

‘Hitacchanda’ as a Possible Drive to Alter Negative Attitudes towards Others

Raluwe Padmasiri (*)

In this paper, I propose the possibility of developing human inclination identified in Buddhism as “desire-to-do-good” (*hitacchanda*¹) as a vehicle to rebuild broken human relationships. This particular drive would pave the way first to recognize, second to welcome and third to respect the otherness of other. I assume that waking up of this positive drive is possible and it could be utilized to cure the wounded hearts of the many. However, priority will be given to seek Buddhist rationality and possibility of developing this drive without any reference to specific socio-cultural or economic conflicts of contemporary world.

(*) Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Buddhist Philosophy, Postgraduate Institute of Pali & Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Email: raluwep@yahoo.com, raluwep.padma@gmail.com, +94713443364

1. This term is translated as in this context as “desire-for-other”, “desire-to-assist-other”, “effort-to-do-good”, “pro-social-conduct”.

Personalities and Desire Manifestations in Buddhism

Buddhist Background of 'Desire':

Desire is a vastly discussed and differently interpreted term in Buddhism. Any of the central teachings of Buddhism is not detached from the notion of desire. The basic teachings like, Dependent Co-origination, Emancipation, Five Aggregates, The Four Noble Truth, and even the teachings related to conduct of ordinary people are just some of many examples. Early Buddhism uses variety of terms to denote desire, terms like *taṇhā*, *kāma*, *rāga*, *upādāna*, *lobha*, *chanda* are employed interchangeably and sometimes they overlap in meaning. The complexity of the meaning regarding this concept is captured by Mrs. Rhys Davids when she said:

A comparison of the translations made by such scholars as Burnouf, Foucaus, Max Muller, Fausboll, Oldenberg, and Warren with the originals, discloses the striking fact that the one English word 'desire' is made to duty for no less than seventeen *Pali* words.²

The dynamic nature of the concept of desire in Buddhism can be illustrated by pointing out the amount and the variety of terms used in the early canons and later texts to refer to it. All the aspects related to desire are categorized into three in early Buddhism: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), confusion (*moha*) (*rāga*, *dvesa*, and *moha* in Sanskrit). All of them are generally identified as unwholesome as they will generate impurities in a person. Furthermore, Buddhism emphasizes the necessity of eradicating craving, hatred and delusion (confusion), in order to attain emancipation (*nibbāṇa*).³ It is apparent that the concept of desire is given a negative connotation in relation to emancipation in Buddhism.

The term desire is used with a succession of meanings in Buddhism and it is mostly used as one of the fundamental roots of continuous existence. However, the meaning of the term in Buddhism depends

2. R. Davids, *On the Will in Buddhism*. London: Pali Text Society. 1898. p.55

3. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, Vol. I, Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.), Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2000. P. 872.

on the person in which it is positioned and according to the context in which it is used. First, desire has a negative connotation in the mundane person. However, it can motivate one to lead a harmless life and positive active life to both oneself and the others. Secondly, the Buddhist emancipation is considered as the eradication of unwholesome desire and transformation and cultivation of wholesome desires.

There is a huge debate on the most appropriate renderings of these Pali terms *taṇhā*, *kāma*, *rāga*, *upādāna*, *lobha*, *chanda*. The term “desire” does not do justice to all the terms. Sometimes, these terms convey different levels and degrees of desire. It is interesting to note that all these terms signify diverse levels of desire in a person.

This paper is constrained to one of the meanings offered to the concept conveyed by term *chanda* and which is rendered as “desire”. Webster⁴ concluded that Buddhism’s use of desire is threefold. The first desires like *chanda* are suitable for transformation and it should be reoriented to *kusala* objects, and held in a more *kusala* manner, free of grasping. Secondly, desires like *tanha* need to be eradicated. Thirdly, phenomena such as *padhāna* which are *kusala* are to be abandoned ultimately by enlightened ones.

