

The condition of suffering and happiness with the perspective of loka-dhamma

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to study the condition of suffering and happiness with the perspective of Loka-dhamma. According to the study, it was found that the condition of suffering and happiness is the feeling. They consist of nature in human life. Loka-dhamma is a natural law. Humans must meet up within the course of a lifetime. Stupid people trying to engage with it and never get away. The Buddha saw that the people who are developing liberating insight can get free from this chain of life. Thus, the perspective of Loka-dhamma can make themselves up to know the right way. This concept dealing with seeing the truth. In addition, with the perspective of loka-dhamma, those who get a touch of this knowledge would do well in releasing themselves from physical and mental suffering, and practice of perfection in Kamma, well-meaning of human beings.

Keywords: suffering, happiness, loka-dhamma.

Introduction

(sabbe sattā sukha-kāmā dukkha-paṭikkulā).

“All living beings”, says the Buddha, “desire happiness and recoil from suffering”.

The teaching of Buddhism centers primarily on human existence consisting of life, suffering, death and the way out of it.

The Buddhist perspective on life, suffering and death can never be truly understood apart from the Buddhist laws of causality (Paticcasamuppada) and mutation. For the Buddhist these two laws are natural laws that operate universally in all physical and mental phenomena. The law of cause and effect is thus expressed: “when this exists, that exists, when this arises, that arises, when this is not, that is not, when this ceases, that ceases.”¹ This is interpreted as meaning that all that exists is the result of antecedent causes. Each ‘event’ or ‘happening’ acts as the cause or the necessary condition for the arising of the following event, which then provokes or causes another event. Thus, as used in Buddhism, the relation between cause and effect is only that of the earlier to the later phase of a single process.²

Buddhism accepts the fact that, like happiness, suffering is subject to change. But at the same time Buddhism points out that there is no balance of happiness and suffering. The painful side of experience usually outweighs happiness. However pessimistic it may seem, Buddhism tries to address the reality of suffering, without any pretense or deception, so as to focus on this painful side of life. At the same time it tries to probe beneath the fact of suffering in search of its causes and a way to end.³

Therefore, The Lord Buddha present the way out of suffering by give to understand dharma of life, this article expresses the way to understand the truth is important and understand what it is, and how is important to know them

¹ Y. Karunadasa, (2013), *Pursuit of Happiness: the Buddhist Way*, Retrieved from <https://www.buddhism.hku.hk/documents/lecture2.pdf>

² Pinit Ratanakul, (2004), *The Buddhist Concept of Life, Suffering and Death, and Related Bioethical Issues*, In Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics, 14 (141-146.), Retrieved from <http://www.eubios.info/EJ144/ej144f.htm>

³ Idem.

The condition of suffering

Suffering: There are many ways of understanding the Pāli word ‘Dukkha’. It has generally been translated as ‘suffering’ or ‘unsatisfactoriness’, but this term as used in the Four Noble Truths has a deeper and wider meaning. Dukkha contains not only the ordinary meaning of suffering, but also includes deeper ideas such as imperfection, pain, impermanence, disharmony, discomfort, irritation, or awareness of incompleteness and insufficiency. By all means, Dukkha includes physical and mental suffering: birth, decay, disease, death, to be united with the unpleasant, to be separated from the pleasant, and not to get what one desires. However, many people do not realize that even during the moments of joy and happiness, there is dukkha because these moments are all impermanent states and will pass away when conditions change.⁴

Yogavacara Rahula said all problems in life boil down to psychological problem called dukkha or suffering. Suffering is not just poverty, starvation and sickness but it is related to mental suffering in the form of confusion, anxiety, worry, restlessness. Buddha point out that they are caused by our mental attitude and reactions to circumstances. Not by the objects or situations themselves. If we really check up inside our mind we will find this is true.

This suffering is understood in Buddhism to be the clash between ourselves and the world around us. To put it in other words, it is the clash between our desire and reality. The real cause of our suffering is the unrealistic desire, not the reality that frustrates it.⁵

Therefore, the truth of Dukkha encompasses the whole of existence, in our happiness and sorrow, in every aspect of our lives. As long as we live, we are very profoundly subjected to this truth.⁶

The condition of happiness

⁴ Sri Dhammananda Maha Thera, (n.d.), **The Buddhist Way of Life for Householders** (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/74.htm>

⁵ Yogavacara Rahula, (2008), **The way to Peace and Happiness**. Taiwan: the corporate body of the Buddha Education foundation.

