

METTĀ-BHĀVANĀ as a daily practice for Peace and Harmony in the Multicultural Society

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ABSTARCT

The multicultural fabric of modern societies has given rise to many new issues and conflicts through mass migration and the dispersion of cultural influences. Even though multiculturalists have dealt with culture, language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and race as main research subjects, it is not easy to handle complicated social problems. Now a new norm, which is expected to bind people together in multicultural background and social context, is supposed to perform an integrative function in multicultural society. Here, the role of religion is to be noted. The reason is that religion is the most fundamental social institution and it is essential if society to remain orderly.

The main objective of this paper is to examine the practical virtue to foster multicultural citizenship, which is to contribute religious peace and harmony as well as social order through Buddhist perspective. This research is mainly a textual study. The collected data were observed on comparative and critical bases.

When immigrants' ratio exceeds more than 2.5% of the total population, it is classified as multi-cultural country. Although consistent inflow of immigrants is changing the demographics, society is currently unprepared for this change. Both the influx of immigrants and mounting concerns about social conflict show the time has long past to leave this matter to individual awareness or good intention. Therefore, people who are at each other's throats in multi-cultural countries must hold public norm to live peacefully as a citizen.

Unlike other religions, Buddhism avoids absolutism and dogmatic fanaticism (*idam-saccābhinivesa*), and has a nonviolent history through its propagation and dissemination. *Dhammapada* states that hatred never ceases through hatred in this world. According to *Anamata-ggasamyutta*, it is not easy to find a being who in this *samsāra* has not previously been our mother, father, brother, sister, son, and daughter. *Cūlagosinga-sutta* clearly shows that how to live in peace with others and to maintain loving-kindness towards different people. *Visuddhimagga* describes *mettā-bhāvanā* as a therapeutic tool to cure psychological disorders and problematic behaviours caused by hatred. So, we need to practice daily *mettā-bhāvanā* for peaceful co-existence in the multicultural society.

Keywords: Mettā-bhāvanā, migration, multicultural citizenship, religious harmony, social order

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