultures, this humanistic thinking of common heritage has been translated into the concept of villagers, "sharing water from a common well". This holistic mindset also explains the viable treaties between Asian nation states over contested territories, such as for example between Thailand and Malaysia in jointly exploiting the offshore crude oil resource in the overlapping Gulf of Thailand sea-bed. The Buddha's holistic perception of peace was also graphically harnessed in modern times in international fora. Regrettably, however, world leaders have failed to grasp the significance of the Buddha's *holistic* perception of peace. They continue to perceive peace along the parameters of narrow selfish interest at the expense of the larger interest of the common welfare of humankind and Mother Nature. A classic illustration of the profound impact of the Buddha's holistic perception of peace in the conduct of international relations and diplomacy is one that dramatically reverberated the deliberations at the San Francisco Treaty of 1951. It will be recalled that the international conference was convened by the victorious powers to extract maximum penalties against Japan for committing, what they had arbitrarily defined, as Japan's commitment of war crimes. The victorious powers were bent on severely punishing Japan by extracting maximum penalties as spoils of their victory in the Pacific War. Their leaders insisted on demanding optimal war reparations, which included imposing drastic economic penalties and

¹² Kumarasei (2009): p. 192.

even the partitioning of Japan into smaller entities. But for Sri Lanka's timely enlightened intervention, Japan would have been severely punished and would not have progressed peacefully to become an independent, successful and highly progressive, culturally steeped nation which it is highly respected today. Though only a small island, but with full confidence in the Sublime Buddha's teaching, the Sri Lankan Delegation ardently pleaded to the conscience of the victorious big powers who had gathered: That compassion should be the guiding light of the Conference and not animosity, revenge, retribution and so on.¹³ To nail Sri Lanka's stance, its Delegation pleaded resolutely the Buddha's insightful teaching on peace encapsulated in the *Dhammapada* thus: "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is the eternal law."¹⁴ The profound teaching of the Buddha in ensuring durable peace, struck a sanguine chord in the minds of the leaders of the victorious nations. They reverberated the atmosphere of the international conference with compassion in place of its hitherto venom of hatred and animosity. This historic illustration should be borne in mind as a classic modern successful illustration of the indispensability of right understanding to ensure durable peace in our highly fractured world.

5.4. The noble eightfold path to wholesome life

It is prudent to proceed with our investigation by offering a brief insight into the eightfold noble path in the Buddha's teaching, more so as right understanding is a key teaching embodied in the viable strategy. Referred to in *Pāli* as *aṣṭāṅgika mārga* or *aṭṭhaṅgika magga*, the eightfold path for wholesome life sets forth a middle way, between the extremes of asceticism and sensual indulgence. The wholesome pathway comprises: (1) Correct view or accurate understanding of the nature of things, (2) Wholesome intention of avoiding thoughts of attachment, hatred, and harmful intent, (3) Right speech by refraining from committing verbal misdeeds such as lying, indulging in divisive, harsh or meaningless speech, (4) Right action of refraining from misdeeds such as killing, stealing, abuse of one's sense doors or senses, (5) Right livelihood by refraining from trades that harm other living beings, (6) Right effort by abandoning negative states of mind that have already arisen, simultaneously preventing negative states that have yet to arise and sustaining wholesome mental states that have already arisen, (7) Mindfulness or awareness of body, feelings, thought, and phenomena, and (8) Right concentration or single-mindedness of one's thoughts and actions.¹⁵

5.5. Indispensability of right understanding

Right understanding significantly is listed as the first teaching in the eightfold noble framework for living a wholesome life, that is aligned with the

¹³ Bandu de Silva (2015).

¹⁴ Buddharakkhita (1996). "Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṃ; Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano."

¹⁵ Donald, L. *Four Noble Truths*, accessed on [February 24, 2025], available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Four-Noble-Truths>.

timeless, universal law of nature and life. The sublime teaching is thus beneficial to other living beings and the protection and safeguard of our precious mother nature. The fact that it is the very first teaching in the noble eightfold path signifies the critical importance of right understanding, to any issue or challenge, be it spiritual or mundane. Furthermore, it runs through the other seven sublime teachings like a golden thread and binds them all together as an integrated framework for actualizing worldly aspirations such as overcoming a problem, issue or challenge encountered. On this auspicious United Nations Vesak Day Conference, this writer considers it propitious to remind world leaders, the Buddha's insightful holistic perception of peace that is so much wanting in our conflict-ridden world: That hatred is never appeased by hatred, but only appeased by right understanding and fostering *brahmavihāra*. This universal truth hopefully would enlighten leaders from all sections of society on the imperative of harnessing the sublime teaching of right understanding and urge them to align themselves with the universal realities of nature and life as taught by the Buddha. As inscribed in the noble eightfold path, right understanding provides a creditable basis for establishing exactly what peace is. By correctly comprehending the phenomenon of peace, we can establish the conditions and causal factors which negate durable peace. More specifically, the root cause, which this writer contends is the underlying misperception of peace will be established and progressively overcome. Similarly, other primary causal factors of conflict and wars can be identified accurately and overcome. They could be forestalled from manifesting. At the same time, we will be better able to strengthen the forces which promote understanding, harmony and peace as they serve as formidable bulwarks against conflict and war. In keeping with these cogent considerations, world leaders should reinforce the positive factors which nourish durable peace by promoting the timeless universal teachings embodied in the *Buddha's teaching*. A classic teaching premised on right understanding is the Buddha's stress for us to cultivate the four sublime states of "*brahmavihāra*" (literarily meaning heavenly abode). This is effectively achieved through mindful and diligent practice of "*bhāvanā*" or meditation practice in daily life. In a nutshell, the sublime state of *Brahmavihāra* comprises "*mettā*" (unconditional friendship), "*karuṇā*" (boundless compassion or benevolence), "*muditā*" (ultra-strict, or sympathetic joy in others' success and achievements), and "*upekkhā*" (equanimity in encountering praise or blame). Experiencing the heavenly abode of *Brahmavihāra* most certainly will greatly strengthen the bastion of peace as one's attention is placed on the *Buddha's* teaching. In particular, commitment to cultivating a wholesome mental culture, as stressed in the noble eightfold path, is practised in daily life. From the perspective of an individual, right understanding promotes the attainment of inner peace as this prevents evil thoughts and deeds from arising. Being at peace with oneself, they are at peace with others in the family, the neighbours, society as a whole and the whole world. Such a mindset operating on a national scale would mean that a nation as a whole would be at peace unto itself and with the international community of nations at large. Furthermore, the sublime state of mind arising from *Brahmavihāra* fosters appreciation of the

universal reality of interdependence between humankind and mother nature. One is thereby also committed to protect and safeguard nature all around. A universal teaching of the Buddha is enshrined in the very preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO. It categorically declares that, “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”¹⁶ This landmark universal acknowledgement by the august world organisation is an unmistakable endorsement of the significance of right understanding and the pivotal importance of cultivating a wholesome mental culture to secure durable peace. To reiterate, we must first ensure, just as the Buddha had unravelled, of first having a correct perception of peace to establish a viable pathway to actualize durable peace. It also underscores the prerequisite of cultivating a wholesome mental culture for actualizing peace. This can be effectively promoted by ensuring that human beings are truly being human and worthy of the human being nomenclature by living a wholesome life in accordance with the noble eightfold path. As pinpointed by the Buddha, the development of a wholesome mental culture is essential to foster a positive mindset among people. This can be skilfully nurtured by ensuring that they have the right understanding of themselves as human beings and on the dynamics of their mind. Right understanding of the inter-related and intertwined prerequisites for securing durable peace is crucial. This is especially so because of the fact that human beings are the principal actors or agents who determine whether peace prevails or not. It is therefore entirely logical that the cultivation of a wholesome mental culture in people be recognised as a primary undertaking for fostering peace. Sadly, however, most world leaders are unmindful of these and other insightful teachings unravelled by the Buddha that are premised on right understanding of the phenomenon of peace.

5.6. Positive outcomes of right understanding

A holistic perception of peace, based on right understanding is also bound to engender several other positive outcomes as well. A noteworthy spin off is that people would be introspective as regards their role and responsibilities in fostering peace. It is worthwhile to also evaluate the impact of the timeless universal teaching of right understanding, in respect to the importance of cultivating a wholesome mental culture through self-practice of *bhāvanā* or mindfulness meditation. In a broad sense *bhāvanā* refers to cultivating a wholesome mental culture whereby virtues such as compassion, equanimity, fortitude, wisdom and other human values are practised and internalised. *Bhāvanā* entails painstaking concentration and mindful effort akin to the Buddha’s simile of a farmer cultivating his land, to ensure possession of a super-duper mind.¹⁷ Numerous invaluable benefits are accrued by practising *bhāvanā* in daily life such as experiencing *Brahmavihāra* (heavenly abode) that is, a state of mind immersed in unlimited goodwill, compassion, empathetic

¹⁶ UNESCO. *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. UNESCO, 1945. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382500>.

¹⁷ Nyanaponika Thera (1994): p.5 - 12.

joy, and equanimity achieved by cultivating *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā*. *Brahmavihāra* brings forth tranquillity and harmonious sentiments within oneself. At the same time, unwholesome thoughts and actions are forestalled from arising in the mind. The interplay of these outcomes in turn ensures a healthy interface, goodwill, and harmony between and among peoples. These outcomes would lay the firm foundations for wholesome social structures to take root that would undoubtedly pre-empt conflict. In the process, durable peace, which is desperately wanting in our precariously fragmented world, is better ensured.

5.7. Critical cultivation of a wholesome mental culture

The universal law of nature and life as embodied in the noble eightfold path stresses the critical importance for human beings to cultivate a wholesome mental culture. Regrettably, however, the Buddha's timeless, universal teaching on the cultivation of the mind is not incorporated as a primary responsibility of all human beings. Neither is this ingrained among parents in grooming their child. Nor is this precious guideline incorporated in the system of secular education. As a result, the development of the emotional, psychological and spiritual being of persons in most societies remains greatly wanting. That is why, whilst most people know a great deal about their body and normally look after it well, they grossly fail to cultivate a wholesome mental culture that is vital for being human. In a strict sense, since they do not possess a wholesome mental culture, they do not qualify to use the human being nomenclature for they are likely to prove not being human in their thinking, attitude, speech, and behaviour. In line with the teaching of right understanding of the human being in the true meaning and sense of the term; it is recommended that the cultivation of a wholesome mental culture be promoted as a national ethos as an integral part of secular education. Such an initiative would forestall negative thoughts which could otherwise arise among people and cause serious societal challenges. Such negative outcomes are mostly inevitable, because unwholesome thoughts would manifest in unskilful actions and cause adverse consequences to oneself and most likely to others as well. The latter could well include near and dear ones in the family as often reported in the case of drug abuses. On the other hand, wholesome thoughts would foster wholesome families and sound social structures in a society. For the individual citizen, aside from pre-empting negative thoughts and consequential unwholesome outcomes, cultivation of a wholesome mental culture would ensure sustainable happiness, actualization of one's innate potential and several other invaluable benefits. Furthermore, these successes are to be acquired here and now in this very life span, irrespective of one's background. The real challenge is that most parents are not aware that the mind begins to function from the foetal state itself. Further, the challenge of cultivating a wholesome mind does not happen in the natural course of growing up in life. Rather, the process of cultivating the mind demands a deliberate and systematic mythology, guidance, training, and regular self-practice in life. This primary task has to be conscientiously pursued so that the mind is free from the negative impulses which tend to

enter it through our senses. Even these basics are neglected in most societies. For example, we continue to be taught in contemporary secular education that human beings possess five senses. However, the Buddha's teaching incisively underscores that we possess six senses referred to as sense doors. The sixth sense is the all-important and dynamic mind. Further, that the six sense doors are constantly prone to be impacted by negative impulses.

5.8. **Profound teaching of *garbha parihāra***

The process of education, guidance and self-training to cultivate a wholesome mental culture should commence when the child is conceived and begins to grow in the mother's womb. This teaching of the Buddha is referred to as *garbha parihāra* (holistic development of not only the physical growth but also the wholesome mental, psychological and spiritual formation of the unborn baby).¹⁸ Ideally, therefore, the critical proactive process of developing a wholesome mind should commence from the conception of the child in the mother's womb. The period of 10 lunar months, while the unborn baby is developing in the mother's womb, hence merits mindful attention. This is when the super-duper mind is a clean slate and referred to as a *tabula rasa*. During this period, it can be programmed into the mind as if it is a blank computer disc. The profound teaching significantly addresses both the physical development and the cultivation of the mind of the unborn baby while growing in the mother's womb. The practice of the science of *garbha parihāra* will enable expectant mothers to not just nurture the physical development of the unborn baby, but also ensure a sound emotional, psychological, mental and spiritual make up of their unborn baby. Parents are encouraged to lay the sound foundations for developing a wholesome mental culture in their child by practising the Buddha's sublime teaching of *garbha parihāra*. This insightful teaching of the Buddha underlines the holistic development of the unborn child from the time of conception in the mother's womb, which usually stretches for ten lunar months.¹⁹ From ancient India, this vital teaching of the Buddha was introduced into China from where it spread to neighbouring Northeast Asian civilizations. Since ancient times, successive Chinese Emperors set up prenatal clinics across the country for expectant mothers in keeping with the teaching of *garbha parihāra* which was referred to as *Tai Cheow*. From China, this important ingredient of learning and teaching psychology in cultivating a wholesome mind in the unborn baby while developing in the mother's womb was introduced into the Korean Peninsula and on to Japan, where it is referred to and practised as *Taikiyo*. With the peaceful spread of the *Buddha's teaching* across most of Asia, the profound teaching of *garbha parihāra* was embraced among the early civilizations in the region. We should, as a matter of priority, educate and train people on the crucial science of cultivating an unborn child's mind by diligently practising *garbha parihāra*. This will serve as a foundation of the proffered proactive strategy to secure durable peace. Modern medical

¹⁸ Kumaraseri (2009): p. 113 - 118.

¹⁹ Kumaraseri (2009): p. 135.

science and research have amply validated the Buddha's insightful teaching that the unborn baby's mind is very much alive and is being constantly conditioned by various positive and negative stimuli. The teaching of *garbha parihāra* is used extensively today by modern life coaches and personal development gurus. However, out of narrow selfish interests and to maximise profits, for example, they have claimed this insightful wisdom as an outcome of their very own self-discoveries instead of giving due credit to the Buddha. They have coined catch phrases like development of the, "foetal environment", "foetal education" and "alignment with the universe", as an integral part of their so-called new-age personal development life training programs.

5.9. Teaching of Pubbha Ācariya

This brings us to another hurdle in cultivating a wholesome mental culture. Most parents are unaware that grooming a child is not the sole responsibility of the teachers and the school. They fail to understand that education, in its true sense and meaning, demands painstaking commitment by parents as well. Parents must also be ever-mindful that the character and behaviour of caregivers and society as a whole also impact markedly on their child's mind. These impressions could well run contrary to what is taught in the classroom and undermine parental efforts to cultivate a wholesome mental culture in their child.²⁰ To reinforce the proactive undertaking to cultivate a wholesome mental culture in the unborn baby, the Buddha stressed the vital role and responsibility of parents in grooming their child. The Buddha stressed that as Pubbha Ācariya (parents are the first and foremost teachers), parents are duty bound to groom their child and cultivate her or his mind in the home, right from infancy. This parental duty will ensure their child is being groomed to be human. Even otherwise, the onus of parents to guide and groom their child springs eternal from the fact that they are the ones who brought their child into this world. It is only morally binding that they should painstakingly groom their child to cultivate a wholesome mind. But most modern-day parents have not been able to fulfil their role and responsibility as Pubbha Ācariya's. The modern scenario of nuclear families, double-income parents, the TV, iPad, and the salaried maid, etc., have replaced the vital parental role and responsibility of nurturing a wholesome mental culture in their child at home, from infancy. Often instead of a wholesome mental culture being developed, their child's mind becomes corrupted even before she or he begin formal education in a school environment. It is also to be noted here that modern scientific research has validated the Buddha's insight into learning and teaching psychology that the first five to six years of life is when a child's brain develops fastest. Thereafter its learning capacity plateaus off. This means that by the time the child attends formal school, the mind is already well-formed, formed either in a positive or negative mode. Given the degenerated modern-day social environment prevalent around the world, the chances are that the mainly negative stimuli would impact on their child's mind. The foregoing unhealthy conditions and

²⁰ Kumarasiri (2009): p. 323 - 329.

causal factors have collectively contributed to the prevalence of unwholesome social structures in most societies. Whenever the opportunity arises, parents should conscientiously fulfil their duty as Pubbha Ācariya's and groom their child in the home. The guidelines provided in the Buddha's teaching on holistic motherhood and parenting would better ensure that their child will grow up in life with a wholesome mind. Otherwise, the child's mind could well get impacted by unwholesome sensory experiences while growing up. Such parental inputs based on right understanding on nurturing the younger generation would most certainly engender wholesome social structures which doubtless will contribute towards achieving durable peace.

VI. FAILURE OF CONTEMPORARY SECULAR EDUCATION

Several cogent factors compound the major failing among human beings to be human. A major reason is that in contemporary secular education systems, the fundamental truths about the human being are not taught. Much less are these realities internalised and ingrained in the system of education. In particular, the dynamics of the mind and its intimate co-relationship with the body are very much neglected, as evidenced in most systems of secular education. Far less are these requirements internalized and ingrained in a person through guidance, training and self-practice in schools. Yet another major flaw in contemporary education systems is that we are told to be mindful of what we do as regards our speech and actions. But oddly, our upbringing and education systems do not provide a right understanding of the mind. Neither does contemporary education provide guidance and self-practice to being human. This explains why, despite receiving formal education, most people are unaware of the profound dynamics of the mind. Even fewer students are taught and trained to cultivate a wholesome mental culture that is vital for being human. Students are not guided in the all-important function and role of the mind in ensuring right thinking, attitude, human values and upright behaviour. To ensure that human beings are being human, we must ensure that from a young age, children are taught, trained, and internalized the dynamics of the mind. They should go on to be guided on self-cultivation of a wholesome mental culture through self-practice in daily life so that they are educated and trained to be human. Among other positive outcomes envisaged, they would be tranquil and at peace within themselves, as well as in interfacing with other living beings and mother nature. This recommended proactive, holistic preventive strategy based on right understanding of the human being would doubtless have better basis for ensuring durable peace.

6.1. Right understanding of education

The foregoing outline of the failure of contemporary secular education draws us to the co-related aspect of right understanding of education that is sorely lacking in many environments. The drawback in contemporary secular education has resulted in most people growing up in life without having a right understanding of their make up as human beings. This stark drawback in contemporary secular education means that it is hardly surprising that most people are not being human. A holistic approach to education would serve

as a formidable bulwark against the arising of unwholesome thoughts and consequential misdeeds in society. Right understanding of education would urge secular education systems to rightly give due emphasis on teaching, learning, and self-training on the dynamics of the mind and cultivation of a wholesome mental culture. It is therefore incumbent upon leaders and officials responsible for policy formulation and implementation in education to ensure that holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy are incorporated into the system of education.

6.2. Incorporation of holistic Buddha's teaching education and pedagogy

The critical step of rectifying education is to be achieved by incorporating into the education system, what this writer refers to as holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy. Among other positive outcomes, this will greatly ensure a right understanding of the phenomenon of peace. This will also foster the cultivation of a wholesome mental culture right from a young age. These positive outcomes would in turn generate wholesome social structures in societies. By operating collectively, these measures will enhance the prospects of durable peace. Holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy can combine to ensure the critical requirement of cultivating a wholesome mental culture as well as wholesome social structures among societies. In this way peaceful, progressive and compassionate societies which are sorely wanting in contemporary societies may be proactively and effectively fostered. The foundations for achieving such wholesome social structures may be adopted globally, regardless of differences among people. The process of grooming a wholesome mind in a child can be further enhanced through incorporating holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy into secular education systems. The ingredients of holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy are extensive to detail in this brief discourse. These are elaborated in this writer's treatises on the imperative of holistic education and holistic pedagogy.²¹ Constraints on wordage compel an outline of a few selected elements, which are recommended for adoption, suffice to state that they provide the necessary grooming, self-practice, and internalization of cultivating a wholesome mental culture and invaluable humane qualities in people. It is also essential to note that holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy provide such ingredients of education as critical thinking, ethical conduct, moral uprightness and internalisation of human values. The liberalism, open-mindedness, rationalism, and other positive elements in learning and teaching psychology that are incorporated would help to enhance the meaning and purposes of education as advanced in the Buddha's teaching. In addition, superstition, dogma, and other limitations in education systems forestalled. Internalisation of these vital ingredients of education would better ensure that citizens are educated and trained to be wholesome beings that would doubtless render more realistic actualization

²¹ Kumarasiri (2024).

of durable peace. Another invaluable outcome of holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy is drawing out the human being or human nature and maximising inherent talents and skills. This is because the holistic ingredients of learning and teaching psychology embodied in the characteristically learner-centered Buddha's teaching holistic education and Buddha's teaching holistic pedagogy ensure the total development of a person. The learner is better placed to develop her or his full potential. An equally important spin off is the enhancement of one's emotional, social, psychological, cultural and spiritual being. This process in turn enriches a learner's character so that she or he lives according to the true sense and meaning of the nomenclature of human being.

6.3. Human beings, the very culprits

Lest we continue to overlook yet another fundamental truth: that the principal agents of, both war and peace, are none other than human beings. The undeniable fact that human beings are the very culprits of conflicts and wars should impel us to possess a right understanding of the human being. But the reality is that we are not taught or guided to being human beings in the true sense of this nomenclature. This reality being the case, right understanding of the human being is central to achieving durable peace. The crux of humans not being human is because of an untrained or uncultured mind. As noted earlier, the cultivation of a wholesome mental culture is necessary because we are acculturated throughout life to nurture our physical being whilst grossly neglecting the critical importance of purifying the mind. Right from the moment we are born, we are cleaned, bathed, powdered, sweet scented, clothed, fed and so on with great attention and care to ensure that physically we are healthy and robust. We overlook the fact that as "*manusia*" (human being) we all comprise "*nāma*" (identity or the mind or mental formation) and "*rūpa*" (corporality or the physical body), and not, just a physical being that we erroneously perceive. This is a frailty among human beings universally. It is because of this frailty that the *Buddha's teaching* pointedly underlines the importance of ensuring a symbiotic relationship between the twin constituents of *nāma* and *rūpa*. In a nutshell, it is a universal truth that a healthy body requires a healthy mind, and vice versa, a healthy mind needs a healthy body, underscores the importance of ensuring a right understanding of the human personality. A right understanding of the human being would underline that the mind is the forerunner of all of our thoughts, speech and actions. A wholesome mind begets positive outcomes. Whereas a corrupted, uncultured mind is susceptible to negative stimuli, which impact on the mind and trigger unwholesome repercussions against oneself and most likely on others as well. That is why, though people are referred to as human beings, in reality, however, they are not being human as expected in the nomenclature of human being. This condition of humans not being groomed to be human beings should be addressed as taught in the Buddha's teaching.

6.4. Right understanding of *manussia*

The lack or absence of right understanding of "*manussia*" or human being

has to be recognised by world leaders as a major underlying reason for the failure to secure durable peace and to overcome other global challenges. The flaws in contemporary secular education should be rectified, such as by incorporating a right understanding of “*manussia*” as underlined in the Buddha’s teaching. Also, the invaluable tools in learning and teaching psychology embodied in holistic Buddha’s teaching education and holistic Buddha’s teaching pedagogy can be harnessed. The process entails educating, training, and internalizing the cultivation of a wholesome mental culture so that citizens, being human as expected in their nomenclature of belonging to the human species. It is by no means accidental that in the Buddha’s teaching human beings are referred to as “*manussia*” which embodies profound qualities which are to be taught and trained to perfect while growing up in life. Right understanding of a human being is an essential requirement for ensuring durable peace globally. As a matter of fact, this writer emphasises that the critical importance of being human constitutes a prerequisite for overcoming other global challenges plaguing humankind. This requirement may be realised incorporating holistic Buddha’s teaching education and Buddha’s teaching pedagogy in the secular system of education by guiding citizens to be human, such as by training them on the dynamics of the mind and self-practising *bhāvanā* in daily life. It is rather strange that our secular education systems focus so much on knowledge on practically every aspect of our external world, but fail to provide a thorough understanding of what exactly we are as human beings, though the latter is a prerequisite. This briefly explains why people grow up not knowing what they are and who they are as human beings, and of failing to be human. The point to note here is that since people grow up in life without having a right understanding of their make up as human beings, we cannot fault them for not being human. The Buddha’s teaching pointedly refers to human beings as “*manussia*,” that is, a being who possesses a *mano* or *mana* (mind), which can be developed to its highest potential. Further, all human beings, without exception, comprise two principal constituents, that is, “*nama*” (identity, personality or name) and “*rupa*” (physical form, corporality or body) which are inter-twined and have a symbiotic relationship. Irrespective of a person’s ethnicity, beliefs, social status or station in life, the universal reality of the dynamics of *nama* and *rupa* applies. So, they are trained to nurture both their physical body and the mind. It is somewhat inexplicable, but nonetheless very true, that despite the reality of our composition as human beings comprising *nama* and *rupa*, that we fail to include right understanding of this and other realities of the human being in our education systems. The same can be said of the omission of right understanding of the dynamics of our mind and its symbiotic relationship with our sensory experiences while growing up in life. The omission is so stark that in most instances not even a single period in the curriculum is devoted to understanding the dynamics of the human mind and the pivotal importance of cultivating a wholesome mental culture in consonance with our nomenclature of human beings.

6.5. Right understanding of the human mind

The stress on cultivating a wholesome mental self-culture is key to pre-empt problems, issues, and challenges one encounters in life. This reality is premised on right understanding of human beings. An underlying failing among most people is the lack, and worse still in many cases, the absence of right understanding of themselves as human beings. A major consequence that results therefrom is their failure to cultivate a wholesome mind. As stressed in the Buddha's teaching, this explains why most people do not live up to the nomenclature of a human being. It is for this reason in several languages, such persons are denounced as animals since they invariably commit misdeeds as they do not possess a cultivated mind expected of a human being. A key causal factor for the breach of peace is an uncultivated or uncultured mind that is susceptible to unwholesome thoughts resulting in unskilful speech, actions and inevitable conflict. We must overcome this fundamental human frailty by ensuring cultivation of a wholesome mental culture to ensure that humans are human beings and society as a whole is wholesomely structured in line with the sublime Buddha's teaching. Right understanding of the mind uniquely constitutes the core of the eightfold path of wholesome life as an integrated framework for living a wholesome, sustainably happy and successful life. The mind is a super-duper computer which absorbs whatever we experience. A critical point to bear in mind in this regard is that whatever we experience in life is mind-made and minded and not dictated by any external Super Power or All-Powerful Being. The Buddha pinpointed that the mind is the forerunner of all of our thoughts, speech and actions. As such a cultivated, wholesome mind is crucial for being human, whilst on the other hand, an untrained and uncultivated and consequently unwholesome mind is susceptible to all sorts of negative thoughts, speech and actions. The Buddha underlined that the human mind is a highly complex entity comprising a logical mind, emotional mind, conscious mind, subconscious mind and so on. As a matter of priority, therefore, we must have a sound understanding of the complexities and dynamics of the mind. In doing so, we will be better equipped to pre-empt negative impulses from impacting on the mind. At the same time, it will be also possible for us to rid our mind of defilements which are already lodged in it.

6.6. *Bhāvanā*: Wholesome cultivation of the mind

The path to being human is by cultivating a wholesome mind and purifying it so the mind is freed of defilements. This is effectively achieved by practising *bhāvanā*, commonly referred to as mindfulness meditation, which subject warrants a separate elaboration. The fundamental prerequisite for human beings to be human can, and indeed should, be mindfully cultivated and internalized through *Bhāvanā* or mindfulness meditation, which subject-matter warrants a separate treatment. It is also necessary to cultivate the mind from an early age by incorporating holistic Buddha's teaching education and holistic Buddha's teaching pedagogy into the system of secular education. Beyond question,

this will contribute enormously towards ensuring a comprehensive, proactive, preventive strategy for securing durable peace globally.²² A major flaw in the system of contemporary secular education is the failure to incorporate *bhāvanā* necessary for cultivating a wholesome mental culture. *Bhāvanā* ensures that a person is mindful of her or his thoughts and actions. Further, that these are in alignment with the natural universal law of life and nature. That is why the sublime *Buddha's teaching* is acknowledged as a complete education as well as an effective self-training program for cultivating a wholesome mental culture. A wholesome mental culture significantly forms a vital requirement for ensuring a sustainable happy, fulfilling life and for safeguarding and protecting mother nature on which humankind is inextricably intertwined and interdependent. The Buddha's stress on practising *bhāvanā* is premised on the universal truth that the mind is the forerunner of all of our thoughts, speech and actions, regardless of one's ethnicity, belief system, gender, social status, station in life or any other difference. In essence, self-cultivation of a wholesome mental culture teaches and trains us to avoid unwholesome thoughts and emotions. One is instead encouraged to do what is good by purifying our mind. In cultivating mindfulness, one imbues and imbibes a wholesome mental self-culture to think, speak and act with a compassionate, virtuous compass. These and other positive human qualities become progressively internalized and ingrained as the mind is progressively purified. In the context of durable peace, *bhāvanā* facilitates the masses of ordinary people to understand and appreciate the pertinent factors outlined for ensuring durable peace. They would be mindful that the violation of peace directly impacts their own welfare and wellbeing, and therefore it is in their own interest to foster durable peace. The practice, for example, of sati or mindfulness in students right from a young age is recommended for inclusion into the curriculum. This has already been successfully implemented in several countries traditionally practising the *Buddha's teaching* such as Sri Lanka. An increasing number of schools in Western countries have also followed suit under the curriculum reference, "quite time". Through this training and self-practice, students develop basic mindfulness therapy as an integral part of living a wholesome life. Secular education systems which have incorporated various forms of training and self-practice in cultivating a wholesome mental culture are reputed to have groomed students who grow up in life with markedly wholesome mind sets. Aside from enriching students' thinking and behaviour, their confidence has also been enhanced, resulting in them achieving success and enjoying a sustainably happy adult life.

6.7. Strengthening of *sīla*

Cultivation of a wholesome mental culture should begin by strengthening one's "*sīla*" (morality, or right conduct), which forms a solid foundation. *Sīla* comprises the first three stages of the noble eightfold path, viz right speech, right action, and right livelihood. This is actualized by strengthening morals,

²² *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, "Bhāvanā." accessed on [January 24, 2025], <https://encyclopediaofbuddhism.org/wiki/Bh%C4%81van%C4%81>.

ethics, and noble human values as an integral part of cultivating a wholesome mental culture. This is because as noted earlier, of the universal reality that wholesome thoughts, speech, and actions are outcomes of a trained or cultured mind, which is steeped in *sīla*. The opposite is also very true, that unwholesome thoughts, speech, and deeds are products of an untrained, uncultured, unwholesome mind. The strengthening of *sīla* will enhance one's mindfulness of refraining from unwholesome thoughts, speech and misdeeds.²³ Here it is important to recognise that though morals and ethics are taught in schools, it does not necessarily follow that the lessons are readily imbued and imbibed among students. As in most cases, what is taught in schools is not reflected in real life. Most learners do not live according to what is taught largely because of the absence or lack of internalisation of the learning. Internalization, however, is achieved through training and constant mindful self-practice in daily life. A logical, rational, and effective pathway to prevent negative outcomes of the mind, as the Buddha had taught based on self-experience, is by strengthening *bhāvanā*, or mindfulness meditation.

6.8. Transforming challenge into opportunity

It is timely to remind ourselves that the flip side of the challenge of durable peace is an opportunity to contribute positively for the common good of humankind. The Buddha's teaching fraternity is thus presented with a golden opportunity to educate and train fellow human beings, to actualize durable peace through right understanding and to reinforce this by diligently practising the sublime Buddha's teaching. It is rational and indeed directly beneficial for humankind to have right understanding, for example, the irrevocable universal law of nature and life in the Buddha's teaching. This will, among other positive outcomes, enable us to have a right understanding about ourselves as human beings and of the realities of life and nature. Such a trained and cultured mind would enable humankind to mindfully align with the timeless universal truths unravelled by the Supremely Self-Enlightened Buddha for the benefit of all humankind. In summation, it is to be borne in mind that right understanding combined with the proactive remedial pathway of cultivating a wholesome mental culture among people represents a comprehensive and effective global strategy to actualize durable peace. For *dhammaputris* and *dhammaputras*, this situation presents an excellent opportunity to make a major contribution towards ensuring durable peace for the benefit of all humankind and our precious planet Earth. They should take upon themselves as exemplifiers of the Buddha's insightful teaching of right understanding as highlighted in the noble eightfold path. They will thereby form noble torch bearers of the noble eightfold path for humankind to live a wholesome, successful, sustainably happy and meaningful life. Whatever inputs towards achieving this goal from whichever quarter therefore are invaluable and should be earnestly welcome and actively supported. As *dhammaputris* and *dhammaputras* who follow the Buddha's teaching to live in peace and harmony with all living beings and mother

²³ Gombrich (1991): p. 33 - 50.

nature; the urge to promote durable global peace comes quite naturally as a spiritual calling. We must continue to zestfully promote the sublime teaching of right understanding to live a wholesome life in a global environment of durable peace that the for *Dhammaputris* and *Dhammaputras*, this situation presents an excellent opportunity can ensure. It is therefore incumbent upon *Dhammaputris* and *Dhammaputras* as well as the *Mahā Saṅgha* (unbroken order of *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunīs* the *Buddha* established) to promote the proffered effective pathway to durable peace, bequeathed by the *Buddha* purely out of his *mahā karuṇā* or great compassion. In summation, it is prudent to underline that the inculcation of right understanding on peace and other teachings of the *Buddha's teaching* is included in secular education systems. This will ensure a more harmonious and happier world. This is critical not only for securing durable peace, but also vital for addressing other problems, issues or challenges we encounter in life. By securing durable peace, we will be able to ensure a far better world for all humankind as well as other living beings and safeguard our precious mother earth. Let us all resolve at this historic United Nations Vesak Day Commemoration to pool our efforts and resources to promote right understanding as embedded in the *Buddha's teaching* and thereby secure a peaceful, progressive and sustainable happy world.

VII. CONCLUSION

Conflicts arise due to a fundamental misunderstanding of peace and emphasize the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path as a means to cultivate a peaceful mind. The article highlights the dangers of war, including nuclear arms races, religious intolerance, and the “Clash of Civilizations” theory, which perpetuate global unrest. The study advocates for holistic education, integrating Buddhist teachings into secular curricula to cultivate ethical leadership and a wholesome mental culture. He emphasizes *Bhāvanā* (mindfulness meditation) as a tool for inner peace, which fosters broader societal harmony. Historical examples, such as the Buddha's mediation between warring factions and Sri Lanka's advocacy for Japan post-WWII, demonstrate the power of compassion and Right Understanding in resolving conflicts. The study urges global leaders to embrace Right Understanding, not only for peace but also for addressing other global challenges. By promoting a Buddhist-based educational approach and reinforcing ethical values, the study asserts that humankind can move toward a sustainable and harmonious world.

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BUDDHISM'S PATH TO PEACE: INTEGRATING DHAMMA PRINCIPLES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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Abstract:

This paper examines the Buddhist approach to peace and conflict resolution, drawing upon traditional Buddhist teachings and their contemporary applications. By analyzing key Buddhist concepts such as *Ahimsa*, *Metta*, and the Four Noble Truths, the study demonstrates how Buddhist principles can contribute to both individual and collective peace-building efforts. The research integrates classical Buddhist texts with modern peace studies to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing Buddhist approaches to conflict resolution in today's world. Particular attention is given to the practical application of Buddhist principles in addressing contemporary challenges to peace, ranging from individual conflicts to global issues.

Keywords: *Buddhist peacebuilding, nonviolence, ahimsa, conflict resolution, inner transformation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In a time characterized by escalating global tensions and conflicts, the imperative for effective peace-building and conflict resolution strategies has become more pressing than ever. Drawing upon its longstanding tradition of promoting peace and nonviolence spanning over 2,600 years, Buddhism presents valuable insights and practical approaches to address these challenges. This paper investigates how Buddhist principles and practices can contribute to contemporary peace-building initiatives.

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The Buddha's teachings emphasize that peace must originate within the individual's mind before it can manifest in society. As stated in the Dhammapada, "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is an eternal law." This core principle underpins Buddhism's approach to conflict resolution and peace-building, suggesting that the transformation of consciousness is essential for creating lasting peace. By cultivating inner tranquillity and understanding, individuals can then extend this mindset outwardly, fostering harmony and resolving conflicts in their communities and the world at large. According to Buddhism, the path to peace involves personal growth and spiritual development, which then radiates outwards to catalyze positive change.

Buddhism stresses the value of peace, and many Buddhist leaders and organizations today are outspoken in their promotion of nonviolence. The Buddhist tradition is most clearly associated with non-violence and the principle of ahimsa ("no harm"). By eliminating their attachments to material things, Buddhists try to combat covetousness, which in itself has the potential to become a source of anger and violence against others.

By tradition, the Buddha himself prevented a conflict between the Sakyas, his clan, and the Koliyas. When the Buddha went to the battlefield and discovered the reason for the conflict was a water dispute, he immediately engaged the opposing rulers in conversation. He questioned them about whether water was more worthy than the blood of fellow human beings. Another paradigmatic example is the Emperor Ashoka, who ruled the Indian subcontinent during the third century BCE and, after his conversion to Buddhism, felt remorse for the death and suffering caused by his military campaigns and embraced the dharma (Buddhist teaching). Some Buddhist texts do sanction taking human lives in exceptional cases to protect the Sangha or defend the innocent.

II. REDEFINING PEACE: A BUDDHIST FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL HARMONY

Peace is a difficult word. Peaceful or peace it suggests calm, an absence of conflict. At worst, it is an ironic reference to an age of dreamy irresponsibility. A society genuinely at peace is not one where there is never any conflict. Just as inner conflict leads us to examine and bring out the best of ourselves, so social conflict is useful for putting existing policies to the test and allowing constant evolution. A society capable of living peacefully is good at handling these conflicts non-violently. So, there is no direct or collective violence, and there is the possibility for all to fulfill their potential. It is a condition as well as a process. Non-violence stands for something most people engage in every day, self-assertion trying to reach goals without violence without intending to harm or hurt anybody. Non-violence entails more than just not being violent. That could include being passive, doing nothing, resigning to one's fate. To handle conflicts without violence needs positive Non-Violence in thought, speech and action and Creativity meaning to develop new ideas.¹ Peace, of

¹ Annabel Mc Goldrick and Jake Lynch. *Peace Journalism, What is it?, How to do it?*.

course, is a state without conflict. Hence, it may be argued that conflict must be unconditionally rejected, irrespective of the reasons, if we are to sustain peace. This is the negative concept of peace, a concept also known as blind antiracism or sentimental pacifism.²

Now, peace is a term that is used in referring to a state of concert secured through the mutual assurance of basic conditions necessary for independence and autonomy. Peace, therefore, has to be a joint effort, that is, bilateral rather than unilateral. If the idea of anti-war or peace is injudiciously advocated to exact from a people a one-sided renunciation of conflict, it will virtually come to no more than surrendering to the enemy. Another kind of peace I have in mind at this point is a peace that stands on practical preventive measures against conflict, possibly through a series of mutual cooperative steps. This is the positive concept of peace. Today, what is visible is the internal war-fair in countries created by the powerful and affluent in the name of peace. Although it is a justifiable fact that under some regimes there are issues of human right violations, freedom of expression etc., but right mechanism has not been applied to deal with such issues, instead of whole economic, cultural, political and social structure of those countries have been severely damaged in the name of peace.

According to the Buddhist teachings, economic, political, and social stability should be reached by Dhamma, the highest morality and the respect for justice in decision taking and implementation of such decisions.³ Such should be in the common interest of the people living in a country, and outsiders could make valuable contributions without excessive interference into the internal matters of a country. The chaotic and internal conflicts in some countries have proven that direct interference with ulterior motives and hidden goals engenders the country into political mayhem and a hotbed for violence. The Buddhist teachings on the Ten Principles of Universal Monarch and the Seven Welfare conditions signify the economic, social, legal, and ethical measures that should be taken to direct a country towards a peaceful and harmonious journey.⁴ On the other hand, discourses such as Kutadanta, Mahasudassana, Mdhura, etc. clearly show measures that should be taken to maintain law and order in a country devastated by poverty and violence. The political, economic, and social responsibilities are stressed in numerous discourses in the Pali Canon and the Jataka stories. The significance of the reconciliation among the divided and combatant groups has been stressed in the Yodhajiva story of Samyutta Nikāya.⁵

Journalist: University of Sydney. 2000. pp. 18-19. PDF. Accesses: 7 August 2017.

² John Galtung, *Peace*. International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 11, The Macmillan Company and The Free Press. USA. 1968, p. 487.

³ *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Extract No.3, Department of Buddhist Affairs. Sri Lanka. 1995. pp. 4 - 5.

⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Extract No.3. 1995. p. 9.

⁵ Leon Feer, Rhys Davids, M. *Samyutta Nikāya. Vol. IV*. The Pali Text Society. London.

III. UNVEILING THE BUDDHIST LENS: HOW ANCIENT WISDOM VIEWS MODERN PEACE

Peace means no violence, calm, or freedom from conflict and violence, especially when people live and work together happily without disagreements.⁶ Another meaning of peace is “Shanti,” which means the state of inner tranquility. It also means the enlightened condition attained by Shakyamuni, sometimes referred to as “nirvana.” Concerning the state of inner peace, a Buddhist text describes this as follows: “Tranquility of mind comes from having successfully transcended greed, hatred and ignorance.” As this passage makes clear, the Buddhist approach to peace starts from the fundamental act of surmounting these deluded impulses or inner poisons. The state of having brought these impulses under control, however, is not a static and private inner peace. Rather, it is limitlessly dynamic, expansive, and evolutionary.⁷

IV. AHIMSA: ANCIENT PRACTICE, MODERN PROMISE

Buddhism arose with its basic principles of the well-being of all. It is natural to think that when Buddha thought of eliminating the sufferings of all, he had well wishes for all the beings. There was no question of injury or harming even an animal. Therefore, the very idea of the well-being of all gives rise to Ahimsa. Thus, the concept of Ahimsa can be defined as the sublime mental state of the well-being of all, irrespective of any consideration. Ahimsa is the central principle in Buddhism, with Sila, morality, the first essential step toward enlightenment to which “at the heart of Sila is the undertaking not to harm any living being.”⁸

The concept of peace about non-violence is closely associated with the fundamental concepts and practice of Buddhism. It has been the highest virtue of Buddhist moral philosophy. The morality of non-violence is enunciated in Buddhist ethics. Buddhism is indeed widely known for its regard of peace and non-violence as its cardinal virtue. Buddhism on track came to rise as an ethical movement, a practical and effortless approach to the problem of salvation and deliverance from the suffering of life. Buddhism is conspicuous for the praise of non-violence as one of the most commendable moral virtues. It condemns injury to life of all. The Buddha discouraged this cruel fashion of animal killing on sacrificial grounds, instead, he teaches to lead to the concept of non-violence. During the time of the rise of Buddhism in India, the sixth century B.C., the ideal of the concept of non-violence had rapidly widened in its scope and implication and became a vital force for human progress and intellectual

1975. p. 308.

⁶ Cambridge Dictionary. Cambridge University Press. 2017. <http://dictionarycambridge.org/dictionary/English/peace>. Accessed: 14 August 2017.

⁷ Yoichi Kawada, A. Walter Dorn, ed. *From Inner Peace to World Peace: A Buddhist Perspective*. Published in *World Order for a New Millennium*. St. Martin's Press. New York. USA. 1999. p. 108.

⁸ Harris, E. J. *Buddhism and Justification of War: A Case Study from Sri Lanka*. Just War in Comparative Perspective. P. Robinson. Aldershot, Hampshire, Ashgate. 2003. pp. 93 - 108.

life. However, Buddhism gives more accentuation to the importance of the qualities of non-hatred (*Averā*) and compassion (*Karunā*), which form the philosophical foundations of the concept of non-violence in its moral sphere. Buddhism also puts emphasis on the positive significance of the concept of non-violence in the form of an entire gamut of excellent virtues of unsurpassable humanistic quality of benevolence towards all creation (*Maître*), joy at others' happiness (*Muditā*), and indifference towards others' faults or equanimity (*Upekkhā*). Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, but it ceases by love only, it is its nature. Non-violence is the absence of hatred but sympathy, love, and kindness. The absence of hatred promotes loving-kindness, which is the source of the unification of different individuals. The absence of hatred or non-hate is the culture of human nobility and is considered as non-violence. It is impossible to attain Nibbana without non-violence. In Buddhism, non-violence is asserted from the perspective of the view of compassion, love, and kindness towards all living beings. At the same time, it is also maintained from the perspective of a penitent and a feeling of shame because of the cruelty involved in killing living creatures. Death is the most fearsome and terrifying thing for every living being. Every living being wants to live. Taking the lives of others means frightening other who enjoy the full spirit of life.

V. MORE THAN JUST CALM: WHAT PEACE MEANS IN BUDDHISM

Buddhists believe that the Buddha awakened to the laws of the universe, which are said to be operating eternally, whether the Buddha discovered them or not. The most fundamental among these laws is the law of Truth and the law of Karma, or in Buddhist terminology, dependent origination, which explains the genuine condition of things that exist in the universe. In its simplest straightforward form, dependent origination claims that anything, including sentient and insentient beings, can only exist about everything else; if the causes of its existence disappear, then it ceases to exist. Nothing can exist on its own, and everything is dependent on other things. All elements, all entities, and all phenomena are thus related directly and indirectly to one another in the universe. Any change in this huge interconnected compound of existence would definitely, eventually exert influence on everything else. Derived from the principle of dependent origination is the Buddhist view of the cosmic world and the human being. For the concepts of peace, Saksana, Rakesh worth in "Buddhism and Its Message of Peace" relate to the concept of peace in its long history we hardly find any evidence of violence, killings or religious hatred. "Buddhism wields only one sword, the sword of wisdom and recognizes only one enemy i.e. ignorance". This is, indeed, the testimony of history.

Buddha has been a great force for peace in the world. Buddha's policy of peace, self-sacrifice, kindness, and charity moulded the lives of numerous saints in medieval India. While in modern India, too some great leaders like Gandhi and Nehru have undoubtedly been guided by Buddha's teachings. The declared foreign policy of India was based on Panchashila, in itself a Buddhist

⁹ S. Radhakrishna's Foreword to P. V. Bapat ed. *2500 years of Buddhism*. 2014. p. 398.

term, which allows for the possibility of peaceful co-existence between people of different ideologies. Buddhism has an intimate association with peace. In its long history, we hardly find any evidence of violence, killings, or religious hatred. Buddhism wields only one sword, the sword of wisdom, and recognizes only one enemy i.e., ignorance. It is true that by promoting the spirit of love for peace as well as the spirit of hatred against aggression throughout the world, we can create the circumstances under which not only local skirmishes are stopped from spreading but also big powers dare not conceive the idea of campaigning for a global conflict.

Just as a big fire is started by a small spark, big conflicts are always set off by small incidents. The First and Second World War were not any exception. Even a trivial dispute should be quenched lest it escalates into a world war.¹⁰ Truly, a constructive way of establishing world peace must commence with uniting our minds into one rather than instituting systems or concluding treaties for surveillance purpose. In other words, the work must begin with erasing alien feeling and, at the same time advocating peace-loving ideas. In as much as the motive of all warfare originate from the human mind, conflict cannot be prevented without changing the mind, conflict cannot be prevented without changing the mind itself. We should hurry on with the diffusion of the right knowledge of peace in its concept and principle. Only through the implantation of the correct idea of peace, will be able to acquire the strength to stop conflict¹¹ In the changing world of today, Buddhism has a great deal to contribute in establishing peace. It provides for a revolutionary doctrine of peace by way of a concept of commonwealth of Dhamma. Though the message of peace is strewn all over in Buddhism, we may make a passing reference to some of the early Buddhist scriptures as well as later Mahayana philosophical and literary works, which contain specific reference to Peace. Among the earlier works Kimsita Sutra of the Cullavagga states that whosoever practices the Dhamma in accordance with Buddha's teachings and attains the essence of knowledge through meditation is established in peace.

The three sutras of the *Mahavagga* (Sundarikabhadvaja, Magha and Salla), most of the Sutta of *Atthakavagga* and the complete chapter of the *Parayanavagga* delineate the Buddhist conception of peace as one's individual attainment of complete mental freedom by one's Endeavour of renouncing craving, all philosophical doctrines and religious ceremonies. Similarly, later Mahayana works depict the Bodhisattva as a personification of Mahakaruna. Accordance with Buddha's teachings, that is to establish peace within the state.¹² In the strife-torn world of today, the message of Buddha holds great relevance. He wanted to lift not only man but the entire human race above

¹⁰ Paul R. Fleischman. *The Buddha Taught Nonviolence, Not Pacifism*. 2000. p. 88.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹² G. Sundara Ramaiah, K. Ravi, S.D. Joga Ram.ed. *The concept of peace in Buddhist Literature in Buddhism and Peace*. Department of Philosophy. Andhra Pradesh University. Vishakhapatnam. 1991. p. 42.

and beyond the fear, ignorance and isolation which best him in his path of life. As for its message of peace, it pervades the whole Buddhist tradition. Buddha realized that peace would come only when Man is happy. He wanted man to get rid of all malice, hatred, indulgence in lower desires and evil thoughts. He was to substitute these with good thoughts, worthy desires, feelings of charity and compassion, and an attitude of serenity and composure. Let men purify their thoughts and desires and complete happiness will be theirs. Such a thought-effort will, then lead to universal peace.

As a social code, Buddhism leads us to peace, understanding and integration. Buddha tried to inculcate in his followers the sense of service and understanding with loving-kindness and compassion by separating man from passion and elevating humanistic tendency in man with the help of morality, *Metta* and *Karuna*.¹³

VI. BUDDHISM'S ANSWER TO CONFLICT

Like all of the major world religions, at its core, Buddhism is a religion of peace.

An early Buddhist collection of verses on practice in everyday life, the Pali Dhammapada, makes this abundantly clear as;

“Na hi verena verani sammantidha kudacanam 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.”¹⁴

The principle revealed in this verse is clear. Quarrels can never come to an end by quarrelling. Conflict can never end through further conflicts. Enmity never ends by returning enmity for enmity. Only by giving up anger, enmity, quarrelling and conflicts can these evils be stopped. It is through friendliness, forgiving and forgetting that enmity ceases.¹⁵ The Pali term for “eternal law” here is Dhamma, or the Buddhist teachings. So, this verse on non-enmity has to do with a tenet of the Buddhist faith that is fundamental, namely, peace and non-harm. (Moreover, though not often cited, the very last verses of the Dhammapada condemn the class (Varna) and other prejudicial distinctions that would divide people.)

Buddhist teachings tell us that hatred and aversion, like their opposites desire and greed, all spring from a fundamental ignorance. That ignorance is our mistaken notion of our own permanent, independent existence. In ignorance, we see ourselves as separate beings, unconnected with others. Blinded to our true state of interdependence and interconnectedness, it is this basic ignorance

¹³ Saksana, Rakesh. *Buddhism and Its Massage of Peace*. Journalist. New Delhi. 2002. pp. 413 - 415. PDF. Accesses: 7 August 2017.

¹⁴ Dhp.S. Daw Mya Tin. *The Dhammapada: Verses and Stories*. Editorial Committee, Burma Tipitaka Association. Rangoon, Burma, 1986. p. 7.

¹⁵ Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero. *Edvin Ariyadasa, ed. Treasury of Truth Illustrated, Dhammapada*. Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. USA. 2015. p. 74.

that keeps us divided. Only practice that leads to overcoming such ignorance will help to free us from the prisons we make for ourselves and for others. We all harbor prejudices of various sorts. There is no exception to this fact. Not one of us is completely freed of prejudicial attitudes. We don't like certain colors or sounds; we're annoyed by certain circumstances, behaviours, or styles of doing things. We are harsh critics even of ourselves. Having likes and dislikes is taken for granted. Indeed, the ability to discriminate is considered an essential part of what makes us human beings. After all, human beings, unlike other living creatures, can form judgments and make choices. Free will and choice are taken as fundamental rights. So, one might ask, what's the problem? The problem occurs as, unfortunately oftentimes is the case, when our own individual likes and dislikes become reified and solidified; when we not only form inflexible opinions, but take them as truths; when we form negative judgments about other human beings and about ourselves and these judgments become for us the lenses through which we view and experience ourselves, the world around us, and its inhabitants. At this point, we have entered into the arena of prejudice of a quite pernicious sort, the sort which causes harm and suffering both for ourselves and for others. And whether it be friendships and loving personal relationships destroyed, or conflicts fought over religion or contested territory, or one group of beings dominating another or restraining their freedom of movement, at this point we cease being human beings at our best.

Each and every day, we ourselves encounter and generate prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. If we are ultimately to survive at all on this tiny planet that is our mutual home, we must learn to appreciate, and to value, each other as human beings and thus to live together in peace. While a general disarming of all nation states would seem the ideal, this process cannot be begun until we have first disarmed our own, individual hearts. In reality, at our innermost cores we are all exactly the same: we are human beings who wish to have happiness and to avoid suffering. Yet, out of ignorance, we go about seeking these goals blindly and without insight. We live our lives seemingly oblivious to our own prejudices even though they are right in front of our eyes. In short, we suffer because we embrace the mistaken notion of our separateness from one another. The illusion of separateness actually works to prevent us from finding the beginning of this erroneous spiral. Buddhist traditions tell us that from the very moment the notions of 'I' and 'mine' arise; there simultaneously arise the notions of 'not me' and 'not mine.' That is, from the moment we conceive of 'us,' there is a 'them.' Once the notions of separateness, difference, and otherness enter our thinking, they then go on literally and figuratively to color all of our subsequent experience, judgments and perceptions. We see the world in terms of us vs. them, me vs. everyone else, mine vs. yours. We are immediately caught up in a world of mistaken, logically unfounded, and seemingly uncontrollable hatred and prejudice. And all these dualistic bifurcations occur at lightning speed and for the most part imperceptibly.

The very deep-rootedness of this mistaken notion of separateness seems to make it impossible even to imagine its cessation. Yet, as Buddhists also tell us,

"By insight is ignorance destroyed." To the question, then, "Can racial, ethnic and religious hatreds and prejudices among human beings be ended?" the answer arises, "Yes, it can." Of course, ending something so deep-seated and unconsciously operative is not an easy task. But it is a task so urgently needed in our current situation that it is well worth undertaking. The dismantling of hateful prejudices begins with the recognition that we do, in fact, harbor them. Next, we must be willing to look at our own particular prejudices with honesty and resolve. We need to know how and why we, as particular human beings, came to harbor the specific views we do and, through this understanding, to be willing now to replace them with more positive views and behaviours. We need to know that we can indeed make a difference; that we can work together for positive change in our own society and in the world. Thus, with understanding and with practice comes a softening of our rigid views. Our hearts can open and, ultimately, we can transform ourselves into loving individuals and loving neighbours; in short, into human beings at our best. More over the Buddhist and Peace related to The Buddha taught that peaceful minds lead to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. If the minds of living beings are at peace, the world will be at peace. Paul R. Fleischman, M. D. an author who study and applies Dhamma to modern life relate whit state of conflict "The Buddha Taught Nonviolence, Not Pacifism" is a book provide ideal of Dhamma related with Peace. He suggests to the Buddha taught Peace is a state of mind.¹⁶

VII. THE INNER JOURNEY TO OUTER PEACE: PERSONAL PRACTICES FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

To achieve peace within a person, the Buddhist approach is to observe and reflect upon the conditions in the external and mental operations, and then to decide on the most appropriate course of action as response to the outer and inner environments. With the most adequate response, we would not do harm to ourselves as not harbor negative feelings and thoughts toward other. Before taking any external action to realize peace, the first step for any Buddhist would be to look at ourselves and the events happening around us carefully and honestly, "not sugar-coating anything about the realities of life, consciousness, or culture"¹⁷. The greater urgency placed by Buddhism upon the inner reflection finds its doctrinal basis on the Buddhist analysis of the roots of violence and conflicts within the mind. As the Buddha teaches, "You should carefully guard your mind, maintaining the mindfulness all the time, In order to cease conflicts"¹⁸

This is the starting point for the Buddha's disciples to live in peace since peace depends not so much on what happens to people, but on what attitude,

¹⁶ Paul R. Fleischman, M.D. *The Buddha Taught Nonviolence, Not Pacifism*. Pariyatti, Onalaska, Washington. USA. Pp. 42 - 43. PDF. Accesses: 6 August 2017.

¹⁷ SulakSivaraksa (INEB), 2002, "Economic Aspects of Social and Environmental Violence from a Buddhist Perspective," http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/journals/buddhist-christian_studies/v022/22.1sivaraksa.html]. Accesses: 24 August 2017.

¹⁸ MN. I.26. Taisho. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. p. 26.

comprehension, and response they give to the happenings. An understanding of the complex set of plural forces, causes and conditions that have brought the event into being and have shaped our immediate perception of, feelings for, and reaction to the event, only comes possible from the insight (Vipassana) we develop from inner reflection in the light of the principle of dependent origination. As the Buddha testifies;

“Maṃ akkocchi maṃ ajini me ahāsi

ye taṃ na upanayhanti tesam veram saṃmati.”

“Living in human society, people often quarrel with one another. When such conflicts occur, people often keep thinking about the wrongs done to them by others. When that happens, their anger tends to grow. But in those who forgive and forget the wrong done to them, anger quickly vanishes. They are then at peace.”¹⁹

The verse reveals the psychological principle that is basic to emotional control. Emotion is an excitement of the body that begins with a thought. A thought creates a mental picture which, if held onto, excites a corresponding emotion. It is only when this mental picture is discarded and paid no attention to that the emotion subsides. The Buddha’s constant advice to his followers was not to retaliate but to practice patience at all times and all places, even under provocation. With a clearer view of what happened through practice of inner reflection, we are empowered with pro-activeness; that is, we no longer would respond compulsively, but would be capable of choosing a course of actions more appropriate and beneficial to all parties involved, with no anger or hate harbored within ourselves. This approach does not only work on the personal level, many contemporary Buddhist leaders of peace movements give first priority to inner transformation within individuals on the path to peace in larger contexts. The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh encourages people who would like to engage themselves in peace activism to prepare themselves in advance by developing awareness and mindfulness for practicing peace, that is, reacting “calmly and intelligently, in the most nonviolent way possible”. Inner practice on nonviolence is hence considered a prerequisite to peace workers and educators. Further relating the impact of individual practice of few on many, that “peace in society begins with peace within oneself”, since the widening circle of influence of each individual would expand from their immediate sphere gradually to the larger contexts. Without this internal disarmament, our negative emotions derived from the ignorance to the true operating principle behind all phenomena including our own feelings and thoughts, the fear, anger and confusion in the state of mind, would rise as reactions to the adversary conditions, and would prevent us from acting nonviolently and living harmoniously with other people in the world. Suppose to one more work in line with the precepts is the right livelihood, which hence excludes butchery, production of and trade in armaments, intoxicants, slaves and prostitutes, and any economic activities taking what is not given or given in a dishonest way. Not only guiding people

¹⁹ *Dhp. 4. Daw Mya Tin. The Dhammapada: Verses and Stories. p. 72.*

to assume economic obligation to the society, this requirement also echoes the peacemakers' protest against the humongous military industrial-economic compound in today's global economy.²⁰

According to the Buddhist teaching, non-violence is to be practiced at all levels. The practice of non-violence is the essence of Buddhist teaching. Literally, violence is mostly defined in the realm of individual actions and direct actions of violence. Any kind of action which is initiated by an intention of heatedness, of greed is one resulting in acts of violence. Today, violence is expressed in many forms, violence in the form of discrimination between nations, violence in the form of conflict and destruction and terrorism that is quite obvious. There are also a lot of other kinds of indirect violence which presents a great deal of difficulty to humanity such as violence in the form of economic disparity, violence in the form of politically, violence in the form of exploitation i.e., socially, economically, politically, violence in the form of competition. There are also some other kinds of violence like unfaithfulness and unfairness in our relationships. There are several dimensions within the causes of violence. The fundamental cause of suffering is ignorance. In this view, ignorance comes from forgetting ultimate reality (Emptiness), due to clinging to one's own self. The ignorance can cause greed on the level of living beings, including humans, because has a blind will to maintain and grow itself. Suffering from violence is rooted in self centered and excessive desire (Greed) on personal level. The cause of hindering peace lies in this self centered desire (Greed). The self centered desire is the cause of disharmony even on the level of social and international relations. The fundamental idea for bringing about true peace on this planet lies in people changing their hearts, releasing themselves from greed and transforming themselves into gentle, broad-minded people who don't act out in violence. When we are governed by our lower self, we are selfish, self centered and materialistic, but insofar as we follow the promptings of higher self we will see things realistically and find harmony within ourselves and others.

VIII. MAKING PEACE HAPPEN: BUDDHIST IDEAS IN ACTION

For the Buddhism the main problem that begins with is the problem of human suffering or Dukkha. According to the Buddha, there is nothing at all but suffering in the world. The Buddha was totally pre-occupied with the question of "how and why life is doomed to be filled with suffering". Life's path led the Buddha to further experiences that deepened his concerned about human suffering. It appears natural that the problem of suffering in human life occupies a major leading role in Buddhism. It can be said that Buddhism is concerned with some problems of human life and aims to find out the means to escape cordially from these problems.

Today, the existence of entire mankind is threatened by the ever-increasing violence and destructive capacities in the world. The average man still shuns violence. By nature man is both violent and non-violent but impulses of violence

²⁰ Theresa Der-Lan Yeh. *The Way to Peace: A Buddhist Perspective*. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Volume 11, No.1, Spring/Summer. 2006. pp. 99 - 101.

in man need to be tamed. Groupism in the form of group action is passed on as a virtue of communitarianism and collective communal concern, which does greater harm to immediate as well as wider society as a whole. The partisan interests often resort towards violence, hatred, suspicion and intolerance of the other. It doubtfully promises to attain peace, hatred, suspicion and intolerance of the other. It doubtfully promises to attain peace, prosperity and unity, for it narrowly mobilizes collective interest. Hence, the main problem that stands out is whether we should place our individual and collective feature as well in the hand of such forces. The contemporary modern man is caught in the vicious circle of living an actual life of fragmented and truncated existence, while continuing to cherish and crave for peace and harmony along the line of an integral philosophy of life. The most agonizing fact is that the general human response to ills and warning of the world has been one of the apathy and inaction.

In Buddhism, the principle of non-violence projects an ideal of universal peace, which can be expanded to include the notion of peaceful mind. The logic of the Buddhist doctrine in fact places the mind first religious striving for cosmic order and harmony takes place in the mind. It is highly encouraging that attention is paid to evolving of a global social order that is based on non-violence. More effective and useful non-violent methods of resolving disputes and differences among people and religions have to be evolved. Already the human civilization, in its stride, has reached the level of resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful and non-violent means like negotiations, dialogue, discussions, persuasion, and exchange of views and opinions. The idea is to appeal to the noble and good qualities inherent in all human beings. The moral chords should be stirred to bring about amicable settlement in a peaceful way. The purpose of non-violence forms of resolving dispute is to soften the hardened feelings, attitudes and sentiments in the adversaries. Thus, violence begets violence. It is only the higher spiritual resources of man, which can appropriately deal with the basal instinct for violence. Man has to be civilization and cultural remade to bring out the best and divine from within. Such man-making processes have to be accorded due primary and continuous vigilance needs to be kept. Unity and mutual understanding among different individuals and groups can be established from such a persistent non-violent course.

IX. CONCLUSION

Buddhism offers a comprehensive framework for peace-building that remains deeply relevant in today's conflict-ridden world. The tradition's emphasis on inner transformation as a prerequisite for outer peace, coupled with its practical approaches to conflict resolution through principles like ahimsa (non-violence), metta (loving-kindness), and karuna (compassion), provides valuable tools for addressing contemporary challenges to global harmony. The Buddhist understanding that peace must begin with the individual mind before it can manifest in society offers an important perspective on sustainable peace-building.

The tradition's recognition of interdependence and interconnectedness

challenges the root causes of conflict - namely, the illusion of separateness that breeds prejudice, hatred, and violence. Through its emphasis on mindful awareness, emotional regulation, and the cultivation of wisdom, Buddhism presents both theoretical frameworks and practical methodologies for transforming conflict at personal, communal, and global levels.

As global tensions continue to rise, Buddhist approaches to peace-building merit serious consideration by peace practitioners, policy makers, and individuals alike. The tradition's time-tested principles of nonviolence, compassion, and mindful awareness can contribute significantly to contemporary peace-building efforts, offering both preventive strategies and remedial approaches to conflict resolution. By integrating these Buddhist principles with modern peace-building practices, we may develop more effective approaches to fostering lasting peace in our increasingly interconnected world.

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LOVING-KINDNESS AND WORLD PEACE: EXPLORING THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF METTĀ

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Abstract:

This paper provides an in-depth examination of the Buddhist concept of *mettā*, or loving-kindness, and its potential to promote world peace. Through a comprehensive review of Buddhist scriptures, academic literature, and empirical research, it delves into the multifaceted role of *mettā* in cultivating inner peace, compassion, and understanding among individuals and communities. The exploration begins with the historical context of *Mettā*, tracing its origins in the teachings of the Buddha and its evolution through various Buddhist traditions. This foundational understanding enriches the discussion on how *mettā* can be effectively applied in contemporary contexts. The paper also discusses the implications of *mettā* for promoting world peace, highlighting its potential to reduce conflict, promote forgiveness, and foster global cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world. By examining case studies where *mettā* practices have been integrated into peace-building efforts, it illustrates how loving-kindness can serve as a transformative force in resolving disputes and bridging divides. Additionally, the paper explores the theoretical foundations of *mettā* in Buddhist teachings, including its relationship to other key concepts such as compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, which further illuminate its significance. It also examines the empirical evidence for the benefits of *mettā* meditation, including reduced stress, increased empathy, and improved interpersonal relationships, showcasing how these benefits can ripple outward to influence wider social dynamics.

Furthermore, the paper discusses the practical applications of *mettā* in promoting world peace, including its use in conflict resolution, reconciliation processes, and international diplomacy. By providing examples of successful initiatives that have employed *mettā* principles, the paper highlights actionable steps that individuals and organizations can take to harness this powerful

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concept. In addition, the paper critically examines the challenges and limitations of promoting *mettā* in diverse cultural and religious contexts, acknowledging that the interpretation and practice of loving-kindness may vary significantly across different societies. It also explores the potential of *mettā* to address some of the world's most pressing problems, including poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, thereby demonstrating its relevance beyond the spiritual realm.

The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of *mettā* in promoting a more peaceful and harmonious world. It advocates for the integration of *mettā* practices into educational systems, community programs, and international relations as a means of fostering a culture of peace. Overall, this paper provides a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the Buddhist concept of *mettā* and its vast potential to promote world peace. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of loving-kindness in nurturing inner peace, compassion, and understanding while also highlighting the practical implications of *mettā* in creating a more just and equitable global society.

Keywords: *Mettā, loving-kindness, world peace, Buddhist teachings, compassion, empathy, conflict resolution, reconciliation, international diplomacy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The world today is grappling with a multitude of interconnected challenges that threaten the very fabric of human existence. Issues such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation are not isolated phenomena; they are deeply intertwined and contribute to a cycle of suffering that impacts individuals, communities, and the planet. These challenges not only compromise human dignity but also undermine the collective efforts aimed at fostering peace and sustainability. The ramifications of these issues are profound and widespread. For instance, the effects of climate change are increasingly evident, leading to extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of ecosystems - a phenomenon that jeopardizes the delicate balance of life on Earth. Concurrently, ongoing conflicts and systemic inequalities create barriers that perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence, and social unrest, further exacerbating the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Such an evolution necessitates a multidimensional approach that integrates insights from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, environmental science, and economics. By examining the underlying drivers of human behavior, researchers can identify the cognitive and emotional factors that influence both individual and collective actions.

Psychological Insights: Understanding the principles of behavioral psychology can provide deeper insights into how individuals make decisions, often influenced by cognitive biases, social norms, and emotional motivators. For instance, the concept of nudge theory suggests that subtle changes in how choices are presented can significantly alter decision-making processes. By utilizing these insights, initiatives can be designed to effectively encourage pro-environmental behaviors.

Sociocultural Dynamics: Cultural values profoundly influence behavior and can either hinder or promote action towards sustainable practices. Researchers should explore the norms and values intrinsic to different communities, analyzing how these factors contribute to or hinder cooperation and environmental stewardship. Such an exploration may provide valuable frameworks for designing targeted educational and community engagement programs that resonate with specific populations.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The complexity of global issues such as climate change, inequality, and public health demands collaborative efforts that break down academic silos. Multidisciplinary research initiatives that integrate diverse perspectives spanning the sciences, humanities, and social sciences can foster innovative strategies that reflect the complexity of real-world challenges. This collaborative approach not only enhances the depth of analysis but also enriches the applicability and acceptance of the solutions among various stakeholders.

Evidence and Policy Integration: Innovative approaches must be grounded in robust empirical evidence. Policymakers and practitioners must draw from existing research to understand which interventions have proven effective in promoting behavior change. The integration of scientific findings into policy frameworks can bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that interventions are informed by the realities of human behavior and environmental constraints.

Fostering Global Citizenship: In a world characterized by increasing interconnectedness, there is a pressing need to foster a sense of global citizenship that transcends national and cultural boundaries. Educational initiatives that cultivate empathy, awareness, and responsibility toward global issues play a vital role in enabling individuals to recognize their role within a larger system. By encouraging a collective identity that embraces diversity and fosters solidarity, individuals are more likely to engage in actions that reflect a commitment to the common good.

Addressing the pressing global issues of our time demands a comprehensive and integrated approach that encompasses insights from multiple disciplines, fosters collaborative efforts, and promotes a profound cultural shift. By re-evaluating our values and behaviors, embracing interdisciplinary collaboration, and prioritizing empirical evidence in policy-making, we can effect meaningful and lasting change. It is through this transformative journey that societies can move toward a more sustainable, equitable, and compassionate world. The onus lies not merely on policymakers or scientists but on each individual and community to nurture this evolution -culminating in a collective initiative that paves the way for a brighter future.

Buddhist teachings present a valuable framework for addressing these multifaceted challenges. Central to this philosophy is the concept of loving-kindness or *mettā*. *Mettā* is more than just a practice; it embodies the cultivation of kindness, compassion, and empathy toward oneself and others. By actively engaging in *mettā*, individuals can foster a greater sense of understanding,

tolerance, and forgiveness, which are essential for nurturing harmony and cooperation within personal and social relationships. The relevance of *mettā* in addressing contemporary global challenges cannot be overstated. In a world rife with conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation, the practice of loving-kindness emerges as a compelling antidote to the forces of division and destruction. By embracing *mettā*, individuals can cultivate a deeper connection not only with themselves and others but also with the natural world, thereby fostering increased empathy, cooperation, and sustainability.

Moreover, research indicates that the practice of *mettā* yields numerous benefits for both individuals and society as a whole. Among these benefits are reduced stress and anxiety, heightened feelings of happiness and well-being, and the strengthening of relationships and social networks. Furthermore, the cultivation of *mettā* has been associated with enhanced empathy, compassion, and altruism - qualities that are crucial for promoting a culture of peace and sustainability in our increasingly divided world.¹

This paper will delve into the concept of *mettā* as articulated in Buddhist teachings, examining its theoretical foundations, practical implications, and potential benefits for fostering peace, sustainability, and overall human well-being. By conducting a thorough review of Buddhist scriptures, academic literature, and empirical research, this paper seeks to provide a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of *mettā*'s role in contributing to a more harmonious and sustainable world. The paper is structured into several key sections. The first section offers an overview of the concept of *mettā* in Buddhist teachings, exploring its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications in daily life. The second section investigates the empirical evidence supporting the benefits of *mettā*, including its effects on stress reduction, enhanced empathy, and improved interpersonal relationships. The third section addresses the potential of *mettā* to effectively confront and mitigate contemporary global challenges such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation. Finally, the paper concludes by underscoring the significance of *mettā* in nurturing a more peaceful and sustainable world, advocating for its integration into personal practices and broader societal frameworks. Through this exploration, it is hoped that the transformative power of *mettā* will be recognized as a vital element in building a brighter future for all.

II. THE CONCEPT OF *METTĀ* IN BUDDHISM

Mettā, often translated as loving-kindness, is one of the four immeasurable (*brahmavihāras*) in Buddhism, alongside compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).² While the term "loving-kindness" captures an essential aspect of *mettā*, it encompasses a broader and more nuanced spectrum of emotions that includes kindness, compassion, empathy,

¹ Matthiew Ricard (2015), *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 114-129.

² Walpola Rahula Thero (2017), *What the Buddha Taught*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, p. 76 - 80.

and understanding.³ Within the rich tapestry of Buddhist teachings, *mettā* is regarded as a fundamental virtue that nurtures a sense of warmth, empathy, and connection - not only toward oneself but also toward all other beings. It is important to clarify that *mettā* is not merely a passive feeling; rather, it involves actively cultivating a genuine interest in the well-being and happiness of others. This active engagement fosters a deep sense of kindness and compassion that can extend to all forms of life, illuminating our shared humanity. The practice of *mettā* is intricately tied to the concept of “*ahimsa*”, or non-harming, which serves as a cornerstone of Buddhist ethical teachings. By nurturing *mettā*, individuals can cultivate a profound respect and reverence for all forms of life, leading to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness that binds all beings together. This understanding fosters greater empathy and compassion, significantly reducing tendencies toward harm, exploitation, or indifference. Furthermore, *mettā* inspires individuals to engage in actions that alleviate suffering, encouraging them to become advocates for peace and harmony in their communities.⁴ In addition to its transformative effects on emotional well-being, the practice of *mettā* also fosters deeper interpersonal connections and community bonds. When individuals cultivate love and kindness toward themselves, it creates a ripple effect, encouraging them to extend these feelings toward others. This communal aspect of *mettā* is particularly significant in today’s increasingly fragmented society, where feelings of disconnection and isolation are prevalent. By prioritizing *mettā*, practitioners contribute to a more compassionate society, helping to reduce divisions based on misunderstanding and prejudice. Furthermore, the ongoing practice of *mettā* meditation can promote resilience against life’s inevitable challenges. As individuals learn to cultivate a compassionate mindset, they become better equipped to handle adversity with grace.

The quality of *mettā* encourages individuals to approach difficulties not with aversion but with understanding and love. This shift in perspective can prove to be invaluable in both personal and professional realms, ultimately leading to more constructive and harmonious relationships. The benefits of *mettā* are not limited to the individual nor exclusively within the confines of meditation. Research has shown that regular engagement in *mettā* meditation can have physiological benefits, such as reduced stress levels and improved immune function. These positive health outcomes further underscore the notion that mental states and physical health are intricately connected.⁵ Thus, *mettā* not only nurtures the spirit but also promotes a holistic understanding of wellness. Moreover, in the context of modern psychology, it is interesting to note that various therapeutic systems are integrating principles of *mettā*. Techniques such as Compassion-

³ Thich Nhat Hanh (1999), *The Miracle of Mindfulness*. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 07 - 39.

⁴ Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005), *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation for everyday life*. London: Piatkus, p. 05 - 10.

⁵ Barbara Lee Fredrickson (2008), *Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, p. 1045 - 1062.

Focused Therapy utilize the foundational aspects of *mettā* to help clients develop self-compassion and enhance emotional regulation. This growing intersection of Buddhism and psychological practice indicates a validation of *mettā*'s efficacy beyond traditional spiritual frameworks, emphasizing its relevance in contemporary mental health discourse. The practice of *mettā* encompasses far-reaching implications for individuals and society as a whole. From fostering personal transformation by mitigating negative emotions to nurturing social connections and contributing to physical well-being, *mettā* occupies a pivotal role in the pursuit of enlightenment and holistic health. As such, integrating *mettā* into daily life presents a meaningful path toward enhanced emotional resilience, overall wellness, and the cultivation of a more compassionate world. The synergy of these various dimensions reinforces the essential nature of *mettā* in spiritual and everyday practice, inviting all individuals to explore its profound benefits.

Furthermore, the synergy between *mettā* and mindfulness can be instrumental in reducing stress and promoting overall mental well-being. When individuals engage in mindful *mettā* practice, they not only cultivate feelings of loving-kindness towards themselves and others but also hone their ability to manage stress more effectively. Research indicates that mindfulness practices significantly reduce anxiety and depression, which often manifest in negative thoughts and feelings towards oneself and others. Incorporating *mettā* into mindfulness practice can also establish a profound sense of community and interconnectedness. Individuals may begin to perceive their place within a larger social fabric, realizing that their thoughts and actions can significantly impact others. This realization may propel individuals to act more altruistically, as their empathetic responses are sharpened by a mindfulness practice that draws their attention both internally and externally.⁶ Moreover, the integration of *mettā* into daily life can lead to transformative changes in one's perspective on interpersonal conflicts. When one practices *mettā* consistently, they develop a broader understanding of human suffering, which can foster a non-judgmental attitude towards others. As individuals deepen their resolve to respond to challenges with kindness, the likelihood of escalating conflicts diminishes. Through this lens of compassion, individuals can engage in difficult conversations with a focus on empathy and understanding, ultimately leading to conflict resolution based on mutual respect rather than hostility. The practice of *mettā* can also serve as a foundation for various therapeutic approaches, such as Compassion-Focused Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy. These frameworks emphasize the importance of self-compassion and interpersonal effectiveness, both of which align closely with the principles inherent in *mettā*.

By fostering a sense of self-acceptance and compassion through *mettā*, individuals can break free from negative self-beliefs and cultivate a healthier relationship with themselves, which in turn empowers them to engage more positively with the world around them. In addition, various studies have

⁶ Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005), *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation for everyday life*. London: Piatkus, p. 08 - 15.

demonstrated the physiological benefits of practicing *mettā* and mindfulness. The practice has been linked to reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol, increased levels of serotonin, and improved overall emotional regulation. These biological changes can create a more resilient individual, one whose growth is enriched through the conscious practice of *mettā*, feeding into a cycle of positive reinforcement. The interplay between *mettā* and mindfulness holds significant potential for fostering emotional well-being, promoting interpersonal harmony, and supporting therapeutic outcomes. As individuals actively cultivate an attitude of loving-kindness rooted in present-moment awareness, they are likely to experience profound changes in their emotional landscapes and relationships, ultimately shaping a more compassionate and connected society. As the world continues to grapple with increasing levels of stress and disconnection, the adoption of *mettā* and mindfulness practices may serve as a vital antidote, leading to healthier, more sustainable modes of engagement with oneself and others.

In addition to personal development, the practice of *mettā* is considered a significant aspect of Buddhist social ethics. Through the conscious cultivation of *mettā*, individuals foster a heightened sense of responsibility and concern for the well-being of others. This commitment can lead to more substantial engagement in social justice efforts and the reduction of suffering in the world. As individuals internalize the principles of *mettā*, they begin to recognize their interconnectedness with all beings, prompting actions that promote peace and understanding in their communities. Such actions not only benefit those around them but also create a ripple effect, encouraging others to adopt similar values and practices, thereby contributing to a more compassionate world. Ultimately, the transformative power of *mettā* has the potential to foster a global culture rooted in love, kindness, and mutual respect.⁷

Ultimately, the concept of *mettā* is central to Buddhist teachings and practices, representing an essential aspect of the journey toward enlightenment. *mettā*, often translated as “loving-kindness”, serves as a foundational principle that encourages individuals to cultivate genuine goodwill and affection toward themselves and others. By nurturing *mettā*, individuals can achieve a deeper sense of inner peace, tranquility, and clarity. This practice is not merely a passive feeling; it requires active engagement and a commitment to fostering empathy, compassion, and kindness toward oneself, as well as those in their communities and beyond.

The transformative power of *mettā* is profound. As individuals learn to extend loving-kindness to themselves, they begin to heal emotional wounds, reduce self-criticism, and develop a more positive self-image. This positive transformation is crucial, as self-love and acceptance lay the groundwork for extending compassion to others.⁸ When individuals embody *mettā*, they

⁷ Christopher S. Queen (2000), *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, Somerville: Wisdom Publications, p. 225 - 275.

⁸ Matthieu Ricard (2015), *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the*

create a ripple effect that enhances personal well-being and contributes to collective harmony and understanding within society. The way in which *mettā* encourages us to regard others - regardless of their background, beliefs, or actions - demonstrates the potential for understanding and connection, even in challenging circumstances.

In a time when division and conflict are prevalent, the principles of *mettā* offer a powerful reminder of the potential for love and kindness to transcend barriers and bring people together. The practice of *mettā* can serve as a balm for societal wounds, promoting reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing. By consistently practicing loving-kindness, individuals can help foster a more compassionate and understanding global community.

Moreover, *mettā* is not limited to interpersonal relationships; it extends to all beings, including animals and the environment. This expansive view encourages a holistic approach to compassion that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life. As we embrace *mettā* in our thoughts, words, and actions, we contribute to a more peaceful world, where understanding and kindness prevail over discord and animosity. The cultivation of *mettā* is, therefore, not only a personal journey but also a collective responsibility, inviting everyone to participate in creating a more compassionate society.

III. CULTIVATING *METTĀ* THROUGH MEDITATION

Mettā meditation, commonly referred to as loving-kindness meditation, is a profound and transformative practice that serves as a powerful tool for cultivating an attitude of loving-kindness and fostering inner peace. Rooted in Buddhist traditions, this ancient form of meditation has gained global popularity due to its accessible and beneficial nature. The practice invites individuals to develop a deeper sense of compassion and understanding, not only toward themselves but also toward others in their lives. By engaging in *mettā* meditation, practitioners focus on well-wishing thoughts, actively extending feelings of love, kindness, and goodwill, starting with themselves and gradually expanding to others, including friends, family members, acquaintances, and even those with whom they may have conflicts or strained relationships.⁹ The core essence of *Mettā* meditation lies in its ability to break down barriers of resentment and animosity, cultivating a more compassionate worldview. Research studies have demonstrated that individuals who regularly practice *mettā* meditation experience significant increases in feelings of kindness, empathy, and connection toward others. This practice not only enhances interpersonal relationships but also fosters a sense of community and belonging. Furthermore, *mettā* meditation has been shown to offer numerous psychological benefits. Studies indicate that engaging in this meditation can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression - prevalent issues in today's fast-paced society. Practitioners often report improvements in their

World. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 114 - 129.

⁹ Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005), *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation for everyday life*. London: Piatkus, p. 08 - 17.

overall emotional well-being, as well as enhanced sleep quality and resilience in coping with life's challenges.¹⁰

In addition to its emotional and psychological benefits, *mettā* meditation can also have a positive impact on one's physical health. The calming effects of this practice can lower blood pressure, improve immune function, and contribute to an overall healthier lifestyle. By integrating *Mettā* meditation into daily routines, individuals can cultivate a more compassionate mindset, leading to a more fulfilling and harmonious existence. The journey of loving-kindness meditation not only transforms the individual's inner landscape but also ripples outward, positively influencing the lives of others in their community. Along with these numerous benefits, *Mettā* meditation has been shown to increase positive emotions, such as joy, gratitude, and love, while simultaneously reducing negative emotions like anger, hatred, and fear.¹¹ This enhancement of positive emotions can foster increased social connections and stronger relationships, as well as improved emotional regulation and resilience in the face of life's challenges. The practice nurtures a sense of interconnectedness, allowing individuals to feel more at ease in their interactions with others, thus enhancing their overall emotional intelligence.

The practice of *mettā* meditation typically involves repeating phrases or mantras designed to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion towards oneself and others. These phrases may include "May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be at peace" or "May all beings be happy, may all beings be healthy, may all beings be at peace". By repeating these phrases and immersing oneself in the feelings they evoke, individuals can develop a greater sense of inner peace and well-being, which can positively influence their daily lives.¹² Furthermore, research shows that engaging in *Mettā* meditation can lead to physiological benefits, such as reduced stress levels and lower blood pressure, contributing to an overall sense of health and wellness. The practice encourages individuals to cultivate empathy and loving-kindness not only towards friends and family, but also towards challenging individuals in their lives, ultimately fostering forgiveness and reducing feelings of resentment.

Over time, this consistent practice can help reshape one's outlook on life, fostering a more positive worldview and encouraging a proactive approach to challenges. As practitioners begin to notice the benefits manifesting in their lives, they often find themselves better equipped to handle stressors and obstacles, leading to a more fulfilling and harmonious existence. In essence, *mettā* meditation serves as a profound tool for personal transformation, nurturing

¹⁰ Stefan G. Hofmann (2011), *The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review*. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, p. 169 - 183.

¹¹ Barbara Lee Fredrickson (2008), *Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, p. 1045 - 1062.

¹² Sharon Salzberg (2020), *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boulder: Shambhala Publication, p. 85.

an environment where compassion and positivity can flourish. Incorporating *mettā* meditation into one's daily routine can be a pivotal step toward achieving a more balanced and joyful life. Moreover, *mettā* meditation can be practiced in various settings, such as at home, in a meditation group, or even during daily activities like walking, eating, or commuting. This flexibility makes it accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles, allowing people to seamlessly integrate it into their routines. In fact, *mettā* meditation has been practiced for centuries across various Buddhist traditions, including Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna. This ancient practice is not merely a contemporary trend; rather, it is an integral aspect of Buddhist teachings that has evolved over generations.¹³ Within these traditions, *mettā* meditation is often embraced as part of a larger spiritual path aimed at cultivating wisdom, ethics, and mental discipline. By engaging in *Mettā* meditation, individuals strive to develop a profound sense of interconnectedness with all living beings, recognizing that their own happiness is intertwined with the happiness of others.

In Theravāda Buddhism, for example, practitioners engage in *mettā* meditation to develop loving-kindness toward themselves and others, fostering an attitude of compassion that extends beyond personal boundaries. This form of meditation is typically accompanied by the recitation of specific phrases that express goodwill, such as “May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe, may I be at ease”. As practitioners repeat these phrases, they begin to internalize the sentiments, which can lead to profound changes in how they relate to themselves and the world around them. This practice not only nurtures a sense of loving-kindness but also helps to alleviate negative emotions such as resentment, anger, and jealousy, which can hinder personal growth and interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, the benefits of *mettā* meditation are not limited to the individual practitioner. As practitioners cultivate feelings of love and compassion, these positive emotions can radiate outward, influencing their interactions with family, friends, and even strangers. In this way, *mettā* meditation can contribute to a more compassionate society, fostering understanding and reducing conflict among individuals and communities. Additionally, *mettā* meditation has gained recognition beyond Buddhist communities, attracting interest from psychologists and wellness practitioners who acknowledge its potential to enhance emotional well-being. Research has shown that regular practice can lead to lower levels of stress and anxiety, improved emotional resilience, and greater overall life satisfaction. As more people incorporate *mettā* meditation into their daily routines, its transformative power continues to resonate, highlighting the timeless relevance of cultivating loving-kindness in an increasingly complex world. Through this practice, individuals not only embark on a journey of self-discovery but also contribute to a collective shift toward compassion and empathy.

¹³ Thich Nhat Hanh (1991), *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. Bantam Books, p. 97 - 119.

Similarly, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, *mettā*, often translated as loving-kindness, is regarded as a crucial aspect of the Bodhisattva path. This path is characterized by an unwavering commitment to altruism and the aspiration to attain enlightenment, not merely for oneself, but for the benefit of all sentient beings. Practitioners of Mahāyāna Buddhism are deeply encouraged to cultivate and expand their loving-kindness, beginning with an initial focus on themselves and gradually extending this compassion outward to friends and family. However, the practice does not stop there; practitioners need to learn to extend their *mettā* to all living beings, even those with whom they may have conflicts or negative feelings.

This deliberate and expansive practice of *mettā* serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it plays a significant role in dissolving the barriers of hatred and resentment that often arise in interpersonal relationships. By consciously choosing to cultivate loving-kindness toward those who may have wronged them or with whom they disagree, practitioners begin to foster a sense of understanding and compassion that transcends personal grievances. This, in turn, helps to create an environment where forgiveness and reconciliation can take place, as the heart becomes more open and receptive to others. Moreover, the expansion of *mettā* contributes to a profound sense of interconnectedness among all beings.¹⁴ In Mahāyāna thought, recognizing that all beings are interdependent is essential. By developing loving-kindness toward all sentient beings, practitioners begin to see themselves as part of a larger whole, which can reduce feelings of isolation or separation. This interconnectedness encourages a sense of responsibility toward others, motivating individuals to act for the welfare of all, rather than merely focusing on their own needs and desires. Ultimately, the cultivation of *mettā* within the framework of Mahāyāna Buddhism not only aids personal spiritual development but also has far-reaching implications for societal harmony and peace. As individuals embody and express loving-kindness, it creates ripples of positive energy that can transform communities, fostering a collective atmosphere of compassion that benefits everyone. Thus, *mettā* is not just a personal practice; it is a powerful tool for social change and the collective elevation of consciousness.

In Vajrayāna traditions, *mettā* meditation, which focuses on the cultivation of loving-kindness, is often integrated with various other spiritual practices to enhance the overall experience and effectiveness of the meditation. This integration may include techniques such as visualization and mantra recitation, both of which serve to deepen the practitioner's connection to the qualities of love and compassion. Visualization might involve imagining oneself surrounded by a warm, radiant light symbolizing loving-kindness or visualizing oneself as a deity embodying the highest qualities of compassion and wisdom. Such practices not only foster a sense of inner peace and warmth but also help practitioners expand their capacity for love toward all beings.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010), *The Buddha's Teaching on Social and Communal Harmony*. Buddhist Publication Society, p. 186.

In addition to visualization, mantra recitation plays a significant role in these meditative practices. Mantras are sacred sounds or phrases that, when repeated, help focus the mind and invoke specific qualities. In the context of *mettā* meditation, practitioners might chant mantras resonating with the essence of loving-kindness, such as “*Om Mani Padme Hum*”, associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the embodiment of compassion. This repetition serves to align the practitioner’s mind with the deep qualities of love and compassion that these mantras represent, facilitating a more profound meditative experience.

Furthermore, the emphasis on compassion within Vajrayāna traditions is also reflected in the practices surrounding various deities and enlightened beings. Many of these figures, such as Tara and Avalokiteshvara, are revered not only for their wisdom but also for their boundless compassion toward all sentient beings. Engaging with these figures through prayer, visualization, and other rituals can inspire practitioners to cultivate similar qualities within themselves. By connecting with the compassionate nature of these deities, practitioners are encouraged to embody these qualities in their daily lives, fostering a more compassionate and loving approach to interactions with others. In summary, the integration of *mettā* meditation with visualization and mantra recitation in Vajrayāna traditions enriches the practice, allowing for a deeper experience of loving-kindness. This multifaceted approach not only promotes personal transformation but also encourages practitioners to embody the values of compassion and love in their everyday lives, thus contributing positively to the world around them.

The deep-rooted history of *mettā* practice highlights its significance in enhancing one’s spiritual journey. By engaging in *mettā* meditation, individuals not only cultivate their inner peace and happiness but also contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious society.¹⁵ The ripple effects of such practices can be seen in various aspects of life, from personal relationships to broader community interactions, ultimately reinforcing the interconnectedness that is central to Buddhist philosophy. Overall, *mettā* meditation is a powerful and transformative tool for cultivating loving-kindness and promoting inner peace. This practice, which originates from Buddhist traditions, involves generating feelings of love and compassion, first towards oneself and then gradually extending those feelings to others, including loved ones, acquaintances, and even those with whom one might have conflicts. By incorporating *mettā* meditation into daily life, individuals can develop a greater sense of compassion, empathy, and understanding towards themselves and others, fostering a more harmonious and fulfilling existence.

The process of *mettā* meditation typically begins with the practitioner finding a quiet and comfortable space. Once settled, they focus on generating kind and loving thoughts, often starting with phrases such as “May I be

¹⁵ Arthur Schopenhauer (1903), *On the Basis of Morality*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Limited, p. 198.

happy”, “May I be healthy”, and “May I be safe”. These personal affirmations help cultivate a sense of self-love and acceptance. As practitioners become more adept, they gradually expand this loving-kindness outward, directing these positive intentions toward friends, neutral individuals, and even those with whom they may struggle to connect. This gradual expansion helps break down barriers of resentment or aversion, allowing for a deeper connection to humanity as a whole.

One of the most significant benefits of *mettā* meditation is its ability to reduce stress and anxiety. Research has shown that regular practice can lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, while simultaneously increasing feelings of happiness and emotional resilience. As individuals dedicate time to engage in *mettā* meditation, they not only nurture their own inner well-being but also contribute positively to the broader community. This practice creates an environment where kindness and understanding can flourish, generating ripples of compassion that extend far beyond their immediate circles.

Moreover, *mettā* meditation encourages individuals to cultivate a mindset of gratitude and appreciation for the good in their lives. By focusing on loving-kindness, individuals can shift their perspective, recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings. This shift not only enhances personal well-being but also inspires others to engage in similar practices, creating a collective uplift in the atmosphere of kindness and love. Ultimately, *mettā* meditation is not just an individual endeavor; it serves as a catalyst for societal change, promoting a more compassionate world for all.

IV. THE ROLE OF *METTĀ* IN PROMOTING WORLD PEACE

Mettā, often translated as loving-kindness, holds immense potential for fostering world peace by addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting forgiveness, and encouraging global cooperation among diverse communities. The practice of *Mettā* involves cultivating feelings of goodwill and compassion toward oneself and others, which can significantly transform both individual and collective mindsets. When individuals embrace loving-kindness, they develop a deeper sense of understanding and empathy for those around them, leading to a marked decrease in hostility and an increase in cooperative behaviors.¹⁶ At its core, *Mettā* encourages individuals to look beyond their immediate circles and consider the broader implications of their actions on the global community. In a world rife with division, where misunderstandings and prejudices can escalate into violence, the cultivation of loving-kindness serves as a powerful antidote. By fostering a mindset that prioritizes compassion over enmity, *Mettā* encourages individuals to engage in dialogues that bridge divides, paving the way for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, *mettā* is not merely a personal practice but can also be extended to community efforts that promote social justice and healing. Initiatives rooted

¹⁶ Antoine Lutz (2008), *Attention regulation and monitoring in meditation*. Trends Cognitive Sciences, p. 163 - 169.

in loving-kindness can inspire groups to come together to address systemic injustices, fostering a culture of empathy and collaboration. When communities prioritize *mettā*, they create environments where individuals feel valued and understood, reducing the likelihood of conflict and promoting a sense of belonging. The ripple effects of practicing *mettā* can extend to larger societal structures as well. Organizations, educational institutions, and governments that integrate the principles of loving-kindness into their policies and practices can cultivate environments of respect and cooperation. This, in turn, can lead to more effective conflict resolution strategies as the focus shifts from punitive measures to restorative practices that foster healing and reconciliation.

Furthermore, the practice of *mettā* can be particularly transformative in the face of global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and social division. By fostering a sense of interconnectedness, *mettā* encourages individuals and groups to collaborate toward common goals, recognizing that the well-being of one is deeply intertwined with the well-being of all. Ultimately, as more individuals embrace the principles of loving-kindness, the potential for a more peaceful and cooperative world grows exponentially.

This transformation can ripple outward, potentially influencing entire communities and even nations. The practice of *mettā*, often translated as loving-kindness or unconditional goodwill, has the power not only to change individual lives but also to generate a broader wave of positive change that extends far beyond personal interactions. As more individuals engage in the practice of *mettā*, a culture of peace and mutual respect can take root within their immediate circles, laying the foundation for improved international relations on a larger scale. When nations prioritize compassion, understanding, and empathy in their interactions, the likelihood of conflicts arising from misunderstandings, prejudices, or historical grievances significantly diminishes.

The cultivation of the spirit of *mettā* encourages individuals to look beyond their perspectives and recognize the shared humanity that connects them with others. It fosters an environment where people are more willing to listen, empathize, and engage in constructive dialogue. Such an atmosphere can pave the way for resolving longstanding disputes and mending broken relationships between communities and nations. As a result, societies that prioritize *Mettā* can create environments where dialogue replaces discord and collaboration takes precedence over confrontation.

In practical terms, the implementation of *mettā* can manifest in various ways. Schools that incorporate teachings of compassion and empathy into their curriculums can nurture generations that are more attuned to the needs and feelings of others. Workplaces that embrace a culture of kindness and support can foster teamwork and creativity, leading to innovative solutions for complex problems. Even local governments that prioritize compassionate policies can enhance community cohesion and resilience, making it easier for residents to come together in times of need. As these individual and communal shifts occur, the potential for broader societal transformation becomes evident. Nations that adopt policies rooted in compassion may find themselves better

equipped to address global challenges, from climate change to humanitarian crises. The ripple effect of *mettā* can thus create a more interconnected, peaceful world where cooperation is valued over conflict, and understanding triumphs over division. Moreover, *Mettā* can be particularly instrumental in fostering reconciliation and healing in post-conflict societies. After periods of violence and discord, individuals often harbor deep-seated animosities and resentments toward former adversaries. These feelings can persist for years, creating a cycle of hatred that is difficult to break. By actively cultivating a mindset of compassion and loving-kindness toward those once viewed as enemies, individuals can begin the process of forgiving past grievances. This journey toward forgiveness is not simply about letting go of anger; it is a profound exploration of the shared humanity that exists even amidst conflict.¹⁷ In many cases, *Mettā* practice encourages individuals to reflect on their own suffering while acknowledging the suffering of others. This dual awareness can help dismantle barriers of division, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding conflict. Instead of viewing the 'other' as a monolithic adversary, individuals are prompted to recognize their shared experiences, dreams, and even pain. Such recognition can foster empathy, which is crucial for healing in societies that have experienced violence.

Furthermore, *mettā* can serve as a bridge for dialogue in divided communities. When individuals approach conversations with a mindset rooted in compassion, they are more likely to engage in constructive discussions rather than confrontational debates. This shift in perspective creates an environment where mutual understanding and respect can flourish, paving the way for collective healing. Additionally, incorporating *mettā* into community practices can have a ripple effect. When leaders and influential figures embody *mettā*, their actions inspire others, creating a culture of compassion that encourages reconciliation on a broader scale. Schools, community organizations, and local governments can integrate *Mettā* practices into their conflict resolution frameworks, promoting a holistic approach to healing that prioritizes emotional and psychological well-being alongside social justice.

In essence, *mettā* is not just a personal practice; it has the potential to transform entire communities by fostering an atmosphere of forgiveness, understanding, and, ultimately, peace. While the journey toward reconciliation may be long and challenging, through the lens of *Mettā*, it becomes a shared endeavor marked by hope and possibility.

As forgiveness takes root within individuals and communities, it becomes a powerful catalyst for fostering a broader sense of social cohesion and stability. When former adversaries or individuals with a history of conflict begin to see each other as fellow human beings deserving of compassion and understanding, the foundation is laid for the healing of deep-seated wounds that might otherwise fester, creating a breeding ground for future disputes.

¹⁷ Judith Lewis Herman (1992), *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 01 - 17.

This shift in perspective is crucial as it allows individuals to recognize the shared humanity that binds them together, paving the way for dialogue and mutual respect.

Moreover, as communities engage in the healing process, they become more resilient. Resilience, in this context, refers not only to the ability to withstand challenges and recover from adversity but also to the capacity to thrive in the face of difficulties. When individuals forgive and actively work towards reconciliation, they contribute to a collective strength that reduces the likelihood of future violence. This proactive approach to conflict resolution fosters a sustainable peace that is essential for the long-term stability of any society. In addition to the psychological and emotional benefits of forgiveness, there are tangible social implications as well. Communities that prioritize forgiveness and understanding often experience increased collaboration, whether in local governance, community projects, or social initiatives.¹⁸ These efforts can lead to improved relationships among diverse groups, fostering a culture of inclusivity and shared purpose. Ultimately, by embedding the practice of *mettā* - loving-kindness – into our daily lives and societal structures, we can nurture a more compassionate world where peace prevails over conflict and understanding triumphs over division.

This commitment to fostering empathy and compassion can extend beyond individual actions; it can influence policies and practices within institutions, promoting environments where forgiveness is both valued and encouraged. Educational programs that teach the principles of compassion and conflict resolution can shape the next generation, instilling values that prioritize understanding and cooperation over division. In this way, the ripple effect of forgiveness can spread far beyond personal relationships, creating a lasting legacy of peace that future generations can build upon.

V. IMPLICATIONS OF *METTĀ* FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION

Mettā, often translated as loving-kindness, carries profound implications for global cooperation, especially in the realms of conflict resolution and sustainable development. At its core, *mettā* embodies a deep sense of compassion and goodwill toward oneself and others, creating an environment where mutual respect and understanding can thrive. By cultivating this quality, individuals can develop a deeper sense of empathy and understanding for others, enabling them to appreciate the complexities of differing perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds. This emotional and psychological growth is not just a personal journey; it has far-reaching implications for societal interactions. Research suggests that such emotional development plays a crucial role in improving communication and collaboration, ultimately reducing conflicts on both interpersonal and international levels. When individuals practice *mettā*, they are more likely to approach conflicts with an open heart and mind, seeking

¹⁸ .. H. H. Dalai Lama (2001), *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 52 - 61.

to understand rather than judge. This shift in perspective is vital in today's interconnected world, where challenges such as climate change and geopolitical tensions require cooperative solutions that transcend individual interests¹⁹. In the realm of international relations, where misunderstandings often escalate into conflicts, the practice of *mettā* provides a path to constructive dialogue and peaceful resolutions. By nurturing a spirit of loving-kindness, nations can build trust and mutual respect – key elements for successful diplomacy. Initiatives like peacebuilding workshops and intercultural dialogues, which incorporate *mettā*, can help bridge divides and foster a deeper appreciation for our shared humanity.

Moreover, sustainable development efforts can greatly benefit from the principles of *mettā*. When stakeholders approach environmental and social challenges with a mindset of compassion, they are more likely to prioritize the well-being of all communities involved, ensuring that development is both equitable and inclusive. In essence, cultivating *mettā* not only enriches individual lives but also provides a transformative approach to addressing global challenges, paving the way for a more peaceful and harmonious world. As we continue to navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the practice of loving-kindness remains a vital tool for fostering enduring cooperation and understanding among diverse populations. Furthermore, *mettā* can be a powerful force in advancing sustainable development and environmental protection initiatives. By nurturing compassion and loving-kindness towards all living beings, individuals develop a deeper sense of interconnectedness with the natural world. This awareness fosters a greater sense of responsibility and stewardship for the environment. When individuals feel a profound kinship with nature, they are more likely to engage in collaborative efforts to tackle urgent environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Such collective action is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals and ensuring a livable planet for future generations.²⁰

The practice of *mettā* encourages individuals to view the environment not merely as a resource to be exploited but as a community of living beings with intrinsic value. This shift in perspective can lead to more ethical decision-making in areas such as consumption and resource management. For example, people who practice *mettā* may be more inclined to support sustainable products, advocate for conservation efforts, and participate in community initiatives aimed at protecting natural habitats. As compassion permeates a society, it can catalyze a cultural transformation that prioritizes ecological balance and respect for all forms of life.

Furthermore, *mettā* can enhance the effectiveness of environmental education by fostering empathy toward nature. Educational programs that

¹⁹ Sharon Salzberg (2020), *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, p. 83.

²⁰ Stephanie Kaza (2005), *Mindfulness and compassion in environmental education*. Journal of Environmental Education, pp. 05 – 15.

incorporate the principles of loving-kindness can help individuals - especially children - develop a strong emotional connection to their surroundings. This emotional bond can motivate them to take action, whether through volunteering for local clean-up efforts, participating in reforestation projects, or simply adopting more sustainable lifestyle choices. Additionally, *mettā* can serve as a unifying force among diverse groups working toward environmental sustainability. By nurturing a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, individuals from various backgrounds and beliefs can come together to address shared challenges. This cooperative spirit can lead to innovative solutions and a more holistic approach to environmental stewardship. In this way, *mettā* not only enriches individual lives but also contributes to the collective well-being of our planet, making it an essential component of the movement toward a sustainable and harmonious future.

