

Variorum, Multi- Disciplinary e-Research Journal
Vol.-02, Issue-I, August 2011
Morality in Buddhism

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Introduction

Here in this article it is highlighted various diagnoses given by the Buddha for the cause of people suffering from the various diseases and dukkhas in their life. The Buddha is only pathfinder, the discoverer of the medicine of Dhamma¹.

The Buddha always emphasized on peace of mind, stability and harmony in society can be achieved only if human beings are disciplined and well established in morality, mind is controlled and rooted in meditation and wisdom is developed and act with loving kindness and compassion, which bring happiness for oneself and peace and harmony in society².

Buddha's attention towards human being:

Over two thousand five hundred years ago, prince Siddhartha was born in Lumbini now in Nepal³. Although he was born to a royal family, he renounced all royal⁴ pleasures and as a mendicant he set out in search of truth that can put human suffering to an end. He achieved enlightenment after six years continuous practice of meditation in Buddha Gaya under the Bodhi tree⁵. The peerless compassionate Buddha, with boundless love and compassion served humanity the rest of his life. Near about forty five years of his life he moved from place to place teaching people the universal Dhamma for welfare and happiness of the people. Thousands of people practiced Dhamma under his guidance and became Arhants⁶, attained highest purity of mind and complete freedom from suffering. After administering the medicine of Dhamma to the sick and suffering multitude for forty five years, at the age of eighty, the compassionate Buddha left the world, took Mahaparinirvana⁷. Like a medical practitioner the Buddha diagnosed the cause of suffering and provided the medicine of Dhamma which he has discovered for cure. According to the Buddha, his teaching is not only a theory but it is the way of life.

The human society has become very complex and sick⁸. There is excessive greed for material comforts; people seek peace of mind through satisfaction of gross material pleasures. The more they seek material pleasures the more restless they become. They search for peace of mind and material

¹ Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, Essays on Buddhism, Buddhahumi prakashan, Nagpur, 1997, P.6-7

² Ven.B.Anandamaitreya, Buddhism, Lectures and Essays on Buddhism, reprinted by The corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1993, p.7

³ Hirakawa Akira, A history of Indian Buddhism, Motilal Banarasidas Publishers pvt. Ltd. Delhi, p.21

⁴ Klaus K. Klostermaier, Buddhism, A short Introduction, Oneworld, Oxford, 2006, P.14.

⁵ Ibid, p.16

⁶ Ibid, p.18

⁷ Ibid, p.19

⁸ Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, Essays on Buddhism, Buddhahumi prakashan, Nagpur, 1997, pp..12-13

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pleasures are two different things. Because human greed is at the peak, there is so much competition in every field of our life causing so much stress, tension, fear and a feeling of insecurity in society. Buddha gave answers for above questions which human being suffer in contemporary world.

Buddha's Teaching and Morality for Mankind:

“andhabhuto ayam loko,
 tanuk' ettha vipassati,
 Sakunto jalamutto'va
 Appo saga gacchati”

--- Dhammapada, 174.⁹

“Blind is the world. Few are those who clearly see. As birds escape from the net few go to a state of happiness”

According to Buddha, both happiness and suffering are mind made and human creations. Mind is the root cause of all suffering and problems, whether it is confined to an individual, or it is in the society or in the state or in the world. Maximum problems and sufferings of the world are caused by human actions done by impure mind which is full of **Greed, Lust, Anger, Hatred, Animosity, Jealousy, Ill-Will and Deceptive pride**¹⁰. All these negative qualities of mind are the infections, viruses and causes of problems and suffering of the world. The Buddha called them the disease of human beings.

Buddha repeatedly emphasized that peace of mind, stability and harmony in society can be achieved only if human beings are disciplined and well established in morality (Sila), mind is controlled and rooted in meditation (Samadhi), and wisdom (panna) is developed and act with loving kindness and compassion. **Sila, Samadhi and Panna** constitutes the three foundation pillars of Buddha's teachings, the medicine of Dhamma. The Buddha found by means of his own personal experience that suffering arises because of craving (tanha). Exploring the depths of his mind, he realized that between the external object and the mental reaction of craving there is a link—the bodily sensations (vedana). Whenever one encounters an object through the five physical senses or the mind, a sensation arises in the body. A Based on the sensation, craving arises. If the sensation is pleasant one craves to prolong it; if the sensation is unpleasant one craves to get rid of it. In the chain of Dependent Origination, the Buddha expressed this discovery: dependent on contact sensation arises, dependent on sensation

⁹ Narada Thera, The Dhammapada, Pali text and translation, The corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1993, p.157

¹⁰ Ven. B. Anandamaitreya, Buddhism, Lectures and Essays on Buddhism, reprinted by The corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1993, p.7

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craving arises. The immediate and actual cause for the arising of craving and of suffering is, therefore, not something outside of us but rather the sensations that occur within us. To free ourselves of craving and of suffering we must deal with this inner reality, that is, with sensations (vedana). This was a unique contribution of the Buddha's teaching.

Conclusion:

. The Buddha taught here that seekers of truth must avoid two extremes—that of the path of sensual pleasure, and that of extreme penance or austerity. Buddha rotated the wheel of Dhamma when he gave his first discourse named Dhammacakkapavattana sutta.

the Buddha give information about practical aspect of the Dhamma.

Teachings of the Buddha mainly consist of four Noble truths, where the forth noble truth is eightfold path. Buddha not only explained these truths theoretically but made one realize all the four truths at experiential level also.

The teaching of the Buddha according to Theravada school is very plain. He asks us to 'abstain from all kinds of evil, to accumulate all that is good and to purify our mind'. These can be accomplished by The Three Trainings: the development of ethical conduct, concentration and insight-wisdom.

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ISSN 0976-9714