Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict and Peace Development

UNDV Conference Volume

The International Buddhist Conference
on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations
4 - 6 May 2552/2009
Thailand

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Preface

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) has been privileged to witness and play a crucial role in developing and hosting successful UNDV celebrations from the beginning in 2004/2547 to 2007/2550. The UNDV celebrations were held in Ha Noi, Vietnam last year; for this year, 2009/2552, the UNDV has returned. As always, we are all very grateful to the Royal Thai Government for its constant support, and thank the Thai Supreme Sangha Council for its blessings, guidance and support. We are indebted, also, to the United Nations for recognizing the thrice-sacred Buddhist holy day.

It has been 2552 years since the death of our Great Teacher, and we have gathered here from across the globe, from many nations, to again pay tribute to his birth, enlightenment, and death – occurring on the same day in different years.

For the celebrations this year, the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU), created during the UNDV in 2007/2550 by the participating Buddhist higher institutions, plays an important role. The IABU Secretariat now, plays a major role in our celebrations, particularly in the academic programme of the conference.

As part of the UNDV Conference theme *Buddhist Approach to Global Crisis* I am pleased that three Conference Volumes are published for the convenience of all participants, with the financial grant from my university, in time for the conduct of the panels and workshops. The various sub-themes of the panels are: Buddhist Approach to Economic Crisis; Buddhist Approach to Environmental Crisis; Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict and Peace Development; and additionally included are the invitational workshops pertaining to the IABU Administration; the Buddhist Common Text Project, and Buddhist E-Resources and Network. In this volume are articles on one of *Buddhist Approach to Political Crisis.*

This publication could not have been possible without the persistence, hard work, and dedication of MCU's scholars and staff. I wish to thank all members of the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak and the Executive Council of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, and the Editorial Committee for their devotion. I am also grateful to our many donors, sponsors and volunteers.

The Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn
Chairman, ICUNDV & IABU
Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Introduction

First, as a man and the editor, I am humbled to be nominated to assist the 6th Annual United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations as the main editor for the conference publication on Buddhist Approach to Global Crisis. I must thank all of the Venerable and respected professors who have entrusted this endeavor to me. I wish that my enthusiasm and engagement into these articles will be warmly received first from the author, secondly towards the delegates and observers to the conference, and thirdly my aspirations aim to please the many readers of this publication.

I admit that this text may contain several remaining grammatical mistakes, largely this is the responsibility of the author, but since many of our contributors are non-native English speakers, there might be a few problems remaining due to the short amount of time between issuing the call for papers [mid-January 2009], to the article deadline date [27 March 2009] to publication date [17 April 2009] - I had thus approximately three weeks to improve every article before presentation to the international Buddhist world, by 5 May 2009. I've mentioned nothing about other behind-the-scenes efforts and nearly 1500 e-mails that made this text possible.

Some fifteen articles were rejected for being non-thematic, redundant in nature (other articles covered similar material), were problematic or were just too poorly written to be included into our program and panels – this demonstrates that we tried to give the Buddhist world the best possible presentation of viewpoints, subjected to our collective committee's discretion. As the main editor, I was the focal-point of communication between the committee and the scholars – often on the receiving end of several complaints and a few compliments. The UNDV 2009 Editorial Committee would like to remind these scholars of simple tasks, beneficial also for future occasions, that if: scholars could run the automated spelling and grammar check-functions on their computers, select the fonts recommended in the call for papers; have someone at their home-university re-read their work for errors – and basically turn in more professionally-approved products, our work at the office would be a lot easier, and less frustrating. Instead, we worked hours into the next day's morning for several weeks, missing holidays - on editing articles that should have been 'publishable' when submitted.

I have given much of my life to Buddhism, sacrificing my family, and professional aspirations of earning my PhD in Buddhism; and because I have worked on these papers that are truly the responsibility of the individual author, most of which have higher qualifications from my own – I hope at least the Buddhist devas are pleased. Therefore, if there was any misrepresentation in any articles or through organizing these panels, may I be forgiven, for humbly working for you? I have tried my best, in a short amount of time.

Those familiar with our annual United Nations Day of Vesak Conference know that over the past few years, we have had more time to prepare, perhaps a few months, to arrange articles and engage in thorough editing. This was not the case for this year's conference, the fourth that I have been involved in. I must take full responsibility. Ultimately though, what largely matters most, is that the various Buddhist leaders and scholars have pondered diligently to present to the United Nations, their individual visions towards solving global crisis through various manifestations; we therefore hope leaders can consider our proposals. Often in international settings, the ability to communicate matters means more than the grammatical intricacies. If someone said: "Help!" this can be enough, and through our observations we could learn exactly what would be needed or how to assist someone with the appropriate remedy. Some people seem to expect or demand our assistance. Help and advice can cut across many barriers, yet I have strove to present the best possible work, by all of our delegates – across national, sectarian and even gender biases. Buddhism is for all, and all here are certainly for Buddhism. Below is, brief summaries of our accepted and collected voices:

Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict & Peace Development

Following the collapse of several styles of government, and the internal strife that conflicts and separates otherwise civil nations – this panel looks at the many ways that a Buddhist Approach would benefit a government, an organization, and even disputes of a personal nature – towards developing the peace that we all deserve as a modern, united humanity. These papers offer suggestions that move beyond recent statements that claim: "people are now deciding whether peaceful means serve them best... people have been repeatedly disappointed. ...Legal standards have been clearly unfair and unjust... the remaining opportunities for a peaceful solution are decreasing every day. ...People have the right to defend themselves against aggression. ...the whole system is distorted."[1] Our panel contains a wide variety of viewpoints that demonstrate that calm and peace are possible - from younger students, various levels of professors, and a politically-banned politician writing on Buddhism. These perspectives illuminate the Buddhist positions on political and peaceful methods – across a variety of circumstances.

Ashin Sumanacara writes in his, "Early Buddhist Theory and Practice of Political Conflict Resolution", offers a lot of practical advice that is worth investigating or actualizing – although this would be idealistic even in contemporary Buddhist societies. As stated in the article, there are new ways to resolve political conflict.

Aung Shing Marma writes in his: "Brahmavihara: A Buddhist Solution to Problems", that: we must undertake or adopt the brahmaviharas into our personal lives to avert any crisis through our relationships with the external world. For a young scholar, his words ring with years of wisdom, and should be considered for all to espouse.

Damien Keown writes in his: "Learning from Religious Peacemakers", that since the world has changed, religions have become more prominent factors in modern disputes. Religious leaders are not really formally trained to resolve conflicts; instead they just draw on a variety of techniques – including: scriptures, charisma of the religious preacher, rituals, common themes, peace education, and communication skills. Our universities and monasteries also contribute towards educating the future peace-leaders. Peace is even questioned in his essay, as perhaps just a conventional concept rather than an ultimate value. He concludes by suggesting a publication be made pertaining to Buddhist peacemakers at the lower levels of society.

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[1] The Nation, "Jakrapob busy setting up a base", Tuesday, 21 April 2009, Vol. 34, No. 52209

Deborah Bowman states in her "Buddhism and Nonviolent Communication: An Effective Practice for Peace", from using the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, that we should clearly understanding the nature of our suffering in order to alleviate egotistical patterns. This would enable us to not confuse strategies enabling us to better learn more about our partner in discussion. We should speak out against injustice, prejudice and violence, she writes – and better language skills enables the inequalities to dissipate.

Dion Peoples writes in his 'Discipline is Required for Resolving Any Crisis': that in these international seminars Buddhism is often pitted against non-Buddhist concepts; and that misperceptions and mindful manipulation are tools of the ruling parties to gain control over the society's population. There are disciplined leading figures in politics and in religious systems that are worthy to emulate. After a brief explanation of a politically-induced environmental disaster, the paper recommends that virtuous people be the leaders of society.

Gregory Cran writes in his somewhat dated article, "Building Capacity to Manage Global Crisis: Lessons Learned", that: conflicts should be better managed to eliminate collateral damage or the death of innocent civilians. He largely examines the Southern Thai situation of strife from 2004-2006. For those living in and studying about Thailand, the situation is much more involved, but the merits here, illustrate the need for better management of the one-dimensional crisis that ignores the wants of the burdened opposition. The government can only govern itself, and holds no influence over the opposition-forces or drug-traffickers. He updates his article in a new post-script.

Gustaaf Houtman writes in his, "Spiritual and Familial Continuities in Myanmar's 'Secular Politics', that: many similarities exist between Aung San and his daughter Aung San Suu Kyi – both have striven towards the secular liberation of the Burmese people from regimes of different types.

Hoàng Ngọc Dũng writes in his, "Social Crisis in India During the Pre-Buddhism Period and Current Global Issues", after summarizing a Buddhist discourse, that: the modern era needs a unifying doctrine, and suggests through quoting Albert Einstein that Buddhism is the answer. He formulates several modern examples or modern demonstrations of 'dependent arising' theories; and concludes briefly through reminding Buddhists to be the examples they want to see changed within and across society.

Ian Harris writes in his, "Is Buddhism a Religion of Peace? Reflections on Conflict and the Buddhist Political Imagination", that: like a virus, Buddhism must adapt if it is to survive in the world. He discusses textual and historical cases of elites abdicating power for reasons, including monastic ordination; discussions more further into relationships between ordained and political figures; and concludes

abruptly by citing that Buddhism is the only ideological-religion that can give peace and protect the world form destruction.

John Whalen-Bridge writes in his, "Angry Monk Syndrome on the World Stage", that: recent political events encouraged Buddhist monks to begin various protests, promoted by Western media as beneficial towards influencing power away from the respective, current ruling governments. The author examines five factors of rhetoric to comprehend Buddhist confliction.

Kudeb Saikrachang writes in his, "Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict and Peace Development", that: conflicts are wholesome or unwholesome. His interpretations of Buddhist history suggest a radicalized agenda – as perhaps parallels to the contemporary confliction affecting Thailand. He makes stern accusations towards the current political governing party. It should be noted: the author is a banned-politician.

Perry Schmidt-Leukel writes in his, "Buddhism, Dialogue and Peace", that: religions must be conducive to peace and should not be misused. He explores the 'misuse of religions': the justifications for wars and sanctions in Buddhism, and the treatment of other non-Buddhist religious sects by Buddhists. He raises some valuable questions pertaining to equality that are personally worth exploring, for the sake of all religions.

Pinnawala Sangasumana writes in his, "Buddhist Perspective on Addressing War-Displacement", that: people are sometimes forced to leave their familiar habitats. He covers forced migration, transition and resettlement; and the Buddhist principles that alleviate the suffering of internally displaced persons.

Pravin Bhalesain writes in his, "Buddhist Approach to the Political Conflict and Peace: A Comparison between Communist and Buddhist Methods", that Buddhist methods and Communist intentions are quite similar. His study is very interesting and very meritorious in its endeavor; however its length made it difficult to edit and summarize briefly.

Sallie B. King writes in her, "Buddhism Nonviolence and Power", that: there have been several Buddhist struggles towards political change. Authorities though, have often met these demonstrations with violence. She discussed six sources of political power and scenarios of how Buddhism interplayed respectfully, within the strife.

Siddharth Singh writes in his, "Buddhist Reflection on Conflict Management through Dialogue: A Discussion in the Light of Pali Literature", that: misapprehension regarding others increases the possibility of crisis – therefore, dialogue encourages peace. After a tour through the Pali literature, he concludes with: any problem can be solved through dialogue.

Somparn Promta writes in his, "Wisdom, Loving-Kindness, and Politics: A Buddhist View on Current Political Situation in Thailand" – simply a great, modern and philosophical inquiry into the modern political situation infecting Thailand. This article can make other articles in the panel obsolete, through its quality of Buddhism wisdom and presentations of ethical situations. He demonstrates two lines of ethical logic and demonstrates metta towards solving political crisis.

Thor Gonen and **Itamar Bashan** collaborate to write on their collective and personal experiences of bringing Buddhism into Israel, in their work entitled, "Buddhist Approach as a Psychological Support in an Ongoing War and Political Conflict In Israel: A Personal Account". They present a general history of Judaism and the other Abrahamic traditions, while illuminating the Buddhist values that carried them through their travails.

Veerachart Nimanong examines in his, "Relatives in Dhamma (*Ñātidhamma*) as the Basis for Peace among Religions", the interpretations for spiritual-siblinghood, across major religious systems to determine that humans can all be treated as relatives.

Ven. Hansa Dhammahaso writes in his, 'Human Nature and Conflict: A Buddhist Perspective', that conflict is unavoidable, and this is why Buddhism speaks about suffering so often. Desire, arrogance and delusion are offered as the roots to conflict – and when these are seen internally, maybe conflict can be avoided. Even the most enlightened of individuals are conflicted, and the paper covers: losing one's mental balance; loss of property; and failure to reconcile as aspects of a dispute. Conflicts can be beneficial, and the papers give several examples of the benefits of conflict – towards illuminating a potentially greater and peacefully pluralistic society.

Ven. N. Gnanaratana writes in his, "Buddhist Monks Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka", that: Buddhist monks have the responsibility to safeguard Theravada Buddhism and have the sacred duty to assist society. He states that politics and religion are interconnected, but religions and politics have become misguided. There needs to be a new approach.

Venerable Ajahn Brahm writes in his, "A Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict & Peace Development", that: Westerners do have a sense of Buddhist values, and illustrates several examples of this reasoning from occurrences from the Australian government. Ajahn Brahm lists: mindful listening; wise listening; compassion in politics; and how justice does not mean revenge. Further, he writes of: learning from past successes; solving conflict by establishing other priorities; preventing political conflict; promoting cooperation over competition; and electing effective leaders. He also suggests leaders of Buddhist nations are often educated abroad in foreign nations, and neglect to utilize Buddhist wisdom when attempting to solve any crisis.

Conclusion

It is the hopes of our Buddhist traditions that the knowledge gained from previous United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations is built upon firm foundations.

The 2005 UNDV Celebrations discussed: Buddhist Organization; Buddhist Education; Propagation of Buddhism; Protecting Buddhism; and Buddhism and Social Welfare.

The 2006 UNDV Celebrations discussed: Perspectives on Buddhist Strategy for World Peace and Sustainable Development; World Peace; Buddhist Education; Dissemination of Buddhism; Protection of Buddhist Culture; Sustainable Development; and Buddhist Collaboration.

The 2007 UNDV Celebrations discussed: Buddhism and Good Governance; Dissemination of Buddhism through Modern Technology; Preservation and Promotion of Buddhist Arts; Buddhist Meditation and Human Development, The University Symposium; and Buddhist Electronic Library.

The 2008 UNDV Celebrations discussed: Buddhist Contribution to building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society; War, Conflict and Healing: A Buddhist Perspective; Buddhist Contribution to Social Justice; Engaged Buddhism and Development; Care for Our Environment: Buddhist Response to Climate Change; Family Problems and the Buddhist Response; Symposium on Buddhist Education: Continuity and Progress; and the Symposium on Buddhism in the Digital Age.

This year's 2552/2009 UNDV Celebrations discuss Buddhist Approach to Global Crisis; Buddhist Approach to Economic Crisis, Buddhist Approach to Environmental Crisis; Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict and Peaceful Development; International Association of Buddhist Universities Workshop Seminar on Administrative Collaborations; Workshop on the Common Buddhist Text Project; and the Workshop on Electronic Resources and Networks.

There seems to be many thematic continuities, which could represent the aspirations or directions in which international Buddhists feel important to negotiate. Hopes and aspirations are felt from everyone, and these articles selected by the editorial committee, we felt were the most relevant to our themes, backed by the knowledge of previous celebrations. Certainly, we all have room to grow, under these and other topics which have gathered attention and we also strive to move forward into new realms. Please take the time to read and consider these provocative contributions to global Buddhism.

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Learning from Religious Peacemakers

Damien Keown
Professor of Buddhist Ethics
Goldsmiths College, University of London

> *'I really admire the Tanenbaum Center Peacemakers in Action. They work courageously for the greater good under the most difficult circumstances. In order to build world peace through inner peace, I think the world's religious traditions have a special role. We should all learn from and follow their great example.'*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, September 26, 2005, Riverside Church, New York City

The Dalai Lama made this statement at the second meeting of a group of sixteen individuals who had dedicated their lives to the cause of peace. Each was a committed religious believer who had struggled in some part of the world to bring peace between rival communities. The first meeting was convened in Amman, Jordan, by the Tanenbaum Foundation[1] in 2004 and the group came together for a second time in New York to prepare for the publication of the book *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of religion in conflict resolution* edited by David Little, a renowned scholar of religion and religious ethics.[2] This book had come to my attention through a review I read, and I was interested to see what lessons could be learned from it that might be applicable to Buddhism. My first reaction was one of disappointment on seeing that of the sixteen case studies reported in the volume not one relates to Buddhism. Despite the above endorsement by the Dalai Lama that appears at the start of the first chapter, I found only a single passing reference to Buddhism in the index. Clearly sensitive to this anomaly, the editor makes the following comment in a lengthy note on p.7:

> Although this book happens to be focused on religiously motivated individuals who come from the Abrahamic traditions, it is important to note that the Tanenbaum Center's Peacemakers in Action program is open to

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[1] The Tanenbaum Foundation is a non-sectarian and not-for-profit organization based in New York. Founded by the late Rabbi Marc H.Tanenbaum. The Foundation's website (http://www.tanenbaum.org/mission.html) states 'we work to reduce and prevent the violence perpetrated in the name of religion by supporting religious peacemakers who struggle in areas of armed conflict and by overcoming religious intolerance in workplaces and schools.'

[2] David Little, is T.J. Dermot Dunphy Professor of the Practice of Religion, Ethnicity, and International Conflict at Harvard Divinity School.

peacemakers from all traditions. To date, we have received few nominations for individuals outside the Abrahamic faiths. Accordingly, we have expanded our outreach in an attempt to encourage more nominations for individuals from other traditions. … From our work with religiously motivated peacemakers worldwide, our thesis is that the findings presented in this book will hold true across various other traditions.

I think the final sentence is true, and despite the absence of specific references to Buddhism in this book it does contain valuable information about religious peacemaking which everyone, Buddhists included, can draw upon. My objective in this paper, therefore, is summarize the main findings of *Peacemakers in Action* and to comment on their implications for Buddhism.

Although religions have always had much to say about peace in their teachings, the contemporary interest in religious peacemaking as a subject of independent study and practice grows out of recent historical developments. The twentieth century saw some of the most terrible wars in history. These wars took the form of confrontations between nations or political blocks holding conflicting ideologies, and lasted for years or sometimes decades. Interestingly, however, although religion is often accused of being a cause of war, most large-scale modern conflicts have owed little religion. Other, secular, ideologies—such as nationalism, colonialism, fascism and communism—have more commonly been the culprits, and between them have probably notched up more casualties than all the religious wars in history combined. More recently, however, the pattern has changed, and the strife we now see in the world around us has more to do with religion than previously. This is because the nature of warfare has also changed, and we tend not so see all-out wars between nations (apparently only some 10% of current conflicts fall into this category[3]) so much as regional disputes between opposing factions who define themselves by their culture, regional identity, ethnic origins, or religious beliefs. These differences are sometimes felt so intensely that they lead to the formation of terrorist groups who carry out the kind of attacks we hear about all too frequently in the news. What provokes these attacks is a mixture of things, but it cannot be denied that religion is often one ingredient in the explosive cocktail that has led to loss of life on a large scale from 9/11 to the recent attacks in Mumbai and Pakistan. While nations have mobilised their armies and security organisations in an effort to strike back at the terrorists, and organizations such as the United Nations have made efforts to find political solutions, it is not clear how successful these efforts have been in either the short or long term, despite the vast amount of human and financial resources spent on them. The 'war on terror' is a bit like trying to vaccinate against a virus that constantly changes its form and can spread to any part of the body. One of

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[3] P.5f.

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the main themes of this book is that the strategy known as 'Track One' diplomacy—namely efforts made at an official level by governments and secular bodies like NGOs and the UN—may not be the best antidote to this kind of disease. Alimamy P. Korama, a religious leader from Sierra Leone put it as follows:

> I am influenced by the confidence and hope in ordinary people and religious leaders. The United Nations and other organizations disappoint people: they do not deliver. But religious leaders, churches and mosques did not flee in Sierra Leone during the war. They remained behind to inspire us that all was not lost. And today we still work with people to say that all is not lost. (p.6).

An important common feature of the sixteen peacemakers profiled in this volume is that they worked at the grassroots level rather in an official capacity. This does not mean they were apolitical, and many of them had contacts with politicians, militants, and guerrilla leaders from across the political spectrum. What distinguished them, however, was a deep commitment to peace that was personal as opposed to institutionally based. Because of their religious belief they were able to see more clearly the common humanity among all parties to a dispute. Theistic believers expressed this in terms of seeing each individual as created in the image of God, but it could equally well be expressed in terms of a shared Buddha-nature, or innate capacity for enlightenment. Alongside their personal religious convictions went courage in the face of danger and a capacity for understanding others and sharing their pain and hopes with deep compassion. Rather than fleeing from the terrible scenes that surrounded them, the peacemakers stood their ground and vowed to be steadfast and work for change. Many of the individual case studies movingly describe their sacrifice and commitment to share the suffering of others and to do all in their power to improve their situation. This seems a job description tailor-made for a bodhisattva, and an area in which Buddhism should be well equipped to contribute.

What techniques did the religious peacemakers draw on in their work? Most of them had no formal training in conflict resolution, and made use of a variety of tools based on their personal experience of what worked and what didn't work in different situations. Sometimes they used methods similar to those of secular conflict-resolution practitioners or social justice workers. At other times they drew their inspiration from the beliefs of their local communities. Sometimes they had little more to rely on than their own deep religious faith and often it was this that saw them through. However, despite their very different personal beliefs and local contexts, many of the peacemakers spontaneously developed similar approaches and methodologies. These methodologies provide a kind of roadmap which points the way for religious peacemakers working either alone or in conjunction with their secular counterparts. David Little lists these under eleven headings in the volume and I summarise his findings below.

The Use of Religious Texts

Scripture provides a fertile source of authority and inspiration to draw on in times of crisis. Stories about how similar situations of conflict were dealt with by a religious founder, elder or prophet can usually be located in the texts, and these parallels can often be adapted to sketch a way forward in a contemporary context. Human nature has not changed greatly over time, and the problems which arise today between individuals and groups are not really so different to those that arose in the past. Conflict over economic resources, territory, political ideologies, and religious differences are nothing new, nor are their solutions. Mining the scriptures is a good starting place for instructive lessons and parallels. Concepts of forgiveness, empowerment, justice and compassion can be found in the Bible, the Qur'an, throughout Buddhist literature, and in the scriptures of all religions. Many of the papers in this conference have drawn on the Pali Canon and the example of the Buddha as peacemaker to show how useful this strategy can be in a Buddhist context.

The Power of the Pulpit

Religious teachers typically have an institutional role as leaders of a parish or religious community. This gives them a unique authority and ensures that their words will be listened to with respect by their congregations and often by their enemies. Examples can be given of religious peacemakers in Northern Ireland and El Salvador who worked with paramilitary groups on both sides of the divide. A religious leader is a fixed point in any community, and their office takes concrete form in the religious buildings they occupy, be it a church, mosque, monastery or temple. Often these sacred buildings have stood in the same place for centuries, and their continuity is a reminder that past problems have been transcended, giving hope that present ones can too. Religious buildings are respected in all cultures as safe havens and places of sanctuary, and provide an ideal location at which to bring opponents together. The messages preached in religious sermons often have a greater impact than those of politicians, whose words and influence may seem ephemeral. Even opponents may trust more in the honesty and integrity of religious teachers of another faith because of the knowledge that what they say is founded on religious belief rather than political opportunism.

Religious Rituals and Traditions

Religious rituals and symbols have enormous power but are often overlooked or not accessible to politicians or outside professionals. Such symbols are often respected by both sides to a conflict and can be used as a way of building empathy

and trust, and symbolizing shared values. Although this particular example is not given in the book, I am reminded of how the Buddhist ordination ceremony was used by some monks in Thailand who were concerned about deforestation. By dressing trees in monastic robes they bestowed on them a religious status and protection which was a deterrent to loggers seeking to cut them down. Seeing the trees as members of a religious and ecological community was a creative attempt to change the perception of those who saw them purely as an economic resource, and testifies to the power of religion to exert an influence where secular arguments may have little traction.

Religion as a source of common ground

The use of scripture has already been referred to above, and finding parallels in the scriptures of other traditions can be a powerful way of illustrating that what unites people of different faiths is greater than what divides them. The work of interfaith groups is important here in breaking down stereotypes of the other, encouraging shared community projects, and discouraging sterile polemical debates that simply try to demonstrate how the other is 'wrong'. A useful starting place is the ethical teachings of the world religions. Despite their many doctrinal differences, much common ground exists at the level of ethics, and followers of different faiths will very often agree about the just and right course of action in a given set of circumstances in spite of having different theological grounds for their views. The document *Towards a Global Ethic* which emerged from a declaration by a Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993 is a good example of an ethical consensus among religions.[4]

Peace Education

This is a technique widely used both formally and informally by religious peacemakers. Setting up a school or institution at which students of different faiths or ethnic backgrounds study together is a powerful way of breaking down barriers. An example is the Mar Elias educational institutions set up by Father Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian Israeli citizen living in Galilee. The students of his schools are Muslim, Christian, Druze, Arab and Palestinian, and are taught first and foremost to be model citizens in a land they all share and love. By focusing on this goal, common to every faith, their religious differences seem less important. What is emphasized is that at the core of every religion is 'the embrace of peace and the mandate to treat others as one would like to be treated' (p.13). While an institutional basis is one way of spreading this message, it can be done informally as well and other peacemakers

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[4] A copy of the document can be found at http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/ethic.pdf.

simply preach the message to their communities that all people should be valued, that forgiveness is essential, and that justice should be sought using non-violent means.

Communication Skills

The written word is a powerful tool in the armoury of any peacemaker. Some have authored documents setting out a strategy for peace listing the stages of dialogue, negotiation and agreement that needed to be passed through on the road to a cessation of hostilities. Peacemaking roadmaps of this kind have been used with success in various parts of the world, and formalized commitments in the form of declarations, accords, and agreements can function as milestones on the road to peace. In Nigeria, a team of Muslim and Christian peacemakers drafted and signed the Kaduna Peace Agreement and then had the document engraved on a plaque which they unveiled together publicly so that the whole community could read and celebrate the achievement. Others have given papers at conferences like this one, or written columns and published communiqués in newspapers and other media.

Philosophies of non-violence and zones of peace

In addition to the power of words, more tangible realities have been used in various parts of the world to bring peace. Chief among these are peace zones, which are areas of land set aside not simply as neutral zones but as places of symbolic importance which exude a spirit of harmony and peace. Just around the corner from my house in London is a Tibetan peace garden opened by the Dalai Lama, a small but harmonious space in the grounds of a larger park. Ironically, the park itself surrounds a well-known military museum known as the Imperial War museum, at the entrance to which stand two enormous canons from a WWII battleship. The Tibetan peace garden, which lies in their shadow, is a quiet place of solitude and its location is a reminder that war and peace are interrelated realities like yin and yang, and that one can be transformed into the other. Further afield, in El Salvador, Chencho Alas constructed a zone of peace with the help of the local community, after long discussions about how the culture of peace to which they aspired could best be expressed in physical form. Local leaders agreed to establish the zone and to meet within it to collaborate and help resolve disagreements non-violently.

Interfaith mobilization

Although religion can divide, it can also unite, and an existing interfaith network is often a natural place for dialogue and cooperative action to begin. This

can be true even when the dispute is not religiously based because people of different faiths acknowledge a shared goal of peace regardless of their secular identities. Examples abound of religious leaders from many communities who have mobilized themselves to search for peaceful solutions. One interesting example of this is Bosnian peacemaker Friar Ivo Markovic who tried to heal the wounds of the conflict in the Balkans by founding an interreligious group called 'Face to Face' and creating a multi-ethnic and multi-religious choir known as the Pontanima Choir. Music has a special power, and group singing or chanting elevates the spirit and creates a bond among those who participate. It is hard to imagine sharing an aesthetic experience of this kind with someone while at the same time wishing to do them harm. While people of different religions may have different beliefs, they all understand what it means to have a strong faith, and share the ethical belief that the things one does in this world will have consequences that cannot be escaped.

Global Issues

The last point leads on to another important dimension of religious peacemaking. Religious peacemakers begin from the premise that all parties to a dispute, whoever they may be, share a common humanity and a transcendent destiny. They also know that what happens to one person affects us all, and this allows them to see local and regional issues in a global context. Bringing news to the global community through truthful, honest and unbiased commentary is an essential part of their role. Father Sava Janjic, known as the 'cybermonk', worked tirelessly during the Kosovo war of 1999 to inform the international community and counterbalance biased portrayals in the media which were serving only to inflame the situation further. Every night he provided bulletins on the internet focusing on the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, and clarifying the root cause as a clash between two extremist nationalist ideologies rather than anything to do with religion. In the midst of another regional conflict, this time in the Middle East, Yehezkhel Landau, worked for peace in Israel and the USA by focusing on the humanitarian values such as dignity, honour and freedom so deeply valued by all parties to the conflict.

Adapting secular practices

Although there is a unique dimension to religious peacemaking, its methods have much in common with those used in a secular context, as noted above. Peacemakers of all stripes share certain characteristics and techniques, which are summarised by David Little as follows:

They are good listeners, act non-judgementally, identify human rights abuses, and search for the common ground. They hold skills training workshops, utilize the media, build institutions, network and partner with secular religious actors, and document the factors in, and the solutions to, their regional conflicts (p.18).

To do their work successfully it is essential for them to be perceived as neutral, or at the very least fair, which may be difficult at times due to the stereotyping which is often associated with membership of particular religious communities. To this extent their religious office can be a double-edged sword, although the positive side of this is that they have access to a range of concepts like forgiveness which are part of the grammar of a universal religious language. The creation of zones of peace, already mentioned above, can be done in a secular as well as religious setting and has been used by the UN and other international organizations. Religious peacemakers would normally be amendable to such methods when used by their secular counterparts. Formal training in conflict resolution is also an option some religious peacemakers have explored, and is a body of knowledge and practice that was not always accessible under certain political regimes. Friar Markovic of Bosnia translated many works on conflict resolution into Croatian so as to make available ideas about pacifism and techniques of compromise and negotiation which were unknown under the preceding communist regime.

Religious peacemaking as a vocation

A thread that runs throughout the individual narratives in this collection is that all of these practitioners see religious peacemaking as a profession as opposed to something they dabble in from time to time. Although they wear different hats as clergy, educators or politicians, at bottom they see their vocation as that of peacemaker. And being a peacemaker is a long-term career. Although the road to peace is often more like a zigzag than a straight line, religious peacemaking has delivered results across the globe, as this volume reveals. Often by drawing on their understanding of grassroots beliefs and values which are inaccessible to many outsiders, and by harnessing the special power of religious myths and symbols, religious peacemakers can become a catalyst for change in unique and unexpected ways. The editor's introduction ends with a call for religious peacemaking to be recognised as 'an accredited line of study leading to a recognized vocation' (p.20). 'Today's students of religion', he writes, 'including seminarians, future rabbis, imams, young practicing Buddhists, and others, are our future peacemakers. Today they are studying religion and tomorrow they will apply what they have learned. This presents seminaries, divinity schools, religious educators, and leaders with an opportunity' (p.20).

