



THE BUDDHIST INTEGRATION FOR SOCIETY'S PEACE AND
HAPPINESS IN THE NEW NORMAL *

พุทธบูรณาการเพื่อความสงบสุขของสังคมในยุคชีวิตวิถีใหม่

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บทคัดย่อ

นับตั้งแต่เกิดมีการระบาดของโรคโควิด-19 (COVID-19) ก็มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงมากมายเกิดขึ้นในสังคม ไม่ว่าจะเป็นการปรับตัวในการดำเนินชีวิตหรือการปรับเปลี่ยนสิ่งแวดล้อม นั่นถือเป็นชีวิตวิถีใหม่ ซึ่งเป็นวิถีที่ได้สร้างสุขอนามัยทั้งส่วนตัวและส่วนรวม ได้เรียนรู้ว่าการมีภูมิคุ้มกันร่างกายและจิตใจเป็นสิ่งที่จำเป็น และได้พบว่าระบบการจัดการเศรษฐกิจ สังคม สิ่งแวดล้อม มีส่วนอย่างมากต่อการปรับตัวของคนในสังคม ในสถานการณ์เช่นนี้ ผู้คนในสังคมจำเป็นต้องมีภูมิคุ้มกันทั้งทางร่างกายและจิตใจ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งด้านจิตใจ ซึ่งเป็นตัวขับเคลื่อนสำคัญให้ชีวิตสามารถดำเนินไปได้อย่างดีที่สุด การจะมีภูมิคุ้มกันเช่นนี้ ต้องอาศัยความรักอันเป็นสากลเพื่อให้กำลังใจและส่งความปรารถนาดีแก่กันและกัน เป็นความรักที่เป็นไปเพื่อประโยชน์สุขของผู้อื่นเป็นหลัก เช่นเดียวกับความรักของพ่อแม่ที่มีต่อบุตร ในสถานการณ์ที่กำลังเกิดขึ้นในสังคมไทยปัจจุบัน เป็นสถานการณ์ที่จำเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่ทุกฝ่ายจะต้องหันหน้าเข้าหากัน และแผ่เมตตาถึงกันและกัน เพื่อเพิ่มระดับความรักสากลในจิตใจ ในที่สุด สมาชิกทุกคนในสังคมก็จะรู้สึกได้ถึงความสุขในจิตใจที่แท้จริง ทั่วทุกแห่งหนบนผืนแผ่นดินนี้ ก็จะมีแต่ความสุขตลอดกาล นั่นถือเป็นการบูรณาการหลักธรรมพระพุทธศาสนา

คำสำคัญ: พุทธบูรณาการ; ความสงบสุข; สังคมในยุคชีวิตวิถีใหม่

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ABSTRACT

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, many changes have occurred in society, whether it's adapting to life or changing the environment that is called new normal life. It is regarded as the way to create both personal and public hygiene, learn that physical and mental immunity is very important, and find that the economic, social, and environmental management systems play a huge part in the adjustment of people in society. In this situation, people in society need both physical and mental immunity, especially the mental being a key driver for life to be able to carry on at its best. So that to have such immunity it does need universal love to encourage and spread good wishes to one another. In the current situation of Thai society, it is really necessary to spread the Loving-Kindness towards one another without border to increase level of love in mind. Finally, every member of whole society could feel peace and happiness. If we all spread love together to the world today, it can be confirmed here that the whole society will not surely be in the difficult situation; there would be only peace and happiness worldwide. That is the integration of Buddhist teachings.

Keyword: Buddhist integration; peace; Society in a new way of life

Introduction

In the midst of the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, many changes have occurred in society, whether it's adapting to life or changing the environment that is called new normal life. It is regarded as the way to create both personal and public hygiene, learn that physical and mental immunity is very important, and find that the economic, social, and environmental management systems play a huge part in the adjustment of people in society. In this situation, people in society need both physical and mental immunity, especially the mental being a key driver for life to be able to carry on at its best. So that to have such immunity it does need universal love to encourage and spread good wishes to one another.

According to opinion of Scott Peck, whose work in the field of applied psychology explored the definitions of love and evil. Peck maintains that love is a combination of the "concern for the spiritual growth of another," and simple narcissism. Love is a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that ranges from interpersonal affection ("I love my mother") to pleasure ("I loved that meal"). It can refer to an emotion of a strong attraction and personal attachment. Philosopher Gottfried Leibniz said that love is "to be delighted by the happiness of another." Biologist Jeremy Griffith defines love as "unconditional selflessness".

Hence, it can be said that Love is the essential factor of human beings. The worldly complete life must be contained with Love. Without Love, life is not real life. Without Love, personal and family life cannot go on happily and peacefully. Love is also the element of couple life; meanwhile, love is not merely meant a marriage; it is in a marriage-the couple which is nourished by love. Love also can nourish human's heart and strengthen spirit. If we all spread love together to the world today, the society would not be in the difficult situation; there would be only peace and happiness worldwide. So it is hard to deny that love is not the most important in our daily life.

