

The Significance of Buddhist Philosophy for International Peacebuilding

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ABSTRACT

Finding effective peacebuilding backgrounds is more significant than ever in a world that is becoming more and more constant in terms of communication, violence, and societal conflict. Among other intellectual traditions, Buddhist philosophy stands out as a valuable source of guidance and wisdom for advancing global peace. Buddhism offers a unique perspective on social peace and conflict resolution that transcends cultural and theological differences since it is founded on the concepts of interconnectedness, compassion, and mindfulness. At its core, Buddhist philosophy emphasizes how important it is to understand the transience of things and the nature of suffering. This information encourages individuals and communities to foster empathy, reduce prejudice, and engage in meaningful dialogue. The Middle Path and non-attachment wisdoms inspire self-control, equilibrium, and an understanding of our common humankind—all of which are essential for passive quarrel settlement. Furthermore, by encouraging individuals to consider the broader implications of their decisions, the Buddhist concept of "Right Action" in the Eightfold Path promotes moral behaviour and social responsibility.

This ethical framework can serve as a guide for world leaders and policymakers who want to encourage respect and cooperation among nations. The active participation of Buddhist scholars and leaders in global peace initiatives in recent years has demonstrated the importance of Buddhist philosophy to contemporary peacebuilding efforts.

Buddhist ideas are used in programs that prioritize communication, community building, and peace-making to address the underlying causes of conflict and advance enduring peace. When considering Buddhist philosophy's applicability to international peacebuilding, it is imperative to consider both its theoretical foundations and practical applications. By applying these ideas to peacebuilding initiatives, we can discover ways to create a society that is less violent and where compassion and selflessness result in enduring peace. In addition to showing how useful Buddhism is in resolving global issues, this inquiry encourages a more thorough examination of the ways in which other philosophical traditions could support a peaceful future.

KEYWORD: *Peace, global-issues, Humanism, Renunciation, Wisdom, Prejudices.*

INTRODUCTION:

In his famous essay *The Civilization of Today* the great English essayist Joad writes "The world is like a haystack waiting for a match with all the war materials lying around,". The catastrophic level of our Mother Planet's recent past is expressed here with ease. People in several countries were so anxious and stiff during this time that they were unable to sleep at all. Many people were seriously talking about the extinction of human species from the planet. In 1983, the United States bishops in their pastoral letter on war and peace in the nuclear age writes: "We are the first generation since Genesis with the power to virtually destroy God's creation. We cannot remain silent in the face of such danger." Today that fear has partly gone. But the problem of harmony on earth still continues. In whatever is happening around the world there are irrefutable evidences that prove it. Therefore, a lot more thinking for world peace is needed.

Finding the rational source of this issue is now essentially crucial. Actually, the problem of peace on earth is man's own creation. Because any progress or problem that we experience is the outcome of the interaction between two forces – man on the one hand and the other objects of the world in the other. It is man who has consciousness that determines the direction and destiny of any process. The rise of our civilization does not at all depend on any God or the stars above, but on ourselves. It is a human creation, the triumph of man's mind and will. In a similar vein, our own development is the unruly of harmony on Earth. It is the downfall of our own motive and determination. This self – defeat naturally unfolds certain disorder in the very nature of man. He is unable to overcome the pull of his body's and mind's corrupt desires because of his matured character and inferior bodily self. This is the root of the problem. According to Radhakrishnan, "We are not facing an intellectual crisis, nor is it a material or economic crisis." It is a crisis of morality and spirituality." Man, himself is not pleased now. Therefore, he cannot be at peace.

Tension, greed, and egocentricity abound inside him. The problem of peace on the earth is the extension of the problem of peace in man. Thus, the only way to address the issue of global peace is to address the issue of personal peace. And the problem of the individual's peace can be solved by creating in him a state of happiness. Any attempt to solve the problem of world peace by ignoring the problem of the individual would be a totally meaningless effort. Therefore, we have to conquer the evils in us by cleansing our hearts. To change from who we are, we must examine our own essence and reinvent ourselves. The world will then become different. Tragically, though, very little is done to enhance an individual's life from the inside out despite all the intelligence put into trying to assist others. Man, himself must have an impact on world peace if we hope to have it at all. For this he has to transform his nature so as to become a morally and spiritually creative being. Thus, the only solution for the problem of world peace lies in the remaking of the nature of man.

