

Buddha Dharma as the Basis of Universal Brotherhood

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Abstract

The Buddhist doctrine of Karma believes that deeds are retributory and as a consequence of their deeds, beings are born repeatedly in the saṃsāra. Thus, it is a mistake when one limits oneself to the welfare of one's immediate relatives and friends only. This kind of thinking in Buddhism proposes that thinking someone as the "other" arises out of sheer ignorance (*avidyā*) because this very person has to be a close relative from one of the past births and likewise is bound to be a kin-member in the future. Similarly, the Buddhist concept of Dependent Arising (*Pratītyasamutpāda*) sees everything in the cosmos being dependent on everything else. Consequently, all the living beings are inter-related and inter-connected across castes, races, nations, or species. Based on this kind of thinking, the Buddhist motto of *bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya* sets for itself the goal of the happiness and welfare of maximum number of people in the world. Buddhist concept of vegetarianism also bases itself on this kind of thinking. However, the question that arises is how can we establish a society based on universal brotherhood. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the lack of equal access to the resources that exist in the world. As pointed out by the Buddha in the *Aggañña Suttanta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* as long as we have poverty and inequality in the world, it will be difficult to establish a society that believes in universal brotherhood. A society founded upon the Buddhist Dharma recognizes that one should aim at promoting the good of the greater unit to which one belongs, and as a minimum one must not look for one's own satisfaction in ways that may cause harm to others. Thus, in Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion governing policy formulation must be the wellbeing of members of the society as a whole. At the same time, though meeting the basic needs of all is basic to the establishment of universal brotherhood, but from Buddhist perspective, sensitization of the populations to the ideals of simplicity, sacrifice, sharing, cooperation, non-wastefulness, compassion, empathy, and equanimity would be equally important.

Keywords: Universal Brotherhood, Vasudhaiva kutumbakam, Buddhism and Universal Brotherhood, Oneness of Humanity and Buddhism

佛法作為人類命運共同體的基礎

摘 要

佛教的因果報應學說認為，行為會產生報應，並且由於它們的行為，眾生會在輪迴中不斷地輪迴。因此，僅關注自己的親戚和朋友的福祉是一種錯誤。佛教中的這種思想認為，把某個人視為“其他人”是純粹的無知（無明）所致，因為這個人必然是自己前世中的一位近親，同樣也會在未來成為自己的親人。同樣地，佛教的緣起觀念認為，宇宙中的一切都相互依存。因此，所有生物都在種姓、種族、國家或物種之間相互關聯和相互連結。基於這種思想，佛教的座右銘“為了眾生幸福，為了眾生利益”設定了自己的目標，即追求世界上最多人的幸福和福祉。佛教的素食主義概念也基於這種思想。然而，出現了一個問題，即如何建立一個基於人類命運共同體的社會。也許最大的障礙是缺乏平等獲取現有資源的途徑。正如佛陀在長部經集的《阿語尼續經》中所指出的那樣，只要世界上還有貧窮和不平等，就難以建立一個信奉人類命運共同體的社會。以佛教法為基礎的社會承認，人們應該致力於促進自己所屬的更大單位的利益，至少不應在可能對他人造成傷害的方式上追求自己的滿足。因此，在佛教對社會和經濟發展的方法中，主導政策制定的主要標準必須是整個社會成員的福祉。同時，儘管滿足所有人的基本需求是建立人類命運共同體的基礎，但從佛教的角度來看，對理念的敏感度，包括簡樸、犧牲、分享、合作、不浪費、同情、共鳴和平等，同樣重要。

關鍵詞：人類命運共同體、佛教與人類命運共同體、人類的合一和佛教