

TOWARDS ETERNAL PEACE

by

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THE BAD ELEMENTS THAT DESTROY PEACE

Once the king of celestial beings, *Sakka*, asked the Buddha a question:

“Reverend Sir, human beings, celestial beings, and many other living beings wish to live in peace, free from enmity, free from the threat either by weapons or by trade, free from enemy, free from worry and grief, and free from anger. Though they wish so, these beings have to live with enmity, enemy, anger, worry and grief under the threat either by weapons or by trade. On account of what bondage do they have to live in such conditions?”

The Buddha gave his reply to that question like this:

“O *Sakka*, although human beings, celestial beings, and many other living beings wish to live in peace, free from enmity, free from the threat either by weapons or by trade, free from enemy, free from worry and grief, and free from anger, they have to live with enmity, enemy, anger, worry and grief under the threat either by weapons or by trade. The reason they have to live in such conditions is that they are under the bondage of envy or jealousy (*issā*), and avarice or selfishness (*macchhariya*).

Envy and Jealousy (*Issā*)

1. If a person excels over another person in wealth, official position, etc.,
 2. If a family excels over another family in every respect,
 3. If a company excels over another company in every respect,
 4. If a race excels over another race in every respect,
 5. If a country excels over another country in every respect,
 6. If a group of countries excels over another group of countries in every respect,
- then an attitude that does not appreciate such a situation develops. This attitude is envy or jealousy (*issā*).

Avarice and Selfishness (*Macchhariya*)

1. The attitude that one can't bear to share one's wealth, prestige, knowledge, residential place and relatives with others,
2. The attitude that one can't bear to see others becoming prosperous, prestigious, knowledgeable, etc., as oneself,
3. The attitude that one can't bear to see the wealth, prestige, knowledge, etc. of oneself, one's family, one's company, one's race, one's country, and one's group of countries being attacked or insulted by other people, other families, other companies, other races, other countries, and other groups of countries is avarice or selfishness (*macchhariya*).

The basic cause for the arising of those bad elements is selfish love and hatred. As a rule one loves oneself, one's family, one's company, one's race, one's country, one's world group, and hates others, others families, other organizations, other races, other countries, other world groups. The attitude of this selfish love and hatred is the basic cause for the arising of envy or jealousy and avarice or selfishness. Those basic causes, that is selfish love or craving (*lobha*), anger or hatred (*dosa*), together with envy and avarice can be completely uprooted and destroyed by the Buddha's Middle

Path comprising Threefold Training — the training of morality (*sīla*), the training of concentration (*samādhi*) and the training of wisdom (*paññā*).

Based on pure morality, the four sublime qualities, namely, loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) as well as the eight types of meditative absorptions (*jhāna samāpatti*) on ten meditation devices called *kaṣiṇa* can be developed by following the Buddha's instructions. If one can successfully develop real *jhānas* in practising *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā*, then one can actually maintain loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity equally on all living beings.

The force of these four sublime qualities will drive selfish love and hatred far away. Thus anyone who successfully develops these sublime qualities will enjoy real peace. But this peace is attained only when the meditative concentration is high, and it slowly vanishes as the concentration relaxes. Thus it is just temporary peace. So one must go a step higher in order to convert that temporary peace into external peace.

The sure way to attain eternal peace is the Buddha's way of practising insight meditation (*vīpassanā-bhāvanā*).

Taking the meditative absorption (*jhāna samādhi*) as the meditation tool, one can investigate one's body and mind to understand the psycho-physical phenomena correctly. When one can develop the meditative absorption, the mind becomes very powerful and it will radiate very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light one can analyze the body to find out that the body is made up of billions of very tiny particles called *rūpa-kalāpa*. This *rūpa-kalāpa* is believed to be many times smaller than invisible atoms.

Furthermore, if the meditator can analyse the *rūpa-kalāpas*, he will realize that each *rūpa-kalāpa* is made up of the element of extension (*paṭhavī*), the element of cohesion (*āpo*), the element of heat (*tejo*), the element of motion (*vāyo*) and their derived material qualities.

