

## **The Utility of the Middle Path in Conflict Resolution**

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### **Introduction**

The goal of Buddhist teaching is the emancipation by uprooting all defilements. Buddhism never issues permission to a conflict at all. The purpose of Buddhism is non-violence and uprooting quarrelsome reasons. But Buddhism accepts that though people think that they may live free from hostility, free from violence, free from rivalry, free from ill will, free from those who are hostile, it cannot be practised. They indeed live with such kind of problems. Therefore arising conflicts is a natural matter in a human atmosphere. Hence, awareness of Dhamma and the nature of defilements is a very important thing in conflict resolution.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this study is to figure out how Buddhist teaching is applicable to face quarrelsome atmosphere and how one can practise the middle path in order to control quarrelsome defilements.

### **Methodology**

In doing our research, we referred to the Kalahavivāda Sutta of the Sutta Nipāta, the Vepacitti Sutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Sati-Sampajañña Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, the Dhammapada and Sotānugata Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya as the primary sources for our study. Here, we discuss the practical application of the middle path in conflict resolution.

### **Discussion**

The Kalahavivāda Sutta depicts that conflicts, disputes, quarrels, controvertings and their consequences like weeping, frustration etc, happen because of desired things. Greediness, anger and such defilements are the psychological impulses behind desired things. These defilements naturally come into our minds while we are facing a quarrel. According to the core idea that depicted in the Vepacitti sutta, the concentration (sati) is compulsory during such

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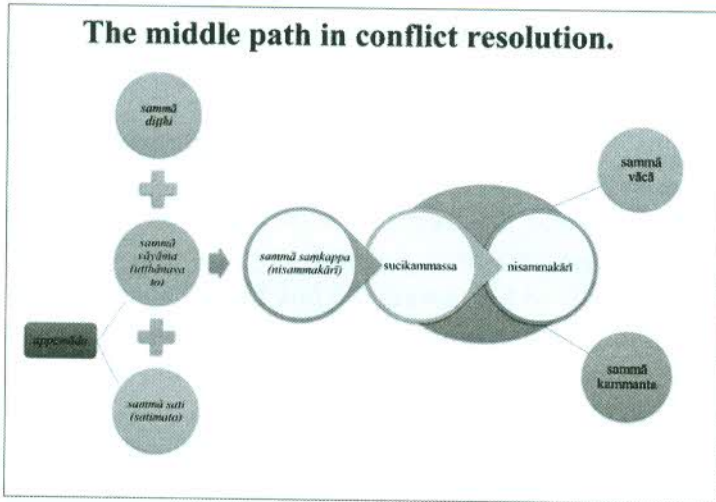
kind of incidents.

The Sati-Sampajañña Sutta clearly explains that working without sati-sampajañña generates problems and failures. Moreover, sati implies the concentrate in the mind and sampajañña denotes the practical usage of virtuous qualities such as khanti, majjhataṭṭā during a conflict. Thus, sati-sampajañña is important to apply during a conflict. But the issue is how one can be conscious of defilements in a quarrelsome atmosphere. In this case it can be identified several qualities which can be practised together with sati in order to control quarrelsome defilements in the mind from the Dhammapada as; diligence (uṭṭhānavato), mindful (satimato), in the purity of deeds (sucikamma) and in carefulness (consideration) of deeds (nisammakārino), in self-control (saññatassa), living according to the Dhamma (dhammajīvino) and heedful (appamattassa).

In discussing the practical application of the middle path in conflict resolution, the connection of these qualities with the noble path must be examined. Accordingly, with the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta, the eightfold noble path can be practised as a way of which is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions. Furthermore, the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta depicts an inseparable interrelationship among the right view, the right effort and the right mindfulness, in order to cultivate the rest of constituents in the path. In order to that the right view means understanding the wrong path as the wrong path and the right path as it is, the right effort means making an effort to be away from the wrong path and enter the right path, the right mindfulness means abandoning the wrong path and mindfully entering upon and abiding in the right path mindfully. In this way, these three constituents run and circle around all the other constituents.

Accordingly, with the proposition, it is appropriate to discuss how the above context of the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta can be practically applied in the cultivation of the said qualities. In this case, we can find a link between the mindfulness and the eight-fold noble paths. The seventh factor of the eightfold noble paths is the right mindfulness. Accordingly with the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, heedfulness or appamāda means the non-absence of mindfulness (satiyā avippavāsa). On the other hand, appamāda is considered as the foundation of all progress. It is the mightiest of meritorious qualities. In that sense, heedfulness deals with both the sammā sati and the vāyāma. In the presence of quarrelsome defilements, one should strive concentrate on arising them and controlling them. The diligence (uṭṭhānavato) deals with the right effort. Here one should strive to avoid quarrelsome defilements, to overcome quarrelsome defilements, to develop un-quarrelsome (wholesome) qualities and to maintain wholesome qualities. Consideration of deeds (nisammakārino) connects with the right intention. One should volitionally analyse his deeds in four-fold causality theory. Then he can keep the purity of deeds (sucikamma) and self-control (saññatassa). Moreover

self-control and purity of deeds deal with the right bodily actions and the vocal purity. In the case of conflict resolution, one should volitionally concentrate. When there are quarrelsome defilements in the mind, there will be a quarrel. From the arising of quarrelsome defilements, quarrels arise and when the mind is free from quarrelsome defilements, there is no room for quarrels. From the ceasing of quarrelsome thoughts, quarrels cease. Then he can free from quarrelsome bodily actions or speech. Since we discussed the practising way of the noble path which relates to the betterment of mundane pleasures in order to control quarrelsome defilements. This affiliation can be drafted in the following way.



The right intention takes a major role in this method because the cultivation of the mind is the most important because the nature of our minds determines the state of affairs in the world. In the case of practising this method, the four-fold ways which are depicted in the Sotānugata Sutta as the teachings must be followed by ear, reinforced by recitation, examined by the mind, and well comprehended theoretically are considerable. The above method also must be followed by ear, reinforced by recitation, examined by the mind and must be comprehended theoretically. Then spontaneously it will become a natural habit and it leads to a peaceful society which is free from conflicts.

## Conclusion

All considered, it is obvious that cultivation of the mind in relation to above qualities implies how Buddhist teaching is applicable to face quarrelsome atmosphere and how one can practise the middle path in order to control quarrelsome defilements. Therefore, our suggestion is, adopting the above Buddhistic method in order to conflict resolution.

**Keywords:** Quarrelsome Defilements, Conflict, Middle Path, Resolution, Mind

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