

Buddhist Perspectives on Domestic Violence

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Introduction

Historically, domestic violence has been culturally and institutionally sanctioned and legitimized within the Asian culture. Consequently, it is a pervasive health, social, and human rights issue, which has serious repercussions on the victim's physical health and mental health. Despite its serious consequences and the scope of the problem, it has been referred to as a "silent crisis". (1)

Overview Buddhism

Brief History

- In 543 before Christianity, Buddha passed away (Parinibbana or enlightened by without any substratum of life remaining).
- During King Asoka's reign, Buddhism was recognized as the golden era. King Asoka patronized the Monk Community Third Council and sent missionaries to different nine directions.
- In the Fourth Council, Buddhism was clearly divided into two main streams: Theravada (the teaching of elders) and Acariyavada (the teaching of recent teachers).

Triple Gem

- **Buddha**: means the Awakened One or Enlightened One. His former name was Prince Siddhatta Goutama.

- **Dhamma**: means nature, rule, discipline, doctrine, truth, way of life or teaching. Some core teachings are Five Precepts, Four Noble Truth, Three Roots of Evil, Three Characteristics, Eightfold Path, Karma...etc.

- **Sangha**: means monks community or followers that can consist of Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni, Laymen and Laywomen.

Definition: DV according to BD

- Buddha's main teaching goal is to provide his followers happiness, peace and salvation. He instructed each family member who came to meet him to live harmoniously together. It is individual responsibility to refrain all kinds of violence.

- In community, the association with others like between employer and employee, teacher and student, friend and friend, has their own specific codes in practicing.(2)

Five Abuses

1. Killing any living beings, harming, battering, beating
2. Stealing, robbing, cheating, wrong living.
3. Raping, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct
4. Telling lies, using harsh words, using malicious words and talking uselessly.
5. Consuming drugs, drinking alcohol, other addictions. (3)

Ten Akusala Kamma or Ten Evil Deeds

1. Physical deed -three(3) : Killing - ending the life of another living being. Stealing - robbing of others' property or belongings. Unchaste – non-confining to one's own wife/husband or children
2. By word or speech –four (4): Lying - telling the untruth. Slandering – talk ill of others. Harsh speech - using bad words or abusive language. Frivolous talk – utterly vain speech (useless or empty talk)
3. By thought (mind) – three (3): Avidyaa or Abhijjaa (Covetousness) – delusion or not seeing the truth. Vyaapaada (Ill-will) – hatred, resentment and anger. Michchaaditthi (False view) – living with false concepts.(4)

Three Roots of Evil

1. Lobha : greed, desire or ambition is the cause leading to restlessness, distress and stress when they don't get what they want.
2. Dosa : when Lobha increases, anger or hatred ignited the mind leading to the destruction of themselves and others.
3. Moha : when Dosa increases, delusion or ignorance empowers itself making the perpetrators loss their mindfulness, responsibility and do the evils vigorously. (5)

The Sayings of the Buddha

- With gentleness overcome anger. With generosity overcome meanness. With truth overcome deceit.
- The wise harm no one. They are masters of their bodies and they go to the boundless country. They go beyond sorrow.

Dhammapada, Anger : 17

The Forms of Domestic Violence (6)

1. Physical abuse such as kicking, punching, biting, slapping, strangling, choking. In Buddhism, these matters are absolutely wrong. Following the first precept, which doesn't allow us to kill, batter, beat or harm others.

2. Psychological abuse such as intimidation, verbal abuse, humiliation, put-downs, ridiculing, threats, threatening to hurt victim's family and children. In Buddhism, those acts are considered as mental violence. Perpetrators have lost their mindfulness, consciousness and like to act for their own entertainment. It is mostly caused by their bad habit or alcohol addiction. This is misconduct of the fourth or fifth precept.

3. Sexual abuse such as rape, forms of sexual assault such as forced masturbation, sexual humiliation, refusing to use contraceptives and coerced abortions. These acts are wrong and breaks the third precept which prohibits sexual misconduct or sexual harassment.

4. Financial/economic abuse such as withholding of money, refuse to allow victims to open bank account, all property is in the perpetrator's name or not allowing the victims to work. This is another type of violence. Perpetrators are greedy and selfish.

Prevention and Resolution

Observe five precepts regularly such as:

1. Refrain from killing, beating, battering or harming others. One must cultivate compassion and spread it around.
2. Refrain from stealing, robbing, cheating or corrupting. One must live by a right livelihood.
3. Refrain from committing sexual misconduct such as raping, sexual humiliation. One must concentrate on their craving.
4. Refrain from telling lies, using harsh words, using malicious words and talk in uselessness. One must aware all speech.
5. Refrain from consuming drugs, addictive things or drinking alcohol. One must be mindful and conscious.

Ten Kusala Kamma or Ten Good Deeds

- (i) Generosity - Daana, which yields wealth.
 - (ii) Morality - Siila, which gives birth in noble families and in state of happiness.
 - (iii) Meditation - Bhaavanaa, which gives birth in Realms of Form and Formless Realms, and which tends to gain Higher Knowledge and Emancipation.
 - (iv) Reverence - Apacaayana, the cause of noble parentage.
 - (v) Service - Veyyaavacca, which tends to produce a large retinue.
 - (vi) Transference of merit - Pattidaana, which serves as a cause to give in abundance in future births.
 - (vii) Rejoicing in others' merit - Pattaanu Moodanaa, which is productive of merit wherever one is born.
 - (viii) Hearing the Doctrine - Dhamma Savana, which promotes wisdom.
 - (ix) Expounding the Doctrines - Dhamma Deesanaa, which promotes wisdom.
 - (x) Straightening of one's own views - Ditthijju Kamma, which strengthens one's confidence.
- (7)

Four Immeasurableness

1. **Loving-kindness**, Mettaa: is the wish that all sentient beings, without exception, be happy. It counters ill-will.

2. **Compassion**, Karunaa: is the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. It counters cruelty.

3. **Appreciative joy**, Muditaa: is the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of all sentient beings. It counters jealousy and makes people less self-centred.

4. **Equanimity**, Ubekkhaa: is the attitude of regarding all sentient beings as equals, irrespective of their present relationship to oneself. The wholesome attitude of equanimity counters clinging and aversion.(8)

The Threefold Training

1. Training in Higher Morality or Ethics, **Sila**: consists of right speech, right action and right livelihood.
2. Training in Higher Mentality or Meditation, **Samadhi**: consists of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.
3. Training in Higher Wisdom or Insight, **Panna**: consists of right understanding and right view.(9)

The Saying of The Buddha

- All beings tremble before violence. All fear death. All love life. See yourself in others. Then whom can you hurt?. What harm can you do?
- He who seeks happiness by hurting those who seek happiness, will never find happiness. For your brother is like you. He wants to be happy. Never harm him and when you leave this life, you too will find happiness.

Dhammapada, violence : 10

Conclusion

- All problems involving Domestic Violence has its actual cause and effect. So we have to study about the effect of the problem, the cause of the problem, the extinction of the problem and the way leading to the extinction of the problem.
- Domestic violence will be easily eradicated if individuals agree to live together with loving-kindness and compassion. They have to response to the Law of Karma.

REFERENCES

- (1)&(6)<http://www.nursingceu.com/NCEU/courses/domesticviolence/>
- (2) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
- (3) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
- (4) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
- (5) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
- (7) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
- (8) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Mahavakka
- (9) Tipitaka, Dhghanikaya, Pathikavakka
