

พุทธธรรมกับการสร้างสันติธรรม ทางศาสนาและสันติภาพโลก

Buddhist Principles Contributing to Religious Tolerance and World Peace*



พระชัยเดช วงษ์โสภา

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ต้องการนำเสนอหลักพุทธธรรมขั้นพื้นฐานที่สามารถเปรียบเทียบกับบางคำสอนของศาสนาอื่นๆ ในความเป็นจริง คำสอนของพระพุทธเจ้าเป็นหนทางแห่งการสิ้นสุดของทุกข์ คำสอนของท่านทั้งหมดมีประโยชน์ทั้งมนุษย์ หรือเชื่อมโยงไปยังแต่ละส่วน แต่ไม่สามารถค้นคว้าเพื่อหาคำตอบเกี่ยวกับคำสอนของท่านทั้งหมด ในความคิดของผู้เขียนยังคิดว่า ศาสนาอื่นๆ มีเป้าหมายเดียวกันที่จะนำชีวิตไปสู่ความสุข

คำสำคัญ : พุทธธรรม สันติธรรมทางศาสนา สันติภาพโลก

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Abstract

This article is mainly to point out some basic Buddhist principles that can be compared with some teachings of other religions. In reality, the Buddha's teachings composed of the same essences leading to the end of suffering. All of his teachings are all beneficial mankind and concord or link to each section. But it is impossible to discuss all of his teachings. Fundamentally he shows the cause of suffering and way leading to the cessation of suffering, and of course, when suffering is ended, there arises happiness. In my opinion, I also think that other religions also have the same goal that is to lead the life to happiness.

Keyword: Buddhist Principles, Religious Tolerance, World Peace

I. Introduction

The Buddha was the first most active missionary in the world. He wandered from place to place for forty-five years preaching his doctrine to the masses and the intelligentsia. Till His last moment, He served humanity both by example and by precept. His distinguished disciples followed suit, penniless, they even travelled to distant lands to propagate the Dhamma, expecting nothing in return. (Venerable Narada Mahathera, 1998 : VIII) The Buddha basically holds Brahma-vihara Dhamma, which are really beneficial to the world, he spent the rest of his lifetime teaching the Dhamma. If he is not greatly compassionate, he might not educate people by his Dhamma. In here, Brahma means the king Brahma world which is the highest realm of heaven. In Hinduism, Brahman is the God of Creator and has four faces. But the Buddha has his own interpretation of Brahma-vihara Dhamma or the four Sublime States which consists of : Metta (loving-kindness, Karuna (compassion), Mudita (appreciative joy), and Upekkha (equanimity) (Anguttara Nikaya, 3 : 99). These are the four kinds of Brahmavihara. (Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, 1985 : 19; Venerable Narada Mahathera, 1998 : XIII; Phra Brahmagunabhorn P. A. Payutto, 2008 : 124-125)

II. Concept of Brahma-vihara Dhamma

Brahma-vihara Dhamma which may be rendered by Modes of Sublime Conduct, Sublime States, or Divine Abodes. These virtues tend to elevate man. They make one divine in this life itself. They can transform man into a superman. If all try to cultivate them, irrespective of creed, race, or sex, the earth can be transformed into a paradise where all can live in perfect peace and harmony as ideal citizens of one world. The four sublime virtues are also termed illimitables (Appamañña). They are so called because they find no barrier or limit and should be extended towards all beings without exception. They embrace all living beings including animals. Irrespective of religious beliefs, one can cultivate these sweet virtues and be a blessing to oneself and all others. (Venerable Narada Mahathera, 1998 : 490)

a. Loving-kindness is the boundless love towards others without any condition, regardless of races, religions, cousins, sons and daughters but for all sentient beings of the world. There is one Buddhist proverb said by the Buddha himself “Loving-kindness upholds the world”. 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. It is also explained as the friendly disposition, for a genuine friend sincerely wishes for the welfare of his friend. (Venerable Narada Mahathera, 1998 : 491)