It is too early to say how enthusiastically this opportunity will be taken up in different religious traditions, but this seems to me an area in which Buddhism—given its deep-rooted belief in pacifist values—is particularly qualified to make a contribution. There are many Buddhists who work tirelessly for peace, and many have been recognized on the world stage. Some, such as the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi, have been honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as many other awards. Others like Thich Nhat Hanh, lecture and write books, while others again build Peace Pagodas. All of this makes a valuable contribution to peace, but to ensure a plentiful supply of dedicated and properly trained peacemakers in the future, perhaps a new subject needs to be added to the curriculum, namely that of religious peacemaking. The world we live in today is full of tension and disputes, and Buddhist clergy like everyone else will be confronted by situations in which they will be asked to, or want to, intervene. The skills to manage and resolve conflicts are more than ever a necessary component of the religious life and should be recognized as such. The roadmap that leads to nirvana for oneself and others negotiates some difficult terrain and conflicts can arise in the monastery, in the village, in the nation, and in the wider world. While introspection and meditation may ameliorate some of the psychological causes of conflict, I am unsure that there is a simple causal relationship between inner peace and world peace. Surely the relationship is a two-way one, and inner peace in turn depends on and is supported by peace in the community and the world at large. To bring about peace in society, a peacemaker, like any professional, needs to be properly trained and equipped with the tools of his trade. Not everyone has the inclination or aptitude for peacemaking as a career, but we can all at least learn a bit of basic DIY in this subject. Those who choose to go beyond this and adopt the mantle of peacemaker should be recognized, celebrated, encouraged and supported by their religious leaders and communities for the work they do that benefits us all.

Conclusion

So what conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of the sixteen religious peacemakers whose case studies are reported in the volume? The first is that the often-heard oversimplification that religion does nothing but cause wars cannot be sustained since there is abundant evidence that religion is also a powerful force in achieving reconciliation and peace. It is clear that in the many regional disputes currently unfolding around the globe religion is not the only factor at work. In addition, there are other ideological influences such as nationalism, ethnic rivalries, and a plethora of economic, political and territorial interests to be factored into the equation. It is easy to depict the long-standing conflict in the Middle East between Jews and Muslims as religious in nature, likewise the genocide and ethnic cleansing

that took place in the Bosnia and Kosovo as arising out of religious intolerance and hatred between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. In neither case, however, is the conflict simply a battle over religion, and in Kosovo at least religion had very little to do with the conflict. At the same time, religion can be—and often is—used as a smokescreen by nationalist or terrorist groups to justify their actions. Extremist groups of all kinds frequently seek to inflame conflicts by invoking religious justifications in order to manipulate events in a violent direction.

On the other hand, can it be maintained that there is *no* connection between religion and conflict, and that true religion will always bring peace? This also seems to be something of an oversimplification, and the fact that many religious pacifists, such as Jesus and Gandhi, died violent deaths suggests that holding a religious belief may often lead one into conflict and that there may be a political price to pay for religious freedom. Martin Luther King Jr. was often blamed for 'disturbing the peace', a charge to which he replied by saying that true peace is more than just the absence of violence. In his view, true peace is based on justice and respect, and is seldom achieved without arousing the violent hostility of 'the profiteers of oppression.' An important question that arises here is how much should be sacrificed in the interests of peace? Reflecting on this question forces us to question our basic values. Is peace an ultimate value, or is it one among a cluster of other fundamental values such as freedom, justice, and truth? There are times when peace may conflict with these values, and when peace can be purchased only at the price of remaining silent about injustice or turning a blind eye to the abuse of human rights. Is peace at any price worth having, or is the role of religion to speak the truth however unpalatable it may be to influential vested interests and political authorities? Going further, if it is accepted that peace at any price is a peace not worth having, should it ever be the role of religion to seek to overthrow unjust regimes, and what degree of force, if any, would be appropriate in such an undertaking? Should we say that a *temporary* disturbance may be acceptable if the *long-term* goal is lasting peace? But then, as St Augustine observed many centuries ago, the long-term goal of *everyone* is peace: even those who resort to war only do so to achieve peace subsequently; no-one except a lunatic desires a perpetual state of war.

It is interesting that one subject on which the religious peacemakers studied in this volume could *not* agree was on whether the use of force could be justified. Naturally, they were concerned only with its use in extreme circumstances and as a last resort, such as protecting one's life in self-defence. This issue of whether the use of force is ever legitimate arises sooner or later in any discussion of religious peacemaking and especially in situations of humanitarian intervention, such as NATO's use of force in Kosovo in 1999. It presents a genuine moral dilemma to many religious believers. One horn of the dilemma is that by preserving peace one permits injustice; the other is that by remedying injustice one sacrifices peace. In

Christian teachings this dilemma has been wrestled with from the early centuries within the 'just war' tradition of thought, but I know of no parallels to this strand of philosophy in Buddhism.

To conclude by returning to a point I made at the start about the absence of any case studies of Buddhist peacemakers in this volume, it would be heartening to see a similar volume that featured the work of Buddhist peacemakers who had engaged with concrete disputes and found solutions in Buddhist teachings. We have plenty of writings about how inner peace and tranquillity are important, but it would be good to see more concrete examples of how Buddhist teachings can make a practical difference in situations of conflict, and to compare the methods and results with the achievements of religious peacemakers elsewhere. I have in mind here not so much individuals who occupy a place on the world stage like the Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Daisaku Ikeda, but the local peacemakers on the front line at town and village level. I am sure there must be many, and it would be good to nominate them for inclusion in the next volume of *Peacemakers in Action* so that their stories can be more widely told.

Is Buddhism a Religion of Peace?
Reflections on Conflict and the Buddhist Political Imagination

Ian Harris

1. Introduction:

I do not wish to push the analogy too far but in some respects a successful religious tradition is a little like virus. At its simplest a virus has two components, its genetic material (DNA or RNA) and a protective protein coating. But unlike other life forms a virus cannot replicate unaided. First it must find a suitable host cell. By finding a way through that cell's defences the virus gains access to the generative materials and structures it lacks and these it now redeploys for the purpose of its own multiple reproduction.

Buddhism, I suggest, also has this two-fold structure. Its genetic material is the *dhamma* while the outer protective layer is represented by the *sāsana*. If we imagine Buddhism moving through history from the time of its foundation to the present we can see that it employs the same technique as the virus. It cannot replicate itself without a host. The host will usually be a single new individual, but if we scale up the metaphor, we can see that from time to time the process inflates into a major epidemic and Buddhism may "infect" a new population group. By these means it moves from person to person and from culture to culture.

Buddhism's mode of replication also parallels that of the virus. It comes into contact with a new host and, only if the conditions are right, it penetrates, injecting its genetic material (*dhamma*) and reordering the host's fundamental working processes. Subsequently, and this is especially the case when Buddhism moves from one culture to another, it produces a copy of itself – a copy in which the *dhamma* presents itself as encased in new protective form, or *sāsana*. In this two-fold structure the *dhamma*, like the genetic-material of the virus, retains almost all of its pristine originality with the outer casing takes on a form somewhat determined by the host. To put it another way, the *dhamma* stands outside history while the *sāsana*, as Buddhism's institutional form, participates in history's movement towards the future.

Now to the topic of this panel – Buddhism, Peace, and Political Conflict. These days we are often asked to define what "Buddhism" has to say on a certain subject of social or political import. I hope that in the light of my introductory comments it is clear that it would be simplistic to rely solely on the *dhamma* for, although this must provide a general interpretive framework, it is somewhat remote from any particular reality. But neither should we base our answers simply on the

sāsana, for when the tradition's specific institutional forms are not animated by the *dhamma* they are little more than an empty shell. A full response to such queries requires consideration of the dialectical relationship between the two for Buddhism understood as a world historical tradition is a hybrid entity. A sociologist of religion has recently commented on Christianity in the following way: "[It] remains the same through the centuries by its retention of a canonical point of reference which cannot be expunged, but it alters greatly according to who believes it and its distance from of proximity to the structure of power" (Martin 1997, 111). Surely the same judgement applies to the Buddhist tradition.

Appleby (2000, 10) has observed that contemporary debates over the socio-political role of religion tend to cluster around two extreme positions. The first, that of "religion's cultured despisers", associates religion with unreason and a fundamental opposition to "enlightened" progress. As such, it is a prime cause of violence and an important ingredient in most of the world's major conflicts. The second is that religion is, in its best sense, simply an old-fashioned name for the belief that human life is the highest good. From this humanistic perspective religion is about preserving life and the avoidance of conflict. The corollary is that when religious actors engage in acts of aggression, they must have fallen away from the true path and cannot be considered as real Christians, Muslims or Buddhists, as the case may be.

But these two extremes – destructive and inhumane on the one hand, creative and civilizing on the other – are inadequate. There must be a middle way, a more subtle interpretation of the sort found in Gandhi's ambivalence about [as opposed to absolute rejection of] physical warfare: "…Where there is a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence…But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence" (Gandhi 1978, 175).

Religious ideals may conduce to peacefulness but this does not mean that religion, as a social reality, fosters peace. Although there can be no question that the proper practice of Buddhism fosters a personal, subjective or inner feeling of peace (*ajjhatta santi*, eg. Sn 837) in the individual practitioner it is a little more difficult to determine whether Buddhist practice actually creates peace in the social or political domain. This is, of course, the claim of some early Buddhist writings – those concerned with the mythology of the *cakkavatti*, for example – and of many contemporary adherents. But what does the premodern historical record tells us about whether Buddhist conduces to an absence of conflict in the political sphere? I fear that the evidence is not especially encouraging.

2. Challenging Unrighteous Rule:

The standard view of Theravāda statecraft has been that a polity works best when it is directed by a leader who bases his rule, admittedly in some rather imprecise manner, on the model of Asoka – the stereotypical righteous ruler. By governing according to the *dhamma* his subjects prosper, the *sangha* flourishes, and the realm is at peace. But as any cursory study of South and Southeast Asian inscriptions makes clear, a very high proportion of Buddhist kings have been eulogized in outrageously flattering terms. Some may have been as righteous as their propaganda suggests but even in these cases they often appear to have engaged in acts of warfare.[1] Many clearly fell well short of the ideal mandated by the *dhamma* but, unfortunately, the Buddha offered no guidance on what should be done in these circumstances.

One option was to grit one's teeth and wait patiently for things to improve. All conditioned things are, after all, impermanent and even the most dreadful regime must come to an end eventually. But the evidence from the history of Theravāda regions suggests that inaction may not have been the preferred option. Perhaps, Buddhists of previous ages accepted Gandhi's dictum that violence is preferable to cowardice.

2a. The Abdication Option:

Leaving death in office aside, one of the more obvious ways in which a king can address his failure in governance is through abdication in favour of a more effective substitute. The Buddha is the exemplar here since he abdicated even before taking up the reigns of power. But the *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* [D. iii. 58ff] is the *locus classicus* for such concept, although the text makes it clear that abdication can only be justified when a ruler reaches such an advanced age that his mind has shifted decisively from worldly to other-worldly concerns. The *Nimi Jātaka* (No. 541; J. vi. 95-129), in which Nimi the virtuous king of Mithilā, like his father before him, abdicates in favour of his son as soon as the royal barber indicates the presence of his first grey hair, reinforces this position.

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[1] . The conduct of warfare may not invalidate a kings claim to rule in accord with the *dhamma*. Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, for example, specifies four kinds of cakravartin:
   a. golden wheeled (*suvarna-cakravartin*) who rules all four continents
   b. silver wheeled (*rupyacakravartin*) who rules three
   c. copper wheeled (*tamracakravartin*) who rules two
   d. iron-wheeled (*ayascakravartin*) who only rules Jambudvipa (Strong 1983, 51).
The iron-wheeled *cakravartin* is also known as the armed *cakravartin* (*balacakravartin*) since his victories are achieved by means of a sword, ie. not through the peaceful means of the *suvarnacakravartin*. It seems that many powerful as otherwise righteous Burmese kings claimed to be *balacakravartin* (Sunait Chutiaranond 1988, 49-50).

Canonical writings appear largely unconcerned about the abdication of kings for political reasons. Indeed, we have only one example to draw upon. The legendary figure Bhaddiya quit his throne with some reluctance and only after insistent requests by his younger brother who wished to take his place. Nevertheless, on entering the *sangha* Bhaddiya Thera, the "chief among monks of noble birth" (*uccakulikānaṃ*) reached *arahantship* during his first rainy season spent as a monk.[2] Having achieved the ultimate goal and dwelling beneath a remote tree Bhaddiya was heard to regularly repeat the phrase "*Aho sukhaṃ, aho sukhaṃ*". When questioned on this by the Buddha Bhaddiya referred to the great fear of assassination he had experienced as a king. Now, by contrast, he dwelt free from anxiety.[3]

Despite the fact that the monastic life is depicted in far more rosy tones than that enjoyed by a monarch Bareau (1993, 15) has concluded that in Buddhist history, as opposed to legend, it was extremely rare for kings to abdicate and ordain simply for personal reasons. When abdication happened it was forced by the influence of by a rival prince or enemy sovereign. Under such conditions the profession of a monk decidedly trumps exile or death even if it fall some way short of controlling an empire.

The medieval Khmer historical record helps us here. Illness is supposed to have been the cause of the first abdication of Jayajeṭṭhā III (reigned 1677-1695; 1696-1700; 1701-1702) in favour of his mother. Jayajeṭṭhā then spent time away from state affairs in robes at Wat Preah Sugandh Mean Bon, Udong (Mak Phœun 1995, 381) where, assisted by his supreme patriarch, he revised the country's laws after having recognized that they were too severe and did not accord with the Buddha's teachings (Leclère 1899, 506). That Jayajeṭṭhā returned to the throne, abdicated, and then ruled once more gives a good insight into the instability of the time, for we know that this was a period when Cambodia was under intense pressure from Siam.[4]

These are clearly not the kinds of abdications envisaged in the *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* or the *Nimi Jātaka* but serial abdication is a recurring feature of Cambodian political life, arguably reaching its apogee in the career of Norodom Sihanouk. He has relinquished the throne twice, first in 1955 and again in 2004, although on neither occasion was he forced to do so.[5] The second of the two abdications is, from our perspective, of little interest. He was relinquishing little more than a minor sinecure and he was, in any case, getting old, ill and increasingly

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[2] . A. i. 23

[3] . Thag. 842-865; Vin. i. 183; J. i. 140

[4] . This attitude of withdrawal appears to have been shared by other high-ranking individuals. *IMA* 38, the so-called Grande Inscription d'Angkor, dated 1701 CE, records the fact that a minister, Jaiya Nan, ordained a total of five times in a relatively short period.

[5] . Sihanouk, although at that time a simple Prince, was also ousted from power in a military coup in early 1970.

frustrated with the country's political theatre.[6] But as the 1950s unfolded and Sihanouk became increasingly anxious to shrug off French tutelage, his ability to exercise power was significantly frustrated by a hostile National Assembly and the depredations of various rebel groupings. His solution was to launch a crusade to break the link between the country and its colonialist overlord. In the process he would become the "father of Cambodian independence" and steal the fire from other nationalist organizations. The strategy was a success and, beyond the retention of a couple of economic assets, the French relinquished their authority in October 1953. In 1955 Sihanouk abdicated in favour of his father, Suramarit. He could now enter the political arena as *samdech upayuvareach* (the Prince who has been King), and as a private citizen he quickly formed a political movement, the People's Socialist Community (*Sangkum Reastr Niyum*) whose platform was more commonly referred to as "Buddhist socialism".

Against a background of violence, intimidation, and good old-fashioned fraud, the *Sangkum* won all of the seats in the National Assembly, with around seventy-five per cent of the total vote, in the 1955 elections. In order to justify his abdication and his bid for continuing power Sihanouk appealed to the well-known legend of Ta Trasak Pha'em, a legendary ruler of Cambodia, possibly based on fourteenth century reality, who overthrew the reigning dynasty with the consent of the people.[7]

2b. Assassination as a Means of Dealing with Misrule:

Cambodia seems to have had an especially bad time with its rulers in the post-Angkorian period. Some were exemplary from the Buddhist perspective, but others were not. To give one example, the Cambodian chronicles tell us that, when Cau Bañā Ñoṃ (r.1600-1602) came to the throne at the age of 16, he neither observed the ten royal virtues nor supported Buddhism. He drank alcohol, hunted and engaged in debauchery. As a consequence the kingdom suffered drought, famine,

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[6] . The new king, Sihamoni, was selected from senior male members of the royal house by a five-person Council of the Throne that included the head monks (*sanghareach*) of Cambodia's two Buddhist monastic orders.

[7]. Ta Trasak Pha'em 's name refers to the fact that he was originally a gardener famed for growing deliciously sweet cucumbers. The reigning king was especially fond of these fruits and fearing that they might be stolen had ordered his gardener to kill any unauthorized entrants to his garden. But overwhelmed by a strong desire during the rainy season when such foodstuffs are scarce, the king himself entered one night and was dispatched according to the orders he had given. Because of his horticultural skills and the fact that he had never disobeyed the dead king's orders, the gardener inherited the throne. The allegory works on a number of levels, but by drawing on this legend Sihanouk was able to replace the idea of rule by traditional quasi-divine right with a slightly more democratic and popular notion of exclusive political power. In this transmogrification the people became his "kinsmen" (Jacob 1986, 124) and now he frowned on the use of Indian-derived honorifics, preferring a colloquial style of address. For his supporters he was now just common-or-garden *samdech euv* (His Excellency, Dad).

disease and brigandage. Tigers entered the villages and meteors fell on the royal palace. His grandmother called on the king of Ayutthaya for help and Bañā Ñom was tied in a sack and drowned at Phnom Penh. It is said that a famous senior monk, Kaev Brah Bhloen, supervised the act (Mak Phœun 1995, 95 n.59).

But non-Buddhist rulers in Cambodia did not always invoke such high levels of disquiet. In 1642 a group of Malays supported the rebellion of a Khmer prince who subsequently seized the throne as Rāmādhipatī I (r.1642-1658). However, as king of Cambodia he embraced Islam and changed his name to Sultan Ibrahim even though he said to have engaged in intensive meditational practice (*kammaṭṭhan*) at Wat Preah Put Leay Leak, Babaur, as a young man (Mak Phœun 1995, 253). The chronicles refer to him as Rama the "apostate" (Rāmā cūl sāṣ).[8] But, an inscription at Wat Srei Toul, Kompong Thom province [K.166] records Rāmādhipatī's donation of a hundred pagoda slaves, a hundred rice fields, and musical instruments to Wat Prasat Pi sometime after his conversion. He clearly continued to support Buddhism and his Buddhist identity appears to have been reconfirmed after death, when his ashes were interred in royal funerary monuments, either in Prei Nokor (Saigon) or in Udong (Harris 2004, 42-3). When Rāmādhipatī was eventually overthrown, the next king, Ang Sūr (1659-1672), re-established the royal patronage of Buddhism - a fact demonstrated by an upsurge in Khmer inscriptions at Angkor shortly after his inauguration - and Cambodia's Muslims do not appear to have suffered any systematic persecution as a result (Mak Phœun 1990, 65f).

This remarkable expression of tolerance stands in some contrast to the case of another great Buddhist benefactor, the Kandyan king Kīrti Śrī (r. 1751-1782). Despite very significant material contributions to the resurgence of Buddhism, including a grand *sangha* purification followed the establishment of a new Thai ordination lineage in 1753 (Holt 1996, 23f), Kīrti Śrī had one major disadvantage. He was not born Sinhalese but, instead, came from a Tamil-speaking South Indian Śaivite background. As such he had incurred the wrath of many alienated Kandyan nobles. Accusing the king of being a "Tamil heretic", in 1760 they planned his assassination.

Kīrti Śrī's own *sangharāja*, Saranaṃkara, appears to have joined a conspiracy to kill the king that involved placing a Siamese prince – at that time disguised as a monk dwelling at the Malvatta vihāra - on the throne in his stead. The king was invited to a ceremony and requested to sit on a throne precariously balanced over a pit of sharpened spikes. But had been alerted to the plot and chose to listen to proceedings in a standing position. The plot failed (Dewaraja 1971, 121f). But as

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[8] . Tradition has it that that Rāmādhipatī's apostacy happened after a famous Cham-Javanese priest, used a love filtre to cause the king to fall in love with a Cham princess (Hickey 1982, 129). Islamic magic, then, made the king forget his ancestral responsibilities to Buddhism.

Evers has noted, there are some illuminating parallels between this event and the successful monastic assassination of the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, almost exactly two hundred year's later on 25 September 1959 (Evers 1969, 687, n. 10).[9]

The monarchical career of Taksin (r. 1767-1782) emerged from the ashes of the Burmese destruction of Ayutthaya in April 1767. Following this traumatic defeat a number of power centres materialized including a "kingdom" at Fang presided over by a group of monks who had previously constituted Ayutthaya's northern *sangha*. The patriarch of this monastic grouping acting as "king" (Lingat 1958) soon took control of Phitsanulok - hence his title, Čhao Phitsanulok – but "puffed up with the conceit that he possessed vast stores of merit" he died of a coughing fit seven days after his consecration in 1768. Taksin took heart from this and laid title to the whole of the previous Ayutthayan domains very soon afterwards.

Against a background of insurrection led by surviving members of the Ayutthayan royal line Taksin is supposed to have said "If anyone is more fitted than I to assume this royal responsibility, I will give the crown to him and seek the solitary ascetic life".[10] Whoever, very far from abdicating, Taksin consolidated his temporal and spiritual powers. He personally conducted a purification of the northern *sangha* to counteract opposition from followers of the deceased Čhao Phitsanulok, and also sponsored a recopying of the Tripitaka, along with a variety of other traditional Buddhist acts. But Taksin's most ill-advised move was to claim to have gained the status of stream-entry (*sotāpanna*) made, perhaps, in conscious imitation of Bimbisāra, king of Magadha. He also desired that the new kingdom's monks should venerate him even though the notion that monks should bow before a king is contrary to tradition and at variance with the advice give by the Buddha to Ajātasattu in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*. Some members of the *sangha* appear to have been happy to felicitate Taksin in this way, as the *Praises offered by the Sangha to Somdet Phra Chao Krung Thonburi* [ie. Taksin] testifies:

The King is the mainstay of the lineage of sprouts of Buddhahood.

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[9] . Bandaranaike was shot dead by a monk called Talduvē Somārāma. His orders came from Ven. Mapitigama Buddharakkhita, chief monk of the very wealthy Siyam Nikāya temple just outside Colombo. For further information, see Weeramantry 1969.

[10] *Chotmaihet raiwanthap samai Krung Thonburī khrao prap muang Phutthaimat lae Khamen* (Daybook of the Campaign to Cambodia and Phuttaimat in the Thonburi period), *Prachum Phongsāwadān* (Corpus of Chronicles) part 66 (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1969) pp. 228-9 – quoted in Gesick 1983, 97, n. 18.

. . . He will gain omniscience . . . His Majesty accomplishes the ten perfections . . . Without fail he constantly offers the four requisites to the *bhikkhu-sangha* who possess the virtues of ethical conduct.[11]

But others were not. The resulting tensions would quickly lead to rebellion and even Taksin himself had to acknowledge that his "store of merit…[had] run out". He relinquished the throne and requested that he undergo ordination as a monk. Instead he was was declared insane for having claimed *sotāpanna* status, arrested, sealed in a velvet sack and bludgeoned to death on 7 April 1782; a punishment against dishonesty and injustice (*āsat āthamma*) justified in the Royal Chronicles in the following manner:

> By the very fact that he has acted against the Dhamma, (though he is King) he is the enemy of the kingdom, and this will not be allowed to go unheeded. It is thus meet that he should be punished.[12]

2c. Foreign Rule and Holy Men Rebellion:

As we have already seen, examples of monk-rule are attested by the historical records of premodern Theravāda Asia. But the nature of the sources available to scholarship makes it extra-ordinarily difficult to be precise about the origin and character of such, often short-lived, political experiments. The same can be said of holy man rebellions, especially when we reflect on the fact that relevant evidence for these period outbreaks tended to be generated by colonial authorities.

Although there is no necessary connection between rebellion and rule by a foreign power it must be admitted that such manifestations were fairly frequent in the European colonial period; not the least because it appears to have been virtually impossible for a Khmer to envisage any non-Khmer (the same principle applies to Burma, Thai, etc.) as the ultimate protector of their religion.

Let us take Cambodia as an example. [13] Buddhist-inspired uprisings predate the arrival of European influence in the region. A rebellion of 1820, led by Kai, a

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[11] . Dated lesser *śaka* era 1141 (1779 CE) and quoted by Skilling (2007, 190).

[12] . Quoted by Ishii 1986, 46

[13] . For a detailed discussion of Buddhist-inspired rebellion in Cambodia, see Harris 2004, 131ff. For holy men rebellions in Burma, see Aung-Thwin, Maitrii. 2003. 'Genealogy of a Rebellion Narrative: Law, Ethnology and Culture in Colonial Burma' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34/3; 393-419, Bečka, Jan. 1991. 'The Role of Buddhism as a Factor of Burmese National Identity in the Period of British Rule (1886-1948)' *Archív Orientální* 59; 389-405 and Herbert, Patricia. 1982. *The Hsaya San Rebellion (1930-1932) Reappraised* Melbourne: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies [Working Paper No. 27]; On Thailand - Chattip Nartsupha. 1984. 'The Ideology of Holy Man Revolts in North East Thailand' in Andrew Turton and Shigeharu Tanabe (eds.) *History and Peasant Consciousness in Southeast Asia* Osaka: National Museum of Ethnography; pp. 111-134, Murdoch, John B. 1974. '1901-2 "Holy Man's Rebellion"' *Journal of the Siam Society* 62/1; 47-66 and Wilson,

monk who claimed supernatural powers, was precipitated by the oppressive conditions endured by some five thousand Khmer labourers forced to work on the reconstruction of the Vinh Te Canal during a period of Vietnamese dominance. Ven. Kai was subsequently declared king (*chieu vuong*) at the holy site of Ba Phnom in Southeast Cambodia.[14] He intended to take Phnom Penh, but was killed with a number of other monks by a Vietnamese military force near Kompong Cham. We know of his exploits largely from a Khmer poem (dated 1869) that glorifies Kai, and his assistant, the novice monk Kuy, who eventually escaped to live among the Lao. The pair recruited followers through a combination of sermonizing, the practice of magico-medical rites, and prophecy. Kai's store of merit was said to be high at the beginning of the campaign, but this was soon depleted. His "amulets and charms had lost their power." In true millennial fashion, when Kai's force was defeated "the sky grew dark and serious floods broke out elsewhere in the kingdom" (Chandler 1973, 105). Another short-lived insurrection broke out around Ba Phnom in 1840. One of its instigators is reported to have said, "We are happy killing Vietnamese. We no longer fear them; in all our battles, we are mindful of the three jewels - the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha*" (*ibid.* 154).[15]

In 1865-7 a rather more serious revolt against Cambodia's king Norodom and his French "protectors" was incited by Po Kambo, a former monk supposedly armed with the sacred sword (*preah khan*) of Cambodian kingship. Po Kambo claimed royal ancestry and having rallied support at Wat Phnom, Phnom Penh Po Kambo is reported to have raised an army of ten thousand that included many monks in robes and holy men (*neak sel*). The aim was to overthrow the puppet monarchy and install Po Kambo on the throne. The insurrection lasted almost two years but Po Kambo was finally cornered in Kompong Thom province, pursued to the centre of a lake and beheaded.

Similar events were taking place in Myanmar around the same time. To give one example - in early July 1888 a rebellion against the British broke out in Tharrawaddy district. Led by U Thuriya, a monk who rode an elephant into battle, it was rapidly suppressed by the authorities. Some 86 of the two hundred rebels were

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Constance M. 1997. 'The Holy Man in the History of Thailand and Laos' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 28/2; 345-364

[14] . His followers seem mainly to have been recruited in the area around Tay Ninh, an area with a long history of millennial activity.

[15] Long standing antipathy towards the Siamese has also been a cause of Buddhist-inspired agitation in Cambodia up to the present day. An 1898 tax rebellion of cardamon collectors in Siam-controlled Battambang province is a case in point. Led by a certain Ta Kae and a Vietnamese magician-monk called Sau, the uprising is celebrated in the popular early twentieth century poem, *The Battle of Ta Kae in the Cardamom Mountains* by Ukñā Suttantaprījā Ind, a prominent Battambang-based monk intellectual. In one of the more significant Buddhist-inspired moments in the story, Sau manages to prevent large-scale violence by asking that some captive Thai officials should be offered to him as alms, thus saving their lives. For more on Achar Ind, see Hansen 2007, 62-63 & 70-75.

arrested and three sentenced to death. However U Thuriya was never apprehended and he came to be known as the "monk general" (*pongyi bo*). Between late 1885 and Jun 1890 13 similar rebellions occurred in "Lower Burma", at least four of which were led by monks who also took military titles (Ito 1987, 214-5 & 218).

We should, however, be careful to avoid interpreting such outbreaks in simple proto-nationalist terms. They always contained magical and chiliastic undertones. The case of Ngo Prep is instructive here. We first hear of him in 1889-90 when, posing as a traditional healer and itinerant Buddhist monk he unsuccessfully tried to raise a rebellion against the French in the Mekong delta region of Cochinchina. Shortly thereafter he withdrew to the province of Treang where he fell in with a number of veterans of previous insurrections. Believing that Preah Bat Thommit, the future Buddha Maitreya, would be reborn and establish a millennial kingdom in 1899, Ngo Prep and his followers proclaimed a new and harmonious unified Viet-Khmer state in which he would act as the chief minister of a cabinet composed of Cambodian, French and Vietnamese dignitaries (Harris 2004, 132).

3. Theravāda in the Modern Period:

Although it is difficult for us to uncover the true, and no doubt multiple, motivations that lay behind these events and personalities treated above it is clear that most of these attempts to overthrow unpopular rulers or to establish alternative polities had a reasonably clear Buddhist dimension. Many of these manifestations, furthermore, cannot be regarded as intrinsically peaceful. We may be inclined to adopt one of extreme positions mentioned at the beginning of this paper and simply dismiss them as vile distortions of the Buddha's original message. But I would advise caution. Like the virus with its twofold structure of genetic material and protein casing, Buddhism consists of an intimate blending of *dhamma* and *sāsana*. For the former to survive it requires the protection of the latter. But if socio-political circumstances produce conditions that prevent the Buddha's teachings from flourishing then conflict may [regrettably] be justified to restore the balance. Appleby, in my view, gets it about right when he says that religions "…have legitimated certain acts of violence, they have also attempted to limit the frequency and scope of those acts" (*op cit*).

