



The Concept of “*Vasudaiva kutumbakam*” in Buddhism.

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Introduction

Vasudaiva kutumbakam is derived from Sanskrit, an ancient language of India particularly. Vasu means world and kutumbakam means Family. It means “the world is one family.” This holistic concept was innovated in the ancient India by the then wise a long way back. This concept shows the inevitability of the mutual cooperation among sentient beings though it is generally attributed to the mere human relations or brotherhood. This peaceful notion appears ever relevant as the evolution and development is conducive solely on the establishment of sustainable peaceful environment/world. So, when it comes to maintaining peace, probably the Buddhism is significantly instrumental.

Today the world is Geographically divided. Racism, Radical- Religion belief and so on are the false views that infest the modern Society. Hence the inculcation of the harmonious coexistence is utmost requirements in the pedagogical to be imparted.

The concept of one world one family was the production of spirituality to harmoniously coexist among many. Therefore, the knowledge of the evolution of multiple religions be it local and global particularly ethical based like that of Buddhism to some extent required.

Along human civilization the shifting from animism to the concept of God as a protector, Creator and destroyer evolved. While observing thoroughly this given process heterodox belief like Buddhism not only refute the God and soul being something eternal or permanent but also affirm the law of causality as something universal and inevitable. This is how the updating of human conceptualization takes place.

- **Buddhism an instrumental medium to Vasudaiva Kutumbhakam**

Buddhism was founded by Buddha more than 2600 years ago. He attained to the enlightenment under Bodhi tree in Magadh at the age of thirty-five. He came to realize the interconnectedness of one thing to another. His teaching on compassion led to the one global family. His teaching irrespective of caste, creed and colour was revolution among the then conservative Indian society. The adaptability according to the time and space

admonished through path truth¹ was already existed in the teaching of Buddha which appears quite relevant in modern days context.

The emergence of Buddhism was not an accident as the society was overwhelmed by the then

Authoritative outdated belief based on false view of discrimination. The society was divided due to which the *vasudaiva Kutumbakam* was struggling to exist.

Buddha preached his discoveries among fortunate people for forty-five years. The first teaching is four noble truth which advocates on i) the existence of suffering on any six realms of hell, hungry ghost, animal, men, demigods and Gods, ii) The causes of suffering that is attachment, hatred and ignorance. iii) the cessation of suffering. iv) the path leading to the cessation of suffering. The teaching was such that it reaches different audiences of varieties of taste and preferences and accepted accordingly. As a consequences eighteen schools were evolved though later on the same compressed to four major philosophical schools² where they were categorized under two Buddhist sects; Theravada and Mahayana. Former basically emphasizes on the liberation of self only but later one is inclined towards the emancipation of all. For Mahayana on the basis of the Rebirth-theory logically advocates that all the sentient beings are our mother or at least parents and cultivates immeasurable compassionate qualities.

- **Buddha Nature**

Tathagata Garbha is called Buddha nature. This concept is inculcated by Mahayana followers affirming all the sentient beings being the future Buddha as the intention of each and every sentient being is the same of attaining to the ultimate happiness. Ultimate happiness is the next to Buddhahood. In Sutra, it says; “the primordial instinct of being is ever pure and illuminating though such inner stream is obscured with abrupt affliction.” The memories, the marks, the mental constructions are all the false view when analysed ultimately. But those phenomena relatively exist and ought not to be taken for granted. Philosophically, there are finally two truths; Relative and Ultimately. On the basis of this, different philosophical schools emerged. The *Vaibhasik* and *Sutrantik* are materialistic as they affirm that atom and the functionality of the matter ultimately exist. But on the other hand, the *Mahayani* schools of *Chittamatra* and *Madhyamik* affirm that in relative world is just an illusion, dream like temporal phenomena but ultimately only mind existent and further more exists nothing.

The phenomenological analyzation is to attain to the wisdom *pragya*³. Every other practice like the practices of generosity, self-discipline, patience, vigour, concentration is maintained solely to achieve the highest perfection “wisdom” the enlightenment. In the text called *Bodhicaryāvatara* by Acharya Shanti Deva, one of the slokas in the chapter No. IX, he says:

idam parikaram sarvam pragyartham hi munirjagai

tasmād utpadyet pragyām dukkha nivritti kāngcha yah:

¹ Four noble Truth; suffering truth, causes truth, cessation truth, path leading to the cessation truth.

² *Vaibhasik, Sutrantik, Chittamatra, Madhyamik.*

³ *Three subjects of Tripitaka (Vinaya pitaka, sutra pitaka, Abhidhamma pitaka) are self-discipline, mindfulness and wisdom.*

Pragya comes from *Sravan, Chintan and Manan*. Here in Buddhist philosophy particularly *pragyā* involves with the concept of emptiness. The emptiness is a profound aspect and it requires thorough investigation of the given phenomena. Buddhist scholars take pain to delve into this field of nothingness to somehow make it accountable to the general peoples' mind. The teaching on emptiness was originally preached by Buddha himself but the recipients was rare and those unable to grasp were ended up in unwanted consequences.

- **The wisdom and compassion of Bodhisattva**

Mahayana is called Bodhisattva-yana as Mahayana emphatically inculcates the Bodhichitta, the *awakening mind* for the Mahayani endeavours to liberate all motherly sentient beings. Bodhisattva is equipped with wisdom and compassion to purify one's mind stream from afflictive and cognitive obscuration ultimately to attain to perfect Buddhahood "*Samyaksambuddha*." Wisdom is fruit while compassion is means of attaining the former. Acharya Nagarjun's theory of interconnectedness (*Pratityasamudpāda*) advocates the amalgamation of both Relative and Ultimate truth⁴ for every conclusion entails further enquiries and investigation. **Law of Karma** according to Buddhism is the mere aspect of Relative Truth of dualistic perception though being effective, one must exert to accrue virtue by benefitting others. In the sutra called *Ahisamayālanakā*, Maitreya Nath, (the future Buddha) mentions that "the Bodhisattva due to the wisdom is not attached to the temporal, relative world, neither due to the compassion S/he is inclined towards Nirvana." Bodhisattva is free from any desire. Multiple manifestations are formed of Bodhisattva to benefit others. Mere being Buddhist is not the approved criteria for inculcating *Bodhichitta* of Bodhisattva. For Bodhisattva the worlds of all sentient beings are one and the same in terms of elimination of pains be it mental and physical.

In the contemporary modern world, representation and propagation of the notion of Bodhisattva are being done by His Holiness Dalai Lama.

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⁴ Mahayana Buddhist affirms two truths: Relative or Conventional truth and Ultimate Truth.

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