

Does Buddhism Accept the Third Sex Party? The Buddhist Notion on Different Sexual Orientations

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Abstract

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This research explores Buddhism's perspective on the third gender, intersecting religious cultural, and sexological studies. In many religions, sexual intercourse outside heterosexual norms is often viewed as sinful, especially within celibate contexts. Buddhism offers a unique view, seeing kāma tanhā (sensual desire) as a barrier to overcoming Samsāric existence. True liberation in Buddhism transcends gender, aiming for freedom from psychological afflictions (greed, hatred, delusion). Buddhist ethics accommodate sexual diversity, including LGBTIQ individuals, advocating non-discriminatory practice. This research, based on textual studies of primary Buddhist teachings and secondary scholarly texts, focuses on early discourses and gender-based myths in the Theravāda tradition. The study seeks to highlight Buddhism's rational humanist aspects to support LGBT social liberation. Findings show Buddhism respects and recognizes human sexual orientation's natural diversity. Historical Buddhist texts document various sexual behaviors—heterosexuality, homosexuality, and intersexuality—as natural phenomena, not marginalization conditions. Additionally, Buddhism promotes an inclusive society free from gender discrimination, emphasizing equality and advocating for compassionate, non-dogmatic human rights approaches. Buddhist teachings highlight that moral and spiritual progress is gender-independent, aligning with modern humanistic values. Conclusively, Buddhism embraces freedom, diversity, and equality, supporting LGBT rights and dignity, and advocating for a society beyond inequality and discrimination.

Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to observe how Buddhism looks at the third gender. This can be considered as one of the arguable topics from the religious perspectives and certain cultural dimensions. A study of the phenomena of sexology could be considered from the religious angles is unusual. Sexual intercourses are considered as sinful activities as seen in the main religious traditions

as far as concern religious celibacy. In such a situation, the Buddhist stand point of sexuality and sexual orientations is very interesting. The Buddhist teachings as a code of ethics provide the prominent teachings towards the shaping of the sexual norms in human existence. So far sex involves as the question of celibacy in the Buddhist discipline. Therefore, it becomes very curious on the matter of the third sex or various sexual orientations in Buddhism. However, Buddhism is quite careful with regard to the subject of sexology because it (*kāma taṇhā* - sensual desire) is one of the hindrances that causes for Samsāric existence under the Origin of Suffering (*dukkasamudaya*). From the Buddhist perspective, true liberation for any individual is not merely freed from gender bondages (male or female or LGBTIQA) but expected the liberation from all the psychological unwholesome traits (greed, hatred and delusion) that reclines within all individuals whether they are male or female or other. After attaining its final goal, *Nibbāna*, no gender distinction is found. The third gender involves generally with the well-known concept of LGBTIQA. According to the *Buddha-Dhamma*, it seems that the sexual differences such as LGBTIQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual) as a result of the diversity of the world. From the purest form of the Buddhist teachings, there are no boundaries such as gender, race, caste, religion, culture and so on. The Buddhist practice is to open to everyone without gender divisions.

Research Methodology

This is a library-based textual study. The research methodology utilized in the research was reading and analyzing the primary Buddhist teachings specially the early Buddhist discourses relating to the subject area and other selected secondary texts, monographs and articles to generate empirical results that remain to the Buddhist teachings while giving a greater insight into some traditional and historical facts of the gender-based myths found in the *Theravāda* tradition. The *Vinaya* commentary, the *Samantapāsādikā* throws much light on various sexual orientations.

Research Problem

LGBT people are concerned as socially, culturally and religiously underprivileged group. This critical study is an attempt at recovering the rational humanist character of Buddhism to their social liberation. Therefore, the main research problem relies upon how the Buddhist teachings look at the third gender or LGBTs.

Results and Discussion

The Third Gender in Buddhism

According to the Buddhist teachings, it is necessary to understand the diversity of the world. The *Ariyapariyesanasutta* speaks of how the Buddha reviewed the diversities of the world as diversities in a pond of lotus. Even as in a pond of blue lotuses or in a pond of red lotuses or in a pond of white lotuses, a few red and blue and white lotuses are born in the water, grow in the water, do not rise above the water but thrive while altogether immersed; a few blue or red or white lotuses are born in the water, grow in the water and reach the surface of the water; a few blue or red or white lotuses are born in the water, grow in the water, and stand rising out of the water, undefiled by the water; even so did I, monks, surveying the world with the eye of an awakened One (*M. I*, n.d., p. 169). In this manner, Buddhism understands the diversity among the people. The Buddhist *Vinaya* texts provide various sexual practices and orientations prevailed during the time of the Buddha. Both hetero and

homo sexual behaviours can be found in the different pages of the *Vinayapitaka*. Besides main sexual orientations and practices, the Buddhist *Vinaya* texts indicates the various sexual orientations.