In addition to environmental stewardship, *mettā* plays a crucial role in promoting social justice and human rights. By nurturing compassion toward all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances, people can cultivate a deeper sense of empathy for those who are marginalized or oppressed in society. This empathetic connection can inspire individuals to become more actively involved in advocacy and activism, thereby fostering a culture of social justice that seeks to uplift the voices of the disenfranchised.²¹

Mettā, often translated as loving-kindness, is a profound and expansive concept that encourages individuals to extend goodwill and compassion not only to friends and family but also to strangers and even those with whom they may disagree. This broader application of compassion is essential in addressing the complexities of social justice, as it fosters a sense of connection and empathy that transcends personal biases and societal divisions. When individuals actively practice *mettā*, they cultivate an awareness of the interconnectedness of all human beings, recognizing that everyone, regardless of background or beliefs, shares a common humanity. This recognition is not merely a feel-good sentiment; it is a powerful catalyst for social change. For example, when individuals embody the principles of *mettā*, they are more likely to engage in dialogues that challenge their preconceived notions and biases. They begin to see the world through a lens of inclusivity, which can lead to a deeper understanding of the experiences and struggles faced by marginalized communities. This shift in mindset can be transformative, prompting individuals to critically examine and challenge systemic inequalities and injustices that persist in society. By fostering an environment in which loving-kindness is practiced, individuals can work collaboratively toward solutions that promote equity and justice for all. Moreover, the practice of *Mettā* encourages individuals to extend their compassion even to those who may hold opposing views or engage in harmful behaviors. This does not mean condoning such actions but rather recognizing the underlying human experiences that contribute to conflict and division. By

²¹ Christopher S. Queen (2000), *Engaged Buddhism in the West*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, p. 222-275.

approaching others with a spirit of loving-kindness, individuals can create spaces for dialogue and understanding, which are crucial for healing and reconciliation.

In a world often marked by division and polarization, the cultivation of *mettā* is more important than ever. It serves as a reminder that our shared humanity can guide us toward compassion and justice, inspiring us to take action in support of those who are suffering. By embracing the practice of *mettā*, we not only transform our hearts but also contribute to a more just and compassionate society where every individual is recognized and valued.

Moreover, *mettā* can serve as a foundation for collaborative efforts to promote social justice. By fostering an environment where compassion is paramount, communities can come together to support one another, creating networks of solidarity that empower marginalized groups. When individuals operate from a place of *mettā*, they are more inclined to listen to the experiences of others, acknowledge their struggles, and advocate for meaningful change. This collective approach not only enhances understanding but also amplifies the impact of social justice initiatives. Additionally, the practice of *mettā* can have far-reaching effects on mental health and well-being. Individuals who cultivate a compassionate mindset are often better equipped to handle the emotional toll that comes with engaging in social justice work. This resilience is essential as advocacy can sometimes lead to feelings of frustration or burnout. By grounding themselves in *mettā*, activists and advocates can sustain their commitment to social justice while maintaining their emotional health. Ultimately, the integration of *mettā* into the pursuit of social justice not only enriches the individuals who practice it but also contributes to the creation of a more just and equitable society. By promoting compassion, understanding, and interconnectedness, *mettā* lays the groundwork for meaningful social change that uplifts and empowers all members of the community.²² Overall, the implications of *mettā* for global cooperation are profound and far-reaching. By continuously fostering loving-kindness and compassion towards others, individuals can enhance their capacity for understanding and empathy, leading to increased cooperation and diminished conflict. This shift not only holds the potential for improved international relations but also paves the way for a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world.

In a global landscape often fraught with division, strife, and misunderstanding, the principles embodied in *mettā* offer a transformative approach that can inspire collective efforts for a better future. At the heart of *mettā* lies the idea of unconditional love and goodwill, which can extend beyond personal relationships to encompass entire communities and nations. When individuals practice *mettā*, they cultivate a mindset that prioritizes the well-being of others, which can mitigate hostile attitudes and promote collaborative solutions to pressing global issues.

²² Paul Grossman & Nicholas T. Van Dam (2011). *Mindfulness, by any other name... : Trials and Tribulations of sati in Western Psychology and Science, Contemporary Buddhism*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, p. 01 - 02.

Moreover, the practice of *mettā* can serve as a powerful antidote to the pervasive negativity that often characterizes political discourse and international relations. By encouraging people to look beyond their immediate self-interests and consider the broader implications of their actions, *mettā* fosters a spirit of cooperation that can bridge cultural and ideological divides. This is especially crucial in today's interconnected world, where challenges such as climate change, poverty, and social injustice require collective action and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, *mettā* can play a vital role in conflict resolution. By promoting empathy and compassion, it encourages parties involved in disputes to approach negotiations with a mindset focused on finding common ground, rather than simply pursuing their agendas. This shift in perspective can lead to more constructive dialogues and sustainable agreements that benefit all stakeholders. Ultimately, integrating *mettā* into global cooperation efforts can foster a transition from a mindset of competition to one of collaboration. As individuals and nations embrace the values of loving-kindness and compassion, they can pave the way for a future where mutual respect and understanding are prioritized, creating a more harmonious and interconnected global community. In this way, *mettā* is not just a personal practice but a foundational principle that can inspire significant change on a global scale.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the remarkable potential of *mettā*, or loving-kindness, as a transformative practice that can significantly contribute to the promotion of world peace. Originating from ancient Buddhist traditions, *mettā* is more than just a fleeting emotion; it is a deliberate and sustained effort to cultivate compassion, goodwill, and love toward oneself and others. By actively engaging in this practice, individuals are empowered to transcend their immediate concerns and biases, fostering a deeper understanding of the shared humanity that connects us all.

As individuals cultivate *mettā* in their daily lives, they not only enhance their emotional well-being but also foster an environment that nurtures empathy and connection. This shift in perspective can lead to increased cooperation among people, communities, and nations, ultimately paving the way for constructive dialogue and collaboration. By embracing *mettā*, individuals contribute to a significant reduction in conflicts, as the practice encourages the recognition of shared interests and emphasizes the importance of peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, the implications of *mettā* for promoting global harmony are both profound and far-reaching. The practice of loving-kindness extends beyond personal relationships and has the potential to influence social structures, political dialogues, and even international relations. When integrated into educational programs, community initiatives, and conflict resolution strategies, *mettā* can serve as a powerful tool for building bridges and fostering understanding among diverse groups.

Given the current global climate, characterized by increasing polarization

and conflict, the need for transformative practices like *mettā* has never been more urgent. Further research is essential to fully uncover its vast potential and explore how it can be effectively applied in various contexts. By investing in the study and implementation of loving-kindness, we can lay the groundwork for a more compassionate world, where individuals are motivated by love rather than fear, and where the pursuit of peace becomes a collective endeavor. Ultimately, the cultivation of *mettā* could be a key component in the quest for lasting global harmony, making it a vital area for continued exploration and practice.

As we navigate an increasingly complex world marked by numerous challenges - including armed conflict, social inequality, and environmental degradation - the practice of *mettā*, or loving-kindness, emerges as a powerful and effective tool for fostering peace, justice, and sustainability. *mettā* encourages individuals to extend compassion and goodwill not only to themselves but also to others, including those who may be perceived as different or adversarial. By nurturing loving-kindness toward all beings, individuals can cultivate a deeper sense of global citizenship, which is crucial for fostering collaboration among diverse communities. This approach promotes empathy and understanding - essential qualities for addressing the multifaceted issues we face today.

Incorporating *Mettā* into our daily lives can transform how we interact with others and perceive the world around us. When individuals practice loving-kindness, they begin to recognize the interconnectedness of all life, understanding that the suffering of one is the suffering of many. This awareness can inspire people to take action against social injustices and environmental destruction, fostering a spirit of solidarity that transcends borders. Cultivating such a mindset can also lead to more peaceful conflict resolutions, as individuals are less likely to engage in hostility when they approach others with compassion rather than animosity.

Moreover, *mettā* can serve as a foundation for community-building initiatives, where individuals come together to support one another during times of hardship. These initiatives can create networks of resilience, enabling communities to address challenges collectively and effectively. By focusing on shared values and common goals, communities can strengthen their capacity for collaboration, leading to innovations in social justice and environmental sustainability.

This sense of shared humanity can foster increased cooperation and a significant reduction in both interpersonal and international conflicts. As we embrace *Mettā*, we nurture a culture of peace that not only addresses immediate challenges but also lays the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable future. Ultimately, by embodying the principles of loving-kindness, we can contribute to a global movement aimed at healing divisions, promoting justice, and protecting our planet for future generations.

Ultimately, the practice of *mettā*, often translated as loving-kindness or goodwill, holds profound transformative power that can significantly impact individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. By cultivating an attitude of unconditional love and compassion, *Mettā* encourages us to transcend personal

desires and biases, fostering a more equitable and harmonious existence for all. This practice is not merely an individual endeavor; it ripples outward, influencing the fabric of our collective social interactions and relationships.

The teachings of Buddhism poignantly remind us: “May all beings be happy, may all beings be healthy, may all beings be at peace.” These simple yet profound sentiments encapsulate the essence of what *mettā* can achieve in the pursuit of global peace. When we engage in *Mettā* meditation, we not only nurture our emotional well-being but also contribute to the cultivation of a more compassionate world. This powerful intention can lead to a significant reduction in hostility, fear, and misunderstanding among diverse groups of people.

Furthermore, the practice of *mettā* encourages empathy and understanding, helping individuals appreciate different perspectives and experiences. In a world often marked by division and conflict, embracing *mettā* can serve as a unifying force, promoting dialogue and cooperation among individuals and communities. It urges us to look beyond the boundaries of nationality, religion, and ideology, fostering a sense of interconnectedness that is crucial for addressing the global challenges we face today.

Moreover, when *mettā* is practiced collectively, it has the potential to inspire social change on a larger scale. Communities that embody the principles of loving-kindness are more likely to engage in acts of service, support one another, and work toward justice and equality. By creating spaces where love and compassion flourish, we can build societies that prioritize well-being and peace. In this way, *mettā* becomes not just a personal practice but a powerful catalyst for societal transformation, paving the way for a brighter, more compassionate future for all beings.

The findings of this paper hold significant implications for policymakers, educators, and community leaders. By integrating *mettā* into educational curricula and community development initiatives, we can foster a deeper sense of compassion, empathy, and understanding among individuals. This, in turn, could lead to increased cooperation and a noticeable reduction in societal conflicts.

Moreover, the practice of *mettā* is versatile and can be adapted across various cultural and religious contexts. This adaptability fosters greater understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among diverse groups. By nurturing loving-kindness and compassion toward others, individuals can develop a deeper respect and appreciation for diverse cultures and traditions, which is essential for promoting global understanding.

In addition, the practice of *mettā* can be effectively integrated with other mindfulness practices, such as meditation and yoga, to enhance physical, emotional, and mental well-being. By cultivating loving-kindness, individuals can experience a greater sense of inner peace, calm, and clarity, all of which contribute to overall well-being.

Overall, this paper offers a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the Buddhist concept of *mettā* and its potential to promote world peace.

The findings deepen our understanding of how loving-kindness fosters inner peace, compassion, and understanding while also emphasizing the practical implications of *mettā* for advancing global harmony.

Future research could explore the application of *mettā* across various cultural and religious contexts, examine its effects on physical and mental health outcomes, and investigate its role in promoting sustainable development and environmental protection. Expanding our knowledge in these areas will help illuminate the pathways through which *Mettā* can effectively contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future.

In summary, the practice of *mettā* provides a powerful tool for promoting world peace, with profound implications for global cooperation and sustainable development. By nurturing loving-kindness and compassion toward others, individuals can enhance their understanding and empathy, fostering increased collaboration and reducing conflict. As we continue to confront the myriad challenges of our world, the practice of *mettā* stands as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward peace, justice, and sustainability for all.

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HOW TO CULTIVATE COMPASSION (KARUṆĀ) FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GLOBAL PEACE

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Abstract:

This paper provides an overview of the Buddhist perspective on compassion in the context of global peace. According to Dependent Origination, everything in the world, including the psychophysical compound we call an individual, exists concerning other beings and phenomena. It undergoes constant changes, responding and reacting to them. The first section of this paper examines Buddhism's role in creating world peace, which is the main element for preventing violence and achieving harmony. The second section finds out the potential of Buddhism to contribute to peacemaking efforts and promote a culture of peace in today's world. Buddhism believes that the roots of all evils stem from the minds of individuals. Recognizing it emphasizes the necessity of internal reflection. The awakening to the interdependent reality will replace selfishness, *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*. On the behavior level, one will practice compassion through five precepts or the Noble Eightfold Path daily. The Buddha taught several principles of goodwill in the community, which bring peace to humanity. Numerous *Suttas* show methods for attaining inner and external peace and preventing violence in international affairs. This paper concludes that the Buddhist view advocates peace for individuals and global harmony through compassion, emphasizing peaceful means and its holistic framework, which would play a vital role in the efforts to bring the nature of peace into the world.

Keywords: *Buddhism, world peace, inner peace, mindfulness, dependent origination, meditation, ethical living, environmental ethics, global harmony.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The natural inclination of beings is toward happiness rather than disaster, as they love themselves and fear death. Therefore, human beings always try to live happily and avoid all suffering. When faced with difficulties in life, they will find a method to overcome the suffering with the higher goal of human

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beings attaining life happily and peacefully.

Although beings want to live peacefully without violence, wars and conflicts always exist worldwide. Returning to previous history, we can see that the world has experienced two major world wars—the First World War I from 1914 to 1918 and the Second World War II from 1939 to 1945, which caused much suffering to society and people.¹ Then, beings and society do not allow war in any form because it destroys the peace of human beings' life.

From 1947 to 1992, one more war happened, the Cold War, between capitalism and communism after World War II. While the Cold War ended the struggle that emerged after World War II between capitalism and communism, the world has confronted various forms of war. Many countries have taken steps to develop nuclear weapons and other things, especially in the fight between the U.S. and some groups of radical terrorists, causing the terrorism war. War is the cause of the loss of peace in people's minds. On the other hand, there are new forms of war, such as economic and cultural, which bring too much suffering and damage to people in the world, destroying the values, economies, politics, and architecture of countries. If war always occurs in the world at different levels, it creates sorrow and destruction for people.

Furthermore, there are many conflicts and violence from individual to individual, in the family or the society, and from country to country with different or several factors. It exists in many forms, such as ideas and profits — violence is always followed by suffering and damage. Extreme materialism, capitalism, and consumerism prevail in the minds of beings. It causes crises in various ways and makes life lose the value of happiness and tranquillity of mind due to the terror of war and violence in multiple forms, and inner unhappiness of life from lack of compassion of mind. Thus, individuals should focus on compassion, which is the sense of inner happiness and tranquillity to mollify suffering and damage due to the war created for human beings.

II. OVERVIEW DOCTRINE OF COMPASSION IN BUDDHISM

Karuṇā is essential in all schools of Buddhism. In *Theravāda* Buddhism, *karuṇā* is explained as a means for attaining a happy present life and heavenly rebirth. Additionally, in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, *karuṇā* is described as the core requisite for becoming a *Bodhisattva*.² Meanwhile, *Visuddhimagga* has described *karuṇā* as one of four divine abidings mentioned as meditation subjects (*brahmavihāra*). It is also concerned with the social aspects of humanity: (1) *mettā* (loving-kindness), the wish to see others happy; (2) *karuṇā* (compassion), the wish to help others out of suffering; (3) *muditā* (sympathetic joy), the capacity for understanding and appreciation or sharing the happiness of others, and (4) *upekkhā* (*equanimity*), the feeling of an understanding calmness of mind when the forgoing three are inappropriate, which

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I&II.

² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karuṇā#:~:text=Karuṇā%20\(Sanskrit%3A%20करुणा\)%20is,Buddhism%2C%20Sikhism%2C%20and%20Jainism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karuṇā#:~:text=Karuṇā%20(Sanskrit%3A%20करुणा)%20is,Buddhism%2C%20Sikhism%2C%20and%20Jainism).

can gain advantages or merits in our life.³ These qualities are believed to bring merits and advantages in life. However, due to the scope of this paper, the focus will be limited to the analysis of *karuṇā* (compassion) rather than a detailed explanation of all four factors.

Karuṇā is described in the meditation subject, which helps one attain the way of peace and enlightenment, but is also used in this world to gain peace in the life of beings step by step.⁴ The world has experienced stress from country to country due to many factors. So, the world needs peace for beings through cultivating compassion and helping each other with pure minds, or to help the world become more peaceful by applying the Buddha's teachings. Regarding the Buddha's voice, Rabindranath Thakur sounds toward the Buddha as the fountain of peace and says: "Thou art the fountain of peace of welfare, holiness, and love."⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru also says: "The Buddha's message of friendship, kindness, and love has a special significance in the present day, with a strife-torn world."⁶

Wisdom (*paññā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) are two qualities that existed in the Buddha's time, and he also practiced them to help beings overcome suffering and improve the world. If compassion (*karuṇā*) enters a being's heart, it helps everyone become happy and peaceful. So, there are no wars or conflicts, only the sunshine of peace for the world with the purpose of (a) bringing happiness to society and leading the individual from the state of suffering to peace in the world, (b) giving immortal peace by leading people gradually to the real world.⁷

Regarding the meaning of the term '*karuṇā*,' *Visuddhimagga* explains that suffering in others causes (*karoti*) good people's hearts to be moved (*kampana*). Thus, it is compassion (*karuṇā*). Alternatively, it combats (*kiṇāti*) others' suffering, attacks and demolishes it. Hence, it is compassion.⁸ The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* also mentions the meaning of compassion (*karuṇā*) as the desire to remove the pain and sorrow from one's fellow men. The characteristic of *karuṇā* is promoting the aspect of reducing the suffering of others. Further, the processing activity of compassion (*karuṇā*) is the quality that rouses tender feelings in good beings to see others suffering and always ignores struggles and suffering that do not bring benefit to beings. In this process, *karuṇā* allows human beings to serve others with loving-kindness motives.⁹

Meanwhile, Ven. Narada views compassion (*karuṇā*) as the function of not bearing others' suffering, manifested as non-cruelty. Its proximate cause

³ *Visuddhimagga*. 291.

⁴ <https://drarisworld.wordpress.com/2020/01/31/compassion-karuna-in-theravada-buddhism/>

⁵ Kusalasaya, *Karuna-Ruang-Urai*, 1986, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.* 77.

⁷ <https://www.dalailama.com/messages/world-peace/a-human-approach-to-world-peace>.

⁸ *Visuddhimagga* (1991), p. 311.

⁹ *Ibid.* 312.

is to see helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering. It succeeds when it makes cruelty subside, and it fails when it produces sorrow.¹⁰ Besides, Venerable Walpola Rahula has articulated the Buddhist perspective on non-violent tolerance: “This spirit of tolerance and understanding has been one of the most cherished ideals of Buddhist culture and civilization. That is why there is not a single example of persecution or the shedding of a drop of blood in converting people to Buddhism or in its propagation during its long history of 2500 years. It spread peacefully all over the continent of Asia, having more than 500 million adherents today. Violence in any form under any pretext whatsoever is absolutely against the teaching of the Buddha.”¹¹

On the other hand, compassion (*karuṇā*) is known not only to humans but also to all living beings. It is used to promote non-violence and end suffering. One who is compassionate will spread another compassion toward where one dwells and to others. The Buddha set a noble example to his disciples to empathize with others. He says: “He who ministers unto the sick ministers unto me, and he taught them to be compassionate to the wicked, the ignorant, and the mentally and spiritually ill people. It is the duty of the spiritually rich to have compassion for the spiritually poor and sublimates them.”¹²

Karuṇā is deeply connected to the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism. The Buddha presented the Four Noble Truths not merely as the theoretical truth but as a profound recognition of the universal suffering of beings, its origins, and the path to its cessation. Through his wisdom, the Buddha realized that only *karuṇā*, combined with wisdom, can overcome the world’s constraints.¹³ The concepts of *karuṇā* and wisdom are similar in meaning and nature. Only one who has wisdom can have *karuṇā* to others. So, after the Buddha’s enlightenment, he showered his compassion for beings who were seen or knew that it was the best way to end the roots of violence or war, and only compassion had enough ability to bring peace to beings.

Depending on the elements above, *karuṇā*’s role in Buddhism is to help man remove from suffering to happiness through forgiveness, gentle tolerance, peace, and harmlessness. It is no place for dwelling in guilt or selfishness, not even for feeling guilty about feeling guilty. Instead, we should give freely and broadly to all beings, including animals, especially ourselves. Then, those who want world peace must practice the Buddha’s teaching through cultivating for compassion (*karuṇā*) and wisdom (*paññā*). That combines two factors of actions and minds to create a peaceful world in our hands.

III. BUDDHISM AS THE FOUNDATION FOR TOWARD WORLD PEACE

According to Buddhist teachings, global peace, or war, is up to man at every moment. Man is the factor that determines how an event occurs and can

¹⁰ Ven. Narada (2018), p.327.

¹¹ Ven. Walpola Rahula (1978), p. 5.

¹² Ven. Walpola Rahula (1978), p. 328.

¹³ http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/publicationFiles/JBS/JBS_-Vol26/26-3.pdf.

control it. It is not hopeless and out of our hands. If we do not do anything, who will? Peace or war is our decision. The aim of Buddhism is peace, not only in this world but also all over the world. The Buddha taught that the first step on the path to peace is understanding the causality of peace. When we understand what causes peace, we know where to direct our efforts. No matter how vigorously we stir a boiling pot on a fire, the soup will not cool. Removing the pot from the fire will cool, and our stirring will hasten the process. Stirring causes the soup to cool, but only if we first remove the soup from the fire. In other words, we can take many actions in our quest for peace that may be helpful. But if we do not address the fundamental issues, all other actions will come to naught.¹⁴ According to Dependent Origination, everything around beings will undergo constant changes, which they respond to and react to.

Today, many religious traditions have practiced ceremonies combined with cultural, political, and economic activities between humans and enterprises that connect countries worldwide closer together. Therefore, the role of religion is significant in building peace because Buddhism goes beyond belief as it is a philosophy of love and wisdom. The path of Buddhism can be summed up in three steps: (1) to lead a moral life, (2) to be mindful and aware of thoughts and actions, and (3) to develop wisdom and understanding.

Buddhism shows the life inequality and injustice in the world. It provides the way of life that leads to true happiness through the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path theory, which can destroy suffering to lead man to attain liberation. Therefore, the right path to peace, the path the Buddha laid down, which leads to peace of mind and the pacification of the defilements, is *sīla* (moral), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom). It is the path of practice. The path leads to purity and to realize and embody the qualities of the *samaṇa*. It is the way to abandon greed, hatred, and delusion. Whether humans view it internally or externally, the practice does not differ from this. Ajahn Chah mentioned the Buddha sound:

This way of training and maturing the mind, which involves the chanting, the meditation, the *dharmma* talks and all the other parts of the practice forces you to go against the grain of the defilements. Then, the Buddha taught that this is how the practice is for all of us. All his disciples who had finished their work become fully enlightened.¹⁵

The issue of peace as the ideal for human survival in consideration of the structural violence of wars is like the lack of peace by an organization. Peace has become most necessary and challenging for religions and Buddhism. The world has become too small and weak to live with anger and delusion. On the contrary, the world will become peaceful due to tolerance, love, and compassion, which are significant because they bring humankind happiness. Forgiveness, gentle tolerance, harmlessness, and quiet compassion are well-known symbols of Buddhism; it is given freely and broadly to all beings.

¹⁴ https://www.cttbusa.org/buddhist_ideas/worldpeace.htm.

¹⁵ Ajahn Chah (2004), p. 279.

Compassion is a central concept in the religion of the Buddha, who came to be known as the *karuṇā* or the prince of compassion. On the other hand, the aim of life, as how to bring the good life for ourselves and others, is to express the states of compassion (*karuṇā*), a characteristic of the state of *nibbāna*. Conversely, the excellent life practice is said to include *samacariyā* living in spiritual calm with one's fellow beings. This doctrine gave 'Inward compassion' and resulted in harmonious living.¹⁶

Humankind is happy and peaceful because it can follow the middle path of non-violence and liberation. Suppose the being is responsible for practicing *dhamma* and observing precepts. They are called humans of wisdom because they cultivate compassionate hearts and serve people with wisdom eyes.

3.1. Five precepts as practice are the basic to peace life

The five precepts (*pañcasīla*) are the fundamental ethical principles the Buddha advises for one who wishes to lead a peaceful life and happiness. Its contribution to society is peaceful without creating hardships for the family and community. *Pañcasīla*, which lay Buddhists voluntarily observe, are not the commandments many have strictly abided by. The five precepts are the foundation of morality in different aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, and it is essential in the starting practice of the Buddhist path of abstaining from killing (*pāṇātipāta*), stealing (*adinnādāna*), sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*), lying (*musāvāda*), and intoxicant drinks (*surāmerayamajja*).

The *pañcasīla* is the concept of Buddhism with the nature of the foundation of morality in ancient and modern times. The five *pañcasīla* are not to take the life of anything living, not to take anything not freely given, to abstain from sexual misconduct and sensual overindulgence, to refrain from untrue speech, and to avoid intoxication, that is, losing mindfulness.

Compassion, peace, love, and happiness establish the true meaning of human life. Our lives have true happiness and meaning while discovering the value of compassion, peace, love, and joy. Human life aims to realize that all beings are interrelated and go to enter the liberation (*nibbāna*) door. According to G. Constant Lounsbery, the present life is consciously or unconsciously due to

Violating these precepts continuously. It is difficult indeed to live a harmless life; it is necessary to have acquired a certain amount of right view. To acquire the right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*), views that are not steeped in ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, etc., we must practice the right attention (*sammāsati*) and vigilant observation of the phenomena around us and have also acquired the habit of observing internal mental phenomena.¹⁷

Hence, each individual keeps *sīla*, which helps us abstain from killing, stealing, etc.; the precept is the basis of behavior codes of conduct humans in daily life to build the family and society in purity for the world into peace and calm.

¹⁶ K. N. Jayatillake (2008), p. 284.

¹⁷ Dr. Paul Dahlke and Bkhikku Silācāra (1975), p. 33.

3.1.1. Noble eightfold path to peace in Buddhism views

According to Buddhist teachings, only the middle path can solve the suffering of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* because it avoids two extremes: sensual indulgence and self-mortification. Only being physically comfortable or acceptable, but not indulging in the mundane material world, as now the mind has nothing to concentrate on to discover the truth. The Noble Eightfold Path is a way to end suffering, and it can rid individuals of clinging and delusions and help them understand the truth about everything.

The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyaatthangikamagga*) is to combine with the Four Noble Truths, which creates the core of Buddhism. The eight elements of the path are interdependent principles in cultivating virtue, meditation, and wisdom, with detail of eight factors: (1) Right view (*sammā-ditṭhi*) is to realize the validity of the Four Noble Truth. It is accomplished with the cultivation of the wisdom of mind, (2) right thought (*sammā-sankappa*) is to help develop conduct and ethics and intend to use them in a consistent and mindful way, (3) right speech (*sammā-vācā*) as remind no false speech but rather truthful and kind speech or silence, (4) right actions (*sammā-kammanta*) should cultivate wholesome and harmonious, abstain from harming ourselves or other creatures, (5) right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) as should earn a living in a lawful, moral and honest way that benefits rather than harms others, and is beneficial to both ourselves and others as well, (6) right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) must be disciplined and committed to our self cultivation with wholesome in our thoughts, which lead to healthy actions, (7) right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) must see the truth cognitively and intellectually, and not be swayed by prejudice or past experience and (8) right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) developing mental stability and the ability to maintain a one-pointed focus with your mind means a more focused mindfulness or observation of a meditation subject.

It should be noted that the Noble Eightfold Path is one of the truest and best ways to lead to peace and happiness in daily life. It can be a philosophy of life based on the right views concerning suffering, liberation, compassion, and kindness. Compassion and kindness are virtues that direct us away from ourselves and our cravings and free us from suffering; the proper thought is to have only the thoughts we want.

Corresponding to the Noble Eightfold Path, the first aim of right thought is to have only thoughts on bringing happiness to oneself and others. Right speech is practiced in words that express compassion and kindness. Right action calls us to react slowly and thoughtfully to do the next right thing. Right livelihood means work that directly or indirectly causes others to suffer, which is work to avoid. Right effort recognizes that we live well only with effort. Right mindfulness is doing one thing and thinking only of it. Right concentration clearing the mind in meditation is both the culmination and the second beginning of the Eightfold Path. No one graduates from the Eightfold Path; living well is an ongoing process we want.¹⁸

¹⁸ William Irwin (2013), p. 68.

3.1.2. Compassion as the pillar of global peace

The *Pāli* commentaries explained that *karuṇā* is the desire to remove harm and suffering from others and for every conscious being to be free from affliction. It counters pitilessness. Individuals can observe the normal state of mind and sympathy in their general surroundings. At the point when a mother, for instance, sees her child genuinely sick, she will usually be moved by compassion and truly wishes that he might be free from the affliction of his infection.¹⁹

According to Buddhist psychology, most problems stem from our passionate desire and attachment to things. Pursuing objects, aggression, and competitiveness are used in the quest for the things we are attached to and seek. An obvious result of these mental processes is the easy translation of thoughts into actions, which breeds belligerence. Although such processes have always been in the human mind, they are carried out more skillfully in the current environment. What steps can we take to curb and manage these poisons of delusion, greed, and aggression? Because these poisons are the root cause of nearly all problems in the world.

The desire for happiness and the desire to save others' pain is the foundation for compassion. It is also predicated on the legitimate sentiment establishing the common need for joy. Indeed, everyone has similar desires, and everyone should have the same opportunity to satisfy those interests. The religiosity we typically identify with traditional religious practice is unnecessary to develop a loving heart. It is for everyone, regardless of color, creed, or political affiliation; it is not just for religious people. It is intended for everyone who views the world from this more expansive perspective and prioritizes being a part of the human family. It should cultivate and use power emotion more regularly, but we frequently overlook it, especially in our prime when we feel overconfident.

The fact that all wish to gain happiness, avoid suffering, and keep in mind our relative unimportance concerning countless others makes us conclude that it is worthwhile to share our possessions with others. Training in this sort of outlook makes a true sense of compassion, love, and respect for others possible. Individual happiness ceases to be a conscious self-seeking effort; it becomes an automatic and far superior by-product of loving and serving others. Another result of spiritual development, which is most useful in day-to-day life, is that it gives calmness and a presence of mind.

We conclude that sharing our belongings with others is beneficial since we all want to be happy, free from suffering, and aware of our smallness compared to innumerable others. A true sense of compassion, love, and respect for others becomes available when you train in this mindset. Individual happiness ceases to be a conscious self-seeking effort; instead, it emerges as a natural and far better consequence of loving and evaluating others. Calmness and presence of mind are other benefits of spiritual development that are most beneficial in daily life. Everyone benefits from the practice of compassion and wisdom. Still,

¹⁹ *Visuddhimagga*, p. 308.

those in charge of national affairs benefit since they can establish the structure of world peace. Many religions bring comfort and happiness to humanity in much the same way as there are particular treatments for various diseases. Every religion makes an effort to help beings avoid suffering and achieve happiness. Each religion tries to improve global civilization and decrease human misery, which works to lessen human suffering and contribute to world civilization.

The Buddha spent forty-five years guiding human beings to go on the right side, which can help anyone, regardless of gender, race, or class. To obtain the perfect enlightenment, known as the nature of all things or the truth underlying existence, refers to the teachings regarding this path. A detailed explanation of all these teachings will give you a general idea of what the Buddha taught. Buddhist social philosophy has rules for ordinary men and women who live at home with their families and in society. The Buddhist method of living, known as the Noble Eightfold Path, is intended for everyone, without exception.²⁰ The Buddha's focus is on human happiness through all of his teachings. He believed living a moral life founded on ethical and spiritual values was necessary for happiness. Continuously, the Buddha explained four conducts conducive to people to attain happiness in the next life if they practice them and keep them, such as (1) faith (*saddhā*), (2) morality (*sīla*), (3) charity (*cāga*) and (4) wisdom (*paññā*).²¹ Therefore, the Buddha says: "Never by hatred is hatred appeased, but it is appeased by kindness. One should win anger through kindness, wickedness through goodness, selfishness through charity, and falsehood through truthfulness. It is an eternal truth."²²

According to Piyadassi Thera, the Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*) is the way to social peace and righteousness. It comprises eight constituents: spiritual training, mental development, and moral conduct. The Eightfold Path can be called the Middle Path (*majjhimāpaṭipadā*). The middle path, because it avoids two extremes, which are painful, low, and lead to harm, and indulgence in sensual pleasures, which are low, worldly, and lead to damage, is one extreme.²³

Since humans fear suffering and constantly seek happiness and peace, many religious and philosophical schools, including East and West, will try to find out how to solve those problems and achieve happiness and peace. Buddhism is one of the religions that focuses on attaining peace and spreading universal world peace through the meaning of love, compassion, and universal brotherhood. According to the Buddha, a good life is free from evils and suffering. So, stopping evil and suffering is the path to a happy existence.

From the perspective of Buddha's teaching, it is clear that the peace of the community depends on the peacefulness or goodwill of the individual members

²⁰ Noble Eightfold Path: right speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, understanding and right thought.

²¹ Ven. Walpola Rahula (1978), p. 83.

²² Ven. Walpola Rahula (1978), 86.

²³ Piyadassi Thera (2018), p.76.

of the community, and the same holds even if we enlarge the community to include the whole world. Peace in the psychological condition or attitude functions as the individual thoughts and feelings. Thus, peace in the general social sense is only the result of the cultivation of peacefulness by the individual, who is the ultimate unit of the social community. This psychological attitude tending to peace in society is further analyzed in Buddhism into four cardinal states of thought and feeling called the four sublime moods (*brahmavihāra*). These four appear the same in all schools of Buddhism. In Pāli they are listed as *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā*.²⁴

The four sublime moods (*brahmavihāra*), which people use for love, are accepted and resonate with others. That means *Brahma* is sublime, and *vihāra* is the path of living. Hence, *brahmavihāra* refers to a sublime path of living. A perfect dawn of harmony and peace will symbolize that kind of society. The sublime state created in one man can be transferred to all the members of society. If every member of a society develops infinite consciousness saturated with *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity), that society will not have hatred, enmity among its members. It will lead to the perfect social order, resulting in the ideal social order.

Ven. Narada requests everyone should practice the *brahmavihāra*, which will arise for the emergence of social order with the reign of complete harmony and universal peace in this ill-disciplined world of today. The modus work of *brahmavihāra* will be as follows: *mettā* embraces all beings, *karuṇā* embraces sufferers, *muditā* embraces the wealthy, and *upekkhā* embraces the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant.²⁵

Combining Buddhism and world peace is one excellent method of cooperation that provides peace of mind. Buddhist beliefs generally have a far stronger love for humankind and desire for peace than those lacking faith. Furthermore, they know how to show this desire for peace and love for man in their actions. People of various religions possess the most significant ability to unite and transcend differences of race and nationality. With this firm belief, the religious operation builds a strong fort of peace based on a deep understanding of our shared humanity. When one can fully realize this, then fraternal love, the feeling that all human beings are brothers and sisters, will spring up in one's heart, and one will be filled with a sense of harmony and cooperation. This sentiment of fraternity is the benevolence or compassion taught in Buddhism.²⁶ Hence, man should practice selfless love to maintain real peace and salvation. Just as suicide kills physically, selfishness kills spiritual progress. Loving-kindness in Buddhism is neither emotional nor selfish. It radiates through the purified mind after eradicating hatred, jealousy, cruelty, enmity, and grudges. According to the Buddha, loving-kindness is the most effective method to maintain purity of mind and to purify the mentally

²⁴ O. H. de. A. Wijesekera (2008), p. 3.

²⁵ Ven. Narada (2018), p. 612 - 4.

²⁶ Niwano Nikkyo (1997), p. 36 - 74.

polluted atmosphere.²⁷

According to the Buddhist teachings, the synonym for love or the negative side of love is non-violence or harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*), which means abstaining from destroying a living being; statements by the Buddha as: “Someone avoids the killing of living beings and abstains from it. Without a stick and sword, he lives carefully, full of loving-kindness, and anxious for the welfare of all living beings.”²⁸ Linking this *Mettā Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta*, the Buddha mentioned: “Let none deceive or decry his fellow anywhere; let none wish other harm in resentment or hate.”²⁹

Love and violence cannot go together; one can not have love and violence simultaneously, so one aspect of love is harmlessness or non-violence. The Buddha always instructs his followers to be true pacifists who live a non-violent life. *Bhikkhu*, who uses violence to solve conflicts, is not a faithful follower of the Buddha. As the Buddha says: “Though thieves and bandits were to cut limb by limb with a double-edged saw, even then one who defiles his mind is not following my instructions.”³⁰

Meanwhile, if we lack loving-kindness in the country where the arms business is, it will directly destroy the economies of exporting countries in different ways. The world would turn into a paradise, with peace and loving beings in positions of power, if everyone practiced loving-kindness and could come to terms with this enormous fact. Thus, Buddhism is renowned for being a religion of peace. It has never waged a conflict on behalf of Buddhism. The Buddha advises his followers to propose love instead of violence and use love rather than force to end conflict. The *Dhammapada* said that: “Overcome the angry by non-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the miser by generosity; overcome the liar by truth.”³¹ So, all the doctrines of the Buddha have the message of peace without conflict. All violent actions are considered contrary to the principle of loving-kindness and compassion. Both these characteristics are the hallmarks of Buddhism for attaining global peace.

Also, the 14th Dalai Lama always wanted to build a society on the foundation of compassion, brotherhood, neighborhood, friendship, freedom from hatred, and ill will without war or conflict around beings in the community. He says:

Love and kindness are the very basis of society. If we lose these feelings, society will face tremendous difficulties; the survival of humanity will be endangered. With material development, we need spiritual growth so that inner peace and social harmony can be experienced. Without inner peace, without inner calm, it isn't easy to have lasting peace. In this field

²⁷ Dhammananda K. Sri (1998), p. 166.

²⁸ Nyanatiloka (2019), p. 56.

²⁹ <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/khp/khp.9.budd.html>.

³⁰ Mererk Prayoon (1994), p. 20.

³¹ *Dhammapada* 223.

of inner development, religion can make essential contributions.³²

Out of compassion, the Buddha appeared to help sentient beings escape the repeated circle of suffering. The world's need to improve compassion is essential to actual civilization. If compassion finds its way into the hearts of beings, they will live in happiness and harmony across the globe. The light of peace will illuminate the planet. Conflicts and war will exist, and peace alone will prevail. Pandit Rajmani Tigunait once said:

Pure love, compassion, selflessness, and self-acceptance radiate from us when we purify our hearts. Because similar attracts are similar, our presence will elicit the same qualities from others. And so love, compassion, cheerfulness, selflessness, and self-acceptance will begin to spread, radiating from the individual and infecting the community, the society, and finally, the world. War will no longer be possible, and nothing will be left to fight about.³³

The world needs peace because human beings have experienced suffering during war, viruses, and so on. Therefore, an individual needs to cultivate compassion in our hearts, which will help others with pure minds and share our fellowmen's sufferings. That is possible only by applying the Buddha's teachings in the world. To recall the words of the 14th Dalai Lama, it says: "Living in the society, we should share the suffering of our fellow citizens and practice compassion and tolerance towards our loved ones and enemies. It is the best of our moral strength."³⁴

Someone must develop a pure mind and compassionate view of happiness and peace. According to the Buddha's teachings, the intention to do good to others and the persistent thought in one's heart of the welfare of others will create happiness among the people around us. Returning good for evil, benevolence for injury, love for hate, and compassion for harm are characteristics of a Bodhi's mind. Benevolence and loving-kindness, not responding to ill-will from others, will delight the heart of all. Indulgence in resentment and vengeance will only further increase the miseries of oneself and others in this life and lives to come.³⁵

Nowadays, science and technology continue to advance rapidly across various fields. Still, their subjects of human problems exist, and even in modern society, man cannot find true peace in their life because man only tries to use mundane materials to solve problems but forgets to develop his mind. So, a man wanting peace must create material and mental energy. The 14th Dalai Lama mentions the methods to cultivate world peace such as: (1) universal humanitarianism is essential to solving global problems, (2) compassion is the

³² <https://garywonghc.wordpress.com/tag/quotes/page/151/?iframe=true&preview=true%2Ffeed%2F>

³³ Pandit Rajmani Tigunait (1991), p. 115.

³⁴ Tenzin Gyatso The XIV Dalai Lama (1997), p. 3.

³⁵ Dilgo Khyentse (2007), p. 67.

pillar of world peace, (3) all world religions are already for world peace in this way, as are all humanitarians of whatever ideology, and (4) each individual has a universal responsibility to shape institutions to serve human needs.³⁶

Human life is closely interconnected with society or community. Society forms the foundation of an individual's existence, and man must seek societal rule through relationships to bring life to peace. The Buddha is one of the greatest peaceful social thinkers who has shown the ideal way to social peace and harmony. He discovered the different problems of the existing society and pointed out the relationship between an individual and society. He emphasizes that man should harmonize life with living in a society without following some desire, ego, or emotion. The Buddha encourages man to follow compassion by associating four principles: (1) giving (*dāna*), (2) kindly speech (*piyavācā*), (3) helpful conduct (*atthacariyā*), and being even-minded and without pride (*samānattatā*).³⁷

Therefore, if a man needs to live in society peacefully, he should cultivate fundamental moral values. Only morals can bring peace and truth to man; the ideals mentioned above are the ways to promote social and world peace, both material and spiritual.

IV. APPLICABILITY COMPASSION (KARUṆĀ) FOR WORLD NON-VIOLENCE

Today, the world is submerged in conflict and wars, and these conflicts have different sizes, from small or large, from individual or social to domestic or international. Every conflict arises from the blind passion of desire and anger from the Buddhist perspective. The key to alleviating all these quarrels and conflicts is to control these selfish, blind passions through compassion or peace of mind.

According to Buddhist teachings, the world has a variety of wars due to a lack of compassion, energy, or peace of mind. Therefore, the Buddha explained that the world without harmony is: 'Indeed, this world is burning with many and various fires of greed, hatred and delusion, fires of infatuation and egoism, fires of infirmity, sickness, and death, fires of sorrow, lamentation, suffering and agony.'³⁸ The world is engulfed in suffering, and it originates from deluded impulses. These fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance, raging fiercely in people's hearts, are the fundamental causes of the suffering of human existence.

From the Buddhist concept of compassion, there are two aspects of compassion: (1) internal compassion, which is the compassion of the mind, and (2) external compassion, which is the compassion of society or beings with beings. It can be divided into two levels. The first type of compassion is the temporary compassion of a person who does not get salvation or enlightenment but can calm suffering and illness, and the second is the

³⁶ A. A. Shiromany (1995), p. 258.

³⁷ *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (2012), p. 419.

³⁸ Wiley John & Son (2012), p. 68.

permanent compassion of a person who gets salvation or enlightenment; that means the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-niroddha*) through the extinction of craving, which is the cause of suffering (*dukkha-samudaya*).

4.1. Internal compassion

Internal compassion is the compassion of the mind, which is known as a state of mental calm, tranquillity, mental balance, harmony, and purity; spiritual content is that mental state of no disturbance, conflict, worry, anxiety, corruption, grief, sorrow, it is an absence of the negative mental state as well as the presence of the positive ones.³⁹ Then, internal compassion, which is well known as the compassion of the mind, is a mental state free from disquieting or evil thoughts or oppressive emotions such as greed, hatred, delusion, and so on. The attained compassion of mind is the ultimate goal of Buddhism, which is absolute compassion as the Buddha says, “No bliss higher than the compassion.”⁴⁰

According to *Vatthūpama Sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the Buddha compared our mind to a cloth that external impurities can defile.⁴¹ Similarly, if we want to transform our lives and be free from suffering, problems, worries, unhappiness, and pain rooted in our minds and manifest as unpleasant feelings, we must learn to transform our minds. This transformation is a key characteristic of a compassionate mind. We can purify the mind by overcoming the three roots of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, freeing it from these defilements, and cultivating compassion. When challenges arise, we often view the external situations themselves as the problem—however, the trustworthy source of these difficulties lies within the mind. If we were to respond to challenges with a positive attitude, they would cease to be problems and instead become opportunities for growth and development.

The compassion in the Buddha’s thoughts means a state of inner tranquillity or the enlightenment condition (*nibbāna*). The Buddhist text describes the state of inner compassion as follows: “Tranquility of mind comes from having successfully transcended greed, hatred, and ignorance.”⁴² Compassion mind is generally associated with bliss, happiness, and contentment, which is a state of being mentally and spiritually at peace. Hence, one who ceaselessly strives to transcend egocentrism is that of inner compassion and tranquillity. A person’s heart is filled with the wisdom of the Dependent Origination and overflows with the spirit of compassion. Inner compassion is when one carries out altruistic acts and seeks to contribute to human society by fully manifesting wisdom and compassion.

In the Buddhist tradition, inner compassion is the genesis of a peaceful life in which all human beings are interconnected, and any action affects the whole. According to Pema Chodron: “War and peace start in the heart of an

³⁹ B., Khemananda (1996), p. 5 - 6.

⁴⁰ *Dhp.* 202.

⁴¹ MLDB.118.

⁴² Kawada Director. Yoichi (1999), p. 36.

individual.” The object is to “soften your heart first, then expand it outward.” The 14th Dalai Lama emphasized the centrality of inner peace to the world by stating that “through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved.”⁴³

Therefore, Buddhism holds that without inner compassion, outer compassion is not impossible. All of us wish for a peaceful world, but it will never be achieved unless people cultivate compassion within their minds. Only the best path to take care of compassion within our minds and guide others is to follow that path, and then we can hope to bring peace to the world near us. On the contrary, the world will not have peace without cultivating inner compassion. Hence, to establish peace and freedom from trouble, war, and conflict, we must first develop inner compassion and maintain it in our daily lives step by step to build a peaceful world.

4.2. External compassion

According to Buddhist teachings, external compassion is the kind of interpersonal peace in society, that is, a state of socially identical peaceful co-existence, cooperation, and friendly relations between men and their fellow beings, as well as nature. It exists in two kinds of senses: (1) in the negative sense, which means the absence of war, hostility, social disorder, violence, violation of human rights, riot, or ecological imbalance, and (2) in the positive sense that means of a state of social harmony, social justice, social equality, concord, friendly relation, public order and security, respect for human rights and ecological balance.⁴⁴

Hence, we must cultivate external compassion, which means men should share compassion with the misfortune and misery in society and avoid all social evils, but instead, the presence of kind, peaceful, calm behavior in society. It also includes communal, national, and world peace; external compassion can also be called social compassion. Likewise, one person is said to have external compassion while living harmoniously, fraternity, unity, and friendly relations with his fellow beings and nature. Therefore, internal and external compassion have a close relationship and are not mutually exclusive but interrelated and interdependent in life. Internal compassion, represented inside individuals' minds, is the first step towards external compassion in any societal situation. Society's peace or harmony should be built up in the minds of individuals since, without internal compassion, a world without peace will be created.

According to Mererk Prayoon, the world has real peace or not depending on the element, and only within can peace be brought to society and the world. The external compassion will direct the outcome of the internal compassion inside the minds of individuals and society. While the minds of individuals in society are peaceful, a peaceful society provides mental peace for individuals in the society.⁴⁵

⁴³ Kenneth Kraft (1992), p. 3.

⁴⁴ B., Khemananda (1996), p. 4.

⁴⁵ Mererk Prayoon (1989), p. 5.

In brief, society is a combination of each individual, and it depends on the individual and influences the individual. If society is good, it will be the foundation for the development of the individual life because the situation influences human life. Hence, internal and external compassion are interrelated. They are interdependent and support each other to create world peace.

V. CONCLUSION

To create a peaceful society or world, individuals must cultivate understanding and love to live harmoniously in the present. Looking to the future, we must abandon the causes of suffering and violence. Buddhism strongly rejects violence anywhere in the world. Firstly, the first step to peace is understanding why human beings need peace in life and respecting peace between individuals and the world. Individuals can direct their efforts to build a peaceful world from this foundation. This process is akin to removing a boiling pot to allow the soup to cool; as long as the fire burns, the soup can not cool. In other words, the Buddhist worldview seeks to see the origination of the analysis of the cause of why humans in the world are unhappy and uncompassionate, with human beings' suffering and without compassion, and find a method to bring happiness to humans, even animals.

Secondly, practicing the five precepts (*pañcasiḷa*) or the Eightfold Path (*ariyaatthagikamagga*) in mind control brings peace and harmony to the world and individuals. Restraint of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* through speech and bodily actions gives others peace through three channels: physical, verbal, and mental actions, which can cause world conflict from country to country. It is the fundamental cause in the world to start the fight. Suppose the world of the door is well-guarded with the training of the Eightfold Path, so the wars and conflicts without the globe are naturally checked. If we wish for a peaceful world, we should follow genuine religion by cultivating a compassionate mind and performing duties and obligations towards one another in society, to believe the world will be quiet forever.

Thirdly, the Buddha taught that training inner compassionate minds leads to peaceful speech and peaceful actions while retaining control of concentration. If the minds of living beings are at peace from inside to outside, the world will be at peace, calm, and happy without any suffering from war or conflict given to beings in the world. As observed, the Buddha showed the picture of beings whose overwhelming majority of us live amid mental maelstroms of greed, hatred, and ignorance, and they subside only for brief and treasured moments. The Buddha taught that beings live in a defiled world, and how they can have true mind peace and be permanently at peace while they have no training in compassion. We can not wait for all beings to become perfect persons or sages; what chance is there of a peaceful world for us? Then, he sends the message that beings should restrain their compassionate mind through Buddhist teachings to be calm and clear in any situation to solve that problem in the spirit of peace and mutual respect for reducing violence in the world.

Finally, from the Buddhist perspective, all beings desire to live happily and peacefully without being overwhelmed by greed, hatred, and delusion.

Therefore, moral conduct, compassion, kindness, peace, and other good qualities should be cultivated. It is the foundation for building peace and happiness within individuals, society, and the world by training inner compassion to influence external actions. This approach can also lay the groundwork for a peaceful world civilization by emphasizing meditation, which focuses on controlling the mind to eliminate negative thoughts. It inspires individuals to follow the path of peace, benefiting themselves and the broader world. Such practices offer a profound suggestion for creating a world without war or conflict, avoiding immense suffering, and striving for global harmony, as presented in this article.

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WORLD PEACE, CONFLICT NATURE, AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN ADAPTING BRAHMAVIHĀRA AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A MEANS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This paper delves into “the critical question: Can sustainable world peace be achieved without transforming individual and collective mindsets?” To address this, the study first examines the root causes and consequences of conflict, contrasting them with the factors that foster peace. Subsequently, it scrutinizes the Human Dignity Approach and UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. The research then explores how the Buddhist teachings of Brahmavihāra and the principles of Emotional Intelligence can serve as powerful tools to cultivate peace and promote sustainable development. The paper posits that the adaptability of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence can lay a crucial foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace. Due to time constraints, this research primarily focuses on a conceptual framework rather than an empirical investigation; however, feedback from three interviewees is briefly discussed in this paper. Further collaborative action research is necessary to implement these principles effectively and sustain world peace.

Keywords: *Inner peace, global harmony, Buddhist philosophy, four noble truths, eightfold path, compassion, peacebuilding, self-awareness.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

“One should not neglect wisdom, but should preserve truth, cultivate relinquishment, and train for peace.”¹ We can never obtain peace in the outer world unless we can train ourselves, and make peace with ourselves. The Buddha’s teaching is that of “non-violence,” which leads to peace and harmony. “Non-violence” is the first step of Sila on the path to Dhamma, refraining from killing to avoid causing harm to others, physically, the first step of Sila as well as verbally, the fourth step of Sila.²

The atmosphere in some areas of the contemporary global hub seems to be on the verge of war in hostile relations like burning charcoal, embedded bruises within people’s hearts, which could ignite to be explored at any time sooner, rooted from envy, jealousy, hatred, and destructive emotions. Taking into consideration these situations, hostility leaves no room for sympathy or compassion for one another and even threatens the stability of the world in every corner. The antidote of this ignition from the Theravāda Buddhist Dhamma teachings of 84,000 Dhamma Khandhā, this study explores four moral virtues called Brahmavihāras, namely, loving-kindness (Mettā), compassion (Karunā), sympathetic joy (Muditā) and equanimity (Upekkhā)³, which appear to have ceased to flourish, drying up nowadays.

Sakka, ruler of the devas, once asked the Buddha. Although human beings wish to live without hatred, hostility, or enmity, they wish to live in peace; however, why do people live in hatred to harm one another and hostile to others as enemies, and what fetters are they bound?⁴ The Buddha answered that it is bound of envy and miserliness that bind them to live in hatred, harm, hostility, and enemies. Envy and miserliness are rooted in liking and disliking, from desire, from thinking; if they don’t feel or think likeness or unlikeness as non-judgmental, then it does not arise.⁵

Ordinary human beings, with usual failings and foibles at the mundane level, could not easily be free from hatred (Dosa), envy (Issa) and jealousy, and avariciousness (Macchariya). The transformability to overcome hostility towards Positive Transcendence somewhat depends on temperament, Puggala-Paññatti - Designation of Human Types from Buddhist study⁶, e.g. sort of envious, avaricious, crafty, cunning, deceitful due to individual and collective mindsets. It has yet to survey empirically whether the different temperaments could be transformable through the four sublims of Brahmavihāras and the modern concept of Emotional Intelligence.

This study examines the Human Dignity Approach from Buddhist

¹ MN 140

² SN.14.25.

³ AN.10.208, (PTS A. V. 299).

⁴ DN 21.

⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2016): 131.

⁶ Law, B. C. (1979): 26.

perspectives alongside UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions as to whether or not this Vesak Day conference could lay the foundations for building a strong institutional Buddhist Community with Positive Transcendence in divergent thinking to prosper peace to engage in global division to co-existence in harmony. Hopefully, the adaptability of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence is of vital importance in laying a crucial foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace.

This paper mainly focuses on a conceptual framework rather than empirical investigation, however, knowledge sharing of three interviewees with different intelligentsia on the root causes and different levels of conflict nature, and the overall view on the big picture of the contemporary situation is emphasized as qualitative research input.

II. THE ROOT CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT NATURE

Oxford Dictionary defines the definition of conflict as “a situation in which groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument”. Political and ethnic conflicts are the cause where the violence is the effect. The definition of conflict from the Cambridge dictionary is that of an active disagreement, opposing opinions, and principles between people, groups, and countries. The definition of conflict resolution by the APA Dictionary of Psychology is the reduction of discord or friction among individuals or groups by using strategies including reconciliation, negotiation, and utilizing bargaining power.

Although peace is more important than war, peace is unlikely to triumph whenever there is war. The various terms like dispute, conflict, and war all are based on the disagreement of different degrees at different levels. Dispute is a short-term disagreement, while a conflict is a long-term disagreement between parties where they perceive a threat to their interests and needs between individuals, communities, or even countries. Conflict resolution is often negatively affected by high emotional agitation.

Why do we have conflicts? What are the problems? To answer these questions, the Four Noble Truths are applied as a structure for conflict resolution. To start with, one needs to understand and know the origin of the problem, which is called *pariññeyyam* in Pāli.⁷ In the Four Noble Truths, the first Truth is to find out the root cause of the problem that needs to be removed. The Second Noble Truth is to move the cause of the problem.⁸ The Third Noble Truth is a complete solution to the problem, the cessation of the conflicts in peacebuilding, which is unlikely to reach the mundane level without practicing and achieving enough wisdom to see things as they are. Truth can be seen only through mindful training to see their inner strength and weakness of self-awareness. This cessation of the problem needs to go

⁷ *Visuddhimagga* XVI.13 - 104; *Dhp* 338, 291.

⁸ *Visuddhimagga* XVI.13 - 104; *Dhp* 338, 291.

through the Eightfold Noble Path. This also operates within the doctrine of dependent origination. Dependent - Origination presents conditions and causality as an interconnected process.⁹ Characteristics of any phenomenon in this world are complex, including relationships and ethical, psychological, and mental attitudes, which intersect causes and conditions. Conflict, as one of the sufferings, is meant to be the causal relationship in the Buddha's teaching of the Law of Kammā that results in war, whereas conflict resolution could lead to peace to some extent. In accordance with the Law of Kammā, causal relations and conditions, conflict resolution is the effect and outcome of peace, while causes of conflicts are to be removed. Inner ill-mentality is the cause of conflict, which results in war.

To find practical resolutions to respond to and lessen the tense situation today, this paper posits the adaptability of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence as conceptual linkages to lay a foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace.

III. FACTORS THAT FOSTER PEACE

Peace begins within the individual and then spreads outward. Peacemaking entails compassion, skills of listening skills, openness, and harmony.¹⁰ Loving-kindness is the only way to peace. The four sublimities of the Buddha's Brahmavihāra are key to inner and external peace: loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity. According to Dhamapada,¹¹ "conquer anger by love, conquer evil by good, conquer the stingy by giving, and conquer the liar by the truth". Though he should conquer a thousand and thousand men on the battlefield, he indeed is the nobler victor who should conquer himself.¹²

In defusing conflicts, reflections to undermine hatred and develop patience among the central values of Buddha's teaching is known as the 'divine abiding': loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity; allied to these is the virtue of patience or forbearance that is Khandi in Pāli.¹³

In Khuddaka-pāṭha,¹⁴ "he who is skilled and who wishes to attain peace, i.e. Nivāṇa should act thus: he should be perfectly upright of pleasant speech, gentle and humble.¹⁵ Buddha's words of peace and conflict resolutions are found in Mettā Sutta, Sariputtasihanāda Sutta, Kosombi Sutta, and many other Suttas as well.

As mentioned above, Buddha's answer to Sakka the fetters bound of envy

⁹ SN 12.68.

¹⁰ Harvey, P. (2000): 283.

¹¹ Dh 223

¹² Dh 103; Harvey, P. (2000): 104

¹³ Harvey, P. (2000): 103-9

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (Trans.). (1895 - 1907). The Jātaka or stories of the Buddha's former births (6 Vols). London: Pali Text Society, p. 234.

¹⁵ Harvey, P. (2000): 104. (In Khuddaka-pāṭha, Ñānamoli, translated); https://www.bps.lk/olib/bp/bp424s_Candy_Peace-In-Buddhism.pdf

and miserliness to live in hatred, harming one another, Mahāsi Sayadaw (1977) in his translation of “A Discourse on the Sakkapañha Sutta” explains that “envy generates ill-will towards those who excel us. Meanness makes us reluctant to see others become as prosperous as ourselves.”¹⁶ These two fetters of envy and meanness frustrate us and cause quarrels, enmity, danger, and misery. Those who envy a man because of his prosperity, influence, and status are unhappy, however, they may talk about the desire for inner peace. Their happiness stems from the evil design that harbors the object of their envy. Naturally, those whom one envies become one’s enemies and vice versa. Many people suffer from envy, and doubtless, this envy is subject to suffering beyond redemption throughout the cycle of existence. As Mahāsi Sayadaw highlights, the root cause of envy and jealousy is the sense of objects, like or dislike, and discursive thinking about them. The remedy is to observe all phenomena arising from the six senses to avoid unwholesome thoughts and to entertain only wholesome thoughts.¹⁷

The Buddha said to Ananda that the root of disputes is anger and hostility. One adheres to his views, holds to them tenaciously, and relinquishes them with difficulty, dwells without respect and deference to the Teacher, the Dhamma, the sangha, that leads harm as evil roots of disputes.¹⁸

Once, the Buddha told Anuruddha, “You are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes. It is a great gain, bodily act of loving kindness, verbal act of loving kindness, mental act of loving kindness, different body, one in mind.”¹⁹

IV. KNOWLEDGE SHARING OF INTERVIEW DISCUSSIONS REFLECTING PEACE AND CONFLICT NATURE

The brief responses reflecting the peace and conflict nature from the three interviewees are discussed in this part.

The first interviewee is an experienced meditation master monk who was previously a medical practitioner (Medical Doctor, MD). He explains that conflicts rooted in “I,” “My,” “Myself,” “Mine,” “Comparison,” and “Competition” are those of being unable to realize the truthfulness of Non-self, Anatta’s concept. There is no Self, but only five bundles of *Khanndhā* (non-self); however, this can be understood by only those who reach a certain level of meditation practice.

In childhood, there was no envy, no jealousy, no competition, and no comparison. “I must be better than you mindset grows in schools and workplaces, and such attitudes lead to envy, jealousy, and ill-willed mindsets. All these mindsets start spreading from the competitive school education system. That competitive mindset continuously grows in workplaces, career

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Pesala. (2021): 78.

¹⁷ Mahāsi Sayadaw. (translated) (1977): 98.

¹⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2016): 151.

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2016): 123 (MN 31).

climbers to be higher and higher at the individual level, community level, and even at the national level. Envy and jealousy are rooted in greed for success. All these good and bad of kutho, akutho, seeds of jāna, are just like plants, fruits, seeds grow again and again endlessly up and down of human realm, lower realm, higher realm of Brahman, etc. endless life cycle, endless suffering.

When we have mental defilements rooted in greed, anger, and delusion, our physical reactions become worsened, hostile, confrontational, and quarrelsome, and these might lead to conflicts and even to wars on the other end. All these ill-willed mindsets could be possibly transformed only through self-awareness of mindfulness training. When we are aware that we are in anger and hatred, we are able to find the cause of anger and hatred, then we would be able to remove the cause of the anger.

This self-awareness is, thus, fundamental in the mindfulness training of Buddha's teaching (Citta-Nupassana) that the researcher learned in many meditation retreats where meditation Masters taught applying Visutti Magga in mind and body exercise. Emotional Intelligence has also adopted self-awareness as its first category. Visutti Magga is the Path of Purification,²⁰ which provides a comprehensive guide to Buddhist doctrine and meditation practices. It was written by Buddhaghosa in the 5th century CE in Sri Lanka.²¹

Self-awareness is to realize when we are angry and why we are angry, while self-regulation is to control our anger. Awareness of our emotions is an essential meditation practice of the realization of our mind (Cittā Nupassanā). The modern concept of Emotional Intelligence, including self-awareness and self-regulation, has been adapted from the Buddha's teaching of mindful meditation practice, while empathy implies compassion, one of the four sublims of Brahnavihāra. Whether we are angry, envious, jealous, biased, partisan, divisive, hostile, fearful, or prejudiced are the root causes of suffering (Dukkha). Only through self-awareness, self-regulation, and mindful awareness, the root causes be eliminated. Brahnavihara is one of the 40 meditation practices. This again is synonymous with realizing the truth, realizing the root cause of suffering, the first Noble Truth. To eliminate the suffering, we must go through the Noble Eightfold Path, where Brahnavihāra and Emotional Intelligence are part of the Noble Eightfold Path in the 4th Noble Truth.

When we share Mettā, like "may all beings be peaceful in mind and body, be safe, be free from all physical and mental suffering", that encompasses loving kindness, empathy, and compassion. When our mind is concentrating on all these, we are serene, calm, and peaceful in mind; consequently, when our mind is trained and occupied with loving-kindness, compassion, and empathy, we are not harmful to others, and our environment is peaceful. This is a good start to sustain peace individually and then move towards collective mindsets in groups. In this way, we may create a conflict-free environment.

²⁰ *Visuddhimagga* IX, 291 - 320.

²¹ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (translated, 2011): 462 - 8.

The second interviewee, a security analyst and former advisor at the national level, shared the “Nature of Conflicts”. When asked what conflicts we are encountering in modern days, he explained three stages of conflict. Level one is on a day-to-day basis. It can be resolved by understanding one another. This is applied to the Noble Eightfold Path²² or “Right View”. Level two is a skirmish, a minor fight, or an argument. This stage causes dent and severe pain. This can, however, be resolved by “give and take” or bargaining power. Level three falls into full-scale war, do or die, which means one side will win, whereas the other side will be destroyed or defeated. This stage is tense and very difficult to resolve. Taking example of one conflict today is that of Ukraine and Russia. If Ukraine becomes a NATO member, direct threats ignite into war. If Ukraine decides not to become a NATO member, this could be level two, “give and take” bargaining power with Russia to compromise for conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution needs negotiators and decision-makers who are directly involved in the conflicts to have nearly the same brain level, knowledge level, experiences, and common national interest, but not prioritize his/ her business or personal interest. The level of analysis is divided into three: the first level is education-basis. Negotiators need to have at least classroom education. The second stage is knowledge level. They should have contained classroom education plus good enough experiences. The third level is wisdom which is the combination of knowledge, experiences plus wisdom. The more experiences they have, the higher the level that leads to a certain level of success in conflict resolution.

When asked what makes the conflict resolution fail? The interviewee answered this question by pinpointing that when the skill of a negotiator or decision maker is weak with a low level of knowledge, lack of experience and priorities favor his own personal interest, not national interest, then resolution will definitely fail. As long as personal ego or personal interest is prioritized, there will always be conflict that is unlikely to be settled. The interviewee concluded the discussion by saying that textbook theory and reality are different and difficult to handle. It is implied that the key to the success of conflict resolution is genuine national interest with wisdom and good enough experiences.

Buddha’s words of conflict resolutions, quarrels, and disputes are found in *Kalahavivāda Sutta*.²³ “... quarrels, disputes, lamentation, sorrows, along with selfishness, conceit, pride” along with divisiveness have arisen from desires, Desires are the cause go along with greed; the cause of hopes and fulfillments, from the cause of desires, decisions, anger, lies, and perplexity have arisen. All these qualities are the contemplative qualities of Dhamma.²⁴

The third interviewee, a prominent researcher and academic in security studies, shares his insights by saying that building genuine peace needs a

²² SN 56.11.

²³ SN.4.11.

²⁴ SN.4.11, 5.14; DN.21, MN.18.

“Mindset-Centric Approach”. The first important thing is the need to change the mindset. We need to discover where we are right now, why we are still at war, why we are not peaceful, assuming that we don’t want where we are right now. Secondly, our dream is based on our discoveries. Have we in war since our grandpa’s, grandmas, and parents’ time? Think of our dream of the possibility of getting out of war. Thirdly, define our dream. How far is the reality and our dream? Fourthly, define our destiny. What is our route and roadmap, and how can we go there without war? How far are we behind Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030? How far are we behind SDG 16, peace, justice, and strong institutions? We need to draw a clear-cut “Line of Approach” if we really want to reach the 17 goals of SDG 2030.²⁵ Finally, create a possibility of a “Mindset-Centric Approach”. How could we transform individual and collective mindset approaches through paving Emotional Intelligence Platforms?

His view on the new world order of democratic conspiracy theory and proxy war reflects certain situations nowadays. Mariam-Webster, Oxford English Dictionary, and Cambridge Dictionary define the conspiracy theory variously. In general, conspiracy theory is “an attempt to explain harmful or tragic events as the result of the actions of a small powerful group. Such explanations reject the accepted narrative surrounding those events; indeed, the official version may be seen as further proof of the conspiracy.”²⁶ Cambridge Dictionary defines a conspiracy theory as a “belief that an event or situation is the result of a secret plan made by powerful people”.

Oxford Dictionary defines it as “the belief that a secret but powerful organization is responsible for an event. They sought to account for the fatal crash in terms of a conspiracy theory”. The interviewee’s view reflects the geopolitics that encompasses money power of divisiveness, invisible hands behind, proxy-war approach, and indirect influences through the balance of power in the disguise of AIDs. Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘proxy war’ as a war fought between groups of smaller countries or smaller groups in a small country that each represents the interests of other larger powers to have help and support from these larger powers. It implies the hegemonic power balance hinders peace as a barrier.

In order to remove barriers to peace, mindset changes of decision-makers are of vital importance. Mindfulness training is a prerequisite for sustainable development. In the disguise of liberal democracy, terrorist action and violence take place in some places nowadays.

This third interviewee shares his thoughts by mentioning some concepts from the books of Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History”²⁷ Political Order²⁸ and

²⁵ United Nations. (n.d.). *Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

²⁶ Britannica. (n.d.). *Conspiracy theory*. Britannica. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/conspiracy-theory>

²⁷ Fukuyama, F. (2012): 43.

²⁸ Francis, F. (1992, 2011). Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24563214>

Political Decay²⁹ Failure of Liberalism and Its Future³⁰ Fukuyama argues that history should be viewed as an evolutionary process and that evolution leads to a definite endpoint rather than a return to a primitive state. “End” means the modernization or development leads to liberal democracy. At the time he wrote *The End of History*, he might not have thought there could be any viable alternative to liberalism.³¹

This third interviewee’s knowledge sharing ignites the researcher to extend more deep-dive research on whether or not “Revisiting End of History” could possibly be transformable to “Revival of Buddhist Moral Principles”.

In this regard, the researcher is convinced that it is important to explore Francis Fukuyama’s thought-provoking messages in reflection of what extent of Human Dignity and UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, peace, justice, and strong institutions to remove the barrier of peace and to maintain human dignity in the study.

The third interviewee sees that the contemporary democratic new world order, especially the largest world institutional chains and their institutional justice, are in the hands of hegemonic power. Institutional paralyzes are obvious in weak states, where proxy wars prevail. The interviewee’s view reflects Francis Fukuyama’s predictions that institutions were decayed, and the state was captured by a powerful interest group, which he said in 2014.³² Two years later, his predictions became true with the rise to power of a series of political outsiders whose economic nationalism and authoritarian tendencies threatened to destabilize the entire international order. Does he mean “The End of History” at the end of the Cold War” revisited as the end of liberal democracy?³³

The above three interviewees’ overall sharing encompasses Buddha’s strategy as based on a personal level, personal habit, and personal characteristics, while the Buddha’s Kalama Sutta is not blind faith, but to test, experience, and rationalize. What if the negotiators or decision-makers, however, do not have sufficient wisdom and rationalization of the right view and right thinking? conflicts remain unsolved, and peace is far away. Things are getting worse mostly due to decision-makers’ lack of vision to maintain peace and harmony.

To these points, it is interesting to scrutinize how the “End of History” as the evolutionary process could be revisited as a new world order in the future and the revival of Brahmavihāra, Emotional Intelligence, as a pre-requisite to building the foundation. The study explores how these concepts are interrelated for peace in terms of sustainable development.

²⁹ American Political Association. (2027). *Perspective on Politics*, Volume 15, Issues 2, June 2017: 567-569.

³⁰ Fukuyama, F. (2022): 585-6.

³¹ Fukuyama, F. (2012): 56.

³² Fukuyama, F. (2012): 45

³³ Fukuyama, F. (2012): 52.

V. HUMAN DIGNITY APPROACH

A theoretical model of Lennart Nordenfelt's four notions of dignity are:

- (1) Dignity of merit: related to a person's formal or informal status in society
- (2) Dignity as moral stature: dignity that is tied to self-respect and dependent on the conduct of the individual
- (3) Dignity of identity: dignity that is attached to the person's identity as a human being, which can be altered by others or
- (4) Dignity of *Menschenwürde* (a German word meaning inner dignity, is accepted in both Eastern and Western cultures. - Conceptualizing Dignity for long-term care. *Menschenwürde* signifies universal dignity that is constant regardless of external factors." Each type of dignity offers a unique perspective on how human worth is perceived and treated.³⁴

In general, the concept of human dignity is "the belief that all people hold a special value that all people hold a special value, tied solely to their humanity. It has nothing to do with their class, race, gender, religion, abilities, or any other factor other than them being human".³⁵

The Human Dignity Approach is based on the idea that all humans are fundamentally equal, regardless of their race, gender, wealth, or other factors. The dignity approach is inspired by Immanuel Kant's idea that humans have a unique form of freedom or autonomy. Human dignity is a universally accepted term for all people, and it is essential when talking about freedom, justice, and peace.³⁶

Francis Fukuyama defines the perception of human dignity in today's society as "Factor X". In his article "Human Dignity," Fukuyama explains that "Factor X are inner traits such as emotions and thoughts that distinguish one person from another. Technology (though it is essential in everyday life) misuses and abandons the factor X of humanity."³⁷

He believed that this essence of "Factor X" is "the foundation of human dignity", made up of a combination of qualities, including language, reason, and emotions. Factor X cannot be "reduced to the possession of moral choice, or reason, or language, or sociability, or sentience, or emotions, or consciousness, or any other quality that has been put forth as a ground for human dignity. It is all of these qualities coming together in a human whole that make up Factor X."³⁸

³⁴Nordenfelt, L. (2004), Nordenfelt & Edgar, A. (2005). Muders, S. (2005). *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*. Retrieved on October 22, 2024, p. 84 - 103.

³⁵<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/14717794200500004/full/html>

³⁶<https://journals.openedition.org/estetica/7185>

³⁷<https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Human-Dignity-By-Francis-Fukuyama-PK5MP-S3TGXZW>

³⁸Fukuyama, F. (2018): 123 – 9.

This piece of “Factor X” draws attention to how human dignity has been affected recently and its decline as we go into the future.³⁹ His well-known End of History in 1989 from Cold War to Liberal Democracy is likely to be revisited again today in this AI age. In his Failure of Liberalism and Its Future in Andrew Yang Podcast, Francis Fukuyama shares the word “Dacay” as drifting in an extremely bitter and extreme degree of polarization, partisan, veto-crazy public policy subject to powerful populist groups.⁴⁰ The researcher assumes revisiting the “End of History” era again by means of the revival of strong inclusive institutions formed with the foundations of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence.

Human Dignity from an Economic Approach,⁴¹ developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, heavily draws on the “Capability Approach” as a moral framework that emphasizes not just income, but also refers to individuals when evaluating economic policies, focusing on ensuring that everyone has access to basic necessities and capabilities needed to live a life with dignity, and ability to achieve key life functions like health and education.⁴²

Despite various diverse definitions of the Human Dignity concept, the researcher perceives Human Dignity as Hiri and Ottappa,⁴³ (Conscience & Prudence) the guardian of the world from the Buddhist aspect.⁴⁴ Hirīottappa Sutta clearly explains that:

One who lacks conscience and prudence has destroyed a vital condition for sense restraint One who lacks sense restraint has destroyed a vital condition for ethical conduct. One who lacks ethical conduct has destroyed a vital condition for the right immersion. One who lacks the right immersion has destroyed a true knowledge and vision. One who lacks true knowledge and vision destroys a vital condition for disillusionment and dispassion. One who lacks disillusionment and dispassion has destroyed a vital condition for knowledge and a vision of freedom.⁴⁵

The Buddha points to these two mental qualities as the underlying safeguards of morality: Hiri is an innate sense of shame over moral transgression; Ottappa is moral dread, fear of the results of wrongdoing. The Buddha calls these two states the bright guardians of the world (sukka lokapala). According to Bhikkhu Bodhi, as long as these two states prevail in people’s hearts the moral standards of the world remain intact, while when

³⁹ Fukuyama, F. (1992): 34.

⁴⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmtDwNqo5QU>

⁴¹ Sen, A. K. (1985): 397 - 416.

⁴² Sen, Amartya (1993, 2000): 97.

⁴³ AN.7.65.

⁴⁴ AN.7.65 Hiri Ottappa Suta: Conscience & Prudence.

<https://suttacentral.net/an7.65/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=plain&reference=none¬es=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin>

⁴⁵ AN.7.65.

their influence wanes the human world falls into unabashed promiscuity and violence, becoming almost indistinguishable from the animal realm.⁴⁶

While moral shame and fear of wrongdoing are common tasks of protecting the mind from moral defilement, their individual characteristics and modes of operation differ. Hiri is the sense of shame, an internal reference, rooted in self-respect and induces us to shrink from wrongdoing out of a feeling of personal honor. Ottappa is fear of wrongdoing, an external orientation, the voice of conscience that warns us of the dire consequences of moral transgression: blame and punishment by others, the painful kammic results of evil deeds, and the impediment to our desire for liberation from suffering. Acariya Buddhaghosa illustrates the difference between the two with the simile of an iron rod smeared with excrement at one end and heated to a glow at the other end: Hiri is like one's disgust at grabbing the rod in the place where it is smeared with excrement, Ottappa is like one's fear of grabbing it in the place where it is red hot.⁴⁷

The Buddha's stress on the importance of Hiri and Ottappa was based on a deep insight into the different potentialities of human nature. In accordance with Bhikkhu Bodhi, the path to deliverance is a struggle against the current, and if we are to unfold the mind's capacities for wisdom, purity, and peace, then we need to keep the defilements under the watchful eyes of diligent sentinels.⁴⁸

Pali hiri and ottappa. Hiri: is an innate sense of shame over moral transgression; ottappa is moral dread, fear of the results of wrongdoing. The Buddha calls these two states the bright guardians of the world (sukka lokapala).⁴⁹

Buddha's teaching of primacy of moral and human values for the long-term consequences for the individual and society is the Five Precepts, (Pansa Sila)⁵⁰ the necessary means for safeguarding the purity of one's conduct and guidelines that form the basis of Buddhist ethics: (1) Abstain from killing: Do not harm any living being (2) Abstain from stealing: Do not take what is not given (3) Abstain from sexual misconduct: Do not harm those you love through sexual infidelity (4) Abstain from false speech:⁵¹ Do not lie, slander, or gossip (5) Abstain from intoxicants: Do not consume drugs or alcohol that can lead to

⁴⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2010): 238.

⁴⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2010). *The Guardians of the World*. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition). https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_23.html

⁴⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2010). *The Guardians of the World*. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition).

⁴⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2010). *The Guardians of the World*. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition). https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_23.html

⁵⁰ Access to Insight. (2013, November 30). The Five Precepts: Pañca-sīla. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition). Retrieved from: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sila/pancasila.html>

⁵¹ AN.8.39

carelessness.⁵² These five precepts constitute the basic code of conduct, code of ethics, or set of rules to be respected by lay followers of Buddhism.⁵³

VI. UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 is one of the 17 Goals of SDG 2030, established by the United Nations in 2015⁵⁴ Goal Target of SDG is set as follows:

Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime

Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels

Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development⁵⁵

Catalyst 2030⁵⁶ is a fast-growing global movement of people and organizations committed to Social Innovation. In order to enhance peace and justice, the suggestions for ways to promote peace include:

(1) Treat all people with kindness, regardless of race, gender orientation, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

⁵² Sujato's Blog - Word Press.com.

⁵³ Access to Insight. (2013, November 30). *The Five Precepts: Pañca-sīla*. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition). Retrieved from: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sila/pancasila.html>

⁵⁴ <https://segs.un.org>

⁵⁵ The UN Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations, New York, 2015.

⁵⁶ <https://catalyst2030.net/>

- (2) Attend a peace rally.
- (3) Write to your government (local and federal).
- (4) Create a peaceful affirmation/mantra.
- (5) Don't engage in violence of any kind.
- (6) Don't purchase weapons.⁵⁷

The goal of SDG 16 peace, justice, and strong institution is likely to be achieved to a certain extent if only the strong institution of the Buddhist Community could play a leading role in laying the foundation of Brahnavihāra as well as Emotional Intelligence through institutional imperative. Self-awareness of their moral conduct, basic five precepts of not harming, killing one another, no verbal attack, preserving fundamental moral values, the shame of wrongdoing, fear of wrongdoing (Hiri and Ottappa), anger management to avoid violence by controlling themselves self-regulation. Showing loving kindness, compassion, empathy, self-respect, and respect to others in the environment as social awareness,

In order to acquire how could we strengthen the “Moral Institution” working on action to adapt Brahnavihāra and Emotional Intelligence to lay a crucial foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace from different levels, starting from individuals, schools, organizations, decision-makers, and the highest authorities at large.⁵⁸

VII. BRAHMAVIHĀRA

The Brahnavihara as the Four Sublime States⁵⁹ are contemplation of Love or Loving Kindness (Mettā), Compassion (Karunā), Sympathetic Joy or Altruistic Joy (Muditā), and Equanimity (Upekkhā). Pali term Brahnavihara is rendered by the Four Sublime States of Mind, which is an excellent, right, or ideal way of conduct towards living beings (sattesu samma patipatti).⁶⁰

These four love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity are known as the “boundless states (appamañña).”⁶¹ Nyanaponika explains that:

A mind that has attained that boundlessness of the Brahma-viharas will not harbor any national, racial, religious, or class hatred. They provide all situations arising from social contact as they are great removers of tension, great peacemakers in social conflict, and healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. These four sublimates also promote brotherhood against the forces of egotism and they are incompatible with a hating state of mind.⁶²

⁵⁷<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

⁵⁸https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_21_SustainableDevelopment_0.pdf

⁵⁹Commentary to *Visuddhimagga* Chap IX. (D III. 247 - 48).

⁶⁰ AN.10.208.

⁶¹ AN.10.208.

⁶² AN.10.208.

In Brahmavihāras, four sublims have a near-enemy and far-enemy.⁶³ For loving-kindness (Mettā), “the near enemy is greed, selfishness, anger while the far enemy is painful ill-will. For compassion (Karunā), near enemy is pity, while far enemy is cruelty; Joy with others (Muditā) near enemy is exuberance, far enemy is resentment; equanimity (Upekkhā) near enemy is indifference, far enemy is craving, clinging.”⁶⁴

The meditations on love, compassion, and sympathetic joy may each produce the attainment of the first three jhāna absorptions, while the meditation on equanimity will lead to the fourth jhāna only, in which equanimity is the most significant factor.⁶⁵ The persistent meditative practice will have two crowning effects: first, it will make these four qualities sink deep into the heart so that they become spontaneous attitudes not easily overthrown; second, it will bring out and secure their boundless extension, gradually uphold the boundlessness of the sublime states. They systematically break down all barriers restricting their application to particular individuals or places.⁶⁶

We have learned 4 sublime meditations.⁶⁷ When we share Mettā in loving-kindness meditation, we start with an aspiration for one’s own well-being as a point of reference for gradual extension: Just as “I wish to be happy and free from suffering, so may that being, may all beings be happy and free from suffering!” Then we extend the thought of loving-kindness to different persons we respect such as parents, a teacher; then to dearly beloved people, to indifferent ones, and finally to enemies or those we don’t like or who threaten us. Since Brahmavihāra is concerned with the welfare of the living, one should not choose people who have died; one should also avoid choosing people towards whom one may have feelings of sexual attraction.⁶⁸ The practice starts with one’s thought of loving-kindness, directed first to the east, then to the west, north, south, the intermediate directions, the zenith, and nadir.

The same principles of practice apply to the meditative development of compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, with due variations in the selection of people. Details of the practice will be found in the texts.⁶⁹

VIII. THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The term “Emotional Intelligence” is attributed to Michael Beldoch, a clinical professor of Psychology at Cornell University, who coined the term for a 1964 research paper from social intelligence to emotional strength.⁷⁰ In 1975, Howard Gardner published “The Scattered Mind”,⁷¹ which introduced

⁶³ D. III. 247 – 48.

⁶⁴ D. III. 247 – 48.

⁶⁵ AN.10.208.

⁶⁶ AN.10.208.

⁶⁷ D. III. 247 – 48.

⁶⁸ AN.10.208.

⁶⁹ D. III. 247 – 48.

⁷⁰ *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* (2021): 864.

⁷¹ Gardner, H. (1975): 45.

the concept of multiple intelligences in seven categories and then developed into nine categories of intelligence.⁷² In 1985, the term Emotional Intelligence first appeared in an unpublished doctoral dissertation of American researcher Wayne Payne in his “A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence” in which EI entailed self-integration, relating to fear, pain, desire, theory, the structure of reality, problem-solving, etc.⁷³

An important development took place in 1987 in an article in *Mensa Magazine*, Keith Beasley first used the term Emotional Quotient (EQ), though Reuven Bar-On claims to have used the term in an unpublished version of his graduate thesis (socialigence.net).⁷⁴ However, 1990 became an important year for Emotional Intelligence (EI) when John Mayor, a professor at New Hampshire University, and Peter Salovey at Yale University published their landmark article “EI” in the journal “Imagination, Cognition & Personality”.⁷⁵ In their model, Mayer and Salovey discussed EI in terms of four branches: perception and identification, appraisal and expression of emotion, using emotion to facilitate thinking, understanding and comprehending emotions, reflective regulation, and management of emotion.⁷⁶

Then in the 1990s, a watershed in the history of EI, psychologist and New York Times science writer Daniel Goleman asked permission from Mayer and Salovey borrowed their model and used the term EI for his research.⁷⁷ His 1995 book “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ” captured in imagination of management fraternity and laymen alike. It became an all-time bestseller and played an important role in popularizing the concept.⁷⁸ By that time Daniel Goleman gave a framework of the EI Quadrant with four components: Self-Awareness, Self-Management Social Awareness, and Relationship Management.⁷⁹ Later, through his other landmark book “Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships” published in 2006, and some other books including “On Emotional Intelligence: HBR’s 10 Reads Featuring ‘What Makes a Leader?’” he used the alternative terms and 5 EI components are known as Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills. This led to the formal formulation of Emotional and Social Intelligence. The parent concept (skillset) evolved into two constituting concepts through the annals of psychology and management.⁸⁰

⁷² Gardner, H. (1983): 57.

⁷³ Wilding, C. (2017): 13.

⁷⁴ Wilding, C. (2017): 13.

⁷⁵ Wilding, C. (2017): 13.

⁷⁶ Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997): 75 - 113.

⁷⁷ Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997): 75 - 113.

⁷⁸ Goleman, D. (2007): 56.

⁷⁹ Goleman, D. (1998): 34; Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2002): 45; Hughes, M. & Terrell, J. B. (2007): 56.

⁸⁰ Goleman, D. (2005); Ordun & Acar (2014); Wood, R. & Tolley, H. (2002). Retrieved from: www.socialigence.net.

On the other hand, the definition of Emotional Intelligence by Dr. Sandeep Atre, a founder of social license, entails that “Emotional and Social Intelligence” is essentially the science of managing self and connecting with others. He defines it as the “ability to adapt one’s behavior on the basis of awareness of one’s own emotions and attunement with other’s emotions.” This conceptualization is represented a proprietary model of his venture socialience. Thus, his model is the combination of three components that overlap awareness, attunement, and adaptability. Awareness is an understanding of what is going on inside oneself, while attunement is observing others and interpreting that observation for cognitive and emotional empathy. Adaptability is utilizing awareness and attunement to choose the most constructive response in a given condition.

Goleman’s books electrified the public and disseminated the term worldwide⁸¹. Many EI books make dramatic claims that cognitive ability or traditional academic intelligence, especially Intelligent Quotient contributes only about 20% to general life success (academic, personal & work), while the remaining 80% is directly attributable to Emotional Intelligence” (Goleman 1995).

The concept of emotional intelligence seemed to appear at the right time when it was believed that Intelligent Quotient (IQ) tests were devised, discriminatory, and even clever people were not quite obviously successful at work. IQ is a genetic given that cannot be changed by life experience and the destiny of life is largely fixed by these aptitudes. This ignores the challenging question of what can we change to help our children fare better in life.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), otherwise known as Emotional Quotient (EQ), is the ability to understand, use, and manage one’s own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. As Daniel Goleman put it, EI is not Intelligent Quotient (IQ) or technical skills, but a group of five skills: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.⁸²

- (1) Self-awareness is knowing one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values, and goals and their impact on others
- (2) Self-regulation as controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and moods
- (3) Motivation as relishing achievement for its own sake
- (4) Empathy is understanding other people’s emotional makeup
- (5) Social skills as building rapport with others.⁸³

All these EI skills are required for decision-makers and negotiators who lead the conflict resolution dialogue, especially empathy in considering other’s

⁸¹ Annamaria, D. (Ed.). (2011): 7, 16.

⁸² Goalman, D. (2015): 12.

⁸³ Goalman, D. (2015): 12.

feelings and, the ability to listen to others especially when making decisions. Social skills are of vital importance in managing relationships to move them in desired directions in conflict resolution.

Dalai Lama in his cross-cultural dialogues together with other Buddhist scholars, Western scientists, and philosophers, calls for compelling contemporary urgency with his probing questions “Why do seemingly rational, intelligent people commit acts of cruelty and violence? What are the root causes of destructive behavior? How can we control the emotions that drive these impulses? Can we learn to live in peace with ourselves and others?”⁸⁴

IX. CASE STUDY OF RESEARCH ON MEDITATED BRAIN

The advanced research of fMRI on the Dalai Lama’s meditated brain and the “Mind and Life Institute sponsored series of dialogues with Dalai Lama, Buddhist scholars, Western scientists, and philosophers” have proven that meditation strengthens emotional stability and greatly enhances our positive moods⁸⁵.

It has been debated on the role destructive emotions play in human evolution, whether or not they are “hardwired” in our bodies, whether or not it is universal or culturally determined, and in what way practices can reduce negativity have also been shown to bolster the immune system.⁸⁶

By exploring new frontiers of EI, different therapies are scientifically experimented with as neuropsychological findings. Some studies, including Compassionate Focused Therapy,⁸⁷ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy,⁸⁸ and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy,⁸⁹ have already been taught by the Buddha about 2600 years ago, as found in Brahmavihāra and mindfulness practices in Visudimaggā, the Path to Purification as a Buddhist approach.

X. CONCEPTUAL LINKAGES IN FOSTERING PEACE IN TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE MINDSETS

Paul Gilbert (2000) founded the Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT). His Focused Therapy (CFT) approach offers life- changing insights into our amazing capacities and also the challenges we face in our everyday lives.⁹⁰ By understanding ourselves, we become motivated to act out of true care for our well-being. This changes the relationship we have with ourselves and others. According to Paul Gilbert, “compassion is a motive that emerges out of the evolution of caring behavior which is primarily a mammalian-rooted motivational system. What turns caring into compassion is our new brain

⁸⁴ Mind and Life Institute. (2000, March). Series of VIII.

⁸⁵ Goleman, D. (2005): 76.

⁸⁶ Mind and Life Institute. (2000, March). Series of VIII.

⁸⁷ Gilbert, P. (2000): 59 - 79.

⁸⁸ Gilbert. P. (2009): 56.

⁸⁹ Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006): 1 - 25.

⁹⁰ Gilbert, P. (2000): 6 - 41.

competence for thinking, empathy, and mindfulness”⁹¹

Paul Gilbert in his three types of emotion regulation systems: The threat System, the Drive System, and the Soothing System, CFT aims to reduce the threat system, healthily build the drive system, and cultivate the soothing system so people feel safe inside themselves and with others. His evolutionary model proposes that” human beings switch between three systems to manage their emotions. Each system is associated with different brain regions and different brain chemistry. Arousing anxiety, anger, or distress is caused by an imbalance between the systems, often associated with under-development of the soothing system.”⁹²

“Threat system links with emotions of anger, fear, and disgust. When it activates, this system directs physiology, attention, thinking, behavior, and emotion to reach safety. The drive system links to positive emotions, highly rewarding such as promotion, excitement, joy, and motivation to reach goals, and to get things to them and others. The soothing system links to feelings such as contentment, calmness safeness, and peacefulness. The system is associated with giving and receiving care from others.”⁹³

Professor Paul Gilbert’s compassion-focused therapy (CFT) integrates techniques from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)⁹⁴ with concepts from “evolutionary psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, Buddhist psychology, and neuroscience”⁹⁵ CBT’s approach is structured and goal-oriented. It identifies negative thoughts and behaviors to change them. On the other hand, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)⁹⁶ is “a type of mindful psychotherapy to stay focused on the present moment and accept thoughts and feelings without judgment. ACT aims to move forward through difficult emotions into healing instead of dwelling on the negative emotions”⁹⁷ ACT helps accept the changes of life and makes a person move towards living a meaningful life according to their perspective values. While modern science has focused on formulating ingenious chemical compounds to help us overcome toxic emotions, Buddhism offers a different method for training the mind through meditation practice. Buddhism explicitly explains these trainings as an antidote to the mind’s vulnerability to toxic emotions.⁹⁸

Paul Gilbert’s 3 Emotional System: The Weekend University⁹⁹

⁹¹ Gilbert, P. (2000): 59 - 79.

⁹² Gilbert, P. (2000): 6 - 41.

⁹³ Gilbert. P. (2009): 34.

⁹⁴ Gilbert, P. (2000): 6 - 41.

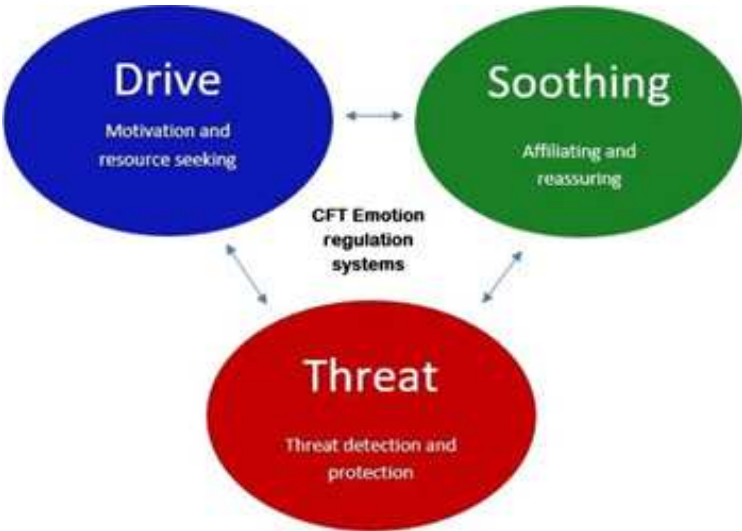
⁹⁵ Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006): 1 - 25.

⁹⁶ Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006): 1 - 25.

⁹⁷ Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006): 1 - 25.

⁹⁸ Goleman, D. (2006): 341 - 362.

⁹⁹ <https://theweekenduniversity.com/compassion-focused-therapy-an-introduction>



Picture Ref. balancedmind.com¹⁰⁰



In terms of the conceptual linkage between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Buddhist approaches, the first EI category of self-awareness is to serve through mindful awareness of Citta Nupassanā. The second EI category of self-regulation through anger management is to link with loving kindness (Mettā), to conquer anger by love, to conquer the liar by the truth.¹⁰¹“Though he should conquer a thousand and thousand men in the battlefield, yet he indeed

¹⁰⁰ https://www.mindfulpath.com.au/application/files/5115/6583/0031/The_three_emotional_systems.pdf
<https://balancedminds.com/three-system-model/>
¹⁰¹ *Dhp* 223.

is the nobler victor who should conquer himself.”¹⁰² The third EI category of motivation is to apply the happiness approach and altruistic joy (*Muditā*), while the fourth category of empathy is via compassion (*Karunā*). The fifth category of social awareness is through emancipation on differences and diversity of religious belief and culture (*Uppekkhā*). To this point, social awareness overlaps to strengthen the Institution to work on action to the adaptability of *Brahmavihāra* and Emotional Intelligence, to lay a crucial foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace from different levels, to start from individuals, schools, organizations, decision-makers, and the highest authorities at large. That is of vital importance in transforming individual and collective mindsets via *Brahmavihāra* and EI as a basic foundation.

According to Bhikkhu Bodhi, “*Hiri*, as the sense of shame, has an internal reference, rooted in self-respect and induces us to shrink from wrongdoing out of a feeling of personal honor. On the other hand, *Ottappa* as fear of wrongdoing has an external orientation; seamless interconnection between the inner and outer domains.”¹⁰³ This is indeed an urgent requirement of today’s deteriorated ethical standards. Such moral decline is widespread especially in virtual media communication. It is paradoxical in the disguise of human rights abusing traditional ethical values in all global frontiers nowadays.

Human Dignity and morality may depend on individual beliefs, however, the notion of morality in the Buddhist concept does not go beyond *Hiri*, *Ottappa*, and the Noble Eightfold Path. The researcher contends that containing world peace is unlikely to hold unless individual and collective mindset changes, without holding *Hiri*, *Ottappa*, 4 sublimes of *Brahmavihāra*, EI which is also part of 4 sublimes and Noble Eightfold Path.¹⁰⁴

Even though *Kalama Sutta* is meant for all human beings around to believe in their own experiences, this could be only possible in Buddha’s time. Nowadays for those *Bāla*, people with no wisdom, could not make the right decision without learning and listening to wise *Dhamma* teachers. Conflict resolution and accurate self-evaluation are just two instances of significant emotional intelligence impacts “There is fruit and result of good and bad actions” forms an essential part of what the Buddha called the Right View (*sammā-ditthi*) and is a crucial requirement for the development of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddha gave advice to monks on the simile of the saw constantly to keep in mind for welfare and happiness for a long time by saying the following: “Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. In this case, monk, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness and starting with

¹⁰² *Dhp* 223.

¹⁰³ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2010): 134.

¹⁰⁴ *MN* 117.

them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill-will. That is how you should train, monks. “Monks, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?” Therefore, monks, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.”¹⁰⁵

According to the Dhammapada: “Hatred is never pacified by hatred in this world; by non-hatred alone is hatred pacified. This is the law, ancient and eternal.”¹⁰⁶ He is reminding us of an important moral and psychological truth. If we counter the hatred that comes from others with our own hatred, we may succeed in frightening or deterring the other person, but we will not end the hatred they have for us. As the Buddha says elsewhere in the Dhammapada:

“Victory gives rise to enmity, the defeated dwell in pain. Happily, the peaceful life, discarding both victory and defeat.”¹⁰⁷ The killer begets a killer, One who conquers, a conqueror. The abuser begets abuse, and The reviler is one who reviles. Thus by the unfolding of kamma, The plunderer is plundered.¹⁰⁸

Abandoning false speech, the ascetic Gotama dwells refraining from false speech, a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world. Abandoning malicious speech, he does not repeat there what he has heard here to the detriment of these, or repeat here what he has heard there to the detriment of those. Thus he is a reconciler of those at variance and an encourager of those at one, rejoicing in peace, loving it, delighting in it, one who speaks up for peace. Abandoning idle chatter, he speaks at the right time, what is correct and to the point, of Dhamma and discipline. He is a speaker whose words are timely, to be treasured, reasoned, well-defined, and connected with the goal.¹⁰⁹

The origins of disputes, conflicts and violence lie in our attachments to such things as property, power, land, status, views, ideas, etc. Disputes over such matters lead to the arising of anger, quarrels, and aggression and, in the debate between Sakka and Vepacitti, we encountered two different approaches to dealing with situations of that sort. Sakka is quoted favorably by the Buddha as arguing that, as a response to hostility from others, counter-aggression or suppression by force will usually only temporarily deal with that hostility, which can then easily spring up again later. From this, we can learn that by making the effort to understand the reasons for the discontent of others with an open and non-judgmental mind we help put everyone in a better position to deal with it in a peaceful and satisfactory way when it arises. In addition,

¹⁰⁵ MN 21, 11, 19.

¹⁰⁶ *Dhp* 5.

¹⁰⁷ *Dhp* 201; *SN*.3.14.

¹⁰⁸ *SN*.3.15

¹⁰⁹ *D. I.* 9

such an approach helps us to become aware of any incipient anger in its earliest phases before it gets out of hand. This will also help us to discover the causes of hostility from others which will further assist us in defusing it. In a discourse known as “The Exposition of Non-conflict”¹¹⁰ the Buddha describes to the monks methods for reducing friction and conflict as they live their daily lives and practice Peace. This discourse reveals important and useful approaches that we can use as general principles to guide many aspects of our lives where we are interacting with others. For example, the Buddha encourages the monks to take a non-dogmatic approach to the use of local language and the everyday usage of words when teaching the Dhamma. He emphasizes that it is possible to be practical, by using language that people understand, and at the same time to refrain from distorting or diluting the teachings. There are other guidelines that we can draw out from the Buddha’s teachings on conflict in the Dhammapada, Suttanipāta. These include the following: We can try to deal with others just as we would be a good friend, this even includes those we strongly disagree with and those who may be doing harmful things. That is to say, to treat them with compassion and loving-kindness. This is the only way if we are truly to live by the four sublimes of Brahmavihāra.

It is also important to note that even the use of guidelines based on worldly notions of justice and righteousness, only reduces but does not negate the results of unwholesome kamma such as using violence or taking life.¹¹¹ Any action rooted in desire, aversion, or delusion is unwholesome and has future unpleasant kammic consequences for the person who carries out such an action. The most basic unpleasant consequence is the continuation of the cycle of rebirth itself. It should also be borne in mind that the law of kamma applies equally to those who encourage and incite others to unwholesome actions even if they themselves do not carry them out.

Indeed disputes, conflicts, and wars all start from our inner mind. To be peaceful in the world, we need to train our minds to be peaceful first, based on compassion. Inner peace is fundamental of peace building. In order to build peace, what Oxford Sayadaw Ven. Dr. K. Dhammasāmi train his disciples is compassionate meditation. Having relaxed ourselves through breath in and breath out, one-minute breathing exercise, we need to start thinking of something to sympathize ourselves throughout our life experiences for a few minute. Second stage is to think about someone we love, parents, siblings, children what a pity they have gone through and encounter in their life. Third stage is to spread the compassion to someone we know, our friends, our colleagues, then the fourth to stranger we don’t know. The fifth stage is spreading compassion to our enemies, those who are hostile to us. These five stages can be practiced in a few minutes in a day frequently. One Neuro Science research shows that once we exercise our mind training fifteen minutes a day for eight weeks, brain cells changed. Compassion transforms our emotions to be

¹¹⁰ *MN* 139

¹¹¹ *AN* 3.99, 4.232.

positive thinking. This is the compassionate mind training of Oxford Sayadaw Ven. Dr. K. Dhammasāmi to his students in enhancing growth mindset.¹¹² This compassionate mind training is the healing medicine for anger management and emotional management which are of essential skills in settling conflict resolution in peace building.

XI. SUMMARY

Three interviewees' knowledge sharing ignites the researcher to extend more deep-dive collaborative research on whether or not Fukuyama's "revisiting end of history" could possibly become the "revival of Buddhist moral principles".

In terms of human dignity, moral shame, and oral dread (Hiri and Ottapa), as the roots of morality, two qualities sustain the entire efficacy as the safeguards of personal decency and the dignity of the human race.

The four sublims of the Buddha's Brahnavihāra are key to inner and external peace: loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity. Peace starts within the individual and then spreads outwards. Root causes and consequences of conflicts: 1) Inner root that causes the consequential effects of; 2) External conflicts: Knowing the fact that 4 sublims Brahnavihāra are still Buddhist followers who have not been able to apply Buddha's teachings of Brahnavihāra in daily life to the fullest extent. This affects the development of Buddhism.

The benefits of meditation to connect with brain function have scientifically been proven, for instance, in the advanced research of fMRI on Dalai Lama's meditated brain, Western scientists and philosophers' research findings.¹¹³ By means of exploring new frontiers of EI, different therapies, scientifically experimented neuropsychological research findings, some case studies such as Compassionate Focused Therapy (CFT)¹¹⁴, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)¹¹⁵, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)¹¹⁶, Buddhist approach to Brahnavihāra and mindfulness practices as in Visudimagga,¹¹⁷ the Path to Purification is of priceless asset for World Peace in the Revival of Buddhist Values.

The implication is drawn that traditional meditation techniques are scientifically proven to strengthen emotional stability and greatly enhance our positive moods.

This UN Vesak 2025 Community as a strong institution can pave the platforms for individual and collective mindset changes, adaptability of Brahnavihāra, and Emotional Intelligence to lay a foundation for healing global

¹¹² Ven. K. Dhammasāmi. (2021): 167.

¹¹³ Goleman, D. (2004): 38.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert, P. (2010): 56.

¹¹⁵ Beck, J. S. (2021): 103.

¹¹⁶ Hayes, S. C., Strosahi, K.D., Wilson, K.G. (2012): 278.

¹¹⁷ *Visudimagga* IX. 291 - 320.

divisions and securing lasting peace. For further action plans to implement and to instill Individualized Consideration and Institutionalized Consideration.

XII. CONCLUSION

From this preliminary study and qualitative input from interviewees, the researcher draws 4 C as the mainstream problem of this contemporary issue, i.e. Conflict, Competition, Comparison, and Combat. These 4 Cs can shake world peace and global stability.

This paper explores the commonality of conceptual linkages, the possibility of “Revival of Buddhist Principles as a new history” into UN SDG 16 of peace, justice, and strong inclusive moral institutions, and how we can enhance peace from individual to the community, from the nation-state to the world at large via inner and external mindset changes.

A strong institution of a Buddhist Community with Positive Transcendence in divergent thinking is expected to prosper peace to engage in global division to co-existence in harmony. Collaborative action research is of prerequisite. In every Vesak gathering, just compiling research papers and discussions only seems merely insufficient.

Francis Fukuyama’s end point of ideological evolution in his “The End of History and the Last Man”¹¹⁸, this researcher posits “Revival of Buddhist Moral Principles”. Hopefully, this UN Vesak 2025 Buddhist Community could strengthen institutional imperative.

As Buddhist training mainly focuses on the three stages of morality, concentration, and wisdom, this study did not expect the mundane level to attain to utmost highest state of peace, Nibana, attainment of liberating wisdom; however, the expectation is reaching to certain extent of moral conduct. At the initial stage, Buddhist Missions as a strong institution could have been able to implement action plans and corporate training as well as corporate responsibility in enhancing basic moral conduct of five precepts, moral shame and moral dread (Hiri and Ottapa) as a basic human dignity of all global citizens. Buddhist missionaries should have been enabled to play an effective role as intellectual mediators in peace-making process from individual to community, from the nation-state to the world at large. Revival of Buddhist principles, especially developing loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, equanimity (Brahmavihāra), non-violence (Ahimsā), and Buddhist moral, ethical, and spiritual value is of vital importance to be institutionalized in peacebuilding. The Buddhist moral values, ethical values and spiritual deprivation are somewhat missing assets to embrace peace and security among the entire mankind. Having established the strong Buddhist Institution as a prominent role of intellectual mediator, challenges we encounter today could hopefully be healed with the Buddha’s medicines in peacebuilding, living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes, bodily act, verbal act, and mental act of loving-kindness.

