

Animal Liberation and Mahayana Precepts

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I. Introduction

Today we face an unprecedented crisis of living. That's because modern civilization rushes down the road which is opposed to a path of reverence and dignity for all life. We, as human beings, look upon ourselves as agents of the creation and we are contaminated with anthropocentrism in which we believe we should have control over all other creatures. Also, we easily commit destroy life, not recognizing our own danger.

Anthropocentrism can be defined as a belief that the highest value is human value and all other beings are just tools for us. This belief arises from modern humanism in human history. The era of modern humanism, was ushered in with Francis Bacon's statement:

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"knowledge is power", This triggered Western Capitalism and brought about rapid progress in science and technology.

Science and technology brought modern conveniences for human life, and now we do not want to revert back to the old ways. However, during this period of rapid scientific and technological advance our peaceful coexistence with other living beings has been deeply undermined and a valuing of life in general has all but disappeared, while humans continue to seek more and more lifestyle conveniences for ourselves. If we don't stop destroying nature and continue to seek a life which is opposed to nature, rather than pursuing coexistence, it is obvious that only ruin finally awaits us. The most important value for all beings is to live together in harmony with nature. Thus, humans must desist from dominating other creatures in this universe under the pretext that we are the supreme species. Rather, we should realize that humans currently resemble cancerous cells hellbent on destroying the earth, and the universal ecosystem. Unless there is a major turn around in the ethics of human's activities the future of humankind will be hopeless. We should address the conflicting ethical viewpoint about discrimination and separation of man and man, man and animal, and man and nature, and we are obliged to deepen our commitment to coexistence.

A Leopord, an environmental ethicist, stated that the ethical system which has been developed up until now is based on one single premise, that is, a human being, as an individual being, is only a constituent member of the global community that is composed of mutually interlocking relationships among all the components of that system, and as ethics embrace relationships of humans in connection with the realm of nature, so this logic must continue to be developed.

Some recent ethics even advocate animal liberation. However, we can find evidence of similar principles in the precepts of Mahayana

Buddhism (大乘佛教戒律). Moreover, Buddhism presents an expansive ethical outlook on animal liberation. This is not a limited viewpoint in Buddhism but is fundamental premise of Mahayana Buddhism.

II. Respect for Life and Abstention from Taking Life

Buddhism unconditionally values life. This is an absolute value in Buddhist teaching. Accordingly, Buddhism prohibits from taking life. We have a strong summons to protect other lives and to also protect our own lives. That's because everyone wants to be free from death and destruction of life. If we put ourselves in other's shoes, we wouldn't choose to kill another living thing or cause another being to suffer death. The *Dhammapada* explains it as follows.

Every being fears violence and death. Don't kill others or cause them die, and apply this principle to your own body (*Dhammapada* 129).

Abstain from killing the living and from being the cause of killing, or destroying a living being. 'Living being' means a being that has life, ranging from a microorganism to human beings. The lord Buddha taught his disciples to compare one's life with other's life.

Every being fears violence and all love life. So, don't kill other life or cause them to die (*Dhammapada* 130).

As we see, the foundation of abstention from taking life in Buddhism is simple and clear. It emphasizes that Buddhists, whether monks and nuns or lay people, shouldn't kill other living things but instead love them. Of the Five Precepts the first, 'ahimsa' (不殺生), clearly states as follows.

I undertake the precept to abstain from the taking of life.
(pāṇātipātā veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādi yāni)

In this precept, pāna (pāna sk prāṇā) indicates a sentient being, yet the more inclusive meaning is a spiritual life, that is, vitality. Causing a sentient being to not exist or taking a being's life is killing. Abstention from taking life is not a precept exclusive to Buddhism. Other religions, including contemporary Indian religions, preach abstention from taking life as well (Kogen Mizino, 1997:4-5). In understanding abstention from taking life, however, Buddhism greatly differs from other Indian religions. In the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* we can find the following explanation.