Biologically speaking, eunuchism and all forms of hermaphroditism represent various stages of intersexuality. Hirschfeld refers Weininger as maintaining that masculine and feminine elements are found intermingled in various proportions in every creature, and he says that Weininger designated these elements as 'M' (masculine) and 'W' (feminine) and stated that the formula for the complete human being would be 'M + W'. According to Havelock Ellis, in higher mammals including man (unlike in the lower stages of animal life), intersexuality has its own peculiar psychic manifestations, as well. As we shall have occasion to refer to certain other forms of intersexuality too, here, on this point, we would like to quote Havelock Ellis in extensor: We may not know exactly what sex is; but we do know that it is mutable, with the possibility of one sex being changed into the other sex, that its frontiers are often uncertain, and that there are many stages between a complete male and a complete female. In some forms of animal life, indeed, it is not easy to distinguish which is male and which female. We are bound to assume that in every sex-chromosome, whether XX or XY, resides the physical basis of an impulse which tends to impose the male type or the female type on the developing individual. The condition of intersexuality, is the result of a quantitative disharmony between the male and female sex-determining factors. Being part of the hereditary constitution of the individual, it is inborn, likely to become more pronounced as development proceeds, and, in the higher mammals to manifest itself in the psychic sphere. The activities of eunuchs and hermaphrodites as mentioned in the *Vinaya* could, therefore, be mostly considered to be manifestations of their peculiar psychic nature (Perera, 1993, p. 145).

Another sex deviant found in the Buddhist texts is hermaphrodite (*Ubhatobyañjanako*). It could also be used as a heterosexual partner on either active or passive sexual roles (*The Pārājikapāli I*, n.d., p. 68/ *The Mahāvaggapāli III*, n.d., p. 221). The term itself implies to mean a person with both sexual characteristics (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 548). Such a person is called as a hermaphrodite. For the *Theravāda Vinaya*, the hermaphrodite has three channels for sexual acts (*Vin. III*, n.d., p. 28). The *Ubhatobyañjanaka* is threefold:

1. Human Hermaphrodites (*manussubhatobyañjanako*)
2. Non-Human Hermaphrodites (*amanussubhatobyañjanako*)
3. Animal Hermaphrodites (*tiracchānagatubhatobyañjanako*)(Gamage, 1998, p. 53)

The *Pāli* term *ubhatobyañjanaka* means a person with both male and female sexual characteristics. According to sexology, this condition is known as hermaphroditism. Clellan S. Ford and Frank A. beach observe the condition of hermaphroditism as follows:

A few men and women in all societies exhibit a condition known in the vernacular as hermaphroditism. More properly termed intersexes, most of these individuals are characterized by the possession of external genitalia of an intermediate type (Perera, 1993, p. 154).

As the *Vinaya* maintains that hermaphroditism could appear among human beings, non-human being and animals. They use three channels for sex acts; anal, genital and oral (*Vin. III*, n.d., p. 28).

Hermaphrodite was ordained as a monk and who is said to have actually done so (*Vin. I*, n.d., p. 89). Further, hermaphrodites are divided into two groups by *Buddhaghosa* in his *Vinaya* commentary, the *Samantapāsādikā*.

1. Female hermaphrodities (*itthī-ubhatobyañjanaka*)
2. Male hermaphrodities (*purisa-ubhatobyañjanaka*)(*VinA.*, n.d., p. 1024)

According to the *Vinaya*, both male and female external genital characteristics of hermaphrodite is accepted. A hermaphrodite can play dual role in sexual relations. Such an incident is reported in the *Vinaya Mahāvagga* where a hermaphrodite ordained as a monk (*Vin. I*, n.d., p. 89). *Buddhaghosa* makes valuable observations pertaining to hermaphroditism in the *Samantapāsādikā Vinaya* commentary.

