

The Way to Peace

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There are many ways which are used in the world for peace. Some are bad ways and some are good ways for peace. Bad ways is a term for doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done, out of zeal (desire), hate, delusion, and fear. They are called 'bad ways' because they are ways not to be travelled by Noble Ones.

Good Ways

Good way is called the Middle Way. The pæli word for the Middle Way is majjhimapaŷipadæ. It is composed of two parts; majjhima and paŷipadæ. Majjhima means the Middle and paŷipadæ means Way. Somajjhima paŷipadæ literally means the Middle Way. This Middle Way is interpreted to mean the Middle Way which has no extreme ways. There is just Middle Way and if a meditator treats this Middle Way, he or she will surely reach his or her destination of Nibbæna. There are no misleading extremes of this way.

Majjhimapaŷipadaæ is the noble path of eight constituents. In striving for purification with a view to gaining insight into the four noble truths that lead to the end of all woefulness - dukkha, there are the two extremes: indulgence in sense-pleasure - Kæmasukhallikænuyoga on the one hand, and self-mortification -Attakilamathænuyoga on the other. It is the Middle Way alone, steering clear of the two extremes that can lead to Nibbæna, the end of woefulness - dukkha.

Concerning ways, the Buddha said in the first sermon the wheel of dhamma and the doctrine of dependent origination.

"Monks, one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in these two extremes."

Purimena sassatædøna, mabhævo pacchimena ca padena,
Ucchedædivighæto, dvayena paridø pito ñæyo.

The first component will deny the false view of eternity and so on, and the second will prevent the nihilistic type of view and others like it, while the two together show the true way that is meant.

The extreme of self-indulgence

Indulgence in sense-pleasures or delighting in desirable sense-objects, pursuing and enjoying sensuous pleasures constitute one extreme practice. This practice is low, vulgar, being the habit of village and town folks, indulged in by ordinary common worldings, not pursued by the Noble Ones, ignoble, unclean, not tending to the true interests one is seeking after. Such pursuit after sensuous pleasures is an extreme practice which should be avoided.

Even before the time of the Buddha, how there were people who held the belief that heavenly bliss could be enjoyed in this very life di~~Y~~had hamma nibbænavæda. According to them, sensual pleasure was indeed blissful; there was nothing to surpass it, and that pleasure was to be enjoyed in this very life. It would be foolish to let precious moments for enjoyment pass, waiting for bliss in future life, which does not exist. The time for full gratification of sensual pleasure is now, this very life. Such is the heavenly bliss in this very life di~~Y~~had hamma nibbænavæda. This is one of the sixty-two wrong views - micchædi~~Y~~hi expounded by the Buddha in the brahmajælasutta of silakkhanda in the deghanikæya.

Enjoyment of worldly pleasures is not the practice of the noble ones - ariya. One may ask here why the noble ones like Visækhæ, Anæthapi~~4~~ðika and the Sakka, the king of the celestial beings, who had already reached the first stage of the noble life -sotæpanna engaged themselves in pursuit of sensuous pleasures. In sotæpannas, lust and passions are not overcome; there still lingers in them the incipient perception of suk agreeableness of carnal pleasures hasaññæ. This point is illustrated in Anguttara by the example of a person who is fastidious in the habits of cleanliness, seeking shelter in a filthy place filled with excrement to avoid attack by an elephant in must.

There are four kinds of indulgence in worldly enjoyments expounded by the Buddha. "Cunda, in this world there are some foolish, ignorant people who promote their own enrichment by slaughter of animals; cattle,

pigs, chicken, fish etc. This practice constitutes the first form of indulgence in worldly enjoyments."

Theft, dacoity and robbery constitute the second form of indulgence in worldly enjoyment while deceitful means of earning one's livelihood constitute the third. The fourth form of indulgence embraces other means beside these three, by which worldly wealth is gained.

When one is engaged in meditation practices, one has to forgo all kinds of sensuous enjoyments just like the bhikkhus who have gone forth from the worldly life because they tend to hinder the development of morality, concentration and wisdom. A meditator, even if he is a layman, must not, therefore, indulge in worldly enjoyments.

This is one form of extreme practice, namely, indulgence in worldly enjoyments.

