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**An Overview of Buddhist Philosophy and Religion Towards
Values and Ethics**

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ABSTRACT

Buddhist philosophy fundamentally provides a pragmatic and analytical framework for comprehending human existence, emphasizing the issue of suffering and the methods to transcend it. Instead of participating in abstract philosophical theorizing, it underscores experiential knowledge and ethical reform as the means to liberation. A fundamental tenet of Buddhist philosophy is the acknowledgement of dukkha or suffering, encompassing not merely bodily pain but also discontent, transience and existential discomfort. This comprehension is methodically elucidated through the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. The first truth acknowledges the existence of suffering in life, the second elucidates its source in craving or desire (tanha), the third asserts the potential for its cessation, and the fourth delineates the method to achieve that cessation. The practical and ethical aspects of Buddhism are articulated through the Noble Eightfold Path. This path amalgamates wisdom, ethical behavior, and mental discipline through principles like right perspective, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. In this article, an overview of Buddhist philosophy and religion towards values and ethics was discussed.

Keywords: *Buddhist, Philosophy, Religion, Values, Ethics.*

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a prominent philosophical and ethical system that originated in ancient India about the 6th to 5th centuries BCE. Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha or "the Enlightened One." Its philosophy is about comprehending human suffering (dukkha), its origins, and the pathway to liberation (nirvana), highlighting ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. Buddhism originated as a reformative movement within the spiritual and social framework of Vedic culture. Siddhartha Gautama, born in Lumbini, forsook secular existence upon observing the suffering in the world. Following profound meditation, he achieved enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. His inaugural discourse at Sarnath, termed the Dharmachakra Pravartana Sutta, elucidated the fundamental tenets of Buddhism, encompassing the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the doctrines of impermanence (anicca) and non-self (anatta). Following the Buddha's death (Parinirvana), his teachings were maintained and elaborated upon by his students, resulting in the progressive emergence of several schools and



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traditions. It emphasizes the fundamental teachings of the Buddha, monastic discipline, and personal freedom. It is widespread in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. Subsequently developed, highlighting universal compassion (karuna) and the bodhisattva ideal—an individual who pursues enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. It disseminated to China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Commonly referred to as Tantric Buddhism, it originated in Tibet and the Himalayan region, integrating rituals, meditation methodologies, and symbolic practices. Buddhist ethics are fundamentally based on compassion, mindfulness, and non-violence (ahimsa). The ethical framework is informed by the five precepts (non-killing, non-stealing, appropriate speech, etc.). The principle of karma (moral causation), the practice of mindfulness and right intention, and the emphasis on alleviating suffering for all sentient beings. Buddhist philosophy and ethics provide a pragmatic and contemplative framework for existence, emphasizing personal transformation and ethical accountability. The historical evolution demonstrates a dynamic tradition that has evolved across cultures while maintaining its fundamental ethical principles of compassion, wisdom, and liberty. The intellectual underpinnings of Buddhist philosophy originate from the teachings of Gautama Buddha and have evolved within the wider framework of Buddhism (Sanjeevankarpavithra, Sanjeevankarvittal, 2017). The objective of the study is to an overview of Buddhist philosophy and religion towards values and ethics.

BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS

A significant philosophical tenet is the theory of impermanence (anicca), which asserts that all conditioned things are in a state of continual flux and devoid of permanence. The notion of no-self (anatta) is closely associated with the rejection of a permanent, immutable soul or essence. The "self" is perceived as a dynamic amalgamation of physical and mental processes that are perpetually in flux. Buddhist philosophy underscores dependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda), elucidating that all phenomena emerge contingent upon causes and conditions. No entity exists autonomously or in seclusion. This principle supports Buddhist interpretations of karma, rebirth, and the persistence of experience without necessitating a permanent self. The philosophical underpinnings of Buddhist thinking constitute a cohesive framework that amalgamates ethical conduct, psychological understanding, and metaphysical inquiry. It offers a pragmatic approach to transcending suffering via wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental development, ultimately culminating in nirvana, the state of escape from the cycle of suffering. The philosophical underpinnings of Buddhist thinking, derived from the teachings of Gautama Buddha, present a cohesive and pragmatic framework designed to comprehend and transcend human suffering. A significant discovery is that Buddhist philosophy is predominantly problem-oriented, emphasizing dukkha (suffering) as the essential condition of existence and providing a systematic approach for its alleviation instead of indulging in abstract philosophical conjecture. A significant discovery is that the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths constitutes the fundamental analytical framework of Buddhist philosophy. It methodically elucidates the nature of pain, its origin in desire, its potential termination, and the pathway to emancipation. Buddhist philosophy is inherently both diagnostic and therapeutic. The research additionally