So far we have confined our attention to the premodern Theravāda, but what of the modern period? Anagarika Dharmapala, in many respects the quintessential modern Buddhist, is a transitional figure. But his career shows just how difficult it was for him to balance the universalistic claims of the *dhamma* with the particularism associated with his own position as a Sinhala Buddhist convert. As Roberts (1997) has so convincingly demonstrated by careful reference to the diaries, Dharmapala had

originally been drawn into the Buddhist fold through his contacts with the Theosophists. Theosophy had placed special emphasis on the unity of "humanity", on the notion of a confederation of all religions, and on a commitment to anti-dogmatism, all of which Dharmapala carried through into the early stages of his Buddhist activism. But as his work with the Maha Bodhi Society got mired down in difficulties and as he sloughed off his earlier admiration for European culture and religion he slowly parted company with his fellow Theosophists to become, as noted by Obeyesekere among others, a Sinhala zealot and Buddhist bigot. By rejecting that original "liberal cosmos" and by abandoning a perspective that embraced all religions Dharmapala would transmogrify into an exclusivistic, sectarian and conflictual figure (Roberts 1997, 1015) who in his later writings would find no problem in justifying the Ceylonese anti-Muslim programs of 1915, for example.

But Dharmapala, and Buddhist modernism more generally, provides a partial key to the better understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and the concept of peace understood as the absence of social and political conflict. As a virtual outsider his early preoccupations were very much with the brotherhood of humanity and the unity of religions but as he worked his way into the historical particularities of his own Sinhala tradition he became much more aware of its fragility and its corresponding need for protection. This seems to be a very old story.

Now as a genre writing on "Buddhism and Peace" has had a short history. My preliminary survey of the holdings of the British Library [65 works in all languages catalogued under this heading] and the Library of Congress [166 works] is quite revealing. Much of this material has a strong tendency to prioritize *dhamma* over *sāsana*. In other words it transposes an individualistic and subjective understanding of peace into the socio-political domain, in a manner entirely consistent with the tenets of "protestant Buddhism" as expounded by Dharmapala in the early stages of his engagement with the tradition.

The earliest of these works date from 1922 and 1941. [16] The next publication to deal with the subject is a lecture by K.N. Jayatilleke given to the International Fellowship on Reconciliation, a Christian Pacifist organization, at Oxford on 8 April 1961, and issued as a Wheel Publication in the following year. In his introductory comments Jayatilleke (1962, 1) maintains that all contemporary religions believe that they must strive for peace and continues by posing the following intriguing question: "[I]s it the case that our talk about these things is devoid of meaning and has only an emotive significance for us and some of our hearers?"

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[16]. *Sekai heiwa to Bukkyō* (World Peace and Buddhism) Bukkyō Bunka Kyōkai, 1922 [http://lccn.loc.gov/80811377] , *An Appeal for Peace from Thailand* Bangkok: Thai Commercial Press, 1941 [http://lccn.loc.gov/42004246]

The 1970s marks a period of gentle growth in the genre largely as a result of the activities of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace [ABCP], an organization founded in Ulan Bator in 1970. In reality the ABCP was a vector for the foreign policy of the USSR in East and Southeast Asia, and one needs to be a little careful in interpreting its publications which were mainly proceedings of conferences held in various Asian regions to help combat American imperialism. The emphasis on peace here clearly has a quite specific and paradoxical meaning. The great growth in publishing on Buddhism and peace, however, starts in the mid 1980s and it has mushroomed since that time.

How should we account for the fact that Buddhism and peace was not a traditional genre of Buddhist writing and why is it that it has only developed in the post World War II period? The answer to the first half of the question is really quite simple. As has been observed elsewhere, "Buddhism has no explicit body of social and political theory comparable to its psychology and metaphysics" and as I have been trying to argue institutional Buddhism did not concern itself in any significant manner with these questions in the pre-modern period.

The second part of the question is a little more complex but I would suggest that it is related to geo-political factors. The most pervasive and general of these is the gradual growth of global liberal religiosity that has caused all of the major traditions to reformulate themselves in increasingly universalistic terms. By slowing loosening the bonds that held it to particular locales and cultures Buddhism, like all other great religions, has slowly migrated out of its previous geographical boundaries – Thailand, Tibet, etc - and been obliged to face in the direction of "humanity". When the "other", quite often regarded as the enemy in former times, transmogrifies into a brother or a sister a concern for peaceful co-existence quite naturally rises to the surface. We have already seen that Anagarika Dharmapala, one of Buddhism's great contributors to the ideal of transnational Buddhism, was forced to wrestle with this new paradox.

But we can also point to more specific events in the history of post-war Asian that also contributed to the precipitation of these changes. One instance of great significance would be Japan's defeat in World War II. Various scholars (eg. Arisaka 1996 & Victoria 2006) have pointed to a high level of collusion between some prominent Japanese Buddhists and the general war effort. Yet this was followed by a very radical shift towards Buddhist peace activism after 1945 (Stone 2000). Other factors include the impact of the philosophy of "non-alignment" following the Bandung Conference of April 1955, the influence of the Buddha Jayanti - the great celebration of international Buddhist fellowship of 1956/7, the fallout from the Chinese invasion of Tibet and its resulting diaspora of Buddhist monks the most prominent of whom, the Dalai Lama, has almost single-handedly established the

discourse of Buddhism and peace, and the unique circumstances of Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar.

The matter was well encapsulated by U Chan Htoon, Attorney-General of "Burma", when, in 1950, he claimed that, "Buddhism is the only ideology which can give peace to the world and save it from war and destruction" (quoted in Ling 1979, 135). Let us now contextualize. He was speaking at a time when Buddhist intellectuals, many of whom had participated in their country's struggles for independence, were picking up the pieces after the "Christian powers" had unleashed total war on the world. They were also waking up to the fact that increasingly popular attempts to blend Buddhism and Marxism would fail on the grounds of the latter's addiction to violence. There can be little doubt that Buddhism's somewhat simplistic recasting of itself as a religion of peace owes a great deal to the conditions of modernity.

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Spiritual and Familial Continuities in Burma's 'Secular' Politics'

Gustaaf Houtman, PhD
Royal Anthropological Institute/University of British Columbia

Politics as *samsara/loka* aiming for *nibbana:*

Although rarely evident in English, Buddhist concepts and practices tend to feature prominently in the way Burmese leaders phrase solutions to political problems for their 'publics' in their own vernacular. We need to come to grips with such nuances especially in the way they construe paths in *loka* and towards *nibbana*.[1]

For example, dating three weeks before the British dethroned and deported King Thibaw to India is an oft-cited order of his from 7 November 1885. In this he stated that 'Those heretics the English *kalas* having most harshly made demands calculated to bring about the impairment and destruction of our religion, the violation of our national traditions and customs..... to uphold the religion, to uphold the national honor, to uphold the country's interests... will gain for us the important result of placing us in the path to the celestial regions and to Nibbana.'[2] In associating the country's hopeful destiny with the path to *nibbana*, he at the same time asserted a subsequently oft-cited ideal for liberation from colonial and post-colonial politics that has persisted right up until today.

Burmese monks have expressed their fight against colonialism as an ascetic struggle for unconditional transcendent freedom of *nibbana* on a path of liberation from conditioned existence in *samsara* or *loka*, which as we have seen in Thibaw's assertion, it is the duty of the king to support.[3] Monks were particularly active in the

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[1] Although I agree with Smith (1965:86) that Buddhism makes for a different kind of nationalism compared to, for example, Islam, I also believe he has under-estimated the way even 'secular' politicians such as Aung San and Ne Win proceeded to phrase their politics in Buddhist terms. Smith (1965:281) characterized 'religion' in Aung San's and Ne Win's politics as 'a private matter'. However, in their public vernacular rhetoric (as opposed to their English communications), both Aung San and Ne Win continued to express their political ideals in Buddhist terms.

[2] Correspondence 1874:257; Foucar 1946:133-34; Smith 1965:84; Ni Ni Myint 1983:41-42.

[3] Because the Burmese word *lutlakyei* conflates both 'national independence' and unconditioned 'freedom' (in the sense of *nibbana*, i.e. emancipation from *samsara*), such conflation introduces a homology between political and ascetic practices. For example, in the nationalist 'Song of National Independence' to the statement that 'the Noble Buddha has now attained the golden and noble land of nibbana', the reply is given as 'Lord, as for us we have not yet attained national independence (*lut-lak-yei*). Please give us national independence (*lut-lak-yei*).' (See Houtman 1999:34). If this conflates nibbana/Buddha's enlightenment with national independence, this is reinforced in the concepts of *samsara* and *loka*: the latter are used to refer to entities as varied as the personal body, village, town, nation, and plane of existence or cosmology, i.e. all forms of conditioned existence. Other references to how *nibbana* relates to national independence include Tharawaddi U Neyya, Thakin Kodawhmaing, Thakin Soe, Thakin Thant Tun, U Ba Khaing (See also Kirichenko 2004).

anti-colonial struggle after the British annexed Upper Burma.[4] Majority Buddhists perceived colonial government as broadly unsympathetic to Buddhism. In particular, removal of formal royal support from the Sangha as posing a threat to the survival of Buddha's dispensation (*sasana*), especially since monasteries were asked to serve the colonial regime's 'secular' educational ends. Furthermore, foreign boots in pagodas and monasteries enflamed local sensibilities, and these became major foci for opposition to colonial regime through the so-called 'shoe question'.[5] Judged by today's standards, resistance in the first decades of the 20th century appear backward-looking compared to later resistance led by university educated generations. In spite of political changes and variations in political ideology over time, however, vernacular rhetoric surrounding politics has been remarkably stable, continuing to run along the *loka-nibbana* axis right up until today, even in the vernacular discourse of so-called 'modernists'.

Monks such as U Ottama (1879-1939) and U Wisara (c1888-1929) played a critical role in rousing national sentiment against colonialism in the 1920s, in particular in the aftermath of the dyarchy reforms E.M. Montegu had announced for India in August 1917. Until separated in 1937, Burma was at the time ruled as part of Greater India. Sir Percy Reginald Craddock, the colonial governor of Burma between 1917-22, stated that he did not consider the Burmese ready for self-representation in the same way as the people of India, and his proposal for slower progress in the case of Burma galvanized the Burmese.[6] After two Burmese delegations visited London to argue for extension of dyarchy to Burma, British parliament eventually passed dyarchy legislation in 1921. However, by then the nationalist campaign already looked beyond reform, towards no less than national independence.

With nationalist sentiment sparked in the early 1920s, hitherto docile branches of the Young Mens Buddhist Associations (YMBA) rallied under the politically active national umbrella of the Greater Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA). An alliance of monks, the Sangha Samaggi[7] (GCSS) emerged that assumed leadership to demand no less than Home Rule. U Ottama and U Wisara appealed to Buddhist ideas for Burma in the way Gandhi did for India. U Ottama attacked dyarchy in 1921, only to be imprisoned repeatedly until he died in prison in 1939. U Wisara died in prison in 1929 while on hunger-strike. Repeated imprisonment and

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[4] Mendelson 1975:173-79 lists at least 11 monks or 'ex-monks' as having been involved in leading major rebellions in the two years after the full annexation of Upper Burma in 1886. See also Cady 1958: 130-40.

[5] Khin Yi (:122-24,1fo27). Ranging from At a Dobama meeting of 26 Jan 1939 Thakin leaders question right of military authorities to enter pagoda compounds with shoes on.

[6] Craddock published his proposals in December 1919 (Cady 1958:201-12).

[7] Also known as General Council of the Sangha Samettgyi (Mendelson 1975:202-3) or Sangha Sameggi Aphwegyoke (Maung Maung 1989:3), or General Council of Sangha Samettggi (Cady 1958:250; Smith 1965:106), as with later similarly named monastic organizations that emerged to help organize the Saffron Revolution, this monastic group appeared as a surprise to the colonial authorities.

criminalization of these monks under civil rather than monastic courts confirmed the impression that the Sangha and the *sasana*, and therefore the moral fiber of society as a whole, were under duress by the weight of the colonial order. This further galvanized nationalist sentiment.

Ottama argued that Burmese were being slaves to the British and that, as a result, Nibbana was now a more distant prospect than ever. In 1921 he gave sermons in which he claimed that, were the Buddha alive, he would not preach on politics but on Nibbana. As slaves to the British, they have no opportunity to attain Nibbana without a prior political struggle: 'When Lord Buddha was alive, man had a predilection for Nirvana. There is nothing left now. The reason why it is so is because the government is English… *Pongyi*s pray for Nirvana but slaves can never obtain it, therefore they must pray for release from slavery in this life.'[8]

U Wisara characterized the British as 'wrong-viewed' (in the Buddhist sense), and encouraged monks and laity to attain 'right view' by meditating jointly to 'eliminate the mental defilements so as to attain nibbana'.[9] The GCSS, of which both monks were lead members, exhorted its members to preach 'The Four Noble Truths of Loki Nibbana' in which the path to freedom from *samsara* coincided with national independence under the headings of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths as follows:

1. The Truth of Suffering, P. *dukkha sacca* (The truth of suffering of the country)
2. The Truth of The Origin of Suffering, P. *samudaya sacca* (The causes of suffering of the country)
3. The Truth of The Cessation of Suffering, P. *nirodha sacca* (The truth of freedom-national independence of the country)
4. The Truth of The Way Leading to The Cessation of Suffering, P. *magga sacca* (Loki Nibbana – the attainment of freedom-national independence of the country)[10]

This homology between person and country converging in *Loka Nibbana* suggests Buddhist asceticism as an instrument of choice simultaneously for both, for cessation of suffering on the Buddhist path and for political action necessary to attain an

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[8] *Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget* 11 July, 19 September 1921; Smith 1965:96; see also Ottama 1967: 51 as cited in Kirichenko. The term for 'I' in Burmese is effectively 'slave to the king' (*kyundaw*) and in the monastic ordination, candidates are asked whether they are 'free from service to the king' (which also means 'are you a revolutionary' *taw hlanthela*). Renowned monks are often referred to as 'revolutionaries' (*taw hlanthu)*, whether they were meditators and instructors of meditation, or whether they addressed the political realm with protests of various kinds.
[9] Lwin (1971:42). In this phrasing, politics and meditation end up on the same side in a manner that explains very well, for example, the apparently 'irrational' acts committed by Prime Minister U Nu who, at the height of political crises, would withdraw into meditation at his favorite meditation centre.
[10] Lwin (1971:65–67). See also Sarkisyanz (1965:125) and Kodawhmaing (1938:181), Houtman (1999:34).

independent nation state. In short, the implication is that to meditate is also to 'do politics'.

Aung San (1915-47):

Laity took over the mantle of leadership from monks in the 1930s, but the Buddhist overtones of this earlier monastic message proved unshakable: leaders continued to formulate the highest political values as a path towards emancipation from *samsara*, be it with a few surprising twists. For example, Aung San (1915-47), whose communications were politically influential long after his time, formulated the domain of politics no longer as the entire path to *nibbana* but as a select one, namely as dealing chiefly with the *samsara* or *loka* part of this path:

> As a matter of fact, politics knows no end. It is Samsara in operation before our eyes, the Samsara of cause and effect, of past and present, of present and future which goes round and round and never ends.[11]

> Politics is but politics. It is not working towards the attainment of *nibbana*. However, beginning with ourselves let us not play dirty. Let us not be bad. It is necessary to watch out.[12]

> In truth, politics is mundane affairs [*loki yeì*]. Politics is not the means to *nibbana* [*neikban yauk chaung*]. Nevertheless, only if there is a mundane sphere [*loka*] can there be a supramundane [*lokuttara*]. And only if there is a supramundane can the mundane world be steady? Only when the stomach is full, can one observe morality (*umá taung hmá thilá saúng hnaing thi*) [and therefore *nibbana* attained].[13]

As a new generation of secular educated students from Rangoon University, in the late 1930s Aung San swiftly distinguished his own brand of politics from the preceding monastic-led version. However, he never dissociated his politics from a Buddhist world-view as some have argued. He merely proclaimed politics explicitly as 'not *nibbana*' but about *loka*[14] or *samsara*. Politics provides basic necessities: it

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[11] 'Problems for Burma's freedom'. Presidential address to the First Congress of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), 20 January 1946. Aung San (1971:59).
[12] *Yweìkaukpwè thadí peì gyet* (Warning before the elections), Election radio broadcast, 13.3.47. (Aung San 1971:219-224; Kyaw Yin 1969a:210-217).
[13] *Nainganyei amyo myo* (Various arts of politics). (*Dagon Magazine*, February-March 1940/November 1948/January-February 1985; Kyaw Yin 1969b,1:15-34; Mya Han 1998:89-113; 2000:50-61). The stock phrase about socialism as focusing on the stomach was used by Ne Win as his chief credo for his version of socialism until 1971, when this was replaced with another of Aung San's sound-bites, namely of socialism as *byama-so tayà*. See also Maung Maung 1969:432.
[14] Aung San's assertion of politics as a 'social science' links *loka* into politics as a component of the Burmese word for 'science' (*loka hdat*). He also referred to politics as a 'secular science' (for a discussion of this see Houtman 1999:244,254-58).

ensures stomachs are filled so that Burma's citizens can observe morality i.e. that sustains as the foundation for the path to *nibbana*. By explaining that without *loka* to work within neither *lokuttara* nor *nibbana* can be attained (the two imply one another), he also simultaneously communicates his recognition that *nibbana* is the ultimate goal as popularly associated with Burma's political struggle. He makes clear that although his brand of politics does not pretend to take direct responsibility for *nibbana* as the immediate political destination, lest politicians only preoccupy themselves with *loka* in a selfish manner[15] he also asserts that a noble selfless mindset ('let us not play dirty'), oriented towards *nibbana*, remains critically important in statecraft.

Aung San's assertion that *nibbana* should no longer be conflated as the immediate goal of politics did not prevent him from also advocating *loka-nibbana* as the *summum bonum* of the struggle,[16] and indeed also relating the political struggle to asceticism in several other ways (he used other ascetic-laden terms such as *samadhi, metta, byama-so*). A point in case is when he urged that 'the battle for national independence is not yet finished … Let us from today, saying "starting from today, till the end of life" (*ijjatagge anupedan*), take the vow to work with all our strength so that we might attain *nibbana* in the mundane plane (*loki nibbana*)'.[17] The expression *ijjatagge anupedan* were the Buddha's last words before he entered *parinibbana* as expressed in Mahaparinibbana Sutta. In the context of widespread identification of Aung San during his leadership of the Freedom Bloc (Htwetyatgaing) with millenarian wizard Bo Bo Aung (who sought to extend his life until the advent of Arimettaya Buddha), could only add to his charisma and to the perception that he had postponed *nibbana* out of compassion and in preparation for the advent of the next Mettaya Buddha.[18]

There is no reason to expect such rhetoric conjoining ascetic and political goals to cease. Although Aung San recognized the role for monks to be limited in modern politics, he held monks exercising *metta* or loving-kindness as practicing the 'highest politics' within the mundane (*loka*):

> Reverend Sanghas! You have a tremendous role to play in world history, and if you succeed, you will be revered by the entire mankind for ages to come. This is one of your high functions ordained by your religion; and this is the highest politics which you can do for your country and people. Go amongst

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[15] In Burmese, 'knowledge of *loka*' (*loki pyinnya*) lit. means 'magic' and Aung San on several occasions dissociated his politics from this kind of activity..

[16] Aung Thàn (1969:15–24). This dilemma of modernists not wanting to abrogate 'traditional' messages has also been raised in respect of Thakin Lay Maung using the term *loka neikban* for socialism in 1931, as did other Dobama members (see Khin Yi 1988:37).

[17] Aung San (1971:241).

[18] E.g. See also Praeger 2003; Houtman 1999:238-41.

our people, preach the doctrine of unity and love [*metta*]; carry the message of higher freedom to every nook and corner of the country, freedom to religious worship, freedom to preach and spread the Dharma anywhere and anytime, freedom from fear, ignorance, superstition, etc., teach our people to rely upon themselves and re-construct themselves materially spiritually and otherwise. You have these and many more noble tasks before you…. (Aung San 1946b 'Problems for Burma's freedom' Presidential Address at the First Congress of AFPFL, 20 January).

In this sense, Burmese monks going out in procession on Burmese city streets in September 2007, reciting *metta sutta* and sending loving-kindness to all sentient beings, was in line with Aung San's view of their role in politics; Aung San, in turn, as we have already seen, had enunciated a political message compatible with the legacy of Buddhist teachings the way he inherited this from earlier monastic political leadership in Burma.

If lay leaders such as Aung San from the 1930s onwards introduced 'secular' political philosophies to distinguish themselves from earlier Sangha-led politics, they evidently did not do so at the cost of vernacular Buddhist rhetoric. Indeed, largely because philosophical concepts employed in *Das Kapital* were translated in Pali loanwords that expressed Buddhist philosophical ideas, even today, many Burmese interpret Marx as a great Buddhist thinker for whom *loka-nibbana* was not only the ultimate classless society but also freedom and independence as the Buddha taught.

Space does not permit full treatment of the Buddhist concepts Aung San used in his communications (e.g. Aung San wrote an essay on politics as originating with the emergence of mental defilements as recounted in the origin myths in *Aggañña sutta* and in *Manugye*, he wrote an essay denying he had as much *samadhi* as he was reputed to have, and he used references to *byamaso* or *brahmavihara*).

My point here is to demonstrate that generations of 'secular' leaders since the British colonial period have retained the very key-points of political discourse by the sangha leaders, namely as operating along *loka-samsara* vs. *lokuttara-nibbana* axes, and that any differentiation is chiefly about the way they relate these concepts. Leaders see themselves responsible for supporting citizens on this path as a political project: is it only partially (as Aung San asserted), or all the way to *nibbana* (the latter was the more extreme tendency of the monastic leaders of the 1920s, but also of Prime Minister U Nu immediately after national independence)? This message remains relevant in the politics of Aung San Suu Kyi also, as we shall see.

Aung San Suu Kyi (1945-):

There are several continuities between Aung San and Aung San Suu Kyi.[19] For example, the most important speeches of both father and daughter were made on the Shwedagon platform, constructed in commemoration of the Buddha's *parinibbana*. As Aung San Suu Kyi herself says about her emergence in post-1988 politics the following:

> I could not as my father's daughter remain indifferent to all that was going on. This national crisis could in fact be called the second struggle for national independence.

She models her own 'second struggle' on her father's ultimately victorious 'first': if her father was pitted against foreign colonialists and imperialists, however, she herself was pitted against the army claiming to be inheritors of her father's legacy. His memory was, in her words, 'the guardian of their [the people's] political conscience'.

Aung San Suu Kyi is one example of several other women victorious in South and Southeast Asian elections, who are connected to prior widely admired deceased leaders (as fathers and husbands). Approximately a dozen other elections in South and Southeast Asia have been successfully fought by women (4 widows plus 6 daughters), issuing into their prime ministership or presidency: ranging from the world's first female Prime minister in the widow of assassinated SWR Bandaranaike, to Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of anti-colonial freedom fighter Sukarno. However, of these, Aung San Suu Kyi has as yet been prevented from taking office last minute (see Richter 1991).

Although her party won the 1990 elections by a landslide, in its aftermath the army refused to hand over power with the excuse that the elections had been intended all along to help draft a constitution first. Had the National League for Democracy been handed the reigns of government, however, Aung San Suu Kyi would have effectively been its leader. Like her father, therefore, electoral victory was snatched away from her at the last minute.

Subjected to three long periods of house arrest since 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi has spent as much as two-thirds of her time in Burma confined to her home, and so she has had much time to reflect on her own predicament and that of her country. Both Aung San and Aung San Suu Kyi have expressed themselves as sometimes

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[19] Aung San Suu Kyi dedicates her book *Freedom from fear* to her father as follows: 'Bogyoke Aung San "When I honor my father, I honor all those who stand for political integrity in Burma".' She begins her book with an essay entitled 'My father', which she originally wrote back in 1982, and which had been published before in 1984. She did not initially aspire to be involved in politics and said herself that her intention when she arrived in Rangoon in March 1988 was 'to start several libraries in my father's honor'.

powerless in their struggle, especially given the overwhelming repression they experienced.

Sometimes they needed to assuage their followers from projecting onto them the idea that they were all-powerful. For example, Aung San sought to discourage popular perception vesting in him the role of Bo Bo Aung, an incarnate ruler awaiting Arimettaya. He said in his first AFPFL conference speech that we must 'take proper care that we do not make a fetish of this cult of hero-worship' (20 January 1946 in Aung San (1971:25). And nine months later in his 1 September 1946 speech he said that:

> At this time I am a person who is very popular with the public. But I am neither a god, wizard or magician - only a man. Not a heavenly being, I can only have the powers of a man. (Aung San (1971:140) also cited in ASSK (1991:28)).

In the case of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, it was evident from the party resolutions in the wake of the NLD conference between 27–29 September 1997 how, internally, the NLD also sought to avoid any impression of personality cults, in part as a response to such accusations. Aung San Suu Kyi has repeatedly sought to side-track her designation as a 'big leader' (gaungzaunggyi) or an 'extraordinary' person, or a saint or female bodhisattva:

> Do not think that I will be able to give you democracy. I will tell you frankly, I am not a magician. I do not possess any special power that will allow me to bring you democracy. I can say frankly that democracy will be achieved only by you, by all of you …(ASSK 1997b:212–13

The idea that Aung San Suu Kyi felt her followers and detractors attributed her with supernatural powers is treated elsewhere. However, in popular perception, supernatural power is associated with those who practice *metta*. Increasingly, Aung San Suu Kyi phrased her core political message to be encouragement of *metta* as opposed to her earlier emphasis on 'freedom from fear' and 'fearlessness'.

For example, in 1992 at the time of publication of *Freedom from fear* her overarching emphasis was on 'freedom from fear', which she understood mainly as:

> 'It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it. Most Burmese are familiar with the four *a-gati*, the four kinds of corruption. *Chanda-gati*, corruption induced by desire, is deviation from the right path in pursuit of bribes or for the sake of those one loves. *Dosa-gati* is taking the wrong path to spite those against whom one bears ill will, and *moga-gati* is aberration due to ignorance. But perhaps the worst of the four is

bhaya-gati, for not only does bhaya, fear, stifle and slowly destroy all sense of right and wrong, it so often lies at the root of the other three kinds of corruption.' (ASSK 1991:180)

She wrote that 'with so close a relationship between fear and corruption it is little wonder that in any society where fear is rife corruption in all forms becomes deeply entrenched' (ibid:180-81), and she related fear as arising from lawlessness (ibid:182) and that it was important for democracy to work for everyone to 'liberate their own minds from apathy and fear' (ibid:183). Aung San, on the other hand, she saw as standing for 'fearlessness', much in the way that Gandhi taught fearlessness (*abhaya*) (ibid:184). Essentially, throughout her freedom from fear essay, fear is portrayed as a bad quality that: corrupts, inhibits human rights, prevents pursuit of truth, and is associated with dictatorships, with lack of law and order. Yet, to overcome fear is associated with good things: her father Aung San, Gandhi, ancient Indian philosophy, revolution of the spirit.

Nevertheless, as Brekke (2002) has pointed out, fear is a complex subject in Indian soteriology: on the one hand, fear is the natural state of *samsara*, and on the other, experience of fear helps propels the exertion necessary in search for *nibbana*. The Buddha comes into the world 'both to create fear in living beings and to bestow freedom from fear' (Brekke 2002:3-4). Quite apart from the negative characterizations Aung San Suu Kyi originally gave of fear, fear also has positive connotations, i.e. fear as *ottapa,* the fear of sinning, thus preventing evil actions, and fear as *samvega,* i.e. as the ultimate fear (*samvega*) of the consequences of one's action for one's perpetuation in *samsara* (e.g. with which Dr Maung Maung ascribes Ne Win's life journey at the beginning and at the end of his biography). The monastic order thrives on the four types of fear (*abhaya*) monks have, including reproachment by laity. Conversely, fearlessness is not always positive either, in the sense that *anotappa*, having no fear of moral constraints, counts as one of the mental defilements. Of the seven types of 'martyrs' (*azani*) only the seventh, namely the *arahat*, has overcome fear for the right reason, namely fearlessness as a result of being free from mental defilements. The other six, however, lose their fear for the wrong reasons, namely as the result of having a strong 'self view' [*atta deikthi*] and 'false view of individuality' (Houtman 1999:241-42).

By the time Aung San Suu Kyi pens her *Letters from Burma* in 1995, in the wake of her release from her second period of house arrest, she devotes her first four letters to her first trip to the Thamanya Sayadaw, an extremely popular senior monk renowned for his practice of *metta*. She was deeply impressed by how Thamanya had managed to build schools and roads, all without coercion and without instilling fear; everyone donated to him because they knew the Sayadaw would deploy all resources with *metta*. She concludes on the following note:

Some have questioned the appropriateness of talking about such matters as *metta* (loving-kindness) and *thissa* (truth) in the political context. But politics is about people and what we had seen in Thamanya proved that love and truth can move people more strongly than any form of coercion (ASSK 1997a:17).

Around the same time, namely during her interviews with Alan Clements between 1995 and 1996, Aung San Suu Kyi began to characterize fear as not necessarily the fault of the regime, but as self-created in one's own mind:

ASSK: When I first decided to take part in the movement for democracy, it was more out of a sense of duty than anything else On the other hand, my sense of duty was very closely linked to my love for my father. I could not separate it from the love for my country, and therefore, from the sense of responsibility towards my people. But as time went on, like a lot of others who've been incarcerated, we have discovered the value of loving-kindness. We've found that it's one's own feelings of hostility that generate fear. As I've explained before, I never felt frightened when I was surrounded by all those hostile troops. That is because I never felt hostility towards them. This made me realize that there are a number of fundamental principles common to many religions. As Burmese Buddhists, we put a great emphasis on *metta*. It is the same idea as in the biblical quotation: 'Perfect love casts out fear.' While I cannot claim to have discovered 'perfect love', I think it's a fact that you are not frightened of people whom you do not hate. Of course, I did get angry occasionally with some of the things they did, but anger as a passing emotion is quite different from the feeling of sustained hatred or hostility. (ASSK 1997b:122)

To underline such self-created fear, she also said that:

When you really think about it, fear is rooted in insecurity and insecurity is rooted in lack of *metta* [loving-kindness]. If there's a lack of *metta*, it may be a lack in yourself, or in those around you, so you feel insecure. And insecurity leads to fear. (ASSK 1997b:4-5)

'In order to overcome your own fears you have to start first by showing compassion to others. Once you have started treating people with compassion, kindness and understanding, then your fears dissipate. It's that straightforward'. (ASSK 1997b:135)

In Aung San Suu Kyi's statement at the closing ceremony of the 9th NLD Congress on 15 October 1997, a rare event as the regime had not hitherto permitted a congress to take place, she encapsulates the significance of the NLD, the democracy movement, and the hope that the regime may change their disposition, all in terms of

this concept of *metta*. While she was under house arrest she told her captors that what they identified as 'wrongs' on the part of the powerless people should be responded to with *metta*. Furthermore, since they renounced violence, only *metta* remains for the democracy movement and the NLD to hold itself together:

> Our League may be a democratic one but we are not an organization that is unjust or repressive to others. If there are any grudges that stem from the past between our party members and the people, we will resolve them. At this time, as I have said, our party is thriving on Metta. We have no power, we have no weapons. We also don't have much money. There is also the matter of that eighty thousand dollars … (laughter). What are our foundations? It is Metta. Rest assured that if we should lose this Metta, the whole democratic party would disintegrate. Metta is not only to be applied to those that are connected with you. It should also be applied [to] those who are against you. Metta means sympathy for others. Not doing unto others what one does not want done to oneself. It means not obstructing the responsibilities of those whom one has Metta. It not only means not wanting harm to befall one's own family, but also not wanting harm to befall the families of others. So our League does [not] wish to harm anyone. Let me be frank. We don't even want to harm SLORC. But SLORC also doesn't want to harm us. Our Congress has come this far because we have managed to reach a degree of understanding with the authorities. I would like to say from here that I thank the authorities for making things possible since this morning. We do not find it a burden to give thanks where thanks are due. Not is it a burden to give credit where credit is due. So it is not true that we do not give thanks or credit where it is due. There will be thanks where thanks is due, credit where credit is due … so be good. One is never overcautious. This is a Buddhist philosophy.

