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## **Development by Love and Compassion**

By SHWE YEE OO

### **ABSTRACT**

The world we are living in is composed of living beings which depend on each other for their existence. Developing as a well-being in this world depends on the support of the society we are involved in. Why is the society important to be a developed person (i.e. to become a real HUMAN)? The reason is that man cannot stand without community out of Society. Development of society is determined by the number of developed persons in the society.

What is Development? According to Oxford Dictionaries, Development means the state of being larger or higher. Development in person should be more than "becoming older in age

and higher in intelligence”. Developed person is one who sees the world with “Love” and beautifies the world with “Compassion” by keeping oneself in mindfulness. Development of a society is total development in various sectors of the society by good deeds of people. Good deeds here mean not only charity or donations, but also all actions done by good intention. As good intention cannot be appeared in one’s mind without love and compassion, we can consider love and compassion as roots of all work done for good sake of society.

How could we measure development? In our actual world, development is measured by the improvement of physical matters that can be seen easily. We must notice that physical development is only external development and it does not always reveal mental or internal development. Is there any matter that can measure internal development? The answer is “Yes, Social Work”.

## **Introduction**

The Enlightened One appeared in the world for the benefits of all beings, especially for the noble peace in mind and in body which can liberate “beings” from the circle of rebirth. Buddha taught Dhamma for about forty years, starting immediately after the attainment of Bodhi Nana to the end of the renewing-capacity of his mind and body, Parinibbana.

Buddha tried hard for ages to be the Noble One and preached during the whole of his Buddhahood, during forty years until his final rest, because he wanted men to understand the truth to get right livelihood by innocent way of surviving. Beings are content struggling their life and attach their existence, and they dare do whatever for their survival either good or bad. If the Enlightened One would not appear in this world, “beings” could not find the right way to escape from samsara even though they do want to know the truth of the world or have desire to know the nature of rebirth circle. Buddha showed the goal of being a human, the liberation, as well as the characters human needs to have to beautify a peaceful world full of wisdom. Dana (donation), Sila (morality) and Bhavana (reciting) are the fundamental factors that Lord Buddha taught to practice for noble life to beautify the world.

Before Buddha has not appeared in the world, there existed so many sects of different religious thoughts and the leaders of these sects dominated nearby inhabitants. People passed their life doing meaningless practices without dana, sila and bhavana. They followed the

practices of their teacher, the leaders of these sects, because they believed that their practices can take them to the total nobility. Indeed, men did not understand kusala (good deeds) and akusala (bad deeds) and they just kept going the way they believe perfect. The whole world was trying to develop by means of the power comes from noble practices they believed. Nevertheless, no one became developed one because they did not know what the real development is.

## **Development**

According to the Oxford dictionaries, development means “the state of being larger or higher”. Based on this, it could be assumed that development in person means “**being greater in wisdom (panna) as well as richer in loving-kindness (metta)**”. The Perfect One is the greatest in wisdom and the richest in loving-kindness and to be that perfect, he had sacrificed much of his time in samsara. Here, wisdom and loving-kindness are emphasized because the Lord Buddha has developed the world by these two factors. The fully Enlightened One taught others the true technique to get development after he had become Fully Developed One. Gratitude to his teaching, men found the right way to the noble liberation or total development. In fact, the Lord’s compassion and loving-kindness to beings, together with wisdom, played the main role in Buddha’s mission to change an undeveloped Loka to developed world.

Developed world is, indeed, composed of developed persons and only developed persons could beautify the world with his developed knowledge combined with love and compassion. Here, beautifying the world with good deeds for the good sake of society could be regarded as social work. **The Enlightened One is the first social worker or, in other words, social leader because he beautified the society by his noble teaching to men.** Then, the persons who became developed by the teaching of Buddha beautified again the world by their kusala or good deeds. In this way, Buddha and his disciples led the society by great social work based on loving-kindness and compassion paired with wisdom.

## **Social problems and its possible causes**

As human beings are social animals, he concerned with all the social tasks and social duties of the society he involves in. A man must play so many social roles in life: as a father, as a son, as a teacher, as a pupil, as husband, as a chef, etc at the same time. As men have to play different social roles with different nature and tasks at the same time, they might have problems in their social role performance because of confusing social roles or neglecting them. By this mean, social problems come into life and disturb the daily rhythm. What are social problems? How can social problems be defined?

All problems of the human society are social problems or, in other words, society disease. As men live and survive together in a society, problems and difficulties that men face in their family or at work or in their life can be regarded as men's problems or social problems. Social problems can be caused by many factors of the society such as lack of education, lack of morality, lack of Buddha's dhamma learning, competition and expansion of power or wars, weak economic system, imperfect social care, etc.

