

THE SOCIAL PHISOPHY OF CAKKAVATTISĪHANĀDA SUTTA

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Introduction

Critics of Buddhism have tried to portray Buddhist teachings of *kamma*, *anatta*, *nibbāna*, renunciation and so on as detrimental to social progress. However, recent research has revealed that this idea is not acceptable as the Buddha is considered as the greatest social reformer of his time and therefore, His teachings would certainly be for social advancement. A thorough examination of the Buddha's teachings, specially the *Vinaya* and *Sutta* sections of the Canon, clearly indicates that His teachings are for both spiritual and social advancement. It would not be practically feasible to quote all of them. Therefore, the *Cakkavattisihanāda sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* is considered to be adequate to prove the above point. This *sutta* was preached to a group of monks at *Mātula* by the Buddha advising them to live in accordance with the *Dhamma*. The aim of this paper is to bring out the moral and ethical philosophy found in the *sutta* showing how it has a bearing on both social and spiritual development.

Methodology

This study is by and large based on the historical and traditional observations highlighting the moral influence reflected in the *sutta*. Such a study is also likely to throw new light on some social problems in contemporary society. Moreover, a comparative study with other *suttas*

related to the *sutta* in question will be used as additional evidence to show the dual role that Buddhist teachings appear to have played. The commentarial sources pertaining to this topic would be thoroughly investigated in order to have a complete picture of the teachings contained in this *sutta*.

Discussion

The *sutta* relates the story of the *Cakkavatti* or the Wheel Rolling Monarch who rules the state according to law and righteousness. However, corruptions arise due to change of leadership and negligence of healthy administration. The present monarch, not being able to control the state, consults the former ruler who was leading a life of a saint. The latter's advice to the former includes instructions regarding the development of social harmony and eradication of poverty from the state. Another significant point made in the *sutta* is fame and love could be gained by means of righteousness only. It also speaks of the *Metteyya* Buddha who is yet to come for the benefit of the world. The *sutta* can be evaluated specially for its significance in the area of Buddhist economic, political and social philosophy.

Conclusion

This paper concludes with the affirmation of the view that the Buddhist teachings contained in the *Cakkavattisihanāda sutta* clearly

indicate that existence of righteousness in human society is indispensable in order to promote harmonious human living and well-being of all life in the world.