> We are not working solely for the benefit of our party. We are not working to gain power. It is true, we are working for the development of democracy. Because we believe that it is only a democratic government that could benefit the country. Let me make it clear that it is not because we want to be the government. And also because we believe that it is only the people that have the right to elect a government. That is why we asked that the government be made up of people that were elected by the people. Not because we want power. Power only gives stress. Power comes with responsibility and I believe that anyone who understands that cannot be power-crazy. I know how much responsibility goes with a democracy. That is why we are not power-crazy people. We are only an organization that wants to do its utmost for the people and the country. We are an organization that is free from

grudge and puts Metta to the fore [Aung San Suu Kyi. Statement at the closing ceremony of the 9th NLD Congress, 15 October 1997].

In line with such overarching emphasis in national politics on *metta*, Aung San Suu Kyi proceeds to give the regime a choice of fulfilling two kinds of roles. They can be a Devadatta, the ever-scheming detractor of the Buddha, who does not respond to or generate *metta*, who is unwilling to listen to advice, and who is incapable of attaining enlightenment until the time of death. Or they can be an Angulimala, the fearsome killer and mutilator who, while attempting to kill the Buddha, is transformed by *metta* only to achieve enlightenment at that very moment, and who ends up making a constructive contribution to the monastic community of which he became part.

Conclusion:

That Asoka style conversions do happen is evident when by 1996, former Gen. Ne Win, who had ruled Burma with iron fist between 1962-87, called U Chit Hlaing, the author of the BSPP Program to visit him on two separate occasions, saying that he would not have taken over government back in 1962 if he had only known then what he discovered about the dhamma and the law of impermanence. It amazed U Chit Hlaing how, without hesitation, Ne Win not only took back the socio-political revolution he had advocated at the head of the military regime since 1962, but by this time explained his close interest in meditation and Buddhism. Ne Win had substituted for his socio-political revolution an alternative 'spiritual' revolution of the dhamma. His disengagement from *loka* in this manner, however, did not prevent Ne Win's successors from placing Ne Win himself under house arrest and meting out death sentences to two of his grandsons (later commuted) for an attempted coup plot. Or, perhaps his own knowledge of his impending political fate and the prospect of his impending death propelled him towards his interest in meditation.

With time, Gen. Thant Shwe will also realize that, when he retires, he himself risks being placed under house arrest by his former colleagues, as Ne Win before him: he may also try to escape fate meted out to him and his family by meditating. However, by then it may be too late, much in the way it was for Gen. Ne Win.

It is to be hoped that a new generation of military come to the fore with an open mind and serious about sharing power with popular elected parties. If history teaches a lesson at all, it is that undiluted militarism can never compete in terms of electoral eligibility with popular leaders whose political discourse addresses the political aspirations of the people, and whose actions demonstrate selfless courage to fulfill such aspirations. Historically, Buddhist ideas brought forth by candidates have

played an important role in their electoral victories, as was evident also from U Nu's repeat electoral victories.

Aung San Suu Kyi has pursued a non-violent course in her politics throughout: she has practiced *vipassana* and *metta* to tide her over long periods of incarceration under house arrest, much in the way that many other political prisoners have. She holds that it is her duty to aim for perfection, as her father advocated. Her struggle may be different from her father's in some ways, in that she did not found an army or waged war. She does, however, follow her father when, in 1990, she proclaimed her father as having said that 'with absolute sincerity and a complete lack of self-consciousness' that he 'would govern "on the basis of loving kindness and truth".' (ASSK 1991:191). It would appear that Aung San Suu Kyi has joined her father in emphasizing *metta* as the most important ingredient to her politics. When in government this may not be the only qualification for success, as it would need to be supplemented with pragmatic planning based on accurate information about the country. However, whilst biding her time, her emphasis on practice of non-violence and on *metta* surely still leaves open the possibility of a political future yet to incorporate her?

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Buddhism, Dialogue and Peace

Perry Schmidt-Leukel
Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology
University of Münster/Germany

Religion, Conflict and Peace:

It is an undisputed fact that religions have been and still are frequently involved in violent conflicts and wars. Critiques of religion, as for example David Hume (1711-76), could even say: "If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it", that is "factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversion of government, oppression, slavery".[1] A common defence, frequently advanced by religious leaders and apologists, holds that the involvement of religion in violent conflicts is due to misuse: True religion – so the argument – is always conducive to peace. If religion instigates or justifies the opposite, the motives are not genuinely religious: they are of a non-religious nature and religion is misused. In relation to Buddhism, for example, the Theravāda monk and scholar, Mahinda Deegalle, claims that: "Whatever violence found in the so-called Buddhist societies is merely a deviation from the doctrine of the Buddha and a misinterpretation of Buddha's valuable message or not leading one's life in accordance with the Buddha's teachings."[2]

The misuse-thesis, popular as it might be, is nevertheless hardly persuasive. If religion or "true religion" would always and necessarily be conducive to peace, why in all the world should anyone be able to "misuse" religion in order to instigate conflict, division, struggle, violence? If somebody wants to burn down a house, he will use petrol not water. If religion were totally and essentially peaceful, it would be impossible to misuse it. I am not denying that there are cases when religion was and is misused out of non-religious motives. But there must be something in religion itself that makes it suitable for misuse. There must be a potential in religion to foster conflict, otherwise it could not be used or "misused" to do so. Instead of merely deploring the alleged or real misuse of religion, it might be more helpful to inquire into those aspects of religion that make it prone to misuse, that is, to ask for the genuine religious roots of religious conflicts. The religious apologist could still argue, that whatever this inquiry might find, as long as this implies the potential for conflict

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[1] David Hume: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and the posthumous essays. Edited by R.H. Popkin, Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing 1983, p.82.
[2] Mahinda Deegalle: "Is Violence Justified in Theravāda Buddhism?" In: *Current Dialogue* 39 (2002), 8-17, p. 9.

it would not represent the spirit of true religion. This strategy of defence, however, would presuppose a huge chasm between "religion" and the supposedly "true religion" and might leave one wondering how it is that "religion" has allegedly so little to do with "true religion".

Some religions, or at least individual tinkers within some religions, have made attempts to identify specific religious roots of religious violence and conflicts. A particularly impressive case is the Christian inquiry into the theological roots of Christian Anti-Judaism, as for example in Rosemary Radford Ruether's classic study *Faith and Fratricide. The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press 1974). As one can clearly learn from this book – and from the subsequent discussions it triggered – this sort of self-critical introspection can be rather painful. It may touch upon central areas of one's own belief and, at times, on some of its core teachings. As Rosemary Ruether showed, it is a certain interpretation of the figure of Jesus Christ, well-grounded in the Christian tradition, that lends itself readily to produce Christian Anti-Judaism, and the amendment of this interpretation would produce radical changes in Christian self-understanding and Christian identity.

Nevertheless, even for those who might shy away from the prospect of too costly consequences, the self-critical inquiry into the religious roots of religious conflicts is indispensable. For there will be no hope to overcome the religious potential for violence – or at least to "domesticate" and control it – if we have no clear insight into the nature of this potential. One of the simple, but strong ideas of early Buddhism is that evil and suffering can only be overcome if their causes are identified and – as far as possible – removed.

Often (but by no means always) religious violence assumes the form of inter-religious violence. People like Hans Küng have therefore suggested inter-religious dialogue as the foremost antidote. He coined the nowadays-widespread slogan:

> No peace among the nations
> without peace among the religions.
> No peace among the religions
> without dialogue between the religions.

Although this has a strong initial plausibility, it needs some qualification. If my preceding argument is correct, inter-faith dialogue will only be able to foster peace among the religions if it also provides a context for a sensitive, but nevertheless rigorous, self-critical inquiry into the religious roots of inter-religious conflicts. Otherwise, any dialogue might remain superficial and without serious consequences, so that the hope attached to it would be futile.

Before I shall outline where I see the religious potential for conflict in Buddhism I would like to come back once more to the apologetic denial of such a

potential, for this – somewhat paradoxically – can provide us with an initial clue about the specific nature of the religious roots of violence. The apologist denies the existence of any genuine religious motives for the use of violence, because he or she is convinced that true religious motives are always good and violence is always bad. But what if religious people do not see some specific forms of violence or force, or their use under specific circumstances, as bad but as something good? Or if they perceive these as the lesser evil, the choice of which, measured against the possible choice of the greater evil, is in itself something good? In those cases we have a genuinely good motivation for the use of violence and because this motivation is honestly good, it is compatible with the good spirit of true religion. This aspect has not gone unnoticed by the critics of religion. The physicist and Nobel-price laureate Steven Weinberg coined the following quite fitting phrase: "With or without religion, good people can behave well and bad people can do evil; but for good people to do evil—that takes religion."[3] Let us take this insight as a guide and ask how and in which ways Buddhism has developed ideas – even good ideas – which might nevertheless harbour the seeds of conflict.

Buddhist Potential for Conflict:

In the West Buddhism enjoys the reputation of being an exceptionally peaceful religion. It might be enough to quote the following phrase from the popular sociologist and peace researcher Johan Galtung who in his various comparative assessments of the world religions' peace potential comes to the conclusion: "Chosen for Peace: only the Buddhists".[4] Such views are not just grossly simplifying – as Galtung himself would admit –, they are naïve, triumphalistic and plainly wrong. If, for example, one would raise the question whether during the history of their encounter, Christians have killed more Buddhists or Buddhists more Christians for direct religious reasons, the answer is by no means obvious.

Looking at the history of Buddhism's relations to the religious other[5] we find a broad range of tensions which led, at times, to open hostility and violent clashes. First of all, there is Buddhism's highly problematic relation to the Brahmanical or Vedic religion and later on to what is nowadays called "Hinduism". The Tipiṭaka is full of harsh polemics against almost all aspects of the Vedic religion and the early Buddhist claim that they, the followers of the Buddha, are the "true Brahmins" and not the Brahmins themselves, implies unmistakably the supersessionist claim that Brahmanism needs to be replaced by Buddhism. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya (iii 221f)

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[3] Steven Weinberg: *A Designer's Universe?* http://www.physlink.com/Education/essay_weinberg.cfm
[4] Johan Galtung: *Religions, Hard and Soft*, http://www.crosscurrents.org/galtung.htm; see also his *Buddhism: A Quest for Unity and Peace*, Colombo 1993.
[5] Cp. Perry Schmidt-Leukel (ed.): *Buddhist Attitudes to Other Religions*. St. Ottilien: EOS 2008.

Brahmins are compared to dogs – with the dogs doing better. When Emperor Aśoka became a strong supporter of Buddhism he forbade in his edict No. 1 all animal sacrifices. This is often presented as an expression of Buddhist care for animals. In fact it meant that Brahmins were no longer allowed to pursue their priestly duties, which sent out the message that under Buddhist rule a peaceful cohabitation between followers of the Vedas and followers of the Buddha Dhamma would be impossible. Thus, after Aśoka the history of Hindu-Buddhist relations is replete with violent clashes, up until today.[6] One of the worst examples is the traditional record of the Buddhist king Duṭṭagāmaṇi (2nd or 1st ct. BCE) in the Mahāvaṃsa. His war against the non-Buddhist, that is Hindu *damiḷas*, is explicitly characterised as not a war "for the joy of sovereignty" but "to establish the doctrine of the Saṃbuddha" (25:17). As a sign of that, Duṭṭagāmaṇi put a relic of the Buddha into his royal standard. After several battles, when he had finally subdued the *damiḷas*, he felt remorse about having killed so many human beings. But eight Arahats comforted him with the words that these "unbelievers" have not been worth more than wild beasts, and that Duṭṭagāmaṇi will bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha (25:109-111). This story still plays a fateful role within the contemporary Buddhist discourse on war between the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Relationships between different Buddhist schools have also been rather tense. The Lotus-Sūtra reports that followers of its doctrines were violently attacked by Buddhists of other persuasions (cp.13) and influential Mahāyāna scriptures like the Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra or the Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra proclaim that for the defence and protection of the true Dharma the killing of the slanderers of the Dharma is justified and sometimes even necessary. In the Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra (cp. 22) the Buddha recalls how he himself, in a previous life, had killed a Brahmin who was a slanderer of the true Dharma and that he did so "out of love". We know of violent clashes between followers of Mahāyāna and Theravāda in Sri Lanka[7], between different Buddhist orders in Tibet[8] and between different Buddhist schools in Japan.[9] Rather strained were the relations between Buddhism and Chinese religions at certain periods during the first millennium and there where local oppressions of Daoists and Confucians by Buddhist rulers.[10] Tense were also the relations between Buddhists and Muslims. In India Muslims fought against Buddhists who they considered as

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[6] Cf. Perry Schmidt-Leukel: "Buddhist-Hindu Relations". In *ibid.* pp. 143-171.

[7] Cf. Walpola Rahula: *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 3rd edn., Nedimala: The Buddhist Cultural Centre 1993, pp. 90-4.

[8] Cf. Michael von Brück: *Religion und Politik im Tibetischen Buddhismus*, München: Kösel-Verlag 1999, pp. 59-67.

[9] Cf. Christoph Kleine: "Evil Monks with Good Intentions? Remarks on Buddhist Monastic Violence and Its Doctrinal Background". In: Michael Zimmermann (ed.), *Buddhism and Violence*. Lumbini: Lumbini Research Institute, pp. 65-98.

[10] Cf. Werner Eichhorn: *Die Religionen Chinas*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1973, pp. 191ff, 241ff. Kenneth Ch'en: *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. Princeton: PUP 1964, pp. 124ff, 135ff, 147ff, 184ff, 215ff, 225ff.

idolaters and/or atheists. Conversely, Buddhists dreamt in the Kālacacratantra of an eschatological war in which a future Bodhisattva king would join the forces of Hindus and Buddhist in order to defeat the Muslims.[11] Buddhist-Muslim clashes are not a matter of the past. Many are aware of the sad destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan through the Taliban in 2001, but only few people outside Thailand know about the violent clashes between Buddhists and Muslims in Southern Thailand. As far as Buddhist-Christian relations are concerned, I already indicated that these have been quite sanguinary on both sides. Portuguese Christians proceeded ruthlessly and violently against Buddhists in Sri Lanka during the 16th century, while in Japan during the 17th century Japanese Buddhists carried out the fiercest persecutions of Christianity ever seen. Of course one could mention a respectable list of positive examples of good and fruitful relations between Buddhists and people of other faiths. However, it is important to be aware that Buddhism too has its potential for conflict and is not the kind of exceptionally peaceful religion as people like Galtung want to make us believe.

Which are the ideas that harbour this problematic potential? My central argument is in three stages: First, Buddhism – in its various branches – has developed arguments that justify the use of violence for specific reasons and under special circumstances within the political realm. Second, these justifications can be and were in fact transferred to the religious realm in order to justify the use of violence in religious conflicts. Third, the problematic potential lies in this transference and the reasons behind it.

Let us first look at how Buddhism justifies the use of force.[12] From the Aggañña Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya iii 93f) onwards, the use of force by political authorities is legitimised with the need to uphold public order and "to sanction those who deserve so". This is a persistent motive in early Buddhist thinking about politics in general and Buddhist politics in particular, that is, the idea of a political rule in accordance with the Dharma. The influential Suvarṇabhāsottama Sūtra ("Sutra of the Golden Light") develops this idea and argues that a king who would abstain from punishing the evil-doer would himself become responsible for the subsequent rise of lawlessness. That is, not using violent means in order to enforce the law would make the king automatically in someone who "supports the side of the lawless".[13] Using violence against the lawless is thus the choice of a minor evil, while refraining from this would give the ruler a co-responsible for the greater evil. The good, in this case,

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[11] Cf. John Newman: "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra". In: Donald S. Lopez (ed.), *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1995, 284-89.

[12] See for the following: P. Schmidt-Leukel, "War and Peace in Buddhism". In: Schmidt-Leukel (ed.), *War and Peace in World Religions*. The Gerald Weisfeld Lectures 2003, London: SCM Press 2004, pp. 33-56.

[13] *The Sūtra of the Golden Light: Being a Translation of the Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* by R.E. Emmerick, London: Luzac 1970, p. 59.

is the upholding and protection of public peace and lawful order. This line of argument was also implied in Buddhist justifications of defensive wars, as can be seen in the Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣayavikurvaṇa-nirdeśa-sūtra.[14] It could further be employed in order to justify tyrannicide. Although the aspect of protecting the victims of tyrannical rule against the tyrant is not absent, a classical case, namely the discussion of the assassination of the Tibetan king Glang Dar-ma in 842 by a Buddhist monk, makes use of a different motive, the motive of "compassionate killing".[15] Here, the "compassion" is not primarily for the victims of the tyrant but for the tyrant himself, that is for the victim of the act of "compassionate killing". The compassion consists in preventing the evil-doer from committing further evil deeds und thus accumulating even more evil karma, by putting an end to his life.[16] Again the logic is one of "protection" but in this case it is the evil-doer who is protected against himself.

The argument that the use of force is justified or even inevitable under certain circumstances in order to protect some important goods like public peace and lawful order or even to protect certain people against possible negative results of their own doings was transferred from the political to the religious realm. One reason for this can be seen in the ancient Buddhist idea of the "dharmarāja" or "dhammarāja", that is - a king ruling in accordance with the Dharma. The king is meant to protect his people *and* the Saṅgha in his territory by ruling in a dharmic way (cf. Dīgha-Nikāya iii 61). However, protecting the Saṅgha involves protecting the Dharma itself, given that one of the key functions of the Saṅgha is the maintenance and proclamation of the Dharma. Ruling in accordance with the Dharma therefore implies the protection of the Dharma. And if it is legitimate and even obligatory for a political ruler to employ violence for the protection of his people, it will also be legitimate to use force, if necessary, for the protection of the Saṅgha and the Dharma. Let us look at some examples.

The protection of the Saṅgha and the Dharma against the perceived threat by Hindu Tamils is a major motive in the various Sri Lankan chronicles.[17] As several studies have shown[18], this motive persists in the current justification of the present

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[14] Cf. Michael Zimmermann: "A Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*: The Chapter on Royal Ethics in the *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣayavikurvaṇa-nirdeśa-sūtra*". In: Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University of the Academic Year 1999 (ARIRIAB 3), Tokio: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University 2000, pp. 177-211.

[15] See the classical record of this incident in: *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* by Bu-ston. Translated from Tibetan by E. Obermiller. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1986, pp. 197ff.

[16] For the classical justification of "compassionate killing" see *The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya) Sūtra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1994, pp. 73f.

[17] Cf. Sven Bretfeld: *Das singhalesische Nationalepos von König Duṭṭhagāmaī Abhaya*, Berlin: Reimer 2001, pp. xxiff, xxxviiff.

[18] Cf. Anette Wilke: "Gewaltlosigkeit und Gewaltausübung in Hinduismus und Buddhismus." In: Alforns Fürst (ed.): *Friede auf Erden? Die Weltreligionen zwischen Gewaltverzicht und*

war against the Tamils: It is seen as being waged "In Defense of Dharma", as Tessa Bartholomeusz pointedly summarised it. Within the Sri Lankan Buddhist discourse, the defence of religion constitutes a case of "just war", because – as Bartholomeusz convincingly shows –religion and State are perceived in close fusion.[19]

The same motive is used – and extended – in Nichiren's (1222-82) justification of violent sanctions against other Buddhist schools. Nichiren was convinced that various calamities of his time were the result of the State's neglect of its duty to protect the true dharma. However, in the eyes of Nichiren, such neglect implies becoming oneself an "enemy" of the Dharma. In this sense, Nichiren quotes the Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra with the words:

> Suppose a good bhikṣu, upon seeing people who destroy the Dharma, does not reproach them, drive them away, or punish them. Know this! He is an enemy of the teachings of the Buddha. If he drives them away, reproaches, or punishes them, he is my disciple, my hearer in the true sense of the word…

Those who protect the right teaching of the Buddha do not have to keep the five precepts, … but have to carry swords, bows, arrows, and halberd…[20]

The parallel with the argument of the "Sutra of the Golden Light" is obvious: A king who would not punish the evil-doer becomes responsible for the resulting growth of lawlessness and is thus himself a supporter of the evil-doer. In the same way someone who does not forcefully proceed against the enemies of the Dharma becomes himself an enemy of the Dharma.

The motive of "compassionate killing" recurs in the justification of the killing of heretics. When the Buddha claims in Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra that in a previous life as a king he killed a Brahmin slanderer of the true Dharma "out of love", the explanation is given in terms of "compassionate killing". The Brahmin, after his death, was reborn in the worst hell and realised that this had been the result of his slandering of the Dharma. From this insight he developed respect for the Mahāyāna, which finally led to his rebirth in another Buddha's land where he enjoyed a very long and good life. Killing this Brahmin was thus an act of kindness and love towards him. But the overall motive is again identified as "protecting the dharma" (see cp. 22).[21] During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), Japanese

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Gewaltbereitschaft. Freiburg: Herder, 2006, pp. 83-150; Elizabeth Harris: "Buddhism and the Justification of War: A Case Study from Sri Lanka". In: Paul Robinson (ed.), *Just War in Comparative Perspective*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2003, pp. 93-108; Tessa Bartholomeusz: *In Defense of Dharma. Just-war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka*, New York: RoutledgeCurzon 2002.

[19] Bartholomeusz, *In Defense…*, p. 157.

[20] Nichiran: *Kaimokushō or Liberation from Blindness*, transl. from the Japanese (TaishōVol. 84, No. 2689) by Murano Senchū (BDK English Tripitaka 104-IV), Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research 2000, p. 124.

[21] http://lirs.ru/do/Mahaparinirvana_Sutra,Yamamoto,Page,2007.pdf

Zen-Buddhists took up the notion of "compassionate killing" and extended it to the concept of a "compassionate war".[22] The Japanese imperialist aggression against China was justified as a compassionate pedagogical attempt to bring the Chinese people back to their own innate Oriental character and a religious note was given to this by arguing that the goal of Japanese politics was to readjust the behaviour of the Chinese bringing them in line with Buddhist principles.[23]

Some people might be inclined to argue that already the Buddhist justification of the use of force or violence in the political realm is the "original sin". If Buddhism would abstain from any justification of any kind of force or violence whatsoever, it could have never become a source of religious or inter-religious conflicts. However, a radical pacifist approach of that kind would imply that Buddhism had nothing to contribute to a vast and important field of social ethics. The answer to the whole question of how much force, for which purposes and under which conditions, would be acceptable in organising social cohabitation would be left to the discretion of non-Buddhists and Buddhism would lose its political relevance. According to my mind the root of the problem lays not in the various Buddhist attempts to produce a controlled justification of force, but in the transfer of these considerations from the political to the religious realm. It is the perception of the religious other as inferior and hence as a possible or real threat that triggers the notion of protecting and defending the Dharma, if necessary by violent means. In my concluding point I will develop this a bit further and, against this background, raise three critical, but hopefully constructive questions.

Some Critical, Constructive Questions:

The sixth section of the Udāna ends with an impressive analogy: The Buddha resembles the sun while the other religious teachers are compared to glow worms:

The glow worm shines as long as the sun has not risen, but when that illuminant arises, the glow worm's light is quenched and shines no more. Even so, the wanderers shine only as long as Fully Awakened Ones do not appear in the world. These thinkers are not purified nor yet their disciples, for those of perverse views are not released from suffering.[24]

In the preceding paragraphs of the same section it is made crystal clear that the other religious teachers are unable to lead their disciples to the liberation from saṃsāra (cf. Udāna 6:4-6). The Vedic "seers" (ṛṣis), for example, are called "blind"

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[22] Cf. Brian Victoria: *Zen at War*, New York: Waterhill 1997, pp. 89ff.
[23] Cf. *ibid*. pp. 90ff.
[24] Udāna 6:10. *The Udāna and The Itivuttaka*. Translated from the Pāli by John Ireland. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society 1997, p. 93.

and those who follow their religion are like the blind following the blind (Majjhima Nikāya ii 170). Their inability to show the path to final release makes their teaching not only futile but also dangerous. The Tevijja Sutta calls the "threefold knowledge" of the Vedas "the threefold desert, the threefold wilderness, the threefold destruction"[25] (Dīgha Nikāya i 248).

As far as I can see, this attitude has become something like the default Buddhist stance in relation to other religions. A slightly more positive approach, that is an inclusivistic approach that sees the religious other not as entirely wrong and even dangerous but as someone who has some elements of truth but nevertheless as someone who is religiously on an inferior level, was usually only taken towards other Buddhist schools. Very rarely this inclusivistic attitude has been applied to Non-Buddhist religions.[26] But if the religious other is seen either exclusivistically as plainly wrong or inclusivistically as partly right but nevertheless inferior, in both cases its existence cannot be seen as ideal. Ideally, everybody should join the superior religion – in this case Buddhism. And if the presence of the presumably false and dangerous or at least inferior religions becomes to strong, it may easily be perceived as a threat against which one needs to defend the true and supreme religion. My *first question*, therefore, relates to Buddhist *supremacy*: *Has Buddhism the doctrinal resources to develop an understanding of religious diversity that allows for the possibility to see other religions as being of equal value?* Let me be clear, I am not asking for an attitude that regards *all* other religions uncritically and in an aprioristic manner as equally valid. Such an attitude would be irrational and irresponsible. My question is, whether it is possible, in principle, that Buddhism could accept some other religion – despite its being different – as nevertheless equally valid.

Traditionally Buddhists of all schools have always accepted the idea that there is more than just one single Buddha and that other Buddhas establish their own Saṅghas and teach their own Dharma. But it was also believed that the key features of these teachings will always be identical. This opens up the question of how much space for religious diversity Buddhism really has. Moreover, traditional Buddhism holds that other Buddhas either lived before Śākyamuni or will follow him in the future, but that there is not – to quote the Aṅguttara Nikāya (i 27) – more than one Buddha at the same time. When King Milinda argued that by a second Buddha the world would be even more illuminated, Nāgasena replied the world could not bear the glory of two Buddha (cf. Milindapañha ii 236ff). If Buddhism holds that a

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[25] *The Long Discourses of the Buddha.* A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya by Maurice Walshe. Somerville: Wisdom Publications 1995, p. 193. I am grateful to Magdalen Lambkin who pointed this out to me.

[26] In China, particularly during the second millennium, Buddhists have at times taken an inclusivist attitude towards Daoism and Confucianism. Cf. Joachim Gentz: "Buddhism and Chinese Religions". In: P. Schmidt-Leukel (ed.): *Buddhist Attitudes*…. (see fn. 5), pp. 172-211, especially 194f, 201f.

different teaching, in order to be equally valid and equally valuable, should in fact not be different but essentially identical, and if it further holds that the Buddha is the 'one without a second', at least in the present world system, how ready is Buddhism then for the kind of inter-religious dialogue that is open and eager to learn from the religious other in and through dialogue? My *second* question, therefore, relates to Buddhist *self-sufficiency*: *Is Buddhism really prepared to enter an open inter-religious dialogue in which it is not only giving but also receiving, not only teaching but also learning?* Catherine Cornille rightly states: "Though openness towards the possibility of discovering truth in teachings and practices different from one's own (…) constitutes an essential condition for a constructive dialogue, religions are not on the whole inclined to such hospitality. Most religious faith is based on a belief in the fullness and sufficiency of one's own religious teachings and practices." [27] This applies no less to Buddhism than to the other religions. But a form of Buddhism that would open itself up to this kind of open dialogue would have to question and radically reformulate doctrines like the omniscience of the Buddha and it would have ask in all seriousness whether the other teachers are really just like "blind following the blind" or like "glow worms" compared to the sun.

But even if Buddhists don't see themselves ready for possibly acknowledging the equal worth of other religious traditions and find themselves unable to give up Buddhist superiority claims, the question remains whether Buddhism might be able to reformulate its idea of political rule in accordance with the Dharma. Will dharmic rule necessarily mean "Buddhist rule"? My *third* and final question therefore relates to Buddhist *theocracy*: *Can Buddhism endorse the idea of religiously pluralistic societies without any privileged status for Buddhism?*

A positive answer to this question could, for example, imply that governance in accordance with the Dharma is re-interpreted as accepting human rights and among them in particular the right to religious freedom and to freely elect the government.[28] That is, dharmic governance would not carry a narrow, sectarian meaning according to which the government has to be Buddhist or, at least, has to be the protector of Buddhism as a privileged religion. Instead it would mean that the government is a protector of all faiths, and of the people of no faith, in its State. It would further imply that if the majority in a democratic State would vote for a government that does not see itself as a Buddhist government, or as a Buddhism-

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[27] Catherine Cornille: *The im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*. New York: Herder & Herder 2008, p. 178. The willingness to learn in and through dialogue from the religious other has been affirmed as a central feature of inter-faith dialogue by a number of its pioneers. See for example Leonard Swidler's famous "Ground Rules", in: Leonard Swidler: *After the Absolute. The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection*, Augsburg: Fortress Press 1990, pp. 42-46.

[28] On the issue of "Buddhism and Human Rights" see: Damien Keown, Charles Prebish, Wayne Husted (eds.): *Buddhism and Human Rights*. Curzon: Richmond 1998; Perry Schmidt-Leukel: "Buddhism and the Idea of Human Rights", in: *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 14 (2004) pp. 216-234.

privileging government, no constitutional clause should stand in the way of such an option.

The fact, for example, that article 9 of the Sri Lankan constitution gives Buddhism a privileged status and makes it the duty of the State "to protect and foster the Buddhist Sasana" inevitably implies that people of other faiths are in a less privileged position. "It is divisive clauses like this", writes the Tamil author Alvappillai, "that lead to perpetual conflict in a multilingual and multireligious society. (…) The Buddhist clergy should agree to let the State to treat all its citizens and ethnic groups alike."[29]

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[29] Alvappillai Veluppillai: "Sinhala Fears of Tamil Demands". In: Mahinda Deegalle (ed.): *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*, London – New York: Routledge 2006, 93-103, p. 95.

Buddhism, Nonviolence and Power

Sallie B. King
James Madison University

Contemporary Buddhists have in recent decades given the world outstanding examples of nonviolent activism. While these movements have demonstrated awe-inspiring courage and massive popular support, sadly, none of these movements has, as yet, prevailed. In this paper we will explore the role played in this situation by political power.

We will focus upon three Buddhist nonviolent struggles: the Vietnamese Buddhist "Struggle Movement" between the years: 1963 and1966 that attempted to end the war in that country; the Tibetan Liberation Movement led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and the Burmese Democracy Movement of 1988-1990 and 2007. These cases, of course, are different. The Vietnamese struggle was not in opposition to a particular oppressive group per se, but was an effort to persuade a series of governments to stop prosecuting the war and to strive instead for a negotiated, political settlement. The Tibetan struggle is with an invading, occupying and controlling power that has displaced the native government and reduced the native people of Tibet to a minority in their own country by relocating large numbers of Han Chinese into Tibetan territory. The Burmese struggle is an effort to remove from power the dictatorship of the Burmese military and to restore democracy and human rights.

