

Humanistic Buddhism, Family Values and Family Counseling

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ABSTRACT

Tried and approved methods of psychotherapy and counseling play upon the attention, activities and aspirations of human beings in various stages of psychological transformation. Some offer an arena whereby Humanistic Buddhism (HB) can become the mode for skilled and receptive interchange between the counselor-helper and client, the one being helped (in this transformation) on a journey in process to improved mental health. The approach of HB is a natural method to be used by the therapist in assessing family values and counseling families. I propose in this paper what can morally and effectively be set out as Buddhist principles for conducting psychotherapy. The impact of (individual) person-therapy upon the whole of a family unit is a consideration not to be overlooked. This impact guides strategists in humanistic psychological terms in providing tenets of change controls, thereby assisting family members to adjust to the intra-social mechanisms of their family unit.

The principles of HB as taught by Grand Master Hsing Yun, and as the basis for spiritual counseling, are described. Specific doctrinal references are given which strengthen the argument for weaving Buddhist precepts of love, virtue and mindful practice into the complex fabric of mercurial human family dynamics. Also dealt with are matters relating to family members working together to achieve a happy, congruent life and the values and morals guiding each person in the unit; case studies of conditions leading to unity and separateness in relationships; and some outcomes.

Introduction

Families and their values, consistencies, dynamics, happiness and problems have been some main issues of concern facing human adjustment to behavioral, spiritual, material, social and interpersonal conditions since the beginning of time. The greater percentages of us are born into a nuclear family and spend our formative years in that style of societal relationship. In America the single-parent raising children and strained economic conditions force many parents to work, leaving their children in school, with friends, with a caretaker or alone for a greater percent of a five-day work-week. Concerned spouses and parents as guides of the nuclear family, strive for happiness within the unit living in one dwelling, and then will sacrifice many personal wants for the needs of their members. However, personalities and roles of husband and wife, father and mother and the relationships among children and between siblings and parents change. What was a fair mode of behavior yesterday may not work today and individual characteristics of members take on unfamiliar complexions.

In the turmoil of transition, couples may attempt to work out their differences between themselves first, before involving the unpleasantness of conflicting ideas and particles with other relatives. Where in the beginning of critical incidences causing differences of opinions and skewed attitudes, all agree that security in financial dealings, better than adequate schooling for the children and safety from harmful

elements were the needs to be attended to. Now, as burdens of getting along and disagreements seemingly dominate every scene, such thoughts of agreement upon spiritual reliance as a mediating force are pushed farther under the table. In the throes of today's conflicts and confusions, families should be able to seek solace with a family counselor who is sensitive to appropriate therapy to relieve symptoms which cause disharmony and splits in the family unit. Sorting out the spiritual, as taught through the principles of Humanistic Buddhism, can be the making of a strong family relationship.

This paper emphasizes the position of the family therapist in assisting and guiding families in crisis with pointed attention to values aimed at keeping the family intact. In a positive sense, the well-functioning family is viewed to operate in a homeostatic manner, with all members in contiguous arrangement and balance. In describing the work of existential therapists, the objective is not the restructuring of family roles back to a weak or destructive character they once had. Once dysfunctional, family members must grow beyond where they were. Families grow up, as do the members. The aim here is to explain the family working and living together and experiencing a loving, happy relationship. In systems theory and with all of the subsystems operating properly, we look at how the principles of HB can be used as a variable by which the family maintains corrective balance as needs, wants, opinions and attitudes change. Once HB becomes the spiritual driver of moral and virtuous guidelines employed by the therapist, its tenets can set the direction for positive change and show marked criteria for change in family values, attitudes and behavior to rescue the troubled family from dissolution.

Principles of Humanistic Buddhism

Where Human cultural dignities parallel human values. These are now flippantly brushed aside as unnecessary guidelines for a peaceful co-existence among national, state, city, neighborhood and family groups. In such a context, Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings of methods for transcending anguish and dis-ease are more forceful and relative than ever before. The Buddha gave us some specific directions for personal and social peace in this world and those have not changed; but the humanness of our existence must be re-established from time to time. We become lax and lethargic to the healing potentiality of the Buddha's teachings.

