



Humanism in Buddhism with Special Reference to Brahmavihara

Dr. Vivek Sharma

Academic-Coordinator, Kathua Campus

Faculty, Department of Buddhist Studies

University of Jammu, Jammu

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ABSTRACT

Humanism is a logic or a way of considering around the world. It is a set of morals or thoughts around how individuals ought to live and act. Individuals who hold these sets of morals are called humanists. Humanism refers primarily to a system of thought, which focuses on the individual's autonomy. Many humanists held many views which include. Humans deserve respect. Every human ought to be treated with regard and permitted to have respect. If all individuals act with regard for others at that point individuals will live in peace and believe. Individuals ought to all be able to choose how they needed to live their lives. They should make reasoning to make decisions and solve problems. The humanistic morals of Buddhism were much superior to the Indian ethical guidelines and too spread all over Asia. It set forth an ideal of universal compassion identical to Universal Nirvana. In brief, the Buddha fixed up the mission of his life on the 'well-being' of humanity. This is right that the Buddha organized an unparalleled system of missionary activity. His devotees went from town to town and city to city for broadcasting. After the enlightenment at the age of 35, Gautama Buddha committed his entire life to the sole reason of illuminating others. In addition, Buddha spent his life in concern for the sorrow of men and helping heal their troubles with his message for

the good of many

("Caratha,bhikkave,Cárikam bahujanahitáya bahujana-sukháya lokánukampáya attháya hitáya sukháya devamanussánam.") based on compassion of his humanity. The Buddhist concept of the Four Brahma viharas or the "divine abodes" are given as under:- 1) Metta—loving-kindness or goodwill, 2) Karuna—compassion, the awareness of the suffering of others and the desire for it to stop, 3) Mudita—sympathetic joy in the happiness of others, and 4) Upekkha—equanimity.. The Brahma-viharas are the Buddha's primary heart teaching that these are the ones connected most directly with our desire for true happiness. While the main focus shall be of this research paper, on how Brahm vihara can play a vital role in the establishment of humanity.

As an ethical and philosophical position, humanism highlights the worth of people, emphasising their potential for both personal growth and the welfare of others. A comparable ethical system can be found in Buddhism, especially in the Brahmavihāra (the Four Sublime States or Immeasurables), which are composed of Upekkhā (Equanimity), Karunā (Compassion), Muditā (Sympathetic Joy), and Mettā (Loving-kindness). These attributes serve as the cornerstones of ethical conduct in Buddhism and are the pinnacles of human goodness.

In addition to being essential to Buddhist ethical teachings, the Brahmavihāra also align with humanistic principles. They encourage practitioners to cultivate profound empathy and concern for all beings, overcome individual and cultural barriers, and support a generous and compassionate outlook on life.

The humanistic ethics of Buddhism developed much better than the Indian moral principles and also expanded to every part of Asia. It set forward a show of widespread sympathy as the same as all-inclusive Nirvana. In Buddhism, humanism is that attitude of mind that attaches primary importance to man and his faculties, dealings, temporal ambition, and welfare.

Gautama Buddha's teaching reveals his humanistic attitude. Buddhism is a religion of equality, compassion, and goodwill. Siddhartha Gautama founded the Buddhist religion in the 6th century BC and is unique among the founders of the religion in more ways than one. Humanism, as per Webster's new



international dictionary, is defined as, “A contemporary cult or belief calling itself a religion but substituting faith in man for faith in god.” C.F. Potter adds more to this definition and explains humanism as the faith in the supreme value of the self-perfectibility of human personality.

The Buddha then determined to achieve freedom from old age, sickness, and death by following the ascetic’s example. The mendicant is supposed to have expressed the following words to the Buddha:

Nara-Pungava janma-mrtyu bhitaḥ

Sraṃaṇaḥ Pravrajito smi mokṣaḥ hetoḥ¹.

(I am Sraṃaṇa, an ascetic, who in fear of births and death has left home life to gain liberation.)

After the attainment of enlightenment, the Buddha preached his realization to all hoping to bring about betterment in human welfare. Gautama Buddha spent his whole life in concern for the unhappiness of men and in helping cure their troubles with his message for the good of many based on compassion for humanity. The main verse of Gautama Buddha is given as under:

“Caratha, bhikkave, Cārikam bahujanahitāya bahujana-sukhāya lokānukampāya

atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam².”

He preached that the extreme of luxury and extreme of self torches in the name of purification both are harmful to the welfare and progress of human beings. Of course, these are unavoidable in the practical and day-to-day life of mankind, yet a person desirous of welfare and happiness should follow the middle path between these two extremes. The Buddha was a great harbinger of peace and happiness for mankind. He preached Compassion, Social Harmony, Social Equality and Human Dignity. Long ago, he set mankind free from dogmas and erroneous beliefs.

The humanist theme is prominent in all aspects of Buddhism. The Gautama Buddha, committed his whole life to making strides in society. The whole idea of Buddhism gives the message of humanism. The Buddha Gautama dedicated his entire life to the betterment of society. Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon at Deer Park, where he told about the Four Noble Truths.