"A person who kills that which has life may suddenly die in the prime of life although he has all things such as, life, wealth and beauty like Adonis." (*Telakaṭāhagāthā* V.78).

It suggests that killing a living being is creating major karma. In *Majjima Nikaya* (中部), we can see clearly that abstention from taking life is explained from the aspect of karma (業) and transmigration (輪廻).

"Young Monk! Even run-of-the-mill men and women abide by total abstinence from causing any harm whatsoever to any living creature, they free their hands from whips and knives, so that they are thoughtful and kind persons. And they conduct a life in pursuit of benefit for all living beings with a sympathetic mind towards them. They will be born in a blessed place or a heaven after death-complete decomposition of their bodies, for they put such things into practice. Nevertheless, if they are reborn as a human body, they will enjoy a long life wherever they are reborn.

So, young monk! The way that will lead to a long life is to renounce killing living beings. Upholding non-injury, they free

their hands from whips and knives and pursue benefits for all living things as thoughtful and kind run-of-the-mill persons, dedicating sympathetic minds to them. That's the way it really is." (*Majjhima-Nikaya*, Vol.III, 35, *Cula kammavibhanga Sutta*, 202-206, (P.T.S)).

Buddhism embraces the precept of abstention from a wider moral perspective than other religions. Concerning this, Damien Keown points out that it is an expression of respect for animals due to a belief in transmigration in terms of cross-species (Damien Keown, 1995:57).

It is thus that Buddhists refrain from killing by upholding the precepts in which all existence that has life, including humans and animals, shall not be killed. It teaches us to abstain from such behaviors as taking other's life by upholding the precepts.

Digha Nikaya (長部) makes it clear that only those lay Buddhists who uphold the five precepts can be an upasaka (優婆塞), A lay Buddhist must uphold the precept of non-killing in order to become a true upasaka.

O great king! What can you say is the state in which the Lord Buddha's disciple has accomplished the precepts? Great king! Here is a disciple who abides by disciplines upholding the precept of non-killing taking off hands from stick and knife and has equipped himself with a thoughtful and kind nature. And he carries a life in pursuit of common benefits for all living beings dedicating his sympathetic mind to them. This is the very discipline by which the disciple of the Lord Buddha abides among many precepts (*Digha-Nikaya* Vol. I , 2, *Samanna-phala-Sutta* [D.N. I , 41-75.(N.D.P); 47-86(P.T.S)]).

The precept of non-killing is a common doctrine included not only in the 8 precepts for laity (在家佛者八齋戒) and the ten precepts for Sramanera (沙彌) and the full 250 precepts for Bhikhu (比丘) and

348 precepts for Bhikhuni (比丘尼) but also the five precepts for secular life (世俗五戒).

III. The Precept of Ahimsa of Mahayana Buddhism

Since Buddhism attaches high importance to the value of life, the precepts concerned with life are explained in detail in the *Vinaya Pitaka* (the Book of the Discipline, 律藏). In the Parajika Pali, the precept of abstention from taking life is observed as the 3rd precept of the Four Parajika offences (四波羅夷). If any Bhikhu violates this rule, he is no longer recognized as a member of the community of bhikhus and is expelled from the sect perpetually, automatically losing the status of bhikhu. The same procedure shall be applied to bhikhuni.¹

In this set of rules, whichever bhikhu should intentionally deprive a human being of life, this entails a parajika offense. It also clearly states that a bhikhu who saves a person possessing a knife or makes a person die by praising death or persuading into dying in many ways which causes him to die comes to commit the Parajika Apatti (波羅夷) (Mitsuo Sato, 1994:78-79).

