

## **A Study of the Buddhist Role of the Avoidance of Ethno-Religious Violence in Sri Lanka**

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### **Introduction**

Religions are certainly created by humans for humans who were in need to establish humanity and eradicate unwholesome acts from the human society in both mundane and spiritual contexts. It is truly questionable when the above purpose does not fulfill within the context of a specific so-called religion that they expected from and is truly happening in several pathetic situations in the world. The world will be much better if we are able to avoid such situations. With special reference to the near past in Sri Lanka, the paper will investigate to avoid communal violence due to religious extremism.

### **Purpose/Aim & Background**

This research paper will challenge the foundation of irrational armed ethnic conflict and suggest an intellectual discussion within the religions to avoid such conflicts. And also, how to manage challenges against Buddhists, As Buddhism is ready with answers. It is also ready to forgive the people who had practiced evil once they have corrected themselves.

Very recently the brutal civil war was ended which lasted for more than thirty years. As soon as the ending of the civil war it seems to begun another due to religious extremism and expansionism. Inter-religious harmony was existing for centuries in Sri Lankan nation and now it is getting foul. Therefore, this research paper is tempted to find solutions for such a situation as to improve inter-nation and inter-religious harmony while avoiding communal violence. In present many critical situations were occurred due to religious extremism and as Buddhists what are the actions that should get for the eradicate of communal violence due to religious extremism, improve the inter-religious harmony and understanding is the main purpose and aim of this research.

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## **Methodology**

This is qualitative research that investigates human behavior and establishes humanities among society. The research paper is based on primary and secondary sources to reach its conclusion.

## **Findings**

For the eradication of communal violence due to religious extremism, all religions should be taught as a subject for a new generation without any specific for a certain religion while history and culture are taught. Sri Lanka needs an intellectual discussion within the religions and re-establish religious teachings for the sake of humanity.

## **Discussion**

Lanka is a country claim for more than twenty-five centuries of Buddhist history, which is unable to disregard in each and every aspect of conflict prevention within the country. There is no doubt that Sri Lanka now needs the application of International Humanitarian Laws as to eradicate civil armed conflicts as what is happening currently in the present related to easter attacks. Therefore, it is essential to consider the Buddhist context and the proposed solutions should be derived through it as the majority are Sinhala Buddhists and the culture is based on Buddhism.

Buddhism is a religion that thoroughly rejects hatred and guides its followers to spread loving-kindness instead of violence. Therefore, Buddhism never leads people to harm any other social group or religious belief. The basic moral discipline proclaimed to disciples in Buddhism is refrain from killing beings. The precept is completed not only refraining from killing beans but also he/she should refrain from the destruction of life, laid aside the rod and the sword, and dwells conscientious, full of kindness, compassionate for the welfare of living beings. Above as the primer and major disciplinary code, there isn't any opportunity for violence or harming any of the social groups.

During Buddha's period, there are examples, even Buddha visited non-Buddhistic temples and had harmonious discussions with other religious groups and respected their beliefs. In each and every visit fellow religious teachers and followers also warmly welcome Buddha in return. Although some occasions few other religious groups turned to be rude to Buddha and his disciples Buddha was silence, very and patient during such circumstances. As an example, when one of another religious group known as Paribbājakas who was malevolence and humiliate on Buddha and implicated Buddha and his disciples as a murderer and libertine. In even such circumstances though some disciples request to leave the temple Lord Buddha rejected the request to leave and was silence in the happening.

The Dhammapada, Buddha's Path of Wisdom clearly says that ' he abused me, he ill-treated me, he got the better of the meet, he stole my belongings;' the enmity of those harboring such thought cannot be appeased. Therefore, non-violence spread through Buddhism which is never attempted for any kind of communal violence.

Hereby Buddha was pleased and praised with many social groups for his loving-kindness instead of violence. It is clearly mentioned Buddha never encouraged violence within communities, while still it was practiced during Buddha's period in some instances engaged even with Buddhists. In such circumstances, Buddha faced opponent parties in a very democratic manner and never ever practiced or encouraged armed conflicts but came into resolutions through intellectual discussions while spreading compassion. For instance, Sarabho who was extraneous of Buddhist dispensation ordained as a Buddhist monk and followed the Buddhist path for a few years. He also was a person who attains the dispensation in an undermined purpose which was unable to reach Buddhist ultimate goal. Even though the behavior in public as a Buddhist monk and was famous as an extraneous who has had the Buddhist ordination. Later he disrobed and lived in a paribbājaka hermitage while contumely to Buddhism as 'I learned the teachings of the ascetic who follow the Sakyan, then I left their teaching and training.' Finally, the public believed his statement and rejected Buddhism as an unwholesome deed. Hereby Buddha left to Sarabho's hermitage and ask for him 'If you had learned what is Buddha's teachings, you have not learned fully. If you had learned it fully, I'll agree.' Presence of the conversation Sarabho was silence and he did not contumely Buddhism further without any violence.

The people who do not partake in violence are the pure followers of Buddha. Armed conflicts are totally rejected in Buddhism and instead propound intellectual discussions are practiced in it. In present Sri Lanka also in need of an intellectual discussion within the religions and its communities while the schools should teach all the religions as a special compulsory subject to avoid internal armed conflicts in Sri Lanka for good. The internal understanding of religious views within the citizens in the country will facilitate to build flexibility and respect within themselves instead of spreading violence leading to bloody ethnic conflicts.

## **Conclusion**

In present, Sri Lanka faces Ethno-Religious violence in several issues. This situation is not much better for the Sri Lankan image and the citizen who hope peace and harmony. Sri Lanka as a Buddhist country and Buddhism as the status religion of Sri Lanka bares a major role in the avoidance of these types of communal violence. In Buddhist aspect intellectual discussion among other religions and teachings all the religions in Sri Lankan schools and let the students to choose their own religion is more positive to avoid the above conflict. Further,

religions are for the betterment of human beings and if we are able to grasp the positives of the religion it will be helpful to avoid the Ethno-Religious Violence in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Conflict, Discussion, Fight, Religion

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