According to the Buddha's teaching, all animate and inanimate objects in the whole world are composed of *rūpa-kalāpas*, and these tiny particles naturally arise and dissolve very rapidly. But they are not the sense-objects of insight-knowledge (*vīpassanā ñāṇa*). Only the ultimate realities such as *paṭhavī*, *āpo*, *tejo*, and *vāyo* that make up the *rūpa-kalāpas* are the sense-objects of insight wisdom. The meditator must first exert the effort to observe these ultimate realities clearly and penetratively with the insight wisdom of the right understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi-ñāṇa*).

Similarly, the meditator must investigate systematically to penetratively observe the mind and clearly understand that it is made up of consciousness (*citta*) and several mental factors (*cetasikas*), and that these ultimate mental realities also arise and dissolve extremely rapidly.

Since these ultimate mental and physical realities arise and dissolve rapidly and incessantly, they are impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), impersonal and not self (*anattā*). So they constitute the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha-sacca*).

The Causal Relations between the Ultimate Realities

The meditator, who has clearly observed and characterized the ultimate physical realities and mental realities with his own wisdom-eye, must strive on to understand the causal relations between these realities. He must realize penetratively with his own wisdom-eye that the physical entities and the mental entities arise as the result of such causes as ignorance of the ultimate realities (*avijjā*), greed or craving (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upadāna*), kamma formations (*saṅkhāra*) and kamma-process (*kamma-bhava*). One must realize these causal relations not only by theoretical concepts as described by the Buddha but also penetratively by one's wisdom of the right understanding.

There are many meditators in our meditation centers who can penetratively and vividly observe these causal relations. If a meditator is successful in striving to realize the causal relations with his own right wisdom, that realization is a form of the right view (*sammā-dīṭṭhi*) that correctly understands that the Noble Truth of Suffering arises on account of the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering (*samudaya-sacca*).

In the Buddha's teaching, men, women, persons, living beings, and celestial beings do not exist in the ultimate sense; only causes and effects exist. These causes and effects are called compounded things (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*). These compounded things are nothing but the impermanent entities (*anicca-dhamma*) that arise and dissolve rapidly, the unsatisfactory entities (*dukkha-dhamma*) as they are incessantly tortured by rapid arising and dissolution, the unsubstantial and impersonal entities (*anatta-dhamma*) as they do not represent any person or self or ego. The knowledge that understands penetratively the true nature of impermanence, the true nature of unsatisfactoriness or suffering, the true nature of not-self or non-ego is the right insight-wisdom (*vipassanā-sammā-dīṭṭhi*).

A meditator should strive to develop this right insight wisdom step by step. Soon after it becomes fully developed, the Noble Path – wisdom (*ariyamaggañāṇa*) will arise realizing *Nibbāna* - clearly. That *Nibbāna* is the incomparable supreme bliss and eternal peace known as the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha-sacca*). The eight Path factors that associate with the Noble Path-wisdom which realizes *Nibbāna* penetratively is known as the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*magga-sacca*).

That Noble Path-wisdom has the power to eradicate mental defilements (*kilesa*) which are the real causes of suffering. The Path-wisdom that arises stepwise in four stages can totally eradicate selfish love and hatred. When selfish love and hatred do not exist, envy and avarice no longer exist. At that time the meditator attains eternal peace. Starting from individual eternal peace, if the right effort can be exerted so that the majority of the world citizens attain eternal peace, then eternal world peace can be achieved certainly.

Satisfactory world peace can be attained right now if all world citizens observe five moral precepts which is the first step of the Buddhist practice and which is practised in nearly all religions. If they can develop meditative concentration, the world will enjoy more lasting peace. If they can develop Path-wisdom, indestructible eternal world peace will be attained.

These theoretical concepts are not just a theory. They have been repeatedly put into successful practice throughout the ages and they can be successfully practised here and now by anyone who is willing to strive strenuously to attain eternal peace. To make this individual eternal peace the eternal peace of the majority of world citizens it is ardently exhorted that everyone undertakes the Noble Practice of the Buddha.

May all living beings attain eternal peace.

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