In the 10th offense among the 90 Pacittiya (Ninety Penalties and Offenses, 波逸提), it specifies that should a bhikhu dig the earth or have the earth dug in any way, it entails a Pacittiya offense, and this is because it may harm the living creatures underneath the ground. The 11th offense lays down that should a bhikhu destroys a "Spiritual Place" of living creatures (壤生種戒), it entails a Pacittiya offence. Here, as it refers to living creatures (生種), it concerns also trees, plants or grass where the spirits of the species of insects abide, for trees, plants and grass also have life. It is thus that cutting down or destroying trees and

1 Yo pana bhikkhu sañicca manussaviggahañ jivitā voropeyya, satthāharaṇaṃ vāssa pariyeseyya, maraṇavaṇṇam vā sañvaṇṇeyya maraṇāya vā samādaṇeyya ambho purisa kiṃ tuyh'iminā pāpakena dujjivitena? Matan te jivitā seyyo"ti, iti cittamano cittasaṅkappo anekapariyāyena maraṇavaṇṇaṃ vā saṃvaṇṇeyya, maraṇāya vā samādaṇeyya; ayam'pi parājiko hoti asaṅvāso.

plants is forbidden. The *Pancavarga Vinaya* (五分律) lays down the rule that should a bhikku damage a tree, plant or grass or have them cut in any way, it entails a Pacittiya offence (波逸提). Therefore, any transgressor of this rule is subject to corresponding disciplinary rules. Due to this precept a bhikkhu shouldn't eat any kind of roots or stems or uncooked fruit. If a bhikkhu wishes to eat fruits and the like, he has to ask a lay person to first render it dead, that is, "make it allowable to eat" (淨法) by cutting or piercing it, and only then can the bhikkhu eat it. The 19th offence: If a bhikku knows that there is a worm or insect in the water, but uses this water and then empties out the water onto the soil or into other water or causes others to empty it out, it entails a Pacittiya offence. With a respectful mind for the life of insects, a bhikkhu refrains from using water in which any living creature lives, or pouring out water onto the grass or soil. The 61st offence: If a bhikkhu intentionally deprives an animal of life, entails a Pacittiya offence. Here, it states not to kill animals with the intent of killing them. The 62nd offence: If a bhikkhu drinks water knowing that there is an insect in it, it entails a Pacittiya offence. The precept recognizes the value of even an insect life.

As we see above, the precept of abstention from taking life is only one, but there are a variety of rules and disciplines which supplement it. In Buddhism, the precept of abstention from taking life is a supreme command that can't be destroyed. This supreme command acknowledges that all beings having life possess a priceless gift in terms of exalted life (Mok, Jungbae, 1986:19-20). Reverence for all life is further emphasized in Mahayana Buddhism. Because Mahayana Buddhism stresses a practical aspect of compassionate spirit (慈悲) in order to be of perfect help for all suffering sentient beings it is critical of the Arhat way which is to pursue one's own nirvana by way of an inferior vehicle, viz., Hinayana (小乘). Whereas Mahayana Buddhism promotes the Bodhisattva, a altruistic being with bodhicitta motivation (自利利他), who wishes to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all

sentient beings, as an ideal form of human being.

The *Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), which introduces the Mahayana precepts, illustrates well the value of a being with a life. The *Brahma Net Sutra* preaches the Ten Major Precepts and the Forty-eight Secondary Precepts, and it speaks of the precept of abstention from taking life as the first among the Ten Major Precepts.

Buddha said, "You, monks! You shall not kill, encourage others to kill, kill by expedient means, praise killing, rejoice at the sight of killing, or kill by chanting a spell. Don't take life of any living things having created the primary cause (因) and the secondary condition (緣) or methods of killing or karma of killing, and shall not intentionally kill any living creature. A Bodhisattva ought to nurture a compassionate and filial mind, always devising expedient mercy to save and protect all sentient beings. Instead, if he acts willfully to kill living beings with great satisfaction, he commits a Parajika offence." (*Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), T.24.1484.1005b).

