



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Political Science

ENGAGING BUDDHISM IN MODERN SOCIETY

KEY WORDS: Buddhism, Engaged, Bodhisattva, society.

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ABSTRACT

In the 1960s, Thich Nhat Hanh invented the phrase “Engaged Buddhism” to describe the practice of Buddhism in everyday life. Engaged Buddhism emphasizes the importance of mindfulness and compassion in helping others, as well as the importance of understanding and assisting wounded individuals. Engaged Buddhism refers to a contemporary form of Buddhism that actively engages with society's social, economic, political, and ecological challenges. It originated in Buddhist Asia and has spread globally, with many leaders and no centralized movement. Participation in Engaged Buddhism is possible for practitioners of all Buddhist sects, including Theravadin, Mahayanist, Vajrayanist, and non-sectarian Buddhists.

I. INTRODUCTION

Engaging Buddhism, as described by Pali scholar Dipak Kumar Barua, is the application of Buddhism in modern ways of life based on logic and reason. This modern approach to Buddhism can be applied equally to the welfare of humanity and appeals most to human minds. According to David Brazier and James William Coleman, Engaging Buddhism is a Western mutation of traditional Buddhism, where the essential divide between monk and layman has been almost completely wiped out. In contrast, the Western world has seen the emergence of Engaging Buddhism, where women and men practice together as equals, sharing tasks and responsibilities in ways that most Asian nations have never seen before. In this article, we will present the engaging Buddhism through applying the Bodhisattva ideal in the society.



II. Contents

The Bodhisattva concept, originating from Mahāyāna Buddhism, aims to help sentient beings overcome suffering by implementing compassion. Being a Bodhisattva requires identifying with suffering and acting in their best interest. Applying the Bodhisattva ideal in modern society can bring happiness and peace if everyone understands it.

1. Application of the Bodhisattva Ideal in Political Government:

The government must be understanding the important of the Bodhisattva ideal and incorporate it. If they do it well, it helps the people of their nation in terms of money, well-being, and happiness. The mind does not discriminate while practising generosity, seeing all individuals as brothers and sisters in the family, resulting in a rich and powerful nation. There is no disagreement, exploitation for loss, status, power, or corruption. Assume that every government official, including those who work for the government or run the nation, adheres to the six perfections. In such a situation, the country will become happier and more tranquil, with no beggars or homeless people. The necessity of following the six perfections would benefit not only oneself and one's family but also societies tranquilly. The country that applies the Bodhisattva idea to nation-building will be very successful. Because such concepts are practical, they aid in the resolution

of many difficulties in life, ranging from mental to material. Because everyone has been instilled with the notion of the Bodhisattva, they will treat one another amicably, without conflict or hostility. Such a nation will be devoid of all ills, with people living freely and quietly and doing business. So, is that nation happy and prosperous? Nobody can argue with that.

A society with people is a cohesive body that would weaken if divided. Thus, the Bodhisattva concept brings people together, constantly aiding each other in life. So, both the above and below agree that it is possible to construct a peaceful and happy nation. The Bodhisattva must dwell in the heart of humanity, utilising a loving mind to comprehend beings' thoughts and tailor the degree using all possible tools. Simultaneously, the Bodhisattva creates all the pure regions of paradise right here in this world, in a condition of no suffering and gentle relaxation of the mind. The world is growing more developed as technology advances, as is the culture of those who use the market system. In the current societal context, the Bodhisattva monk understands what to do. The first stage for oneself is to comprehend the inner class, i.e., the Dharma teachings that constitute the foundation of one's existence. Because the Buddha's teachings have elevated individuals to a lofty and holy level, learning the Buddha's teachings allows one to convey the concept of life to everyone.