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concludes that the Noble Eightfold Path functions as the pragmatic ethical and psychological framework of Buddhism. It encompasses ethical behavior, mental rigor, and insight, demonstrating that emancipation is attained via disciplined existence, awareness, and correct comprehension rather than through rituals or external dominion. A notable philosophical discovery is the focus on impermanence (anicca) and non-self (anatta). These philosophies contest the concept of a permanent identity or substance, proposing that all phenomena, including the human self, are ephemeral and constituted by continuously evolving processes. This results in a flexible and non-essentialist comprehension of reality. A significant discovery is the principle of dependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda), which emphasizes that all events emerge from interdependent causes and conditions. This creates a relational and causal perspective, dismissing the notion of autonomous or self-sufficient entities. The conceptual foundation of Buddhism is fundamentally ethical and practice-oriented, highlighting compassion, mindfulness, and self-transformation. The ultimate objective, nirvana, signifies the termination of ignorance and desire, resulting in emancipation from the cycle of reincarnation and misery. Buddhist philosophy manifests as a methodical, experiential, and ethically anchored tradition that synthesises metaphysics, psychology, and morality into a cohesive pathway to liberation. The interplay between religion, morality, and human behavior is profound and interconnected, as religion has traditionally served as a primary source of moral principles and conduct standards in human cultures. Religion offers a framework of beliefs, symbols, and doctrines that delineate moral standards, thereby influencing ethical awareness and directing both individual and communal behavior. In this regard, religion functions as both a worldview and a moral guide that shapes human conduct. In the realm of moral philosophy, religion and morality are intricately linked, as religious traditions frequently establish ethical precepts based on divine authority or holy doctrines. In the context of religion, moral laws are regarded not just as social customs but as principles of transcendent importance. This imparts morality with a sense of duty and responsibility, frequently associated with notions like sin, virtue, karma, or divine retribution. Human behavior is directly influenced by this moral framework, as religious doctrines inspire individuals to align their activities with ethical principles such as veracity, compassion, non-violence, integrity, and self-discipline. These principles affect daily conduct in personal life, familial ties, and wider social interactions. Religion serves as a regulatory mechanism that fosters social order and individual integrity through the internalization of moral discipline. The relationship between religion and morality is not exclusively unidirectional. Although religion significantly impacts moral conduct, human reasoning and societal settings also determine the interpretation and application of religious teachings. Moral behavior can change over time as communities reassess religious teachings in light of evolving cultural, scientific, and ethical perspectives. This indicates that morality can both derive from and critically interact with religious traditions. Religion, morality, and human behavior are intricately linked in a dynamic interplay. Religion establishes core values and moral direction; morality supplies rules for judgment and ethical reasoning; and human conduct exemplifies the practical application of these values in real-life contexts. Collectively, they constitute an integrated system that influences individual character and underpins societal functionality. The interplay



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between religion, morality, and human behavior demonstrates a profoundly interwoven framework in which religious belief systems substantially influence ethical norms and action. A key result is that religion serves as a fundamental source of moral direction, offering humans a framework of rules that delineate right from wrong and direct human behavior in both personal and social contexts. A significant discovery is that, within the overarching context of religion, moral principles are frequently upheld by sacred authority. This imparts ethical principles with validity, obligation, and accountability, motivating individuals to adhere to moral laws not merely as societal expectations but also as spiritually significant responsibilities. Religious teachings significantly impact human behavior by advocating values such as honesty, compassion, non-violence, truthfulness, and self-discipline. These values facilitate behavioral regulation, enhance interpersonal connections, and promote social peace by motivating individuals to act responsibly and ethically throughout various domains of life. Another discovery is that the connection between religion and morality is neither static nor one-dimensional. Human reasoning, cultural evolution, and societal advancement perpetually shape the interpretation and application of religious moral concepts. This suggests that moral behavior develops through the interplay of tradition and modern ethical comprehension. The study concludes that religion, morality, and human behavior collectively provide a cohesive moral framework. Religion establishes the foundational values, morality supplies ethical reasoning, and human behavior manifests these principles in daily life. This interdependent interdependence is essential in influencing both personal character and societal structure (Malla, M.A., 2018).