This means that because of loving-kindness, the world can sustain. If one kindly loves each other and regard others as members of humanity who share common natural characteristics of birth, old age, illness and death, one may not do any harm to one another, and this will lead to peace.

b. Compassion is the quality of mind when one seeing others in pain or suffering, one will try to help them to free from it. In this case, if compassion lies in the mind of an individual, he will not cause and harm to others but will help other from suffering. As we can see there are many international projects working on the poverty eradication worldwide. The projects are organized by different

organizations from different walk of life without labelling any name of any religions. In this respect, because of all religions share the context of compassion for humanity. Therefore, in the tenet of compassion, Buddhism should be internationally understood that it has the same basic of virtue to share with other religions and it needs mutual cooperation to develop compassion among all human beings by lending a hand from other practitioners of all religions to practice it, or another practitioner should accept that we are practicing the same ways for humanity.

c. Sympathetic joy is the way of rejoice. When one sees others succeed in their life, one will appreciate, congratulate and rejoice with others' success or achievements. In this case, for those what have the quality of mind with sympathetic joy will never envy or jealous others. Therefore, if there is no one envies others, the society will be full of inspirational people who encourage one another and this will create harmony among people in the society.

d. Equanimity is another quality of mind that should be studied carefully. It means the feeling of mediation, the way of dealing problems without any biases but based on the reality of life. It is also the way of acceptance. For instance, if there is case when one's beloved cousin has done something wrong, one needs to make the mind of equanimity in the way of being ready to accept for whatever will happen in case that the problem cannot be solved.

However, there are many people think that equanimity is the quality of mind that denies or not responding to any problems. In reality, equanimity is the way of dealing with problems by wisdom which based on the three characteristics of nature: Aniccata : impermanence, Dukkhatta : state of suffering or being oppressed and Anattata : soullessness; state of being not self. (Phra Brahmaganabhorn P. A. Payutto, 2008 : 89) The three characteristics of nature are beyond the control of all no matter what religion you profess. Therefore, if one cannot do anything to solve a certain problem which lies in this natural law, then one needs to have the mind of equanimity. Other basic principles of Buddhism are the five precepts to be discussed.

These precepts are commonly prevailing in other religions as: Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lie, taking any intoxicant. In here, it is needless to explain in details but I would like to point out the first principle, abstaining from killing. This is the way to practice nonviolence, and because of loving-kindness, there will be no violence. If one can observe only this principle, there will be no war on earth. And because of all religions have the same messages; therefore, if all members, followers of each religion of the world completely observe this principle, at any corner of the world will be full of harmony, peace and happiness. In Buddhist perspective, if one can observe completely the five precepts, one can be a perfect human being or even can be call a deva heavenly being.

After explaining the concepts of Brahma-vihara Dhamma and a bit of five precepts, I would like to pinpoint some common messages from other religions which share the same meaning for the unity and harmony of mankind as follows: Buddhism says, “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

- a. The Taoist says, “Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss.”
- b. The Christian says, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”
- c. The Muslim says, “Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourself.”
- d. The Hindu says, “Let no one do to others what he would not have done to himself.” (K.Sri Dhammananda, 1983)

As mentioned in above mentioned points, we can clearly see that all religions have the purpose of teachings to not hurt or do any harm to others, but concern and care about the living of other people regardless of races, religions and so on. All men want peace, and need to live in harmony.

III. Conclusion

The Brahma-vihara Dhamma and five precepts are practiced in a family, it can create that family as a Brahma realm where the head of family holds and practices this Dhamma towards family members and a simple heaven on earth. This also can be practiced for all people in any organizations where bosses, heads can lead his teams to harmony in the way of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Ideally, if all people apply this Dhamma, they can elevate their mind higher as heavenly being as in the realm of Brahma heaven and the way of peace and harmony will prevail in society as well as on earth.

Therefore, this Dhamma lesson is applicable for all of us; and I think that it can also be applied for all men in any religion or for all men from all walks of life. So, radiate the quality of mind that you have practiced this Dhamma to other people surrounding you and to all beings, and then the family, society and the world will be in peace and better places to live.



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