In the case of the female hermaphrodite female sexual characteristics are in evidence while the male characteristics are concealed and in the case of the male hermaphrodite male sexual characteristics are in evidence while the female characteristics are concealed. When a female hermaphrodite unites in a masculine capacity with women the female characteristics get concealed whereas the male attributes become evident. When a male hermaphrodite in a feminine capacity approaches men, his male attributes become concealed while his female attributes become evident. The female hermaphrodite could herself conceive as well as impregnate another. The male hermaphrodite does not himself conceive, but can impregnate another (Perera, 1993, p. 155).

Buddhaghosa mentions a statement regarding hermaphroditism as appearing in the *Kurundī Atthakathā*. Further he gives some information on the subject of hermaphroditism in his *Abhidhamma* commentary, the *Atthasālinī* (Perera, 1993, p. 155). *Buddhaghosa* classifies two hermaphrodites as male and female. In the *Atthasālinī* commentary, he goes deep meaning into the matter as follows:

Fundamentally, a hermaphrodite is said to have a faculty-*indriya*-of either femininity or masculinity, and it is further said that both are never found together. This faculty is considered to be the factor determining the hermaphrodite's main external genital characteristics, while the organs of the opposite sex manifest themselves due to sensuality, supported by karmic forces. The nature of the sexual arousal is said to activate the appropriate genital organs, while the others remain concealed, perhaps dormant. Inasmuch as the hermaphrodite has only one specific faculty of sex, the female hermaphrodite could herself conceive and also impregnate another, while the male hermaphrodite could only impregnate (Perera, 1993, p. 158).

According to the *Mahāvagga* statement in obtaining monkhood of the hermaphrodite is obviously reckoned as a male (*Vin. I*, n.d., p. 89). However, *Pabbajjā* and *Upasampadā* have been denied to eunuchs and hermaphrodites in the Buddhist monasticism (*Vin. I*, n.d., pp. 86, 89)(*Vin. V*, n.d., p. 222). What we can carefully observe in this regard is that for the rejection of giving ordination and higher ordination to eunuchs and hermaphrodites have been impacted various psycho-physical and socio-cultural reasons during the time of the Buddha. Peter Harvey's idea is important to clarify the Buddhist notion of not allowing the ordination and the higher ordination to sexual deviants.

Within the earliest monastic texts such as the *Vinaya* (c. 4th century BCE), male monks are explicitly forbidden from having sexual relations with any of the four genders: male,

female, *Ubhatovyañjanaka* and *Paṇḍaka*; various meanings of these words are given below. Later, the Buddha allowed the ordination of women, forbade ordination to these other types of people, with exceptions to a few particular types of *Paṇḍaka*. The Buddha's proscriptions against certain types of people joining the monastic *Sangha* (ordained community) are often understood to reflect his concern with upholding the public image of the *Sangha* as virtuous; in some cases, this is explicitly stated. Social acceptability was vital for the *Sangha*, as it could not survive without material support from lay society (Harvey, 2000, p. 390).

The *Vinaya* further classifies another sexual orientation called eunuchs (*Paṇḍaka*). They generally participate oral and anal relations as reported in the *Vinaya* (*Vin. III*, n.d., p. 28). The *Vinaya*, here presents two examples of specific sexual practice involving eunuchs.

1. A certain monk had sexual relations with an eunuch (*Vin. III*, n.d., p. 37).
2. An eunuch in the monastic community who was soliciting the younger monks. But the attempt was failed. Then, he went to mahouts and grooms and misbehaved with him (*Vin. I*, n.d., p. 85).

According to *Buddhaghosa*, eunuchs are ever willing to make companionship with anyone they meet (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 991). There are various deviants of eunuchs in the texts. Three types of eunuchs are mentioned.

1. Human eunuch (*manussapaṇḍako*)
2. Non-human eunuch (*amanussapaṇḍako*)
3. Animal eunuch (*tiracchānagatapaṇḍako*) (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 53) (*The Pārājikapāli I*, n.d., p. 68)

At the same time, the *Vinaya* text further mentions these kinds of males:

1. Human male (*manussapuriso*)
2. Non-human male (*amanussapuriso*)
3. Animal male (*tiracchānagatapuriso*) (*VinA.*, n.d., pp. 53–54)

