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What the Buddha taught about peace for Laymen

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Abstract: *The Buddha taught not only the matters to lead to Nibbāna (liberation, the ultimate goal of Buddhism), but also the secular matters to gain peace and happiness along the course to be born in the circle of births. The guidance of Buddha's secular matter is excellent ways and means to live in mundane household life. If one or others follow those ways and means, they will be able to accomplish any affair thoroughly and successfully. Nowadays many associations are established to bring about the welfare in religion, social affairs, and politics. The religious and social associations help those who are victims of calamity, giving the needs to them. Similarly, those from political parties or groups are trying to find solution of diversion in the country and to reconcile them. Thus each and every association or group is trying hard to stand as a unique integrated group through cessation of confrontations amongst different ethnics and by means of peaceful co- existence. The Buddha expounded the factors which every association or organization should follow to be steadfast and to last for long, in the discourse on sāraṇīya dhamma.¹ Sāraṇīya dhamma or sāraṇīya practice is that which must be remembered in one's heart constantly for a long time (or as long as one lives); so it may be called memorable practice. If each and every person of an association understands and always takes up sāraṇīya practice, that association will properly be united and succeed all affairs to do. Otherwise, the association will be poor in unity and not accomplish the tasks thoroughly and completely. Taking up the sāraṇīya practice can surely benefit a family, an association, a state, a global association in every aspect without difficulty. It is said that "Man is a social being". It is an ancient law that man lives in association with one another at least even in a family, that is the smallest unit of mankind. In any case, one cannot accomplish everything by oneself, so man has to perform the works hand in hand with other(s). For this reason, men have, to benefit the world, established associations such as the Buddhist Order, social associations, administrative bodies, political parties, education, institutions, etc. If the spouse of a family help one another along the life-journey, and consult through mutual respect and unity, they can lead a successful life. Unless they have unity, they will not be successful in life, but they have to face with various difficulties. Moreover, men should know the associated ones' needs to build up a peaceful and harmonious life. What are the needs to live with association? The needs are difficult to understand. The Buddha has instructed those needs from all points of view. In this article, the*

¹ MI.396,397;AI.205;AII.256

way of living in peace for laymen which the Buddha taught will be presented.

Keywords: Peace, Saraniya Dhamma, loving kindness, Buddha's way of living for laymen

Establishing Peace Through *Sāraṇīya* Dhamma

The Pāli word *sāraṇīya* can be derived into the root 'sar' and the future participial passive suffix 'anīya'; the root 'sar' means to remember. So the word "*sāraṇīya*" means that which should be remembered. *Sāraṇīya* is defined as: *ciraṃ sārīyate pavattāpīyate anussarīyateti sāraṇīyaṃ*, 'Sāraṇīya is that which is caused to be remembered for a long time'². And then *sāraṇīya dhamma* is defined as: *Saritabboti sāraṇīyo dhammo*, 'Sāraṇīya dhamma is that which should be remembered'³ or *Sāretuṃ arahatīti sāraṇīyaṃ*, 'That which should be remembered is *sāraṇīya dhamma*'⁴. So *sāraṇīya dhamma* implies factors which should be remembered. There are some "discourses on Factors which should be Constantly Remembered" in the Pāli Canon⁵. *Sāraṇīya dhamma* is, in other words, *sāraṇīya* practice.

In the *sāraṇīya dhamma*⁶, the Buddha expounded six factors to help any association or institution to unite and live peacefully and happily. They are *Mettā Kāyakamma* (Loving-kindness through Bodily Actions)

1. *Mettā Vacīkamma* (Expressing Loving-kindness Through Verbal Actions)
2. *Mettā Manokamma* (Expressing Loving-kindness Through Mental Actions)
3. *Sādhāraṇabhogī* (Sharing Property with Fellows)
4. *Sīlasāmaññagatā* (Equality in Morality)
5. *Diṭṭhisāmaññagatā* (Equality in view)

1. *Mettā Kāyakamma* (Loving-kindness through Bodily Actions):

In the discourse on *sāraṇīya dhamma*, the Buddha exhorted first, "*Mettaṃ kāyakammaṃ paccupaṭṭhitaṃ hoti sabrahmacārīs u āvi ceva raho ca*", 'A monk expressed loving-kindness through bodily actions towards his companions in the Noble Practice, whether in their presence or in their absence'. It implies that each and every one of an association must express loving-kindness through bodily actions towards his companions whether in their presence or in their absence. Loving-kindness through bodily actions means expressing loving-kindness by gesture or behavior. It is, however, important for leaders and their comrades of philanthropic associations founded by one

² AII.255;AAIII.89;ATIII.89.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sī T thit II. 248.

