

The Buddhist Followers Observed the Non-Greed Practice in Dhammapada Commentaries



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ABSTRACT

This research article aimed to study (1) the Buddha's words on non-greed practice in Theravāda Buddhism, (2) a responsible understanding of the Buddhist followers observed that practice in Dhammapada commentaries, and (3) its benefits in Theravāda Buddhism.

They were selected according to the scope of the research. The instrument for collecting data based on Theravāda Tipiṭaka Pāli Canonical Texts, commentaries, related books, dictionaries, and so on with qualified academics, Analysis data by Descriptive statistics and Content Analysis. The research results were found as follow: 1) Non-greed practice is a good conduct to reduce and remove greed or bad desire. There are four kinds of such practice in Dhammapada commentaries: generosity, absence of sensual objects or sexual objects, absence of covetousness, and tranquility meditation, 2) Non-greed practice was mostly observed by some of the Buddhist followers at the time of the Buddha in their different kinds of conditions and different methods, 3) It can support practitioners in different kinds of its good benefits. Observing it, practitioners may attain good benefits of their lives in inner peace. This paper intends to show its development of the peaceful world in modern age according to different methods of it.

Keywords: Non-greed, generosity, sensual objects, covetousness, tranquility meditation

1. Introduction

Sensual views of greed are tonics of the human beings. In those outside views, the world was a very lovely area for human beings. However, in inner peace views, the world became an awful area with enemies, because of foolish people with the bad mental actions such as greed, bad desire, and so on. Being created by the greed, they became to commit bad conducts such as enjoyment of sensual objects, selfishness, sexual misconduct, covetousness, thievery, violence, war and terrorism. It can be said that, due to their immoral practices of greed, the world was leading to the suffering away from peace.

To resolve those problems, the world needs to observe non-greed practice. Non-greed practice is a good conduct to reduce and remove greed slowly and slowly in the proper ways. In Dhammapada and Dhammapada commentaries, it is found that the Buddha uttered his teachings of non-greed, and owing to their observing it, the Buddha's followers could attain good benefits with inner peace views and resolve such problems. Therefore, it can be said that such practice could support the world in the important role for peace.

Moreover, their observed non-greed practice was also studied in other Theravada Buddhist books by modern research methods for development of it. Thus, it was found that there are different conditions and different methods of it. In modern age, suffering such problems, human beings can also observe it for their needs and works in proper modern ways according to the Buddha. It is believable that they can win their lives in inner peace views without any problems.

2. Non-Greed Practice in Theravada Buddhism

In English, *alobha* is non-greed (Rhys Davids and William Stede 2009, 653). It is one of the wholesome roots (Dhs 180). Non-greed practice based on it, is a good conduct free from greed. Such practice can suppress greed effectively (Mehm Tin Mon 1995, 374). It can be generally observed by everybody. Actually, it can be completely observed only by the noble persons. But, it can develop to cause ordinary persons to be the noble persons in the good principles according to their evaluations with good actions: good bodily action, good verbal action, and good mental action. It refers to generosity, absence of sensual objects or absence of sexual objects, non-covetousness, tranquility meditation called 10 loathsome objects and reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body.

Of them, generosity is one of Theravāda Buddhist concepts of either non-greed or goodwill to see other beings' happy by supporting them with non-attachment to the donations. There are kinds of generosity: alms-generosity (Vin IV 191-193), generosity of first corn and fruit (A III 41), knowledge-generosity, (Dhp 51), greed-dependence-generosity, anger-dependence-generosity, etc (Pt I (B.) 450-451).

The Buddha guided donor about factors of generosity: before generosity one's mind is glad, while generosity one's mind is bright and clear, and after generosity one's mind is gratified (A III 337). If one with those factors observes generosity, one can reduce and eradicate greed to get peace and happiness.

Next one, absence of sensual objects or sexual objects, and non-covetousness are moral practices of non-greed. There are six sensual objects: visible object, sound, smell, taste, tangible object, and mind object (Vbh 167). Sexual object means tangible object. Covetousness is concerned with first five objects. Absence of them is at the morality site.

Morality is basically related to the eight-fold noble path that is the way of main practice (M I 299). It is a moral practice in Buddhism to reduce and eradicate the defilement of greed, etc., to abstain from those sensual objects and sexual objects, and not to commit bad acts such as sexual misconduct, covetousness, stealing, selfishness, violence and war. If one without any crimes observes that absence of them, one can reduce and eradicate greed to get peace and happiness, also.

