

AXIOLOGICAL DOMINANCE OF BUDDHIST HUMANISTIC IDEAS IN TERMS OF SEARCHING STRATEGIES OF INTERRELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Oleksandr Brodetskyi

Ph.D (Philosophy)

Associate Professor, Department of Cultural, Religious Studies and Theology

Yuriy Fedkovich Chernivtsi National University,

Ukraine

Abstract. This article deals with the ethical ideas of classical Buddhism in terms of their semantic correlation with the humanistic values of other religious traditions and philosophical systems. The author synthesizes ideological heritage of the classical Buddhism (particularly guidelines of "Dhammapada" and a number of parables) as well as of modern ethical and philosophical discourses of the religion. The article gives a definition of the role of axiological resource in Buddhist ethics in terms of understanding and developing strategies to solve urgent problems and overcome the present crisis of spirituality, bring tolerance into interreligious phenomenon, proves denial of a number of stereotypes about the Buddhist ethical heritage to be rational. The author justifies the thesis that Buddhism (both philosophical and anthropological doctrine) has an effective potential of moral enthusiasm and constructive interaction in social initiatives with other religious confessions and philosophical traditions, oriented towards practical humanism and its social implementation. That's the exact image of humanistic Buddhism that should be taught as primary at religious and moral education.

Keywords : values, Buddhism, religious ethics, humanisation of religion, "Dhammapada", ideological synergy, tolerance.

1. Introduction

In modern society, there is a fairly significant interest in the spiritual heritage of the East and its religious traditions - Hinduism, Buddhism and others. As you know, there are even separate neo religions - so-called neo oriental cults, quite popular among a certain segment of young people. Nevertheless, neo oriental religion is not as much about moral core of oriental traditions, as it's about rituals and religious practices, meditation, psychotechnics, that may be a threat to psychological and social well-being of their followers. Therefore it's very important to be able to separate "wheat from the chaff" and when exploring oriental religions to consider what's morally right and what doesn't prevent, but helps you build critical thinking. This means that only those ideological resources of eastern spiritual heritage, characterized by philosophy and which appeal primarily to intensify awareness and value of reflection rather than to religious practices must have the primary value for European or Western people .

Objective: Based on understanding of ideological and semantic content of sources of ethical thought of classical Buddhism (especially famous guidelines of "Dhammapada") to identify its humanistic potential and justify the conceptual and practical synergies of this legacy and heritage of humanistic ethics of other religious traditions and philosophical systems.

2. Materials and methods

Analysis of the heritage of classical Buddhism encourages the use of methodological approach to explicate the phenomenon of moral and anthropological content dominating dogmatic and ritualistic element.. Such original sources as "Dhammapada" and various parable attributed to Buddha provide a lot of valuable material. Buddhist ethical guidelines preserve humanistic significance even beyond

confessional frame, many of its principles resonate with the ethics of other religions (including Christianity) as well as with philosophical ideas of humanistic self-perception.

Undoubtedly, different studies in professional literature have been and still are dedicated to various aspects of philosophy, ideology and religious practices of Buddhism. However, very productive and yet not developed enough is the methodological line of Buddhist ethics in the system of semantic relations and correlations with the global humanistic tendency in ethics, as well as correlation of Buddhist heritage values not only with the achievements of other religions, but with moral and ethical ideas of secular philosophers. Within this issue important are considerations oriented towards justifying factors of religious humanization and identification of its global context. These ideas are fully and methodologically presented in *the works* of A. Schweitzer, E.Fromm, O.Men. Especially valuable in terms of analyzing social and ethical principles of Buddhism today are works of Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda. Among modern researches valuable can be cosidered works of A.Chebunin, who interpreted the early Buddhist ideas about the essence of human nature; T.Kostyukova who gives interpretation of Buddhist values in aspects of their humanistic educational potential; N.Pupusheva who examines the correlation of specifics of Buddhist ontology and axiology; N. Vasylyeva, I.Shubynsky, A.Dyuranova, whose works contain the classification of human concepts in Buddhism, etc.

The element of scientific innovation of the research is its heuristic value in the development of the updated typological model of religious and moral doctrines based primarily not on the areally civilizational, chronological or dogmatic criteria but on axiologically anthropological. This study is realized on disciplinary and methodological intersection of religious philosophy, ethics and certain aspects of social philosophy. Such aspects as principles

of objectivity, impartiality, humanistic synergy of value resources of different traditions and tolerance were taken into account.

