



# **BUTCHER THE BUDDHA: HAD THOU METH HIM: ZEN DETACHMENT**

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## **Abstract**

This article was aimed to physiologically, psychologically and philosophically explore butchering Buddha if one met Him. They are found that the Buddhist Theory of Killing (pāṇātipāṭa) is classified into to 3 actions, i.e. the 3 Kāyakamma (physical actions); the 4 Vacīkamma (verbal actions); and the Manokamma (mental actions). Psychologically, whenever we pursued worldly goals like riches and social class status; the Buddha within has been slaughtered. Our life on earth is short, we shall meet death either sooner or later. Had we rejected to spiritually develop and nourish in this samsara (rebirth); we thus choke the Buddha within. “Kill the Buddha” is a koan (Dhamma Riddle), unique to Zen Buddhism. It implies the disciples alleviate discriminating ideas, in order to rise the better instinctive insights since neither killing ends killings nor violence ends violence. Pope Francis (2013) prudently cautioned Gossip is Crime.” Yet, Metaphilosophical, Theravadan and Vajrayāna or Mantrayānan or Esoteric Buddhism or Tantric killings should be deeper digged.

**Keywords:** Pāṇātipāṭa (killing); physiological killing, psychological killing and philosophical killing

## **Introduction**



The essential Zen spirit was insulated in an extraordinary transmission outside the scriptures; free dependency on letters and words, directed to the human mind and deliberating one's nature and achieving Buddhahood (Fischer, N. 2022). Zen targeted at the personhood perfection and used "za-zen" (sitting meditation) as the medium. Literally the aggressive approaches could have violated the First Precepts (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī/abstain from killing, DIII: 235; AIII: 203,275; Vbh: 286), the al-Kaba'ir Sins No.2 in Islam (taking away someone's life, Shah, S.S, 1999) the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment (Thou shalt not kill: Exodus 20:13). By Buddhist Cannon, its theory of killing lied upon the 5 Precept No.1 (sikkhāpada) includes Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing) and otherwise. Philosophically, "Kill the Buddha" often is considered a koan, one of those bits of dialogue or brief anecdotes unique to Zen Buddhism. By contemplating a koan, the disciples exhaust discriminating thoughts, and a deeper, more intuitive insight arises (O'Brien B. (2020). Killing the Buddha by Pacheco, Chris (2021) implies butchering our conceptualizations, and the belief all what we have understood it, which seems counterintuitive. Finally, had knowledge been let go, what were left then? It is the total revelation consisting of experience exposure, the ascertain uncertainty, the secure insecurity and the vulnerable comfort. To detach everything what we has sacrificed time and energy should be senseless, and impossible since what we have learnt and experiences would permanently be deep-rooted implanted in our brain and unleashed when we need them.

"If you meet a Buddha, kill the Buddha.  
 If you meet a patriarch, kill the patriarch.  
 If you meet an arhat, kill the arhat.  
 If you meet your parents, kill your parents.  
 If you meet your kinfolk, kill your kinfolk.  
 Then for the first time you will gain emancipation [release], will not be entangled with things, and will pass freely anywhere you wish to go".

Lin-chi Lu. (d.866, p.52).

The Buddhist theory of killing was found opposite to Sikkhāpada (Precept) 5 No.1. It is Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing) means citta (thought/ mind/a state of consciousness) of Kāmāvacara (belonging to the Sense Sphere) which is Kusala-saharagata with joyfulness stemming Sampayuta with wisdom (ñāṇa) bloomed to persons who abstain from killing. In any ages,

abstinence, and absence from killing, non-acting, ceasing to act, non-violation, non-border crossing, the elimination of the root causes of killing, called Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing). The rest of Dhamma State is believed to be Sampayuta with veramaṇī. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing) means citta (thought/ mind/a state of consciousness) of Kāṃāvacara (belonging to the Sense Sphere) which is Kusala-saharagata with joyfulness stemming Sampayuta with wisdom (ñāṇa) bloomed to persons who abstain from killing. In any ages, deliberate action, deliberate manners, and intentional state, are called Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing). The rest of Dhamma State is believed to be Sampayuta with Cetanā (volition). And Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing) means citta (thought/ mind/a state of consciousness) of Kāṃāvacara (belonging to the Sense Sphere) which is Kusala-saharagata with joyfulness stemming Sampayuta with wisdom (ñāṇa) bloomed to persons who abstain from killing. In any ages, Phassa (contact/ touch/ mental impression); Paggāha (exertion/well-exerted energy: Dh.328, p.243) and Avikakhepa emerged which is called Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (abstain from killing).