Tranquility meditation called 10 loathsome objects (*asubha*) and reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) is a mental development because it can produce first concentration (Mehm Tin Mon 1995, 377). It is great practice called *brahmacariya* (Nett 48). It refers to concentration called *samādhi* (Nett 82). For meditation, the Buddha encouraged his followers to develop concentration to realize phenomenon as they really are (S III 13). Due to that realization, it can support a practitioner not to do evil and to get peace free from defilements such as greed, ill-will. If one observes it, one can also reduce and eradicate greed to get peace and happiness.

Even the Buddha had to observe some of those non-greed practices for self-mortification without middle way (*mijjhima-ṣaṭṭipadā*). After using middle way, he could attain enlightenment and founded Buddhism for peace. Also his followers with that way could respectively observe such practice in individuals and society for peace, and win their works. Therefore, it should be careful that all of the non-greed practice should be observed in the middle way only for the society.

3. The Buddha's Followers Observed the Non-Greed Practice in Dhammapada Commentaries

In Dhammapada commentaries, it is found that there are four kinds of the Buddhist followers who observed the non-greed practice:

- 1) Buddhist Monks (*Bhikkhu*)
- 2) Buddhist Nuns (*Bhikkhunī*)
- 3) Lay Men Disciples (*Upāsakā*)
- 4) Lay Women Disciples (*Upāsikā*)

How these followers had to observe non-greed practice at the time of the Buddha will be stated with their stories as follow.

3.1 Thera Sundara-samudda and Non-Greed Practice

At the time of the Buddha, Thera Sundara-samudda (Dhp-a II 195-200) was a Buddhist monk. When going for alms-food, he had attachment to delicious food from beautiful lady. Due to that attachment, he was loved and embraced by her in one of the rooms of the high building. But, he did commit misconducts of her. Not because of other hindrances, but because of observing morality non-greed practice of sexual objects according to methods of the Buddha, he could abstain from them. As results, due to listening to the Buddha's teachings, he could continuously attain enlightenment of peace (Mya Tin 1995, 474-476). His non-greed practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society. This story is a true evidence for non-greed practice that it can help a practitioner to get peace.

Furthermore, as regards with his events, it is found that:

- 1) His work
- 2) His absence of sexual objects.

As regards his work, it is presumed as following visions.

First vision: His work

He was a Buddhist monk, so he had to go for alms-food around the villages and cities and take meditation without any violence. With right livelihood, he had to stay politely, and simply. Giving up his family and his properties, he could collect many meritorious deeds. Once, he lost his mindfulness to control attachment to the taste objects of delicious food by observing non-greed practice. Due to that attachment, he had to follow a beautiful lady and he was loved and embraced by her in one of the rooms of the high building.

At this point, it can also be presumed that, owing to attaching to sensual objects of delicious food, he had to face serious problems from the bad persons. Because his association with good persons such the Buddha, he could completely eradicate greed and win his work. Thus, his event is a real ideal for him as well as the society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 1 is: Do not attach to sensual objects of taste object, etc.

Second vision: His absence of sexual objects

He had to stay politely and simply. Due to his attachment to delicious food, he had to follow a beautiful lady and he was loved and embraced by her. His collected meritorious deeds could not directly help him. Indirectly, those deeds were his mental powers and helped him not to follow his persuasions. As a good monk, for his win, he had to also follow good ways abstaining from the bad ways of violence to protect his life from her. Because of his association with good person such the Buddha, and listening to him, he was fortunately patient with attention of violation and completely could eradicate greed and win his practice of absence of sexual object, as well. It can also be said that, due to help of the Buddha, he could especially win his work without any violence. Thus, his event is a real ideal for the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 2 is: Associate with good persons, Method 3 is: Be patient with attention of violation, and Method 4 is: Respect and recognize others' helps.

3.2 Thera Nigamavāsi-tassa and Non-Greed Practice

At the time of the Buddha, Thera Nigamavāsi-tassa (Dhp-a I 283-286), who lived in his village with his relatives together, could observe non-covetousness non-greed practice of any objects. So he never stole, attack and misused of anything from others. He could abstain from covetousness. As results, he could continuously attain enlightenment of peace. His non-greed practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society, also.

Furthermore, as regards with his events, it is found that:

- 1) His work
- 2) His absence of covetousness.

As regards his work, it is presumed as following visions.