⁵ MI.396,397;AI.205;AII.256

⁶ MI.396,397;AI.205;AII.256.

patron or by some patrons together, to be their minds purified and of high spirit. In altruistic works, everyone should perform the respective task without any distinction of either love or hatred. Why? Because, there may be found two sorts of altruistic work: one working for welfare to the world or all people; another works superficially, but for one's own benefit. Those altruistic works that are wishing to do one's welfare or fame or attainment of social acceptance will diminish and totally disappear sooner or later. In addition, altruistic work is naturally to perform collectively; it cannot be accomplished by single one. So anyone who participates in the altruistic work should abandon selfish thought to gain one's own welfare or to get fame. And then, in a philanthropic group that is organized by many persons, each and every one should try to understand and tolerate one another. Everyone has his own ability and capacity; so everyone has to cooperate with others. Working altruistic affairs everyone has to dispel vanity and must endure criticism. In an association, the authority is superior to the position which one occupied; especially to work effectively in the association is the most important. In philanthropic affairs, one should work everything that he or she has to undertake bravely and altruistically until the task is accomplished. This is a kind of expressing loving-kindness through bodily actions; it can benefit oneself as well as others.

2. *Mettā Vacīkamma* (Expressing Loving-kindness Through Verbal Actions)

In society men have to deal with one another by means of bodily loving-kindness, but only it is not sufficient, they have to convey their loving-kindness to others through verbal actions, it may be said that it is more important. So the Buddha expounded, *Mettaṃ vacīkammaṃ paccupaṭṭhitam hoti sabrahmacārīsu āvi ceva raho ca*⁷, as the second factor in the discourse on *sāraṇīya dhamma*. It may be rendered as, 'A monk has expressed loving-kindness through verbal actions towards his companions in the Noble Practice, whether in their presence or in their absence.' Herein, the expression "*sabrahmacārīsu*" implies "companions in a residence" for monks, "colleagues" or "co-workers" for associations and social groups. It means that either companions or co-workers must express verbal loving-kindness towards one another. It is to deal with one another by means of loving-kindness whether in their presence or in their absence. The lesson is to avoid telling this in the presence and that in the absence.

⁷ VinIII.498; VinV.167; DII.68; DIII.203; MI.267,284,396; MIII.38,194,250,337; AII.255.

The people who are not wise and without intellect will tell goodness to someone in the presence; but they will say against him in the absence. When such one, who was told, re-hears the matter, he would be disappointed and there may become a problem. There is an old saying, “One dies due to his words; another one is crushed due to his hands (works)”. So, in society, there may be committed a fight due to words which they said. However people cannot naturally cultivate positive attitude; they are always apt to blame others. They despise and blame their own friends for the sake of their reputation, fame and pride. They have no sympathy to praise others. There will cease harmony and unity amongst friends or in an association as long as they are criticizing and blaming one another through envious attitudes. Consequently, all organizations from an association to a government would be out of range from peace and true happiness. That is why all should express verbal loving-kindness towards one another through benevolent mind.

Moreover, the Buddha expounded, “*Pharusena ne na paṭivajjā*”⁸ (Not to hit back them through harsh speech), when the others speak to one with harsh words. Considering that advice, it is obvious that everyone is apt to hit back in kind as he or she is overwhelmed with defilements such as vanity, anger, etc.; one is always satisfied to return in kind to the other for ten times. But hitting back in kind, there will never become a harmonious condition; a small verbal fight can cause to wage a world-war.

3. *Mettā Manokamma* (Expressing Loving-kindness Through Mental Actions)

Most important thing in relation with one another is to have a good-natured mind or attitude. If one has a good-natured mind or positive attitude, he or she will certainly overcome whatever difficulty he or she meets. To get a good companion one must have a good-natured mind. There may be no good companion for an ill-minded person; as like attracts like is a natural law in the world. In any way, although the others had dealings with one through ill-attitude, one should return good or positive attitude to them.