All those who care about suffering and about nonviolence no doubt long for success in these struggles. Of course, the Vietnamese struggle is long over, but the other two struggles are not. Both the Tibetan and the Burmese struggles have eminently worthy aims. A great deal of suffering would come to an end if either or both struggles would succeed. In addition, in this age of globalization, success or failure in these struggles has an impact on others. Successful struggles breed imitation, whereas failed struggles tend, naturally enough, to make people want to turn away from what they may see as failed tactics. Success matters, both for the sake of oppressed and suffering people and for the sake of the future of nonviolence.

So far, however, there have been no successes, no victories in the Buddhist nonviolent struggles. It is not as if nonviolence cannot win struggles, even against great and violent powers. Nonviolence was the tool used in all these successful struggles: the svaraj (self-rule) movement in India against the British Raj; the Solidarity movement in Poland against communist rule; the civil rights movement in

the United States; the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa; the "people power" deposing of Marcos in the Philippines; and the deposing of General Martinez in El Salvador, among others.[1] Indeed, the statement that the Buddhist struggle in Vietnam failed needs to be amended. When viewed separately, the six month nonviolent struggle from May 8, 1963 to November 1, 1963 succeeded in the overthrow of Diem. If the movement had ended then, it would have been considered a significant nonviolent victory. However, it continued on and that victory became obscured in the failure of the larger movement.

I was once asked in a radio interview by a particularly audacious interviewer: Do you think that the Engaged Buddhists have failed to win any of their struggles because there is no God in Buddhism? While my answer to that question was and is an unqualified, "no," I was at that time unable to answer to my own satisfaction why it is that Engaged Buddhist nonviolent struggles have not yet succeeded. Certainly it is necessary to regard each case as unique and to evaluate it by itself.

In this paper, I propose to draw upon the thinking of Gene Sharp to clarify our understanding of nonviolent power. I will then use those ideas to understand better the dynamics of power in the nonviolent struggles of Vietnam during the war years, and Tibet and Burma today. Gene Sharp is arguably the foremost theoretician of nonviolent power in the world today. He is also an established friend of both the Burmese and Tibetan Engaged Buddhists, having worked directly with both. I will also use the Buddhist cases to reflect back upon Sharp's theories, offering a small response from the Buddhist side to Sharp's views.

Before taking up Sharp's analysis of power, I must pause to point out that Buddhist activism often seems to have an uneasy relationship with the very idea of power, despite its comfort with taking up social and political struggles. For example, looking back upon the Struggle Movement in Vietnam, Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh has reflected,

> There were people who described it [the 1963 struggle against Diem] as a holy struggle, because the intention was so pure. The struggle in 1966, 1967, and on up to the present has never been as pure as it was in 1963. Because, when we speak of a third force, of replacing the government, of all those things, there is always an intention of seizing or at least sharing power. …

I think the motive of the struggle determines almost everything. [At the time of the 1963 struggle] you see that people are suffering and you are suffering, and you want to change. No desire, no ambition, is involved. So, you come together easily!

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[1] See Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force more Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

I have never seen that kind of spirit again, after the 1963 coup. We have done a lot to try to bring it back, but we haven't been able to. … It was so beautiful.[2]

There is no question that motivation is important. There is a reason, I believe, why religion is often (though by no means always) involved in the motivation of those involved in nonviolent struggles—religion is often able to impart to its adherents great courage, hope and, at its best, an idealistic vision for which one is prepared to sacrifice. Motivation, however, is one thing, and success is another.

Another example of an uneasy Buddhist relationship with power is a 2007 statement by Ven. Ashin Nayaka, a leader of the International Burmese Monks Organization. With respect to the "Saffron Revolution," the monk led protests in Burma/Myanmar of 2007, he said, "the Saffron Revolution is not a power struggle, but a conflict between peace and moral freedom on one side and the forces of political repression on the other."[3] Here we see a similar distaste for the very idea of political power.

The distaste for power evinced in Ven. Nhat Hanh and Ven. Nayaka's statements would seem to suggest that some important activist Buddhist leaders, at least, reject the idea of conceiving a nonviolent struggle as a power contest. Gene Sharp, however, argues that whether one likes it or not, the success or failure of a nonviolent struggle is finally determined by power. Would it, then, be important for Buddhists to think more about power if they want their struggles to succeed?

Let us examine Sharp's views. Sharp begins his magnum opus, *The Politics of Nonviolent Power*, by investigating the nature of political power itself.[4] He argues persuasively that the power of the state, even the most despotic state, ultimately rests upon the consent and cooperation of the people of that state.[5] He begins making his case by pointing out those rulers, whether a single individual or a small, governing group, do not and never could rule the state by themselves. Every ruler has only two hands and 24 hours a day of time. In order to wield power, all rulers must acquire power from sources outside of themselves. He discusses six sources of such power. (1) First is authority. This is the right to give commands and be obeyed voluntarily by the people. Sharp argues that while the rulers can use violence to punish people

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[2] Thich Nhat Hanh in Daniel Berrigan and Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Raft Is Not the Shore: Conversations toward a Buddhist-Christian Awareness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 80-81.
[3] Ashin Nayaka, "Testimony of Ven. Ashin Nayaka, Leading Member of International Burmese Monks Association and Visiting Professor at Columbia University." Testimony made to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on December 3, 2007; posted December 4, 2007 on the online blog, "Burma: Online News and Analysis."
(http://burmanewsandarticles.blogspot.com/2007/12/testimony-of-ven-ashin-nayaka-leading.html); retrieved March 25, 2009.
[4] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973), Ch. 1, "The Nature and Control of Political Power."
[5] The following summarizes Sharp, *Politics*, pp. 10-12 and portions of Chapter 1.

who do not obey them, this cannot be the main source of their power. This is because it takes resources to inflict violent punishment—for example, policemen or soldiers who will be in the right time and place to see the disobedience and punish it. This can be done for the occasional disobeyer but it cannot be done for an entire country full of people. The rulers depend upon the majority of people obeying automatically without the use of violent force, of which there is a finite supply.(2) A second source of power is human resources. By themselves, rulers can actually do very little; they directly require subordinates to execute their orders. A source of power for rulers then is the cooperation of government ministers, the entire government bureaucracy, the military and police. (3) By extension, another source of the power of rulers is having command of an array of skills and knowledge—planners, engineers, a weapons industry, manufacturers, etc. (4) The power of the ruler is affected by religious, psychological and ideological factors, including habits and attitudes towards obedience and submission. (5) Rulers require command of material resources—property, food and water, natural resources, financial resources, means of communication and transportation. (6) A final source of rulers' power, of course, is penalties and punishments, the ability to inflict harm.

Upon examination, it becomes clear that all these sources of the power of rulers fundamentally depend upon the consent and cooperation of the people. Authority, as we have seen, is nothing but the consent and acquiescence of the people. Similarly, the human resources upon which the ruler directly depends would not be available to the ruler unless people allowed themselves to be of use, whether they be civil servants, soldiers or manufacturers. Even natural resources, which might seem to be independent of human consent, have to be delivered by human beings to the place where they are wanted. Penalties, too, must be delivered by human agents. A ruler cannot arrest or shoot everyone, everywhere who disobeys him; he relies upon others to do this for him.

In short, everything that a ruler needs in order to exercise power depends upon the cooperation of others. Others put the power into his hands. Therefore, each of these sources of the ruler's power is something that could also, at least in theory, be withheld from the ruler. Thus, Sharp is able to argue that the people of the state have sufficient nonviolent power to overturn a government that they do not accept when they remove the consent and cooperation upon which that government depends. That is, the people gain control "not by the infliction of superior violence …, but rather by the subjects' declining to supply the power-holder with the sources of his power, by cutting off his power at the roots."[6] Might this be a conception of power that would be acceptable even to the most exacting Buddhist ethics?[7] Could those

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[6] Sharp, *Politics*, p. 47.
[7] Assuming that the ethics in question did not require withdrawal from the world and its concerns.

who understand their struggle in the most selfless and idealistic terms embrace this conception of power?

Of course, people do not routinely rid themselves of unwanted governments. To do so is very, very difficult. Sharp identifies two main impediments to the people's exercise of their power to unseat tyrants: will and ability.[8] In order to acquire the will to change the status quo, Sharp argues that the people must overcome their ignorance that it is they who are empowering the ruler by accepting and cooperating with his rule. When they understand this, they must firmly decide that they are going to withdraw their cooperation from the ruler. In addition to acquiring the will to make change happen, it is of course also necessary to have an idea of *how* to make change happen. Sharp argues that in order to achieve success in a nonviolent struggle, it is essential that there be group or mass action, and furthermore that there should be a carefully considered strategy based upon an understanding of how nonviolent power works.

It must be acknowledged that nonviolent power is by no means safe. The more a nonviolent group builds up power, the more they are a threat to their opponents and therefore risk violent repression. No one believes that struggling nonviolently removes a group from the risk of harm. However, most people believe that there are likely to be fewer casualties in a nonviolent struggle than in a violent struggle. This is one of the reasons that Aung San Suu Kyi has given for taking a nonviolent approach in the Burmese struggle. She has said, "We've chosen non-violence because it is the best way to protect the people, and in the long term assure the future stability of democracy. … [I]f you have a choice and feel that you have an equal chance of succeeding, I think you certainly ought to choose the non-violent way, because it means that fewer people will be hurt."[9] Similarly, Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche, the Kalon Tripa of the Tibetan Government in Exile, has said, "Due to our non-violent approach, not only is the Tibet issue still alive, but not a single PRC [People's Republic of China] or Tibetan life has been lost as a result of non-violence. That is also a great achievement: to preserve human life is very important and very sacred."[10]

Sharp explains that there are four ways in which victory may be achieved in a nonviolent struggle.[11] In cases of "conversion," the nonviolent group succeeds in changing the attitude of their opponents, "converting" them, such that the opponents

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[8] Sharp, *Politics*, p. 31-48.
[9] Aung San Suu Kyi, *The Voice of Hope: Conversations with Alan Clements* (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. 114.
[10] Samdhong Rinpoche*, Samdhong Rinpoche: Uncompromising Truth for a Compromised World: Tibetan Buddhism and Today's World*, ed. Donovan Roebert (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2006), p.158-159.
[11] For this section, I draw mostly upon Sharp, *Politics*, pp. 705-768. See also his *There are Realistic Alternatives* (Boston: Albert Einstein Institution, 2003), pp. 13-14.

no longer want to continue their repression and voluntarily change their behavior in a way that is satisfactory to the nonviolent strugglers. This scenario describes what Gandhi aimed for and achieved in his struggle with the British. He wanted the British, he said, to leave India, but he wanted them to leave "as friends." This, in fact, is exactly what happened.

A second scenario is "accommodation." In this scenario, the opponents are not converted and do not change their original perspective of wishing to dominate the nonviolent group. However, they ultimately come to agree to at least some of the demands of the nonviolent strugglers and change their behavior accordingly, despite the fact that they still have sufficient power to refuse. Why do they change, if they have not been forced to do so? The opponents change because they have come to feel that though they could continue to repress the nonviolent strugglers, it is not worth it to them to do so; that is, the costs to them of repressing the nonviolent group outweigh the benefits. There are many ways that this could happen. For example, there may be a feeling that while the nonviolent group is wrong, the oppressors have gone too far in violently repressing them. There may be a division within the group of opponents, with those favoring continued repression needing to bow to the wishes of others in their group who feel such repression is no longer worth the trouble. Again, the opponents may come to believe that the economic cost of repressing the nonviolent strugglers is too high, due to such factors as economic boycotts or the high cost of extensive policing.

A third scenario by means of which change can come about through nonviolent means involves "nonviolent coercion." Nonviolent coercion occurs in instances in which the opponents are forced to give in to the demands of the nonviolent strugglers, despite their wish not to do so, due to the power of the nonviolent group. Generally speaking, nonviolent coercion may succeed when the nonviolent group's noncooperation and defiance has either made it impossible for the social, economic and political system to operate or has made it impossible for the oppressors to successfully repress the nonviolent group.[12]

The final scenario of nonviolent change is "disintegration." In this rare situation, "the defiance and noncooperation [of the nonviolent group] have been so massive, and the severance of the sources of the opponents' power has been so complete, that the regime has simply fallen apart."[13] This, then, is an extreme case of nonviolent coercion.

These four scenarios of change seem to be based upon two ways of using power. The opponents can be converted to the view of the nonviolent strugglers and give in to their demands because they want to. Or the opponents can be pushed to

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[12] Sharp, *Politics*, p. 741.
[13] Sharp, *Alternatives*, p. 14.

give in, against their will, by the power of the nonviolent strugglers; that is, they can be coerced. To my mind, there can be little question that Buddhist ideals can accommodate conversion. Whether or not one believes that Buddhist principles can countenance the use of coercive force, Engaged Buddhists have, in fact, been using it in at least some of their struggles, as we shall see. Let us now turn to a consideration of our three nonviolent Buddhist struggles in the light of this understanding of nonviolent power.

Vietnam

Let us begin with the Vietnamese Struggle Movement of 1963-1966. This movement, led by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBC), aimed to end the war in that country and to resolve the conflict between North and South Vietnam by negotiation. While the target, therefore, was not a particular group of opponents *per se*, the Struggle Movement nonetheless was able to amass significant political power. In 1965, American CIA analysis determined that the Buddhists were "strong enough to make unworkable any set of political arrangements their leaders care to oppose."[14] What were the sources of their power? This can be conveniently discussed using the three categories of nonviolent action proposed by Sharp.[15]

(1) Acts of "nonviolent protest and persuasion" are actions in which a nonviolent group expresses its opposition to or its support for a government or its actions. While this may seem to be no more than a form of self-expression, these acts can generate significant power. By arousing attention and publicizing an issue they invite support from people not yet committed. They encourage those who are committed to become more deeply committed and possibly take action. Nonviolent protests are thus important in broadening the base of support of the movement. They also put the opponent on notice that their authority is being challenged, letting them know that there is a group of committed people who are not going to unquestioningly accept whatever is handed down.[16] In this way, they weaken the opponent's aura of authority, or expected obedience, thus weakening its power.

Between 1963 and 1966, South Vietnam saw a great variety of forms of nonviolent protest. These included: holding many massive public assemblies and marches; using poetry, folk songs, anti-war songs and the like to inspire and educate people; shaving heads, thereby taking on the appearance of a monk or nun, as a

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[14] George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 267. Cited from CIA, Memorandum for the national Intelligence Board, SNIE 53-65, "Short Term Prospects in South Vietnam," February 2, 1965.

[15] Gene Sharp makes brief reference to a number of the Struggle Movement's forms of action in *Politics*. They are scattered throughout the book

[16] See Sharp, *Politics*, pp. 117-118.

protest of the government's actions; reading statements and making demands; public mourning and funeral processions. These acts and others continued throughout the movement.

Indeed, the Struggle Movement began with an act of symbolic and nonviolent protest, as do many nonviolent struggles. The Diem regime of South Vietnam had forbidden the display of religious flags; in practice, it permitted the display of the Catholic flag but prohibited the Buddhist flag. In 1963 when Buddhists in Hue flew Buddhist flags as part of a Vesak celebration, those flags were torn down. This flag was "nothing but a symbol," but its tearing down represented the oppression of the Buddhist majority of the country. That night, when a Buddhist radio program was not aired as expected, a crowd gathered at the station. This was a spontaneous act of nonviolent protest. The government ordered the crowd to disperse and when they did not, they fired into the crowd without warning, killing seven children and one woman. This event outraged the public, resulting in what Sharp calls "political jiu jitsu."[17]

Political jiu jitsu is at hand when a government's acts of violence rebound against itself. Typically, it occurs when a nonviolent action so threatens a repressive regime that they crack down with violence. That violence is so inappropriate and offensive a response to a nonviolent action that people are outraged. As a consequence, public opinion turns against the regime and support for the nonviolent activists increases. Already committed members of the movement tend to become further radicalized and their determination strengthened. Uncommitted members of the public may jump into active participation with the nonviolent activists. The allies of such a blatantly oppressive regime may withdraw their support. The regime's crackdown may also open up a fissure within the repressive regime itself, with some part of that group coming to feel uneasy or even actively opposing the violent repression.

In the case of the attack at the radio station in Vietnam, the consequence of the government's action was that the Struggle Movement was ignited. Two days later, over ten thousand people participated in a protest demonstration in Hue and the Buddhist leadership began to make public demands of the government. Three months later, government forces raided Buddhist pagodas in several cities. Monks were forcefully ousted, 1,420 monks were arrested, several were killed, about thirty were injured and the pagodas themselves were ransacked. In further political jiu jitsu, these attacks rebounded against the regime in the most serious way possible. South Vietnamese generals began seriously to plan a coup and the United States government, whose support of course was essential to the regime, gave encouragement to the coup planners. The coup occurred a few months later. The

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[17] See Sharp, *Politics*, Chapter Twelve.

coup was bloodless except for the executions of Diem and his brother Nhu. While these executions diminish the purity of the nonviolence involved in the coup, it should be noted that those executions were not part of the *power* that brought the regime down. Nonviolent power did that.

While some might believe that nonviolent protest is a very weak thing, this account should make it clear that in some circumstances nonviolent protest can be very powerful indeed. This is perhaps especially so when an oppressive regime over-reacts and its own violent force sows the seeds of its own destruction.

(2) Acts of "noncooperation," Sharp's second category, involve the nonviolent activists deliberately withdrawing from the ordinary and expected forms of cooperation with the government. Noncooperation can be social—as in the withdrawal of religious services or student strikes; economic—as in consumer boycotts, embargoes, worker's strikes or the nonpayment of taxes; or political—as in the boycott of elections, the boycott of government institutions, and noncooperation with military conscription.[18] To the extent that the opponent government requires cooperation in order to function, actions such as these, when engaged in by a sufficient number of people over a period of time, constitute a direct loss of power and a real challenge to the existence of the regime.

The Vietnamese Struggle Movement engaged in a variety of forms of social, economic and political noncooperation. These included: many strikes; economic shutdown; the return of government licenses; mass resignations of university professors and government administrators; the boycott of classes by students; the refusal by officials to participate in public policy announcements; political resignations; the boycott of elections; the refusal of military conscription; widespread aid and protection of military deserters and draft resisters; and mutiny by the military.

While it is difficult to measure the power of actions like these, it should be clear that if such actions as strikes, shutdowns, boycotts and draft resistance are massive enough and relentless enough, they may seriously weaken the authority and power of the government, putting it on the defensive and destabilizing it by raising serious questions in the minds of both the people and the government itself about how long it can endure. The mutiny by the army was a potentially decisive action. We will further discuss it below. Suffice it for now to say that the army's mutiny would never have come about without the cumulative effect of these plentiful and massive nonviolent, yet powerful, acts of noncooperation.

(3) Acts of "nonviolent intervention" use psychological, physical, social, economic or political means to intervene in the functioning of the government. They

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[18] See Sharp, *Politics*, pp. 183-184.

may either disrupt established government functions or establish alternatives.[19] Forms of nonviolent intervention used by the Struggle Movement included: the construction of alternative schools, such as the School of Youth for Social Service and Van Hanh University; the establishment of alternative communications, such as a publishing house, a journal and underground information circulation; the interjection of the activists themselves in front of troops in order to prevent the troops from entering their destination; placing sacred family altars in the street in the path of approaching tanks, in hopes of stopping them; fasting, used both for self-purification and in the effort to convert others; and self-immolation.

A word must be said on the self-immolations of Vietnamese monks, nuns and laypeople. While there is no question that these acts were extremely powerful, it is open to debate whether these acts were nonviolent. I do not propose to go into this subject in detail here as I have written on it elsewhere.[20] Sharp, evidently considering these acts to be violent, does not include them in his discussion. I am aware that many Buddhists, especially Mahayana Buddhists, understand them to be nonviolent acts, the acts of bodhisattvas. Whether violent or nonviolent, these are acts of self-suffering, similar to fasts, which Sharp considers to be acts of political intervention. Self-suffering may function to put pressure on an opponent, or it may be an effort to touch the opponent so deeply that he will be converted to the point of view of the self-sufferer. Certainly the Buddhist self-immolations in Vietnam had the latter intention. There is no doubt that especially in Vietnam, and to an extent even in the United States where these actions were not well understood, the self-immolations, at least until 1966, were extremely powerful.[21] Their power lay in the fact that they were a form of self-chosen and self-accepted suffering. Many nonviolent activists deeply believe that self-suffering is the most powerful way of bringing about the conversion of one's opponents in a struggle. Gandhi advocated and repeatedly used self-suffering during his campaign, as did Martin Luther King, both of whom succeeded in winning their struggles by means of the conversion of their opponents. Gandhi explains it thus:

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[19] See Sharp, *Politics*, pp. 357-358.

[20] Sallie B. King, "They Who Burn Themselves for Peace: Buddhist Self-Immolation," in *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium* (Bangkok: Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation, 1999), pp. 283-296.

[21] Wimark reports that there were one hundred or more self-immolations during 1970-1971 but during that time the power of the South Vietnamese government was not seriously shaken by the Buddhist movement. See Bo Wimark, *The Buddhists in Vietnam: An Alternative View of the War*. (Brussels, Belgium: War Resisters' International, 1974). p. 22.

[I]f you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding of man.[22]

The Vietnamese self-immolations appealed to the heart and indeed went beyond this to draw upon the veneration accorded the ideal of the bodhisattva.

In the end, despite all these actions, heroic courage and massive support, the Struggle Movement was defeated. How did that come about? In 1966 major parts of the South Vietnamese government's essential power base in northern South Vietnam were slipping away from them. As the U.S. Secretary of State wrote to the U.S. President, in Hue and Danang "the police, civil servants, and large elements of the local 1st Division [troops] are in total sympathy with the [Buddhist-led] 'struggle' group."[23] The government was losing control. When General Ky brought Saigon troops in to crush the movement, a local general mutinied and blocked the Saigon troops from moving. Another general also declared for the Struggle Movement and General Ky had to back down. Public concessions were made to the Buddhists promising the granting of all their demands and it looked briefly as if the movement was on the verge of winning the struggle, but in reality General Ky just retreated to an American base where he prepared a larger assault force. A few weeks later, when local troops had been lured away, the government's military crackdown recommenced. Using American arms, tanks and bases they completely crushed the opposition. After this, the Struggle Movement never again was able to gather sufficient power to seriously challenge the government.

Let us examine the movement in light of the four scenarios for change discussed by Sharp. It is clear that in 1966 accommodation was not going to happen. The government had ample opportunities to accommodate the movement by allowing elections to be scheduled as the movement was demanding, but their promises to hold elections were just decoys used to temporarily mollify the movement. Moreover, the Struggle Movement did have enough power in1964 to elicit accommodation from the government of Major General Nguyen Khanh, but when Khanh began to accommodate Buddhist demands, he was removed from power. The American government simply would not tolerate a government embracing the demands of the Struggle Movement.

I believe that the Struggle Movement's actions created a situation that combined the dynamics of conversion with those of nonviolent coercion. The most

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[22] Gandhi, cited in Sharp, *Politics*, p. 709, quoted from Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Studies in Gandhism* (Calcutta: Indian Associated Publishing Co. 1947), p. 162.
[23] Memorandum for the President from Dean Rusk, "Political Situation in South Vietnam" April 2, 1966, cited in Kahin, p. 421.

visible and dramatic power was the power inviting conversion. The self-immolations strongly invited all those who wanted to continue the war to change their minds. The public funerals of self-immolators reinforced this, as did the extensive suffering of many other nonviolent activists, the anti-war poetry and songs, and the public assemblies and marches. There is no doubt that quite a few did change their minds, as demonstrated by the mutiny within the army.

The mutiny of the army in Hue and Danang manifested a critical fissure in the power base of the Saigon government. If this mutiny had not been crushed and if it had spread to the military in other areas of Vietnam, the Struggle Movement could have won. This military mutiny did not come from nowhere, however. It was the culmination of a sustained, three year campaign in which the Struggle Movement had steadily amassed power and public support in all sectors of society—religious and lay, students, civil servants, workers, peasants—through a combination of all the tactics they had used, the public demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, draft resistance, and all the rest that together steadily eroded the authority and power of the Saigon government. There was no shortage of repression of the movement—there were constant attacks, arrests, tortures and executions—but this repression did not stop the Movement. If the Movement had not been out-maneuvered in the final crackdown, and, especially critically, if the Saigon government had not had the strong support of the United States, the Struggle Movement might have succeeded in forcing the government to step down and be replaced by an elected government that would presumably have reached for a political solution to the conflict with the North. In this scenario, the top leaders would have been felled by nonviolent coercion, but their crucial power base—certain generals, mid-level officers and rank-and-file soldiers— would have been won over to support of the Struggle Movement by conversion.

Arguably, conversion is the most nonviolent of all the nonviolent approaches. Perhaps those Buddhists with a reluctance to think of nonviolent struggles as power contests would be pleased to see that the power amassed by the nonviolent movement in Vietnam acted most effectively when it was bringing about the conversion of others to the movement.

Myanmar

When we examine the present military government of Burma for the sources of its power, we readily see that it has very little authority—one wonders how many people in Burma at present actually believe their government deserves to rule—but it has an abundance of the other sources of power. It has access to all the workers and skills it needs by means of its ability to pay salaries; indeed, the impoverishment of the country which it has overseen only increases this power, as alternatives to

government employment become ever harder to come by. The government has access to wealth and various commodities by the willingness of certain governments to trade with it. Above all is the ultimate source of its power—the ability to inflict dire punishments on any who dare to challenge it.

How can the government's power be weakened? A strict international arms and trade embargo of Burma would go a long way towards this end by weakening the government's ability to punish those who challenge it and its ability to pay those who serve it; tragically, this seems impossible to bring into being.

The key to the situation seems to be for the nonviolent opposition to interfere with the government's ability to deliver punishments to those who challenge it; that is, somehow to get the soldiers, police, informers, etc. not to carry out orders to suppress the people. This, of course, is not easily done. Factors weighing against effectively achieving this are substantial: the huge size of the army; the extensive use of forcibly recruited, abused and threatened child soldiers (reportedly one in five Burmese soldiers is a child); the fact that for many this is the only viable source of livelihood; and the worry of severe punishment in case of flight or defection.

The Burmese opposition is no doubt well aware that they need to win over the army; but how is it to be done? One way to achieve this, in Sharp's scenario, would be to induce in the soldiers a change of heart, a "conversion" that would cause them to stop their soldiering and either join the opposition or simply walk away. In fact, little "change of heart" as such may be necessary; how many soldiers can want to attack civilians, much less monks and nuns? What is needed for many is a way out. There are no doubt threats of the severest penalties to any soldier who fails to carry out orders or who deserts. Moreover, such actions by an occasional lone individual do not amount to much; they must be done by a group. But how is that to be engineered?

There were somewhat comparable situations in Vietnam and the Philippines that could possibly shed some light on how to bring about a mutiny within the military. In both cases, a nonviolent struggle against a government reached a crucial moment when a part of the army defected from the government to the rebel side. The Philippines is an especially comparable case: there a nonviolent mass movement rose up and successfully deposed a despised dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, with a military mutiny playing a crucial role. Let us briefly examine that case.[24]

The undoing of Marcos' control of the military apparently was rooted in a combination of two things: the resentment of officers who were passed over due to the cronyism of Marcos and his chief lieutenant; and the ambition of reform-minded

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[24] For my account of the Philippines, I draw upon Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), Chapter Ten.

officers who wanted to see the military be more professional and effective. The military was thus riven by cliques. When the leader of a clique realized that Marcos knew of his disloyalty and planned to arrest or assassinate him, he broke from Marcos, taking with him another leader and troops that were loyal to them both. They then publicly declared their abandonment of Marcos and their support for the opposition leader, Corazon Aquino. They knew that these steps invited an attack from troops loyal to Marcos. At this critical juncture, they called the local cardinal of the Catholic Church and asked for his help (the Church had already been supporting Aquino). The cardinal then got on the radio and asked Catholics to go where the rebel leaders were and support them. The crowd that gathered was said to number fifty thousand unarmed men, women and children. With praying nuns out in front, the crowd swarmed around the rebel troops and leaders, protecting them with their bodies. As armored personnel carriers converged on them, no one moved. Though the armored vehicles might have plowed right through the crowd, as happened at Tiananmen, on this occasion the personnel carriers stopped. The drivers did not want to kill the people. Thereafter, when a colonel who commanded a helicopter attack squadron was ordered by the regime to attack the rebels, he and sixteen pilots flew their helicopters to the rebels' base instead. The colonel later said, "All I wanted to say was we followed our conscience. I have not really done much in my life and for once I wanted to make a decision for my country."[25] Citizen and religious groups continued to protect the rebels. Marcos' power was gone.

What can we learn from this? With regard to the question how a defection of the Burmese military is to be engineered, we may note that in the Philippines the nonviolent activists were not the ones who organized the military's defection; the defection came from within the military as a result of dynamics within the military itself. So that aspect of the defection was outside the control of the activists. However, it *was* the achievement of the activists that they had made themselves an appealing, indeed the inevitable, place for the rebels to turn once their break with Marcos came.

Human nature being what it is, it is highly likely that there are similar dynamics of cliques and jealousies within the Burmese army. This is not something that the opposition can control. What is under the control of the Burmese opposition is to make themselves an appealing and inevitable place for any rebels to turn and to be prepared to turn out massive public support for any rebels. However, whereas the civilian support of rebel troops in the Philippines turned out well, there are no guarantees on this point. If there were a mutiny in Burma and Burmese civilians were to interpose themselves between government and rebel forces as in the Philippines, the Burmese tanks might run over them. The Burmese well know that in

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[25] Ibid., p. 390.

1988 government troops did fire on nonviolent demonstrators and thousands of people were killed.

Another element to underline in the undoing of Marcos was the active role played by the Catholic Church. Obviously, there is a clear parallel in Burma in the active role being played by the Sangha. In the Philippines, I note that there was a direct plea from the cardinal of the Church, the highest local official, for people to go where the rebels were and show their solidarity with them. This action was decisive for the positive outcome of the struggle.

The role played by the Sangha in the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" in Burma has been breathtaking. Their courage and leadership has made a huge contribution to the movement. Their actions have publicly held up the moral bankruptcy of the government and made clear that the regime is not accepted by the Sangha. The way that the public responded to the monks and nuns was also critical, as they showed up in huge numbers in appreciation and support, spontaneously gathering whenever the monastics appeared, walking and standing with them.

The monastics' public demonstration of their opposition to the regime could have played out in a number of ways, but whichever way it played out, it could not help being, in a sense, a victory for the opposition, according to Sharp's theories. By publicly demonstrating as they did, the monastics presented the regime with an unpleasant dilemma. On the one hand, if they were to let the monastics continue demonstrating, the demonstrations would grow and grow and the regime would lose more and more power every day. On the other hand, if the government were to attack the monastics, they would call up the bitterest kind of disgust and most vehement rejection possible on the part of the public. Ultimately, of course, they chose to attack the monastics. That kind of attack should, if Sharp's theory is correct, have called up the "political jiu jitsu" of which we spoke earlier, rebounding against the regime by calling up more deeply dedicated opposition than before, thereby empowering the movement. So far, however, it seems that the power of the government's repression is far greater than the power of any "jiu jitsu" rebound effect.

