

Buddhist Response For The Resolution Of Problems Of Social Conflict

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When Gotama , the founder of Buddhism embarked on what he conceived as the noble pursuit, the ultimate goal he had in mind was the attainment of a state of supreme peace. The Buddhist goal of Nibbana can be seen as the attainment of inner calm, and inner peace or harmony. Nibbana is often referred to as peace (shanti). Referring to the widely prevalent conflicts among adherents of different religious and philosophical dogmas of his time, the Buddhist pointed out that the truth of Nibbana is the single truth, realizing which people could put an end to all disputes. Accordingly the Buddha taught the realization of that truth, which enables people who realized it to live in peace. Being questioned by a Sakyan, regarding the nature of his teaching, the Buddha responded that the teaching was for the purpose of enabling people who transformed themselves in accordance with what was taught to live in the world without coming into conflict with anyone. There is no doubt that in these instances the emphasis in the Buddhist teaching and the way of life is to live in the world without engaging educating and training themselves, to live among the hateful without hatred, to live among those enslaved by craving without craving, to live among the deluded without delusion. But let us examine how could this help in resolving problem of conflict at the level of the larger society? This is often the question to which Buddhists have to respond when some critics of Buddhism point out that Buddhism is far removed from social concerns, and maintain that it is supposed to teach only a way for individuals to attain deliverance from samsaric suffering. The teaching of the Buddha recognized and includes social conflict in the wider predicament of suffering in its elucidation of the four noble truths. In the *Māhādūkkhakkhandha* Sutta conflicts what occurs at different levels of the social life of people are explained as parts of the mass of suffering that human beings are subjected to due to no other cause other than their pursuit of objects of sense desire (*kāma*). Human experiences of conflict, in whatever form it arise, could be seen as a signifying part of the first noble truth of suffering.

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