⁶ K. Sri Dhammananda Maha Thera, (n.d.), **Four Noble Truths** (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/74.htm>

Happiness

In addition, even though Dukkha is a noble truth, it does not mean that there is no happiness, enjoyment and pleasure in life. There is, and the Buddha has taught various methods with which we can gain more happiness in our daily life. However, in the final analysis, the fact remains that the pleasure or happiness which we experience in life is impermanent. We may enjoy a happy situation, or the good company of someone we love, or we enjoy youth and health. Sooner or later, when these states change we experience suffering. Therefore, while there is every reason to feel glad when one experiences happiness, one should not cling to these happy states or be side-tracked and forget about working one's way to complete Liberation.⁷

According to Richard he said happiness really is. His emphasis the different pleasure and happiness. The former offer is often what we spend a lot of effort trying to obtain, thinking that it his happiness we are chasing.⁸

In the Pāṭi-English Dictionary, Rhys Davids gives the definition about the term 'Sukha or Happiness' pleasant, blest and sukha means well-being, happiness each ideal and success. Moreover, the synonyms of the term happiness are blessedness, blessing, cheer, cheerfulness, delight enjoyment exaltation, gladness, joy, merriment, pleasure, rapture, sense of well-being and transport. Happiness is dividing into two kinds. There are physical happiness (Kāyika-sukkhā) and mental happiness (Cetasika-sukkhā).

Firstly, Kāyika-sukkhā or physical happiness means happy people have better health. They get the things what they want. It is the material happiness which depends on other person or things as the arising basis of happiness or joy.

Secondly, Cetasika-sukkhā or mental happiness means the state of mind which is meditative, clam and joyful etc.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Micael Widell, (2016), Matthieu Ricard on Buddhism and Happiness (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://michaelwidell.com/happiness-by-matthieu-ricard/>

However, both happiness depend on each other. That means when one has a good mental condition and their cause a good physical condition too.

As human being we have many moments of these sense pleasures and although they are transitory, still they create a kind of joy and happiness in it. It is the happiness inside. Example when person makes the meditation then he get peace in mind.

Buddha presents the great happiness. This is the happiness and bliss of concentration. That is a higher kind of happiness than the happiness of heaven.⁹ This is the Vipassana happiness or happiness of insight. The mind which is seeing clearly, penetrating deeply into the nature of things, experience the arising and passing away of phenomena very distinctly.

Therefore, the study of happiness for understanding the great beauty of the dhamma by the understanding of how things are happening.

The condition of suffering and happiness with the worldly condition perspective:

The Lokadhamma Sutta: “*Aṭṭhime, bhikkhave, lokadhammā lokam anuparivattanti, loko ca aṭṭha lokadhamme anuparivatta’ti....loko ca ime aṭṭha lokadhamme anuparivattati.*”¹⁰

“Bhikkhus, the eight manifestations of worldly vicissitudes are always following all living beings, otherwise known as “the world,” and all beings are also following worldly vicissitudes.”¹¹

There are eight manifestations of worldly vicissitudes, and these are always following living beings. If a man is in the sun, his shadow always follows him — he cannot prevent it from following him. So, like the shadow, these worldly vicissitudes always follow all beings. Similarly, beings are always pursuing worldly vicissitudes.

⁹ Phramaha Prapas Kaewketpong, (2011), Study of the Theravada Buddhism concept of Human Destiny, (Ph.d Thesis), Banaras Hindu University, Faculty of Art, Philosophy and Religion.

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Pesala, (2018), Mahāsi Sayādaw A Discourse on Worldly Vicissitudes (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <http://www.aimwell.org/lokadhamma.html#WhatIsLokadhamma>

¹¹ Idem.

Everybody has had their ups and downs of life. In the circumstances, it is important to maintain their integrity and to remain calm and smooth. More or less, people surely must face with this nature of eight manifestations of Worldly Vicissitudes (Loka-dhamma). But it is not easy for a layman to become tolerant of Lokadhamma.¹²

In the Mangala Sutta, the Buddha said:

“Phutthassa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati.”¹³

The term ‘Lokadham’ (in Burmese) is derived from the Pāḷi term ‘Lokadhamma’. ‘Loka’ is of three kinds: Sattaloka, Saṅkhāraloka, and Okāsaloka. Sattaloka means all living beings. Each being is one world. That is, each person or being is a world.¹⁴

Okāsaloka means the abodes, places of residence, or habitats of beings. So we have the human world, the world of devas, the world of Brahmas, the lower realms of misery: hell, the animal kingdom, the abode of hungry ghosts (peta). The abode of animals and hungry ghosts are on the earth; the abode of devas and brahmas are celestial realms.