Gautama Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths by addressing the existence of suffering, its cause, and its end. It is respected as one of the Buddha's most noteworthy lessons and his to begin with instruction.

Buddha's diagnosis of human disease from the four noble truths. These are

1. There is suffering. (Dukkha: bad state of mind)
2. There is a cause of suffering. (dukkha-samudaya Craving, lust, attachment, selfishness)
3. Suffering has been destroyed. (dukkha-nirodha A remedy is conceivable yet difficult)
4. There is a way leading to the destruction of suffering. ((dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-pratipad, Sila: Ethics, Samadhi: Pure mind, Prajna: wisdom).

Everyone on the planet aspires to lead a happy life. Nobody wants to be unhappy in this world. This was the first lesson that gave the message to all to live a happy life.

The Fourth Noble Truth is a corridor leading to the annihilation of misery. The Way is the suggested course of activity for finishing enduring. The Noble Eightfold Path is the name given to this route. The Eightfold Path is enumerated below:

1. Right View (Samma ditthi), an understanding or view of the nature of things in the world as they truly are. In particular, one should understand the first three Noble Truths: (a) the nature of suffering, (b) the cause of suffering and (c) the cessation of suffering.
2. Right Determination (Samma sankappa), Making confident or firm our thoughts and intentions toward others and ourselves are meant to help and support.
3. Right Speech (Samma vaca), Always communicate to promote harmony and understanding and avoid any harmful communication
4. Right Action (Samma kammanta) our actions promote moral and honorable conduct
5. Right Livelihood (Samma ajiva), The work you do in the world must not harm anyone or anything or compromise any of the precepts
6. Right Effort (Samma vayama), Ace your contemplations to advance loving-kindness and cancel cynicism.
7. Right Mindfulness (Samma sati), Awareness of all activities in the body and surroundings that are tangible and intangible.

8. Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi), in connection with practicing meditation and engaging in a fully immersive state of meditation.

Buddhism is often described as the complete development of human civilization. The main aim of Buddhist thought is the revival of humanity. These teachings promulgated by the Buddha were for the welfare of human beings which demonstrates his humanistic approach toward all living beings. This is how to visualize the possibility of universal ethics of humanity, which is just a different name for humanism in the sense of the religion of Universal Liberation.

The most significant principle of Buddhism is “The Middle Way” which involves a balanced approach to life and the regulation of one’s desires and actions. Buddhism is sometimes referred to as "The Middle Way," denoting the reconciliation of opposing extremes. The Middle Way, in its broadest definition, refers to the behaviors or mindsets that will bring satisfaction to oneself and others. That is similar to the humanist viewpoint in several ways, which holds that kindness and sympathy should be balanced with reason and reasoning.

According to the recorded history of Humanism, there have been unspiritual people who have believed that this existence is the only existence we have, that the creation is a normal occurrence with no supernatural side, and that we be able to live ethical, carrying great weight, and pleasing lives on the basis of reason and humanity. " "They have trusted the logical strategy to get it how the universe works, made moral choices based on concern for the welfare of human creatures and other aware creatures, and looked for to make a positive commitment to building a superior society."

On the other hand, Humanism is an approach to life-based on reason and our common humankind, recognizing that ethical values are appropriately established on human nature and encounter alone as per the Bristol Humanist Gather. Humanism is the belief that people can attain happiness and live well without relying on religion. A practical humanist upholds the dignity of humanity and embraces classical Greek and Roman values such as reason, justice, and ethics, as opposed to supernatural religious beliefs. Humanism started amid the Renaissance and was established in the Latin concept of "instruction that befits a civilized individual." Those who follow humanism are known as humanists and regularly have a profound understanding of writing, reasoning, and history.

In Buddhism, every verse shows some message for the welfare of human beings, like this verse, which is that people's duty, is to promote human welfare.

*“Sabbapāpassa akaranam,
kusalassa upasampadā,
sacittapariyodapanam,
etam buddhāna sāsana³”*

“Not to do cruel, To develop justify and to cleanse one’s intellect – this is the educating of the Buddha
These verses of Dhammapada show the way of life, wherein human beings can take the way to establish peace and happiness in society.

Manō Pubbangamā dhammā
Manō setthā manōmayā
Manasā cē padutthēna
Bhāsati vā karoti vā
Tatō nam dukkhamanvēti
Cakkamva vahotō padam⁴.

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their ruler; they are all mind-wrought. If an individual talks or acts with a debased intellect, enduring takes after him like the wheel that takes after the foot of the ox.

Manō Pubbangamā dhammā
Manō setthā manōmayā
Manasā cē pasannēna
Bhāsati vā karoti vā
Tatō nam sukhamanvēti
Chāyāva anapāyani⁵.

Mind precedes all mental states. Their primary mind; they are all products of the mind. When someone speaks or behaves with a pure mind, happiness follows them like a never-ending shadow.

To purify one's mind,

These 1st and 2nd verses of Yamaka Vaggo in Dhammapada encompass the critical idea in Buddha Dhamma: That the mind is at the forefront. This entire humanity is made of the mind and has the mind as the foundation for everything.