CONCEPT OF DUKKHA (SUFFERING) AND ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING

The notion of Dukkha (suffering) is important to Buddhist philosophy and signifies a core comprehension of human existence. The term "dukkha" is sometimes rendered as anguish, dissatisfaction, or disquiet; yet, its connotation extends beyond just bodily or emotional distress. It encompasses the intrinsic flaws and transience of existence. Buddhist philosophy posits that life is characterized by impermanence, and due to humanity's attachment to transient entities, discontent is an inevitable consequence. From an ethical standpoint, the comprehension of dukkha pushes individuals to cultivate awareness of the origins of pain. Buddhism recognizes craving (tanha), ignorance (avijja), and attachment as the fundamental causes of dukkha. When humans are motivated by insatiable need or egotism, they inflict agony upon themselves and others. Ethical life commences with self-awareness and moderation, enabling individuals to acknowledge how their actions perpetuate the cycle of suffering. The ethical view of dukkha underscores compassion (karuṇa) and non-harming (ahimsa). Recognizing that all beings endure suffering inherently fosters empathy and ethical obligation towards others. This knowledge deters detrimental activities and fosters kindness, generosity, and conscientious behavior in both personal and social contexts. Moreover, the notion of dukkha establishes a basis for ethical conduct and spiritual advancement. In Buddhism, ethical action is grounded not solely in exterior regulations but in the inward comprehension of suffering and its origins. Adhering to the Noble Eightfold Path—particularly right conduct, right intention, and right mindfulness—enables individuals to progressively diminish suffering and advance towards liberation



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(nirvana). Consequently, dukkha serves not merely as an assessment of the human predicament but also as a framework for ethical development. In Buddhism, suffering is denoted by the term dukkha, encompassing not just physical pain but also discontent, impermanence, and the inherently unsatisfactory quality of all conditioned existence. Buddhist philosophy posits that pain is an inescapable aspect of existence due to the impermanence and continual flux of all things. Even ostensibly joyful experiences are fundamentally precarious and may result in worry or deprivation upon their alteration or conclusion. The First Noble Truth of Buddhism recognizes suffering as the fundamental basis for spiritual comprehension. It posits that birth, aging, disease, and death constitute types of suffering and that emotional states such as grief, frustration, and disappointment also belong under the realm of dukkha. This acknowledgement is intended not to foster despair but to promote a pragmatic comprehension of human existence. The importance of suffering in Buddhism is rooted in its function as the basis for liberation. The Buddha asserted that comprehending the nature and origins of suffering is the initial step in transcending it. Distress primarily originates from desire (tanha), attachment, and ignorance of the ultimate essence of existence. By recognizing these factors, individuals can initiate the process of spiritual change. Suffering possesses profound intellectual and ethical significance in Buddhism, as it directs one toward the attainment of Nirvana, the ultimate state of deliverance from suffering. The recognition of dukkha compels individuals to pursue the Eightfold Path, which offers pragmatic direction for ethical behavior, mental discipline, and wisdom. Suffering is not solely a negative experience; it is a crucial component that guides individuals toward enlightenment and inner tranquillity. Suffering denotes the experience of pain, misery, hardship, or discontent encountered by individuals in physical, emotional, social, and psychological dimensions. It is a fundamental feature of human existence that emerges from different factors, including disease, loss, failure, conflict, unfulfilled ambitions, and the transient essence of life. Suffering, in a comprehensive philosophical context, encompasses not only acute pain but also nuanced sensations of incompleteness and disquiet that last even during periods of comfort. The importance of pain is in its function as an educator of human experience. It facilitates the cultivation of profound self-awareness by addressing the constraints and truths of existence. Through adversity, individuals frequently acquire understanding of their beliefs, priorities, and emotional resilience. It serves as a catalyst for the development of maturity, resilience, and empathy towards others. Adversity significantly contributes to moral and spiritual development. Numerous philosophical and religious traditions perceive suffering as a mechanism for cleansing or transformation, directing individuals toward elevated comprehension and ethical existence. It frequently prompts contemplation on the significance of existence, human purpose, and the necessity for empathy towards all entities that endure suffering. Consequently, suffering, although intrinsically challenging, possesses profound importance in the development of human character and consciousness. It compels individuals to pursue solutions, enhance their circumstances, and cultivate a deeper comprehension of existence. Suffering thus transforms into both a task and a spur for personal development and intellectual exploration. Suffering originates from a confluence of physical, psychological, social, and existential factors. Fundamentally, it is attributable to biological causes,