Saṅkhāraloka means the continuous activities of the physical and mental elements of beings, and the changes and movements of inanimate things such as the earth, trees, forests, mountains, abodes, water, air, fire, etc. In brief, it includes all evolutionary processes of mental and physical phenomena.

¹² Lokadhamma, (2014), The Unbeguiled One (8 Loka-dhamma) (A life that does not err) (Online).

Retrieved 24 December 2020, from

http://www.thaniyo.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241:thaniya5747&catid=9:thaniyapucha2557&Itemid=13

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Pesala, (2018), Mahāsi Sayādaw A Discourse on Worldly Vicissitudes (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <http://www.aimwell.org/lokadhamma.html#WhatIsLokadhamma>

From the above, we will concentrate in the world of sentient beings (sattava). So ‘the world’ in this context means ‘living beings’ and Dhamma means ‘the natural law’. Loka-dhamma means the natural consequences that every being has to experience and contend with. The Buddha gave two discourses¹⁵ on Lokadhamma: a short one and a longer one.¹⁵

Lokadhamma shows the natural consequences that every being has to receive and contend with. It relates to the loka of sentient beings (Sattava). Therefore, Loka means ‘being’ and Dhamma means the ‘law’. The Buddha had delivered Lokadhamma in his suttas. Like a shadow, human beings are always accompanying Lokadhamma. No one can dispel it.¹⁶

Loka-dhamma: ‘worldly conditions’: ‘Eight things are called worldly conditions, since they arise in connection with worldly life.

They are comprised follow:

1. Lābha or gain - having an abundance of food, money, assets.
2. Alābha or loss – not having an abundance of food, money, asserts.
3. Yasa or fame or rank, dignity – having companions.
4. Ayasa or obscurity – not having companions.
5. Nindā or blame – getting blames and censures.
6. Pasaṃsā or praise – or getting praises.
7. Sukha or happiness – good heath in body and happiness in mind.
8. Dukkha or pain suffering in body.¹⁷

Thus there are eight articles of loka-dhamma, four desirable ones and four undesirable. When one gets the desirable items, one is glad, interested and high spirit. But when one meets with the undesirable items, one is sad and depressed, looking painful. Both types of emotion are natural responses to the impact of loka-dhamma. The one keen to be happy is also very easy to be sad. The one of great happiness can be easily tuned into of great sorrow. Sadness is domanassa.¹⁸

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

¹⁷ U. Nyi, (2010), *Practical Aspects of Buddhist Ideals*, (U.K.: n.p.), p.40.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

The Worldly Vicissitudes are composed of eight in number. The following eight laws are grouped in pairs:

Sweet (good)	Bitter (Bad)
1. Gain	2. Loss
3. Repute	4. Disrepute
5. Praise	6. Blame
7. Happiness	8. Suffering ¹⁹

Therefore, in order to gain normal position of his consciousness in the upside-down life, everybody must stand firm according to the appropriation of Dhamma.²⁰

Lābha and Alābha: one must work hard in all fairness to earn worthy of one's effort. But do not too shown so as to make others hate the sight of you.

Yasa and ayasa: benefactor gentlemen and womenfolk look only if surrounded by some companions. The companions take care of security inside and outside of the courtyard and also assist in every other need.

Nindā and pasamsā: The Buddha says: "They who speak much are blamed. They who speak a little are blamed. They who are silent are also blamed. In this world there is none who is not blamed."

Blame seems to be a universal legacy to mankind. The majority of the people in the world, remarks the Buddha, are ill-disciplined. Like an elephant in the battle-field that endures all arrows shot at him, even so, the Buddha says, do I suffer all insults.²¹

(sukha) and (dukkha) are the last pair of opposites. They are the most powerful factors that affect mankind. Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. No sooner is the desired thing gained than we desire some other kind of happiness. So insatiate are our selfish

¹⁹ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

²⁰Buddhist Study, (2015), Loka Dhamma 8 (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=301415336686509&story_fbid=395490143945694

²¹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

desires. The enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness to an average person.

The second source of happiness is derived by the enjoyment of such possessions (*bhoga sukha*). Ordinary men and women wish to enjoy themselves. The Buddha does not advise all to renounce their worldly pleasures and retire to solitude.

The enjoyment of wealth lies not only in using it for ourselves but also in giving it for the welfare of others. What we eat is only temporary. What we preserve we leave and go. What we give we take with us. We are remembered for ever by the good deeds we have done with our worldly possessions.

Not falling into debt (*ananasukha*) is another source of happiness. If we are contented with what we have and if we are economical, we need not be in debt to anyone. Debtors live in mental agony and are under obligation to their creditors. Though poor, when debt free, you feel relieved and are mentally happy.