HB as presented by Grand Master Hsing Yun, brings the Buddhist religion to all levels of social strata and draws hundreds of families together to participate in planned activities for children and adults. In application, HB is a form of "socially engaged" Buddhism, which makes us more aware of our true nature and the naturalness of all things. Family members are taught through Buddhist principles. Although the value of each family member is unique, there is a sharing of values according to the personal attributes of each. Members develop their private persona, but through the family relationship happiness and survival is assured. Humanness (being one with nature) has urged writers like Joanna Macy (1991), Thich Nhat Hanh (1990) and Buckminster Fuller (1970) to also have us consider we have lived past lives in roles other than our present and have an ecological challenge to unite, make

well and preserve all phenomena.

Righting the ecology is humanity's family responsibility and a model by which to purify our existence within the real, nuclear family. Counseling the family can be the inner-work of spirituality for the psychotherapist. There are beliefs, tenets, and practices in HB which will bring attention to certain principles appropriate to family counseling. The Grand Master, in his most recent treatise on HB (2000), states he...“could say many things about Humanistic Buddhism, but it would probably be best for me to sum it up by discussing the principle virtues of the bodhisattva path: the six *paramitas*.” The Grand Master explains:

The six *paramitas* are: generosity, morality, patience, constant progress [effort], concentration, and wisdom. *Paramita* is a Sanskrit word that literally means “crossing over to the other shore”...the six *paramitas* are called the “six perfections” in English. They are the deep virtues that lead us to enlightenment...they are the middle path between nirvana and the phenomenal world. (p.154)

He discusses the six *paramitas*:

Generosity ...Generosity means that we give something of ourselves to others. There are many kinds of generosity. Generosity may involve material things, emotional caring, and intellectual sharing. Showing someone how to do something is an act of generosity as is preventing someone from doing something harmful. The Buddha said that generosity helps others become unafraid. The highest form of generosity is to share the Dharma, because only the Dharma can show us how to help ourselves...

Morality...The practice of humanistic Buddhism asks us to keep the moral example of the Buddha's life uppermost in our minds. It also asks us to make our own lives into a worthy moral example for others to follow. A bodhisattva must lead by example...It is not an idea that becomes enlightened, but a human being who has learned to live the truths of harmlessness, compassion, equanimity, and selflessness...

Patience ...Patience is an important cure for anger. Whenever we feel anger, we should wait. If we wait long enough, the anger will subside...Anger is a form of delusion. Patience is a form of truth.

Constant Progress [Effort] ...Constant progress [effort] is important to the bodhisattva path because this is the virtue that gets us to persevere and to act upon what we know to be right. Turned inward, constant progress [effort] is like an active form of introspection. Turned outward, it is proof of our commitment to the good...[This perfection] helps us focus our energies as it prevents us from being satisfied with the small gains we have already made.

Concentration ...Meditation is a profound form of concentration. *Samadhi* states are usually learned in sitting meditation...As we progress in Buddhism, we learn how to achieve *samadhi* states when we are sitting, walking, working, or doing anything else during which it is possible to be mindful. These states are very important because it is through them that we gain access to higher levels of awareness and wisdom...

intervener, umpire, coach, teacher and perhaps most importantly director of this drama. The therapist is the mediator who does not take sides.

The goal in this section is to describe in moral terms the practical role presentation of the therapist in treating the family and keeping mindful of systematic balance of a family's "synergistic functioning." (each system being unique, the phenomenal relationship of humanistic elements comprises the system, where the whole system is greater than the sum of its parts.) There are numerous factual elements and methods of transmitting family values and a core of morals to the family in covering the important basis to promote wellness in all areas – physiological, psychological, political and spiritual. (I use the term "political" here to denote in-process justice of ecological/economic balance, or appropriate gain from energy expended). By no means "preacherish" in the religious sense, many top respected psychotherapists of the 20th century have detailed some methods and dialogues in setting spiritual and moral positions. Fromm (1960), Glasser (1965), Rogers (1942, 1977), Jung (1934), Welwood (2000) and Doherty (1995) are a few who teach spiritual composition surrounding their counseling and moral work. Following are some arguments, pointers and techniques in refining the moral issues in psychotherapy.

