

Close harmony and *open harmony* use close position and open position. Other types of harmony are based upon the intervals used in that harmony.

16.3.2 Pillars of Harmony

Harmony can be grounded on three, mutually-supporting pillars:

- Peace and security;
- Sustainable and inclusive development;
- Human rights and the rule of law.

These pillars of harmony are the foundation of successful societies even though every society has its own unique characteristics.

16.4 IMPORTANCE OF PEACE AND HARMONY

All people of all nations are like the various parts of our body. When every single part of our body works in cooperation with the other members of the body, everything moves smoothly. We enjoy life and all those around us are bound to benefit. However, when segments of our body become sick, cease to work constructively together, then we experience the creation of surmountable suffering unnecessarily.

Peace and harmony are basic prerequisites. Peace and harmony can bring a peaceful and stable order to society, and they are a necessary condition for the survival and development of mankind. A world deprived of peace and harmony certainly will fall apart and return to the jungle era in which the strong prey on the weak. Peace and harmony are an essential benefit. Peace and harmony are enjoyed and possessed jointly by mankind, which is a base for the full realisation of the creativity potential of individuals, the sustainable development of the economy and culture of nations, and a true security for the long lasting prosperity of mankind society.

Peace and harmony are an ideal path. Peace and harmony mean dealing with disputes and resolving conflicts fairly and properly with neutralisation and Middle Way principles to further the welfare of each individual as well as the wellbeing of mankind as a whole. Peace and harmony have long lasting value. Ever since the emergence of mankind, numerous cultures have been produced, among which most vanished as soon as they appeared and were forgotten in history for being partial to certain aspect or limited to certain period. Among those thoughts which have been handed down to the present and continuing to have important influence, peace and harmony occupy the most dominating position.

Peace and harmony are high wisdom. It is the height of wisdom that determines the breadth of vision, the depth of exploration, the extent of progress and the limit of transcendence. History shows that all the thoughts that are against peace and harmony are against the will of the people and shall perish by themselves.

16.5 THE CONTENT OF PEACE AND HARMONY

Peace and harmony of the mankind society should be integral and compressive. They consist of the following six areas:

- i) An international political order that embodies equality and mutual trust, maintaining security and justice jointly by political cooperation;
- ii) A world economy system that fully embodies balance and mutual benefit, eliminating discrepancy between rich and poor as well as regional imbalance;
- iii) A global cultural atmosphere that fully embodies diversity and integration, conducting dialogues and exchanges to consolidate and enhance friendship and dissolve historical prejudice;
- iv) A natural and ecological ethics that fully embodies coexistence and common prosperity, actively fulfilling the responsibility of improvement and resolving environmental crisis by ecological protection;
- v) Scientific and technological improvement that fully embodies human nature and humanity, prompting scientific and technological fruits to ultimately benefit the long-term welfare of mankind;
- vi) Spiritual and mental state that fully embodies health and morality, helping each individual obtain physical and mental serenity, harmony and happiness through traditional wisdom.

Among the areas mentioned above, cultural peace and harmony occupy a fundamental position. All in all, culture is a value system and the collection of its correspondent codes of conduct. There is no normal activity of a human society that is not the actual manifestation of its value. A culture with peace and harmony as its mainstream value will certainly implement peace and harmony in all the areas of social life. Historical experience has shown that a society can obtain continuous and steady development only when it truly loves peace and place importance upon harmony.

