

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSIONS

The first two stanzas briefly describe the ethical bearings of the Philosophy of Buddha. The importance of mind in assessing morality, the Buddhist law of moral causation (*kamma*), the problem of pain and happiness, self-responsibility, etc, along with two simple homely illustrations, find expressions in these twin verses. The two relevant stories clarify the points which are in question.

The verses dealing with hatred and its appeasement are of especially relevant at the age of atomic explosion. Force will certainly be met with force and hence bombs will be met with bomb. Vengeance will be met with vengeance. Retaliation never leads to peace. Buddha's advice to his followers runs as follows: "Hatred never ceases through hatred, but through love alone they cease." *Metta* or compassion is the only answer to modern atomic bomb.

The ideal moral standard as expected from the disciples by Buddha has been described in some of the verses. The last two verses of the first chapter describe the Buddha's attitude towards learning and actual performance. The *Dhamma* which is compared to a raft for crossing the ocean of *Samsara* is to be known only to practice it in actual life.

The story of prince Nanda, Buddha's step brother, and the uttered verses regarding him signifies the exercise of Buddha's psychic power to transform a lust-stricken mentally sick Bhikkhu to a pure, spiritually healthy individual. Obeying to Buddha, though reluctantly, prince Nanda was initiated in the order of life on his marriage day. He was constantly attentive to his bride without intending to enter into the

holy life. Under this situation Buddha has tried to divert him towards seemingly more desirable objects and became successful in making him an *Arahant* (Verse nos. 13-14).

The initial two chapters are concerned with the discussion of ethical conduct in Buddhism which is common for the *Bhikkhus* and laymen. As the book is a kind of philosophical literature, it is essential to refute the view of the *Purvapaksa* or the opponents and to defend the view of Buddhism. The second chapter deals with the arguments which justify the position of Buddhism after refuting the critics trying to describe Buddhism as 'a dead hand'. *Appamada* denoting heedfulness, vigilance, earnestness and allied concepts is the name of the second chapter. The first verse which is on heedfulness has transformed completely the nature of King Ashoka- from wicked Ashok (*candashoka*) to Righteous Ashoka (*Dharmashoka*). This transformation is the effect of dialogue between him and Buddha. A single line-'Seek no delight in worldly favours, but cultivate seclusion' has made a tremendous effect on him. The verse 24 deals with the root causes of our worldly progress, which ultimately proves that Buddhism is not absolutely the other-worldly as normally taken by the opponents.

The subsequent chapter i.e., the third one is very significant in the sense that it gives us an idea about the Buddhist concepts of mind and mind control. The chapters on pleasure, happiness, hell, evil, world, flowers, the fool, the wise, craving etc. deal with some principles helping persons engaged in material pleasures. The worldly pleasure and so called life of happiness has been proved to be illusive in these chapters.

The chapters on the Buddha, the *Arahant*, give an idea of the people having higher spiritual level. It gives us the characteristic

features of really enlightened beings. An individual should not be satisfied with the sayings of Buddha, but he should always ponder, read and re-read the verses along with accompanying stories and draw right knowledge from them. The stories and other descriptions point to eulogize the greatness of the Buddha having energetic and compassionate character. All these utterances of the Buddha should be recited and practiced every day. It has been rightly said in the *Dhammapada* that happily he lives who drinks of the *Dhamma*. It is to be noted that the metaphors adopted by Buddha are very much simple capable of being understood even by a child. For example, the metaphors of the cart's wheel, man's shadow, the ill-thatched house, sleeping village, clear deep lake, fragrant beautiful flower, a bee collecting honey, etc. may be mentioned. In these usages of metaphor we find some glimpses of the Buddha's wisdom. From the verses of the *Dhammapada* it is known to us that the Buddha prefers to use a method of direct teaching, but sometimes he takes recourse to his psychic power (not miracles) in order to enlighten his less intelligent hearers (Verse nos: 146-148). Once Buddha described a fisher man, Ariya, (meaning 'noble') as ignoble who was angling fish in the true sense of the term due to his engagement in killing animals. The person, through the grace of Buddha, came to realize his own nature and became noble in the true sense of the term through some rectification (Verse no.270).

The principles found in this text are mainly to illustrate the moral and philosophical teaching of Buddha. Buddhism in general represents the way of compassion. The Buddha is an embodiment of compassion and hence he is regarded as the compassionate protector of all beings. To him the individuals following the path should practice loving kindness, which implies not to harm the life of all beings. It is always advised to protect mankind as well as animals and vegetations. It is his wisdom through which he can see all human beings in the universe as

equal in nature. The wellbeing of human being and animals is inter-related and mutual. To ignore the instructions of Buddha is to invite our environmental crisis. In the modern time we find that human beings in the universe have misused their power and destroyed the animals, forests and mountains resulting in environmental crisis. The greedy minds of mankind lead to such changes and destructions of the ecological balance.

What does Buddhism say about animal rights and our treatment of animals in general? In the *Dhammapada* an answer is found to resolve this issue. There are some steps mentioned in the *Dhammapada*, which are to be adopted according to the Buddhist spiritual and moral laws. In Buddhism there are five precepts, which provide moral guidance for the lay men and monks/nuns. It is said that he who destroys life, who utters lies, who only takes from others without giving them in return, who gives life to others, who gets drunk and digs up the very roots of his life (*Dhammapada*, verses 246-247). The injunction against destroying life is known from the first precept. Is it morally wrong to hurt others through speech and weapon? The *Dhammapada* certifies that this type of activity is wrong morally. It is said that he who for the sake of happiness hurts others mentally and physically, shall not hereafter find happiness (*Dhammapada*, verse no. 131).

Violence in general is not admitted in Buddhism. What may be the probable reason for this? The *Dhammapada* answers that all beings fear from danger and life is dear to all (*Dhammapada*, verse no.129-130). If some one considers this seriously, he cannot kill others, because he will think that life is precious to each and every one.

Is environmental pollution dependent on the pollution of mind? It has already been proved that the answer is in the positive and several measures have been prescribed to minimize our mental pollution.

Lastly, is material or bodily need neglected in the *Dhammapada*? It is true that the success of power is put above the success of power, wealth etc. But bodily or material attachments are not ruled out. But the Buddha has cautioned against being overly attached to our body or material attachment. Our body is nothing but the house of bones covered with flesh and blood. Pride and hypocrisy as well as the old age and death dwell in this house. The glorious chariots of kings wear out, the body wears out and grows old, but the virtue of the good never grows old (*Dhammapada*, verses-147-151). From this it is proved that virtue is superior to body though it is not at all negligible.