As we have become more of a society in America of defending our citizens against violent crimes in our cities, of diverting teenagers away from mind-altering, illegal drugs (and legal substances they abuse), of witnessing the continuing growth of a homeless population, of mourning children killing children – we search for remedies and prophylaxes for affects in the moral domain. In a sound family system, moral values can be learned, and when the family structure starts crumbling perhaps the mortar of morality is what has begun to wash away, more often than not. In applying HB principles to help mend the broad and specific riffs in the family, the therapist's role is to carry the message of respect, love and compassion in truthfulness and concern to the family at the center of their concern.

I will cite a case study which uncovers the fragile conditions of seemingly strong family units and focus on core virtues of therapist. There will follow a description of workable processes and techniques of current dynamics in family therapy. Rogers (1942) and Ellis (1973) outline some tried and longstanding virtues or attributes of an effective therapist, which are primarily in their work of client-/person-centered and rational-emotive-behavior counseling. First I would like to continue some general observation I have made in working with families in a psychotherapeutic dimension. Moral issues are at the forefront of my observations of families and methods of treatment used by their counselors. Throughout various training and therapy work we hear "moral" and "ethical" used most simply to indicate polarization of actions, thoughts and words – good, bad, right, wrong. In the family the focus is on interpersonal morality regarding consequences of one's behavior for the welfare of other people. Values may indicate more attention to judgements and situations of varying importance. One professional may not assign the same value indicator to one thing as another person. Therapists bring their values when teaching the family, but these attitudes in many cases change to moral beliefs which most probably result in biases concerning their clients' behavior. That goes beyond value clarification. There are "restrictions" influenced by environmental elements which impinge upon an

individual and cause undue frustration in the struggle for peaceful stability in one's family life.

In the following case narrative, one of my clients in psychotherapy, I relate a situation – this condition where “morals” or “ethics” could not be used as a wedge in our struggle to normalize his interpersonal and family life. There was hope to strengthen his role as father and husband. Mark came for his first appointment early in the afternoon and I invited him to relate his marriage/family problem. He began:

“Our values we brought into this marriage are no longer important and sacred. Susan and I were both church-going when we met (not same religion) but had pretty much the same religious values we wanted to keep. Why should marriage do anything but strengthen them? ...to be truly devoted, helpful, respectful of each other and hoping our love would grow and we'd be even closer when the kids came along. Those are the values we... I had strong attitudes about. We talked about this, at first, then these became no longer the point of our conversations. Not that we had to force them out, they were just there, when we had serious talks. That was seven years ago and it seems like a century. When Paul [his son] came along, Susan and I were drawn closer – we shared taking care of him and he was the light of my life. My son! After two years it was like a wall was going up between us. Susan got busy with her career and I had to work harder on my job. My boss is now demanding my time after work, at dinner, drinks with business associates nearly every night. The verbal abuse has started at home and I have no close feelings anymore – only feelings of hate and fear, and being trapped. Right now I want to run ... guess I need help and want to keep my family. I pray Susan shows up!”

Relating the details of future sessions with Mark alone and with Susan would be too time consuming, but I shall summarize. Susan did show for the appointment and, as expected, was resistant to opening up to her personal issues and reaction to Mark's withdrawing. In later sessions I discovered that Mark was deep into a state of alcoholism, which started some months even before our first session. Susan was aware that something was wrong – his hands shaking, puffy, red-splotched cheeks, not able to articulate clearly, missing work, coming home late and numerous others. Of course Mark covered up the obvious on most occasions (like his first visit with me). Upon first inquiring of Susan about his condition, she denied his alcoholic problem, as he did. “Denial” is known as *the* disease of alcoholism, and this deceitful, but unmalicious state is a well-known symptom of the latter stages, seemingly cutting off all hope for Mark's abstinence and for the family and therapist. With denial, there is no entry into a way to break through the chemical addiction and mental obsession. Secondly, Mark's passive/aggressive personality would not let him tolerate criticism of his powerlessness and lack of comprehension of his disease...alcoholism.

