

The Relevance of Buddhist Teachings for the Management of Emotions

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Introduction

We are living in an age of stress and strain conflict and confusion, where moral and spiritual values have reached their lowest ebb. Politicians proudly proclaim that this is an age of the common man but it is more true to say that it is an age of anxiety, unrest and instability. In today's highly competitive, commercialized civilization, man is drifting hopelessly in a sea of doubt and anxiety, without a purpose and goal in life.

What are the major, inner problems of people at present? When we look beneath, the outward occasions for people's problems, such as the threat of war, the draft, and economic uncertainty, what are the underlying conflicts? To be sure, the symptoms of conflicts which people describe, in our age as in any other, are unhappiness, inability to decide about marriage or vacation, general despair and meaninglessness in their lives, and so on. But what underlies these symptoms?

When people talk about autonomy or lament their inability to make decisions, difficulties. It soon becomes evident that their underlying problems are that they have no definite experience of their own desires or wants. Thus they feel swayed this way and that with painful feelings of powerlessness because they feel vacuous, empty, which generate conditions of stress and loneliness.