The *Pārājikapāli* further emphasizes that if a monk commits anal or oral sex with any of the above eunuchs or males, he is defeated (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 54). The above practices can be similar to homo sexual activities. The practice of oral and anal sexual intercourse even with a female can be found as mentioned earlier. In addition, the practice of oral and anal intercourse is possible between a male and a eunuch (*paṇḍaka*), with a hermaphrodite (*ubhatovyañjanaka*) and another male (*purisa*) (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 55). *Buddhaghosa* refers to the five types of *paṇḍakas*. They are:

1. *āsittapaṇḍaka* (Oro-genital contact)
2. *usuyyapaṇḍaka* (A voyeur)
3. *opakkamikapaṇḍaka* (Castrates)
4. *pakkhapaṇḍaka* (A peculiar psycho-somatic category)
5. *napuṃsakapaṇḍaka* (Congenital Eunuchs) (Perera, 1993, p. 142) (*VinA.*, n.d., p. 1015)

Therefore, it is clear how the term *paṇḍaka* is made to embrace all eunuchs and sexual deviants with a wider scope in the post canonical texts. A few instances can be found in relation to intersexuality in the *Vinaya*. It is said that the female sex organ (*itthilingam*) appeared to a monk. Under the advice of

the Buddha, he joined to the *Bhikkhu* Order. The next instance is the male sex organ (*purisalingam*) appeared to a nun. Then, she joined the *Bhikkhu* Order. The two passages run as follows:

Now at that time the sexual features of a woman appeared on a certain monk. They informed the Buddha on this matter. The Buddha said: Monks, I allow the same teacher, the same tradition, the same rainy seasons together with the nuns. I allow reinstatement among the nuns for those offenses that nuns share in common with monks. According to those offenses of monks that are not shared in common with nuns, there is no offense (*Vin. III*, n.d., pp. 34–35).

Now at that time the sexual features of a man appeared on a certain nun. They informed the Buddha on this matter. The Buddha said: Monks, I allow the same teacher, the same tradition, the same rainy seasons together with the monks. I allow reinstatement among the monks for those offenses that nuns share in common with the nuns. According to those offenses of nuns that are not shared in common with monks, there is no offense (*Vin. III*, n.d.).

The term *linga* in this context is represented various interpretations and connotations. The word carries the actual sexual genitalia of male and female. It commonly refers to gender and biological sex organs of man and woman. Further, it gives meanings such as sign, characteristics, feature, sex or organ (*The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, n.d.). Therefore, when we refer to the above two passages of the *Vinayapitaka*, the term *linga* appears the sexual features of males or females can may appear in both sexes.

The *Atthasālinī Abhidhamma* commentary gives more details regarding the changing of sex. The *Atthasālinī* speaks of faculties of sex and changing of the sexes means the moment when the real sex, undisclosed at birth, is revealed. In regards to the sex changing, Marie Delcourt claims that when the Ancients (and for that matter moderns too) speak of a change of sex, they are simply describing the moment when the real sex, undisclosed at birth, is revealed. The two phenomena sexual ambiguity and evolution from one outward form to another, are thus one and the same thing (Perera, 1993, p. 161). The *Abhidhamma* mainly asserts that an individual belongs to specifically to one of the faculties - *itth'indriya* or *puris'indriya*. Havelock Ellis emphasizes that the frontiers of sex being often uncertain, there is the possibility of one sex changing into the other (Perera, 1993, p. 161).

The *Sāratthadīpanī* suggests that sex-change is the passing away or the arising of a given faculty of sex (*The Sāratthadīpanī*, n.d.). Therefore, changes in external sexual characteristics occur through a more fundamental change, the change in faculty (*The Sāratthadīpanī*, n.d., p. 475). According to this view, it is obvious that a change of sex-faculty can be occurred naturally. Another story is reported in relation to the certain forms of intersexuality in the *Vinayapitaka*. It mentions that irregularity in female physiological functions of genital characteristics involving certain stages of intersexuality (*Vin. II*, n.d., p. 271).

Now at that time ordained women were to be seen without sexual characteristics and who were defective in sex and bloodless and with stagnant blood and who were always dressed and dripping

and deformed and female eunuchs and man-like women and those whose sexuality was indistinct and those who were hermaphrodites (*Vin. II*, n.d., p. 162).

The above two passages of the *Vinayapīṭaka* claim that the sexual features of males may appear in nuns and the sexual features of females may appear in monks. The story of *Soreyya* is a great example regarding the change of sex in the Theravada Buddhist tradition due to lustful mental factors (*Dh.*, n.d., v. 43). The *Cakkavattisihanādasutta* provides the term *Adhammarāga* that comes by the days of the end of the world (*D. III*, n.d.). According to the *Dīghanikāya* commentary, the *Sumangalavilāsini*, the term *Adhammarāga* refers to in the sense of homosexuality as gay and lesbian (*DA.*, n.d.).