Leading a blameless life (*anavajjasukha*) is one of the best sources of happiness for a layman. A blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. It should be stated however that it is very, very difficult to get a good name from all. The noble-minded persons are concerned only with a blameless life and are indifferent to external approbation. The majority in this world delight themselves in enjoying pleasures while some others seek delight in renouncing them. Non-attachment or the transcending of material pleasures is happiness to the spiritual. Nibbānic bliss, which is bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness.

Ordinary happiness we welcome, but not its opposite -- pain, which is rather difficult to endure.²²

²² Idem.

Therefore, all human in the world must face with this reality.

“All saṅkhāras (conditioned things) are impermanent” sabbe dhammā anattā — “all dharmas (conditioned or unconditioned things) are not self” sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā — “all saṅkhāras are unsatisfactory”²³

In Buddhism, the three marks of existence are three characteristics (Pali: tilakkhaṇa; Sanskrit: trilakṣaṇa) of all existence and beings, namely impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā). These three characteristics are mentioned in verses 277, 278 and 279 of the Dhammapada.

That human is subject to delusion about the three marks, that this delusion results in suffering, and that removal of that delusion results in the end of suffering, is a central theme in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.

As mentioned earlier, lacking a permanent Ego at the center of our being and transitory in our nature, we long to find and to cling to something substantial in the ceaseless flow of change. We therefore project reality onto an illusory Ego for the purpose of gratification. Possession is used as a means of ego-gratification to fill this void. The use of people as objects to be manipulated for our needs is another way in which we attempt to solidify ourselves. But it is like building a house on sand. There is nothing substantial there. The grains fall apart and dissolve, and the house crumbles into dust. We still feel inadequate or unsatisfied, no matter what we get, because our ego-desires (tanha) are by nature insatiable.

It is seen in Buddhism that much of the misery of life is caused by self-centeredness and the constant desire to satisfy one's own needs. These ego-desires are the very root of all evil, including greed, lust, hatred, lying, deceit, and crime. It is the delusion of the Ego that begets all forms of these ego-desires. Because ego-desires are the cause of most human suffering, it is the elimination of the Ego that is necessary to end our unhappiness. And because the Ego has no reality of its own we are able to abolish it through our efforts.

This is not seen as an easy process. Buddhism discourages ego-focus because it wants us to realize our non-personal potentialities. Besides, self-concentration does not allow the pursuit of truth and righteousness. The value of life does not depend on quantity but on

²³ Three marks of existence. (2021, May 03). Retrieved May 12, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence

quality. Any life lived solely for the self is a life not worth living, as there is no room for the highest goal of attaining nibbana, the liberation from the endless life-cycle, samsara existence. It is this ultimate goal that makes life worth living. Thus, to be absorbed and engrossed in the temporal, impermanent part of life matters little.²⁴

As Professor Rhys Davids remarked, the state of an individual, of a thing or person, distinct from its surroundings, bounded off from them, is unstable, temporary, sure to pass away. It may last as, for instance, in the case of the gods for hundreds of thousands of years; or, as in the case of some insects, for some hours only; or as in the case of some material things (as we should say some chemical compounds), for a few seconds only. But in every case as soon as there is a beginning, there begins also at that moment to be an ending. The ethical significance of this law of impermanence is well brought out in the MahāSudassana Suttanta (DN 17). There the Buddha tells Ānanda, his favorite disciple, about the glories of the famous king of the past, Mahā Sudassana; about his cities, treasures, palaces, elephants, horses, carriages, women, and so on, in the possession of which he led a wonderful life; about his great regal achievements; and finally his death; only to draw the moral conclusion: “Behold, Ānanda, how all these things are now dead and gone, have passed and vanished away. Thus, impermanent, Ānanda, are the saṅkhāras; thus untrustworthy, Ānanda, are the saṅkhāras. And this, Ānanda, is enough to be weary of, to be disgusted with and be completely free of such saṅkhāras.” When the Buddha characterized all compounded things and conditioned processes as impermanent and unstable, it must be understood that, before all else, stood out that particular heap of processes that is called man; for at bottom it was with man chiefly that Buddha had to do, in so far as it was to man primarily that he showed the way to emancipation. Thus the chief problem was to find out the real nature of man, and it is precisely in this great discovery that the uniqueness of the Dhamma is visible. The Buddha’s conclusion regarding man’s nature is in perfect agreement with his general concept of impermanence: Man himself is a compound of several factors and his supposedly persistent