The *Brahma Net Sutra* sets forth the precept of abstention from taking life as the first major precept and it specifically puts emphasis on a mind of compassion. The First Major Precept among the Ten Major Precepts in the *Brahma Net Sutra*, which relates to abstinence from killing, is supplemented in the Forty-eight Secondary Precepts in an elaborated manner. In the 3rd Secondary Precept, it states to refrain from eating meat (*Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), T.24.1484.1005b). The 10th Secondary Precept states "do not store any deadly weapons." (*Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), T.24.1484.1005c). The 11th Secondary Precept exhorts to not serve as an emissary between armies. The 14th, Secondary Precept tells not to intentionally set fire to any place where there is life (*Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), T.24.1484.1006a). And the 20th Secondary

Precepts preaches on the practice of liberating sentient beings and of devising a way to rescue and protect life (*Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經), T.24.1484.1006b). If we look in detail at the precept of liberating sentient beings, it is as follows:

A disciple of Buddha must practice to liberate living things with a compassionate mind, and all male sentient beings have been my father, and all female sentient beings been my mother. I was born of them. Therefore, sentient beings in the six realms (六道) have been my parents. If I kill any living beings, it would be as if I were killing my parents, as well as killing a living body that was once my own. Since all elemental earth and forms have previously been part of my body, and air and fire are part of my substance, thus, set all living beings free to live. As sentient beings are forever reborn, again and again, lifetime and lifetime (世生生) the disciple of Buddha should always cultivate the practice of liberating living beings and enjoin others to do so. If a Bodhisattva sees an animal on the verge of being killed, he must devise a way to rescue and protect it by expedient means, helping it be freed from suffering, and deliver sentient beings through means of teaching and transmitting the precepts to them at all times to a wide extent with encouragement of putting the Bodhisattva precepts into practice.

Here, in this precept, it stresses that not only human life but also that of flora and fauna must be protected, and, furthermore, that life be rescued and liberated in an affirmative manner. The Buddha's Discourse on the *Dài sà zhē ní zǐ jīng* (正法念處經) gives an elaborate and comprehensive explanation of the precepts as outlined in the *Brahma Net Sutra*. For instance:

"How can a disciple of Buddha avoid killing the living thing?
If a bhikkhu encounters an ant, earthworm, toad, or other

insect on his way somewhere, he should make a detour away from such living creatures. That's because he is mindful of protecting sentient beings in a merciful way." (*Dài sà zhē ní zǐ jīng* (正法念處經), T.17.0721.206a)

In addition, the *Mahāsatya-nirgrantha-sutra* (大薩遮尼乾子經) exhorts us not to harm any life form as follows:

"You should not burn or destroy a city, village, forest, stream, hill, palace, building, road and bridge, natural cave, any kind of crops, flowers and fruits, trees and plants, and wood. You should not drain water or cut plants. This is so because you should not harm or hurt animals and insects living in them." (*Mahāsatya-nirgrantha-sūtra* (大薩遮尼乾子所說經), T.9.0272.335b)

As such, Buddhism teaches us that life, whether human, animal or plant, must be protected without discrimination.

IV. Animal Liberation and the Precept of Abstention from Eating Meat

Buddhism preaches that an animal should be protected in that it is one-facultied life. However, the animal has always been excluded from consideration from an ethical perspective, and even in today's world, this trend has not changed.

It is based on a belief that man is a metaphysically unique and different being from other animals. This belief is supported by attributes such as reasoning power, linguistic ability, and a high level of knowledge and technology, which supposedly differentiates man from animals.

Nevertheless, ever since the enlightenment period, the insights attained by way of the theory of Evolution, as formalized by *Charles*

Darwin, and Psychoanalysis which was developed by *Sigmund Freud*, and the Philosophy of History that was shaped by *Karl Marx*, along with *Nietzsche's* Anthropology and recent developments in biotechnology, all the former enable us to realize that our belief in human uniqueness is a big delusion and a flaw in metaphysical viewpoint. Man and animals are not basically different from a metaphysical perspective. Human life deserves to be respected as it is, so do the lives of other animals. A difference of value may extend to some degree, but there is no difference in essence-nature (Park, Imun, 1998a:65-66).