¹¹⁸ Fukuyama, Francis. (1992, 2006): xi.

This study humbly calls for the collective effort of action research, and action plan to pave a solid foundation of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence for world peace. The researcher is confident that the adaptability of Brahmavihāra and Emotional Intelligence can lay a crucial foundation for healing global divisions and securing lasting peace.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE LAYPERSON MEDITATION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL HARMONY

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Abstract:

This study explores the current state of Chinese layperson meditation and its role in promoting social harmony and world peace. By analyzing data from Chinese meditation activities conducted between December 2024 and January 2025 and through in-depth interviews with eight practitioners of Pure Land and Chan Buddhism, the research reveals several key characteristics of lay meditation in China: Diverse forms of activities, including traditional seven-day Chan retreats, *Samatha-vipassanā* meditation, and dynamic meditation. These activities are increasingly flexible regarding regional distribution, scheduling, and curriculum design to meet modern demands. Significant improvements in emotional management, self-awareness, and life attitudes among practitioners demonstrate meditation’s positive impact on personal growth. Deep integration of meditation culture with modern life, with practitioners widely applying meditation concepts in daily routines and work.

The study also finds that the development of layperson meditation significantly contributes to social harmony by alleviating societal stress, improving interpersonal relationships, and fostering a spirit of public welfare. In the context of globalization, Chinese layperson meditation also contributes to world peace through cross-cultural exchanges and technological applications. These findings suggest that layperson meditation has become an important spiritual and cultural phenomenon in modern society, with far-reaching implications for personal growth, societal development, and world peace.

Keywords: *lay meditation, social harmony, Buddhism, mindfulness, inner peace.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 21st century, with China's continuous economic development and accelerating urbanization, modern individuals have faced unprecedented work pressure and life anxiety. Against this societal backdrop, an intriguing cultural phenomenon has quietly emerged: the culture of meditation has transitioned from the secluded spaces of traditional monasteries to the public domains of urban society, gradually becoming an essential pathway for urban dwellers to seek inner peace. This shift is evident not only in the increasing number of participants but also in the diversification of meditation practices and the secularization of meditation venues. As stated in the *Dhammapada*: "Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows like a shadow that never leaves".¹ Furthermore, the Buddha taught: "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 the right path, for the attainment of the right path, for the realization of *Nibbāna* - namely, the four foundations of mindfulness."²

This study systematically examines the current development of contemporary Chinese layperson meditation by analyzing nationwide meditation activity data from December 2024 to January 2025 and conducting in-depth interviews with eight practitioners from Pure Land and Chan Buddhism. Special attention is given to how meditation practices help modern individuals cope with societal pressures and the positive effects of this spiritual and cultural practice on promoting social harmony and advancing world peace.

II. THE RISE OF MONASTIC MEDITATION IN CHINA

Let's first look at the data provided by the WeChat public account "Chan Delight Meditation Network", which published a summary of meditation registration for winter 2024, along with the nationwide meditation activity schedules for winter 2025 (covering cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen).³ Key highlights include:

Chongqing Fuling 12.3 - 1.5: 2025 New Year's Day Awakening Meditation Beginner's Public Meditation Activity Registration.⁴

¹ *Dhp.* (1996): 21.

² DN 22, *Mahāsatipatṭhāna-sutta*: Maurice Walshe, trans (1995): 350.

³ The retreat information is sourced from the WeChat official account Changyue Jingxin Network, in the post titled meditation registration summary 12.28:2025 January New Year winter retreat registration schedule across temple nationwide (including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen) on [January 10 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/b9pBlemK0XynMwsOn1lx1w>.

⁴ The prevalence of meditation retreats during the New Year period can be attributed to two main factors: the extended holiday break that allows younger participants to attend, and the cultural belief that starting the year with meditation practice brings auspicious outcomes for the coming year on [January 10, 2025], available at <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/V-45wBORx-rDRXSityCv5PA>.

Shanxi Wutai Mountain 12.3 - 3: Wutai Mountain Dynamic Meditation Public 100-Day Meditation Activity Registration Notice

Guangdong Huizhou 1.1 - 1.6: Guangdong Huizhou 2025 New Year's Meditation Camp Registration Announcement

Guangdong Shantou 1.1 - 1.7: 2025 New Year's Silent 7-Day Meditation Camp Registration

Jiangsu Nanjing 1.1 - 1.7: 2025 New Year's Nanjing Qixia Public Meditation Class Registration

Jiangxi Fengxin 1.1 - 1.7: Jiangxi Fengxin Gengxiang Temple 2025 New Year's Vipassana Meditation Camp Registration

Fujian Putian 1.1 - 1.3: Fujian Putian Fayi Chan Forest 2025 New Year's Four Foundations of Mindfulness Meditation Registration

Sichuan Mianzhu 1.1 - 1.7: 2025 New Year's Mianzhu 7-Day Samatha Meditation Camp Registration

Beijing 1.1: 2025 New Year's Basic Samatha Meditation Public Activity Notice (Beijing)

Jiangxi Ganzhou 1.1 - 1.5: New Year's Ganzhou Huichang Tianxing Temple "Samatha Meditation & Health Preservation Class" Registration Notice.⁵

Zhejiang Wenzhou 1.1 - 1.6: Wenzhou Tianhu Temple 2025 New Year's Samatha Meditation Class Registration

Fujian Sanming 1.1 - 1.7: 2025 New Year's Sanming Taining Ban Mountain Wisdom Black Meditation 7-Day Closed Retreat Registration.⁶

Shaanxi Weinan 1.1 - 1.11: Weinan Huizhao Temple New Year's 3-Day & 10-Day Healing Body and Mind Journey Registration Announcement

Anhui Jiuhua Mountain 1.2 - 1.6: Da Yuan Jiuhua Mountain Dizang Temple Light Meditation Experience Camp

Guangdong Guangzhou 1.3 - 4.10: 2025 Guangzhou Ecological 100-Day Meditation Camp Registration Announcement

Shanghai Xi lin Chan Temple 1.4 - 1.7: Xilin Chan Temple "3-Day Meditation, Additional Practice for Resources" Event Registration Announcement

Fujian Quanzhou 1.4 - 1.6: Quanzhou Tianxian Temple 2025 January Public Mindfulness Meditation Camp Compassion Meditation Camp⁷

⁵ Many temples now blend meditation with health practices to meet the growing public interest in wellness , accessed on [January 10, 2025]. available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/gVn2T42kckBopRhWUQgOswJa>.

⁶ The 'Black Meditation' is a meditation retreat held in total darkness and silence. It helps people focus inward, free from distractions, and deepen their meditation. accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/54y63khsHKWflu1uTcMsRg>.

⁷ Quanzhou Tianxian Temple. (2024). 2025 January Chan Meditation Retreat Regis-

Guangdong Huizhou 1.4 - 1.17: Huizhou 2025 New Year’s First Heart Camp Two Sessions of 7-Day Silent Meditation Course

Guangdong Huizhou 1.8 - 1.14: Guangdong Huizhou 2025 New Year’s Awakening New Life 7-Day Meditation Camp Registration

Jiangxi Yifeng 1.12 - 1.20: Yifeng Dongshan Temple 2025 January Samatha “Silent Observation” Meditation Camp Notice

Guangdong Huizhou 1.18 - 1.20: Guangdong Huizhou Harmonious Body and Mind Journey Meditation Camp Registration

Hunan Jingzhou 1.18 - 2.16: 2025 New Year’s Spring Festival Jingzhou Feishan Chan Temple Silent Meditation Camp Notice

Hunan Jingzhou 1.27 - 2.4: 2025 New Year’s Jingzhou Feishan Chan Temple Spring Festival Experience Meditation.

Guangdong Sihui 1.28 - 2.6: Sihui Liuzu Temple 2025 January *Vipassanā* Meditation Class Enrollment.⁸

Zhejiang Linhai 1.29 - 2.4: 2025 Spring Festival Linhai Bailian Jiang Temple Pure Public Samatha Meditation Activity Notice.

Guangdong Shantou 1.30 - 2.12: Shantou 2025 First Heart Camp Two Sessions of 7-Day Silent Meditation Course

Guangdong Huizhou 2.4 - 2.11: Guangdong Huizhou 2025 February New Year’s Spring Festival Spiritual Awakening Meditation Camp Registration

Chongqing Fuling 3.20 - 6.20: Chongqing Fuling Wuling Mountain 2025 Chan Meditation Pathway Meditation Class Registration

Year-round and Long-term Meditation Camp Registration Guangdong Sihui (Second Half of 2024): 2024 Second Half of the Year Meditation Courses at Liuzu Temple Meditation Center.⁹

Zhejiang Taizhou (2024 Year-round): Tiantai County Tiantai Cien Temple Year-round 7-Day Meditation Camp Schedule

Shanxi Changzhi (2024 Year-round): Changzhi City Huangmei Temple Year-round Sitting Meditation

Shanghai (2024 Year-round): Shanghai Dayuantong Temple Daily Meditation Registration.¹⁰

tration Notice. accessed on [December 30, 2024], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/WGkkq-yU6eCNXso6I-UDPA>.

⁸ The Liu Zu Temple is a sacred one where Master Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch, lived and practiced for fifteen years. It is a revered place for Buddhists. accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/XPaVZPcpLjDtDPGSm-9UPQ>.

⁹ LiuZu Temple holds regular meditation retreats every month, creating a continuous practice cycle. In some well-known temples, meditation programs have become standardized courses. accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/u_WsMX-WQ620_tzoWkp_xjQ.

¹⁰ As China’s most economically developed city, Shanghai has temples that now offer daily meditation sessions, with senior monks providing teachings and guidance for lay practitioners.

Shanghai Bao Rong Temple (Weekend Meditation): Shanghai Bao Rong Temple Weekend Meditation Registration, Join Us on the Weekend

Fujian Fuzhou (Every Night): Fuzhou Bai Ta Dingguang Temple: Public Meditation Activity Every Night Notice.

Guangdong Sihui (2024 Year-round): Liuzu Temple Meditation Center Year-round *vipassanā* Meditation, Study and Practice Camp, Acupuncture Meditation, and Silent Meditation Classes.

This article had 951 views on January 13, 2025. The number of published events and regions exceeds Little Red Book's Chan Mini-Retreats. This public account was established on March 30, 2024, and is operated by an individual. It indicates the intense spontaneity and proactivity of the Chinese public in meditation practice.

Looking at the nationwide meditation activities around New Year's Day in 2025, Chinese Buddhist meditation presents distinct characteristics of modernization and a trend toward diversified development.

In terms of scheduling, the activities are both concentrated and flexible. On the one hand, many meditation camps are focused on the New Year's holiday (1.11.7), meeting the needs of urban dwellers who wish to practice during the break. On the other hand, some activities extend into the Spring Festival period, and several temples offer year-round sitting meditation activities, such as the daily meditation at Shanghai Dayuantong Temple and the year-round sitting meditation at Huangmei Temple in Changzhi, Shanxi, providing practitioners with a stable and continuous practice environment.

Regarding geographic distribution, meditation activities are no longer confined to traditional Buddhist holy sites but are spread throughout the country. In addition to conventional sacred sites like Mount Wutai¹¹ and Mount Jiuhua,¹² urban temples are also very active, especially in regions such as Huizhou, Shantou, and Sihui in Guangdong, showing a dense distribution of activities. This distribution reflects the deep integration of meditation with modern urban life.

Regarding course offerings, meditation forms have become increasingly diverse and professional. In addition to the traditional *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* meditation, there are now dynamic meditation, *Vipassanā* meditation,

accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Jz2Z78MQpmY-fRNAbkGpDKg>.

¹¹ Wutai Mountain, the foremost of China's four major Buddhist mountains, is considered the sacred site of Manjushri Bodhisattva. According to 2014 records, it is home to 39 temples. accessed on [January 10, 2025] available at <https://baike.baidu.com/item/中国佛教四大名山/2267734>.

¹² Jiuhua Mountain is traditionally believed to be the bodhimanda of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. It is home to more than 80 temples and over 300 monks and nuns. accessed on [January 10 2025], available at <https://baike.baidu.com/item/中国佛教四大名山/2267734>.

loving-kindness meditation, and other forms, with courses tailored to different levels of practitioners, ranging from beginner “introductory classes” and “experience camps” to advanced “7-day retreats” and “100-day meditation camps.” It is noteworthy that innovative course forms have appeared, such as the “Healing Body and Mind Journey” and “Ecological 100-Day Meditation Camp”, reflecting the integration of meditation with modern people’s physical and mental needs.

In terms of operation, most activities emphasize their public welfare nature, lowering participation barriers and making meditation more accessible and popular. The duration of activities ranges from 1 day to 3 months, providing flexible options for different groups. These characteristics suggest that traditional Chinese meditation culture is deeply integrating with modern society, maintaining its conventional spiritual core while continuously innovating in form to meet the needs of contemporary practitioners.

Looking at the analysis of the 48 meditation centers listed in the article published by the WeChat official account ‘Bai Seng Ge’ on November 17, 2024, which had a readership of 10,000 as of January 14, 2025,¹³ we can observe the following characteristics:

III. TYPES AND LOCATIONS OF MEDITATION ACTIVITIES

Traditional Patriarchal Chan Retreats: This is a crucial form of Chan practice, typically lasting seven days. It allows practitioners to let go of all distractions and focus on the meditation to awaken the mind. For example, the ‘Fourfold Chan Retreat’¹⁴ at Wuhua temple in Yiyang County, Henan, from November 5, 2024, to January 14, 2025, has ten sessions and limits the number of participants to 40, with specific health and age requirements.

Tathāgata Chan and Samatha and Vipassanā Meditation: This approach focuses on cultivating concentration and wisdom. For example, the 7-day ‘Guanyin Chan Meditation Camp’ at Xiyuan Temple in Suzhou, Jiangsu, and the winter ‘Samatha and Vipassanā Meditation’ at Longfu Temple in Langfang, Hebei.

Dynamic Meditation: This involves meditation through movement and is suitable for people with busy modern lifestyles. For example, the ‘Dynamic Meditation’ at Dahu Guo Wenshu Temple in Shiziwo, Mount Wutai, Shanxi,¹⁵ emphasizes cultivating awareness in everyday activities such as walking, sitting, and lying down.

¹³ The retreat information is sourced from the WeChat Official Account *Bai Seng Ge*, in the post titled *2024 Winter Chan Qi and retreat information summary (48 locations)*, accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/yNxn>.

¹⁴ refers to meditation practice involving monks, nuns, and lay practitioners, emphasizing equality and mutual support on the path to enlightenment and liberation.

¹⁵ Dynamic Meditation Retreat. Registration for 30-Day and 7-Day Meditation Retreats at the Lion’s Den Great Protector Manjushri Temple, Mount Wutai, July-August 2024. Accessed on [December 30, 2024], available at https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/AZKZ_6wuaROdT-Vdg4rK-ww.

Locations Across the Country:

Northern China: Yiquan Temple in Xingtai, Hebei; Berlin Chan Temple in Shijiazhuang, Hebei.

Eastern China: Xiyuan Temple in Suzhou, Jiangsu; Zijiao Temple in Ningbo, Zhejiang.

Southern China: Donghua Chan Temple in Guangdong; Nanhua Chan Temple in Guangdong.

Central China: Luhua Hermitage in Huangmei, Hubei; Baoning Temple in Gushan, Changsha, Hunan.

Southwestern China: Wuwei Temple in Dali, Yunnan.

Characteristics of Activities

Short-term Meditation: For example, the 3-day meditation camp at Zijiao Temple in Ningbo, Zhejiang, is suitable for those with limited time.

Long-term Meditation: For example, the 22nd Winter Chan Retreat at Sizu Temple in Hubei, which lasts 49 days, is suitable for those with ample time.

Renowned Monastics Leading the Retreats for Monks: Some meditation activities for monks invite prominent monks to lead or offer personal teachings. For example, the Winter Chan Retreat at Donghua Chan Temple is led by the abbot, Master Wanxing, with Master Huixiang as the assistant monk and Master Dunhan as the chief monk.¹⁶

Professional Guidance: The Winter Chan Retreat for monks at Lingyin Temple in Hangzhou is guided by the compassionate teachings of Master Guangquan, helping monk practitioners improve their meditation practice.¹⁷

Convenient and Diverse Registration Methods:

Online Registration: Most temples have online registration systems, such as the 'Berliner Chan Temple Life Meditation Online Registration System' in Shijiazhuang, Hebei.

WeChat and Phone Registration: Some temples offer WeChat and phone registration, making it convenient for people of different ages and preferences.

Benefits of participating in meditation

Improving Meditation Levels: Through professional guidance from monks, participants can systematically learn meditation methods and improve their meditation practice.

¹⁶ Donghua Chan Temple. (2024, November 20). *Donghua Chan Temple 2024 winter bhikkhu Chan retreat officially begins*. Donghua Chan Temple Official WeChat Account. accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/EXP52fFCdg8WYQuTePK05Q>.

¹⁷ Lingyin Temple. (2024, December 15). *Hangzhou Lingyin Temple Jiachen year winter Chan retreat begins*. Lingyin Temple Official WeChat Account. accessed on [January 10, 2025], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/CSTIqn00MFrOWvVYur4MYw>.

Purification of the Mind: In the peaceful environment of the temple, practising with others helps reduce afflictions and enhances moral cultivation.

Increasing Wisdom: Deepening one's experience in meditation can open the door to wisdom, helping to better address challenges in life.

Benefits for Buddhist Tradition:

Cultivating Buddhist Talent: These activities help train many meditation practitioners, ensuring the transmission of Chan teachings.

Preserving Buddhist Traditions: Through the transmission and practice from generation to generation, these activities ensure that Buddhist culture thrives in modern society.

Benefits for Social Harmony:

Promoting Social Peace: Meditation participants develop a more peaceful mindset, helping reduce social conflicts and promoting societal harmony.

Providing Spiritual Support: Meditation offers people a place to relax, reduce stress, and foster social harmony.

Social Impact of Meditation Activities

Attracting Young People: More and more young people are participating in temple meditation activities, such as the 'Monastic Life Experience' at Lingyin Temple in Hangzhou¹⁸ and the Chan experience at Nuo Nata Temple in Mount Lu.¹⁹

Boosted by Social Media: Some temples have gained popularity online due to participants sharing their experiences, attracting more young people to join.

Market Issues: There are also cases of entrepreneurial institutions taking advantage of the term 'meditation' to deceive people, highlighting the need for stronger regulation of meditation activities.

All in all, the winter meditation activities of 2024 are diverse in type, spread across the country, with reasonable scheduling, strong teaching faculty, and convenient and varied registration methods. Participating in these activities offers numerous benefits for personal practice and promotes the transmission of Buddhism and social harmony. It is hoped that more people will join in and experience meditation's tranquillity and wisdom.

IV. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS ON LAYPERSON MEDITATION IN CHINA

In the fast-paced modern society, more people seek inner peace and wisdom. Through in-depth interviews with eight practitioners (four from the

¹⁸ Lingyin Temple. (2024). *Registration for the 2024 Monastic Life Experience at Lingyin Temple*. accessed on [December 10, 2024], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/WGk-kq-yU6eCNXso6I-UDPA>.

¹⁹ Nuo Nata Institute. (2024). *Registration notices for December 2024 meditation retreat at Nuo Nata Institute*. accessed on [December 10, 2024], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/QxC1rWA9Ld8STpzVw5H9xA>.

Pure Land School and four from the Chan School), we gain insight into how modern individuals practice cultivation amidst their busy daily lives. These practitioners, from diverse backgrounds, including founders of psychological institutions, media professionals, homemakers, and teachers, showcase the profound impact of cultivation on modern people's physical and mental transformation through their unique experiences and insights.

(I) Pure Land School Practitioners

We interviewed four Pure Land School practitioners in-depth and discovered common patterns in their shared experiences.

The four Pure Land School practitioners are:

Tian Xin, 46-year-old female, founder of a psychology organization.²⁰

Ke Ke, 35-year-old female.²¹

Sophie is a 50-year-old female senior media professional.²²

Xiao Lin, a 40-year-old male, is a current doctoral student.²³

Although each practitioner's experience is unique, some commonalities reflect the generally positive impact of practice on their physical, mental, and daily lives.

4.1. Inner Peace and Calm

Emotional Stability: Several practitioners mentioned that their emotions became more stable through practice. For example, Tian Xin uses the Buddha's name to calm her body and mind when she feels unsettled; Ke Ke has achieved a peaceful state of mind through meditation; Sophie has become calmer after practising, and she can stay composed in the face of life's challenges. This emotional stability helps them remain unaffected by negative emotions when dealing with stress and difficulties, allowing them to respond more peacefully.

Reducing Anxiety: Practice has helped them reduce anxiety and stress. Sophie initially turned to meditation due to feelings of anxiety and stress in the fast-paced modern world. Through meditation, she gradually found inner peace. Xiao Lin learned to relax and observe pain instead of resisting it, which also eased his anxiety. When people find inner tranquillity through practice, their anxiety and tension in life naturally subside.

4.2. Self-awareness enhancement

Understanding the Inner World: Practice helps practitioners better understand their inner selves. Ke Ke has enhanced her self-awareness

²⁰ Tian Xin, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 25, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

²¹ Ke Ke, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 19, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

²² Sophie, interview conducted via WeChat Voice Message, December 14, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

²³ Xiao Lin, interview conducted via WeChat Voice Message, December 18, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

and deepened her understanding of herself through meditation; Sophie gradually explored the deeper aspects of her inner world through practice. By observing their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations, they could better understand their inner needs, desires, and fears, achieving personal growth and improvement. As the Buddha taught: Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself.²⁴

Heightened Awareness: Practice has improved their awareness. Tian Xin, through long-term practice, has become keenly aware of her inner disturbances, anxiety, and low mood and promptly adjusts by chanting the Buddha's name. Ke Ke uses the wisdom from her practice to address real-life problems, reflecting her heightened awareness and response-ability in everyday life. This enhanced awareness enables them to recognize their behavior patterns and thought habits more clearly, allowing them to make more conscious choices and changes.

4.3. Change in Life Attitude

More Tolerant and Grateful: Practice has cultivated a more tolerant and grateful attitude. Sophie has become more tolerant and views others with a more accepting mindset after her practice; she also feels more gratitude and cherishes every moment. Ke Ke improved her interpersonal relationships through meditation, which might also be linked to her change in mindset, as she learned to treat others with more tolerance. When people's hearts are filled with tolerance and gratitude, they notice their beauty and happiness, and their attitudes towards others become more friendly and harmonious. As Buddha taught, one should give up anger, renounce pride, and overcome all fetters. Suffering never befalls him who clings not to mind and body and is detached.²⁵

Living in the Present: Practice has made them more focused on living in the present. Sophie emphasizes maintaining mindfulness, trying to focus on the present moment regardless of the activity; Ke Ke reminds herself that 'The past mind cannot be obtained, the present mind cannot be obtained, the future mind cannot be obtained' when facing negative emotions, which reflects living in the present. Through practice, they learned not to be bothered by past events or overly worry about the future but to immerse themselves in the present life and enjoy every moment, thus improving their quality of life.

4.4. Integration of practice and life

Practice in Daily Life: They all focus on integrating practice into their daily lives. Tian Xin regards her psychological work as a way to help others and closely combines practice with her career; Ke Ke believes that practice is not about form but about being aware of one's mind at all times and sees taking care of her family as part of the *Bodhisattva* path; Sophie, though busy with her business, occasionally practices meditation weekly and integrates the principles of meditation into her daily life. This attitude of incorporating practice into life

²⁴ *Dhp.* (1996): 46

²⁵ *Dhp.* (1996): 76.

allows them to find space for practice even in busy lives, making it a natural lifestyle rather than an additional burden disconnected from life.

Life as Practice: Meanwhile, their lives have become more meaningful and purposeful due to their practice. Tian Xin helps others transform from pain through her unique psychological therapy system named Compassionate Touch Therapy,²⁶ realizing her self-worth; Ke Ke provides assistance to the dying through her recitation assistance²⁷ and experiences the depth of meditation and the solemnity of life; Sophie, during her entrepreneurial journey, uses meditation to maintain inner peace and focus, enabling her to tackle work challenges better. Every action and experience become an opportunity and venue for their practice, allowing them to grow and progress continuously.

4.5. Persistence and belief in practice

Long-Term Commitment: These practitioners have demonstrated a long-term commitment to their practice. Tian Xin has maintained the habit of playing Buddha's name 24 hours a day at home for over 20 years; Ke Ke practices morning and evening chants daily; Xiao Lin meditates several times a week. This long-term commitment reflects their love and dedication to practice, and it shows that they recognize that practice is a continuous process that requires constant investment and effort to achieve more profound experiences and rewards.

Firm Belief: They have a firm belief in practice. Tian Xin has always believed that the moment of chanting is from the East, and the moment of cessation is from the West;²⁸ she believes that one thought encompasses a lifetime and is convinced that through practice, she can experience a sense of fulfillment and joy in daily life. Ke Ke, during her chanting practice, firmly believes that all beings possess the wisdom and virtue of the Tathagata. As long as they continue practising, they will ultimately attain enlightenment. This unwavering belief allows them to overcome difficulties and press forward on the path of practice, continuing to explore and practice even when facing challenges and setbacks.

V. INTERVIEWS WITH CHAN PRACTITIONERS

Below is a summary of the experiences of four Chan practitioners and the common points they share:

²⁶ Compassionate Touch Therapy, rooted in the Chinese traditional concept of integrating compassion and wisdom, is a non-verbal emotional regulation technique developed by psychologist Tian Xin. accessed on [December 10, 2024], available at <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/wH3ZwMlcrNvIB3O--MIhKQ>

²⁷ Yin Shun (1998) pointed out in *An Introduction to Buddhism* that recitation assistance (zhùniàn) is an important practice to help dying individuals maintain right mindfulness and reduce afflictions. In the Pure Land tradition, recitation assistance is particularly emphasized as a means to guide the deceased toward rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

²⁸ This sentence is not from Buddhist scriptures but a symbolic expression. The East represents the Saha world, and the West symbolizes the Pure Land, implying that a single thought can shape one's practice. Similar ideas appear in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* and *The Blue Cliff Record*.

Miao Miao is a 43-year-old female housewife.²⁹

Introduction to Chan Practice and Methods: Miao Miao started attending Chan retreats in 2019, focusing on seated meditation and insight practices. She gradually extended her meditation time from 30 minutes to an hour, learning breathing techniques and visual focus to reduce distractions. During her second Chan retreat, she learned to attend to herself fully.

Daily Chan Practice: Miao Miao practices Chan every day, ranging from a few minutes to 30–40 minutes, striving to overcome obstacles. During group meditation, the resonating energy field helps her calm down. She has learned to listen to her body, manage inner distractions, and find balance.

Integration of Chan Practice and Life: Chan helps her manage negative emotions, accept them, and let them pass naturally. Every year, she goes on a pilgrimage with her family, practising Chan walking, and teaches her husband Chan walking, believing it enhances family interactions. She hopes to introduce Chan culture to the younger generation.

Yi Bei is a 61-year-old female psychologist.³⁰

Starting Point and Transformation: Yi Bei began Chan practice ten years ago when her health was poor, but she gradually improved through meditation. She shifted from Master Wei Hai's Five Aggregates Psychology³¹ to dynamic meditation techniques. She respects various practices and participates in temple activities but does not commit to a specific sect.

Chan Practice Philosophy and Application: She believes Chan practice is about maintaining awareness in everyday life and trying different methods like *Vipassanā* and Osho's techniques. She emphasizes that the goal of practice is to stay aware and not be distracted by external forces. In daily life, awareness is more effective than sitting meditation, and she is willing to serve others, walking the Bodhisattva path.

Chan Experience and Attitude: Yi Bei has experienced a state of lightness and joy during walking meditation, possibly entering a meditative state. She maintains an open and respectful attitude, exploring inner peace and wisdom, and values practical results from Chan's practice.

Meng Meng, 44-year-old female, Freelancer³²

Daily Sharing of Personal Thoughts: Meng Meng started her practice with A Course in Miracles, sharing personal thoughts and discovering similarities

²⁹ Miao miao, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 19, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

³⁰ Yi Bei, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 10, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

³¹ Shi Wei Hai, abbot of Wuling Zen Temple, is known for his work *The Psychology of the Five Skandhas*. Baidu Baike. Retrieved December 10, 2024, from <https://baike.baidu.com/item/释惟海/65115237>.

³² Meng meng, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 9, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

between the Course's teachings and Chinese Chan. She learned to let go of self-judgment, forgive others, and experience inner peace and joy.

Life Practice and Inner Transformation: In 2012, she met an American Miracle teacher and practised not pleasing others and avoiding personal thoughts. Sharing her private thoughts brought relief. She volunteered at Donghua Temple and Nanhua Temple, learning Chan practices.

Inner Awakening and the Essence of Practice: Meng Meng experienced a profound inner awakening, realizing the consciousness of "non-birth and non-death." She recognized that Chan's practice stabilizes the inner core, using external events to train the mind. She focuses on inner connection and stability, not relying on external aids.

Qing is a 40-year-old female Primary School Teacher.³³

Chan Practice and Energy Enhancement: Qing began with online courses and participated in mindfulness, samatha- *vipassanā* retreats, and walking meditation courses. She faced physical challenges and healing during Chan practice and felt her life improved. She developed a walking meditation habit, and awareness became automatic. **Practice and Study:** Qing is attending a seven-step program and learning directly from Master Wei Hai. She is considering joining a 90-day retreat and volunteering in filial piety classes to deepen her practice.

Challenges and persistence in practice

Physical and Mental Challenges: Miao Miao works to overcome distractions in meditation; Yi Bei, with initially poor health, improved through Chan practice; Qing experienced physical exhaustion and coughing but improved over time. All of them faced physical or mental challenges but persisted.

The Importance of Persistence: Each practitioner emphasizes the importance of persistence. Miao Miao kept a daily practice habit, Yi Bei sought the proper practice for herself, Meng Meng deeply grasped Chan's principles, and Qing's clarity of thought improved with continued practice. Their persistence allowed them to keep progressing despite difficulties.

Diversity and adaptability of Chan practices

Various Chan Practices: Miao Miao uses breathing techniques and visual focus. Yi Bei tries *Vipassanā* and Osho's methods, Meng Meng follows the principles of A Course in Miracles,³⁴ Qing practices mindfulness, samatha- *vipassanā*, and walking meditation, and Fang follows awareness meditation.³⁵ They have adopted various

³³ Qing, interview conducted via Tencent Meeting, December 7, 2024, the interview has been transcribed and securely archived for reference purposes.

³⁴ Helen Schucman, a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University, completed the groundbreaking work *A Course in Miracles*. Baidu Baike. accessed on [December 10, 2024], available at <https://baike.baidu.com/item/奇迹课程/2487741>.

³⁵ Awareness meditation, also known as Mahayana Chan, is a practice based on the principles and methods that strictly follow the laws and structure of the mind, being scientifically reliable. Jueguan Mind and Body. accessed on [December 10, 2024], available at

Chan methods.

Adaptation to Personal Needs: Each practitioner chooses practices that suit their needs. Cui Cui found her rhythm in Chan, Miao Miao reduces distractions with breathing and visual focus, Yi Bei prefers Osho's approach, Meng Meng finds peace with private thought-sharing, Qing integrates various practices into her path, and Fang adapts to her learning method. They are adaptable to different Chan practices and find the one that works best for them.

Impact of Chan practice on personal growth

Emotional Management: Miao Miao reduced her frequency of anger and learned to accept emotions, Yi Bei maintains awareness to reduce emotional interference, Meng Meng practices letting go of judgment and forgiving others, and Qing experiences emotional healing through Chan. Chan helps them better manage emotions and reduce the impact of negative feelings. As the Dhammapada states: "Victory begets enmity, the defeated dwell in pain. Happily the peaceful life, discarding both victory and defeat."³⁶ Through Chan practice, they realize that true forgiveness is not merely excusing others but letting go of attachments and no longer suffering due to past conflicts.

Enhanced Cognitive Ability: Miao Miao listens to her body more attentively, Yi Bei improves awareness with different practices, Meng Meng awakens to life's truths, and Qing experiences an uplift in life's state. Chan enhances their cognitive abilities, leading to a deeper understanding of themselves and the world.

Shift in Life Attitudes: Miao Miao finds balance through Chan. Yi Bei wishes to serve others, walking the Bodhisattva path. Meng Meng values inner and outer authenticity and shares her experiences with others, while Qing seeks to deepen her practice alongside her work. Chan has changed their attitudes toward life, making them more proactive and positive.

Understanding the essence of Chan practice

Chan is Not Just a Form: Miao Miao emphasizes that Chan practice is not just about sitting still; Yi Bei believes "Chan is not about sitting, it's about walking it out"; Meng Meng sees Chan as stabilizing the inner core; Qing appreciates the deeper cultural connotations of Chan through her practice.³⁷ They all realize that Chan is more than an external form—it is about inner transformation and growth. This aligns with the Dhammapada: "Although he recites many sacred texts, if he does not act accordingly, that heedless man is like a cowherd who only counts the acts of others- he does not partake of the

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/n3htm_4Iyx3LWABuzDTUeA.

³⁶ *Dhammapada*. (1996): 71.

³⁷ These ideas reflect a core teaching of Chan Buddhism, which emphasizes that the practice of meditation is not limited to sitting but extends to all aspects of daily life. The concept of walking meditation (行禪) and integrating mindfulness into daily activities is central to many Chan teachings, as seen in the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* and other Chan texts.

blessings of a holy life.”³⁸ Chan is not merely about external rituals but about embodying wisdom in daily life.

Life Is Practice: Miao Miao integrates Chan into daily life, Yi Bei maintains awareness in everyday activities, Meng Meng practices the principles of A Course in Miracles, and Qing develops awareness through walking meditation. They all view life as the arena for practice, and Chan becomes their life attitude. As the Dhammapada wisely states: “Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless, heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are already dead.” Their practice teaches them to maintain continuous mindfulness, allowing them to live fully in each moment.³⁹

Recognition and promotion of Buddhist culture

Affirming Buddhist Culture: Miao Miao frequently visits temples, Yi Bei respects various methods of practice, Meng Meng volunteers at temples, and Qing enjoys visiting temples. They all recognize the positive impact of Buddhist culture on individuals and society.

Promoting Buddhist Culture: Miao Miao hopes the younger generation will understand Chan culture, Yi Bei recommends Master Wei Hai’s teachings, Meng Meng shares her practice experiences, and Qing considers more retreats and volunteer work. They promote Buddhist teachings in their ways, helping others benefit from the wisdom of Buddhism.

The stories of these practitioners reveal an essential truth: spiritual practice is not about retreating into the mountains but integrating into the everyday path of life. Whether through chanting, meditation, walking meditation, or psychological awareness, each practitioner has found a method of practice that suits their life journey. Their experiences demonstrate that spiritual practice can bring inner transformation and promote social harmony. Their stories in this challenging modern society point to inner peace and wisdom, showcasing traditional spiritual wisdom’s practical significance and profound value in contemporary life.⁴⁰ Chan meditation culture is positively impacting our increasingly tense modern society. Its influence is becoming increasingly apparent, from individuals to society.

First, let’s talk about social pressure management. Urban life is fast, and the pressure is high, making many anxious and stressed. Chan meditation acts as a natural ‘stress reliever,’ helping people relax physically and mentally through simple practices such as sitting meditation and mindfulness. Studies have shown that people who regularly practice Chan meditation can better manage stress in their daily lives and work.

³⁸ Dhp. (1996): 20.

³⁹ Dhp. (1996): 26

⁴⁰ Yang, Z. W. (2022, July 4). *Living Chan: New Buddhist concepts rooted in real-life and the Chan school study system*. Bai Lin Temple. accessed on January 28, 2025, available at <http://www.bailinsi.net/index.php/home/shc/shcytwz/id/54.html>

Next, it helps improve social relationships. Meditation helps us better understand our own emotions and thoughts. When we know our feelings, we are less likely to be influenced by others' negative emotions and find it easier to get along. As a result, social relationships become more harmonious. The Buddha teaches: "Overcome the angry by one-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the miser by generosity; overcome the liar by truth."⁴¹ This wisdom aligns with how mindfulness encourages emotional control and harmony in relationships.

Additionally, Mindfulness fosters a sense of social responsibility. Many meditation centres now engage in charitable activities, encouraging practitioners to participate in community service. This approach helps others and promotes personal growth, creating a win-win situation.

Mindfulness, as a lifestyle, is gaining increasing global acceptance and practice. Its core goal is to reduce personal suffering through inner peace and awareness, promoting social harmony and peace. Here are some key points on how mindfulness promotes world peace. Stated in *Dhammapada* verse: "All tremble at violence; all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill."⁴²

Same meditation goals

Reducing suffering: Whether in Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the United States, or China, meditators share the goal of lowering inner suffering, enhancing self-awareness, and fostering peace through meditation. Meditation is a personal practice and a call for external peace. Many esteemed monks emphasize that inner peace is the foundation for achieving external peace. As the Buddha said, Of all paths the Eightfold Path is the best; of all truths the Four Noble Truths are the best; of all things passionlessness is the best; of humans, the Seeing one is the best.⁴³

International exchange and cultural transmission

Cross-national meditation experience: More and more meditators are choosing to practice abroad, and this cross-cultural exchange has facilitated understanding and cooperation among meditators from different countries and regions. For example, *Vipassanā* centres are present worldwide, and practitioners from China also participate in *Vipassanā* meditation in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and other neighbouring countries.

Application of modern technology: In the United States, technological advancements have led to new meditation methods, such as the development and promotion of meditation apps, making it easier for people to access and practice meditation. These meditation apps are becoming a significant force in promoting world peace. They are already in use in many countries. For instance, apps like Calm and Headspace offer meditation courses centred on

⁴¹ *Dhammapada*. (1996): 76.

⁴² *Dhp*. (1996): 53

⁴³ *Dhp*. (1996): 87.

'peace,' helping users cultivate inner compassion and calmness. Insight Timer gathers guided meditations from monks worldwide, promoting cross-cultural exchange. Simple Habit organizes online meditation challenges, encouraging the public to develop stable meditation habits and build a harmonious lifestyle. By combining technological innovation, these apps attract more ordinary people to practice meditation, contributing uniquely to reducing inner suffering and enhancing social harmony. Meditation is becoming an essential channel for connecting the world and pursuing peace through these apps.⁴⁴

Globalized meditation culture

A Global Lifestyle Trend: Mindfulness has become a global lifestyle, with people from many countries practising meditation for inner peace and harmony.

Shared Call for Peace from Monks Worldwide: Monks from countries like Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and China, as well as the teachings of Buddha, all emphasize the importance of peace. These calls have gathered into a global network advocating for peace. For example, Plum Village's website published an open letter calling for peace: "As our teacher Thich Nhat Hanh said, the world will have peace when we have peace within. If we succeed in ending the war in Ukraine and achieving lasting peace, the whole world will benefit, as we are all interconnected and interdependent as one human family. We also pray that precious global resources will be directed away from war and towards areas in need, such as addressing disease, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, human trafficking (including the exploitation of vulnerable children), environmental stress, and climate change issues."⁴⁵

China's Master Xu Yun said: "Buddhists love peace most because it is our responsibility to protect peace. Why protect peace? I can give two reasons: First, we dislike war and need peace; second, our hearts also need peace."⁴⁶

As the Buddha taught, happy indeed we live, friendly amidst the hostile! Amidst hostile people we dwell free from hatred.⁴⁷ Humanity keeps repeating the pattern of war, conflicts still occur in some regions of the world, while social divisions continue. The root cause is that each individual has internal struggles. Liberation from the cycle of war, preventing conflicts from arising, and practicing the right path to achieve inner peace is key.

Philosophical foundation of meditation and peace

Buddhist teachings emphasize awakening and compassion, believing that true societal harmony can only be achieved when individuals find inner peace. Mindfulness helps people better understand their relationships with

⁴⁴ Wanisha Sirivarangkun, '8 Best Meditation Apps of 2024 to Practice Calm and Focus,' Mindful Wonderer, accessed 2024, <http://mindfulwonderer.com/best-meditation-apps/>.

⁴⁵ Plum Village, 'Call for Peace Open Letter,' April 2, 2022, <http://plumvillage.org>.

⁴⁶ Master Xu Yun, *The Complete Teachings of Master Xu Yun: Buddhists Should Unite to Defend World Peace* (Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2009).

⁴⁷ *Dhp.* (1996): 70.

themselves and others, reducing conflicts and opposition.

Through these discussions, it becomes evident that mindfulness is a personal practice and an essential force for promoting world peace. It influences the external social environment through inner transformation, guiding humanity toward a future of harmony and understanding.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through an in-depth study of layperson meditation in China, we have found that meditation culture is undergoing a significant modern transformation. This transformation not only preserves the core values of traditional meditation but also continuously innovates in form to meet the spiritual needs of contemporary individuals. The research shows that mindfulness has transcended its role as a purely religious practice and has become an essential way for modern people to seek inner peace and improve their quality of life. As stated in *Dhammapada* verse: “To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one’s mind – this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”⁴⁸

On an individual level, meditation helps practitioners achieve emotional stability, enhanced self-awareness, and a positive shift in life attitudes. On a societal level, the popularization of layperson meditation reduces social stress, improves interpersonal relationships, and promotes public welfare, thus fostering social harmony. More importantly, as a cross-cultural spiritual practice, meditation, through international exchange and cultural transmission, has positively contributed to promoting world peace.

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THE BUDDHIST VIEW OF *AHIṂSĀ* TO BUILD SOCIAL PEACE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE *KURUDHAMMA* *JĀTAKA*¹ AND *DHAMMAPADA* VERSE 362²

Bhikkhu Kotte Upananda*

Abstract:

The Buddha ended suffering and realized the universal truth under the Bodhi tree on the Vesak full moon day. Later, he shared his message of liberation with the people of India. In the 6th century BCE, India was a place of new beginnings, where many philosophical movements emerged. During this time, the Buddha's teachings stood out as unique, emphasizing nonviolence, love, and compassion. Furthermore, Buddhism offers teachings on peace and social harmony, which influenced the entire social structure of India. The Buddhist perspective on *ahiṃsā* is based on a deep understanding of humanity. Specifically, this concept of nonviolence is closely connected to morality and ethics. Moreover, *ahiṃsā* can be applied to build social harmony and peace, as it holds immense value according to Buddhist philosophy. Beyond that, this principle of nonviolence was adopted by the Indian emperor Asoka in his *Dharma*, which was fundamentally based on Buddhist teachings. The *Dhammapada* and *Jātaka* stories provide comprehensive insights into *ahiṃsā* and its significance from a Buddhist perspective. In this study, the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* verse 362 serve as primary references. This research is structured around three key objectives: (1) to identify the content of the

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¹ The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* (*Jātaka* 276) teaches the importance of moral conduct. It tells of King Dhanañjaya of the Kuru kingdom, who upheld the *Kurudhamma* (ethical principles), bringing prosperity to his land. A neighboring king, suffering from drought, adopted these virtues and also found success. The story highlights how righteousness leads to well-being.

² *Dhammapada* Verse 362 defines a true monk as one who controls body, speech, and mind, delights in meditation, and is content. It emphasizes self-discipline and inner peace as the essence of monastic life.

Kurudhamma Jātaka and its relevance in fostering peace, (2) to examine the meaning of *Dhammapada* verse 362 and its connection to peacebuilding, and (3) to analyze both teachings in relation to their importance for promoting peace in modern society. Through this approach, the study seeks to answer the research question: “How does the Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā*, as highlighted in the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* verse 362, contribute to ethical behavior in building social harmony and peace?” Although various studies on peace and *ahiṃsā* exist, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on the connection between *ahiṃsā* and social harmony within the framework of the *Jātaka* tales and the *Dhammapada*. Thus, this study aims to bridge this gap using a qualitative approach. Primary and secondary sources, including texts on peace, the *Jātaka* and the *Dhammapada*, as well as journal articles, have been used to develop insights. The scope of this study is limited to the *Kurudhamma Jātaka*, *Dhammapada* verse 362, the concept of *ahiṃsā*, and its relation to peace. The research reveals unique insights and will serve as a valuable resource for future scholars seeking a deeper understanding of *ahiṃsā* and peace.

Keywords: *Ahiṃsā, Buddhism, Dhammapada, Kurudhamma Jātaka, peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of *ahiṃsā* (non-harm) lies at the heart of Buddhist philosophy, shaping both its ethical principles and its vision for a harmonious society. Derived from the broader commitment to refrain from harming living beings, *ahiṃsā* emphasizes compassion, non-violence, and the cultivation of inner peace as prerequisites for fostering societal harmony. Once, the Buddha stated: “Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law.”³ In this context, Buddhist literature offers profound insights into the transformative power of *ahiṃsā*, particularly through its stories and teachings. This study delves into the Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā* as a foundation for social peace, with a special focus on two seminal texts: the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* 276 and *Dhammapada* Verse 362. By examining these texts, the paper aims to uncover the practical wisdom they offer for addressing the pressing challenges of societal discord in the modern world. One Jenkins states that “Buddhist traditions offer a richly nuanced ethic for the compassionate use of violence, including warfare, torture, and punishment, that has effectively supported regimes of vast geographical and cultural diversity for millennia”⁴. In other words, while introducing the philosophical and spiritual path to ending suffering, Buddhist teachings have provided a benevolent and moral influence on political and social issues throughout history. Specifically, it is notable that the *Jātaka* tales are highly relevant in addressing modern social matters. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* recounts the story of a virtuous king who

³ Dmp. v 5: “Nahi verena veranī/ Sammantī da kudācanam/ Averenaca sammantī/ Esa dhammo sanantano”

⁴ Jenekins, S., 2017. Once the Buddha Was a Warrior: Buddhist Pragmatism in the Ethics of Peace and Armed Conflict.. *The Nature of Peace and the Morality of Armed Conflict*, p. 159 - 178.

upheld the ten royal virtues (*dasarājadhammā*) amidst adversity, emphasizing the centrality of ethical governance and personal commitment to non-violence. This *Jātaka* highlights how adherence to *ahiṃsā*, even in the face of hardship, serves as a cornerstone for societal harmony and peace. Similarly, *Dhammapada* Verse 362 provides a concise yet profound exposition on the qualities of a true *bhikkhu* (Buddhist monk), emphasizing self-discipline and control over body, speech, and mind as critical to achieving peace within oneself and the broader community. Together, these texts not only illuminate the Buddhist understanding of peace but also demonstrate the practical application of *ahiṃsā* in diverse contexts, from leadership to personal conduct. According to Ven. Ehelepola Mahinda: “While setting up the well-being and happiness of the mundane world, ultimately Buddhism has focused on showing the path to attaining higher peace or ultimate happiness (*paramasukha*)”⁵. In other words, Buddhist teachings provide numerous guidelines for reaching the ultimate goal of *nibbāna*, but many teachings can be applied to stabilizing peace in the world. Thus, the ideas found in the *Dhammapada* can serve as valuable resources for fostering global peace.

This research paper seeks to achieve three primary objectives: (1) To analyze the story of the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and its importance in building peace. The narrative of the Kuru king exemplifies how ethical leadership, grounded in the principle of *ahiṃsā*, can promote stability and harmony in society. (2) To explore the story and verse of *Dhammapada* Verse 362 and its relevance to fostering peace. The verse offers a guideline for individual conduct, underscoring the role of mindfulness, self-restraint, and inner contentment in achieving social and personal peace. (3) To integrate the teachings of both texts and highlight their collective importance in building peace within society. By drawing parallels between the *Jātaka* and the *Dhammapada*, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of *ahiṃsā* as a unifying principle for ethical living and social cohesion.

The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* narrates the tale of a wise and compassionate ruler who exemplifies the principles of *ahiṃsā* and ethical governance. When faced with a severe drought that threatened the well-being of his people, the king remained steadfast in upholding the ten royal virtues, including generosity (*dāna*), truthfulness (*sacca*), and non-violence (*ahiṃsā*). His unwavering commitment to these principles, even under challenging circumstances, ultimately led to divine intervention, bringing rain and restoring prosperity to his kingdom. The story underscores the importance of ethical leadership in fostering peace and highlights how adherence to *ahiṃsā* can mitigate suffering and promote collective well-being. *Dhammapada* Verse 362 complements the teachings of the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* by shifting the focus from leadership to individual conduct. The verse describes a true *bhikkhu* as one who is disciplined in hand, foot, and speech, and who cultivates mindfulness and meditation

⁵ Mahinda, E., 2019. Buddhist teachings to sustainable peace building. *Mindful Leadership for Sustainable Peace*, p. 287.

as paths to inner peace. Such an individual, the verse asserts, is content and composed, embodying the qualities necessary for creating harmony within oneself and extending it to others. This teaching reinforces the Buddhist belief that peace begins at the individual level, with the cultivation of self-discipline and inner tranquility serving as the foundation for broader social harmony. In an age marked by escalating conflicts, inequality, and environmental challenges, the teachings of the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* Verse 362 offer timeless wisdom for building a more peaceful and just world. The principle of *ahiṃsā*, as demonstrated in these texts, provides a framework for addressing modern issues, from promoting non-violent conflict resolution to fostering ethical leadership and encouraging mindfulness practices. By integrating these teachings into contemporary discourse, this study aims to highlight their relevance and inspire practical applications of Buddhist ethics in creating a harmonious society. The Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā* serves as a profound ethical and spiritual foundation for building social peace. Through the teachings of the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* Verse 362, the transformative potential of *ahiṃsā* becomes evident, offering timeless guidance for individuals and communities striving to foster harmony and resolve conflicts. These texts illustrate that peace is both an internal and external process, rooted in self-discipline, compassion, and ethical conduct. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* emphasizes the role of ethical leadership in cultivating social harmony. The unwavering commitment of the Kuru king to the ten royal virtues demonstrates how adherence to *ahiṃsā* can inspire unity and alleviate suffering, even in challenging circumstances. By practicing generosity, truthfulness, and non-violence, the king exemplified the qualities of a leader who prioritizes the well-being of his people, laying the groundwork for a stable and peaceful society. Similarly, *Dhammapada* Verse 362 highlights the importance of personal discipline and mindfulness in achieving peace. By describing a true *Bhikkhu* as one who is self-controlled, content, and composed, the verse underscores that inner tranquility is a prerequisite for social harmony. This teaching aligns with the Buddhist understanding that peace begins within, with individuals cultivating the qualities of self-restraint and compassion, which ripple outward to benefit society. In a modern context, the principles of *ahiṃsā* presented in these texts remain profoundly relevant. From promoting non-violent conflict resolution to encouraging ethical leadership and mindfulness practices, these teachings offer practical solutions to contemporary challenges. The integration of *ahiṃsā* into personal and societal frameworks can address pressing issues such as violence, inequality, and environmental degradation, fostering a more harmonious and sustainable world. By bridging ancient wisdom with modern needs, this study reaffirms the enduring value of the Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā*. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* Verse 362 provide a comprehensive blueprint for building inner and outer peace, offering insights that continue to inspire and guide humanity toward a more compassionate and harmonious future.

II. THE BUDDHA'S LIFE AND CONCEPT OF AHIMŚĀ

Non-violence, or *ahiṃsā* in Pāli, is one of the most significant and defining

principles of Buddhism. Derived from the roots “A” (non-) and “*hiṃsā*” (violence or harm), *ahiṃsā* transcends the mere avoidance of physical harm to encompass a broader ethical framework that involves non-violence in thought, speech, and action. According to the words of the Vijayalaxmi Munagala, “*Ahiṃsā* means kindness and non-violence towards all living beings including animals; it respects living beings as a unity, the belief that all living things are not just connected but integrally part of the whole.”⁶ That can be stated as follows: in Buddhism, *Ahiṃsā* is not just an absence of violence; it is an active cultivation of love, compassion, and understanding towards all living beings. This principle is deeply embedded in the teachings of the Buddha and is considered essential for achieving true peace and enlightenment. The importance of non-violence in Buddhist teachings is profound and multifaceted. Firstly, it is a key component of the Five Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*), which are the basic ethical guidelines for lay Buddhists. The first precept explicitly states the commitment to abstain from killing any living being. This precept extends beyond human interactions to include all forms of life, reflecting the interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings. Secondly, non-violence is integral to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, particularly under Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*) and Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*). Through these practices, Buddhists are encouraged to foster harmony and goodwill in their interactions, thereby contributing to a peaceful and compassionate society. On the other hand, spiritual leaders improve their views according to the Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā*. Dr. Hope K. Fitz pointed out her idea of Gandhi⁷ as follows “However, as we shall see, it was the Buddhists who fully developed the importance of compassion. It was this view and practice of compassion that affected Gandhi’s view on the subject”⁸. Generally, it means the Mahatma Gandhi’s vision on *ahiṃsā* was profoundly shaped by the Buddhist concept of *ahiṃsā* that uniquely connected with compassion. Additionally, the Buddha emphasized non-violence in his teachings on the Four Sublime States (*brahmavihāras*): loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), empathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These mental states are considered essential for personal development and for creating harmonious relationships with others. For instance, the practice of *mettā* involves developing a universal love and benevolence that is free from ill-will or enmity, extending even to those who might be perceived as adversaries. This universal love is seen as a

⁶ Munagala, V., 2016. The Buddha’s Ethics of *Ahimsa*. *Sucharitha: A Journal of Philosophy & Religion*, January, volume 4, p. 53.

⁷ One of the most notable figures influenced by Buddhist non-violence is Mahatma Gandhi. Although Gandhi was primarily influenced by Hinduism, Jainism, and his own spiritual convictions, his philosophy of non-violence (*satyagraha*) also drew inspiration from Buddhist teachings. Gandhi’s commitment to non-violence as a tool for social and political change profoundly impacted the struggle for Indian independence and inspired civil rights movements worldwide.

⁸ Fitz, H. K., 2007. *Ahimsa: A Way of Life A Path to Peace*. Massachusetts: The Center for Indic Studies, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

powerful antidote to the destructive forces of hatred and violence. According to the History, Siddhartha Gautama, who would later become known as the Buddha, was born into a life of luxury and privilege in the 5th century BCE in the region that is now Nepal. As the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya, Siddhartha was destined to inherit his father's throne. His early life was spent in the opulence of palace walls, shielded from the harsh realities of the outside world. This seclusion was intentional, as his father wished to prevent him from encountering suffering, hoping to groom him into a great king rather than a spiritual leader. According to the life story of Siddhartha, while walking through a palace garden, Prince Siddhartha once saw a goose with an arrow in its wing. Siddhartha took the goose and went to the palace and removed the arrow, then, he treated the wound with oil and honey. Prince Devadatta, who had shot the goose, came and asked Siddhartha to hand over the goose to him, but Prince Siddhartha refused to give. Both princes went to court to ask who owed the goose, then the sage said that the goose belonged to Siddhartha because he tried to save it. This story highlights the concept of nonviolence that was automatically followed by Prince Siddhartha. Despite the lavish surroundings, Siddhartha's innate curiosity and empathy led him to question the nature of life and human existence. According to Buddhist tradition, during a series of excursions beyond the palace, Siddhartha encountered the Four Sights: an old man, a sick man, a dead body, and an ascetic. These sights profoundly impacted him, revealing the inevitable realities of aging, illness, death, and the possibility of overcoming suffering through renunciation and spiritual discipline. Moved by these revelations, Siddhartha made the monumental decision to renounce his princely life at the age of twenty-nine. Leaving behind his family and the promise of worldly power, he embarked on a spiritual quest to discover the truth about suffering and the path to its cessation. This renunciation was the first significant step in his commitment to non-violence, as it involved a rejection of material wealth and power, often sources of conflict and harm. For six years, Siddhartha practiced extreme asceticism, believing that self-mortification might lead to enlightenment. However, he eventually realized that such practices were not leading him to the ultimate truth. This realization prompted him to adopt the Middle Way, a path of moderation that avoids the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification⁹. Through intense meditation and profound insight under the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, Siddhartha attained enlightenment at the age of thirty-five, becoming the Buddha, or the "Enlightened One." The Buddha's teachings on non-violence are central to his doctrine and are exemplified throughout his life and discourses. His approach to non-violence was not merely the absence of physical aggression but encompassed a broader ethical framework that included non-violence in thought, speech, and action. This comprehensive understanding of non-violence is reflected in his first sermon, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (DN), where he introduced the Four

⁹ *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* (DN). "Kāmasukallikānuyoga and Attakilamātānuyoga".

Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. These foundational teachings emphasize the eradication of suffering through ethical living, mental discipline, and wisdom, all of which are grounded in non-violence. On the other hand, in the Buddha's teachings, the concept of nonviolence is specific because some teachers and spiritual leaders like Mahavira, followed nonviolence hardly. They never touch or step on even simple grass because, according to their understanding, grass is a living creature. However, Buddha hardly followed the concept, and he tried to live peacefully with nature without doing any harm. Apart from that, Buddha pointed out that not all are subjected to having any kinds of physical punishments and abuses, and all are afraid of death, so one needs to think of others and treat others the way he or she would like to be treated¹⁰ in *Dhamma Pada*. This teaching was not only theoretical but also practical, as the Buddha himself demonstrated non-violence in his interactions. Not only in the *Suttapiṭaka* but also in the *Vinayapiṭaka*, one can find numerous examples related to the concept of non-violence. There are no harsh or painful punishments in the Buddha's rules. Instead, the rules are designed to cultivate the offender's mindset and moral consciousness, providing an opportunity for transformation and self-improvement. This kind of culture developed the *ahimsā* concept. Paul Fleischman states that "rather than a theologian or a systems thinker, the Buddha was a liberator, a spiritually attained practitioner and teacher of the path to *nibbāna*, freedom from hate, delusion and fear"¹¹ in other words, Buddha was teaching the way leading to end suffering and he had given his idea to go beyond the general thought and specifically, he introduced a great philosophy to experience freedom from all negative qualities. The teachings of the Buddha gave protection to everyone and everything in nature. In addition, the *ahimsā* concept covers every corner of the universe, so it builds a harmless environment for every living being. Throughout his life, the Buddha provided numerous examples of non-violence in action. One such instance involved Angulimala, a notorious bandit who had committed numerous murders. Instead of condemning him, the Buddha approached Angulimala with compassion and wisdom, leading to the bandit's transformation and eventual ordination as a monk. This story illustrates the power of non-violence and compassion in overcoming even the most entrenched forms of hatred and violence. Another significant aspect of the Buddha's teachings on non-violence is the emphasis on Right Speech, one of the elements of the Noble Eightfold Path. Right Speech involves abstaining from lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle chatter. By practicing Right Speech, individuals can foster harmonious relationships and reduce conflict. The Buddha's conduct exemplified this principle, as he always spoke truthfully and kindly, aiming to alleviate suffering and promote understanding. The Buddha also advocated for non-violence towards all living beings, not just humans. This broader application of *ahimsā* is reflected in the first of the Five Precepts, which advises

¹⁰ Dmp. 129. "Sabbe Tassanti Daṇḍassa- Sabbe Bhāyanti Maccuno- Attānaṃ Upmaṃ Katvā/ Na Haneyya Na Ghātaye"

¹¹ Fleischman, P., 2002. The Buddha Taught Nonviolence, Not Pacifism. *Spring*.

against taking life in any form. This precept extends to animals and insects, promoting a reverence for life that is foundational to Buddhist ethics. The life of the Buddha and his teachings provide a profound and comprehensive framework for understanding and practicing non-violence. From his early renunciation of a life of privilege to his enlightened teachings and compassionate actions, the Buddha exemplified *ahiṃsā* in its fullest sense. His insights, as recorded in the *Dhammapada* and other texts, continue to inspire and guide individuals and societies towards a more peaceful and harmonious existence. Through a deep commitment to non-violence in thought, speech, and action, the Buddha's teachings offer a timeless path to overcoming suffering and achieving true peace.

III. AHIṂSĀ IN KURUDHAMMA JĀTAKA

The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* centers on a virtuous king of the Kuru dynasty who ruled his kingdom based on the Ten Royal Virtues (*Dasa-Rāja-Dhamma*)¹². These virtues - *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (moral conduct), *pariccāga* (self-sacrifice), *ajjava* (honesty), *maddava* (gentleness), *tapa* (austerity), *akkodha* (non-anger), *avihiṃsā* (non-violence), *khanti* (patience), and *avirodhana* (non-opposition) - formed the cornerstone of his governance. Among these, *Ahiṃsā* stood out as the guiding principle that shaped the king's decisions during a period of intense drought.

In the story, the Kāliṅga-Dantapura kingdom faced a catastrophic drought that devastated crops and threatened the survival of the population. The people, fearing starvation, approached the king, urging him to abandon the practice of the royal virtues and resort to coercive measures to secure resources. However, the king was unfamiliar with the virtues, so he consulted the Brahmins and followed the criteria they prescribed. Despite his efforts, the rain did not fall. Then, the Kāliṅga king inquired further, and he was informed about a sacred elephant in the Kuru kingdom, which served as the royal mount of the Kuru king. The sages proclaimed that if the elephant were brought to Kāliṅga, its power would cause the rain to fall again. Acting on this advice, the Kāliṅga king sent eight Brahmins to retrieve the elephant. The Kuru king, in an act of generosity, gifted the elephant to the Kāliṅga king, and the Brahmins returned with it. However, despite their expectations, the rain still did not fall. Perplexed, the Kāliṅga king asked for the reason. The Brahmins explained that the true cause of the Kuru kingdom's prosperity was not the elephant itself, but the virtues upheld by the Kuru king. They emphasized that as long as these virtues were observed, the kingdom would continue to flourish. Realizing this, the Kāliṅga king sent messengers to return the elephant and instead request the virtues to be brought to his kingdom. Upon arrival, the messengers discovered that the Kuru king and his people diligently practiced these virtues. Acknowledging

¹² The ten royal virtuous is one concept of the Buddhist doctrine that kings of people, societies, kingdoms, countries are meant to hold. This concept revealed the importance of good quality that helps for better governing. In addition, Buddhist *Jātaka* stories, suttas and *Khuddakanikāya* give information about this concept.

the significance of their teachings, they transcribed the virtues onto a golden tablet and presented it to the Kāliṅga king. Inspired, the Kāliṅga king began to practice these principles earnestly. Witnessing this transformation, Sakka, the king of the gods, blessed the Kāliṅga kingdom with rain, thereby restoring its prosperity. The story of the Kuru king teaches that ethical governance rooted in *ahiṃsā* can overcome adversity and inspire collective well-being. It underscores that peace and harmony are not mere by-products of material wealth but arise from a steadfast commitment to virtuous conduct.

The Kuru king's embodiment of *ahiṃsā* serves as a model for ethical leadership. His actions reflect a deep understanding of the interdependence between rulers and their subjects, highlighting that the well-being of a society depends on the moral integrity of its leaders. For *Ahiṃsā* as a principle of leadership: The king's idea to resort to the virtue principles during the drought illustrates the essence of *ahiṃsā* as a leadership principle. By refraining from exploiting Kuru king's subjects or neighboring kingdoms, the king demonstrated that true power lies in restraint (*saṃvara*) and compassion, not domination. This approach aligns with the Buddhist ideal of *mettā* (loving-kindness), which calls for the active promotion of others' welfare. The king's actions exemplify *mettā* in practice, as he prioritized the well-being of his people over personal gain or political expediency. For *ahiṃsā* and patience (*khanti*), The Kāliṅga king's patience (*khanti*), even in the face of public pressure, highlights another critical aspect of *ahiṃsā*. Rather than succumbing to anger (*kodha*) or fear (*bhaya*), he maintained equanimity (*upekkhā*) and remained committed to his ethical principles. This demonstrates that *ahiṃsā* requires inner strength and self-discipline, qualities essential for effective leadership. For *ahiṃsā* and generosity (*dāna*), The Kuru king's generous distribution of resources, even when faced with scarcity, underscores the inseparability of *ahiṃsā* and *dāna*. In Buddhism, *dāna* is more than mere charity; it is an expression of selflessness (*anatta*) and non-attachment. By practicing *dāna*, the king not only alleviated immediate suffering but also fostered a spirit of trust and solidarity among his people, laying the groundwork for lasting peace.

3.1. Implications for leadership and social harmony

The Kuru king's adherence to *ahiṃsā* offers profound insights into the role of ethical leadership in building social harmony. His actions demonstrate that peace is not achieved through force or fear but through compassion, fairness, and moral integrity. Sukhumpong Channuwong and other scholars highlight the importance of good governance in their article: "Good governance is a crucial approach to the development of communities, societies, and countries, fostering sustainable progress and creating resilience for the long term."¹³ In other words, good governance could be mentioned as the proper and skillful theory that can be used to develop every part of a country. So, Buddhist *Jātaka* stories

¹³ Sukhumpong Channuwong, Kirati Wongsutthirat, Pechlada Weerachareonchai, Panita Chaetnalao, Pusit Pupapassiri, 2024. Good Governance principles in Buddhism for Business and Politics Administration. *Migration Letters*, Volume 21, p. 818-827.

can be used in numerous ways to develop countries. For ethical leadership as a catalyst for peace, the story underscores that a leader's commitment to ethical principles can inspire societal trust and cohesion. By embodying *ahiṃsā*, the king set an example for his subjects, showing that non-violence is not a sign of weakness but a source of strength. His leadership fostered a culture of mutual respect and cooperation, essential for social harmony. For *ahiṃsā* as a basis for conflict resolution, the king's refusal to resort to violence, even in the face of adversity, highlights the potential of *ahiṃsā* as a tool for conflict resolution. By prioritizing dialogue and understanding over aggression, he avoided unnecessary suffering and maintained the moral high ground. This approach remains relevant in contemporary contexts, where non-violent methods of resolving conflicts can lead to more sustainable outcomes. For the interdependence of inner and outer peace, the Kuru king's equanimity in the face of challenges illustrates the Buddhist principle that inner peace (*ajjhātika santi*) is a prerequisite for outer harmony (*bāhira santi*). His ability to remain calm and composed under pressure enabled him to make ethical decisions that benefited his people. This highlights the importance of cultivating mindfulness (*sati*) and wisdom (*paññā*) as foundations for effective leadership. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* exemplifies the profound impact of *ahiṃsā* on leadership and social harmony. Through the actions of the Kuru king, the story illustrates that non-violence, compassion, and ethical conduct are not only moral imperatives but also practical tools for addressing societal challenges. By upholding *ahiṃsā* amidst adversity, the king demonstrated that true peace arises from inner strength, self-discipline, and commitment to the welfare of others. These timeless lessons remain relevant today, offering a blueprint for building a more just and harmonious world. Sarah Shaw provides insight into the five precepts as they appear in the *Jātaka* stories: "All Buddhists know the five precepts - the undertaking not to kill, steal, practice wrong or excessive sensory pleasures, lie, or become intoxicated. Here, however, the *Jātaka* has explained the precepts in an embodied manner, by exploring their application in daily life." In other words, while the five precepts are well known among Buddhists, the *Jātaka* stories offer a deeper explanation and understanding of their application in daily life through unique examples. Specifically, the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* serves as a valuable resource for learning how to apply the five precepts in a practical and meaningful way.

3.2. *Ahiṃsā* in *Dhammapada* Verse 362

The *Dhammapada*, a revered text in the Pāli Canon, offers profound guidance on ethical conduct and spiritual practice. Verse 362, in particular, encapsulates the essence of self-control (*saṃvara*) and mindfulness (*sati*) as essential foundations for the Buddhist principle of *ahiṃsā*. This area of study explores the verse's emphasis on these qualities, their role in cultivating *ahiṃsā*, and how they align with the broader Buddhist understanding of non-violence. By contextualizing the teachings within the framework of the *Dhammapada* and *Kurudhamma Jātaka*, this area highlights the interconnectedness of individual discipline, social harmony, and ethical living. *Dhammapada* Verse 362: "He

who is controlled in hand, in foot, in speech, and in the highest (mind); he who delights in meditation and is composed; he who is alone and is contented - him they call a bhikkhu.” This verse describes the ideal qualities of a Bhikkhu (monk), emphasizing mastery over one’s actions, words, and thoughts as the hallmark of a disciplined practitioner. The verse underscores the significance of inner composure (*samāhito*), mindfulness, and contentment (*santutthi*) in the pursuit of spiritual and ethical goals, particularly *ahiṃsā*. While it directly addresses monastic life, its teachings are universally applicable, emphasizing the importance of personal discipline in achieving peace.

3.3. The role of self-control (*saṃvara*) in *ahiṃsā*

Self-control (*saṃvara*) is central to the Buddhist path. According to the Padmal De Silva, “Buddhism stresses self-development and offers many strategies for achieving changes in behavior and emotional reactions”¹⁴. In simple words, Buddhism has teachings that help to change behavior into good quality, regarding self-development and improvement. On the other hand, in the context of *ahiṃsā*, it involves restraining harmful impulses and actions that could lead to physical, verbal, or mental harm. *Dhammapada* Verse 362 highlights control over the hands (*hattha*), feet (*pāda*), and speech (*vācā*), symbolizing the three modes of action that can either contribute to harmony or perpetuate harm. The inclusion of control over the mind (*manasaṃvara*) in “the highest” emphasizes the foundational role of mental discipline in achieving true non-violence. For preventing *hiṃsā* through *saṃvara*, the term *hiṃsā* (harm) refers to actions, thoughts, or words that cause injury or suffering. Without self-control, the potential for *hiṃsā* increases, as individuals often act impulsively out of anger (*kodha*), greed (*lobha*), or delusion (*moha*). Rekhamoni Devi wrote in one of her journal articles that “It is easy to develop the intellect, but it is difficult to purify and develop the heart”¹⁵. Simply, it means that the brain and its factors can be improved quickly, but that does not make your true improvement. But improvement and development of your heart makes you perfect, but that is not easy. For example, an unrestrained reaction to provocation may lead to verbal or physical aggression. By practicing *Samvara*, individuals can prevent the escalation of harm and create conditions for peace. For practical application of *saṃvara*, the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* provides a powerful illustration of self-control in action. During a severe drought, the Kalinga king sought the virtues practiced by the Kuru king to restore harmony to his kingdom. The Kuru king’s commitment to ethical governance, rooted in *saṃvara* and *ahiṃsā*, ensured the well-being of his people even in adversity. His restraint in refusing to exploit others or resort to coercion demonstrates how *saṃvara* can uphold social harmony. For the significance of mindfulness in non-harm, mindfulness (*Sati*) is the practice of cultivating awareness of

¹⁴ De Silva, P., 2000. Buddhism and psychotherapy: The role of self-control strategies. *Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism* = 西來人間佛教學報, Volume 1, p. 169 - 182.

¹⁵ Devi, R., 2018. Ahimsa in Indian Philosophy A Phenomenological Perspective. *Journal of Arts, Culture, Philosophy, Religion, Language and Literature*, 2(1), pp. 18 - 20.

one's thoughts, emotions, and actions. In the context of *ahimsā*, mindfulness serves as a preventive mechanism, allowing individuals to recognize harmful tendencies before they manifest. Most Venerable Henepola Gunaratana¹⁶ wrote in the "Mindfulness in plain English"¹⁷ book that "Meditation is a living activity, an inherently experiential activity. It cannot be taught as a purely scholastic subject"¹⁸. Which means that the mindfulness or meditation cannot be learned in a school or institute because it comes within you with your practice in the present moment. *Dhammapada* Verse 362 emphasizes composure (*samāhito*) and inner contentment, qualities cultivated through mindfulness and meditation (*bhāvanā*). A mindful practitioner can respond to challenges with equanimity (*upekkhā*), reducing the likelihood of causing harm. For mindfulness and interpersonal harmony, by fostering awareness of one's interactions, mindfulness supports harmonious relationships. For instance, mindful speech (*vācī samvara*) helps avoid words driven by anger or harshness, which can lead to conflicts. Instead, speech rooted in *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) promotes understanding and reconciliation. For *sati* in the *Kurudhamma Jātaka*, the narrative of the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* also highlights mindfulness as a critical aspect of ethical leadership. The Kuru king's awareness of the interconnectedness of his actions and the well-being of his kingdom enabled him to make decisions aligned with *ahimsā*. His mindfulness extended beyond personal conduct to encompass his responsibilities as a ruler, demonstrating the ripple effects of mindful leadership on societal peace. For *ahimsā* as non-harm and compassion, in Buddhism, *ahimsā* is more than the mere absence of violence; it embodies an active commitment to fostering well-being and alleviating suffering. In one of his books, John Makransky states: "In early and Theravāda Buddhism, compassion is a power for deep mental purification, protection, and healing that supports inner freedom."¹⁹ In other words, compassion is regarded as a great power and quality that aids in experiencing mental and spiritual freedom in early Buddhist doctrine. Rooted in the principle of interconnectedness (*paṭicca samuppāda*), *ahimsā* acknowledges that harm to others ultimately results in harm to oneself. This understanding motivates Buddhists to cultivate positive qualities such as compassion (*karuṇā*), generosity (*dāna*), and loving-kindness (*mettā*), which counteract tendencies toward *himsā*. For the inner and outer dimensions of *ahimsā*, *Dhammapada* Verse 362 emphasizes the

¹⁶ Bhante Henepola Gunaratana is a Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist monk. He is affectionately known as Bhante G. Bhante Gunaratana is currently the abbot of the Bhavana Society, a monastery and meditation retreat center that he founded in High View, West Virginia, in 1985. He is the author of the bestselling meditation guide *Mindfulness in Plain English*.

¹⁷ Since *Mindfulness in Plain English* was first published in 1994, it has become one of the bestselling - and most influential - books in the field of mindfulness.

¹⁸ Gunaratana, H., 1991. *Mindfulness in Plain English*. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.

¹⁹ Makransky, J., 2012. Compassion in Buddhist psychology. In: C. K. G. a. R. D. Siegel, ed. *Compassion and Wisdom in Psychotherapy*. s.l.: Guilford Press.

inner dimension of *ahiṃsā*, focusing on self-discipline and mindfulness as prerequisites for peace. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* complements this teaching by illustrating the outer dimension, where ethical governance and the cultivation of virtues promote societal harmony. Together, these teachings highlight the inseparability of personal transformation and social well-being in the practice of *ahiṃsā*. *Dhammapada* Verse 362 and the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* together present a comprehensive framework for understanding *ahiṃsā* as a principle that integrates self-control, mindfulness, and ethical action. The verse emphasizes the inner dimensions of non-harm, focusing on the disciplined and mindful qualities necessary for cultivating peace. The *Jātaka* complements this teaching by illustrating how these qualities manifest in leadership and governance, fostering societal harmony. In both texts, the Buddhist ideal of *ahiṃsā* emerges as a dynamic and holistic principle that begins with personal transformation and extends to social engagement. By embodying *saṃvara* and *sati*, individuals can not only prevent harm but also actively contribute to the well-being of others. In a world increasingly in need of non-violent solutions, the timeless wisdom of these teachings offers a pathway to creating a more compassionate and peaceful society.

IV. BUILDING SOCIAL PEACE THROUGH *AHIṂSĀ*

The Buddhist principle of *ahiṃsā* (non-harm or non-violence) is a transformative ethical framework that offers powerful solutions for fostering social harmony and resolving conflicts. Rooted in the core teachings of the Buddha, *ahiṃsā* extends beyond mere abstention from physical violence to encompass a proactive commitment to compassion (*karuṇā*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and ethical conduct (*sīla*). In the modern context, where societies face challenges such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation, the application of *Ahiṃsā* becomes profoundly relevant. This discussion examines the practical role of *ahiṃsā* in resolving conflicts and promoting peace, using examples such as peaceful leadership and non-violent activism to demonstrate its enduring relevance.

4.1. *Ahiṃsā* and conflict resolution

Conflicts, whether interpersonal or societal, often arise from misunderstandings, greed (*lobha*), anger (*kodha*), or delusion (*moha*). *Ahiṃsā* provides a framework for addressing these root causes by emphasizing restraint (*saṃvara*), mindfulness (*sati*), and compassion (*karuṇā*). In conflict resolution, *ahiṃsā* seeks not only to prevent harm but also to foster mutual understanding and reconciliation. For mindfulness as a tool for conflict resolution, one of the most practical applications of *ahiṃsā* in conflict resolution is the cultivation of mindfulness. By practicing awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and reactions, individuals can approach conflicts with a calm and balanced mind, avoiding impulsive actions that may escalate tensions. For example, mindfulness-based conflict resolution programs have been used successfully in schools and workplaces to reduce aggression and foster understanding among diverse groups. For dialogue and non-adversarial approaches, *ahiṃsā* promotes dialogue as a means of resolving disputes. This

approach is grounded in the principle of *avirodhana* (non-opposition), one of the Ten Royal Virtues (*Dasa-Rāja-Dhamma*), which advocates for resolving differences through cooperation rather than confrontation. Mediation and restorative justice practices, which emphasize reconciliation over punishment, align closely with the ethos of *Ahiṃsā*. For instance, in post-apartheid South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission embodied these principles by fostering dialogue and forgiveness to heal societal wounds.

4.2. Peaceful leadership and *Ahiṃsā*

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping societal norms and addressing conflicts. Leaders who embody the principles of *ahiṃsā* can inspire trust, unity, and collective well-being. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* offers a compelling example of peaceful leadership, where the Kuru king's adherence to non-violence and ethical governance ensured harmony and prosperity in his kingdom. This narrative provides timeless lessons for contemporary leaders. For the role of ethical governance, *ahiṃsā* in leadership requires a commitment to ethical governance that prioritizes the well-being of all. Leaders practicing *ahiṃsā* refrain from exploitative policies and instead focus on equitable resource distribution and conflict prevention. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi, often regarded as a modern embodiment of *ahiṃsā*, demonstrated how non-violence and ethical leadership could inspire a movement for justice and independence without resorting to violence. For building trust through compassion, compassion (*karuṇā*) is central to peaceful leadership. Leaders who act with empathy and prioritize the needs of marginalized groups create environments where conflicts are less likely to arise. The Dalai Lama's advocacy for peace and non-violence in the face of political oppression offers a contemporary example of leadership guided by *ahiṃsā*. His emphasis on mutual understanding and forgiveness continues to inspire global efforts for peace.

4.3. Non-violent activism and social change

Non-violent activism is one of the most direct expressions of *ahiṃsā* in modern society. This form of activism seeks to bring about social change through peaceful means, such as protests, boycotts, and civil disobedience, while avoiding harm to opponents. For Gandhi's satyagraha movement, Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha* (truth-force) is a quintessential example of non-violent activism rooted in *ahiṃsā*. Gandhi used non-violent resistance to challenge British colonial rule in India, demonstrating that peaceful methods could be more powerful than violence in achieving justice. His approach not only achieved political independence but also set a precedent for other non-violent movements worldwide. For the civil rights movement in the United States, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., inspired by Gandhi's teachings, applied *ahiṃsā* to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Through peaceful protests, marches, and speeches, King challenged racial segregation and inequality, demonstrating the transformative power of non-violence in addressing systemic injustice. His leadership exemplified the principles of *ahiṃsā*, showing that moral courage and compassion could triumph over hatred and discrimination. For environmental activism and *ahiṃsā*, in the

realm of environmental activism, *ahiṃsā* manifests as a commitment to protecting the planet and all living beings. Movements such as Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future embody the spirit of *ahiṃsā* by advocating for non-violent action to combat climate change. These efforts align with the Buddhist principle of interconnectedness (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*), which emphasizes the interdependence of all life forms.

4.4. Challenges and opportunities in applying *ahiṃsā*

While *Ahiṃsā* offers a powerful framework for promoting peace, its application in modern societies is not without challenges. Cultural, political, and economic factors can create obstacles to the widespread adoption of non-violent principles. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and adaptation. For overcoming cultural and political barriers, in societies where violence is deeply entrenched, promoting *ahiṃsā* requires significant cultural shifts. Education and awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in fostering a culture of non-violence. For example, integrating mindfulness and ethical teachings into school curricula can help instill values of *ahiṃsā* in future generations. For leveraging technology for peace, technology offers new avenues for applying *ahiṃsā*. Social media platforms can be used to promote messages of compassion and non-violence, countering divisive rhetoric and fostering dialogue. Digital tools can also facilitate global movements for peace, enabling activists to connect and collaborate across borders.

The principle of *ahiṃsā* offers timeless wisdom for resolving conflicts and promoting peace in modern societies. By emphasizing self-control, mindfulness, and compassion, *ahiṃsā* addresses the root causes of violence and fosters conditions for harmony. Whether through peaceful leadership, non-violent activism, or conflict resolution, the practical applications of *ahiṃsā* demonstrate its transformative potential. Historical and contemporary examples, from the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* to the Civil Rights Movement, illustrate the enduring relevance of *ahiṃsā* in creating a just and harmonious world. Despite the challenges, the opportunities for applying *ahiṃsā* in modern contexts are vast, offering hope for a future defined by peace and compassion. As humanity continues to face complex social, political, and environmental challenges, the principles of *ahiṃsā* remain a guiding light for building a better world.

V. CONCLUSION

Ahiṃsā could be seen in many ancient religions and philosophies, but the Buddhist idea of *ahiṃsā* highlights a complete method of using that in social and political problems. Further, Buddhist teachings have the proper explanation on *ahiṃsā*, specifically, the concept is reflected in Buddhist stories like *Kurudhamma Jātaka*, on the other hand, and *Dhammapada* is giving real-time examples and teachings on the concept of *ahiṃsā*. Specifically, *Kurudhamma Jātaka* the 276th tale of *Jātaka* stories and the verse 362 of *Dhammapada* are interrelated to each other and it is directly connecting with the concept of non-violence, so, both *Kurudhamma Jātaka* and *Dhammapada* verse 362 texts are used to analyze the concept, and primary and secondary sources have been used to develop the main idea of this study that Buddhist concept of *Ahiṃsā*

and social peace. Many sub teams have been discussed such as, Buddhas life and non-violence, soft skills, leadership qualities, leadership methods, mindfulness, social challenges and answers, social harmony, etc. ultimately, the unique Buddhist view of *ahiṃsā* could be used to solve contemporary social challenges and those ancient methods are revealed in this paper.

ABBREVIATIONS:

DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
SN	<i>Saṃyukta Nikāya</i>
AN	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
KN	<i>Khuddhaka Nikāya</i>
PTS	<i>Pali Text Society</i>
Dmp	<i>Dhamma Pada</i>
JK	<i>Jātakatṭhakat</i>

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BUILDING PEACEFUL LIFE THROUGH PROTECTION (*PARITTA*) BASED ON THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE IN *VINAYA PITAKA* AND *SUTTANTA PITAKA*

Ven. Uttama*

Abstract:

This article surveys the Buddhist vision of peace in the light of protection (*Paritta*). According to the Buddha's teaching of *suttas* such as *Ratana sutta*, *Metta sutta*, *Khandha sutta*, and *Dajagga sutta*, everything, including the psychophysical components, exists in this universe and undergoes constant changes reacting to them. The following section examines the Buddhist perspective on the causes of violence and ways to prevent violence and realize peace. The last section explores the potential of Buddhist contributions to the peacemaking efforts and the promotion of a culture of peace in today's world. Believing that the root of violence is located within the mind, Buddhism has placed a greater urgency upon inner reflection. With the awakening to the interdependent reality, selfish compulsive responses will be replaced by loving-kindness. On the behavioral level, one practices peace daily by observing loving-kindness. Peace (*Santi*) is connected with a triple gem or banner of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, loving-kindness and truth. To prevent in-group disputes, the Buddha teaches the principles of cordiality in any community. As for international affairs, Buddhist scriptures are rife with stories that teach nonviolent intervention. The article concludes the Buddhist view is surprising by the insights of peace, its insistence on peace by peaceful means, and its universal framework of peace, which would play a vital role in the efforts of bringing the culture of peace into existence around the world.

Keywords: *Paritta, protection, Ratana sutta, Metta sutta, Khandha sutta, Dajagga sutta, and peace, Santi.*

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I. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Why are the *Paritta* essential for peace of life?

Why does the utterance of *Paritta* offer protection against danger?

How to apply with chanting *Paritta* for peace of life?

How does the *Paritta* support the peace of life?

1.1. Research methodology

This article highlights qualitative research, Vinaya and Suttanta Pitaka as primary sources, and scholarly articles as secondary sources, and study as a textual base.

The research aims and objective

To stay with chanting *Paritta* as a peaceful life

To be harmonious, living with *Paritta*

To live without fear to have a peaceful life through *Paritta* protection.

Background of the *Paritta*

Paritta is concerned with Buddhist moral manners and protective discourses for all human beings who follow and practice them in daily as well-being and welfare. Generations will also observe and practice protective sermons and enjoy these benefits of *Paritta* and virtues, truth, and loving-kindness for their well-beings. According to *Vinaya* in Theravada Buddhism, the scripture from Buddha's time, the Buddha denied accepting the significance of magical and Brahmanical religious rites. This critical character of early Buddhism demands reflection. Though there could be an alternative possibility that the socially and economically progressive urban people in Buddha's time reversed the false belief in the use of magical performance, in underdeveloped areas, the overarching influence of magic could not be confronted. In early Buddhism, the acceptance of the provincial society penetrated the solid order of Buddhism against magical spells and rites, and consequently accepted some particular periods.

Many Buddhist people certainly believe that *Paritta* is taught by Buddha himself, and the *Paritta* is also used by the Buddha's previous life or experiences to be Bodhisatta. Even though Buddhists accept that *Paritta* is preached by Buddha himself, different concepts, traditions, and ways of study regarding *Paritta* are also found in other Buddhist societies. The commentary has interpreted the term *Paritta* as protection or safeguard. Moreover, *Paritta* protects by warding off the dangers, and the power of *Paritta* protects beings from fears, disasters, and risks arising from all directions.¹ However, the *Paritta* in every Buddhist community is considered a valuable teaching that focuses on how to build a moral life.

¹ G. Ariyapala Paerera, "Buddhist Paritta Chanting Ritual" (A Comparative study of the Buddhist benedictory ritual), Buddhist Culture Centre, Sri Lanka, 'Parisamantato Tāyati Rakkhatīti Parittam' 'Antarāyam Pariharantam Tāyati Rakkhatīti Parittam' 'Mahātevantatāya Samantato Sattānam Bhayam Upaddavam, Upassaggam Ca Tāyati Rakkhatīti Parittam' p. 15.

The history of the practice of reciting or listening to the *Paritta* began at the very early time of the Buddha. The *Paritta* was used by the Buddha, for the first time, in a discourse known as *Khandha-Paritta* in the *Cūlavagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka* and also in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* under the name *Ahirāja-sutta*. The Buddha recommended this discourse as a guard for the members of the order. In this discourse, the Buddha preaches the monks to cultivate loving-kindness towards all beings. The *Paritta* recital produces mental well-being for those who listen to them with intelligence and are confident in the truth of Buddha's words. Such mental well-being can help those who are ill recover and support them in developing the mental attitude that brings happiness and overcoming its opposite.

The practice of chanting protective utterances developed by some later Buddhists, especially by Theravadins, has some affinities with the Tantric practice of uttering Mantras. *Paritta* is chanted to secure worldly gains such as health and wealth, and the belief in the power of words is at the heart of this practice. However, there are significant differences. The anticipated influence of the phrase is not believed to be derived from the proper articulation of words. Still, it is supposed to be derived from the truthfulness of the words initially uttered by the Buddha, who is embodied with great virtue, concentration and wisdom. Thus, the power of *Paritta* is believed to be derived from their source and content and not from any alleged intrinsic strength of the words.

Initially, in India, people who listened to protect themselves from danger through the teachings of the Buddha understood what was recited, and the effect on them was significant. The Buddha requested to Cundha therā to recite *Paritta* for him, and he also asked his disciples to recite *Paritta* when they were ill. This practice is still a trend in Buddhist Sangha community. The Buddha and the Arahants can concentrate on the *Paritta* without the aid of another. However, when they are ill, it is easier for them to listen to what others recite and thus focus their minds on the Dhamma that the *sutta* contains rather than think of it alone. There are occasions, as in the case of illness, which weaken the mind when different suggestions are more effective than self-suggestion.

The *Paritta* is assumed to have great power of mind and to make helpful spiritual forces capable of counteracting unfortunate occurrences while reciting. The lay people are not mainly expected to understand the meaning of the words they utter. Instead, if the sound is well-directed and the vibrations are changed into words of power, they can ward off evil and bring good luck for the protection and welfare of beings. *Paritta* that has the closest relationship with people is the most useful for them out of the teachings of the Buddha. While passionately and faithfully chanting the Buddha's teachings can bring blessings and protection from harm and danger, traditionally, only certain Suttas are recognized as *Paritta*.

Paritta has power that enables warding off evil effects, and many cultural training methods belong to the mundane and super-mundane. Therefore, *Paritta* became the doctrine closest to the people. Protection is being chanted from the time of the Buddha up to now. Nowadays, it is apparent that both

monks and laypeople are chanting and listening to *Paritta* to develop blessed prosperities and protect against the various types of danger in performing either excellent or bad affairs. In Buddhist monasteries, starting from a young age, people capable of learning education tend to study *Paritta* by heart, Pali, and translation. Most Buddhists in Theravada countries, especially, chant *Paritta* to protect from danger and develop *Mettā* and *Saccā*.

In Theravada Buddhist countries, many festivals came from Buddha's preaching and were performed to support the monks. As well-wishers, advisers, and religious guides of a family, the monks maintained a close relationship with the laypeople, and they participated in various domestic functions from birth to death and even after that. The site for holding the ritual could be at the temple, home, temporary recitation hall, or the specially constructed pavilion. There was no limitation period for chanting, but it took at least one hour on a special occasion. It may be performed at any time throughout the year, even during the days of the rainy season. It is impossible that there have been identical versions of *Paritta* from one period to another due to different periods chanting the *Paritta* in various ways.

It can be pointed out that the *Paritta* was recited to prevent various kinds of fear, diseases, different types of suffering, concern, annoyance, and displeasure, as well as to provide happiness and prosperity. Therefore, the *Paritta* are called blessed chants for protection. In almost all *Paritta*, there is a refuge to the three jewels: prayers, praise, and sublimity. Virtually all the *Paritta* are tributes in honour of the Buddha. In some *Paritta*, the reciter requests forgiveness from the person for any shortcoming on his part meaningfully. In almost all the *Paritta* recitations, the reciter monk, on the promise of truth, prays for his good and welfare and that of others assembled to listen to the *Paritta* recitation. However, *Paritta* is not easy to understand, and it is prevalent in several countries of Theravāda Buddhism. In these countries, collections of *Paritta* verses are trendy and widely recognized.

On the other hand, peace is the essential teaching of Buddhism. As a means of practice, peace cultivated in a person's mind is the source of an act of peace, then a moral deed. Only a peaceful mind can originate a peaceful act. The Buddha's teachings enable a person to keep his mind at peace and require peace from others. In the view of U Hutsein dictionary mention that *Sametīti Santi* or *Kilese samanatotī Santi* or *Samupasametīti Santi* it means peace². Fellowship, amity and quiet living have been the main essential features of the Buddha's teachings. Another way peace is called *Santi* in Pali is the absence of hostility, and *Santisukha* is peace accompanied by happiness. Peace in a nation does not only mean that there is no conflict, but it must also mean allowing citizens to develop their social and economic well-being to live a happy life. Therefore, peace must go through participation, and true peace cannot be without real happiness.

² *Dātutthapankun*, p. 9, p. 758.

Moreover, peace is a central concept in the religion of Buddhism. Buddhism is the way of life. It teaches us to be a peaceful to live with the best of our life to death. Peacefulness do not come from outer world. It is the key: if you have inner peace, the external problems do not affect your deep sense of peace. It is an important tool which can solve all problems and your preaching makes others to understand the meaning of life. It is to be avoided and even hated by some in favor of distraction, when peace is the truth. Nature is peace and it comes from within, do not seek it without. Besides, the aim of the good life, as understood in Buddhism, is described as attaining peace (*Santi*), a characteristic of Nibbāna. On the other hand, the good life practice involves harmonious living with one's fellow beings. It was this doctrine, which gave inner peace (*ajjhata-santi*) and resulted in righteous living as it is sometimes called, which the Buddha, for the first time in the known history of humanity, sought to spread over the entire earth when he set up as he claimed the kingdom of righteousness.

There is a Buddhist verse saying at *Sukha vagga* in *Dhammapada* that peace transcends all kinds of bliss (*Natthi santiparam sukham*)³ There are still more Buddhist proverbs dealing with peace uttered by the Buddha and his followers on various occasions and places. Take, for example, some verses like, "One who expects the rise of peace should discard his needs for sensual pleasures." and "One's mind finds no peace, neither enjoys pleasure, nor goes to sleep, nor feels secure while the dart of hatred is stuck in the heart." And then another way there is a Buddhist saying that says, 'Expecting to attain peace, one shall discard all the worldly attraction (*Lokamisam pajahe santipekkho*)⁴. Those who love wisely see clearly because they know the full humanity of others, including both the good and the bad. Love heals distribution as it views others as family, as fellow loving-kindness on our human journey. Many conflicts disappear in the presence of love; those that don't are transformed into problems to be resolved, not battles to be won.

1.2. *Ratana sutta* and building peaceful life

At present, *Paritta* chanting is very popular in Theravada Buddhism. Although Buddhism has the protection of chanting, the primary purpose of chanting is different from other religions. *Paritta* chanting in Buddhism does not mean praying to the creator god for help. In times of war and conflict, the *Metta-sutta* is often recited. Vesāli, a country during the time of the Buddha, was affected by drought and three catastrophes: a period of pestilence (*Rogantarakappa*), a period of slaughter (*Satthantarakappa*), and a period of famine (*Dubbhikkhantarakappa*). It is preached by the Blessed One, who went to Vesāli at the invitation of a group led by Prince Mhāli. It is a meditation on loving-kindness and compassion and is believed to help cultivate positive qualities that can promote peace and understanding, even in times of great

³ K. Sri Dhammananda, *Dhammapada*, *Sukha vagga*, verse 202, p. 403.

⁴ *Sanyutta nikāya*, *Sagāthāvagga*, *Upaniya sutta*, p. 3.

conflict. In times of famine and scarcity, the *sutta* is often recited⁵. It contains powerful verses believed to offer protection against hunger and starvation and promote the cultivation of virtues such as generosity and compassion.

It is mentioned in *Ratana-sutta* that it is necessary to determine whether *Paritta* can prevent diseases or what benefits can be achieved from delivering *Paritta*. It can be said that *Paritta* is one method of curing diseases. It is a well-known example, which Venerable Ānanda first chanted in *Vesāli* to ward off all the evils and drought. It has been known to us recently because people believe it will provide many benefits against diseases, the fear of the divine, drought, and starvation. Apart from that, it is said that in other Theravāda countries, the *Paritta* chanting is very popular. The last benefit we may get from chanting discourses is a meditative one. When we chant, if we try to concentrate well on the chanting, our mind becomes contemplative, not wandering, not engaging in unwholesome thoughts.

In Buddhist tradition, specific *Paritta* chants are considered particularly powerful during catastrophes like pestilence, war, and famine. These chants are supposed to protect against suffering and generate positive energy that can help create a more peaceful and harmonious world. Here are some examples of the *Paritta* chanting for the three catastrophes: the *Ratana-sutta* is often recited in times of widespread illness and disease. It is believed to have been chanted by the Buddha to alleviate suffering during an epidemic in ancient India. It contains powerful verses that offer protection against illness and disease and promote healing and well-being.

Paritta is defined in the sense of protecting in every way by the blessings invoked on the truths of the Triple Gem in general, and on the reality of Dhamma in particular. In providing protection, emphasis has been placed on several aspects of the Dhamma to invoke blessings on those in need. It is to be stressed that these protective chants are not mystical compositions or mysterious combinations of words and sounds. They are not magical formulas but original discourses delivered by the Buddha and preserved in the Pali canon. Hence, it is entirely legitimate to assert that the Buddhist system of chanting has introduced a religious dimension of widespread recognition of the laity so that they can participate actively in the practice and thereby contribute texts compiled mainly to chant. These discourses have been recited as *Paritta* even during the time of the Buddha. Gradually, when Buddhism evolved as a religion of the masses, Buddhist chanting became increasingly popular among them due to its efficacy of protecting by warding off sorrows, fears, and ills. The fact that it had already penetrated the Buddhist way of life by the first century B.C. is proved by the lengthy discussion on *Paritta* found in the *Milindapañña*.

The *Ratana sutta* mentions the building peaceful life in the human society. Understanding peace as the absence of violence is a limited vision. It encompasses happiness and harmony among living beings with a triple gem. On a broader understanding, peace is the nature and goal of every sentient

⁵ Sayadaw U Silānanda, *Paritta Pali, Protective verses*, pp.13 – 17.

being with truth. Being peaceful is living in friendship with oneself and with every creature. It is inseparable, but insecurity anywhere can threaten peace everywhere. Buddhism considers peace as an inner state of mental tranquility which spreads outward. Attaining a state of peace could be an inspiration to all. The Buddha attained peace by practicing truth, which inspired him to work for the world peace. In most of his teachings, the Buddha emphasizes that truth uproots mental defilements, which are the causes of suffering and restlessness. Once a person overcomes suffering, he recites the *Ratana sutta* for peace. Peace projects itself outward, towards the family, friends and the larger society. This ensures *Ratana sutta* and peace in the human world. Thus, world peace can be achieved through peace. This presents the existing potential of this postulation based on Buddhist understanding. The Buddha became a source of inspiration to all humanity as he attained peace of truth.

1.3. *Metta sutta* and building peaceful life

Buddhism teaches that loving-kindness is how people can achieve inner peace. Loving-kindness is a method for acquainting our mind with thoughts and feelings conducive to peace and happiness. When our mind is peaceful, we are free from worries and mental discomfort and experience true happiness. Buddhists use many lines of thought and feelings as objects of loving-kindness. These include loving-kindness and unique lines of reasoning that enable us to overcome negative states of mind, such as self-centeredness and having a biased attitude towards others. An effortless *Mettābhāvanā* meditation used by nearly all Buddhists is peaceful meditation. In this *Mettābhāvanā* meditation, we take the sensation of our peace as our object of meditation. Although it is only an introductory *Mettābhāvanā* meditation, even this *Mettābhāvanā* meditation can lead us to experiences of absolute inner peace and tranquility.

According to Buddhism, it depends on whether the mind was trained because the mind has two roots, i.e., immoral and moral. If any act is motivated by any immoral root of the mind, evil conduct must be inevitably performed by bodily, verbal, and mental acts. By contrast, good conduct will firmly be performed, whether bodily, verbal, or mental acts, if a moral root of mind activates any act. The mind's roots are the root of action. To create inward peace is to get the mind trained to suppress an evil act activated by the immoral roots of the mind and perform a good act activated by the moral roots of the mind.

Additionally, loving-kindness plays an essential role in creating inner peace, for it is concerned with suppressing the complex emotions caused by hatred mind and subsiding ill-will together with activating a lovable mind in all human beings. Moreover, the significance of loving-kindness aims to seclude the mind from hate, which is seen as a danger, and introduce it to patience, which is known as an advantage. Successfully, the purpose of the discipline of loving-kindness should start with reviewing the danger of hate. Then, there is the advantage of patience, for hate has to be abandoned, and patience is attained in the development of this meditation.

Then, as a result of loving-kindness, the *Mettānisaṃsa-Sutta* of *Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, *Patisambhidāmagga*, and *Visuddhimagga* mention that there are eleven

advantages of practicing loving-kindness. These advantages include: one sleeps in comfort, one wakes up in comfort, one does not have bad dreams, one is dear to human beings, one is particular to non-human beings, the deities protect one, fire, poison, and weapons do not affect one, one's minds easily concentrated, the expression on one's face is serene, one dies without having a confused mind and if one does not attain any highest sanctity here and now, and one will be born in the Brahmas. One who recites it regularly during the daytime or nighttime will get these benefits supported by recitation.⁶ It is not mentioned in the texts that one will be safe if one recites this *sutta* every day.

Moreover, His reverence towards the lord entitles him to reverence in his future births; thus, he receives glory and respect. His soul outshines fire, is as excellent as a god, and he never loses wealth. His farms and animals overflow with produce, and he is blessed with virtuous children. Even if he falls, he always receives support. Like a tree whose roots and trunks have matured, he is never shaken by winds; his enemies never harm him.⁷ Everyone will benefit if one acts with *Mettā*, whatever one says or thinks year-round. Everyone should try to dwell with lovingkindness in their minds. The minds and hearts of people inherently possess *Mettā*. However, if one does not practice to improve the power of lovingkindness, the benefits will not be experienced. Treating anyone with *Mettā* can make things go well for people of any race and religious background. There will be no fault in their mind if one does so. *Karaniyametta-Sutta* has to be chanted daily to develop our spiritual benefit and to ward off evil.

The Buddha taught that loving kindness is essential and all living things are connected. And one's well-being depends on the well-being of all. I can see this likeness in our common quest to uphold human dignity, our commitment to sustainable development, and our work to promote peace. Indeed, it is accepted that we must reach the weakest and leave no one behind. This teaching of the Buddha serves as a constant reminder of why we do what we do. Lastly, there is fundamental equality for all people. The Buddha taught that the journey to enlightenment was open to all, regardless of status or characteristics. These same values are enshrined in our Charter. Non-discrimination and inclusivity are fundamental principles by which we work to meet our energetic goals. And that is why we must reinforce them every day, everywhere.

Consequently, we become aware that our own well-being and that of others are inseparable: without considering and acting to promote peace for others, our own peace would be impossible. Non-double peace, based on a compassionate mind, is to be understood as a transition from self-centered, dichotomous tensions of in-group and out-group processes to an altogether state of awareness of our fundamental interdependence and

⁶ *Sukhaṃ supati, sukhaṃ patibujjhati, na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati, manussānaṃ piyo hoti, amanussānaṃ piyo hoti. Devatā rakkhanti. Nassa aggi vā visaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati. Tuvaṭaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati. Mukhavaṇṇo vipasādati. Asammūlho kālaṃ karoti. Uttariṃ, appativijjhanto, brahmalokūpago hoti.* AN p, 1, Paṭi. p. 314 and Vism. p. 305 - 307.

⁷ Ibid. p. 149.

interpenetration. This awareness drives us to make an effort to delight the basic needs of all, promote freedom and justice for both ourselves and those with specific identities, and resort to peaceful methods of managing differences constructively and creatively.

The practice of *mettā* was thus an essential part of the training. The worth placed on Love in Buddhism may be gathered from the following remark of the Buddha: “None of the good works employed to acquire religious merit is worth a fraction of the value of loving-kindness.” The word *Mettā* is the abstract noun from the word *Mitta*, which means “friend.” It is, however, not defined just as “friendliness” but as analogous to a mother’s love for her only child. “Just as a mother loves her only child even more than her life, do thou extend a boundless love towards all creatures⁸.” Let one’s thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world – above below and across – without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. The person who has successfully developed these qualities is said to be “one who is cleansed with an internal bathing” after bathing “in the waters of love and compassion for one’s fellow beings⁹.”

When the Buddha’s disciple Ānanda suggested to him that half of the religion of the Buddha consisted in the practice of friendliness, the Buddha’s rejoinder was that it was not half but the whole of the religion. It was this emphasis on compassion which made it possible for Buddhism to spread its message over the greater part of Asia, without resorting to political power. It is the proud boast of Buddhism that not a drop of blood has been shed in propagating its message and no wars have been fought for the cause of Buddhism. It was able to convert people to its view by its reasonableness and the inspiring example of those who preached it. Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law¹⁰.

Regarding the process of pervading Loving-kindness, it should firstly be done to himself, then to the others. Anyways, the purpose of creating the inward peace by using the Loving-kindness mainly aims at the hostiles. So, it is not easy to Loving-kindness to the hostiles because the resentment is always arising whenever the wrong doings from the hostiles are remembered. The main point in this regard is to subside or get rid of the resentment against the hostiles. In this point of views, Buddhism comes out with an intelligent strategy that is to admonish ourselves, to review an equality of oneself and the hostile and to give a gift.

The Buddha advised this discourse as protection for the disciples’ spiritual progress. The Buddha urged reciting and listening to the *Paritta* to his disciples. Engaging in the recital of *Paritta* produces mental well-being in the listeners with intelligence and those who have confidence in the truth of the Buddha’s

⁸ The great book of protection (*catubhānavarapāli maha pirit pota*), Tisarana Buddhist Association, p. 23.

⁹ *MI* 39.

¹⁰ *Dhammapada* Verse 5.

words. Mental well-being can help and encourage the mental attitude that brings happiness. One who recites and listens to *Paritta* chanting comprehends what is recited, which has a peaceful and significant effect on him. The Buddha also expounded this *sutta* related to loving-kindness.

