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## **BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION ON THE PRACTICE OF NON-VIOLENCE**

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### **Abstract**

The philosophy of Ahimsa (non-violence) is a core principle in Buddhist ethics, expressing respect and love for all living beings. Built on the foundation of harmlessness and compassion, Ahimsa not only aims at avoiding physical violence but also requires not causing mental harm to anyone. In Buddhism, Ahimsa represents the spirit of compassion (Karuna) and wisdom (Prajna), widely applied in the relationship between people and between people and society.

Ahimsa in Buddhism is not simply a passive act of avoiding violence but is also positive, requiring people to actively develop compassion and act for the benefit of all living beings. For everyone, practicing Ahimsa is a way to train compassion, control the mind, and reduce negative emotions such as anger, greed, and ignorance. When an individual lives by this principle, they not only create inner peace but also radiate peace and compassion to the surrounding environment.

At the social level, the philosophy of Ahimsa has the potential to promote a harmonious and sustainable community. When people respect the lives and interests of others, conflicts and violence are reduced, replaced by cooperation and mutual understanding. The compassion that Ahimsa encourages is not limited to human relationships but extends to all living beings. This creates the foundation for a society that develops towards peace, environmental protection, and ecological conservation.

Ahimsa is not only a personal philosophy of life but also an important principle in building social relationships and developing communities. When widely applied, Ahimsa can become an important tool to solve the problems of violence, injustice, and discrimination in modern society, creating a peaceful and compassionate society.

**Keywords:** Ahimsa, Buddhism, harmlessness, compassion, morality, society.

### **1. Introduction**

The philosophy of Ahimsa, also known as non-violence, is one of the core principles of Buddhist ethics. Buddhist ethics has a profound influence on the way of looking at life, people, and society, contributing to the promotion of social and awareness-raising for the development of people and society. Ahimsa is not simply the renunciation of physical violence but also includes the avoidance of causing harm in all forms, from words to thoughts. Buddhism cultivates Compassion (karuna) and Wisdom (prajna) as two factors that go hand in hand with Ahimsa in shaping the attitude of Buddhists and the way they interact with the world around them.

Buddhist ethics guides people to actively develop and educate human personality, is a bridge between individuals and society, in which Ahimsa plays a fundamental role in maintaining balance and peace, avoiding violence and conflict. This path not only aims at not causing harm but also encourages the cultivation of compassion for all living beings, from humans to animals and the natural environment. Non-violence aims to consolidate and develop for the sake of harmony and common benefit, cultivating compassion, and good karma. (Jerryson, 2015)

In the context of modern society, people often face challenges related to conflict, violence, and injustice, the Ahimsa philosophy of Buddhist ethics becomes more important than ever, it promotes the end of conflict and war. This is a humane approach, helping society move towards equality, solidarity and sustainability in humans and society.



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This article will delve into the analysis of the philosophy of Ahimsa in Buddhist ethics, clarifying how it fosters compassion and non-harming for individuals and society, thereby contributing to the comprehensive development of humans and communities. For the common good, for the equality and human rights of humans and society.

## 2. Research Methodology

In this study, I present Buddhist philosophy considering the entire scope of Buddhism's relevance to Non-violence. Studying non-violence, traditions of maintaining and developing ethics in Buddhism. In addition, it will be shown that non-violence is the basic human ethics, cultivating compassion and not killing or harming anyone including humans and animals. Principles Furthermore, Buddhist philosophical ethics is not only based on ethical theory but also on human ethics in all aspects, not just for disciples. Those who teach based on deep understanding of the reality of life.

The method used is a combination of various methods. Two important primary and secondary sources have certainly been studied. The Primary Source is mainly based on Buddhist teachings, useful in Buddhist schools, important Mahayana Sutras and Vinaya Pitakas related to the concepts of Ethics in Buddhist philosophy. The scriptures, precepts, philosophies and teachings of religions, researchers and scholars. On the other hand, the secondary sources will include the works that have been done on the subject. The paper will be supplemented and clarified with notes and evidence.