The metaphysical foundation of anthropocentrism is a falsehood. Man is not a unique or unprecedented being among all living things. Although man has a highly developed brain, this has merely resulted from evolution beginning with primitive life through the vast history of nature. The premise of metaphysical discontinuity in relation to all living beings is not true. And we can't avoid such the monistic and metaphysical conclusion that all beings that have been observed to be different from one another are, in fact, a part of the "whole being," while mutually connected, or as an aspect of this whole.

However, humans still commit all kinds of animal cruelties. Peter Singer points to man's animal cruelty in detail. The fact that there is a great gap between man and animals has been regarded as a truth throughout most of the history of Western civilization. Some people thought that while it is difficult not to acknowledge a gap between man and animals, it is a difference of degree rather than a difference of kind. They tried to find a standard to differentiate man and animals. However, the reality is that the boundary was not kept in place for long (Peter Singer, 1996:145-147).

Even if such attempts to draw a line between man and animal are congruent with reality, they still don't have any moral ground or meaning. Just because a being doesn't use language or make tools, this

will never justify ignoring the pain of other beings. Some philosophers argue that there is a more fundamental difference. They claim that an animal can't think and reason and therefore doesn't have awareness of its own being or self-consciousness. We can refute an opinion that self-consciousness, autonomy, or other similar attributes help to separate man from animals. In other words, this is calls our attention to the fact that there are men whom we can't believe that they are more self-conscious and autonomous than animals. Although man is significantly superior in terms of knowledge and intelligence, subjugation of other species by man cannot be justified from any ethical perspective. If human dignity of common people, or a man of humble birth, should be respected as much as that of a king or a man of noble birth, then by the same token, the right of animals like dogs or pigs to live with dignity should be respected as much as that of ordinary people's right to live and retain their dignity.

As there is no fundamental or metaphysical difference between an emperor and his subjects, a feudal lord and knight, an aristocrat and merchant, all of these are men having biological bodies, so there is no ontological difference between man and animal as established by the theory of evolution and extending further to recent biotechnology. Both are entitled to human rights in that despite the difference in sex, intelligence, body, and bloodline, man should be respected equally if only on the basis of their humanness, and also because of the democratic belief that all people have equal political rights as civilians despite economic, political, occupational, and social difference, and this belief is based on the fact that there are no metaphysical differences among people (Imun Park, 1998b:158-159).

A day may come when a world of another species other than human acquires the right to manage its own affairs independently, and cannot be deprived of this right by any human, except by the force of

a tyrant. The French already realized that the difference of black skin cannot be used as a reason to abandon people without compensation after willfully causing such a person to undertake hard labor. Some day, in such a same manner, we may also be forced to admit that having a greater number of legs, availability of hairs on the skin, the shape of the end of sacrum and so, on cannot be sufficient reason to withhold compensations after causing such living creatures to suffer. What else is there which might be regarded as an impeding boundary which can't be jumped over? Is it an ability of reason or an ability of discourse? However, a fully grown horse or dog is much more reasonable and communicable beings, insomuch as compared with, a newly born baby or a month old infant. The problem is not whether they have reason and speak a language but whether they have suffering (Piter Singer, 1991:79).

In Buddhism, the problem of suffering is already understood. *Bodhisattva bhumi* (菩薩戒弟) explains the following. Bodhisattvas have compassion for sentient beings by the following cause and condition. Although there is an infinite world in samsaric realms (十方) where suffering can't be perceived, the Bodhisattvas accompany suffering and don't strive to live in a world without suffering. Furthermore, (1) they see a person who is suffering from a certain trouble that prevails (2) they see themselves suffering (3) they see other persons or themselves, or (4) both of them have been suffering from a series of various agonies, which are serious and ceaseless, for a long time (U. Wogihara, 1930-1936:16-17). Racists violate the principle of equality in that they put a greater importance on the race they belong to (when their interests conflict with other races). Sexists also violate a principle by placing unreasonable importance on the interests of the sex they belong to. Likewise, specieists connive when the interest of the species they belong to greatly exceeds that of other species. In all these cases, the pattern

is the same (Piter Singer, 1999:45).