Many street-children and children beggars can be seen very often at junctions and bus-stops. These street children sometimes can change suddenly into young-aged children criminals in a second. They are on the street the whole day for their survival instead of going to school to learn because of their uneducated parents and the poverty they face. Children have to learn how to cheat others on the street and how to earn money easily. As their poor parents cannot guide them or show them the attitude of a gentleman, children gradually become naughty guys who have nothing in their brain except cheating. Lack of education here results crimes and poverty results in weak/poor morality. So, poverty and lack of education here can be regarded also as a possible condition that causes social problems.

Uneducated people can mostly be found as main characters in crimes, sometimes gravely as murderer. The last words of all murderers who got death penalty is that they regretted to commit the bad action they did because of sudden anger. Crimes cause problems not only for victims but also for criminals and their corresponding families. Indeed, crimes are bad actions that carry akusala kamma which follows us like shadow in samsara. If the criminal had understood that whatever they do bear result, they would not do the cruel actions that cause sadness, depression, bad kamma and bad orientation.

Times by times, helpless old-aged can also be seen in the surrounding as beggars. As they are old and could not work anymore, “being beggar” is the only way for them to earn money. That might be because their offspring pass away before them or they cannot or do not want to take care of their parents. Buddhists people are people who do take responsibility for their parents when they become old but today, some old-aged people are abandoned by their offspring even in some Buddhist countries. People become cruel and can neglect the gratitude of their parents without considering how they sacrificed for them. That might be because people do not understand what the must-do duty in their life is. Not learning Buddha’s dhamma makes them far from right thoughts and forces them to commit bad actions, and then, social problems come out as results.

The competitions of power among two or more parties or organizations by wars can also be regarded as one of the main factors that leads people to unsafe lives. Mostly, the leaders said that they participate in the war for peace because they think that it is the only way to perform to get peace. Then, that idea makes them attached the wars as the main weapon for their profit and people in the area of war become victims who do not know where to refuge. They are also suffered from violence, starving and, especially, children and women have to survive with fear in unsafe conditions. Children cannot go to school and they have to abandon the education because of wars and people get loss of their properties. Wars strike indeed the life of human and can also be regarded as one of the sources of social problems.

Country’s economy can also effect on life of people as it regulates the whole country as the main factor. The rate of people’s income and people’s life standard depend on the strength of country’s economy and its policy. In poor countries, laws are not respected, citizens are not disciplined, people have to struggle hard even for a meal, it is hard to survive with good livelihood, and bribes or corruptions take the main role to start a function. Mostly in poor countries, the quality of education is lower than that of rich countries and lower quality education cannot make children to understand the morality or ethics. The whole world would be full of problems if children or future leaders do not even know to respect morality as the basic practice that men must follow.

Lack of social care in a country could also be one of the causes of social problems. Country’s government is mainly responsible in this case to take a good care of his people. Education for children, shelters for old people, caring centres for the sick, etc must be founded and run by the government. Men are born for equal rights and duties, they all deserve same chances and

same responsibilities. If the balance of equality is destructed once, the results go to social problems. Social cares like pension for old government services, free-of-charges health care service, and special supports for wounded soldiers are very basic and necessary ways to prevent some of social problems.

## **Cure for social problems**

Social problems are the most visible spots in the society which make it ugly and inconvenient live-place for human. As a consequence, total development would be far away from that society as these spots of problems or imperfections are sourced on undeveloped conditions of that society. If so, how could we beautify the society which has spots like acnes? Is that possible to repair and replace these ugly acnes spots? Yes, we can repair these ugly spots by metta and replace them by karuna. Even if a girl wears a smile on her lips and kindness in her eyes, she has clear, innocent face and is lovely. If people all wear loving-kindness (metta) and karuna (compassion) for all work they do, these good actions will take the society to peace, mutual understanding and humanity on which total development is based.

As development could be performed only by developed persons by repairing and replacing social blanks, people must know the right way to become developed first. The only and right way to improve one's mind and character by moral, spiritual and intellectual training is to practice Buddha's teaching as it is based on love, compassion and service to others. To be strong enough to face all the good and bad things of the world, one should understand what the Buddha said. Everything in the world is impermanent and suffering that one should not consider as "oneself". Newton, the famous scientist, said that every action has reaction and most of people believe and accept it. Though, from Buddhist point of view, every action has energetic result and it follows like shadow in samsara.

## **Possible solutions: Love and Compassion**

Once, when the Buddha was staying in Savatthi, a deity came to the Buddha one night and said,

*"Living beings are entangled in a tangle"*

*both the inner and outer tangle*

*so who would succeed in disentangling the tangle?"*

The Buddha gave the reply,

*"When a wise man established well in virtue*

*develops concentration and understanding*

*then as a Bhikkhu ardent and sagacious*

*he succeeds in disentangling this tangle".*

In Buddhism, Dana (donation), Sila (morality) and Bhavana (reciting) are the main three practices. Donation is the very basic and essential step that is based on karuna with good intention. Good intention comes only from the well-practiced mind by the five basic rules (five precepts) taught by the Buddha. Morality or the five principle precepts taught by the Buddha is the Lokapala or the rules that keep polite human society. The last and highest one is Bhavana or reciting to understand how the whole world is happening and to liberate from the circle of birth.

