

BUDDHIST APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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While various forms of conflict are interdependently connected with human existence, they can be briefly understood in two types: internal and external. Buddhism fundamentally recognizes that all forms of conflict are a part of suffering. Buddhism explains that the concept of suffering, or *dukkha*, is the nature of human existence. Some critics tend to think that this emphasis on suffering makes Buddhism a kind of pessimism. Since the Buddha talked about suffering with the ultimate aim of eradicating it, one cannot call Buddhism a pessimism. Nevertheless, one has to accept the centrality of the concept of *dukkha* in the teaching of the Buddha. The nature of conflict, which is a manifestation of *dukkha* in Buddhism, arises from both internal and external causes, according to *Kamma* theory. This understanding is framed within the doctrine of dependent co-origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*), which considers that all phenomena are interdependently connected. Any conflicts caused by internal and external conditions lead to unstable and unpleasant conditions in life. Human beings are drawn to a pleasant life rather than to an unpleasant one full of conflict. The Buddha introduced the Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*) to address these conflicts, which outlines a practical framework for conflict resolution. The Buddhist way is to understand the main cause of any conflicts or problems, to remove it, to realize the way to the cessation of it, and finally to practice the way that leads to its cessation or true happiness. However, a critical question arises: does the Buddha's teaching provide a comprehensive theory and practice for resolving all conflicts? This inquiry necessitates a thorough examination of the nature of conflict and exploring Buddhist theories and practices aimed at conflict resolution. Therefore, the present paper will undertake a qualitative and descriptive analysis to investigate the nature of conflict, examine the theoretical frameworks provided by Buddhism, and assess their practical applications for conflict resolution. By illustrating relevant data from Buddhist scriptures, this study aims to deepen the understanding of conflict resolution within a Buddhist context. Ultimately, this paper seeks to illuminate the Buddhist theoretical framework and its applications for resolving conflicts; thereby, highlighting the path to peace that Buddhism offers. Through this exploration, we hope to demonstrate the relevance and efficacy of Buddhist teachings in addressing the nature of conflict and its resolution.

Keywords: Conflict, dependent co-origination, Fourth Noble Truth, peace