

Psychological Basis of Conflict – A Buddhist Perspective

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Introduction

The phenomenon of conflict is very complicated and difficult to understand in terms of both general and academic sense. It has become one of the popular topics in modern days at all format. The purpose of this study is to examine the Psychological basis of conflict in Buddhist perspective. Thus, research problem of this study is how psychological basis of conflict build in Buddhism. Referencing Tripiṭaka literature is the primary source of collecting data and others are secondary source. Relevant analyzing method will be used in this qualitative research. The term conflict is derived from Latin 'Conflingere' which means to come together for a battle. Its English term conflict has different types of meanings; a struggle to resist or overcome, contest of opposing forces or power, strife, battle, clash, collision, antagonism, discord. Conflict is a negative result of verbal, non-verbal, and physical factors following the inconsistency of two or more parties. Conflict that is occurring between two contradictory ideas is called as internal or intrapersonal conflict. Conflicts that arise between two or more individuals are called as external or interpersonal conflicts. External causes of conflict are depending on time, place, resources, and the nature of the individuals who are involving with the conflict. Internal causes of conflicts extremely depend on our mental behavior.

Discussion

From Buddhist point of view, conflicts take place where disagreement is going to be happening within individual, two parties or more. The root of conflicts is associated with defilements - the mental contents that pollute our

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mind. Conflicts would not happen more where defilements are absent. There three terms related to the conflicts in Buddhism; Bhaṇḍana (dispute), Kalaha (conflict or quarrels) and Vivāda (argument) which are mostly used in terms of similar meanings. Kalahavivādasutta commentary of Mahānidāsapāli refers to if something becomes a conflict, it will become a debate or argument, in the same way if something becomes a debate, and it will become a conflict. Debate is the primary stage of conflict in another way.

Debate can occur among anyone and it may develop up to the conflict. According to commentary of Udānapāli, Bhaṇḍana is also considered as an early stage of Kalaha (conflict). As said by commentary of Mahānidānasutta, Conflict will be expressed either physically or verbally.

All the phenomena, including physical and mental are followed by dependent origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda), one of the fundamental teachings that emphasizes the emergence and cessation of material and non-material things. Any internal or external sources of conflict do not exceed this theory of law as pointed out by many Suttās. External causes of conflict are mostly noticeable and measurable. Besides, it has concealed Psychological roots, which are often running inside in any problematic situation. Moreover, external causes are the visible form of underline psychological factors.

As stated in Mahānidānasutta, various evil unskillful things including conflicts and its negative outcomes have aroused by means of dependent co-arising. Thus, craving will arise because of pleasure, displeasure or neutral pleasure feelings. Seeking is dependent on craving, acquisition is dependent on seeking, ascertainment is dependent on acquisition, desire and passion is dependent on ascertainment, attachment is dependent on desire and passion, possessiveness is dependent on attachment, stinginess is dependent on possessiveness, defensiveness is dependent on stinginess, and because of defensiveness, dependent on defensiveness, various evil, unskillful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies.

Above theoretical annotation, clearly point out how conflict and other unskillful phenomena have raised in line with dependent co-arising. It appears feeling overlaps others, which is one of the key mental contents that support to construct Psychological basis of conflicts. Let us see this from somewhat different angle. Definitely, pleasure feeling can lead internal or external conflict. At the same time, unpleasant feeling may result in anger, which leads conflicts and its negative outcomes. Other adjoining negative mental state such as hatred, malice may arise with anger making situation more worst and paying way to another dispute.

Kalahavivādasutta point outs the same idea with the same principle but

partly different to the earliest one mentioned in the Mahānidānasutta. From what raised quarrels, dispute and other multiple defilements and resulted behavior. From being too endeared (to object and person) arise conflict, dispute and other negative emotions, thoughts and related behavior.

What are the sources of becoming endeared in the world? Desires are the sources of becoming endeared. Then what is the source of desire in the world.

Pleasant and unpleasant feelings are the causes of the desire. It is obvious that desire arise from both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Then how does unpleasant feeling contribute to develop desire? When someone losses something that he likes, it will make him unhappy because of desire. What is the cause of pleasant and unpleasant feelings? Contact is the cause of pleasant and unpleasant feelings. What is the cause of contact? Both mind and matters (Nāma –Rūpa) depend upon contact. Mind – matter and contact are not mentioned in the Mahānidānasutta, in which the cycle began from feeling and ended with unskillful phenomena. Despite some differences, both have followed the same law of Paṭiccasamuppāda. Kalahavivādasutta however has mentioned it in more propound way compared to Mahānidānasutta.

Conclusion

According to the law of Paṭiccasamuppāda, in any conflict there may be internal and external causes. The Internal causes are often known as Psychological roots. This study focused on how conflicts aroused based on psychological factors. Thus, it is evident that there is nothing single psychological factors, which causes conflicts. Psychological roots are often dependent instead of single entity.

Keywords: Conflict, Dependent Origination, Psychological Basis

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