As earlier mentioned that there is a reference that the eunuch and the hermaphrodite and a specific 32 persons with certain physical and mental shortcomings are not admitted into the Buddhist Order as monks or nuns (*Vin. I*, n.d., pp. 85–89). The denial of the ordination and higher ordination has been done to preserve the good image of the Buddhist Order. What we need to remember in this context is that it is not for the purpose of discriminating the rights of such sexual-oriented people. When we carefully observe the social background during the time of the Buddha, there had been deep rooted ideologies regarding certain social concepts such as birth, race, creed, colour and sex. Every social unit had been male dominated. Therefore, the contemporary Indian society was under patriarchal supremacy of Brahmanism. This was not easy to conquer the Buddha and his disciple. The above idea is elaborated as follows.

Buddhism arose in a society where accorded to women an inferior position. The Buddha succeeded in creating a minor whip against the social injustice and introduced the equality in society. The Buddha saw the danger of attachment to views and dogmas within the individual and society. He condemned the caste organization dominated by the Brahmin priests. He denied the existence of an Almighty God-centered attitude and emphasized emancipation by individual's effort. The prime concern of Buddhism is salvation by one's own effort, presupposes the spiritual equality of all beings, male and female. This should be against the exclusive supremacy of the male (Gnanarama, 1997).

A Humanitarian Approach towards LGBT Peoples from the Buddhist Perspectives

What is Humanism?

The term humanism is derived from Latin *humanus* (*homo*= human being) and gives various meanings such as benevolence, mercy, compassion, pity, humaneness and generosity. Rationally, it refers to fortitude, prudence, judgment, freewill, self-reliance and understanding (Gnanarama, n.d., p. 1). A humanist is not only an ideal philosopher but also as an active social reformer. The following definitions of humanism is significant in order to understand the role of humanism in contemporary context:

Humanism is for freedom of thought and expression and an open society. Humanism is for forms of moral education that stress our moral autonomy and the importance of thinking critically and independently. Humanist do not just reject dogma-based approaches to answering moral, political, and social questions, they are very for developing positive, rational, and ultimately more life-affirming and life-enhancing alternatives (Law, 2011, pp. 5–6).

Humanists do tend to be reformists. Their views often bring them into conflict with the religious- especially the more conservatively religious- on issues such as birth control, the rights of gays and lesbians, the rights of women, the rights of children, freedom of speech, and an end to religious privilege. This is because what humanists oppose is often (though not always) rooted in religious traditions and institutions and given a religious justification (Law, 2011, p. 27).

Humanism advocates education for both young and old and stands for oneness of humankind irrespective of race, colour, sex, caste or creed. It is totally against to feudalism and authoritarianism deep-rooted in various societies of both eastern and western world. According to Auguste Comte, institutionalized religion was outdated and should be replaced humanism, the religion of humanity which should be possessed with love, compassion, patience, equanimity, free inquiry, democracy and freedom. It should be away from dogmatism and extremism. As Ven. *Pategama Gnanarama* stresses that the keynote of humanism is unconditional compassion towards the human race. Since it developed as a revolt against medieval dogmatism and religious authority, humanists formed a sort of intellectual community and promoted democratic ideals (Law, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, we need to look towards LGBT or third sexual party from a humanitarian perspective. In this regards, Buddhism provides a great yardstick to preserve the rights of LGBTs.

The Importance of the Buddhist Teachings in relation to LGBT Rights

The term *Sattā* in Buddhism stands for every being in the universe including human being. It is universally used term and is unique for Buddhism. Buddhism protects not only human rights (Male, female and third gender) but also rights of other beings such as animals, birds, flora and fauna etc. The following diagram helps to realize the importance of the Buddhist practice with reference to the place of human being in terms of the religious perspectives. Buddha draws our attention in the *Udānapāli* by mentioning of non-discrimination in his teachings.