Results. Although Buddhism has acquired the status of world religion, distorted ideas about the content of its ideas and attitudes are still often cultivated. Most of them come down to the statement that it is a religion and philosophy that "denies life itself", or imputing extreme social indifference to Buddhist ideas and extreme social indifference and existential isolation to its believers. We believe such views are one-sided and if they are right, they can only be applied to certain religious practices, but not to Buddhism in general and even more so - not to its semantic resources which attract attention to opportunities and conditions of human practical perfecting and communication. Of course, every religious tradition is a conglomerate of various mental stereotypes, alternative forms of actions and interactions, ideas about man's place in the world. The advantage of a modern person is that within every tradition they can choose particular values, which prove to be constructive. It is not necessary to belong to Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Jainism, for instance, in order to use creative ideas and other traditions from these religions for one's own development and improvement. On the other hand, any tolerant and open-minded person, even belonging to some particular tradition and religion, is always willing to enrich their moral consciousness through productive ideas of other religions if they can complement and deepen those valuable resources given to a person by her own tradition. This, in our point of view, is the sense of ideological ethic synergy of different religious traditions as a precondition for inter-civilizational understanding and tolerant relations.

Practical moral and ideological sense of Buddhist humanistic traditions is the idea of the middle path. It implies avoiding both extremes of pleasures and efforts to get rid of attraction to them; the concept of tolerance is cultivated, there is no clear distinction between religious and secular ideals of morality, asceticism in its various forms is often denied; great importance is attached to self-perception and self-improvement.

Especially vivid are humanistic guidelines found in one of the sources of Buddhism, endowed with constructive philosophical potential - "Dhammapada", creation of which dates back to the third century BC. The word "Dhammapada" is translated as "way of truth (law)" ("dhamma"). The text is from Tripitaka - sacred writings which consists of 26 chapters containing 423 aphoristic sayings attributed to Buddha. This version of the "Dhammapada" - the shortest, there is also a Sanskrit version, consisting of about 1000 stanzas. One of the distinguishing feature of the "Dhammapada" is its unusual stylistic form. After all it is a set of concise, aphoristically formulated thoughts. Style of "Dhammapada" is abstract and metaphorical, but it does not prevent its conceptual depth, but instead it emphasizes its reflective focus and at the same time promotes its easy acceptance. The stylistic specificity of "Dhammapada" largely echoes with such achievements of European ethical idea, like, for instance, the works of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Jesus Christ's sermon on the

Mount, ideas of M. Monten etc. Despite the relatively short text of the guidelines, their content is rich and diverse. But the main leitmotif is to find ways to improve the personality morally, find harmony with the world, people and oneself. Here are the names of some of the sections of the text: "Even Stanzas," "The Seriousness", "The Fool", "The Wise", "The Evil", "The Desire", "The Peace", "The Old Age" "The Anger" , "The Happiness" and so on. Orthodox theologian and writer O. Men, paying the tribute to humanistic sense of "Dhammapada", once said: " Dhammapada contains wonderful expressions that concern people today. It contains wonderfulness and wisdom"[1].

The text of "Dhammapada" as humanistic Buddhism in general, has two major semantic layers: 1) the idea of spiritual and moral self-discipline and struggle with sources of evil primarily within oneself; 2) the idea of morality as the basis of religious piety and conviction of false forms of religiousness. Let's consider these ways to explain and prove ideas, which seem to be relevant nowadays, bringing them into the methodological context of European ethical thought.

The specific of ethical program of Buddhism has been greatly influenced by the key idea of this doctrine, according to which all reality, including human being should be seen as a process. As E. Fromm once fairly noted, "There is no room in Buddhist thought for the concept of any enduring permanent substance, neither things nor the self. Nothing is real but processes" [2]. Buddhism anticipates that the choice between good and evil means constant being in the state of non-occurrence of dynamics of self-fulfilment, understood primarily as an internal struggle with selfish motivations within oneself. That's why classical Buddhism offers dynamic deepening and strengthening oneself in the struggle with evil as an octal way of "salvation". Particularly important is an approach to moral perfection, which implies that even a high level of self-knowledge and approval of constructive values does not exempt from more and more effort. No wonder that the stage, entitled "righteous efforts" follows the stage of "righteous life." Righteous way of life is not a characteristic of sustainable social or reputational state, "status" or belonging to a particular religious corporation, not something achieved once and for all; it requires constant work of the mind and will. Buddhists describe righteous efforts as a dynamic situation in which the person cherished desires, efforts, so that evil intentions and qualities, which have not emerged yet, can not emerge at all; so one can get rid of the false qualities and intentions, he already has and gain good and right ones he doesn't have yet. This is a desire, an effort and an intention to maintain, increase, develop and improve good qualities, which are already built up [3]. As you can see, there is a mental mechanism of continuity of values choice and responsibility for it.

