# Review on Buddhism for Peace and Conflict Resolution –by Puspa Bahadur Gurung

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**Abstract**

*Buddhism is a symbol of peace, harmony, and well-being. It focuses on the development of the inner mind's enlightened qualities by cessation of suffering and conflict. Buddha taught the four noble truths for understanding these human sufferings. If we don't understand our suffering it is very difficult to empathize with others. Nowadays, Buddhism is becoming socially engaged, and its ideals have helped to inform a variety of approaches to conflict resolution. The paper prepared for the dissemination of the essence of Buddhism for social and practical life. This workout has been done to enrich academic standards by presenting general issues, problems, findings, and recommendations written under the research methodologies. How Buddhism defines the cause of conflict, which suttas are found for conflict resolution, and what are the Buddhist concept of peacebuilding and the way to conflict resolution are the major problems of the study and its attribution is applied to social harmony.*

**Key Words: inner peace, outer peace, three poisons, eightfold path, cultivate opposite qualities.**

**Introduction**

The roots of all suffering are greed (lōbha), aversion (dōsa), and delusion, (mōha) called three poisons (tri-visha), and the path leading to the cessation of suffering is to carry out the Eightfold Noble Path (Āryāṣṭāṅgamārga). This is Buddha's profound Samsaric teaching for building inner peace that is focusing on how this world (Saṃsāra) is being regulated and how can we live and let live comfortably for the enhancement of outer peace. To attain any semblance of peace, the practitioner must turn inward wholesomeness (Kuśalamūla) and cultivate the opposite qualities of three poisons, (amōha)) wisdom, (alōbha), generosity, and (adōsa), loving-kindness. And naturally, it follows that the cultivation of these qualities will have a positive impact on society as a whole.

Human nature is struggling for self-existence but challenges always come together with the prerequisite form of existence as a cause of suffering (dukkha samudaya). For the development of the inner mind's enlightened qualities, sufferings, and conflicts are to be ridden off from our minds.

To resolve suffering or conflict in mind, peace is the primary cause for the survival of human beings and the preservation of human civilization. In absence of peace, war, and violence occur both in the mind and the society. Inner peace (ajihata-śanti) at present peace, which is generally known as 'peace of mind', is a mental state free from 'disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions (Singh 93). Inner peace is a prerequisite for outer peace, which involves interpersonal relations. A person is said to have outer peace when he lives harmoniously with his fellow beings (samacariyā), spiritual calm. Outer peace includes communal, natural, and global peace. Buddhism believes that peace is as much concerned with individuals as with groups and institutions. The inner peace of individuals provides firm foundations upon, which the entire edifice of social peace is to be built. For the establishment of lasting social or outer peace, various roles are to be played in this interdependent world today. The world has enough to satisfy everybody's needs but not everybody's greed. The United Nations needs to be representative of the modern world functioning in a democratic way to keep balance to avoid war and conflict between the nations (Thepsophon 59).

**Objective**: To find out the general review of literature of Buddhism in peace and conflict resolution.

**Methodology**: Library method is applied to generalize the Buddhist's philosophy on peace and conflict resolution.

**Results and Discussion**

The Concept of Peace, Concept of Peace in the Buddhism, Cause of Conflict in Buddhism and Ways of Conflict Resolution in Buddhism have been identified for discussion from the various literature. Logically the concept of peace in Buddhism is analysed on conflict resolution.

**The Concept of Peace**

The online etymological dictionary defines, the term 'Peace' originates most recently in the 11th century from the Anglo-French pes, and the Old French pais, meaning "peace, reconciliation, silence, agreement, tranquillity, absence of hostility, harmony. The term 'peace' is opposition to war; this is negative peace, defined as the absence of direct physical violence (Kriesberg 188). War is one of humanity's most pressing problems; peace is almost always preferable to war. Moreover, peace can and must include not only the absence of war but also the establishment of positive, life-affirming, and life-enhancing values and social structures (Barash et al. 129).