The extreme way of self-mortification

Practice of self-mortification -attakilamathaænuyoga, which forms the other extreme practice results only in self- torture and suffering. It is not the practice of the Noble Ones, hence ignoble, unclean and does not tend to one's own welfare and interest. This extreme practice should be avoided. Imwadi

In lomahausasutta, ekanipæta commentary, it is stated that the Bodhisatta himself followed these practices in one of his existences, ninety-one world-cycles ago. He realized his mistakes when he saw signs of future miserable life as death approached. By abandoning the wrong practices he managed to attain the deva world. It was also mienionca in Mahæschanæda sutta.

"Let only skin, sinew and bone remain. Let the flesh and blood dry up. I will exert incessantly until I achieve the path and fruition I work for."

The Buddha had definitely stated in mahæsatipavhænasutta that pleasant feeling, painful feeling as well as equanimity are all objects for contemplation. Thus it should be definitely noted that any object which falls under the category of five groups of grasping is a legitimate object for meditational contemplation.

The Blessed One stated: "A bhikkhu meditates after making a firm resolution; unclinging, I will remain seated, without changing the crossed-legged position until the taints - æsavas have been removed. Such a bhikkhu

is an adornment to the Gosi³ ga- monastery in the forest of ingin-trees, a valuable asset to the forest abode."

"Bhikkhus, in this teaching, a bhikkhu after well consideration, patiently puts up with cold, heat, hunger, thirst, attack by insects and reptiles, effects of wind and sun, accusation and abuses, painful discomfort which arises, painful suffering which is violent, sharp, unbearable, unpleasant, hateful, fearful which may endanger his life even. The beneficial result of such patient toleration of heat, cold, hunger, thirst, attacks of insects, insults, physical discomforts, is non-appearance of taints, impurities, suffering and burning which would surely make their appearance if not borne with patience."

It should be noted seriously that the Blessed One advised in this sabbāsavasutta to bear with pain or suffering which is severe enough to cost even one's life. In the commentary to the sutta, it is mentioned that the Elder Lomasanæga persisted in his meditation practice even when enveloped by snowflakes while sitting in the open, round about the full moon of January. He overcame the cold surrounding him, without giving up his meditation posture, simply by contemplation of the intense cold of the Lo- kantarika region of the purgatories.

Thus practices which are not concerned with promotion of morality, concentration and wisdom but are taken only for mere suffering are definitely forms of self-torture. On the other hand, arduous efforts, however painful and distressing if made for the development of morality, concentration and wisdom do not constitute self-mortification. It must be definitely taken as the Middle Way or the Noble Eightfold Path, put forward by the Blessed One.

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The blessed One himself, after avoiding the two extreme practices, has by following the Middle Way reached Buddha hood and gained Enlightenment. The blessed One continued: "Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extreme practices, the Tathægata has gained the penetrative knowledge of the Middle Way which produces vision and foremost knowledge and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, penetrative insight and realization of Nibbæna."

For thirteen years from the age of 16th to the age of 29th, he had indulged in sensuous pleasures, the way of extreme laxity. At the age of 29th, he had given up the lax way of living by going forth from the worldly life; he had practised extreme austerity through self-mortification. After six years of rigorous training, he had not gained any higher knowledge, he had not benefited in any way from the training and he realized that he had pursued the wrong way.

By developing Good ways or the Middle Way, penetrating to the four noble truths will be attained by means of Ariya Magga, finally Nibbæna will be realized through the Arahattaphala. Having thus realized Nibbæna, the last conscious moment of parinibbæna will not lead to new existence for new forms of mind and matter. It is the cessation of all suffering. In this way, the Middle Way leads to realization of Nibbæna, cessation of all suffering. Da

Concerning the way to peace, the Buddha delivered the following sermon to the ascetic Subhadda:

"If, in any set of laws - dhamma and discipline - vinaya, the Middle Way or Noble Eightfold Path is absent, their practice can never bring about the first stage of monk - sama¹/₄a who enters the stream that leads to progressive sanctification and becomes a once-returner sakadæ gæmø, nor the third who never returns to this world of pleasure - kæmaloka and becomes an non-returner - anægæmø. Lastly, there will be no Worthy Ones -Arahants, who have finally conquered all defilements - kilesæ.