The advantage of *Metta-sutta* lies at the heart of the Buddha's beautiful ideal of peace, friendliness, and goodwill and guides us towards leading a serene life¹¹. When practiced diligently, whether one stands, walks, sits, or lies down, its inherent power enhances and empowers oneself to overcome daily life problems. There are eleven benefits of loving-kindness, and the management of loving-kindness is contained in the *sutta*, and loving-kindness is an active force. Every act of one who truly loves is done with the pure mind to help, cheer, and make the paths of others easier, smoother, and more adapted to the conquest of sorrow, the best of the highest bliss. Eleven benefits are acquired when loving-kindness meditation is practiced. The eleven advantages of *Mettā* are to be expected from the release of heart by familiarizing oneself with thoughts of loving kindness, by the cultivation of loving-kindness, by constantly increasing these thoughts, by regarding loving kindness as the vehicle of expression, and also as something to be treasured, by living in conformity with these thoughts, by putting these ideas into practice and by establishing them.

Furthermore, one looks friendly and graceful in the face and earns the affection of others. One is accessible from the harm of evil beings like ogres. One should recite this *sutta* frequently as the *sutta* can avert other dangers, too. It is sure that all will benefit if one does with *Mettā* whatever one says or thinks the whole year round. Everyone should try to dwell with *Mettā* in their mind. The minds and hearts of people have essential *Mettā*. However, if one does not practice to improve the power of loving-kindness, the benefits will not be experienced. Treating anyone with lovingkindness can make things go well for people of any race and religion. There will be no fault in his or her mind if one does so.

The repetitive nature of *Paritta* chanting can help calm and focus the mind, making it a valuable tool for meditation and stress reduction. Practicing *Paritta* chanting can help individuals cultivate inner peace and tranquility. Protection is often performed in groups, and it can serve as a means of advancing social organization and a sense of community. Participating in *Paritta* chanting can help individuals feel connected to others with similar spiritual beliefs and values. By focusing their chanting on positive intentions, such as promoting peace, compassion, and social justice, practitioners of *Paritta* chanting can positively influence their communities and society. It can help promote a culture of kindness, generosity, and spiritual well-being. In brief, protection is a powerful spiritual practice that offers many advantages for individuals and society. By participating in this practice, practitioners can cultivate spiritual well-being, promote positive values and intentions, and create a sense of connection and community.

¹¹ Ibid.

It has described the power of loving-kindness; the words of the Buddha are never empty of love. The recipients of the *Paritta* are also expected to be filled with loving kindness and a calm mind for the chanting to be completely effective. Therefore, the recipients of the *Paritta* are expected to do so with a heart of love, wishing the listeners and others happiness and protection from all harm. It is shown that *Mettā* is an active force, and every act of one who truly loves is done with the pure mind to help, cheer, and make the paths of others more manageable, smoother, and more adapted to the conquest of sorrow, the winning of the highest bliss.

Addition to perhaps the earliest development of chanting concerns preaching the discourse on Loving Kindness. The *Khuddakapāṭha* prescribes the spread of unreserved loving kindness to all sentient beings. The Buddha taught the sermon to some forest-dwelling monks to be practiced as a protective chant and a subject of meditation. The monks had been interrupted in their meditation from their forest abode. These monks had taken their residence in the forest during the rainy season. Realizing that the presence of these monks in the woods could be an unexpected bother for them, the deities who had made the trees their habit took various demonic guises and frequently tried to frighten them away. The monks, terrified and disturbed in their concentration, returned to *Sāvattī* and reported the matter to the Buddha. Thereupon, the Buddha taught them the *Mettā-sutta* to be recited, and its theme was reflected upon as a subject of meditation. Returning to the same forest, they chanted the discourse while focusing on its composition. It has been recorded that the deities who listened to the recital were appeased in their unfounded displeasure and provided guard and protection for the monks as long as they lived there.

The protective discourse on loving-kindness must be recited repeatedly among the protective lessons and be significantly cultivated. When cultivating loving-kindness, the power of *Mettā* spreads to oneself, and one's environment is peaceful for oneself and others. Bodily and verbal actions are quiet and free from the use as a debt (*Īṇaparibhoga*). Even though you are not an Arahant, if you develop *Mettā* towards lay devotees offering four requisites, firstly, you can benefit from being free from the use as a debt without reflecting wisely. In this world, loving-kindness from one to another is very significant for the benefit of one after the other. In this *Sutta*, there are seeing and unseeing beings on this planet. Sending loving kindness to each other and bringing offerings to them benefits them, and this is the nature of universal truth.

The cultivation of attributes and the development of loving-kindness are familiar to everyone. However, loving-kindness is of three kinds: bodily-*Mettā*, verbal-*Mettā*, and mental-*Mettā*. Among them, it is necessary to develop mental loving-kindness as a particular habit. Bodily loving-kindness and verbal loving-kindness can produce just merit, but they cannot lead to concentration. On the other hand, mental loving-kindness can make both merit and concentration. It is true that the attributes of Triple Gems, loving-kindness, and telling the truth, are powerful and effective, but they will give different results depending upon the practice. If one practices every day, they will be solid and practical.

Without training, they will not be powerful and effective. If a person wants to be powerful like noblemen, he must practice like them. Their powers become powerful, and they are called noble persons not because they can do what ordinary ones cannot do but because they do what everyone can do.

Cultivating such loving-kindness spreads not only oneself but also one's surroundings and seen and unseen persons, making everything peaceful. When bodily actions and verbal actions are mild, the relationship between each other becomes very polite and gentle. At that time, all persons can live in happiness and peace. Otherwise, bodily and verbal actions will become gross if people lack loving-kindness. As mentioned above, cultivating loving-kindness towards living beings is not enough to produce it bodily and verbally. We have to cultivate loving-kindness in our hearts. Our ordinary loving-kindness cannot calm such grossness. It is not as effective as the absorption of loving-kindness. The absorption of loving-kindness is the loving-kindness associated with sublime and supra-mundane consciousness.

It differs from the loving-kindness sent ordinarily, and its effectiveness is different. It is just like being punched with a blunt pin; being beaten with a sharp pin is different. To be jabbed with the direct plug is painful and ineffective. On the other hand, puncturing with a pointed pin is painless and more effective. Therefore, the loving-kindness associated with mundane sense-sphere wholesome consciousness is not practical in such a case. Only the loving-kindness cultivated by noble persons with loving-kindness associated with absorption is more powerful and effective. It is considered that our loving-kindness is not practical, according to what a previous female layperson said.

If a monk develops loving-kindness just for the time of a finger-snap, he is not worthy to call a person who enjoys in vain the food offered by the lay devotees. Moreover, loving-kindness must be cultivated in standing, walking, sitting, and lying down, whichever posture. In this case, the word '*mettā*' is said using a significant method. Despite mentioning only the word '*mettā*' effectively, if a monk develops other meditations apart from loving-kindness, he should not be called a person who enjoys the meal offered by lay persons in vain. Therefore, other meditation methods can also be developed in any posture: lying down, sitting down, standing, or walking.

It is not mentioned in the texts that one will be safe if one recites the *Metta sutta* every day. But many people in Myanmar believe that in the word of Mogok Sayardaw; medicine, such as pills, should be swallowed to have its intended effect. Simply wearing it without consumption would not facilitate recovery. Similarly, the *sutras* should be practiced rather than merely chanted. Simply reciting them without understanding and application will not lead to the cessation of suffering. There will be little benefit if one uses pills that should be swallowed as an ointment. The pill should be swallowed to be effective¹². Therefore, one should develop *Mettā* not by recitation but by practice because it is a kind of *Bhāvanā*. *Mettā* is not for reciting but for creating and is a kind

¹² Ven Nandamalabhivamsa, the summary of eleven Paritta suttas, p. 69

of practice. Most people think that only *vipassana* meditation is *Kammathāna*. Developing *Mettā*, however, is also a meditation technique and a form of concentration meditation. Therefore, concerning the *Metta-sutta*, we can say that it is not only for reciting and listening, but more importantly for developing *Mettā*.

Besides, *Metta-sutta* is a beautiful formula, and he can become a celebrity by using most of it. This *sutta*, which can be said sweetly than any other *Paritta*, is the *Metta-sutta*. That's why it has the most charming power. This formula should be practiced without breaking a single word or first letter to fraud and without breaking it through words. These *gāthā* should not be chanted fast to the rhythm of *Mantara*. If we recite this formula without mistakes in the right tune, we will get benefits even without understanding its meaning. Sometimes, the men who say wrong cannot be blamed by *Mantara*. Even if we do not understand, we will get the quality of speaking the *Paritta* correctly.

It may be possible that the world is getting warm because of the decline in loving service. Although, commonly, the heating of the earth is explained by a hole in the ozone layer. When loving-kindness is getting dry in the minds of beings, whatever is produced from their bodies is heat. Because then there is unwholesomeness in the form of greed and hatred. Therefore, loving-kindness should always be kept in people's minds to maintain peacefulness. There are many benefits to it.

Then, loving-kindness and peace are combined with each other, it inevitably depends on getting mind trained. Since violence results from a hateful mind, Buddhism turns to utilize the discipline of loving-kindness to prevent the undesirable situation that causes violence. Apart from loving-kindness, it is the discipline of peace so as to suppress harsh emotions and calm mental activities. According to the discipline of Loving-Kindness and peace is said to be the discipline of getting the mind trained. At the international level, nations are supposed to develop their own social, economic, and political systems for the well-being of their people. At the same time, they have to be conscious of what is going on beyond their borders and contribute to the maintenance of world peace. Without world peace, it is impossible to achieve the tranquility and harmony needed for nations' development and progress.

1.4. *Khandha sutta* and building a peaceful life

Moreover, the *Khandha-Paritta* of the *Cūlavagga* in the *Vinaya Pitaka* was used by the Buddha for the first time to share loving-kindness for all snakes. The Buddha advised the disciple about this discourse as a protective measure to use on members of the disciple. In the *Cūlavagga* of *Vinaya Pitaka*, it can be seen that the *Khandha-sutta* was allowed by the Buddha as a watch, a safeguard, and protection for oneself for the use of the order.¹³ The Buddha encouraged reciting and listening to the *Paritta* to his disciples. The recital of *Paritta* produces mental well-being in listeners with intelligence, and they have

¹³ G. P. Malalasekera, "Dictionary of Pali Proper Names", New Delhi, 1953, p. 157.

confidence in the truth of the Buddha's words. Having recited it, mental well-being can help one recover from illness and can also help encourage the mental attitude that brings happiness. One who recites and listens to *Paritta* chanting understands its effects and enjoys it harmoniously.

The benefit of this *sutta* is that you are not prone to the danger of poisonous animals such as snake bites and insect bites. Besides, this *Sutta* develops the loving mind towards clans of animals such as snakes and all beings, including the footless one. This *sutta* is like the medicine of deities, and it can also heal and prevent poisonous bites and other kinds of danger. This *Sutta* enjoins a kind aspiration: "May all see what is good, may suffering not come to anyone."¹⁴ Rhys David's comments on *mettā*: "The profession of amity according to Buddhist doctrine was no mere matter of pretty speech. It was to accompany and express a mental suffusion of the unfriendly man or spirit with begin, friendly emotion with *mettā*."¹⁵ In this *Sutta*, this section is a protection different from the others.

It relates to the account of a monk who dies of a snake bite. On receiving the news, the Buddha blames him for not practising *Mettā* towards the four categories of snakes and proceeds to describe them. The following verse is not considered a part of the original *sutta*. The song aims to spread loving tenderness to the snakes and all other poisonous insects, requesting them to keep away because they are all protected by a higher power. Then, the *Sutta* describes the triple-gem and their infinite righteousness and morality, which contrasts with the limited sense of the same in the creatures described previously. The animals are snakes, scorpions, lizards, spiders, and mice. Then, the Buddha declares safety for them and from them. Then, he orders them to return to their places of dwelling. He also says that if you worship the Buddha, the seven fully enlightened ones will always be safe from the abovementioned creatures. The *suttas* of *Metta* and *Khandha* concern them. There is nothing different from the discourses selected from the respective *Nikāyas* except the two encouraging verses (*Uyyojanagāthā*) at the beginning of each of them.

The advantage of *Khandha-Paritta* is that it allows one to become free from dangerous creatures, the danger of toxic animals, deadly creatures and disasters. One should recite this *sutta* frequently, and the *sutta* can avert other risks, too. It is a chanting and blessings based on internally developed *Mettā* in the morning and evening towards all the clans of snakes to soften them and for self-protection. This protection is nowadays recited for protection not only against dangerous snakes, for which it was initially composed but even from other frightful creatures as well, including scorpions, spiders, lizards, rats and mice. The peculiar phenomenon of this discourse is that lord Buddha declared the power of reciting for personal safety, preservation, and protection openly. When the Buddha was the teacher of hermits before enlightenment, He taught *Khandha-sutta* to the pupils to protect themselves from the danger

¹⁴ AN p. 72.

¹⁵ David, C. A. F. Rhys. "Dialogues of the Buddha", part iii, p. 185.

of poisonous snakes and encouraged them to recite them.¹⁶ Since the hermits recited that discourse, they were free from the threat of poisonous snakes. The forest fire broke out when the future Buddha was a quail. Some benefits of reciting the *sutta* are that it can destroy any poison and remove any dangers for everyone who is used to reciting and listening to it.

It has shown that it could not be accepted as precisely correct in terms of Buddhism. The rites and rituals based on Buddhism came into being several centuries after Buddhism first appeared. It becomes clear when we examine the history of the dispensation. The Buddha *vagga* of *Dhammapada*¹⁷ shows that pre-Buddhist people believed in such matters: Trembling in fear, human beings seek refuge in mountains, forests, parks, trees, and shrines. These are not secure refugees, and they are not the supreme refugees. Those who take refuge in them are not released from all suffering. On the other hand, people who have gone for refuge to the triple gem see with proper knowledge the four noble truths-sorrow, the course of sorrow, the transcending of suffering, and the noble eightfold path which leads to the cessation of sorrow. It, indeed, is a secure refuge. It, indeed, is the refuge supreme. By seeking such refuge, one is released from all sorrow.

On the other hand, *Khandha sutta* and peace lies at the link of significant interdependence among diverse physiological, and psychological for human being. And then to live in peace should be understood as involving both personal fulfillment and social well-being, the psychological and spiritual quality of life, and objective living conditions. Besides, strong and sustainable peace is to be understood as a combine of external peace and internal peace. It means a universal peace wherein physiological needs of all are secured, structural and institutional justices are addressed, and people develop and perform multiple functions of mind to have positive views of others and become creative in transforming non-violent dispute into an opportunity to promote an interconnected relationship.

1.5. *Dhajagga sutta* and building peaceful life

Besides, in the view of *dhajagga sutta* if you want to be free from danger you will chant this *sutta*. If you cannot chant you will get danger from *Yakkha*

¹⁶ *Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā*, V ii, p. 135.

¹⁷ K. Sri Dhammananda, *The Dhammapada*, published by Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society, *Bahuṃ ve saraṇaṃ yanti-Pabbatāni vanāni ca*

Ārāmarukkhacetyāni-Manussā bhayatajjitā (verse-188) p. 390.

Netaṃ kho saraṇaṃ khemaṃ-Netaṃ saraṇamuttamaṃ

Netaṃ saraṇamāgama-Sabbadukkhā pamuṇcati (verse-189) p. 390.

Yo ca Buddhaṃ ca dhammaṃ ca-Sanghaṃ ca saraṇaṃ gato

Cattāri ariyasaccāni-Sammappaṇṇāya passati (verse-190) p. 390.

Dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ-Dukkhaṃ ca atikkamaṃ

Ariyancatthangikam maggaṃ-Dukkhasamagāminam (verse-191) p. 391.

Etaṃ kho saraṇaṃ khemaṃ-Etaṃ saraṇamuttamaṃ

Etaṃ saraṇamāgama-Sabbadukkhā pamuṇcati (verse-192) p. 391.

(organ) or Sora (thief) so please recite to the *dhajagga sutta*¹⁸. This *sutta* is refer to banner or flag. This flag or banner are staying on the top. History background of this *sutta* in previous name is Sihlo or present time called Sri Lanka at the time it has one evidence. One day the Buddha's service sangha has to clean at *Dīgavāpi Cetiya* or Stūpa. They clean to on the top of the Buddha banner. Among the sangha, one monk falling down closely between top and bottom. At the time other monks support him for chanting *dhajagga* and then he chants to *dhajagga sutta* and one deva support with string-course him for free from danger. So that is good evidence for us.

Once upon a time the Buddha was dwelling in Sāvattī at Jetavana's grove in Anāthapindika's monastery. O monks, yes Sir, the Buddha deliver to dhamma to venerable Ananda. At the time the Buddha told event at Deva world or heaven sphere. This occurring arose a war with Sakka and Asura. The deva king of Sakka told to his follower. When you go to fight a war at the time you are mind fear with hair of the body, terrible so His follower remembers to sakka of banner and then you will get free from danger or Asura. And then if they could not look for the top of my banner, then you should look for the top of the banner of *pajāpati*. So, they are free from danger. Similarly, they cannot remember to *pajāpati* they will remember to *varuna* deva and then they will get free from danger. Besides, they could not focus to *varuna* deva they will remember to *Isāna* at the time they will get free from Asura. Even though they can remember to all deva but they could not get free from Asura because these devas have not free from passion, free from anger, free from delusion so you could not get free from danger exactly.

Then the Buddha also told to his follower or sangha. O monks, yes sir, whatever you will stay in forest, silent place, and under the tree at the time you will face problem so remember to Buddha quality then you get free from danger. You know the Buddha quality. What are they, they are *Araṇha*, *Sammāsambuddha* and so on. And then the Buddha said to his sangha if you could not remember the Buddha quality you will remember to the Buddha his dhamma at the time you will get free from danger. You know the Buddha his dhamma what are they, they are *Savkkhāta*, *Sandithika* and so on. Besides the Buddha said if you could not the Buddha dhamma you will remember to the Sangha quality at the time you can get free from danger. You know the sangha quality what are they, they are *Suppaticcapanna*, *Uzuppatipanna* and so on. Here sangha is noble monks like Ariya Sangha four pair of path Sangha and four pair of fruit Sangha. If you remember these the Buddha dhamma and Sangha you can get free from any danger because the Buddha the dhamma and teaching and the sangha have no desire, no fear, and no horrible. Therefore, you definitely get free from danger.

Moreover, rapidly the Buddha said his sangha the Buddha is a teacher or guider, or leader for human beings so you remember the buddha every time

¹⁸ Ven Kotawila Sri Pemaloka Nayaka Thera, The great book of Protection, (Catubhānavārapali), pp. 83 – 89.

in your life. If you could not remember to the Buddha you remember to the Buddha dhamma or teaching of the Buddha. The Buddhist doctrine means liberation so you remember to the Buddha dhamma in your life every time. Then if you could not remember the Buddha dhamma you will remember to sangha quality. It means like farm filed. For instance, farmer work at farm filed they need fertilizer or soil therefore you remember to sangha quality. Lastly if you can remember these the Buddha, dhamma and sangha you get free from any danger. Here I highlight request to you please chant quality of the Buddha, quality of the dhamma, and quality of the Sangha in your life every day or every time. If you chant these you will get protection and blessing in your life.

It has mentioned that if you want to get the best qualities from *Paritta*, you need to study well and know its meaning. There is a rare among those who say *Paritta* and those who know their purpose and tell them. The protection, which says meaningless, is less powerless, but neither do we get a virtue. If you study *Paritta* without mistakes and display it correctly, it will also benefit you a lot. Thus, virtues are because words have some power. The power of expression is not so enormous but minor, and saying too many times increases that power. Therefore, many *Paritta* should be recited; the more times you recite, the better the quality. The power of *Paritta's* voice has the power to remove fear, enhance others, console the body, and relieve pain and other diseases. It protects Inhumans, thieves, enemies, snakes, and evil planetary conditions.

Besides, The Buddha's message of banner, peace for all living beings tells us to open our hearts and embrace all members of our human family, especially those in need. These timeless teachings can help guide state and the international community. They can inspire our efforts to address many of the broader challenges confronting our world in security and peace, in development and in the protection of our environment. In each of these areas, we have to chant above *dhajagga sutta*, and practice and act as members of one universal community.

II. CONCLUSION

This article examines the Buddha's fundamental teachings that contribute to peace with *Paritta* in the human world. A Buddhist view based on the principle of protection (*Paritta*), its analysis of the causes of diester, and the open communication and participatory decision-making procedures in social organizations, would inform and provide useful paths for theoretical approaches and applying on the applications in peace. In *Ratana sutta* refer to triple gem, and truth that is important for human being in peace. Then the *Metta sutta* and *khandha sutta* refer to *mettā* as it is essential for human being in peace. Besides, the *dhajagga sutta* refer to quality of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha as it is very vital important for human being in peace. In particular, the Buddhist observation techniques developed for more than 2,500 years may start peaceful life among conflict people as well as peace social action: support them to see more clearly the mutual effort operating in the situation, and the appropriateness of own causes and behaviors.

Paritta chanting, a practice within Theravada Buddhism, connects deeply

with social values by fostering community cohesion and cultural continuity. This ritual, performed for protection and blessings, brings people together, increasing positive energy, emotions and feelings, enhancing social bonds and shared identity. It preserves traditional practices, offering emotional and psychological support while reinforcing ethical conduct and moral principles. Taken together these results suggest that *Paritta* contributes to the well-being of individuals and the broader community, strengthening both social solidarity and cultural heritage.

The true value of loving-kindness advocated by Buddhism would also inspire all people on the path of peace. To achieve peace within a person, the Buddhist approach is to observe and reflect upon the conditions in the external and mental operations, and then to decide on the most appropriate course of action as response to the outer and inner environments. Given the will, the insight, and the practical creativity to realize the infinite possibilities underlying in the peace, from the Buddhist perspective, is realistic and achievable. Moreover, working toward a more just loving kindness and compassionate world is a shared responsibility, guided by the interdependent nature of our existence—a duty that belongs to each and every one of us.

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ENGAGED BUDDHISM AND COLLECTIVE HEALING



LOVING-KINDNESS TO BRING GLOBAL PEACE: A STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS

Prof. Dr. Biman Chandra Barua*

Abstract:

Loving-kindness is one of the most distinctive and esteemed fundamental tenets of Buddhism. It is characterized as the genuine desire for the well-being of humanity. The sincere aspiration, May all beings be happy encapsulates it. It also embodies a more profound significance than simple benevolence. Through loving-kindness, we may coexist harmoniously with the most fragile beings present in this and other realms. It is a global principle. This research article examines the intimate connection between loving-kindness and peace in Buddhism. The researcher has endeavored to elucidate and delineate the principles of peace and the fundamental qualities of loving-kindness, together with its three foundational pillars, throughout the study. This research analyzes the role of loving kindness in facilitating an exemplary life within society, potentially contributing to global peace.

Keywords: *loving-kindness, Buddhism, peace, happiness, five precepts, society.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Loving-kindness is a more abundant and solemn term for *mettā*, differentiated from the Pāli language as a feminine noun, *maitrī*, its designation in Sanskrit, fulfills a metaphysical function. It can be characterized as kindness, goodwill, universal love, and charitable friendliness, defined as the desire for the welfare of all beings without exception. Loving-kindness is one of the perfections (*pāramis* or *pāramitā*) that a Bodhisattva or Buddha must realize in the future. The perfections are enumerated as 10 in Theravāda Buddhist literature, although they are described as six in Sanskrit Buddhist literature. The ten perfections outlined in Theravāda Buddhism are almsgiving (*dāna*), Morality (*sīla*), renunciation (*nekkhama*), wisdom (*pañña*), vigor (*virīya*),

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tolerance (*khānti*), truthfulness (*sacca*), determination (*adithāna*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and equanimity (*uppekkhā*). The six perfections (*pāramitas*) articulated in the Sanskrit Buddhist tradition are almsgiving (*dāna*), Morality (*sīla*), patience (*khānti*), vigor (*virīya*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and wisdom (*pañña*). It is more comparable to compassion and affection than just amicability. We consistently frame it to propose loving-kindness at the highest level of accessibility, with focus as the objective. We exclusively confine loving-kindness to the contemplative development of aspirations for the well-being or success of others. Loving-kindness is recognized as one of the four sublime states, referred to in Buddhism as the *Brahmavihār*. Individuals occasionally denote loving-kindness as the four aspects of universal compassion. The primary attribute of loving-kindness is the cultivation of benevolent attitudes that enhance the well-being of all.¹ It possesses the capacity to foster happiness and tranquility across society. A distinguished Buddhist scholar stated, 'Loving-kindness is the most efficacious means to preserve mental purity and cleanse the polluted mental environment.'² Global peace is a significant issue in the contemporary day. To attain tranquility in our daily existence, we must adopt the principles of loving-kindness. A peaceful and harmonious society can be established by the practice of loving-kindness in various domains, including community, family, workplace (both public and private), and governmental structures.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Global peace is presently one of the most vital issues in international culture. Buddhist loving-kindness solidifies tranquility within a community or nation. Buddhism observes that inner and outward conflicts arise from a lack of loving-kindness, compassion, morality, and mindfulness.³ They focus on the ethical principles of Buddha to foster peace and avert societal disputes. Consequently, they elucidate the tribulations of compassion and mindfulness via a comprehensive framework, employing Buddhism as a perspective for their analysis. Conversely, emphasis is placed on moral conduct to foster happiness, which can be attained via the development of empathy.⁴ Examine the notion of *sīla* (morality) as Buddhist ethics for facilitating moral reform to attain liberation from suffering. *Sīla* serves as the cornerstone for attaining the ultimate objective of liberation from human misery.

It further contends that no conflict has propagated Buddhism, rendering it one of the most tranquil religions acknowledged worldwide. It underscores the significance of knowledge and compassion in resolving conflicts and alleviating suffering, ultimately promoting a harmonious and fulfilling existence within society. Furthermore, we have meticulously refined social ties and collaboration to steer humanity.⁵ It emphasizes the necessity for exemplary and conscientious leadership to foster global peace via sustainable practices. He discovered that

¹ Narada Thera, 1956, p. 111.

² K. Sri Dhammananda, 1992, p. 166.

³ Mamata Dash and Dr. Kamlesh KR Pandey, 2023, p. 2297 - 2298.

⁴ Ven. Pategama Gnanarama, 1996, p. 85; P. D. Premasiri, 2020, p. 5.

⁵ Ven Nyanika, 2020, p. 4.

inadequate emotional management abilities perpetuate the leaders' worry inside society. Competent and conscientious leaders may manage wrath, greed, delusion, hatred, and anxiety, hence fostering a non-harmful societal existence.⁶

Five principles of mindfulness training, such as the preservation of life, awareness of pain caused by violence, the pursuit of true happiness, authentic love, compassionate communication, and attentive listening, contribute to fostering peace and happiness among individuals, communities, and nations, as well as with the natural world and other beings.⁷ The contemporary world exists in a state of conflict, dread, distrust, and tension. A nation governed by mindfulness, loving-kindness, compassion, and non-violence is assuredly pleasant and peaceful.⁸ In Buddhist principles, moral conduct and the practices of mindfulness and vision into the disposition of reality are integrated actions of a unified whole.⁹ Self-directed loving-kindness should be prioritized in practice. In this process, an individual should transform both mind and body through affirmative thoughts of tranquility and joy.¹⁰ A multitude of studies has been published in several journals, concentrating on subjects such as Buddhism, peace, sustainability, moral instruction, the environment, and good governance, among others. Therefore, there are several opportunities to research the current issue. This study may benefit researchers, academics, and students, as well as facilitate additional literature evaluations and literature reviews.

2.1. Objectives of the study

- To identify the key points of loving-kindness in the light of Buddhism.
- To identify the relation between loving-kindness and its impact on global peace.
- To identify some core concepts of loving-kindness and its necessity in the society for the well-being of humanity.

2.2. Methodology

This qualitative research method has been employed to carry out the investigation. Consequently, data have been compiled from several sources, including published books, esteemed articles, periodicals, research papers, literature, journals, and search engines. The literature from several sources has been examined to gather fundamental interpretations of loving-kindness and its significance for contemporary studies.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Loving-kindness

The term Pāli *mettā* means loving-kindness. It includes goodwill,

⁶ Ven Devinda, 2019, p. 161.

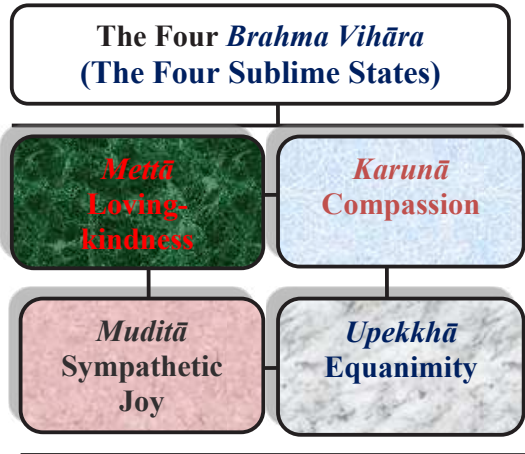
⁷ Sauwalak Kittiprapas, 2016, p. 64.

⁸ Walpola Rahula, 1998, p. 86.

⁹ Hammalawa Saddhatissa, 2003, p. 89; John Magnus Michelson, 1995, pp. 39 - 56.

¹⁰ Narada Maha Thera, 1973, p. 371.

friendliness, friendly feeling, kindness, love, and charity.¹¹ Additionally, *mettā* (loving-kindness) derived from the mind means to love, to soften. Loving-kindness embraces all creatures without exception. Loving-kindness to spread to all beings is also stated in the four Brahma vihāra or four sublime states.¹² Loving-kindness eliminates the ill will, anger, greed, delusion, hatred, jealousy, wrong views, and intolerance, pride, and shows the righteous pathway for peace and happiness for a sustainable society. A famous Buddhist scholar, Narada, explained the significant importance of loving-kindness, thus: *Mettā* (loving-kindness) needs to be practiced at the very beginning by oneself. To do that, an individual needs to alter one's mind, and body, focusing on peace and happiness through positive. One must think about how one could be joyful, peaceful, and happy, suffering free, free from worry, and annoyance. One then could be able to become the quintessence of loving-kindness; shielded by loving-kindness, one avoids all antagonistic atmosphere and harmful thoughts. One could return good for malevolence, love for anger. One becomes ever more liberal and tries the level best to facilitate instances for antagonism to anyone. One's own contented, one injects happiness into others, not only privately but also externally, by putting one's *mettā* into practice during one's daily life. Through the practice of loving-kindness, one could be able to be full of peace and free from all sorts of hatred. It is relatively easy for him to emit loving-kindness towards others. What one does, one will be unable to facilitate others. Before making others, one should be happy oneself first. One has to know the paths and ways to make oneself joyful.¹³ Therefore, loving-kindness is the state of feeling of infinite universal love for all living creatures. These are present below:



(Source: Author owns: *The Four Brahma Vihāra or the Four Sublime States*, 2025)

¹¹ Robert Caesar Childers, 1977, p. 246.
¹² Maurice Walse, *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 187 - 195, and Bhikkhu Ñanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, pp. 118 - 122.
¹³ Nārada Maha Thera, 1973, p. 371.

The concepts of the four universal great moral virtues have been advised by the omniscient Buddha. Here, *Mettā* or loving-kindness represents responsive love towards all creatures. It builds a peace and happiness bridge in society. *Karunā* or compassion is the sympathetic approach that arises to others suffering or difficulties with the persistence of assistance or support for others. *Muditā* or compassionate joy refers to the capability to be happy in joy without any envy by exploring others' gladness, contentment, and successes. *Upekkhā* or equanimity refers to tolerating happy, glad, and joyful, of distressful condition in an impartial sense or logic. These principles are very important for mental peace, mutual understanding, social harmony, happiness, and prosperity. These four sublime states play an important role in eliminating violence, war, quarrel, injustice in the family, community, society, state, and nation and building a peaceful and prosperous society.¹⁴

3.1.1. Aims of Loving Kindness

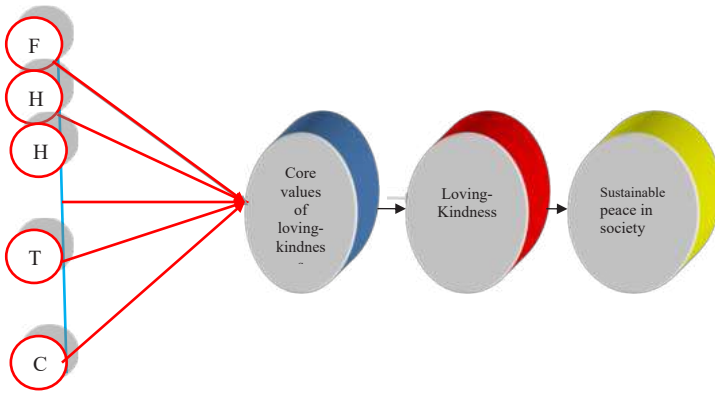
The role of loving-kindness is vital and vibrant in fostering happiness, creating a harmonious and peaceful family, society, country, and nation. It involves cultivating a sincere and infinite sense of moral will, compassion, and kindness toward all. A healthy society, family, and state could lead by this loving-kindness. The aim of loving-kindness is given below:

- Overcoming hatred and ill will with kindness and mutual understanding.
- Fostering unconditional goodwill and compassion to all creatures.
- Promoting inner-outer peace.
- Promoting social harmony.
- Resolving violence or conflicts.
- Maintenance of communal cohesion.
- Encouraging harmonious and moral behavior in all.
- Control three roots of violence: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*desha*), and delusion (*moha*).
- Develop strong morality with physical, mental, and verbal.
- Develop mental training for happiness and a harmonious life.

3.1.2. Core Values of Loving-kindness

There are so many different essential core values of loving-kindness, which are unconditional and universal concepts of Buddhism. It is extended to others equally to all beings, including enemies also. A chart was given below:

¹⁴ Sukhumpong Channuwong and Suvin Ruksat, 2022, pp. 29 - 41.



(Author's own: *Core Values of Loving-kindness*, 2025)

F: Friendship, **H:** Harmony, **H:** Happiness, **B:** Belief, **T:** Tenderness, **I:** Intimacy, **C:** Commitment,

Friendship: It is referred to as Pāli *kalyāṇmitta*, signifying a virtuous and genuine or noble friend. Genuine or virtuous relationships are crucial for a joyful and harmonious existence. In the *Singalovāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha elucidated the concept of true or noble friends, characterized by their care at moments of vulnerability, their support in adversity, their provision of sagacious counsel, and their encouragement to remain committed to the pursuit of excellence, merit, and knowledge.¹⁵ The Buddha delineates in the *Mettānisaṃsa Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* four categories of genuine noble companions. These encompass the supporter, the patient and steadfast companion, the advisor, and the kind and benevolent friend.¹⁶ Each category of friend outlined above can substantially augment the ethical and spiritual well-being of society.

Harmony: Harmony may significantly contribute to the establishment of inner tranquility, contentment, concord, and societal unity. The Buddha advocates for fostering harmony in personal, familial, communal, and national contexts via compassion, mutual understanding, respect, and non-violence. The Buddha delineated ethical obligations to promote societal, communal, and familial harmony.¹⁷ Harmony is a force that fosters peace and happiness within a family, society, and nation. Buddha admonished against harsh, deceitful, and cruel speech, advocating instead for the use of serene, tranquil, peaceful, and true language. The *Dhammapada* emphasizes one must convey the truth. One ought not to harbor anger. One ought to provide, even from limited resources, to those who request; via such actions, one may attain the presence of the divine.¹⁸ This essential principle acts as a mechanism to avert conflicts,

¹⁵ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 461 - 469.

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 1573.

¹⁷ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 461 - 469.

¹⁸ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 224.

disputes, and warfare. Furthermore, a joyful and tranquil society, along with manifestations of oneness among individuals, families, and communities, necessitates harmony. In the *Kosāmbi Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* the Buddha delineates six characteristics of amicability that foster love and mutual respect, promoting cohesiveness, non-dispute, concord, and oneness.¹⁹

Happiness: Happiness is a distinctive and significant term. The Buddha stated that there are four categories of laypeople. The Buddha categorized four kinds of gladness and joy that may be achieved, which are found in the *Digha Nikāya* that is given below: his happiness from ownership, the happiness from enjoyment, the happiness from being debt-free, and the happiness from being blameless.²⁰ Among these conceptions of happiness, the foremost blameless and pristine happiness emphasizes the moral code of conduct and spiritual advancement. The Buddha taught that life is transient and attachment is a fundamental source of pain. It suggests that happiness originates in the mind. The *Dhammapada* asserts: Release the past. Release concerns about the future and observe with depth the current reality. Subsequently, happiness will accompany you.²¹ Buddha asserted that there is no heat comparable to lust and no crime equivalent to hate. Boredom is the greatest affliction, while the calm of mind is the highest form of happiness.²² The ethical code of conduct, as an expression of thanks, is the paramount blessing that fosters happiness.²³

Belief: The phrase in Pāli is *saddhā* and in Sanskrit is *śraddhā*, both of which denote an ethical behavioral framework. Trust is crucial in personal, familial, and social contexts since it cultivates a peaceful environment. In this context, the Buddha elucidated in the *Kālām Sutta* of *Aṅguttara Nikāya* trust as a rational principle: do not depend on hearsay, tradition, or rumor. Investigate and comprehend the factors that contribute to well-being and happiness.²⁴ The *Sigālovāda Sutta* delineates the attributes of trustworthy individuals, encompassing honesty, dependability, and fidelity.²⁵ These attributes foster mutual respect and establish firm, consolidated boundaries within familial, societal, and national contexts. In Buddhism, trust cultivates reciprocal reliability in relationships, promotes ethical behavior, and nurtures genuine understanding within a society or nation.

Tenderness: In Buddhism, it closely resembles *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion) and, *mudita* (gentleness). Tenderness exemplifies a gentle, serene, and sincere demeanor towards oneself and others, promoting

¹⁹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 421.

²⁰ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 452.

²¹ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 266.

²² Narada Thera, 1995, p. 178.

²³ H. Saddhatissa, 1985, p. 29.

²⁴ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 180.

²⁵ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 461 - 469.

communal or societal cohesion and averting various forms of discord. It also denotes a non-violent, compassionate, and nurturing disposition that promotes moral and spiritual development. The Buddha describes an exemplary monk as one who is compassionate and benevolent toward all sentient beings.²⁶ It is shown through benevolence and compassion in physical presence, verbal communication, behavior, and cognition. The Buddha profoundly urges practitioners to eradicate harsh, violent, and deceptive words and to embody *mettā* or loving-kindness. The Buddha highlights in the *Dhammapada*:

“*Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ asādhunā sadhunā jine Jine kadariyam dānena saccena alikavādinam.*”²⁷

That is to say, subdue wrath with affection. Overcome malevolence with virtue. Overcome the miserly via generosity. Defeat the deceiver with veracity.

Tenderness is crucial in settling various disputes and conflicts and can foster robust communal cohesion. Tenderness is crucial for fostering a joyful, tranquil, and harmonious community. “*The Kakacūpama Sutta*” illustrates a distressed mind, encouraging us to avoid employing harsh or unkind, untrue, or harmful language.²⁸ In Buddhism, it signifies possessing inner peace, harmony, and contentment, which enables the extension of love and compassion toward others.

Intimacy: Buddhism enhances self-intimacy by self-awareness and mindfulness. It upholds robust ethical ideals, empathetic understanding, reciprocal respect, and mutual trust. The Buddha advocates in the *Dīgha Nikāya* for laypeople to foster mutual understanding, respect, and responsibility to enhance community harmony and familiarity.²⁹ It exhibits a dynamic ethical framework deeply rooted in the teachings of the Buddha. Scholarship, resemblance, and practice foster intimacy. The *Dhammapada* emphasizes attention. The gift of the Dhamma exceeds all gifts; the taste of the Dhamma exceeds all tastes. All pleasures are conquered by the one who comprehends the true nature of desire, thus overcoming all suffering. The gift of truth exceeds all other gifts. The essence of truth exceeds all other flavors. Indeed, pleasure exceeds all other gladness and joy. One who eradicates desire conquers all grief.³⁰

Buddhism broadens the concept of intimacy from personal mutual understanding to include all sentient beings. By cultivating *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karunā* (compassion), and *upekkhā* (equanimity), an individual fosters an intimate understanding of the interconnectedness of existence. Buddha advocates for the promotion of global compassion and connection with all sentient beings.³¹ Buddhism emphasizes significant practical aspects of

²⁶ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 305.

²⁷ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 190.

²⁸ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 221.

²⁹ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 466 - 469.

³⁰ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 270.

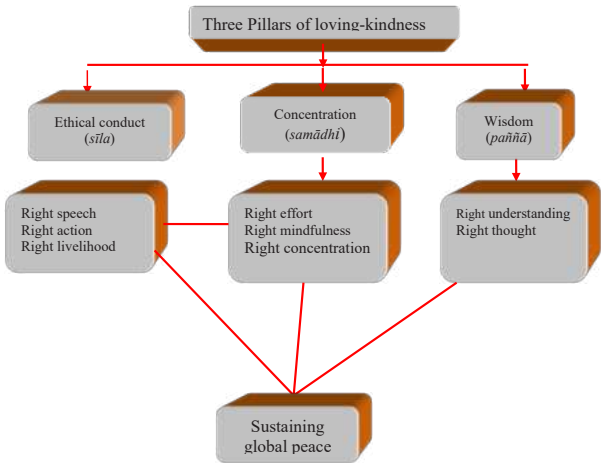
³¹ Saddhatissa H., 1985, p. 16.

intimacy, including mindfulness in mutual understanding, the practice of *mettā* or loving-kindness, the comprehension of impermanence or non-attachment, and *sīla*, which refers to the moral code of action.

Commitment: Commitment is essential for both laypersons and monks. It manifests in multiple facets of life. It emerges in multiple facets of life, including familial relationships, self-discipline, interpersonal understanding, and spiritual experiences. The Buddha counselled laypeople to maintain their commitments to one another within personal relationships: family, society, and the nation.³² An adept practitioner must dedicate themselves to cultivating an eightfold path. The Buddha tackles this matter by advocating for mindfulness as the paramount dedication.³³ Buddhism emphasizes dedication to self-transformation, ethical conduct, compassion, and the welfare of all sentient creatures. It could effectively advance personal, familial, communal, and societal liberty, fostering peace, happiness, bliss, love, compassion, and global harmony. If the core values of loving-kindness can be applied and followed in the societal, family, and every sphere, sustainable global peace can be attained.

3.2. Three pillars of loving-kindness

The universal concept of loving-kindness is closely interrelated with the three illustrious pillars of the Buddha's teachings. These pillars have taken a prominent place in Buddhism. These pillars offer the significant foundation for the cultivation of loving-kindness and its transformative impact on individuals, communities, and nations. Sustaining peace in society can be achieved through the following pillars.³⁴



(Three Pillars of loving-kindness, 2025)

³² *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 461 - 469.

³³ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 153.

³⁴ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 171 - 174.

In Buddhism, there are four noble truths. The eightfold path is the fourth truth in the four noble truths that form the core of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha explores how loving-kindness supports the eightfold path and leads to liberation or *dukkha*.³⁵ It is an approach that terminates suffering and makes liberation or *dukkha*. The eightfold path, frequently enlightened as the middle path or way, excludes extremes of self-pleasures and self-abstention. The Eightfold Path is: right understanding, right effort, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.³⁶ This path combines three divisions, which are called the three pillars of Buddhism. These three pillars are excellent virtues that lead to building or forming an ideal and prosperous life in society. Ethical conduct (*sīla*) makes perceptual clarity and sovereignty from guiltiness necessary for concentration. *Dīgha Nikāya* states that ethical conduct (*sīla*) is the moral foundation of concentration that leads to the development of wisdom.³⁷ Concentration (*Samādhi*) denotes the cultivation of mental focus and tranquility, calmness, and peacefulness through practices of meditation. The Buddha describes this as one who is well- rigorously understanding things as they rightly.³⁸

Wisdom (*paññā*) refers to the ways to look into the feature of reality, particularly impermanence, suffering as well as non-self. In the *Majjhima Nikāya* the Buddha shows that wisdom arises when morality and concentration are perfected.³⁹ In the '*Sotapātti saṃyutta*' the Buddha advises that those with upper persons, hearing the right or actual dhamma, pay suspicious attention and exercise in adequation with the Dhamma.⁴⁰ At a glance, ethical conduct (*sīla*) leads to moral conduct, concentration (*samādhi*) leads to tranquility of mind, and wisdom (*paññā*) leads to dispelling the ignorance of right or true knowledge. These pillars cultivate moral, social harmony, and make sure peaceful relationships in a community or a nation. Ethical conduct, concentration, and wisdom are very relevant and important to both. If people think that simply following the three pillars of morality is sufficient for a happy and peaceful life in a society.⁴¹

3.3. Five precepts leading to a peaceful society through loving-kindness

The five precepts (*pañcasīla*) and loving-kindness have been instrumental in fostering a joyful, harmonious, sustainable, and peaceful community,

³⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2000, p. 1528.

³⁶ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 299.

³⁷ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 233.

³⁸ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha –A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2000, p. 1528.

³⁹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 102 - 107; Peter D, Herschok, 2006, p. 83.

⁴⁰ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha –A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2000, p. 1837.

⁴¹ Peter Della Santina, 1998, p. 56.

society, and country. Buddha’s five commandments are widely recognized as the cornerstone of ethical existence. The five precepts⁴² are:

Refrain from killing.
Refrain from stealing.
Refrain from sexual misconduct.
Refrain from false speech.
Refrain from intoxicants.

The five precepts, transmitted directly from the Buddha, constitute the paramount ethical code in Buddhism. Buddha cautions individuals who engage in the destruction of life, utter falsehoods, appropriate what is not theirs, pursue the spouses of others, and are accustomed to intoxicants or alcoholic beverages, likening them to one who undermines their own foundation in this world.⁴³ It is evident that abstaining from killing, theft, sexual misconduct, deceit, and substance abuse fosters tranquility and a peaceful community; if the world is populated by such virtuous individuals, enduring peace and happiness will prevail. In this setting, it is essential to regulate the mind, as it is very busy in its endeavors. Consequently, it is imperative to refrain from malevolence and concentrate on performing virtuous actions. It is evidently essential to cleanse the psyche as well. *The Dhammapada* states: “Not to do any evil, to nurture good, and to purify one’s mind, this is the teaching of the Buddha’s.”⁴⁴ In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha presents a remarkable and profound principle. I shall safeguard others, Bhikkhus: Consequently, one needs to nurture and enhance mindfulness via practice. By safeguarding oneself, Bhikkhus, one concurrently safeguards others; by safeguarding others, one concurrently safeguards oneself.⁴⁵ A diagram of five precepts was given below.



Adopted from: https://www.shutterstock.com/search/five-precepts?image_type=illustration

⁴² Nyanatiloka, 1996, p. 170.

⁴³ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 203.

⁴⁴ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 165.

⁴⁵ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha –A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*, 2000, p. 1648.

The five precepts promote loving-kindness and foster individual, community, and societal peace and happiness. These are the precursors to traversing the path of tranquility. Non-experts would gain from the outcomes of their own acts. These five precepts lay the foundation of the ethical life. Whosoever in this universe hampers life, speaks lies, steals others’ things, goes to others’ wives, and is addicted to intoxicating drinks or alcohol, such as one digs up his own roots in this world.⁴⁶ Buddha elucidates five advantages of adherence and five disadvantages of misconduct.⁴⁷

Five merits of observation	Five demerits of transgression
The virtuous individual, steadfast in righteousness, acquires substantial wealth.	The offender, lacking integrity, succumbs to significant promotional apathy.
He disseminates his ethics and behavior widely	Immorality and misbehavior are prominently Displayed overseas.
Regardless of the societal group he engages with, be it nobles, brahmins, heads of households, or members of religious orders, he interacts with confidence and composure.	Regardless of the society he joins, be it that of aristocrats, brahmins, heads of households, or religious groups, he approaches with timidity and bewilderment.
He passes away without trepidation or concern.	Upon his death, he will be engulfed in anxiety.
Upon the cessation of his corporeal existence, he is reborn into the same condition of ecstasy and delight in heaven.	Upon death, his corporeal form ceases, and he is reborn into the same lamentable condition.

The correlation between the five precepts and loving-kindness is significant. The five commandments foster loving-kindness, which subsequently cultivates non-violence, peace, and secular democratic values within society, state, or nation.

3.3.1. The relationship between loving-kindness and the five precepts

Loving-kindness acts as the impetus for ethical conduct, providing the intrinsic motivation to follow the five Precepts. Adhering to the commandments is a practical expression of loving-kindness. Each precept safeguards individuals

⁴⁶ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 203.
⁴⁷ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha - A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 236 - 237.

from harm and guarantees safety, trust, harmony, and happiness. These principles foster a mind devoid of guilt, anger, delusion, greed, animosity, and hostility. This is a comparative analysis of loving-kindness and its connection to the five precepts.

First precept: refrain from killing

Relation to Loving-kindness

Loving-kindness fosters a genuine dedication to ahimsa, or non-violence, by actively safeguarding life. It advocates for the recognition of all sentient creatures as entitled to safety and freedom from various forms of harm. It would eradicate and deter all manifestations of violence, homicide, and warfare while promoting a peaceful world.

Textual Reference

The Dhammapada states that all beings fear violence and death. One should neither retaliate nor provoke retaliation while comparing oneself to others.⁴⁸ Refrain from detrimental discourse and behavior. Buddha advocates for the development of discourse characterized by compassion and non-violence.⁴⁹ The Buddha asserts that monarchs and administrators ought to promote non-violence to achieve social peace and harmony.⁵⁰

Applied manifestation

A practitioner, driven by loving-kindness, would abstain from inflicting damage and proactively enhance the well-being of others, including all sentient beings and the ecosystem.

Second precept: refrain from stealing

Relation to Loving-kindness

Lovingkindness honors the wealth and possessions of others. It fosters dāna (generosity). It stems from a desire for all sentient beings to exist free from fear and violence. The principles of loving-kindness and non-stealing correspond with eco-friendly sustainability by promoting conscientious consumerism and resource sharing.

⁴⁸ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 123.

⁴⁹ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Āṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 1147.

⁵⁰ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 405.

Textual Reference

In the *Sigalovāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* the Buddha underscores the significance of moral conduct founded on mutual understanding, in harmony with loving-kindness⁵¹. Buddha advises earning wealth and prosperity righteously without harming.⁵²

Applied manifestation

Loving-kindness promotes an approach that guarantees honesty, sincerity, and justice in all interactions, while preventing exploitation and deceit.

Third precept: refrain from sexual misconduct

Relation to Loving-kindness

Loving-kindness cultivates respect and compassion in reciprocal interactions. It inhibits all manifestations of detrimental behavior and emotional suffering for others.

Textual Reference

In the *Cakkavatti Sinhanāda Sutta*, the Buddha emphasizes the ethical code as integral to a compassionate and equitable society.⁵³ The Buddha advises those discontented with their partners yet reliant on the spouses of others, guaranteeing their downfall.⁵⁴

Applied manifestation

A true individual, ethically motivated by compassion, maintains integrity and protects their conduct to uphold the dignity and emotions of others.

Fourth precept: refrain from false speech

⁵¹ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 466 - 467.

⁵² *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 209.

⁵³ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 405.

⁵⁴ H. Saddhatissa, p. 12.

Relation to Loving-kindness

Loving-kindness prioritizes veracity, integrity, and communication that elevates and assists others. It eschews nasty, impolite, and harsh language, as well as falsehoods that damage relationships. Recognizing truthfulness through this principle enhances trust and transparency, becoming the foundation of equitable communities.

Textual Reference

Buddha instructs us to transcend animosity via love, which encompasses communicating truthfully and kindly, while refraining from anger. Articulate solely that which is agreeable and veracious.⁵⁵ Veracious discourse fosters a harmonious and tranquil community. In the '*Sutta Nipāta*', the Buddha emphasizes the significance of employing agreeable discourse to elicit happiness and joy in others, rather than engaging in malevolent speech. Let us employ amiable discourse with others.⁵⁶

Applied manifestation

Devoted to loving-kindness, one ought to communicate with affection, integrity, tranquility, composure, and purpose to foster reciprocal understanding and concord.

Fifth precept: refrain from intoxicants

Relation to Loving-kindness

Loving-kindness encompasses compassion for oneself and others. It possesses the capacity to jeopardize health and compromise judgment. It also leads to injury, damage, devastation, and a breach of the principles of benevolence.

Textual Reference

In the *Sigalovāda Sutta* the Buddha asserts that intoxicants result in heedlessness and negligence, which compromise ethical conduct and kindness.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 191.

⁵⁶ H. Saddhatissa, 1985, p. 50.

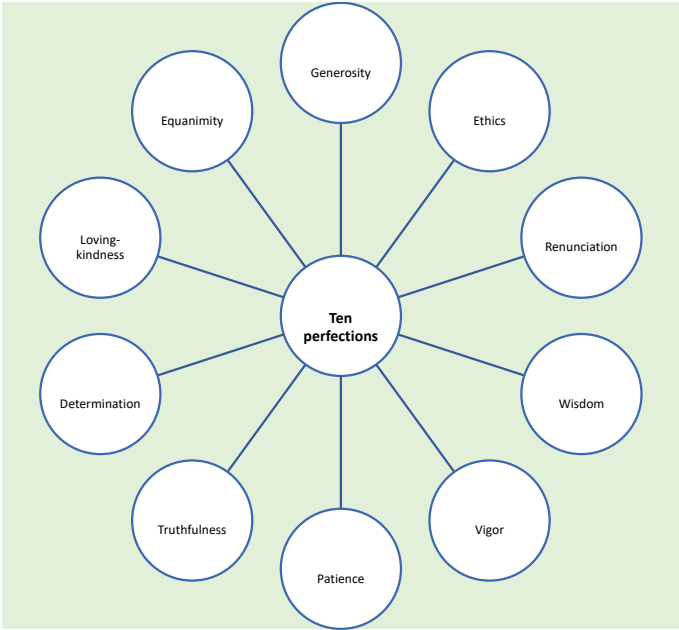
⁵⁷ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha - A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 404 - 405.

Applied manifestation

A practitioner, out of kindness, refrains from substances that may cause injury, impairment, or disregard of others’ well-being or happiness.

3.4. The impacts of loving-kindness on ten perfections

The notion of Buddhist loving-kindness (*mettā*) and the ten perfections aims to establish a comprehensive framework that fosters individual, familial, and societal harmony. By amalgamating loving-kindness with perfection, individuals and communities can establish a sustainable, harmonious civilization grounded in compassion, wisdom, and ethical principles. The ten perfections are:



(Barua D. S., 1988)

Generosity: Loving-kindness cultivates benevolence by diminishing selfishness, enhancing well-being, and enabling mutual support for the advancement of others. In the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*.⁵⁸ The Buddha counselled to provide generosity with a spirit of benevolence towards all beings. The virtue of loving-kindness transcends all forms of assistance.

Ethics: Loving-kindness enriches the moral code, fostering ethical conduct and compassionate, non-harmful communication. The five principles are the essence of fundamental morality. Morality can be described as the adherence to benevolence and the avoidance of harm to others. Ethical obligations rooted

⁵⁸ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Āṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 1041; Ven. Mettavamsa stavir, 2012, p. 19.

in benevolence uphold communal tranquility and cohesion.⁵⁹

Renunciation: Allowing loving-kindness fosters egotistical cravings and attachment, enabling actions of loving-kindness devoid of any desire.⁶⁰

Wisdom: It enhances the practice of loving-kindness through the understanding of the interdependence of all sentient creatures. The Buddha stated that this virtue fosters affection, respect, esteem, and oneness.⁶¹

Vigor: Loving-kindness requires perseverance, especially in the distribution of kindness, which might be arduous in person or in challenging circumstances.⁶² Initiatives in energy aim to foster societal peace for everyone. The Buddha commends persistent endeavor towards good attributes, including loving-kindness.⁶³

Patience: Loving-kindness thrives on patience, addressing individual and communal challenges with a serene, peaceful, and compassionate demeanor. In the *khānti Sutta*, the Buddha articulates patience as the paramount ethical virtue essential for harmonious cooperation.⁶⁴ The '*Chakkabatti Sinhanāda Sutta*' of the '*Dīgha Nikāya*' emphasizes that patience is fundamental for equitable, harmonious, and compassionate leadership.⁶⁵

Truthfulness: It promotes honest communication and acts that foster positive connections throughout families, societies, and nations. A sustainable and harmonious society depends on veracity. The Buddha emphasizes the significance of truthfulness, which is essential for social peace and harmony.⁶⁶

Determination: Loving-kindness embodies unwavering determination to persist in practice, especially throughout adversity. The Buddha's unwavering dedication to kindness exemplifies an ideal of resolute action.⁶⁷

Loving-kindness: As an ideal, it is crucial for cultivating a harmonious community through the promotion of empathy, inclusion, and benevolence. The '*Karaniya Mettā Sutta*' emphasizes boundless and unconditional love towards all beings.⁶⁸

Equanimity: Loving-kindness, tempered by equability, ensures impartiality, allowing love, affection, and kindness to be imparted universally without bias or injustice. The Buddha advocates for equanimity as a form of perfection, a significant

⁵⁹ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 469.

⁶⁰ Dr. Sitamsu Bikas Barua., 1988, p. 7.

⁶¹ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 1114.

⁶² Dr. Sitamsu Bikas Barua., 1988, p. 8.

⁶³ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 98.

⁶⁴ Ven. Mettavamsa Stavir, 2012, p. 3.

⁶⁵ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 393 - 405.

⁶⁶ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 405

⁶⁷ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 405.

⁶⁸ H. Saddhatissa, 1985, p. 16.

virtue alongside loving-kindness.⁶⁹

Loving-kindness and the ten perfections provide a comprehensive framework for fostering a harmonious society. These cultivate qualities such as empathy, tolerance, and honesty in individuals, shaping morally upright leaders and nations. These attributes foster personal change, promote communal and societal harmony, resolve internal and external issues, advocate for financial integrity, establish sustainable governance, and strengthen community bonds. The integrated teachings of these virtues offered by Buddha established a moral framework for enduring friendship, peace, and harmony worldwide.

3.5. Loving-kindness and its impact on livelihood

The notion of livelihood (*sammā ājiva*) is integral to the noble eightfold path. It underscores the importance of earning in a manner that is ethical, harmonious, benevolent, and devoid of damage to others. When loving-kindness is a vocation, it transforms into a significant moral force for fostering societal harmony, advancing sustainability, and achieving global peace. These are ethical ideals that collectively direct individuals and communities towards enduring avenues of affection that demonstrate regard for both human autonomy and the natural environment. The *Dīgha Nikāya* presents the Buddha's precepts for attaining riches and happiness without engaging in malice, violence, deception, cheating, or fraud, so safeguarding other sentient beings from harm.⁷⁰ Those who recognize the integrity of being and embody compassion are liberated from wrath, greed, hatred, and illusion.⁷¹ The Buddhist lifestyle delineates an ethical and lawful route that refrains from exploiting or harming others, embodying the principles of compassion and non-violence. Consequently, Livelihood identifies abstention from five categories of trades that contribute to the degradation of both individual and communal existence. The Buddha counselled against engaging in five categories of commerce detrimental to the establishment of an ideal, joyful, and peaceful society. There are five⁷² trades:

- Arms or weapons trading
- Commerce involving living human beings and animals
- Commerce in fish and meat
- Commerce in alcoholic beverages or narcotics
- Commerce in toxins

Avoiding the five trades demonstrated by the Buddha fosters personal and communal happiness, contributing to peace and harmony among families, societies, nations, and globally.

⁶⁹ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 510.

⁷⁰ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha - A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 462.

⁷¹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 103.

⁷² *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha - A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 790.

Labor should not be undertaken solely to generate income for the pursuit of pleasures. These adversely affect society. Engaging in labor for this purpose is an erroneous approach to earning a livelihood, as it merely exacerbates one's desire for and attachment to life's pleasures. A father's aspiration for wealth may exploit others to get psychological gratification. Should this occur, any such livelihood becomes detrimental to moral and spiritual existence within society? The teachings of Buddha promote the cultivation of compassion and loving-kindness towards others. His focus is on serving humanity and individually progressing towards spiritual liberation for all beings. It has the potential to foster societal harmony and fairness at any moment. These are essential for establishing a sustainable society. The establishment of a sustainable society could perhaps foster global peace.

3.6. Relationship between loving-kindness and compassion

Compassion is the second virtue of the four sublime virtues. *Karunā* originates from the Pāli term signifying kindness. Scholars characterize compassion in the following manner: *karunā* or Compassion is a trait that eradicates the desire to impede others. It cultivates empathy for the sorrows of others, seeking to mitigate rather than intensify them.⁷³ Compassion is defined as a commendable trait that enables one to empathize with the sufferings of others. It denotes a spiritual element that enables sensitivity to the pain of others and inspires efforts for its alleviation.⁷⁴ Likewise, Venerable Master Hsing Yun identifies loving-kindness and compassion as fundamental aspects of Buddhist teachings. True loving-kindness involves addressing faults in a congenial manner.⁷⁵

Furthermore, compassion can be likened to *anukammpā*, *dayā*, kindness and sympathy. Compassion is essential for a harmonious society, educated nations, and the attainment of wisdom. In this context, compassion signifies a profound affection for all sentient beings. It instructs us to refrain from engaging in violence or detrimental actions. Compassion possesses the capacity to eradicate lust, illusion, and malevolence, hence fostering peaceful and harmonious civilizations. Compassion can obliterate or diminish emotions such as anger, pain, attachments, and the desire to harm others. It is imperative to have a harmonious society and guarantee the equality of individuals. Consequently, compassion ought to be regarded as an instrument for mindfulness and a discipline for cultivating serenity, as well as a fundamental avenue for spiritual existence. All is encompassed within the Buddha's doctrine. Compassion is an admirable virtue. A sympathetic individual becomes inundated with empathy when witnessing others in distressing circumstances. He or she assists in eliminating sources of distress, refrains from personal selfishness, and aids others in alleviating poverty. A caring individual experiences distress when witnessing others in adversity and endeavors to foster their happiness. When

⁷³ Edward Conze, 1960, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Dr. Suraj Narain Sharma, 2011, p. 104

⁷⁵ Venerable Master Hsing Yun, 2021, pp. 179 - 182.

others encounter difficulties or adverse circumstances, he or she experiences anguish, despondency, distress, vexation, and lamentation. In this setting, a caring individual can benefit others and alleviate their difficulties. To cultivate and advance a harmonious community, love, kindness, benevolence, kindheartedness, and compassion are important. In Buddhism, love, kindness, and compassion are promoted via fearlessness and openness. In addition to genuine love, sympathy and compassion are limitless. It is universally applicable, allowing all individuals to profit. Compassion is essential for a harmonious community. When an individual just pursues personal satisfaction, their self-focused mindset, self-cherishing tendencies, and many negative attitudes might generate issues inside their emotional state. If negative views dominate one's thinking, happiness will remain elusive; achievements in life might affect work, health, and overall existence.⁷⁶

Moreover, the objective of a compassionate individual is to enhance the happiness of others, effect positive change, alleviate suffering, and promote well-being across all domains. Prioritizing the enjoyment of others' welfare should be paramount. In this sense, the Buddha stated that the ending of suffering constitutes the pinnacle of happiness. The ending of sadness yields enduring joy. The Buddha stated, 'Health is the most valuable asset, and contentment is the highest form of wealth.' A reliable individual is the most esteemed relative; *Nibbāna* is the ultimate happiness.⁷⁷ Furthermore, when individuals entirely transcend desire, ignorance, and malevolence, they will comprehend the ultimate happiness as attained by Buddha. Consequently, an individual can attain happiness, peace, and compassion by cultivating loving-kindness.

3.7. Loving-kindness ensures good governance

The UNDP (United Nations Development Programme, 1997) identifies eight indispensable criteria of good governance. The principles include participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity & inclusion, efficiency and effectiveness, and accountability.⁷⁸ These are seen as a moral code of ethics for effective government. Loving-kindness is a fundamental moral principle for individuals, societies, and nations. When incorporated into governance, loving-kindness fosters moral leadership and inclusion, harmony, and establishes conditions conducive to happiness, peace, and robust communal well-being. The Buddha advocates loving-kindness as a fundamental moral principle for harmonious existence, promoting the avoidance of quarrels, wars, and conflicts while fostering trust. A governor or ruler exercising benevolence emphasizes the social welfare of all citizens by ensuring that policies are equitable, compassionate, and inclusive. In *Udāna*, genuine bliss cannot be attained through the act of killing. Individuals pursuing happiness attain tranquility and joy via the practice of loving-

⁷⁶ Pataraporn Sri Kanchan, 2019, pp. 213 - 214.

⁷⁷ Venerable Sri Buddharakkhita, 1986, p. 53 & 81.

⁷⁸ D. B. S Rao, 2005, p. 50.

kindness.⁷⁹ Buddhism emphasizes a dynamic concept of effective governance and the essence of the state or nation. Regarding the governance of Buddha, he provided advice.⁸⁰ The following advice is provided below:

An effective governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator should exercise impartiality and must not exhibit limitations, biases, or discrimination across distinct communities.

An effective governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator should not harbor any animosity towards any of their subjects.

An effective governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator exhibits no apprehension in the execution of laws or acts, as it is permissible.

An effective governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must possess a comprehensive understanding of the laws, regulations, and principles governing enforcement. These regulations and rules should not only be the accountability of the monarch, governor, emperor, or administrator for the enforcement of the law. A rational procedure and standard awareness must be adhered to.

The Buddha's ideals of effective government are founded on morality and compassion, frequently shown by the Dasa rājadhamma, or ten royal duties of a king, which closely correspond with the practice of loving-kindness. These ten virtues serve as guiding principles to align good governance with moral, kindhearted and long-term success. The following are provided below:⁸¹

Dāna: It signifies the act of giving, encompassing generosity, benevolence, and recompense. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator is expected to be liberal and unencumbered by attachment to wealth, capital, and property. This is an opportunity available to everyone.

Sīla: *Sīla* denotes integrity. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must possess moral integrity, exemplifying ethical behavior in daily interactions while adhering to the five principles of moral conduct.

Pariccāga: The Pāli term *Pariccāga* refers to generosity. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must be prepared to relinquish personal pleasures, reputation, and comfort for the benefit of their constituents, fostering a liberal mindset by offering community amenities and promoting well-being initiatives.

Ajjava: It signifies uprightness. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must be devoid of fraud, falsehood, insincere promises, hypocrisy, and pretense. He must be honest and act according to his own words.

Maddava: The Pāli term "*maddava*" translates to "gentleness" in English. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator should embody the virtues of gentility, amicability, benevolence, and courtesy. Consequently, benevolence, amicability, and empathy benefit residents.

⁷⁹ Sreemath Jotipal Bhikkhu, 2019, p. 34.

⁸⁰ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 398 - 401.

⁸¹ SreeEshanChandra Ghosh, 1384 Bangla, pp. 1 - 8.

Tapa: It meant restraint and discipline. A governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must exhibit self-control and self-discipline. One should refrain from indulging in a life of material luxury and must embody modesty and kindness.

Akkodha: A governor, ruler, king, or administrator must embody the virtue of freedom from animosity, enmity, hostility, rage, malice, and jealousy towards others.

Ahimsā: The principle of *ahimsā* (non-violence) signifies that a governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator should endeavor to foster peace within their jurisdiction by preventing and halting disputes, confrontations, conflicts, warfare, or any actions that include violence. He must refrain from intimidating or coercing individuals for personal benefit by exploiting the royal influence at his disposal.

Khānti: Possessing a commendable character, the governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator must not exceed the limits of courtesy. He ought to cultivate the virtues of patience, self-discipline, and forbearance.

Avirodha: *Avirodha* refers to the absence of abstraction or non-opposition. The governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator should honor the judgments and aspirations of others.

These 10 royal virtues and loving-kindness are essential for cultivating social life. Good governance and loving-kindness are positively correlated. Loving-kindness fosters compassionate leadership in a governor, ruler, monarch, or administrator. He or she should lead with a perspective of benevolence, governing as a service to the citizenry, fostering trust, commitment, and loyalty. Loving-kindness is crucial in promoting effective governance by cultivating social peace through the encouragement of mutual respect and understanding. Loving-kindness ensures equitable treatment of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The concept of good governance is inspired by benevolence. To establish effective governance, it is essential to prioritize benevolence, uphold morality, ensure justice, refrain from detrimental actions, promote moral education, alleviate poverty, and guarantee equitable development.

IV. EMPEROR ASOKA AND WELFARE STATE FORMATION THROUGH LOVING-KINDNESS

Asoka was a Mauryan monarch famous for his profound transformation upon his conversion to Buddhism after the Kalinga war. Subsequently, he embraced Buddhism during the eighth year of the reign.⁸² Emperor Asoka was anointed king of Magadha and is regarded as one of history's most formidable monarchs. He stated that all citizens of my nation are my offspring.⁸³ He underscores his principles of morality throughout his administration. Upon adopting Buddhism, he embraced the Buddha's ethical framework as the foundation for his governance. He occupies a significant position in the annals of

⁸² Wilhem Geiger, 1993, p. 27 & 58.

⁸³ Pijus Gayen, 2011, p. 163.

world civilization for upholding the Buddha's ethical teachings. He is regarded as a paragon of friendship. Peace and non-violence.⁸⁴ The *Dhammapada* served as the primary foundation for Asoka's authentic understanding of a welfare state. Vincent A. Smith asserts that "the doctrine of the necessity for ongoing self-sustained effort to achieve the highest moral standard is entirely consistent with various passages in the *Dhammapada* and other early Buddhist texts."⁸⁵ In his inscriptions, Emperor Asoka conveyed the Buddha's teachings in several human languages. The lessons were widely influential throughout world history. B. M. Barua asserts that the principle of universal well-being in Asoka's inscriptions is derived from the social philosophy of Buddhism.⁸⁶

Despite attaining the status of a formidable emperor, his objective remained the dissemination of the Buddha's teachings on loving-kindness, non-violence, and the welfare state. Asoka incorporates benevolence in his governmental policies that foster harmony, peace, and non-violence. He promoted compassion, loving-kindness, and moral conduct for all beings, not solely humans. By adhering to Buddha's principles, Asoka established a peaceful, harmonious, and welfare-orientated state, achieving success. Asoka dispatched numerous Buddhist scholars to disseminate dharma across various nations, where they conveyed his message of peace, compassion, truthfulness, and kindness, grounded in the principle of living.⁸⁷ Emperor Ashoka's state edicts emphasize the necessity of caring for all sentient beings. Specifically, he commanded the excavation of wells along the thoroughfares and the cultivation of trees for the enjoyment of both wildlife and humans.⁸⁸

His benevolence inspired him to disseminate Buddhism throughout Asia, advocating it as a philosophy of peace and generosity. The reign of Asoka serves as a paradigm of ethical leadership and government, inspiring monarchs and administrators globally. Emperor As revolutionized his existence and administration via benevolence. His rule illustrates how benevolence underpins a cohesive society and international tranquility.

V. BUDDHIST LOVING-KINDNESS APPROACH TO GLOBAL PEACE

5.1. Peace and its nature

Peace is the paramount and essential consideration in the cosmos. The universal objective is to cultivate happiness, patience, and cooperation to foster a culture of peace across physiological, social, cultural, and socio-cultural dimensions, indicating that a connection exists between external peace and internal peace. Buddhism seeks to establish a peaceful, harmonious, and ethical society through the attainment of inner tranquility and the pursuit of peace.⁸⁹ The following figure

⁸⁴ Dr. Atul Chandra Roy, 1990, p. 133.

⁸⁵ Vincent A. Smith, 2013, p. 33.

⁸⁶ B. M. Barua, 1968, p. 363.

⁸⁷ Madhukar Piplayan, 2011, p. 77.

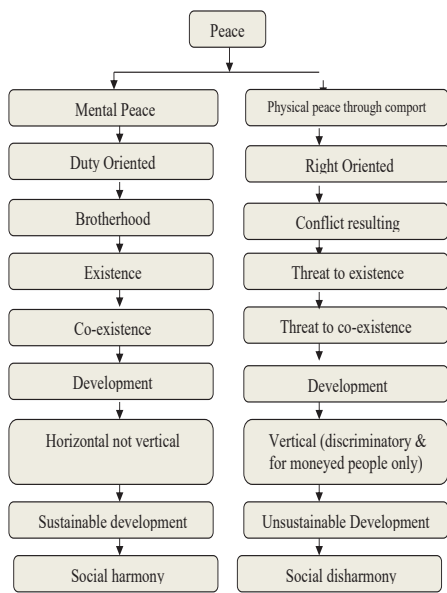
⁸⁸ D. C. Sircar, 1957, p. 40.

⁸⁹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009,

shows the distinction between mental and physical peace to bring communal harmony. To achieve peace, the following matters⁹⁰ must be addressed. Such as:

- To provide a milieu conducive to tranquility
- To propose novel techniques for achieving peace
- To cultivate mutual understanding, camaraderie, and collaborative learning to foster harmony and attain peace
- To cultivate an environment conducive to the practice of peace
- To engage educational institutions in fostering information dissemination and the cultivation of wisdom

Peace denotes the capacity to address conflict through nonviolent means. Peace pertains to religious, cultural, educational, multicultural, and social harmony. It may be classified into two groups. Including spiritual tranquility and physical serenity — the first can be acquired without infringing upon others, whereas the second can only be attained by violating the rights of others. The subsequent figure illustrates the differences between mental peace and physical peace in fostering societal harmony. Mindfulness is essential and decisive at each stage, significantly contributing to the development of a joyful and harmonious existence.⁹¹ The subsequent figure illustrates the differentiation between mental and bodily tranquility to foster communal harmony.



(Sharma R. N., 2014)

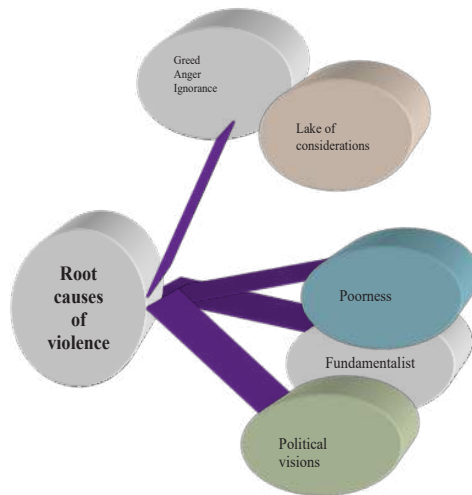
p. 259.

⁹⁰ Ram Kalap Tiwari, 2019, p. 53 - 55.

⁹¹ Thaissaro Bhikkhu 1999, p. 61 - 63.

5.2. Buddha's notions to peace

Buddhism and peace are intricately connected. Buddhist philosophy primarily emphasizes loving-kindness, compassion, honesty, non-violence, happiness, harmony, and various other principles at every step.⁹² According to the Buddha, the primary sources of unhappiness are greed, aversion, and delusion, which are detrimental, destructive, and culpable. This may exacerbate malice, avariciousness, and erroneous perspectives; jealousy (*issā*), anger (*kodha*), ignorance (*avijjā*), intolerance (*akkhānti*), sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācharā*), pride (*māna*), among others; and result in mental and physical distress in various forms, ranging from physical ailments to psychological tension. These are contrary to the development of mental satisfaction and bliss for enduring serenity. It is acknowledged that individuals who eliminate greed, hatred, and illusion are genuine friends within society or the state.⁹³ The Buddha elucidated the fundamental principles of the noble eightfold path as a foundation for fostering universal peace. The noble eightfold path comprises right knowledge, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This path can assist an individual in becoming a proficient creator, hence fostering a virtuous existence. These may foster positivity among all beings, contributing to a harmonious and peaceful society and nation. Numerous factors contribute to conflicts, wars, and violence inside society or the state, undermining peace. The subsequent image illustrates the underlying reasons for violence.



Source: (Nam, *The View of the Buddhist about the Cause of Violence, Conflict, War and Method of Remedy*, 2019)

⁹² Tsering Tashi Geshe, 2005, pp. 121 - 123; Lam Yeshe, 2007, pp. 6 - 7.

⁹³ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2000, p. 1546.

The Buddha elucidates that conflict or violence within society or the state originates from quarrels, disputes, and contentiousness at many levels present in a community.⁹⁴ This conflict may manifest in a family, society, state, nation, or globally. Sensuality is the fundamental origin of aggression or conflict. In the *Mahādukkakkhandha Sutta*, the Buddha elucidates the connection between aggression and sensual pleasure. Kings contend with kings, nobles with nobles, Brahmins with Brahmins, mothers with sons, sons with mothers, fathers with sons, sons with fathers, brothers with brothers, brothers with sisters, sisters with brothers, householders with householders, and friends with friends. Here, they engage in quarrels, disputes, and brawls using fists, clods, pole, rods, sticks, or dagger, even confronting death or severe suffering. This is excessively perilous; sensual joys or cravings constitute a multitude of afflictions associated with sensuality.⁹⁵ The '*Raṭṭapāla Sutta*' demonstrates that avarice is the principal catalyst of violence and discord. Raṭṭapāla emphasizes the involvement of monarchs in destructive, unpleasant, and hostile conflicts driven by their avarice for power.⁹⁶

The *Mahānidāna Sutta* indicates that war or violence is the fundamental cause of conflicts. The Buddhist perspective on violence emphasizes the importance of Dhamma. Violence or warfare typically originates in the psyche. The turmoil and unrefined intellect of the populace engender discontent in others. Consequently, Buddhism advocates for the regulation of the mind to avert unwholesome activities.⁹⁷ Life is favorable. It is prudent to avoid causing injury or generating fear in others. Buddha stated: "Just as a mother would safeguard her sole offspring at the peril of her own life, one should similarly nurture limitless compassion for all sentient beings."⁹⁸ In Buddhism, violence is regarded as the fundamental cause of conflicts. These disagreements may manifest as verbal, psychological, or physical violence. Violence inherently arises from karma. Consequently, victims seek retribution for the misdeeds of others. Ignorance engenders three cognitive elements. Examples include greed (*lobha*), hatred (*desha*), and delusion (*moha*).⁹⁹ The intellect is regarded as the fundamental basis of ethical decision-making. Traditionally, the three mental components are considered immoral roots. Immoral foundations are referred to as immoral consciousness. The Buddha asserts that these are fundamental elements that incite conflict, undermining the peace and happiness of humanity.¹⁰⁰ It can be represented as a cycle. Such violence can be mitigated by

⁹⁴ H. Saddhatissa, 1985, p. 102.

⁹⁵ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, p. 181.

⁹⁶ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, pp. 676 - 691.

⁹⁷ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, pp. 223 - 230.

⁹⁸ H. Saddhatissa, 1985, p. 16.

⁹⁹ Olendzki Andrew, 2010, pp. 3 - 4.

¹⁰⁰ Nyanaponika, 1978, p. 50.

transcending avarice, animosity, and illusion.

In the *Kosāmbi Sutta*, the Buddha delineates essential concepts that might be employed to prevent conflicts and warfare, fostering harmony and unity within society. They are regarded as follows: They are characterized by the following: a. avoidance of conflicts, b. universal likability, c. mutual understanding or respect, d. collaboration, e. absence of divergent opinions, f. promotion of unity or harmony, g. simultaneous action, and h. empathetic, verbal, and mental honesty.¹⁰¹ The *Dhammapada* of *Yamaka Vagga* states that Buddha advised: 'He insulted me, he struck me, he conquered me, he plundered me, and in those who nurture such ideas, animosity is not quelled'¹⁰². The cessation of war or bloodshed is the paramount objective for all. In the contemporary setting of global challenges, Buddhism provides the most suitable methodology to mitigate conflict and bloodshed. The Buddha firmly advocates for a pure mind imbued with loving-kindness, exemplifying the paramount principle of coexistence. The *Dhammapada* elucidates how this empathy manifests as a thoughtful evaluation of human circumstances.

“*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbe bhayanti maccuno
Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā n haneyya na ghātaye.*”¹⁰³.

That is to say, all fear the rod. Everyone fears death. Consequently, in comparing oneself to others, one should neither inflict harm nor provoke harm.

A narrative from Buddhist texts¹⁰⁴ recounts a conflict between the Sākya and Koliya clans over the water dam on the Rohini River. Two clans resided along the riverbanks. A violent conflict erupted between two clans during a drought, escalating into warfare. The Buddha arrived at an opportune moment and persuaded them to forgo the conflict for the benefit of the individuals in those two clans. The Buddha enquired of the rival factions:

“Why are you clansmen in a state of conflict?

Due to the waters of the Rohini.

Articulate what holds greater significance,

Water or human lives?

The Buddha enquired.

The response was ‘Human lives.’

Consequently, the Buddha questioned, ‘Is it justifiable for you to annihilate one another for water, which holds lesser worth?’”

In a conflict, one participant is being defeated while the other prevails, yet both experience two forms of sad mental states. Consequently, the *Dhammapada* explicitly articulates:

¹⁰¹ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha-A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 2009, pp. 419 - 423.

¹⁰² Narada Thera, 1995, p. 6.

¹⁰³ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 123.

¹⁰⁴ Sree Eshanchandra Ghosh, 1391 Bangla, pp. 259 - 264.

*Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati dukkhaṃ seti parājito
Upasanto sukkhaṃ seti hitvā jayapara jayaṃ.*¹⁰⁵

In other words, triumph engenders animosity. The vanquished endure suffering; contentedly, the serene exist, relinquishing triumph and loss.

The Buddha consistently advocated for the cultivation of harmonious conduct towards others. It promotes the attainment of wealthy and pleasant lives for all individuals. In this setting, the Buddha's subsequent counsel is crucial for non-violent endeavors in life. He uttered:

*"Na hi verena verāni sammanti'da kudācanaṃ
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo sanantano".*¹⁰⁶

That is to say, Hatred does not diminish via Abhorrence in this universe; it is only via affection that it subsides. It is known as perpetual law.

After significant impact, they ultimately ceased hostilities and re-established amicable and sociable connections. The Buddha cultivated harmonious relationships among them via loving-kindness. The *Yodhājiva Sutta* presents an insightful scenario for achieving a peaceful existence. This *sutta* addresses profound insights into the principles of non-violence, ethical conduct, and the perceptual methodologies crucial for fostering peace. The *Yodhājiva Sutta* pertains to a headman named Yodhājiva who approaches the Buddha to enquire whether it is accurate that warriors who vanquish their foes in battle are reborn in heaven. The Buddha, for the third time, declines to respond to the inquiry. However, *Yodhājiva* persists, prompting the Buddha to elucidate that the mentalities of individuals who engage in combat are base, ignoble, and misguided, since they strive to kill, annihilate, and capture adversaries. Consequently, they are reincarnated after death either in hell or as animals. Upon hearing the Buddha's response, Yodhājiva, the headman, exclaimed, and tears streamed down his face. Ultimately, he becomes a disciple of the Buddha.¹⁰⁷ The Buddha unequivocally condemned the prevailing belief in designated heavenly realms for warriors to justify bloodshed and engage in the brutal slaughter of their adversaries. Moreover, the Buddha fervently promoted a heart imbued with loving-kindness, defined by the principle of coexistence and mutual respect. Participating in violence generates anguish for oneself and others. The Buddha asserts that genuine triumph is achieved not by violence, but by overcoming one's impurities, including anger, greed, and delusion.

The Buddha asserted the importance of regulating an agitated mind, emphasizing the necessity of governing mental, verbal, and physical acts to foster societal peace. This tranquil approach can foster global peace by adhering to the teachings of Buddha, including loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is the sole means to foster harmony among families, societies, governments,

¹⁰⁵ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 175.

¹⁰⁶ Narada Thera, 1995, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya*, 2000, pp. 1334-1335.

counties, and nations. Global peace can be achieved through the application and implementation of loving-kindness within society. The seven conditions of welfare are crucial for maintaining peace and a harmonious existence, serving as a unifying force within a society or community. The Buddha asserts that seven conditions serve as welfare mechanisms, functioning as policies or regulations for community social engagement in formulating guidelines and principles for communal coexistence and societal governance.¹⁰⁸

5.3. Benefits of loving-kindness

Historically, the Buddha taught the Bhikkhu about the eleven advantages of loving-kindness. The advantages of loving-kindness can enhance happiness.¹⁰⁹ He clarified that when the Bhikkhu fosters and nurtures mental liberation through loving-kindness, establishes it as a vehicle, foundation, or basis, then applies, assimilates, and executes it properly, one must not overlook the eleven benefits. The Buddha delineated eleven advantages of loving-kindness in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*.¹¹⁰

- The proponent of loving-kindness rests peacefully.
- The proponent of loving-kindness rises with elation.
- The practitioner of loving-kindness encounters no negative dreams.
- The practitioner of loving-kindness is amiable to all sentient beings.
- The practitioner of loving-kindness is harmonious with spirits.
- The practitioner of benevolent deities provides protection.
- The proponent of loving-kindness abstains from inflicting harm via fire, poison, or weaponry.
- The mind of the loving-kindness practitioner rapidly achieves focus.
- The expression of the loving-kindness practitioner is tranquil.
- The practitioner of loving-kindness departs this life with satisfaction.
- The practitioner of loving-kindness does not go farther but ascends to the Brahma world.

The eleven advantages underscore the transformative impact of loving-kindness on physical, mental, verbal, and spiritual health.

These eleven advantages encompass physical, mental, verbal, and spiritual well-being, highlighting the transformative potential of loving-kindness. The '*Karaniya Mettā Sutta*' states:

“Mettaṇa sabba lokasmiṃ mānaṣaṃ-bhābāye aparimāna
Uddhaṃ adha ca triyaṇa asambadhaṃ averamesa-pattaṃ.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ *The Long Discourse of the Buddha-A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 2012, p. 233.

¹⁰⁹ Minkon Sayardaw, 1985, p. 65.

¹¹⁰ *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha- A Translation of the Āṅguttara Nikāya*, 2012, p. 1573.

¹¹¹ Dhammajoti Thera and Neelambar Barua, 1955, p. 46.

That is to say, the notion of boundless love encompasses the entire world, transcending obstacles, hostility, and antagonism.

VI. CONCLUSION

Loving-kindness denotes profound affection. It possesses a mystical power that may readily influence anybody regardless of proximity, wealth, or ethnicity. This power is accessible to everyone. A minimal effort is required to claim it as our own. Occasionally, we observe instances of civil disturbance globally. Violence invariably entails animosity. Hatred engenders discontent in both the hater and the hated. Self-love underlies all conflicts and disputes. Loving-kindness is the most efficacious method for achieving peace and pleasure for humanity. Loving-kindness is the capacity to accept all aspects of ourselves and the world around us. In the absence of loving-kindness, a healthy society may fail to emerge, brotherhood may not proliferate, peace may not be established, and prosperity and happiness may not flourish globally. Loving-kindness is the crucial and fundamental basis for both individual development and the establishment of a peaceful, progressive, and healthy society. By practicing loving kindness, we can foster an equitable sense of affection for ourselves. For a sustainable and harmonious community, compassion and tranquility are essential. Conflict, warfare, and the deployment of armaments across states have precipitated global discontent. Given these conditions, the principles of Buddha, including loving-kindness, compassion, respect for others, and fostering connections among communities, societies, counties, states, and nations, are essential for establishing a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous society. Consequently, such actions may contribute to global peace.

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BUDDHIST APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL RESILIENCE

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of *spiritual resilience* from a Buddhist perspective, emphasizing how foundational teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, equip individuals to endure and grow through adversity. Rather than avoiding suffering, Buddhism encourages practitioners to face it with awareness, compassion, and wisdom, turning challenges into opportunities for inner growth. The paper draws on key Buddhist concepts, including impermanence (*anicca*), non-self (*anatta*), and suffering (*dukkha*), and highlights the importance of faith in the Noble Triple Gem, moral virtues, and mindfulness practices. By cultivating qualities such as loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), and intuitive wisdom (*prajñā*), individuals can develop the inner strength to remain balanced and purposeful even in the face of life's most difficult circumstances. Drawing on early Buddhist texts, this study illustrates how the Buddhist path fosters not only spiritual well-being but also holistic resilience – physical, mental, and emotional – laying the foundation for a peaceful and fulfilled life.

Keywords: *spiritual resilience, Buddhism, mindfulness, compassion, wisdom.*

I. INTRODUCTION

'Resilience' can be broadly defined as 'one's ability to bounce back from an adversity or difficult experience'. It may be viewed from several different angles: physical, mental, psychological (emotional), spiritual, and so on. Spiritual resilience may have a significant impact on mental health and other areas and vice versa, too.

Adversity and difficult experiences are a fact of life. Eight worldly vicissitudes: gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and blame, happiness and sorrow include 50% of our life experience of adversity whether we like it or not. Such a situation necessarily demands our ability, skills, and tools to deal

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with them. When one loses that ability to sustain in the face of adversity, that can lead to many undesirable consequences, including a complete breakdown that can even threaten our existence.

Buddhist philosophy and central Buddhist teachings based on Four Noble Truths (the details of which will be discussed in detail in section 2.2 - 2.2.1) which alerts one to the reality of 'suffering', 'stress', 'vexation' in life necessarily prepares one to accept and positively deal with them head on. What is also significant is that Buddhism invites the experiencer to turn any adversity into an opportunity of learning rather than to shy away from them. Some Buddhist teachers refer to this practice as the A (acknowledge), F (forgive), and L (learn) code in Buddhism¹. Acknowledging and sensitising oneself to stressful moments not only helps prepare one to be more understanding of a situation but also to handle them with care and in a positive manner. More and more understanding of difficult situations can lead one to forgive and learn from them, ultimately developing more compassion towards oneself and others. The purpose of *metta* (loving kindness) practice in Buddhism is thus to promote such a learning environment in the face of difficult circumstances. Metta practice tends to act as an antidote to any 'bitter' feelings that can be caused by adverse experiences. We will discuss this in more detail in the following sections.

In this paper, we will discuss spiritual resilience from a Buddhist perspective. In doing so, we will first explore where Buddhism stands in the spirituality discussion and spell out what is in the 'toolkit' of a practising Buddhist in empowering and activating spiritual resilience. Whilst one can view and argue that the entire Buddhist practice and training is a way of developing 'resilience,' the focus here is on what specific teachings and practices may help one become resilient in the face of the most challenging situations and circumstances. The points made here are based on the early Buddhist texts (*suttas*) in the Pali canon and the commentaries therein.

II. BACKGROUND

Buddhism is the third oldest religion in the world, followed by over half a billion world's population who follow and practice Buddhist teachings for their moral, spiritual, and pastoral needs. Even those who do not proclaim to be Buddhists may follow some Buddhist practices, such as mindfulness meditation, for their spiritual resilience and well-being.

Once, the Buddha was quoted as saying that the entire Buddhist theory and practice may be summarised into one syllable in the Pali/Sanskrit languages²: 'Buddh-' meaning of which is best described as 'to know', 'to understand', 'to be aware' and 'to be awake'. It would be accurate to say that Buddhist teachings rest mainly on two pillars: **great wisdom** (*mahā pragñā*) and **great compassion** (*mahā karunā*).

¹ Ajahn Brahmavamso online teachings.

² *Dona sutta* AN 4:36.

Buddhism differs from other main world faiths in that it is a 'human based' faith as opposed to relying on an almighty divine power. *Gautama* the Buddha was a human being who lived in the 6th century BCE and discovered 'an ancient path' (which had been discovered by many Buddhas in the past but got covered over time) towards full freedom of mankind. The aspiration of every Buddhist in the broadest sense is to become a 'Buddha' (*sammā Sambuddha* ('All Enlightened One' that one attains Buddhahood through one's effort) or a *pacceka Buddha* (a solitary Buddha who does discover the path by oneself but not able to teach others) or *suta*-Buddha (a disciple who attains full enlightenment within the dispensation of a *sammā Sambuddha* by having been introduced to the teachings). In all these cases, the aspiration is to become a 'Buddha', which is broadly termed as 'one who is fully aware' or fully awaken one'. It is that 'awareness and wakefulness' and the power it generates within one (inner peace and wisdom) that epitomises the Buddhahood and enables one to be and become resilient.

The Buddhist path to spiritual resilience can be explored under several different headings, which, in turn, are connected to basic tenets in Buddhism:

2.1. Refuge in the noble triple gem (*Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha*): *Buddha* is the one who discovers the path, *dharma* is His teachings, *sangha* is the four-fold community of monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees. These three are called 'precious gems or jewels since they are instrumental in one's salvation through guiding one in the right direction. One becomes a Buddhist and commits to the Buddhist path by taking **refuge** in these three jewels. In section 2.1.1, we will discuss how placing trust and taking refuge in the Noble Triple Gem (NTG) helps support one's spiritual life while developing resilience.

2.2. Understanding/ realisation of the four noble truths and eight-fold noble path: (1) the noble truth of suffering, (2) the noble truth of the cause of suffering, (3) the noble truth of cessation, and (4) the noble truth that leads to the cessation of suffering are called 'Four Noble Truths' (FNT) which is fundamental to Buddhist teaching. How does suffering become a noble truth? The answer is that it is the knowledge of suffering that 'ennobles' one in the path and practice. When one understands that 'pain is given but suffering is optional', one naturally finds a way to be free from suffering. The path leading to the cessation of suffering is called 'Eight-fold Noble Path' (ENP): (1) right view, (2) right intention, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, (8) right concentration. See section 2.2.1 to see how this teaching empowers one in the path of Buddhist practice.

2.3. The generation of wisdom (*pragñā*) and compassion (*karunā*) is essential in the path of practice. Wisdom is one's instinctive awareness that is needed to penetrate reality as it is rather than as we wish it to be. Compassion is empathy that one develops towards those who are still suffering due to their inability to penetrate reality. How the development of wisdom/ insight and compassion helps support one will be discussed in some detail in section 2.3.1. below.

2.4. Understanding/ realisation of three characteristics of existence:

Impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and soullessness (*anatta*) are three characteristics of existence that the Buddha realised in his attainment of Buddhahood. *Anicca* refers to the constant, fleeting nature of things that we experience through our six sense doors: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When the world is in constant flux, one cannot expect any aspect of the world to give us lasting pleasure and happiness. Understanding of impermanence, therefore, naturally leads one to suffering (vexations). The more one investigates the reality, one comes to understand/realise that in such an impermanent world, holding on to things as ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’, ‘mine’ is pointless and hence the idea of soullessness (also called emptiness). How this realisation helps one in the Buddhist practice will be discussed in section 2.4.1 in some detail.

2.5. Cultivating/ developing the practice of virtues: Buddhahood signifies the culmination and perfection of virtues such as ten (or six in some traditions) *pāramis/pāramitas* (perfections) *dāna* (generosity), *sila* (morality), *nekkhamma* (letting go or practicing detachment), *pragñā* (wisdom), *virīya* (effort), *khanti* (patience), *sacca* (integrity), *adhiṭṭhāna* (determination), *metta* (loving kindness, compassion), *upekkhā* (equanimity). Development of thirty-seven factors of Enlightenment. How the development of virtues can help one’s resilience building will be discussed in section 2.5.1.

In what follows, we will discuss these five aspects in some detail to show how they singularly and collectively strengthen one’s spiritual resilience.

III. REFUGE IN THE NOBLE TRIPLE GEM (NTG)

Faith plays a significant role in building resilience. This is indeed why many in our communities turn to faith in adversity. In Buddhism, as a non-theistic faith, there’s no unseen higher power empowering one’s faith, rather the pioneer teacher, the Buddha, and his vibrant teachings and the four-fold community of monks, nuns, female and male lay followers who benefited from the sublime teachings collectively become the object of unwavering faith of a follower.

In the Buddhist path, thus, faith (known as *saddhā/ sraddhā* in Pali and Sanskrit, respectively) plays a significant role in confidence-building in the heart and mind of a follower. Whilst faith is quite central spiritual quality in almost all faiths and none, in Buddhism, it is more so since it is divided into two types: (1) *Amūlakā saddhā/ sraddhā* (blind or baseless faith and (2) *Akrāravati saddhā/ sraddhā* (based on knowing, based on one’s direct experience).

Even if a follower were to enter the Buddhist path with some level of faith by walking the path, one can develop that faith into one’s insight/ wisdom since the landmarks of the journey help one navigate the path towards a full enlightenment/realisation. Inquiry and close examination of one’s experience, thus, takes one from faith to fruition (wisdom, realisation). Such individual experience is shared and compared with one another’s realisation to ensure that one’s realisation/attainment is similar or identical to the same attainment by others. In this way, faith in Buddhism is not a ‘constant quality’ but rather a

developmental aspect in the path open to observation and examination, which ultimately culminates in one's wisdom/ insight.

Establishing faith in the NTG, therefore, is fundamental and foundational in Buddhism and Buddhist practice. Such faith is essential for spiritual growth. Buddha once described 'faith in the NTG' as 'foundational faculty' (*saddh-indriya*), 'formidable power' (*saddhā-bala*) 'seed' (*saddhā-bijam*), 'wealth' (*saddha-dhanam*), 'a raft that helps one cross the tide of defilements in the whirlpool of the cycle of existence' (*saddhaya tarati ogham*)

Faith in the NTG thus has many aspects to it in terms of one's spiritual growth, it is also a primary factor in spiritual resilience. In one of the key *suttas* (teachings), *dhajagga*³ (Banner Protection), the Buddha stated the reason why faith in NTG is so important. Faith in Buddhism is not based on mere belief in the NTG, but rather, there is a strong and valid reason for it, namely, the three Jewels: Buddha, dhamma, and sangha, who collectively possess 24 great qualities and are worthy of veneration and respect. These qualities can be observed and tested by anyone⁴. One who places faith and trust in them, because they are free from all defiling tendencies summarised into: greed, hatred and delusion, invariably bring blessings with an element of protection built into it. Even the deities in the heavenly realms are not free from those negative tendencies since they are not totally free from those defilements, hence their attachment to those respective divine realms. Thus, there's a clear difference between having faith in a 'higher power' and having faith in tangible 'virtues and goodness'.

The NTG thus represent that 'goodness' which is free from all negativities and defilements and therefore they qualify to win the trust and faith placed on them. The blessings they generate for all those who have faith in them go a long way in protecting them. Such faith indeed empowers and strengthens one's resilience.

3.1. Understanding/ realisation of the Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Noble Path:

The Four Noble Truths (FNT) and Eightfold Noble Path (ENP), briefly discussed in section (2.2), are the most succinct and central teachings in Buddhism. Both these teachings are intertwined in that the last Noble Truth refers to the Eightfold Noble Path, and the first step in the Eightfold Noble Path constitutes the full understanding of the FNTs. Just like the footprints of all animals fit into the footprint of the elephant, entire Buddhist teachings are subsumed in these two teachings.

How does the full understanding of FNT and ENP lead to resilience? It is not just the academic and intellectual understanding of these teachings that empowers a person; rather, when one makes a full commitment to the ENP and when one places one's faith and trust in the efficacy of these noble

³ SN11: 3.

⁴ *Vīmaṇsa sutta* MN 47.

teachings, such undertaking naturally empowers one. Full understanding of the path not only develops faith; such understanding, coupled with faith, develops resistance as the tradition has shown the past 2500 years.

3.2. Generation of wisdom (*pragñā*) and compassion (*karunā*)

If 'knowledge is power', then wisdom surely must be a greater power! The entire Buddhist path is about generating 'intuitive wisdom' into realities of the world and life. A natural offspring of wisdom/insight is empathy towards those who are ignorant and act with a lack of awareness. The mature state of such empathy is called '*karuna*', which is defined in Buddhism as 'the empathy/sympathy towards those who are in ignorant states', those who need help. As in the case of selfless commitment in the forces, compassion balanced with insight/wisdom empowers one and develops resilience. Prayer, meditation, and contemplation based on wise compassion are a huge support to the receiver and a great asset to the giver. Wisdom and compassion, with their outward expression, are thus a great source of energy from which to draw, and such wisdom and compassion invariably lead to empowerment.

3.3. Understanding/realisation of Three Characteristics of Existence

As mentioned above, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and soullessness (*anatta*) taught in Buddhism empower one to develop resilience since they put life into proper perspective. According to the Buddhist teachings, the fear psychosis, which leads to one's complete breakdown, arises from one's grasping, selfish attachment, and craving of the world. When one understands the true nature of existence as an impermanent, suffering nature and empty of self, the cause of one's selfish attachment is removed, and such realisation again leads one to resilience and empowerment. Notably, according to Buddhist teaching, the idea of soul and self is one major cause of one's attachment, which brings so much anxiety and stress, which doesn't help in generating resilience, but rather the opposite. One can thus see how understanding and realising the true nature of existence is better than believing in things that are unchanging, everlasting/ permanent souls that should always bring pleasure and happiness.

More importantly, these three characteristics of existence are not separate entities but three sides of the same prism. One who subscribes to this view helps one to live less attached to the world, and consequently, it results in less anxiety and stress. Such a view, according to the Buddha, helps liberate from all negativities in the mind, building and developing inner peace and harmony, which are essential ingredients of a resilient life.

3.4. Cultivating/ developing the practice of virtues:

As mentioned in section 2.5, the ethical life of a Buddhist includes the cultivation and development of virtues. The utility of virtue ethics is that it demonstrates one's commitment to a virtuous life, enabling 'best behaviour in the worst of circumstances' both within and outside. As Buddha points out, virtue is an asset not only to an ethical life but also naturally leads to empowerment and resilience building.

From a psychological point of view, a good practice, a virtue, can necessarily

build one's trust and confidence in oneself. In troubled situations, such trust and confidence have the power to overcome certain distresses, and it is indeed often seen with or without a faith/ religion one relies on one's virtuous practices and life experiences.

Buddhism encourages virtuous living not because that would satisfy a 'higher authority on the Day of judgement' but because the opposite can lead to an accumulation of bad 'karma' which not only disturbs one in this very life but also can hinder one's onward journey in the *samsaric* existence.

'Skilful means' (*kusala*) in Buddhism thus helps one navigate through 'hard times' with confidence and with a goal in mind, which is called '*nirvana*', complete and total peace. Buddhism thus recognises ethics as a way of developing resilience and makes ethics a part of spiritual life.

IV. BUDDHIST PRACTICES THAT EMPOWER RESILIENCE

With the above theological and philosophical background in mind, one could witness many regular Buddhist practices that externalise Buddhist teachings discussed in section 2 that help support developing resilience. According to the Pali canon⁵, 5 practices would enable one to engage in the doctrinal (*dhamma*) practices: *sutā* (listening, hearing), *dhathā* (remembering, bearing in mind), *vacasā paricītā* (reciting, chanting), *manasānupekkhā* (reflecting, contemplating), *ditthiā suppaṭividdhā* (proper seeing, penetrating).

4.1. *Sutā* (lending the ear to the *dhamma*) is a crucial practice in Buddhism. Listening to the teaching is vital in any faith, but it is more so in Buddhism since it is through listening to like-minded noble friends (*kalyana mitta*) that one encounters and progresses in the teachings. In Buddhist life, therefore, regular listening, hearing the noble ones (*Aryans*) is key not only to one's spiritual attainment but being empowered in the path. Regular sermons, *dhamma* talks, discussions, and conversations on the teaching are quite common in the Buddhist culture of all traditions. It is through this mode of communication that one makes any spiritual progress, which also has a major effect on being resilient.

4.2. *Dhatā* (bearing the message) is also considered quite an important practice in Buddhism. One becomes a 'true bearer' of the Buddha's message not only by 'knowing and seeing' the teachings, by experiencing the reality explained by the noble ones. Such a disciple is called 'Aryan or Arahant' in the sense that s/he has accomplished the journey by destroying all defiling tendencies of the mind.

4.3. *Vacasā paricītā* (reciting or chanting the message) is another widespread practice in Buddhism. As in the case of almost all faiths, either individually or in groups, religious teaching is recited or chanted in the respective languages of the followers. It is believed that chanting brings blessings for the person who does it as well as those who listen to them. In Buddhism, chanting is also considered a form of collective meditation (*sa-jhāyana*).

⁵ *Canki sutta*.

4.4. *Manasānupekkha* (reflective or contemplative) practice includes a wide range of religious activities such as prayer, meditation, mindfulness practices, contemplative practices, and so on.

4.5. *Ditṭhiyā suppaṭividdhā* (proper seeing, penetrating/ realising). The goal of a practicing Buddhist is to experience complete peace, cessation called '*Nirvana*' (freedom from all defiling tendencies. This is a gradual process that must be achieved in stages. Penetrative wisdom.

What is important in these 5 practices is that there is a gradual deepening in the path enabling people of diverse backgrounds and different stages to develop their path which means spiritual resilience does not have to be limited to certain ages, stages or positions but is available to all irrespective of social, cultural or other differences.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, spiritual resilience in Buddhism is derived from multiple sources. As the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recognised four areas of health- Physical, mental, social and spiritual- so did the Buddha 2500 years ago:

Ārogya parama labhā (physical health is an ultimate profit)

Samtuṭṭhi paramaṃ dhanam (contentment is the highest wealth)

Vissasa parama ñāti (trusted is the highest relation)

Nibbana paramaṃ sukham (the ultimate piece is the highest happiness)⁶

As this stanza states, physical, mental, and social health collectively contribute to spiritual health, and spiritual health, in turn, contributes to overall health.