It was not until the 19th century that lively discussions about animal protection began to occur. From then, among scholars, the sensibility and ability to perceive pains has always been referred to as an element of the equation between human and nonhuman. The fact that animals have sensitivity and ability to perceive pain was not previously admitted by humans, but animals also originally have these abilities in them.

Of course, anyone can sense how animals really feel.

We can understand an animal's feeling, because its expression is very similar to that of human beings. The animal's expression (gesture) tells us the state of their health and also what they like and hate. Their numerous physical responses to changes in surroundings are also very similar to humans. The higher animals have at least an anatomical and pathological base to experience pain. For this reason, animals should be treated in a humanistic way.

We shouldn't give them pain without reason. That is not simply because we should worry about the damage of man's moral susceptibility with our superficial pity and, as Kant requested, it is not to keep only our moral susceptibility which is natural, but it is also because animals should be treated as that which they really are, which is Hilpert's assertion. Man should treat animals as animals. Otherwise, man commits a wrongdoing.

According to Knigge, animals can feel pain the same as humans. He claims that man should not give pain to animals. H. Hendriche states that more highly evolved animals such as dolphin, chimpanzee, and primates have character qualities just as humans do, like confidence, solidarity, pity, sympathy, concession, resignation, patience,

and giving oneself up to despair. Wolf and T. Reagon advocated abstinence from killing animals. Specifically Reagon stressed animal rights.

Buddhism, which appeared more than 2,500 years ago, can provide us with a model of ethics. The Buddhist ethical view is to repress greed and to convert to a life of asceticism and also to turn away from a material-oriented value to spirit-oriented values. And idealistically, it means to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle, giving up eating meat. There is a verse in the Discourse on Loving-Kindness (*Karaniya Metta-Sutta*, 悲慈經) which runs:

Whatever living creatures there be, either animal or plant,
Without exception, long, huge or middle-sized,
Or short, minute or bulky,
Whether visible or invisible,
And those living far or near,
The born and those seeking birth,
May all beings be happy!

For this reason, not eating meat was stressed in many sutras.

Here is another exhortation of no meat eating in *Lankavatara-sutra* (入楞伽經).

Dàihui! If my pupil ate meat, all people in the world would say, with a heart of slandering and abusing him, how could a person that cultivates pure and clean conduct as a samana (沙門) break this conduct and abandon the doctrines of a samana, by causing sentient beings to be surprised and scared, through giving up the food heaven which immortals eat and eating meat heartily like a wicked beast? With this, I can tell there is no controlling actions in the Buddha-dharma.” A Bodhisattva should protect sentient beings with a heart of mercy and pity, and shouldn't eat

meat at all nor cause sentient beings to have a mind to eat meat. (*Lankavatara-sutra* (入楞伽經), T.16.0671.561-564).

The *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (大乘涅槃經) puts even more emphasis on not eating meat.

At this time Kassapa (迦葉尊者) asked the Lord Buddha. "Lord! We should not give meat to the person who eats it. That's because I saw that a person who doesn't eat meat has charity." The Lord Buddha praised Kassapa. "You're as nice as you can be. Finally, you understand my mind. A Bodhisattva should know this as well. Virtuous man! It is not allowed for my disciples to eat meat from today. If there is meat among alms given by Dnapati (檀越信施), you should think it is like your children's flesh." Kassapa asked the Lord Buddha again. "Lord! For what reason does the Tathagata forbid the eating of meat?" "Virtuous man! To eat meat is to cut the seed of great mercy." (*Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (大乘涅槃經), T.12.0374.386a).

