

Philosophy of Creating Peace in Buddhism

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Abstract

In terms of creating peace, philosophy is reasonably said to have the method to create peace that is the method of dialogue and morality. As for dialogue, it might be considered as the initial step for creating the peace. Anyway, morality is one of those factors for creating peace because it separately involves training process, especially how to train mind. Regarding Buddhism, there are certainly two kinds of peace; namely, external peace and inner peace. External peace is concerned with how to live one's life with others in society peacefully. With this, five precepts which are well-known among the Buddhists as a moral law are practically used as a social regulation in which people in the society should comply with stringently. Thus, the process of creating the external peace in Buddhism relies on moral discipline that is five precepts. As for inner peace, it inevitably depends on getting mind trained. Since violence results from hatred mind, Buddhism turns to utilize the discipline of patience (*Khanti*) so as to prevent the undesirable situation that causes violence. Apart from patience, it is the discipline of Loving-kindness (*Metta*) so as to suppress harsh emotion and calm mental activities. According, discipline of patience and Loving-kindness are said to be the disciplines of getting mind trained.

Keyword: Philosophy; Peace; Patience; Loving-kindness.

Introduction

Religious organizations, who are born to serve others, have given way to the insane human ambitions and ended up placing greater emphasis on power and “having”, as in “being”. We spend almost all our energy to multiple mundane to hold large structures and leaving aside contemplation, simplicity and silence activities. We build great temples, but leave all that mattered, the construction of the human being¹. There are some constraints that require special attention for flourishing vibrant democracy.²

When philosophical problems are meaningfully brought up to discussion, a reason is one of significant factors for finding the way out of the problem. With this, seemingly, a reason cannot be separated from philosophical circumstances if a valid result of the discussion is to be eventually determined. According, reason is inevitably included in the systematic philosophy. When “Peace” is mainly concerned, the question might be considerably raised: How can philosophy play the vital role for creating peace? Simply, one of the processes of creating peace in general is dialogue; it is the process of preventing a conflict and war and brings back peace and reconciliation to society. Also, the dialogue is exactly used for finding a reliable knowledge among philosopher. Definitely, all of these are based on the reason; it might be the theoretical reason which is not enough to create a peace in society. So, a dialogue might be the initial step for creating a peace in society, for society is unified with various factors. Apart from dialogue, action, especially, personal behavior, is said to be essential process for creating such this peace. Philosophically, practical reason or morality is the philosophical process for indicating the expression of personal behavior in positive way, for practical reason or morality extremely arms at virtuous conduct, goodness and happiness. All of these are said to be the way to create peace in philosophical circumstances.

¹ Barahona, Humberto, “Right Human Relations and World Peace”. **Journal of MCU Peace studies**, Vol.4 No.1. (2016), pp. 288-294.

² Gyeltshen, K. and Sripokangkul, S. “Bhutan’s Unique Transition to Democracy and its Challenges”, **Journal of MCU Peace studies**, Vol. 5 No.1(2017), pp. 281-296.

Buddhism concerns both outer and inner factors for creating a peace; one is how to live the life together with other without any kind of conflict, and the other one is how to get one's own mind trained. The former emphasizes the law which is the social regulation consensually accepted by the people therein; it is so-called "moral law" in Buddhist philosophy. The latter is the law for self-training; it is a regulation for getting mental activities, i.e., emotions, behaviors, attitudes, to be trained respectively. As of deeply understanding of how to comply with the moral law and get mind trained for the purpose of creating a peace, initially, Buddhism straightforwardly indicates two sides of a conduct; namely, an evil conduct that people has to completely prevent and a good conduct that people has to get trained physically and mentally; then, indicates the way to get mental activities trained respectively.

The Evil Conduct

Buddhism reveals an undesirable conduct that might unfortunately instigate a bad action and cause a conflict. The undesirable conduct might in some respect called the first cause of violence that is centered on personal actions. What is the undesirable conduct? According to Buddhism, it is the evil conduct performed by three acts as follows³;

1) By the physical act, it is misconduct by bodily action; that is, the termination of life of beings, taking things which the owner has not given, in the way that thief would do, and wrong behavior in regard to sex.