Chanda with the meaning given in the first aspect is taken here for my research. Term *chanda* is used in canon and their commentaries with different meanings such as impulse, excitement, intention, resolution, will, desire for, wish for, delight in⁵. In the context of four foundations of spiritual powers (*iddhipāda*: *chanda*; *citta*; *virīya*; *vimamsā*) *chanda* is translated as “will”. One’s will to develop spiritual powers is meant by this. This specific aspect is explained as follows:

If one gains concentration, gains one pointedness of mind

4. David Webster, *The Philosophy of Desire in the Buddhist Pali Canon*, Routledge: Curzon, p. 192. ([http://www.misterdanger.net/books/BuddhismBooks/The Philosophy of Desire in the Buddhist Pali Canon - Routledge Curzon](http://www.misterdanger.net/books/BuddhismBooks/The%20Philosophy%20of%20Desire%20in%20the%20Buddhist%20Pali%20Canon%20-%20Routledge%20Curzon)). Accessed date. 23/01/2014

5. *The Pali Text Society’s Pali and-English Dictionary*, T. W. Rhys Davids (edt.), London: Pali Text Society, 1972P.274-275

based on will (*chanda* / *kattukāmyatāchanda*), this is called concentration due to will. One generates the will for non-arising and abandoning of un-arisen evil unwholesome states; one makes an effort, arouses energy, applies the mind and strives⁶.

According to Sucitto⁷, *chanda* refers to some form of desire that is essential in order to “aspire to”, and “persist in”, cultivating the path out of *dukkha*. Thus, it is possible to understand desire as an eagerness to offer, to commit, and to apply oneself to meditation and henceforth good deeds. Pali commentator Dhammapala has pointed out *hitacchanda*⁸ as one of the categories of *kama* and it is rendered a “effort-to-do-good”. According to all these contexts, it is certain that *chanda* is used in Buddhism in the sense of “desire-to-do-good”. *Hitacchanda* is also used in this specific sense. Thus, English concept “desire-for-other” is utilized in this paper as a human drive that persuades a person to help other.

Personalities and Desire:

As a whole, Buddhism categorizes human beings into three groups: fully-enlightened ones (*Buddha* and *arahant*), enlightenment-seekers (*Bodhisatta*) and ordinary human beings (*potujjana*). This division is done with regard to emancipation Buddhism prescribed. The skills and the extent of these three groups’ dedication for others’ wellbeing depend on their spiritual position.

However, this paper is constrained to study Buddhist concept of “desire” for pro-social conduct found in mundane personality while giving a considerable attention to enlightenment-seeker (*Bodhisatta*) since it also represents mundane characteristics to some extent and this modal plays a key role as one of the ideals Buddhists are supposed to pursue.

6. ‘*Connected Discourses* (Mahāvagga / Iddhipādasamyutta, Samyutta Nikāya / Pali Canon), (trans.) Bikkhu Bodhi., p. 1729. <http://phong.com/journal/4-bases-of-spiritual-power/1-will/> Accessed date: 25/01/2014

7. <http://phong.com/journal/4-bases-of-spiritual-power/1-will/> Accessed date: 25/01/2014

8. *Vimānavatthu Aṭṭakatā*.

Diversity of Desire in a Mundane Personality

According to early Buddhism, a **mundane person** sees himself as a separate being. He is called mundane/untutored/uneducated (*putujjana*) as he considers himself a separate entity or a separate being from other phenomena. The core structure of this personality is having the concepts of 'this is mine, this I am, and this is my self.'⁹ Self conception is a dominant force in such a character. Though he is naturally egoistic such a personality possesses desire-for-others' wellbeing. On the other hand this does not mean that such a person is totally driven by other person's point of view. Desire-for-other in him is significantly tainted by attachment and selfishness. In such a context that mental trait cannot be identified as altruism in its fullest sense in which one risks himself and is driven only by the thought of removing other's suffering without any selfish interest. However, Buddhism teaches the need for being attentive to others' wellbeing. One is advised not to consider other as mere passive object.