We find that the most direct route to admission of the full-blown state of “alcoholism” is when the client experiences a crisis. The crisis must be severe with an emotionally devastating loss actually occurring – no threats which are counteracted with more empty promises. Mark made what he believed to be honest, serious promises to quit (“I can, anytime I want to.”) when his job was threatened and each time Susan would threaten to leave. But, he was addicted to alcohol and had to experience, in full awareness, what is called a *bottom*. Usually after the loss of self-

respect, nothing else matters to the alcoholic. Susan did move out of their home and Mark's boss gave him a choice either check-in to a ninety-day drying-out and recovery program or termination. These two events, with discovery of a severe heart condition and liver damage, was a bottom for Mark. He entered the program, stayed the full ninety days and he and Susan continued therapy with me for some months after that. I worked with Mark as I have with other addictive-natured clients and found that teaching moral attention is not only not helpful but harmful until the addictive element is eliminated. I have followed the advice and teachings of biofeedback therapists in using those skills to train clients body temperature self-regulation, muscle relaxation and stress relief. The existential therapy of building the client's confidence through surrender to the addictive agent is the best way to achieve freedom. This practice of non-attachment is a combination of meditation, biofeedback and the tried and true sharing (group-support) therapy experienced in Alcoholics Anonymous. AA's essential features include ego reduction, the acceptance of a power greater than self and "spiritual awakening" – this according to each individual's views.

Marriage and Happiness

Since humans have occupied this earth, there has been one pressing goal in each person's life and that is to reach a state of happiness at whatever price is necessary. Some psychotherapists, Maslow (1968), Satir (1964), Welwood (2000), Rogers (1972), say that many clients come to them not to eradicate conditions causing pain (emotional and physical), anxiety, fears, episodes of trauma and dis-eases, but simply to eliminate a state of being unhappy. The human theme seems to be eliminate *this*, change *that*, etc. and ... "I can be happy." Some identify happiness with a condition of compassion, not an identifiable situation in life definable as true happiness. So, not only that population who enters therapy to correct some unpleasant/unhappy causes of conflicts, but most of us identify happiness, or a state of feeling good, in terms of not feeling bad. Humans create polarization-swings from have to have-not, satisfaction to dissatisfaction - in order to be in a condition of alrightness, not really knowing that the happiness they seek is predicated upon some degree of that which they are able to produce. This is noticeably true in those who search for a religious or spiritual teaching which promises health, longevity in this life, an all abiding (unknowing, un-seen, creating) power which controls the universe and all within. This unquestionable power promises eternal, everlasting happiness in a heaven composed of elements tailored to the wants and desires of all beings who reside there, after deliverance from life on this earth. The aura of happiness comes to be just that – an aura surrounding a notion which is nebulous and has no character. The state of being happy (don't complicate it further with qualifiers such as "truly", "completely", "comparatively") is a human emotion in continuous movement at any point in time located somewhere between a degree of pain-no-pain and gratification of self-centered desires. One of my biofeedback clients who practiced diligently in eliminating his physical pain, would answer me, when asked... "how do you feel this morning", with... "I feel good. My leg doesn't hurt." The norm is our stating conditions of feeling good in terms of not feeling bad.

Human beings work hard and struggle to attain happiness – not being able to distinguish it from pleasure. The Buddha's advice was to live the middle way between

overindulgence and self-denial, and this should be the tempered advice of the counselor given to his/her clients in the pursuit of happiness. As we grow from childhood to being adults, we are besieged with conditions demanding more grown-up attention and rational resolutions. One grows away from the nuclear family and begins to think of happiness in terms of a partner who is more than just a friend, but a partner in a unique relationship. Love, sex and marriage then become matters of importance and the pursuit of a partner to match these needs and desires itself can be a special, happy-producing relationship. For any man or woman there can be pleasure (fun) in the search. Buddhism does not regard marriage as a religious duty nor a sacrament that is ordained in heaven. Marriage is basically a personal preference for two people in love and not a social obligation. Men and Women in present day societies have the freedom either to get married or to remain single. Among human beings, the relationship of marriage has come about so that society ensures the perpetuation of the human species and that within the family children will be cared for. This is based on the argument that children born through the pleasure of sex must be the responsibility of the partners involved, at least until they are grown. Marriage ensures that this responsibility is upheld and carried out.

Through Buddhist teachings one can find all the necessary advice which can help to lead a happy married life. One should not neglect the advice given by a virtuous and moral teacher, therapist or counselor if one wants to lead a happy married life. In his discourses, the Buddha gave various kinds of advice to married couples and for those who are contemplating marriage.