Real Love in Buddhism

According to the Buddhist view, the word "Love" stands for "Metta" or Loving-Kindness, which is really pure love for leading the world to peace and happiness. Loving-Kindness is benevolent love. This love is unconditional and requires considerable self-acceptance. It is also regarded as the universal love and unlimited love. This is quite different from ordinary love, which is usually about attachment and sex and which rarely occurs without self-interest. Instead, in Buddhism it refers to detachment and unselfish interest in others' welfare. It is similarly like a parents' love to their children. In order to live



together peacefully and happily as a warm family, according to Buddhist thought, parents have their duty not only feeding children but also the following categories:

- 1) They restrain him (them) from vice,
- 2) They exhort him (them) to virtue,
- 3) They train him (them) to a profession,
- 4) They contract a suitable marriage for him (them), and
- 5) In due time they hand over his (their) inheritance.

In five ways a child should minister his duties in return to parents as the eastern quarter:-

- 1) Once supported by them I will now be their support;
- 2) I will perform duties incumbent on them;
- 3) I will keep up the lineage (of my family);
- 4) I will keep up the tradition of my family;
- 5) I will make myself worthy for my heritage.

If every family member tries one's best on duty whole society would surely become peaceful and happy. Here, it is an experience concerning Loving-Kindness. By nature, it is not easy for me to believe in some thing without any provability or consideration. As the Lord Buddha said in the Kalamasutta "you need to know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them." Accordingly, I always try to prove whatever I would have some doubts, like cultivating Metta (Metta Bhavana), etc. through doing that, what will happen? How does it affect to the doer? Not only that, I also want to prove the Law of Karma, in which I strongly believe; none of living things can escape from this law of nature, even the Buddha, the Exalted One. Hence, I started to study and search from the several Buddhist Texts: the Tipitaka including the Commentaries, Sub-Commentaries and Visuddhimagga during my life in University.

Actually, I have been practicing the spread of my Loving-Kindness towards all living beings since I was 18 years old only. At beginning, I remembered that I just wanted to be free from worry when facing some difficulties in life; then I started to spread Loving-Kindness toward all livings in order to gain coolness and calmness in my mind. This method causes me sleep deeply; there is no need to get any help from the sleeping pill.

I have been keeping on spreading loving-kindness toward all livings every moment: bathing, walking, and talking, etc. and practiced more and more. Not so long, I caught a hard



sickness (3 years after started cultivating Metta) and had to get a continuous treatment in the hospital for 28 days. In the hospital, I became to know more about ‘Power of Loving–Kindness’ when a man who was serving in the hospital blamed me that “Do not believe in doctor too much if you still want to have long live.” I didn’t listen to this man’s word. Oppositely, I did whatever the doctor had suggested me; that is why my life could be saved so far. In fact, the man himself had a stomach problem, but he did not believe in doctor’s warning. Accordingly, one day he ate the slang food. Consequently, he had serious illness caused by eating such slang food, so that the doctor had to provide him the serious treatments for approximately 12 hours to save his life.

Through the above story, I had learned a good lesson that is ‘Do not try to blame others’, otherwise, the karma would return to yourself. I remember well about the story of Julapanthaka, who used to be an intelligent man in former life; but in this life in the time of our Buddha he born to be Julapanthaka, and became a very foolish one who could not remember even one stanza because in his previous life he looked down a foolish man. Accordingly, do not try to blame and look down others. On the other hand, one should not be jealous on others’ successfulness because in return it would be difficult to gain successfulness in one’s own life. Hence, it is very needful to control personal feeling concerned the others. In this connection, I never feel jealousy when seeing others’ success. I always think that I can do the same as they did or maybe better than that in the future. By such thought, I never want to take others’ properties for myself and never look down my ability including other’s, too. Of course, it also helps me to strengthen my heart and encourage myself to overcome all the obstacles and difficulties facing life in the busy world so far.

After a such kind of incident, I have no doubt about the power of loving–kindness; so that keep on spreading my loving–kindness more and more every moment in order to reach perfection somehow.

Eleven Benefits of Loving-Kindness

During my further study in India (1995–2004), I had experienced several examples, which happened to me occasionally. The following story is an example of those:

Once, when I was walking into a market near by the Ganges of Varanasi, a biggest and holy river of all Indians, to buy some fish for the sake of releasing into the river as usually; unexpectedly, about seven dogs had come on with the willing to bite me. I myself



stopped moving and looked at those dogs for a while and spread Metta toward them. Fortunately, there was a big friendly-feel dog with brown color appeared in the front of me and obstructed those. Suddenly, those dogs had changed their behaviors and friendly acted to me. I was very surprised how the big friendly-feel dog came to save me in the needful time. Besides, I have noticed several times that there always is someone or some thing providing me the solutions when facing some difficult situations. Analyzing the good results (benefits) of cultivating Metta, especially in Mettasutta and Visuddhimagga vol. 2, I had found that the good result of the said story derived from one of the eleven benefits of cultivating Metta. As in Visuddhimagga vol. 2 it has been mentioned that the one, who always spreads his loving-kindness toward all living things more and more, is able to expect the eleven benefits as follows:-

