

Buddhists Paradigms of Peace and Prosperity

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Buddhism teaches that whether we have global peace or global war is up to us at every moment peace or war is our decision. The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace, not only peace in this world but peace in all worlds. The Buddha taught that the first step on the path to peace understands the causality of peace when we understand what causes peace; we know where to direct our efforts. No matter how vigorously we stir a boiling pot of soup on a fire, the soup will not cool. When we remove the pot from the fire, it will cool on its own and our stirring will hasten the process stirring causes the soup to cool, but only if we first remove the soup from fire. In other words, we can take many actions in our quest for peace that may be helpful.

But if we do not first address the fundamental issues, all other actions will come to naught.

The Buddha taught that peaceful minds lead to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. If the minds of living beings are at peace, the world will be at peace.

According to Buddhist teachings, after death a human being. All sentient beings are seen as passing through the unending cycle of the wheel of rebirth. They are born, they grow, old, become sick, and die. They are reborn, grow old, get sick and die. Over and over and over again.

Individual karma is not limited to a single line. What you did in your past lives determines your situation in your present life. If you did good deeds in past lives, the result will be an auspicious rebirth. If your actions in past lives were predominantly bad, your situation in the present will be inauspicious. In this life you act more like an animal than a human being, your next rebirth will be as an animal.

Buddhists believe that the minds of all living beings are totally interconnected and interrelated, whether they are consciously aware of it or not. To use a simple analogy for the interconnection, each being has his or her own transmitting and receiving station and is constantly broadcasting to all others his or her state of mind and is constantly receiving broadcast from all others. Even the most insignificant thoughts in our minds have some effect on all other beings. How much the

more so do our strong negative emotions and our acting out of them in direct or indirect forms of physical violence! In other words, each thought of us brings the world either a little closer to the brink of global disaster or helps to move the world a little farther away from the brink. Each time we feel irritated, annoyed, thwarted, outraged, or just plain frustrated, we reflect on the consequences of our thoughts, words and actions, perhaps that reflection in itself will help to lead us to behave in a way that will contribute to global peace.

As we acutely feel, all is not well in the contemporary existential scenario and this calls for a paradigm shift in our value-perceptions, in our modes of thinking and in our ways of living. We are passing through a critical period struggling between best possibilities and worst possibilities. At the present juncture human kind is facing a crisis which is manifold and multi-dimensional. Human existence is stationed at a crossroad. It is a time when forces of unity and harmony can triumph, and marvels of science and technology can be used to ameliorate human suffering and ensure quality of life, precisely at this time forces of terror and violence and impulses of lower human nature are advancing menacingly on a global scale. The ratiocinative human mind is confronted with a dilemma as to how to respond to the present scenario.

The Buddhist ethical code springs from karuna. And it touches each and every form of existence. It therefore provides a solid basis for ecological concerns. Instinctive love and respect for and protection of nature and environmental awareness have been deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition as apart of general Indian tradition. Similarly the flow of Karuna is not confined to human beings alone and has to be extended to all creatures. All life is sacred, meaningful and valuable, Indian ethics not only regulates human conduct in relation to one's own self and in relation to other fellow human beings but goes a step further to bring in human conduct in relation to all living beings and natural environment. Every existence has intrinsic worth and it must be given due respect.

Buddhist approach to ethics is not rights based but obligation-oriented. It involves performance of one's obligation as per one's station in the total cosmic set up. In order that one can

perform ones duties property, skillfully and efficiently one must know ones nature and capabilities as those of others and also what is to be performed, how to be performed, when to be performed, why to be performed etc. But apart from this management of action there is a need for the management of result of action. It may be helpful to note that every purposive action has to be motivated but it has not to be intended. That is to say, the agent should know why the action is to be performed. That is to say, the agent should know why the action is to be performed and what shall be its con sequence. This apart he should have the will and skill to do so. But he should not be attached to the con sequence.

The world will be powerful and prosperous. Villages, towns and royal cities would be so close that a cock would fly from housetop to housetop.

The overall message of three suttas is that the path of peace, security and prosperity in the world here and how is twofold.

1. Eradication of poverty through such measures as ensuring equitable distribution of goods (i.e. welfare and services), subsidizing agriculture, providing capital to businesses and paying living salaries to public employees, and
2. Introduction moral values based on sanctity of life and property, sexual purity, right speech, respect to parents, elders and kindness, compassion, sympathy ethic joy and equanimity.

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