Just as the great rivers- that is to say, the *Gangā*, the *Yamunā*, the *Aciravati*, the *Sarabhū* and the *Mahī* when they have fallen into the great ocean, lose their name lineage and are thereafter reckoned as the great ocean just so, O monks, do these four classes - the *Khattiyas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Vessās* and the *Suddās*- when they have gone forth from the household under the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya* proclaimed by the Buddha, renounce their names and lineage and enter into the number of the *Samāṇa Sakyaputtiyā*. Just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt- just so, O monks this *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* have only one taste- the taste of *Nibbāna*. The implementation of the practice of justice in Buddhism is extremely important to give due place for LGBTs in society. The followings are some intellectual's ideas of the nature of the Buddhist way of justice.

Thus, according to Buddhism all men, irrespective of their caste or race, had equal rights and deserved equal opportunity for development as members of a single social order which embraced a common humanity. It was a man's social status as determined by the wealth that he possessed, and not his birth in a particular caste or racial group which made it possible for him to command the services of others whatever their pedigree might be. All men, likewise, irrespective of race or caste, should be equal before the law. The attitudes of people do not depend on their birth in a particular caste or a race. The moral worth of a person should receive social recognition. Regardless of the caste to which he belonged and all men should receive equal opportunity for moral and spiritual development since all men were capable of it (Jayatilleke & Malalasekara, 1958, p. 49).

Buddhism, therefore, upholds the equality of man in the sense that man's essential nature is the same whatever the individual differences due to heredity, environment or karmic factors may be. His basic

needs, material, psychological and spiritual are also fundamentally the same although men may differ in their interests and capacities due to their divergent historical evolution, and could contribute in their own way by developing their talents to enrich the life of mankind. He therefore needs to be treated equally and afforded equal opportunities for developing his potentialities and serving mankind (Jayatilleke & Malalasekara, 1958, p. 7).

Some Intellectual Ideas in relation to LGBT People from the Buddhist Point of View

The 14th *Dalai Lama* explains: Gay marriage is OK provided it's not in contradiction with the values of one's own chosen religion (Coleman, 2002, pp. 50–51). A sexual act is deemed proper when the couple use the organs intended for sexual intercourse and nothing else homo sexuality, whether it is between men or between women is not improper in itself. What is improper is the use of organs already defined as inappropriate for sexual contact (Coleman, 2002, pp. 52–53). Sexual organs were created for reproduction between the male element and the female element and everything that deviates from that is not acceptable from a Buddhist point of view (Coleman, 2002, p. 55). Of LGBT groups that he can't rewrite the texts. He thinks that this is the type of issue that would need to be discussed by a council of Buddhist elders from all Buddhist traditions (Coleman, 2002, p. 56).

Peter Jackson writes: Buddhism is a complex tradition and there is no single canonical or scripturally sanctioned position on homosexuality (Coleman, 2002, p. 57). *Hsing Yun* in his work *Buddhism Pure and Simple* presents: Tolerance is a form of generosity and it is a form of wisdom. There is nothing anywhere in the *Dhamma* that should ever lead anyone to become intolerant. Our good as Buddhists is to learn to accept all kinds of people discover the wisdom of the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha (Coleman, 2002).

Alexander Berzin: The texts in Buddhist traditions have been written from the point of view a heterosexual male. We need to explore the intention of the teachings on sexual misconduct, which ultimately is to eliminate attachment, obsessive desire and dissatisfaction. If a heterosexual male finds no bounds to these disturbing emotions, he might have sex with someone else's partner, as well as other men. We can apply the same logic and explore what constitutes boundless attachment and dissatisfaction for homosexual and bisexual males or females. For examples, having sex with somebody else's partner and so on could be destructive for these types of person as well (Coleman, 2002, p. 84).

Nydahl: However that sexual orientation is not really important in order to practice Buddhism. *Thich Nhat Hanh*: The spirit of Buddhism is inclusiveness and mentions when you look at the ocean, you see different kinds of waves, many sizes and shapes, but all the waves have water as their foundation and substance, if you are born gay or lesbian, your ground of being is the same as mine. We are different, but we share the same round of being (Coleman, 2002, pp. 89–90).

Conclusion

The spirit of Buddhism totally depends on human freedom, understanding diversity, mutual respect, and free will. Therefore, the place for third gender in Buddhism is not recognized as a sin or a fact for marginalization. It is clear that sexual differences are natural and biological phenomena in accordance with the Buddhist teachings rather than social constructed identities. Further, Buddhism accepts the equality of human society which must consist of the absence of inequality and discrimination as sexes including man, woman and LGBT people.

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