Sharing or donation generally means "contributing voluntarily to whomever the person without any hope". The object for donation could be money or food or primary stuffs or it could also be abstract thing like knowledge. There are three steps of sharing or donation to be fulfilled: sharing objects or things (Dana Parami), donating parts of one's body (Dana Upaparami) and donating one's life (Dana Paramattha Parami) and among these, the last one is the most difficult one that all Bodhisattas dared to do and did it. Social problems' solutions are mainly based on donation comes from morality, in other words, the spirit of sharing comes out from humanity, which is the results of practicing five basic precepts in daily life.

Sharing of knowledge to uneducated people and to the illiterates would be a good cure for the disease of lack of education and would be one of the best ways to prevent the consequences of lack of knowledge. People who know much should share what they know to people who know less and should guide them until they have clear understanding. Here, the method and the technique that have to be used for the knowledge share must be considered and chosen rightly according to the receivers or intended public. Moreover, the contents and the curriculum would also need to be well prepared to be able to catch the goal. Indeed, education is not tests, marks, certificates nor diplomas but it is a perfect understanding of

right and wrong things. Education gives the ability to make the right decisions that men can use their whole life.

The Lord Buddha preached his whole life, with very little of rest, to lighten the brain of the disciples for the enlargement in knowledge. He restarted turning the Dhamma wheel in the world by the very first of his suttas named Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta , then, Anattalakhana Sutta. At the end of his teaching, his first five disciples understood the noble truths and got liberation from the circle of repeating birth. This is the very visible and well-known example to show the result of Buddha's education as it was the very first time of his teaching and all his five pupils saw the truths by his light. Buddha continued teaching and sharing the Dhamma he found to so many other people and did the education in his way. The result is that his education could form a developed society by reducing greed, hatred and ignorance in human and could promote the humanity comes out of loving-kindness and compassion to others.

However, Buddha, at first, despaired when he saw that the whole world is covering with defilements and impurities. Though, he did not abandon his duty to educate people for better understanding of the nature of the body as well as the reality of the whole world. Buddha tried to develop human of the human society by morality, ethics, rules, duties, volunteering spirit, inquisition and understanding the noble truths. In fact, his compassion to "beings" forced him to try to be the fully Enlightened One as he did want to help the whole world by teaching to understand the reality to be developed in mind. Buddha first fulfilled himself to be developed then he shared and distributed the Dhamma or the nature he saw to the disciples by metta.

Lord Buddha once said on his last day at Vesali;

*"Monks, for this reason the matters which I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learnt by you, practiced, developed and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans"*.

The main purpose of life or the goal of being human in Buddhism is to attain supreme Enlightenment that is to understand oneself as one really is. That understanding could be achieved through sublime conduct and mental culture that are based on loving-kindness and compassion which support until liberation or perfection.



Love, metta, could be said “the main cause of liberation” because love can prevent the hindrances. When one’s mind is in love or in metta, one enjoys conducting welfare of others and it is liberating from anger, dosa. In Dhammapada (verse 223), it says that,

*“Let us overcome anger by love, let us overcome evil by good, let us overcome the greedy by generosity, the liar by truth.”*

These facts mentioned above show that one could overcome and get peace in mind by means of love. All the crisis of the world are waiting now for a suitable solution of mankind. If social problems like crimes, poverty, wars, discriminations and environmental problems like global warming, climate change and deforestation were solved, it could be named that the world is well developed.

The question comes along on development: Does development stand only for positive mental changes in human? Does it also mean the good changes of physical matters? Development stands for both physical and mental positive changes and what the actual world really needs is the total development. Nowadays world is very developed in physical matter. New technological devices and high-standard new buildings (condos, supermarkets, universities) can be seen everywhere but it cannot be assume that there is mental development. Ones who do not understand the value and role of love and compassion could not know the value of Buddha’s teaching and they would not achieve internal development. Undeveloped person could never lead other people to peace and perfection.

## **Conclusion**

In the Discourse on Loving-kindness, Buddha taught that one who would like to be skilled in his good (or who would like to be developed) should be efficient, perfectly upright, obedient, gentle and humble. They should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure them. He should also enjoy in metta, and wish and pray for the welfare and happiness of others. He also needs to be easily supportable, has few duties, light livelihood, controlled senses and no attachment to family. He must not commit any harms to others but should cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. He should also conduct mindfulness and let “love” gets away the hatred. He must also be virtuous and discard the attachment to sense-desire. Then that one will never return to mother’s womb and it could be assumed that fully development is attained in person.

Building the total development in a community would not be much easy as many social problems and environmental problems are still need to be solved. Though, it is still possible to found a developed society if all the ugly spots of the society are repair by love and are replaced kindly by compassion by well-developed people.

“People hold dear him  
Who embodies virtue and insight,  
Who is principled,  
Has realized the truth  
And who himself  
Does what he ought to be doing”

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