Young people by nature like to indulge in worldly pleasures which can include both beneficial and harmful actions. Good things, like the enjoyment of music, poetry, dance, good food, dress and similar pursuits do no harm to the body. They may for a short time distract us from seeing the fleeting nature and uncertainty of existence and in many instances delay our being able to perceive the true nature of the self. The faculties and senses of young people are fresh and alert; they are keen to satisfy all the five senses. Almost everyday, they plan and think out ways and means to experience some form of pleasure. However, by the very nature of existence, one would never be completely satisfied with whatever pleasure one experiences, and the resultant cravings only create more anxieties and worries. When we think about it, we can understand that life consists of only a series of happy and unhappy emotions. In the end, what do we gain from attachment to this life? - only more worries, disappointments and frustrations. We may enjoy brief moments for pleasure, but in the final analysis, we try to find out what the real purpose of our lives is. We can study the Buddha's teaching regarding the feelings that man and woman have for each other. The Buddha asserts that no object in this world attracts man's attention more than a woman. Likewise, the main attraction for the woman is man. It means that by nature, women and men give each other worldly pleasure to some degree. They cannot gain happiness of this kind from any other object. The ancient Greeks knew this when they said that originally man and woman were one. They were separated and the two parts that were divided are constantly seeking to be re-united as man and woman. Carl Jung (1959) explains this more clearly in his writings on the theory of "animus" and "anima", the male and female roles of the psyche.

One of the major causes of marital problems is suspicion and mistrust. Marriage is a blessing but many people make it a curse due to lack of respect and devotion. Both husband and wife should show implicit trust for one another and not harbor any secrets. Secrets create suspicion, suspicion leads to jealousy, jealousy generates anger, anger causes enmity and enmity results in loss of love and compassion leading to emotional and physical separation. If a couple can share pain and pleasure in their day-to-day life, they learn to console each other and minimize their grievances. Thus, the wife or husband should not expect to experience only pleasure. There will be a lot of painful, anxious and incongruous experiences to be faced. They must have the strong willingness and willfulness to reduce their burdens and misunderstandings. Discussing mutual problems is necessary to give them confidence for maintaining a happily married state. Man and woman need to give comfort to each other when confronted with even minor conflicts. The feelings of insecurity and unrest will disappear and life will be more meaningful, happy and interesting if there is someone with whom to share another's burden.

When two people are in love, they tend to show only the best side of their nature and character to each other in order to project a good impression. Love is said to be blind and hence people in love tend to become completely oblivious of the darker side of each other's nature. In practice, each will try to highlight his or her sterling qualities to the other, and being so engrossed in love, they tend to accept each other on surface value only. One will not disclose the darker side of his or her nature for fear of losing the respect and affection of the other; any personal shortcomings are covered up or denied. People in love also tend to ignore their partner's faults thinking that they will be able to correct the other's faults after marriage, or that they can live with these faults, and "love will prevail." However, after marriage, as the initial romantic mood wears off, the true nature of each other's character is revealed. Then, much to the disappointment of both parties, concealing of the innermost feelings of each partner is removed to expose the true nature of both. It is then that disillusion sets in.

Love by itself does not subsist on lovingkindness and lofty ideals alone. The present world is a materialistic world and in order for the family to meet their material needs, proper financing and budgeting is essential. Economic and materialistic/physical needs must first be met for the self to be actualized in the higher needs of love and self-esteem (Maslow, 1970). This does not mean that one must be rich to make a marriage work. However, if one has the basic necessities of life provided through a secure job and careful planning, many unnecessary anxieties can be removed. This discomfort of poverty can be averted if there is complete understanding between the couple. Both partners must understand the value of contentment. Both must treat all problems as "our problems" and share all the "ups" and "downs".