**Concept of Peace in the Buddhism**

The concept of peace or Śhanti in Buddhism represents both inner and outer peace. Buddhism commends peace (Shanti) promoting non-violence (Ahimsa) in society since its inception. It is a religion of peaceful co-existence and a philosophy of enlightenment. A story of nonviolence in Buddhist history is depicted in Ȧṅgulimālīya Sūtra that how a serial killer ultimately comes to the right path and became Buddha's follower. In the third turning of the wheel, he taught the doctrine of (tathāgatagarbha) the Buddha nature which means all sentient being has the potential to attain Buddhahood. In his doctrine, he emphasized the peaceful coexistence among all sentient beings and the natural environment. The concept of peace in Buddhism here has both negative and positive meanings. In its negative sense, peace is an absence not only of war and conflict but also of 'structure violence' such as social injustice, social inequality, the violation of human rights, the destruction of ecological balance, etc. In its positive sense, peace means encompasses within itself the absence of conflict as well as the presence of harmony (Thepsophon 58).

Japanese Mahayana Buddhist traditions Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a worldwide movement for 'developing the positive human potentialities for individual happiness and for global peace and prosperity (SGI 2). Sokka Gakkai International whose slogan is 'Buddhism in Action for Peace' goes beyond the original teaching that unskilful desires cause suffering. Nichiren sect argues that 'earthly desires are enlightenment, in the sense that their transformation into wisdom leads to Buddhahood. Even anger 'can be transformed into a passionate desire for peace' (SGI-UK 20). Such claims might be misinterpreted as encouraging continued indulgence in 'earthly desires', though the Ten Worlds (realms) teaching helps to explain how this emotional transformation takes place. Even negative emotions such as the Hell state enable one to 'sympathize with the suffering of others, while Anger may bring either 'the energy needed to fight injustice' or 'the passionate driving force for personal and social reform' (Causton 43, 53).

**Cause of Conflict in Buddhism**

In Buddha's time, there was political, social, and spiritual unrest prevailing in the neighboring states. His first teaching, four noble truths were focused on the causes of conflict and violence in the mind and the suffering caused thereby. Life is full of suffering and dissatisfactions which are arises from desires (tanha). The state of a peaceful mind can be realized by following eightfold noble paths. As Buddhism emphasizes inner and outer peace, prerequisite inner peace of mind is

distracted by defilements which are associated with greed, hatred, delusion, and imperfect practice of eightfold noble paths. As a result, outer peace is overridden and political conflict arises.

For the settlement of political conflict Buddha taught the compassionate right way of conduct avoiding unwholesome actions (akusala karmas). In the history of Buddhism, a quarrel arose between the Shakyas and Koliyas about the water of the river separating their territories. Had it not been for Lord Buddha's intervention, the quarrels would have grown into a fierce battle. (Bapat 24). To resolve such conflicts, Buddha spoke in verses as follows.

Susukham vata jivama, verinesu averino

Verinesu manussesu, viharama averino

Susukham vata jivama, aturesu anatura

Aturesu manussesu, viharama anatura.

Susukham vata jivama, ssukesu anussuka

Ussukesu manussesu, viharma anussuka.

(Dhammapada" Sukha Vagga" verse 197, 198, 199)

Ah, happily do we live without hate amongst the hateful; amidst hateful men, we dwell unhasting. Ah, happily do we live in good health amongst the ailing; amidst ailing men, we dwell in good health. Ah, happily do we live without yearning amongst those who yearn; amidst those who yearn we dwell without yearning (Dhammananda 399).