The Buddhist concept of spiritual health and resilience thus comes from multiple sources that lead to integrity, understanding, realisation, peace, and harmony. More peace and harmony lead to more resilience and empowerment. Positive attitude, selflessness, and virtuous living have the miraculous power to sustain, empower, and build resilience as the Buddhist tradition has shown over two and half millennia.

⁶ *Dhammapada* 204.

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AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL'S INNER PEACE CONTRIBUTES TO WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

In Buddhism, inner peace or peace of mind denotes a condition of mental and spiritual tranquility, as well as having sufficient knowledge of reality to maintain composure and stability in the face of difficulties, conflicts, shortages, and hardships. Peace of mind is especially linked to tranquility, bliss, calmness, happiness, and serenity. The ultimate peace of mind, according to Buddhism, is enlightenment. Suffering, problems, worries, stress, unhappiness, anxiety, and all other detrimental mental states overwhelm the mind. When the mind responds to difficulties and problems with peacefulness, those unhealthy states do not become problems for us. Problems arise only if we respond to them with a negative state of mind. The mind overwhelmed by the noxious trio - greed, hatred, and delusion - leads to an uncontrolled, insatiable desire for material comforts, wealth, power, or fame at the expense of others' well-being. Individuals with deluded mental states, beleaguered by avarice, egoism, conceit, pride, and immorality, destroy their inner peace and engulf the peace of individuals, families, ethnic groups, nations, and eventually the peace of all humanity. Individuals endowed with loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic acts, understanding, and contentment cultivate inner peace within themselves and, by overcoming greed, hatred, and delusion, alleviate the suffering of others. Such individuals work towards establishing inner peace in daily life and simultaneously contribute to the realization of peace in the world, which is highly beneficial in achieving nearly all the Sustainable Development

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Goals (SDGs).¹ The objective of these goals is to foster peace, harmony, and prosperity for individuals and communities. Hence, the primary purpose of this paper is to explore how inner peace is attained and how the inner peace of an individual brings about peace in family life, community life (especially in social, cultural, political, and religious spheres), and ultimately genuine peace in the world.

Keywords: *mind, inner peace, noxious trio, community life.*

I. DEFINE THE TERM “PEACE”

First of all, it is essential to outline the term peace to grasp its genuine significance and to gain a profound comprehension. Various meanings differ according to the context in which the term is used. The word peace comes from the Latin word *pax*, which signifies a contract, control, or agreement to put an end to war or any conflict between two individuals, two nations, or two hostile groups.² In this context, I use only two definitions to define peace. According to Albert Einstein, peace involves more than just the absence of conflict; it encompasses the existence of justice, law, order, and governance within society. As he stated, “Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order - in short, of government.”³ Moreover, Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677), a renowned philosopher of the 17th century, articulated his perspective on peace as not merely the absence of conflict but as a virtue, a mental state, and an inclination towards kindness, trust, and fairness. He emphasized the importance of both virtue and this mental state.⁴

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research paper is to explore the profound connection between an individual’s inner peace and its potential role in restoring global peace and fostering sustainable development. By examining historical perspectives, particularly the inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka, this study seeks to highlight the significance of inner harmony as a catalyst for broader societal transformation. Ashoka’s edicts emphasize moral governance, compassion, and non-violence, offering valuable insights into how personal tranquility can translate into collective well-being. This research aims to bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary challenges, proposing that sustainable global peace is rooted in the cultivation of inner peace at an individual level.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research follows a qualitative methodology, focusing on an in-depth analysis of historical and philosophical texts. Data will be collected

¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Sustainable Development Goals*. UNDP, available at: <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>.

² Ven. B. Khemanando, (1995): 387.

³ Vesilind, P. A., (2005): 43.

⁴ Spinoza, B. (1670). *Theologico-Political Treatise* (R. H. M. Elwes, Trans.). Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/990>.

and examined from Buddhist canonical texts, Ashoka's inscriptions, and other relevant secondary sources. Through textual analysis and interpretative methods, this study aims to uncover insights into the relationship between inner peace, global harmony, and sustainable development, drawing from both historical wisdom and contemporary perspectives.

IV. DISCUSSION

A core and unique aspect of the Buddha's teachings is the interconnectedness of all beings. In addition to elucidating the path to *nibbāna*, the Buddha's teachings encompass various principles that guide individuals on how to coexist harmoniously and supportively. These socio-political doctrines have served as foundational ideologies for rulers and monarchs in Theravāda Buddhist nations across Asia. In recent times, the political landscape in Asia has undergone significant transformation due to the impact of Western political ideologies. Numerous Buddhist scholars and organizations in the region have perceived this shift as a challenge to traditional teachings, particularly in light of the political turmoil experienced in recent years. The pressing issue we face is how politics can serve as a source of happiness rather than a cause of grievance for people worldwide. Buddhism offers valuable insights for the endeavor of creating a just political framework globally. Although this mission remains incomplete, there is potential for fostering confidence in the establishment of such a platform, not only within Asian countries but also in Western countries. In the era of the Buddha, various governmental systems were in place, including absolute monarchy in the larger kingdoms and oligarchic democracy in the smaller federated states. The Buddha refrained from asserting the superiority of any particular form of governance over the others. He engaged in dialogue with famous monarchs such as King Pasenadi of the Kosala kingdom⁵ and King Bimbisāra⁶ of the Magadha kingdom. He was well-acquainted with the state of the Vajji federation.⁷ He provided guidelines on how to incorporate ethical principles into political matters. It appears that, for the Buddha, the moral character of a government takes precedence over its structural format.

V. BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES FOR THE RIGHTEOUS POLITICS

There are many suttas delivered by the Buddha that elucidate political theory in Buddhism. The *Aggañña Sutta*, one of the most important suttas in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, expounds the principles of righteous political theory and examines the emergence of kingship as a consequence of the detrimental trio.⁸ This sutta outlines the leadership qualities expected by the common people in the early period. The first king, referred to as *mahā-sammata*, a term interpreted in the text as "people's choice," was designated as the "lord of the fields." It is reported in the *sutta* that they approached a physically attractive person (*abhirūpataro*), pleasant (*pāsādikataro*), and capable (*mahesakkataro*) and asked him to accept

⁵ *Samyutta Nikāya* (2006): 130 - 188.

⁶ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 22 - 246.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110 - 265.

⁸ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 137.

leadership.⁹ They sought an individual who embodied both authoritative and amiable characteristics. Additionally, the guidance offered to political leaders further elucidates the Buddhist perspective on leadership. The etymological interpretation of the term *rāja*, *dharmena pare rañjatīti rājā*, suggests that a king, as the leader of his people, ought to ensure their happiness through virtuous policies.¹⁰ This principle applies to any leader, who should strive to maintain the well-being of their group through effective governance. A leader is not merely an authoritative figure who issues commands and enforces strict compliance. Instead, through effective communication skills, a leader should earn the respect of their followers - not through coercion, but through amiable interactions. It is essential for a leader to cultivate a pleasant demeanor that fosters a harmonious environment. A wheel-turning monarch (*cakkavatti*) is a king who advances the dhamma through his governance. A basic description of how a king becomes a *cakkavatti*, and of the seven treasures that he obtains by doing so, is given in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta*.¹¹ Very briefly, a king can only become a *cakkavatti* by achieving personal moral purity, and he can maintain that status only by ruling in a way that encourages the people to also achieve moral purity.¹² The symbol of a king's status as a *cakkavatti* is the *Wheel Treasure*, which is described as a visible but magical wheel that allows the king to peacefully conquer and rule neighboring states. The *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* recounts what happens when a *cakkavatti* rules in the wrong way.¹³ In this sutta the Buddha enumerates five characteristics an ideal ruler shows in his dealings: able to discriminate good from bad (*Atthaññu*), knows righteousness (*Dhammaññu*), knows the limit of punishment etc (*Mattaññu*), knows suitable time for court work, pleasure and tour (*Kālaññu*), knows his assembly; as to what type of people are they (*Parisaññu*). Leaders should be morally integral and compassionate, with a clear vision and mission. They should not abuse their leadership for self-glorification or personal gain. They must be good communicators and able to represent their group effectively.¹⁴ The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* is another major canonical source that provides normative political guidance.¹⁵ It outlines seven principles related to righteous

⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 266 - 305.

¹² There appears to be no direct scriptural reference for this idea. However, we can infer from the principle that a great man is destined to become either a wheel-turning monarch (*cakkavattin*) or a Buddha that once one of these figures arises, another such candidate would not emerge at the same time and place. Of course, it could be argued that both a *cakkavattin* and a Buddha might exist simultaneously, as suggested in the *Cakkavatti-Sihanāda Sutta*. However, this idea was never explicitly developed beyond this mention.

¹³ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 96.

¹⁴ Palihawadana, M, (2003) "Theravada perspective on causation and resolution on conflicts", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 10. Accessible at <http://www.buddhistethics.org/10/palihawadana-sri-lanka-conf.html#pagetop>.

¹⁵ "vajjī samaggā sannipatanti, samaggā vuṭṭhahanti, samaggā vajjikaraṇīyāni karonti'ti,

governance: (1) Holding regular and frequent assemblies, (2) Meeting in harmony, breaking up in harmony, and conducting business in harmony, (3) Not authorizing what has not already been authorized, not abolishing what has been authorized, but proceeding according to what has been established by ancient tradition, (4) Honoring, respecting, revering, and saluting the elders, considering them worthy of being heard, (5) Not forcibly abducting others' wives and daughters or compelling them to live with them, (6) Honoring, respecting, revering, and saluting the Vajjian shrines both at home and abroad, while maintaining the proper support previously given, (7) Ensuring the proper provision for the safety of *arahants* so that enlightened beings may come in the future to live there, and those already present may dwell in comfort.

The *Jātaka* texts, which consist of parables detailing the previous incarnations of the Buddha, contain significant references to normative political theory. These texts enumerate a set of responsibilities that righteous rulers are expected to uphold, collectively known as the Ten Duties of the King (*dasa-rāja-dhamma*):¹⁶ (*Dāna*) Liberality, generosity, and charity. A ruler should renounce excessive desire and attachment to wealth, instead distributing resources for the benefit of the populace, (*Sīla*) Moral integrity. A virtuous ruler should abstain from taking life, engaging in deceit, theft, exploitation, infidelity, falsehood, and the consumption of intoxicants, (*Pariccāga*) Self-sacrifice. A king must be willing to relinquish personal comforts, reputation, and even life itself for the welfare of the people. (*Ajjava*) Honesty and integrity. A ruler should govern without fear or bias, demonstrate genuine intentions, and refrain from misleading the public. (*Majjava*) Kindness and gentleness. A good ruler must possess a genial temperament and compassionate nature. (*Tapa*) Austerity and self-discipline. A king must embrace simplicity, avoid indulgence, and exercise restraint in habits and desires. (*Akkodha*) Freedom from envy, ill-will, and enmity. A ruler should harbor no hatred toward anyone. (*Avihimsā*) Non-violence. A king must not only refrain from harming others but also actively foster peace by preventing war and destruction. (*Khanti*) Patience and forbearance. A ruler should possess the ability to endure hardships and criticism without succumbing to anger. (*Avirodhatā*) Absence of obstruction. A ruler should not suppress the genuine desires of the people or hinder initiatives that promote communal well-being. Instead, governance

‘*vajjī apaññattam na paññapenti, paññattam na samucchindanti, yathāpaññatte porāṇe vajjīdhamme samādāya vattanti*’^{ti}, ‘*vajjī ye te vajjīnaṃ vajjimahallakā, te sakkaronti garukaronti mānenti pūjenti, tesaṃ sotabbaṃ maññanti*’^{ti}, ‘*vajjī yā tā kulitthiyo kulakumāriyo, tā na okkassa pasayha vāsenti*’^{ti}, *vajjī yāni tāni vajjīnaṃ vajjicetiyaṇi abbhantarāni ceva bāhirāni ca, tāni sakkaronti garukaronti mānenti pūjenti tesaṃ dinnapubbaṃ katapubbaṃ dhammikaṃ baliṃ no parihāpenti*’^{ti}, *vajjīnaṃ arahantesu dhammikā rakkhāvaraṇagutti susaṃvihitā, kinti anāgatā ca arahanto vijitā āgaccheyyūṃ, āgatā ca arahanto vijite phāsu vihareyyu’nti*.”

¹⁶ “*Dasasūti dasasu rājadhammesu. Dānādisu dasavatthukā cetanā dānaṃ, pañcasīladasasīlāni sīlaṃ, deyyadhammacāgo pariccāgo, ujubhāvo ajjavaṃ, mudubhāvo maddavaṃ, uposathakammaṃ tapo, mettāpubbabbhāgo akkodho, karuṇāpubbabbhāgo avihimsā, adhivāsānā khanti, avirodho avirodhanam*.” (*Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā*).

should align with the interests of the populace. The division of political groups often leads to decisions that favor one faction while disadvantaging others, creating discord and instability. Ven. Dr. Pategama Gnanarama Thera observes that human beings accumulate wealth and property to fulfill biological needs, yet unchecked psychological greed fuels tension, rivalry, and conflict among individuals and nations.¹⁷ The Buddha, in the *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, states: “The world is insatiable, enslaved to craving.”¹⁸ Similarly, the *Dhammapada* highlights this perpetual dissatisfaction: “Not even a rain of gold coins can satisfy sensual cravings.”¹⁹

Peace and non-violence have been the fundamental concerns of the modern world. Aggression, violence, harassment, conflicts, hostilities, and confrontations are prevailing all over the world because of modern politics, culture, fundamentalist creeds and religions, and racism, which are detrimental to both the material and spiritual welfare of human beings. Buddhism, as a religion of non-violence, imparts that world peace or war rests on the individual’s preference at each moment. Peace is characterized as a condition of calmness and serenity. It is understood as the absence of war, the cessation of conflicts, and the lack of discord, as well as a state of mental tranquility and a clear conscience. In a community context, peace signifies the harmonious coexistence of individuals from various backgrounds.²⁰ Peace or war originates from the combination of individuals’ decisions or thoughts. The origins of peace or conflict reside within the human mind, rather than being externally imposed. Furthermore, peace serves as the foundation of true happiness; however, many individuals mistakenly seek peace in inappropriate avenues, often believing that financial success and material wealth are the keys to happiness.²¹ Peace is connected to the spiritual aspect of humanity worldwide. According to the socio-ethical teachings of the Buddha, one should first cultivate peace and non-violence within the mind because a spiritually advanced person is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, the noxious trio. The person who has developed the mind to such an extent can bring world peace. Once, the Buddha, addressing a monk named Chunda in the *Sāleyyakasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, says:

Cunda, for one submerged in mud to pull out another submerged in mud is not possible. One not submerged in mud could pull out another submerged in mud - this is possible. Cunda, one who is not tamed, not trained, and not extinguished cannot tame and train others and help them to extinguish suffering. One who is tamed, trained, and extinguished can tame and train others and help them to extinguish suffering. In the same

¹⁷ Dr. Gnanarama Thero, P (2005): 148.

¹⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2006): 452 - 464. Pali text: “*Ūno loko atitto taṇhā dāso*”.

¹⁹ *Dhammapada, Khuddaka Nikāya, verses 186-187* (2006): 26-128. Pali text: “*Na kahāpana vassena titthi kamesu vijjati*.”

²⁰ Bhalerao, D. R. (2003): 383 - 386.

²¹ *Ibid.*,

manner, for the hurter, there is no-hurting for extinguishing.²²

Purifying should be done thus: (1) Others may have an angry mind; we will not be angry. Others may have wrong view; we will have right view, (2) Others may have wrong mindfulness; we will have right mindfulness. (3) Others may have wrong concentration; we will have right concentration. (4) Others may be angry; we will not be angry. (5) Others may bear a grudge; we will have no grudge. (6) Others may be hypocritical; we will be free from hypocrisy. (7) Others may be merciless; we will be merciful. (8) Others may be jealous; we will not be jealous. (9) Others may be selfish; we will not be selfish. (10) Others may be crafty; we will not be crafty. (11) Others may be deceitful; we will not be deceitful. (12) Others may be stubborn; we will not be stubborn. (13) Others may be conceited; we will not be conceited. (14) Others may be unruly; we will be gentle. (15) Others may have evil friends; we will have good friends.”²³ These noble expositions very clearly prove that a person who is deprived of inner peace and tranquility will not be able to build a peaceful and harmonious society, but it is easy for a person who has inner peace to bring peace to the world.

After four years of the Buddha's enlightenment, a war took place between Kapilavatthu and Devadaha - cities of the Kṣatriyas and Koliyans, both sides being relatives - over the use of the water of the Rohiṇī River. When the war was about to start, the Buddha, having seen that both sides of his relatives were about to wage war, came and stood in the sky between the two great enemies. At the sight of the Great One, both sides of the enemies had the same thought: “Now the Great One is in front of us. Therefore, we cannot shoot arrows at our enemies.” And all of them threw away their bows and arrows and worshiped the Buddha. Then the Buddha asked, “Why have you gathered here?” They replied that they had come to the bank of the river to obtain water for irrigation. Then the Buddha asked, “How much value does water have when compared with the lives of men?” They replied that the water of the Rohiṇī River had very little value. Then the Buddha asked them again, “Why do you kill valuable human lives over valueless water?” Since people cause war through misunderstanding, thereby harming and killing each other, they should try to understand each other in the right manner. In other words, misunderstanding leads all people to a tragic end, and the Buddha exhorted them to pay attention to this. Thus, the armies of the two city-states were dissuaded from fighting each other.²⁴ It was the leaders, rulers, and people who had no inner peace but were overwhelmed with greed, hatred, and delusion that destroyed world peace. One of the most horrific devastations in the world was the Second World War. It is estimated that about fifty million people were killed in the Second World War. Besides,

²² *Majjhima Nikāya* (2006): 452 - 464.

²³ *Majjhima Nikāya*, (2006): 452 - 464.

²⁴ *Dhammapada Verses 197, 198 and 199, Natikalahavupasamana Vatthu*, accessed on [January 20, 2025], available at: <https://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=197>.

millions of people were subjected to misery. The erosion of moral qualities and the wanton destruction of resources were other harmful consequences.²⁵

In the third century B. C., during the reign of Emperor Asoka, a similar event took place. The state of Kāliṅga (Orissa or modern-day Odisha) was the target of a bloody, destructive war fought by Emperor Asoka around 260 BCE.²⁶ After the defeat of Kāliṅga, he renounced war and implemented a policy of reconciliation and peace. In his 13th Rock Edict, he mentioned:

In the conquered Kāliṅga, a hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed, and many times that number perished. Afterwards, now that Kāliṅga was annexed, the Beloved of the Gods very earnestly practiced Dhamma, desired Dhamma, and taught Dhamma. On conquering Kāliṅga, the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse, for when an independent country is conquered, the slaughter.²⁷

Why did King Asoka wage war against Kāliṅga? Why did he commit such a massacre? The primary motivations for invading Kāliṅga were both political and economic.²⁸ Asoka's grandfather, Chandragupta, had previously attempted to seize Kāliṅga but was unsuccessful. Following a fierce struggle for power after the death of Bindusāra, Asoka sought to annex Kāliṅga. His efforts culminated in a brutal conflict, the aftermath of which profoundly altered his perspective on warfare, prompting him to vow never to engage in battle again. It is reported that in the wake of the Battle of Kāliṅga, the Dayā River, which flows adjacent to the battlefield, ran red with the blood of the fallen. Dhauli Hill is believed to be the site of the Kāliṅga War. These historically significant Dhauli hills are situated along the banks of the Dayā River in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. The hill features a large open area and is home to significant Edicts of Asoka, which are inscribed on a massive rock beside the road that leads to the hill's summit. This event marked a pivotal moment in world history.²⁹ After the Kāliṅga war was over, the king was extremely sorrowful and stricken with remorse, unable to sustain inner peace. He was deeply repentant. A natural outcome of waging war is the serious violation of human rights. Asoka witnessed the violence firsthand and realized that he was responsible for the devastation. Asoka's reaction to the *Kāliṅga* War is documented in the aforementioned 13th Rock Edict. It proves that after observing the destruction of the *Kāliṅga* war, the king completely renounced warfare and ordered his sons and grandsons to practice non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and seek victory through *dhamma-vijaya* instead of territorial conquest (*dig-vijaya*). He governed the region for over four decades, characterized by relative tranquility, unity, and affluence. One legend recounts that following the conclusion of the war, King Asoka visited the ravaged battlefield to witness the courageous acts of his soldiers. However, he found

²⁵ Dr. Gnanarama Thero, P (2005): 148.

²⁶ Jerry Bentley, (1993): 44.

²⁷ Gnanawimala B (1986): 44 - 52.

²⁸ Ramesh Prasad Mohapatra (1986): 10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*,

no evidence of triumph; instead, he was confronted with charred homes and the remains of fallen warriors. This harrowing scene filled him with despair, prompting him to weep:

What have I done? If this is a victory, then what is defeat? Is this a victory or a defeat? Is this justice or injustice? Is it gallantry or a rout? Is it valor to kill innocent children and women? Did I do this to expand the empire and bring prosperity, or to destroy another's kingdom and splendor? One has lost her husband, another her father, someone else their child, another an unborn infant. What is this debris of corpses? Are these marks of victory or defeat? Are these vultures, crows, and eagles the messengers of death or evil?³⁰

King Asoka's war and victory were akin to that of the Pyrrhic king. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a Pyrrhic victory refers to a triumph that ultimately proves futile, as the victor incurs significant losses that overshadow the benefits of winning. Experiencing a protracted and costly legal battle, achieving professional advancement at the expense of familial relationships, or attaining victory at the cost of injury or health deterioration can leave the victor with a profound sense of loss or an absence of fulfillment, despite apparent success. This concept originates from the Pyrrhic War, during which King Pyrrhus of ancient Greece triumphed over the Romans in the Battle of Heraclea in 280 BCE and the Battle of Asculum in 279 BCE. Despite his victories, King Pyrrhus's forces suffered such heavy losses that he is said to have remarked, "If we win another such battle against the Romans, we will be completely lost."³¹ Asoka emerged as a philosopher-king, exemplifying righteousness and selfless service to his subjects. As a monarch who adhered to Buddhism, he held the conviction that the teachings of Buddhism were beneficial not only for humanity but also for animals and plants. He wholeheartedly embraced the fundamental tenets of Buddhism. Asoka's dhamma was grounded in the principles of non-violence, tolerance, piety, compassion, kindness, generosity, truthfulness, forgiveness, purity, gentleness, goodness, and the harmonious coexistence of all faiths. Emperor Asoka recognized that the greatest triumph was one achieved through Dhamma, which is none other than the peace of mind of an individual. He emphasizes this in his 13th Rock Edict:

The Beloved of the Gods believes that one who does wrong should be forgiven as far as it is possible to forgive him. And the Beloved of the Gods conciliates the forest tribes of his empire, but he warns them that he has power even in his remorse and he asks them to repent, lest they be killed. For the Beloved of the Gods wishes that all beings should be unharmed, self-controlled, calm in mind, and gentle. This inscription of Dhamma has been engraved so that any sons or great-grandsons that I may have should not think of gaining new conquests. And in whatever

³⁰ Gnanawimala B (1986): 44 - 52.

³¹ Shwetabharati, *Aashokas-monologue-and-pyrrhic-victory*, accessed on [April 11, 2024], available at: <https://shwetabhartiin.wordpress.com>,

victories they may gain, they should be satisfied with patience and light punishment. They should only consider conquest by Dhamma to be a true conquest, and delight in Dhamma should be their whole delight, for this is of value in both this world and the next.³²

According to Buddhism, we should cultivate friendly feelings towards all beings, including enemies. This principle is beautifully conveyed in the *Mettā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*:

As a mother would risk her life to protect her child, her only child, even so should one cultivate a limitless heart with regard to all beings. With goodwill for the entire cosmos, cultivate a limitless heart: above, below, and all around, unobstructed, without enmity or hate. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as long as one is alert, one should be resolved on this mindfulness. This is called a sublime abiding here and now.³³

Once this individual compassion becomes a reality among human beings, international relations will fall into proper perspective, ultimately leading to world peace. This aligns with the Buddha's teaching that war and peace begin in the heart of man, and only through inner peace can global harmony be restored.

In the *Sakkapañha Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, Sakka, the king of the Devas, posed a profound question to the Buddha: "Fettered with what, dear sir - though they think, 'May we live free from hostility, free from violence, free from rivalry, free from ill will, free from those who are hostile' - do Devas, human beings, *asuras*, *nāgas*, *gandhabbas*, and whatever other beings there are, nevertheless live in hostility, violence, rivalry, and ill will with those who are hostile?"

The Blessed One replied: "Devas, human beings, *asuras*, *nāgas*, *gandhabbas*, and all other beings are fettered by envy and stinginess. This is why - even though they wish to live free from hostility, violence, rivalry, and ill will - they nevertheless continue to experience them."³⁴

VI. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to foster peace, harmony, and prosperity for individuals and communities worldwide. The facts discussed throughout this research confirm that peace must first exist within the minds of individuals before it can manifest in society. Cultivating amiable attitudes toward all living beings is essential in creating peaceful minds. The Buddha proclaimed the noble eightfold path as the proper way to build inner peace, beginning with right understanding. Additionally, the four sublime abodes (*catu brahma vihāra*): loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), equanimity (*upekkhā*) are vital in developing a

³² Gnanawimala B (1986): 44 - 52.

³³ *Sutta Nipāta* (2006): 44 - 47.

³⁴ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 396 - 435.

peaceful society. When individuals embody these noble qualities, their minds become replete with peace and harmony, leading to non-harmful actions toward themselves and others. Before taking external measures to promote global peace, the first step is for each person to guard their mind and maintain mindfulness at all times, thereby ceasing internal conflict. The Buddha teaches that an undeveloped or untamed mind (*abhāvitam cittaṃ*) gives rise to both inner and outer conflicts. Therefore, in accordance with Buddhist teachings, inner peace attained through meditation is a fundamental prerequisite for establishing world peace and harmony. In summary, world peace serves as a foundation for sustainable development, benefiting not only humanity but the entire planet.

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CULTIVATING WORLD PEACE THROUGH METAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The current society is overwhelmed with unwholesome mental states that cause unethical and wanton behaviours in almost all walks of life, jeopardizing social peace. At least a certain degree of mental peace should be existent in the minds of inhabitants to maintain a peaceful society. Mental peace can be restored, developed, and enhanced through ethical behaviour as reflected in Buddhist teachings. When mental peace is not existent in man, no peace in family and society is existent and subsequently, individual, family and social life suffer. Mental peace in adolescents, adults, householders, all citizens, professionals, religious leaders, leaders, etc., should be enhanced through wholesome mental states through ethical behavior endowed with wholesome development of economic, social, governing conditions, etc. Mental peace in individuals in almost every stratum in the current society should convincingly be enhanced through Buddhist discourses as elaborated in the Sutta Piṭaka. Therefore, the principles that expose wholesome mental states found in Buddhist doctrine should be adopted in an all-inclusive approach for the enhancement of mental peace through ethical behaviour.

Keywords: *World peace, mental & ethical behaviour, Buddhist teachings.*

I. IMPACTS OF UNWHOLESOME ROOTS

The uncontrolled or untrained mind of any human in the world is full of mental impurities caused due to the three unwholesome mental roots – greed, ill-will, and delusion. These mental defilements should not be allowed to increase but controlled, suppressed, and mitigated for the welfare of one's mental peace and that of others. When the mind is overwhelmed with the intensity of extreme likes and dislikes, extreme hatred, and extreme delusion,

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mental peace in one's mind is lost, and he or she jeopardizes mental peace in others. Violation of moral conduct with such a corrupt mind causes distrust, disharmony, suspicion, fear, unhappiness, distress, frustration, corruption, fraud, riots, crimes, violence, and a lot of suffering in individual, family, social, educational, economic, administrative, and governing contexts. This is the miserable condition that is generally persistent in every stratum of society, harming world peace.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL CAUSES THREATENING MENTAL AND WORLD PEACE

According to Buddhism, any ordinary individual suffers from problematic mental states, which may cause problematic behaviour in response to the social atmosphere. The root causes of any form of violence and crime, whether they are psychological, behavioural, or sociological, are multi-caused. Psychological roots are the noxious trio – greed, aversion, and delusion as revealed in the *Mūla Sutta*¹ and the *Loka Sutta*.² When the mind is overwhelmed with the intense noxious trio – intense greed (*abhijjhā*), intense aversion (*vyāpāda*), and intense delusion (*micchādiṭṭhi*) – it is detrimental to individuals, family, society, environment, all beings, and the world. According to the *Hāritajātika*, when the mind is overwhelmed and beguiled by the four strong powers in the world – passion, hatred, pride, and delusion – true wisdom will not develop or arise there (*cittārome, loke atibālā bhusā, rago doso mado moho, yattha paññā nagādhati*).

Other psychological and sociological reasons are that rulers and officials possess no genuine attitudes to solve basic problems confronted by the countrymen. Great wealth and abundant free resources are accumulated out of avariciousness and covetousness (*abhijjhā*), two psychological reasons, unimaginable amounts of money acquired through the most sordid possible means are illegally stockpiled in banks to amass bills that are purely bluff, palatial edifices complete with extravagant amenities are constructed while decadent vehicles of immense worth are ordained, immovable properties of tremendous value are purchased within these shores as well as outside on foreign lands, and unlawful means of amassing riches are emergence at the same time that responsibilities to society are jettisoned, and economies are subjected to millennia of oppression and deprivation; unequal and lopsided distributions of wealth are persecutions and exploitation of minorities resulting in poverty and starvation of the majority. Indulgence into sensual pleasures and overconsumption of material wealth and resources by rulers and minority elite in a society leads subsequently to the stricken poverty of the majority of the people towards social crimes and violence. The *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta* points out that heads of state engage in destructive and aggressive wars due to their insatiable greed for power and wealth, bringing destructed not

¹ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), 3. 69 (9). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 292.

² *Ud.3.10 (Udāna)* London: Pali Text Society. 32.

just upon themselves but also upon many. A king wins territory that reaches as far as the surrounding ocean through aggression- yet not being contented with that, he desires territories even beyond the shores.³ This Sutta mentions wars that originate from the aggressive intentions of greedy heads of state, all of which injure mental and social peace.

The impurities cause problematic behaviour, disturb moral life, and impede wholesome mental peace. Evil consequences caused by the Six Channels of Dissipation of Wealth⁴ elaborated in the

These detestable practices listed in this Sigālovāda Sutta lead a layman to live a life worth impertinence that must cast a haze over the individual's inner peace, demean the family, and ruin social tranquillity. Immoral behaviors that the sutta defines embrace (1) indulging in intoxicants - these create infatuation and heedlessness leading to bad luck like the loss of wealth, quarrel increase, disease, evil fame, shamelessness in body-exposure, and feeble intellect, (2) walking the streets at unseemly hours leaving him unguarded or unprotected, leaving his wife and children unprotected and unguarded, leaving his property unprotected or unguarded, bearing evil rumors, and suffering loss of reputation and riches, (3) visiting theatrical performances makes one always thinking of where dancing is, where singing is, where music is, where recitation is, where cymbal clap is, and where pot-blowing is, (4) indulging in gambling creates hatred in the winner and the one who is initialized for the loss of earnings, thief or being subjected to the testimony of earned riches, never to be employed as evidence in a court, and those living miserably due to being repeatedly rejected by marriage suitor or partner, (5) bad company makes allies out of anyone whose gambler is; libertine-drunkard; cheat-swindler-rowdy, (6) sloth and indolence create a situation for him that too cold prevents from working, too hot prevents from working, too late in the evening to work, while too early in the morning too early for one's stomach to kill time.

Thus, psychological disturbances might arise with culpable behavioral conditions that prevent one from making the most of psychological capacities like non-remorse, joy, and rapture and, consequently, are incapable of suppressing harmful mental forces and concomitantly suppressing in themselves those very mental forces that hinder peacefulness. Moral restraint and moral purity that guarantee appropriate outer conditions and therefore the internal path and development provide aid against the incurring conditions of bad behavior which contrast mind peace in its complete presence. Maturely, some impediments on behavior could alleviate and enhance the purification of morality with psychological power, calmness, and sound equilibrium in light of benefiting from peace conduction.

³ The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (*Majjhima Nikāya*), 82. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 689.

⁴ The Long Discourses of the Buddha, 31. (*Dīgha Nikāya*), Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 461.

III. WRONG VIEWS AND WRONG BEHAVIOURS

The most harmful and intensive psychological reason for committing violence and crimes is wrong view (*micchā diṭṭhi*). According to the *Mahā-cattārīsaka Sutta*,⁵ because of wrong view (*micchā diṭṭhi*), a person thinks that there is nothing given, offered, or sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no offspring or parent; there are no reborn beings; nor are there any priests or ascetics who rightly fare and rightly practice, proclaiming the world and the next, after having known and realized it for themselves. A person who has such a wrong view brings violence and crimes to society because he does not accept the results of good or bad actions. The *Micchatta Sutta*⁶ and the *Bija Sutta*⁷ explain how wrong actions that may cause violence come into being because of wrong views. Because of a person's wrong view, wrong determination, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, etc., come into being. Whatever bodily deeds, verbal deeds, and mental deeds he undertakes in line with that view all lead to what is disagreeable, unpleasing, unprofitable, and stressful because the view is evil. Actions and wrong livelihood (*micchājīva*) based on such a wrong view lead to social violence and crimes. Such a wrong view also leads to immoral behaviour or moral decline, causing social violence. Right views instead of wrong views should be established in order to prevent wrong actions and inculcate wholesome actions for the restoration of mental peace and ethical behavior.

IV. WRONG LIVELIHOOD AND VIOLENCE AND CRIMES

The present world is overwhelmed with wrong livelihood at small and large scale in almost every field, threatening world peace. For instance, unrighteous, crooked and illegal means of earning wealth through robberies, ransom, poaching, destruction of natural resources under corrupt authorities and political power, production of health hazardous adulterated food stuff, drink and commodities, release of crude entertainment programs, dramas and pornography, drug trafficking, intoxicants, etc. harm health, mental peace and social peace. Occupations, professions, business, trading, etc. in arms and weapons, poisons, smuggling, intoxicants and drug trafficking and selling, killing animals for sale, hides, etc. illegal or unfair transactions and dealings, slavery, engagement in business or affairs that cause destruction of environment, natural resources, engagement in underworld activities, individual and organized robberies, corruptions, etc. and living by supporting all such wrong and evil movements, organizations, gangs, etc. cause social violence and crimes destroying peace and harmony in the society. The *Vaṇijjā Sutta* introduces five types of business that a person should not engage in. They are businesses in weapons, business in human beings, business in meat,

⁵ The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (*Majjhima Nikāya*), 117. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 934.

⁶ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*), 10.103 (3). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 1484.

⁷ Op. cit. 10.104 (2). Boston: Wisdom Publication. pp. 1485 – 1486.

business in intoxicants, and business in poison. When a person is engaged in these kinds of business, they do not cause any welfare to individual, family, society, all beings, environment and the world as they only bring unhappiness, harassment, torture, destruction, fear, distress, ethical deterioration etc. Therefore, any form of wrong means of livelihood that harms individual, social, and world peace should be disallowed.

V. POVERTY AND SOCIAL VIOLENCE THREATENING WORLD PEACE

Apart from the analysis of psychological causes, the Buddhist teaching has been realistic enough to recognize certain proximate causes associated with the material conditions of life – external causes that lead to poverty and its related issues. The *Ina Sutta* exposes that poverty (*dāliddiya*) is miserable in the world for a person who enjoys sensuality.⁸ Material deprivation serves as a key source of conflict against equality and peace. Therefore, poverty is usually perceived as a root of crime in society. The *Kuṭadanta Sutta* shows that vices and moral decline caused due to poverty proliferates suffering in diverse aspects, incurring social violence and jeopardizing social peace.⁹ The *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*¹⁰ and the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* expose that the roots of social crimes and violence lie not only in individual consciousness but also exist in the very structure of society that encourages those roots to grow. As the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* emphasizes, the failure on the part of the state to look after the essential needs of the people drives the people who are deprived of their needs to resort to crime, violence, and rebellion against the state. The *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* reveals, any social system that does not address the problem of economic poverty leads to unrest culminating in the ultimate fall of the moral backbone of the society and a great deal of social crime and violence.¹¹

The *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* lists the factors in causal origination. Indeed, because wealth is not given to the masses and becomes concentrated quantitatively, poverty does arise; because of this arising of poverty, there arise thieves; because of this arising of robbery, there arises weaponry; because of this arising of weaponry, there arises murder, and due to murder, life gets short, etc. Thus, violent condition leads to short life: When people live for ten years, the ten courses of moral conduct will completely disappear, and the ten courses of evil will prevail exceedingly. The idea of ‘good’ (*kusala*) will not exist. Men will not recognize women as ‘mother,’ ‘mother’s sister,’ teacher’s wife, etc. Thus, the world will become thoroughly immoral like goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, dogs and jackals. Among them, fierce enmity will prevail one for another, fierce hatred, fierce anger and thoughts of killing, mother against child and child against mother, father against child and child against father, brother against

⁸ Op. cit. 6.45 (3). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 914.

⁹ The Long Discourses of the Buddha (*Dīgha Nikāya*), 5. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 135.

¹⁰ Op. cit. 26. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 395 ff.

¹¹ The Long Discourses of the Buddha (*Dīgha Nikāya*), 26. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 395 ff.

brother, brother against sister, just as the hunter feels hatred for the beast he stalks. There will be a seven-day period of war, when people will see each other as animals; sharp swords will appear in their hands, and they will murder each other, each thinking, ‘This is an animal.’ Thus, the Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta also exposes that there exists a causal relationship between material poverty and ethical or social deterioration – violence and crime.¹²

VI. DOGMATIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND TERRORIST MOVEMENTS AND VIOLENCE AND CRIMES

Dogmatic or wrong concepts as taught in certain faiths also cause violence and crimes in contemporary society on a great scale. Certain extremist faiths based on wrong dogmatic views induce their followers to torture and kill animals and those who do not follow their teachings or speak against or criticize them. A lot of evidence and incidents in this regard in the present-day world can be found. Such dogmatic actions and movements that destroy peace and harmony in the world should be prevented to maintain law and order for all in every society in the modern world.

6.1. Restraint through suppression

It is extremely difficult for any individual, especially one who leads a sensual life, to eliminate such mental frailties at once. Nevertheless, intensification of greed, ill-will, and delusion into levels of covetousness, aversion, and wrong view (*abhijjā*, *vyāpāda*, and *micchādiṭṭhi*) should be prevented. The initiation for developing mental peace is the alleviation of intense greed, aversion, and wrong views that are commonly existent in the human mind, irrespective of caste, creed, or status. This alleviation comes into being with the control or restraint of evil verbal and bodily behaviors. The restraint in evil verbal and bodily conduct is none other than control or suppression of evil mental actions since all the verbal and bodily actions are mind wrought and propelled by the noxious trio – greed, hatred, and delusion.

6.2. Development of mental peace through verbal and bodily conduct

The *Sikkhā Sutta* shows that an individual who develops virtue for his benefit and for others – individual and social peace abstains from the five major violations of virtuous behavior and encourages others to abstain from such violations – killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, falsehood, and use of intoxicants.¹³ The *Mahāvaccagotta Sutta* shows a person to develop three types of wholesome bodily behaviors through the abstention from killing living beings, taking what is not given and misconduct in sensual pleasures and three types of wholesome verbal behaviors through abstention from the false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech and gossip.¹⁴ These levels of bodily and verbal

¹² Op. cit. p. 403 ff.

¹³ The Book of the Gradual Sayings (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), Vol. II. 4.99. London: Pali Text Society. p. 107.

¹⁴ The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (*Majjhima Nikāya*), 73. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 595.

actions propelled by the mind, as discussed in the above suttas, strengthen the outward control, laying the basis for mental strength that is conducive to mental happiness. In discourses like the Cunda Kammāraputta Sutta, how individuals' verbal behaviors are made pure in four ways by developing them to skillful levels is elaborated.¹⁵

For instance, the individual is to be pure in skillful verbal actions. (1) By abandoning false speech, abstaining from false speech, in a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his company, or of the royalty, by saying that he knows when he knows and that he does not know when he does not know, by saying that he has seen when he has seen and that he has not seen when has not seen. Thus, he does not consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or the sake of any reward. By letting go of falsehoods, he leaves falsehoods behind, speaks only truth, and clings to truth. They stand very firm and are very reliable; they are never a cheat, and no one is ever deceived by them. (2) By refraining from telling them what he has heard here to break apart these people from those people there, and vice versa, he breaks those people apart from these people here, that he abandons divisive speech. Thus, he loves, delights in, and speaks things that create concord while at the same time strengthening those who are united and reconciling those who have been broken apart. (3) By not speaking abusively and not speaking abusively, he speaks words that are pleasant to the ear, gentle, heartfelt, polite, pleasant and to many and not idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter and (4) speaks at the right time, speaks what is true, in line with the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Thus, he speaks words worth retaining, in season, reasonable, circumscribed, and connected to the goal. This is how one becomes pure in four ways by skillful verbal conduct, developing inward mental strength towards mental peace. Further, higher levels of enhancement of the three kinds of bodily conduct and four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma and righteousness are introduced in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta*.¹⁶

Performance of wholesome actions with intention (*cetanā*) to correct unwholesome actions manifested in body and speech propelled by mind as exposed in Right Speech (*sammā vācā*), Right Action (*sammā kammata*) and Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) expounded in the noble eightfold path brings about peace in individual as well as in the society.

It is the external behavior control of the moral purification, which has deeper and more psychological significance and has a two-dimensional quality than conduct purification and character purification that is attained through the absence of bodily and verbal misconduct as well as unwholesome livelihood. Motivated by greed, hatred, and delusion, inner impulses cause the transgressions of moral conduct by bodily and verbal actions. Refraining from

¹⁵ The Book of the Gradual Sayings (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*), Vol. V. 10.176. London: Pali Text Society. p.175.

¹⁶ The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (*Majjhima Nikāya*), 41. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 380.

the transgression of moral conduct reinforces the outer suppression of harmful mental factors and also helps an individual to suppress the inward detrimental mental factors. All of them, moral restraint and moral purity, institute so sound outward conditions, which further would help inward progress with endowed psychological strength such as non-remorse, joy, and rapture in peace restored to individuals and society.

6.3. Peace through five ethical behaviours

Five major human rights advocated in the UN Human Rights Convention are also safeguarded with application of the five major verbal and bodily behaviours elaborated in Buddhist discourses. Namely; refrain from killing establishes the human right of safeguarding one's life, refrain from stealing safeguards the wealth and property of every human as a right, refrain from sexual misconduct establishes the right for every man to lead a peaceful or undisturbed family life, refrain from falsehood establishes the right to know true information as a human right and keeping an undisturbed mind is safeguarded basically by refrain from taking intoxicants. In other words, refrain and abandonment of three bodily misconducts and four verbal misconducts by adults, husbands and wives, teachers and students, employers and employees, professionals, religious leaders and followers, policy makers, politicians, rulers and citizens and statesmen will bring about mental peace in them and that will establish reciprocal relations and interactions, mutual trust and harmony, peaceful coexistence among fellow citizens, communities and people of every echelon of the society. This reinforces mental, social, and world peace.

6.4. Elimination of poverty for world peace

Buddhism does not welcome poverty, nor does it reject wealth. It finds fault in amassing enormous riches or in the gains acquired through immoral sources; the possession of a large amount of wealth is approved as being earned through righteous means and hard work. By itself, according to Buddhism, poverty is suffering; it means non-possession of the basic material requirements of leading a decent life, that is, free from hunger, malnutrition, and disease. The minimum amount of material needs for a decent living is recognized by Buddhism. The *Īṇa Sutta* notes that suffering is for one whose orientation is sensual enjoyment and becomes debt-bound suffering in the world for a debtor who is poor and attains sensual enjoyment.¹⁷ The person who enjoys sense pleasures poverty is miserable. Poverty leads to borrowing, and borrowing leads to the piling up of debts. When one who is in debt is taken to task by the lenders, it becomes a great suffering, harming mental peace. According to Buddhist teachings, the causes of loss of wealth and poverty can basically be cited in the suttas like *Kuṭadanta*, *Cakkavattisihanāda*, *Najirati*, *Vyagghapajja*, *Sigālovāda*, *Parābhava*, etc. The *Suttas Kuṭadanta* and *Cakkavattisihanāda* reveal that social peace, equality, justice, and harmony are harmed, and violence and crimes increase due to moral degradation committed through vices impelled by poverty

¹⁷ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*), 6.45 (3), Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 914.

(absence of adequate wealth and resources).¹⁸ Consequently, social unrest and moral degeneration in a society are indications of the growth of poverty. The Kūṭadanta Sutta points out that any society in which the material needs of certain sections are not adequately met and they are oppressed, exploited, and marginalized, they tend to resort to criminal behaviour. This jeopardizes mental well-being and peace in society.

Therefore, good governance should address the economic poverty, give money to the poor, equally distribute wealth to people, and provide the means of right living, which creates wealth for the poor, leading to alleviating and eradicating poverty to restore world peace.

VII. STABILITY, WEALTH, AND PEACE

As pointed out in the Vyagghapajja Sutta, a householder knowing his income and expenses should lead a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand more than his expenses, but not his expenses over his income.¹⁹ The four sources of the increase by which wealth is amassed rightly through right livelihood or right living are (1) avoidance of debauchery, (2) avoidance of drunkenness, (3) non-indulgence in gambling, and (4) friendship, companionship, and intimacy with the good. It is in these four that simple and balanced living can lead to a balanced life (*sama-jīvikatā*). As the above Suttas, a household that lives well at present lives well, is doing good, is ever alert, is even-tempered in living, is careful in savings (*uṭṭhātā kammadheyyesu, appamatto vidhānavā, Samam kappeti jīvikam sambhatam anurakkhati*). It results in all mental well-being, physical well-being, as well as their holistic social well-being restoring world peace.

7.1. Right livelihood for world peace

Earning the right wealth and using it rightly brings about a balanced life. One of the important teachings of the Sigālovāda Sutta is that the Buddha is said to instruct the young householder on how one would have the wealth earned righteously and the four modes through which one ought to spend one's wealth as a wise man endowed with virtue to lead a life fruitful, wholesome, and balanced.²⁰ The right uses of wealth that has been righteously obtained are also conducive to balanced living, according to the Pattakamma Sutta.²¹ The Vyagghapajja Sutta also exposes four conditions that conduce to worldly progress and development of wealth: (1) the accomplishment of persistent effort (*uṭṭhāna-sampadā*), (2) the accomplishment of watchfulness (*ārakkha-sampadā*), (3) good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*), and (4) balanced livelihood

¹⁸ The Long Discourses of the Buddha (*Dīgha Nikāya*), 26. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 403 ff.

¹⁹ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), 8.54 (4). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 1195.

²⁰ The Long Discourses of the Buddha (*Dīgha Nikāya*), 31. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 466.

²¹ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), 4.61 (1). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 449ff.

(*sama-jīvikatā*).²² Right livelihood in trading, business, food and drink industry, commodities, agriculture, all types of professions and transactions should be established, and the types of occupations mentioned in the *Vaṇijjā sutta*²³ should be avoided to restore and maintain mental wellbeing and world peace.

7.2. Righteous wealth and happiness

The *Adiya Sutta* deals with the benefits to be obtained from wealth.²⁴ The Buddha outlined to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder the benefits and pleasures derived from wealth that has been justly earned. Wealth rightly acquired and gained through one's efforts and enterprise should be obtained through the strength of one's arm and piled with the sweat of one's brow. Such wealth becomes rightfully a cause of his joy and satisfaction. He can rightfully enjoy it. He provides his parents with pleasure and satisfaction and maintains that pleasure rightly. He provides his children, his wife, his slaves, servants, and assistants with pleasure and satisfaction and maintains that pleasure rightly. When one obtains these five benefits from wealth, his wealth goes to depletion, and the thought occurs to him, although his wealth has gone to depletion, he has obtained the five benefits that can be obtained from wealth, and he feels no remorse. If it so happens that, when he obtains these five benefits from wealth, his wealth increases, the thought occurs to him, he has obtained the five benefits that can be obtained from wealth, and my wealth has increased, and he feels no remorse. His wealth has been enjoyed, his dependents supported, protected them from calamities. He has given supreme offerings and performed the five oblations. He has provided for the virtuous, the restrained, followers of the holy life. For whatever aim a wise householder would desire wealth, that aim he has attained. He has done what will not lead to future distress. When this is recollected by a mortal, a person established in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, he is praised in this life and, after death, rejoices in heaven.

Few people in the world, as highlighted in the *Appaka Sutta*, manage to remain grounded when they acquire significant wealth. These individuals avoid becoming arrogant or careless, do not cling to sensory indulgence, and treat others with respect. However, the majority act differently – they lose themselves in excess, prioritize pleasure, and often cause harm to others. The *Anaṇa Sutta* outlines four types of happiness a householder can experience at the right time and under the right circumstances: (1) the joy of possessing wealth, (2) the satisfaction of wisely using wealth, (3) the freedom that comes from being debt-free, and (4) the peace of living in a way that is beyond reproach.²⁵ The significance of right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) emphasized in the *Magga-*

²² The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*), 8.54 (4). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p.1194.

²³ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*), 5.177 (7). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 790.

²⁴ Op. cit. 5.41 (1). Boston: Wisdom Publication (WP). pp. 665 – 666.

²⁵ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (AN), 4.62 (2). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 452 – 453.

vibhaṅga Sutta,²⁶ the four conditions that conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life²⁷ elaborated in the Vyagghapajja Sutta,²⁸ refrain from unwholesome occupations (*micchā ājīva*) (Trading in weapons, human beings, meat, intoxicants and in poison) mentioned in the *Vaṇijjā Sutta*²⁹ restore mental and world peace.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Unwholesome mental behavior, verbal and bodily misconduct, wrong livelihood, poverty, inequalities, injustice, wrong views, bad administration, etc., that destroy mental peace and coexistence in the current world exist in household, educational, economic, professional, aesthetic, political, environmental, and religious contexts. The abolition of the above causes that destroy mental peace and world peace should be executed in the above contexts. Hence, the principles that deal with wholesome mental states exposed in Buddhist doctrine should be adopted in an all-inclusive approach for the development and enhancement of mental peace through ethical behavior in order to restore world peace.

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²⁶ The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (SN) 45.8. Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 1528 ff.

²⁷ The accomplishment of persistent effort (*uṭṭhāna-sampadā*), the accomplishment of watchfulness (*āraṅkha-sampadā*), good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) and balanced livelihood (*sama-jīvikatā*).

²⁸ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), 8.54 (4). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 1194.

²⁹ The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), 5.177 (7). Boston: Wisdom Publication. p. 790.

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BUDDHISM AND CULTIVATION OF INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE

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Abstract:

This paper explores the theme of the Buddhist idea of cultivating inner peace for world peace. The paper is set in the context of the profound significance of Vesak in underscoring two milestones that celebrate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of South Vietnam and the reunification of the country (April 30, 1975 – April 30, 2025) and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (September 2, 1945– September 2, 2025). The paper advances the central theme of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 that is centered on the promotion of Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development. The thrust of this paper is to examine the notion of cultivating inner peace for world peace. This is contextualized by a case study of Tibetan Buddhism in Zimbabwe. The paper argues that peace is a fundamental component of Buddhism and is a strong pillar for unity and sustainable development. The paper starts with an assessment of the views of peace in Buddhism, its role in politics, special themes on peace, Sustainable Development Goals, and relevance to the international context. The paper is a product of empirical research in Zimbabwe, supplemented by a literature review of Buddhist texts from 2020 to 2025. The paper concludes that cultivating inner peace is the panacea for Buddhist achievement of unity and inclusivity, fostering world peace and sustainable development.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace, sustainable development, unity, and inclusivity.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that is rooted in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as Gautama Buddha, who lived in the 5th century BCE in the region of Magadha in India. Gautama was born into a wealthy family in Lumbini in 563 BCE. But he experienced the most opulent life that he renounced after witnessing a grueling sight of extreme poverty and destitution. For several years, he sought relief from the extreme sufferings of this world by pursuing ascetic practices and meditation. Eventually, he found enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bhod Gaya in India. This experience granted him a sense of peace, perfect wisdom, and compassion.¹

At its core, Buddhism seeks to attain spiritual enlightenment, a state of inner peace and wisdom, through an understanding of the Four Noble Truths, which reveal the nature of suffering, and the Eightfold Path, a guide for moral and spiritual practice. The path aims to liberate individuals from the cycle of suffering, which is influenced by karma's system of rebirth. With various schools and sects, Buddhism encompasses diverse perspectives on the Buddha's nature, the attainment of enlightenment, and the roles of religious orders and lay practitioners.² By its nature and inception, Buddhism is founded on the attainment of inner peace. This paper argues that peace is a very important part of Buddhism. It helps people come together (unity) and makes it possible for communities to grow and succeed in a way that supports sustainable development. The paper starts with a discussion of perspectives of peace in Buddhism, then it will treat the issues of politics and non-violence. The paper will discuss pertinent themes on peace before it turns to matters of Sustainable Development and its relevance to the global context. It will end with an examination of a case study of the Buddhist religion in Zimbabwe.

II. BUDDHISM'S VIEWS OF PEACE

Buddhism advocates for nonviolence and compassion toward all living beings, emphasizing that harming others perpetuates suffering. Conversely, the Buddha taught that treating others with kindness, respect, and empathy leads to peaceful outcomes.³ Buddhism adopted certain principles that amount to peace in several ways. First is the concept of Inner Peace: According to Buddhist teachings, inner peace can be achieved through mental discipline and meditation. By releasing desires, attachment, and ignorance, individuals can cultivate peace within themselves, as taught by the Buddha.⁴ Religion perceives inner peace as a sense of emotional, mental, and spiritual harmony.⁵ A Buddhist scholar, Pearl Nash (2024), states that Buddhist methods of attaining inner peace include the following: (1) Embracing mindfulness. (2)

¹ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 13 - 25.

² Index Mundi. "Religions in Zimbabwe" <https://www.indexmundi.com/zimbabwe/religions.html>. Accessed 19 Jan. 2025.

³ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 95 - 100.

⁴ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 45 - 50

⁵ Bing, <https://www.bing.com>. Accessed 22 Jan. 2025.

Letting go of attachment. (3) Cultivate Compassion. (4) Practice patience. (5) Understand Impermanence. (6) Find contentment in simplicity. (7) Cultivate Wisdom through reflection.⁶ He underlines the fact that if one practices these methods, one cultivates inner peace. Furthermore, a constant reflection upon these methods guarantees the experience of “calmness and clarity, a serene landscape that exists within oneself”.⁷ The second is the principle of nonviolence: Buddhism advocates for nonviolence and compassion towards all living beings, emphasizing that harming others perpetuates suffering. Conversely, the Buddha taught that treating others with kindness, respect, and empathy leads to peaceful outcomes.⁸

The third is mindfulness and meditation: Through regular practice of mindfulness and meditation, individuals can foster a profound sense of peace and calm. These Buddhist practices develop greater self-awareness, mental clarity, and inner serenity, ultimately leading to a more peaceful state of being.⁹ The fourth is interconnectedness: Buddhism emphasizes the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena. By acknowledging and embracing this reality, individuals can cultivate a deeper sense of peace, compassion, and empathy towards others, recognizing that their well-being is inextricably linked.¹⁰ Fifth is the Four Noble Truths: The Four Noble Truths, a cornerstone of the Buddha’s teachings, offer a comprehensive framework for comprehending the root causes of suffering and the pathway to achieving peace. These Truths underscore the crucial importance of acknowledging and confronting suffering, relinquishing its underlying causes, and nurturing wisdom and compassion to attain liberation.¹¹ By adopting these principles, Buddhism promotes a holistic understanding of peace that encompasses individual inner peace, nonviolence, mindfulness, interconnectedness, and wisdom.

Theresa Der-lan Yeh, a Buddhist scholar, postulates that peace in Buddhism is conceived as a “State of inner calm, serenity, and well-being”¹² that emanates from the interrelationship between all forms of occurrences. The standard norm for dependency stipulates that everything exists in relationship to the other, and accordingly, any change has a ripple effect, meaning changes in one aspect tend to affect the other. In this light, the Buddhist concept of Indra’s Net illustrates the interconnectedness of all phenomena, whereby each node reflects and is reflected by all other nodes. This notion promotes a sense of responsibility, appreciation, and empathy for others.¹³ From a Buddhist perspective, human beings are viewed as a cord of processes governed by a

⁶ Pearl Nash (2024), p.1 - 8.

⁷ Pearl Nash (2024), p. 8.

⁸ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 95 – 100.

⁹ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 120 - 125.

¹⁰ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 150 - 155.

¹¹ Walpola Rahula (1959), p. 55 - 65.

¹² Der-lanYeh (2006), p. 92 - 94.

¹³ Der-lanYeh (2006), p. 93.

dependent origination. The doctrine of no-self (*anatta*) states that nothing in an individual is independent, but at the same time, it accepts that each being has a semblance of variety and exceptionality from the other being. According to Ye, such Buddhist teachings underline a sense of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.¹⁴ These endowments, shared with wisdom, help guide Buddhist practices and promote a sense of concord with all existence. Buddhism advocates for a holistic understanding of peace. Religion acknowledges that peace is a combined outcome that is molded by interfaces of all entities involved. This perspective endorses the significance of personal transformation and determination for peace in every moment.

Theresa Der-lan Yeh observes that the Buddhist view of peace echoes with modern peace studies that recognize the complexity and collectiveness of causes of war or attainment of peace. The concept of negative and positive peace is also relevant, highlighting the importance of addressing socio-economic injustices to achieve lasting peace.

III. BUDDHISM AND POLITICS

Several scholars have debated the political stance of the Buddha. Whilst some think he was politically active, others believe that Buddhism is apolitical. Those who think that he was apolitical argue that he emphasized individual spiritual development and moral conduct. But those who think that he was politically active argue based on his emphasis on social justice, equality, and compassion.¹⁵ According to Shubham Srivastava, although the Buddha was born in the royal family and was naturally positioned for political office, he never sought political mileage nor the creation of political institutions in his teachings. Rather, he confronted the problems of society through an approach that appealed to society to move towards greater humanism, improved the welfare of its members and equitable distribution of resources.¹⁶ However the author traced political statements that point to present day political order for instance, he taught about equality of all humanity and castigated classes and castes as artificial systems; he advocated for the spirit of cooperation and active participation in the society; he advised members of the Order to be guided by the Rule of Law effected through the *dharma* and finally he encouraged the spirit of consultation and democratic processes.¹⁷ The Buddha's political inclination was the moralization and responsible use of public power. His message was entirely focused on political ideology but one that set the way to attain *nibbāna*.

IV. BUDDHIST PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE

Buddhist belief is couched in the facet of non-violence. The religion's teachings set out the parameters for non-violence as expressed in the first of its

¹⁴ Der-lanYeh (2006), 101.

¹⁵ Mathew Watson (2025), <https://www.amazon.co.uk>, Accessed 28/02/25.

¹⁶ Shubham Srivastava (n.d), <https://www.academia.edu>, Accessed 28/02/25.

¹⁷ Shubham Srivastava (n.d), <https://www.academia.edu>, Accessed 28/02/25.

five guidelines to the adherents, “Avoid killing, or harming any living thing”.¹⁸ Buddhism is understood as a peaceful religion, and nothing in the doctrines appears to support violence. It is one of the religions that respects the concept of peace in the world.

Buddhism identifies three areas of causes of violence and conflict, namely, the eternal causes in which physical and verbal harm is inflicted on others. It condemns social injustices exhibited in political and economic systems and the pursuit of resource accumulation without regard for ecological and ethical considerations as unjust.¹⁹ The author identifies internal causes that lie in psychological states of fear, anger, and hate, such as sticking to pejorative views and desire for material things that result in lust and contest. He identified the root cause of violence as embedded in ignorance about the connection of all forms of nature and failure to accept the reality of the world as it is, a matter that results in affection and dangerous postures.²⁰ The Buddhist is thus reminded to address these causal factors and be realistic in their understanding of the world.

V. SPECIAL THEMES ON BUDDHISM AND PEACE

Buddhism makes links between health and wellbeing and peace, human rights, gender issues, the family, environment, symbols, and sayings. They hold that peace is a state of mind that can be nurtured through the practice of mindfulness, meditation, and adherence to the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path.²¹ The essence of the Noble truths is summed up by Peter Harvey as follows: “(1) Suffering (*dukkha*). (2) Origin (*samudaya*). (3) Cessation (*nirodha*). (4) Path (*magga*).”²² Peter Harvey (2013) emphasizes that the Four Noble Truths constitute a fundamental teaching of Buddhism that explicates the nature of suffering and the means to liberate oneself from it.

Buddhism’s approach to health is in fulfillment of the requirements of Sustainable Development Goal 13 that seeks to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.²³ According to Sarath Ananda (2019), Buddhism’s good health is dependent on the person, who must control their mental, physical, and verbal behavior that deactivates his/her evils. It is this impure body that is the causal factor for illness and disease, as expounded in the Buddha’s teachings.²⁴ In his quest for the Buddhist approach to healthcare, Sarath Ananda noted that the Buddhist approach to health and well-being for individuals can establish a sustainable society. Like any other religion that strives to make its adherents live happily and liberate them from suffering

¹⁸ BBC (2014), <https://www.youtube.com/bbc%20news/live>, Accessed 28/02/25.

¹⁹ Der-lan Yea (2006), p. 94 - 97.

²⁰ Der-lan Yeh (2006), p. 97.

²¹ Walpola Rahula (1974), <https://archive.org/details/BhanteWalpolaRahulaWhat-TheBuddhaTaught>, 28/02/25.

²² Peter Harvey (2013), p. 35.

²³ United Nations (2015), <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, Accessed 28/02/25.

²⁴ Sarath Ananda (2019), p. 303.

through illness and disease, Buddhism believes that suffering (*dhukka*) is caused by craving, aversion, and ignorance, but it can be overcome through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.²⁵ The central belief of Buddhism is suffering, as summed up by Damien Keown 2013, quoted in Sarath Ananda (2019, 309).

What, O Monks, is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering, sickness is suffering, old age is suffering, and death is suffering. Pain, grief, sorrow, lamentation, and despair are suffering. Association with what is unpleasant is suffering; disassociation from what is pleasant is suffering. Not getting what one wants is suffering. In short, the five factors of individuality (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) are suffering.²⁶

Buddhism aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health, which states, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.”²⁷ Buddhism extricates itself from suffering through the adoption of the Eight-Fold Path and the Four Noble Truths. The Eightfold Path offers a route to freeing oneself from suffering by its pronouncement of eight interdependent principles, namely, Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.²⁸ This path fosters wisdom, ethics, and mental clarity, and one can remove him/herself from the cycle of suffering and achieve liberation. The Four Noble Truths uncover that suffering is an inherent part of life, fueled by craving, aversion, and ignorance. The truths offer a lifeline of hope and assurance that misery is not invincible but can be overcome, leading to liberation through the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path. In this process of liberation, the Buddhists’ aim is to develop wisdom, ethics, and mental discipline, ultimately leading to the attainment of *nibbāna*, a state of liberation from suffering. This approach aligns with the World Health Organization’s definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”²⁹ This posture also tallies with another definition of health as ‘the ability to adapt and to self-manage.’³⁰

Sarath Ananda states several ways in which Buddhism addresses issues of health and well-being. Some of these include, first, that Budha himself set up two medical practices through his behavior, the Putigattatissa Thero and Suppiya Upasika, which stipulate that one must look after the other in times of sickness. The middle path is another example that demonstrates that one

²⁵ Sarath Ananda (2019), p. 306.

²⁶ Damien Keown, (2013), p. 50.

²⁷ United Nations (2015), <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, Accessed 28/02/24.

²⁸ Easwaran (2007), <https://www.amazon.co.jp/Dhammapada-Easwarans-Classics-Indian-Spirituality/dp/1586380206>, Accessed 28/02/25.

²⁹ WHO (2018), <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>, Accessed 28/02/25.

³⁰ Huber et al (2011), <https://www.bmj.com/content/343/bmj.d4163>, Accessed 28/02/25.

can acquire liberation by avoiding getting into extremes that are detrimental to health. As such, the religion cautions against bad intentions, speech, and actions as responsible for suffering. Buddhism also emphasizes the practice of *mettā*, the notion that one must practice love of one another. The most important value of Buddhism is the principle of karma, which explains the idea of cause and effect, that one reaps what one sow. In this context, Buddhism positions health as a holistic manner that comprises physical and mental states and amicable relationships with the family, neighborhood, workplace, and the environment.³¹ Sarath Ananda observes that the harmony of all these elements in society is an indicator of sustainability.

A lot of literature on Buddhist health and wellbeing is captured in sacred texts such as *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta-Pitaka*, the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, and the *Mahāvagga Pāli* (Sarath Ananda 2019: 313). These documents contain health instructions for proper physical and mental health and are based on herbal medications and the maintenance of a specific lifestyle. They are recited in the temples under the guidance of the Monks. Whilst the *Bojjhaṅga (Paritta) Sutta*, *Girīmananda Sutta* are believed to be therapeutic for the sick people's physical and mental health, the *Aṅgulimāla (Paritta) Sutta* are chanted for pregnant mothers to enable safe delivery.³² All these are fundamental ingredients of peace, unity, and tranquility in Buddhism.

Human rights are a vital element of cementing peace in Buddhism. However, Damien Keown notes that the interpretation of human rights in the religion may not necessarily be identical to the Western conception. But what religion espouses is the compatibility of human rights with doctrines. Human rights are discernible in Buddhism by their endeavor to accomplish the following: (1) Conflict prevention. (2) Promotion of dignity and respect. (3) Addressing inequality and discrimination. (4) Fostering inclusive societies. (5) Ensuring accountability and justice.³³ The promotion and protection of human rights are essential for achieving and maintaining peace. Buddhism upholds human rights by supporting Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, advocating for Human Rights education, and championing human rights and empowerment.³⁴ That way, Buddhism promotes and protects human rights, essential for achieving and maintaining peace, by the international statutes.

Buddhism is concerned with matters of gender equality. Research has shown that many Buddhists observe gender equality, although some traditions show that they have not always practiced it since gender inequality exists. In Buddhism gender issue is not only a social affair but is also a religious one to such an extent that some people have debated on the gender composition of

³¹ Sarath Ananda (2019), p. 309 - 310.

³² Sarath Ananda (2019), p. 313.

³³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>. Accessed 28/02/25.

³⁴ Damien Keown (1998), <https://www.dhammausa.com/2024/09/buddhism-and-human-rights-philosophical.html>, Accessed 28/02/25.

the Buddhist gods.³⁵ According to Nishadini Peiris (2015), Buddhist teachings approach gender differently from the normative way by Western scholars. They view one's warmth to gender issues as an impediment to spiritual development. The phenomenon is impermanent and is connected to one's mental state.³⁶ The Buddhist teachings such as the five precepts that condemn non-harming or exploitation, including sexual abuse of others; the Four Noble Truths; the principle of dependent origination that emphasize interdependence and impermanence of all phenomena; non dualism that includes non-binary thinking, for instance male-female dichotomy and emptiness (*shunyata*), all accentuate the importance of understanding, equality and compassion.³⁷ Despite the criticism of some gender practices in Buddhism, the religion aims to promote understanding, equality, and liberation. Therefore, the gender component is real in Buddhism, and the religion is in conformity with Sustainable Development Goal 11, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.³⁸

Respect for the family is another aspect that reflects elements of peace in Buddhism. But several scholars agree that the religion is not a family-based one, taking cue from the Buddha, who adopts a monastic life that involves renunciation of this world. The Buddha abandoned his family and elegant life in pursuit of enlightenment, and thus, the family appears as a source of attachment, delusion, and suffering. The religion, therefore, emphasizes monasticism and Buddhahood as an important element for attaining peace.³⁹ However, Reiko Ohnuma (2018) identifies strong family support that is exhibited in Buddhism. This is manifest in messages for pastoral advice on the conduct of familial life; promoting rituals and practices supportive of fertility, procreation, productivity, and success of the family; positioning itself as a collaborator on matters that pertain to parents, children, and their relationship with ancestors.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Buddhist *Sangha* is said to have incorporated vocabulary that includes metaphors of family, lineage, descent, and kinship in their statements, indicating its importance in social, cultural, and religious domains.

The Buddhist concern for the environment is another matter that is central to the tenets of faith as it connects with the element of peace in the religion. The relationship between the environment and peace is intricate and manifests in that environmental degradation and resource scarcity can contribute to conflict, while environmental cooperation and sustainable development can promote peace and stability. The Buddhist scholars Oyuna Vasilievna Dorzhigushaeva and Aryana Vladimirovna Kiplyuks (2020) identify some key aspects that constitute the environmental ethics of Buddhism, namely 1.

³⁵ Nishadini Peiris (2015), p. 2.

³⁶ Nishadini Peiris (2015), p. 2.

³⁷ Ajahn Kherma, 994.

³⁸ United Nations 2015.

³⁹ Anonymous, <https://family.jrank.org>, Accessed 24/01/25.

⁴⁰ Reiko Ohnuma 2018, p. 149

The law of karma. This is expressed in the golden rule of Buddhist morality, equal treatment of all beings and the principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence), and 2 Tolerance.⁴¹ The authors capture the essence of Buddhist ethics succinctly: recognition of the world as an interconnected, dynamic system; independence of all phenomena; moral principles as the basis for a sense of responsibility; and universal consciousness of the unity of the world. These Buddhist principles offer a holistic and sustainable approach to a comprehension of the world and the human position in it. The religion lays the foundation for an ecological paradigm that prioritizes harmony, compassion, and interconnectedness.⁴²

Peace is of paramount importance in Buddhism as depicted in their interpretation and understanding of symbols. The religion exhibits certain symbols that reflect Buddhist facets of peace. For instance, the *swastika* is an ancient Buddhist symbol that is used concurrently with the *Dharma* Wheel; the Lotus flower is synonymous with peace. The picture of a meditating Buddha is an emblem of peace. Whilst the *dharma* wheel is a sign of good luck, the Bhodhi tree is a mark of enlightenment.⁴³ Buddhism has a remarkable myriad of color symbolism that punctuates socio-cultural and religious life; for instance, the colors blue, white, and green are viewed as peaceful and calming. Meditation colors red, orange, and red are used for meditation to signify spiritual growth and inner peace. The colors purple and pink are used to represent harmony and balance. However, it is outside the purview of this paper to analyze every color in the religion, but suffice it to highlight that the most conspicuous color, green, is an emblem for peace, protection from harm, sky element, and Amoghasiddhi Buddha.⁴⁴

The concept of peace also pervades the language discourse. There are certain sayings that connote peace and are attributed to the Buddha, for example, "If we don't occupy ourselves with everything, then peaceful mind will have nowhere to abide".⁴⁵ This challenges us to preoccupy ourselves with issues of peace lest we find no place to stand. The next one says, "All the things that truly matter, beauty, love, creativity, joy and inner peace arise from beyond the mind".⁴⁶ This points to the fact that all good feelings and emotions emanate from beyond human cognizance. Another saying states, "We all wish for world peace, but world peace will never be achieved unless we first establish peace within our minds".⁴⁷ This saying poses a challenge that peace will not be attained unless we create it in our minds.

VI. BUDDHISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SDGS)

Buddhism subscribes to Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDS

⁴¹ Vasilievna Dorzhigushaeva and Aryana Vladimirovna Kiplyuks (2020), 154 - 7.

⁴² Ruth Langer (2001), p. 10.

⁴³ Anonymous, <https://www.bing.com>, Accessed 21/01/25.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, <https://www.bing.com>, Access 22/01/25.

⁴⁵ Shen-Hui, <https://exploringyourmind.com>, Accessed 24/01/25.

⁴⁶ Eckhart Tolle, <https://exploringyourmind.com>, Accessed 24/01/25.

⁴⁷ Geshe Kelsang, <https://exploringyourmind.com>, Accessed 24/01/25.

Goal Number 16, which seeks to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”⁴⁸ Buddhism conforms to the SDGs by its adherence to the principles of peacefulness manifest in its faithful obligation to *Ahimsa*. This is done by upholding the values of nonviolence and compassion to humankind. The religion also sticks to its teachings of tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of diversity on the Buddha’s Teaching on Non-Violence.⁴⁹

Buddhism promotes the co-existence of humankind in fulfillment of its global mandate. The religion advocates mindfulness and meditation as these serve as cornerstones to develop inner peace, reduce stress and conflict. Buddhism supports the interconnectedness of all things, and by so doing, it endorses global linkages and unity. As such, the religion fosters peace and conflict resolution through amicable dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding on mindfulness.⁵⁰

One of the tenets of peace in Buddhism is the religion’s fostering of inclusive Institutions, social justice, and good governance of intuitions. This is affected by its establishment of the *saṅgha* that promotes equality, mutual respect, and collective decision-making. The religion also supports education and critical thinking with its assets in analytical skills and emotional intelligence that enable individuals to make informed decisions on *saṅgha* as an inclusive institution, The *Pāḷi* Canon⁵¹ discusses education and critical thinking.⁵²

The Buddhist faith also believes in access to justice by enforcing teachings that pronounce compassion and empathy towards all beings and encourage fairness and justice in human interactions. The religion’s doctrines also associate with restorative justice that does not believe in punishment but encourages forgiveness, rehabilitation, and reparation on compassion and empathy. The *Dhammapāda* (Verses 129-130) discusses fairness and justice.⁵³

VII. BUDDHISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE GLOBE

In a world that faces modernization and globalization, Buddhism faces rapid expansion due to advancements in technology and communication. But the religion also faces threats of modernization such as cyber-attacks, trends of secularization, capitalist ideology, and the influence of consumerism. Despite these challenges, Buddhism prevails with its advocacy for world peace. The

⁴⁸ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals No.16, 2015.

⁴⁹ United Nations: [//sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals), Accessed 20/01/25. See also *Dhp.* 135 and *Mahayana Sutra*).

⁵⁰ United Nations :[//sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals), Accessed 20/01/25. See also The *Dhp.* 37 and *SN (MN.10)*.

⁵¹ *AN* 3.65.

⁵² United Nations <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, Accessed 20/01/25. See also The *Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga*. I. p. 1 - 10.

⁵³ Anonymous, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, Accessed 20/01/25. See also The *PTS (Sn*. I. p. 8).

religion addresses modern challenges by promoting its teachings on peace, compassion, and personal well-being peace, compassion, and personal well-being. Its principles have gained traction in fields like Philosophy, Psychology, Spirituality, Ethics, Metaphysics, and Religion. Buddhism remains relevant, and its impact is felt by both individuals and societies globally.

According to Chandrashekhar Paswan, a Buddhist Professor at Gautam Buddha University, Uttar Pradesh in India, Buddhism conforms to the trends of sustainable development. He upholds that matters of conflict, intolerance, and disharmony are counter-productive, and they stem from desires, hatred, and ignorance. But these can be circumvented by developing confidence, tolerance, and harmony, which are important ingredients for enriching common values and universal ethics. He proposes the promotion of education, dialogue, and social and economic development as hallmarks for the sustainable development of peace in the world.⁵⁴

VIII. BUDDHISM IN ZIMBABWE

Buddhism is practiced in Africa, and the majority of Buddhists are of Asian descent, mostly Chinese, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, or Japanese (Charmaine Lachman 2015). The origins of Buddhism in Zimbabwe are fairly recent, having started in the 20th Century. Historians state that the religion was first introduced by the Western Buddhists mainly from Britain during the colonial times in the 1950s and 60s. These practitioners arrived in small groups, interested in meditation and spiritual development. However, the religion experienced growth and development in the 1970s and 1980s with the introduction of *Theravāda*, *Mahāyāna*, and *Vajrayāna* Buddhists.⁵⁵

In 1980, Zimbabwe attained its independence from Britain, and Buddhism entered a new phase of life. This development saw the government's adoption of a "generous religious policy" that offered freedom of worship to all religions in the country, including Buddhism.⁵⁶ Before this development, the government recognized Christianity as the only religion in the country. This was in fulfillment of the three-pronged missionary policy of settlement in Zimbabwe, that they would bring civilization to the natives through evangelism, education, and medical care.⁵⁷ Christianity became mainstreamed in schools at the expense of other religions. This meant that all other religions, such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Bahai, Jainism, Shintoism, Confucianism, and African. However, after independence in 1980, the country implemented a multi-faith religious policy that granted religious freedom to all faiths; additional religions were excluded from freedom of worship. But the situation was reversed at independence in 1980 when the country offered religious liberty to all religions through the introduction of a multi-faith religious policy.⁵⁸ Since

⁵⁴ Chandrashekhar Paswan (2019), p. 435.

⁵⁵ Druon Khen Rinpoche (2019).

⁵⁶ Antony John Dachs (1973), p. 213.

⁵⁷ Antony John Dachs (1973), p. 213.

⁵⁸ Tabona Shoko (1991), p. 63.

the government attributed the success of the liberation war against the British imperialist government to the ancestral spirits, African Traditional Religion was officially recognized alongside Buddhism and other faiths.

In 1995, the Buddhists in Zimbabwe numbered only 780. In 2011, membership grew, primarily driven by the Tibetan Buddhist community.⁵⁹ The religion expanded with the formation of Buddhist Associations in the country. In modern times, Buddhism has continued to experience steady growth in Zimbabwe. The 2013 constitution of Zimbabwe further upholds this multi-faith religious strata. As it stands, the statistics are Protestant 74.8% (includes Apostolic 37.5%, Pentecostal 21.8%, other 15.5%), Roman Catholic 7.3%, other Christian 5.3%, traditional 1.5%, Muslim 0.5%, other 0.1%, and none 10.5%.⁶⁰ Buddhism is thus featured among the 0.1% recognized religions in the country, but the bottom line remains that it is an officially recognized religion in Zimbabwe.

IX. BUDDHIST CENTRES IN ZIMBABWE

There are several Buddhist centres in Zimbabwe, namely the Harare Buddhist Centre Kagyu, Samy Dzong Harare, and Tara Rokpa Therapy Centre. One notable institution is the Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Centre for World Peace and Health. The centre upholds the beliefs of *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, which places *dharma* at the core of its tenets of peace. They instill in the participants the teachings and practices of Buddhism, particularly the meditation techniques. The centre's drive is on: "Long-term fruits include increased inner-stability, self-awareness and contentment, resulting in one being able to lead a more fulfilled and happier life".⁶¹ The centre is also involved in charity work in the country, such as the institution run by Rockpar Support Network, founded by Akong Tulku Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama and physician.⁶² The practice has a spiritual orientation based on Western Psychotherapy. The Network caters to vulnerable people, particularly disabled people living with or infected by HIV and AIDS, to create a positive change in life.⁶³ The centre also runs a self-help therapy process based on Buddhist philosophy and Western psychological and therapeutic approaches to healing, self-empowerment, and compassionate action.

Conclusion

The paper has discussed Buddhist understanding and approach to peace by unravelling the religion's perspectives of peace, the state of politics, and the doctrine of non-violence. It has also discussed pertinent themes such as health

⁵⁹ RelZim, <https://relzim.org/>, Accessed 18/01/25.

⁶⁰ CIA World Factbook (2021), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/religions/>, Accessed 28/02/25.

⁶¹ Harare Buddhist Centre (2021), <https://www.hararebuddhistcentre.com/>, Accessed 28/02/25.

⁶² Jane Pilosof (2024), <https://www.hararebuddhistcentre.com/>, Accessed 28/02/25.

⁶³ Harare Buddhist Centre (2021), <https://www.hararebuddhistcentre.com/>, Accessed 28/02/25.

and wellbeing, human rights, gender, family, environment, symbols, and sayings that reflect peace. The paper explored issues of Sustainable Development Goals and their relevance to the global context. It ended up by examining a case study of the Buddhist religion in Zimbabwe that helped contextualize the phenomenon of peace in a particular context in Africa. Therefore, the paper has demonstrated that Buddhism is a religion that promotes inner peace for World peace. The religion's beliefs and practices in promoting peace exhibit best practices for supporting unity and inclusivity, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.

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PEACE AND HUMAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PASSIONLESS MIND (VIRĀGA CITTA) IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

In this article, a study is conducted on the Peace and Human Sustainable Development of the Passionless Mind (*virāga citta*) in Theravāda doctrinal teachings, along with its approach to resolving issues based on Buddhist doctrine. This study aims to provide essential guidelines for eradicating the Passionate Mind (*saṅgaṇika citta*), ultimately leading to the cessation of suffering. In this way, we can effectively promote peace and sustainable human development in a meaningful manner. The cause of suffering and the cycle of rebirths primarily originate from the six sense doors, which function as channels influenced by both internal and external factors. These sensory experiences often become sources of attachment, fueling craving (*taṇhā*) and perpetuating the cycle of dukkha. This article provides deep insight into the nature of suffering, shedding light on how to attain solutions to various existential and psychological dilemmas. Human beings enter this world due to ignorance. This ignorance (*avijjā*) is deeply rooted in desire or greed (*lobha*), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), and delusion (*moha*). Additionally, āsava (mental defilements) are closely linked to the psychological process, reinforcing attachment to internal and external phenomena. As a result, individuals struggle to perceive the reality of the Passionless Mind (*virāga citta*), which remains veiled by their conditioned mental constructs. This article explores the profound significance of the Passionless Mind (*virāga citta*) as a fundamental basis for human development and lasting happiness. It clarifies this central concept as understood in early Theravāda Buddhism and highlights its relevance in contemporary discussions on mental purification and personal transformation.

Keywords: *Buddhism, philosophy, Theravāda, mindfulness, meditation, ethics, dharma.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to the concept of Peace and Human Sustainable Development in early Theravāda Buddhism, it has been found that *citta* and *mano*.¹ Even though the five outer faculties have their field and domain, they do not experience each other's field and domain, these have mind (*mano*) as their resort, and mind (*mano*) experiences their fields and domains. The concept of mind and roots or *hetu* determines the moral quality of an intentional state, and it's associated with consciousness and mental factors. The Abhidhamma explains the roots are referred to as '*mūla*', denoting six unwholesome (*akusala*) and wholesome (*kusala*) roots called *lobha mūla*, which means greed-rooted consciousness.²

The function of *citta* is described as consisting purely of moral sense. It is proximately related to the world: 'The world is led around by mind; by mind it's dragged here and there. Mind is one thing that has all under its control.'³ *Citta* is said to possess the characteristic of being 'luminous' (*pabhassara*) and yet defiled by defilements that come from outside (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ*) or liberated from such defilements (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttaṃ*).⁴ It is a field of behavior of the mind. When it arises in an individual, its state is characterized by the defilements.⁵ Or it is bounded by Greed or attachment (*lobha*), Hatred or ill-will (*dosa*), and Delusion or ignorance (*moha*). Therefore, *citta* has to be purified to attain final knowledge.

When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilements, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of *āsava*s Greed or attachment (*lobha*), Hatred or ill-will (*dosa*), and Delusion or ignorance (*moha*).⁶

A root is a mental factor imparting firmness and stability in the *cittas* or *cetasikas* that they are associated with. *Cittas* that have roots are firm and stable like trees, whereas *cittas* without roots are weak and unstable like moss. It can be defined from different views on mankind.

II. BUDDHIST ETHICS APPLY TO SPIRITUAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Buddhist ethical thoughts are built on the basis of the particular conceptions of the life-view, values-view, and liberation-view. The implications of Buddhist ethics consist of three relationships. Here, it is the relationship between individuals stressing the Buddhist Precepts (*sīla*). Here, we can see the relationship between humans and another sentient beings, between individuals and the cosmos, which advocates respect for life and protection

¹ I. B. Horner (tr.), *The Middle Length Saying (Majjhimanikāya)*. vol I, Oxford: PTS, 1954, M. I. 295.

² Dhs. 1252.

³ F. L. Woodward (tr.), *The Book of the Gradual Saying (Aṅguttaranikāya)*, vol I, (Oxford: PTS, 1936). A. I. 177, S. I 39.

⁴ A I 10.

⁵ I. B. Horner (tr.), *The Middle Length Saying (Majjhimanikāya)*. vol I. Oxford: PTS, 1954, MI 91.

⁶ Ibid. MI 23.

of the natural environment – the healthy development between humans and nature. In this respect, ethics is a very important part of Buddhist teachings, as well as the Buddhist approach to reforestation and the completion of life. Buddhist ethics and moral theories these are playing an important role in the history of global civilization and our real life, which is the significance of the peace of human development in the modern world.

According to Buddhist ethics, we can apply this as “To avoid all evil deeds, and to cultivate good deeds, and the last one is, to cleanse one’s mind. This is the teaching of the Blessed One’s.”⁷ The distinction between good and evil becomes a principle of Buddhist ethics and the standard of moral judgment. Buddhism stresses interdependent relationships between people and hence approves of coexistence, mutual prosperity, mutual coordination between individual and another’s interest, individual survival, and social development. Also, Buddhist ethical thoughts could alleviate crises and warn and awaken oneself in the present human development.

Buddhist ethics encourage people to improve the reality of the natural environment, perform efforts beneficial to every sentient being, cultivate good fortune, and bring benefit to all living beings to promote harmony, prosperity, and natural happiness. In this way, we can apply the principles of sustainable development to environmental conservation, ensuring that human actions align with the well-being of all life forms. This perspective aligns with the Buddhist view that humanity does not exist separately from nature but rather as an integral part of the ecosystem. The principle of dependent origination serves as the theoretical foundation of Buddhism, explaining not only the nature of existence but also the interdependence of peace, human development, and environmental conservation. Through this understanding, it becomes clear that the well-being of sentient beings and the sustainability of the environment are interconnected, and ethical responsibility extends beyond human interactions to encompass the entire natural world.

The Buddhist principle of the maturation of *karma* suggests that all sentient beings live within an environment shaped by past actions. According to *kamma* interpretations, mountains, rivers, land, and even the global environment as a whole are all subject to the effects of the prior *kamma* of sentient beings. This idea illustrates the deep interconnection between human actions and environmental conditions, emphasizing that subject and environment are inseparable. Subjective activities inevitably influence changes in the objective environment, a notion that carries profound enlightening and instructive significance. This understanding urges human beings to respect nature, treat it well, and take active measures to protect it. The pursuit of harmony, stability, and development can be found throughout Buddhist ethics, as human-oriented thoughts and good wishes are deeply embedded in Buddhist teachings. These principles illustrate that Buddhist ethics are expressions of humanity’s lived

⁷ Dhṛp. 183: “Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ/kusalassa upasampadā, /sacittapariyodapanam etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.”

experience in the process of survival and human development, making them highly relevant to modern challenges.

According to Buddhaghosa's classic commentarial literature, The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*), Buddhist training is often classified under the comprehensive framework of the threefold training, which consists of proper conduct (*sīla*), meditative engagement (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). These three aspects are not separate but are interdependent, forming a complete system for personal transformation and ethical cultivation. They serve as a pedagogical model for training the entire person – body, speech, and mind – across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The cultivation of *sīla* establishes the foundation of ethical life and prepares a conducive atmosphere for *samādhi*, as inner purity and moral discipline help stabilize the mind. In turn, *samādhi* strengthens concentration, creating a firm background for the development of *paññā*, which represents wisdom and the ultimate understanding of reality. Thus, in Buddhist teachings, the holy life consists of three stages, each serving as a necessary condition for the next. This integrated approach to ethical and spiritual development reflects Buddhism's emphasis on both personal enlightenment and collective well-being, making it a transformative path not only for individual practitioners but also for the broader human community.⁸

According to Buddhist teachings of 'Three Gradual Training (*sikkhā*)', the Blessed One emphasizes on development of wisdom, and the attainment of wisdom does not come at once, but by a gradual training (*anupubba sikkha*), a gradual working out of cause (*anupubba kriya*), a gradual practice (*anupubba patipada*).⁹ This training is trained by oneself to gradual step by step on the Ariyan way.¹⁰ In the *Udāna*, the Blessed One explains as follows;

Just as, O Bkiihkus, the mighty ocean is of one taste, the taste of salt, even so, O Bhikkhus, this Dhamma is of one taste, the taste of liberation (*vimutti*).¹¹ In the *Dhammapada*, there is another explanation as follows:

Following this path, you will make an end of suffering. Having discovered how to pull out the thorn of lust, I make known the path.¹²

According to the nature of Dhamma, it has to be lived in and practised according to these triple trainings. There is absolutely no deviation from these trainings following as *sīla*, *Samadhi*, and *Pañña*. In the *Ānguttara Nikāya*, the Blessed One explains as follows;

Virtuous conduct, Ānanda, has the benefit and reward of non-remorse.

⁸ D.III. 220; A.I. 229.

⁹ M.I. 480; M. II. 174: "Na āyatkeneva aññārādhanam vadāmi, apica anupubba-sikkhā anupubba-kiriya anupubba-patipadā aññārādhanam hoti."

¹⁰ M.I. 479.

¹¹ *Udāna*. Peter Masefield, (tr.), Oxford: PTS, 1994, p. 67.

¹² *Dhp*. 275: "Etañhi tumhe paṭipannā/ dukkhass'antaṃ karissatha/ Akkhāto ve mayā maggo/ aññāya sallasanthanam."

Non-remorse has the benefit and reward of joy. Joy has the benefit and reward of delight. Delight has the benefit and reward of tranquillity. Tranquillity has the benefit and reward of happiness. Happiness has the benefit and reward of concentration. Concentration has the benefit and reward of knowledge and vision of things as they are. Knowledge and vision of things as they are having the benefit and reward of disenchantment. Disenchantment has the benefit and reward of dispassion has the benefit and reward of the knowledge and vision of liberation in this way. Ānanda, virtuous conduct brings the succeeding qualities to perfection, for reaching step by step the fruit of Arahantship.¹³

In this world, there is no shortcut to get full liberation from the *samsara*. We need continuous practice, step by step. Just like the Buddha advised to Ananda that the virtuous conduct brings the successful qualities to perfection for reaching the final liberation. Therefore, we need to practice these triple trainings step by step to develop our morality. Because morality, concentration, and wisdom are the path to final liberation. If we practice these trainings, like the morality will help to get more concentration and the good concentration would bring the result of the wisdom. So, the wisdom will finally help one person to know the right path for the destruction of human desire.

III. THE NATURE OF PASSIONLESS MIND (*VIRĀGA CITTA*)

It is very important to clarify and understand the basic nature of the mind before presenting the analysis of the passionless mind. According to the *Samyutta Nikāya*, it is explained as follows: “I teach you all. Listen to it, O monks, what is all? Eye-from, ear-sound, nose-smell, tongue-taste, body-touch, mind-mind states, this is meant by all.”¹⁴

According to the explanation, a person has twelve sense-objects (*dvādasāyatana*), and these twelve sense-objects represent the world. We can find more explanation in the *Rohitassa Sutta* as follows: “I say that without having reached the end of the world there is no making an end to suffering. It is, friend, in just this fathom-high carcass endowed with perception and mind that I make known the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.”¹⁵

According to the *Migajāla Sutta*, these six sense organs of, mind can be considered the main faculty. Also, there is more explanation we can find in the *Dhammapada* as follows: “All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the

¹³ A.V. 311; A. III. 19, 20.

¹⁴ Hare, E.M., *Kindred Saying*, Part. IV. PTS, London, 1917, S. IV. 15.

¹⁵ Bodhi Bhikkhu, tr., “The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (*Samyutta Nikāya*)”, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1914-1998, p. 158.

Leon Feer, M., ed., “*Samyutta Nikāya*”, Part I. Oxford, PTS, 1991, S I 62: “*Imasmiññeva vyāmamatte kaḷevare saññimhi samanake lokaṃ ca paññāpemi lokasamudayaṃ ca lokanirodhaṃ ca lokanirodhagāminim ca paṭipadanti.*”

ox that draws the carriage.”¹⁶

It is explained that the mind is the forerunner of all states; mind is chief, mind made are they. Furthermore, the condition of mind is explained as follows: “Those who bridle their mind which travels far, moves about alone, is without a body, and hides in the chamber (of the heart), will be free from the bonds of *Māra* (the tempter).”¹⁷

It is explained as, faring far, wandering alone, bodiless, lying in the cave, is the mind. In Pāli, we called *citta* means thought or mind; in Sanskrit, it is mentioned as *mano*, or *cit*, the same as Pāli thought or mind. According to *the Manual of Abhidhamma*, it is explained as synonymous with *citta* terms like *citta*, *ceta*, *cittuppāda*, *nāma*, *mana*, and *viññāṇa*.¹⁸

The nature of mind is based on the remaining sense organs and it receives the sense objects. What is the original nature of the mind that visualizes various objects? According to the *Āṅuttara Nikāya*, it is explained as the nature of mind is fundamentally resplendent, that mind is naturally pure and radiant but is defiled, polluted by the external impurities, influence of sense and mental faculties or defilements. While defining the nature of mind, the Blessed One explains as follows: “This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleansed of taints that come from without. This, the educated Ariyan disciple, understands not as it is. Wherefore for the educated disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare.”¹⁹

No object in this world can move faster than the mind. It is very difficult to find an example of the speed of mind. The mind has been further explained in the *Dhammapada* as follows: “As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back.”²⁰

The flickering, fickle mind is difficult to guard, difficult to control, and also furthermore explained as follows: “As a fish taken from his watery home and

¹⁶ Max Müller, F., tr., “The Dhammapada, A collection of Verses”. PTS, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1898, p. 3: “*Monopubbāṅgamā dhammā - manoseṭṭhā manomayā/ Manasā ce paduṭṭheṇa - bhāsati vā karoti vā/ Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti - cakkam’va vahato padaṃ*” -Von Hinüber, O. and Norman, K. R., ed., *Dhammapada*. PTS, Oxford, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 12: “*dūraṅgamaṃ ekacaraṃ asarīraṃ guhāsayaṃ/ ye cittaṃ saññameṣanti mokkhanti Mārabandhanā*.” -Von Hinüber, O. and Norman, K. R., ed., *Dhammapada*. PTS, Oxford, 1995, p. 11.

¹⁸ Narada Maha Thera, ed., “A Manual of Abhidhamma, Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha”, Published by the Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1979, p. 24.

¹⁹ Woodward, F. L., tr., “The Book of the Gradual Sayings (*Āṅuttara Nikāya*)” vol. I. London, PTS, 1970, p. 8. -Richard Morris, Rev., ed., Part I, London, PTS, 1961, p. 10: “*Pabbassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ taṃ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. taṃ sutavā ariyasāvako yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Tasmā sutavato ariyasāvakassa cittabhāvanā atthi ti vadāmi ti*.” A I 10.

²⁰ Max Müller, F., tr., “The Dhammapada, A collection of Verses”. PTS, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1898, p. 12: “*Phandanaṃ capalaṃ cittaṃ - dūrakkhaṃ dunnivārayaṃ*” -Von Hinüber, O. and Norman, K. R., ed., PTS, Oxford, 1995, p. 10.

thrown on the dry ground, our thought trembles all over in order to escape the dominion of *Māra* (the tempter).²¹

Like a fish that is drawn from its watery abode and thrown upon land, even so, does this mind flutter, hence should the realm of the passion be shunned, and also there is another explanation as follows: “It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it listed, a tamed mind brings happiness.”²²

The mind is difficult to control; swiftly and lightly, it moves and lands wherever it pleases. The passion-bound mind is like an oasis for defilements. The mind is naturally movable, it is fickle, and controlling this nature of mind is subjugation. The uncontrolled mind always generates passions. Here, the factors like passion (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*) and in addition to these jealousy, envy (*isā*), anger (*kodha*), intoxication (*mada*), conceit (*māna*), sloth and drowsiness (*thinamiddha*), excitement and flurry or worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), all these factors defile the mind.²³

According to Buddhism, there is no escape from this mind, which is full of defilements. It is constantly burning with the fire of lust, hatred, and delusion, etc. *nibbāna* is shown as the extinction of this fire. According to *Samyutta Nikāya*, the *nibbāna* is explained as “*yo kho bhikkhu rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, mohakkhaya idam brahmacariyapariyosānan ti Nibbāna*.”²⁴ That mind which is freed from lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) is called the passionless mind. The mind that is freed from passion is the best. Passionless is the best of norms. *Virāgo settho dhammānam*²⁵ here, *virāga* is often called *nibbāna*. *Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbupadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhaya virāga nirodho Nibbānam*.²⁶ In order to get rid of the above defilements, the mind should be passionless.

The centered of mind is taking good and bad objects through six sense organs, which gives rise to impurities as well. It is explained as the expectation of the passionless mind. Such a mind, calm, tranquil, endowed with equanimity, is transcendental. The nature of such a dispassionate mind is to be attentive (*yoniso manasikāro*) and to know things as they truly are (*yathābhūta*).

²¹ Max Müller, F., tr., “The *Dhammapada*, A collection of Verses”. PTS, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1898, p. 12: “*Vārījo va thale khitto – okamokata ubbhato/ Pariphandat’idaṃ cittaṃ – mārādheyyaṃ pahātaṃ*.” -Von Hinüber, O. and Norman, K.R., ed., PTS, Oxford, 1995, p. 10.

²² Max Müller, F., tr., The *Dhammapada*, A collection of Verses: “*Dunniggaḥassa lahuṇo – yatthakāmanipātino/ Cittassa damatho sādhu - cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ*.”

²³ Leon Feer, M., ed., *Samyutta Nikāya*. V. Oxford, PTS, 1991, SV 6: “*Yassa saddhā ca paññā ca dhammā yuttā sadā dhuraṃ, hirī isā mano yottaṃ sati ārakkaśārathi/ Ratho silaparikkhāro, jhānakkho cakkaviriyo, upekkhā dhurasamādhi, anicchā parivāraṇaṃ/ Abyāpādo avihiṃsā, viveko yassa āvudhaṃ, titikkhā dhammasannāho, yogakkhemāya vattati Etad attaniyam bhūtaṃ, brahmayānaṃ anuttaraṃ, niyyanti dhīrā lokamhā, aññadattu jayanti*.”

²⁴ Leon Feer, M., ed., “*Samyutta Nikāya*”, Part V. Oxford, PTS, 1991, SV 8.

²⁵ Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pāli English Dictionary*. PTS, 1921, p. 634.

²⁶ Leon Feer, M., ed., “*Samyutta Nikāya*”, Part I. Oxford, PTS, 1991, SI 136.

According to the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, it explains the nature of mind as the vision, knowledge, wisdom, insight, and light arose.²⁷

The five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) it is the supramundane consciousness that enables one to transcend this world of mind and body. These are destructive, subject to change, bound to the world of sense-desire, in the realm of sense desire, the realm of form, and the realm of non-form minds, the condition of passionless mind cannot be expected of such a mind that belongs to the realm of sense-desire. But this state of passionlessness can be found in the transcendental mind.²⁸

IV. PASSIONLESS MIND CAN BE SPIRITUAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

According to Theravāda Buddhism, it is explained that by contemplating our stream of consciousness in meditation, we can be led naturally to the spacious experience of mind. As we observe our thoughts carefully, we will notice that they arise, abide, and disappear. There is no need to forcefully expel thoughts from our minds forcefully, just as each thought arises from the clear nature of a passionless mind.

The Buddhist concept of man is universally accepted, so in Buddhism, it is further emphasized, elaborated, and strengthened. The concept of a being includes all beings, yet the teaching about man is very important. Therefore, man must get a special place among other beings. Man is called a being because he is attached to the five sensual pleasures. A being who is attached to these five sensual (*rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, and phottahabba*) pleasures is called a man.

This definition is common to both man and other living beings; unless a being is redeemed from suffering, he is attached to the five sensual pleasures. We are worldlings (*puthujjana*) due to our attachments to worldly conditions. We know that Arahants are not ordinary beings because they overcome all sensual pleasure. It is mention in the Ratana Sutta, “*ye puggalā attha satampasattā*”²⁹

Man is inheriting an evaluative intellect. Only human beings can evaluate ethics. Men who belong to all religions have evaluative abilities. Therefore, the man can evaluate both wholesome and unwholesome deeds, good and bad, merit and demerit. The concept of man and animal advocated by a sage is as follows: “Food, sleep, fear, and sexual activity are common to both man and animal; but righteousness alone is superior to all these things. Being utterly devoid of righteousness, one is regarded to be equal to and animal.”³⁰

²⁷ .. Ibid, S V 424: “*Cakkhum udapādi, nānam udapādi, paññāudapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.*”

²⁸ Edward Müller, ed., *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, London, PTS, 1978, p. 3. *Sanidassanā dhammā, anidassanā dhammā. sappatighā dhammā, appatighā dhammā. Rūpino dhammā, arūpino dhammā. Lokiyā dhammā, lokuttarā dhammā. Kenaci viññeyyā dhammā, kenaci na viññeyyā dhammā.* (Dhs. 3.)

²⁹ *Sutta-Nipāta*. (ed.) Andersen, Dines, and Helmers Smith. vol. II. Oxford: PTS, 1997, p. 32.

³⁰ Narayan Rāma, *Hitopdesa*, Chaukhambha Oriental and antiquarian books, Varanasi, 1984, p. 6: “*Āhāranidrā bhaya maithunascha,/ Sāmānyametat pasubhih narānām,/ Dharmohi*

According to explanation of the Hitopadesa, man and animal can be identical with one another. Nevertheless, the basic difference lies in the observance of righteousness. Man can act in accordance with ethical norms. He is more sensible than an animal in so far as his creative power is concerned. An animal does not possess such a creative power.

The Blessed One has explained in the *Samyutta Nikāya* that 'all you have to know is what you are, how you exist. You don't have to believe in anything. Just understand your mind: how it works, how attachment and desire arise, how ignorance arises, and where emotions come from. It is sufficient to know the nature of all that; that alone can bring you happiness and peace. Thus, your life can change completely; everything turns upside down. What you once interpreted as horrible can become beautiful' as follows: "Greed, hatred, and delusion – Arisen from within oneself. Injure the person of evil mind – As its fruit destroys the reed."³¹

A being is only a conventional term. Such an individuality does not exist. After fixing different parts together, we identified it as a chariot. When all aggregates are put together, the convention of entity comes into being, which is a wrong notion. According to the early Buddhist philosophy, beings are subjected to suffering. This suffering exists and is extinguished or ceased. Early Buddhist philosophy demonstrates that beings are bound by suffering.

According to the Theravāda and Mahayana Buddhism, it has explained about the *Bodhisatta* and *Mahāsatta*, the term *satta* is generally used. The meaning of *Bodhisatta*, "*Bodhiyāsatto Bodhisatto*," is fully attached to enlightenment. And also, Another meaning of *Bodhisatta* is called 'Bodhi-being'. A being destined to attain the fullest enlightenment of Buddhahood. A *Bodhisatta* passes through many existences and many stages of progress before the last birth in which he fulfils his great destiny.³²

The Buddhist philosophy elucidates *satta* without any speculation. This entity is neither self-made nor made by others. Accordingly, the being is not a creation of God. Buddhist philosophy reveals the fact that a being is not an accidental creation; it comes into being due to cause and effect.³³

The reason for an understanding of causality being so important in Buddhist thought and practice is that it relates directly to sentient beings' feelings of pain and pleasure and the other experiences that dominate their lives, which arise not only from internal mechanisms but also external causes and conditions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand not only the internal workings of mental and cognitive causation but also their relationship to the external material world.

tesāṃ adhiko viśeso/ Dharmohinā pasubhiḥ samānā." V. 25.

³¹ Bhikkhu. Bodhi, tr. *Samyutta Nikāya*, vol. I. Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1896-1998, p. 189.

³² T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pāli English Dictionary*, PTS, Motilal Benarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1993, p. 491.

³³ D. III. 137: "*Nayidam attā katamā bimbam – Nayidam parakatam agham/ Hetum paticca sambhutam – Hetu bhaṅgā nirujjhati.*"

The fact that our inner experiences of pleasure and pain are in the nature of subjective mental and cognitive states is very obvious to us. But how those inner subjective events relate to external circumstances and the material world poses a critical problem. The question of whether there is an external physical reality independent of sentient beings' consciousness and mind has been extensively discussed by Buddhist thinkers. If a person has a calm and stable mind, this influences his or her attitude and behavior in relation to human development. In other words, if someone remains in a state of mind that is calm, tranquil, and peaceful, external surroundings or conditions can cause them only a limited disturbance.

V. CONCLUSION

The prime expectation of Buddhist thought is that mankind becomes aware of the reality of life as well as the problems revealed through this awareness. The Buddha explains in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* that "*The five-holding-aggregates are suffering (pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā dukkhā)*." The term *dukkha* (sorrow) used in the Pāli Canonical texts reveals the reality of life and the problems confronted by man. It is considered that the Blessed One appears in this world in order to make mankind fully conscious of *dukkha* (sorrow), thereby illuminating the true nature of existence. Buddhism intends to show the path that leads to the elimination of sorrow, guiding individuals toward a state of liberation from suffering and attachment.