1. to sleep happily,
2. to wake up happily,
3. to not see bad dream,
4. to be beloved one of human beings,
5. to be beloved one of inhuman beings,
6. to be protected by deities,
7. to not be harmed by fire, poison and weapons,
8. one's mind is to be quickly concentrated,
9. one's feature looks brightly (surpassingly),
10. to die unperturbed; and
11. not attaining to supramundane stages, he is certain to reach the state of high divinity of Brahmaloaka.

However, it should be noted here that the eleven benefits will return to the practitioner only when he cultivates loving-kindness constantly for long time. Through the spread of loving-kindness, I didn't expect any mentioned benefits. But I could notice that some of those always return to me, especially, the first seven. At the present time, I fall in sleeping and wake up easily and happily, never have bad dream, feel safe when going somewhere. It is because I always think that I am the beloved one of both human and inhuman beings, and also protected by deities; so that none could harm me. On the other hand, every one surrounding me always provides me some helps in every need-time. I do think that I have special power to enable somebody know whatever I am thinking about and give me hands somehow. By the way, formerly before starting to spread loving-kindness, I



had suffered from diarrhea often, but now I never face any trouble from this kind of disease again. It seems to be that any type of poisons can do no harm for me anymore. Nowadays I still spread my loving-kindness toward all livings every moment in silence and I can feel the responses from them. The one who wants to have the same experience as mine should start right now, but it requires practicing constantly for a long period. Just try...once...somehow.

How to Spread Loving-Kindness

The followings are the methods to spread loving-kindness toward oneself and other livings. It is just simply to be repeated every moment. This is method to :-

Aham avero homi (May I be free from enmity),

Abbyapajjho homi (May I be free from ill-will),

Anigho homi (May I be free from troubles of mind and body),

Sukhi attanam pariharami (May I be able to protect my own happiness).

The method to spread the loving-kindness towards the others including all living things is to say that:-

Avera hontu (May they be free from hostility),

Abyapajjha hontu (May they be free from affliction),

Anigha hontu (May they be free from distress),

Sukhi attanam pariharantu (May they are able to protect one's own happiness).

However, the practitioner does not need to say only in Pali language because to spread loving-kindness is the way to transfer one's good wishes to others including all livings. The practitioners can spread it through any language individually. In the beginning, you have to spread your loving-kindness towards yourself and then others. Thus, initially, the good benefits would return to you automatically. Besides, you will feel safe from the different kinds of dangers and become a beloved one of both human beings and animals. But you have to really spread it without expecting any benefit.

Remember that you have to spread it in every moment you would be free, especially the time to go to bed or outside your house. On the one hand, you also can do when facing some problems that make you think and concern too much; you will feel relief.



Conclusion

Here, it can be seen how much great my love's power is, and also are able to attain this kind of power with practice the loving-kindness constantly for long time. The loving-kindness can be named as powerful protector, too. If you are looking for some protector, I would love to introduce you to do cultivate Metta increasingly. Also it is a very good way to do meditation through cultivating Metta. With all my pure love, I just want you to share my great experiences. Although it would be less in showing how do I feel about truly happiness, but all of you may practice and feel happy as same as I do.

Finally, it can be concluded here that the Loving-Kindness is benevolent love. This love is unconditional and requires considerable self-acceptance. It is also regarded as the universal love and unlimited love. This is quite different from ordinary love, which is usually about attachment and sex and which rarely occurs without self-interest. Instead, in Buddhism it refers to detachment and unselfish interest in others' welfare. It is similarly like a parents' love to their children. In the current situation of Thai society, it is really necessary to spread the Loving-Kindness towards one another without border to increase level of love in mind. Finally, every member of whole society could feel peace and happiness. If we all spread love together to the world today, it can be confirmed here that the whole society will not surely be in the difficult situation; there would be only peace and happiness worldwide.

Additionally, since the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, many changes have occurred in society, whether it's adapting to life or changing the environment that is called new normal life. It is regarded as the way to create both personal and public hygiene, learn that physical and mental immunity is very important, and find that the economic, social, and environmental management systems play a huge part in the adjustment of people in society. In this situation, people in society need both physical and mental immunity, especially the mental being a key driver for life to be able to carry on at its best. So that to have such immunity it does need universal love to encourage and spread good wishes to one another. In the current situation of Thai society, it is really necessary to spread the Loving-Kindness towards one another without border to increase level of love in mind. Finally, every member of whole society could feel peace and happiness. If we all spread love together to the world today, it can be confirmed here that the whole society will not surely be in the difficult situation; there would be only peace and happiness worldwide. That is the integration of Buddhist teachings.



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