On the other hand, Bodhisatta is much more enriched in pro-social conduct. However, it is essential to remember that this personality too is under the mental structure of "this is mine, this I am, and this is my self." Nonetheless, it differs from the mundane character as he is oriented towards perfect enlightenment with the intention of bringing about other's welfare. Moreover, he abandons his own emancipation because of others. Additionally, it is useful to remind that he is driven by perfect enlightenment or Buddhahood. To attain this, he needs to train himself. Therefore, his acts are not totally devoid of egoistic structure. However, he is better oriented to other's wellbeing than the mundane person who is mostly oriented towards himself.

The goal of the Bodhisatta is to be a perfect Buddha. Being such a person brings happiness and meaning to the world in which he lives. In the bid to achieve enlightenment, he assists others as a spiritual teacher and spiritual friend in addition to the other great roles he plays. Being emancipated he strives for others' emancipation

9. *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Ñānamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.) Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2009. P. 229

by offering constant aid. Thus, his goal is directed towards others' happiness and wellbeing. The path, which promotes others' welfare, is full of sacrifices. Though he has the intention to become a fully perfected Buddha, his conduct is full of altruistic deeds. He helps others to acquire long life, beauty, happiness, strength, wisdom, and finally liberation. Therefore, his dedication for the other is both spiritual and material.

The ethical culture related with desire-for-other's wellbeing is also found in Bodhisatta's practice. For *Vessantara Jātaka*, the other's face represents human beings. King *Vessantara* assisted all kinds of people. Among them were beggars, commoners, innocent people suffering from long-time starvation and distress, ministers, and even kings. His desire was a kind of love for others' wellbeing. The "desire-for-other" in these contexts can be identified as a kind of non-possessive desire.

Non-Possessive Desire

One's reaction to other person generally operates via a mechanism of from-subject-to-object. In this mechanism other or the one who is going to be assisted by an agent becomes an object of the agent. In such a circumstance, the other becomes secondary to the agent. However, the mechanism of "desire-for-other" operates in opposite direction. There, the agent does not feel that he is in a higher position but feels equal to other person or he feels his responsibility towards other. Therefore this mechanism transcends taking other person as an object. This mechanism is known as non-possessive.

Desire-to-do-good, altruistic joy, threefold pain, right thought, right effort, and fourfold bases of solidarity, are classified under wholesome roots in Buddhism. All these aspects explain possibility of having a non-possessive conduct within a mundane personality. Intensity of non-possessive drive in a mundane person may differ from person to person. However, its possibility is acceptable in Buddhism.

The Buddhist account on non-possessive desire is threefold. The mundane person is driven by egoistic motives of my, I and my-self. His acts are driven either by wholesome roots or unwholesome roots.

Therefore, most of the acts of such a person present a possessive characteristic. All good motives/drives are classified under a category of wholesome roots in Buddhism. The principles and prescriptions Buddhism presents depend on their pragmatic value. This is ascertained by the Buddha's own claim that humans are never asked to practice his teaching unless it is practicable. He further says that he taught others only pragmatic things.

In Buddhism, acts that are driven by others' suffering are considered wholesome, so are all acts that produce beneficial results for others. Acts of ordinary human beings can be possessive to certain degrees. Some acts may be extremely possessive while some others can be of less possessiveness. Moreover, there can be some more acts which are based on non-possessive mode.

One such act is found in the notion of 'altruistic joy' (*muditā*) which is included in four-sublime qualities. This is considerably found in a well trained compassionate human being. He is happy with other's happiness though the person may be unknown or not have any relation to him. Likewise, he expects nothing from others. This mental trait leads him to a non-possessive satiety.

Compassion (*karuṇā*) too emphasizes the skill to be moved by other's suffering. However, the suffering person may not be necessarily associated to him. In such a case he wishes only to remove the pain the sufferer undergoes. He wishes to release the victim from suffering. The compassionate being does not have time to conceptualize the other. He is not oriented towards gains from such a person. He just makes the other free from trouble. This is a natural move and it is non-possessive.

