

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A BUDDHIST IN THE PRESENT DAY WORLD-I*

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In the present days world of human conflicts, hatred and violence Buddhism provides an answer through its philosophy of International peace and Brotherhood to liberate human beings from the bondage of sufferings born of mundane desire and lustful sins. All human guess based on self advancement, according to the teachings which the afflicted world has been ceaselessly striving for, but only increases misery and pain. As long as a human being remains a slave of moral poisons and a victim of evil thoughts and misdeeds there is no radical escape from the material world to the spiritual world.

The Great Gautama Buddha teaches us to love mankind, thus : "Hatred is not conquered by hatred, but hatred is conquered by love and gentleness".

Furthermore, the Great Teacher instructs human beings to purify their minds, to cultivate wholesome and healthy habits and to cease doing evil deeds. It is enough for any individual to understand that egoistic ideas of men and materialistic gain will never lead mankind to the ultimate and of peace and happiness which various civilizations have all along been struggling for in order to be free from the bondage of the present day world its conflicts and technological conquests.

There is no doubt, as the lamas maintain, that the present technological advancement of the western civilization can never elevate mankind to a state of real peace and happiness in the world, not to speak of the sublime stage of bliss where all are absorbed in the void of 'SHUNYATA'. According to the Tibetan philosophy, men of technological world have come to misuse knowledge on the other hand, political power and technology have led mankind back to the dark age of mistrust and destruction, a gruesome example of which was provided when, thirty three years ago, an atom bomb reduced the city of Hiroshima into ashes and brought down the proud civilisation of Japan into dismal despair. The case history of Japan, the only war victim of such a deadly weapon of destruction in 1945, is a significant example to convince the world that there is no escape from the havoc which the technological advancement can bring about today.

One of the weighty questions which many of our pundits have been asking time and again is whether the ancient teachings of the Great Buddha would eventually lead mankind in our baffled age to the realization that matter remains as tangible as spirit itself. Realization of the rationality of the Buddha's message of fellowship among all living beings would enable mankind to walk in the sunshine of people with feelings of relief from stark fear and gnawing pain. The answer to the ever puzzling question, however, cannot so easily be found out in our present crisis

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without understanding the mystery of metaphysical background of the doctrine of the Buddha.

Indeed, as mankind marches on towards a progressive yet uncertain future, it should be for every individual in the world today to seek peace through logical belief in the brotherhood of man. Such belief automatically calls for logical action to challenge the Law of Causation of life itself which relatively moulds the destiny of mankind to its apex of tolerance, fortitude patience, sympathy and loves.

While there is no denying the fact that science and technology have brought about a total revolution in political thinking for a progressive future based on radical social change, tolerance and sanity, yet, paradoxically, the modern world has created a monster in the shape of a doomsday bomb.

At a time such as this, it is for every individual Buddhist and peace-lover in the world to accept the metaphysical content of Buddhism as a guide-line to improve the philosophical systems, and to endure the trial of time with a change of heart. The answer to the present day crisis of unhappiness of mankind, and the struggle of human beings to make a better world lies only in the transformation of all human hearts. What is so urgently needed today is a fair wind to blow across the world so that those of us who have been following the teachings of the Great Guatama Buddha may yet find time to put out sails and move across the ocean to find the ultimate goal of Nirvana.

As a true Buddhist, I personally feel that it is high time that we, the responsible Buddhist's should keep trying to rediscover and rekindle some of the dynamic vitality of Buddhism, and it should be adopted in such a way so as to transform it into a guiding light for the younger and older generations of our time.