



Application of Applied and Engaged Buddhism in Existing Society

SATYARTH PRAKASH
M.A., Ph.D, Mgdh University

Abstract:

Buddhism is related with all aspects of our life. That philosophy which is applied in our life is called applied Buddhism. Present paper is trying to explore the importance of applied Buddhism in our all peripheries. Applied Buddhism is deeply related with the mental and physical well being of our life. Applied Buddhism can be applied in our life without getting engaged in any rituals or leaving any identity and actions. It doesn't differentiate any division between any culture and religion rather considers the whole world as one. Severe lack of research in this area has created a vacuum to understand this concept.

Keywords: *Applied Buddhism, Religion*

The applications of Engaged Buddhism which later on was given the name of "Applied Buddhism" is the application of Buddhist teachings in our daily life. It is a broad umbrella under which all the essential aspects of life such as physical, mental, social and spiritual well being as well as philosophical, bio-ethical, financial and modern scientific aspects could be incorporated. This includes the Buddhist ideas practiced by the three major schools of Buddhist thoughts in modern era, namely the Theravada, Mahayana and Tantrayana (Tibetan) traditions. Apart from the commonly discussed philosophical and psychological aspects, more emphasis is given here on the traditional culture and social aspects of Buddhism.

"Applied Buddhism" also shares valuable information on Buddhist contributions to modern science, health and well being. As our concept of well being is directly related to our mental and spiritual health, Buddhist Meditational practices are given the prime importance for prevention of mental illnesses and recommended for incorporation in the regimen of regular psychotherapy and in primary and secondary school curriculum as a part of primordial prevention.

Without disrespecting the significance of religious rituals, the myths and beliefs and traditional local ceremonial practices related to Buddhism are however, carefully extracted and excluded from this domain of "Applied Buddhism". This is intentionally done in order to make the Buddhist ideas more acceptable to people belonging to other religious realms and cultural backgrounds. The idea behind this is to enable people practice Buddhism without being converted into a Buddhist. One should understand that Buddhism is not just a religion, but a way of life. In order to incorporate Buddhist ideas in daily life, one need not give up his or her own religion. Just that one can remain spiritual without being religious, in the same way; one can practice Buddhist teachings without formally being a Buddhist.

Applied Aspect of Buddhism: Intergradations of Buddhist Philosophy with Activities in Daily Life. Thus, the term "Applied Buddhism" explains how every person can relate Buddhist ideas into his or her daily life and in profession. The main focus of this new concept is to diffuse the teachings of the Buddha in every nook and corner of the society, so that all sentient beings, irrespective of their religion, culture and creed can benefit from it. In recent times, some of the new concepts that have

evolved in Buddhism are Engaged Buddhism, Social Buddhism, Socially Engaged Buddhism and Green Buddhism. Like the "String Theory" of quantum physics, "Applied Buddhism" is an effort to integrate all these scattered aspects of Buddhism under one single and unified concept in order to make it more appealing to the global community. Through this Applied Buddhism, one should be able to follow Buddhism without being a Buddhist. The term "Applied Buddhism" was first coined by an eminent Buddhist Scholar from India, Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua. He was the elected Dean of the Faculty Council for Postgraduate Studies in Education, Journalism & Library Science in the University of Calcutta, West Bengal, India (1987-1991) and the Director of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda (a Deemed University) in Nalanda, Bihar, India (1996-1999). He had discussed at length about this new concept of "Applied Buddhism" in his Book entitled, "Applied Buddhism: Studies in the Gospel of Buddha from Modern Perspectives".

However, due to limited publications and restricted circulation of this book within the country, the new concept of "Applied Buddhism" could not be popularized outside India for quite some time. However, during the later years, this new concept was widely appreciated by the renowned scholars in various intellectual forums throughout the world. The common people from varied religious background also found comfort in easy understanding of the principle teachings of the Buddha.

This new concept of the applied aspect of Buddhism is destined to bridge the gap of understanding that exists due to misinterpretation of the teachings of the Buddha by people belonging to diverse religious backgrounds. One popularized and accepted it would pave the way in promoting peace and harmony in the society. Applied Buddhism is also a noble endeavor to integrate the Buddhist philosophy with modern science and technology. This applied philosophy is an integral part of our daily life and is expected to be accepted by everyone without any discrimination. I am included in the reviewers' list of the international journals such as 'Bulletin of the World Health Organization', 'International Psychogeriatrics' and 'Journal of Neuroscience and Behavioural Health'. I had received the esteemed "Tung Lin Kok Yuen Postgraduate Scholarship in Buddhist Studies during the year 2008-2009" by the Li ka Shing Foundation of the Centre of Buddhist Studies of the University of Hong Kong. I had received the prestigious "2007 Leelabati Bholanath Award for Research in Community Psychiatry" for the original research article entitled, "Depressive Disorders in India Elderly Population".

The Four Noble Truths is one of the simplest, yet most misunderstood, philosophical concepts ever presented. The Buddha said that there is a general dissatisfaction with the world; just by the very nature of existing as a temporal being. We are generally dissatisfied (dukkha or 'suffer') because we have cravings the we cling to. There is a solution. The way to end suffering is following the Noble Eightfold Path. But the words of the Buddha must be a clearly understood beyond our loosely translated definitions. What do we mean by suffering. What do we mean by craving. What do we mean by clinging. If we didn't really think about it, hunger would be a craving and misunderstood as being the root of suffering. Of course it is not-hunger is necessary to tell us that we need nourishment. Not all cravings (the Pali word is "tanha" or thirsts) are bad. There must then be some discernment to which cravings are wholesome and unwholesome.

Interestingly and coherently Buddhism provided and applied such terms in similar situation by their followers, thinkers and also by some politicians in their own thought. And one such term is Pancasila, which has very wide and at the same time deep implication in the propagation of Buddhist "Concept, culture and practice. Sila- the technical term, used as 'conduct' or 'virtue' usually used to designate rules of ethical training for Buddhist. Unlike the formal and externally enforced code embodied in the Vinaya Pitaka, through Sila appears to be non condified internally enforced ethical guide line designed to assist in the development of proper human conduct. The standards and moral values of the individual practicing their personal life lead to social harmony in their social introduction and social activities.

Buddhism knowledge is always controlled by the moral conscience. And this morality stands at the head of three trainings (Sila, Samadhi, Prajna) and leads the way as accordingly which means the morality is the starting points of Buddhist culture. And there is another Buddhist morality- Dasakusalakarma is another category of virtuous conduct which differ from the others proceedings of classified Buddhist morality because unlike the others these moral actions do not merely include bodily action of four Buddhist Brahmaviharas. The highest moral characters of six Paramitas of Mahayana Buddhism are Dana, Sila, Ksanti, Virya, Samadhi and Prajna. The Buddhist morality, therefore, in spite of the fact, that the system has so many precepts and moral instructions in its foundation of teachings. The most important characteristic of the Buddhist morality is its practicability.

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