In taking to the streets it was critical for the monastics to maintain nonviolent discipline. Their goal is at least as much to attract lukewarm supporters of the regime—such as soldiers—to join the opposition as it is to discredit the regime. In order for this to occur, the soldiers cannot be harmed but must be respected and invited in one way or another to stop supporting the regime and join with the opposition.

The Burmese monastic leadership has clearly been mindful of this and has certainly tried to do this. An eyewitness to the 2007 Saffron Revolution reported this

scene: "The crowd had grown. Maybe things were getting a little bit rowdy. They [the monks] would say, 'Okay, let's stop.' Everybody sat down. They would lead some meditation, some prayers, some chanting. One monk got up and asked the crowd, "Don't fight! Be disciplined! Be united and join us. Anyone can join, but we don't accept violence at all.' And the crowd went crazy."[26] The crowd's strong and joyful response to the nonviolent ideals of the monks is, it seems to me, a key point, indicating that it is these ideals that the monastics not only speak but also live, not only live but also represent in who and what they are, that draw people to the monastics and make them want to support them. These ideals, therefore, are the ultimate source of the monastics' power.

It is not possible for this writer to speak of a way forward for the Burmese nonviolent opposition. I am by no means qualified to make suggestions that practically require extensive first hand experience of the situation and morally require personal engagement and risk. I can do no more than make a few suggestions from a distance on the basis of Sharp's analyses and hope that better informed persons will correct my errors and take over the discussion.

Antipathy to the Burmese regime would seem to be at an all time high. On top of everything else, the government was unable to respond effectively to the emergency of Cyclone Nargis and actually interfered with those who were trying to help! Who can be left who actually wants the regime to rule? This antipathy favors the opposition. Unfortunately, as far as I have learned, despair is also very high. This favors the regime.

Immediately after the 2007 demonstrations, Burmese opposition supporters in the West suggested that the time for street demonstrations, which expose people to great danger, was past and expressed the hope that the opposition might turn to tactics that endanger both monastics and laity less than street demonstrations, such as work slowdowns, errors in the production of goods and services for the military, or stay at home strikes. In addition, as ever, an ongoing hope is that there will be a mutiny within the army. In fact, in the past there have been some Burmese government troops who have mutinied and joined the opposition, so this is not an unreasonable hope. Loyalty of mid-rank military officers is always potentially volatile. If the Burmese regime at some point comes to be seen as losing power, mid-rank officers with an eye on their status post-regime may desert the regime. In the Philippines, the two officers who deserted Marcos became defense minister and armed forces chief of staff in the succeeding Aquino government. Burmese officers must know that such a thing is possible. But in order for such a thing to come about

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[26] The eyewitness was Patrick Shank of the U.S. Campaign for Burma. He was reporting at a conference held at the Asia Society on October 5, 2007. This was captured on Youtube as "Burma Emergency Town Hall" (www.youtube.com). Retrieved March 27, 2009.

the government must be seen to be seriously challenged. There are still activists in Burma, lying low for now. This struggle is by no means over, though it remains extraordinarily difficult.

Tibet

Turning to Tibet, it may seem that Tibetan independence or autonomy is the most hopeless of causes when considered from a power analysis perspective. Nevertheless, at this moment in time when the Tibetan leadership is re-evaluating the strategy of their struggle with China, I suggest that is imperative for the Tibetans to evaluate their struggle in terms of power considerations.

Reports tell us that more and more younger Tibetans have been losing patience with the Dalai Lama's approach. It seems that their argument for a radically different approach, possibly using violence, is gaining ground, at least among the younger generation. But what does a power analysis reveal? There is no scenario in which the Tibetans could have enough violent power to win in a violent power contest against China. The Kalon Tripa, Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche, has said this very plainly, and to my mind, unarguably:

If we were not engaged in the non-violent path, but in the path of violence, … then we should evaluate what sort of result could have been achieved by this. It was absolutely clear that none of the world governments would help the armed struggle nor sympathize with it. And the entire cause would have been completely swept away from the international scenario by this time, fifty years on. The Tibet question would have been completely forgotten and the armed rebellion would have been crushed very easily by the PRC [People's Republic of China]….

[W]e remain firmly convinced that it was the right choice by His Holiness to choose the non-violent path. It is the reason why the Tibet issue is still alive today, and growing stronger, and there is a lot of concern for Tibet. Also, China is not able to ignore the insistence of the Tibet issue, and they cannot completely ignore His Holiness or the TGIE [Tibetan Government in Exile]. They need to respond, and they need to deal with us. That has been the result of the non-violent struggle."[27]

Here the Rinpoche looks at the Tibet situation and based on an assessment of power concludes that the non-violent approach was the only possible approach. He points out that it has achieved a certain measure of success—certainly more than violence could have achieved.

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[27] Samdhong Rinpoche, p. 156-158.

What about the use of nonviolent coercion? Who that compares Tibet and China in terms of political, military and economic power would think that Tibet can prevail in that kind of power contest? Moreover, the importation of large numbers of Han Chinese into Tibet has reached the point at which the Tibetan government in exile believes that Han Chinese now outnumber Tibetans within Tibet. This dilution of the Tibetan people with Han people makes it very difficult to take away the power of the local government, since any boycotts, strikes or other non-cooperation on the part of Tibetans would be undercut by the Han Chinese simply continuing business as usual.

What of the Dalai Lama's approach? His Holiness has maintained the strictest nonviolence while offering various proposals to resolve Tibet's differences with China and inviting the Chinese to dialogue. The Chinese, after 50 years of stone walling, have recently begun to talk with the Tibetans. But we should expect nothing from those talks. Why should talking produce any change when China has so much power and Tibet so little? Where does this leave the Tibetans, then?

As we have seen, options for the nonviolent use of power ultimately come down to two: conversion or coercion. The Tibetans cannot coerce, so it seems clear that their only viable option is to try to convert. The young, impatient Tibetans need to see that the Tibetans' strongest source of power—their *only* real source of power— has been their consistently holding the higher moral ground, their ability to represent an ideal and live that ideal. The impeccably nonviolent stance that the Dalai Lama has maintained over the decades, together with the impact of his entire personality, has consistently and powerfully invited conversion from around the world and even within China.

If this analysis is correct, it could be very helpful to communicate to the younger Tibetans that His Holiness' approach *is, in fact, amassing power*. His approach is *not* just passively waiting and "doing nothing." It is actively engaging the struggle by inviting conversion from among the Chinese people. There have been reports out of China for some time of significant numbers of young people who see Tibet as an appealing "spiritual land," an intriguing alternative to the meaningless materialism they see around them in the PRC. As the older generation of Chinese leaders dies out they will be replaced by a new generation. If that generation has a positive image of Tibet and sympathetic interest in Tibetan culture and religion, the leadership might ease the repression of the Tibetans such that their culture and religion could once again flourish in their own land. Admittedly, this is at present only a distant possibility; however, it seems to be the only possibility of the Tibetans achieving a condition in which while they would not have independence, they would be able in other respects to live their lives the way they choose. It seems, then, that the Tibetans' approach thus far, if it were to continue, could aim for the conversion of

a sufficient number of the Chinese people and future Chinese leaders for the Chinese to willingly grant the Tibetans freedom of religion and the preservation of their culture, and possibly some internal autonomy.

If this strategy is pursued, it must be understood and remembered that violence, such as the recent violence around the time of the Olympics, is a major setback to the process of inviting conversion. Chinese public opinion reacted extremely negatively to that violence. The Chinese internal propaganda machine is masterful at taking the smallest incident and using it to stir up public disapproval of the Tibetan cause. The Tibetans and their allies must not give them anything to work with.

In this context, it is useful to note how important to this strategy it is to communicate the Tibetan perspective to the Chinese people. There are projects underway now with the aim of opening up more communication between Tibetans and Chinese via internet in order to provide an alternative to the Chinese government's propaganda. Efforts of this nature must by all means grow, along with more intentional efforts to develop understanding on the issue among Chinese studying abroad.

In addition, a natural ally of the Tibetans will be movements within China for increased political freedom and rights for the Chinese themselves. It would be natural for the Tibetans to attach themselves to those struggles. Those Chinese who want more freedom and rights for themselves should be able to become sympathetic to the Tibetans' cause once they come to understand the Tibetans' perspective and experience.

In short, I believe that a power analysis of the Tibetan situation persuasively demonstrates the correctness of the Dalai Lama's approach thus far, the necessity of continuing and extending it, and the imperative of avoiding violence. It is a painfully slow process, but there is hope for the Tibetans in pursuing such a strategy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I propose that it can be helpful to look at these struggles in terms of power dynamics. On the other hand, having considered the situations in Vietnam, Burma and Tibet from a power perspective, I find myself drawn to the conclusion that there is something besides the dynamics of a power struggle that needs to remain as a central focus, alongside power.

In my view, in Tibet, it is abundantly clear that Buddhists' greatest source of power is their ability to represent an ideal and live that ideal. In fact, the same was probably true in Vietnam and seems true today in Burma. In Tibet, Vietnam and

Burma, Buddhism's strength and ability to lead a national struggle lies in two facts: (1) it is the only non-government national organization with widespread public sympathy and respect; and (2) it represents the ideals of the people. If it were ever to stop representing those ideals, its power would vanish.

Speaking from Sharp's point of view, I earlier raised a question about the way that some monks speak about their struggles, for example, the way Ashin Nayaka spoke during the Saffron Revolution. To quote him once again, "From a Buddhist point of view, the Saffron Revolution is not a power struggle. We came out to the street just to speak out. We came out in the street just for chanting for peace, for loving-kindness, for compassion."[28] From Sharp's point of view, if this is really how the leaders of a nonviolent struggle think, perhaps this attitude prevents them from looking at the power issues that they need to examine in order to succeed. However, in responding to Sharp from a Buddhist point of view, it seems crucial to recognize that it is exactly the ideal embodied in this way of speaking that is so attractive to the people. It is the Sangha's ability to represent this ideal that makes the Burmese, Tibetan and Vietnamese people embrace the Sangha's leadership; it is what gives the Sangha power. If the Sangha were ever to stop embodying these ideals, it would have nothing to offer the struggle. I suggest that while it is helpful to Buddhist nonviolent struggles to adopt a power analysis of the kind that Sharp suggests—critical in the case of Tibet—the Buddhist nonviolent strugglers also have something to teach Sharp about the importance and power to at least the Buddhist nonviolent struggles of spiritual ideals.

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[28] Ashin Nayaka at the Asia Society on October 5, 2007, captured on Youtube, *op cit*.

"Angry Monk Syndrome" on the World Stage

Dr. John Whalen-Bridge
National University of Singapore

"Politics in the Dharma can be very destructive, but Dharma into politics is a very good thing." --Ven. Bokar Rinpoche[1]

I. Tibet, Engaged Buddhism, and the Weapons of the Weak

"Angry Monk Syndrome" describes events occurring between September 2007 and the Beijing Olympics of August 2008, but as we shall see "events" must refer both to the protests themselves and the media responses to the protests: Angry Monk Syndrome might not exist in the absence of journalistic constructions and their endless replays.[2] In the year leading up to the Beijing Olympics, journalists and news consumers around the globe communed daily on images of and words describing angry monks. Regular news reports came in from Yangon, Kathmandu, Lhasa, New Delhi, Beijing, and there were also protests in support of the "saffron revolutionaries"[3] in Europe and North America, usually associated with events designed to promote the Beijing Olympics.[4] Physical struggles between monks and

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[1] http://www.khandro.net/dailylife_activities.htm, accessed 6 March 2009.

[2] Angry Monk Syndrome refers, in this paper, primarily to the protests of 2007-08, but as I show in the middle sections of the paper, protests by Buddhist monks are continuous with the rise of colonial incursions into South and Southeast Asia and with the rise of secular nation states. In short, whenever Buddhism and the State come into sharp conflict, Angry Monk Syndrome incidents will spike up.

[3] The phrase "saffron revolutionaries" became quite common in 2007 and 2008, especially after "Saffron Revolutionaries" by Matthew Weiner appeared in the *International Herald Tribune*, April 1, 2008. Weiner reviews the concept of Engaged Buddhism, usually associated with Vietnamese scholar/teacher/activist Thich Nhat Hanh,
(http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/04/01/opinion/edweiner.php, accessed 25 February 2009).

[4] News of Buddhist monks protesting were a daily occurrence in international newspapers between 2007 and 2008. On India, see Amelia Gentleman and Hari Kumar's "Protesters March in Advance of Torch in India," *The New York Times*, April 17, 2008,
(http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/world/asia/17torch.html). On Myanmar, see "Buddhist Monks Join Pro-Democracy Protesters in Myanmar," *The New York Times*, August 29, 2007, (no author given, Agence France-Presse,
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/29/world/asia/29myanmar.html?_r=1&scp=7&sq=Myanmar+protesting+monks&st=nyt). Angry Monk Syndrome did not begin because of the Olympics in Beijing, nor did protests end after that event. For an account of protests and increased security in Tibet at the approach of Losar (Tibetan Lunar New Year) in 2009, see Edward Wong's "China Adds to Security Forces in Tibet Amid Calls for a Boycott," published 18 February 2009 in *The New York Times*, "China Increases Security as Tibetan Festival Nears" in the *International Herald Tribune* on 20 February 2009 (pages 1 & 4), and Edward Wong and Jonathan Anfield's "For Tibetan New Year, Prayers and a Boycott: Monks Memorialize Victims of Uprising" in the *International Herald Tribune* on 26 February 2009, 1, 5. Months after the end of the Olympics, monks are still front-page news.

police—hard power struggles—took place at numerous geographical sites; media struggles over the meaning of these events—soft power struggles—took place simultaneously in media outlets and on internet servers around the world. Angry Monk Syndrome is a "weapon of the weak" in Scott's sense, but it is also a form of "soft power." We often think of "soft power," after Joseph S. Nye's discussion *in Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* in relation to dominant figures who use soft power as an alternative to force. This paper concerns the use of "soft power" resources by actors such as His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, whose is recognized as both the ecclesiastical and temporal leader of Tibet.[5] The question "So what?" ought to arise when anyone suggests that there is a theatrical element to political activity, but it is necessary to meditate more deeply on the significance of this theatrical political activity. The typical, reductive response—we language habits are the lines on the road that strongly shape our thinking—is to call such acting or theatre or what you will "political posturing," but it is an utterly inadequate approach to Angry Monk Syndrome to reduce it either to political posturing or to a flat-out failure of Buddhist monastic discipline.

Rhetorical analysis helps us to see the difference between what the words say and what the actors do with the words. According to Burke, "Rhetoric is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic and continually born anew: the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."[6] Burke adapted tools of dramatic analysis to better understand the interrelations of parts in a rhetorical event, but the use of literary analytic tools did not indicate that the overall events were less real. The dramatistic pentad has five major elements. An **Act** is what has been done or what will be done; a **Scene** is the location of the act, either in time or space and corresponds to "setting" in some theatre discussion; an **Agent** is the being who performs a given act, often corresponding to the "actor" or "character" in a conventional stage drama; **Agency** refers to the tools and methods used to perform the act; and **Purpose** is the goal of the act in question, or, in a larger sense, the "entelechy" that is understood to bring act, scene, agent, and agency together.[7]

(http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/19/world/asia/19tibet.html?scp=2&sq=angry%20monks%202009&st
=cse).
[5] The XIVth Dalai Lama's current role was asserted by his predecessor the XIIIth Dalai Lama, who expressed to the emperor of China his intention "to exercise both temporal and ecclesiastical rule in Tibet" (31) in Melvyn C. Goldstein's *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). On "soft power," see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). For a fill discuss of "weapons of the weak," see James C. Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985).
[6] Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California, 1950), 43.
[7] The elements, as discussed in works such as *Rhetoric of Motives* and *Grammar of Motives* and several other Burke volumes could be elaborated into a bewildering array of permutations; for a *basic* discusson, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dramatism, accessed 7 March 2009.

To understand Angry Monk Syndrome, we must look at the relationships between various *Acts* (monks getting angry, Buddhist leaders such as Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh making public statements that provide leadership), *Scenes* (locations of the protests or riots but also "locations" of media replays such as the New York Times or Xinhua online publications), *Agency* (especially the affective "technology" of Buddhist monks as signs of peace and forms of activism known as "Engaged Buddhism"), and Purposes (such as the amelioration of conditions for Tibetans within Tibet, the self-construction of Western readers as moral beings, and perhaps, some would claim, the hegemonic Western construction of China as a an oppressive force within Asia).[8] A full Burkean analysis would require a book; at present, I wish to use Burke's dramatistic approach to create a 3-D alternative to the flattening ways of understanding Angry Monk Syndrome that appear with absolute regularity in the hard-copy and online media. As an "actor" on the world stage, the Dalai Lama employs what Burke calls "scene," including both his own public speaking venues as well as references to monastic and secular settings in Tibet.

Anyone who has worked within a theatrical context for a while might think Burke has left out a key role—that of the "director." Certainly this role can be subsumed under "actor" in a rough way, but a play without a director (or a concert without a conductor) would seem quite out of place, and the leadership role played by the director has its analogue in the political and religious realms, as well. Within Vajrayana Buddhism, the "guru," it could be said, is entrusted with the job of directing the play of one's life, and it might be useful to consider the Dalai Lama as more than just another actor in the world-performance of Angry Monk Syndrome.

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[8] *New York Times* journalist Nicholas D. Kristof frames the "hegemony" point of view quite well in one of his blog entries on the difficulties of writing about Tibet: "There's a larger point to make. Americans tend to see Tibet through the prism of romanticism and human rights. Chinese see it through the prism of a 200-year history of Western countries bullying China and trying to demean or dismember it. The fact that the CIA backed the Dalai Lama feeds that narrative (even though in fact the U.S. didn't actually back Tibetan independence, partly for fear of annoying Chiang Kai-shek). When the American Congress jumps on the Tibetan question, that tends to trigger the Chinese sensitivity to Western bullying and Chinese nationalists close their ears. In many ways, Tibet is a clash between Han and Tibetan nationalism, which is why it is so hard to resolve." See "Your Comments on Tibet, Part Two, http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/17/your-comments-on-tibet-part-two/?apage=12", posted May 17, 2008, *10:47 pm*, accessed 9 March 2009. Orville Schell attempts the impossible when he tries to describe China-Tibet relations in a manner that both sides of the highly charged debate could accept. Schell writes insightfully about Chinese resentments that would not appear on the radar for very many Western interpreters:

> Mao Zedong set about reunifying all the errant pieces of China's old multiethnic empire, traditionally viewed as including *han* (Central Chinese), *man* (Manchus), *meng* (Mongolians), *hui* (Moslems), and *zang* (Tibetans). Indeed, as it had been for the founders of so many previous Chinese dynasties, the task of reunification was viewed by Mao's revolutionary government as an almost sacred obligation. Since it was the official Party view that China had been 'dismembered'—literally *fen'gua,* or 'cut up like a melon'—by predatory imperialist powers, reunification was a tangible way for Mao to show the world that China had, in fact, finally 'stood up' and would henceforth strive aggressively to restore and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. (25)

He could be thought of as the director of some of the more successful productions. Considering the Dalai Lama both as an actor—one who regularly appears to give a soliloquy, since China will not participate in any actual dialogue—*and* as a director, I propose that we approach Angry Monk Syndrome as a kind of political theatre. The term "theatre" has often been used in terms of the Dalai Lama's actions in an accusatory way, but, rather, we also need to recognize that this form of theatre

a) *performs* Buddhist narratives to a world often unfamiliar with them;

b) *alludes* to Tibetan history and culture in order to develop support for displaced Tibetans and for the Tibetan Government in Exile;

c) s*tylizes* performances in ways that will—when the performance goes as hoped—manifest a Vajrayana-inflected "Engaged Buddhism."

d) *publicizes* human rights abuses within Chinese-occupied Tibet in ways consonant with the principles of "Engaged Buddhism."[9]

The first act "Dramatism: Angry Monk Syndrome as Soft Power, Theatre as Politics" establishes the interpretive framework, elaborating the connections between political activism, theatrical performance, and even religious practice. The second act "Colonialism and the Conditioned Genesis of Angry Monk Syndrome" investigates Angry Monk Syndrome in relation to colonialism and other forms of political domination, while the third act "Enter the Dalai Lama: Engaged Buddhism as an Aesthetic Activity" considers the charisma and moral prestige of the Dalai Lama as Burkean "agency," as ritual implements through which he pursues both political and spiritual ends rather than as worldly compromises.

II. Dramatism: Angry Monk Syndrome as Soft Power, Theatre as Politics

All the world's a stage,And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances;And one man in his time plays many parts….

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[9] In his essay "Why I Write," George Orwell pluralizes motivation in a way that avoids the either/or presumption about political *or* aesthetic motivation being predominant in a work of art. His overdetermined schema divides motivation into "pure egotism," "aesthetic enthusiasm," "historical purpose," and "political purpose," and these four motivations correspond to Aristotle's four causes. If we are considering a chair, the carpenter who makes it is the "efficient cause, which corresponds to Orwell's "pure egotism." The formal cause is carpentry, and it corresponds to Orwell's "aesthetic enthusiasm." The material cause is wood in the case of a chair, "historical purpose" in the case of Orwell's literary motivations. The final cause is the purpose. A carpenter makes a chair to sell or so we can sit, and Orwell declares his most significant final cause to be the promotion of democratic Socialism. The Dalai Lama's performances likewise involve his own celebrity, his attempts to argue historical points regarding Tibetan history, his choices (which could variously be called "stylistic," "ethical," "strategic," or what have you—so long as we are aware his is practicing the *art* of politics), and finally his final causes, which include both this-worldly amelioration for Tibetan people within and without China and also dharma teaching on a global level for whoever is paying attention.

-- As You Like It (II.vii.139-42)

Dramatically regarded, angry monks are too rich to ignore. Angry monks are surprising because monks are supposed to have achieved permanent peacefulness, and if they haven't, they are supposed to be self-disciplined enough to repress anger or feel shame about having fallen into anger. "Dramatically regarded" sounds arch, unserious. Drama and poetry and literary analysis must always defer to *reality*, but our course through Angry Monk Syndrome will show such commonsensical divisions to be illusory--or perhaps even impractical.

From the worldliest of political philosophies, *realpolitik*, hard reality is composed of economic bottom lines and the capacity to marshal compulsive force, and from this point of view "literature" and "theatre" are imaginary rather than real, and they are significant only to the degree that they can undergird military and economic realities to grant them hegemonic acceptance, which is less expensive than, say, military occupation. From this point of view, "theatre" is contemptible, weak, unreal, and so forth.[10] It is a vain semblance of "reality." On 17 October 2007, China's top religious affairs official Ye Xiaowen spoke at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Part of China about the Dalai Lama, and he compared politics to theatrical performance in a disparaging way that illustrates the division of political reality and theatre according to the *realpolitik* mindset:[11]

It's like a Peking Opera, and the Dalai Lama is the protagonist singing his long-time attempts to split the motherland and seek "Tibet independence," said Ye Xiaowen, director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, at a press briefing during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.[12]

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[10] The Wikipedia entry on this mentality explains it as a mode of policy in which calculations are practical as opposed to ideological: "*Realpolitik* (German: *real* "realistic", "practical" or "actual"; and *politik* "politics") refers to politics or diplomacy based primarily on practical considerations, rather than ideological notions. The term realpolitik is often used pejoratively to imply politics that are coercive, amoral, or Machiavellian. *Realpolitik* is a theory of politics that focuses on considerations of power, not ideals, morals, or principles." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realpolitik, accessed 3 March 2009.
[11] Political authors and political activists are forced by their circumstances to reflect on the ways in which their messages are rhetorically framed according to disciplinary social conventions that precede the political issue in question. The site of *actual* power typically dismisses a locus of *potential* power, or opposition, by deploying the ideologically charged priority of "reality" over "imagination": as in Plato's text, poetry is frequently banished from "the republic." For a discussion of the ideological deployment of "the real" in relation to the "merely imaginary" that is from the hegemonic standpoint to be disparaged, see my chapter "Submerged Revolution in *Moby-Dick*" in *Political Fiction and the American Self* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), pp. 45-72.
[12] "China's religious official lashes out at Dalai Lama's U.S. award, Bush meeting," available online at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6285276.html, accessed 24 February 2009. The New York Times article, published 17 October 2007, mentions "farce" but not "Peking Opera," (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/17/washington/17cnd-lama.html?hp, accessed 24 February 2009).

From the perspective of the top religious official in China, "theatre" is a contemptuously weak alternative, but it may be the best option of the Central Tibetan Administration's best option.[13]

Angry Monk Syndrome has made almost daily appearances in international newspapers in the months leading up to the Olympics in Beijing, with manifestations also in Myanmar and to a lesser degree in places like Korea, but Angry Monk Syndrome has been occurred regularly when Buddhism has been directly affected by colonial domination. It is most strongly associated with Myanmar and Tibet, but to ignore the international dimension of this struggle would obscure the nature of this communication completely.[14] Whether the monks protest in Myanmar, Korea, Nepal, India, or China (or Tibet), the conflicts are fueled by colonial resentment and geo-political maneuvering. The contestants in the soft-power struggle vie for sympathetic understanding or, at least, tolerant acquiescence from the West.

Orientalist constructions play an important role. The dynamic tension that gives this syndrome its attention-grabbing drama stems from the belief, in part an Orientalist construction and in part a standard doctrine within Buddhism, that Buddhist monks are never supposed to indulge in anger. Because Buddhist monks conveniently signify the human capacity for self-pacification, that become, in the breach, highly dramatic symbols of anger, and so they make especially good first-page copy. Yet, because Buddhist monks are typically understood to have renounced voluntary anger, they have often accrued an impressive degree of moral authority, a conditioning factor that gives their anger more international credibility than, say, that of Palestinians who are stereotypically associated with violent response to oppression rather than Gandhian endurance. Angry Monk Syndrome as reported within the mass media unfailingly generates desired dramatic effects; the newspaper (and internet) reports require aesthetic and intellectual tension to produce pleasurable affects

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[13] The Tibetan government-in-exile refers to itself as the Central Tibetan Administration and claims jurisdiction over the entire Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and also Qianghai province. CTA operates from Dharmasala, India and is selected through democratic elections, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_Tibet_in_Exile, accessed 24 February 2009).

[14] See Matthew T. Kapstein's "Concluding Reflections" for documentation of a 1987 outbreak of Angry Monk Syndrome: "To speak of 'religious revival and cultural identity' in contemporary Tibet may convey to many readers images of protest demonstrations, cries for freedom, and reported violations of human rights. The close relationship between resurgent Buddhism in Tibet and the Tibetan independence movement began to receive intensive international attention in the wake of a series of riots that erupted in Lhasa during the autumn of 1987" (139). Kapstein goes on to argue, as I do throughout this paper, that the simplistic contradiction between angry protest and our expectations for Buddhist monks belies a more complex situation: "For besides being the most dramatic expressions of religious and political activity in Tibet, the events in Lhasa have been the most accessible to outside scrutiny. Despite this, as the events and circumstances discussed in this book make clear, the post-Cultural Revolution religious revival has involved considerably more complexity and variation than such a picture alone suggests" (139). *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*, edited by Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew T. Kapstein, foreword by Orville Schell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

between readers. Angry monks, as a semiotic device, come preloaded with a tension between our expectations of achieved-tranquility and the newspaper's staple for generating interest: conflict and disaster. From the perspective of news media professionals, the dramatic appeal of Angry Monk Syndrome makes great sense.

News media actors benefit from Angry Monk Syndrome, but the monks themselves have other interests. The dramatic appeal of "Angry Monk Syndrome" as a media phenomenon would appear to subvert the political objectives of the Buddhist monks, since the action of expressing anger would apparently cancel out the basis of international moral authority, namely the renunciation of anger, self-interest, and so forth. On the one hand, a media fetish can trivialize one's cause, but on the other "there is no such thing as bad publicity." Have they been, in terms of their presumptive political goals, been *skillful*? There is no difference between asking "Have they been politically skillful?" and asking "Have they been successful performers?"

The political—meaning rhetorical and performative—actions of the protesting monks enhances the power of the monks so long as their expressions of anger seem "reasonable" to media consumers and so long as their expressions of anger do not tilt into violence in such a way as to *generate someone else as a victim.* Buddhist monks in Myanmar and Tibet (including Tibetan monasteries in India and Nepal) almost always appear within the western press as victims, even though there have been claims that rioting Tibetans in Lhasa beat Han Chinese there. The victim-status of angry Tibetan monks (which Chinese media challenges every chance it gets) protects the monks from the potential drawbacks of Angry Monk Syndrome, but if they were to massacre the Han Chinese who might, conceivably, be refigured as an *ethnic minority*, the benefits of Angry Monk Syndrome would quickly be lost. It helps the Tibetan cause that foreign journalists have been largely excluded from Tibet in the months surrounding the Olympics, since the absence of verifiable reports—the official Chinese media has absolutely no credibility to readers of the *New York Times*—leaves readers unsure whether Tibetan protestors actually victimized any Han Chinese in Lhasa.[15, 16]

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[15] Insert some NYT media asserting skepticism about Chinese official media.

[16] Sri Lankan monks are associated with the government in power and receive little or no sympathy in the west. Also, Thai monks who are angry at female monastics who wish to have respect on par with male clergy do not receive respectful treatment in the western press, either. The necessary condition for media valorization could be called "honorable powerlessness." Obviously, it is against one's *long term* interests to accede to "powerlessness," but it can be a wise short-term strategy to perform honorable powerlessness in ways that develop one's chances at self-determination.

       Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism betrayed? Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Regarding monks protesting against women who wish to be ordained at an equal level to men, see "Thais debate over women as Buddhist monks," Singapore Straits Times, JULY 26, 2004:

Angry Monk Syndrome has beneficial results for protesting Buddhist monks, then, for two reasons. First, a sympathetic viewer will blame not the monks but rather the oppressing state. Second, and relatedly, the viewpoint presumed by international English-language media is *not* Buddhist to a significant degree and so need not be overly concerned that Buddhist monks are betraying Buddhist principles.[17] Buddhist monks will not lose credibility so long as they continue to be perceived as harmless, which is at once a blessing and a curse, and infractions of Vinaya[18] disciplinary codes

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CHIANG MAI - First came the allegations of heresy, the death threats followed, then came the start of an impeachment process. The formerly peaceful world of Thai Buddhism has been rocked by an issue that has riven religions worldwide - the role of women within the ranks. While Thais are proud of the thousands of golden-roofed temples that adorn the kingdom, more and more believers are calling for the removal of No Women Allowed signs that hang outside some buildings containing sacred relics. But worse still to the old guard is the threat of the full ordination of women to the Therevada Buddhist order, followed by more than 90 per cent of Thais.

'When I was first ordained, there were people that wanted to be ordained also, but they didn't dare, so they waited to see if I got clobbered first,' said Dhammananda Bhikkuni, Thailand's only Therevada Buddhist female monk.

Accessed on 7 March 2009 from http://www.thailandqa.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4399. See also "07/28/04 Debate over Women as Buddhist Monks..." at http://www.buddhistview.com/site/epage/18029_225.htm.

[17] According to the Pew Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (http://religions.pewforum.org/reports, accessed 25 February 2009), Buddhists make up less than 1% of the population, with atheists and agnostics making up 4% and self-identified Christians making up over 78%. The report was published 23 June, 2008.