The paper will be supplemented and clarified with footnotes and evidence. Whenever necessary, the explanations related to the issues are detailed so that the original intention of the presenter can be fully conveyed. Therefore, I will refer to the relevant passages of the footnotes as mentioned above whenever necessary. And I will also use these footnotes as references to provide a complete introduction to the explanation that better presents the issue related to my research. The main methods applied in my thesis can be listed as follows:

- Literary method
- Comparative method
- Historical method
- Analytical method
- Philosophical method

## 3. Ahimsa in Buddhist Ethics: Origin and Meaning

### • Ahimsa and its philosophical origin:

According to researchers, the concept of “Ahimsa” may have originated from Vedic thought, and it is considered an important stream of thought used in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Today’s thought is formed and developed based on ethical principles and human and social needs. Ahimsa originated in Hinduism, but Buddhism developed it into a more comprehensive philosophy, expanding from the concept of non-violence to non-harming mentally and emotionally. In Sanskrit the word "himsa" means "harm", and "a" is negative, these two words combined create the meaning of "not causing harm". (Nyanatiloka, 2004)

### • Origin from Hinduism:

Ahimsa appears in the texts of ancient Hinduism, specifically in the Upanishads and Mahabharata, which are two important scriptures of Hinduism. In the Upanishads, Ahimsa is associated with the concepts of dharma (morality) and karma (action), emphasizing righteous moral behavior, and not harming others, the purpose is not only to maintain the balance of the universe and humanity but also to contribute to the stability of people and society. According to K. V. Bose: “It is Ahimsa



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that accorded dynamism in the lives of Indians. It directs their day-to-day behaviors in such a manner that they can ensure their own existence; their conflicts, inevitable in daily life, are transformed and resolved. Furthermore, it has given ever-new dimensions to the process of cooperation; the outcomes of which are present in the form of unprecedented and unending development in various walks of life.”(Bose, 1992). Ahimsa is the idea of peace, forming an important ethical principle, encouraging kings and warriors, politicians to rule with compassion and avoid unnecessary violence, to eliminate all hatred and live in peace. join hands to unite and build and protect this environment for humanity. (Chatterjee, 1983)

#### • Ahimsa in Jainism:

Jainism is a religion that strongly promotes Ahimsa and considers it a fundamental and central principle for the practice of disciples. For Jains, Ahimsa is the top principle in all creative actions, they practice strictly, they are vegetarians and take the philosophy of Ahimsa very seriously. They believe that all forms of life, from humans, animals to microorganisms, have the right to exist without being harmed, all living beings are equal. Therefore, Jains follow strict rules to avoid killing, even avoiding harming small insects, they are vegetarians and always adhere to Ahimsa and places. In Jain philosophy, Ahimsa is not only an external action but also requires control of the mind and speech, not allowing thoughts or words to harm any living being. The Acaranga sutta describes the fundamental need for non-violence:

“All beings are fond of life; they like pleasure and hate pain, shun destruction and like to live, they long to live. To all, life is dear.” Ahimsa is a way of living and thinking which respects this deeply. (Chapple, 1993).

#### • Ahimsa in Buddhism:

Ahimsa is a notion that Buddhism developed and received from ancient Indian intellectual traditions. However, Buddhism has developed this idea into a complete philosophy, with compassion and equality everywhere and at all times, helping people and society develop morality and personality. Ahimsa is a matter of concern and application to all human and social lifestyles. in the spirit of compassion and equality. (Hanh, 1999). In Buddhism, the concept of ahimsa not only instructs us to abstain from violence but also forms the basis for the growth of wisdom (Pranja) and compassion (karuna). To achieve nirvana and bliss, the Buddha taught that the practice of Ahimsa entails developing compassion and wisdom. This leads to a profound awareness of selflessness (anatman) and the interdependence of all beings. Therefore, the practice of Ahimsa in Buddhism not only helps individuals stay away from violence but also promotes the cultivation of compassion for all living beings, respecting the right to life and love of all species, regardless of race or skin color...

##### • Ahimsa in social practice:

For centuries, Ahimsa has been applied by philosophers, social leaders, and nationalist movements as a philosophy of life, it is the ultimate truth that contributes to the peace of humanity. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most famous people who applied Ahimsa in social and political struggle. He used Ahimsa to fight for India's independence from British colonialism without resorting to violence. For Gandhi, Ahimsa was not only the renunciation of physical violence but also the elimination of mental violence, that is, not harming the self-respect and dignity of others.

##### • Ahimsa in the modern context:

In modern society, the philosophy of Ahimsa still has a strong influence and is applied in many different fields, from environmental protection to the movement for human rights and animal rights. Non-violent movements, such as the movement of Martin Luther King Jr., in his fight for civil rights in the United States, was also inspired by Gandhi's Ahimsa. (King, 1998). This philosophy has also played an important role in promoting healthy living, especially in the movements for vegetarianism, animal rights, and the protection of life in general.