First vision: His work

He was a Buddhist monk like Sundara-samudda, so he had to go for alms-food around his relative's villages and take meditation without covetousness. He did not take care of good foods and bad food. With right livelihood, he had to stay politely, and simply. Giving up his family and his properties, he could collect many meritorious deeds. He was content with one's own. He never moved to other places from his village. As an ordinary person, for his work of right livelihood, he had to follow good ways of the non-greed objects and abstain from the bad ways of greed objects. Because of listening to the Buddha's teachings of non-covetousness, he could completely eradicate greed and win his work. Thus, his event is a real ideal for him as well as the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 5 is: Be content with one's own.

Second vision: His absence of covetousness

Also, he had to stay politely and simply like Sundara-samudda. Due to his attachment to delicious food, if moving to other places, he would be censured by others for his livelihood. He honored contentment of his own. When meeting with the Buddha, he did not lie about his event and he answered truly. For his non-covetousness of others' foods and properties, he was praised by the Buddha. Because his association with good person such the Buddha, and listening to him, he fortunately and completely win his practice of absence of covetousness against persuasions of foods and your relatives. It can also be said that, due to help of the Buddha, he could especially eradicate greed and win his work. Thus, his event is a real ideal for the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 6 is: Abstain from covetousness talking the truth against persuasions of foods and your relatives, and Method 7 is: Honor contentment of one's own.

3.3 Therī Khemā and Non-Greed Practice

At the time of the Buddha, Queen Khemā's event (Dhp-a II 58-59) illustrates that once upon a time ladies were proud of their beauty but someone such as Queen Khemā had to realize the truth while seeing and getting help from the Buddha. Before realization of truth, Queen Khemā was proud of her beauty. After realization of it accomplished by her non-greed practice and seeing a dead corpse she became a great person (Mya Tin 1995,

424-425). Her event is evidence for society to understand that the rude can be changed to be polite. To change someone upon the others' encouragement is to promote practice of ones' victories. Encouragement can promote such victories but discouragement can change them to the woeful side away from a bright future. True changing of mind can promote society leading to physical changing.

Furthermore, as regards with her events, it is found that:

- 1) Her work
- 2) Her tranquility meditation

As regards her work, it is presumed as following visions.

First vision: Her work

She was a queen of king Bimbisāra. She was a very beautiful one, so she was proud of her beauty. She was very busy with her beauty in daily life. It can be said that she absolutely followed greed called her visible object of her body and her work is to create her beautiful body. The king might love her very much. Nevertheless, other queens and ladies except her followers, might hate her proud of beauty. She had to live together with the conceit of others. She did not seem to know that time and tide wait for no man. The more she followed her beauty, the more she lost peerless time and others' love.

Actually, it was very unluckily for her that the king could go and observe the practice from the Buddha, but she could join with him, so she lost peerless time and peerless teachings. She was a sinner under the conceit of her beauty. It can be presumed that she was away from great opportunities for a long time. As the king persuaded and helped her with the songs of the Buddha's temple, she could completely observe such practice on time and eradicate greed. Thus, her event is a real ideal for not only her but also the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like her, Method 8 is: Do not be proud of your own, and Method 9 is: Do not lose peerless time for your works.

Second vision: Her tranquility meditation

She had works of her beauty and many followers. She had to do them and associated with them. These are social works for her lovely life. But, due to her king who persuaded her with the songs of the Buddha's temple, she had to happily go, unexpectedly observe tranquility meditation called non-greed practice of 10 loathsome of the body in front of the Buddha and eradicate greed. Her non-greed practice helped her to attain enlightenment. Especially, she became a noble person. Also, she could support the Buddhist Order with her knowledge. Her observing it is a peerless example for her lovely life as well as her

surroundings. Thus, her practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society, also.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like her, Method 10 is: Develop knowledge observing tranquility meditation called 10 loathsome of the body for your greed of visible object when you become greedy, and Method 11 is: Support your surroundings with your knowledge.

3.4 Kāla and Non-Greed Practice

At the time of the Buddha, Kāla, son of Millionaire Anāthapiṇḍika (Dhp-a II 190-192), who had greed of sensual objects and sexual objects, wasted a lot of money (*Kahāpaṇa*) for them. Once, he observed non-greed practice of them due to money. As results, he could continuously attain enlightenment of peace, stop spending money for them, and support the good society with money and so on. His practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society, also.

Furthermore, as regards with his events, it is found that:

- 1) His work
- 2) His absence of sensual object.

As regards his work, it is presumed as following visions.