This is the Buddha's Teaching.

"Manōpubbangamā Dhammā" covers the significant idea in Buddha Dhamma: That the mind is the forerunner to all living and non-living things in the world. These two verses can be interpreted as mundane, as outlined above. Any given task with an undefiled mind will always lead to a pleasant and joyous state of mind.

There is a more in-depth interpretation. While, the thoughts, speech, and actions done with a defiled mind (*lōbha, dōsa, mōha*) can lead to births in the *apāyās* and, thus, to a high degree of suffering. Those done with a pleasant mind (*alōbha, adōsa, amōha*) will lead to births in the "good realms" and will eventually lead to *Nibbāna*, the end of all suffering.

The concept of Brahmavihāra is one of the most significant teachings and sermons of Gautama Buddha. It is interpreted as a sublime idea. The Brahmavihāra is fourfold, which is enumerated as (a) Mettā (Friendliness), (b) Karunā (Compassion), (c) Muditā (happiness), (d) Uppekkhā (Equanimity).

The Brahma vihāra has been eloquently mentioned in the Majjhima Nikāya, mentions as follows:

The application of Brahmavihāra to achieving peace and harmony in the world is now a recognized fact. This fourfold Sublime idea can create a peaceful, harmonious, and congenial atmosphere amongst persons and nations in the world.

The Mettā, that is to say, Friendliness is the first Brahmavihāra (Sublime idea) of the four Brahmavihāra. It is a stepping stone for obtaining peace and harmony in the world. The Mettā destroys ego and ill-will. It combines the hearts of the people. It helps in achieving love and harmony for human beings in the world. The import of Mettā has been nicely enunciated in the Metta sutta of the Sutta Nipata of the Khuddaka Nikāya. The relevant couplet of the Metta sutta renders as follows:

“Santussako ca subharo ca, appakiccoca sallahukavutti

Santindriyo ca nipakoca, appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho⁶”.

He ought to be placated, simple to bolster, unbusy, straightforward in vocation, with faculties controlled, tactful, not impudent, and not eagerly connected to families.

Naca khuddham samācare kiñci Yena viññū pare upavadeyyum Sukhino vā khemino hontu Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhi-tattā⁷

He would not commit any slight misdeeds that otherwise men might find fault in him. May all creatures be well and secure, and may their hearts cheer.

Karañīya mattha kusalena Yantam santam padam abhisamecca Sakko ujū ca sūjū ca Suvaco cassa mudu anātimāni⁸

He who is skilled in good, and wishes to attain that state of Peace, should act thus: he should be able, upright, perfectly upright, amenable to correction, gentle and humble.

All the verses of the Metta Sutta provided a message to humanity, wherein I have taken four verses that are more significant in today's world.

The inculcation of the Mettā Brahmavihāra helps in achieving the state of equality before all. It does not differentiate between person to person. In this respect, Gautama Buddha exhorts in the Metta sutta of the Sutta Nipāta by the following:

“Matā yathā niyam puttam, ayusā ekaputtamanurakkhe

Evampi Sabbabhūtesu mānasam bhāvaye aparimānam⁹”.

(That is to say: Just as a mother takes care of her only child with her life. Likewise, all beings should cultivate a boundless mind and loving thoughts for the entire world)

It is pertinent to note that the Mettā Brahmavihāra propounded by Gautama Buddha is more relevant to the modern world than ever before. Mention may be made of terrorism which is now a universal phenomenon. Almost every country is being affected by terrorism and extremism. In this situation, the Mettā Brahmavihāra can play a considered and decisive role in destroying terrorism. It will cultivate love and affection instead of hatred and enmity. The cardinal message given by the Buddha for the monks is very relevant nowadays to cultivate the Mettā Bhavanā amongst disillusioned, disgruntled, and disenchanted youth and persons who profess terrorism and extremism in the world.

In this way, the Metta Brahmavihāra gives a sense of brotherhood and solidarity with fellow citizens in the world.

The other Brahmavihāra, such as the Karunā, Muditā, and Uppekkhā are also helpful in getting peace and harmony all over the world. The Karunā Brahmavihāra has been emphasized by Gautama Buddha, and the Buddha is called Mahākrūṇika. It bestows compassionate kindness while destroying rivalry and jealousy. The concept of Brahma vihara is appropriate for establishing humanism in the world, wherein Metta, Karunā, Muditā, and Uppekkhā show the significant way for establishing harmony, peace, and happiness in society.

Buddhism insists on the supreme importance of the performance, on the part of the spiritual aspirant, of sublime duties like benevolence towards all (Maitri), compassion for the distressed (Karuna), joy at the happiness of others (Mudita), and indifference to the faults in other's (Upehha). It has been rightly observed that “meditational practices constitute the very core of the Buddhist approach to life. The Gautama Buddha's main motto was to free human beings from suffering.

In the end, we can say that the message of humanity is everywhere in Buddhist teaching but the concept of Brahmavihari provides a significant way to establish harmony, peace, and happiness for the well-being of society.

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