⁸ Khu I. 421-422

The Buddha expounded, “*Mettā manokammaṃ paccupaṭṭhitam hoti sabrahmacārīsu āvi ceva raho ca*”⁹ as the third factor of *sāraṇīya* practice. This expression can be rendered as “A monk expressed loving-kindness through mental actions towards his companions in the Noble Practice, whether in their presence or in their absence.” It means that one should have loving-kindness through mental actions towards his colleagues in the group whether in their presence or in their absence. It exhorts one to avoid dealing with others pretending as dealing with loving-kindness in their presence, and trying to make them ruin in their absence. Although the mind delights in evil, one must culture his mind to be good. So the Buddha exhorted, “*sacitta pariyoḍapanam*”¹⁰ (To purify one’s mind).

There cannot be found loving-kindness in the person who has no positive attitude (or good-natured mind); one without loving-kindness cannot have compassion (kindness); there will exist cruelty in an unkind person’s mind; again, a cruel person may be apt to persecute others. So there may be peaceful co-existence, only when men express loving-kindness towards one another. That is why the Buddha exhorted, in the discourse on *sāraṇīya dhamma*, the monks as well as the laymen, who are always participating in this or that association, to express loving-kindness through bodily or verbal or mental actions towards one another.

Loving-kindness never does a favor for anyone with bias. It may be found that a person who is fully endowed with loving-kindness never limits his extending loving-kindness amongst relatives, friends, and association, etc.

If there is no loving-kindness in both sides, dealing amongst them is utterly apt to face with troubles. An association with many troubles cannot have harmony, unity and peace; without harmony, unity, and peace, an association cannot last for long, it may certainly ruin. To gain unity in an association, its members have to deal with one another through loving-kindness. Only through harmony and unity, there may have peace in an association. The Buddha has uttered, *Samaggānam tapo sukho*¹¹, ‘Happy is the practice of those in harmony’. It implies that those who cooperate with one another in harmony and unity can be happy.

4. *Sādhāraṇabhogī* (Sharing Property with Fellows)

⁹ Vin.V.167;DII.68;DIII.203;MI.267,284,396;MIII.38,194,250,337;AII.255.

¹⁰ D II. 42, Khu I. 41; Pṭk. 205; Nett. 68.

¹¹ Khu I. 42.

Wherever one lives in a family or group or association one should cultivate positive attitude of equality; one should enjoy the property sharing with his fellows in the group impartially. If one, in the group, uses the property for one's sake, there may become estranged. In a family or association, if the members perform discordantly there may become disunity; disunited family or association neither develop nor succeed, but would certainly decrease. That is why the Buddha taught, “*sādhāraṇabhogī*”¹² (sharing property with fellows) as the fourth factor in the *sāraṇīya* practice. It implies to share the property amongst fellows in the group. If one in the group takes advantage for oneself making other(s) suffer, the harmony and unity of the group would be broken up. When the members in the group live together through thick and thin, they may increase their loving-kindness towards one another and their unity would be more firm. When their unity becomes more firm all the members would be more happy in doing everything as they co-operate with one another. Any association which has co-operation amongst members and is ongoing happily would surely have true peace.

In saying to share property impartially, the property must be obtained according to the rule. It implies that one shares his property got legally with his companions or fellows in the association. Either an ordinary man or government-servant should share only his legitimate gains with his colleagues. Even some ordinary men are making a living by means of illegal professions. Amongst government-servants, some are misusing public fund; some are bribery through their authority and their morals have been corrupted. All the people should extraordinarily avoid sharing illegal-gained property with companions or colleagues in the association.

Moreover, all natural resources of the country should be shared among citizens. The head of state and authoritative persons should avoid spending the outcomes of the natural resources for the sake of their own or for their own race or religion. Residents of a region generally desire to use the local natural resources for only their region; so there appear the organizations oppose the Government, clinging to their region. Thus battles often occur between ethnic groups and government defending forces. Because of these battles the people have to leave their region for a safe place and have to suffer from lack of food, clothes, shelter, education and health. So the people like to acquire peacefulness and happiness. To acquire peace, all outcomes of the natural

¹² Vin.V.168;DII.68;DIII.203;MI.397;MIII.38;AII.255.

resources of the country should be shared among all citizens, without any distinction, for their food, clothes, shelters, education, and health.

5. *Sīlasāmaññagatā* (Equality in Morality)

Morality is also an important factor in society. The Buddha described *sīlasāmaññagatā*¹³ (Equality in morality) as the fifth factor of the *sāraṇīya* practice. It implies that companions of an association must be equal in morality. An association whatsoever it is should be organized by persons of good morality to last for a long time and to develop; otherwise, it would ruin sooner or later. If there is an immoral person in the association, it may be defamed or despised. There is an old saying that all fish in the boat would be rotten because of a rotten little fish. Similarly, the dignity of the association may be affected because of an immoral person. It is really important that each and every leader or chief of either tyranny or people-elected government must be of good morality; in such authoritative institution, if there is any one of immorality the whole government would be undignified, and all the people under his authority would be in danger.