The Hollywood comedy *Anger Management*, from 2003, played this belief for laughs, such that the lead actor's incredibly annoying character forces a Buddhist monk to lose his temper in a most un-Buddhist manner. The not-so-subtle theme of the movie is that anger is good for you, that you need to "get in touch" with your anger. But as this film ridiculed Buddhism's radical scepticism towards anger, the Dalai Lama has consistently denied – contrary to the Western notion – that it is better to 'vent'. "Some Western psychologists say that we should not repress our anger but express it – that we should practice anger!" he once stated derisively. (Quotation from a webpage devoted to the Dalai Lama's teachings about Tibetan "anger management" disciplines known as *lojong*, or "mind training": http://www.bodhicitta.net/HHDL%20The%20Eight%20Verses%20of%20Thought%20Transformation.htm, accessed 25 February 2009. On the tradition of lojong texts, see Thupten Jinpa, "Introduction," *Mind Training: the Great Collection*, compiled by Shönu Gyalchok and Könchok Gyaltsen, translated and edited by Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 1-18.

[18] For the reader's convenience, I append the Wikipedia paragraph explaining the differences between the various articulations of the Vinaya texts, with the relevant sources pasted in below. Information accessed 2 March 2009.

At the heart of the Vinaya is a set of rules known as *Patimokkha* (Pāli), or *Pratimoksha* (Sanskrit). The Vinaya was orally passed down from the Buddha to his disciples. Eventually, numerous different Vinayas arose in Buddhism, based upon geographical or cultural differences and the different Buddhist schools that developed. Three of these are still in use. The Vinayas are the same in substance and have only minor differences. Buddhists in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Thailand follow the Theravadin Vinaya, which has 227 rules[1] for the bhikkhus (male monastics) and 311[2] for the bhikkhunis (female monastics, though the female order died out centuries ago and recent attempts to restore it from the Chinese tradition are controversial). Buddhists in China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam follow the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (四分律),[3][4] which has 250 rules[5] for the bhikkhus and 348 rules[6] for the bhikkhunis. Buddhists in Tibet and Mongolia follow the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, which has 253 rules for the bhikshus and 364 rules for bhikshunis (in theory, though the female order was never introduced in Tibet; it

does not threaten non-Buddhist readers in any direct way. Political powerless may be charming, but obviously it makes repression more likely.[19] Insofar as it allows for public protests that generate huge amounts of international publicity, Angry Monk Syndrome very much abets the cause in question. However, the built-in constraint—harmlessness—can also reinforce the perpetuation of victimhood, since prestige based on powerlessness can certainly increase the tolerance of international viewers for the monk's victimhood.

Ten years ago I was a temporary monk for eight days within the Theravada tradition, and I learned that the basic rules of acting that I had learned in high school dramatic productions applied fully for sincere monks when they interact with the non-ordained public: all actors know that you must make sure you are "in character" at least five steps before you walk out onto stage. I was invited to take temporary ordination to help manage a large group of boisterous eight-to-sixteen year old boys who knew little about Buddhism and far less about monkhood when they began their eight-day adventure in asceticism, and it became clear that they had to be taught *quickly* to understand themselves in relation to an audience. This became especially clear to me when the boys, as they received alms in their begging bowls, noticed that if they lowered the bowls a bit, attractive women who made donations had to bend down lower to make the offerings, allowing a better bodice glimpse. It became clear to me at that moment that the robe protects the monk from his own tendencies precisely because it sets the monk apart (and to some degree above) the regular population in exactly the way a theatrical costume and stage set the actor apart and above. The actor must discipline himself or injury to the dramatic production will result; the monk must discipline himself, or he will damage the reputation of the sangha. Whatever the young boys felt, they had to be taught quickly to do what young sales representatives who lack confidence must learn: fake it 'til you make it. It is not useful to draw too hard a line between theatre and religion, I realized.

A second anecdote connects theatre and politics: in the late 1980s and early 1990s, while I was writing a dissertation on contemporary political fiction, I decided

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has recently been authorized by the Dalai Lama). In addition to these patimokkha rules there are many supplementary rules."
1. ^ http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhu-pati.html
2. ^ http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhuni-pati.html
3. ^ 四分律 http://www.cbeta.org/result/T22/T22n1428.htm
4. ^ 解脫戒經 http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T24/1460_001.htm
5. ^ 《四分律比丘戒本》 http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T22/1429_001.htm
6. ^ 《摩訶僧祇比丘尼戒本》 http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T22/1427_001.htm

[19] Thich Nhat Hanh directly challenges the idea that "power" must necessarily be limited to the ability to compel others: "Living our life deeply and with happiness, having time to care for our loved ones—this is another kind of success, another kind of power, and it is much more important. There is only one kind of success that really matters: the success of transforming ourselves, transforming our afflictions, fear, and anger. This is the kind of success, the kind of power, that will benefit us without causing any damage" See *The Art of Power* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 2.

to make time to participate in political protests in the Los Angeles area, in part because I believed in the cause and in part because I wanted to know the degree to which my writing was able to mean something beyond the ivory tower. When I was writing my dissertation chapter on Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, I was also, once or twice a month, getting up at 5:00am to attend a "clinic defense" rally. At these events, Christian groups composed of evangelical fundamentalist and Roman Catholics would try to close down women's clinics associated with abortion, while at the same time members of the "Clinic Defense Alliance," a coalition of feminist and gay rights groups, would struggle to keep the clinics open.[20] Signs were displayed prominently, and there was much chanting. Physical struggle almost never involved striking blows, but there was intense struggle to create lines and tunnels of people to either keep the entrance open or close it down. As in a game, there were shared objectives for both sides, and—at these particular events, though not when something "outside the rules" like a bombing occurred—there were implicit shared rules about acceptable behavior. On a given Saturday morning, we (the so-called "Pro-Choice" CDA members) all got out of bed at 5:00am, drove in caravan to the (so-called "Pro-Life") rally site, determined where the attempt to close a clinic would happen and tried to get there at almost the same time, but if on such a day the media refused to show up, everyone from both sides of the struggle would pack up their protest signs and go out to breakfast. This happened several times, forcing me to conclude that the political protest is always a triangular affair in which the two sides struggle before an audience. One notes the popularity of the movie genre "the courtroom drama," as it builds into itself a reflection of this audience in a way that sometimes has a meta-theatrical level. The two attorneys, analogous to the two agents in conflict, never try to persuade each other: the only opinion that matters is that of the judge or the corporate opinion of the jury.

When we consider the media battle over the Tibet/China relationship that arose from China's hosting of the 2008 Olympics, it is easy to see that both sides marshaled "theatrical" resources (dramatis personae included the Dalai Lama and Hu Jintao; costumes include the red robes of Tibetan monks; settings include monasteries in Tibet, Nepal, and India; themes included national sovereignty, human rights, and cultural self-determination; and there were attempts to frame the overall interpretation of the event by controlling the key-words through which the audience would attempt to unlock its complexities, words such as "splittist." Meanwhile, there were attempts to use force to shape outcomes (e.g., arrests of Tibetan monks or in a few cases rioting by Tibetan monks that may have included attacks on Chinese residents of Lhasa), events which did not "play well" to the audience. The political wisdom of relying on "theatrical activism" can be questioned on the grounds that the

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[20] See Meta G. Carstarphen and Susan C. Zavoina's *Sexual Rhetoric: Media Perspectives on Sexuality, Gender, and Identity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999).

audience, as large as it might ever become, is essentially passive, exactly in the manner of a real theatrical audience, but theatrical assertion makes sense when military response is futile, and so the artful jockeying of disciplined political protest can be put forth as the most reasonable option when one must choose among "weapons of the weak."

III. Conclusion: When the Curtain Falls, the Audience Decides

Political activism, then, is a kind of theatre, though certainly not one in which the outcome is scripted in advance. Some may wish to resist this point, since it may seem dismissive about motivations or effects to compare orchestrated public actions in the service of, say, publicizing human rights abuses the kinds of cultural consumption that typically help us escape the burden of more serious demands on our attention. "Theatre" sounds playful and "merely entertaining," but the desire to be amused or fascinated or engaged on the part of an identifiable audience is a shaping condition of the news as we experience it, and, as suggested above, grassroots political actors are keenly aware of this. Political activists hope to shape perception in ways that will be as consequential as possible. In this theatrical situation, three subject positions exist in triangular relation: the monk, the State, and the international witness. When the State and Buddhist institutions are in conflict, a monk may participate in a protest, and an international viewer, reading about the event in the *New York Times* or the *Guardian*, will perceive the event that is presumed to be of consequence to either the monks or the State.[21] This benefit can be in the form of international prestige (which may condition treaties and trade agreements) or in the more direct for of tourist dollars. When we look at the "monk" subject position, we must consider both the more or less anonymous assemblage of monks that appear in news media photographs and the much more nuanced representations of a particular monk, the Dalai Lama. When discussing international viewers, the range of evidence can includes mainstream western media, responses in particular to the Dalai Lama (including academic, journalistic, and religious writings in English). However we construct this metaphorical "audience," the point remains that, while viewers tend to idealize Buddhist monks, this idealization is an important fact that all parties

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[21] The "stage" metaphor of this essay can be worked out more specifically: most of the time, the "stage" in question is not really the geographical location of protesting monks but is, for the purposes of this rhetorical analysis, best thought of as the front page of *The New York* Times and its international edition *The International Herald Tribune*. Of course, the United States is one of many audiences that Buddhist monks and non-religious states (especially Tibetan monks and the People's Republic of China, in this essay) attempt to cultivate, but the archive of possible material on this question is huge and always growing, so it will be wise to limit discussion to a specific dramatic event (Buddhist monks struggling with states), a stage (the New York Times outlets, including online versions), and an audience (primarily the American consumers of this media, with some attention to the degree to which this audience is integrated with other consumers from Europe and sometimes Asia). All online versions have been verified as of 25 February 2009.

recognize and which forms the basis of one form of struggle, a rhetorical battle between Tibetan Buddhist monks and the PRC. This symbolic battle is not in itself a sufficient strategy to attain Tibetan independence or even autonomy, but neither is armed insurrection a viable option for Tibetans in exile or Tibetans within the borders of contemporary China. The *symbolic* battle, however small a part it can play toward a satisfying outcome, has certainly helped the Tibetan government in exile accrue status with governments around the world, much to the consternation of the PRC.[22]

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[22] Our understanding of Angry Monk Syndrome is complicated by a common conditioning factor, namely the continuing pattern of western misunderstanding in which Buddhists are understood to be quietistic pacifists, vegetarians who hold no positive beliefs and so are moral nihilists.[22] Less well understood, at least at the level of mainstream journalistic media, is the history of Buddhist political activism known in its most modern manifestation as "Engaged Buddhism." That term is usually associated with the exiled Vietnamese Buddhist teacher Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, whose writings on the subject will help reframe our view of rhetorical choices made by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile. In addition to reporting on Tibetan strategic choices, it is also possible to extrapolate from these choices and from the writings of the Dalai Lama to formulate the outlines of Tibetan inflection of "Engaged Buddhism." I do this in a continuing section of this argument, though there is not space to include the next state here.

There is a growing bibliography on Engaged Buddhism. See Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*, edited by Arnold Kotler, illustrated by Mayumi Oda (Berkelely: Parallax Press, 1987); Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World*, foreword by Donald Swearer (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005); Sallie B. King, *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005); Susan Moon, editor *Not Turning Away: The Practice of Engaged Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2004); and Pema Chodron, *Practicing Peace in Times of War*, edited by Sandy Boucher (Boston: Shambhala, 2007). Add Robert Aitkin.

Buddhist Perspective on Addressing War-Displacement

Ven. Pinnawala Sangasumana

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Introduction:

Human displacement is a process or phenomenon of people forced to flee from habitual places and to find refuge another places involuntary by different kind of causes such as political conflicts, natural or human-made disasters and development projects etc. As a result of, or in order to avoid the effect of one or more of these causes, people have been forced to leave their places of origin. When this occurs within the border of a country, it is called 'Internal Displacement' and the people who are experiencing this situation is concerned as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) while others who cross the international border and find refuge another country is called as Refugees. *IDPs has been defined by UN Guiding principles on Internal Displacement as; Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border* (OCHA 1999:6). But in fact internal displacement is not just a process where people are forced to move from the places of habitual residence to another, it is a multi-dimensional process which emerges from interrelated phases; Forced migration, transition and resettlement. They stayed in each phase sometimes for days, sometimes for years, as the course of the armed conflict ebbed and flowed across the landscape (Wikinson 2003). Cathrin Brun (2003) says the process of internal displacement is often experienced and expressed as loss: loss of home, loss of possessions, loss of social networks, and even of culture and identity and experiencing physical dislocation, separation from habitual environments, social disruption, and material dispossession.

Approximately 85 percent of all displaced persons in the world have fled from their places of origin, because of different conflicts which include international and internal armed conflicts, political persecutions, violation of human rights and other kinds of political violations (UNHCR 2005). The report of Global IDP project indicates that of the 24.5 million IDPs in at least 50 countries, Africa is worst-affected continent with 12.1 million IDPs in 20 countries of the region (Global IDP Project, 2007). By the end of 2006, some 3.3 million people were displaced within

Asia- Pacific region due to different conflict. Banerjee et al. (2005) show that the most vulnerable and marginalized communities bear the brunt of displacement in most South Asian countries. Among them Sri Lanka has become a country which is experiencing unbearable situation of war-induced internal displacement today. The conflict gained greater momentum since the 1983, escalating in violent confrontations between the state military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It has killed around 70 000 of people, displaced around two million and destroyed physical infrastructure. On the one hand Tamil tigers have been undertaking the frequent human right violations such as arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, forced expulsion, ethnic cleansing, forced recruitment of women and children, claymore attacks to the public transports, bomb explosion in public places and suicide bomb attacks, on the other hand Government is confronting this situation in fighting against them with sever operations, arresting and kidnapping, areal bombing, establishing high security zones so and so forth. Altogether this situation has caused mass movement of people from their places of origin as well as human suffering and damage in almost all spheres of life. Within the last two and half decades, an estimated two million people, belonging to all three ethnic communities; Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims have been displaced in Sri Lanka. Most of them have been languishing in welfare centers for several years anticipating the return to their own homes. The plight of the displaced people has become important for socio-economic, political, cultural, environmental and humanitarian context and also it has become a social issue in the country. It is difficult to determine the exact numbers of internally displaced people in Sri Lanka in the absence of a precise IDP Survey. According to some estimates, however, 4 55 514 people remained displaced in May 2008 as including over 181 000 people displaced by the fighting since 2006. On an average, one in every 18 Sri Lankan is displaced, while in the Northern Province it is one in every three persons (IDMC 2008). However at present the situation is slightly different because on the one side the most of IDPs in the Eastern province are being resettled while on the other thousands of IDPs are being produced from the north (Vanni area).

Conflict and displacement not only disrupt the lives of the individuals and families concerned, but the entire communities and societies. Both these areas left behind and the areas to which the displaced flee often suffer from extensive damages. Therefore war- displacement has come to the fore as one of the more pressing humanitarian, human rights, political, security, social, cultural and environmental issues facing the global community. These significant illustrations show the seriousness of the internal displacement problem, which has resulted in many social and political problems at individual, community, state and global level. Most case studies on war-displacement examine only the background to displacement and the conditions experienced by IDPs at a national level. Under this situation, it is noted

that seeking durable solutions through religious perspective to the problem of war-displacement is almost always become more prominent in the world today.

What is addressing internal displacement?

Addressing internal displacement concerns that the manner in which successive governments, international organizations, regional bodies, national human rights institutions, civil society and the displaced themselves deal with entire process of displacement in all its aspects. Therefore literary two perspectives are discussed on the basis for advocacy efforts on behalf of the rights of the displaced in the national responsibility frameworks: a). policy oriented which means that the way the internally displaced live and cope with it is instrumental to protecting and assisting them and the b). actor oriented perspective is an understanding of the individual as an active subject, with the capacity to process social experience and to invent new ways of coping with life, even under extreme coercion.

However the effectiveness of those approaches is further called into question as most of the programs do not take into consideration the three essential phases of internal displacement: forced migration, transition and resettlement following one upon the other. Therefore these phases should be touched upon when addressing this protracted problem. According to the UN Guiding Principles, addressing displacement is an entire attempt to deal with every aspect and phase of the internal displacement. It goes on to outline the rights of IDPs from the period prior to any displacement through to the end of displacement. Principles 5-9 thus deal with the issue of prevention or protection from displacement while 10-23 cover protection during displacement and also 28-30 deal with questions relating to seeking durable solutions including return, resettlement and reintegration (UN 2000).

Based on this foundation, it is appropriate to consider the rich and highly sophisticated elements in Buddhism related to addressing war-displacement with special reference to preventing displacement and minimize its adverse effects, ensuring assistance and protection of IDPs and creating durable solutions to return or resettlement and reintegration as well as more importantly, to address the social and psychological issues behind the conflicts and arbitrary displacement.

Prevention of war-displacement:

In the context of addressing internal displacement first and foremost is prevention. Actors have a responsibility, elaborated in the *Guiding Principles* (Principles 5-9), to prevent and avoid conditions on their territory that might lead to population displacement, to minimize unavoidable displacement and mitigate its

adverse effects, and to ensure that any displacement that does occur lasts no longer than required by the circumstances (Brooking 2005). Preventing displacement is difficult but there should be a 'rights of displaced' and details would be obligations of governments and insurgent forces - before displacement occurs. Since conflict can be identified as a main reason which relates to miserable face of war-displacement, prevention of root and proximate causes of conflicts should be the main task in order to stop or minimize the adverse effects of arbitrary displacement.

Most conflicts causing internal displacement are rooted in competition for resources, poverty, inequality, acute racial, ethnic, religious and cultural cleavages along with bad governance. Several countries in the world experience war-displacement of various magnitudes according to those factors which caused them and also according to their severity. It is justifiable to say that the civil war which has kept worsening almost during the past two decades is a result of the national conflict originating from a combination of all types of conflicts in the world. According to the United Nations most conflicts are de facto rooted in economic disparities. Later they may be cloaked in ideological, racial or even religious overtones . It is notably seen that if a main cause is economic disparities, enhancement of development programmes could assist to increase the resource base may help reduce tensions and violence but some causes like ideology may be very difficult to deal with. It is clear that a fairer distribution of the world's wealth and resources, and the establishment of a minimum standard of human rights, education and health for every citizen of the world, would do a lot to bring about greater peace. But Buddhism says that these external adjustments will fail unless craving is controlled. From this point it is essential to have religious perspectives in order to prevent the conflict and displacement. The teaching of Buddhism in the creation of unity and peace is very relevant here. Buddhism as a religion that keeps its weight upon the principle of cause and effect defines this situation if the cause would be eliminated the result would immediately follow suit. The Buddhist perspective on preventing conflict induced displacement is to identify the causes of the conflict with certainty and great detail first and fore mostly then easy to minimize the adverse effect of displacement. In identification of the causes, Buddhism outlines the ever best strategy – 'Dependant Organization' called *Paticca-samuppada,* the core of almost every Buddhist doctrine. Accordingly Buddhism holds the view that nothing can originate abstractly, or without a cause and the cause would also be varied i.e. natural. Psychological, social, economic, political and even environmental (Ven. Dhammadassi 2008). According to this principle it is clear that understanding of the causes of conflicts first, thereafter seeking non-violent solution to peace building and mitigation of war-displacement on the one side and helping displaced to restore their lives and make all of them feel a sense of belonging on equal footing with the other

nationals of the country on the other. Unless this is done, these acutely war-IDPs can never enjoy full peace, security, unity, stability and shared prosperity.

In Sri Lanka today thousand of people are being displaced and are suffering due to the most terrible so called victories of both government and the LTTE. There are many references in the earliest Buddhist texts to the futility of this kind of situations. *Dhammapada* says that *victory breeds hatred. The defeated live in pain. Happily the peaceful live, Giving up victory and defeat (Having set winning & losing aside)* (Sukkha Vagga, 201). Losing a conflict of course brings suffering, but so too does winning as it merely creates resentment and plans for revenge in the losing side. Consequently people may have to displace from their places of origin.

An interesting explanation of conflicts and their adverse effects are highlighted in different discourses of the Buddhism (*Suttas*) such as *Sakkapanha, Agganna, Chakkavattisihanada, Mahanidana, Kutadanta* etc. *Sakkapanha Sutta* of the *Digha Nikāya* has pointed out the Buddha's response to questions as to why people who enjoy living in peace nevertheless act in a way that leads to conflicts. In diagnosing the problem, the Buddha traced the immediate and secondary causes until he arrived at the final root cause, namely craving. Common manifestations of craving are envy which arises because people identify things as "I", and avarice which arises because people appropriate, they attempt to carve out a territory for themselves and to furnish that territory with possessions that will titillate their greed and sense of self-importance. This is clearly bound with prolong armed conflict in Sri Lanka mainly based on territoriality and ethno regionalism practices. As an example, the expulsion of all Muslims lived in the North and all Sinhalese of border villagers are the most extensive case of ethnic cleansing in Sri Lanka. Brun (2008) highlighted the voice of displaced who had experienced this unexpected violence as: *The LTTE came and asked us to go in two hours, that was October the 30th in 1990. They said that there is a certain place for us, Jaffna is for the Tamils. 'Puttalam and Ampara is for the Muslims, you should go there.*

In the *Magandiya sutta* it is stated that 'abiding by their (own) views people dispute, (saying) that; only this is true, everything else is false' or 'what some say is true or real, what other says is empty or worthless'. Thus contending they dispute'(*Naheva saccani bahuni nana- annatra sannaya niccani loke, takkanca ditthisu pakappaitva-saccam musati dvaya dhamma mahu*). This situation has been very clearly explained in the *Kamma sutta* in Sutta nipatha under two motivational forces lying beneath the human life; *kilesa-kamma (subjective sensuality) and Vattu-kamma* (Objective Sensuality) which cause to originate the conflicts. First one refers to the strong desire or attachment towards ideologies while the other link to burning desires and attachments to material things, wealth and so forth (Ven Dhammadassi 2008). It can be further linked to the explanation of Buddhism on origin of disputes,

conflicts, arguments, disagreements according to *Kalahavivada sutta.* Here causes are explained in accordance with the theory of Dependent Co-origination which is from longing, possession, contact and pleasant and unpleasant attitudes etc. arise desire, anger, lying, doubt with in turn pave the way to human displacement.

War-displacement is a result of conflict which includes killing, kidnapping, ethnic cleansing, violation of human rights etc. According to the Buddhism these violations arise due to greed, rage, anger, hatred, ill-will, and jealousy. In order to heal such psychological conditions, three fundamental modes of training in Buddhist practice: morality, mental culture, and wisdom can be used and then there wouldn't be a conflict causes to the displacement of people. Buddhism teaches self management, self control and self discipline for seeking effective solutions to the conflicts because conflicts must be resolved by means of ones own action and efforts.

In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, it is recorded that the Buddha addressed a monk called *Cunda* with the words:

> *It is not possible, Cunda, for one who is stuck in the mud to pull out another who is stuck in the mud. But Cunda, it is possible for one who is not himself stuck in the mud to pull out another who is stuck* (Majjhima Nikāya, Sallekha Sutta. No. 8).

This means that it must be concerned ourselves with our own thought, speech and action rather than with those of others, not only because this is what is most directly within our control, but also because it is these that cause us to suffer. In *dhammapada* it is further said that evil done by one does oneself defile. Evil left undone by one does oneself purify. Purity and impurity belong individually to oneself; no one shall another purify (Loka Vaggo 165).

Buddhism encourages individual thinking against conflict and develops self determination of adverse effects of displacement. Buddhism teaches that to establish peace and harmony in the world, all of us must first learn the way leading to the extinction of hatred, greed and delusion, the roots of all evil. It further says that war begins in the hearts of men, and that only in the hearts of men can real and lasting peace be established. Interestingly, this concept is now enshrined in the preamble to the United Nations Charter on Peace: *Since it is in the minds of men that wars begin, it is in the minds of men the ramparts of peace should be erected*. This statement echoes the very first verse of the *Dhammapada*: *Mind is the forerunner of all (evil) states. Mind is their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox* (Yamaka Vaggo 01). Since people are being uprooted mainly because of fear of attacks, killing and kidnapping as a result of the war, the action should be taken to prevent them if they should be protected from the displacement. Hence Buddhism

teaches: *Let one conquer anger with non-anger: kindness, the wicked with righteousness, let one conquer the miser with liberality and the liar with truth*. (Dhammapada: Kodhavagga 223).

Peace has to be cultivated in our minds through what Buddhists call right understanding or right thought (*samma sankappa*). This includes both thought and intention, and in particular refers to the thoughts that motivate our actions. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha described right thought in this way: *And what is right thought? The thought of giving up, the thought of love and the thought of helpfulness – this is called right thought* (Majjhima Nikāya III: 251). This means the right thoughts encourages people to practice the principle of conquering hatred and avarice through love or non-hatred. Again *Dhammapada* (Yamaka Vagga: 5) states that: *hatred can never be appeased in this world through hatred. It is only be means of non-hatred or love. This is an eternal law. (Nahi verena verani- sammantida kudachnam, Averenacha sammanthi- esa dhammo sanantano)*.

Having good governance is the other most important factor and the fore-runner of the entire cause of preventing displacement. It enables to overcome most of root causes of the conflicts. The *Cakkavatti Sutta* explains the distinguishing characteristic of the *cakkavattin* is that he rules "the Earth to the extent of its ocean boundaries, having conquered territories not by force of arms but by righteousness (Digha Nikāya: Burma Pitaka). This means that the character of the ruler is the crucial factor in Buddhist perspective on good governance. If a good person becomes the ruler, then the whole system of Dhammic-socialism will be good. On the other hand, a bad ruler will produce an unacceptable type of socialism. Buddhism has introduced the ten royal virtues: *Dasaraja Dhamma* which if implemented assists the spiritual leadership of a *dhammaraja* resulting in sustainable peace towards preventing war-displacement. The ten royal virtues as follows:

1. *Dana* (generosity, charity). The ruler should not have craving and attachment to wealth and property, but should give it away for the welfare of the people.
2. *Sila* (a high moral character). One should never destroy life, cheat, steal and exploit others, commit adultery, utter falsehood, and take intoxicating drinks. That is, one must at least observe the Five Precepts of the layperson.
3. *Pariccaga* (sacrifice everything for the good of the people). The leader must be prepared to live up all personal comfort, name and fame, and even one's own life, in the interest of the people.
4. *Ajjava* (honesty and integrity). One must be free from fear or favoritism while fulfilling duties, have sincere intentions, and not deceive the public.

5. *Maddava* (kindness and gentleness). One must possess a genial temperament.

6. *Tapa* (austerity in habits). One must lead a simple life, and should not indulge in a life of luxury. The leader must have self-control.

7. *Akkadha* (freedom from hatred, ill-will, enmity). One should bear no grudge against anybody.

8. *Avihimsa* (nonviolence). Not only should one not harm another, but also a leader should try to promote peace by avoiding and preventing war, and everything which involves violence and the destruction of life.

9. *Khanti* (patience, forbearance, tolerance, understanding). A leader must be able to bear hardships, difficulties and insults without losing one's temper.

10. *Avirodha* (non-opposition, non-obstruction). A leader should not oppose the will of the people. One should not obstruct any measures that are conducive to the welfare of the people. In other words, a leader should rule in harmony with the people (Ven. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*,).

It is interesting to see that each and every principle on internal displacement provided by the United Nations is closely connected to *Dasaraja Dhamma.* If the governing parties of conflict-held countries undertake these virtues it may help to develop a great platform for seeking stable solutions to the war displacement.

Protection and assistance of displaced people:

Even though the necessities of displaced people may vary depending on the dimension of their displacement, protection and assistance should be the key component when addressing the war-induced internal displacement. Forced to abandon their habitual environment, IDPs are particularly vulnerable to severe violations of human rights. These factors are often a central cause for their flight, and the moving to safety may itself be fraught with danger. The eventual destination may offer no particular assurance of safety. Resolving situations of displacement requires putting a stop to violations and providing redress for victims. Protection is thus central to the experience of internal displacement, and must be central to efforts to address it. UN Guiding principles spell out what protection should mean during each phase of internal displacement (Principles 10-23) in terms of protection from particularly external forces such as attacks, genocide, murder, arbiter executions, rape, torture, abuses, forced recruitment, discrimination and other human right violations. Further it is underlined that all IDPs are entitled to the protection and assistance of their government perhaps national and international organizations. From

this point of view, it is clear that protection of displaced is, fundamentally, a legal concept, upholding the rights of IDPs is a particularly important reflection of national responsibility as well as a vehicle for its fulfillment (Brooking 2005). By protection, moreover, it is meant the range of political and civil rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights. When answering the question of why IDPs need protection, it can be said that simply because when they are at risk in particular situations they are need to be physical and material protection (United Nations 2005). In this context the Buddhism points out a rich and remedial approach to address the all aspects of protection i.e. physical, material as well as psychological protection which is not much considered even in the UN Guiding Principles on internal displacement. In Pali texts three words are used for giving a whole meaning for 'protection': *Atta guttiya, atta rakkhaya, atta parittaya* which means self protection from spiritually, self protection from outside forces and self protection from all aspects bounded with insecurity. In Addition it is emphasized that another dimension of 'protection' in the Buddhist perspective as important as protection by oneself and protection by others. The importance of mental protection is highlighted by the concept of self-protection because it sensually causes to uplift the physical and material protection for a wealthy mind. This means keeping away from ill-minded positions like greed and anger, one can easily cope with worse situations arisen due to the displacement. When considering Sri Lankan Experience of war displacement most of the IDPs who had been chased away from their places of origin are exhausted empty handed and consequently the unusual fear which grips them as a mental problem causes hindrance to the daily activities of the people by shattering the tranquility of their mind from time to time. Every time they hate not only Tamil Tigers but also the people who fuelled the armed conflict which probably caused to their displacement.

In order to overcome such psychological conditions like hatred, greed, and anger for the mental protection, the Buddha advises us to bear the wrongs done to us by others. His advice is to not retaliate when provoked, but to practice patience and forbearance at all times. A verse in *Dhammapada* says; *he abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me. In those who harbor such thoughts, hatred is not appeased* (Dhammapada, 1:1 in Twin Verses).

As a result of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the attacks take place everywhere cause destruction and wide spread damage to the local communities. The social structure shatters and a strong feeling of fear grips them. By seeing with their own eyes, the terrible pitiful fate faced by their relations, parents, children and grand children they suffer from a terrible fear. This unusual fear which grips them as a psychological problem causes hindrance to the daily activities of the people by shattering the tranquility of their mind from time to time. It may danger to have such mental condition with hatred and anger because it may cause them to improve the

mental illness through stress, trauma, depression, aversion etc. Such psychological situations that are obsessed in the human mind are found in the Buddhist teachings as *asava* (mental stress). In the *Subbasavasutta,* asava is described as destructive and consuming. Buddhism which knows seven ways to get rid of asawa shows meditation as one (Ven. P. Gnanarama: 1996) As many problems related to *unprotection* originate due to mental conditions, Buddhism shows the methods to avoid these by means of psychological analysis and it very methodically and correctly provides answers to these basic human anomalies. Therefore the approach of Buddhism to address the psychological protection of displaced people is very pragmatic.