Here Buddhism, the religion propounded by the Great Gautama can become an important guide for the whole mankind. It was one of the most significant spiritual movements in human history. "Historically speaking, Buddhism is the most significant religion—not intellectually, but historically—because it was the greatest massive religious movement and spiritual tsunami to ever erupt on human society. Stated Swami Vivekananda in his speech on "Buddha's Message to the world," which was given in San Francisco on March 18, 1900. There is no civilisation on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other". Buddha truly loved people and was a great humanist. The spiritual transformation that occurred in him after he was deeply moved by the different scenes of human life and suffering – an old man, a sick person, a deceased being and an austere – evidently says of his genuine love for manhood. Because his message is ageless and eternal, it will always be valuable. He was a man who gave us advice on how to reestablish our friendship, love, and harmony. He asserts that the way we are living in this world is not the best way to live in brotherly love. We have broken up into different sects, communities and nations fighting with one another. We live in a world ripped apart by conflict and hatred. Buddha's message here is to defeat hatred with love and anger with non-hatred. He gave us advice on how to develop a compassionate and loving heart.

Buddha was deeply concerned with the sufferings of man and very much eager to heal their sorrows. Buddha was the personification of self-sacrifice, understanding, and love; his heart was always full with kindness when he observed other people's suffering. His entire goal was to demonstrate how to achieve the ideal state of peace and tranquillity and free oneself from the agony and enslavement of suffering. For this he renounced all the good things of earthly life and went through tremendous penance and self-suffering. He was successful in his effort. He has shown us the way. His approach is not extreme. He followed the middle path (the Madhyama marga). This is the best method for resolving the ethical and spiritual issues that arise in daily life. His "Four Noble Truths" are a significant finding for the moral advancement of all people. These admirable truths will always have significance. The most basic reality about existence is his first noble truth, which is that "life is full of suffering." We cannot deny that in spite of the tremendous scientific and technological achievements, mankind is still suffering from the most terrible pain and sorrows of life. After reflecting on the source of pain, Buddha found that the main reason people suffer in life is ignorance of reality. He exemplified it with a chain of twelve links, using the well-known Buddhist idea of dependent origination, which upholds that everything has a cause. Here are 12 links of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppada), which explain the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth as mentioned above:

1. Avijja (Ignorance) – Lack of understanding of the true nature of reality.
2. Sankhara (Formations/Volitional Actions) – Volitional activities driven by ignorance.
3. Vinnana (Consciousness) – The arising of consciousness conditioned by Sankhara.
4. Namā-rupa (Mind and Matter) – The mental and physical phenomena arising from consciousness.
5. The term *salāyatana* (Six Sense Bases) refers to the six sense organs and the objects that correspond to them.
6. Phassa (Contact): The interaction of objects with sensory organs.
7. Vedanā (Feeling) – The sensation resulting from contact.
8. Tanha (Craving) – Desire or attachment arising from feelings.
9. Upadana (Clinging) – The clinging's or attachments that strengthen craving.
10. Bhava (Existence): The clinging-driven process of becoming or existing.
11. Jati (Birth) – Birth into a new life form.

12. Jaramarana (Old Age and Death) – The inevitable aging and death that follow birth.

Once more, his third noble truth confirmed that eradicating the cause of misery in life is possible. In his fourth noble truth he has given us the famous ‘eight – fold – path’ consisting of right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought and right concentration which take us to the end of suffering. These are the moral disciplines by following which we can overcome the baser passions of our nature and get rid of all the defects which are already there in our hearts. His teachings inspired everybody – laymen, householders, monks, and women. Buddha was a great preacher of equality. For him all men are equal. Every man and woman have the same right to attain spirituality. The highest achievements were due to everyone, even the lowest. He holds that when it comes to man's holy life, there is no significance in distinctions based on caste, creed, colour, birth, sex, etc. Actually, his goal was to free all of humanity. The enlightened one should postpone his own liberation till the entire human race is liberated. He, therefore, advised his pupils to preach his Dhamma for the well – being of all. Buddha never saw himself as a great prophet whose teachings should be taken at face value or as an earthly representative of God. He urged his disciples to evaluate his teachings based on their own experiences. This critical approach is the most appropriate way for bringing about permanent solutions of all the practical problems of life. Buddha, by his own personal example, has shown that man can attain enlightenment through his own moral and spiritual effort. He has got absolute faith in man. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in his foreword to “2500 years of Buddhism” writes: “The Buddha aimed at the development of a new type of free man, free from prejudices, intent on working out his own future, with reliance on one’s own self, *attadipa*. His humanism crossed racial and national barriers.”

To put it briefly, Buddhism teaches us to instil values such as compassion, love, forgiveness, equality, simplicity, renunciation, charity, and non-violence. The service of man is the core teaching of Buddhism. If we sincerely follow the teachings of Buddhism, we can develop peace and harmony in our own self and in our relationship with others. This will enable us to live life truly. There will be a natural end to the world peace issue.

To conclude, the Buddha's teachings on peace place a strong emphasis on mindfulness, compassion, and inner harmony as the cornerstones of real quiet. By becoming wise and acting morally, people can overcome their pain and advance harmony both within themselves and in the world. Ultimately, the Buddha's experiences inspire a life originated on knowledge, empathy, and mystical enlightenment, leading to lasting peace that exceeds both private calmness and group harmony.

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