For instance, if there is a bad and troublesome offspring in a family, the dignity of the whole family would ruin and the family would be in danger. Only when parents and all children are of good morality, family-members can enjoy worldly blessing harmoniously and happily. So either a family or an association needs to be taken up by members of good morality; all the members should be nurtured to be of good morality. Morality which the Buddha encouraged means the good morality or morality based on good conduct. There are some groups or associations organized with immoral persons. Because of some notorious organizations of immoral persons the whole human society becomes decreased and slow in development. And those notorious organizations do not benefit the people, but push them into physical and mental disaster. Thus human society is losing security and has to face with various sufferings because of those notorious organizations of immoral persons. So it is necessary to establish organizations of good-moral persons all over the world to make human society develop physically as well as mentally and gain peace, calm and happiness.

6. *Diṭṭhisāmaññagatā* (Equality in view)

¹³ DII.68;MI.397;AII.255,256.

It is very difficult to be one's view (or understanding) the same as that of another. One's view would certainly differ from another's view. In the same family, one's view would differ from that of another. So in groups or associations organized with various persons, there would certainly be various views. The family or the associations of different views may have difficulties to go forward for their ongoing tasks; for them the process to develop would diminish and eventually disappear. So a family or an association must negotiate the views of its members and balance the thoughts among them. If each and every member withdraws his or her selfish thought and accepts majority's wishes, there is no reason not to get the same view. So, if members of any group or association try hard to change one's view with another's and to get the same view for all, that group or association would gain unity and development.

Having different views is a way of decrease and ruin. So the Buddha taught "*Diṭṭhisāmaññagatā*"¹⁴ (Equality in view) as the sixth factor in the *sāraṇīya dhamma*. It implies that all of an organization or association must have the same or equal view. If the view is of all different kinds, there is no chance or way to establish an organization or association. Only the persons of the same view can be gathered together and only then organization or association may be established. In the Buddha's teaching (or dispensation), the organization established with monks is called the Order, it is in singular as it is a unique one. Similarly, although an organization or association is gathered with many persons, it represents a single one, i.e. of the same view or the same vision. As long as the organization or the association has a united vision or view, it would have harmony and unity; consequently it would surely develop. If any organization or association gets into the waddle of different views, it would soon ruin, it is certain.

Fundamentally, one differs from another in desire (wish), vigilance, morale and education. In an organization or association, although members co-operate with one another, they may differ in manner, one works earnestly, but another works superficially. The earnest ones may lead the group, the non-earnest ones have to be followers. But a leader's earnest vision or attitude singly cannot make the

¹⁴ VinV.168;DII.68;MI.397;AII.255,256.

organization or association progress for long. So to progress an organization or association the main factor is having similar vision and earnest wishes of all the members. The Buddha taught, “*Chandavato kiṃnāma kammaṃ na sijjhati*”. It means that there is no work which cannot be accomplished by one who has earnest will (desire). To have a similar vision in an organization or association the main point is based on the individual will.

In human society one should see another, even though he may be an opposite one, from point of view of the bright side; thus men may co-exist by tolerating one another; it has been said by the Buddha. Five factors to endure other’s conduct seeing from point of view of the bright side are as follows.

(1) As if an article may be utilized putting aside the bad part and using the good part, even so one should look at another, who is inferior in behavior but pure in verbal conduct, dispelling his weakness and appreciating his goodness.

(2) As if one drinks water putting away the rubbish in the water, even so one should look at another, who is rude in verbal conduct but polite in behavior, ignoring his weakness and appreciating his goodness.

(3) As if a thirsty person drinks the water in the ox’s hoof-print sitting on his hands and knees not to disturb the water, even so one should look at another, who is rude physically and verbally but can offer calm, having forgiven and forgot his faults and being aware of his calm.

(4) One should wish others to be out of danger and to gain happiness by exercising compassion for those are rude in physical action and verbal speech and have neither any gratitude nor any respectable behavior and one could not help them in any way.