Accordingly, an ethical and psychological path has been directed at this interpretation, indicating that Buddhism is not only a philosophy of passionlessness but also a guide to passionless conduct. It encourages individuals to transcend their cravings and delusions, leading to a purified state of mind. Buddhism itself is a study of man as well as a study of the complex environment that surrounds us. It is widely acknowledged that Buddhist theoretical and pragmatic teachings bear direct relevance to human development as they emphasize self-discipline, moral integrity, and mental purification. Through such teachings, individuals cultivate wisdom (*paññā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and mental discipline (*samādhi*), which collectively contribute to the betterment of both personal and societal well-being.

It is very evident that Dhammas always arise not as solitary phenomena but as combinations or clusters. This is true of both mind and matter. Here, whenever consciousness arises, together with it arise at least seven mental factors, namely: contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, psychic life, and attention. Each of these factors interdependently functions as part of a dynamic process, demonstrating that even the smallest psychic unit or moment of consciousness is a complex co-relational system. Thus, human cognition and emotions are not isolated but are interconnected, shaping one's perception of reality and contributing to the formation of karmic tendencies.

According to the *Dhammapada*, it is explained that *santutṭhī paramaṃ dhanam* - contentment is the highest wealth. This highest satisfaction exists beyond the limitations of nature and death. Human beings struggle to find lasting joy due to their fear of impermanence and mortality. However, when

one transcends the attachment to the physical and conditioned existence, they discover a profound peace that is beyond ordinary suffering. The realization of this truth allows one to dwell in a state of contentment, where the mind is free from greed, hatred, and delusion. When we go beyond nature and death, the highest satisfaction and happiness will exist in the nature of the passionless mind. This is the essence of spiritual **Human Development**, a state where wisdom and equanimity prevail, leading to a harmonious existence both within oneself and with the world.

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GLOBAL WELL-BEING & THE HOUSEHOLDER: A STUDY FROM BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

This paper examines global well-being from a Buddhist perspective, emphasizing the interconnectedness between individual and collective harmony. Despite scientific and technological advancements, modern society faces crises such as pandemics, wars, and environmental degradation, stemming from inner turmoil within individuals. The study highlights the household as a microcosm of the global structure, asserting that ethical living and spiritual discipline contribute to stability and peace. By exploring Buddhist principles such as *śīla* (morality), *samādhi* (meditation), and *prajñā* (wisdom), as well as the Hindu Karma theory, the paper outlines a path to individual and societal balance. The Eightfold Path and ethical precepts guide moral behavior, promoting non-violence, compassion, and mindfulness as essential tools for well-being. Furthermore, the study discusses the role of ethics and morality in religion and everyday life, illustrating how disciplined actions foster positive transformation. Conclusively, the research advocates for a shift from materialistic pursuits toward spiritual enlightenment, proposing that collective harmony begins with self-awareness and virtuous conduct.

Keywords: *Global well-being, household ethics, Buddhism, Karma theory, Eightfold Path, morality, mindfulness, compassion, non-violence, spiritual discipline.*

I. PLEASURE-PAIN AND ANXIETY OF THE PRESENT

The second decade of the 21st century has been characterised by an apocalyptic disease in the form of the Covid Pandemic, followed by war in Ukraine and the Arab world. Despite great progress and advancements in science, technology, and networks of relationship, the world has been going through intense sufferings and pains and going through a collective paranoia. The dream of ultimate progress and development has given way to sombre helplessness. This is despite our collective success in fighting the

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Covid pandemic. The world of Science and technology came in quick time to develop a synthetic vaccine against Covid. However, the cover-up, the Vaccine politics, and primordial nationalism hindered a global coordinated response. However, the Post-pandemic period saw senseless violence and war, which only underscore that the simmering violence at the global level is merely an outward manifestation of deeply troubling violence and rumbling within the individual. The global violence is merely the aggregate projection of the deep violence and anxiety from within.

Racial, ethnic, flare-ups which are largely products of – be it individual and collective – virtually have put the world in a whirlpool of mess manifested as in the global conflict and warming and endemic conflict over resources. This unsustainable thinking has arrested the progressive and constructive ideas to be exercised in one platform. Observing the precarious situation of the present world, one would be wise enough to realise that the quest to cling to materiality is largely due to the new eschatology of secular material progress, which is antithetical to the old wisdom of ancient religions like Buddhism. The latter is based on morality and ethics relating to beliefs, customs, practices, and tradition of a group or society.

II. HOUSEHOLD AS MICROCOSM OF THE GLOBAL MACROCOSM: SYMBIOTIC RELATIONS BETWEEN COSMOS AND INDIVIDUAL

Since a householder is a micro unit of the entire globe, it would be a right effort to train, to educate, and to create awareness in them to bear the brunt of this type of adverse challenges. There are certain hindrances which a householder encounters in life to maintain equanimity and equilibrium in all states of affairs. They are the negative aspects of human life, i.e., desire, delusion, violence, anger, hatred, jealousy, intolerance, suspicion, restlessness, laziness, selfishness and egoism, etc. Other outstanding obstacle in the present scenario is the spread of COVID-19 pandemic that seems to dilute the moral saying of the spiritual preceptors like Lord Srikrishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavir Jaina, and Jesus Christ taught: “Hate the disease, but not the diseased one. Serve that fellow with utmost care, loving-kindness, sympathy, compassion, and other necessary help according to your ability.” Whether a householder lives in a nuclear or extended family, the absence of even one of these virtues can lead to fragmentation. This highlights that peace, prosperity, growth, development, awareness, and enlightenment – whether at the societal, national, or global level – are all rooted in the well-being of the householder. A stable household fosters a harmonious world, transforming negativity into a pleasant, graceful, and compassionate environment where unity, integrity, and solidarity thrive in diversity.

Though following the doctrines and principles of ancient teachers may seem outdated in this supersonic age, they remain as fresh as a gentle breeze and will continue to hold relevance for generations to come. To test this, one might explore Lord Buddha’s Eightfold Path and the Karma theory of Hindu tradition.

This paper explores how Buddhist principles such as *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā* contribute to an individual's holistic spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. It outlines various Buddhist methods for achieving mindfulness and tranquility while emphasizing how individual well-being fosters a harmonious, non-violent, truthful, and compassionate world. By disseminating loving-kindness, sympathy, and virtue, these teachings help alleviate the suffering of millions, ultimately paving the way for a golden era free from anger, jealousy, hatred, egoism, selfishness, violence, and delusion.

III. KARMA THEORY AND INDIVIDUAL WELL BEING IN BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM

Buddhism and Karma theory of Lord Srikrishna are perhaps unique among the world's philosophical traditions which have explored the dynamics of interdependence and how systematically and sustainably to orient those dynamics towards the resolution of trouble and suffering. Since the well-being of the householder is interconnected with the well-being of the globe, the outstanding determining factors are what sort of social responsibility is to be borne out by the householder when the world is on the brink of nuclear war. There is exploitation, corruption, humiliation, and injustice prevailing in every country. Several uncountable wars persist in different forms and various parts of the world, leading millions and millions of people to be worst hit by territorial expansion with imperial design, struggle from poverty, starvation, and poor health. In addition to it, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to arrest the loving kindness, sympathy, compassion, kindness, and mutual help. What is the cause of these wars or sufferings when the world is resourceful enough with food, wealth, and all other required amenities? Jack Kornfield believes that "the cause is greed, prejudice, hatred, religion, hatred of different skin colour and different customs, we like our country, family, our culture, and religion, and our type. So there is hoarding, and there is grasping, greed, hatred, and ignorance."¹ It is the essential need of the time to work for the dilution of anti-human feelings.

The well-being for the householder should be shaped by global currents of every imaginable type of material good, service, information, and knowledge. In addressing these concerns, one's approach has been to clarify the values, the intentions, and practices animating prevailing ways of thinking about responding to these and the world. Emergent realities and to reflect on what it would endanger a value coordinating redirection of the interdependencies constitutive of both the householder and the globe is the matter of discussion. The potentials of Buddha's Eightfold Path and *Karma* theory of Lord Srikrishna for enriching evaluative engagement with the householder lie in how the approaching third decade of the 21st century global realities will cooperate with this idea when the emerging trend appears to destabilise the

¹ Kornfield, Jack, *The Eightfold Path for the House Holder*, Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., Berkeley, 1995, p. 6.

order, discipline, ethics, and morality. Ethics have four descriptive aspects, i.e., thought on the bases and justification of moral guidelines (normative ethics), and on the meaning of moral terms (*meta-ethics*), specific moral guidelines (applied ethics), and how people behave (descriptive ethics).² Defining ethics as a “moral” statement, David Little and Sumner Twiss state that it addresses problems of cooperation among humans. It gives “action-guide” for individuals and groups to initiate, preserve or extend some form of cooperation, by guiding actions, character, emotions, attitudes, etc., that impinge on this. Morality is “other-regarding”, and focused on the effect of our actions, etc. on others.³

Little and Twiss consider a religious statement as one that expresses acceptance of a set of beliefs, attitudes and practices based on a notion of sacred source of values and guidance, that function to resolve the “ontological problems of interpretability.”⁴ Analysing the role of religion in human life, Harvey mentions that “religion is focused on making sense of life, including suffering, death and evil, to help people to understand, and resolve the human predicament. Morality and ethics can exist apart from religion, for example, in humanism and utilitarianism, or ethics can be integrated into a religious system.”⁵ Moral “action-guides” sometimes conflict with each other, i.e, religion *versus* spiritualism. Conscience sometimes pricks the mind and thought to tell a lie to protect somebody else for the welfare of mankind. On the other hand, religion is not averse to telling a lie or half lie for the moral victory of mankind when there is a conflict or war arises between righteousness and unrighteousness. One classic example is found from the Great Epic *Mahabharatq*’s story that Droṇāchārya, who became the commander-in-chief of Kaurava army after the fall of Bhishma, was an invincible and formidable warrior who killed king Drupad of Panchal, king Virat of Matsya, Satyajit and causing a great devastation in the Pandava’s army on 15th day of the war. As it was not possible to get rid of Droṇa-so long he was armed, Śrīkrṣṇa advised the Pandavas to resort to a trick to disarm him. Since Droṇa had too much weakness and absolute attachment for his only son Aswathāmā, the news of the latter’s death could only dishearten and demoralise him to the extent of dropping the arms. Despite Arjuna’s protest, Yudhisthir, who was called an incarnation of *Dharma* and who never told a lie, agreed to do that telling, “If no other way to restore Dharma is open, I will carry the weight of this sin on my shoulders.” On instruction of Srikrishna,⁶ Bhima killed the mountain like elephant called Aswathama who belonged to Malava chief Indravarma and moved to the centre of the field shouting he had killed Aswathama. The

² Harvey, Peter, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, p. 2.

³ Little, Davis & Twiss, Sumner. B, *Comparative Religious Ethics: A New Method*, Harper & Row, New York, 1998, p. 28 - 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵ Harvey, 2000, p. 2.

⁶ Mbh, Droṇaparva, p. 115.

distressed Droṇa on his query to know the truth from Yudhishthir got the reply that “*Aswathamāhatahitinarovakuñjarava*” (Yes Aswathama is dead - and then he murmured-, I do not know whether it is a man or elephant) after which he dropped the weapons and sat in meditation and was beheaded by Dhrishṭadyumn, the commander-in-chief of the Pandavas.⁷

IV. BUDDHIST MORALITY IN DAILY LIFE

Morality and ethics can be integrated into religion, or can exist apart from it, e.g. in humanism or utilitarianism, but simultaneously it maintains a common objective, i.e. to achieve the welfare of others, or not to harm others. Ācārya Nāgārjuna⁸ in his letter to Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi mentions that “morality is said to be the foundation of all virtues, just as the earth is (the support of both) animate and inanimate things.” For experimentation, a phrase “do not kill” is to be taken. Asaṅga, a Mahāyānist, explaining the essence of ethics, tells that “To correctly receive it from someone, to have a quite purified intention, to make correction after failure, and to avoid failure by generating respect and remaining mindful after that.”⁹ Considering from Buddhist perspectives, it may be analysed that the effect of actions on the welfare of others moves often more imperceptibly from ethical concerns, relating to the material welfare of others, to more “spiritual” ones such as self-discipline and renunciation, though these may, in turn, have ethical spin-offs. Harvey (2000, II) believes that morality and ethics as a religious statement have produced a set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices based on the source of value and guidance, which have far-reaching consequences.¹⁰ Undoubtedly, it is noted that the practice of Buddha’s teachings, through generations, is helping people first to develop a calmer, more integrated, and compassionate personality, and then make aware of restricting delusions: delusions which cause attachment and suffering for the individual. Buddha’s teaching is moving with new dynamics with different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in different periods. It is the consequences of the Buddha’s advice to the *Kālāma*¹¹ that they should reject those states, i.e., old sayings, traditions and customs, speculative reasoning, personal preferences, what they think to be true, or respect for a particular teacher, if it is conducive to harm and suffering.

Buddha’s explanation to the *Kālāma* people made to convince them that avarice (*lobha*), hate (*doṣa*) and illusion (*moha*), the three states, are the sole factor for harming an individual. Being the victim of one of the states, he or

⁷ Maharshi Vyasa-deva, Mahabharat, Dronaparva, Sloka. 115 - 116.

⁸ Jamspal, Chopel & Santana, 1978, XVI.

⁹ Tatz, M, *Asaṅga’s Chapter on Ethics, with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa*, Studies in Asian Thought and Religion, Vol.4 Edwin Mellen Press, Lewinston, Queenston, 1986, p. 47.

¹⁰ Harvey, Peter, op.cit, p. 2.

¹¹ Woodward, F. L. & Hare, E. M. (tr), *Aṅguttara Nikāya (A) Kālāma-Sutta*, vol.1 (*The Books of Gradual Sayings*, in 5 volumes), London, PTS, p. 188-193. *Kālāma-Sutta* is one of the volumes of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya (A)* which is translated into English in 5 volumes by F. L. Woodward and E. M. Hare.

she commits heinous criminal activities, such as killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling lies, and encouraging others to do likewise, so that he or she suffers for a long time.¹² Buddha suggests that one who follows or practices the Eightfold Path would never succumb to these three harmful states. Similarly, Srikrishna explains to Arjun that one who practices right karma, which is otherwise known as right dharma, never falls a victim to the above said states. *Dharma* (Sanskrit) or *dhamma* (Pāli) is unanimously accepted to signify the same spirit through the universe. It is a law that guides ethics, morality, and conduct.¹³ It is not difficult to practice Eightfold Path in everyday life. It needs a strong willpower. Her shock explains that indeed, this understanding could be seen as an operational definition of the root meaning of wisdom (*prāñjā*) as one of the three interlocking dimensions of Buddhist practice along with attentive virtuosity (*samādhi*) and moral clarity (*śīla*).¹⁴

Śīla (discipline or ethical living) constituting three aspects of Eightfold Path, i.e., right speech, right action and right Livelihood, undoubtedly purifies or controls outward behaviour of mankind that he/she will be free from remorse and blame by renouncing unwholesome behaviour and cultivating wholesome behaviour. Kornfiel believes Śīla in one aspect signifies self-control or restraints and non-harming and on the other, its positive dimension is loving and caring.¹⁵ Let Buddha's right speech be discussed both from the eastern and western perspectives. Speech has enormous and tremendous power: It can make a foe to a dear friend and a dear friend to a foe; and, a soft, sweet, and truthful word can make one to sleep comfortably. As some foul or false words make someone enraged, angry, and lose their temper, similarly, the honest and soft words can heal up the sick physique and troubled mind and mentality. Further, Kornfield clarifies that the rightful words hailed from wisdom, from the heart, from the eye can make all kinds of things clear to us, can help us to see, to let go, to discover, to awaken our self-consciousness.¹⁶ One has to follow two principles to practice Right Speech; first, the words should be true and sweet with a tinge of love and compassion that would obviously bring joy and equanimity; and, secondly, they should be kind and helpful. Sometimes brutal honesty in words embarrasses some personalities or puts someone in an awkward position, and it does not become helpful at all, rather it creates trouble or suffering. There is a proverb in Odia language that "*vachanekidāridrytā*" which means no misery should be made in uttering honey like words while talking to others. So, it would be wise to avoid brutal honesty.¹⁷

¹² Harvey, op.cit., p. 10.

¹³ Kornfield, Jack, op.cit., p. 1.

¹⁴ Herschok, Peter D, *Buddhism in Public Sphere*, Routledge, Talor&Francis Group, London & Newyork, 2006, p. 7.

¹⁵ Kornfield, Jack, op.cit., p. 30.

¹⁶ *Ibdi*. p. 30. For example, while speaking to someone, a person has to utter the words like this, "I will tell you just what I think right and true, may it be helpful or not".

¹⁷ Odia language is the mother of people of Odisha, one of the eastern state in India.

In the *Anguttara Nikāya*¹⁸ it is mentioned that lying leads to present you as a liar, speaking spiteful things about a person leads to breaking up friendship and relationship, speaking words bitterly seems to listen to unpleasant sounds; and garrulous talks might be unacceptable like ineffective speech. In analysing the role of speech in this universe, it would be rational to speak that our society, our nation, our friendship, our love, the law and order, our relationship, the world around us, is created by an agreement through our communication or words. Violence, jealousy, lying, divisive or harsh words, anger and hatred must be avoided from one's speech, thought and deed.

The next aspect is Right Action, which is the key dimension in *Śīla* and principal theory of Bhagavad Gītā and Upanishads. Its fundamental quality is *ahimsā*, or non-harming. Both the Hindu and Buddhist sacred literature state that one can become an animal, or become a spirit (ghost), according to the degree of deeds. Some may ridicule this statement saying that what religion will do in the present supersonic era. Here, Gandhi's statement appears to be relevant: "To come to the heart of consciousness or truth one must be able to think the meanest creature as one self. And those that think that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."¹⁹

To judge from a pragmatic approach, it is obviously found that the moment you hurt someone through your actions, or your words, you are in pain. Buddha's saying "to abstain from evil actions and encouraging others to do so leads to heavenly rebirth."²⁰ It may be interpreted that the practice of the right action makes one's present life as pleasurable and delightful as one expects in heaven. Even if one can perceive the results of the evil actions in the existing life, e.g, to kill or harm to living beings is to be punished either with loss of life or to be languished in the jail; the act of stealing leads to loss of wealth; to commit the sensual misconduct incurs rivalry and hatred from others; to get intoxicated leads to commit insane activities.²¹ Similarly, if one strikes living beings might fall into sickness; anger on the tip of nose presents you as a quarrelsome personality; jealousy and spitefulness makes a man irrelevant in character; a miser is in real sense is a poor being; a supercilious haughty and disrespectful person is considered to be a man of low origin; and, one is considered imprudent if he does not distinguish between what is morally wholesome or unwholesome leads to being weak in wisdom. All the opposite good actions make your life heavenly both in the present and the next life.²² One would be gainer in many ways, if one leads a virtuous and ethical life, i.e., earning wealth through diligence; carving a good reputation displaying moral purity; sticking to self confidence in all situations without fear of reproach or punishment; to concentrate deeply on

¹⁸ A., vol. IIV p. 247 - 8.

¹⁹ Kornfield, op.cit., p. 38.

²⁰ A, p. 306 - 308.

²¹ *Ibid*, IV, p. 247 - 248.

²² Horner, I. B. (trans), *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN), (*Middle Length Sayings* in 3 Volumes), vol. III, London, PTS, 1954 - 59, p. 203 - 206.

meditation; and to lead a life without anxiety.²³

The founding pillar of *Sat Karma* (Right Action) is virtue based on the absence of violence, stealing, hatred, jealousy, egoism, pride, selfishness, etc. In *Śrīmadbhagavat Gītā*, Srikrishna advises to carry out selfless action without waiting for the result, which is the real *dharma* in human life. He explains:

You have the right to do the *karma* (act, duty) but you don't have any right on the result of the *karma* done by you. That is why, you should not be the cause of the result of your *karma* and you should not have any inclination not to do your *karma*, duty.²⁴

The real meaning indicates that one has ceaselessly to act according to his ability and strength so long as he/is alive, and all the acts should be ethical and moral oriented. Without expecting the result of what one has done, he/she should not be disinclined to work. Further, it is stated that the *karma* should be like a yoga (meditation) and one should act maintaining equilibrium in pleasure and pain, loss and gain, and defeat and victory. One who acts likewise would never incur sin.²⁵ When one's wisdom will avoid the delusion (*moha*) like a muddy road, he/she definitely acts remaining indifferent towards the worldly pleasure and enjoyment about which he has already heard or is supposed to hear in the future.²⁶ One who renounces doing *karma* in order to get liberated from the *karmic* entanglements is never achieved liberation or *siddhi* (success), rather doing *karma* without any desire or without delusion, which is called *karma yoga*, would lead to achieving a state of *samādhi* (*prajñā*) or liberation.²⁷ It is instructed that as an ignorant work being addicted with a desire to gain in a likewise manner, a man of wisdom who is devoid of desire or delusion must do the *karma* for public welfare.²⁸

Which actions are to be avoided is instructed by Ācārya Nāgārjuna, one of the chief exponents of *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosophy, seems to be more appropriate and relevant in the present scenario for achieving the well-being both for a householder and the globe. In his opinion, these thirteen actions are to be treated as great enemies and should be shunned up immediately. They are:

(1) To be avaricious and miserly. (2) To hide one's own fault. (3) To show one's qualities by false methods. (4) To desire one's own body and health. (5)

²³ Rhys Davids, T. W. & C. A. F. (trs), *Digha Nikāya (D)*, (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 Volumes), London PTS, 1899 - 1921, p. 86.

²⁴ Goyandaka, Jayadayal(ed), *Maharshi Vyāsadeva's Śrīmad Bhagavat Gītā*, Ch.II, śloka.47, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 2011 (17th Reprint), p.112. (SBG, II, p.112): "Karmanē Vādhikārastemāphaleshukadāchana/ Mākarmaphalaheturbhurmatēsangohsvakamaṇ."

²⁵ SBG, śloka. 38, p. 102: "Sukhaduhkhe same kritvālābhālābhaujayājayau/ Tato yud-dhyāyayujusvanaivampāpamvāpsyasi."

²⁶ *Ibid*, 52, p. 118: "Yadā temohakalilambuddhirvyatitarishyati / Tadāgantāsinirvedamīśro-tavysyaśrutasya cha."

²⁷ *Ibid*, III, śloka.4, p.181: "Na karmaṇāmanārambhānaishkarmyarpurushohśnute/ Na cha samnyasanāmsamadhigachhati."

²⁸ *Ibid*, śloka.25. p. 177.

To be lazy (i.e. To have no interest in the performance of virtuous actions). (6) To have pride (i.e., to pretend to have qualities which one does possess). (7) To be lustful. (8) To be angry towards one's enemies. (9) To have pride of race. (10) To have pride of form (i.e., to feel that one's body is better than that of another). (11) To have pride of learning. (12) To have pride of "prime of life". (13) To have pride of power.²⁹ Further, what eight actions are to be forsaken by men and women in order to present oneself as a divine entity are also recommended by him in the verse no.10 I.e, not to kill, non-stealing, non-involvement in sexual misconduct, not to speak a lie, not to be intoxicated, to be too attached to food at improper times, and forsaking enjoyment of high seats and beds with all kinds of songs, dances and using garlands.³⁰ Though it appears too difficult for a layman to practice these eight precepts in today's life, but the first five principles are an absolute necessity to be forsaken every day, leaving the other three to be followed occasionally or on an auspicious day.

One who aspires to follow *sat karma* must inculcate the sense of We, Ours, Us which is an extension of "I", "me" and "mine". He/ she should have to abandon the use of words like "they", "them", "their" and "they are" in the utterance, which is harmful and brings a wide difference in maintaining harmony, integrity, solidarity, equanimity and equilibrium in the public sphere.

Right Livelihood, another suggested path by the Buddha, which along with the other two completes *Śīla* phenomenon. It means one's earning livelihood must be based on virtue or righteousness, where harming, killing, lying, and stealing, etc, would be conspicuously absent. Traditionally, it is expressed that the way of livelihood must not harm or hurt people around you. Life should be trained that way. The means of livelihood must start with the concept of how much love one is giving to his/her fellow beings without considering how much he/ she is getting. It is learning to speak, to act - in one's family life, professional life, business life, and student life - more consciously, more mindfully, more compassionately, which gives awakening, but awakening cannot be achieved if one is involved in inhuman activities like killing, lying and stealing, etc.

This can only be achieved by following the teachings of Śrīmadbhagavad Gītā.³¹ One who controls the body, mind, sense faculties, pleasure and enjoyment both from inward and outward perspectives that desire less and nonchalant personality would never succumb to sin if he is doing certain actions relating to livelihood for the sustenance of the body. To control sense faculties (*indriya*) one needs six practices to be followed: They are, (1) *Vichāra* (a rational deep thought or contemplation), (2) by *prachāṇanaitikasakti* (will force), (3) by *kumbhaka* (retention of breath by *prāṇāyāma*), (4) by *dama* (restraint), (5) by *pratyāhāra* (abstention), and (6) by *vairāgya* and *tyāga*

²⁹ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V. N & Sanina, P. D., verse.12, p. 8 - 9.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 8.

³¹ Jayadaya Goyandaka (ed), *op.cit*, ch.IV, *śloka*.21, p. 232. (SBG, IV, 27): "Nirasīryachhit-tatmātyaktasavaparigrahaḥ/ Śārīramkevalam karma kurvannāpnotikilvisham."

(apathetic & sacrifice).³²

Ācārya Nāgarjuna in support of this theory mentions that “In choosing between the one who conquers (attachment to) the ever unsteady and momentary objects of six-sense faculty and one who conquers enemy’s in battle, the wise know the first to be great for a hero.”³³ The analysis of this stanza explains that one must not allow his senses to become entangled with the defilement. If one combats his defilement by disengaging his senses from them, the battle has then been won. If one can act in such a manner, he is braver and more heroic than the victor on the battlefield. Even animals can win in battle, but few can conquer the senses.³⁴ The prime need for Right Living is to conquer the senses.

Kornfield, an educationist and one of the great exponents of Buddhist philosophy in the USA, believes that Right Livelihood has five aspects. Non-harming or non-violence is the first aspect, which recommends not harming any animate or inanimate being in thought, action, or words. Living in a society, if one finds that someone commits an act of aggression (such as goondas, mafias, goons, or terrorists) through weapons, exploitation, drugs, or any other activity causing trouble and harm to people, he/she must come forward with a strategy to obstruct it.

Non-harming is followed by Appropriate Happiness, which has four dimensions. To remain happy, one should be content with his/ her profession, be free from extreme indulgence, be free from debt, and be free from blame or fault in one’s livelihood or work. This is possible when one is guided by his “conscience,” which is based on certain qualities like *hiri*, *ottapa* (Skt. *apatrapya*), and *appamāda* (Skt. *apramādyā*). *Hiri* and *ottapa* are seen as the immediate causes of virtue and two bright states that guide the world. They make one’s life more pleasurable, tranquil, and happy.

Hiri means “self-respect” or being self-conscious, which guides one to avoid performing non-virtuous actions. *Ottapa* guides one to refrain from committing any kind of wrong or evil action that lowers one’s prestige and integrity. *Appamāda* (conscientiousness or concern), a combination of mindfulness (*sati*) and diligence, guides one to take great care in distinguishing what should be adopted and what should be avoided – it is the foundation of all virtues. It is wise to avoid a lifestyle based on greed and trickery that causes suffering to others, such as trading in weapons, trafficking living beings, promoting alcoholic drinks, or selling poison.

Extreme indulgence to possess certain matters is controlled by distinguishing between wholesome and unwholesome impulses. Śāntideva nicely expresses in his *Bodhi-charyāvatāra*: “If I give this, what shall I have left to enjoy? Such selfish thinking is the way of the ghosts: If I enjoy this, what shall

³² Control of Desires (objectified desires), www.sivanandaonline.org/public_html.

³³ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V. N & Sanina, P.D., op.cit, verse 24, p. 14.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 14.

I (have left to) give?-Such selfless thinking is the quality of Gods.³⁵ Giving or sharing according to one's capacity is the most essential aspect of Appropriate Happiness, leading to mental calmness, joy, and pleasure, or giving broadens the mind, heart, creating a suitable atmosphere for deep and concentrated meditation.³⁶

The third aspect is Growth and Awareness. Ācārya Nāgārjuna says that the way to achieve growth and awareness is to possess seven unblemished properties, i.e., faith (in *Triratna-Buddha, Dhamma, Saṃgha*), morality, giving, study, modesty, humility and wisdom by abandoning six things which are gambling, participation in pleasurable festivals, laziness, association with sinful friends, alcohol, and walking in the night.³⁷ With growth and awareness, the first thing is that one should not need to be identified with what he/ she does. Since everything in the world is momentary, one should not run after name, fame, power, and position and should not boast of his/ her strength, valour or status. It also means that one can begin to use one's work, whatever it is, to wake up and to awaken, which also requires a lot of discipline and a lot of repetition.

Simplicity is the fourth one. Let simplicity begin from one's living style. Ācārya Nāgārjuna suggests that "One must keep it in mind that food is only medicine for the illness of hunger, he/ she should eat moderately. One should neither eat to acquire beauty, physical strength, or pride nor with any thought of desire or hatred. Therefore, one should eat for sustaining the body".³⁸ It is also stated in Śāntideva's *Bodhi-charyāvatāra* "share food with the people in distress, the orphans, monks, and fellow ascetics by consuming moderately and to donate all possessions except apparel."³⁹ Mahatma Gandhi recommended "simple living and high thinking" which inspired Schumacher to write a book on *Small is Beautiful and Buddhist Economics*. It is rightly said that the wish of love, sharing, compassion, joy and equanimity for all sentient beings will make the life simpler and make the mind free from defilement. If one becomes a victim to these five evil practices, like insolence and regret, harmful thoughts, apathy and sleepiness, attachment and doubt, his/ her life will be more complex and is supposed to lose all happiness in life.

The last one is the Spirit of Service, which is the most beautiful of all. Connecting one with the other, one can easily be connected with the globe. The principal *mantra* of the "service to mankind is service to God" is to render loving kindness, compassion, charity, help in need, and other beneficial services whenever it is required. May someone be a teacher or a student, a doctor or a patient, an attendant or an attendee, a bureaucrat or subordinate, a master or a servant, etc, here, each one requires the service of the other and

³⁵ Harvey, op.cit. p. 16.

³⁶ A, IV, p. 60 – 63.

³⁷ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V.N&Sanina, P.D., op.cit, 32, 33, p. 19 - 20.

³⁸ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V.N&Sanina, P.D., op.cit, 32, 33, p. 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 22.

it should be maintained in a very honest and sincere way. Bossism, hegemony, and superior or inferior complex will mar the spirit of service. If reciprocity and equanimity would not be properly maintained, the service will harm each other. It is explained in the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* that “one must meditatively do his duty without indulgence treating failure and success at equal footing and this state of equanimity and equilibrium is called yoga (meditation)”.⁴⁰ To discharge one’s duty or *karma* with a loving affection in mind and heart is the real service that he/ she rendered to the society.

Samādhi is the next step in the practice of which leads to control of the inward behaviour achieving equanimity, equilibrium, calmness, contentment, wholeness, and settled, concentrated and undistracted mind. It has three dimensions, i.e., Right Effort, Right Attitude and Right Understanding. The first factor is Right Effort, which is the king pin of the *Samādhi*. It is known that enlightenment is not one’s birthright. Those who succeed do so only through proper effort. Right Effort leads to making life virtuous and righteous, directing the mind to develop in a wholesome way. There are four types of effort: The first one is to abandon/ avoid unwholesome/ unskilful states of mind that express attachment, grasping, fear, hatred, anger, and delusion. Kornfield evaluates that self-judgement or self-resistance would make one not to be the victim of the above-mentioned vices or too much attachment to the material world.⁴¹ The second effort should be to maintain their absence, or to overcome/ undermine the unwholesome states with strong resolve. It is to be told, for example, that a chain-smoker or a drug-addict can get rid of this habit with their absolute determination and strong will-power. Thirdly, one must try to develop or nourish or cultivate meditatively the wholesome states of mind. The last one is the effort to maintain or stabilise wholesome qualities of mind which have been generated. It indicates that one should have to inculcate awareness, loving-kindness, caring/ sharing, sympathy, compassion, for all the people at the front door or for the world around them/ she discarding fear or reproach. He/ she must set the paradigm for others to follow. It is rightly said in the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*: “That person is the most venerable one who carries out all activities nonchalantly controlling all sense faculties through mind.”⁴² Whatever mannerism or behaviour is discharged by the best personality is followed by others, and what he/ she proves is imitated by other people.⁴³

In right attitude/ right resolve, “One sees the value in inner life and sees that frankly one’s happiness is based on one’s heart considerably more than it is on external circumstances. When there are difficulties around, if the heart is open or clear or understanding, one can be happy. One can be in the midst of beautiful circumstances and be miserable, be lonely or depressed, and know that his/ her happiness, which he/ she seeks, is really a function of his/ her

⁴⁰ Goyandaka, Jayadayal (ed), op.cit, II, śloka.48, p. 114.

⁴¹ Kornfield op.cit, p. 64.

⁴² Goyandaka, Jayadayal(ed), op.cit, III, śloka7, p. 155.

⁴³ *Ibid*, śloka, 21, p. 172

heart, his/her interior life".⁴⁴ It is also directed towards emotions with thought on how to get rid of unethical and immoral thought like ill-will, cruelty, fraudulent practices, lying, etc, and how to imbibe with the spirit of loving-kindness and compassion.⁴⁵ Right Attitude has three aspects: Openness/ Receptivity, Renunciation, the Quality of Non-Harming/ Loving Thoughts. Openness signifies not to be the victim of self-desires or to be caught up with the thought like I want "peace, calmness, not to be angry, my body not to be hurt, to be fearless, or joy", rather it gives ample opportunity to discover through experimentation what one is. This self-evaluation makes one look and learn, rather than to focus on areas for improvement and growth, instead of just judging achievements or short comings. Openness is the process of discovery, i.e., to just see things and happenings around you without trying to change them, but seeing clearly with mindfulness, without judging their positive and negative actions. This way the transcendent level will emerge beginning with the learning; learning of fear, the forces of desire, of wanting, of love that makes the whole world go round, and runs the lives of the people.

Renunciation means putting what one wants aside for a little bit, when one tries to train himself/ herself not to follow all one's habits and desires, the following of which causes pain and suffering for the people living around him/her. It brings a sense of well-being or purity, or something conducive to yield happiness for others. The last one, the Quality of Non-Harming/Loving Thoughts, makes the world around one more pleasant and charming. It purifies both material and spiritual life. To evoke or to bring loving thoughts, one has to become more conscious of what one does, in what he/ she does. Loving thoughts manifest when things get difficult. It requires patience and, in true sense, love and patience are complementary to each other. What is Right Effort is explained by Ācārya Nāgārjuna: "Understanding food to be like medicine, neither use it with hatred, nor attachment, nor for might, pride or beauty, but solely for maintaining the body."⁴⁶ Both renunciation and loving thought are, here, coined together to share it with those fallen into evil states, those without protection and with the needy one. The attitude of Non-Harming or Loving Thought can never occur unless one extends his/her wish for all sentient beings to be happy and have the cause of happiness, to depart from suffering and from the cause of suffering, to feel joyous, because they possess the cause of happiness and one must leave attachment for dear ones and hatred for enemies and treat all equally. It means that one has to meditate on love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

V. MIND - BODY BALANCE IN BUDDHISM

The cultivation of Right Understanding/ Right View in oneself will allow one to comprehend the complete and realistic nature of things. It makes a person take full responsibility for his/ her action. It also leads to understanding

⁴⁴ Kornfield, op.cit, p. 16.

⁴⁵ MN, III, p. 75.

⁴⁶ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V.N&Sanina, P.D., op.cit, 38, p. 22.

life: One must start to see the laws of things, that things are impermanent, that attachment does not work, and that life is a process of change, and life is limited. Life is not only impermanent and ungraspable, but there is suffering if one is attached to it, and there is pleasure and pain in this world.⁴⁷ In answering some people's query, "how one will be happy?", the Buddha said that one has to understand the law of *karma*. If one cultivates generosity, kindness, awareness, and giving, he/ she will be happy because he/ she will learn that it is pleasant, and also the way that *karma* works is that his/ her world will become more of a cycling rather than fear and holding. He/ she will discover happiness in this generosity.⁴⁸ It is found that in the world around a person starts to become kind if he/she practice kindness, maintaining a basic level of non-harming, honesty, truth, and extending help. Inside he/ she will feel kinder and happier; outside people will treat him/her that way.

One has to discover where he/she has to live: to live either in the world of fantasy of one's thoughts about things, or in bodies being aware of the senses observing changes in every sphere - in seeing, in hearing, in smelling, in tasting and physical sensations. This experience of change will make one learn to assume responsibility for being here in this wonderful world, in this wonderful time, for he/ she will learn that he/ she is only here for a very short period, likely to witness all the marvellous happenings in the future. To discharge social responsibility as a sentient being of this globe to eliminate wars, poverty and starvation for making this world more wonderful, each one has to renounce greed, hatred, hoarding, grasping, anger, fear, prejudices, attachment, desire, restlessness, doubt, violence, etc, inculcating patience, compassion, loving kindness, tolerance, sharing and giving. Ācārya Nāgārjuna rightly says that "Be aware that these five obstructions are thieves which steal the wealth of virtue: insolence and regret, harmful thoughts, apathy and sleepiness, attachment and doubt".⁴⁹ These five obstructions can only be removed by assiduously following the five best principles like right faith, right energy, right mindfulness, right concentration and right knowledge. These are the real strength and power which help to attain the desired goal.⁵⁰ For Right Understanding Lord Srikrishna tells that:

"A man of equilibrium with profound knowledge and wisdom, who has taken refuge with the Supreme Being, should not to disenchant or to distract the ignorant who perform their duties following *śāstric* injunctions, rather he/ she, with a perfect well intentioned attitude has to discharge all the duties or responsibilities according to *śāstric* scriptures setting paradigm and creating interest in their minds to follow that activity"⁵¹ It is a matter of fact

⁴⁷ SN, II. p.16 - 17.

⁴⁸ Kornfield, op.cit, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Jamspal, Chopel&Santina, op.cit. p. 25

⁵⁰ Jamspal, Chopel&Santina, op.cit. 45, p. 26

⁵¹ Goyandaka, Jayadayal(ed), op.cit, III, śloka. 26, p.178: "Na Buddhivedaṃjanayeda-jñāṃkarmasānginām/ Jōshayetsarvakarmāṇividwānyuktahsamācharan."

that all the *karmas* are performed with natural instinctive qualities, like *Sattva* (purity), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (darkness, destruction) but whose soul is shrouded with pride and ego that stupid-ignorant thinks “self as the pioneering authority behind all the actions”.⁵² It is mentioned in *Anguttara Nikāya* that wrong thought, wrong speech, and wrong action are the outcome of the wrong view, while right view has the opposite effect.⁵³ Since wrong actions hail from misperception of reality, they are incompatible with the nature of things and naturally they lead to unpleasant results. Thus it is said to be impossible that wrong conduct would yield to compatible, amicable, and pleasant results, or right conduct may lead to achieve disagreeable, unpleasant, unfriendly atmosphere.⁵⁴

Prajñā (knowledge and wisdom), a combination of right awareness/ right mindfulness, and right concentration, is essential to guide all other six paths. It is the key to enlightenment or a real path to attain complete liberation from sufferings, tragedy, misery, mutual distrust, disharmony, envy, enmity, anger, hatred, etc. Buddha once said, “I am not a man, I am not a God. I am none of these things. I am awake”. Right awareness, right mindfulness (*sati, smṛiti*) is a crucial aspect of any Buddhist meditation, and is a state of keen awareness of mental and physical phenomena as they arise within and around one, and carefully bearing in mind the relationship between things.⁵⁵ The founding pillar of awareness, mindfulness is to live in the physical reality of one’s body, to live in the feelings, to be aware of the pleasant, neutral and unpleasant aspects of one’s experience, and to learn that one does not have to resist that which is painful and grasp that which is pleasant all the time. This is the first and foremost condition of mindfulness, It is an open hearted and non-judging awareness which comes into the body and the feelings and then observe the mind as well as its laws, the laws of karma, the laws of impermanence, and begins to see how to relate to it all out of compassion, kindness and wisdom, which means seeing how it is operating.⁵⁶ Secondly, mindfulness/ awareness makes one see or to feel what is in existence here clearly so that he/ she can practice the most virtuous qualities like non-greed, non-grasping, non-hatred, not pushing away, non-laziness, and fearlessness, etc.

So, right awareness is the only direct way to mental purification of mankind, to the overcoming and elimination of all sorrow, frustration, pain and misery, anxiety, tension, fear to gaining the right method, to the realization of *Nibbāna* or liberation. In Ācārya Nāgārjuna’s explanation, the right way to practice mindfulness is nicely reflected: “Out of eight worldly *dharmas*, most of the worldlings desire for gain (acquisition of material wealth, etc), pleasure/ happiness, sweet or pleasing speech (i.e, fame, etc), and praise with a non-desire

⁵² *Ibid*, śloka. 27, p. 179.

⁵³ A, vol.V, p. 211 - 12.

⁵⁴ MN, III, p. 66.

⁵⁵ Harvey, op.cit, p. 38.

⁵⁶ Kornfield, Jack. op.cit, p. 9.

for loss (wealth, etc), pain/ unhappiness, harsh/ unpleasant speech, and blame and criticism.⁵⁷ Here, Nāgārjuna suggests that one should neither hope for the first four conditions, nor fear the last four. Finding no difference among them - neither striving for four pleasant ones nor avoiding the four unpleasant ones - the person practicing karma should regard eight worldly *dharma*s as equal. He, further, said that “mindfulness should be maintained when performing any bodily action. All the *Sugatas* have said that it is very important to remember what one should do. Therefore, one should be earnestly mindful of which actions are to be performed, which are to be abandoned, etc. If one remains mindful all virtue will follow.”⁵⁸

It is told in *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* that “Just like the smoke covering the fire, the dust particles enveloping the mirror and the womb concealing the pregnancy, the desire and delusion shroud true knowledge and wisdom.”⁵⁹ It also states, “one should have to bring all the sense faculties under control, destroying the sin like desire and delusion.”⁶⁰ The two hymns undoubtedly explained the importance of Right Awareness/Mindfulness. So Right Awareness enables one to live in the reality of the present, and then responding to it wisely, being aware of the situation that he lives in. It develops non-greed, non-hatred, non-delusion, non-jealousy, no anger, tolerance, forbearance, compassion, sympathy, non-lying, non-stealing, truth, honesty and above all, loving kindness, etc.

The householder should be aware that this body is only transient and compounded form; he/ she must be aware of the feeling just as conditioned emotional reactive response; mind merely as a habituated, and temporary or passing set of moods, and to be aware of the phenomena only as constructed mental states. It gives the householder to distinguish between wrong view and right view, wrong motivation or right motivation, wrong speech or right speech, wrong action or right action, wrong livelihood or right livelihood, wrong effort or right effort, wrong attitude or right attitude, wrong awareness or right awareness and wrong concentration or right concentration, it enables one to live in the reality of the present, and then responding to it wisely, being aware of the situation that he lives in.

The last of the Eightfold Path is Right Concentration/ Right Meditation. It is the breath, or life breath, which is a kind of mirror, the mirror of one's energy and openness. Referring to this Right Concentration, Harvey believes that various levels of deep calmness known as *jhanas* are the states of inner collectedness arising from attention closely focused on the meditation object.⁶¹ Right Concentration is the key element for achieving tranquillity and equanimity in both the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. It is highlighted in the

⁵⁷ Jamaspal, Venerable Lozang, Chopel, V.N & Sanina, P.D., op.cit, 29, p. 18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 54. p. 33.

⁵⁹ Goyandaka, Jayadaya (ed), op.cit, III, *śloka*. 38, p. 195.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, *śloka*.41, III, p. 199.

⁶¹ Harvey, op.cit, p. 38.

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā that a person having *saṃbuddhi* (full consciousness/perfect knowledge) becomes free from sin and virtue in the present life which he acquires by practicing *śamatva yoga* (a meditation for equal consideration towards all human beings/ even mindedness) which liberates one from all action oriented bondage.⁶² Further, Right Concentration makes man called *sthītaprajña* (equilibrium) when he completely renounces all the desires of mind when he/ she is fully satisfied with his mind fixed in Ātman.⁶³ and also *asthirabuddhi* (self intelligent) who remains apathetic on achieving something pleasant and never laments upon obtaining something unpleasant and whose anger, fear and jealousy are completely destroyed.⁶⁴ For proper practice of Right Concentration, a *sādhaka* (a devoted person for practicing meditation) has to sit in deep concentration on transcendental being after duly controlling all the sense faculties, and this leads to attaining self-intelligence which is called *sthīrabuddhi*.⁶⁵

Nirvāṇa, which is the ultimate objective of the Buddhist doctrine, may be evaluated in a post-modern sense as the complete liberation from sufferings, that means absence of wars, military aggrandisement, shrewd diplomacy, poverty, starvation, torture, humiliation, etc from the life of the people of the world. Following Ācārya Nāgārjuna, Jamaspal, et. al, suggest that true *Nirvāṇa* could be achieved through practicing morality, wisdom, and concentration, the seven limbs of which are mindfulness, discrimination of things (*dharma*s), energy, joy, purification, trance, and equanimity.⁶⁶

Concentration makes one become quiet or tranquil or to become still. To concentrate the mind means to collect it, to have it become steady on one point, like a candle flame in a windless place, where it is steady and it does not flicker so much.⁶⁷ The sincere practice of concentration leads to a tranquil state called *jhanas* (*dhyānas*). One enjoys the real peace, calmness, joy and happiness in this state which sustains forever.

VI. CONCLUSION

Global well-being and the well-being of the householder are intertwined with each other. So long as the householder would not be properly enlightened or does not do *karma* being devoid of desire, delusion, and attachment and without waiting for the result, it is unwise to expect a wholesome result. There are five hindrances that arrested the wholehearted following of the Eightfold Path or the *Karma Yoga*, which, in other words, obstructs achieving the well-being for the householder. They are desire (The juiciest one), anger, laziness, restlessness, and doubt. When the desire for obtaining some pleasant thing fails, and further desire to have it by hook or crook leads to adopt some trickery

⁶² Goyandaka, Jayadaya(ed), *op.cit*, II, śloka. 50, p. 116.

⁶³ *Ibid*, śloka.55, p. 122.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, śloka.56, p. 123.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, śloka. 61, p. 130.

⁶⁶ Jamaspal, Venereble Lozang, Chopel, V.N & Sanina, P.D. 105 - 106, p. 54 - 55.

⁶⁷ Kornfield, Jack, *op.cit*, p. 80.

or fraudulent practices at the cost of others' interest/ welfare, which violates the principle of *hiri* and *ottapa*. The result is that he/ she would be undermined and have to face blame and criticism. Anger, which is the root cause of all evils, leads to violence, hatred, impatience, jealousy, and intolerance, etc. Anger comes to mind when one feels he/ she is right or authentic over the matter. Non-cooperation with the ideas, advice, suggestions, resistance, and doings makes one irritated, which causes the body to receive a lot of tension. The nicest way to control anger is to practice right awareness or right mindfulness and right concentration.

The next one is laziness. It creates inertia and tempts one to avoid taking responsibility. The people of the world are living with a lot of responsibility: the responsibilities are seemingly to be discharged towards society, economy, politics, culture, family, friends, relatives, acquaintances, professional work field, commerce and trade, one's religious faiths, etc. The thought of "let me enjoy the fruit of others' effort or labour, shifting the responsibility on someone" is really bringing disharmony, disintegrating the amicable relationship, stability, and solidarity in which one lives; and, it creates trouble and suffering. Restlessness makes one not to nurture stillness within himself/ herself, one develops the habit of keeping himself/ herself preoccupied with certain activities for self-gain without thinking of others' welfare in quietude. This gives rise to remaining absolute self-centred, causing all sorts of discrepancies in the sphere one is living. The last one is doubt, which leads to tension, confusion, and a kind of wondering. It put one in faltering mood to select a life in the professional, spiritual, relationship, etc., lacking love for self, or for other, or for the world around us.

To overcome this type of hindrance, one should try to be self-guided. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat* which is originally written by Maharshi Vyāsa Deva in Sankrit and translated into Odia language by Atibaḍi JagannāthaDās, Srikrishna is found to explain Uddhava, one of his great devotees and who is in a state of dilemma, that "your real preceptor is your mind and conscience and it is not wise to ask some other fellow for clarification or suggestion" So also in Buddhist tradition, it is suggested to try different strategies for dealing with these hindrances. For experimentation, a poisonous tree and its fruit must be taken into account. To get rid of this poisonous tree, the first strategy is to cut it down, chopping it into pieces; the second one is putting a sign near the tree mentioning not to use its fruit and leaves as it is poisonous; and, the last one is more interesting. As one thinks to use the berries, leaves, and another part of the tree for medicinal use for curing a number of diseases, including the illness of desire, anger, fear, greed, laziness, restlessness, and doubt.

In the conclusion, it may be suggested that perfect awareness will be really an action-guide to all other paths, removing ill intentions, actions, and motives, which will ultimately bring the well-being both for the householder and the globe.

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BUDDHIST INSIGHTS FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Every person desires peace and happiness and everyone's aspiration to be free from all obstacles, worry, anxiety, war, problems and suffering. Very needful the world peace in the present era for human beings. Buddha was the pathfinder of a philosophical and religious movement on a larger scale than history had ever known. For forty-five years propagated the Dharma for the happiness and peace of human beings. Many of his eminent disciples did likewise. The Buddha's infinite flooding mercy was one toward not only human beings but also the speechless creatures. He was indeed mindful of the poor, defenseless creatures of the earth. Buddha's teachings are the discourse for a pathway to improvement for happiness and world peace for all human beings. His mission was to emancipate creatures from the miseries of samsara to give them instructions of way-out of their sufferings and to teach them the noble and unique path.

Buddha's teaching has now various forms and traditions in the world and practicing the Buddha's teaching. Most of the general lay people confuse the which is best techniques Buddha path. We have various teachings from the Buddha, and he has given the method of how we can solve the present problems of peace and how we can get the ultimate peace of mind for world peace. Buddha pronounced opinions that are inclined towards progress in the world. Both the physical and the spiritual are crucial factors in the development of countries. One cannot exist without the other, while at the same time material progress should not be achieved at the cost of the spiritual progress as has become common in many countries worldwide which call for the need to seek a more spiritual pattern of living. As a Buddha, Dharma brings peace to a peaceful world in the present time.

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I. PREFACE OF THE SUB-THEME

At present, the world is trapped in cycles of rage, power of economics, power of weapons, power of leading, extremism, violence, reprisal, and terrorism. People all over the World are living in great misery, fear, and death. We see the whole world as uneasy, agitated, and worried.

Nowadays, technology gives us great opportunities to connect with loved ones, make new social relationships, and makes it easier to give time, ideas and money to others and create experiences that are surprising, delightful, evoke emotion, provide solve health, safety and scientific problems; and also empower people to improve their lives. However, technology has created some issues and obstacles to Peace. Misuse of technology or social media for fallen beds affects families, societies, and countries worldwide.

Now, the world's four major religious traditions evolved into various forms after the historical Buddha's demise in 480 B.C., adapting to diverse natures and individual needs. Its missionary work and local engagement have aimed at positive community transformation, emphasizing human and ecological well-being, often undermined by power struggles and socioeconomic influences like greed.

In this paper about obstacles to global Peace, discuss the challenges to peace and how to overcome them. My research is based on obstacles of Peace, Problems of Peace, and how we can get insights for world peace and sustainable development.

1.1. Problems of peace

Terrorism, Power of dissimilarity, greed, covetousness, discrimination, extremism, impure mind, lack of love-kindness, forgiveness. External conflicts, poverty, disease and environment of degradation, geopolitical aggression. Also, many problems threaten world peace, including:

- **Geopolitical competition:** Countries compete for influence and power by supporting proxies in other countries. This can lead to protracted conflicts like those in Syria and Yemen.
- **Climate change:** Climate change and conflict are linked and exacerbate each other. Climate change threatens human security, while war damages the environment.
- **Human rights violations:** Violence and human rights violations within states are a threat to international Peace and security.
- **Economic crisis:** A financial crisis is a threat to peace and security.
- **Underemployment:** Underemployment is a growing issue that can threaten peace.
- **Disinformation:** Disinformation is a threat to peace and security.

• **Abuse of social media for Peace:**

Social media abuse, also known as digital abuse, is the use of social media and other digital technologies to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate someone and also spread misinformation for this reason's incident of unpeaceful aggression.

1.2. Challenge of research paper

Different traditions of Buddhist forms of Jhana¹, Theravada², Mahayana³, Vajrayana⁴, Kalachakrayana⁵, Tantrayana⁶, Zen⁷, Esoteric⁸, and Shaolin⁹ exist in practicing Buddhism all over the world. Abovementioned the forms of the Buddhist sutras instructed sustainable development and peace. Different systems of practice, culture, and custom rituals pose challenges in sorting out the best process to practice Dharma, and difficult to identify many sutra about the research paper.

1.3. Key of the Buddhist Insights for world peace and sustainable development

Many of the discourses expound Buddha for world peace and sustainable development in the world. Buddhism addresses all forms and processes guiding to happiness and peaceful way. We have to find many of the methods from Tripitaka & Sutra for peace and sustainable development. Bramavihara¹⁰, Sutra, morality, and all the Buddha's teachings given technic for unique path of multiple way to happiness and world peace. I am discussing the Brahmaviharas are also known as the four Buddhist immeasurable or infinite minds.

Everyone wants peace and happiness, it's needed for all. Bramavihara

¹ Jhana is vehicle, it is way of the enlightenment. This is Buddhist practice that involves meditation to achieve a state of deep concentration and consciousness.

² Theravada is the oldest practiced form Buddhism. The name comes from the Pali word Theravada, which means 'way of the elders.'

³ Mahayana (Sanskrit), It is meaning of Great Vehicle. Mahayana Buddhism is the largest Buddhist sect in the world and its belief and practices are what most non-adherents recognize as Buddhism in the modern era. It's practices to help people achieve enlightenment.

⁴ Vajrayana Buddhism that uses rituals and practices to help people achieve enlightenment.

⁵ Kalachakrayana' means wheel of time or time of cycles. It is Buddhist tradition that includes a series of the texts, a practice lineage and a tantric deity.

⁶ Tantrayana is one of the three main paths or vehicles (*yana*) of Buddhism. On the Tantrayana path. This practice uses the body to work with mind for enlightenment.

⁷ Zen Buddhism is schools of Buddhism that originated in China and emphasizes meditation simplicity. The word 'Zen' comes from Sanskrit word dhyana which means 'meditation.'

⁸ Esoteric Buddhism came as a revelation the most profound and powerful version of the teachings for path of enlightenment.

⁹ Shaolin Buddhism is a branch of Chan Buddhism that originated at the Shaolin Temple in China. The Shaolin Temple is also known for its martial arts, Buddhist art and traditional Chinese medicine.

¹⁰ (Narada, The Buddha and his teachings, 1988) Brahmavihara are four sterling virtues are collectively termed in Pali 'Brahmavihara' which may be rendered by modes of sublime conduct states or divine abodes.

started the practice of loving-kindness (*Metta*¹¹), compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

Firstly, Loving-kindness is very important for all creatures in the world. The Buddha gave the example as just as mother protect her only child with her life and same to love for toward all infinite existence beings. Every moment of our life is insecure and impermanent, and any time and moment could lead to death. The Buddha expounded the Karaniya Metta Sutra,¹² and we have found many examples or ode of loving-kindness from this sutra for how to get peace in the world. We have multiple benefits for practicing the Mettanisangsa sutra.¹³ It's called discourse of universal love. I hope that this thought is very helpful for peace and sustainable development.

Secondly, Compassion¹⁴ is essential for beings. Compassion to all helpless and suffering people. All over the world day by day increasing lack of compassion. If we want to peaceful life for our family, society, country and own religion, and other religious people, therefore have to keep in compassion our insight of the mind.

Thirdly, Sympathetic¹⁵ joy is very important in our society. If anyone sees helpless people, poor people, helpless sick people; therefore, that's a moment of assistance handed over to them.

Fourthly, Equanimity¹⁶ is necessary, especially for laypeople who live in an ill-balanced world amidst fluctuating circumstances. Sights and insults are every day among humanity. The world is so constituted that the good and the virtuous are often subject to unjust criticism and attack if it is heroic to maintain a balanced mind in such circumstances.

Loss and gain, fame and infamy, praise and blame, pain and happiness are eight worldly conditions that affect all humanity.

The Buddha's exemplary life offers us an excellent example of equanimity.

Like Mother Earth, the Buddha suffered everything in silence with perfect equanimity.

At present, very significant of sustainable peace for the world, such as Buddhism given us a nice solution, if we are following the Buddhist teaching

¹¹ (Narada, The Buddha and his teachings, 1988) Metta (Sanskrit-Maitri) It means that which softens one's heart, or the state of a true friend. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception.

¹² *Karaniya metta sutra* is Discourse on universal love. This is What should be done by one who is skilled in goodness, and who knows the path of peace. Karaniya Metta Sutra expound the Buddha at Anathapindaka's Monastery in Jeta's grove near Savatthi.

¹³ Mettanisangsa sutra is discourse on advantages of loving-kindness. Many of benefit for self & other beings for following the discourse. Sutra expound the Buddha at Anathapindaka's Monastery in Jeta's grove near Savatthi.

¹⁴ *Karuna* is meaning of compassion, It's second practice of Brahmavihara.

¹⁵ *Mudhita* is meaning of sympathetic joy, it's third practice of Brahmavihara.

¹⁶ *Upekkha* is meanig of equanimity, it's fourth practice of Brahmavihara.

and would find the solve of the problem of the peace and ultimately getting happiness and peaceful society, country in the whole world.

Many of the discourses from the Buddha, we have found, give instruction for peace and happiness for all beings. An example of the Discourse on great blessings¹⁷, it's thirty-eight tactics for welfare, peace, and happiness for the world. I am discussing the some of the tactics of benefit for insight of development and the peace for world: keep away from evil or wrong people and accompanied with the wise, residing in suitable locality and endowed merits of pass deeds with setting oneself on the right path, acquire poly knowledge and learned with skillful in craft, disciplined in morals and well cultivated and being gifted with elegance words with compassion, Taking care mother and father, supporting wife and children and blameless career, being generous and virtuous in conduct, bear hand to relatives and impeccable action, hatred and giving up evils, abstaining from intoxicating drinks and being heedful in spiritual practices, Practicing austerity, leading holy life, gaining the vision of Noble truths, and realizing Nibbana and ultimate peace. These are important for us to have insights for sustainable development and world peace. We have seen many discourses of the Buddha for given nice method for peace for world and we see one of the verses of Dhammapada:

“Hatred does not cease through hatred,
through love alone, they cease” (*Dhammapada* V.5)¹⁸

We become more cheerful and open as our compassion flows. This will encourage us to practice more diligently. Great Master Atisha Dipankar¹⁹ mentioned his books of Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland²⁰:

“Proclaim your faults,
But do not seek our faults in others.
Make known the good qualities of others,
But conceal your qualities.
Abandon gain and respect,

¹⁷ The *Mangala Sutta (Sutra)*, this is called discourse on Great blessings. The Buddha, supreme Lord of Gods, then enunciated thirty-eight kinds of blessing that destroy all evils and promote the well-being of all in the world.

¹⁸ (*Dhammananda*, 1988), Pali Word 'Avera', literally, means non-anger, here it means the virtue opposed to the vice of anger, that is, loving kindness (*Metta*). Verse: 5.

¹⁹ Few figures in the history of Buddhism in Tibet have had as far-reaching and profound an influence as the Indian scholar and adept Atisha Dipamkara (1025 - 1084), Originally from Bengal (Vajrayogini, Bikarampur, Dhaka, Bangladesh), Atisha was tantric Buddhist master during Vajrayana Buddhism's flowering in India, and the traveled extensively, eventually spending the remaining twelve years of his life revitalizing Buddhism in Tibet.

²⁰ 'Bodhisattava's Jewel Garland' is among Atisha's important works an essential practice. Atisha prescribes a program of bodhisattva conduct in twenty-seven verses. The text is regarded by Atisha's following as a significant text on mind training and is the root text for both the Father teaching and son teachings in the book of Kadam.

Permanently eliminate arrogance and fame.
 Cultivate love and compassion,
 and make firm the awakening mind.
 Abandon the ten non-virtuous deeds,
 and always be firm in faith.

Have few desires, be content, and have gratitude for the kindness of others.

I think that all Buddhist traditions point out the purification of the mind; if anyone works and does the pure mind all everything is pure and gets a good result.

We should think that our running life is destructible and always be careful about our thinking, work, order, faculty of mind, and activities. Buddha stated that,

“Mano pubbangama dharma,
 Mano settha manomaya
 Manasa ce pasannena
 bhasato va karoti va
 Tato nam sikhamanweti
 Chaya’va anapayini.” (Verses-2)²¹

Tolerance:

Buddhism teaches us to develop inner world peace, which helps us understand outward world peace. Fluctuations in the mental states are suffering. If anyone can stop the fluctuations by practicing meditation and keeping his mental state constant, he can easily understand the outward world peace. In other words, he can deal with outward world peace very quickly. In other words, he can deal with outward problems very peacefully.

However, it is impossible for everyone, even if we talk about inner world peace. The external world is under the threats of nuclear weapons, atomic horror, wars, colonialism, suppression and oppression by the stronger ones to the weaker ones, aggression, etc. This is happening because those responsible for such conditions lack inner peace. They are suffering from ignorance, greed, and hatred. These three are poisons of agony and pain. Until these agonies and pain can be removed, the world will remain a place of pain and suffering. Of course, there will be no world peace. In a world where humans can live in peaceful conditions, one can postulate that there is Peace.

Actually, Buddha’s thought is how to get rid free from suffering in our existing life, because life has multiple problems and suffering (*dukkha*).

²¹ (Dhammananda, 1988) *Yamaka Vagga 2*, Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states. 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.

Yamaka means a pair. This chapter is so named because it consists of the pairs of parallel verse. Dharma is a term of many meanings. Here it is used in the sense of Karma which denotes volitions (*cetana*) and the other accompanying mental states found in any particular moral or immoral type of consciousness. In this verse the term Dhamma or Dharma arise.

As personal, family, society, countries and extremism of religious thought spreading the various problems in the world.

Buddha identifies what the problem or suffering His first discourse of the *Dharmacakkrapavatana sutta*²². It is frequently represented as meaning “The Kingdom of truth” or “The Kingdom of Righteousness.” “The wheel of truth” This called Dharma.

“From craving spring grief, from craving spring fear, for him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear.” (Verses-216)²³.

“Pleasant speech is as sweet as honey; truthful speech is beautiful like a flower; and wrong speech is unwholesome like filth.”

Morality (Sila):

Morality²⁴ is fundamental in life; Morality leads to the most extraordinary life; as a good person flows Morality, he is the good and the best person. Buddha’s teaching emphasizes practicing Morality. A moral person does good deeds for happiness in life. As good deeds could be possible for world happiness. According to him, an action is defined as good and wholesome if it is blameless, causes no harm to any living being, and bears good results in the present and future.

The ten ‘unwholesome courses of action’ (*Akusala Karma*), regarded as ‘bad conduct’ (*ducarita*), are described as follows.

(a) Three unwholesome bodily actions

1. Panatipata - Killing any living or sentient being,
2. Adinnadana - stealing or taking others’ property unlawfully.
3. Kamesumicchacara – Sexual misconduct such as rape and adultery.

(b) Four unwholesome verbal actions (speeches)

4. Musavada - laying or false speech,

²² *Dharmachakka* (Dharmachakra) is the name given to this first discourse of the Buddha. This narrated and expounded in Isipatan, Saranath, Benares, India. In the world fallen the various suffering, so how can eradicate the in this suffering (*dukkha*), So that, Buddha given the thought and way free from suffering. Buddha Narrated the Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to get what is one desires is suffering. Buddha uttered the Middla path which promotes sight and knowledge and which tends to peace, higher wisdom and enlightenment.

²³ *Dhammapada* verses 216. ‘Tanhaya Jayanti soko, tanhanya bhayam, Tanhaya vippmuttassa, natthi soko koto bhayam. Carving is a power mental force latent in all and is the chief cause of mot of the ills in life. It is this carving, gross or subtle that leads to repeated births in Samara and that which makes one cling to all forms of life.

²⁴ (Narada, The Buddha and his teachings, 1988). Four kinds of Morality: 1. Patimokkha Sila: The Fundamental Moral Code, 2. Indriyasamvara Sila: Moralilty pertaining to purity sense-restrain, 3. Ajivaparissuddhi sila: Morality pertaining to purity of livelihood, 4. Paccayasannissitta: Morality pertaining to the use of the necessities of life.

5. Pisunavaca - slandering or back-biting
6. Pharusavaca - rude or harsh speech
7. Samphappalap – vain talk
8. Three unwholesome mental actions (thoughts)
9. Abhijha -covetousness or planning to take others' property unlawfully,
10. Vyapada- ill will or planning to destroy others' lives and properties.
11. Micchaditthi is wrong, taking that karma and its effect does not exist.

The above ten actions are unwholesome, immoral, wicked, and unjust since they cause harm to others. The above ten Buddha's teachings concern leading a life free from harm and a happy and peaceful world²⁵.

I mention this comment: 'Today, we are living in a world of diversity in culture, faith and political and economic systems. In this world, different people may have different opinions on common problems. Yet, some problems are common to all, and we are interested in finding one solution to those problems. There will be no final solution to our human problems. Therefore, we must accept the concept of 'Unity in diversity' and find a common platform for solving our problems while maintaining and promoting Peace and security. Despite such diversities, I am confident that by building bridges between cultures and religions, we will be able to understand other faiths better, reduce tensions, and avoid conflicts at the same time.

A bridge is a crossing in both directions that allows people to meet and work together for a common goal. I also agree that diversity is a blessing that humanity should embrace and celebrate. Building such bridges allows us to channel different views and inspirations into common ground to promote Peace and security.

We must believe in our rationality and common sense that to alternate war and conflict is Peace, security, and coexistence. We should try to conquer ourselves by replacing hatred, anger, greed, ignorance, aggressiveness, extremism, and prejudice with love-kindness, compassion, tolerance, and forgiveness (Middle Way). At the same time, we must oppose extremism and aggressiveness and any manifestations around the world. But we should be mindful that if we are unable to reduce and remove evil thoughts, evil speeches, and evil deeds, as well as greed, hatred and ignorance, we are like beings living in a world of darkness, sorrow and suffering when there is darkness, the light is of a vital necessity. The darkness and the light oppose each other; they cannot co-exist. We have to put the light in a place of darkness. When there is fire, water is an urgent need for us. Today, the whole world is under the darkness of sorrow and suffering caused by violence, conflict, and brutal fighting. The Buddha's message said, "The world is blind, the world is unstable, and the

²⁵ (The nest moral education that is most valuable in life, Dr. Mehm Tim Mon, Collection of speeches & Messages, Buddhist Leaders of the world, The world Buddhist Summit, Myanmar - 2004.)

world is burning internally and externally.”

The world has witnessed a lot of bloodshed due to power carving and ignorance of truth. The Noble Truth is the inner core of all religions. There is nothing new to teach in this world but the truth. The truth is within ourselves. Therefore, the world badly needs peace, harmony, and coexistence. This is an excellent challenge for political, spiritual, and religious leaders.

We must accept that reconcilability and brace for those challenges; every religion has its outer shell and inner core. The outer shell consists of rites, rituals, ceremonies, beliefs, myths, and doctrines. These outer shells differentiate one religion from another. However, there is an inner core that is common to all faiths. This is the universal teaching of Morality, charity, mental discipline, pure mind, pure love, compassion, goodwill, tolerance, insight, and truth. This is a common denominator that all religious leaders ought to emphatically teach their followers to practice if proper importance is attached to the essence of all religions so that love, tolerance, and compassion prevail in the hearts of their followers. Then, conflict and violence would be gradually minimized.

All human beings should be free to profess and follow their faith. However, they must be careful not to neglect to practice the essence of their religion, not disturb others with their religion, and not condemn other faiths. In this diversity of beliefs, when people of different views approached the Buddha, He said, “Let us set aside our differences, let us give attention to what we can agree on, and put common core which we agree upon into practice.” The Buddha said, “Animosity can be eradicated by its forgiveness. Animosity cannot be eradicated by Animosity. Violence increased by non-violence. Violence never ceases through violence. Hatred never ceases through hatred. Through pure life only can it be ceased. This is the eternal law. “This is the Dhamma in the world; it has nothing to do with Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Islamism, or any other.” Dhamma is a simple truth: to understand the truth is our common goal; to understand the truth is our standard solution to all problems; to understand the truth is our common core; and to understand the truth is our common ground. Dhamma teaches us that we can strengthen peace in the world by removing such negativity and understanding the truth within ourselves²⁶.

Great Buddhist Scholar Aisha Dipankara said in his book “Lamp for the Path of Awakening”²⁷

²⁶ (Sleeted Speeches (2), Dr. Ashin Nanissara, Sitagu Sayadaw, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Myanmar. P. 12)

²⁷ Atisha’s Lamp for the Path to Awakening is this most well-known work. The text contains sixty-eight verses outlining the intergration of three forms of discipline, including the vows of the pratimoksha, bodhisattva precepts and the precepts of the Secret Mantra Vehicle. Mahayana and Vajrayana practices and cultivations are also discussed. Written in response to questions from King Jangchup, O in west Tibet around 1042, Atisha’s Lamp became one of the most influential of Indian texts received by Tibetans. This Lamp for the Path to Awakening, this known as Bodhipathapradhipa.

“Then, beginning with a loving attitude toward all living creatures, one considers all beings suffering through birth in the three lower realms -the realms of animals, hungry ghosts, and hell denizens -death and rebirth.

Then, due to the desire to liberate these beings from the suffering of pain, from suffering and the causes of suffering, one should immutably develop the resolve to attain awakening.

Maitreya thoroughly explains the good qualities of developing the aspiration for awakening in the *Gandavyuha sutra*²⁸.

From this moment onward until the attainment of pure awakening, I shall not harbor ill will, anger, avarice, or envy.

I shall undertake pure conduct and give up transgressions and desire. With joy and the vow of discipline, I will train to follow the Buddhas.

I shall not be eager to attain awakening most quickly but shall stay until the very end for the sake of a single sentient being.

I shall purify unlimited inconceivable fields and remain in the ten directions for those who call my name.

I shall purify all my physical, vocal, and mental activities and do nothing unwholesome.

When those observing the vow of the active engagement of the awakening mind have trained well in the three forms of discipline, their respect for these three forms of discipline flourishes, which causes the purification of body, speech, and mind²⁹.”

Lama Yeshe said, “Look into your mind. If you fervently believe that all your enjoyment comes from material objects and dedicate your entire life to their pursuit, you are under the control of a serious misconception”.

This attitude is not simply an intellectual thing. When you first hear this, you might think, “Oh, I don’t have that of mind; I don’t have complete faith that external objects will bring me happiness.” But check more deeply in the mirror of your mind. You will find that beyond the intellect, such as attitude, there is indeed something there and that everybody’s actions show that deep within, you believe this misconception. Take a moment now to check within yourself to see whether or not you are the A mind with a strong faith in the material world is narrow-minded. And limited; it has no space. Its nature is sick, unhealthy, or, in Buddhist terminology, dualistic.

In many countries, people are afraid of those who act out of the ordinary,

²⁸ Mahayana Buddhist Sutra that forms the climax of a larger text. It is unique in that most of its narrative takes place in south India. The sutra primarily describes both the inner qualities and the external displays of miraculous powers that have been attained by the various kalyanamitras whom Sudhana meets. It concludes with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra composing the Prayer for completely good conduct.

²⁹ (Atisha Dipankara, Illuminator of The Awakened Mind (2019), James B. Apple, P. 184 - 185.)

such as those who use drugs. They make laws against the use of drugs and set up elaborate customs controls to catch people smuggling them into the country. Examine this more closely. Drug taking doesn't come from the drug itself but from a person's mind. It would be more sensible to be afraid of the psychological attitude of the polluted mind that makes people take drugs or engage in other self-destructive behavior. Still, instead, we make a lot of fuss about the drugs themselves, completely ignoring the role of the mind. This, too, is a serious misconception, much worse than the drugs a few people take.

Misconceptions are much more dangerous than just a few drugs. Drugs themselves don't spread too far, but misconceptions can spread everywhere and cause difficulty and unrest throughout an entire country. All this comes from the mind. The problem is that we don't understand the psychological nature of the mind. We pay attention to only the physical substance people take; we are unaware of the stupid ideas and polluted misconceptions constantly crossing borders.

Recognize the nature of your mind. Human beings always seek satisfaction. By knowing the nature of the mind, we can satisfy ourselves internally, perhaps even eternally. But you must realize the nature of your mind. We see the sense world so clearly, but we are utterly blind to our internal world, where the constant functioning of misconception keeps us under the control of unhappiness and dissatisfaction³⁰.

So, we need to draw our attention to a simple process like inhalation and exhalation for a while, which can heal our hearts and bring us Peace and harmony for a much longer time. A little smile on our face can benefit us much more than we imagine. But how to keep that little? When we are in a balanced mood, it is essential to prepare ourselves to face conflicts, although it will still be a different experience when we face them. Before going to bed every evening, for instance, we could sit with a half-smile, directing our smile to our breath. Let us be aware that we are breathing in and out.

Buddhism views world peace as a fundamental goal and mental tranquility that can be achieved through inner Peace.

Buddhism teaches that Peace is natural for all sentient beings and that inner Peace can be achieved through meditation, and that inner Peace can spread outward to create Peace in the world.

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I encourage all Buddhist leaders. In a world entirely of destructive vices, we must provide constructive power: Loving-kindness, compassion, Sympathetic joy, and equanimity. I have indicated the discourse of blessings and thoughts of Buddha. I have abovementioned the some of the sutras and methods of sustainable Buddhist development and a peaceful world. We also need Buddha's teaching of four noble truth techniques for

³⁰ (Becoming your Own Therapist, expanded edition including, Make Your mind an Ocean'-2003, Ven. Lama Yeshe, P. 88.)

world peace. Human beings are mysterious, with incredible potential and criminal tendencies. These traits may emerge unexpectedly, and we can only observe them.

The United Nations resolved that the Day of Vesak be celebrated at the Vietnam Buddhist University (La Minh Xuan Campus). During the UNDV 2025 celebrations, numerous cultural activities, Buddhist exhibitions, and international artistic exchanges will occur. This year's Vesak holds particular significance for both the Buddhist community and the people of Vietnam.

Let us extend our wish for the welfare of all beings with the following statement. "May every being experience freedom from hatred, suffering, and worry, and may we all embrace a life filled with joy and happiness."

Sabbe Satta Sukita Honto.

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METTĀ (LOVING-KINDNESS) AS A PATHWAY TO BRIDGING SOCIAL DIVIDES AND CULTIVATING GLOBAL PEACE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND SUSTAINABLE HARMONY

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Abstract:

Mettā, often translated as Loving-Kindness, is a central tenet in Buddhist teaching that emphasizes unconditional kindness, compassion, and sympathy toward all living beings. This research will explore the possibility of *mettā* as a transformative method for overcoming social inequalities and advancing world peace, social justice, and sustainable coexistence. In an ever-more globalized world fractured along innumerable fault lines, social differences based on race, religion, culture, and socio-economic status seem to be exacerbating conflicts and injustices. The research objective is to examine how *mettā* can effectively be used as a means of achieving cohesion among diverse communities and conflicts within contemporary societies. The study is based on an analysis of Buddhist canonical texts, scholarly articles, and Dhamma sermons given by renowned Buddhist scholars. This research suggests that the practice of *mettā* is useful in reducing prejudice and increasing mutual understanding, leading toward social justice and environmental sustainability. The importance of *mettā* in meeting the challenges that overwhelm the world today - systemic injustice, environmental degradation, and socio-political unrest - is considered. *Mettā* establishes a sense of shared responsibility for and sustainable coexistence with all beings since it is an extension of loving-kindness toward all beings. Case studies from different contexts illustrate the effect of transformation on individuals, communities, and society. *Mettā* establishes a sustainable framework for changing personal attitudes and restructuring societal forms.

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This paper concludes that adopting *mettā* is not only consistent with ethical principles based on compassion and mindfulness but also offers concrete methods for problems on a global level.

Keywords: *Conflict resolution, ethical practices, global peace, mettā, social divides, social justice.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Mettā, or loving-kindness, is an important Buddhist concept that motivates the care of all individuals unconditionally.¹ It is not an emotion but a thoughtful and persistent endeavor to construct a heart devoid of hate, anger, and injustice.² As communities continue to suffer from such problems as social divisiveness, global strife, and inequalities, cultivating *mettā* offers a valuable way of infusing peace, justice, and lasting harmony. *Mettā* originates from the Buddha's teachings. It inspires individuals and communities to cultivate an unconditional love that transcends differences and contributes to a gentler and more just world. The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* illustrates *mettā* as an extremely large and altruistic love, similar to the profound love a mother has for her one and only child³. This sutta calls people to practice loving-kindness to all, irrespective of race, religion, or nationality.

Mettā helps to bring people together and is also linked with social justice. The *Sigālovāda Sutta* explains what individuals have to do for others in different roles, i.e., between parents and children, teacher and student, employer and workers, and between friends.⁴ As long as relationships are built based on *Mettā*, they bring about justice, respect for others, and peace in the world. The Dhammapada also teaches that nothing but non-hatred can end fights and quarrels⁵. It shows that *Mettā* is a practical tool for conflict resolution. Through the practice of loving-kindness, people can convert ill will to compassion. This leads to more peaceful relationships and just societies. The benefits of developing *Mettā* are discussed extensively in the *Mettānisaṃsa Sutta*. It lists eleven positive things that come from having loving-kindness as a consistent part of one's life. The benefits range from sleeping well to being harmless and having a mind that is pure and untainted.⁶ The *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* reveals how effective *Mettā* can be. It is stated that a monk who cultivates loving-kindness and has faith in the Buddha's doctrine will attain inner peace and tranquility.⁷

¹ King (2023), p. 2516 - 31.

² Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (2014), p. 23.

³ Sn 1.8: "Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ, āyusā ekaputtāṃ-anurakkhe- Evampi sabbabhūtesu, mānasāṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ."

⁴ DN 31

⁵ Dhṛp 5: "Na hi verena verāni, sammantidha kudācanaṃ- Averaṇa ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano"

⁶ AN 11.16: "Mettāya, bhikkhave, cetovimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulikatāya yānikatāya vatthukatāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāraddhāya ekādasānisaṃsā pāṭikāṅkhā"

⁷ Sn 1.8: "Mettañca sabbalokasmi-mānasāṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ, uddhaṃ adho ca

The Dhammapada also has a similar teaching, stating that walking the path of *mettā* leads to great peace and emancipation from suffering.⁸

These teachings illustrate that *mettā* is not just a personal practice but a potent tool for societal transformation. By infusing loving-kindness into our lives, our communities, and the world, we can bridge social gaps, establish just systems, and build a culture of peace and compassion. In a world that remains divided and at war, *mettā* offers a timeless and practical way to build peace, justice, and lasting harmony for all.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The practice of *mettā* – loving-kindness as a way of developing unity, world harmony, and social justice – has grown very weak in today's world with its increasing social disparities, political polarization, and cultural fragmentation. Whereas *mettā* is acknowledged as one of the most central tenets in Buddhist teachings – advocating for loving kindness towards all living beings – there is a huge lack of applying this principle in the modern world. Societal divisions, such as race, religion, gender, and economic inequalities, continue to support discrimination, inequality, and conflicts in both the personal and collective sense. The lack of *Mettā* in our daily interactions with each other and in the general policies of this world increases these divisions and takes away efforts moving toward a more peaceful, more equal world. As an individually practiced virtue, *mettā* goes beyond personal prejudices and social barriers, making the development of more empathy, understanding, and reconciliation.

So, it is useful to apply *mettā* in overcoming social fragmentation and exploring its potential in bringing world peace, social equality, and lasting harmony. This article looks into the application of *mettā* in both personal and social contexts to try to ascertain the factors that impede its spread and also propose strategies to re-integrate loving-kindness into a modern social structure.

III. DISCUSSION

Loving-kindness, in this sense, is an intensive mental state of all-embracing love, free from selfish motives or personal attachment.⁹ In contrast to conditional love, which depends on a definite relationship or condition, *mettā* goes beyond personal bias, extending to all without exception.¹⁰ A very important aspect in Buddhism, *mettā*, means more than just surface feelings or fleeting emotions of goodwill; it is active mental cultivation to be free from ill will, enmity, or aversion.¹¹ Through regular meditation and disciplined practice, it is so developed in practitioners in such a way that this state of mind

tiriyañca-asambādham averaṃ asapattam"

⁸ Dhp 368: "Mettāvihārī yo bhikkhu, pasanno buddhasāsane- Adhigacche padaṃ santam, saṅkhārūpasamaṃ sukham"

⁹ Gunaratana (2017), p. 12.

¹⁰ Aronson (1980), p. 24.

¹¹ Bodhi (1998), p. 33.

becomes a natural and transformative characteristic within their character.¹² Most specifically, the teaching of *mettā* explained by the Buddha in the Metta Sutta is toward personal liberation but also for social harmony. The barriers in the mind that give rise to hostility and division are gradually dissolved when there is this development of limitless love and goodwill.¹³

At its core, *mettā* is the true wish for happiness, safety, and release from suffering of all sentient beings.¹⁴ It is nonselective in extending to all creatures the wish for well-being – first to those closest, dearest to us; then gradually expanding to strangers; finally, even our enemies – by way of universal friendly disposition. The *Vatthupama Sutta*, the “Simile of the Cloth Discourse,”¹⁵ provides a deep spiritual underpinning for the idea of how *mettā* – loving-kindness – can be used to transcend social boundaries and establish a world of peace, social justice, and sustainable harmony. The sutta, therefore, implies that it is in this kind of mental purity from the impurities of hatred, ill-will, and envy through the cultivation of *mettā* that transformative practices become possible. A dirty cloth can’t take dye, just like a mind filled with bad thoughts can’t help in any action or attitude that seeks harmony and fairness. And in that condition, *mettā* is an instrument that human beings and the community carry with them into action for tackling the source of ills in society and creating a foundation for understanding and peace.

Mettā is a practical application in the Buddha’s teaching that involves creating kind feelings for all people, beyond personal likes and differences.¹⁶ It relates closely to social justice and world peace because it battles against the separations caused by race, religion, ethnicity, or money.¹⁷ The Buddha’s urging to cultivate loving-kindness toward all – oneself, loved ones, strangers, and even those perceived as enemies – provides a pragmatic formula for taking down prejudices. In the development of *mettā*, there arises the ability to look at others with compassion instead of hostility, leading toward the friendly solution to a conflict and reconciliation in society.¹⁸

In the *Kakacūpama Sutta*, the Buddha teaches his disciples to cultivate loving-kindness even in difficult situations: that *mettā* does not rest in outside conditions, but in an inner state of friendliness, tenderness, and non-hostility.¹⁹

¹² Griffin (2022), p.111.

¹³ Siriwardhana (1983), p. 7.

¹⁴ Sangiacomo (2022), p. 380.

¹⁵ MN 7: *Seyyathāpi, brāhmaṇa, vatthaṃ saṃkiliṭṭhaṃ malaggahitaṃ; tamenam dhovako khāreyapi, parikkammepi, ūseyapi; atha kho taṃ vatthaṃ aparisuddhañeva assa saṃkiliṭṭhaṃ malaggahitaṃ. Evameva kho, brāhmaṇa, upakkilese cittaṃ*

¹⁶ Tongsupachok et al (2024), p. 633 - 651.

¹⁷ Yeh (2006), p. 91 - 112.

¹⁸ Siddhi et al (2018), p. 24 - 48.

¹⁹ MN 21: “*Ubhatodaṇḍakena cepi, bhikkhave, kakacena corā ocarakā aṅgamaṅgāni okanteyyum, tatāpi yo mano padūseyya na me so tena sāsanakaro. Tatāpi vo, bhikkhave, evaṃ sikkhitabbam: ‘na ceva no cittaṃ vipariṇataṃ bhavissati, na ca pāpikam vācam nicchāressāma,*

The basic message says to be persistent in kindness even toward hostility or in the face of injury. More broadly, the practice of *Mettā* can help bridge social divides and advance social justice on a global level by promoting equity, fairness, and the well-being of all people, including enemies. The sutta illustrates global peace by depicting that true peace doesn't depend on the absence of troubles but rather results from the occurrence of compassionate understanding amidst trouble. Only thus, through the cultivation of *mettā* can everyone become an active collaborator in co-creating a harmonious world, where even the most difficult situations become an opening for healing and mutual respect.

In the *Tevijja Sutta*, the Buddha gives a most important teaching with great emphasis on the idea that the development of *mettā* can lead one to become with Brahma, the highest being within the Brahmanical tradition.²⁰ The Buddha explains that the path to Brahma, or the highest spiritual state, is not attained by ceremonies or outward practices, but by the cultivation of a pure and spacious mind, filled with loving-kindness toward all living beings. In pointing out how, by the practice of *mettā*, one could purify the mind and develop qualities that would be in harmony with the divine and thereby transcend ego and attachment. This, the practice of *mettā*, brings about a state of harmony and unity, wherein the practitioner is in a state of unconditional love, untroubled by hate, ill will, or fear, and is ultimately at peace with himself and united with all life.

IV. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL DIVIDES

Social divides are separations within society wherein various groups of people possess varying levels of status, resources, opportunities, or recognition.²¹ These may come from things like class, ethnicity, religion, gender, money, education, or where people live. They result from a combination of historical, cultural, economic, political, and social factors. These include the impacts related to caste systems, differences in wealth, cultural and ethnic diversity, discriminatory political rules, and those based on social prejudices.

Historical inequalities have been among the main causes of social divides that still affect us today. This led to social layers where colonization, slavery, and the caste system formed their hierarchies in society by creating power imbalances that privileged some at the cost of others. Like in all instances of the colonial era, artificial boundaries, economic structures, and societal systems were built by the European powers to their advantage, at the expense of the natives. This has had an indelible impact, making the colonized people struggle with numerous issues, mostly amidst poverty and with very little or

hitānukampī ca viharissāma mettacittā na dosantarā, tañca puggalaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā pharitvā viharissāma, tadekarammaṇaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjhena pharitvā viharissāma’ti. Evañhi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabbam”

²⁰ DN 13: “So mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjhena pharitvā viharati.”

²¹ Knight (1982), p. 514 - 531.

no access to any resources. Slavery in America forcefully uprooted individuals from Africa, snatched their fundamental human rights, and subjected them to all those decades of torture.²² The racial divide that began with slavery continues to this day with ongoing racial discrimination and economic disparities.²³ An example is the caste system of India, which divides people into fixed social groups. People belonging to lower castes are marginalized, discriminated against, and have fewer chances to succeed.²⁴ These systems of oppression and abuse from the past have left indelible marks on society. The fight for equal rights and justice by the oppressed groups still goes on today. This past continues to influence social ills today, perpetuating the disparities in wealth, education, healthcare, and other overall opportunities for progress. The outcome of this disparity-ridden past is that whole communities become marginalized while others maintain their social, economic, and political dominance. These historical contributors become increasingly important to understand in order to move toward bridging the existing social gaps, creating a society that rectifies social injustices and enables healing.

Political aspects are significant in the formation of social cleavages. Political policies, decisions, and ideologies have the power to unite various groups or exacerbate existing disparities.²⁵ Policies and laws that favor one group over another can reinforce social cleavages. Voting rights laws in the past have also been used to disenfranchise minority groups from their voting power, and this has distorted politics. A case in point is welfare programs that benefit a part of society more than another. Economic inequalities increase as a result, and it becomes increasingly hard for poor people to get the welfare they deserve to improve their economic status. Political ideologies can not only create divisions but also reinforce existing ones. Political actions implemented with hardly any regard for social justice – such as cuts in public services, oppressive taxation policies, and legislation and regulations that circumvent the interests of vulnerable individuals – make inequalities worsen and create long-lasting resentment. Political agreements that work in favor of the wealthy or mighty also cause privilege to adhere, contributing to the exclusion of disadvantaged groups. For this reason, political factors not only respond to but also create and reinforce social cleavages. This contributes to the need for policy ideas revolving around inclusiveness, equity, and justice to mend these cleavages and attain social cohesion.

Social stereotypes and prejudices – infused with discriminatory actions – are excellent contributory factors in the creation and sustenance of social divisions. Many are the instances of such discriminations based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and disability, among other social categories that oftentimes place a roadblock against some groups being able to avail

²² Oshinsky (1997), p. 38.

²³ Baron (1971), p. 27.

²⁴ Javaid et al (2020), p.29.

²⁵ Dalton, R. J. (2017), p. 195 - 208.

themselves of equal opportunities and means.²⁶ Prejudice and biases can also occur in social interaction and thus result in the exclusion or unjust treatment of individuals or groups based on presumed differences.²⁷ Exclusionary behavior supports cleavages within society because groups that have been marginalized often come up against barriers that limit their access to social integration or the ability to integrate fully into community life. Minority religious or cultural groups, for example, face discrimination in workplaces or social setups, while women and LGBTQ+ individuals may be confronted with restrictions to their advancements or equality.²⁸ Thus, social biases can sustain cycles of inequality, as those who are discriminated against may not be able to access the same resources or opportunities as others, resulting in intergenerational differences in wealth, education, and social mobility. Such exclusion from mainstream society can generate sentiments of alienation, resentment, and polarization, further making it more difficult to close social divides.

Geographic and regional inequalities are the variations between locations that may generate social divisions.²⁹ The majority of these variations arise due to the residential location of individuals, either in urban or rural places or areas with varying degrees of development. In most cases, those residing in urban areas have access to the majority of services and opportunities. For example, they will have access to improved schools, hospitals, transport systems, and employment. These amenities ensure an improved standard of living for the individuals and help people improve their living standards. Technological development, industrialization, and business activities are typically more in the cities, offering superior economic prospects to the inhabitants compared to the rural locations or the towns lacking these attributes. Inhabitants of these areas can be troubled by underdeveloped infrastructure. This includes bad roads, lack of public transportation, and bad electricity and water supply. Good schools and medical facilities might be hard to reach, making it even harder for people to gain access to education or proper health care. Employment opportunities are also typically limited, compelling them to depend on poorly paid work or unstable employment, such as agricultural work or small business undertakings. Disparities can generate a huge divide between urban and rural populations. There may be improved quality of life for those residing in urban places, while the latter in rural areas perpetually struggle just to meet fundamental needs. This kind of imbalance can generate discontent or a sense of marginalization among individuals in disadvantaged areas, thus making it extremely difficult to have an equal and peaceful society.

In order to minimize such disparities, efforts and resources need to be channeled by governments and organizations alike into developing rural communities, upgrading infrastructures, and making basic services and

²⁶ Bagilhole (2009), p. 15.

²⁷ Abrams (2010), p. 46

²⁸ Eskridge (2017), p. 322.

²⁹ Williamson (1965), p. 1 - 84

opportunities accessible to all, irrespective of geographical location.

V. THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DIVIDES ON GLOBAL COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Social divides can inflict the most devastating and serious impacts on global peace, social justice, and sustainable harmony.³⁰ Such divides in society, typically along lines of race, religion, gender, socio-economic standing, or other, split a society into various groups that witness varying degrees of opportunity, recognition, and justice. The implications of such divides are far more extensive than mere individual grievances and do impact the overall community, nations, and even international relations.

Social divisions lead to conflict and violence, both within and among societies.³¹ When groups are excluded, treated differently, or abused due to who they are, it may generate anger, mistrust, and hostility. These emotions may snowball into social upheavals, protests, or even brawls as the oppressed groups struggle for their rights, recognition, and equality. Deep-seated social cleavages are not likely to guarantee the persistence of peace and stability in a nation. For example, nations with deep ethnic and religious animosity have gone to war over conflicts, triggering a full-blown war and humanitarian crisis in recent times, spreading waves of instability and insecurity across the globe. These cleavages create discord among humans, because of which shared issues in the form of climate change, pandemics, or security concerns do not receive appropriate cooperation or focus. Social cleavages are unfair in the sense that they cause shared power, resources, and opportunities to be distributed unevenly.³² It is the marginalized communities, perhaps with less money, or who experience political persecution, or who are shunned by society, that are denied fundamental rights to education, health, and employment. Such entrenched disparities are contrary to the ideals of justice and equality at the heart of social justice. If social rifts remain, entire generations can be lost. It's a cycle of poverty, disenfranchisement, and few opportunities to better oneself. Unless these inequalities are corrected, there can be no genuine social justice in societies. Privileges are still enjoyed by some groups while others are discriminated against and marginalized.

Sustainable harmony means coexisting peacefully, respecting each other, and cooperating.³³ Social divides shatter this harmony by causing division, suspicion, and rivalry rather than collaboration. A society injured by prejudice and discrimination struggles to unite for shared goals like protecting the environment, developing the economy, and exchanging cultures. When individuals do not function effectively together, attempts at building long-term solutions to worldwide issues are so frequently undermined since key voices in

³⁰ Lederach (1997), p.16.

³¹ Anderson (2010), p.726-742.

³² Young (2001), p.9.

³³ Nandhikkara (2019), p.131-136.

decision-making are excluded.³⁴ In addition, when individuals or societies are polarized, they will be less inclined to endorse policies or programs aiming for the good of all, hindering long-term progress. Thus, Sustainable development is satisfying today's needs without jeopardizing the future generation's ability to meet theirs. It involves combining three integrated dimensions: economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. Economic sustainability ensures success in the long term as it makes systems inclusive, resilient, and resource-efficient. Environmental sustainability involves conserving resources, minimizing pollution, safeguarding various species, and addressing climate change in order to maintain healthy ecosystems for generations to come. Social sustainability entails creating an equitable society by promoting fundamental human rights, ensuring that all people have equal access to resources, and engaging everyone while reducing inequalities. Together, these goals aim to build a good relationship between people and the Earth, allowing us to make progress today without harming the future well-being of upcoming generations.

Mettā – loving-kindness promotes world peace, social justice, and sustainable harmony by developing a mindset of compassion, inclusivity, and connectedness with others.³⁵ As stated by Buddhism, *mettā* renders individuals friendly and sympathetic towards all human beings irrespective of their race, religion, culture, or social status.³⁶ Such universal love can dissolve biases and stereotypes causing conflicts; therefore, peace can be attained very easily. Thus, *mettā* is one of the significant ideas in the propagation of social justice: it is rooted in good actions and respect towards others, rectifying injustices, and treating people as fellow beings. Through loving-kindness in action, people cultivate a hate-free, bias-free, and anger-free heart in which they are at peace with the realization of the issues various groups encounter in society and offer support to fairness and inclusivity. This kind of attitude will give practitioners the courage to speak against discrimination, fight against injustice, and support programs that advance the dignity and rights of all individuals.

Sigalovada Sutta provides exceedingly clear instructions on how to integrate *mettā* into daily life to facilitate social justice. It also describes the responsibilities and respectful comportments that individuals should have within several social relationships such as between parents and children, between employers and employees, and between spiritual teachers and their students.³⁷ Practicing these common duties with loving-kindness is how, the sutta suggests, a peaceful and equitable society is established. The values it espouses – concern, respect, fairness, and guardianship – are connected with the larger goals of social justice, which ensure that no individual or group is vulnerable to exploitation or neglect. Therefore, *mettā* transforms not only how people behave but also influences society, building a culture of

³⁴ Straus (2002), p.17-34.

³⁵ Thien et al (2019), p. 126 - 131

³⁶ Buddhārakkhita (1989): 35.

³⁷ La (2018), p. 200 - 218.

justice and respect. For lasting harmony, *mettā* promotes a profound feeling of connectedness beyond people to all beings and nature. This arises from the understanding of the interconnectedness of all living beings, that they are all interdependent, and the happiness of any one impacts all of them. As individuals mature in insight and a compassionate attitude by cultivating *mettā*, their lifestyles of leading life must honor nature. This will promote conscious consumption, respect for natural resources, and action that would not harm nature, leading to harmony in the world.

The *Karaniya Mettā Sutta* addresses this principle most eloquently by exhorting human beings to show loving-kindness towards all beings, even the smallest and insignificant creatures. The sutta's insistence on limitless compassion emphasizes the ethical imperative to live in consonance with nature, to maintain its fragile equilibrium. With the embracing of *mettā* as a paramount principle, human beings and societies are likely to work towards permanent peace in which human desires are fulfilled without harming the health and well-being of the Earth for future generations. This connection with environmental concern is crucial to address contemporary issues like climate change, extinction of other species, and environmental degradation.

Mindful living and meditation have the power to transform individuals' thoughts, generating patience, understanding, and a firm resolve for peace. The meditations on *mettā* guide one to look into his or her own biases and develop an unconditional kindness mentality, therefore dissipating anger, aggression, and conflict. This inner transformation emanates outward and influences how individuals interact with each other, encouraging conduct that leads to harmony and consideration for each other. The patience and insight that *mettā* would instill in an individual would, therefore, compel individuals to collaborate towards the resolution of social ills and unjust institutions. Those who practice *mettā* want to help establish righteous rules and actions that respect the dignity and happiness of all individuals, irrespective of their social, economic, or cultural standing. Being kind and without harm to anyone, *mettā* is a positive and lofty way of addressing such significant problems as inequality, discrimination, and environmental issues. It offers a means to unite individuals from various backgrounds and to construct mechanisms that generate equity and justice.

VI. UNIVERSALIZATION OF *METTĀ* (LOVING-KINDNESS)

In the universalization of *mettā* (loving-kindness), the concepts of generalized radiation, specified radiation, and directional radiation play an important role in making the practice inclusive and expansive. These forms of radiation exemplify how practitioners systematically extend loving-kindness to all beings without exception.

Generalized radiation of *mettā* means sending loving-kindness to everybody equally, no matter who they are or where they live.³⁸ It represents a wish for

³⁸ San Van Xien (2018), p. 50.

the happiness of all beings, free from any partiality or prejudice. Following *Karaniya Mettā Sutta*, this practice speaks on the boundless aspects of loving-kindness, telling people to wish all beings, weak or strong, long, stout, medium, short, small or large, “seen, and unseen, near, or far,” well-being. This form of *mettā* is very potent in promoting world peace by working on the main causes of hate, bitterness, and fighting. Practitioners of it create a friendly attitude by sending loving-kindness to all, battling against bad feelings such as anger, jealousy, and dislike. It produces feelings of goodwill for all, which reduces violence, competition, and separation. Generalized radiation pushes people to act ethically and to commit themselves to non-violence. Showing concern for everyone’s well-being makes them act in ways that benefit the whole group, such as standing up for fairness and the elimination of systemic issues. That brings peaceful solutions to conflicts, and people take responsibility for the well-being of others. It refines the way of thinking of a person, making him patient, understanding, and stable through emotions. These qualities assist a person during hard times to act calmly and kindly. This is a regular practice of loving-kindness that one is at peace with oneself, thereby knowing how to help build a peaceful and harmonious world.

The specified radiation from *mettā* is directed toward friends, family members, colleagues, or even enemies – toward those with whom one has difficulty.³⁹ This focused approach then allows the practitioners to focus on specific sources of disharmony or personal biases, hence being a very potent tool for the betterment of relationships and the creation of mutual understanding. Unlike general radiation, which applies to everyone, specific radiation addresses specific circumstances. This allows the practitioner to create goodwill where help is needed urgently. It helps dissolve feelings of animosity, resentment, or misunderstanding by intentionally cultivating *mettā* toward those involved in conflicts or difficult relationships. It encourages a shift in perception, allowing one to see others with empathy and compassion rather than through the lens of anger or judgment⁴⁰. For example, radiating loving-kindness to a difficult colleague or an estranged family member creates a mental climate that is conducive to reconciliation and improved communication. Such specified radiation is very helpful in the promotion of social justice. It can make practitioners, by focusing on marginalized groups or people who face discrimination, actively confront their prejudices and biases. This approach calls for fair interactions that promote respect and fairness for those who have been treated unfairly or left out in the past. It helps a practitioner grow to a mindset that views the basic dignity and worth of every individual, essential in creating lasting change and support. This practice will also make people emotionally stronger and self-aware, individually. One gets to know about his feelings and connections with others through the willingness to send kind thoughts to specific people or groups. This awareness helps in developing

³⁹ Buddharakkhita (2020), p. 23.

⁴⁰ Salzberg, S. (2015), p. 73.

patience, tolerance, and a better understanding of how relationships are linked.

Directional radiation means sending out *mettā* (loving-kindness) in all directions: east, west, north, south, above, and below. This is an energetic way of developing the ability to give unconditional love and compassion, helping one grow out of personal likes, location, and social differences⁴¹. This systematic approach gradually overcomes the normal feelings of attachment, aversion, or indifference that one has for particular persons or groups. It cultivates instead an all-inclusive wish for the well-being and happiness of all beings. It is in this way that directional radiation helps us feel connected and realize that all living things deserve kindness and compassion. It is a very good way of developing mindfulness by using directional radiation: when individuals radiate *mettā* in all directions, they bring about a state of concentrated awareness and presence, making sure that their intentions are true and stable. Being mindful, by developing Metta, helps control emotions, reduces anger, hatred, and fear while building patience and understanding.⁴² On a larger scale, directional radiation contributes to harmonious sustainability by forming global care and nonviolence. As practitioners radiate loving-kindness without discriminating, they embody the values that are opposite the divisive: prejudice, xenophobia, and exploitation. Such a limitless mindset nurtures attitudes and actions consonant with ecological balance, peaceful coexistence, and the understanding of shared responsibility for humanity's role in the world.

VII. CONCLUSION

Mettā, or loving-kindness, is a potent practice for bringing people together, one that encourages global peace, social fairness, and lasting harmony. In the practice of *mettā*, people are said to be able to drop their personal biases and differences, embracing a common feeling of kindness that develops unity and understanding. Practices based on *mettā* that spread in different ways give useful approaches to showing care toward everybody, solving conflicts, and building more inclusive communities. A Buddhist discourse pointed out that *mettā* is not only exercised with oneself in mind but equally functions to confront discrimination and brings an individual out of disparity onto levels with equity. With the application of *mettā* in everyday life, individuals and society can help bring about a world that is peaceful, just, and harmonious. This is a world where the well-being of all is valued, and nonviolence and respect guide us toward cooperation for a brighter future.

⁴¹ Bodhi (2012), p. 1598.

⁴² Gunaratana (2017), p. 142.

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THE FOUNDATION OF HARMONY: WOMEN'S ROLE IN CULTIVATING FAMILIAL PEACE FOR SOCIETAL HARMONY THROUGH BUDDHIST WISDOM

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Abstract:

The family is often regarded as the foundation of society, and the cultivation of peace within this unit is crucial for broader societal harmony. Women, as central figures in the family, play an indispensable role in fostering inner peace that radiates outward to create harmonious communities. Buddhist teachings, including the *Sigālovāda Sutta* and other key scriptures such as the *Parabhava Sutta* and *Maṅgala Sutta*, provide a comprehensive framework for fostering familial harmony by emphasizing mutual respect, moral responsibility, and compassionate interactions. This paper explores the critical role of women in embodying and promoting these values within the family, drawing insights from these *suttas* to address the problem of familial discord manifesting in neglect, conflict, and the erosion of values. By engaging with these teachings, this study underscores how women's contributions to cultivating inner peace at home serve as a foundation for societal and global peace, highlighting the universal relevance of Buddhist wisdom in resolving contemporary challenges.

Keywords: *Buddhism, harmony, peace, wisdom.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of peace within Buddhist philosophy extends beyond the absence of conflict, encompassing a state of harmony, ethical conduct, and mindfulness. While the Buddha's teachings emphasize individual responsibility for cultivating inner peace, they also recognize the interdependence of individuals within families and communities. Women, often described as the

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nurturers and moral anchors of the family, are pivotal in embedding these principles in the household.

Peace in Buddhist philosophy is intrinsically linked to the ethical and moral behavior of individuals, which finds its most immediate and profound expression within the family unit. The Buddha's recognition of familial relationships as a microcosm of society underscores their importance in fostering peace and stability. Among the members of the family, women as mothers, wives, and daughters often serve as the keystones of this intricate structure. Their role in instilling values such as compassion, respect, and mindfulness ensures that the family becomes a sanctuary of peace and moral integrity.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta* stands out as a quintessential guide for lay practitioners seeking to create harmony in their personal lives and relationships. Within this text, the Buddha provides detailed instructions on the reciprocal duties of family members, emphasizing that peace within the family is a shared responsibility but often facilitated by the nurturing influence of women. In particular, the role of a wife, described as a “best friend” to her husband, highlights the respect and partnership that form the bedrock of familial harmony.