All such ethics are based on the premise of intrinsic value of an ethical object. The reason why an ethical subject considers the welfare of others in terms of an object, is that the subject believes in the intrinsic value of others. The reason why modern ethics don't affirm status-oriented or nation/race-oriented ethics, and the reason why differences in intrinsic values among constituent members of a society or between nations and races of mankind cannot be admitted is that there is no acceptable metaphysical base for these differences any longer. If the metaphysical difference between humans and animals can't be acknowledged, differences between the value of human life and animal life must also be denied accordingly. If we acknowledge the intrinsic value of humans together with its accompanying dignity, we must also recognize the dignity of other life. In this context, it is seen that Buddhism has already advocated life liberation.

V. Conclusion

It is often said that the 21st century should be a century of culture. However, this is not the reality. The key word of today is only civilization, and culture is only a hope. That's because culture must be based on moral ethics. A civilization, which is absent of such ethics, is free to destroy, forfeit and decompose all kinds of life forms. We, as human beings, have a belief that there is a conspicuous difference or discontinuity in the metaphysical aspect between us and animals or other life forms, and thus we have excluded such life forms as subjects to be considered from an ethical perspective. We have believed that such unique and original attributes as reasoning power, language, use of tools and the like are a sphere that can be dominated by humans.

However, such uniqueness or originality of humans has been proved to be false, and it is nothing but a deluded belief. It has been discovered that humans are not the only living creatures who can use language and tools. Humans are no more supreme creatures amongst all creation. Man is just one of the animal species called *Homo Sapiens* that is part of the ecosystem. We shouldn't justify, nor neglect the reckless violence committed by the species called *Homo sapiens* any longer. In modern ethics, it is thought that the center of the universe is not man but nature, and the most dignified creation is not mankind but a life itself, and other life forms than human shouldn't be excluded from the ethical community. In addition, taking a different stance from usual, it clearly propounds that aggressive attitudes toward nature, such as subjugation without mercy, reckless development and exploitation, as well as indifference and non-consideration of animals who suffer, all of which are affronts against nature, cannot be condoned from the perspective of ethics. However, such an exhortation has already been posited in Buddhism. The following sermons from *Vimalakīrti* (維摩詰)

edited in *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* (維摩經) bring to us who live in this fanatical world, a refreshing sensation.

“Vimalakīrti said that If lust arises because of foolishness, an illness breaks out. Since all sentient beings are sick, I am sick, too. If all of their illnesses disappear, mine will disappear, too. That's because a Bodhisattva enters onto a path of living and dying for sentient beings. In death and life there is always an illness. If sentient beings are free from illness, the disease of a Bodhisattva also disappears.

Let me give you a parable. A rich man has an only son. If the son is sick, his parents become sick. If the son recovers from an illness, his parents get well. A Bodhisattva loves sentient beings like parents love their children. If the sentient being becomes sick, a Bodhisattva becomes sick as well. If they get well, a Bodhisattva gets well, too. And he continues. What is the cause of this illness? The reason that a Bodhisattva became sick is Maha-karuna (the Great Compassion, 大悲).”

Glossary of Chinese Terms

- Bodhisattva 菩薩
 Bodhisattva-bhumi 菩薩地
 Buddhadharma 佛法
 Dàihùi 大慧
 Dài sà zhē ní zǐ jīng 正法念處經
 Dhammapada 法句經
 Dīghanikāya 長阿含經
 karaniya metta-sutta 慈悲經
 karma 業
 Lankavatara-sutra 入楞伽經
 Mahā-parinirvāṇa sūtra 大乘涅槃經
 Mahakaruna 大悲
 Mahayana 大乘

Majjhima Nikāya 中阿含經
Mahāsatya nirgrantha-sūtra 大薩遮尼乾子經
Brahma Net Sutra 梵網經
 nirvana 涅槃
 Pacittiya 波逸提
 pāna 有情
Pancavarga Vinaya 五分律
 Parajika 波羅夷
 sentient beings 有情
 upasaka 優婆塞
Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra 維摩經
 Vinaya pitaka 律藏

Abbreviation

T Taisho shinshu Daizokyo

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