Furthermore, a Bodhisattva practitioner is a person of high virtue who, by ethical purity, should provide an example for sentient beings. The words and acts of the Bodhisattva often coincide with the experiences of sentient beings, and those who are moral and virtuous in all they do are quickly successful. Suffering is a term that people do not fully grasp. We are conscious of pain and pleasure but not of the root of our misery. It is tough for them to understand the source of their anguish. Consequently, today's practitioners must fully grasp, which requires a deep study and comprehension of internal and external literature and spirituality. Political, economic, and social charity work are all active subjects in today's social work. In the past, Buddha was a brilliant politician. He directed the kings to do good actions by the dharma. The nation's affairs were calm and prosperous, successful, and quiet. The economy will grow until the globe is calm and peaceful, with no more looting, poverty, rich people ruling over poor people, or racial prejudice.

2. Engaging Buddhism in Socio-economic:

Even though we live in a world with many goods, we are unconcerned about disasters. People have turned against one another and are now a source of fear for one another. To demonstrate our Bodhisattva behavior, compassion, and morality, we need to call on all persons who can look at tragedies, articulate what they can do, and make some effort toward the goal of establishing a society that is characterized by justice, humanity, and peace. For instance, when we come

across someone who has been involved in a car accident, everyone else avoids them in some way, such as pretending they are not there or declining to assist them. We hurry over to help them, either by calling a cab or taking them straight to the hospital in our vehicles. That is a typical, hands-on endeavor that exemplifies the genuine Bodhisattva character. The route of practicing compassion, also known as the liberation of the Bodhisattva, is dedicated to easing the pain and suffering of sentient beings and bringing about harmony among them. The concept of a Bodhisattva is easy to understand in theory but challenging to execute in real life. We are not anticipating or anticipating that the Bodhisattva will rescue us; this is impossible. Instead, the Bodhisattva ideal directs us to assist those in need; this is the genuine Bodhisattva ideal.

In the real world, the Bodhisattva's mission is to provide medical treatment for those in need. Because we are human, we must all suffer; everyone will inevitably get ill. When people get unwell, they need medical attention and care to recover. When someone in their family is sick, it is common practice for the ailing person's spouse or kid to provide care for them. When those who are homeless or never married, such as monks, get ill, they have little choice but to combat dangerous illnesses in whichever way they can. In this challenging environment, people must make a life for themselves.

In today's culture, there is a kind of business, and if the Bodhisattva ideal is applied to business, people will not abuse one another. There is a notion that the "marketplace is like a battlefield" demonstrates competitiveness and damages each other, and they are prepared to injure others for their purpose. Sales are more lucrative. There will be no rivalry if people grasp the Bodhisattva teachings; businesses will support each other to survive. Then society will be less demanding, and life will be easier. The objectives of the Bodhisattva are sentient creatures. Without creatures, a Bodhisattva cannot become a Buddha. In this human world, beings build a social culture. Of course, social existence is not without obstacles; many sentient beings generate a lot of negative karma, but many aware people create a lot of positive roots. As a bodhisattva who encompasses the six senses gate, there is no longer any desire in this realm. However, the Bodhisattva path still regards sentient beings as their children, unwilling to leave them to bear the consequences of their actions.

The Bodhisattva rapidly converts with all his consciousness rolling into life and rescuing sentient beings, looking for all ways of birth. Consequently, the Bodhisattva is at the side of sentient beings to comprehend, and any cause may be discovered. The mind of the Bodhisattva is still satisfied in the spirit of change, and it is glad to know that their acts are necessary. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva may often practise giving, which is a functional requirement of sentient beings, in addition to making the mind pleasant. If we get into the core of society, we will observe how needy people are, materially and mentally. They continued swimming in poverty, passion, and suffering since no one led them. The Bodhisattva gives charity and urges others to do the same. In this manner, the Bodhisattva will create countless relatives who will always love one another selflessly. The spectacle of the strong abusing the weak and the affluent mocking the poor is no longer evident. The Bodhisattva should grasp the concept of constructing the pure land as soon as they have developed the love of sentient beings so that all beings might experience harmony in the world and not elsewhere.

Constructing a clean place for sentient beings to enjoy bliss is a highly noble deed with the huge Great Compassion mentality of the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva does not build the pure country elsewhere; instead, the Bodhisattva establishes the pristine land at the centre of this human heart.