The Anguttara-Nikaya and Digha-Nikaya contains some valuable advice which the Buddha gave to women prior to their marriage. Realizing that there could be difficulties with the new in-laws, the wives-to-be were enjoined to give every respect to their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, serving them lovingly as their own parents. They were expected to honor and respect their husband's relatives and friends, thus creating a congenial and happy atmosphere in their new homes. They were also advised to study and understand their husbands' natures, ascertain their activities,

characters and temperaments, and to be useful and cooperative at all times in their new homes. They should be polite, kind and watchful of their husbands' earnings and see to it that all household expenditures were properly administered. This was especially appropriate for Asian families at the Buddha's time, for the newly married couple traditionally reside in the home of the husband's parents. This remains the situation now in many Asian and mid-European countries. It is still practiced in America but not as common and in many places as in the first few centuries of our founding. Some counsel given by the Buddha to families more than twenty-five centuries ago, and still valid even today, is quoted from Sigalovada-sutta summarized by Rahula (1959) below.

And how, young householder, does the Aryan disciple protect (guard) the six quarters? The following should be looked upon as the six quarters: parents as the east; teachers as the south; wife and children as the west; friends and companions as the north; servants and employees as the nadir; recluses and brahmins (the *religieux*) as the zenith.

A child should minister to his parents as the eastern quarter in five ways (saying to himself): Once I was supported by them, now I will be their support; I will perform those duties they have to perform; I will maintain the lineage and tradition of my family; I will look after my inheritance; and I will give alms (perform religious rites) on behalf of them (when they are dead).

Parents thus ministered to by their children as the eastern quarter, show their love for them in five ways: they restrain them from evil; they direct them towards the good; they train them to a profession; they arrange suitable marriages for them; and in due time, they hand over the inheritance to them...

A wife as western quarter should be ministered to by her husband in five ways: by respecting her; by his courtesy; by being faithful to her; by handing over authority to her; by providing her with adornment (jewelry, etc.).

The wife, ministered to by her husband as the western quarter, loves him in these five ways: by doing her duty well; by hospitality to attendants, etc.; by her fidelity; by looking after his earnings; and by skill and industry to all her business dealings. (p. 122-123)

The Buddha pointed out many of the problems, difficulties and worries that people face today in our modern world when they take on the responsibility of marriage. The act of marriage itself implies to some that a person is still attached to the physical world, and since our mental faculties are influenced by craving, attachment and human emotions, it is only natural that problems would arise. This happens when we have to consider the needs of others and to give in to others' wants and desires. It is an on-going task to insure as a family unit there will be a balance between needs of husband and wife and among others in the household, children and other relations...that is, space and quietness for individual and family regular meditation, a private devotional shrine, a common agreed-upon time and place (if possible) in order for the entire family to gather around a dinner table for meals and pleasant conversation.

In instances where any one family member, or the entire family unit feels their need for directed religious guidance, a deeper analysis of the nature of self may be advisable with a qualified psychotherapist or spiritual counselor. This may be seen as important to help them understand the origin of their problems, worries, anxieties and how to overcome them. Here, religious advice is important for maintaining a tranquil life. Each person must learn how to make use of religious precepts for his/her betterment and for contentment with these values. Following certain religious vows or commandments with blind faith or by force, thinking that we are duty-bound to observe them, will not develop honest and proper practice of spiritual containment.

One important aspect of Humanistic Buddhism is that the Buddha did not impose any religious dogma, laws or commandments on anyone following his Path. The Buddha was a unique teacher who had set out a number of disciplinary codes for us to uphold according to our way of life. Those lay people who follow the First Five Precepts observe them voluntarily but not as obligatory religious laws. It is up to us to follow the advice through our own understanding and experience of moral rightness for ourselves and others.

One should try to understand the nature of the worldly life. By knowing that one has to face problems, and understanding their source, one will be able to strengthen the mind and be more prepared to deal with the issues which arise after marriage. Religious values are important to know in helping one recognize, confront and adjust to individual and marriage problems of a spiritual and religious nature. Whatever is learned about religious principles when one was young can be re-asserted to avoid misunderstanding, ill-feelings and frustration. Virtuous qualities and emotional strength gained through the practice of regular conjoint family meditation and of the Six *Paramitas*, as a foundation for Humanistic Buddhism proposed by Grand Master Hsing Yun, are important assets for a strong marital relationship. (These tenets are explained in an earlier section of this paper.)

