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AN ETHICAL STUDY OF NATURE AND BUDDHISM IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

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ABSTRACT

A physical act should be undertaken only after repeated reflection; a verbal act should be undertaken only after repeated reflection; a mental act should be undertaken only after repeated reflection. If you, Rahuala, wish to undertake a physical act, you should reflect on that act so: 'That physical act which to do might lead to the harm of self, and that might had to the harm of others, and that might lead to the harm of both; this physical act is unskilled, its yield is anguish, its result is anguish' reflecting so should find: That physical act which I wish to do would lead neither to the harm of self nor to the harm of others nor to the harm of both; this act is skilled, its yield is happily, its result is happy'-a physical act like this, Rahula, may be undertaken by you."

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of morality in Buddhism is to create an environment in which everybody attain nirvana, "when a man gives , his merit will increase, no enmity can grow in the self-restrained. The skilled shun evil; they attain nirvana. By ending greed and hatred and delusion." Here the Buddha follows the path of deontological ethics in daily life.

They have been suggested even not to harm any living-being knowingly or unknowingly. For this reason, the Buddha himself follow the rule of Chaturmas (four months) rest in which all monks stay at the place where rainy season begins. Because during this season all insects come to the surface of earth due to wet weather. As in wet weather worms and insects may come under the feet during travelling. To follow the principle of ahimsa the Buddha prohibited his monks not to dig the ground, as it is a kind of violence against earth." Once a follower of the Buddha built a clay hut for himself and later he set it on fire, because it was not fine. When the Buddha informed by someone

about this incident, he strongly objected the happening as so many living creatures would have been burnt in the process, It is the best example from the Buddha's point of view for cominenerations. The Buddha also advised to his monks not to drink unfiltered water as there may be smallest living creatures in water." It is undoubtedly good habit to drink filtered water as it is important from hygienic point o view but what is not worthy is the reason which prompts the practice, namely sympathy for other creatures.

In its positive aspect the first principle implies not only the non- injury of the living beings but also sympathy and compassion for all living beings." It also teaches us to have affection towards all creatures, timid and bold, long and short, big and small, minute and great, visible and invisible- near and far, born and awaiting birth. The Buddha's this principle goes against the right of abortion which is in current practice. Just each person's life is precious for him so is the case with other. Therefore, reverence must be cultivated towards all forms of life.

The best action, according to the Buddha, is one in which the result of the action concerned should be gone to the favour of others and not forth doer. The action which never harms someone is ethically accepted in Buddhism.

Environmental Pollution

The rationalism and scientific investigation of this era led world towards the Industrial Revolution and the Romantic movement which was a reaction against it. The Romantics rebelled against the increasingly mechanized, industrialized, rational world which they saw as isolating individuals from society, from nature and from their own inner power and creativity. It sought to regain the enchantment of a nowdis-enchanted world. But although Romanticism was a reaction against many aspects of the enlightenment, it had inherited a belief in the human individual as the measure of all things.

Modernity is the advantage of Western enlightenment. It is influenced by physical science and spreaded all over the world. With its Starting it began to dessect nature for the purpose of examining and cassembling it according to human specification. The main purpose was to free humanity from the grip of nature. It was the birth of scientific rationalism, a world view that believed everything could be measured and explained according to observable physical laws. There were no miracles and no unseen sniritual

forces. The pioneers of the enlightenment asserted that if there is a God. "let him watch the world mutely". God has made the world out of mechanical law. Now world is operated by its own accord.

Environmental pollution has assumed such vast proportions today that humanity has been forced to recognize the presence of ecological crisis. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the situation as we are already threatened with new pollution-related diseases. Pollution to this extent was unheard of during the time of the Buddha. But there is sufficient evidence in the scriptures to provide insight into the Buddhist attitude towards pollution. Cleanliness, both in the person and in the environment, was highly commended. Several rules prohibit monks from polluting green grass and water with saliva, urin and faeces. These were the common agents of pollution known during the Buddha's day. Rules about keeping the grass clean were prompted by ethical and aesthetic considerations as well as the fact that it is food for many animals. Water, whether in a river, pond or well, was for public use nad each individual had to use it with proper care so that others who followed could use it with the same degree of cleanliness.