Because there is so much pain and delusion in the human world, the Bodhisattva, who has attained the most significant degree of freedom, he reasoned, cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of sentient beings. In this world, thinking clearly with a calm and unfettered mind, no stubbornness or enthusiasm, actively engaging in social activities but pondering doing nothing naturally, without symbol, injustice, or anonymity in all situations. In the *Mahāyāna* teaching about the Bodhisattva is one who has attained *Nirvāṇa* but take a vow to return to *Samsāra* so that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, they are not rushed to become Buddhas until the Bodhisattva's *Nirvāṇa* is also secure in their activities, which means real *Nirvāṇa*. All the above definitions reflect Bodhisattva's altruistic will.

3. Teaching Buddhism in the Education:

Education is a strategy of continually altering an object's mental and physical growth to acquire the qualities and abilities we need finally. Education is the teaching, transmission, and training of knowledge that helps the individual receive it, grow intellect and virtue, find, and comprehend oneself, and adopt activities appropriate for the environment, life, and society. Education is essential for introducing individuals to the truth of goodness and beauty while also introducing them to the human experience and making them aware of material things. Incorporating Bodhisattva philosophy into education is the fastest way to bring humanity pleasure and peace. Educators and instructors who transmit the spirit of the Bodhisattva to students, scholars, graduate students, and others are following the correct procedure, which will teach future generations about happiness and prosperity. This is also the way of Buddhist instruction, according to the spirit of the Bodhisattva. To calmly overcome all adversities, the Bodhisattva practitioner must constantly be conscious of who he is, what his goal is, and the actual value of his being. All karma will be directed towards the horizon of freedom, giving humanity wealth and harmony. It is feasible to argue that the spiritual education of a Bodhisattva involves more than simply training those who are wholly virtuous and intelligent to sit down and satisfy other necessary attributes like selflessness, virtue, patience, and, most importantly, compassion. Compassion is a fundamental Buddhist precept that pervades all Buddhist teachings and activities.

Compassion in Buddhism is more than worldly emotions; it constantly surpasses the borders of private sentiments, eradicating all caste barriers, gender, status, and race. When a person is genuinely loving, he does not always express his enormous love to his friends or family, and he does not always show love to his adversaries. With its teaching of compassion, Buddhism has restated an everlasting truth: wrath and violence cannot erase all disagreements or inconsistencies in life; only love can calm hostile hearts filled with hatred and cruelty. Buddhist educational philosophy in the spirit of the Bodhisattva has made a significant contribution to all who practise the Bodhisattva, assisting practitioners in opening their hearts to consider all of life's adversity, allowing practitioners to progress firmly on the Bodhisattva path as a result of those obstacles. Due to sentient creatures' misfortune, the practitioner generates enormous compassion for all persons in a community.

The law of society is that whichever is appropriate for the times to exist. Bodhisattva thought that it is well received by people in this society who has immortal faith, and has ingrained in the mind of each person. *Mahāyāna* Buddhists believe that suffering is often reciting the name of the Bodhisattva, it will disappear. According to *Theravāda* Buddhism, the image of the Bodhisattva is very diverse, in many different forms. All the Bodhisattvas lives when experiencing, from animals to humans, from common people to kings. But *Theravāda* Buddhism accepted only the Buddha's past lives, proving that they only accepted Buddha as a

Bodhisattva Siddhartha Gotama previous lives before becoming a Buddha. But through the period *Mahāyāna* Buddhism it opened to mankind that all sentient beings can become Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Not only that, the Bodhisattva can be an ordinary person, a monk. Bodhisattvas appear with many forms of great person with compassion (*Karuṇā*) and wisdom (*Prajñā*). But we do not misunderstand people with bad minds, there are people who disguise themselves with a compassionate appearance but in fact, they do it for their benefit. This shows us that only those Buddhist disciples who study and practice the Dharma correctly can fully practice the Bodhisattva ideal. Attachment is the root of pain for beings on the six routes. Some people are addicted to the world and human beings. The universe and human beings are imaginary, not actual, but living beings consider it natural and cling to it, causing many sufferings. Some people believe that the world and human life are meaningless, so they do not believe in cause and effect, sins, or *Saṃsāra*, and willingly commit innumerable sins while suffering incessantly.