The Buddhist Theory of Killing-it is the Akusala-kamma (the unwholesome course of action) No.1 (D.11.269; 290 (Dh.321, pp.235-236); D.11.161 (Dh.137, p.113); D.11 (Dh.238, p.175)). They are the immoral routes, evil actions, and the evil deeds of the ways heading to deterioration, unhappy and evil states, and the woeful course of existence (duggati). The Buddhist Theory of Killing (pāṇātipāta) is classified into to 3 actions, i.e. the Kāyakamma 3 (physical actions); the Vacīkamma 4 (verbal actions); and the Manokamma (mental actions). a). The Kāyakamma 3 (physical actions) includes 1). Pāṇātipāta (the destruction of life or killing); 2). Adinnādāna (taking what is not given or stealing; and 3). Kāmesumicchācāra (sexual misconduct). b). The Vacīkamma 4 (verbal actions) incorporates 4). Musāvāda (false speech); 5). Pisunāvācā (tale-bearing or malicious speech); 6). Parusavācā (harsh speech); and 7) Samphappalāpa (frivolous talk or vain talk or gossip). c). The Manokamma (mental actions) contains 8) Abhijjhā (covetousness or avarice or greed); 9) Byāpāda (illwill or hostility or hatred); and 10). Micchādiṭṭhi (false view or wrong view).

It is certain that all loved their life, wanted existence, safety without miseries and did not want to die, never wanted anyone to destroy and encroach.



Human action indicated his/her habits and in whatever one did, one wanted the end-results. Buddha ever preached what one sowed one harvested its yield: did good deed gained good deed, did bad deed bore bad deed (Kamma Rule). Consequently, had one killed a Buddha, patriarch, arhat, parents and kinfolk; when one became a Buddha, a patriarch, an arhat, parents and kinfolk; one would have also been killed, literally. However, Pope Francis (2013) ever preached gossip was crime and gossip was overlooked though it was a lethal weapon and it threatened the human community every day; it sew envy, jealousy and power struggles, therefore never to kill our neighbour with our tongue, It has even caused murder. This statement was analogous to the Vacīkamma (verbal actions) No. 7: Samphappalāpa (frivolous talk or vain talk or gossip) that killed. Here the author concentrated only on Pāṇātipāta (killing), which served the literal and implications instructions of Lin-chi Lu, “If you meet a Buddha, patriarch, arhat, parents and kinfolk, kill them all. And His Venerable promises that it is then for the first time you will be emancipated, will detach things, and pass freely everywhere you desire to visit” (Lin-chi Lu, d.866, p.52). Physiologically, psychologically and metaphysically, to kill or not to kill by action or by words neither gives peace of mind nor ends any animalistic instincts of human DNA.

## **Physiological Elements of Literal Pāṇātipāta**

The Tripitaka Ordinances and the Adjudication of Sīla. No. 1 of Pāṇātipāta (destruction of life/killing) in Kamma-kilesa 4 (Dhm.137p.113) and in Akusala-kammapatha 10 (Dhm.321p.235). By adjudicated principle, wrongness or rightness of an action incorporated 5 measures. Had it mantled 5 elements (5 Sambhāra); it was counted Sīla transgression deserving as sin and capital penalty. Had it otherwise not; it wasn't. The 5 elements are, the being is alive, knowing the being is alive, having volition to kill, and practicing attempting to kill and the being died by that attempt. What we have found here is beings and it should be human beings and their rightness or wrongness depended on laws and religious doctrines whereas other beings were guided by their instincts and natural ordinances. Animalism approached with an Eye for an Eye and a Tooth for a Tooth. The Exodus, in the Old Testament scribed:

But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise. “An owner who hits a male or female slave in the eye and destroys it must let the slave go free to compensate for the eye. And an owner who knocks out the tooth of a male or female slave must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth.

