

# **The Role of Ritual and Spirituality for a Nonviolent Society**

Guo Xing

Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, Taiwan

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# **Introduction**

- **Violence exists in many forms: domestic, emotional, ethnic, and global.**
- **Buddhism offers tools:  
ritual (external) and spirituality (internal)—for cultivating nonviolence.**
- **Focus:**
  - 1. Ritual of Repentance**
  - 2. Spiritual Cultivation of Wisdom and Compassion.**

# **Ritual and Spirituality**

- **Ritual: symbolic action; external reinforcement.**
- **Spirituality : inner transformation.**
- **Both shape individual behavior and societal values.**

# **Ritual of Repentance**

- **Acknowledges past harm.**
- **Expresses sincere remorse.**
- **Vows to avoid unwholesome actions.**

# **Elements of the Repentance Ritual**

- **Prostrations of self-reflection → cultivate humility and shame.**
- **Scripture Recitation → teaches cause and consequence (karma).**
- **Vows → commitment to ethical improvement.**

# **Repentance Prostrations**

- **Cultivate humility and shame**
- **Reflect and examine actions**
- **Recognize and accept wrong actions**





# **Scripture Recitation**

- **Alert and mindful for actions**
- **Teaching of cause and consequence (karma).**





# **Making Vows for Avoiding Wrong Actions**

- **Have resolute to correct wrong doings.**
- **Strengthen one's commitment to avoiding wrong deeds.**
- **Reinforce a peaceful mindset**





# **Outcomes of Repentance Ritual**

- **Reduces likelihood of violent behavior.**
- **Fosters compassion and peace.**
- **Reinforces ethical living in daily life.**

# **Spirituality – Wisdom and Compassion**

- **Wisdom: Insight into interdependence; breaks ego-centered thinking.**
- **Compassion: Altruistic care; relieves suffering.**
- **Wisdom and Compassion : basis for nonviolence.**



# **Wisdom and Compassion**

- **Master Sheng Yen (1931-2009), the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain said,**  
    **“With true wisdom one will not have any vexations.**  
    **With true kindness and compassion, one will not encounter any**  
    **enemies.”**
- **Wisdom: no vexation – inner peace**
- **Compassion: no enemy– external peace**

# **Ritual and Spirituality**

- **Shape individual character and collective social values toward peace**
- **Integrate compassion and wisdom into daily life and social engagement**

# Individual Peace Expands Into Social Peace

Master Shen Yan said,

“The Buddhist approach to fostering peace grows out of wisdom cultivated in meditation and shares with others in a wide range of activities, among which teaching and exemplary behavior are paramount. Buddhism teaches us that the causes of conflict and wars lie within ourselves; it also teaches us how to constructively temper our own tendency to generate conflict. Underlying this is the Buddhist idea that peace in society begins with peace within oneself. This cultivated inner peace numerically expands from one person to the next until we can truly say that we both act and think locally as well as globally. Simply by sharing our inner peace on a one-on-one basis, we can have a staggering effect on global peace.”

# **Peace through Reconciliation and Resilience**

- **Rituals help with reconciliation**
- **Spirituality builds resilience**
- **Rituals and Spirituality support sustainable peace in individuals and society**

# **Reconciliation through Repentance**

- **Acknowledging harm → restores relationships.**
- **Builds ethical accountability.**
- **Internal & External healing.**



# **Resilience through Spirituality**

- **Inner strength to remain nonviolent in adversity.**
- **Emotional and ethical resilience.**
- **Wisdom helps reframe conflict; compassion guides response.**

# **Conclusion**

- **Buddhist rituals and spirituality foster peace from within.**
- **Tools: Repentance Ritual + Cultivation of Wisdom & Compassion.**
- **Peace is both a personal and societal achievement.**
- **Transform ourselves to transform the World.**