By appreciating others, we will eliminate greedy envy in our brains, unite fair nature with great compassion, create pleasure, and escape from sorrow to be pleased. We may also nurture righteous ideas, dispel ignorance and illusion, unite in truth, bring serenity, genuine fear, sadness, and worry and assist sentient creatures in living in peace and freedom. Almsgiving is a positive karma pillar that helps individuals live a good life by eradicating the three poisons of greed, wrath, and delusion. Bodhisattva is *Mahāyāna* Buddhism's only ideal direction and an active and perfect feature of personality and activities for humans and the universe. We are giving people a life of peace and happiness in the real world. We are actively attempting to turn desire and ignorance in ourselves.

This is a challenging route, but Bodhisattva's persistent efforts have made it a way of life since he wants to transform the face of ignorance completely. The Bodhisattva must labour ceaselessly to address concerns of welfare and death. A Bodhisattva aspires to gain Buddhahood, which is the desire to fail. Practitioners should pursue pleasure for all species while ignoring their own. On the other hand, by following the Bodhisattva path, one may immediately witness the actuality of the truth, for the Supreme Bodhisattva can only blossom and yield fruit in the centre of the scorching region right there in this short body. Existence is fleeting and selfless. On the one hand, the thought of immense compassion comes from the Bodhisattva's "emptiness" when he enters reality. Leaving clinging to self-forms, on the other hand, has valuable benefits. The primary goal of the Bodhisattva is to help sentient creatures realise their irrational thinking. Then people can figure out how to get rid of misery. The Bodhisattva path is a blend of both personal faith and ordination. Even though religion in the home is in accord with human existence, it nonetheless aims towards the goal of Buddhahood. Religion, while seeking the ideal of freedom, aims to aid creatures in the mind. The Bodhisattva approach is a method of assimilation into society. Consequently, man is the focal point of the Bodhisattva's spiritual practice, and whether he likes to or not, whether standing at home or in renunciation, he is consistently tied, no more and no less.

Given natural principles, self-control often governs the practitioner's spiritual life. Practitioners always take advantage of the chance to free themselves from all the laws of nature and circumstance to enter the realm of spiritual freedom, which is regarded as the ultimate human satisfaction in the face of sorrow produced by the self-indulgence of cases implicate others. All species and practitioners always take advantage of the chance to free themselves from all the laws of nature and circumstance to enter the realm of spiritual freedom, regarded as the ultimate human bliss. It does not detach or isolate the practitioner from the reality of human suffering, even though it increases mental autonomy. It is the

primary goal of the Bodhisattva philosophy, which regards suffering as a predetermined connection. Since the fulfilment of the eternal destiny is the ideal and criteria for all values, seeing pain as a factor in self-control and bringing it towards the ultimate eternal ideal is a factor in self-control and bringing it towards the top infinite model. They can float about in life's sea, going both left and right, and yet be secure; they may merge into the river to fall in love, bringing people to a genuine escape from low wants. The Bodhisattva religion is particularly "favourable" at home since their topics of study and practice are appropriate in front of their eyes every day, every hour, giving them a chance to acquire noble ideals.

III. CONCLUSION:

The six perfections are a group of generous thinking and behavior characterizing traits. In other words, the path to a direct awareness of reality is pointed out by the idea that perfection is life. There are several activities for ensuring people's comfort while doing the six perfections. We can assist the many homeless individuals who lack access to water and clothing. We may consider the pain of the people and treat them equally. We must offer and display generosity. The ethics of active Buddhists have been incorporated into every community and country as Buddhism has grown across numerous nations. Buddhism views humanity as a whole and is a human religion. But from a higher viewpoint, Buddhism serves all living things, including safe advantages for animals and plants, rather than just societal interests. Because Buddhism strongly emphasizes supporting the peaceful interests of people, animals, and the natural world, it differs from other faiths in this regard. When one realizes the goal to create and change suffering existence into the Pure Land of the world, they are no longer constrained by irrelevant considerations such as high or low status, wealth, or poverty, etc.

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