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including disease, senescence, trauma, and mortality. Psychological factors encompass dread, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and unfulfilled wants. Human expectations frequently surpass reality, and this disparity between aspiration and experience is a significant source of psychological distress. Societal factors such as poverty, inequality, violence, prejudice, and fractured relationships significantly contribute to human distress. Philosophically and religiously, suffering is frequently associated with internal factors such as attachment, avarice, ignorance, and insatiable desire. In Buddhist philosophy, yearning (tanha) and ignorance regarding the transient nature of existence are deemed fundamental sources of suffering. When humans attach themselves to material belongings, relationships, or identity, they endure suffering when these eventually transform or vanish. Suffering arises from both external circumstances and internal psychological conditions. The ethical ramifications of pain are significant. Adversity fosters the cultivation of compassion, empathy, and moral accountability in individuals and societies. When individuals acknowledge the universality of pain, they are more inclined to behave ethically, refrain from causing harm, and assist those in distress. This also generates inquiries of justice and equity, eliciting ethical concerns about mitigating unnecessary suffering resulting from social and economic disparities. Moreover, suffering plays a transformational ethical role in forming human character and moral judgment. It can prompt individuals to contemplate their conduct, diminish selfishness, and embrace more compassionate and accountable behavior. Numerous ethical frameworks underscore the obligation to alleviate suffering and enhance well-being, positioning pain as a pivotal issue in individual morality and societal ethics. Buddhist philosophy posits that the journey to liberation and ethical reform commences with the acknowledgement of suffering and its origins. Liberation is defined as emancipation from pain (dukkha) and the cycle of rebirth (samsara). The Buddha asserted that suffering originates from craving (tanha), attachment, and ignorance; thus, freedom may only be attained by eliminating these fundamental causes via wisdom, ethical behavior, and mental discipline. The fundamental structure of this path is the Four Noble Truths. The First Truth recognizes the presence of suffering, the Second delineates its origins, the Third asserts the potential for its cessation (Nirvana), and the Fourth outlines the path to achieve this cessation. The Noble Eightfold Path functions as a pragmatic framework for ethical transformation and spiritual advancement. The Eightfold Path is categorized into three principal domains: ethical conduct (sila), mental discipline (samadhi), and knowledge (panna). Ethical behavior encompasses right speech, right action, and right livelihood, facilitating responsible living and minimizing harm to others. Mental discipline encompasses appropriate effort, attention, and concentration, fostering inner awareness and mastery over ideas and emotions. Wisdom is cultivated via accurate comprehension and intention, allowing humans to recognize reality as transient, interrelated, and devoid of ego attachment. Through this understanding, each individual progressively transcends ignorance and desire, which are the fundamental sources of suffering. Consequently, the journey to liberation is not solely academic but profoundly practical, necessitating ongoing self-purification and ethical conduct. Moral transformation transpires as individuals cultivate greater compassion, mindfulness, and detachment from egocentric desires. This path ultimately culminates in Nirvana, a condition of great tranquillity, emancipation, and release from all types of suffering (Naranje, S., 2015).