One of the causes of greatest concern among those who do not have common religious doctrine and depth and breadth of religious practice is the problem of religious conversion before marriage and peaceful individualization after marriage. Marriage, contrary to many romanticists, does not mean the total and absolute merging of two personalities to the extent that each loses his or her own identity. When a religion demands that both partners must have the same belief system and convictions, it denies that basic human rights of individual faith and practice. Unity in Diversity is not only possible but desirable, as societies other than religious have shown. Out of diversity comes greater respect, tolerance and understanding. This would also apply to marriage. There are many living examples in the world where husbands and wives maintain and practice their own beliefs and yet are able to maintain a warm, virtuous and moral life together without anger and confrontation. No aware intelligent human being who truly understands the beliefs of his/her own conviction should give up comfortable religious beliefs merely to satisfy the demands of the spouse or other family members. Buddhists do not demand that their partners embrace Buddhism. Neither should they be pressured to surrender their beliefs. There must be no thought of neither man nor woman being superior—each is complementary to the other; marriage is a partnership of equality, respect, compassion and dedication. In

Humanistic Buddhism, one taking refuge in the Triple Gem can therein find the help needed to lead a happy married life.

Self in Western Psychotherapy vs. Non-self of Buddhism

In a HB therapeutic model there are considerations to examine the approach of western psychology and the importance of self: this “self” meaning personality characteristics of internalized strength (or weakness). In such references, which denote positive goals for a distressed mental condition, such as self-actualization, self-power, self-development, self-reliance, self-control, and so on, psychology teaches ego in equivalent terms with self. A probing question in relating HB to therapeutic goals for an individual would be, “is there a conflict in beliefs between the self/not-self predominant in Buddhist teachings and the development of the psychological self?” We have seen in this paper some applications of HB to the psychology of human emotions and probable conflicts in living according to the Six Paramitas. Self – evaluation, as suggested in all modalities of therapy/counseling aids one in opening up areas for psychological improvements. In a discussion of the Metta-sutta on loving kindness in the *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification), Buddhaghosa cites a method indicated by the Buddha.

I visited all quarters with my mind
Nor found I any dearer than myself;
Self is likewise to every other dear;
Who loves himself will never harm another (IX, 10)

And in further reflections on loving kindness,

...for the purpose of showing [loving kindness] unspecified pervasion... equally to all classified as inferior, medium, superior, friendly, hostile, neutral, etc., just as to oneself (*attata*); equally with oneself...(IX, 97)

I first heard Carl Rogers (1948), noted American psychologist talk on his theories of self psychology and client-centered therapy techniques in graduate school where I also worked for the Veterans Administration as a Vocational Counselor. I volunteered to participate in Rogers’ client-centered training program for counselors on our campus, which cleared up my confusion about his giving clients’ unconditional positive regard (UPR) in his client-centered approach. Explanation of UPR is discussed later in a more specific description of Rogers’ techniques, which I incorporate into my family counseling practice.

Maslow’s self-actualization theories become real when we investigate our clients beliefs as to where one positions his/her state of self-awareness on a triangle based upon a hierarchy of needs – actual physiological, emotional and spiritual in nature. Belief means views of having satisfied lower needs before moving up in a direction from mundane to psychic and what motivations and drives are needed to stimulate the movement. The five levels of satisfaction are physiological, safety, love, self-esteem and self-actualization, with Maslow’s term of “peak-experience” at the very top-point of the triangle. His techniques have had a profound impact on

humanistic participation in both secular and religious psychological and emotional therapy. The process and reasonable assurance of our changing our behavior and adopting the necessary spiritual essentials to balance humanism was herewith taken out of the hands of the “behavior modification” experimentalists and entrusted to therapist touching peoples lives who teach love and compassion as ways to emotional healing and wellness.

But, is there a conflict in treating individuals with Buddhist psychotherapy to believe in reliance on the self? Erich Fromm looks further into their needs, their sickness and well-being and Zen Buddhist therapy. Fromm (1960) points out the differences between symptomatic patients at the beginning of the 20th century who formed the majority of psychoanalytic clientele (in the minority today) and the clients seen now who function socially, minimally, but “suffer” (my quotes) from more psychosomatic complaints than any others. These range from depression, insomnia, unhappy marriages, dissatisfaction with work, etc. He calls these “maladie du siecle” – a malaise, inner deadness. He states...“The common suffering is the alienation from oneself, from one’s fellow man, and from nature.” My point is the necessity for us to understand the anxieties I speak of as being different from psychiatric, symptomatic suffering, as cure of symptoms of suffering, and one’s being released from illnesses. Fromm’s words: “...cure does not consist in the absence of illness, but in the presence of well-being” (Fromm, 85-86). An explanation of The Four Noble Truths in Buddhism as a medical model explains Fromm’s idea explicitly. He describes the issues further advance in the connection between “humanistic” psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, and Buddhism.