16.6 PATH TO THE REALISATION OF PEACE AND HARMONY

Ever since the beginning of the 21st century, cultural problems have aroused world-wide concern. It has been deeply realised by those who have insight that without global cultural harmony, mutual political trust and economical benefit are mere theory or become mere formality, not to mention forming effective international cooperation when confronted with global challenges. Therefore, an integration of global cultures at in-depth level is of pressing urgency to human society. Thus following three points are to be taken care of:

- i) ***The organic integration of overall diversity and regional diversity.***

With exchanges becoming increasingly frequent, diversity is not only a description of the status of the world as a whole, it is also a reflection of the reality of most countries. It can be foreseen that cultural diversity of the world as a whole in the future will take root in the cultural diversities of each region. In some places, because people pursue unitary domination with one-sided approach and fail to achieve diversity and mutual integration, a great number of confrontations among ethnic groups and social conflicts are created which not only affect their only stability, but also produce elements of instability in neighbouring regions. If the ethical requirements of a particular cultural tradition are taken arbitrarily to judge the normal living styles of other cultural traditions, some conducts which are irrelevant to ethics at all will also be coloured as right, wrong, virtuous or evil,

which will certainly result in false value judgments and even ultra emotional reactions. Therefore, every cultural tradition should exercise tolerance and reconciliation, and resolve the tension within society with mutual sincerity.

ii) *The organic integration of consensus thinking and diversity modes.*

Regarding values, we should help the major cultural traditions reach certain universal consensus under the precondition of mutual respect. Although varying living environments have produced varying cultural traditions, among them there should still be many common concepts which have common spirit. We need to make such common thinking cohere into consensus thinking that has universal meaning and become the common spiritual wealth of all human beings.

Concerning the mode of practice, we should encourage all the cultural traditions to adopt diverse and localised methods for practice in respect of such consensus thinking in accordance with their own needs and circumstances. Whichever cultural tradition is formed by long-term exploration and endeavours in their adapting to living environments, it is a unique manifestation of the common thinking of mankind. Thus, there does not exist a best cultural mode that can fit all situations. As a matter of fact, the more common a concept is the more proper mode of practice needs to be selected in accordance with specific causes and conditions of specific time and space.

iii) *Organic integration of absorption value and contribution value*

Absorption value is comprehensively examining the existence of other cultures as reference and turning the advantages of other cultures into resources that are beneficial to perfecting one's own culture. It is because different cultures complement each other remarkably that conducting dialogue among each other becomes highly necessary. During such a process, each culture should be established on its own position and enlarge its vision, enrich its content and elevate its state by understanding and learning the excellent fruit of other cultures.

Contribution value refers to making in-depth summary of the positive values of the existence of one culture that contributes to other cultures and making appropriate constructive suggestions to other cultures. The more positive values a culture contributes to other cultures, the more it can be respected and recognised by other cultures, and the more it can make great contribution to the whole human culture. The underlying driving force of the improvement and progress of human culture comes from the gathering and integration of the positive value of all the cultures.

16.7 SUMMARY

Peace and harmony of all the human beings mean peace and harmony among all the nations, ethnic groups and religions. Meanwhile, it is peace and harmony of each nation, ethnic group and religion that constitute peace and harmony of all the human beings. Religious culture epitomizes the achievement of culture and wisdom of mankind, and all the major religions regard selfless great love as their fundamental tenet. Promoting peace and harmony of all the human beings is the common noble mission and great cause of all the religions.

According to Indian viewpoint, peace and harmony are generally synonymous. Peace connotes an atmosphere or time where there is no fighting, no rudeness, no cruelty, but

what prevails is calmness, absence of hostility, existence of healthy or newly-healed interpersonal or international relationship, socio-economic welfare, acknowledgement of equality and fairness in political relationships and global matters. It is also the basic spirit in the root of welfare state. The purpose of peace is to provide a solid and comprehensive ground to one and all to tread the path of large scale welfare, prosperity and development. In such a state, each and everyone gets equal opportunities to rise on the strength of their physical, mental and professional abilities. Hence, the importance and all-time significance of both, peace and harmony for society, a nation or humanity as a whole, is self-evident.

16.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the concept of peace and harmony.
- 2) Discuss the significance/importance of peace and harmony in the present context.
- 3) How will you distinguish between imposed to consensual peace?
- 4) What are important paths to realise peace and harmony?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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