
THE EMANCIPATION FROM SUFFERING IN MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Human beings constantly seek meaning and temporary happiness for themselves. Nevertheless, they live in a perpetual cycle of universal and subjective suffering, affecting their general and mental wellness. Scholars in the humanities continue to pursue questions of meaning and interpretation of suffering, and in science there is still no solution for the emancipation of human suffering. This study will try to show that the concept of Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism can address the issue of emancipation of suffering in a meaningful way. Mahayana Buddhism suggests that suffering comes from the objectification of the mind, the notion of self, and the discriminatory mind that arises from dualistic views. Overcoming suffering is possible by using the type of discipline usually reserved for the Bodhisattva. This discipline provides a way even in secular society to emancipate individuals from suffering, and improve their quality of life and mental well-being. In conclusion, the study suggests that Bodhisattva practice can be used in public education as a psychological tool for self-help and the emancipation of sufferings.

Keywords: Psychology; Mahayana Buddhism, Suffering, Bodhisattva