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- **Ahimsa and Buddhist scriptures:**

Ahimsa, or "non-harming," is a core principle in Buddhist teachings, emphasized in many scriptures. The Metta Sutta encourages the development of infinite compassion, love, and non-harming towards all living beings. Similarly, in the Dhammapada, the Buddha teaches that all human actions should be based on compassion and non-violence, which helps the individual escape the cycle of suffering. These teachings emphasize that Ahimsa is not only about abstaining from violence but also about developing kindness and love in daily life.

#### **4. Compassion and Non-harming: Links with Ahimsa**

- **Karuna (Compassion):**

An integral part of Ahimsa, karuna is the driving force that leads people to act with compassion and respect for life. In Buddhist philosophy, compassion (karuna) and non-harming (ahimsa) are two closely linked factors that form the ethical foundation for how people treat all living beings. Karuna, or compassion, plays an important role in Ahimsa, as it is the driving force that drives people to act with love and respect for life. Compassion includes not only avoiding harming others but also trying to alleviate the suffering of all living beings, including the smallest ones. (Yeh, 2006).

- **Prajna (Wisdom):**

In Buddhism, wisdom helps people understand the impermanent nature and connect with all living beings, thereby developing deep sympathy and compassion. In addition, prajna (wisdom) in Buddhism helps people to see deeply into the nature of impermanence (anicca) and interdependence (pratitya-samutpada) of all living beings. When people understand the interconnectedness of all life, they will develop deep sympathy and compassion for others. This wisdom helps to realize that the suffering of others is also their own suffering, motivating the practice of Ahimsa in every action and thought.

- **Ahimsa and compassion in action:**

From not killing, not causing harm to animals and plants, to not causing harm to others in spirit, speech and action. Ahimsa does not stop at avoiding killing or causing physical harm, but extends to every aspect of life. It requires not causing harm to any living being, from animals, plants to humans, in all forms from thoughts, speech to actions. This includes avoiding harmful mental actions such as hurtful words or hateful thoughts. (George, 1973) Practicing Ahimsa requires a lifestyle of consideration, love and respect for life, and through compassion and wisdom, people can maintain harmony with all living beings in the world.

#### **5. Ahimsa for individuals: Self-training of the mind and development of personality**

- **Self-control and self-discipline:**

Ahimsa is not only an external action but also an internal practice. Developing mindfulness helps people control their thoughts, emotions and actions to avoid causing harm to others. People who practice Ahimsa are kind inside and always live in peace and happiness.

- **Reducing greed, anger and ignorance:**

Ahimsa helps individuals overcome desires, anger, and ignorance, avoiding violence is avoiding the main causes of violence and conflict, helping our inner self not to compete, envy or hate.



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- **Improve the quality of personal life:**

When individuals practice Ahimsa and compassion, they will find inner peace and the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully. Individuals, families, and society will always be peaceful and happy. When personal life improves, society will also develop and be sustainable.

## 6. Ahimsa for Society: Building Harmonious and Sustainable Communities

- **Ahimsa and Social Justice:**

The philosophy of nonviolence plays an important role in eliminating forms of social injustice and violence. Nonviolent movements, from Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr., have been inspired by Ahimsa to fight for human rights without resorting to violence.

- **Social Conflicts and Resolutions Through Ahimsa:**

When everyone in society applies Ahimsa, conflicts will be reduced. Problems of discrimination, inequality, and violence will be replaced by compassion and solidarity. People and women are treated fairly without disputes or discrimination.

- **Environment and Ahimsa:**

Ahimsa extends not only to humans but also to nature, encouraging people to protect the environment and animals. A secure life is guaranteed, the climate is clean and beautiful. Human life is guaranteed and stable. Enhance the preservation and promotion of human and natural values.

## 7. Ahimsa and other religions: Similarities and differences

- **Similarities**

### Hinduism:

Ahimsa is one of the most important ethical principles, expressed in ancient scriptures such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. In Hinduism, Ahimsa is not only not killing but also respecting all life, with the belief that all living beings have souls (atman) and are connected to Brahman (the supreme reality). Ahimsa helps practitioners achieve liberation (moksha) through compassion and avoiding causing suffering.

