

A STUDY ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND SETTLEMENT AS REFLECTED IN BUDDHISM

M. J. D. Peiris¹

Introduction

Some social scientists identify conflicts as a process which contributes to social evolution. Buddhism also agrees with the fact that, social evolution occurs due to conflicts of individuals. But the question one should raise on social conflicts is whether the evolution of the society, which occurs due to it, is positive or not? Therefore, Buddhist teachings give more attention to the root-cause and the outcome of social conflicts. On the other hand, it also paves attention to preventing and resolving social conflicts. These social conflicts should be resolved in order to stop them becoming more violence. From this perspective, conflict Management in Buddhism takes a significant even for today. The development of effective measures to prevent conflict begins with the articulation of the problems, generating the conflict, and it requires the mobilization of social forces which address those problems. Buddhism in this context has been exceptionally effective in combat against systematic violence, prejudice and hatred through non-violent means. Since resolving conflict is essentially a practical exercise this article would present relevant aspects of Dhamma in reference to situations in which the Lord Buddha personally intervened to resolve conflicts before they erupted into hostilities. Therefore this research basically intends to explore the incidents where the conflicts were settled by the Buddha.

Methods and Procedure

The research problem is “What are the Buddhist concepts and consequences which reinforced conflict settlement in the society”? The objectives of this research are to identify the principle concepts of Buddhism which emphasizes the conflicts settlement and to understand the

¹ Jananimc4@gmail.com

methods followed by the Lord Buddha to resolve conflicts among people in those societies. Primary data was collected from the Tipitaka. Apart from that, secondary data was collected from journals, books, and websites to enrich the primary data.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that Buddhist teachings have approaches to enhance peace in the society through handling and settling disputes. There are various methods of conflict management and settlement such as self-resolution, mediation (third party assistance), arbitration (third party decision making), conciliation (third party proposing a non-binding solution), and diplomacy. Buddhism has also adopted mediation, conciliation, perhaps also arbitration. Examples could be drawn by examining the discourses of the Buddha of the conflicts solving. During the life of the Buddha many of the conflicts are depicted as having been resolved by referred to Buddha for consideration. In relation to peaceful dispute resolution Buddhist teachings explore every possibility to resolve disputes without resort to violence. For instance, on two occasions the Buddha intervened and prevented Sakyas and Koliyas from fighting over the waters of River Rohini. The commentaries of the Anguttara Nikaya and the Samyutta Nikaya recount this instance. As a result of the Buddha's peaceful mediation and the dispute resolution, made a large number of young persons of the Sakyas entering the Bhikkusāsana.

The Buddha has shown much insight into managing conflicts both theoretically and practically. Moreover, when Vidūbha went to massacre Sakyans, in spite of his own ill health, the Buddha intervened three occasions to prevent the attack. In two out of the three visits he is believed to have made to Sri Lanka there had been involvement of the Buddha for creating peace between rival factions. In the ninth month of his enlightenment he is reported to have visited Sri Lanka for the first time to prevent two yaksa groups from fighting. Another successful intervention of the Buddha resolving disputes took place in Sri Lanka at Nagadipa, where

R he persuaded two warring princes in Sri Lanka to lay down their arms and
P amicably settle their dispute over a gem-set throne.

R There are circumstances when a prominent follower of another
W religion expressed his desire of becoming a follower of the Buddha, the
D Buddha asked him to think again of their decision. Thus the Buddhism
T seems to avoid igniting conflicts as much as possible. However, avoiding
H itself is not sufficient as it is inevitable that conflicts of various nature are
N bound to arise in society. One might expect, with such glowing record of
C tolerance and peace psychology, the Buddha to apply his theory to resolve
N real conflicts. As a matter of fact, the Buddha was approached by some
R people to get his assistance to mediate in their conflicts. Two young
H Brahmins called Tarukkha and Pokkharasati, once approached Buddha to
A resolve a conflict on their religion. And the Buddha settled their issue by
convincing what was right after a systematic and clear discussion. This was
a good example of successful mediation where the both parties agreed with
the conclusion. When there was the conflict between Dharmadhara and
Vinayadhara monks over a significance of a minor rule. When negotiation
did not resolve the conflict the Buddha left them to argue and went to
forest. He did so as a way to make them feel the repercussions of conflict
and it was effective to bring harmony again which made them for self-
resolution.

Conclusion

Finally, it could be concluded that the Buddha lived in an era with political and social conflicts. Considering these facts, methods employed by the Buddha could be considered as the finest mediator, facilitator, or conciliator in resolving conflicts. The Buddha saw the way to resolve the conflicts. Therefore, these methods in Buddhism can be applied to restore justice, prosperity, peace and harmony in the world.

References

- Peiris, R. N. (2015). "Buddhist Social Conflict Management Approach," Retrieved from a research article
www.undv.org/vesak2015/paper/buddhist_social_conflict.pdf.
- Dhondup, T. (2005). "Buddhism and Conflict Resolution," The Times of Tibet. Retrieved from
<http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=8,667,0,0,1,0#.Wboz77IjHIU>
- Marsden, L. (2012). *Theashgate research companion to religion and conflict resolution*, New York: Routledge publishers.
- Nadimpali, H. (2016). "Buddhism: A Pathway to Peace Conflict Resolution," Retrieved,
<https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/buddhism-a-pathway-to-peace-and-conflict-resolution>.