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THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AS ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The Four Noble Truths, fundamental to Buddhism, serve as essential ethical precepts that direct moral conduct and spiritual growth. The First Truth recognises the existence of pain (dukkha), promoting ethical consciousness and compassion for all sentient beings. The Second Truth recognises desire and attachment as the fundamental sources of suffering, advocating self-restraint, moderation, and the development of disciplined living. The Third Truth asserts the potential for the cessation of suffering, hence fostering hope, self-betterment, and ethical development. The Fourth Truth delineates the Noble Eightfold Path, encompassing right speech, right action, and right livelihood, thus establishing a foundation for ethical behaviour. Collectively, these truths serve as both metaphysical insights and pragmatic moral principles that promote responsible living, minimise harm, and foster knowledge and compassion in daily life.

The ethical analysis of the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism demonstrates that they offer a systematic framework for comprehending moral existence and human conduct. The First Noble Truth elucidates that pain is an intrinsic aspect of existence, hence ethically prompting humans to cultivate compassion and refrain from inflicting damage on others. The Second Noble Truth elucidates that suffering originates from craving, attachment, and ignorance, underscoring the ethical imperative for self-discipline, moderation, and liberation from excessive desires. The Third Noble Truth offers the potential to transcend suffering, providing ethical guidance and fostering human transformation, discipline, and the quest for inner tranquillity. The Fourth Noble Truth delineates the Noble Eightfold Path as a pragmatic framework for ethical existence, highlighting right speech, right conduct, and right livelihood. The findings suggest that the Four Noble Truths function as a pragmatic ethical framework that amalgamates individual morality with empathetic social behaviour (Kaur, K., 2022).

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH-FRAMEWORK OF BUDDHIST ETHICS

The Noble Eightfold Path constitutes the fundamental framework of Buddhist ethics and serves as a pragmatic guide to alleviating suffering and achieving enlightenment (Nirvana). It comprises eight interconnected principles: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. These are conventionally categorised into three fundamental characteristics of ethical development: wisdom (prajna), moral conduct (sila), and mental discipline (samadhi). The journey commences with the development of accurate comprehension of reality and ethical intention, which then directs one's conduct in communication, actions, and means of livelihood, guaranteeing a life lived without causing harm to oneself or others. Through persistent effort, awareness, and meditative focus, a human cultivates mental clarity and ethical integrity. The Noble Eightfold Path offers a comprehensive moral framework that unifies cognition, conduct, and meditation to foster ethical existence and spiritual enlightenment (Hussain, A., 2021).



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The Noble Eightfold Path delineates Buddhist ethics as a systematic and interrelated approach to leading a morally disciplined and spiritually enlightened existence. It underscores that ethical behaviour commences with the right view when an individual comprehends the essence of suffering, impermanence, and the ramifications of actions (karma). Consequently, right intention cultivates motives of non-violence, compassion, and the abandonment of detrimental impulses. These internal principles direct external conduct via Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, emphasising honesty, non-harm, and earning a living without inflicting suffering on others. The discourse elucidates that an ethical life necessitates mental training: Right Effort aids in averting unwholesome thoughts and fostering positive mental states; right mindfulness guarantees awareness of thoughts and actions in quotidian life; and right concentration cultivates profound mental focus through meditation. Collectively, these components demonstrate that Buddhist ethics transcends mere regulations, representing a comprehensive process of modifying thinking, behaviour, and consciousness to attain harmony, compassion, and liberation.

CONCLUSION

The examination of the Noble Eightfold Path demonstrates that Buddhist ethics are inherently pragmatic, amalgamating moral behaviour, mental discipline, and insight into a cohesive framework for living. It demonstrates that ethical conduct in Buddhism is founded not on external mandates but on the development of correct understanding and intention, which inherently results in compassionate and non-harmful behaviour. The results indicate that compliance with Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood fosters societal harmony by deterring deception, aggression, and immoral professions. The practices of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration enhance self-regulation, emotional equilibrium, and mental clarity, which are crucial for ethical decision-making. The Noble Eightfold Path serves as a comprehensive moral framework that promotes personal transformation and enhances peaceful, responsible societal living.

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