### Jainism:

Ahimsa is the highest principle in Jainism, emphasizing that every living being, no matter how small, has the right to live. Jains practice Ahimsa strictly in all aspects of life, even avoiding harming small creatures like insects. This is the religion that most strongly and thoroughly expresses Ahimsa.

### Christianity:

Although there is no equivalent term for Ahimsa, the principles of "love your neighbor as yourself" and "forgiveness" in the teachings of Jesus are similar to Ahimsa. The ideas of compassion, loving your enemies and avoiding harm are also emphasized in Christianity.





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## Islam:

Similarly, Islam also has the principle of compassion in dealing with others. The ideas of mercy (rahma) and justice in the Quran reflect the respect for human life and the right to life, although there is a difference in the concept of just war (jihad) compared to Ahimsa.

- **Differences**

### Degree of practice:

The main difference between Ahimsa in Indian religions and other religions is the degree of application. In Jainism and Buddhism, Ahimsa is not only a moral principle but also a radical way of life, from avoiding harm to animals to controlling the mind and speech. In contrast, in Christianity and Islam, the idea of compassion and avoiding harm exists but does not necessarily prohibit killing in all cases, such as just war or self-defense.

### Conditional practice of violence:

In Christianity and Islam, there are situations where violence is acceptable, such as just war in Christianity or Jihad in Islam, where violence is considered legitimate if it is for the purpose of upholding justice. This is different from the idea of Ahimsa, which completely renounces violence in all situations.

### View of living beings:

Ahimsa in Buddhism and Jainism does not only apply to humans but also extends to all animals and even plants, with the belief that all life is precious. Meanwhile, Christianity and Islam have a view of human rights that prioritizes humans over other species.

## 8. Ahimsa in Modern Society: Applications and Challenges

Applications of Ahimsa in Modern Society Ahimsa is not only applied to big issues such as social conflicts but also to the smallest daily behaviors: from the way of eating, communicating, to the way of treating nature.

- **Social and political movements**

Ahimsa has become the foundation for many movements fighting against oppression and injustice in the world. A typical example is the movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in India to gain independence from British colonialism through non-violent protests. (Merton,1965) This philosophy also deeply influenced human rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, who used non-violence to fight for equal rights and against racism.

- **Religion and philosophy**

In modern society, Ahimsa remains an important ethical principle in Buddhism and other religions. It encourages people to live a peaceful life, avoiding conflict and harm not only to humans but also to all living things. In the animal rights and environmental movements, Ahimsa has become an ethical theory that helps to reduce human destruction of nature.

- **Personal lifestyle**

Today, many people practice Ahimsa through a vegetarian lifestyle and animal protection, with the goal of reducing harm to life. This lifestyle not only has ethical benefits but also contributes to protecting health and reducing negative impacts on the environment.



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## • Challenges of Ahimsa in modern society

### Conflict and violence

One of the biggest challenges to the practice of Ahimsa in modern society is conflict and violence, from war to terrorism and domestic violence. Although Ahimsa encourages peaceful resolution of conflicts, many people still resort to violence as a means to achieve their goals, which raises questions about the feasibility of Ahimsa in the modern context.

### The complexity of globalized societies

In globalized societies, economic, political, and social systems are increasingly complex. Ahimsa, with its principle of respecting and protecting all life, sometimes conflicts with the realities of maintaining modern industrial economies, where the exploitation of resources and labor inevitably causes harm to the environment and people.

### Conflict between the individual and society

Ahimsa emphasizes not causing harm to any living being, but this sometimes conflicts with social and personal obligations. For example, in the face of violence, one may have to choose between self-defense or observing Ahimsa. This requires a balance between self-interest and social responsibility, and the full application of Ahimsa may be difficult in such situations.

## 9. Conclusion

Ahimsa is a philosophy that has great power in shaping individuals and societies. By following this principle, each person not only finds inner peace but also contributes to building a peaceful, just and sustainable society. In the turbulent modern world, the value of Ahimsa in Buddhist ethics remains powerful and applicable, helping people face challenges calmly, compassionately and without causing harm. Ahimsa, with its philosophy of non-violence and respect for life, has the potential to become a powerful tool for building a more just and peaceful society. However, applying Ahimsa in modern society requires overcoming many challenges, from violent conflicts to over-consumption. Change needs to come from both the individual and societal levels, through education, policy and concrete action. Ahimsa is not just an ethical principle, but also a path to creating a peaceful and sustainable world.

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