First vision: His work

He was a son of millionaire Anāthapiṇḍika, so he with much money used to follow the sensual objects the whole day. He did not understand right livelihood and wrong livelihood, he enjoyed with the sensual or sexual objects so unhappily that his father had to control him according to the teachings of the Buddha. He spent much money for bad actions. Nevertheless, he continuously followed those objects again and again. He could not collect many meritorious deeds. It is presumed that his work is concerned with the enjoyment of those objects.

As an ordinary person, for his work, he followed bad ways of the greed objects and abstain from the good ways of the non-greed objects. He was a young sinner under the happiness of those objects. It can be presumed that he lost great opportunities for a long time. As his father could wisely persuade him with money to observe such practice, after observing it according to the Buddha, he could reduce greed and became a noble person. So, it can be said that he could spend money for his son and his works about the good side against spending them for the bad. Thus, his father event is a real ideal for him as well as the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 12 is: Persuade one's family spending money only for the good against spending them for the bad.

Second vision: His absence of sensual objects or sexual objects

As an ordinary person, he followed bad ways of the greed objects and abstained from the good ways of the non-greed objects. Because of his association with good person called his father, he could fortunately win his work first of all. It was funny that, not because of intending to do meritorious deeds, but because he wanted to get one hundred of Indian ancient currency from his father, he had to observe non-greed practice of absence of sensual object on Sabbath day. Secondly, due to the Buddha's good guide, after observing that practice, he could reduce greed and became a noble person. He became to understand the values of non-greed practice. Against intending to get money, he with pure mind, could especially avoid violence and support the society. So, it can be said that, after getting enlightenment, he lived for money as well as great dignity of the society.

Actually, no one can live without any mistakes. Unfortunately, human kinds used to make mistakes, spending money. But, after abstaining from those mistakes, they should choose right ways of their peaceful lives on time. Understanding his true events and non-greed practice called absence of sensual objects, people should live for money as well as great dignity of the society. Thus, his event is a real ideal for not only him but also the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like him, Method 13 is: Live for money as well as great dignity of the society.

3.5 Mātikamātā and Non-Greed Practice

At the time of the Buddha, Mātikamātā (Dhp-a II 291-298) stayed in her village with the sensual objects and offered alms-food to the Buddhist monks before when they arrived there; she could do good deeds by herself as she liked; her politeness was right for them; she got opportunity from one of those monks to study and observe tranquility meditation called of reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body; her non-greed practice helped her and others to attain enlightenment. Also, she could luckily follow the Buddhist practices and support those monks with temples and different foods. Fortunately, some monks could also attain enlightenment because of having different foods from her. Especially, her non-greed practice supported her to be a noble person who could know others' minds. Her non-greed practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society, also.

Furthermore, as regards with her events, it is found that:

- 1) Her work and generosity
- 2) Her generosity and tranquility meditation.

As regards her work, it is presumed as following visions.

First vision: Her work and generosity

She was a laywoman. She was a female householder as well as a mother of the village headman, also. She had to do her work, so she could collect much money, and many followers. They support her to be a greedy one. After associating with the Buddhist monks, owing to listening to the Buddha's teachings from the monks, she had to investigate and offer the suitable food to those monks and follow good ways of the non-greed objects and abstain from the bad ways of greed objects for her works. Because of her association with good persons such the Buddhist monks, she can spend much money, and many properties in proper ways, she had fortunately and completely win her works. It can also be said that, due to help of generosity called non-greed practice as well as good power of a mother of the village headman, she could especially reduce greed, win her works and support her surroundings. These are her ideal activities for the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like her, Method 14 is: Follow good ways forever and Method 15 is: Offer suitable properties after investigating receivers about what they want.

Second vision: Her tranquility meditation

Like a rich woman of Visākhā, she had works and many followers. She had to do them and associated with them. These are social works for her lovely life. But, she had to luckily study and observe tranquility meditation called reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body. Her non-greed practice helped her and others to attain enlightenment. Especially, she was a noble person with psychic power, who could know others' minds. Also, she could support those monks with temples and different suitable foods. Fortunately, some monks could also attain enlightenment because of having those foods from her. The more she attained psychic power from meditation, the more she attained will-power to observe generosity for her lovely life as well as her surroundings.

But, it can be presumed that her collected many meritorious deeds such offering many foods, many donations, and so on, could support to associate with those monks who could teach that tranquility meditation. Her generosity and tranquility meditation are helping each other to develop in mental power and reduce greed. So, her practice was one of the ideal Buddhist practices for the present society.