Beyond the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, the *Parabhava Sutta* and *Maṅgala Sutta* further reinforce the principles essential for familial and societal peace. The *Parabhava Sutta* (Discourse on Downfall) provides a detailed account of behaviors that lead to the deterioration of individuals and families, emphasizing the need for ethical living and mutual respect. Similarly, the *Maṅgala Sutta* (Discourse on Blessings) outlines the qualities and practices that lead to a blessed and harmonious life, many of which directly apply to family dynamics. These *suttas* collectively provide a broader framework for understanding how peace within families can be cultivated and maintained.

This paper focuses on how women, guided by the principles articulated in the *Sigālovāda Sutta* and supported by complementary teachings in the *Parabhava Sutta* and *Maṅgala Sutta*, contribute to cultivating peace within the family. The aim is to illuminate how their roles extend beyond mere domestic responsibilities, evolving into an ethical and spiritual leadership that not only nurtures individual family members but also contributes to societal well-being and global peace. The pressing issue of familial discord manifested in conflicts, neglect, and moral decay calls for a reinvigoration of these Buddhist principles, where women's roles are celebrated and supported as central to resolving these challenges.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta*, alongside the *Parabhava Sutta* and *Maṅgala Sutta*, provides specific guidance on cultivating mindfulness (*sati*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and loving-kindness (*mettā*) within familial relationships. These qualities are not abstract virtues but practical tools emphasized in these *suttas*' descriptions of reciprocal duties. For example, mindfulness encourages individuals to be present and attentive to the needs of family members, fostering an environment of patience and understanding. Women, in their roles as caretakers and emotional anchors, exemplify this mindfulness by modeling calmness and attentiveness, even during times of stress or conflict.

Compassion, as outlined in these teachings, is the ability to understand and alleviate the suffering of others. Women's natural roles within the family often involve addressing the emotional and physical needs of their spouses and children. The emphasis on the ethical duties of a wife such as protecting and supporting her family underscores how compassion is central to maintaining harmony and resolving disputes.

Loving kindness, or *mettā*, as described in these *suttas*, is a proactive practice of goodwill and benevolence. Women are uniquely positioned to embody this value, often acting as mediators and sources of unconditional love within the family. The Buddha's directive that spouses treat each other with mutual respect and affection further reinforces the importance of *mettā* in strengthening familial bonds.

The role of women in cultivating these virtues is further highlighted through the responsibilities outlined in these *suttas*, which include fostering an environment of mutual respect and ethical behavior. By practicing mindfulness, compassion, and loving-kindness, women transform their families into havens of peace and serve as catalysts for broader societal harmony. This emphasis on practical application links the teachings of these *suttas* directly to the everyday lives of lay practitioners, making them profoundly relevant to contemporary family dynamics.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Peace, as a concept cultivated by women, has been defined in various frameworks. Sara Ruddick, in her work *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (1989) on feminist peace theories, describes "maternal thinking" as a practice of nurturing and non-violence, emphasizing women's capacity to foster peace through caregiving roles. She argues that the responsibilities inherent in mothering such as preserving the life of the child, fostering their growth, and training them socially lead to specific cognitive capacities and virtues. Ruddick posits that these capacities can form the foundation for feminist peace politics, suggesting that the values developed through maternal practices are inherently nonviolent and can contribute to broader societal peace efforts.¹ Similarly, Betty Reardon in her book *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility* defines peace as "a comprehensive framework for non-violent conflict resolution and ethical interaction,"² highlighting women's roles as mediators and educators within families and societies.

These definitions align with Buddhist principles of mutual care and respect, as outlined in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, where peace begins with the fulfillment of familial duties. The nurturing and protective roles of women, emphasized in these modern theories, resonate with the Buddha's teachings on the responsibilities of a wife and mother to ensure the welfare of the family.

In her book, *In a Different Voice* (1982), Carol Gilligan introduces the

¹ Ruddick (1995): 127.

² Reardon (1988): 20.

concept of an “ethic of care,” emphasizing the importance of relationships and responsibilities in moral development. She states, “In the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection.”³

This perspective provides a framework for understanding women’s approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, highlighting the role of care and relational dynamics. According to Gilligan, women often prioritize relationships, empathy, and interconnectedness, traits that align with the *Sigālovāda Sutta*’s emphasis on mutual respect and ethical behavior within the family.

In the Buddhist context, the *sutta*’s description of reciprocal duties where each family member supports and respects others parallels the ethics of care by emphasizing interdependence and compassion. These theories provide a foundation for analyzing women’s centrality in fostering peace at the micro and macro levels.

Existing studies on the *Sigālovāda Sutta* highlight its relevance to modern family dynamics. For example, Bhikkhu Bodhi emphasizes the ethical framework provided by the *sutta*, arguing that its teachings serve as a blueprint for harmonious relationships. He asserts that “it is by loving-kindness that one protects others”⁴, highlighting loving-kindness as the most cherished trait in women, which fortifies the bonds among family members. Dr. Lily de Silva explores the role of women in actualizing the *sutta*’s principles, noting that women’s nurturing influence ensures the practical application of these teachings within households.⁵

These works, alongside insights from scholars such as Richard Gombrich⁶, underscore the transformative potential of the *Sigālovāda Sutta* and related texts in fostering familial peace. The *Maṅgala Sutta* and *Parabhava Sutta* complement this perspective by providing a broader ethical framework for living harmoniously. Together, these *suttas* demonstrate how adherence to Buddhist principles can create a foundation of harmony that extends beyond the household, contributing to societal and global peace.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative methodology grounded in textual analysis and interpretative approaches to examine the role of women in fostering familial peace and its broader societal implications through the lens of Buddhist teachings. The research draws on primary sources, including English translations of key Buddhist scriptures such as the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, *Parabhava Sutta*, and *Maṅgala Sutta*. These were complemented by secondary sources, including scholarly commentaries by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Richard Gombrich,

³ Gilligan (1982): 131.

⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2016): 30.

⁵ “Lily de Silva” (2000): 45.

⁶ Gombrich, Richard F. (1996): 98.

and Lily de Silva, as well as insights from feminist peace theorists such as Sara Ruddick, Betty Reardon, and Carol Gilligan. Historical and cultural examples from Buddhist societies were also analyzed to provide context and demonstrate the practical application of these teachings. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes, including the emphasis on reciprocal duties in familial relationships, the role of mindfulness, compassion, and loving-kindness in fostering harmony, and the connection between familial peace and societal well-being. The study synthesizes insights from Buddhist scriptures and modern feminist theories, highlighting the centrality of women in peacebuilding. While the interpretative nature of this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its reliance on existing literature and the absence of empirical data. Future research may address this limitation by conducting interviews or case studies with women in Buddhist communities to further validate the findings.

IV. DISCUSSION - WOMEN AS ETHICAL LEADERS

The *Sigālovāda Sutta* underscores the role of women as moral stewards within the family, a perspective that aligns with the principles of Feminist Peace Theory. The *sutta* describes a wife as a “friend and partner” to her husband. This implies an equal and collaborative relationship where the wife contributes not just to domestic responsibilities but also to maintaining the ethical and emotional equilibrium of the household. This aligns with the Feminist Peace Theory’s emphasis on relational ethics and mutual respect as the foundation of peace: “By being faithful, hospitable to relatives, and skilled in her work, a wife protects her family.”⁷ This highlights a wife’s role in fostering trust, unity, and cooperation within the household. Sara Ruddick (1989), in her work on maternal thinking, asserts that women’s caregiving roles naturally position them as ethical leaders and mediators of peace within both families and broader communities. Similarly, Betty Reardon (1988) emphasizes that peace is cultivated through non-violent conflict resolution, which often originates in the ethical guidance provided by women in familial settings.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta* entrusts wives with the role of protecting the family’s wealth and ensuring its proper use. While this includes material wealth, it also extends to ethical and moral wealth, positioning women as the custodians of values and integrity in the family. The *sutta* explicitly states that a wife

⁷ “The wife thus ministered to as the West by her husband shows her compassion to her husband in five ways:

- (i) she performs her duties well,
- (ii) she is hospitable to relations and attendants
- (iii) she is faithful,
- (iv) she protects what he brings,
- (v) she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

“In these five ways does the wife show her compassion to her husband who ministers to her as the West. Thus is the West covered by him and made safe and secure.” (*Sigālovāda Sutta*, 31st sutta in the *Dīgha Nikāya*).

should “protect what her husband brings home,” suggesting that women are instrumental in maintaining the household’s material and moral prosperity. The *sutta* outlines that a wife contributes to familial harmony by being emotionally supportive and industrious. Her role in creating an environment of trust and stability allows the family to function harmoniously: and there are five ways in which a wife, thus ministered to by her husband as the western direction, will reciprocate: by properly organizing her work, by being kind to the servants, by not being unfaithful, by protecting stores, and by being skillful and diligent in all she has to do. In this way, the western direction is covered, making it secure and free from peril.⁸ These traits contribute to a peaceful and ethical family life.

What’s more, the *sutta* emphasizes that husbands and wives must treat each other with respect and kindness, establishing a framework of mutual care. Women’s roles in ensuring this reciprocity are pivotal, as they often set the tone for relational dynamics within the family: the husband’s duties include “respecting his wife and treating her with honor,” which reinforces her moral authority within the family unit.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta*’s portrayal of women as central figures in maintaining ethical, emotional, and material balance within the family resonates with the following principles of Feminist Peace Theory: women’s roles as nurturers and moral guides reflect the theory’s focus on building peace through relationships and care. The *sutta*’s emphasis on kindness, faithfulness, and hospitality aligns with feminist ideas of women as peace builders who mediate conflicts and foster harmony.

Likewise, the *sutta*’s framework of reciprocal duties showcases the collaborative efforts required to maintain peace, emphasizing equality in relational dynamics. By outlining women’s roles as moral stewards and advocates for familial harmony, the *Sigālovāda Sutta* highlights their indispensable contributions to fostering peace, a concept central to both Buddhist ethics and Feminist Peace Theory.

The *Parabhava Sutta*⁹ supports this view by warning against neglect and

⁸ Bikkhu Bodi (2016): 172.

⁹ “The wicked are dear to him, with the virtuous he finds no delight, he prefers the creed of the wicked — this is a cause of one’s downfall; Being fond of sleep, fond of company, indolent, lazy and irritable — this is a cause of one’s downfall; Though being well-to-do, not to support father and mother who are old and past their youth — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To deceive by falsehood a brahman or ascetic or any other mendicant — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one’s luxuries alone — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To be proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and to despise one’s own kinsmen — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To be a rake, a drunkard, a gambler, and to squander all one earns — this is a cause of one’s downfall; Not to be contented with one’s own wife, and to be seen with harlots and the wives of others — this is a cause of one’s downfall; Being past one’s youth, to take a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To place in authority a woman given to drink and squandering, or a man of a like behavior — this is a cause of one’s downfall; To be of noble birth, with vast

moral decay within the family, which women counteract through their roles as protectors of values and harmony. Bhikkhu Bodhi notes that ethical decay within the family is a precursor to societal downfall, highlighting the critical role of women in sustaining moral integrity and harmony in the household: "And how does a wretch live together with a goddess? Here, in householders, the husband destroys life . . . who abuses and reviles ascetics and brahmins. But his wife abstains from the destruction of life . . . from wines, liquor, and intoxicants; she is virtuous, of good character; she dwells at home with a heart free from the stain of miserliness; she does not abuse or revile ascetics and brahmins."¹⁰ By fulfilling their responsibilities with mindfulness and compassion, women embody the principles that prevent familial and societal decline.

Furthermore, the *Parabhava Sutta* identifies specific behaviors that lead to downfall, such as disrespect and dishonesty. Women, through their nurturing and ethically grounded roles, help mitigate these behaviors, ensuring the moral and emotional stability of their families. This perspective aligns with Reardon's emphasis on ethical leadership within families as foundational to broader peace-building efforts. The *Maṅgala Sutta*'s emphasis on "speaking kindly" and "avoiding harmful deeds"¹¹ resonates strongly with Feminist Peace Theory's focus on empathetic communication as a tool for conflict resolution. Reardon highlights that women often employ relational skills to mediate conflicts, fostering environments of mutual understanding and respect: "Women, more often than men, tend to employ relational skills in mediating conflicts, creating contexts for mutual understanding and fostering respect."¹²

This is mirrored in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, where the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness) is essential for resolving familial tensions and promoting reconciliation. Research by Carol Gilligan (1982), in her theory of ethics of care, underscores the relational focus of women in nurturing harmony and resolving disputes. Women's roles in mediating family conflicts, as emphasized in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, embody this relational approach, using kindness and compassion to navigate challenges and maintain familial cohesion.

V. NURTURING FUTURE GENERATIONS

The responsibility of nurturing future generations is intricately tied to

ambition and of slender means, and to crave for rulership — this is a cause of one's downfall; Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the noble sage endowed with insight shares a happy realm. (*Parabhava Sutta*)".

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2016): 174.

¹¹ "To have much learning, to be skillful in handicraft, well-trained in discipline, and to be of good speech, this is the greatest blessing; To support mother and father, to cherish wife and children, and to be engaged in peaceful occupation, this is the greatest blessing; To be generous in giving, to be righteous in conduct, to help one's relatives, and to be blameless in action, this is the greatest blessing; To loathe more evil and abstain from it, to refrain from intoxicants, and to be steadfast in virtue, this is the greatest blessing." (*Maṅgala Sutta* in *Kuddhaka Nikaya*: in *Khuddakapāṭha* and *Sutta Nipāta*).

¹² Reardon (1988): 42.

the family unit, with harmonious relationships between parents serving as its cornerstone. The Buddha's teachings in the *Sigālovāda Sutta* highlight the profound role of parents in fostering a strong moral foundation for their children. Bhikkhu Bodhi elaborates on this, emphasizing that parents cannot be adequately repaid merely through material benefits but rather through their children establishing them in faith, virtuous conduct, generosity, and wisdom. Furthermore, he underscores that the well-being of parent-child relationships is rooted in the mutual respect and affection of a couple, with the *Sigālovāda Sutta* offering practical guidance for married life. An ideal marriage, according to these teachings, is one in which both partners share commitments to virtuous living, spiritual values, and acts of generosity:

He explains how parents are of great benefit to their children, and he says that one's parents can never be adequately repaid by conferring material benefits on them but only by establishing them in faith, virtuous conduct, generosity, and wisdom. Wholesome relations between parents and children depend in turn on the mutual affection and respect of husband and wife. The discourse selected for Text X,¹³ offers guidelines for proper relationships between married couples, holding that the ideal marriage is one in which both husband and wife share a commitment to virtuous conduct, generosity, and spiritual values.¹⁴

The *Maṅgala Sutta*'s identification of "raising children in righteousness" as a blessing aligns with the notion that women, as primary caregivers, are central to shaping the ethical and moral fabric of future generations. As Gombrich explains, the teachings of the suttas serve as a guide for moral education within families, with women playing a significant role in instilling values such as mindfulness and ethical conduct.¹⁵ This perspective aligns with the Feminist Peace Theory, which emphasizes the intergenerational transmission of peace-oriented values.

Reardon asserts that women's contributions to peacebuilding begin at the familial level, where they lay the foundation for broader societal harmony by nurturing compassionate and socially responsible individuals.¹⁶ This perspective

¹³ "Monks, based on the Himalayas, the king of mountains, great sal trees grow in five ways. What five? (1) They grow in branches, leaves, and foliage; (2) they grow in bark; (3) they grow in shoots; (4) they grow in softwood; and (5) they grow in heartwood. Based on the Himalayas, the king of mountains, great sal trees grow in these five ways. So too, when the family head is endowed with faith, the people in the family who depend on him grow in five ways. What five? (1) They grow in faith; (2) they grow in virtuous behavior; (3) they grow in learning; (4) they grow in generosity; and (5) they grow in wisdom. When the head of a family is endowed with faith, the people in the family who depend on him grow in these five ways." (AN 5:40, NDB 664).

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2016): 166.

¹⁵ In Richard F. Gombrich's *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (1996).

¹⁶ In her 1988 publication, *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global*

aligns with the Feminist Peace Theory, which underscores the significant impact of women's contributions to peacebuilding, beginning within the family unit and extending to society at large.

VI. EXPANDING FAMILIAL PEACE TO SOCIETAL HARMONY

The principles laid out in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, often referred to as the “code of discipline for laypeople,” underscore the interconnectedness of family and society. The sutta's emphasis on reciprocal respect and ethical conduct extends beyond familial boundaries, portraying the family as a microcosm of a well-functioning society. Bhikkhu Bodhi highlights the sutta's teachings on mutual responsibility as a foundational blueprint for societal harmony, where the values instilled within families ripple outward to influence broader social systems:

The Buddha regarded the family as the basic unit of social integration and acculturation. It is especially the close, loving relationship between parents and children that nurtures the virtues and sense of humane responsibility essential to a cohesive social order. Within the family, these values are transmitted from one generation to the next, and thus a harmonious society is highly dependent on cordial and respectful relations between parents and children.¹⁷

This perspective aligns with the Feminist Peace Theory, which posits that peace must begin at the grassroots level to ensure long-lasting societal transformation¹⁸. Women, often positioned as primary caregivers, are at the heart of this transformation. Reardon asserts that women's roles in fostering peace within families set the stage for cultivating a society rooted in compassion, equity, and social responsibility. Her argument emphasizes that familial nurturing is not just a private act but a crucial element of public peacebuilding. The *Mallikā Sutta* recounts Queen Mallikā's wisdom in balancing her spiritual practice with her royal responsibilities, ensuring peace within the palace and beyond. The *Maṅgala Sutta* reinforces this idea by linking personal virtues, such as truthfulness, patience, and generosity, to communal blessings. This connection suggests that familial harmony is not isolated but rather foundational to the collective well-being of society. Rita Gross (1993) argues that women's contributions to familial peace through nurturing children and fostering ethical conduct are instrumental in building inclusive and compassionate societies. For example, the Buddhist tradition

Responsibility, Betty Reardon emphasizes that women's roles as primary caregivers position them uniquely to instill values of compassion and social responsibility in their children. This nurturing at the familial level serves as a foundation for broader societal harmony, highlighting the intergenerational transmission of peace-oriented values.

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2016): 165.

¹⁸ “The Buddha also taught and guided people who chose to follow his teachings at home, as lay disciples, living in the midst of their families and working at their regular occupations. He was thus faced with the additional task of laying down guidelines for society as a whole.” Bikkhu Bodhi (2016): 3.

often highlights the role of mothers in teaching their children the principles of *metta* (loving-kindness) and *karuna* (compassion), which are critical for cultivating empathy and mutual respect across societal divides. Women's natural inclination towards empathy enables them to apply these principles effectively. The *Cūḷa-Viyūha Sutta* illustrates the importance of non-contention and understanding, qualities that women often embody to defuse familial tensions and maintain harmony.

Historical examples from Buddhist societies illuminate the profound relationship between familial peace and broader societal harmony. In the *Visākhā's Story (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Visākhā, a devout laywoman and an exemplary disciple of the Buddha, is celebrated for her wisdom, generosity, and ability to foster harmony within her household and community. Her role as a matriarch highlights how women's guidance and dedication to Buddhist principles promote inner and outer peace. By using her wealth and influence to support Buddhist monks and provide for the needy, Visākhā demonstrated how familial values, such as compassion and generosity, can ripple outward to nurture societal cohesion.

In ancient Sri Lanka, queens and royal mothers, such as Queen Anula and Queen Viharamahadevi, played pivotal roles in ensuring the moral and spiritual stability of their kingdoms. Their commitment to the *Dhamma* not only guided their children, many of whom became virtuous rulers but also influenced policies that fostered justice and social welfare. Similarly, in Myanmar, Buddhist nuns (*thilashins*) have historically acted as moral educators within communities, transmitting values of mindfulness and ethical living to younger generations, thereby bridging the gap between familial and societal well-being.

Thailand offers another enduring example, where Buddhist teachings on family values have long been regarded as a cornerstone of the nation's cultural and social cohesion. Women, as primary caregivers and custodians of traditions, have instilled virtues such as loving-kindness (*mettā*) and mindfulness (*sati*), ensuring that these values are deeply embedded within Thai society. Community initiatives led by Buddhist laywomen, such as organizing temple ceremonies or leading charity efforts, further exemplify how familial values translate into societal harmony.

Joanna Macy (1991), a contemporary Buddhist scholar, expands this theme by connecting familial peace to ecological and societal sustainability. Her work on "interconnectedness" highlights that the nurturing practices within families such as teaching mindfulness and interdependence mirror the care required to address global challenges like environmental degradation and social inequality. For example, a mother instilling mindfulness in her children fosters not only a peaceful home but also equips them with the skills to engage in compassionate, sustainable living within their communities. The Buddhist concept of *kalyāṇa-mittatā* (spiritual friendship) further underscores the interconnectedness of familial and societal harmony. Families guided by women's nurturing influence become spaces where spiritual friendship is

cultivated, promoting shared values such as compassion, ethical conduct, and mutual respect that transcend individual households. For instance, in the *Jātaka Tales*, stories of familial bonds often emphasize the transformative power of ethical leadership and collective care, reflecting how familial virtues can be scaled to the societal level.

Empirical evidence supports these historical and cultural insights. Studies on maternal education and child development reveal that mothers emphasizing mindfulness and ethical behavior significantly enhance their children's prosocial behavior, empathy, and sense of responsibility. Such qualities are essential for building harmonious societies. In a modern context, programs inspired by Buddhist principles such as mindful parenting workshops illustrate how family dynamics rooted in compassion and mindfulness can address contemporary challenges like youth mental health issues and social disconnection. By drawing on these historical, cultural, and contemporary examples, it becomes evident that women's roles within families are not only pivotal for nurturing future generations but also for fostering societal harmony. The values cultivated at home ripple outward, creating communities rooted in peace, compassion, and ethical integrity.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Buddhist teachings, particularly the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, *Parabhava Sutta*, and *Maṅgala Sutta*, illuminate the profound interconnectedness of familial and societal harmony. These texts emphasize that peace begins at the grassroots level, with the family serving as the foundation for ethical and moral development. Central to this framework are women, whose nurturing roles extend beyond caregiving to encompass ethical stewardship, emotional anchoring, and relational mediation. By practicing mindfulness, compassion, and loving-kindness, women not only cultivate inner peace within their families but also contribute to the moral stability and cohesion of society. The integration of Buddhist wisdom with contemporary feminist peace theories further underscores the transformative potential of women's roles in fostering peace. Feminist thinkers like Sara Ruddick and Betty Reardon have highlighted the inherent alignment between caregiving roles and peace-building, reinforcing the Buddhist notion that familial harmony is pivotal for societal well-being. Historical and cultural examples, such as Visākhā's contributions to her community and the influence of royal women in Buddhist societies, vividly illustrate the impact of women's leadership in creating harmonious communities.

The ripple effect of familial peace on societal harmony is not merely theoretical but has been substantiated through empirical studies linking maternal influence to pro-social behavior and ethical development in children. The enduring relevance of Buddhist teachings, coupled with the practical applications of feminist peace theory, provides a robust framework for addressing contemporary challenges of conflict, neglect, and moral decay within families and societies. Ultimately, the role of women as nurturers, ethical guides, and peacemakers is indispensable in realizing the vision of a

harmonious and peaceful world. By embodying the principles of mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct, women uphold the values central to both Buddhist philosophy and modern peacebuilding, transforming the family into a microcosm of societal harmony and laying the foundation for global peace.

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PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH BUDDHIST IDEALS: AN INTROSPECTION

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Abstract:

This paper investigates how Buddhist principles – particularly compassion, non-violence, mindfulness, and interdependence – can serve as a foundational framework for peacebuilding and conflict resolution in today's turbulent world. Drawing from the Pāli Canon and Buddhist philosophy, it explores how teachings such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path not only cultivate inner peace but also support global peace initiatives. Through historical examples and modern-day applications, including socially engaged Buddhism and case studies from Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Vietnam, the paper shows how Buddhist ideals have guided ethical leadership, empowered marginalized communities, and resolved conflicts. Emphasizing spiritual transformation as key to societal change, it also discusses the role of meditation, mindfulness, and vipassanā as tools for emotional regulation and sustainable development. Additionally, the work reflects on global efforts like those by the UNDP and explores the intersection of Buddhism and ecology. Ultimately, this introspective study positions Buddhism as a timeless and practical guide for fostering unity, inclusivity, and human dignity in pursuit of enduring peace and holistic development.

Keywords: *Peace, conflict, kosambi, happiness, contentment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Drawing insights from the Pāli Canon, the teachings of the Buddha offer timeless wisdom on resolving conflicts, cultivating inner peace, and promoting harmonious coexistence. The Karaṇīya Metta¹ Sutta emphasizes

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¹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2017), *The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses*:

boundless loving-kindness (*mettā*) as a universal antidote to hatred, while the *Sigālovāda Sutta*² provides ethical guidelines for social harmony and mutual respect. Furthermore, the Buddha's interventions during disputes, such as his guidance to the monks at Kosambi (*Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga*), underscore the importance of dialogue use and reconciliation in achieving unity. The concept of the Cakkavatti (righteous king), as outlined in the *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutta*,³ illustrates a governance model rooted in justice, inclusivity, and the protection of all beings.

These teachings remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges, such as inequality, discrimination, and conflict though in this modern world also we have many organizations which are globally recognized like the United Nations (UN) which has an agency like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which is dedicated to eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable development, building resilience, advancing democratic governance, gender equality and women empowerment which are the necessary steps in the path of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. By integrating these principles into modern frameworks, societies can promote human dignity, bridge divides, and create pathways for enduring world peace and holistic human development. This study highlights the role of spiritual wisdom in shaping ethical leadership and fostering global solidarity, especially by quoting examples from the past, whether we talk about ancient India or till present in the areas of war and peace, economy, ecology, mindfulness, or meditation.

In 1963 Martin Luther King Jr. said that “our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men”⁴. He reflected on society and also expressed his concerns that humanity's rapid advancements in science and technology were not being matched by a corresponding advancement in moral and spiritual development. He was fearful that this imbalance would lead to suffering, injustice, inequality, moral dilemma, and most importantly the chaos that we are experiencing in the twenty-first century. This is not only happening to this society but the same happened earlier during the time of Buddha. All these similar obstacles were faced by that ancient society and I think Lord Buddha understood the root cause of all the suffering and in the *Dhammapada*, his saying occur as “*Manopubbarigamā dhammā, manosetthā manomayā*.” “All phenomena are preceded by the mind, ruled by the mind, made of the mind.”⁵ Inner peace arises from the purification of one's thoughts.

Together with Its Commentary, *Paramatthajotika* II and Excerpts from the Niddesa. Somerville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, Chapter. 1.8.

² Maurice Walshe (2012), trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*. Somerville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, pp. 461- 469.

³ Maurice Walshe (2012), trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*. Somerville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publication, pp. 395-405.

⁴ King, Martin Luther (1964), *Strength to Love*. New York : Pocket Books INC., p. 70.

⁵ Muller, Max (1898), *Dhammapada*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 3.

Talk of unity and inclusivity for human dignity concerning world peace and human development is the need of the hour. As we are talking right now, according to the Geneva Academy⁶ over 110 armed conflicts are ongoing throughout the world and millions of people including women and children are affected by the war. As the year ends the world is facing several major conflicts like the Russian's Special Military Operation in Ukraine, the Middle East conflict (Israel and Gaza and Israel and Hezbollah), the Sudan conflict, the toppling of Assad's regime, and Yemen regional tension, all these conflicts and chaotic world order points to socio-economic inequalities, political instability and governance challenges, resource scarcity, ethnic and religious tension, geopolitical rivalries, diminishing or erosion of international diplomacy and cooperation. So, this research paper will not only talk about past and present problems but it will also come up with solutions and not only quantitatively but more with a holistic approach as Buddha not only talked about suffering and causes of suffering as Rahul Walpola in this book 'What the Buddha Taught' mentions *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* as the heart of the Buddha's teaching lies in the Four Noble Truths⁷ but what makes it unique and practical about Buddhism is that all its teaching are practical; that is why we can do the Buddhist introspection as he also talks about the solution or path to end the suffering for which he talked about (*Ariya-Atthangika- Magga*)⁸ or Eight Fold Noble Path. He was such a visionary and dynamic personality of that time that he understood that only individual happiness and materialistic success will endure this humanity for long and he understood the importance of unity and inclusivity for humans and all sentient beings and the need for an approach which will ensure the world peace and human development in the coming time. In *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta* he talks about "*Sukhino vā khemino hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*."⁹ "May all beings be happy and secure; may all beings have happy minds." Cultivation of loving-kindness (*mettā*) is essential for inner tranquility. In this sutta, he talks about happiness for all, may no one suffer, and may everyone be free from suffering.

II. CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH THE LENS OF BUDDHISM: A REVIEW OF PAST AND PRESENT

Buddhists, particularly those who are socially active, hold that societal change must be accompanied by a shift in one's spirituality. Self-improvement is the first step towards a more compassionate world. It is impossible to achieve a more peaceful world without giving the spiritual aspect adequate thought. Starting a transformational process that would assist people become less

⁶ <https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts>. Accessed on 27 Dec. 2024.

⁷ Rahul, Walpola (1959), *What The Buddha Taught*. London: Oneworld Publications, p. 16.

⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

⁹ Chalmers Lord (Ed). (1932), *Buddha's Teaching Being the Sutta - Nipāta or Discourse - Collection*, pp. 36 - 38.

capable of committing violent acts is one of the main objectives of Engaged Buddhists. The intelligent person understands that the attachment to oneself is the true enemy and never views other people or animals as foes. As Sulak Sivaraksa mentions in his book *Socially Engaged Buddhism* non-violence is the way of dealing with conflicts. He further mentions that “Non-violence of course does not mean non-action. Peace is not merely the absence of war. Peace is a proactive, comprehensive process of finding common ground and resolving conflict through open communication and giving life to a philosophy of non-harm and shared resources. Creating a culture of peace is an active process.”¹⁰ So now the question arises what is Socially Engaged Buddhism how it has contributed in different aspects and how the theoretical insights with practical applications created a transformative impact and fostered a more peaceful situation which led to a more peaceful world. According to Sallie B. King, Engaged Buddhism is a contemporary form of Buddhism that engages actively yet non-violently with the social, economic, political, social, and ecological problems of society.¹¹ So here we will be dealing with examples of contemporary world problems and how Buddhist countries tackled and addressed the root causes and resolved many conflicts in the area of social, economic, political, and ecological crises faced by each country which will further help us in understanding how Buddhist teachings and precepts will help us to create inner peace for world peace and also we will be discussing practices such as mindfulness, meditation and vipassana, interdependence (*Pratītyasamutpāda*)¹² for cultivating peace and how it can contribute to peace-building and conflict resolution.

III. IN TERMS OF WAR AND PEACE

We will start with an incident of “water war”¹³ which took place between Kapilvatthu and Koliya over the use of water and this incident happened only four years after Buddha’s enlightenment. The armies were ready to fight and kill each other but they stopped after seeing the *Sakyamuni* who asked the warriors why they were fighting and upon realizing the matter he gently asked them that does the value of water in comparison with the lives of their family and neighbour is worth killing and he further taught them that the cause of war is none other than a misunderstanding, and this leads to hatred and killing of each other and this led us to a tragic end and thus the two cities were prevented from killing each other.

One of the most significant ideological figureheads of the Vietnamese Buddhism was the poet and Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Thich

¹⁰ Sivaraksa, S. (2005), *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, p. 38.

¹¹ King, S. B. (2009), *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. U.S.A.: University of Hawai’i Press, p. 1.

¹² Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (2008), *The Shape of Suffering: A Study of Dependent Co-arising*. Valley Center, CA: Metta Forest Monastery, pp. 3 - 4.

¹³ Mingun Sayadaw (1991 – 1998), *The Great chronicles of Buddhas*, 6 volumes. Yangon: Ti Ni Publishing Centre.

Nhat Hanh, who received training in both Theravāda and Zen, created the term “engaged Buddhism” to describe the type of Buddhism he wished to see emerge: one that would convert the compassion and wisdom that Buddhists work to cultivate into tangible action on behalf of all sentient beings (that is, all beings with awareness, primarily humans and animals). To prepare young Buddhists to meet the needs of the Vietnamese people, especially in the countryside, he co-founded the School of Youth for Social Service. One of the most significant figures in the development and expression of Buddhist spiritual social activism is Nhat Hanh, who has addressed both to Buddhists and non-Buddhists worldwide and regularly conducted workshops for meditators, activists, families, veterans, artists, and therapists.

Another example is Sri Lanka where the largest nongovernmental organization known as the Sarvodaya Shramadana, was established and led by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne. To create a society where all needs – not only financial ones, but also social, cultural, psychological, political, and spiritual needs – are satisfied, Ariyaratne was a pioneer in the development of “Buddhist economics,” a counter to both capitalist and communist economics which resulted in grassroots development, empowering marginalized communities and promoted non-violence and peace.

A key figure in promoting peace and reconciliation in Cambodia was Somdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, who is frequently referred to as the Gandhi of Cambodia. One of the few Cambodian monks to survive the Khmer Rouge era was Maha Ghosananda, who was fortunate enough to train in Thailand. As the leader of Cambodian Buddhism, he worked tirelessly to mend the deep wounds of the Cambodian people both domestically and internationally. He also oversaw the restoration of Buddhism after the Khmer Rouge had essentially eradicated it. In later years, he brought considerable attention and participation to the remaining areas of violence by organizing the yearly *Dhammayietra*, or Peace Walk, which followed refugees returning home from the camps. As Sallie B. King mentions in his book writing about him that his entire family died during the Cambodian Holocaust but he always radiated infectious joy.¹⁴

Several “development monks” in Thailand are at the forefront of helping the poor by lending money for seeds from contributions to the temples. “Ecology monks” strive to preserve the severely threatened ecosystem, paying special attention to land loss due to dams and deforestation. Such work is risky because it can contradict vested interests; monks may be accused of engaging in political activities inappropriate for a monk, which may lead to defrocking but this is a wrong idea as getting involved in societal activities can be traced back to ancient times as Buddha also got involved in various political matters during his lifetime for the benefit of common people.

Nobel Peace Prize winner and laywoman Aung San Suu Kyi spearheads the democratic and human rights struggle in Burma, sometimes referred to as

¹⁴ King, S. B. (2009), *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. U.S.A.: University of Hawai’i Press, p. 5.

Myanmar. Since 1988, her organization, the National League for Democracy, has fought to install civilian democratic governance in Burma and overthrow the country's violent military rule. Students and Buddhist monks crowded the streets of Rangoon (now Yangon) in the summer of 1988, demanding an end to the military regime and the establishment of human rights. In 1990, her party achieved a resounding electoral win.

Tzu Chi is a massive charitable organisation with over four million members both in Taiwan and overseas, founded by the nun Venerable Cheng Yen. The creation of the third-largest bone marrow data bank in the world, the provision of worldwide emergency aid, and the introduction of free medical care, both in Taiwan and elsewhere, have been among Tzu Chi's most significant contributions. Tzu Chi has a rule against getting involved in politics, unlike other active Buddhist organizations. This has given it access to North Korea and the People's Republic of China, where its offers of emergency relief during natural catastrophes have been warmly received. Hence Socially engaged Buddhism demonstrates how Buddhist teachings address the root causes of disunity, such as greed, hatred, and ignorance, replacing them with compassion, understanding, and ethical behaviour. By applying these principles, individuals and societies can create inclusive, peaceful communities that prioritize collective well-being and sustainable human development which eventually boosts the process of peace-building and sets an example of conflict resolution through Buddhist ideals.

IV. IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY

Many people believe that economic concerns are something that Buddhism would never address. However, this is not true of the Buddha himself or of Engaged Buddhists, who are deeply concerned with eradicating poverty and opposing materialism which is an immense hurdle in creating unity and inclusivity for human dignity. In the book *Buddhism for World Peace* R. K. Pruthi, S. Ram, and Archana Chaturvedi mention that the Buddha and his followers taught people the value of accumulating riches and the significance of economic development for their happiness and well-being. The *Digha Nikaya's* "*Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutra*" makes it abundantly evident that poverty is the root cause of crime and immorality. The Buddha further explained in the "*Kutadanta Sutta*"¹⁵ (in the *Digha Nikāya*) that punishment was ineffective in deterring offenses like theft. Opportunities for people to be contentedly employed in their jobs so they can live happy lifestyles should be made available to effectively and appropriately manage and prevent such crimes.¹⁶

Convincing people that the Buddha did teach economic principles and that this is a legitimate area of interest for Buddhism is frequently the first job of engaged Buddhism in this field. In actuality, the Engaged Buddhists apply the

¹⁵ Walshe, Maurice (2012), *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikāya*. Somerville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, pp. 133 - 142.

¹⁶ Pruthi, R. K., S. Ram and Archana Chaturvedi (2011), *Buddhism for World Peace*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers PVT. LTD., p. 37.

Buddha's teachings to the modern world and derive their fundamental economic ideas from them also Buddhist economic principles focus on ethical behaviour, contentment, simplicity, and generosity, which contribute to cultivating inner peace. When inner peace is achieved collectively, it creates the foundation for world peace. We get the reference from Pali Tripitak which mentions:

4.1. Right livelihood (*Sammā-Ājīva*)

The Noble Eightfold Path includes *Sammā-Ājīva*¹⁷ (Right Livelihood), which guides individuals to earn their living ethically. Livelihoods that harm others, such as trading in weapons, intoxicants, or living beings, are discouraged.

4.2. Ethics of trade

In *Vanijja Sutta*¹⁸ one can get the reference for ethics of trade, this sutta identifies five types of trade that a layperson should avoid: trading in weapons, trading in human beings, trading in meat, trading in intoxicants, trading in poison

4.3. The four kinds of happiness (wealth and contentment)

*Anana Sutta*¹⁹, this sutta outlines the four kinds of happiness a layperson can experience related to wealth: the happiness of ownership (*atthi-sukha*), the happiness of using wealth (*bhoga-sukha*), the happiness of freedom from debt (*anana-sukha*), the happiness of blamelessness (*anavajja-sukha*)

4.4. Proper use of wealth

*Sigālovāda Sutta*²⁰, this discourse to laypeople explains how wealth should be divided and utilized: one part for daily expenses, one part for investment, and one part to be saved for emergencies. The sutta also emphasizes supporting family, friends, and society, as well as practicing generosity.

V. ECOLOGY AND THE IDEA OF INTERDEPENDENCY (*PRATĪTYSAMUTPĀDA*)

Many people believe that an ecological viewpoint and Buddhist ideals and values are highly compatible. Some go even further, highlighting how Buddhist thought expands the scope of ecological thought. Among those leading the investigation of this novel field are the Engaged Buddhists. Deep ecology is a branch of ecological thought and practice founded by Arne Naess, a philosopher who draws upon Spinoza, Gandhi, and Buddhism. Naess

¹⁷ Nāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, and Bhikkhu Bodhi (2015), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Somerville, MA, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, pp. 934 - 940.

¹⁸ Bodhi, Bikkhu (2012), *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya*. Somerville, MA, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, p. 790.

¹⁹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2012), *Anguttara Nikāya, Anana Sutta, The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya*. Somerville MA, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, pp. 452 - 453.

²⁰ Rhys-Davids, T.W. (1960), et al. *The Digha Nikaya*. London: For the Pali Text Society by Luzac, Vol.3, pp. 180 - 192.

declares that Deep Ecology or “green” thinking, is from a starting point in Buddhism. Deep Ecology is virtually identical to the core ideas of Buddhist thought. For example, the scientific understanding that all systems of life on Earth are interrelated and interdependent is an idea that is similar to the idea of dependent origination (*pratitya samuccapada*). Also, the idea of “no self” is one of the fundamental ideas of Buddhism which also matches with the idea Naess says that “self-realization” means that identification with others or seeing something of oneself in others, is the realization of a broader self that becomes broader and broader until it includes all beings which overlaps with the idea of Buddhism. There are four important deep ecologists Joanna Macy, John Seed, Gary Snyder, and Thich Nhat Hanh. They have important contributions to deep ecology and plantation that help societies and communities to get in touch with self-bodies and the natural world.

Thailand’s Ecology Monks: The Ecology monks of Thailand largely evolved from that country’s development monks who focused on Thailand’s widespread and rapid deforestation. From 1976 to 1989 the country lost 28 percent of its forest cover and the UN Environment Program states that two-thirds of Thailand’s wildlife habits have been destroyed by deforestation. So, to save trees Buddhist monks, wrapped them in saffron robes to protect forests from logging and deforestation.

Vietnam: Thich Nhat Hanh’s Plum Village Projects Plum Village in Thailand and Vietnam promotes permaculture and sustainable agriculture. Tree planting is treated as a meditative and mindful activity, integrating ecological action with spiritual growth.

The *Diamond Sutra*, a well-known text from the Mahāyāna *prajñā-pāramitā*²¹, or “perfection of wisdom,” literature, provides a good illustration of this. These texts teach *sunyata*, or emptiness, by expanding on the prior teachings of interconnectedness and no-self. The concept of emptiness, to put it briefly, is that everything is completely interdependent and mutually beneficial, to the point where (what may have been initially believed to be) the constituent parts of things are acknowledged as being so interdependent with one another that they are not separate things at all. In this manner, it is impossible to identify the basic components that makeup everything. Such things do not exist. According to this theory, everything is “empty” of “own-being,” or the capacity to “own” one’s own identity and be oneself on one’s own. Thus, not only do people lack selfhood – an inner, unchanging core that forms the basis of our identity – but everything and everything is devoid of such a core. Realizing this emptiness experientially and letting go of all conscious and subconscious mental constructions of fixed things and entities where none exist is the “perfection of wisdom” that the majority of Mahayana views as a fundamental spiritual objective. It is claimed that the experiential result is a highly flexible mind and a strong sense of limitless openness.

²¹ Tanahashi, Kazuaki (2016), *The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide to the Classic of Mahāyāna Buddhism*. Shambhala Publications, p. 6.

VI. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS: BUDDHISM FOR WORLD PEACE - SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM IS THE WAY

Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Zen master and peace activist, has focused on inner peace as the most essential element for achieving world peace, he famously stated that “There is no way to peace, peace is the way”²². Hence one can say that it’s a good ideal vision but how can it be achieved? Isn’t it just an unrealistic fantasy? No, it isn’t. The moment has now come to list some doable actions that can be taken to make it a reality, and here are the steps we can take to start:

Extensive discussion has been done above in this paper about cultivating world peace through socially engaged Buddhism and how it crossed the international border and not shied away from showing its potential in tackling problems of society in most of the areas whether we talk about social, economic, ecological or religious hence it encourages mindful practices, understanding interconnection, compassionate action, and non-violence. It epitomizes how engaged Buddhism leads to both inner and global harmony. Also, it’s an interesting idea of the ideal of the *Bodhisattva* (an enlightened being who devotes himself or herself to the enlightenment of all beings) is willingly return to our world of suffering life after life to teach the way to inner peace which is the only way to bring true peace to the world.

Very famously, R. K. Pruthi, in his book *Buddhism for World Peace*, has described 3 practical steps toward achieving it as a reality. Step 1: The writer beautifully explains that our karma is responsible for all the suffering, so he talks about killing the flame, i.e., the karma. He says, “If the karma of killing is the flame beneath the soup pot, by reducing it, we directly affect the boiling turmoil of violence and war.”²³ In Step 2, he emphasizes violence and teaches that the main reason is television or nowadays social media. He also presented the reports of Michael Nagler, who presented a report on the effects of television because of violent content and many hours of its viewership in homes. For all these problems, he offered a simple solution i.e. Turn off the TV.²⁴ In Step 3, he provides a way to constantly be mindful of his thoughts, words, and actions and by constantly trying to purify them.²⁵ So, instead of joining the force for war, we can join the force for peace. *Karma* teachings tell us that no matter how just our cause or how good our thoughts are, if they are accompanied by hate and wrath, they will only make the situation worse. No matter how admirable our cause is, we support war if our brains are consumed by the feelings of conflict. Buddhist karma teachings make it clear that leading an essentially moral life is a necessity for purging our brains of bad emotions and turning them into unselfish compassion for everyone.

²² Hanh, Thich Nhat (20 Oct. 2023), “An Invitation to Sit Together for Peace | Plum Village.” plumvillage.org/articles/an-invitation-to-sit-together-for-peace. Accessed 4 Jan. 2025.

²³ Pruthi, R. K., S. Ram and Archana Chaturvedi (2011), *Buddhism for World Peace*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers PVT. LTD., p. 47.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁵ *ibid.*

VII. MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

In Buddhism, mindfulness (referred to as *sati* in Pali or *smṛti* in Sanskrit) is a foundational practice and an integral part of the path to liberation from suffering. It plays a central role in cultivating wisdom, ethical behavior, and mental clarity. Here's how mindfulness is understood through the lens of Buddhism. Mindful meditation is a powerful practice for cultivating inner peace because it helps individuals develop a calm, balanced, and non-reactive mind. Inner peace arises when one is free from excessive mental chatter, emotional turbulence, and attachment to external circumstances. It is said that mindfulness and meditation were as early as Hinduism and the Vedas, but later on, Buddha picked it up and developed a new technique called Satipatthana meditation, also known as mindful meditation. Mindfulness is one of the eight parts of the 8-fold Noble path or (*Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgika-Magga*). *Satipatthana's*²⁶ literal meaning can be seen as 'sati,' which means attention, 'upa,' which means inside, and 'thana,' means to keep hence the sensible meaning comes as to keep your attention inside.

Mindful meditation is crucial in this journey because a study conducted in 2014 at Harvard Medical School showed that mindfulness meditation may ease anxiety, and mental stress²⁷, another paper titled 'Curing Depression with Mindful Meditation'²⁸ published in 2011 in Psychology Today found that it is possible it could cure depression with a therapy that was more effective and long-lasting than expensive drugs, and which did not have any side effects. These are the claims being made for a form of mindful meditation. A paper published in 2012 at huffpost.com titled 'Meditation for headache relief'²⁹ also found out that certain posture and breathing techniques can help lessen the intensity of your headache. In 2019, Carl Sherman, Ph.D., published a paper titled 'Mindfulness Awareness: How to Combat ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder) symptoms with Meditation'³⁰ the research found that for many adults and children with attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD or ADD), two persistent daily challenges are paying attention and maintaining

²⁶ *Satipaṭṭhānasutta, Majjhima nikāya* 10: Nāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, and Bhikkhu Bodhi (2015), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Somerville, MA, U.S.A.: Wisdom Publications, pp. 145 - 155.

²⁷ Corliss, Julie. "Mindfulness Meditation May Ease Anxiety, Mental Stress - Harvard Health Blog." *Harvard Health Blog*, 3 Oct. 2017, www.health.harvard.edu/blog/mindfulness-meditation-may-ease-anxiety-mental-stress-201401086967. Accessed 27 Dec. 2025.

²⁸ Corliss, Julie. "Mindfulness Meditation May Ease Anxiety, Mental Stress - Harvard Health Blog." *Harvard Health Blog*, 3 Oct. 2017, www.health.harvard.edu/blog/mindfulness-meditation-may-ease-anxiety-mental-stress-201401086967. Accessed 28 Dec. 2024

²⁹ Magone, David. "Meditation for Headache Relief." *HuffPost*, 20 Aug. 2012 www.huffpost.com/entry/headache-treatment_b_1783691. Accessed 28 Dec. 2024.

³⁰ Sherman, Carl. "Mindful Meditation for ADHD: Natural Remedy for ADHD Symptoms." *ADDitude*, 16 Nov. 2006, www.additudemag.com/mindfulness-meditation-for-adhd. Accessed 27 Dec. 2024

self-regulation. So, it stands to reason that some kind of attention training that also hones self-control would be invaluable — and incredibly powerful — as a natural remedy for ADHD.

VIII. VIPASSANĀ

Before delving into the *vipassanā* and its effect on the world, we must understand in brief what is *vipassanā* and its origin. A key component of Buddhist practice, *vipassanā*, is a type of meditation that dates back to ancient India. In *Pāli*, the word “*Vipassanā*” means “insight” or “clear seeing”. It alludes to a method of meditation meant to cultivate self-awareness and understanding of the actual nature of reality. According to the Global Vipassanā Pagoda in the article titled “The Spread of *Dhamma*,”³¹ it was Sayagyi U Ba Khin’s vision that *Vipassanā* expanded from Myanmar and then came back to India and then the rest of the world. When he returned to his ancestral homeland in 1969 as an official instructor, his pupil, S.N. Goenka³² started to realize this ambition. From its birthplace, it spread to the Asia-Pacific Region such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the rest of the world. All these *Vipassanā* meditations are conducted in a structured course-wise system in which a ten-day residential retreat is very common all over the place. In this system first participant has to register themselves through a *Vipassanā* centre. After committing for the whole duration, i.e. ten-day course, the code of discipline is to be observed by the participant like five precepts, noble silence, no reading or writing. The sessions are usually from 4:00 am to 9:00 pm, and it accompanies morning meditation, meditation sessions, and in-between meals along with teacher instruction and evening discourses. From day 1 - 3, they focus on breathing (*Anapana*), and day 4 - 9 they practice *Vipassanā*, and on day 10 *Metta Bhavana*, i.e. loving-kindness meditation. The benefits of *Vipassanā* are that it helps in self-transformation, improved mental clarity, stress reduction, mind-body connection, emotional regulation, reduces negative emotions, and cultivates compassion which leads to peace and harmony both internally and eventually externally. All the benefits mentioned above are not in writing only but many types of research have been conducted practically as well as scientifically has proven the above claimed benefits.

Some journals that provide the backbone to these findings are- Health Benefits of Vipassana Meditation: A Comprehensive Review³³ published in Indian Journal of Positive Psychology. Similarly, an official website of the

³¹ “Global Vipassana Pagoda.” *Globalpagoda.org*, 2024, www.globalpagoda.org/. Accessed 28 Dec. 2024.

³² “Vipassana Meditation.” *Dhamma.org*, 2020, www.dhamma.org/en/index. Accessed 2 Jan. 2025.

³³ Kumar, Praveen, and Sandeep Singh. *Health Benefits of Vipassana Meditation: A Comprehensive Review*. 2 Mar. 2024, journals.indexpopernicus.com/api/file/viewByFileId/1950565. Accessed 3 Jan. 2025.

United States government named the National Library of Medicine also found similar results in the paper named Vipassanā Meditation: A naturalistic, preliminary observation in Muscat,³⁴ and they concluded that the present preliminary findings, juxtaposed with the results of studies from other parts of the world, suggest that the practice of Vipassana meditation may help mitigate psychological and psychosomatic distress. Hundreds and hundreds of research works and findings now support the more than 3000-year-old meditation technique that spiraled out with a new twist during Buddhist India.

IX. DASAVIDHA-RĀJADHAMMA³⁵ OR DASA RAJA, BUDDHISM FOR WORLD PEACE

This verse could be found in *Khuddaka Nikāya* which explains the 10 virtues of the king.

*Dānaṃ sīlaṃ pariccāgaṃ ājjavaṃ maddavaṃ tapaṃ
akkodhaṃ avihiṃsaṃ khantiṃ avirodhaṃ.*³⁶

It defines the following ten virtuous deeds a king should perform and these are as follows: *Dāna* (charity), 2. *Sīla* (morality), 3. *Pariccāga* (altruism), 4. *Ājjava* (honesty), 5. *Maddava* (gentleness), 6. *Tapa* (self-controlling), 7. *Akkodha* (non-anger), 8. *Avihiṃsa* (non-violence), 9. *Khanti* (forbearance) 10. *Avirodhana* (uprightness).

Although these principles and responsibilities were originally prescribed for ancient kings and rulers these virtues remain highly relevant in the modern world, particularly for leaders, policymakers, and individuals in positions of authority. All the *rājadhamma* mentioned above focuses on ethical leadership, equity and justice, sustainable development, character building preventing violence, and promoting peace which are essential ingredients for cultivating inner peace for world peace as the proverb goes charity begins at home so all these virtues when applied at all the levels of modern government can play a significant role and can create a ripple effect from single house to community and from community to society and from there to state and nation and then it offers a timeless wisdom fostering ethical governance, compassionate leadership and a harmonious society and by adopting it will contribute to universal appeal for global peace.

Apart from Buddhist practices many other government organizations' policies and schemes are part of its development steps, NGO's, agencies, groups, and individual efforts have been there which works tirelessly in the field of peace and development which ensues a holistic developmental step

³⁴ Al-Hussaini, A., Dorvlo, A. S., Antony, S. X., Chavan, D., Dave, J., Purecha, V., Al-Rahbi, S., & Al-Adawi, S. (2001). *Vipassana meditation: A naturalistic, preliminary observation in Muscat. Journal for scientific research. Medical sciences*, 3 (2), 87 – 92. Accessed 3 Jan. 2025.

³⁵ Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 1987, 1995), pp. 395 - 405.

³⁶ *Khuddaka Nikāya*, specifically in the *Suttanipāta* (Sn), *Cūlavagga*, in the *Dhammika Sutta* (Sn 2.14).

which is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices. As the lead United Nations agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. We help countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnerships, and institutional capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Our work is centered around six core development areas, known as our signature solutions: poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.³⁷

Mission: UNDP's mandate is to end poverty and build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions. We advocate for change and connect countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build a better life.

Examples of UNDP's contribution to inner and world peace:

1. Outreach programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the UN³⁸: Promoting reconciliation and rebuilding communities after the genocide in 1994. UNDP collaborated with the Rwandan government to rebuild government structures, transparency, justice, accountability, and rule of law.

2. Women's Empowerment in Afghanistan: Enhancing women's roles in governance, education, and business. It started a project called EGEMA³⁹ (Enhancing Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in Afghanistan). Its objective was to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Its major achievement was- it supported 155 women to get scholarships for tertiary education through cross-border cooperation with UNDP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan also, it trained 190 women in digital skills and provided them with online job opportunities to overcome mobility barriers. Strengthened the capacity and mentorship of 120 community gender advocates to prevent domestic violence.

3. Youth Programs in the Middle East: Providing young people with skills and opportunities, reducing the allure of extremist ideologies. Many programmes such as:

UNICEF's Adolescent and Youth Participation⁴⁰ Initiatives. UNICEF focuses on engaging adolescents and youth in the MENA region by providing platforms for active participation in societal development. UNAOC's Young Peacebuilders Program.

³⁷ United Nations Development Programme. "UNDP." *UNDP*, 2024, www.undp.org/. Accessed 3 Jan 2025.

³⁸ Department of Public Information. *The Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda*. Mar. 2012, www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/pdf/bgjustice.pdf. Accessed 4 Jan 2025

³⁹ "Enhancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (EGEMA)." *UNDP*, www.undp.org/afghanistan/projects/enhancing-gende. Accessed 4 Jan 2025

⁴⁰ "Middle East and North Africa | UNICEF Middle East and North Africa." *Unicef.org*, 2023, www.unicef.org/mena/topics/middle-east-and-north-africa. Accessed 2 Jan 2025

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations⁴¹ (UNAOC) launched the Young Peacebuilders program in the MENA region to support young civil society leaders. The program aims to equip participants with competencies to address negative stereotypes, prejudice, and polarization.

UNRWA's Educational Programs for Palestinian Youth: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)⁴² has been providing quality education to Palestinian refugee children for nearly 70 years. These educational programs aim to equip young Palestinians with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal development and active participation in society.

X. CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of world peace and human development, unity and inclusivity are foundational values that are all the ingredients required to make a great recipe for modern peace-building and conflict-resolution frameworks that resonate deeply within various global frameworks, including Buddhist teachings, particularly in the Tripitaka. The Tripitaka, the sacred scripture of Buddhism offers profound insights into how personal and collective transformation can lead to a more harmonious world. It emphasizes the importance of compassion, non-harming (*ahimsa*), and the interdependence of all beings – principles that align with the pursuit of human dignity, world peace, and sustainable development. The *Dhammapada*, a part of the Tripitaka, teaches that “hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love.” This message of non-violence and compassion underscores the importance of addressing conflict with empathy and understanding. In the context of modern-day conflicts, such as those in war-torn regions or areas with systemic inequality, the promotion of unity and inclusivity becomes vital for healing and rebuilding. The UN's peacebuilding efforts, including initiatives like youth empowerment and gender equality, reflect these core principles by fostering cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect. For example, the UN's programs in Afghanistan and Rwanda demonstrate how inclusivity and human dignity are prioritized in post-conflict recovery. In Afghanistan, UN efforts to empower women and youth, particularly in education and economic development, are reflective of Buddhist values that emphasize the transformative power of knowledge and compassion. Similarly, in Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, the emphasis on justice, reconciliation, and community rebuilding aligns with Buddhist teachings on interdependence and collective well-being. In essence, the *Tipiṭaka* offers timeless wisdom that remains relevant in the modern context of global peace and development. The teachings encourage individuals

⁴¹ “Young Peacebuilders in Middle East and North Africa | UNAOC.” *United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)*, 10 July 2023, www.unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects-and-initiatives/young-peacebuilders-in-mena/. Accessed 2 Jan. 2025.

⁴² *Refugee Youth in Gaza Make the Most of UNRWA Job Creation Programme Opportunities*. 19 June 2015, www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/refugee-youth-gaza-make-most-unrwa-job-creation-programme-opportunities. Accessed 3 Jan. 2025.

and communities to foster unity, inclusivity, and mutual respect – values that are crucial in addressing the challenges of today's world. By embracing these principles, humanity can create a more dignified and peaceful world where everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

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INNERPEACEANDETHICALLEADERSHIP: ABUDDHISTPATHTOGLOBALHARMONY

Laxmikanta Sunil Mane*

Abstract:

Inner peace is the foundation of unity, inclusivity and human dignity essential for world peace and sustainable development. However, inner conflicts- ego, anger, greed, and ignorance- disrupt relationships and social harmony escalating into larger social and global disputes. This paper explores how the Buddha's teachings including the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, and *Brahmavihāras*, help overcome these challenges. By cultivating mindfulness, compassion, and ethical living, individuals can foster inner stability, inclusivity, and societal peace.

At a global level, inner peace shapes ethical leadership, conflict resolution, and responsible governance. While personal peace fosters self-awareness, in leadership, it influences decision-making and policy. True peace requires a shift in mind- set, where wisdom and morality guide governance, rather than power- driven agreements. If leaders fail to resolve their inner conflicts, peace efforts remain superficial.

The interconnection between inner peace and global harmony is evident in historical and modern leadership. Nelson Mandela's reconciliation approach and the Dalai Lama's advocacy for non- violence demonstrate the real- world application of Buddhist principles. Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) model further highlights a governance framework prioritizing well-being over material gain. These examples reinforce that sustainable peace is possible only when individual transformation aligns with collective responsibility.

Keywords: *Global- peace, peacebuilding, Buddha's teaching, three-poisons, inner-peace.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The great son of the world, Siddhartha Gautam, born on the day of *Vesāka*, got enlightened and achieved *Mahaparinibbāna* on that very day, making *Vesāka* an immensely pious, auspicious, and historically significant day for followers of Buddha's teachings. The Buddha was an individual who, with his teachings, brought peace and tranquillity to the world. An individual is the basic unit of society at large. Cultivating inner peace in an individual contributes to world peace, as it creates a ripple effect that extends from an individual's peace of mind to the peace of families, communities, and subsequently nations. If an individual is mentally healthy, morally upright, and well established in Dhamma, we can expect society to be healthy and morally upright. Inner peace is developed on the three pillars of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*—the foundation of the Buddha's teaching. These teachings stem from the discovery of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. For 45 years, the Buddha dedicated his life to delivering *dhamma desanā* (discourses), addressing numerous issues and challenges faced by humankind. Remarkably, the solutions he offered 2,600 years ago remain equally relevant to the problems of today's world, encompassing "we the people."

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ are a set of 17 goals aiming to promote peace and prosperity for all people. As per the theme of conference, present research paper tries to dwell primarily into Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) especially the inner peace aspect of it and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) primarily concerning mental peace and well-being.

As per Collins Dictionary,² Conflict is defined as (1) a struggle or clash between opposing forces; battle OR (2) a state of opposition between ideas, interests, etc... disagreement or controversy, OR (3) a clash, as between two appointments made for the same time, (4) Psychology: opposition between two simultaneous but incompatible wishes or drives, sometimes leading to a state of emotional tension and thought to be responsible for neuroses.

As per Merriam Webster Dictionary,³ Peace is defined as (1) a state of tranquillity or quiet: such as a: freedom from civil disturbance Peace and order were finally restored in the town. (2) A state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom.

Cultivating inner peace is one of the biggest challenges the modern world is facing today. The paper discusses this by considering an individual operating at

¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, accessed on [Feb 21, 2025], available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/2015/en/111816>.

² Collins English Dictionary, *Conflict*, accessed on [February 11, 2025], available at: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/conflict>.

³ Merriam-Webster, *Peace*, *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*, accessed on [February 11, 2025], <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>.

different levels in any given society. A person at home can act lovingly but he can be a horrible person when operating in a society. A Nation can be good to his citizens but may be waging wars at others. Accordingly, it can be categorised at three levels: (1) Individual Level, (2) Community Level, (3) Global/ World Level.

At the individual level, a decline in inner peace or on- going mental stress can harm a person and affect their immediate family. While such personal struggles might seem insignificant in the context of world peace, they become critical when the individual holds a leadership role- such as the head of a society or institution- since their mental stability influences the larger community. On the global scale, leaders like policymakers, political figures, business barons, and even entertainers play a decisive role in shaping world peace. Historical examples, such as Hitler, shows that leaders who wage wars likely possess agitated minds, seething with anger, ego, lust, and hatred. The massive destruction caused by past world wars and ongoing conflicts until 2025 highlights the urgent need for inner peace among those in power to foster global stability and harmony.

Analysing the aforementioned situation of war-torn society at global level, it becomes imperative that inner peace and well- being should percolate from top to bottom level as it will have greater and quicker results.

1.1. Purpose of the research paper

The reason to undertake this research lies in the growing need for sustainable and universal methods of conflict resolution and relationship building. This paper explores how Buddhist key concepts and teachings can offer practical solutions to maintain harmony within the self that will be transmitted to the World.

1.2. The aims & objectives of the proposed paper are

- (1) Analyse the Causes of Inner conflicts
- (2) Highlight the Relevance of Buddhist Teachings
- (3) Promote Inner Peace as a Foundation for World Peace
- (4) Provide Practical Recommendations
- (5) Contribute to Contemporary Discourses on Peace building

1.3. Hypothesis

This paper hypothesizes that global peace has its roots in an individual's inner state. It further hypothesizes that when leaders and individuals experience unresolved inner conflicts, it manifests as larger societal and global tensions. Cultivating inner peace fosters unity, inclusivity and sustainable world peace.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study will use a library- based approach for textual analysis. Along with it an analytical study will be undertaken to establish the correlation between *the* Buddha's teachings and their potential outcomes with respect to peace at various levels- individual, social and global.

Let's understand the probable reasons for getting into these negative state

of mind. Those can be summarised as follows:

2.1. Primary (individual) level conflicts

This represents a single unit of a society, a self, who experiences conflict in his own domain.

(1) High stressful life owing to professional work commitments and trying to find balance between conflicting desires between career growth and personal well- being. Fast paced lives and unmet expectations giving rise to restlessness, anger and anxiety.

(2) Unresolved childhood/ past Traumas leading to depression, self- guilt, undercurrent anger and self- doubt. Not able to channelize the emotional outbursts in the absence of access to mental health resources or correct spiritual path.

(3) Lack of Emotional Awareness thereby not understanding the problem areas and all the negative emotions remains unchecked leading to pain and suffering.

(4) Relationship issues at various stages of life and lacking maturity in handling it.

(5) High dependence on new age technology & social media platforms giving rise to feeling of inadequacy, inferiority complex and doubts (comparing oneself to others success), addiction to posts & reels giving rise to ego (seeking validation), overindulgence leading to wastage of time further leading to feeling of guilt, detachment from real world- face to face interaction leading to loneliness and emotional emptiness.

(6) The constant efforts to acquire more with respect to power, money, fame, respect and underlining strong urge of dominating others in a given society.

(7) Shrinking family size and nuclear families and super busy parents/ couples leading to loneliness, feeling of neglect, lack of emotional support, difficulty in handling life challenges.

(8) Erosion of Spiritual and Ethical Values- Absence of self-reflection leading to uncontrolled ego and attachment to transient pleasures.

(9) Highly Competitive environment around us leading to feeling of doubt, fear and restlessness.

2.2. Secondary (societal/ community) level conflicts

At the secondary level, conflicts often arise from social, cultural, and economic disparities within groups or communities leading to division and mistrust. Unequal wealth, joblessness, and worker exploitation create economic struggles. Limited access to healthcare, education, and basic services increases hardship. Religious and ethnic tensions often cause violence and discrimination. Political suppression and human rights violations make people feel unheard and excluded. Disputes over water, land and energy along with careless use of natural resources add to the problems. All these issues weaken unity, create fear, and disturb peace in society.

2.3. Tertiary (global) level conflicts

At the global level, conflicts are driven by power struggles between nations and alliances. These encompass geopolitical tensions, international wars, economic competition, and environmental disputes, such as those related to resource scarcity and climate change. Global conflicts also arise from ideological differences and nationalism, which can escalate into large-scale violence and instability, impacting world peace and security. Rivalries between global powers. Arms race and excessive military spending over social development, proxy wars fuelled by superpowers, radicalization and terrorism based on ideological divides, suppression of religious minorities and forced conversions, use of religion for political dominance rather than peacebuilding, wealth concentrated in a few nations while others remain in extreme poverty, exploitative global trade policies favouring developed nations.

Common Output from aforementioned Issues: People experiencing challenges at various levels often face various mental disturbances. These can range from short-term anxiety to chronic stress and depression, accompanied by emotions such as worry, fear, uncertainty, restlessness, irritability, guilt, shame, hopelessness, frustration, emptiness, fatigue, detachment, insomnia, self-doubt, and loneliness.

At the societal level, unresolved conflicts can divide communities, foster mistrust, and even lead to violence and social unrest- much like how personal conflicts can cause stress and depression.

On the global stage, on-going disputes among nations can escalate into wars, humanitarian crises, and economic instability, ultimately undermining international cooperation and overall global peace. People are displaced, killed, human rights are grossly neglected.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section tries to look at some of the scholarly research papers commenting on various aspects of diversity, importance of peace and morality, globalization and how the Buddha's teachings are path-breaking in establishing the peace.

This Buddhist way of looking at the world comes, in the opinion of Johan Galtung 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-levelled 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 on-going dialectic between our actions and the world. This contingent view of peace, as shared by many peace scholars and activists in the field, is similar to what Buddhist perceives peace to be.⁴

Buddha advocates "Not even worldly happiness is possible without exchanging (*parivarta*) one's happiness with others suffering". How difficult then

⁴ Yeh (2006): 91 - 112.

the attainment of (the happiness of) being a Buddha. If the leaders of this world may follow this doctrine, no pain in this world, no wars may occur, no conflicts, no terrorism can destroy the people of this world.⁵

Sustainable development has been a topic of discussion in development practices and theories for a long time. Since the industrial revolution, development has mainly focused on economic progress in consumption, production, and industrial growth together with technological advancement. Human and social development as well as the environment has not much received careful consideration, and all three have deteriorated.⁶

Precepts (*Sila*) is paying attention to our life for living it wisely so that we may be free from remorse and blame. Being mindful, all unwholesome behavior is cultivated into wholesome behavior and committed to the way of awakening.⁷

The early discourses of the Buddha emphasize on the balanced development between happiness in this world (*ditṭhadhammasukha*) and happiness in the next world (*samparāyika-sukha*). In other words, Buddhism expounded that happiness can be achieved by two means: physical and spiritual happiness. It is true that Buddhism states that spiritual happiness is far better than physical happiness; however, without the physical happiness one cannot acquire spiritual happiness. So both physical and spiritual happiness of man are equally appreciated by Buddhism. Excessive achievement of the economic wealth in the present world and neglect of happiness for the next world are discouraged by the Buddha. Life of intensive spiritual development and the neglect of the happiness in the present world are unwise.⁸

Discussion: This section highlights the root causes of negative emotions at the mental level that are reflected in our thoughts, speech, and actions (*mano-vāca-kāyā*). Here, it is being explained by various *suttas* and *Abhidhamma* concepts. Further, it also put focus on the importance of self-healing before we can help heal others. Ultimately, it establishes the need to understand the core of our human intelligence - our mind.

3.1. Understanding conflicts and negativity through *Abhidhamma*

The Buddha is considered to be the first spiritual psychologist and mind trainer of the Humankind. His teachings in *Abhidhamma* is considered to be very complex yet so minutely defined concepts of mind and mental actions.

As *The Dhammapada* mentions 'Mind is the foremost and front runner in driving our thoughts'⁹ hence understanding the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* becomes crucial in deciphering the function of our mind. Its importance can be attributed to the fact that in Sri Lanka King *Kassapa V* (tenth century A.C.) had the whole

⁵ Raju and Gowda (2014): 90 - 91.

⁶ Kittiprapas (2015): 90 - 123.

⁷ Gurung (2023), 64 - 70.

⁸ Barua, (2020): 33.

⁹ *Dhp* 01.

Abhidhamma Piṭaka inscribed on gold plates and the first book set in gems, while another king, *Vijayabāhu* (eleventh century) used to study the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* each morning before taking up his royal duties and composed a translation of it into Sinhala.¹⁰

If we look at the probable cause of mental afflictions from *Abhidhammic* studies per say, we can list a detailed 14 unwholesome factors that are being grouped as: *Moha* group mental factors (*cetasikas*): (1) Delusion, (2) Shamelessness, (3) Fearlessness of Wrong, (4) Restlessness. *Lobha* group mental factors: (5) Greed, (6) Wrong View, (7) Conceit. *Dosa* group: (8) Hatred, (9) Envy, (10) Avarice, (11) Worry. Remaining are (12) Sloth, (13) Torpor, (14) Doubt. These are the hindrances to inner peace as it produces the negative behavior in a person leading whole mass of mental conflicts.¹¹ However, the *Abhidhamma* also mentions 25 Beautiful- *Sobhana Cetasikas* that influencing inner peace.¹² The understanding of *cetasika* becomes important as they are karmically loaded and consequences are associated with them.

From the Buddhist psychology point of view, the cause of all human conflicts is all unwholesome actions rooted in three poisons i.e. greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and delusion, (*moha*). To attain any semblance of peace, one must turn inward and cultivate the opposite qualities of wisdom (*Amoha*), generosity- (*Alobha*), and loving- kindness (*Adosa*). Defilements such as greed hatred delusion exist in the form of unwholesome act of body, speech and unwholesome thoughts in mind together with latent tendencies in the mind that are the root causes of all these. A *kusala* action is blameless one which is wise or skilful in producing an uplifting mental state and spiritual progress of a doer.¹³ It is said that greed is a lesser fault, but fades slowly, hatred is great fault but fades quickly and delusion is a great fault and fades slowly.¹⁴

Dhamma-vicaya: The Buddha's teaching emphasizes self- understanding, where wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) fosters inner peace, while unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*) leads to mental distortions and conflict. The *Dhamma-vicaya* becomes the very foundation, as unless the correct understanding of the mind is developed, one can't make amends in it. Through *sati* and *pañña*, we analyse and understand the mind. Once we understand the current state of mind with respect to wholesome and unwholesome states, we can further work upon it for its development, replacement, or improvement.

Summary: *Abhidhamma* provides an intricate understanding of the human mind, categorizing mental states into wholesome (*sobhāna*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) factors. The unwholesome factors, such as greed, hatred, delusion, envy, and restlessness, lead to inner conflict and disrupt peace. In contrast, wholesome mental states like generosity, wisdom, and loving- kindness

¹⁰ The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* (2000): 2.

¹¹ The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* (2000): 83.

¹² Ibid: 85.

¹³ Harvey (2000): 42.

¹⁴ Ibid: 47.

promote peace and resolution. *Abhidhamma's* focus on cultivating the opposite qualities of these defilements is key to fostering harmony. By understanding these mental factors individuals can transform their minds, resolving conflicts and contributing to peace- building efforts, both personally, socially and globally. This psychological approach plays a significant role in Buddhist conflict resolution helping to maintain inner peace and effectively deal with external challenges.

3.2. Understanding conflicts through *Suttas*

This sections gives comprehensive understanding of various aspects of suffering, concept of non- self, narcissist behavior, unwholesome thoughts and actions, practicing loving- kindness. It also discusses the ethical responsibilities of rulers, real meaning of grand sacrifice for the benefit of its citizen. It highlights problems, root causes of problems and its solutions.

What is *dukkha*? The Buddha says- whatever notion we are attached to, brings pain and suffering. He provides a comprehensive list of elements- birth, old age and dying, grief, sorrow and lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair come into being. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.¹⁵

The *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (SN 22.59)¹⁶ teaches the core teaching of non-self. The Buddha says, “This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self”. The *sutta* explains that the five aggregates- form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are all impermanent in nature and lack an enduring self. When there is no permanent “self,” then what is the point clinging to things that only bring pain and suffering. Let go of ego- driven attachments that lead to greed, hatred, and delusion.

Mahā Rāhulovāda sutta (MN 62)¹⁷ the Buddha taught *Thera Rāhula* that, “Meditate on love. For when you meditate on love any ill- will be given up. Meditate on compassion. For when you meditate on compassion any cruelty will be given up. Meditate on rejoicing. For when you meditate on rejoicing any discontent will be given up. Meditate on equanimity. For when you meditate on equanimity any repulsion will be given up. Meditate on ugliness. For when you meditate on ugliness any lust will be given up. Meditate on impermanence. For when you meditate on impermanence any conceit ‘I am’ will be given up”.

Further in *Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovāda Sutta* (MN 61),¹⁸ the *Tathāgata* beautifully explains the young *Rāhula* with various metaphors the importance of cleaning one’s mind and action before acting. He explains- “When you want to act with the mind, you should check on that same deed: ‘Does this act of mind that I want to do lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? If, while checking in this way, you know: ‘This act of mind that I have done leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It’s unskillful, with

¹⁵ *Vinaya Pitaka* (2007): vol 4.

¹⁶ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (2018): 22.59.

¹⁷ Duong Thi Kim Uyen, (2024): 1224.

¹⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 61.

suffering as its outcome and result.’ Then, Rāhula, you should be horrified, repelled, and disgusted by that deed. And being repelled, you should restrain yourself in future”.

In *The Vimāṃsaka Sutta* (MN 47),¹⁹ the Blessed One urges the monks to investigate the *Tathāgata*’s qualities to determine his full enlightenment, even without directly knowing his mind. One of the investigations he wanted them to check was if a monk has achieved name, fame, and glory, does he suffer from dangers associated with fame? The Buddha warns, “But when they achieve fame and renown, those dangers appear.” This is a very profound statement made by *Tathāgata*. As he felt that once we attain certain kind of success in our work and life, we are engraved with pride, conceit and a sense of superiority creeps in. “I am the best” and “no one like me”- is the latent feeling that takes over the mind then there is strongest attachment to greed. In modern term it is called as Narcissist behaviour.

Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)²⁰ is a profound testament to the Buddha’s wisdom, explaining how to counter unwholesome thoughts and actions through insight and reflection. The *sutta* identifies three āsavas: *Kāmāsava* (craving for sensual pleasures), *Bhavāsava* (desire for rebirth), and *Avijjāsava* (ignorance of reality, which sustains suffering).

The Buddha teaches that applying wise attention prevents defilements from arising and eliminates those already present. He then outlines seven methods to overcome taints: “some should be given up by seeing, some by restraint, some by using, some by enduring, some by avoiding, some by dispelling, and some by developing”.

In *The Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Sutta* (MN 14),²¹ *The Shākyan Mahānāma* observes that even with his understanding of the defilements, his attachment to sensual pleasures still fuels greed, aversion, and confusion. The Buddha explains how clinging to sensual pleasures is the root cause which persists as a result of indulging in worldly desires that leads to stress, conflict, and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, renouncing them brings inner peace.

In the modern day context, we are busy searching for peace and tranquillity from the materialistic things and not seeking solace from the acts that matter a lot. The Buddha aptly conveyed this to monks in the *Pāsarāsisutta* (MN 26)²² stating, “Mendicants, there are these two quests: the noble quest and the ignoble quest”. It defines two types of searches: (1) Ignoble Search (*Anariyapariyesanā*)- Seeking things that are impermanent, subject to decay, and ultimately unsatisfactory, such as wealth, power, status, sensual pleasures, and even relationships. A person caught in this search remains bound to suffering. (2) Noble Search (*Ariyapariyesanā*)- Seeking the path to liberation

¹⁹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 47.

²⁰ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 2.

²¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 14.

²² *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 26.

from suffering by pursuing wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental cultivation. This includes searching for enlightenment, *Nibbāna*, and understanding the Four Noble Truths.

Paṭhama Lokadhamma Sutta (AN 8.5)²³ is the revolutionary *sutta* that forms the base of all modern day mental issues. The Buddha in this *sutta* says, “These eight worldly conditions revolve around the world, and the world revolves around these eight worldly conditions”. Those eight are- “Gain and loss, fame and disgrace, blame and praise, pleasure and pain”. An ignorant person remains trapped in the endless cycle of four opposing conditions. The Buddha further states, “An intelligent and mindful person knows these things, seeing that they’re perishable”.

In *The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* (AN 3.14),²⁴ it beautifully summarise the duty of Noble Wheel-Turning Monarch. The Buddha declares, “Monk, a wheel-turning monarch provides just protection and security for his court, relying only on principle.” Instead of ruling through conquest, a righteous king governs “only in a principled manner,” ensuring justice, security, and the well-being of all. The Buddha further states, “He provides just protection and security” to all beings, including nobles, householders, ascetics, and even animals. By upholding moral values, “this power cannot be undermined by any human enemy,” emphasizing that true leadership is based on ethical governance and compassion.

It is mentioned that he must rule based on unwavering ethical principles. Instead of seeking power through conquest, a true monarch must use moral values as his guiding banner- ensuring justice, providing security, and attending to the welfare of every being in his realm. He is expected to protect the weak and care for all, from nobles and commoners to ascetics and even animals, fulfilling his moral obligations by offering fair support rather than mere charity. Moreover, by regularly consulting wise advisors to distinguish between what is skillful and unskillful, he sets a standard of governance that promotes lasting happiness and social harmony for the entire community.

In *The Mettā sutta* (*Kp* 9),²⁵ The Buddha instructs, “Let none deceive another, nor look down on anyone anywhere. Though provoked or aggrieved, let them not wish pain on each other”. By cultivating a boundless heart that radiates loving-kindness in every direction we transform negative qualities like anger, arrogance, and hostility into empathy, respect, and goodwill. This practice not only nurtures inner peace through daily mindful living but also extends that tranquillity outward, fostering harmonious and inclusive communities where every being is valued.

In *The Dīghanakha sutta* (MN 74),²⁶ provides deep insight on how rigid

²³ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2018): 8.5.

²⁴ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2018): 26.

²⁵ *Khuddakapāṭha* (2020): 9.

²⁶ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2018): 74.

attachment to views leads to quarrels, distress, and harm. The Buddha states, “Some believe everything is acceptable, some believe nothing is acceptable, and some believe some things are acceptable and some are not.” He further warns, “Suppose I were to obstinately stick to this view and insist, ‘This is the only truth, anything else is futile.’ Then I’d argue with two people... And when there’s arguing, there’s quarreling; when there’s quarreling there’s distress; and when there’s anguish there’s harm.” The wise person reflects on these potential outcomes and gives up their fixed views in favour of letting go, which leads to peace.

In *The Kūṭadanta sutta*,²⁷ The Buddha tells the Brahmin Kūṭadanta a story about a king who wished to perform a grand sacrifice. The high priest said to the King, “here is a plan, relying on which the plague of savages will be properly uprooted”. As per the plan, the king chose to support his citizens instead of conducting a traditional animal sacrifice. He provided resources to farmers, traders, and government workers, enabling them to pursue their livelihoods without hardship. As a result, the kingdom experienced increased prosperity, peace, and happiness, with citizens living harmoniously and contentedly. Effective social policy requires a forward-thinking plan, not just reacting to grievances.

In *The Mahāparinibbāna sutta* (DN 16),²⁸ the Buddha declares in a monks’ assembly, where Ajātasattu’s chief Brahmin Vassakāra was also present, ‘I taught The Vajjis these seven principles that prevent decline’. He then explained that their strength lay in these principles: Regular assemblies’ ensured transparency, unity in decision-making fortified them against threats, respect for elders preserved wisdom in governance. Their protection of women fostered social stability, reverence for religious sites upheld moral values, and just governance maintained trust. By following these principles, The Vajjis thrived as a prosperous and secure society, earning the Buddha’s praise as a model of sustainable leadership.

In *The Dutiyasāraṇīya Sutta*,²⁹ The Buddha told his mendicants, “these six warm-hearted qualities make for fondness and respect, conducive to inclusion, harmony, and unity”. The six qualities conducive to unity and inclusivity are: (1) loving-kindness in action, (2) loving-kindness in speech, (3) loving-kindness in thought, (4) sharing possessions righteously, (5) maintaining virtuous conduct, and (6) upholding right view. These elements cultivate social harmony, making them highly relevant in resolving modern conflicts, fostering interfaith dialogue, and strengthening diplomatic relations.

Summary: The *suttas* highlight the Buddha’s insights on peace and conflict resolution. While we discussed all these *suttas*, the common understanding that comes out is that true peace arises from letting go of ego and self-centered thinking, leading to greater understanding and harmony. Good leadership,

²⁷ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2018): 5.

²⁸ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2018): 16.

²⁹ *Anguttara Nikāya* (2018): 6.12.

honesty, and self-discipline is a key to resolving conflicts, while wise reflection prevents disputes. Reducing greed and attachment lowers hostility, and accepting change helps people stay strong in difficult times. Fair governance, kindness, and nonviolence bring unity, while avoiding rigid views prevents unnecessary arguments. By following ethical values and supporting one another, we can build a peaceful and stable world.

3.3. Importance of “Self”

Self-acceptance is the basic ability of one's own good qualities. In Buddhist psychology the terms, self-respect (*attakāra*), self-love (*attakāma*) and self-appreciation (*attapiya*) are always used by the Buddha in a positive sense. A person can truly respect others wholeheartedly only when he respects himself. Therefore, self-acceptance and self-respect is the first thing to do. Self-acceptance is the basic ability of one's own good qualities.³⁰

The *Dhammapada- Atta Vagga*³¹ presents a complete perspective on how a person must first correct themselves before attempting to correct others. Every verse in *Atta Vagga* makes a strong statement that self-introspection is the foundation for peace and healing. The beginning of love does not exist outside but within. It teaches: (1) Value yourself by staying ever watchful of your thoughts and actions. (2) First, cultivate yourself; then guide others. (3) Practice what you teach; self-control is key. (4) Self-mastery is true protection. (5) One's own evil crushes like a diamond on a gem. (6) A wicked man destroys himself like a creeper choking a tree; harm is easy, good is hard to achieve. (7) One purifies or defiles oneself; none can do it for another. (8) Prioritize your own good; never neglect it for another.

Summary: Self is therefore a very important dimension as the starting point for self-respect and respect for others, self-healing and then healing others, self-peace and sharing peace with others.

3.4. The Buddha's core concepts

The Four Noble Truths (*Catvāri Ariyasaccāni*) are the core teachings of Buddhism. The first truth, *Dukkha*, acknowledges that suffering is an inherent part of life. The second truth, *Samudaya*, identifies craving and attachment as the causes of suffering. The third truth, *Nirodha*, offers hope, stating that suffering can end by eliminating craving and attachment. The fourth truth, *Magga*, outlines the path to the cessation of suffering, known as the Eightfold Path, which guides individuals toward ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. Together, these truths provide a roadmap for understanding and overcoming suffering.

Following The Middle Path (*Majjhimāpaṭipadā*),³² as expounded by the Buddha in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, the Buddha says, “Monks, there are these two extremes that should not be followed by one who has

³⁰ Mahatthanadull and Mahatthanadull (2020): 21.

³¹ *Dhammapada* (2021): 157 – 166.

³² SN 56.11.

gone forth"... "The pursuit of sensual pleasure (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) and pursuit of self- mortification (*attakilamathānuyoga*). While self- indulgence "is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and unbeneficial" and fuels attachment and craving and self-mortification "is painful, ignoble, and unbeneficial" that leads to frustration and suffering. Avoiding both the extremes leads to the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Middle Path also navigates between the extremes of Eternalism ("I" or *ātma-vāda*) and Annihilationism ("Nothing Exists"), highlighting that "I" and "You" arise due to causes and conditions. This makes the Middle Path inseparable from *paṭicca-samuppāda* (Dependent Origination), revealing the interdependent nature of all phenomena.

The Eightfold Path: It can be understood in three key divisions: *Sīla* (Ethical Conduct), *Samādhi* (Mental Discipline), and *Paññā* (Wisdom), *Sīla* includes Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. It emphasizes ethical living and moral behaviour thereby laying the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious life. Building on this ethical framework, *Samādhi* focuses on mental discipline, consisting of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. It helps to cultivate mindfulness, concentration, and mental clarity. Finally, *Paññā*, which encompasses Right View and Right Intention which leads to the development of wisdom, understanding the nature of reality and cultivating compassion and renunciation. Together, these three divisions create a path where ethical conduct supports mental discipline, and both lead to wisdom, ultimately guiding one towards enlightenment.

Concept of *Brahmaviharas*: As per *Abhidhamma*,³³ the four mental states are called as illimitables (*appamaññā*) because they are radiated towards all living beings without limit or obstruction. The four attitudes of *brahma-vihāra*³⁴ are usually described in distinction to their opposites, which are called as distant enemies, and to their corruptions, called as near enemies:

Mettā, love or loving kindness, is opposite of hate, anger, and ill will; it should not degenerate into either subservience or possessive adoration, which are its near enemies. *Karunā*, is compassion based on sympathy and understanding; it is opposite to cruelty and vengefulness; it should not turn into sentimentality or dejection.

Muditā, is sympathetic joy in the welfare and success of others; it is opposite to envy and jealousy; its near enemy is uncontrolled frivolity.

Upekkhā, or equanimity, is an uplifted independence of flattery and threats; its near enemies are arrogance and indolence.

Overall Summary: This section discussed the four aspects of *suttas*, *Abhidhamma*, importance of self and core teachings of the Buddha.

³³ The Abhidhammā Saṅgaha (2000): 336.

³⁴ Bhikkhu, Ā. K. Ā., *The Meditative Culture of Heart: Interpersonal Relationships as a Kammatthāna*, accessed on [February 18, 2025], available at: https://dhammarama.eu/media/com_form2content/documents/c3/a26/f5/medit_culture_of_heart.pdf.

The Buddha's teachings in the *suttas* and *Abhidhamma* help us understand how our mind works and how to create peace. *Abhidhamma* divides our thoughts into wholesome (good) and unwholesome (bad) mental states. By developing positive qualities like wisdom, kindness, and generosity, we can reduce harmful feelings like greed, hatred, and confusion. The Buddha's *suttas*, like the *Anattalakkhaṇa*, and *Metta Suttas*, teach us to let go of attachment, practice compassion, and follow ethical principles for peace. The idea of "self" in the *Dhammapada* shows that self-respect and healing are key to finding peace within ourselves and sharing it with others.

The key Buddhist concepts of the Four Noble Truths, which outline the nature of suffering and the path to its cessation; the Middle Path, a balanced approach between extremes; the Eightfold Path, a practical guide for ethical and mental development; and the *Brahmaviharas*, four qualities of compassion and goodwill, together, these teachings guide us in resolving conflicts and creating harmony both inside and out.

IV. CONFLICT ANALYSIS BY LEVELS

The *suttas* as discussed in early chapter emphasize that understanding the root of suffering and the illusory nature of things, that there is no permanent self helps us let go of our ego. This leads to inner peace and helps resolve conflicts. They tell us to focus on inner wisdom and good behavior instead of chasing money and power. This approach reduces greed and power struggles. The *suttas* also show that kindness and self-reflection can change anger into understanding. They remind us that life has ups and downs and that being happy with what we have is true wealth. Finally, they stress that looking inside and being disciplined helps us heal, which makes our communities more peaceful. The *Cakkavattisutta* outlines the ethical duties of a true ruler and gives a model of leadership serves as an ideal for ethical governance in modern contexts. The *Dīghanakha Sutta* teaches that letting go of rigid views and embracing flexibility can reduce conflict and promote peace. In today's global context, leaders and communities must remain open-minded and empathetic to resolve differences and build harmony.

The detailed analysis of noble Eight Fold path is undertaken as it forms a backbone of Buddha's teaching and must be replicated in every aspect-be it an individual, communities or nations.

Ethical Conduct: (Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood); Mental Discipline: (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration): Encouraging mental clarity and emotional resilience, which are essential for peaceful conflict resolution at both community and global levels; Wisdom: (Right View and Right Intention).

4.1. Individual level and community level

(1) Ethical Conduct (*Sīla*):

Right Speech - Families and communities can enhance relationships by practicing respectful communication, avoiding gossip, slander, or harsh words. Mutual love and understanding help resolve personal misunderstandings and

reduce conflicts. Politeness and empathy are keis in maintaining harmony.

Right Action (*Sammā Kammando*) - Each individual should refrain from actions that harm others, whether through violence, dishonesty, or unethical behavior. Acts of kindness and honesty, as well as practicing non-harm in everyday actions, lead to better family and community dynamics.

Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājivo*) - Personal ethical choices in livelihood-such as choosing careers that align with moral values help cultivate contentment and peace. Ensuring one's work does not harm others or the environment promotes a balanced and peaceful life.

(2) Mental Discipline:

Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāmo*) - Practicing right effort on a personal level and community level involves cultivating positive mental states such as compassion and empathy while actively working to reduce negative emotions like greed, anger, and jealousy. One must work on developing habits of patience, calmness, and emotional intelligence to maintain peace in relationships with each other.

Right Awareness/ Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) - Practicing mindfulness helps individuals gain clarity on their emotions and reactions, preventing impulsive actions that could harm relationships. By staying present and aware, individuals can avoid misunderstandings and work towards harmonious, peaceful interactions. Awareness becomes very important aspects especially when aggression or crime against women is discussed.

Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*) - Staying focused on constructive goals, avoiding the distraction of negative emotions or thoughts is expected. Concentration helps maintain a balanced and peaceful mind, which is essential in managing conflicts, whether at home or in the workplace.

(3) Wisdom (Paññā) - Insight for Global and Individual Peace:

Right Understanding (*Sammā Dīṭṭhi*) - On a personal level, right understanding involves recognizing the impermanence of material gains and the futility of clinging to self-centered desires. This can lead to greater acceptance and patience in relationships, as individuals recognize that struggles and conflicts are temporary and can be resolved through understanding and compromise.

Right Thought (*Sammā Saṅkappo*) - Right thought involves cultivating positive intentions such as kindness, non-violence, and renunciation of harmful desires. Individuals who develop pure thoughts are less likely to engage in conflicts and more likely to approach situations with understanding and compassion. Practicing right thought helps resolve family disputes, workplace issues, and personal or communal conflicts through non-violent means.

4.2. Global level

(1) Ethical Conduct (*Sīla*):

Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*) - Leaders and diplomats must prioritize honest, truthful, and constructive communication to foster peace,

collaboration, and reconciliation in conflict zones. Refraining from divisive language, misinformation, and hate speech can help prevent the escalation of political or religious conflicts. International organizations should encourage dialogue that promotes mutual respect and understanding.

Right Action (*Sammā Kammanto*) - Ethical governance and policies should avoid exploitation, corruption, and harm to the environment. Actions that promote peace, justice, and human rights are essential in resolving global conflicts, including wars and social inequality.

Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājivo*) - Nations should promote sustainable and ethical industries that do not harm the environment or exploit vulnerable populations. Right livelihood in global trade involves ethical labor practices, fair trade, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that wealth is created responsibly. Widespread smuggling of Drugs, procurement of Weapons-Armaments, goes against the essence of Right Livelihood.

(2) Concentration (*Samādhi*) – Mental Discipline for Global and Individual Peace:

Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāmo*) - Governments and global institutions must actively promote practices that reduce violence, hatred, and discrimination. Global leaders can encourage collective efforts to cultivate compassion, loving-kindness, and empathy through education, awareness campaigns, and conflict-resolution programs.

Right Awareness/ Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) - International cooperation should be grounded in mindfulness, where nations pay attention to the causes of conflicts and approach solutions thoughtfully, avoiding rash decisions that escalate tensions. Mindful negotiation and diplomacy that focus on shared human dignity and long-term peace will yield more sustainable results.

Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*) - Global peace can be facilitated through meditation and mindfulness practices that promote inner peace and clarity among world leaders. A collective focus on achieving long-term harmony, free from the distractions of power struggles and greed, helps reduce conflicts.

(3) Wisdom (*Paññā*):

Right Understanding (*Sammā Ditṭhi*) - At the global level, right understanding requires an awareness of the interconnectedness of all nations and peoples. Understanding the root causes of conflict - whether related to resources, identity, or power- can help find solutions that respect the dignity and needs of all involved. World leaders should develop an understanding of impermanence and the suffering caused by conflict, guiding them towards compassionate and balanced decisions.

Right Thought (*Sammā Saṅkappo*) - Globally, right thought encourages leaders and societies to prioritize benevolence, nonviolence, and the eradication of hatred. Right thought guides diplomatic negotiations, peace treaties, and conflict resolution efforts. Promoting an atmosphere of goodwill, cooperation, and the well-being of all people is essential in global peacebuilding.

Summary: Global Peace: The teachings of the Eightfold Path guide world leaders in making ethical decisions that foster peace, prevent violence, and promote mutual understanding. Emphasizing patience, mindfulness, ethical conduct, and compassion at a diplomatic level can reduce the escalation of global tensions. The global community should adopt practices that align with the Buddha's wisdom, focusing on the well-being of all beings, recognizing interdependence, and cultivating harmony through understanding and cooperation.

Individual and Communal Harmony: For individuals, Buddha's teachings offer practical tools to resolve conflicts within families, workplaces, and communities. Through the right speech, the right action, and cultivating mindfulness, individuals can transform their personal relationships and live harmoniously. By developing wisdom and understanding the root causes of suffering- whether internal or external- individuals can lead more peaceful lives, free from the disturbances of greed, anger, and ignorance.

V. SOLUTIONS

As we have discussed many core teachings of the Buddha and his important teachings through various *suttas*, we can list out many solutions that can address conflicts and bring in peace at three levels: Individual Level, Community/ Group Level, and Global/ World Level.

Let us equate conflict to cancer: at stage ^{1st}, it is easy to nip the cancerous cells in the bud; at stage ^{2nd}, it becomes a bit tougher as the cancer has spread from its origin; at Stages ^{3rd} and ^{4th}, the fight against its proliferation becomes much more challenging, leading to severe suffering, pain, and even death. In each stage, the treatment would differ with increasing intensity. Similarly, at the individual level, the peace practices and resolution methods will differ from those needed at the global level.

All solutions can be applied to any level of conflict since, at our core, we are all individuals. Likewise, understanding and practicing core concepts can be life- changing for everyone. The distinction lies in global leaders, who must grasp these same teachings and solutions from the perspective of their responsibilities in maintaining world peace.

5.1. Individual level initiatives

As discussed, any individual who is experiencing an overwhelming stress and mental block can undertake any of the solutions to get away from negative thoughts and conflicts to find a way to peace and tranquillity.

(1) **Mindfulness (*Sati*):** *Sati* Ronald D. Siegel, Christopher K. Germer, and Andrew Olendzki define mindfulness as having three key aspects: awareness, focused on the present experience, and approached with acceptance. A single moment of mindfulness integrates all three elements.³⁵ Everyday mindfulness should be practiced, which means staying aware of the present moment in daily activities, like noticing sensations while walking, tasting food, and observing

³⁵ Didonna (2009): 20.

surroundings. At an individual level, we can consider this for generating awareness about self and surroundings.

(2) *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* meditation: Buddhism recognizes two types of meditation: *Samatha* (calm) and *Vipassanā* (insight). While *samatha* brings out mental stability through tranquillity and *vipassanā* enables deeper understanding of conflicts by uncovering their root causes. Together, they provide a wholesome way of managing distress and preventing impulsive reactions in conflict situations. We become emotionally more mature and can handle stress and mental affliction with a more stable mind. Due to clarity of mind, we make informed choices.³⁶

(3) *Satipaṭṭhāna*: Through *Satipaṭṭhāna*, observe the body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), mind (*citta*), and mental patterns (*dhamma*). It helps us understand our emotional and thought patterns clearly. In modern-day life challenges it can act as a catalyst to handle inner conflicts like stress, anxiety, or overthinking. Those who have gone higher in their *vipassanā* practice can take up *Satipaṭṭhāna*. Everything we feel or think about- like being happy, sad, making choices, or understanding what is right- fits into four simple groups. By paying attention to these four things, we can understand ourselves better, feel less upset, and be more peaceful inside.³⁷

(4) Application of mindfulness through Thích Nhất Hạnh's modern ways of practice. His five-step method - recognition, acceptance, embracing, deep looking, and insight - offers a stepwise emotional processing system. This method promotes direct engagement with emotions, leading to sustainable conflict resolution.³⁸

(5) Buddha's teaching has a universal appeal. Monks and psychologists have beautifully blended Buddhist mindfulness with Western therapeutic techniques, Carl Rogers' person-centred therapy and Jacob Moreno's psychodrama, known as *Satitherapy*, it has a proper step wise process where patients are treated. Rooted in *Abhidhamma*, it promotes healing, self-transformation, and compassionate mental well-being³⁹. The five basic sati therapeutic procedures are: commenting, reflection, anchoring, concretization, and psychotopex exploration.⁴⁰

(6) Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by modifying cognitive-affective processes. In a study on Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), 16 patients underwent fMRI while responding to negative self-beliefs and regulating emotions using breath-focused and distraction- focused attention. After MBSR, 14 patients showed

³⁶ The Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha (2000): 329.

³⁷ Frýba, (1995): 18.

³⁸ Thich Nhat Hanh (1999): 26.

³⁹ Āyukusala Central European Sangha, (2002), *Satitherapy: Integrative psychotherapy approach*, accessed on [February 18, 2025], available at: <http://www.ayurama.dhammadharma.eu/dhamma/session.html>

⁴⁰ Nemcová and Hajek (2009): 29.

reduced anxiety, depression, and improved self-esteem. Breath-focused attention led to decreased negative emotion, reduced amygdala activity, and increased attentional control. MBSR may enhance emotion regulation, reducing SAD-related avoidance and automatic emotional reactivity.⁴¹

Case Study:

This case study explores how *Vipassanā* meditation played a crucial role in healing the emotional trauma experienced by Rahul Gandhi⁴² and Priyanka Gandhi,⁴³ Children of slain former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Following the tragic losses of their grandmother and father at the hands of terrorism, the siblings faced deep-seated anger, frustration, and grief from a young age. Both have indicated in interviews that embracing *Vipassanā* meditation enabled them to cultivate mindfulness, equanimity, and inner calm. Rahul Gandhi noted that the practice helped him break free from cycles of anger and reactivity, while Priyanka Gandhi explained that it fostered a sense of clarity and compassion, allowing her to process her pain constructively. Their experiences underscore how meditation can serve as a powerful tool for overcoming personal suffering and building resilience in the face of political violence and loss.

Take Away: They both resorted to the practice of *Vipassanā* during a critical state of mental and emotional grief. This shows that they believed it to be the only solution for regaining inner peace and achieving self-healing- crucial first steps toward overcoming personal trauma and anger. Gradually, they healed completely, with no residue of anger, hatred, frustration, or other negative emotions.

5.2. Community level initiatives

(1) Educational Reforms: Schools and universities should integrate mindfulness-based conflict resolution programs into curricula. Inspired by the *Sārāṇīya Sutta*, students should be taught interpersonal harmony, tolerance, and ethical responsibility.

(2) *Ānāpāna* sessions at Schools: It is a very welcoming move that state governments in India like Maharashtra and Assam are slowly understanding the role of meditation in young school-going children. They have issued a government resolution (GR) to introduce *Ānāpāna* sessions at school for tackling mental restlessness, physical aggression, and lack of concentration in school-going students. Many students are getting benefits out of it experiencing emotional stability.

⁴¹ Goldin and Gross (2010): 83.

⁴² India Today, *Modi likes Mangoes, I like Vipassana: Rahul Gandhi in an exclusive interview*, accessed on [February 19, 2025], available at: <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/modi-likes-mangoes-i-like-vipassana-rahul-gandhi-in-an-exclusive-interview-2019-05-02>

⁴³ NDTV, *In conversation with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra*, accessed on [February 19, 2025], available at: <https://www.ndtv.com/video/in-conversation-with-priyanka-gandhi-vadra-70850>

(3) Residential Meditative Retreats for practitioners: 10 days, 20 days and similar higher duration courses for students, working professionals, professionals with high stress level and anyone who wish for stress free life can enrol for meditation retreat as conducted by S N Goenka based on *Sayagyi U Ba Khin* tradition for mental peace and tranquillity.

(4) Ethical Corporate Governance: The corporate sector can adopt Buddhist ethical frameworks to promote sustainable business models. By integrating right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), companies can shift from exploitative practices to socially responsible and environmentally conscious operations. We should learn to promote 'just governance' from the Cakkavatti sutta and ethical and non-exploitative economic policies for sustainable leadership from the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*.

(5) Values in Society: Launch public awareness campaigns and community programs that highlight core values such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). Encourage leaders and media to model ethical behaviour, reinforcing these values in everyday life. Social harmony through the six principles of cordial living (*Sāraṇiyadhamma*) as a model for reducing communal tensions and fostering inclusivity should be adopted. Social harmony through the six principles of cordial living (*Sāraṇiyadhamma*) as a model for reducing communal tensions and fostering inclusivity should be adopted.

Case Study-1:

Ven. Thích Nhất Hạnh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace activist, introduced mindfulness to the West in the early 1970s. He founded Plum Village near Bordeaux, France, which serves as a prominent international practice centre. At Plum Village, mindfulness is seamlessly integrated into daily activities, fostering inner peace and awakening in a homelike atmosphere. He did pioneering work in promoting socially engaged Buddhism.⁴⁴

The Five Mindfulness Trainings- Reverence for Life, True Happiness, True Love, Loving Speech and Deep Listening, and Nourishment and Healing, rooted in the precepts from the Buddha's time, serve as a foundation for lay practitioners. Thích Nhất Hạnh modernized these precepts, emphasizing mindfulness as their core. Through mindfulness, individuals become aware of their bodies, emotions, thoughts, and surroundings, helping to prevent harm to themselves and others. This practice fosters personal and societal well-being by highlighting the consequences of actions and encouraging insight based on personal understanding rather than external authority.⁴⁵

Take Away: Thích Nhất Hạnh revolutionized Buddhist teachings through Engaged Buddhism, making ancient wisdom applicable to modern challenges. He redefined the Four Noble Truths by linking suffering to social issues, identifying real-world causes like violence and greed, and offering mindfulness-based solutions for personal and collective well-being.

⁴⁴ Tri Nghiêm (2024): 93.

⁴⁵ Plum Village (2022): 56.

By integrating mindfulness into daily life, individuals and societies can cultivate inner peace, thereby promoting global harmony.

Case Study-2:

Ānāpāna Sati sessions at Schools: It is a very welcoming move that State governments in India like Maharashtra and Assam are slowly understanding the role of meditation in young school-going children. They have issued a government resolution (GR) to introduce Ānāpāna sessions at school for tackling mental restlessness, physical aggression, and lack of concentration in school-going students. The MITRA community, formed by the meditators from the tradition of S N Goenka, visit schools and motivates students, teachers, and parents to turn to mindful breathing techniques. Schools who have adopted this practice daily at school have reported some amazing results ranging from children becoming calmer, understanding complex maths and science concepts easily, teachers requiring less efforts in managing students, improved interpersonal relations between students- parents and students- teachers.

Take Away: This can be seen as a game changer. Not only students but teachers and parents are also reaping the benefits by experiencing mental & emotional stability. If it is replicated at National level we can hope to see emotionally matured and compassionate, peace loving generation in future leadership roles.

5.3. Global level initiatives

At the global level, if peace is to bear fruit, global leaders must cultivate mindfulness and be aware of the consequences of their decisions, which can cause fear, anxiety, and stress among their people. Some of the solutions at the global level suggested as follows:

(1) Inner Peace: Global peace begins with leaders cultivating mindfulness and self-restraint. For example, the Russia- Ukraine war, on- going since February 2022, has caused widespread humanitarian and geopolitical challenges. Here one can learn from the *Dighanakha Sutta* that holding rigid views leads to conflict. It suggests that if leaders let go of fixed positions and adopt empathy, they can find common ground and reduce tensions, paving the way for peace.

(2) Policy- Level Implementation: The United Nations peacekeeping missions should incorporate mindfulness and ethical leadership training for diplomats and conflict negotiators. Practical applications of right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) and right action (*sammā-kammanta*) could create diplomatic environments that prioritize long- term peace over short- term political gains.

(3) Shared Values: By adhering to ethical principles similar to right speech, action, and livelihood, leaders can build trust across borders. In regions like Syria and Israel-Palestine, focusing on fairness and transparency could help replace military might with humanitarian efforts, as evidenced by progress in certain ceasefire agreements.