Buddhism anticipates that there are no absolutely good or absolutely evil people, and therefore morally fallen person can always stop "falling", redirecting their life vector towards improvement. On the other hand, there is always a risk for a virtuous person to lose their excellence. Awareness of this encourages constant mental self-control and control of

one's actions. To illustrate these characteristics of Buddhist ethical doctrine let's pay attention to such thoughts from "Dhammapada": "There has never been, there will never be, and now there is no absolutely commendable person or the one who deserves condemnation alone" [4].... "If somebody won a thousand people a thousand times in battle, and another was victorious over himself, the second one would be the greatest winner. Indeed, a man's victory over himself who lives in constant self-restraint and abstinence - better than victory over others. No Mara with Brahma, nor even God himself can turn this victory into a defeat" [5]..." Even if a person has committed an evil deed, they should not do it again and base their intentions on it. Accumulation of evil is lamentable. If a person has committed a good deed, they should do it again and again and build their intentions based on it. Accumulation good is joyful ... " [6] " Do not think carelessly of evil ! - "it will not happen to me" - because the pitcher gets filled by falling drops. A fool gets filled with evil, even gradually accumulating it" [7].

Undoubtedly, these ideas of Buddhism reveal its universal humanistic context and certify internal semantic connection with those moral doctrines of humanity, which defined existential actual work of consciousness primarily as a prerequisite for life of self-realization. In our point of view, this relation is most clearly evident when comparing to Stoicism (Seneca, Marcus Aurelius) and humanistic psychoanalysis.

This semantic relation of Buddhism and psychoanalysis appears to be particular evident, because one of the coryphaeuses of this trend E.Fromm refers to Buddhism as one of the primary humanistic and authoritarian forms of religiosity. This thinker with many illustrations tries to prove the humanistic nature of early Buddhism, considering it one of the best examples of this type of religiosity. Philosopher takes Buddha primarily as one, who is not speaking on behalf of supernatural forces, but on behalf of reason. Buddha calls each person upon using their mind to see the truth; he simply claims to have seen it first. The idea of continuous development is very valuable in early Buddhism, the first step in comprehending the truth must inevitably continue to encourage all efforts to develop the mind and deepen love for people. E.Fromm cites a number of Buddhist parables, leitmotif of which is reduced to the spirit of loving care for all living and at the same time - a deep awareness of sustainable human forces and capabilities. The Psychoanalyst finds even more antiauthoritarian trend in the later Buddhist stream - Zen. E.Fromm says: "Zen Buddhism ... is an expression of more radical antiauthoritarian position. Zen Buddhism claims that knowledge has no value if it does not come, "doesn't grow" from within; no authority, no teacher can teach us anything except doubt the words and ideas of the system, since they get easily converted into authorities and people start worshipping them. Life should be realized and experienced in the way it is, and this is what virtue is about " [8].

The humanistic nature of early Buddhism is also revealed in the ideas of the primacy of moral spirit and value vector of actions over steadfastness of dogmatic tenets of religion. On the one hand, that's the exact position of the