Conclusion

In this paper I have expressed what appears on the surface some standards relative to how American families envision the worth of that family relationship. I would not attempt to set out the elements of a general set of common family values – nor would the sociologist or cultural anthropologist. The “American” family is extremely culturally diverse, therefore one model of that emotionally entangled group of human beings would not be realistic in addressing values, happiness, realistic judgments or the like of many other difficult-to-define descriptors. What is the catalyst that makes such diverse, strange, volatile, personalities which compose a family?

Because the premise here might be that a family in trouble seeks help from a family psychotherapist/counselor (or should seek help), therefore a great percentage of marriages are saved from dissolution. No valid data are available to substantiate such a hypothesis. Neither is there a conjecture supported by any verifiable resolution one style of therapy given by an acknowledged expert practitioner of that style will “cure” the psychological or emotional ills individuals or designated groups.

Individuals growing up and moving within their family must maintain a preferred degree of mobility and still be in harmony with others. However, one’s self attitudes – needs, desires, wants – do not at all times coincide with others and have to be tempered. As the group priorities change, the nice, smooth, evenly-balanced

homeostatic condition is challenged; all members of the unit must be flexible in "attitude-adjustment", while the code of family values as agreed upon is still adhered to where changes in attitudes and modes of interacting within the targeted family. I emphasize that counseling the individual family member who is the disruptive element must be done first before movement toward family cohesion can begin. In a truly dysfunctional family, the person-therapy approach is highlighted. This is exemplified by one case study. Especially in solving problems of moral significance the counselor will have been trained in specific.

The most priceless and precious tribute any one member of a family can make to the cohesiveness of that unit is, as a person, to be of value. I studied attentively in graduate classes and for conferences and seminars during the mid-1970's and 80's to glean the significance of "family as system", as referred to by "systems theorists". This idea of the family working together to engage in a self-perpetuating homeostatic balance was contrary to the teachings of Rogers, Maslow, Satir and many other existential therapist who taught that family values belonged to be individual members of the family. One resultant evaluation of a family in HB terms would be to see the practice of love and compassion as the catalytic energy and force which keep family members working together happily. The individual components or elements of a family in humanistic terms are those members, those who have the feeling and play the role of belonging.

We see a trend on present-day counselors' and therapists' work in healing families that leans toward interpreting the Buddha's doctrines to all levels of human behavior as appropriate; each person as a *bodhisattva* can pronounce the Teachings of wisdom and compassion as in HB to an understanding of the unity of human nature and Buddha nature.

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Then the great bodhisattva Manjushri said to the gathering of bodhisattvas:

Disciples of Buddha in this Saha world, the Noble Truth of Suffering means many things. It means retribution, oppression, constant change, clinging to conditions, grouping together of conditions, piercing pain, dependence on the senses, madness, disease, stupidity.

Disciples of Buddha in this Saha world, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering means many things. It means attachment, destruction, clinging love, deluded thinking, the seduction of desire, wrong determination, the net of conditions, empty discourse, passivity, cleaving to debased sources.

Disciples of Buddha in this Saha world, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering means many things. It means non-argumentation, leaving the dust behind, perfect peace, being without the perception of delusion, being beyond decline, being without self-nature, being without hindrances, extinguishing, knowing the truth, dwelling in self-nature.

Disciples of Buddha in this Saha world, the Noble Truth of the Way that Leads to the Cessation of Suffering means many things. It means the One Vehicle, desire for tranquility, the guide, full completion without distinction, equanimity, renunciation, having no craving, following the way of the saints, the way of the sages, the ten treasures.

Disciples of Buddha in this Saha world, the Four Noble Truths have four quadrillion names or meanings that are understood by sentient beings according to their tendencies. This great plethora of meaning shows all sentient beings how to gain control of their minds.

—*Flower Garland Sutra*