The Middle Way or the Noble Eightfold Path is to be constantly cultivated and developed, for it is a set of discipline called bhævetabba which is conducive to the generation of the power to gain insight into the nature of the Path

The principles of the Middle Way or the Noble Eightfold Path can be achieved only through meditation and contemplation in the way of insight meditation -vipassanæbhævanæ. Any proposition to negate the principles and practice of the Middle Way or the Noble Path is to forbid or destroy Buddhist teachings. Beyond the pale of Buddhism, there is no the Middle Way or Noble Path and where there is no Middle Way or Noble Path there is no annihilation of defilements which obstruct the way to the extinction of craving Nibbæna.

The practice of the Middle Way or the Noble Path rests mainly on the observance of moralities - sōla, the practice of concentration - samædhi, and the acquisition of wisdom - paññæ. If morality is observed with dedication one would be bringing the three paths of morality magga' gasōla into play, namely, Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. If one meditates, the three requirements of concentration samædhimagga ga will be fulfilled, namely, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. Meditation for insight is vipassanæbhævanæ which encourages Right Views and Right Thoughts. These two qualities constitute the path of wisdom paññæmagga ga. Mad

"You should strive for the annihilation of all potentials of defilements. Tathægatas can only show you the way. You yourself must practise meditation on the objects of tranquility meditation and insight meditation. Only then will you be liberated from the bonds of defilements that destroy what is wholesome and moral." hRI botou

"O Subhadda! Under the law - dhamma and discipline - vinaya laid down by me, you can attain the eightfold noble path. Only under the wings of my teaching can you come across firstly the stream-enterer sotæpannaa, secondly the once-returned -sakadæ gæmø, thirdly the non-returned - anægæmø and fourthly the worthy one. Outside my teaching, there are no such persons who actually know what they profess to know, able to annihilate the potentials of defilements."

The commentary gives twelve kinds of such samaas who can be subdivided into three divisions. In the first division, there are the four kinds of insight-meditators - vipassanæyogø who have already striven for the Path and so are known as æraddhavipassaka. In the second division, there are the four noble - ariya persons who have established themselves on the Path. The third division comprises the four noble persons -ariya who have come to the final stage to enjoy the fruition of the Path. sbla l vd bano

"Subhadda, I will tell you how to maintain this sæsanæ for long with its complements of the Middle Way or the Noble Eightfold Path and the sama4a practicing it. If the twelve kinds of monks live well, there shall be no extinction of the lineage of true samanas including the Arahats." insie 20 01

The term "bhikkhu" is rendered as belonging to the twelve kinds of samanas following the annotations in the commentary. The four insight-

meditators - vipassanæ yogø and the eight noble persons - ariya constitute the twelve.

"By the term 'sammæviha reyyuu - to live well' is meant that a stream-winner - sotapanna who has attained the first path of holiness must be able to disseminate the knowledge he has gained to others and organize them to become stream-winners like him."

The commentary has this to say: "The insight-meditator who has already striven for the stream-winner sotæpanna state, and attained that stage of knowledge of wisdom called udayab haya-ñæa, will also be able to convert others to his own way of striving for the path of stream-entry sotæpattimagga, demonstrating to them the exercises in meditation, in which he has excelled. If he has done so, he may be said to have 'lived well.

The constituents of the middle way are as follows;

1. Sammædiyyhi - Right understanding or view
2. Sammæsa kappa - Right thought
3. Sammævæce - Right speech
4. Sammækammanta - Right action
5. Sammææjova - Right livelihood
6. Sammævæyæma - Right effort
7. Sammæsati - Right mindfulness
8. Sammæs amædhi - Right concentration

Among the eight constituents, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood are grouped in the middle way of morality sølamagga ga. If a meditator abstains from four oral actions, three bodily actions and mot tloz mari s86alon bluos bae gidous seven kinds of misdeeds, he or she is regarded as practicing the middle way of morality. 90

Right effort, Right mindfulness and Right concentration are grouped in the middle way of concentration - samædhimag ga ga. By practicing them, the way of concentration is established.

When the middle way of concentration is established, one shall be regard as possessing Right understanding and Right thought. They are grouped in the middle way of wisdom - paññæma gg'ga.

Everyone who follows this way will be peaceful and can live peacefully. May you all be peaceful. go9g sua to esrota om10 ibbut sii gni glngs.

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