classical Buddhism that makes it the subject of criticism from so-called "revealed religions" - Judaism, Christianity, Islam. On the other hand, this approach can be a reliable platform of methodological substantiation of the value of tolerance and synergies of opinions on values in different religions. Here are two typical content Buddhist parables that illustrate this methodological strategy. Having heard the question about whether there was a God from three people, Buddha paradoxically answered in three different ways: affirmative, negative and to the third person he didn't answer at all. At first it seemed to be simple unprincipled relativism. Nevertheless, the Buddha said: "They were different people. The first one believed that there was no God, and he really wanted me to confirm his faith. I told him, "God exists." For only through freeing from what one believes in he can see the truth. The second person believed that God existed. He also really wanted to get confirmation of his faith. I answered him that God did not exist. I am here to destroy any belief that the mind could rise above itself and enter the Truth. The third man was neither a believer nor an atheist, so it was no necessity to answer "yes" or "no." I said nothing, which meant "just do as I do and immerse yourself in silence and then you'll know better" (Proverb "Rise above faith") [9]. There is another parable that clarifies the position of Buddha. Its leitmotif can be formulated in the following way: "Do not ask eleven questions ... about God, the soul, death, life, truth, etc ... They can not be answered. It's not that I don't know the answers but first of all, there are no words to express the answer. Secondly, knowing these things does not promote sanctity of life and does not lead to enlightenment. Thirdly, these issues create beliefs, which prevent us from seeing the true reality. Ask me about anger and how to get beyond it. Ask about the greed, attachment, the transformation ... "(Proverb "It does not lead to holiness ") [10]. As you can see, these points of Buddhist ethics advocate the primacy of spiritual and practical moral improvement over the grooves in dogmatic subtleties of beliefs that may become a barrier to people's solidarity. That's why there is another saying in "Dhammapada": "Even if a person always cites the Scripture, but is careless in following, he is like a shepherd who counts other people's cows. He has nothing to do with holiness. If the man cites the Scripture not as much, but lives in full compliance with dhamma, freed from passion, hatred and ignorance, having true knowledge, free mind, without any dependency neither in this nor in the other world - he is involved in holiness" [11]. This updates the Buddhist idea of the priority of moral and existential dimensions in search of sacred over ritualistic aspects. It can be very productive in the context of current search of interreligious understanding and revival of a dialogue between the representatives of alternative beliefs. Opportunely let's mention that such ideas of Buddhism partially overlap with the philosophical trend of Christian mysticism, including views of the medieval philosopher and mystic Meister Eckhart. Mystics were often indifferent to "steadfastness" of dogmatic church-canonical postulates, religious and corporate subordination, and assigned a greater role to individual, existential experience of understanding the depths of faith. An example here is

the religious experience of the late Middle-Ages German philosopher-mystic like Meister Eckhart (c. 1260 - 1327), whose doctrine was condemned by the Catholic Church. This doctrine of Eckhart is especially emphasized by E.Fromm. Fromm interpreted the mystical nature of communion with God and his humanistic potential in the following way: man is not praying for something, he's not demanding anything from God; for a man God becomes a symbol of completeness of all he seeks, that is the reality of the spiritual world, love, truth and justice; he believes in the principles that God represents, he thinks true, lives in love and justice, says his life is valuable only to the extent that it lets us comprehend human essence; and finally, he does not speak of God, does not even say his name. «To love God, if he were going to use this word, would mean, then, to long for the attainment of the full capacity to love, for the realization of that which" God "stands for in oneself» [12].

Among a number of scholars or ideologues (mostly driven by motivation of alternative religious beliefs) there is an opinion on Buddhist appearing indifferent when it comes to the objectives of improving social reality, reformatting life, public opposition to injustice. Often this position on vital social potential ethics of Buddhism becomes a part of the content of religion and education. Nevertheless, such an assessment is true only partially (but only if we take the "letter" of certain maxims and tenets of the religious ethical doctrine into account). If we analyze the spirit of this study, including the manner and style of the building of Buddhist parables, aphorisms and sayings, they reveal quite strong communicative expression, moral and didactic engineering designed to appeal to the human effort to change themselves, to the transformation of attitude towards others. So Buddhist ethics is not a choice of nothingness and omission at all but the call for reformatting, values reappraisal, even if this call is sometimes expressed in paradoxical form of objection of substantial personal identity, institutionalized moral standards, social regulatives.

In our point of view, the Buddhist denial of substantiation and sustainability of absolute first principles - is not an appeal to ontological chaos and therefore not an authorization of life indifference but a desperate attempt to point out the relativity of the social attitudes and values, which in the specific historical conditions can appear to be leverages of implementation of authoritarian ruling in the society and manipulating individuals. So, if interpreting the main ideas of Buddhist philosophy and its ethics adequately we can perceive them as those which give powerful impulses of immunity against imposed social values and illusory.