Another such concept is right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*), the second of the eightfold path. An ordinary person's right thought is threefold: thought of renunciation; of non-ill will (greed) (charity); and of non-violence. All these thoughts lead one to non-possessive acts. The opposite of these three are identified as intention governed by desire, intention governed by ill-will, and intention governed by harmfulness. These are morally bad as they are directed by a possessive mode of being. The right thought/intention suggests that

it is possible to establish non-possessive acts in an ordinary human personality. One such person can act for others' wellbeing. How one engages in such acts depends on one's cultivation. Some are more accustomed to do it while some others are less accustomed. This repeatedly establishes that every mundane personality can act non-possessively.

The Bodhisatta possesses more advanced form of non-possessive skill compared to the ordinary person due to his specific Bodhisatta characteristics. All the ordinary motives he possesses take on a more wholesome form as he has trained himself in the advanced characteristics. He is closer to the fully enlightened one and is further from mundane person. The Bodhisatta Siddhattha's renunciation indicates the ultimate possibility of acquiring a non-possessive attitude. All his acts are regarded as less possessive or non-possessive. A more advanced degree of compassion and wisdom are found in him as compared to the mundane personality. He is powered by them to act non-possessively.

Buddhist literature reveals that others' predicaments have led Bodhisatta to seek a lasting solution to suffering. However, he cannot be said to be totally altruistic as he is on his journey to enlightenment. Some possessive character traits may exist in him. One can argue that all his acts are directed to his emancipation goal and the others are secondary to his enlightenment goal or others were used as a ladder to reach his goal. This is a double edged argument as it cannot be totally denied or proved. Nevertheless, his renunciation alone can be taken as a huge departure from having a possessive attitude. The one who would cast everything away cannot have the idea of helping others with such a base motive. Thus, Siddhattha's conduct is closer to a non-possessive character. His move is not to gain any personal advantage. It is mostly done for the sake of others.

These sorts of great characteristics are found in the character of Bodhisatta. As sources indicate Bodhisatta Sumedha's aspiration¹⁰

10. 'Should I wish, I could destroy the endless turmoil of existence, and become a novice of the Order, and enter the noble city (no. 47). 'What use in disguise? By the extinction of sin, I having become a Buddha like this Buddha,

was to be a ferry and bridge for others to attain the emancipation, the eternal bliss. His wish was to make others free. It was not based on a selfish motive. For *Visuddhimagga*, he sacrificed his own happiness for others' happiness. He was moved to do this as he was driven by an unshakable loving-kindness.

Desire as a Drive to Assist the Other

Likewise, possibility of having a kind of inclination to “desire-for-other” is grounded on the fundamental Buddhist teachings illustrated below. However, at this juncture, it is significant to comprehend Buddhist view of personal identity since desire-to-do-good is based in a personality. It is a widely accepted fact that Buddhism denies the notion of self or a reality that ensures self-identity as such. This raises a counter question ‘how can there be a desire-to-help others if there is no such self-identity? Buddhist ideas of reality clarify this issue. Reality for Buddhism is twofold: conventional and absolute. Persons and morality exist in the conventional realm, while in the absolute realm of reality these ideas do not make sense.¹¹ In the teaching of Dependent co-origination, a person is identified as a psycho-physical flux. Again a person is divided into a fivefold process called ‘five aggregates (factors).’ All these factors are changing often and they are in a state of flux. The preceding events disappear giving birth to succeeding events. Anyone can verify this reality by looking at oneself objectively and introspectively.