²⁴ Pinit Ratanakul, (2004), The Buddhist Concept of Life, Suffering and Death, and Related Bioethical Issues, In *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 14 (141-146.), Retrieved from <http://www.eubios.info/EJ144/ej144f.htm>

personality is in truth nothing more than a collection of ceaselessly changing processes; in fact, a continuous becoming or bhava.²⁵

These eight worldly conditions are divided into two sides, those that are pleasant, desirable and generally aspired to, known as ittharammana, and those that are distressing, undesirable, and generally abhorred, known as anittharammana. Regardless of whether they are liked or not, these eight worldly conditions can arise for everyone, be they unlearned and unenlightened or learned and enlightened, the only difference lying in the way each person responds to and acts on them. That is to say:

1. Unlearned, unenlightened beings do not know or understand the true nature of worldly conditions and so they mindlessly rejoice and lament over them: whenever they win they become indulgent and vainglorious, and whenever they lose they become sad and despondent, or even deranged. They let worldly conditions control their lives and overwhelm their minds, so that they are forever experiencing ups and downs and do not transcend sorrow.

2. Learned noble disciples know how to reflect on worldly conditions and see their true nature: that all things that arise, whatever they may be, are without exception unstable, impermanent, imperfect and naturally subject to change. Thus they do not mindlessly indulge in pleasant experiences (ittharammana) or become saddened or depressed on account of unpleasant experiences (anittharammana); they abide with mindfulness and equilibrium, neither indulging in happiness nor being overwhelmed by suffering.²⁶

The Conclusion:

All conditioned things end in dukkha and only the deathless (that which is neither born nor dies) bring perfect, permanent peace. There fore it would be pointless for the arahant to become involved in worldly concerns which contribute to the conditioned experience of dukkha. The Buddha advised the early monks to beware of the ‘eight worldly conditions’ (loka-dhamma) so arahant, as one who has ‘reached the end of the world’, completely

²⁵ O. H. de A. Wijesekera, (n.d), The three Signata: Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā (With extracts from the Buddha’s discourses), Retrieved from <https://what-buddha-said.net/library/Wheels/wh020.pdf>

²⁶ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

comprehends the world's dangers and is incapable of living with any worldly attachment remaining:

Hence the wise one who knows the world. The one who has lived the holy life. Will reach the end of the world. Knowing the world's end, at peace. He no more longs for the world. Nor for any other. (AN 4:45).²⁷

The Arahāt's mind remains unshaken. In other words, he is unaffected by gain and loss, praise and blame, fame and defame, happiness and sorrow, when affected by pair of worldly vicissitudes. He remains calm and stable in mind, because there are no defilements (kilesa) at all. There are no dangers for him. So, the arahats are also subjected to Lokadhamma though they can receive both ones of the good and the bad with equanimity (uppekkha).²⁸

As fruits fall from a tree -- tender, ripe or old -- even so we die in our infancy, in the prime of manhood or even in old age. The sun rises in the East only to set in the West. Flowers bloom in the morning to fade in the evening. Inevitable death, which comes to all without exception, we have to face with perfect equanimity. "Just as the earth whatever is thrown Upon her, whether sweet or foul, Indifferent is to all alike, no hatred shows, nor amity, so likewise he in good or ill, must even-balanced ever be." ²⁹

A person who is not heedless or so enraptured by life and the world that he is enslaved by them- 'deceived by the world, drunk on life,' as it were- is one who is mindful, who knows how to look and investigate, and knows the right attitude to adopt to the truths that exist inherently in life and this world as the natural course of things, as follows: Knowing the ways of the world: he reflects on, understands and establishes mindfulness properly in relation to the ever-changing conditions in life within the world known as the eight loka-dhamma (norms of the world, or normal conditions which repeatedly visit worldly beings, and by which worldly beings are constantly being spun around).³⁰ which the follow the says:

²⁷ Dennis Candy, (2008), *Peace in the Buddha's Discourses: A Compilation and Discussion*, Kandy: Buddhist publication Society. p. 105.

²⁸ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

²⁹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

³⁰ Lokadhamma. (2014). **The Unbeguiled One (8 Loka-dhamma) (A life that does not err)** (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2018, from

“When touched by worldly conditions the mind of an Arahant never wavers. Amidst gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and blame, happiness and pain, let us try to maintain a balanced mind”.³¹

“Loka-dhamma is nature’s course, various in kind and source, Emotion not to rise, cultivate the mind to be wise”.³²

http://www.thaniyo.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241:thaniya5747&catid=9:thaniyapucha2557&Itemid=13

³¹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

³² U. Nyi, op.cit, p. 44.

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