(Exodus 21:23-27)

These statements expressed the reciprocal-justice principle found in the Code of Hammurabi predating the Hebrew Bible. The *lex talionis* (law of exact retaliation (Plaut, 1981p.571ff) bore the similar. principle that a person who has injured another person is to be penalized to a similar degree by the injured party. In softer interpretations, it means the victim receives the [estimated] value of the injury in compensation (Plaut, 1981p.572). The intent behind the principle was to restrict compensation to the value of the loss. (Plaut, 1981p.571ff) or tit for tat age meant an equivalent given in retaliation. However, humans with mind was inborn with consciousness and what they did they usually have choices and intentions or Cetanā or Sañcetanā (Volitions). Cetanā or Sañcetanā (Volitions) includes Rūpa Sañcetanā: volition of forms or objects or bodies; Saddha Sañcetanā: volition of audible objects or bodies; Gandha Sañcetanā: volition of odorous or fragrant objects or bodies; Rasa Sañcetanā: volition of sapid or taste objects or bodies; Photṭhabba Sañcetanā: volition of objects or bodies; and Dhamma Sañcetanā: volition of ideational objects or bodies or idea or mental objects or bodies. (D.III.244; S.III.64; Vbn.102, DhM.V. 263, p.190). Lin-chi Lu, too in what His Venerable instructed; he was fully vested with Cetanā or Sañcetanā (Volitions). But his approaches were irregular to democratic stance in modern way which brought shocks to modern people. He seemed to be the pre-Machiavellian dictator (ruthlessness, mercilessness, sneaky, cunning, and lacking a moral cod) who thought, he would bring peace of mind to his students. Machiavelli argued:

“Men have imagined republics and principalities that never really existed at all. Yet the way men live is so far removed from the way they ought to live that anyone who abandons what is for what should be pursues his downfall rather than his preservation; for a man who strives after goodness in all his acts is sure to come to ruin, since there are so many men who are not good.”



## (Chapter 15, Machiavelli, 1532)

Yet aggressiveness never ended aggressiveness but bred later violent preachers. Still, in the era of Samurai, aggressive training and brutality in killing brought the success of the national control to many Shoguns ever since the early world civilizations around the world. Nevertheless, in any laws there have to be penalties imposed on lawbreakers to pacify the societies.

By adjudication of petty and capital penalty, killing any beings is sinful but either capital or petty is based on 3 adjudicate principle, i.e. in fact, most adhered to Retribution Theory (the instinct theory and just desert theory) which the retributivist based the punishment theory on the credo that an perpetrator deserved the suffering matched the sternness of his /her committed crime under the 3 retributive principles; i.e. **First**, the penalty had to impose a hardship or cost on the culprit or least impose benefit confiscation. **Second**, the punisher must inflict the hard punishment intentionally, not as an accident or side-effect of something else. **Third**, the punishment must be imposed in response to an act or omission. Its advocates included Cicero's *De Legibus* (1st century BC), Kant's Science of Right (1790), and Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1821). Also, in the frame of The Classical School of Criminology (Utilitarianism Philosophy, Social Contract, and Free Will) based on Cesare Beccaria (1764) where punishment was meant for specific deterrence and general deterrence. However, the 3 adjudication principles in Buddhism were below involved:

1 . By material designation-had human killed his /her benefactor; [s]he deserved capital penalty alike killing animals is prescribed by levels of indebtedness, and figures. This was a melancholiest phenomenon on international laws that the benefactors and the good should have legal self-protections and preventive laws but in every country enacted law to protect, foster and cherish every criminal and every killer as if crime could secure the country from any harms offered by politicians, economists, socialists, educationist, technocrats, environmentalists and mass media farers. As such, this materialism was designated to the have rather than the have not since the 282 Hammurabi Code of Laws (1792-1750 BC) to establish the standards for commercial interactions and set fines and punishments to meet the requirements of justice (Amanda, O. 2020). Had it been for commerce; there were cardinal

immortality of the commercial class otherwise King Hammurabi might not have encoded such laws for merchants who exploited the either or rich customers.