Pro-social conduct in Buddhism is possible since it admits continuity of existence though it refutes the notion of a permanent self. This aspect is directly related to early Buddhist notion of morality. Generosity is clearly identified and well-established as one

supreme in the world, will ferry the people in the ship of the Law across the ocean of existence, and bring them to the City of Nirvāna, my own happiness being extinguished’ (no. 48- 49). The hero, the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara, the one Bridge of the World, the World’s one Eye, stood at his head, and spoke: ‘In time to come, this man shall be a supreme Buddha, Gotama by name,’ and revealed his disciples, his native city, and so forth (No.53-54). *Jinacarita:Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. V, London: Henry Frowde, 1905. p. 120

11. Gunapala, Dharmasiri, *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics*, Singapore: The Buddhist Research Society, 1986., p.18

of the wholesome deeds everyone should practice. This behavior is well appreciated by both worldly beings and emancipated beings. Perfection of giving (*dāna paramitā*) is briefly illustrated below to portray how Theravada Buddhism appreciated it.

Perfections: Perfection of Giving:

Given the limited space and its direct relation to the basic concept “desire-for-other”, only the perfection of giving (*dāna Paramaitā*) is illustrated here. For the commentaries and *Cariyāpiṭaka*, perfections are virtues cultivated by a heart filled with compassion, guided by reason, utterly indifferent to worldly gain, and unsullied by error and all feelings of self-conceit. It is admitted that fulfillment of these ten are inevitably important for the achievement of the goal. Thus they are titled ‘things to-be done for the Buddhahood’ (*buddhakāradhamma*). The whole conduct around these ten represents an ethical development of a person in which the other is often taken into greater consideration.

Recognizing perfection of ‘giving’ as one of the highest conducts in one’s life clarifies the significance given to this concept in Buddhism. Giving is one of the three ways of acquiring merit.¹² Moreover it is the first of ten meritorious deeds. Generosity is divided into two: giving of material things and giving of advice and spiritual guidance. The latter is identified as more valuable.¹³ The Practice of giving is encouraged with two aims. The first of them is to bring a person to the climax of giving in which one can renounce everything, abandon craving for possessions, and give things to others compassionately. The second aim is to build up a positive relation with others while one’s concern for the other is developed. In this explanation, generosity is given double value by stressing both its personal and social significance.

‘Giving’ or ‘charity’ is identified as the utmost significant perfection as it guides the person to reduce craving which is the most dangerous factor that binds a being in continuous existence with troubles. *Buddhavamsa* explains this “so, seeing supplicants, low, high or

12. *Dīgha Nikāya*. Vol. III. p. 218

13. *It*. p. 98

middling, give a gift completely like the overturned jar.”¹⁴ One can give many things ranging from material things, education, merits and dhamma, one’s limbs and life.

This perfection is based on the teaching of the fundamental value of life. Buddhism believes that one’s conduct should be based on the ethics of respecting the value of others’ lives. Everyone should regard life as the most precious thing.¹⁵ Therefore, it is everyone’s fundamental responsibility to refrain from causing harm to another’s life, and to give the highest good and happiness to others within his or her reach. One has to refrain from harming others ([*væritta*] negative aspect) and work sympathetically to bring about welfare of other beings ([*critta*] positive aspect). The latter is associated with friendly and sympathetic attitude towards others. Giving represents one’s sympathy towards the other.

Different aspects of giving related to Bodhisatta’s character are numerous depicted in Theravada Buddhist literature. The first of them is that he cares only about the need of the recipient. If the recipient is in need, the Bodhisatta helps without any discrimination or thought regarding the genuineness of the purpose of the recipient. However, it is noteworthy that there are places where the Bodhisatta is portrayed as being keen on knowing the recipient’s genuine intent. Sometimes, if he finds that the intention behind the request is a ruse, he ignores the person. If the purpose is worthy enough he offers things the recipient requires. In most of the life stories of the Bodhisatta (*Jātaka*) he is seen as giving what others asked of him without any investigation about the recipient’s character or purposes. In that case, he seems to act for the sake of action. He expects no reward in return. He does not classify people according to their social status when he gives but only cares about the need of the recipient.