**Ways of Conflict Resolution in Buddhism**

Buddhist theory of interdependent origination (Pratītyasamutpāda), is causes and conditions which is the same as a violation that causes conflict. Conflict often arises from attachment to material things: pleasures, property, territory, wealth, economic dominance, or political superiority. Buddhism addresses the Buddhist perspective on the causes of conflict and ways to resolve conflict to realize world peace. The Canonical literature, doctrines, and philosophy of Buddhism are the best suited for inter-faith dialogue, harmony, and universal peace. From the Buddhist point of view, the cause of all human conflicts is all unwholesome actions called i.e. greed (lōbha), aversion (dōsa), and delusion, (mōha). To attain any semblance of peace, the practitioner must turn inward and cultivate the opposite qualities of (Amōha)) wisdom, (Alōbha), generosity, and (Adōsa), loving-kindness (Harvey10). And naturally, it follows that the cultivation of these qualities will

have a positive impact on society as a whole. In the story of Uttara, the lay disciple, Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

> Conquer the angry one by not getting angry,
>
> Conquer the wicked by goodness,
>
> Conquer the stingy with generosity,
>
> and the lair by speaking the truth.

 (Dhammapada, verse 223)

The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace for all living beings which is taught by Buddha that the first step on the path to understanding the causality of peace which is a peaceful mind leads to peaceful speech and peaceful action (Singh 97). Non-harm to others is concerning to benefit perfections practiced by a bodhisattva in the course of their training. 8th Century's Mahayana Sanskrit ācārya Shantideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra highlights the six perfections which are the perfection of generosity (Dāna pāramitā ), morality (Śīla pāramitā ), patience (Ksānti pāramitā), effort (Vīrya pāramitā ), and meditation (Dhyāna pāramitā), and wisdom (Prajñā pāramitā). It is often practiced by taking each of the perfections in turn and applying it to oneself and then to others nearby. Generosity (Dāna pāramitā), is helping others, empathy, and understanding others for social benefit and benevolence. Discipline (Śīla pāramitā), is self-care and instruction following not cribbing and complaining about the task accomplishment. Patience (Ksānti pāramitā), is self-control, and emotional regulation by adapting to any changes within the activities for stress management and calm functioning. Diligence (Vīrya pāramitā), is putting effort into the task and not getting distracted. Meditation (Dhyāna pāramitā), is sustaining attention through analytical skills and logical reasoning, and wisdom (Prajñā pāramitā), is for problem identification and understanding of cause and effect and application of gained skills in the activities for the future. The verses of Bodhicaryāvatāra given below that is the ideals and practice of Nobel peace prize laureate His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who so frequently cites as his highest inspiration (Badal, 2021).

As long as space abides and as long as the world abides,

so long may I abide, destroying the suffering of the world.

Bodhicaryāvatāra 10.55:

Similarly, in the 5th century, Pali scholar Buddhaghosa explained the four immeasurable (Catvāro brahmavihārāḥ) which are loving-kindness or benevolence (Maitrī), compassion Karuṇā),

empathetic joy or rejoice (Muditā), and equanimity (Upekṣā) in the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga). It is often practiced by taking each of the immeasurable in turn and applying it to oneself and then to others nearby, and so on to everybody in the world, and to everybody in all universes for the establishment of peace overriding the conflict.

**Conclusion**

The Buddhist approach to the establishment of peace and conflict resolution is the Buddhist way of Dhamma practice which is a simultaneous practice of a noble eightfold path consisting of threefold training (Silā, Samādhi, and Prajnā). We started with precepts (Silā) by right speech, right action, and right livelihood and ended up with mindfulness (Samādhi) by right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, and developing wisdom (Prajnā) by the right view and right intention. Precepts Silā is paying attention to our life for living it wisely so that we may be free from remorse and blame. Being mindful, all unwholesome behaviour is cultivated into wholesome behaviour and committed to the way of awakening. This method in the practice of Buddhism evolved into a balance of power based on conflict resolution and equilibrating threats of war through the cultivation of compassion and mindfulness. Transforming conflict into reconciliation and dialogue for peace is a skilful means (Upāyakauśalya) that is a subject of indispensable matter for society.

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