2. By volition designation-intent to kill by having greater rage deserved greater penalty but less rage deserved less capital penalty. Intent to kill was referred to the defendant had the mental purpose to take the life of other humans or was aware that their conduct was practically certain to cause the death of another human being. For examples, a specific intent crime, it can be the subject of a charge of attempt and/or murders in which the actor premeditated the killing were first- degree offenses; without premeditation, intent to kill murder is a second-degree offense and/or Intent to kill may be proved by inference and “may be inferred in a(n) (aggravated) felony-murder when the offense and the manner of its commission would be likely to produce death.” State v.

3. By attempted designation-the endeavor to kill; more attempt deserves more capital penalty, less attempt deserves less capital penalty (Somdet Phramaha Samanachao Khrompraya Vajirañānvarorasa, 1995). Attempt was the incomplete form of some other fundamental offense. Unlike state law, federal law did not feature a general attempt statute. Instead, federal law outlawed the attempt to commit a number of federal fundamental offenses on an individual basis. Occasionally, federal law treated attempt-like conduct as a fundamental offense; outlawed drug possession with intent to traffic, for example. One way or another, it is a federal crime to attempt to commit nearly all of the most frequently occurring federal offenses. Attempt consisted of two elements - one was the intent to commit the fundamental offense. The other was taking some substantial step, beyond mere preparation, collaborative of the intent to commit the fundamental offense. The line between mere preparation and a substantial step can be hard to identify. Some suggested that the more outrageous or egregious the fundamental offense, the sooner preparation will become a substantial step (CSR Report).

## **Psychological Pāṇātipāta**

The Buddha within should not be killed which was the hidden meaning of the First Precept. Whenever we pursued worldly goals like riches and social class status; the Buddha within has been slaughtered. Our life on earth is short,



we shall meet death either sooner or later. At the death point, our life experience either feats or fails were absolutely meaningless just a fading and dreaming memories. Our afterlife journey shall begin. Exceptions were day-by-day spiritual insight we have accumulated. Had we rejected to spiritually develop and nourish in this samsara (rebirth); we thus choke the Buddha within. His Venerable Master Lin-chi Lu cautioned,

“If you seek the Buddha, you will be seized by the Buddha devil. If you seek the patriarchs, you will be fettered or chained by the patriarch devil. As long as you seek something it can only lead to suffering. Better to do nothing.”

(Lin-chi Lu d.866, p.47)

Buddhist and patriarchal Māra were stormy rain, rocks, ashes, and darkness, frightening away all the gods who had gathered to honour the future Buddha but failed. Finally, it has to send its three daughters, Trṣṇā, Rati, and Rāga (thirst, desire, and delight), to tempt Gautama. In religious experiences of either religions, we have always found that the Māra were empowered more than the religious founders alike Mammon was greater than Jesus Christ since he could offer worldly prosperity to Jesus Christ the Son of God; the Pharisees and the Sadducees could claim the life of the Only Son of the Trinity and crucified Him. In the Bharata of Hinduism, all demons won the angels; in Ramayana, Ravana could win Rama in almost the entire episodes, just only 2 lines left that Rama won back. In every world movies, the bad entire won the good except the last minute the good retaliated but rarely touched the heroine while the bad were almost the husbands of all heroines. Should we be Māras rather than the Morals or should we be the bad to brew the world? These have witnessed His Ven. Master Lin-chi Lu's words that had one quested for the Buddha, one would be dutched by the Buddha devil (endeavors to meet calamities). If one quested for the patriarchs, one would be chained by the patriarch devil (worldly prosperities and social class statuses). As long as one quested for something it could only direct to suffering. His Ven. Master Lin-chi Lu cautioned that one better did nothing which meant one must be patient, wait and see to grasp the best opportunity to greater gains.