2) By verbal channel of an act, it is misconduct by verbal action; that is, lying, slandering, rude speech, and frivolous talk.

3) By mental channel of an act, it is misconduct by mental action; that is, covetousness, ill-will, and wrong view.

All of ten evil actions are mainly rooted by immoral minds that are attachment (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*).

³ P.A. Payutto, **Good, Evil, and Beyond Kamma in Buddha's Teaching**, Bruce Evans. (translate), Bangkok: Buddha Dharma Education Association, 1992.

To put it more precisely with regard to ten evil actions and three root of immoral minds, Buddhism clearly gives the details of each evil action caused by the root of immoral mind.

By the misconduct with a physical action, the termination of life of beings is performed with a root of the immoral mind of aversion, to take the things which the owner has not given, stealing, can sometimes be performed either with the root of immoral mind of attachment or sometime with the root of immoral mind of aversion, and the wrong behavior in regard to sex, misconduct in sex, can be performed with the root of immoral mind of attachment.

By the misconduct with a verbal action, lying, slandering, rude speech, and frivolous talk might be performed with the root of immoral mind of attachment if their purpose is to obtain something for oneself such as being beloved to others, etc. They might be some respect performed with the root of immoral mind of aversion if their purpose is to harm the other.

By the misconduct with a mental action, it is effectively performed with both the root of immoral mind of attachment and aversion. Ill-will can be performed with the root of immoral mind of aversion, for it has an intention to harm or hurt the other. As for a covetousness and a wrong view, they can exactly be performed with the root of immoral mind of attachment.

Buddhism reveals all ten kinds of evil actions which are performed through bodily, speech, mental actions. All of them are frankly said to be the dark side of a personal action caused by one's own roots of an immoral mind and also create a negative effect to society. Purposely, Buddhism initially indicates all evil actions and their causes centered on person themselves, the roots of immoral mind, in order that they should turn back to look at their own mind and suppress evil action caused by immoral minds or even get rid of all root of immoral actions when they has considered an negative effect of the evil actions and their caused.

The Good Conduct

Apart from an evil conduct, by contrast, Buddhism discloses positive side of personal actions resulted by getting trained, whether physical training, verbal training, and mental training respectively. Good conducts, according to Buddhism, are as follows⁴;

1) A good conduct by an act, preventing from killing, from stealing, and from misconduct in sex;

2) A good conduct by speech, preventing from telling lie, slandering, rude speech, and from frivolous talk; and

3) A good conduct in thought, performing with good will and a right view but preventing from covetousness.

All of these actions are deeply caused by the root of personal moral mind, i.e., generosity (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*).

The Moral Law for Goodness and Happiness as the Art for Creating Outward Peace

What people need for their life is undoubtedly happiness, definitely, not suffering life. So, how to live the life happily and how to get happiness to their life are the main points for discussion. Extremely, Buddhism comes out with the considerable answer of this point. According to Buddhism, happiness can come with unification of the group of people as Buddha's word mentioned in *Dhammapada*, "The unification of people among their group is happiness (*Sukhā sanghass samaggi*).” Besides answering such this question, Buddhism give the way to unify people for bring the happiness to them purposely. It is the moral law that the people in each society has to stringently comply with; it is the so-called "Precept (*Sīla*)". With regard to a precept (*Sīla*), in Buddhism, it is philosophically regarded as moral codes that people in the society has to unanimously accept them and lives their routine life with these codes. The moral code suitable for people in society consists of five codes as follows⁵:

⁴ Buddhaghosa, Bhadantācariya. **The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)**, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. (translate), Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1991; Gorkom, Nina van. **Abhidhamma in Daily Life**. London: Zolag, 2009.

⁵ P.A. Payutto, **Good, Evil, and Beyond Karma in Buddha's Teaching**, 1992.

- 1) Abstaining from bringing about the termination of life of beings (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*),
- 2) Abstaining from taking things which the owner has not given, in the way that thief would do (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī*),
- 3) Abstaining from wrong behavior in regard to sex (*Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*),
- 4) Abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā veramaṇī*), and
- 5) Abstaining from drinking intoxicating liqueurs (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*).