So if you would like to reduce your greed and win your works like her, Method 16 is: Develop knowledge practicing tranquility meditation of reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body when you become greedy.

On the whole, it is found that the followings are rules of non-greed practice from the Buddhist followers at the time of the Buddha.

Method 1 is: Do not attach to sensual objects called taste object, and so on.

Method 2 is: Associate with good persons

Method 3 is: Be patient with attention of violation.

Method 4 is: Respect and recognize others' helps.

Method 5 is: Be content with one's own.

Method 6 is: Abstain from covetousness talking the truth against persuasions of foods and your relatives.

Method 7 is: Honor contentment of one's own.

Method 8 is: Do not be proud of your own.

Method 9 is: Do not lose peerless time for your works.

Method 10 is: Develop knowledge observing tranquility meditation called 10 loathsome of the body for your greed of visible object when you become greedy.

Method 11 is: Support your surroundings with your knowledge.

Method 12 is: Spend money only for the good against spending them for the bad.

Method 13 is: Live for money as well as great dignity of the society.

Method 14 is: Follow good ways forever.

Method 15 is: Offer suitable properties after investigating receivers about what they want.

Method 16 is: Develop knowledge practicing tranquility meditation of reflection on the 32 impure parts of the body when you become greedy.

4. Benefits

The Buddha uttered the five benefits of generosity as follow:

- 1) Being loved and appealed to by many people,
- 2) Being communicated with by good people
- 3) Having fame of one's good name
- 4) Nothing to stray from householder-duties
- 5) Reappearing in a good heavenly plane after the break-up of the body at death (A III 41).

Generosity produces a shared mind for people and it causes donor much happiness (A VI 337). Actually, it also produces shared mind, harmony and sympathetic joy for both sides (donor and recipient) to be happy. If generosity related to altruism is practiced very carefully and very deeply according to Theravada Buddhism, the society will reduce greed and develop good mental actions with happiness. So the government can found the peaceful society with good moral actions.

Next one, absence of sensual objects or absence of sexual objects, and non-covetousness is at the site of morality. The Buddha uttered three benefits of morality as follow:

- 1) Free of fear and animosity in the present,
- 2) Free of fear and animosity in the future,
- 3) Free of experiences mental states of pain and despair (A III 205).

Morality is higher than generosity in the practice level. If morality related to altruism is practiced very carefully and very deeply according to Theravada Buddhism, the society will also reduce greed and develop good mental actions without any crimes. Therefore the government can also found that peaceful society with good morality without any problems.

Tranquility meditation called such 10 loathsome objects and reflection on such 32 impure parts of the body can produce first concentration as its essence calming down the hindrances such as sensual desire, ill-will, and so on (Mehm Tin Mon 1995, 377). This meditation is higher than morality in the practice level. It is able to especially reduce greed and produce not only good bodily actions good verbal actions, but also mental actions. Due to supporting main point of mental actions, it is more useful practice for the present society where crimes appear. Thus the government can also found that peaceful society with such meditation without any problems.

In sum up, all kinds of non-greed practice could reduce and eradicate greed so such practice was useful one for the Buddhist followers. Dhammapada commentaries shows that practice was living for them in different methods. Such practice supported such buddhist followers with the different benefits. Nowadays if such practice is also observed in different methods, they can produce and bring the bright prices of the benefits to the moral practitioners. Therefore, it can be said that this practice is a useful one for the Buddhist followers as well as the present society. Also the government can found that peaceful society with such practice without any problems.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, non-greed in Theravāda Buddhism is a concept of Abhidhamma preached by the Buddha. Non-greed practice was an ancient mental one for the beings to reduce and eradicate their greed that can destroy their good actions. Such non-greed practice consists of three kinds: generosity as low level, morality as middle level, and tranquility meditation as high level. As regards Buddhist theory of action: bad action can create bad benefit and good action can produce good benefit, this practice was a true one for the true events and the true benefits. The ancient beings of the Buddha and his followers had to respectively observe it and reduce and eradicate their greed in different methods, and win their lives with good benefits. The ancient beings and the modern beings are similar ones in their similar actions: mental actions, verbal action, and bodily actions. So, observed such non-greed practice in good methods, the modern beings in the present society can get good benefits like such the ancient beings and upgrade their social systems to be peaceful in standard of such practice. The government should support those modern beings with good activities and found that peaceful society with such practice.

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