

An Inquiry into Likelihood of Religious Pluralism in Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

The well-known fact is that the Buddhism emerged in a multi-religious society in the 6th century BC in India. But, it guides explicitly how to practice harmony amongst other religious followers. It doesn't mean that it is impossible to observe Buddhist criticism towards the contemporary heretical views in India. The notable fact, in this regard is that the remorseless Buddhist criticism aimed at the practitioners of self-indulgence only. Even though, the Buddha and his disciples experienced a number of difficulties from the other religious groups, they practiced religious harmony constantly.

The attitudes of the Buddha towards Jains, Śramaṇa practitioners, and well-versed Brahmanas imply how Buddhism practiced religious tolerance. The tolerance cannot be defined that a religion accepts what opposing religion teaches. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the religious pluralism goes far beyond the tolerance. The aim of this paper is to prove that the Buddhism manifests pluralistic teachings in different layers while it presents the non-soul theory as its unique teaching. Particularly, the sources utilized in this research will be limited to the *Sutta-piṭaka* only.

Keywords: Religious pluralism, Self-indulgence, Jain, Sramana practitioners, well-versed Brahmanas