No wonder that early Buddhism, which is, in fact, the basis of the whole philosophical concept was so skeptical (although not nihilistic) in terms of rituals. After all, it is what often in specific historical and social conditions serves as a mechanism for preserving the mythological worldview and attitude towards the world. On one hand, myth gives psychological levers of harmonization of the relationship between man and the world, but on the other hand nevertheless it becomes a form of unification of people. So we can assume that by questioning the reality and substantiation

of "personal identity" Buddhism really just intended to release the individual from depending on not always humane and equitable forms of socialization. Confirmation of the statement that objection of substantiation of personality and one's own "self" is not an end in itself in this religious system but an original, psychological and methodical technique on the way to a deeper self-knowledge and self-control may be an indication of how important according to spiritual Buddhism are the creation and perception of art in education. And aesthetic, artistic and creative factor, as known, are intended not to deny, but rather affirm, maximize and enhance personal aesthetic (in this case aesthetic and religious) identity of participants of communication. They reveal deep resources of originality and uniqueness of one's own "self" in its union with being and other people.

Actual personalizing element of Buddhism (and not the objection of individuality) is proved by Buddhist prohibitions on declaration of superhuman capabilities of certain religious authorities common in many systems. The image of the Buddha, despite a series of mystical layers, is captured with the leitmotif of his humanity and originality. Legends and tales describe Buddha as a strong, bright, thoughtful, sensitive person - that person with all his unique psychological and communication skills. In fact, the image of Buddha became the ideal model of caring and spiritual leader, spiritual reformer, who concerned about improving the quality of human fulfillment through education, self-discipline and social debunking of stereotypes masked as sacred postulates. Of course, as in religions in general, not the real features of Buddha as a historical figure, but phenomenological validity of his images symbolism is an index of clarification of human self-creation, anthropologically educational opportunities of Buddhism. Universal potential of Buddhism is proved by real missions of a number of Buddhist leaders in the modern world. We can say that the leitmotif of ethical appeals and priorities of famous Buddhist leader - Dalai Lama XIV - confirms compliance of its activities in humanistic format of aspirations of the modern world.

Designated ideas of Buddhism (in their meaningful synergies with similar achievements of western spirit) are the constructive platform for Buddhist authors to develop ethical and social concepts of harmonization and solidarity relations in today's globalized and technologized world. Daisaku Ikeda (nar.1928) is a developer of one of these concepts of "global ethics". He is a modern Japanese Buddhist philosopher, which gained great popularity in the western world. Philosopher emphasizes that Buddha's idea is the faith in man. However, in his point of view, the fundamental purpose of Buddhism is not to ensure the dominance of its own religious system and surely not some of its particular institutional forms. "We work for man, and not religion" [13, p.19] - emphasizes the philosopher. The leitmotif of ethical principles proved by the concept of global ethics, is largely commensurate with the ethical guidelines of reverence for life, written by A.Schweitzer.

Conclusions. Summarizing the research, we decided to point out the following. More thorough and thoughtful analysis of key value pulses of Buddhism encourages

getting rid of stereotypes about this doctrine as the concept of choosing "nothingness", being passive in life and social apathy. Buddhism has the powerful potential of moral enthusiasm and synergy with other native religious traditions in constructive social initiatives. Its humanistic hypostasis should become the subject of primary coverage rates of religious and ethical education. Ethical ideas of humanist Buddhism resonate with many constructive ethical tenets of other religions and philosophical systems of the past and present (stoicism, humanistic psychology, psychoanalysis, existentialism). The resource of Buddhist ethics must inevitably be considered when developing strategies of understanding and solving global problems of our time. When teaching religious ethics at schools and universities one should not be limited to studying Christian heritage alone, but get familiarized with ideological content sources of other religions, including Buddhism. It will promote awareness of the unity of mankind, fundamental values in life and develop practical tolerance. Prospects for further research in this area anticipate the possibilities of using ethical heritage of Buddhism in order to understand and solve actual problems of modern applicative ethics.

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Information about author

Oleksandr Brodetskyi, Ph.D (Philosophy), Associate Professor, Department of Cultural, Religious Studies and Theology, Yuriy Fedkovich Chernivtsi National University, 2, Kotsiubynsky St. Chernivtsi 58012, Ukraine, e-mail for correspondence: stud-conf2010@mail.ru