(4) Mutual Understanding: Empathy and active listening can dissolve long-standing hostilities. The success of the Northern Ireland peace process

shows how acknowledging historical pain and embracing compassion can transform adversaries into partners for peace- principles that global leaders can adopt to bridge divides.

(5) Sustainability: Recognizing our global interconnectedness, sustainable practices are crucial in resolving conflicts over natural resources. For instance, on- going water disputes in the Middle East might be alleviated by policies that promote equitable resource distribution and environmental stewardship, supported by international agencies like the UN and World Bank.

Replacing *Dosa* (hatred) with *Mettā* (loving- kindness) will be the key. Diplomacy, peace treaties, and conflict resolution through non- violent means rather than aggression. Recognizing interdependence and Understanding that harming others ultimately harms oneself on a global scale.

Replacing *Lobha* (greed) with *Dāna* (generosity) will be the key. Global wealth distribution, fair trade, and cooperative policies instead of exploitative economic practices should be practiced. It's high time we shift our belief from profit-driven business models to sustainable economics, emphasizing ethical business and environmental consciousness.

Replace delusion Greed (*moha*) with *Paññā* (*wisdom*). Encourage education, open dialogue, and policies based on rational understanding rather than emotional or ideological bias. Nations must acknowledge their limitations, embrace cooperation, and adopt ethical leadership for long-term peace. This is akin to promoting a Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*).

Policies promoting non- exploitative economic models understanding the principle of right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), conflict resolution based on the *Vinaya* principles, and international diplomacy using Buddhist values of right intention (*sammā-saṅkappa*).

Case Study-1:

Universal Monarch King Ashoka: There can't be a bigger example than the King of Kings Ashoka. He did not become the Universal Monarch by winning the Kalinga war or by obtaining massive land through several wars but only by overcoming his inner conflicts of remorse, pain, and restlessness due to the massive destruction the Kalinga war caused. By converting into Buddhism and following the highest standards of Morality and five precepts, *pañcasheel* that he changed his fate and made his citizens happy, content, and prosper across the length and breadth of *Jambudwipa*. The Ashoka established himself in Dhamma, and one can see the complete shift in his way of governance, which earlier focused mainly on military conquest.

Ashoka's governance focused on welfare and compassion. His edicts show his commitment to providing both physical and spiritual care for his people. He set up hospitals, veterinary clinics, rest houses, and wells, highlighting his holistic approach. His animal welfare policies, including limiting slaughter and ensuring veterinary care, reflect his belief in non-violence.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Radhamma (2017): 706.

It shows the leadership is not about winning wars and acquiring lands or proving your supremacy but true leadership lies in good governance through prioritizing the well-being of all life forms and empathetic values rooted in four *brahmaviharas* of compassion (*karuna*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), appreciative joy (*Muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) for the benefits of others. King Ashoka not only reigned his huge kingdom by following the highest ethical and moral grounds by also made a huge sacrifice by involving his two children to serve and spread the Dhamma.

Take Away: This is a perfect example of how leadership at the topmost level can bring about positive changes. Here Ashoka changed himself and changed his way of administration by developing policies that would benefit every one regardless of social status or background. His approach to governance, emphasizing moral integrity, social welfare, and non-violence, serves as a timeless model for modern leaders. By integrating ethical leadership, public welfare policies, and compassion-driven governance, societies today can cultivate sustainable peace and progress on a global scale. The principles of Ashoka's reign remain relevant, offering a pathway for resolving contemporary conflicts and promoting a world rooted in justice, equality, and harmony. He showed great commitment to peace by sending his children to spread peace instead of making his son a king to conquer more land.

Case Study-2:

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH):⁴⁷ In the late 1970s, Bhutan's 4th King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, said, "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product." He introduced this idea to emphasize that true progress includes not just economic growth but also overall well-being and happiness. Gross National Happiness (GNH) is more than just asking if someone is happy on a semantic scale of research. Bhutan's approach, influenced by Buddhist views, includes various aspects of well-being like health, education, social connections, mental health, culture, community, and the environment—much broader than the typical Western idea of happiness.

In 2011, the UN adopted a resolution, proposed by Bhutan with support from 68 countries, urging a "holistic approach to development" focused on promoting sustainable happiness and well-being. In 2012, a UN meeting brought global leaders together to create a new economic model based on sustainability and well-being, inspired by Bhutan's GNH Index.

In 2022, Bhutan carried out a Gross National Happiness Index sample survey, in which people from both urban and rural areas, across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and employment sectors, were interviewed. Among various factors, the GNH considered aspects such as relationships, work-life balance, and belongingness—elements that contribute to happiness rather than focusing solely on income. Here, responses on one important indicator—'psychological well-being' have been compiled for those categorized

⁴⁷ Ura et al. (2023): 127.

as ‘deeply happy’. These are the people who scored 66% and above in the Happiness Index.

Take Away: Global peace efforts must go beyond economic measures like GDP and prioritize well-being as a key indicator of progress. By integrating happiness and mental health into policy-making, nations can create more sustainable and inclusive societies. Sustainable peace strategies should balance economic growth with environmental and social welfare, preventing conflicts rooted in inequality and resource exploitation. Diplomatic approaches should incorporate well-being indices, fostering cooperation rather than competition in international relations. Addressing mental health and emotional resilience in post- conflict regions is crucial for lasting peace. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness and ethical decision- making into education systems can cultivate a culture of non- violence and harmony on a global scale.

Case Study 3:

Bodhisatva Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: India is the land where the Buddha attained enlightenment at Bodhgaya, delivered his first sermon at Sāranath, and attained *Mahaparinibbāna* at Kushinara. Once a flourishing Buddhist country under King Ashoka, India struggled to sustain Buddhism after the Gupta dynasty. In the 19th century, however, one man single-handedly revived Buddhism in India. Dr. Ambedkar renouncing Hinduism converted to Buddhism with his lakhs of followers. He considered it be his new birth as Hinduism promoted caste- based inequality and oppression. He exhorted his followers to practice the Noble Eightfold Path- grounded in knowledge, the right path, and compassion. This historic event is seen as the modern third turning of the wheel of Dhamma.⁴⁸ Author Nicola Jaoul, in his article *The Politics of Navayāna Buddhism*, cites a news article titled “Neo Buddhists are Far Ahead of Hindu *Dalits*,” written by socialist Shura Darapuri, in which the benefits of conversion are highlighted in terms of sex ratio, literacy rates, female literacy, and employment. Based on all- India figures from the 2021-2022 census, she shows that in all these domains *Navayāna* practitioners have surpassed Hindu *Dalits* and Hindus in general. She thus concludes that these results are clearly due to a change in religion, which has liberated them from the bondage of caste and an inferiority complex, enabling them to progress.⁴⁹

Take Away: Dr Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism is seen as the World’s biggest religious conversion ever. But Dr. Ambedkar’s reason to choose Buddhism as his new religion was based on his understanding of the Buddha’s teaching as the ultimate resort for peace, equality and humanity. He based his reasoning on the Model grounded in knowledge, compassion and the right path i.e *Paññā*, *Karunā*, and path of *Pāramitas*- living with purity, righteousness, and virtue. This model should be adopted at the global level through educational reforms, policy- making, and community engagement, promoting ethical leadership, social justice, and compassion- driven governance to address global

⁴⁸ Keer (1995): 500.

⁴⁹ Teltumbade and Yengde (2018): 290.

restlessness effectively. He spoke about practising *sa-dharma* that transcends religions and is universal which teaches us to respect others.

VI. CONCLUSION

World peace requires collective efforts, from individuals to global leaders- especially policymakers and their influencers. This is a herculean task that demands immense willpower, wisdom, compassion, and virtue. A top- to-bottom approach must follow three interconnected levels to bring visible change.

At the individual level, cultivating inner peace through mindfulness and ethics reduces stress, improves relationships, and fosters well-being. However, this alone is not sufficient- it is merely the primary stage.

At the societal level, community leaders, politicians, spiritual figures, and NGOs must promote social unity and ethical governance. Community dialogues, interfaith discussions, and grassroots initiatives can resolve conflicts and foster inclusion. Dr. Ambedkar's model of peace through righteousness and virtues, rooted in the Eightfold Noble Path, should guide policymaking. His principle of *sadharma* offers a concrete solution to religious conflicts. Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index serves as a living example of integrating human dignity, happiness, and quality of life into governance. Other nations must adopt similar models.

At the global level, peace demands sustained, proactive action, not mere conflict resolution. World leaders must engage in dialogue without rigid ideologies, prioritizing listening, mutual respect, and flexibility. They must recognize that national interests sometimes need to be set aside for global welfare. Further, reflecting on the harm caused by wars should drive efforts toward cooperation rather than power struggles.

The Dhammapada states: *santutthiparamam dhanam*- contentment is the greatest wealth. Yet modern conflicts arise from limitless greed, consumerism, and failure to recognize "how much is enough." True security lies not in military power but in ethical governance, equitable resource distribution, and nonviolence.

Across all levels, the Buddha's core teachings remain constant, though their scope expands. The Middle Path, Eightfold Noble Path, ethical values (*Sila*), and the *Brahmavihāras* (*mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā*) provide a practical framework for conflict resolution. *Khanti* (patience) and *mettā* (loving-kindness) directly counter rising religious intolerance and ethnic tensions, offering nonviolent solutions as seen in Myanmar's reconciliation efforts.

Buddhism teaches that karma shapes the future- our actions today determine the world our future generations inherit. The Buddha's wisdom is revolutionary, but its impact depends on practice and structured implementation at individual, societal, and global levels.

A structured roadmap for peace must begin with individual transformation, extend to societal ethics, and culminate in global policies. The six principles of cordial living provide a timeless guide for fostering harmony. Moving forward,

global institutions must shift from reactive conflict resolution to proactive peace-building, integrating Buddhist ethics into governance, education, and diplomacy.

As Thích Nhất Hạnh said, “*Peace is every step*”- it begins within us and extends outward to the world. The time to act is now.

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BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA: AN EXAMPLE FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The Great Empire of Mongolia, which was created with great violence and terror, was eventually and subsequently turned into a peaceful nation with the spread of Buddhism. This can be taken as a model for the spread of world peace and sustainable development to maintain human dignity in the world using Buddhist doctrines. Chinggis Khaan of Mongolia created a great empire through great might and brutal force, conquering many countries with terror. Despite the violent conquests, he sowed a seed of Buddhist practice by liberalizing religious practices and supporting Buddhism. Later, Ogedei Khaan and Kublai Khaan created a conducive environment for Buddhism to spread peace in Mongolia. Zanabazar spread Buddhism using his artistic skill, creating amazing images of Buddhas and other Buddhist divinities. It can be seen how a war-hardened Mongolia transformed into a peaceful nation practicing Buddhism, and this great transformation can be used as a specimen for the world to replicate to maintain world peace and sustainable development.

Keywords: *Altan Khaan, Arniko/ Anige, Chinggis Khaan, Kublai Khaan, Ogedei Khaan, Phägs-pä, Zanabazar.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is the most practiced religion in Mongolia. About 51.7 percent of the population identifies themselves as Buddhist in Mongolia. Buddhism changed the outlook of nomadic Mongols, who were known for their fearsome warlord aptitude creating terror in Asia, to peaceful Buddhist Mongols. It was possible because of the transmission of Buddhism. With the proliferation of Buddhist teachings along with its art, culture, and architecture, it generated harmony and peace in the whole of the nation. Mongolia's transformation

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from great conquerors to a nation of peace using the doctrine of Buddhism can be an example for the world to duplicate the strategy in order to create a conducive ambiance for world peace and sustainable development. This religion of peace was propagated by Buddha, who was born in Nepal more than 2500 years ago. He left his palace in quest for the true essence of life in human being. With rigorous meditation in the wilderness of India, he found the answer to the suffering of human life and established a profound teaching to find true happiness and peace for the sentient beings of this world. He attended *Mahaparinirvana* and left us with a great teaching, which helps us find true happiness and peace within ourselves.

His teaching was further propagated by emperors and the general population of the period to be spread to most parts of Asia. Many Asian countries embraced Buddhism in some form or the other. In the vast Mongolian land, the dissemination of Buddhism commenced since the time of great Chinggis Khaan. He was very liberal with the religious practice in his empire. Though his ancestors believed in Shamanism, he was very liberal with other religions that were practiced in his homeland. He even chose a Chinese monk to be his grandson Kublai Khaan's teacher in his tender age. His third son, Oegdei Khaan, even invited Tibetan monks into his court to get the empowerment of *Cakrasamvara* initiation and is believed to have built the great Erdene Zuu monastery in his newly established capital Kharakhorum. His reign lasted for a short period, but his collaboration with Tibetan Buddhism found a strong base for Buddhist practice that helped pacify and subdue the harsh people of Mongolia to lead a peaceful life in this vast, harsh land. Buddhist emperors, even though they were involved in great battles for the defense of their territories, were less fierce and ruthless to their enemies. We have a good example in Indian Emperor Asoka who was a very successful emperor, but was a patron and propagator of Buddhism. His Pillar inscriptions and stone edicts in many parts of India are the testimony to his justice and generosity in conducting the everyday affairs of the lives of his people. Mongolians, too, were fierce warriors who were feared in Asia, but gradually, with the introduction of Buddhism, they became pacified. The introduction of Buddhism at the time of Chinggis Khaan was the beginning, and Oegdei Khaan continued the use of Buddhism in his reign, and finally with the Kublai Khaan used the Tibetan master and Nepalese artist to further strengthen Buddhism in his huge Yuan Empire. Eventually, the selection of the Fourth Dalai Lama Gyalwa Yonten Gyatso from the Altan Khaan family further strengthened Buddhism in Mongolia. Furthermore, Zanabazar was appointed as the reincarnation of the great Tibetan Lama Taranatha of the Jonangpa sect under the Fifth Dalai concretely established Buddhism in Mongolian territory. The close connection between the Tibetan Buddhists and Mongolian Khaan rulers created a good blend to spread Buddhism in Mongolia and generated a benevolent and peaceful country that embraced Buddhism even in the modern times. This is an evidence of a good case of how war hardened Mongol nomadic tribes who were feared for their terroristic machinery of conquest using great violence gradually pacified by clever procedure of gradual introduction of Buddhism that shaped the peaceful

and harmonious society in Mongolia. There were many countries in the world where the doctrine of Buddhism changed the overall outlook of the nation, and a peaceful condition was manifested to bring harmony. Similarly, Mongolia is one of the Buddhist majority countries where beautiful monasteries house great Buddhist artworks and people live in great harmony. This can be taken as one of the examples of Buddhist insight for world peace. The great Mongols of the period not only influenced the practice of Buddhism in their vast land but also supported the Buddhists from Tibet, China, and Nepal, creating a vast network that corroborated these nations into the common net of peaceful co-existence. Hence, Buddhism became a strong medium to create world peace and harmony among the people of the vast Asian continent.

II. THE MONGOLS AND THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA

The Mongolian race was one of the most successful conquerors of Asia. At one time, Mongolia under Chinggis Khaan controlled one of the biggest land empires of the world. They were extremely swift and very clever strategists. Especially, Chinggis Khaan, who started from a very humble background with lots of ups and downs in his youth, became the most successful conqueror of the world. Despite all of the odds, he united all Mongols to create the great empire. We know from the accounts of his life that the faith of Mongolia was based on Animism and Shamanism. In the year 1180 CE, a young man who would become a great Khaan survived attacks from his enemies on the mountains in northern Mongolia. He had faced numerous offences from his enemies after his father was murdered. Yet again, this time he was miraculously saved, escaped from early death. It was not just coincidence, but his skill saved him along with his belief that he was protected by Heaven- blue heaven, the ancient god of the Mongols¹. Mongols believed in animism and shamanism, and their shrine, *Oovo*, epitomized their faith. Mongolia, which is considered the land of blue sky, worshiped nature and particularly the blue sky as their protector god. It is obvious that in the vast, harsh land, human would seek protection from the unseen divine for their well-being. Mongols who dwell in this hostile land needed some form of divine intervention for their overall security. It is evident from the confidence of Chinggis Khaan that he was protected by this vast blue heaven (the concept of deific blue sky marks that their initial faith was animism and shamanism). Mongolian belief in nature is very remarkable, they would not pollute their land and water because they worship nature as the god. In the Mongolian territories, the land and water are kept in pristine condition. Now, in modern times, most the Mongolians follow Buddhism, but their culture is still based on the old traditions and values. They worship their *Oovos* (traditional shrines) and keep the environment clean in most of the parts outside the capital city of Ulaanbaatar.

Mongols power under leader Temujin, who later was given the title Chinggis Khaan, was behind this². In the middle of the twelfth century CE, the Mongol

¹ John Man (2014): 10.

² Patricia Berger and Terese Tse Bartholomew (1995): 8.

were established as a clan group. Temujin inherited this clan from his father this clan. At that time, the clan was reduced, and it was at the bottom of its fortunes³. After his father's death, he had been hiding from his enemies who wanted to kill him. He was hardly a teenage boy then. This young boy, whose name was Temujin, later became one of the most feared conquerors of the world. It has even come to designate as one of the most populous races of the world – Mongoloid race. Of the vast empire Chinggis Khaan and his descendants bequeathed to their people, the steppe dominated heartland that stretched from the Khailar River in the east to the Ili River in the west, from the Great wall in the south to Lake Baikal in the north, could be termed Mongolia proper⁴.

He had a keen sense of protection from the belief in a god of heaven- the blue sky- which made him confident. His genius leadership qualities and the Mongols' overall great quality of adaptation to the harsh surrounding of great vast Mongolian wilderness could be the key to their success. There are numerous advantages of his clan to be so successful, chiefly trio qualities, namely culture of wrestling, horseback riding, and archery. Other factors include the nomadic life, herder and animal husbandry, their temporary Gers (Yurt), better dietary supplements with natural pure water, and good herbs for the treatment of wounds. The most important part of their conquest was the leadership element of the Mongol society. These three important life skills- wrestling, horseback riding, and archery made every Mongol a great soldier who would use these skills in the battlefield field taking enemies by surprise.

In his childhood, Chinggis Khaan witnessed shamanism, which he dearly believed in, and Nestorian Christianity were rivals among Mongol and Turks. He was aware that other rulers believed in religious backing. The Chinese ruler at the time of Western Xia was partial to Buddhism, and he must have seen the monuments such as the Buddhist pagodas, the royal tombs, and the temples at Datong and Beijing. As he was the very clever leader, he ordered that all religions should be treated equally. This law became one of the underlying rules that made Mongol emperors remarkable from his time onwards, thus creating religious tolerance in Mongolia. Chinggis Khaan tolerated any faiths for the practical reason that Shamanism was not antagonistic to other religions. For this reason, he would accept any priest of any religion, as long as they prayed for him and admitted to the Mongolian sovereignty. He would even gladly grant them exemption of taxes and provide them with freedom. This would be seen in his first encounter with the Buddhist monk Haiyun in 1214 CE and later appointed him as the tutor of his grandson Kublai Khaan who became a great emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, propagating Buddhism and spreading Buddhist art far and wide in his vast empire in China and Mongolia. In 1219 CE, Haiyun came to his court again, and this time, he brought his master along. Great Khaan made a decree that these men are true sage who pray to Heaven, and he would like to assist them with clothes and food. This indicates supporting

³ Patricia Berger and Terese Tse Bartholomew (1995): 8 – 9.

⁴ Patricia Berger and Terese Tse Bartholomew (1995): 9.

monks with robes and food along with shelter represent the true benevolent gesture in the Buddhist communities. He further announced that he would make them chiefs in his court and declared he was preparing to assemble many of such kinds of monks. He already had two other great Buddhist monks in his court, Khitan Yelu Chucai, 'Long beard', and other one was his Chinese minister, Liu Wen⁵. This provides a sign that Mongols were gradually turning to a more peaceful way of life, accepting the teaching of Buddha, who gives blessing to all sentient beings and spreading message of humanity. These royal decrees were the first step to the acceptance of Buddhism and conversion of tribal warmongers to the more placating way of life anticipating to lead a very pious, peaceful life after the bloody conquests. Buddhism was eventually accepted by people of all walks of life in Mongolia.

Great Khan had decreed that his third son, Ogedei Khan, would be the heir to the throne. Ogedei further made changes in the style of living for Mongolians strengthen Buddhism in the heartland of Mongols. In 1220 CE, Chinggis Khan chose Kharakhorum, 'black boulder,' to start the great capital for Mongol empire. He could not fulfill his dream, so Ogedei achieved the goal by starting this place as the capital of Mongolia. This great turn sowed the seed of the change of Mongol tradition by having a permanent settlement in 1235 CE⁶. It is well recorded that Great Khan had instructed Ogedei Khan to invite the Tibetan Lama Kung thang pa to Mongolia. It is obvious that the Mongols were well aware of the transformation of Tibet from a tribal nomadic race to a very civilized Buddhist community by embracing Buddhism from China and Nepal in the seventh century CE. Ogedei Khan followed in father's advice and invited Tibetan Lama. Ogedei Khan and his family received the *Cakrasamvara* empowerment in Kharakhorum. Following this historic empowerment from the Tibetan Buddhist practitioner, the succession of inviting learned lamas from the Śākya and Karma Kagyu orders continued till the Togoontomor Khan (1320 - 1370 CE)⁷.

Erdene Zuu monastery is one of the greatest monasteries in Mongolia and is located in the present Kharakhorum Soum territory of Uvurkhangai Aimag. It is believed that this monastery was originally made by Ogedei Khan, and it was later renovated from the old temple⁸. This monastery gives us some idea of how Buddhism was established in Mongolia, to change the hard warmongers to the peaceful society worshipping Buddha and Buddhist deities in the grand monasteries. In early times, Mongols were nomads, so their monasteries were also made of temporary Gers. As time changed, the great Khans started to support Buddhism, and eventually most of the monasteries were made permanently, establishing a strong hold of Buddhism. This spread of Buddhism gave rise to Buddhism and Buddhist art as well, resulting in the construction

⁵ John Man (2014): 96 – 97.

⁶ John Man (2014): 130.

⁷ Vasna A Wallace (2015): 77.

⁸ Altanzaya laikhsuren et al (2020): 9.

of great monasteries and beautiful Buddhist sculptures and paintings. In the process, they employed great artists from neighboring regions like Tibet, China and some artists from Nepal. We can know from the accounts of Kublai Khaan how an artist from Nepal, Arniko/Anige, made his way to the Yuan dynasty and created amazing arts in the Yuan court to further cement Buddhism in Mongolian hearts and souls.

There are no clear written historical records of Buddhism in Mongolia before the thirteenth century CE. During the reign of Ogedei Khaan, a Tibetan lama came for the first time to endow Buddhist empowerment to establish an appropriate practicing lineage in Mongolia. By this time, Mongolian rulers had settled in the Kharakhorum as the capital. The general population, however, still led the life of nomad, and their monasteries were set at Gers. It is believed that Erdene Zuu was established by Ogedei Khaan, and later, this monastery was built on a great scale, continuing Buddhism in Mongolia. However, Kublai Khaan, grandson of Chinggis Khaan, had a different vision. When he came to power, he shifted his capital to China. In his court, he chose a Tibetan monk as his royal teacher, Phāgs-pā who he bestowed the title of *Kuo-shi* (guushi, 'Teacher of realm'),⁹ and a Nepalese artist, Arniko/Anige, as chief of the Buddhist art construction department.

III. THE STRENGTH OF BUDDHISM UNDER KUBLAI KHAAN

Chinggis Khaan's grandson Kublai Khaan established the Yuan dynasty, one of the most important dynasties in China. During the Yuan dynasty, China developed into a grand empire, uniting whole nation and establishing a great authority. This was the period when Buddhism disseminated tremendously in China under Phāgs-pā, the state Buddhist leader. The concept of Buddhism was first introduced to Kublai Khaan by Buddhist monk Haiyun in 1214 CE when he was still very young. Later in the year 1242 CE, when he met the monk again, he asked him whether Buddhism offered world peace. The monk replied that it did, but understanding of Buddhist teaching was required: Kublai Khaan should surround himself with Buddhist scholars¹⁰. This meeting must have led to circulating Buddhist teaching to spread peace and harmony in his empire after consolidating complete control over the whole of China under Yuan's leadership. Kublai Khaan chose Buddhism instead of Confucianism and Taoism, which were the predominant religions of China. He instead chose Buddhism under the guidance of Phāgs-pā, who cleverly introduced him as a *cakravartin-raja* according to Buddhist tradition. Many kings in India have previously taken this title, as the Bodhisattva who ruled a great populace and turned the wheel of Law/Dharma¹¹.

Phāgs-pā was born in 1235 CE in Tibet. He was a descendent of the aristocratic 'Khon family' of the Śākya sect of Tibet. He was conferred a title of 'State Tutor' and bestowed on him a jade seal symbolic of authority

⁹ Hurelbaatar Ujeed. (2015): 281.

¹⁰ John Man. (2014): 53 – 54.

¹¹ John Man. (2014): 177.

the year after, when great Khaan ascended the throne. When Kublai Khaan moved his capital from Xuandu (Inner Mongolia) to Dadu (modern Beijing) and established the Yuan Dynasty, he put the Phāgs-pā in charge of the newly established Zongshi (general) council. Later, it was renamed the Xuanzheng (political) council- a central government department that handled Buddhist affairs of the whole nation and the local military and administrative affairs of the Tibetan area. Later, the great emperor granted him the honorific title of 'Imperial Tutor of the Yuan Dynasty' along with another jade seal of authority¹². This allied the Yuan Dynasty of China and the Śākya sect of Tibet in the joint endeavor of propagating Buddhism to spread peace and harmony in both regions. The Tibetan King Srong btse Gompo in the seventh century CE married Nepali princess Brikuti Devī and princess Wencheng from Tang dynasty to established Buddhism in Tibet, similarly, this new alliance between Yuan dynasty and Śākya sect established a good cooperation to exchange the Buddhist expertise and consequently transmitted peace and harmony in the vast region of China, Tibet, Mongolia, and surrounding regions.

One anecdote that showed how the Buddhist idea of Nepal influenced the great Khaan to change the outlook of Buddhism and Buddhist art can be taken from the incident when Arniko/Anige was presented in the court for the first time. When he was presented in the Yuan court, Kublai Khaan observed him for a long time before asking him if he was afraid when he came to see the great emperor. He replied, "The sagely man regards people in all directions as his sons; when a son comes to his father, why should he be afraid?" Kublai Khaan asked him what the reason for his arrival in China was. He answered: "My family has been in the West for generations. I took the edict to come to Tibet to build the Stupā for two years. I saw constant wars there and wish Your Majesty could bring peace there. I came for the sentient beings." Kublai Khaan then asked him about his specialty. He replied: "I take my mind as my teacher and know roughly painting, casting and carving."¹³ This conversation reveals his intelligence and his concern for ordinary people and the confidence of his artistry in announcing his arrival in Tibet to make the Stupā. With his courage and talent mentioned by Phāgs-pā, Kublai Khaan asked him to repair the Song dynasty bronze sculpture of acupuncture model which was broken, and no artist of his court could repair. Arniko/Anige replied that he would try his best and completed the repair of this sculpture in 1265 CE. He made this as it was: the veins and all the body parts were repaired as previously made, leading him to receive the highest accolade by the sculptor artists of the court.¹⁴ Thereafter, Kublai Khaan always entrusted him with responsibility for important imperial projects. He was commissioned to build a grand Stupā in the capital of Beijing. The White Pagoda work commenced in the year 1271 CE, completed in the year 1279 CE. It took almost 8 years to complete this 50.9 meter Stupā. The

¹² Yang Shuwen et al (1987): 9.

¹³ Anning Jing (1989): 5.

¹⁴ Satya Mohan Joshi (1987): 84.

completion of this Stupā firmly established him in the Yuan court.¹⁵ This also showed how Buddhist art and the Buddhist practice of Nepali artists in Yuan shaped the spread of Buddhist ideology to sustain the everlasting concept of Buddhist teaching extending peace and harmony among the people of China. This had a huge impact on the general people and later dynasties of Ming and Qing to further enhance the concept of Buddhists principals and concepts to sustain peace and harmony in their nations.

IV. PROPAGATION OF BUDDHISM BY DESCENDANTS OF CHINGGIS KHAAN

The Fourth Dalai Lama Gyalwa Yonten Gyatso died young, therefore, his life was not as prolific as his predecessors. However, he generated a real bridge between the Tibetan and Mongolian people. It was very important that the hostile nomadic Mongolians, who were known for their bravery, followed Buddhism and pacified their lives applying teachings of Buddha also because their leader's child was chosen as the reincarnation Fourth Dalai Lama. The Third Dalai Lama was encouraged by Altan Khaan to propagate Buddhism in Mongolia. It was under Altan Khaan, the Third Dalai Lama traveled and taught Buddhism to nomadic Mongols and Mongol regions of northwestern China. Altan Khaan was a direct descendent of Chinggis Khaan, and he was considered as the reincarnation of Kublia Khaan, the grandson of Chinggis Khaan. In the historical context, Mongols were very insistent and sometimes very threatening while sending the invitation to the Tibetan monks. Altan Khaan and his predecessors always insistently invited Tibetan monks in threatening expression to their service. When Altan Khaan was old, sick and about to die, he called Third Dalai Lama to use his power to cure sickness and lengthen his life using his divine power. Third Dalai Lama, hearing his reckless demand, later gave a long discourse of Buddha's teaching of impermanence. "As Buddha said, all compounded phenomenon will one day disintegrate, and all that is born must one day die. You are not an exception to this law of nature."¹⁶

The third Dalai Lama not only prayed and healed Altan Khaan but also exhumed his remains after his demise and performed the proper Buddhist ritual by constructing a Stupa for his relics. It was believed that the earlier Mongol burial funerary practices were fundamentally wrong and the process of rites was incorrect. Later, the Third Dalai Lama praised Queen Jonggen for her Buddhist devotion, and it was mentioned that a Nepalese artist made a diadem for the temple's Jowo statue. It is believed that Queen Jonggen was a strong believer and supporter of Buddhist conversion. A year later, when the Third Dalai Lama died in the year 1588 CE, the queen not only struggled hard to bring the relic of the Dalai Lama back but also played a vital role in finding the Fourth Dalai Lama from Mongolia. Sometime after the nirvana of the Third Dalai Lama in the year 1588 CE, Altan Khaan's grandson Prince

¹⁵ Satya Mohan Joshi (1987): 16.

¹⁶ Glenn H. Mullin (2008): 166. The Third Dalai Lama however, used his potential to extend Altan Khan's life using the Amitayus tantra of life enhancing methods.

Sechen Chokhor's young wife got pregnant. Both of them were good disciples of the Third Dalai Lama, and they were both good practitioners. It was said that the princess felt complete inner peace and joy¹⁷. A boy was born in 1589 CE, and he was extraordinary and bigger than the normal boy. A monk by the name of Gushri Palden Gyatso was given the responsibility of forming a committee to undertake the search for the reincarnation of the Fourth Dalai Lama. The oracle was consulted, and he gave his answer as to where the next reincarnation would be born. It was the place in Mongolia where the Fourth Dalai Lama would be born, good news for Mongolian but bad news for Tibetan as Mongolia was a long distance from Tibet. Gyalwa Yonten Gyatso, appointed as the Fourth Dalai Lama from Mongolia and the highest spiritual leader in Tibet, created a special bond between the two countries, and since then on, the cordially relation was maintained. There was a great influence of Tibetan Buddhism (all sects) and a huge impact in the field of Buddhist art.

The great Fifth Dalai Lama (1617 - 1682 CE) was an important Buddhist leader who contributed to the development of Buddhism and spread peace in Tibet and Mongolia, as a matter of fact, to the whole of the region. The appointment of Zanabazar as the reincarnation of Taranatha of the Jonangpa school of Buddhism was approved by both the Panchen Lama and the great Fifth Dalai Lama. Panchen Lama's main dharma center, Tashilhunpo, near Shigatse, was built by the First Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama title was given to Tibetan great reincarnated Lama (incarnation of *Avalokiteśvara*) by Mongolia Altan Khaan. The Third Dalai Lama was so revered by people that when he became the great guru of the Mongolian people, his role to the warlike Mongolian tribes was transferred as a role of peacemaker from a Buddhist preacher. This role has continued even in the present day. Dalai Lama became an important facet to create peace and harmony in the region.

Mongolian followers also supported the great Fifth Dalai Lama at the time of its need in Tibet. When Tibet was threatened by the King of Tsang, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo and his father, Karma Puntsok Namgyal, Mongolian great Khaan lent their support. When Karma Tenkyong Wangpo continued his control over all Tsang and western Tibet, as well as large parts of central Tibet, attacking and plundering great numbers of Gelukpa monasteries, there was a great fear for the safety of the Fifth Dalai Lama. At this critical period, his Mongolian followers pressed to bring him to Mongolia for his studies¹⁸. Despite all efforts by Tibetans and Mongolian, the Tsangpa king was trying to inflict hard on central Tibet and the Dalai Lama. In 1635 CE, Tsangpa king hired ten thousand mercenaries from the Chogthu Mongols. Great numbers of Chogthu armies were dispatched from Mongolia under the leadership of Arsalang Khaan, a son of Chogthu chief, to plunder and attack all Gelukpa monasteries in central Tibet. Had they succeeded, the history of Tibet would have been different. The names of Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama would have

¹⁷ Glenn H. Mullin (2008): 166 and 167.

¹⁸ Glenn H. Mullin (2008): 196.

disappeared forever. Another Mongol Gushri Khaan learned of this great invasion mission by the Chogthu force and intercepted it at the Kokonor (blue lake). Here, he had a Mongolian-style conference with Arsalang and pressed him to abandon his gruesome mission. This conference had a deep impact on him and consequently left the military contingent at the Namtso Lake and proceeded to Lhasa with Gushri Khan. Arsalang requested an audience with the young Dalai Lama, and they met in the Ramochey monastery, which was built by Srong btsen Gompo for his Chinese wife a thousand years ago. Gushri Khan later took an opportunity to attack Chogthu chieftain at Kokonor region in Amdo in the year 1637 CE and ended the threat from him. His clear move was successful, and the threat ended. Some historians claim that Gushri Khan annexed Tibet to the Mongol empire which is not true. In fact, Gushri Khan remains a close disciple of the great Fifth Dalai Lama. He spent considerable period of his life in Lhasa and remains very cordial to the people of Lhasa¹⁹. This warfare between regions of Tibet and interference by Mongolian Buddhist followers also show the cordial relation between the Dalai Lama and Mongols. Consequently, his spiritual leadership was powerfully established to enhance peace in the region, creating the atmosphere of inter-relationship between people of different races through the cultural and spiritual aspects of Buddhism. In the year 1642 CE, all the confrontation faded and there was peace again. Tibet which was a great and united some seven centuries earlier had fragmented into three princedoms, then splintered into several dozen major and minor kingdoms, once again united under the great Fifth Dalai Lama²⁰. This great alliances between two nations under Buddhism principal created harmonious condition producing a conducive ambiance for Buddhist practices aiding the overall peaceful environment for the whole of the region.

V. ZANABAZAR CEMENTED BUDDHIST SOCIETY IN MONGOLIA

One great leader who brought a change in Buddhist sphere leading Mongolians towards much peaceful way of life was Zanabazar. He was one of the most important Buddhist masters who brought Vajrayana Buddhism to Mongolia. He was a Buddhist scholar, very creative artist and an able politician who brought a new concept in Buddhism and Buddhist art in Mongolia. According to his disciple Zaya Pandita, his biographer, Zanabazar was a descendant of the great Chinggis Khaan. He wrote a King, Batu Mongke Dayan was the twenty-seventh generation descendant of universally famed Chinggis Khaan. From his eleven sons, the tenth was called Jalair Khung Tayiji and from his seven sons, the third was Uijeng Noyan. From his six sons the eldest was called King Abutai (or Abatai) who died at the age of thirty-five. His son was Erkei Mergen, His son was called Vajra King Tushiyetu Khaan. He acted with the full understanding of the two kinds of affairs, Buddhist doctrine and worldly political rule. He was the father of the present Lord [i.e. Zanabazar]²¹.

¹⁹ Glenn H. Mullin (2008): 200.

²⁰ Glenn H. Mullin (2008): 198.

²¹ Agata Bareja-Starzynska, (trans.) (2016): 43.

Zanabazar was born in the year 1635 CE to his father mighty Khalkha Tushiyetu Khaan Gombodorji and his mother who was the daughter of the daughter of the younger brother of the Zanabazar own grandfather, great Vajra King (Abaitai). Even though he was born in the great warrior family who were descendants of great Chinggis Khaan, he didn't succeed his father in the path to become Khaan. Instead, he was inclined to religious life since his early childhood and later recognized as the reincarnation of the Jonangpa scholar Taranatha Kunga Nyingpo (1575 - 1634 CE)²². There were some miraculous events happened during Zanabazar's birth according to his biographer. In old days, during the birth of some great masters, there were very important and incredible event happened as in case of Siddhartha Goutama's birth, there were thirty-two omens. As the Zanabazar's biographer state, his birth and extraordinary childhood were full of amazing and miraculous events. Early in life of Zanabazar, he proved to be great Buddhist inclined prodigy, at the age of three, amazing all, he would recite by heart the prayers and holy text of *Mañjusrinamasamgiti* - one of the major early text of *Mañjusri*, which had been translated into four languages and printed by Chojjamts, the grandson of Altan Khaan²³.

At the age of four, he was initiated with the dharma name of Zanabazar, Ishdorj (Tibetan *ye shes rdo rje* and Sanskrit name of *Jñānavajra*) and undertook the vow of genen (Tibetan *dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa*, Sanskrit *upsaka samvara*) the first rank of Buddhist monkhood by a certain Jambalin Nomin Khaan. The name Jñānavajra must have been chosen as the Ishdorj appear along with the name of the Indian adept Kṛṣṇacarya (Mahasiddha), an important Buddhist philosopher and scholar in ancient India who belongs to the same lineage as Taranatha²⁴. Taranatha was born in 1575 CE, he was called Kun-dga'sñin-po (Anandagarbha) but later as Taranatha and was famous for his work *rGya-gar-chos-byun* which means "the history of Buddhism in India"²⁵. Mongolian took inspiration from great masters for Buddhist practices from Tibet. So Zanabazar also undertook the journey to Tibet to receive numerous teachings. He went to Tibet two times, 1649 - 1651 CE for the first and second time in the year 1655 - 1656 CE, via Kumbum and Amdo. In his first visit, he received lineage empowerments, initiations and teachings on commentaries from the Fifth

²² Agata Bareja-Starzynska, (trans.) (2016): 60.

²³ Uranchimeg Tsultemin (2021): 16.

²⁴ Uranchimeg Tsultemin (2021): 16 - 17.

²⁵ Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya (trans.) (2010): xxiii. Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, - In Tibetan Tāranātha is usually mentioned as "Jo-nan Tāranātha" or "rje-btsun (bhaṭṭāraka) Tāranātha of Jo-nan sect" Jo-nan is the name of a place with a lofty caitya and a convent about a hundred miles to the north-west of the Tashi-lhun-po. The sect of Tibetan Buddhism which had Jo-nan as its stronghold came to be known as the Jo-nan-pa sect. The founder of this sect was Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal (Digvijayi), born in 1306 CE. It appears that a pronounce enthusiasm for the Kālacakra Tantra constituted an important feature of its creed, Tāranātha himself, a later leader of the sect, was famous as an author of several works on Kālacakra doctrine.

Dalai Lama and First Panchen Lama. He also went to pilgrimage in Tibet and it was said he spend most of his time in Central Tibet. In the text, it is mentioned that he visited mainly the Geluk schools. After his first visit to Tibet starting 1649 CE, he return to Khalkha in 1651 CE. In his biography, it is mentioned, Zanabazar was sixteen of age and was recognized by Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama as the First Jebtsumdampa reincarnation and he started to build his temples in Khalkha²⁶.

It is believe, Zanabazar started a Buddhist monastery in a form of Ger, the tent house. The Urga (Orgoo), which is a bigger version of Ger, was believed to have been made as the first monastery for his Buddhist practice. It was a mobile camp that was to reach out the nomadic communities in various areas of Mongolia and spread Buddhism among them²⁷. Mongolia is very huge country with small population so it was logical to have a mobile camp monasteries to reach out to nomad people who move constantly to feed their herds. Most of the Mongolian population were nomadic so it was not possible to have a stationary monasteries like in Tibet, Nepal or India. As Buddhism focuses on the *Upāya Kausala* (Skillful means), Zanabazar must have used his native culture to attract general people to follow Buddhist practices. This Urga was strategically developed in the course of time to be constructed as the main Khalkha monastery, Ikh Khuree, while still maintaining its mobility until 1855 CE. After Mongolia declared its independence from the Qing rule in 1911 and was taken by Communist revolutionaries later, Ikh Khuree became the Capital Ikh Khuree, renamed as Ulanbataar (Red Hero) by communist revolutionaries in 1924 only to be completely destroyed and transformed into Soviet-provincial town in the twentieth century. The most important monastery of Mongolia, Gandantegchinling monastery was the only surviving monastery from the former Ikh Khuree, which was the main center of the Eighth Jebtsundamba Bogh Gegeen²⁸.

In the year 1647 CE, Zanabazar founded Shankh monastery when he was 12 years old. It was also known as Baruun Khuree meaning Monastery of the west. This monastery was also began as a Ger monastery and moved from places to places to attend to the nomadic disciples before setting its current location in 1787 CE and taking its Shankh Monastery name. Till the late nineteenth century CE, large numbers of monks continued to travel in mobile camp to reach out to its followers. Tovkhon Khiid another important monastery where Zanabazar spend his time in practicing mediation has been known as the center of Zanabazar. This is one of the important pilgrimages for Buddhists as it was a center where he lived for a long time meditating. Tovkhon Khiid is translates as “meditation place” and its Mongolian appellation as *Buteelin sum* (temple of creation). *Buteelin sum* or *Dukhang* in Tibetan, suggests a meditation site, where creation implies a mental production based on visualization practice.

²⁶ Uranchimeg Tsultemin (2021): 16.

²⁷ Uranchimeg Tsultemin. (2015): 116.

²⁸ Uranchimeg Tsultemin. (2015): 116 – 117.

The site, currently has several small new reconstructed temples, is located in Ovorkhangai aimag, in the same province where Zanabazar was born²⁹.

One monastery complex that was recently found, renowned Ribogejai-Ganden Shaddbling was Zanabazar's main dharma center. According to Zaya Pandita's biography, young Zanabazar undertook the project of construction of this monastery at the foot of Saridag Mountain in the Khaan Khentii Mountains. The construction of monastery started in the year 1654 CE³⁰ and was complete in the year 1686 CE³¹ only to be destroyed from the attacks by the Dzungar armies in the year 1689 CE. The construction of this monastery took more than thirty years and was known as Saridag (or Saridagiin) Khiid. This monastery was the second major Vajrayana monastery that was built in Mongolia after the sixteenth century Erdene Zuu Monastery³². It is stated in the biography of Zanabazar that second month of the Earth Dragon year (1689 CE) Galden Boshugtu arrived at the land of Khalkha and destroyed monasteries one by one. Erdene Zuu and other monasteries were damaged but the monastery Ribo Gegye Ling (Saridag) was demolished completely³³. Recent excavation revealed its complete plan of the monastery with numerous Buddha statues, twelve buildings, three stupas and three temples compounds. Out of the most of the Buddhist monasteries related to Zanabazar, Ribogejai-Ganden Shaddbling was completely destroyed and recently there was discovery of numerous of Buddha images from this sites. Out of most of other monasteries, here in Saridag monastery, Zanabazar appear to have made most of the important Buddha images. Most of the images made by Zanabazar had a very close resembles to the Buddhist images created by Newāḥ artists of Kathmandu valley, Nepal. Newāḥ artists were prolific artists who worked in most of parts of Tibet since the time of Śrong btse Gompo, during the initial stages of Buddhism in Tibet. They traveled to most parts of Tibet, China and other parts of Asia as itinerant artists. They created numerous genres of Buddhist art be it architectures or sculptures or paintings. They had created a special affection of Tibetan for the creation of Buddhist art for their daily practices. Buddhist art plays a vital role in practicing Buddhism and undertaking many Vajrayana rituals. The continuous influx of different artists from far of places to Mongolia indicated the proliferation of Buddhism in the heart of nomadic herdsman who were previously feared for their ferocious nature as the barbaric conquerors. Due to the spread of Buddhism, whole of Mongolia became an enticing site for the Buddhist practitioners and especially itinerant artists from Nepal. Presently, half of the population in Mongolia follow Buddhism which is

²⁹ Uranchimeg Tsultemin (2021): 48.

³⁰ Agata Bareja-Starzynska (trans.) (2016): 121. In the biography it was mentioned that Zanabazar secretly went to Tibetan U and Tsang to offer prayers for extension of life of all known Panchen Lamas.

³¹ Agata Bareja-Starzynska (trans.) (2016): 134.

³² Uranchimeg Tsultemin (2021): 51.

³³ Agata Bareja-Starzynska (trans.) (2016): 146.

a good indication of their faith that led them to choose the life of compassion and harmony with the fellow human following Buddhist doctrine and living in harmony with nature according to their ancient practice. It could be clearly seen how Buddhism changed overall situation of Mongolia from brutal conqueror to peaceful people in course of about one thousand years. This could be taken as an example for the world peace and sustainable development through the implication of teaching of Buddha.

VI. CONCLUSION

Mongolia in present day is one of the most predominantly Buddhist populated nations in the world. More than half the population practice Buddhism. Like most of the Central Asia, Mongols also followed Shamanism before their preceding rulers Turks and Uyghurs. Chinggis Khaan established a foundation for liberal religious practice in his empire giving a prominent position to Buddhism in order to create harmonious ambiance for his progenies to live in more reliable atmosphere different from his earlier days. His son who was official chosen as the heir to the Mongol empire, firmly generated a ground for Buddhism. Buddhism became a practice to lead the better living for his family and for whole of the Mongol race holding on the society with peace and tranquility. He himself took empowerment of *Cakrasaṃvara* and believed to have made initial Erdene Zuu monastery in his first capital at Kharakhorum. This led to following of Buddhism by the rulers of that period, creating an atmosphere of more peaceful social setting which was different from the lives of Mongolian. Buddhism started to take root in the hearts and minds of elite rulers and gradually spreading the ideology of Buddhism into war harden Mongols who spend most of their lives in battle field.

Kublai Khaan, grandson of Chinggis Khan, was many fold ahead of his predecessors in firmly founding Buddhism as the state religion in order to create more civilized and harmonious social system for the Mongol rulers and Chinese as whole. He took assistance from Tibetan master Phägs-pä and Nepalese artists Arniko/Anige to spread the Buddhism in his vast empire enticing the sense of calm and peaceful society after his firm control of Yuan dynasty in China. The Buddhist teaching and Buddhist art coherently spread peace and harmony in the Yuan dynasty, though, as a mighty nation the conquest continued in many parts of the Asia. Mongols' affection towards Buddhism didn't faded with diminishing of Yuan dynasty or Mongol empire. The later Mongol ruler for instance, Altan Khaan supported Buddhism and consequently, the reincarnation of the Fourth Dalai Lama was chosen from the family of Altan Khan. Eventually, appointing of reincarnation of Jonangpa Buddhist master Taranatha as the Mongolian Zanabazar cemented the Buddhism and Buddhist practice in the society of vast Mongolia. The great Vajrayana master propagated Buddhism and spread the exquisite art form to bring all Mongols to follow Buddhism in order create a sublime and transcendent ambiance among the harsh warmonger nomadic Mongolian. Despite Mongolia faced different vicissitudes and communist's rules, it remained a peaceful nation, all because of the root of Buddhism which teaches love and compassion. The history of

Mongolia and its Buddhism ultimately led us to assimilate the true idea of an example for world peace and sustainable development adhering the teaching of Buddha.

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UNITY AND INCLUSIVITY FOR HUMAN DIGNITY - BUDDHIST INSIGHTS FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. YoungHoon Kwaak*

Abstract:

This paper introduces the visionary Lumbini Peace and Harmony District (P. H. D.) a master-planned global sanctuary in the birthplace of the Buddha, designed to become the epicenter of spiritual renewal, ecological harmony, and sustainable development. From Material to Mind: Challenging the dominance of consumerism and nationalistic self-interest, the author calls for a global paradigm shift - from material matters to mind matters - where Buddhist principles such as sudden enlightenment and gradual cultivation (dunwu-jianxiu) guide personal and planetary transformation. Designing Peace through the Dharma: The proposed Peace City integrates Buddhist spatial symbolism - Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha zones, the Eightfold Path, and lotus architecture - with practical environmental ethics, rural development, and inclusive civic planning.

A Call to Action: By linking the project's implementation with global Buddhist responsibility, the author urges immediate international cooperation to overcome political stagnation and bring this transformative vision into reality. The essay's contribution lies not in abstract theorization, but in offering a concrete, spiritually grounded blueprint for living the Dhamma collectively - a city that embodies peace, sustainability, and universal compassion.

Keywords: *Buddhist Urbanism, mindful planning, sustainable civilization, lumbini peace and harmony district.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, we face numerous challenges and conflicts, as we are reminded daily by the events unfolding in Ukraine and Gaza.

As we come to Vietnam in search of new meaning for humanity and solutions to global crises, we must find real ways to overcome our shared challenges: climate change, unbridled AI technology, and grave nuclear threats. The material-oriented world and nation-centric mindset are shifting, transforming into three or four major bloc states.

I would like to introduce Lumbini Peace and Harmony District, prepared in 2014—a sacred place where people from around the world can come together, live together, and learn together how to live together in harmony. Lumbini Peace and Harmony District will serve as a living environment that offers solutions to these global challenges.¹

As these crises converge, the need for sustainable policies, responsible innovation, and global collaboration becomes increasingly urgent to ensure a safer and more resilient future for humanity.

I would also like to humbly request all the Buddhists and Buddhist leaders to take actions to realize Lumbini Peace and Harmony District, which has not been implemented for more than two decades due to various Nepal Political situations.

II. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Material matters

There is no action since KOICA and KWAAC ESPRI provided in 2014

“Material comes first” refers to a perspective or belief where material possessions, wealth, and physical comfort are prioritized above all other aspects of life, such as emotional well being, relationships, or spiritual fulfillment. This mindset often aligns with materialism, where the accumulation of goods and the pursuit of financial success are seen as the ultimate goals in life. In a world where “material comes first,” there is a strong focus on tangible, measurable achievements, sometimes at the expense of more intangible or non-material aspects of human experience, such as happiness, personal growth, or connection with others.²

This idea can be seen in consumer-driven societies, where value is placed on what one owns or can acquire, and status is often linked to wealth and possessions. Critics of this mindset argue that it leads to a shallow and unsatisfying life, where individuals might neglect their emotional, social, or ethical needs in favor of material gain.

If we continue living at the current rate, the U.S. would need 5.39 Earths,

¹ Kwaak, Y. H. (2004). Proposal for the Lumbini World Peace City. Presented at the 2nd World Buddhist Summit, Lumbini, Nepal.

² Kwaak, Y. H. (2013). Urban Planning for World Peace and Sustainability. Seoul: Mokmin Institute for Policy Studies.

France and England would need 6 Earths, respectively, and China would need 1.2 Earths.

Pic.1

If every people live like the people in the following countries, how many Earths would be needed?³

- American: 5.39 Needed



- Canadian: 4.88 Needed



- British: 2.94 Needed



- French: 2.94 Needed



- Japanese: 2.66 Needed



- Chinese: 1.2 Needed



Source: GFN, Global Footprint Network, Report, 2013.⁴

Furthermore, according to scientists, Doomsday is now closer than ever. On January 28, 2025, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, a nonprofit organization focused on global security and science, officially moved the Doomsday Clock forward for 2025. The clock is now set to 89 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to impending doom, according to the organization's press release.

³ Kwaak, Y. H. (2008). Design Principles for a Buddhist City: Planning for Lumbini. *Journal of Urban Spirituality and Ethics*, 3 (2), 112 – 129.

⁴ UNESCO. (2013). Culture: Urban Future. Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

The new time is one second ahead of last year's clock - which was set at 90 seconds to midnight - and experts said that multiple world issues factored into the new Doomsday time.



Doomsday Clock on Jan. 28, 2025

Pic.2⁵

III. WHERE SHOULD WE GO?

Material mattered, but now, the mind matters more than ever before

To break free from a world where “Material matters” dominate, we must strive to create a society that prioritizes “Mind matters.” The mind matters even before the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha. Human greed is insatiable, constantly driving individuals toward material pursuits without end. Therefore, to bring about a shift toward a world that values the mind over material wealth, a spiritual solution is essential.⁶

In this crucial transformation, we Buddhists must take the lead, as the teachings of Buddhism - particularly the principle of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (Dunwu-Jianxiu)-serve as a guiding light, helping individuals and society move toward a more compassionate, mindful, and harmonious existence.

Buddhism is more relevant and important than ever in today's world, and Lumbini Peace and Harmony District stands as the foremost model for the

⁵ Kaza, S. (2000). The Greening of Buddhism: Promise and Perils. In Tucker, M. E., and Williams, D. R. (Eds.), *Ecology and Religion in History* (pp. 55 – 70).

⁶ Berkwitz, S. C. (2006). *Buddhist History in the Vernacular: The Power of the Past in Late Medieval Sri Lanka*. Leiden: Brill.

path humanity must follow.⁷

IV. WHAT SHOULD WE DO? LUMBINI PEACE AND HARMONY DISTRICT

The legend of Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni Buddha began in Lumbini nearly 2,600 years ago, and his teaching is embraced by millions of Buddhists around the world. However, the birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha has been ignored for too long.

At this juncture of human history, when our world is in constant crisis, some visionaries begin to see that this obscured Lumbini - the birthplace of Buddha - can evolve to become a living and learning spiritual place, a fountain of world peace that will bring hope to this troubled world.

4.1. Project background and necessity

4.1.1. December 1998

Nepal's Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha and is one of the four sacred places of Buddhism. Lumbini is a sacred pilgrimage site for many Buddhists and peace lovers around the world and was declared '*the fountain of world peace*' at the first World Buddhist Summit in 1998.

4.1.2. November 1999 ~ 2004

Accordingly, through UNDP research from 1999 to 2000, Dr. KWAAK YoungHoon of Harvard Divinity School and Dr. Abelardo Brenes, Vice Rector of the World Peace University in Costa Rica made the report recommending Lumbini as the 'World Peace City', and their report was unanimously adopted at the 2nd World Buddhist Summit in 2004.

4.1.3. March 2012 ~ 2015

As part of Korea KOICA's ODA project from 2012 to 2014, Dr. KWAAK YoungHoon's research and design team (KWAAK E. S. P. R. I.) established the 'Lumbini World Peace City Master Vision Plan', which was adopted as a Government Plan at the Nepal Government Ministerial meeting in 2015 and decided to be promoted by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil.

4.2. Project purpose and design principles

4.2.1. Preserve and protect the historical, cultural, religious and ecological treasures of the area

- "No house should be involuntarily removed".
- "No archaeological sites should be disturbed".
- "No more polluting industrialization and urban sprawl".
- "No more deforestation and Restore the forest".

4.2.2. Embody the principles in practical application of the three treasures of Buddhism

⁷ Tucker, M. E. (2003). *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase*. Chicago: Open Court.

- “Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are to be spatially layed out”.
- “Lotus should be symbolized”.
- “8 Truth Paths should be introduced”.

4.2.3. Provide a living and learning environmental model conducive to self enlightenment and to the formation of more harmonious Global Village Civilization

- “Upasaka/ Upasika, concept for world citizens should be introduced”.
- “Provide additional new rural villages for new incoming farmers”.

4.2.4. Alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life in rural villages in the greater Lumbini area.

- “Peace cannot come amidst hunger and disease”.
- “Economic and ecological sustainability should be ensured”.
- “At every level of implementation, local residents must be involved and human development must be considered”.

4.3. Planning philosophy and physical layout design

KWAAK E. S. P. R. I. has been practicing for the last 45 years with the six environmental viewpoints with which there were some questions that have arisen for the city environmental design.

Six environmental viewpoints

- Spatio-physical environment
- Econo-social environment
- Eco-natural environment
- Historical and cultural environment
- Aesthetic-visual environment
- Mind-spiritual environment

4.4. Project implementation and procedure

4.5. Plan concept

Lumbini Peace and Harmony District is organized into 8 separate Sanghas with low density, the original nature recovered Dharma Zone, Buddha Zone with Sacred Garden and 108 small village-like Upasakas/Upasikasand New Rural Villages spread out in the 24km × 24km rural and agricultural land.

Zone	Function	Properties and directives for develop- ment
Buddha	Preservation & Restricted Zone	• Sacred Garden, absolute preservation
Dharma		• Place for meditation and spiritual training • Minimum development. Natural land- scape and forests

Sangha	Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living for Peace-loving World Citizens and Buddhist Pilgrims and Residents. • Residential Community
New Rural Village		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmony of urban and rural spaces. • Linkage between center and periphery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Villages and Pedestrian-green axis connection
<i>Upasaka / Upasi-ka</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92 Urban Civilization Units for Peace-loving World Citizens and Buddhist Pilgrims from all over the world

4.6. Cost of construction project

- The total cost of the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District construction project, which includes land development of Sangha Zone, New Rural-Village Zone, Upasaka/Upasika Zone, construction of Urban Arterial Road Network, and Regional Water Supply Facilities, is approximately **1.8 billion USD**.
- Among these, the first leading project is the construction of the ‘Sangha Ring Pilgrimage Road’ of the Lumbini Sacred Garden (15m Width, 15km Length) using the Sangha Middle Ring Road planned route, with a cost of approximately **13.5 million USD**.

V. CONCLUSION

The 21st century faces an ultimatum from our planet regarding its future well-being of humanity. The previously mentioned severely over lagged climate, technological, and nuclear crises have led to growing social uncertainty, the spread of extreme ideologies and political populism, the deterioration of psychological and mental health, the collapse of social trust, and the weakening of collective responses and cooperation.

As a solution to the previously mentioned global crises and challenges, I propose the immediate development of the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District. Envisioned as one of the pioneering spiritual communities dedicated to alleviating human suffering, development of the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District must not be delayed any longer!

For this purpose, the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District is designed in the shape of a lotus flower, a symbol of Buddhism, and consists of five major areas, including the Three Treasures Zones - Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha - as well as the 108 Upasaka/ Upasika Global Citizens Villages. By embracing the philosophical meaning of coexistence through life and learning, we aim to create a ‘World Peace City’ Vishwa Shanti Nagrama where Buddhists, pilgrims, and global citizens can come together to live and to learn how to live together.

A quarter has passed since the 1st World Buddhist Summit in Lumbini in 1998 when Lumbini was declared as the “Fountain of World Peace”.

My heart goes out to the residents of Lumbini, who have long been waiting for relief from poverty since the UN made its promise in the 1970s. My thoughts also extend to Nepal itself, a country with clear potential to thrive as a place where the values and principles of peace, sustainable human development, and new citizenocracy can be experimented and truly flourish.

But more than anything, I hope to see the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District realized as soon as possible so that all peace-loving people around the world can witness it serving as a beacon for many nations and religions in this crisis-ridden world.

There is no doubt in our minds that the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District is the most significant world peace project for humanity in the 21st century. There is no greater peace project than seeing the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District as the “Fountain of World Peace”.

Therefore, I strongly urge all the Buddhists, Buddhist leaders, and the Government of Nepal as follows:

To the Government of Nepal

- to endorse this Master Vision Plan Report by Government of Nepal for ODA Countries, global Buddhist organizations and developer to participate the implementation;
- to declare a Moratorium on land transactions & new constructions in Lumbini World Peace City;
- to establish Lumbini World Peace City Commission to enforce the Moratorium and carry out the development as planned by KWAAK E.S.P.R.I.;
- to start and implement the perimeter roads and irrigation network of Sangha Zone to avoid unplanned development and urban sprawl;
- to procure aid funding from ODA Countries and global Buddhist organizations to finance the development and sustain on-going operations of Lumbini P.H.D. or to recruit the developer to implement the project area with land pulling method and/or land (housing site) development project;
- To receive donations from peace-loving global foundations.

To the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District Commission (to be organized in the near future)

Lumbini Peace and Harmony District Committee of 88 to be established and Lumbini Peace and Harmony District Global Committee as octagon with the 8 councils with 11 members each (88 members):

- Infrastructure Council
- Capacity Building Council
- Quality of Daily Life Council
- Job Opportunity Council
- Organic Agriculture Council
- Eco-Culture Council
- Fund Raising Council

- Transparency Management Council

We can no longer postpone. The world is currently doomed according to the report of the doomsday clock.

Due to various political situations in Nepal, the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District has not yet been implemented. On this 2025 United Nations Day of Vesak, I hope that we, all of the Buddhists, decide to collaborate to raise funds and unite wholeheartedly to support the realization of the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District

Now is the time for Buddhists to seize this opportunity to implement the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District and to take action for world peace!

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Prof. Dr. Cho Cho Aung is a distinguished professor, researcher, and expert in Myanmar language and Buddhist education, with over three decades of academic experience. Born on February 15, 1960, in Yangon, Myanmar, she holds a Ph.D. in Myanmar Language from Yangon University (2009), specializing in Myanmar Language for Foreigners. Her career includes teaching positions at Yangon University, Mawlamyine University, and the University of Foreign Languages, Yangon, before becoming Head of the Myanmar Language Department at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) and Pandapwinttaung Buddhist Missionary University. She has developed textbooks on Myanmar language and culture for both local and international students, and her research explores Buddhist education, mindfulness, and linguistic studies. Dr. Aung has presented papers at prestigious Buddhist conferences worldwide, including the United Nations Days of Vesak and forums in China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. She is also a fellow of the Center for Women, Faith & Leadership (CWFL, USA) and an active coordinator for the World Alliance for Buddhist Culture Exchange in Hong Kong. With expertise in language education, Buddhist teachings, and global cultural exchange, she continues to shape Myanmar's academic and Buddhist educational landscape.

Mr. Ashok Nanda Bajracharya (PhD Scholar) is a renowned scholar and academic with a strong background in Buddhist philosophy and

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Dr. Biman Chandra Barua was born in the village of West Andher Manik, under Raozan Upazilla in the district of Chittagong. He is a professor the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, and director, of the Centre for Buddhist heritage and culture. University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He served as the chairman of the Pali and Buddhist Studies department. Dr. Barua took Hon's and Master's degree in Pāli and Buddhist Studies from the University of Dhaka of Bangladesh in 1993 & 1994 respectively. He also obtained Ph.D. degree from same University of Bangladesh. He has published many research articles in many noted journals of different academic journals and institutions in home and abroad. He took part in many positions in the University of Dhaka; like Academic Counselor, Senate Member and Executive Member of Dhaka University Teachers Associations, House tutor of Jagannath Hall-DU, Executive member of Sports Board (DU). He was involved in so many socio-religious and cultural organizations in Bangladesh.

Dr. Barua is a good organizer. Under his unique and qualitative leadership (asaconvener) 1st International Seminar on Buddhism Civilization and Culture 2018 was held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka which was organized by the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Now, He is a Vice-President of Bangladesh Buddhist Cultural Association, an Executive Member of Bangladesh Boudha Kristy Prachar Sangha and an Executive Member of Sampritee Bangladesh.

Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Lien Bon graduated with a BA in English Literature in 2010 from Ba Ria - Vung Tau University. She graduated with a MA (Buddhism, Philosophy and Comparative Religion) from Nālandā University in June 2024. She has been contributing articles to Torch Lotus Magazine since 2024.

Dr. Indra Chandramali is a scholar and lecturer specializing in Buddhist Studies, Āyurveda, Counseling and Psychotherapy. Currently serving as a lecturer of the Faculty of Buddhist Studies and course coordinator of Master Degree Programme of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She conducts lectures for both undergraduates and post-graduate students. She obtained her first degree from the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka by following Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhist Culture and Pāli. She completed

the Master of Arts Degree in Buddhist Āyurvedic Counselling from University of Kelaniya. In 2021 she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies by the NIIBS for his research study, entitled “A Critical Study of the Buddhist Contribution to the Development of Āyurveda in National and International Context.” She is also an Āyurvedic Doctor registered with the Āyurvedic Medical Council in Sri Lanka and she has over 20 years of experiences as an Āyurvedic doctor. She has prepared three Study Guides (Collection of Articles) for the use of post-graduate students. She has compiled several academic research papers to national and international conferences related to Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist social work, psychology etc.

Prof.Dr. Binodini Das (MA, M.Phil, PhD in History), daughter of Late Maheswar Das and Smt. Adaramani Das, is born in village Kantapada of Jagatsingpur District, Odisha, India, 1954. She has a brilliant academic career and research experiences. She served Odisha Education Service, Govt of Odisha, India for 35 years and retired as a Professor of History from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Under her guidance 10 and 19 scholars have been awarded PhD and M.Phil Degree respectively in History. Nearly, 100 research articles have been published in different refereed Journals, Proceedings and Books of national and international reputation. She has published two research books. She attended number of national and international seminars, conferences, conclaves and conventions. She was also a life member of different Learned Accredited Societies and delivered extra mural lectures on various topics on many occasions. Her research activity is based on Ancient Indian History, History of Jainism and Buddhism. Presently she is working as a Visiting Professor in the Postgraduate Department of History, Rama Devi University, Bhubaneswar in Odisha.

Bhikkhuni An Dieu (Le Thi Thanh Thuy) currently resides in Sri Lanka, where she is pursuing her doctoral studies. She was born on July 29, 1976, in Dong Nai Province, Vietnam. She is the abbot of Phi Lai Monastery in Duc Trong, Lam Dong Province. In 2001, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City. She then continued her Buddhist studies at the Buddhist College of Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, also in Ho Chi Minh City. After completing her studies there, she obtained her Buddhist Bachelor of Arts degree from the Vietnam Buddhist University at Van Hanh Monastery in Nguyen Kiem in 2009. In 2009, she went to China to pursue her Master of Arts degree at Central China Normal University in Wuhan, which she completed in 2013. In 2013, she further earned her Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Buddhist Philosophy in 2013 and successfully completed it in 2018. In 2019, she began her Doctoral Degree, which she is still pursuing.

Dr. Gurmet Dorje is a distinguished scholar of Buddhist Studies and an expert in Himalayan and Central Asian Buddhism. Born on September 22, 1974, he has dedicated his academic career to the study, teaching, and promotion of Buddhist traditions. He holds an M.A. in Buddhist Studies and a Ph.D. on Buddhist Monasteries of Zanskar: A Study in Art and Culture. With over 12

years of teaching experience, Dr. Dorje has served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Kashmir and Gautam Buddha University. His expertise spans Tibetan Buddhism, Ladakhi Buddhism, Pali-based Buddhism, and Vipassana meditation. He has mentored several M.Phil. and Ph.D. students, contributing significantly to Buddhist academic research. Currently, Dr. Dorje is the Director of the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Arunachal Pradesh, under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. He has actively participated in numerous international conferences, including the United Nations Day of Vesak and the Global Buddhist Congregation. His research interests include Buddhist philosophy, Himalayan Buddhist heritage, and the Silk Route's role in spreading Buddhism. Dr. Dorje is an acclaimed researcher with several published works and awards recognizing his contributions to Buddhist studies and cultural preservation.

Mr. Ermal Bega, Executive director, Albanian Center for Oriental Studies, Albania.

Mr. Sumedh Boudh Gadpaile is a dedicated team member at Enlighten World Group of Companies, where he contributes as a speaker and writer. With a strong focus on sharing knowledge and inspiring others, Sumedh has made a significant impact through his eloquent speeches and compelling written content. An advocate for continuous learning, Sumedh combines his academic achievements with his passion for communication to deliver insights that resonate with diverse audiences. His ability to simplify complex ideas and present them in an engaging manner has positioned him as a trusted voice within the organization and beyond. As a writer, Sumedh crafts thoughtful and impactful content, aiming to inform, educate, and inspire. His work reflects a deep understanding of his subjects and a commitment to fostering growth, both personally and professionally. As a speaker, he captivates audiences with his clarity, energy, and ability to address critical topics with a fresh perspective. Driven by a desire to make a positive difference, Sumedh leverages his skills to promote innovation, collaboration, and progress. His contributions to Enlighten World Group of Companies demonstrate his dedication to excellence and his belief in the power of ideas to drive change. Sumedh's work continues to inspire others to reach their fullest potential.

Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Gallele Sumanasiri Thero, a luminary in the field of Buddhist philosophy and Sinology, serves as the Vice Chancellor of the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. Born in 1956, he embarked on his monastic journey in 1969 and received higher ordination in 1976, subsequently pursuing a distinguished academic path. A scholar of Pali under the traditional monastic education system, he holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Buddhist Philosophy and a Master of Arts from the University of Kelaniya. Dr. Sumanasiri furthered his expertise with scholarships to the University of Delhi and Peking University, delving into Chinese religion and culture. His prolific contributions include seminal works such as **Buddhism and Confucianism** (1998) and **A Historical Survey of Chinese Buddhism** (1999), alongside research on universal peace, economic applications of Buddhism, and monastic

management. As a thought leader and author of cross-cultural studies, Dr. Sumanasiri bridges ancient traditions with contemporary relevance, advancing global understanding of Buddhist philosophy's role in fostering peace, ethics, and cross-cultural dialogue. His influence resonates profoundly in academic, interfaith, and monastic circles worldwide.

Miss Hnin Pwint Han is a PhD student at Shan State Buddhist University Taunggyi. Her background is M.Phil in Buddhist Sociology and Anthropology SSBU; M.A. in International Relations Thammasat University Thailand; B.A. English - Institute of Education Myanmar; Hotel Management Diploma-ICS Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA. She acquired an outstanding award of Integrating Internet into the Classrooms certificate course- Lewis and Clark College, USA; a scholarship alumna of the WIIS summer symposium class 2000 – Women in International Security, Washington D.C.USA. As an academican among the several research papers, Buddhism related papers encompasses Sustainable Myanmar Society from Global Education and Buddhist Ethics Aspects 2019 Vesak Day Conference in Vietnam by UNDV 2019; New Paradigm in the Covid 19 Pandemic Based on Buddhism 2020 Mahamakut Buddhist University Thailand; Revisiting Indigenous Political Theory and Thoughts of Myanmar in Responding the Crisis 2021 Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand; and Skills to Settle Conflict Resolution in Peace Keeping 2023 University of Global University Mandalay, Myanmar. Her research interests cover cross-disciplinary approach bridging the Buddhist principles to contemporary issues in adapting revival of Buddhist value, security, prosperity and well-being, ethical dilemma in modern days. Her professions include a fulltime lecturer in Bangkok University and Bangkok University International College; a part time broadcaster of Radio Thailand World Service in Thai Government; a visiting lecturer at the National Management Degree College Myanmar; KAPLAN International University Yangon Branch. Her teaching in various subjects is based on active learning, creative learning and project-based learning.

Mrs. Tran Thi Hieu, with the Dharma name Nhu Lien, has dedicated herself to both secular and Buddhist education. She holds a bachelor's degree in French Language and Law from Can Tho University. Furthering her spiritual journey, she studied at the Vinh Long Buddhist Intermediate School and Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City. In 2024, she completed her Master's degree in Buddhist Studies at Nālandā University in India, demonstrating her commitment to deepening her understanding of Buddhist philosophy and teachings.

Prof. Dr. Jinabodhi Bhikkhu (Mahathero) is a renowned scholar and dedicated monk with profound contributions to Buddhist Studies, education, and social reform. Currently serving as a professor in the Department of Oriental Languages (Pali & Sanskrit) at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, he is also the Founder President of the Buddhist Research and Publication Centre-Bangladesh. His academic journey began with a BA and MA in Pali from the University of Chittagong, where he graduated at the top of his class, followed by a PhD from Calcutta University in 1995, specializing

in a critical study of 'Patisambhidamagga'. Fluent in Bengali, English, Pali, and Hindi, his linguistic mastery amplifies his scholarly reach.

Most. Ven. Bhante Jinalankara is the abbot and president of the Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre in Wellington, New Zealand. He is a senior Buddhist monk, has been a monk for forty years in the Theravada forest monastic tradition from Sri Lanka, and is currently residing in New Zealand. He has a good knowledge of the Pali language and English languages. He has a deep understanding of Pali Tripitaka. He conducts meditation retreats in Sinhala and English for the broad community locally and internationally. He is a well-known Buddhist monk in New Zealand.

Ven. Karunananda Bhikkhu (Ruapn Barua) B. A (Honors) & Master's Degree from National University of Bangladesh and Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidharma full course completed from Pali and Sanskrit Education Board, Dhaka, Former assistant teacher in Asian Residential school & College, Now is Chief Abbot of Atisha Dipankar Memorial Complex & Relics Stupa (The Birth Place of Great Buddhist Scholar Atisha Dipankara srijanan), Curator of Atisha Dipankar Library & Cum Museum, Bangladesh, Archeological Secretary, Bangladesh Bouddha Bhikkhu Mahasavha (Supreme Sangha Council of Bangladesh), Chief Advisor, Mogalmari Buddhist Association, West Bengal, India, Vice-President of Bangladesh Buddha Kristi Prachar Sangha-Youth and of the some of paper & Article published wby conference of Sri Lanka - 2016 & International Buddhist Forum, Russia, 2024 WFB Conference, Thailand - 2013, and participant of the international Buddhist Conference in International (Peace and Wisdom Conference), Sitagu International Buddhist University, Mandalay, Myanmar – 2016, WBY Buddhist Conference, Kandy, Srilanka-2017, International Tripitaka Ceremony, Bodhgaya, India. 5th times. One Books published Phylosophy & life of Buddhist Great Scholar Atisha Dipankar), Bengali, most of the Buddhists articles published in Bangladesh. Former Chief editor of Magazine of Buddhist Association of Chittagong College, Chattogram, Bangladesh.

Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Lien Kinh (Nguyen Trinh Thi Ai Lien) was born in 1985 in Quang Ngai. SC. studied and received a BA degree at the University of Paris 7, Denis Diderot, Paris, France and a BA & MA in Buddhist Studies at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar, and is currently a PhD candidate at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar, and is also pursuing a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. With her fluency in English and French, TKN. Thich Nu Lien Kinh has demonstrated outstanding dedication through her research and works, focusing on the dissemination and counseling of Buddhist teachings. Her main research interests include Theravada Buddhism and the application of Buddhist teachings to psychological counseling and human development.

Ven. Kudakathnoruwe Vineetha is a senior lecturer in Buddhist Philosophy attached to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. He is a First Class honours graduate in Buddhist Philosophy and he awarded a

Masters of Philosophy (Mphil) Degree for his intensive research on Buddhist perspective on Disaster Prevention. His research interest in Buddhist studies derives from his longtime experience in teaching and research in Buddhist studies. The current research interest of Ven. Vineetha is on Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism and engaged Buddhism. He already has several publications in refereed journals, edited volumes and conference proceedings. His career has an extensive reach and diversity in terms of teaching, research, consultation and administration.

Dr. Alfred Kumaraseri, Ambassador, Founder President - Live Buddhism, Sri Lanka.

Most Ven. Asst. Prof. Dr. Polgolle Kusaladhamma serves as an Assistant Professor and the Head of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA). He is also a member of the Higher Education Committee at SIBA Campus. With over eight years of experience as a Senior Lecturer at this esteemed institution, he has made significant contributions to the field. He completed his PhD in Buddhist Studies at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, from 2014 to 2017. His specialized research areas include the Body-Mind Relationship Based on Buddhist Meditation and Modern Neuroscience, Mindfulness Practices, Engaged Buddhism, Buddhism and Science, Buddhism and Economics, and Buddhist Social and Political Philosophy. His academic journey began in 2004 at the University of Peradeniya, followed by the completion of his MA in Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya in 2009. He then pursued an MPhil at the University of Peradeniya in 2013, alongside a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the Open University of Sri Lanka in the same year. Additionally, Dr. Kusaladhamma taught at Dipankara Dharmayatana Pirivena in Galle and Siri Dhammaratana Pirivena in Kandy for over 20 years, starting in 2003. He has been honored with the nomination of Saṅgha Nayaka (Chief Prelate) for the Dumbara region by the Mahanayaka Thera of the Sambuddhasasanodaya Saṅgha Committee. Driven by a deep commitment to promoting Buddhism, he founded and currently serves as the principal of the SIBA English Medium Dhamma School and Sri Sucharitha Dhamma School in Pallakale, Kandy. In addition, he has contributed to the establishment of a new Buddhist monastery in Pallakale, where he serves as the Chief Abbot.

Dr. YoungHoon Kwaak is a distinguished academic, urban planner, and global policy advisor, currently serving as the Founder President of the World Citizens Organization (WCO). With an extensive career in urban design, environmental policy, and international development, he has played a pivotal role in major global initiatives, including the Silk Road Economic Belt Cities Cooperation and Development Forum and the United Nations Association of Korea. Dr. Kwaak holds a Ph.D. in Educational Philosophy from Dongguk University, an M.A. in Education from Harvard University, and degrees in Architecture and Planning from M.I.T. He has also completed advanced studies at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and M.I.T.'s

Advanced Environmental Studies Program. Throughout his career, Dr. Kwaak has held esteemed teaching positions, including as a Distinguished Professor at Jeju National University and Lumbini Buddhist University, as well as a Senior Fellow at Harvard Divinity School. His contributions extend beyond academia, having been a policy advisor for KOICA, a master planner for Expo events, and a consultant for Olympic and urban development projects.

Ven. Bhik. Dr. Hang Lien - lecturer at VBU in HCM City (from 2007 to present). Graduated from VBU (VBHS Course II - Campus II, HCMC) - 1992 and served in VBRI from 1992 - 1994. Completed degrees in India from 1994-2007: Master of Bst Studies at Delhi Uni. - Delhi, India (MA of Bst. 1994 - 1996); PhD of Bst Studies at Delhi Uni. with research topic: Egalitarianism in Primitive Buddhist Thought references to Tipitaka. (PhD of Bst. 1996 - 2001); PhD in Philosophy Dept. at Punjab University - Chandigarh, with a research topic in psychological philosophy: Human nature and the transformation of consciousness according to the Pali Canon. (PhD of Phi. 2001 - 2006). Ven. Bhik. Dr. Hang Lien has been the Abbot of Phap Son Monastery, Nam Cat Tien Commune, Tan Phu District, Dong Nai Province from 2007 to present and also specializes in guiding Vipassana meditation.

Mrs. Anula Maharjan, a seasoned media professional and cultural communicator, currently serves as a News Coordinator and Reporter at News24 Television, Nepal. With a Master's degree in Humanities and Social Sciences from Tribhuvan University, she has devoted over a decade to interdisciplinary work spanning broadcasting, education, and Buddhist cultural studies. Her impactful career began at Radio Maitri, where she spent six years producing and presenting programs focused on Buddhist teachings and contemporary spiritual life. Transitioning into television, she worked for seven years with News24 Television, reporting extensively on Nepal's cultural heritage, festivals, religious practices, and socio-political narratives, thereby shaping public understanding through mass media. Beyond journalism, Mrs. Maharjan has served as an Educational Consultant at Trust International Education, guiding students in cross-cultural academic environments. Her unique insight is deeply informed by over 14 years of monastic life as a Buddhist nun, merging spiritual wisdom with academic rigor. While her contributions are not published in scholarly journals, her extensive media coverage and cultural storytelling have significantly influenced public discourse on Nepalese tradition and identity.

Ven. Dr. Buddha Priya Mahathero, a distinguished scholar, meditation master, and philanthropist, serves as the Founder General Secretary of the Siddharth United Social Welfare Mission (SUSWM) and holds leadership roles in multiple international organizations, including the Bharatiya Sangharaja Bhikkhu Mahasabha and the International Peace Foundation, Spain. Dr. Mahathero has been widely recognized for his contributions to global peace and education, receiving numerous accolades such as the Atish Dipankar Peace Gold Award (Bangladesh), the Ambassador for Peace Award (Norway), and recognition from the United Nations in Geneva and New York. As an author of several books and articles, his works span topics of Buddhism, meditation,

and social welfare, significantly influencing his field. His initiatives include founding schools such as the Maitri Karuna Jnanapith Higher Educational Institute and providing support for orphaned and underprivileged children in India and abroad.

Ven. Mahinda was ordained in 1976 under the tutelage of Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Thera. He has practised meditation in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand, and undertook systematic cultivation of Samatha Vipassanā under the guidance of the Venerable Amatha Gavesi in 1992. He has taught mettā and mindfulness in over 20 countries for more than 50 years. He is the spiritual advisor to the Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia and several other organisations in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.

Mrs. Laxmikanta Sunil Mane is a Gold Medalist in Masters in Pāli (2022–2024) from the Department of Pāli & Buddhist Studies, Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) and is currently pursuing a Masters in Buddhist Studies. She has qualified UGC-NET (2024) with an All India Rank of 02. She is actively engaged in academic research, and has participated in International Students' Conferences organized by her department for the past five years and has presented a research paper at the National Oriental Conference, Udupi. She is actively engaged in Dhamma work that includes coordinating with schools for implementing the Anāpāna Sati Meditation Program for students, delivering Dhamma talks at Buddha Vihāras, and contributing as a Research Team Member for a project at the Vipassanā Research Institute (VRI) studying the effects of Anāpāna meditation on students. In addition to Buddhist studies, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Cosmetic Technology and a Master's degree in Media & Communication Studies, bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to his academic and research endeavors.

Ven. Prof. Moragollagama Uparathana is a respected Buddhist monk, scholar, and educator hailing from Sri Lanka. He has contributed extensively to the study and dissemination of Buddhist teachings, both in Sri Lanka and internationally. Ven. Uparathana's work primarily focuses on the promotion of Pali Studies. Ven. Uparathana was born in Sri Lanka, where he initially trained in the Buddhist monastic tradition. He is not only a monk but also a distinguished academic. He holds numerous academic degrees and has contributed significantly to the academic study of Buddhism. He earned his first degree specialized in Pali in 2000. He has completed two master degrees in 2003 and 2004 and another Master degree in the University of Hong Kong in the academic year 2003-2004. He has completed Master of Philosophy degree in 2009 at Kelaniya University and Doctor of Philosophy degree in 2011 in the Wuhan University, China. Over the years, he has authored numerous scholarly articles, books, and papers on these subjects.

Ven. Prof. Uparathana currently, working as the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in BPU. He is known for his ability to bridge the gap between traditional monastic education and contemporary academic approaches to Buddhist studies.

Dr. Naresh Shakya is founder Principal of Aksheswar Traditional

Buddhist Art College. He received his Ph. D. degree from Lumbini Buddhist University in the year 2017 and Masters in Buddhist Studies from Tribhuvan University in 2008. He is actively involved in teaching Buddhist Art courses at the Aksheswar Traditional Buddhist Art College and Lotus Academic College including Masters in Applied Buddhism and Buddhist Art history. He is also actively involved in research on Newāḥ Buddhist paintings influences in Nepalese and Indian Himalayan regions, Tibet, China, Mongolia and Central Asia. He is from traditional Newāḥ artists' family involved in Buddhist art and artifacts business.

Ven. Dr. Neminda, a distinguished academic and meditation master, serves as a permanent lecturer at the International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC), Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand. His scholarly contributions span the intersection of Buddhist Studies and mindfulness, with a focus on themes such as conflict resolution, ethical governance, and meditation therapy. Dr. Neminda has authored over 20 academic articles and books, including significant works such as "Metta Suttas in the Tipitaka" and "Buddhism in Pakistan." His research delves into economic ethics, loving-kindness as a conflict resolution tool, and mindfulness practices for the 21st century. Beyond his academic rigor, he has profoundly influenced the field of Buddhist education and international collaboration through his lectures, meditation programs, and co-supervision of theses across Asia. Dr. Neminda's holistic approach to integrating Buddhist wisdom into modern challenges cements his reputation as a leading figure in Buddhist academia and practice.

Bhikkhuni An Ngoc (Tran Thi Cam Van) graduated from Vietnam Buddhist Academy in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts. She took one year to study Buddhism in Thailand because of the interesting rich culture of this country. She was not just attending school but also getting involved in it. She had served on the debate team and also participated in some charity activities in Thailand. Currently, she is a research student with an M.Phil. at the Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies (NIIBS), Sri Lanka, under Prof Asanga Tilakaratne. 2024 - Paper at the International Conference of Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Research (ICPIR2024), promoted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies of Sri Lanka Buddhist and Pali University. Her academic work has shown her commitment to creating a convergence of Buddhist philosophy with modern interdisciplinary studies. On top of that, she is a teacher at Dharma school as well, actively disseminating Buddhist teachings and moral education. The role of researcher and teacher as her dual identity brings out her commitment to academics as well as translating Buddhist wisdom into practice.

Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Nhu Phuoc, (Nguyen Thi Hoa) born 1980, dedicated Buddhist scholar and teacher specializing in Vipassanā meditation. She entered monastic life at the age of eighteen and was fully ordained as a Bhikkhuni in 2006 at Phap Vo Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh City. She pursued higher education in both Buddhist studies and English, earning a Bachelor of Arts in English Linguistics and Literature from Vietnam National University, Ho Chi

Minh City, in 2010, and a Bachelor of Arts in Buddhist Studies from Vietnam Buddhist University in 2011. Her academic journey continued in Myanmar, where she completed a Diploma in Buddha Dhamma (2012–2013), a Bachelor of Arts in Buddha Dhamma (2015–2016), and a Master of Arts in Buddha Dhamma (2021–2022) at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon. Currently, she is a first-year Ph.D. student in Vipassanā Meditation at ITBMU. Bhikkhuni Nhu Phuoc serves as the abbot of An Ky Pagoda in Quang Ngai Province, where she teaches the Dhamma and encourages meditation practice, integrating both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. Through her scholarly and monastic work, she continues to inspire and guide practitioners on the path of mindfulness and wisdom.

M.Phil. PhD. Scholar Thich Nu Vien Quang (TD Pham Thi Thanh Hang), born 1983 in Binh Dinh Province. From 2019-2020 completed Diploma and Master Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka. From 202-2023 Completed M.Phil and Master's in Buddhist Counselling at the University of Kelaniya. From 2024 to now: Researcher at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Ashin Revata was born 1980, in Zee Gone Village, Sagaing Division, upper Myanmar. He was novitiated as a novice at the age of 8 and received higher ordination in 2000. He has a strong educational background, having earned a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies in January, 2025. Throughout his academic journey, he achieved significant milestones, including a gold medal in his B.A. (B.Dh). He is a Lecturer in the Vipassanā Department of Paṭipatti Faculty, at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon. Dr. Revata also teaches Samatha meditation subject at the Mahāvihāra Dhamma-Vinaya University in Hmaw-bi town, Myanmar. He is also the founder of the Ratanālaṅkāra Sāsanavimāna Dhamma Centre (RSDC), where he teaches young monks, nuns, and laypeople, focusing on English Four Skills and Buddhism in English so that they can join the Buddhist universities home and abroad. A dedicated missionary, he delivers teachings on the Dhamma both locally and internationally, promoting the Buddha's Dispensation and fostering spiritual growth.

Ven. Revata is a Buddhist monk from Myanmar who received his higher ordination in 2007. He pursued his Buddhist education at the State Pariyatti Sasana University, Kabar Aye, Yangon, where he obtained both a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree by 2016. In 2017, he traveled to Sri Lanka to further his studies in Buddhism. He completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies at the Nagananda International Institute of Buddhist Studies and subsequently earned an M.A. degree from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (PGIPBS), University of Kelaniya.

In 2019, Venerable Revata commenced his Ph.D. research at PGIPBS, focusing on a critical study of concentration (*samādhi*) in Theravāda exegetical literature. He has since submitted his doctoral thesis for external examination and is currently awaiting his viva voce. In recognition of his academic expertise,

PGIPBS appointed him as a visiting lecturer for the Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies in 2024. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Venerable Revata has actively participated in academic research. He recently submitted a conference paper to the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Alongside his ongoing academic engagements, he is currently pursuing an M.A. in Counseling at PGIPBS, further broadening his scholarly and practical contributions to Buddhist studies.

Ven. Rideegama Wanarathana, with a commitment to both teaching and research, has made significant contributions to the fields of Buddhist Philosophy and Social Work. He obtained his initial degree in Buddhist Philosophy from the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. He pursued three Master's degrees, two in Buddhist Philosophy from the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and the University of Kelaniya respectively, and another in Social Work from the National Institute of Social Work Development. Currently, he is pursuing his Doctoral Degree in Social Work from the University of Cyberjaya in Malaysia.

Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh is an esteemed scholar and Assistant Professor in the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours), a Master of Arts, and a Ph.D. in Pali, all from BHU, reflecting his deep academic commitment to Buddhist and Pali studies. His research interests focus on Theravāda Buddhism, Abhidhamma philosophy, and Buddhist psychology, particularly analyzing classical Pali texts such as Kathāvatthu. He has led a significant research project funded under BHU's IoE Seed Grant, critically examining the three schools of Theravāda Buddhist thought: the Puggalavādins, Sabbatthivādins, and Lokuttaravādins. Dr. Singh has presented at international conferences, including the First International Conference in Buddhist Studies in Colombo, and has published extensively in renowned journals such as *The Maha Bodhi* and *Dharmadoot*. In addition to teaching and research, he serves as a warden at Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Hostel, BHU, and actively supervises Ph.D. scholars on diverse topics in Buddhist philosophy and ethics. As a life member of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, he continues to contribute to Buddhist studies, promoting academic discourse and scholarly engagement in the field.

Dr. Shravan Kumar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, where he specializes in Ancient Indian History, Indian and Chinese Buddhism, Jainism, and Buddhist ethics. With a strong academic foundation, he holds a Ph.D. (2022), M.Phil. (2018), and M.A. (2016) from the University of Delhi, complemented by a B.Sc. (Hons, 2009) and diplomas in Pali (2020) and the Nalanda Course from Tibet House, New Delhi (2021). His interdisciplinary expertise bridges history, philosophy, and cultural studies, reflecting his passion for exploring ancient societies, pilgrimage traditions, and Buddhist thought. His teaching portfolio spans diverse courses such as History of India (up to 750 CE), Ancient Societies, Yoga: Philosophy and Practice, and Delhi Through the

Ages, fostering a dynamic classroom environment. A prolific researcher, Dr. Kumar has authored multiple international journal papers on Buddhist ethics, societal relevance, and modern applications of Buddha's teachings. Recognized for his scholarly rigor, he has been awarded the UGC-NET and ICHR-JRF (2021). Committed to academia and cultural preservation, Dr. Kumar recently represented his institution at the 19th United Day of Vesak Celebration (2024). His blend of administrative acumen, pedagogical innovation, and research excellence underscores his dedication to advancing historical scholarship and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue.

Mr. Tabona Shoko is Professor in African Traditional Religion and Phenomenology of Religion in the Department of Philosophy Religion and Ethics at University of Zimbabwe. He is Member of Research Board, Member of Research and Innovation Committee and Research Group Leader in the Dept & Faculty. He is founding Director AAIRTA Lab and Editor-in Chief of Journal of Association of African Indigenous Religion, Theology & Arts. He had several Research Fellowships at Universities abroad namely Vanderbilt, USA (2021-22); Florence, Italy (2017); Bamberg, Germany, (2016); Soderton, Sweden (2008); ASC, Netherlands (2006); Edinburgh, UK (2004, 1994); Utrecht, Netherlands (2002, 1988-9), Botswana (1998-99, 1997). His areas of research interest include Religion & Climate Change; Environment; Peace and Conflict Resolution; Human Rights; Religion & Pandemics; Gender & Sexuality, Indigenous Knowledge Systems. He has published numerous books, book chapters and articles. His relevant publications include, 'African Traditional Religion and Climate Change: Perspectives from Zimbabwe', in E. Chitando, E. Conradie, S. Kilonzo, *African Perspectives on Religion and Climate Change*, London: Tylor and Francis, 2022, 22-34.

Ven. Dr. Bhikkhu Sopaka is a traditional Burmese Buddhist monk dedicated to Buddhist education and counseling. His spiritual journey began at the age of six when he entered a traditional Buddhist temple as a novice, immersing himself in Buddhist studies and practices. At twenty-five, he earned the Sāsanaadhaja Dhammācariya certification from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Indo-Āryan Studies from Mandalay Buddhist University. Continuing his academic pursuit, he completed a Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in 2016 and 2017. He later pursued an M.Phil. in 2017 and ultimately earned his Ph.D. from the same university in 2023. Expanding his academic scope, he also pursued a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Counseling at Aquinas University College and is currently studying for a Master's in Buddhist Counseling at the University of Hong Kong. His teaching experience includes serving as a lecturer at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, a visiting lecturer at Dhamma Duta Chekinda University in Yangon, and a teacher at Chan Thar Gyi Temple in Mandalay. With a strong commitment to Buddhist education and counseling, Ven. Bhikkhu Sopaka continues to share his knowledge and skills, promoting Buddhist wisdom and mental well-being.

Rev. Subinoy Bhikku Ph.D., is a citizen of Bangladesh, and he was born from a traditional Buddhist family in Betagi, Rangunia, Chittagong. He has ordained as Novice on 14th March 1997 in Dharmarajika Buddhist Monastery, Dhaka, Bangladesh. And he has high ordination in Sri-Lanka 3rd of July 1006 at Sri-Dherananda Seema Malakaya Jayasekaramaya, Kuppiyawatta, Colombo. He achieved Education, O/L, A/L, in Srilanka, and Bachelors Degree of Art (BA) in Buddhist Studies, Master Degree of Art (MA) in Buddhist Studies, and Doctor of Philosophy (Buddhist Studies), International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC), Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Ayutthaya, Thailand. He is a Guest Lecturer from 2016 to Present at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Ven. Medagoda Sumanatissa Thero is a Buddhist monk. He is a scholar who conducts studies and research based on Buddhist philosophy. He is currently working as Visiting lecturer at the Nagananda International Buddhist Institute - Sri Lanka. He is also studying for a Master of Philosophy degree in Buddhist Culture. He has completed a Master of Arts degree in Buddhist Studies and an Honorary Bachelor of Arts degree in Buddhist Philosophy and has also passed the Pracina Pandit General Degree Final Examination of Examinations of The Oriental Studies Society of Sri Lanka. He has presented many research papers related to the subjects of Buddhist Studies and Buddhist Philosophy and has also written a book titled Śramaṇa Sampradāya hā Bauddha Śramaṇa Sampradāya, author Publication. He is holds the position of chief incumbent of a Buddhist temple and the principal of the Dhamma school at that temple. He is an exemplary figure who brings Buddhism closer to the individual, builds a life of dharma and principles, and engages in selfless behavior by preaching the Dhamma to people, nurturing the field of Buddhist philosophy.

Rev. Raniswala Sunanda Thero was born in 1967 and ordained in 1982 in Sri Lanka and received his higher ordination in 1987. He obtained his B.A and MA degrees from University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka in 2014 and 2015. He earned Royal Pandit Degree in Pāli, Sanskrit and Sinhalese Languages in 2015. He completed his Second Master degree in Three Traditions in Buddhism Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna at International Buddhist College in Thailand. He has worked as a Government Teacher for Pāli and Sanskrit languages, Buddhism and Mass Communication in Sri Lanka more than 20 years. He earned his 3rd Master Degree in 2017 in Applied Psychology at HELP University in Malaysia and he has graduated in 2017 as a Certified Professional Coach by following the ICF-ACTP Certified Professional Coach Program conducted by Co-operate Coach Academy in Malaysia under HELP University. Rev. Sunanda resides at the Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and is researching for his Phd at University Malaya in Malaysia and has been conducting Pāli and Abhidhamma class online and physically. He has contributed with many research articles to various international conferences and composed several books.

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. Throughout his academic career, he has spent time studying and practicing Buddhist Meditation. Sunil has been offering meditation to professionals in the government departments in UK, including NHS and Home Office. At the Saddhatissa International Centre for Buddhist studies at Kingsbury affiliated to the Pali and Buddhist University of Sri Lanka, he taught a diploma course in Buddhism. In London Buddhist monasteries and other faith centres he has been lecturing and teaching meditation and mindfulness to help UK community in their mental health and general well-being.

Dr. Rev. Thalagampala Paduma Thero is a distinguished scholar-monk and Scientific Assistant (Research) at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya. Holding a Ph.D. in Pali and multiple advanced qualifications in Buddhist Studies and English, he serves as a visiting lecturer at several universities, including the University of Kelaniya, Sri Jayewardenepura University, and Dhamma University. He supervises MPhil and PhD research, serves as an external examiner and editor for postgraduate theses, and actively contributes to academic journals as a reviewer. He is a key member of academic committees at PGIPBS and coordinates research workshops for postgraduate students. In addition to his academic endeavors, Ven. Paduma Thero is the Chief Incumbent of Sri Dharmaloka Viharaya in Bandaragama, General Secretary of several Buddhist organizations, and a Justice of the Peace (All Island) in Sri Lanka. He is also affiliated with the Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA - Taiwan).

Master Nguyen Van Tien, born in 1971, studies history, culture, state management and policy, lecturer in the subject of Political Theory_Faculty of Management Sciences_Thu Dau Mot University. Teaching Philosophy, State Management of Ethnic and Religious subjects. The author has had 10 articles published in specialized journals, domestic and international conferences, and books published by many authors.

Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Diệu Trí (Dương Thị Kim Uyên), PhD student at Gautam Buddha University, India.

Most Ven. Dr. Thích Duc Tuan (Anh Vo), a senior monk of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha since 1975, currently resides at Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh City. Ordained by prominent masters, he has served as a chaplain since 1997 and spiritual counselor since 2010. With multilingual fluency (Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Japanese, English), he integrates Buddhist wisdom with sociology and psychology. In 2005, he earned a B.A. in Sociology from San Jose State University and later an M.A. in Counseling and Education (2010). He has provided spiritual care for terminal cancer patients across the San Francisco Bay Area and participated in international Buddhist events. In 2023, he completed his Doctorate in Psychology at California Southern University. He currently serves as a member of the Central Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Deputy Chair of the National Department of International Buddhist Affairs, and President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in America (2024).

Bhikkhu Kotte Upananda is a young Buddhist monk and research scholar, was born in 2001 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He completed his secondary education at Ananda College, Colombo, one of Sri Lanka's premier Buddhist schools. In 2018, he was ordained under the guidance of Ven. Bhante Katugastota Uparatana, the Sri Lankan Chief Monk of Judicial North America. He pursued higher studies at Va/Ku/Giri Pravacanālakāra Maha Pirivena and completed public speaking and English diploma courses at the American College of Higher Education. In 2022, Bhikkhu Kotte Upananda entered the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Palkelele, affiliated with the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, under the mentorship of Most Ven. Dr. Niyangoda Wijitasiri Maha Thera. In 2022, he received higher ordination at the Ancient Simāmalaka of Kandy, Malwatta Chapter. In 2024, he won first place in the Inter-University Dhamma Preaching Program organized by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. Fluent in English, he has earned several awards for his public speaking skills and has published four academic papers. His research focuses on Buddhist Philosophy, World Religions, Sociology, and Buddhist Psychology, reflecting his dedication to Dhamma dissemination.

Ven. Uttama is a dedicated Buddhist scholar and practitioner originally from Myanmar. He has pursued extensive academic training in Buddhist studies, beginning with a B.A. degree from the State Pariyatti Sasana University in Yangon. His passion for deepening his knowledge led him to Sri Lanka, where he earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies from Nāgānanda International Institute of Buddhist Studies, followed by an M.A. from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya.

Currently, Ven. Uttama is a Ph.D. candidate at the same institute, having already submitted his thesis and awaiting his viva voce examination. His academic journey reflects his dedication to the study and preservation of Buddhist teachings, as well as his commitment to scholarly discourse in the

field. Beyond academia, Ven. Uttama resides at the Makutarama Myanmar Temple in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continues to engage in Buddhist practice and contribute to the monastic and scholarly community. His work stands as a testament to his devotion to Buddhist studies and his role in fostering cross-cultural understanding between Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Dr. Mukesh Kumar Verma at present working as an Associate Professor and Head Department of Buddhist studies, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda. Prior to the present assignment he had served as an Assistant Professor in the School of Buddhist Philosophy, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Sanchi, Raisen, M.P. He was also a Research/Faculty Associate in the School of Buddhist Studies and Civilization, Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, U.P. and Guest Faculty in the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. Above mentioned university he has took teaching assignment at the level of Ph.D., M.Phil., Post-Graduation, Under-graduation and Certificate Course. He got a doctorate from the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi on the topic “Bhartiya Darśan ko Bauddha Mat ka Yogadān” under the Supervision of Prof. Bhikshu Satyapala and Dr. T. R. Sharma in 2006. He has completed M.Phil. and M.A. programme in the department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi. Dr. Verma has also qualified UGC-NET/JRF in Buddhist Studies in 1997. It is under his supervision 03 students have been awarded Ph.D., 07 have been awarded with M.Phil. degree and 02 are pursuing their doctoral research. He has contributed more than twenty research papers in National, International journals and chapters in the edited books.

Dr. E.G.I.P. Wickramasinghe is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Language Skills Development at the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, and pursued advanced studies in France, obtaining a Licence 3 in Modern Letters from Paul-Valéry University, Montpellier III. She further completed her Maîtrise and Master's 2 in Didactics of Languages at Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris III.

Dr. Wickramasinghe holds a Doctorate in the Didactics of Languages from Jean-Jaurès University, Toulouse II, specializing in innovative approaches to language education. She has authored numerous research papers and books, contributing significantly to the fields of applied linguistics and language teaching. Her research also focuses on teaching foreign languages within a Buddhist context, exploring how Buddhist principles such as mindfulness and ethical communication can be integrated into language education. This interdisciplinary approach aims to create meaningful and compassionate language learning experiences. Through her academic endeavors, Dr. Wickramasinghe continues to advance language education by bridging Buddhist philosophy with modern pedagogical practices, making her a key contributor to the field of applied linguistics and Buddhist studies.

Ven. Dr. Divulapelesse Wimalananda is a distinguished scholar and educator in Pāli and Buddhist Studies. He graduated with First Class Honours in Pāli from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka in 2007 and earned his

Ph.D. from the same institution in 2012. He also holds a Master's in Buddhist Studies from the University of Kelaniya and an Honorary Doctorate from the Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy, Australia. Dr. Wimalananda has been a senior lecturer at the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka since 2009, where he also serves as an advisor for the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Manuscripts. He collaborates with the Dhammachai Tipiṭaka Project in Thailand, contributing to the critical edition of the Pāli Tipitaka. He is a recognized expert in Pāli text editing, Sinhalese manuscripts, and training others to read and record Pāli texts in various scripts. Dr. Wimalananda has published over 35 academic articles and actively participates in national and international conferences. He is also a visiting lecturer at several universities in Sri Lanka, continuing his work to preserve and teach Buddhist scholarly traditions.

Mrs. Liu Xiaodong is currently an MPhil researcher at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (PGIPBS), University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, is a dedicated scholar specializing in Buddhist meditation. Born on July 10, 1979, in China and now residing in Colombo, Sri Lanka, she has a diverse academic background, holding a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Hunan University (1998–2002) and a Master of Arts in Buddhism from PGIPBS (2023–2024). Her current research delves into the profound dimensions of meditation, exploring its transformative potential in fostering inner peace and well-being. Liu Xiaodong's academic pursuits bridge traditional Buddhist wisdom with contemporary applications, positioning her work as a valuable contribution to the growing field of Buddhist studies. Through her meticulous research and cross-cultural experiences, she embodies the spirit of intellectual curiosity and global collaboration, enhancing the dialogue on mindfulness and meditation in the modern world.

Dr. Neeraj Yadav is an Assistant Professor, NCWEB, University of Delhi. He completed his Graduation from Ramjas College, University of Delhi. He has done his Post-graduation, MPhil and PhD in Buddhist Studies from University of Delhi. He taught in Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi as an Assistant Professor. His research area is related with Buddhism in Mathura. He presented more than twenty nine papers in National and International conferences. His research papers have been published in various national and international journals.

Rev. Zanaka, is a Myanmar Buddhist monk, studying in Sri Lanka. He was born on 1984 in upper Myanmar. He pursued his secular education until he completed middle school. His monastic journey began at the age of sixteen in April 2000. In the same year, he moved to Yangon to pursue monastic education. In 2005, he received higher ordination in Yangon. Upon his higher ordination, he moved to Mandalay and continued his studies under the guidance of various teachers from different temples. In 2010, he passed the Dhammācariya exam, which is recognized as equivalent to a B.A. degree by local and international Buddhist Universities. He ventured to Sri Lanka in 2013 and enrolled in the Master Program in Buddhist Studies at the University of

Kelaniya. In 2016, he enrolled Master of Philosophy program at the university of Peradeniya. The same year, he completed his first presentation for M.Phil. degree with the title “The Analytical Study of Theory and Methods of Taming the Mind in Theravada Buddhism.” The university academic board approved upgrading my M.Phil. degree to a Ph.D. degree in April 2024. He is currently researching on that thesis.

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.