When we were with someone who was talking with us, confiding in us, and our mind was thinking about either what we wanted to say or what we could



be doing instead of being with that person, then we were killing the Buddha within that person and we killed the Buddha within ourselves. When we did not listen to the bird that was singing for us then we killed the Buddha within ourselves as well as the Buddha in the bird. That bird spent many lifetimes training to sing that song so that we could hear it and we spent many lifetimes training so that we could listen to what the bird had to say. The bird sang, we couldn't care, the moment passed and we were not aware. We were as good as dead alongside the Buddha within.

Here, when we were preoccupied or pay attention with our dialoguer who admired and totally trust us; we were attracted by the person and forget Buddha around and within us. Preoccupations often implied having one's attention so taken up by thoughts as to neglect others which led to absent stresses and inability to fix the mind on present concerns due to more mental wandering than to concentration on what mattered (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). We absolutely did not realize the presence of the Buddha but were distracted by others person. This meant that we killed the Buddha in ourselves and even slaughtered Buddha within our dialoguer. Buddhism taught us to be with nature and learn from nature and the Buddhists had many beliefs when it came to the environment, which they believe that man and nature need to coexist, and whether nature was neither good nor evil the Buddhists had a respect for all life, and therefore they valued everything in nature. When we were distracted by other surrounding rather than the singing bird in front; the implication was we killed the Buddha in the bird and the Buddha within ourselves. A hymn sang:

The mind changes, following along with ten thousand environments; the way it changes is truly most mysterious. If you follow its flow and can perceive its nature, you will have neither joy nor sorrow.

(Lin-chi Lu, d.866 p. 55: From the hymn by the Twenty-second Indian Patriarch Manorhita, as recorded in Pao-fin chuan 5)

All lives are interdependent and interrelated. Our natural environments are enlivened and at least partly conscious. They are neither perfect and sacred nor devilish and to be overcome. The reality in-depth of the Nature is not separate from our fully enlightened nature (Buddha-nature). However, human mind shifts with thousands of environments which is cryptic and had one flown with the natural shifts; one shall meet neither delight nor depression.



## Philosophical Pāṇātipāta

Master Lin-chi Lu if said had one wanted to comprehend based on dharma; one must never be distorted anyone. The Master advised that when one encountered either outward or inward Buddha, patriarch, arhat, parents and kinsfolk; one must kill them all. When one followed the words of the Master; one was unchained and enabled to liberally fly to anywhere on earth and in the universe one desired. The Master implied that all these talks of killing he was certainly purposive to caution his followers or disciples never be led astray by outward goals or adjudications even though Lin-chi's violent language often shocked audience, erudite and readers (Lin-chi Lu, d. 866 p.52). Nevertheless, the sutta exemplified that tanha paired with individualism bred violence and conditions the necessity for state power to curb excesses. As such, its teaching is directly in the mainstream of Buddhist thought: craving and grasping lie at the root of negative and unwholesome states in society. However, more needs to be said about the causes and consequences of individualism.

Chris Pacheco (2021) implied that slaying the Buddha was referred to eradicating all concept and the belief what we have understood. It seemed counterintuitive. Still if we eradicate our knowledge; what was then left? It would be our experiences, the uncertain certainty; the insecure security and the vulnerable comfort. All in all, we can be our own teacher and our own teaching. However, upon killing the Buddha, we would be able to transcend. The transcendence came through our very experience. Paradoxically, upon the second we recognize we were the Buddhas; we immediately misplaced being the Buddhas.

Violent deeds and thoughts, deeds that hurt and humiliate others and thoughts that similarly adjudicate hurt and humiliation block the routes to spiritual progress and the self-victory that leads to the existence destination. This is normally accounted unskillfulness (akusala) and likely impossible to escort to Nirvana. Buddha denounces slaying and hurting living beings but inspires mindfulness (satipathana) as right deed. Therefore “either the rightness or the wrongness of a deed centralizes around whether deeds themselves harm oneself and/or others”. In the Ambalatthika-Rahulovada Sutta, the Buddha says to Rahula:

If you, Rahula, are desirous of doing a deed with the body, you should reflect on the deed with the body, thus: That deed which I am desirous of doing with the body is a deed of the body that might conduce to the harm of self and that might conduce to the harm of others and that might conduce to the harm of both; this deed of body is unskilled (*akusala*), its yield is anguish, its result is anguish. (Harris 1994; Kalupahana 1992, pp. 105–106; Brannigan 2010, p. 59.)