A Bodhisatta’s generosity is depicted in such a way that he often wishes the happiness of others. His concern is to minimize others’ suffering. Once, it was said that *Sakka* the head of the gods, attracted by Bodhisatta’s virtuous life, visited him and asked what he expects

14. *Buddhavaṃsa and Cariyā Piṭaka*. op., cit., Verse, 120

15. *S.V*, pp. 322-5

from him (*kaṇha Jātaka* [no.440]). His desires were: may I harbor no malice or hatred against my neighbor, may I not covert my neighbor's glory, may I cherish affection towards others, and may I possess equanimity. *Sakka* was disappointed and asked what other wishes he has. And then Bodhisatta's request was: "O Sakka, ... a choice thou didst declare: no creature be ought harmed for me, anywhere. Neither in body nor in mind; this is my prayer." In the *Mahākapi jātaka*, the Bodhisatta is depicted as a great leader of monkeys, who foreseeing danger to his herd from the kings, allowed fellow monkeys to pass safely by treading on his body, stretched as the extension of a bridge.¹⁶

In addition to this, the *Visuddhi Magga* points out qualities of *Mahāsattas* (great beings), another term for Bodhisattas, they are concerned about the welfare of living beings, not tolerating the sufferings of beings, wishing long duration of life circles to the higher states of happiness of beings and being impartial and just to all beings. To all beings they give *gifts*, which are sources of a pleasure, without discriminating thus, 'it must be given to this one; it must not be given to this one'. He practices virtues to prevent harm to the others. They have an unshakable resolution towards the welfare and happiness of other beings.

Different Analysis to Justify "desire-to-do-good":

Buddhism justifies desire-to-do-good (*chanda*) from different perspectives. Firstly, from the dependent co-origination, the central teaching of Buddhism, others (human beings specially and other sentient beings) play an essential role in one's life. As life is taken as a flux of different and multiple conditions, others are an essential and unavoidable factor. In this context the other is situated in the centre of one's life. No one is totally separated and independent. Each and everyone's life is naturally related to other humans and to other beings as well as to nature. There must be a good link between one and the others to construct a whole. Thus, it is obvious under the central theory of Buddhism that a concern for one's fellow human beings is a well rooted notion.

16. *The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, Vol. III, E. B. Cowell (trans.), London: The Pali Text Society, 1973. Pp. 225-8

Secondly in Buddhism, it is believed that most social tensions, natural disasters and personal conflicts occur due to the disregard of the link that should be kept with one's conduct. An analysis presented in discourse *Sigālovāda* regarding human relationship with all the members of the society depicts this very clearly. A reciprocal relationship is presented here based on the role one plays in a particular society. One's duty is prioritized while less concern is placed on one's rights. Fulfilling one's duty would automatically imply the safeguarding of one's right according to Buddhism. One of the modern scholars has succinctly pointed out this interrelatedness:

Leaves are usually looked upon as the children of the tree. Yes, they are children of the tree, born from the tree, but they are also mothers of the tree. The leaves combine raw sap, water, and minerals, with sunshine and gas, and convert it into a variegated sap that can nourish the tree. We are all children of society, but we are also mothers. We have to nourish the society. If we are uprooted from the society, we cannot transform it into a more livable place for us and for our children.¹⁷

Thirdly, one's essential link with the society is acknowledged in the criteria of wholesome (*alobha, adosa, amoha*) and unwholesome (*lobha, dosa, moha*) acts. Buddhism emphasizes the idea of wholesome acts over unwholesome ones in relation to emancipation. Wholesome roots motivate the subject towards moral behavior for the wellbeing of oneself and others. In addition to this, there is another reference made in the canons regarding four motives: impulse (uncontrolled) or partiality (*chanda*), hatred (*dosa*), fear (*bhaya*), and delusion (*moha*)¹⁸ which would lead a person to a biased conduct. One who is motivated by one or more of them will commit unwholesome acts, thus harming him and others. Therefore, it is said that one should be very attentive to them in order to control them. Cultivation of wholesome mental tendencies generates good conduct in a person, thus minimizing harm and maximizing benefits for oneself and others.

17. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*. Berkeley, Calif: Parallax Press, 1987. p.47

18. *Dīgha Nikāya* .Vol. iii. P. 182

The most distinguished teaching that emphasizes the significance of the other in Buddhism is found in the Fourth Noble Truth (*ariya aṭṭaṅgika magga*)¹⁹ and it is the fifth aspect. It represents the path which is called the gradual path, for emancipation. The path is eightfold and it is again divided into three: virtue, concentration and wisdom. The whole behavior of a Buddhist is expected to follow this path. A detailed account of this explains that the whole path is directly related to the other. It is taught that enlightenment is attainable through this path which culminates in wisdom. However the most significant aspect of this teaching is that it is based on the good conduct of the follower. In all the practice the other plays a central role.

Moreover, all the ethical instructions given regarding the behaviour of the lay and recluse are aimed at the other, especially in the noble eight fold path. Right understanding is necessary to recognize the value of others lives, to respect them, and to help them. This understanding will convince one that his behaviour should bring happiness and pleasantness for all. He will then commit to the wellbeing of the world. This will produce right thoughts in him. These right thoughts will lead him not to use harmful words but pleasant words with others. This will lead him to commit right actions by not causing troubles to others but by improving the others' life conditions. To be in this good mode and continue in it, one must have energy. It should be supported by right effort in which wholesome thoughts are produced and cultivated while unwholesome thoughts are controlled and submerged. To continue this, one must be mindful enough and it is done by right mindfulness. The eighth stage is the calm, pacified and contented state in which no one is harmed but all are helped.

Likewise, social life and societal responsibility are often emphasized in Buddhism. Responsibility brings out one's relation with others and thereby responsibility of every member of society is stressed. Shared responsibility is identified as a must for the survival and continuance of a peaceful society and less-suffering society. People who have no sense of responsibility for the society or the common good are acting

19. *Majjima Nikāya Vol. III. Pp.71-81*

against human nature.²⁰ This entails that people should orient their hearts and minds away from the self and go towards alleviating others suffering. Universal responsibility and altruistic behavior work hand in hand. Each and every member of the society has a duty to care for each member of society. Thus, it is essential to ensure that the sick and the afflicted do not feel helpless, rejected, or unprotected. The affection one shows to such people demonstrates the measure of one's spiritual health, both at the level of the individual and at that of the society.²¹

Emphasizing the need of other's mutual support even towards one's spiritual progress is another important point by which Buddhism appreciates others. There are two essential factors that support the progress of spiritual path. The first is, called critical reflection (*yonisomanasikāra*) which is internal while the second is called spiritual friend which (*kalyāṇa mittatā*) is external. The Buddha was concerned about both the internal and external factors and thereby pointed out the significance of both in the progress of spiritual aspirant along the path.

It is clear that even the spiritual path Buddhism prescribes is not devoid of other people. Every aspect of one's life from its conception to death is directly related to others. It is clear that one could have a desire-to-do-good in the Buddhist context irrespective of the negative connotation of desire emphasized in it. To produce good thoughts, to continue those thoughts and to put those wholesome thoughts into action can be categorized or seen as a desire to do good.

Conclusion

Post-conflict societies are in a real necessity to find a pragmatic mechanism to unite people of different beliefs and faiths. This mechanism ought to be a common flat form where it is possible to get together and work together as different identities for a common

20. Dalai Lama, *Worlds in Harmony*. Berkeley, Calif: Parallax Press. 1992. pp.131-139

21. Dalai Lama. *Ethics for the New Millennium*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1999. p.169.

course. “Desire-for-other” (*hitacchanda*) is crucially important inclination that could be employed to reach this goal. The discussion here has established the fact that every man possesses this great inclination (*hitacchanda*) since Buddhism recognizes every being’s pure nature²². It is not impossible to cultivate this if necessary attention is paid to awaken and promote this human drive of desire-to-do-good via appropriate means and ways.

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22. “Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tanca ko āgantuke hi upakkilesehi upakkilṭṭhaṃ.” *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Pabhassara Sutta, 1.10, PTS, London

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