Why do these five moral codes unify people and bring happiness to their life? In this point, Buddhism points out that the main aim of five moral codes is virtuous behavior, goodness, and happiness; all are highly expected in moral circumstances. To put it more accurately about the main aim of five moral codes, Buddhism classifies them into good conduct through three channels of an act, good conduct by a physical act, good conduct by a speech: (1) Abstaining from bringing about the termination of life of beings (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*), (2) abstaining from taking things which the owner has not given, in the way that thief would do (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī*), (3) abstaining from wrong behavior in regard to sex (*Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*), and (5) abstaining from drinking intoxicating liqueurs (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*) are classified into the good conduct by a physical act; and abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā veramaṇī*) is classified in the good conduct by an act of speech.

Therefore, five precepts are said to be the moral code to get people train their behavior with good conducts by a physical act and a verbal act; here might also be called “a virtue is as the initial (good)”. Those who follow five precepts are certainly deemed to be good people with having a virtuous behavior in this regard. Together, it makes a positive effect to the society in which the society can be arranged in order. Eventually, peace and harmony can be jointly created in society. However, regarding Buddhism, here is said to be an outward peace owning that it results from a good conduct by outward act, i.e. physical and verbal acts.

Loving Kindness as the Art for Creating Inner Peace

How are people able to exactly perform a good conduct by a bodily act and a verbal act? According to Buddhism, it definitely depends on whether mind got trained or not owing that there are two roots of mind, i.e., an immoral root and a moral root. If any act is motivated by any immoral root of mind, an evil conduct must be inevitably performed by whether bodily act, verbal act, or mental act. By contrast, a good conduct will firmly be performed by whether bodily, verbal, or mental act if any act is activated by a moral root of mind. To be precise, the roots of mind is the root of action. To create inward peace is to get mind trained so as to suppress an evil act activated by the immoral roots of mind and perform a good act activated by the moral roots of mind⁶.

Violence arises from hatred mind or ill will which is one of the factors of an evil conduct and makes a strong influence to human behavior resulting performing evil conducts, for example, killing, talking a rude word, etc. Thus, firstly, mind has to be continually trained so as to prevent violently confrontation when a conflict is arising. With this, Buddhism comes out with intelligent strategy to prevent the violence arising with hatred mind by using the Patience (Khanti), for it is practically considered as the best moral practice as saying in Dhammapada:

*Khanti paramam tapo titikkha
nibbanam paramam vadanti buddha*
The best moral practice is patience and
forbearance; “Nibbana is Supreme”,

said the Buddhas.

To use patience when violent confrontation arising is to get trained to be mindfulness and change harsh emotion to calmness.

Apart from patience, Buddhism prefers using the discipline of Loving-kindness (*Metta*) so as to suppress harsh emotion and calm mental activities.

⁶ See in Phramahāsamaṇachao Kromphrayā vajirañāṇavarorasa, Somdet, **Nvakovāda: Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bikkhus and Sāmaṇeras**, Bangkok: Mahāmakūṭ-rājavidyālaya, 1971.

How can Loving-kindness suppress harsh emotion, the cause of violence, and calm mind? Buddhism explains the characteristic of loving-kindness in the path of purification (*Visuddhimagga*) as following:

It is promoting the aspect of welfare. Its function is to prefer welfare. It is manifested as the removal of annoyance. Its proximate cause is seeing loveliness in beings. It succeeds when it makes ill-will subside, and it fails when it produces (selfish) affection.

By the passage above, the Loving-kindness plays most essential role for creating inward peace, for it concerns with suppressing the harsh emotion caused by hatred mind and subside ill-will together with activating lovable mind in all human beings. Moreover, the significance of Loving-kindness aims at secluding the mind from hate seen as a danger and introducing it to patience known as an advantage. Successfully, regarding the purpose of the discipline of loving-kindness, in *The Path of Purification*, firstly, it should start with reviewing the danger in hate, then the advantage in patient, for hate has to be abandoned and patience attained in the development of this meditation⁷.

