

Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies

University of Kelaniya

Sri Lanka

**A Critical Study of the Multicultural Elements of
Buddhist Social Philosophy and Ethics**

Ven. Pang Yahui

Registration No: 2013/PhD/E/3243

A Thesis Submitted to the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist
Studies (University of Kelaniya) in Fulfillment of a Requirement of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 2015

Abstract

Buddhist ethics and social philosophy has been a very popular subject among the scholars and the general writers on Buddhism. Further Buddhism both Theravāda and Mahāyāna emphasizes the importance of practical aspect related to ethics leading to freedom (nibbāṇa), the final aim to be achieved by a Buddhist. The ethical codes prescribed in almost all religions in the world mostly bear the similar characteristics though their philosophies, aims and objectives are different from each other. Most of the philosophical speculations of the world religions are based on beliefs and there cannot be seen a logical relationship between the philosophy and ethics recommended in them. Buddhism holds a unique position in this regard because its philosophy and ethical codes are mutually interdependent. And also the basic elements of Buddhist ethics specially related to its social philosophy refer to the universal truths that can be experienced by all. It also should be mentioned that some Buddhist ethical codes related to various cultural contexts have been recommended taking the relevant characteristics into consideration. Although sometimes they seem unacceptable in relation to basic elements of Buddhist Philosophy, they encourage the social harmony in any given society. Whatever difference occurs in Buddhist ethical codes, they directly or indirectly are connected with the gradual path of Buddhism viz. Sīla – morality, Samādhi – concentration and Paññā – wisdom.

The above facts have not adequately been taken into consideration as a whole in modern researches on Buddhist social philosophy and ethics. So we have taken an

attempt to elucidate such points mentioned above with reference to the topics such as Buddhist path to deliverance, general nature of Buddhist social philosophy and ethics in order to prove their acceptability and sustainability in any given society. The modern world has become a global village due to the development of modern science and technology. With its progress the blind beliefs and practices seem to disappear from the way of life of common people. Therefore time has already come to review our traditional religious concepts and ethical codes and point out their acceptability and fruitfulness to the modern society which is multicultural in its nature.

Abbreviations

- verse in the Nyansaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi anthology, who generally maintain the numbering system of the Pali Text Society.
- Abh. Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha
- As. Aṅgasaṅgīhī (The Expositor) : cited to page number in Pe Tin Maung translation
- Bv. Buddhavaṃsa (Chronicle of Buddhas): cited to section and verse in Horner translation.
- BvA. Madhuraṅgavāṇanī (The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning): cited to section and verse in L. B. Horner translation of Buddhadasa Thera commentary.
- Cp. Cariyapīṭaka (Basket of Conduct): cited to section and verse in Horner translation.
- Dhp. Dhammapadam : cited to verse in Narada Thera translation.
- DN. Dīgha Nikāya (Long Discourses of the Buddha) : cited to Sutta and section in Walsby translation.
- EPD. English-Pali Dictionary: cited to page number in the A. P. Buddhadatta