Babara O'Brien (2020) adjudicates “Kill the Buddha” is a koan (Dhamma Riddle), unique to Zen Buddhism. It implies the disciples alleviate discriminating ideas, in order to rise the better instinctive insights. “Killing the Buddha” makes a priceless point. Taking the Buddha as a sacred fetish is to distort the essence of the Dhamma doctrine. We have to cherish the Master’s prudent guides rather seriously. By the Zen rule of thumb, if we can only intellectually grip it, we are not the Master’s disciples yet.

Tyson B. Meadors (2007) contends that “Killing to save lives” is justified among the Certain Mahayana Buddhist Schools considered justified by certain Mahayana Holy Scriptures like in *Upaya-kaushalya Sutra*. Shakyamuni Buddha in the past life kills a bandit who on mass murder on a ship (with the intent both of saving the lives of the passengers and saving the robber from bad karma). K. Sri Dhammananda recalls Buddha converses with a soldier that warfare is acceptable as finalization when exit is impossible. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (2009) during His Holiness’s lecture at Harvard in 2009, suggests that to kill other is permissible. His Holiness evoked the *Upaya-kaushalya Sutra* and says that “raging forceful action” aroused by compassion, could be “violence on a physical level” but also could be “necessarily nonviolence”, but we have to absolutely understand the meaning of “nonviolence”. His Holiness approved the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, saying “Forgiveness doesn't mean forget what happened. ... If something is serious and it is necessary to take counter-measures, you have to take counter-measures.” In 2015, His Holiness was asked whether killing Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, or Mao justified because of their genocide campaigns. His Holiness responded “yes” in so far as killing was not in anger (Flanagan, O. 2017).



## Conclusions

The Buddhist Theory of Killing (pāṇātipāṭa) is classified into to 3 actions, i.e. the 3 Kāyakamma (physical action); the 4 Vacīkamma (verbal actions); and the Manokamma (mental actions). By adjudicated principle, wrongness or rightness of an action incorporated 5 measures. Had it mantled 5 elements (5 sambhāra); it was counted Sīla transgression deserving as sin and capital penalty. Had it otherwise not; it wasn't. The 5 elements are, the being is alive, knowing the being is alive, having volition to kill, and practicing attempting to kill and the being died by that attempt.

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In most life fact, Majihimā padipadā is wrong. One cannot stand in the middle of the two ways road. One has to take side either good or bad; either being saint or being Satan; one cannot be saint-Satan at the same time or friend-enemy but choicing be my friend or my foe as Carl Schmitt (1932, pp. 45-53) contended, friend-enemy conflicts constituted by two parties or two countries should be ended by the two parties or the two countries; they cannot delegate them to the third parties. Friend-enemy conflicts like Ukraine-Russia, should end by Ukraine-Russia, and both countries should not lobby the third parties to join their conflict. However, USA, NATO, EU probably UN while Russia, Belarus, Nicaragua, North Korea and Syria did not undertake Majihimā

padipadā, for instance. Nevertheless, in Chan Buddhism, the Middle Way delineates the realization of one-sidedness freedom on viewpoint which takes the extreme polarity as objective reality. Huineng counts basic oppositions of consciousness and elaborates how the Way is free from both extremes

## **Suggestions**

Killing never ends killings but chain killings. Jesus Christ cautions violence never ends violence (Mathew 26:52). Wars never end wars (Herfried Münkler, 2019). Political friend-enemy: Political choice “be my friend or my foe” (Carl Schmitt 1932, p.33). A Peace is to End All Peace (David Fromkin, 2009). Not only violent actions are wildfires that devastate everything but gossip is also great crime that kill physiologically and psychologically (Pope Francis (2013). Metaphilosophical, Theravadan and Vajrayāna or Mantrayānan or Esoteric Buddhism or Tantric killings should be deeper investigated.



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