To review the danger in hate, it should review the influence of hate making a severe impact again the man who is under its influence that resulting in terminate other life subsequently, as saying in *The Path of Purification*, “Friends, when a man hates, is a prey to hate and his mind is obsessed by hate, he kills living things, and ...”

Besides, the advantage in patient should be understood clearly, especially the significance and the rule of patience as mentioned in *The Path of Purification*:

“No higher rule, the Buddhas say, than patience,

And no Nibbāna higher than forbearance”;

“Patience in force, in strong array:

“Tis him I call a brahman”

“No greater thing exists than patience”.

⁷ See in Upatissa, Arahant. **The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimagga)**, Rev. N. R. M. Ehara Soma Thera, Kheminda Thera. (translate), Columbo: Balcombe House, 1961.

Regarding the process of pervading Loving-kindness, it should firstly be done to himself, then to the others. Anyways, the purpose of creating the inward peace by using the Loving-kindness mainly aims at the hostiles. So, it is not easy to Loving-kindness to the hostiles because the resentment is always arising whenever the wrong doings from the hostiles are remembered. The main point in this regard is to subside or get rid of the resentment against the hostiles. In this point of views, Buddhism comes out with an intelligent strategy that is to admonish ourselves, to review an equality of oneself and the hostile and to give a gift.

By admonishing ourselves, in *The Path of Purification*, such this strategy is explained in many ways; for example, we should admonish ourselves by reminding ourselves that;

“If you are angry now, you will be one who does not carry out the Blessed One’s teaching; by repaying an angry man in kind you will be worse than the angry man and not win the battle hard to win; you will yourself do to yourself the things that help your enemy; and you will be like a pyre log.” Regarding the passage above, it indicates the way to remind ourselves that if we cannot suppress the harsh motion and are possessed by hatred mind, we might not be able to follow Buddha’s teaching successfully. Worse still, we might not be different from the angry man if we try to hurt them in revenge for the mistake the angry man had done to us; we might be worse than them in this regard and it is hard to us to succeed in whatever we try to. Here it indicates the danger in angry and repaying too.

However, if the resentment cannot be subsided in the way of admonishing ourselves, we should review the quality of ourselves by comparing with the hostiles. With this, in *The Path of Purification*, it is to reviews the fact that we ourselves and the other are owners of their deeds.

If the resentment cannot subside this reviewing, we should review the special qualities of the Master’s former conduct as saying;

“Now you who have gone forth, is it not a fact that when your Master was a Bodhisatta before discovering full enlightenment, while he was still engaged in fulfilling the perfections during the four incalculable ages and

a hundred thousand aeons, he did not allow hate to corrupt his mind even when his enemies tried to murder him on various occasions?”

If resentment cannot subside in this way, then we should review by dealing with beginninglessness [of the round of rebirths]. By this, when we cannot find out who has not firmly been our father, etc., then, we should think about this people as saying, “This person, it seems, as my mother in the past carried me in her womb for ten months...”

If the resentment cannot subside in this way, to give a gift is some way to subside the resentment. In *The Path of Purification*, it suggests the way to amicably give the gift that it can either be given by himself to the other or accepted by himself from the other.

Conclusion

What all people in society need is firmly goodness, happiness, and virtuous behavior. Regarding Buddhism, all of the needs can exactly be activated by the Buddhist moral codes; that is, five precepts. How can five precepts bring happiness, goodness, and virtue to the people and society? Buddhism steadily accepts that happiness, goodness, and virtue arise from getting physically and verbally trained that the process of such these trainings can practically be concluded in five precepts. Having got trained along with five precepts, they can be called “moralized and virtuous one” that can bring happiness to society in this regard. In other ways, five precepts can debar the conflict caused violence, for each code of them gets people trained of how to prevent from evil conducts such as bad bodily action, etc. that people can live their life together with others in society peacefully and happily.

In the case people is possessed by hatred mind resulting in resentment when they are to inevitably confront with their hostiles. With this, Buddhism suggests the way to subside such the resentment by activating mind with a patient and a discipline of Loving-kindness (*Metta*). Regarding the discipline of Loving-kindness, it cannot easily be used for subsiding the resentment; so, various strategies in Loving-kindness have to be used for stopping the resentments.

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