(5) As if a thirsty and weary wayfarer in summer days sees a lake which is full of water, even so when one meets with a virtuous person who is polite in physical actions and verbal conduct and can offer calm and peace, one must look at him of all goodness¹⁵. If all the people nurture such positive minds, there is no reason not to be peaceful in human society.

Advantages of *Sāraṇīya* Practice

To love one another is an important factor in human society. If there is neither loving-kindness nor compassion to one another, the human society would gain no harmony; if they have no harmonious relation among themselves, they would have to face difficulty in daily life. When they have no loving-kindness to one another, they

¹⁵ M II. 163.

would be unsafe, unhappy and would suffer from pain and misery. So the Buddha taught that men could acquire “*Piyakarāṇa*”¹⁶ (loving one another) through exercising *sāraṇīya* practice which should be remembered for a long time (or as long as one lives). So each and every organization or association should try to gain loving-kindness (or love) to one another through practising *sāraṇīya dhamma*.

But loving one another in the organization or association singly is not sufficient to accomplish the works desire-to-do; due respect is also an essential factor; if there is no due respect between leader and followers and among co-followers, the organization or association would lose its unity; in an un-united organization or association, there would be no peace and happiness. So an organization or association needs loving-kindness and due respect to one another for the sake of its stability for long. The Buddha taught that the *sāraṇīya* practice may be conducive to “*Garukarāṇā*”¹⁷ (due respect). So each and every organization or association should practice the *sāraṇīya dhamma* to gain due respect to one another.

Moreover, the Buddha expounded that the *sāraṇīya* practice can be conducive to four aspects of extraordinary advantages. These advantages are (1) *Sanṅahāya*¹⁸ - to be unity (2) *Avivādāya*¹⁹ - not to be different from, (3) *Sāmaggiyā*²⁰ - to become concord, and (4) *Ekībhāvāya*²¹ - to be togetherness or to be united.

To be conclude, the Buddha said that one may collect or persuade the other(s) to be a group or an organization or association through exercising the six factors of *sāraṇīya* practice; thus the organization or association, although it has so many members, may become a united one without any estrangement. Men usually consider that earning for living is the most important thing. They are always striving to earn for living only. They ignore to practice the human ethics which are really to be followed by all. Consequently, in society, many persons have to confront with so many problems that they suffer from pain and misery; although they are very rich they are unhappy and have estrangement to one another.

Abbreviations

1. (AII) Anguttaranikaya Pancaka Chakka Sattakanipata Pali
2. AA III _ Anguttara Atthakatha(Tatiyo Bhago)

¹⁶ M I. 396; A II. 255-256.

¹⁷ M I. 396; A II. 255-256.

¹⁸ AII.256,257;DIII.237;MI.396.

¹⁹ Vin V. 167; D III. 203; A II. 256.

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ *Ibid*

3. A T III _Anguttara Tika(Tatiyo Bhago)
4. Si Ti thit II _Silakkhandha Vagga Tika(new) (Dutiyo Bhago)
5. M I _Majjhimanikaya Mulapannasa Pali(Pathamo Bhago)
6. A I _Anguttranikaya Eka Duka Tika Catukanipata Pali
7. Vin III _Vinayapitaka Mahavagga Pali(Tatiyo Bhago)
8. Vin V _Vinayapitaka Parivara Pali)
9. D II _Dighanikaya Maha Vagga Pali(Dutiyo Bhago)
10. D III _Dighanikaya Pathika Vagga Pali(Tatiyo Bhago)
11. M III _Majjhimanikaya Uparipannasa Pali(Tatiyo Bhago)
12. M II _Majjhimanikaya Majjhinapannasa Pali(Dutiyo Bhago)
13. Sn _Suttanipata Pali
14. Vin IV _Vinayapitaka Culavagga Pali(Catuttho Bhago)
15. A III _Anguttaranikaya Atthaka Navaka Dasaka Ekadasaka Pali
16. Vin A I _Parajjakanda Atthakatha(Pathamo Bhago)
17. Dhp _Dhammapada Pali
18. Ptk _Patakopadesa Pali
19. Netti _Netti Pali
20. S II _Khanda Vagga Salayatana Vagga Samyutta Pali
21. Bvm A _Buddhavamsa Atthakatha
22. Ap A I _Apadana Atthakatha(Pathamo Bhago)
23. A A I _Anguttara Atthakatha(Pathamo Bhago)
24. Miln _Milindapanha Pali
25. D T III _Pathikavagga Tika(Tatiyo Bhago)
26. Thag _Theragatha Pali

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