Today, noise is recognized as a serious personal and environmental pollutant troubling everyone to some extent. It causes deafness, Stess and irretation, breeds resentment, saps energy and lowers efficiency.⁴ The Buddha did not hesitate to voice his stern disapproval of noise whenever the occasion arose. Once he ordered a group of monks to leave the monastery for noisy behaviour. Even in their choice of monasteries the presence of undisturbed silence was an important quality the Buddha and his disciples looked for. Silence overawes those who are impure with looked for." Silence invigorates those who are pure at heart and raises their ignoble impulses of greed, hatred and delusion. The BhayatheravaSutta beautifully illustrates how even the rustle of a falling twig in the quit of the forest sends tremors through an impure heart. This may perhaps account for the present craze for constant auditory stimulation with transistors and cassettes. The moral impurity caused by greed, avarice, acquisitive instincts and aggression has made people fear silence which lays bare the reality of self-awareness. They prefer to drown themselves in loud music.

Such scenario is completely different from the Eastern civilization. Buddhism has enough power to encounter such blind storm. civilization. Buddhism has enough power to encot According to Buddhism, all we have to do is to make our lives 'fit' for external nacal, It strongly suggests that we must first protect the environment from ourselves.

The psychological trainig of teh monks is so advanced that they are expected to cultivate a taste not only for external silence, but for inner silence of speech, desire and thought as well. The sub-vocal speech, the inner chatter that goes on constaintly within us in our waking life, is expected to be silenced through meditaiton. The sage who succeeds in completely quelling this inner speech is called a muni, a silent one. The inner silence is maintained even when speaking.

It is worth noting as well as the Buddhist attitude to speech. Moderation in speech is considered a virtue, as one can avoid four unwholesome vocal activities, namely; falsehood, slander, harsh speech and frivolous talk. In its positive aspect, moderation in speech paves the way to self-awareness. Buddhism commends speaking at the appropriate time, speaking the truth, speaking gently, speaking what is useful, and speaking out of loving-kindness; the opposite modes of speech are condemned. The Buddha's general advice to monks regarding speech was to discuss the Dhamma or maintain noble silence.

The Buddha does not stop the law of causation only to the domain of the evolution of the world but also evey sphere of life. Even in the field of Karmas, such law is also applicable, He warned His disciples always to remember the traditional doctrine of Karma of India, According to Him, "for every action we perform we experience a similar result," The law of karma tates that all our thoughts, words and deeds shape our experiences in the future. In his theory of Karma, He treis to show that our present life is the out come of past life. It means, environemntal pollution is the outcoem of human's dred and they ahve to face this panic situaiton, No animal, no birds and other creatures have polluted the environment. Only the human beings, the crowns acthe creation have deserted the land, polluted water and air. To pollute the anviroment is a kind of evil. "One who does not want to suffer, should not do evil deeds openly or secretly. Do evil now or later, you can flee from it, surely you will suffer sooner or later."

Central to grasp the process of Karmic cause and effect is the Psychological insight that all human actions begin in the mind. The quality of life, in terms of either our inner feelings or the external situations, we find ourselves with positive and negative attitudes of mind, motivate our actions. For this reason, disciplined attention to thoughts, meditation. The famous feelings and emotion is considered essential to the practice of opening lines of Dhammapada express this well:

Mind precedes all things, Mind is supreme, produced by mind are they. If one should speak or act with mind defiled, Suffering will Just as wheel follows hoof of the drawing ox. Mind is supreme, produced by mind are they. If one should speak or act with purified mind. Well-being will follow, Like a never-parting shadow."

What we have seen in our thorough going paragraphs in the chapter is that no other living-being are as much discourteous as human-beings toward nature. Age before the astrophysics, in which distance of stars are measuring in millions of light years, we have a universe. According to Buddhist, universe is beginning less or end and the number of galaxies is as vast as the sands of the River Ganges. Buddhist perceives universe as teeming with diverse living beings, longing not just to be, but to be something, to have something, to feel something, It translates itself into external environments complex of thoughts, feelings and impulses with the tragic habit of grasping themselves as separate, solid and permanent selves.

In our universe, there are only six forms of life and human life is one of them. Among them some are visible to the human eye, as with animals, but most are invisible, as with gods and ghosts. Man among the other creatures are not restricted to the planet-Earth, nor is the human species regarded as the best effort so far in evolutionary unfolding of nature. Existence as human is a rare event, for it is the kind of life most suited to finding out what is going on here. For all these renewal of human personality is necessary. Only by meditation human personality can be changed. But before starting the meditation one should know the four noble truths of Buddha.

The first Noble Truth states that there is suffering. The second, that there is a cause for the suffering which is delusion. The Third Noble Truth states that there is an end to the suffering and the fourth that there is a way or path to reach that end. To day we are encountering with environmental pollution. According to the law of causation, there must be a cause of pollution. Now, we shall see how these four Noble Truths work in the field of environment and its pollution.

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