The Buddhist concept of Oneness of body and mind is perhaps the most important concept with respect to the issue of mental stress in our daily lives. Though there is a relationship between one's body and one's mind or say it another way there is a relationship between the physical and the spiritual in one's own life, the mental and physical safety are interdependent and indispensable by means of real 'protection'. Buddhism sees the physical and the spiritual aspects of our lives as completely inseparable and of equal importance. Buddhism advises therefore to avoid not only mental forces but external forces such as killings, executions, discrimination and other human right violations which cause to lose the physical and material protection of people as well. It has also been emphasized that when social structures and support systems break down, displaced people become vulnerable to different kind of abuse and harassments. Therefore an important principle borrowed from Buddhism is that of *ahimsa*, of non-violence, which provides absolute rejection of direct violence. The five precepts (*pancasila*) are very clear in this regard: To abstain from taking life, taking what is not given, taking sensuous misconduct, abstain from false speech and toxicants as tending to cloud mind. The first precept admonishes against the destruction of life. This is based on the principle of goodwill and respect for the right to life of all living beings. By observing this precept one learns to cultivate loving kindness and compassion. One sees others' suffering as one's own and endeavors to do what one can to help alleviate their problems. Personally, one cultivates love and compassion; socially, one develops an altruistic spirit for the welfare of others. According to Buddhism this is the real meaning of protection. Hence, John Galtung (1993) says that no other religion has such an unambiguous norm against taking life. He further added that the five factors that are involved in killing according to the Buddhist explanation, not only life but also the perception of life; not only the thought of murder but also carrying it out; and death as a result of it. In this context, according to Buddhist thoughts, it is important to uphold human rights without any discrimination because all are equal in that they are all subject to the same law of nature. All are subject to birth, old age and death. Therefore some says that there is no need at all to search for a place of human rights in the Buddhist tradition because the freedom is indeed the essence of the Buddhism.

In policy oriented approach, assistance of displaced people is defined as attending to displaced's needs for food, clean water, shelter, medical care and other basic humanitarian assistance. UN guiding principles (24-28) explains who should be the key responsible and what could do relating to humanitarian assistance of displaced people. It has not justified what kind of assistant should provide the IDPs but in fact giving material needs of IDPs. Buddhism does not condone this approach but emphasizes that it is very important to have spiritual assistance as well. As mentioned above the *Chakkavatti Sutta* says that the noble duties of the *chakkavattin* (The king) are to provide protection, shelter, and security for all, including the birds and beasts, taking the Dhamma as his sole guide and support, enquiring of the proper teachers as to the proper course of action. This is well fitted to the guiding principle 25:1 says that the primary duty and responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons lies with national authorities. It is noted that some concepts: such as personal dignity and hope for the future related to the spiritual assistance are introduced by the Guiding Principles. In Buddhist social welfare system not only physical and material assistance but also the mental help is much appreciated. Out of four types of food explained in the Discourse of *Ahara sutta* in *Samyutta Nikāya*, three are spiritual. (Samyutta Nikāya: Ahara Sutta 6:1) This means every people need the spiritual assistance than the physical and material when they are helpless.

It is interesting to see from Buddhist teachings that humanitarian assistance is advised through the four sublime states: *Brahmavihara* when they assist the people in any circumstances. This has eternal and universal value of these noble qualities which can be applied to the concept of real humanitarian assistance.

- *Metta* – Develop thoughts of loving kindness and good will, hoping for own happiness and that of others.

- *Karuna* - Develop thoughts of compassion with sympathy to relieve the obsessed towards oneself and others.

- *Mudita*- Develop thoughts of appreciation, taking delight in the happiness own experience and in that experienced by other.

- *Upekkha*- Develop equanimity or impartiality in all vicissitudes of own life and that of others.

The ethic of "metta" is the key to understanding the Buddhist stance on social welfare. Metta is the exercise of practical wisdom in daily life and it calms the mind, strengthening it against greed, hatred and jealousy. If someone attends with humanitarian assistance for IDPs, they should permeate and enjoy this responsibility.

Seeking Durable Solutions:

In the present context of war displacement, there is no a distinct way has been developed for seeking durable solutions on internal displacement. But several concepts, ideas and suggestions are presented by different scholars, institutions as well as the respective governments. Most of those ideas are directed to the three solutions: return, resettlement and re-integration. UN Guiding Principle 28:1 says: competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavor to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons. However it should be noted that war-displacement is not only a spatial phenomenon that arises out of being in a "home away home" situation or due to a physical dislocation, but also can be seen from the psychological, socio-economic and cultural perspectives. Generally, since people and cultures are rooted in certain places, this means that being displaced is to be unfixed, uprooted, uncultured. The IDPs are in the state of temporary they get back to their original residence or self determined place and reestablish their lost social contacts and networks, livelihoods, and full functionality of the normal lifestyles including physical reconstruction and regaining of lost assets and properties. Further, they are in a state of uncertainty until they are fully recovered from the psychological and sociological setbacks that they have undergone due to being IDPs. Therefore seeking durable solutions to the problem of war-displacement has become a complicated issue than the authorities perceived. That is why it is said that decisions that "displacement has ended" must not be taken arbitrarily, without due regard to the situation, needs and rights of the displaced. Because of the numerous protracted situations of displacement, many IDPs find themselves in circumstances where their needs cease to be addressed long before a satisfactory durable solution has been identified. In such cases, when people can neither return nor continue to live in the camp or other temporary shelter conditions, resettlement to a new and safe area within the country could be a third alternative. Whether IDPs choose to return or to resettle in a self determined place, there must be a responsibility to facilitate their reintegration and foster conditions enabling them to rebuild their lives. Indeed, strategies promoting IDPs' restoration of a livelihood and means of self- reliance should be introduced as soon as possible after displacement occurs so as to avoid creating long-term dependency and instead to facilitate their eventual reintegration when return or resettlement becomes possible.

In order to address such protracted situations, it is appropriate to use some important teachings of Buddhism related to reintegration of displaced people so that they could reestablish their normal life. In the *dhananjani Sutta* of *Samyutta Nikāya*

(SN 7.1) has an answer to the question of how IDPs recover their psychological setbacks. One day *Bharadvaaja Brahman* visited Lord Buddha. After exchanging greetings and compliments with the Blessed One in a friendly and courteous manner, he sat down to one side. So seated, he addressed the Blessed One thus in verse:

> *What must we slay to live in happiness?*
> *What must we slay if we would weep no more?*
> *Is there any single thing of which,*
> *You'd approve the killing, Gotama?*

Then the Blessed One replied:

> *By slaying wrath you'll live in happiness*
> *Slaying wrath, you'll no more need to weep.*
> *Kill the poisoned root of anger, Brahman,*
> *Which with sweetness leads to fevered rage.*
> *Killing this, the Noble Ones commend:*
> *Slaying this, you'll no more need to weep.*

This may answer the current question on when and where the mental disorder of IDPs actually ends, in the process; it may help to redefine the concept of reintegration because generally most practitioners believe that people are in an IDP status until they are being physically resettled.

According to the guiding principles authorities have a duty to establish conditions and provide the means to allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their places of habitual residence or, if they choose, to resettle in another part of the country. Buddhism also emphasizes that people are entitled to have a freedom of choice to return or resettle to areas where their life, safety, liberty and healthy. An important principle borrowed from Buddhism is that of '*free-will*', which provides freedom of choice for IDPs against forced return to a situation where they would be at risk. From the Buddhist point of view, it is very difficult to have the freedom of choice in any circumstances. As an example, in cases of conflict-induced displacement, this typically will require an end to the conflict or a fundamental change in the circumstances that originally caused the displacement. In Buddhism it is taught that the idea of absolute freedom of choice (i.e. that any human being could be completely free to make any choice) is foolish, because it denies the reality of one's physical needs and circumstances.

In the context of internal displacement, (re-)integration is used to describe the (re-)entry of formerly IDPs into the social, economic, cultural and political fabric of their original community or the new community where IDPs have resettled. In both reintegration and integration, long-term assistance and/or protection may be needed by returning or resettling internally displaced (IDMC 2005). According to Buddhism integration process can be defined as a strategy of improving inter-personal, inter

social as well as inter cultural relationships which could help to develop peace and harmony among different communities. In this regard, Buddhism suggests exercising sublime-states which effectively develop good relationships. Combined they are characterized by a concern for the welfare of all without discrimination; being unenvious; the elimination of aversion and acquisitiveness; objectivity towards oneself and others equally; and taking responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. This is the stuff of mood control, by which one develops a positive attitude towards oneself and others, and resilience to fluctuations in one's own fortunes. The *brahmaviharas* have the therapeutic benefit of promoting subjective well-being; at the deeper level of insight, they erode a concept of self which is bounded, independent and permanent. Practicing this method, not only enable to easily reestablish the lives of IDPs but also enable to prevent some conflicts starting with the host community. Since every displacements cause to the social isolation, establishing new affiliations and friendships is very important those who need to develop a social support system. Several discourses i.e. *Sigalovadasutta, Wasalasutta, Wyaggapajjasutta* etc. – dscourses of Buddhism giving real guidance to rebuild social relationships for ones who want to reintegrate confidently. The *Mettasutta* demonstrates how to radiate friendliness, even towards their enemies. Finally Buddhism points out the four guiding principles which may help to address the problem of seeking durable solutions (Majjima Nikāya: Brahmayu Sutta)

1. *Samdassanâ* – adduce
2. *Samadapanâ* – convince or persuade
3. *Samuttejanaâ* – encourage or empower
4. *Sampagansanâ* – appease or comfort

As this principle has shown seeking durable solutions to the displacement is not only about return, resettlement and reintegration, but also about making happiness through encouraging IDPs to plan for the future, rebuilding their mindfulness and understanding as well as and let them to have peace and harmony.

Conclusion:

As a result of, or in order to avoid the effect of internal or international armed conflicts, the process that people have to be forced to leave their places of origin can be defined as war-displacement. This has come to the fore as one of the more pressing humanitarian, human rights, political, security, social, cultural and environmental issues facing the global community today. Addressing internal displacement concerns that the manner in which successive governments, international organizations, regional bodies, national human rights institutions, civil society and the displaced themselves deal with every phases of internal displacement.

Buddhism has advised for prevention of root and proximate causes of conflicts through the discourse of course-effect principle and pointed out the displacement has become a result of the conflict which has been arisen due to the psychological conditions such as greed, rage, anger, hatred etc. Distinguishing characteristic of the *chakkavattin* found in Buddhism is very relevant to establish the good governance as a main factor which helps to stop or minimize the adverse effects of conflict and arbitrary displacement. At the very outset the study has pointed out the policy and actor oriented perspectives on addressing internal displacement with special reference to different stages of war-displacement. Since policy oriented approach has intended to provide short-term humanitarian cures as opposed to long-term sustainable solutions, hence to fill this vacuum, here it is argued that actor oriented approach should also be implemented with the support from rectification concepts and thoughts found in Buddhism.

From Buddhist point of view, protection and assistance of IDPs during the displacement is very pragmatic in terms of providing physical, material and psychological needs. The concept of *ahimsa* that particularly bound with first precept of *Pancasila:* an unambiguous norm against taking life can be applied to the current debate on real protection of IDPs. In addition Buddha taught that four sublime states could play a vital role for keeping the psychological security.

In seeking durable solutions, according to the Buddhism: war-displacement is considered as not only physical dislocations but also as a psychological, socioeconomic and cultural phenomenon. Hence, the paper has attempted to redefine the prevailing ideas on return, resettlement and reintegration in order to offer durable solutions for war-displacement.

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Buddhist Monks, Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka

Ven. Dr. N. Gnanaratana
Dept. of Pali and Buddhist Studies
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka society that comprises Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim ethnic communities has been the victim of three decades long armed struggle, making immense adverse effects on its peaceful existence and development. This is not limited to a certain community or to a particular geographical area of the country; the entire country has suffered much in every section such as economy, culture, religion, education etc. Being a country having all potentials to emerge as a prosperous land, Sri Lanka has lost that opportunity after its independence from British colonialism. It is no exaggeration to say that in Sri Lanka politics to certain extent is embedded in post colonial Buddhism, but as some state[1] we can not say Sri Lankan Buddhism was thoroughly political only after independence. The relationship between the Sangha and the state is witnessed even in the early and medieval Sri Lanka[2]. There are number of other instances recorded in the chronicles regarding the monk's intervention even in nominating a person to the throne. Though the politicians who ruled this country after independence are mainly responsible for this prevailing miserable condition, unfortunately, Sinhala (including Christian) and Buddhist community in this country who represent the majority of the population are usually blamed and criticized by outsiders[3]. It seems that these ethnic and religious institutions are criticized due to ignorance of two main reasons. One is that they don't like to see the causes and conditions of armed struggles taking place in the other parts of the world and therefore see this situation in Sri Lanka as unique. Secondly they cannot or don't like to separate Buddha's teaching from the existing multicultural social norms in this country which are conditioned by external forces. It is obvious today, from the findings of humanitarian missions, how the INGOs have played a role in the context of North Eastern conflict providing material and ideological support for the escalation of separatism. However, this paper does not intend to criticize and pinpoint external forces as responsible for this bloodshed and brutalization process.

Considering the allegation regarding politicizing of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and monks' involvement in politics, it should be mentioned that this is not a newer

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[1] Jayadeva Uyangoda, edt , Religion in Context, P ii
[2] Robe and the Plough; Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka, P. 338.
[3] Jayadeva Uyangoda, (edt) Religion in Context, P. iv

trend or unusual in the history of Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, we witness monks' political engagement on a number of occasions, particularly when the country and Buddhism faced hardships due to internal upheavals or external interferences. Some critics, looking from a western view point at the current conflict between Tamil opposition and government forces, criticize Buddhist monks as responsible partners of the struggle. As Jayadeva Uyangoda views, "opposition to the ordination of women, antipathy to Mahayana Buddhism, and the militant opposition to any form of Buddhist intervention in seeking a peaceful resolution of the ethnic question are some recent examples of this fundamental lacuna in the contemporary Sinhalese Buddhist intellectual formation"[4]. This statement on one hand shows the lack of historical knowledge or on the other hand his reluctance to accept the ground situation, because, these are not new to Sri Lankan society. It is true to believe that Sri Lanka Buddhist society led by monks has obligation to represent and safeguard Theravada Buddhism and the rights of Sinhala community by which Buddhism is preserved. If this situation is unique to Sinhala Buddhists in Sri Lanka, the issue should be taken into serious consideration, but is there any nation or community in this world which can tolerate in the name of religion, the overpowering of their religious or communal rights by others. What Sri Lanka Buddhist monks did in view of unstable political situation is nothing else but enlightening the people to form a stable democratic government which can face internal and external conspiracies.

One time, when Theravada Buddhism was threatened by Christian movements led by colonialism, Anagarika Dharmapala, who is well known as the founder of Mahabodhi society in India and Sri Lanka, revitalized the national movements to save the religion from extinction. H.L Senevirathne while underestimating him identifies, Anagarika Dharmapala as the pivotal figure who reworked the relationship between Buddhism and society in general, and Buddhist monks and society in particular, under British colonial conditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries[5]. Accordingly, Dharmapala had identified the existing problem rightly, but as he says Buddhist monks have turned their back on the moral empowerment dimension of Dharmapala's project and focused exclusively on its ideological component. This is neither as he thinks a failure of Dharmapala nor intellectual failure of Buddhist monks in that period. During and after Dharmapala's time, Sri Lankan monks seemed more intellectual, but progressive against colonial and Christian movements. Buddhist monks like Mohottiwatte Gunananda, Koratota Sobhita and Dodanduwe Piyaratana Tissa supported by many other educated monks engaged in debates successfully with Christian missionaries and utilized them for Buddhist purposes[6].

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[4] Jayadeva Uyangoda, Pravada,Vol. 1. May 1999.
[5] H.L.Senevirathne, The Work of Kings, 1999.
[6] George D. Bond, The Buddhist Revival of Sri Lanka, University of South Carolina, 1988, pp. 48-60

Walpola Rahula a senior Buddhist monk who initiated and defended the political role of monks in the last century provides historical evidence to substantiate the same. He says "From the time of King Dutugemunu… religious and national fervor of both the laity and the sangha began to grow intensely. "It is evident", he says "that the bhikkhus of that time considered it their sacred duty to engage themselves in the service of their country as much as in the service of their religion"[7].

The political situation in Sri Lanka, a few years before, was not much deferent from the above; daily a large number of people were killed irrespective of their religion or ethnicity. This happened mainly due to unstable political power in the central government. In view of this turmoil, not only terrorists, but extremist with nationalistic-political opinions and external anti-Buddhist agencies gained ground to tarnish the image of positive/neutral Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. Though, we are not in a position to justify the monks' presence in Parliament, it should be viewed that their presence to some extent, was conducive to neutralize extremism and destabilizing forces of democratically elected government's. One can say that this engagement of monks in Political struggle has paved the way for ongoing war in one part of the country, but it should be mentioned that earlier no part of the country or ethnic community was free from the brutal killings of any type of terrorist due to instability of the national political institution.

It is not the objective of Buddha's teaching to create a political or any other social institution or arrangement for the social welfare. Basically, it seeks to approach the problems of society by reforming the individuals constituting that society and by showing general principles through which the society can be guided towards harmony and indiscrimination. The Buddha through his investigations as a Bodhisattva (before enlightenment) realized the causes and conditions leading to unsatisfactoriness of human kind, and set the path and goal based on his experience to overcome the same. Accordingly, greed, hatred and delusion of a person motivate him or her to gain happiness by any means. Unless these evil forces are uprooted from the mind, he may be a king or a beggar but he wants to obtain more power and try to overpower others. To be freed, people have to look within their own minds and work towards freeing themselves from the net of ignorance and craving.

Today's Buddhist monks, except very few who holds positions in politically motivated government offices and parliament, are not going to justify the partial behavior of politicians who claim that they are Sinhala-Buddhists, since much of this havoc took place due to their greed for power. In Sri Lanka, few years before, monks engagement in party politics was a much debatable topic, but today not only the Sinhala Buddhist community, but even those MP monks no doubt have understood that they can hardly work for the welfare of society as parliament members. The role

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[7] Walpola Rahula, The Heritage of the Bhikkhu, 1946, P.22.

of Buddhist monk has been evolving for centuries, probably ignoring its ultimate objective and identity of ideal Buddhist monk, mainly for the fulfillment of social and communal requirements. Earlier, the monk was a social guide, but today it seems that the monk is guided by social needs. Even though, the role of Buddhist monk is transformed from truth seeker to teacher or social worker, still people overwhelmingly expect monk to be religious, ritualistic but not political[8].

The politicians everywhere always think only of the will and wish of voters (including monks) who support them to gain power. In this exercise some sections of the society become deprived of rights, causing them to take arms or just build a rival opposition. It should be mentioned here that the present democratic system of electing representatives to Parliament or any other governing body should be reconsidered, because this election system on the one hand paves the way for electing a government and on the other hand a bitter opposition who always find ways and means to topple the government through destructive approaches. In third world countries, it seems that the main objective of opposition parties is to cultivate hostile thoughts in the minds of others and thereby instigate them to cause destruction in society.

In view of such a situation, religion in general has failed to establish its objectives in aiming towards a just society. Today, political mechanism is highly organized and spread everywhere, no other social institution can challenge or compete with it, it employs all good and bad means to retain in power. As a result, even well established religious movements which have strong social basis are losing the confidence of the people, because people think prevalence of social injustice, corruption and violence to be a failure of religion. Eventually, what is happening today is that religion moves towards politics for its own protection and survival, ignoring its noble objectives.

Buddha's teaching being a non violent religion has always emphasized the need of moral values and ethics applicable to any society. Killing, harming, humiliation or any other deed, word or thought against not only human beings but also every kind of sentient being are considered sinful and wrong. Even for livelihood or one's own survival, one has no right to terminate another's life. Buddhism firmly believes and respects every sentient being's right to live (sabbesam jivitam piyam)[9]. Apart from this, Buddhism believes in the effects of karma, if a person commits bad karma, like: killing, stealing, adultery, saying lies and other kind of wrong and harmful deeds against another person, he is liable to reap similar results in this life or lives to come. Buddhist ethics finds its foundation not on the changing social customs but rather on the unchanging laws of nature. Morality in Buddhism is

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[8] H.L.Seneviratne, Pravada, Vol. 7. 2001
[9] Dhammapada, Dandavagga, Stanza 2.

indeed practical; it leads a person to happiness. In this path each individual is considered responsible for his own fortunes and misfortunes. Consequently, Buddhist ethics are not founded on any commandments which men are compelled to follow. The Buddha showed people the way which is most wholesome and conducive to long term benefit for self and others. The morality found in all the precepts of Buddhism is summarized in the following stanza; to avoid evil, to do good, to purify the mind is the teaching of the Buddha.[10]

According to Buddhism political power should lead to moralization and the responsible use of public power. By just war no one can gain happiness. The victor breeds hatred, the defeated lives in misery (jayam veram pasavati, dukkham seti parajito)[11]. Not only did the Buddha teach non violence and peace, sometimes he went to the battlefield personally to prevent the outbreak of a war. Once he said, when the ruler of a country is just and good, the ministers become just and good; when the ministers are just and good, the higher official become just and good; when the higher officials are just and good,…. the people become just and good[12]. The Buddha also said that immorality and crime, like theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, could arise from poverty. If the ruler tries to suppress crime through punishment, he is unable to eradicate crimes.[13] In the Kutadantasutta of Dighanikaya, the Buddha has suggested eradication of poverty instead of force to curb crimes.

Therefore, if Buddhist monks absolutely need to establish welfare and betterment of the society effectively, what they have to do is to teach politicians the way of good governance in the light of Buddha's teaching, as happened in ancient Sri Lanka. The kings in the past, who wanted to establish a just society, on the advice of monks followed ten duties as prescribed in Jatakapali. They are as follows: 1 The ruler should not be greedy for wealth, but should consider the welfare of the people (dana). 2 The ruler should have a higher moral character (sila). 3 The ruler should donate for the good of the people (pariccaga). 4 The ruler should maintain honesty and integrity (ajjava). 5 The ruler should be kind and gentle (maddava). 6 The ruler should be simple and self controlled (tapa). 7 The ruler should be free from hatred and ill-will (akkodha). 8 The ruler should be non-violent (avihimsa). 9 The ruler should be patient (khanti). 10 The ruler should not oppose the will of the people (avirodha).

Regarding the behaviour of rulers, the Buddha further said in Cakkavattisihanadasutta; 1 A good ruler should act impartially and should not be biased, 2 A good ruler should not harbour any form of hatred against any of his subjects, 3 A good ruler should show no fear whatsoever in the enforcement of the

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[10] Dhammapada, Buddhavagga, Stanza 5.
[11] Dhammapada, Sukhavagga, Stanza 15.
[12] Anguttaranikaya.
[13] Dighanikaya, Cakkavattisihanadasutta.

law, if it is justifiable, 4 A good ruler must possess a clear understanding of the law to be enforced.

There are a number of instances found in ancient Sri Lanka that the kings wanted to govern the country under the above rules. As a result, kings established close links with Buddhist monks and always expected the advice of monks in formulating constitutions and in introducing new policies. Thereby, the connections established between monks and laity through the village temples as a centre of worship as well as of social discourse play a significant role in society[14]. At present it is Buddhism as the majority religion which endorses the legitimacy of political power. On one hand politicians compete with one another to prove themselves as better supporters of religion by giving patronage to temples and religious ceremonies. On the other hand these influences have divided the high ranking monks along party lines. As Marshal Fernando says this division of monks who support the governing party and those who support opposition disturb the independence of Buddhist religion as a social force to challenge the misdeeds of politicians. There are several instances recorded in Pali canon how the Buddha maintained relationship between religion and politics, without contradicting each other[15]. So interdependence of religion and politics in the past gave advantage to both, but today, on this very factor we find both religion and politics are misguided and deteriorating. It is worthwhile to consider the usefulness of separating religion from politics and understanding the limitation of political systems in bringing about peace and harmony.

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[14] Dialogue, Marshal Fernando, The Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue, 2001, P. 20.
[15] Oliver Abenayake, Fundamentals of Buddhist Polity, Singapore,1995, P. 50

Social Crisis in India During The Pre-Buddhism Period And Current Global Issues

Ven. Dr. Hoàng Ngọc Dũng
(Thích Viên Trí)
Vietnam Buddhist University

In the early decades of the sixth century BC, Indian society was experienced a deep crisis in the realm of religious philosophy. The quick outburst and development of sixty-two new philosophical and religious traditions[1] characterizing this chaotic state of affairs. Each of these schools of thought maintained that its teaching was the only truth, while the rest represented wrong and untrustworthy views.[2] In order to solidify their position in society and expand their influence, these religious leaders utilized all means, good and bad, to reach this goal. Cynicism, "mud-slinging", verbal attacks, and distortions were among the less-than-noble methods used to compete for material and political advantage, recognition, and to attract new followers. No methods, including violent and bloody confrontation, were ruled out for the achievement of these goals. The Indian populace faced a dilemma of choosing the right religious path; none of the choices offered them inner peace, or met the spiritual aspirations and lofty goals of their lives. This was the reason behind the overall crisis in Indian society at that time, since the main characteristic of all civilizations, East or West, is known to be the ability to manifest faith values based on the core religious foundations.[3]

Similarly, mankind of the twenty-first century confronts a historical dilemma: as people's dependence on and devotion to religious traditions are fading every day, advanced technology and nationalism are also found to be unable to fulfill spiritual and inner aspirations.[4] The world indeed has become smaller as a result of the huge advancement in communications technology. Modern convenient transportation systems enable people from different parts of the world to relate to each other quickly and easily. But these modern-day conveniences also give birth to many serious conflicts as various philosophical doctrines and religious systems of the world collide against each other.

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[1] *The Dialogue of The Buddha* I, tr. T.W & C.A.F Rhys Davids, PTS,1957.
[2] *The Book of The Gradual Sayings* I, tr. F.L Woodward, PTS, 1955.
[3] A. Toynbee-D.Ikeda, *Man Himself Must Choose*, Koddansha, I.Lid. Tokyo-USA, 1976, pp. 288-289.
[4] Ibid., p. 293.

The tendency towards the extreme view that the "I" and "mine" are of absolute importance is the root cause of all modern-day conflicts. Following in the footsteps of ancient India, many religious traditions, political doctrines, and "civilizations" in the world today are vying for supremacy. The desire to become "the most valuable", "the most sacred", and the "most perfect" system, worthy of respect and worship, creates an environment of confrontation rather than of constructive dialogue among these traditions. Worse yet, humankind has been victimized and become slaves to its own self-centered, destructive desire, and subject to exploitation to serve the ambition of an elite minority.

However, as each philosophical and religious system fails to meet people's needs, they feel compelled to continue searching for a new tradition that better fits their aspirations. The peak of this tireless search in India was the appearance of the historical Buddha and His attainment of enlightenment. The loving-kindness and compassionate religious system that the Buddha himself realized and propagated became an ideal solution for a dark, war-ravaged, divided and hatred-filled society. After more than twenty-five centuries, Buddhism is still pacing hand in hand with mankind. This path has increasingly become mankind's true spiritual need as today's world more than ever reflects the chaos of Indian society in the time of Buddha. Facing this situation, Nietzsche suggested that Buddhism might well be the reasonable solution for this fatiguing civilization.[5] According to other opinions, our era is in desperate need of a religion/philosophy that is capable of bridging the gap between Eastern and Western thought, bringing together people from all walks of life, helping American and European societies escape the current crisis, and lifting Eastern societies from backwardness and poverty.[6] Albert Einstein also suggested that Buddhism possesses the practical answers for modern day's headaches.[7]

Within the limited framework of this discussion, I would like to analyze some of the essential points of Buddhist teachings, in order to identify the rationale behind suggestions from several thinkers, philosophers, and educators as to how to apply this system of thought to solve current world conflicts. As mentioned above, tendencies toward totalitarianism, expansionism, self-centered attitudes, and oppression of the opposition's voice have been in full force in almost every aspect of life. These are the root causes of all of the hatred, separatism, and wars that ravage the world. In order to deal with this intense situation, the first and foremost requirement is mutual respect among all parties. Only through respect can dialogue take place, and dialogue is the solution for all deadlocks: a pretext that betters mutual understanding, and provides the opportunity for ironing out differences. Then and only then, can coexistence become a reality. On this point, Buddhism considers an

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[5] *Niezche and Philosophy*, Ed. Gilles Deleuze, Tr. Hugh Tomlinson, pp. 155-156
[6] Hoang Ngoc Dung, *The Concept of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva*, India, 200, p.14.
[7] Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinion*, Rupa & Co. Calcutta-Bombay-Delhi, India, p. 38

individual to be a person of noble virtue, someone who defends and respects the truth, when this individual while steadfastly upholding his own faith, never suggests that his faith represents the only and final truth[8]. Clearly, this is the fundamental and necessary pretext for freedom from the prejudiced and conservative ideas that we all possess.

How is it so? The Buddhist Theory of Dependent Arising (paticcasamuppāda) explains the dependent-arising nature of all phenomena in the universe. A simple formulation of this concept is: w*hen this exists, that exists; on the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not exist; on the cessation of this, that ceases.*[9] According to this concept, not a single phenomenon exists in and of itself. The very existence of this depends upon the existence of that, and the cessation of one phenomenon leads to the cessation of another. Considering the health crisis that mankind is facing at the moment, we can certainly appreciate the meaning of this Theory of Dependent Arising. If the Bird Flu epidemic originated in China and did not threaten the lives and health of domesticated birds of the developed countries in Europe and America, these governments (*whose outlook of life heavily favors practicality*) would probably not provide medical aid to China to battle this epidemic (*When this exists, that exists*). If the acceptance of Vietnam or another country to the World Trade Organization (WTO) brings benefits only to the newcomers, the economic powerhouses would never waste so much time on negotiations and compromises (*On the arising of this, that arises*), etc…

Clearly, the concept of dependent arising has been and is being applied to all facets of human lives for the purpose of coexistence, and to find solutions to various conflicts and collisions, such as issues of human trafficking, drug trafficking, the war on terrorism, and the prevention of nuclear war.

Other aspects of life that this theory seriously considers are the areas of cosmology and the humanities. From the Buddhist point of view, our existence is dependent upon a collection of five psycho-physical aggregates: forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness. These five constituents are divided into two groups: the physical aggregates and the mental aggregates. Mental aggregates include feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness, while the "forms" – physical aggregate includes the four material elements earth, water, fire and wind, as well as the outside world. As such, human form and the universe share a profound relationship, if not an inseparable entity. Our existence therefore depends on the universe; in other words, the deterioration and decay of the natural environment directly affect our very lives and survival. The dramatic environmental disasters indirectly or directly created by mankind, such as global warming, cause the melting

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[8] *The Middle-Length Sayings*, tr. I.B. Horner, PTS, 1959.
[9] *The Dialogue of The Buddha III*, tr. T.W & C.A.F Rhys Davids, PTS,1957

of glaciers at the North and South Poles which poses a serious threat to human existence; the slowly rising sea level threatens to bury fertile land under the ocean. Irresponsible destruction of rain forests is the reason for horrible disasters such as floods, storms, severe droughts, and mud slides. To put things in context, when mankind damages the environment, we actually cause harm to ourselves because the outside world is a part of us. The serious health problems affecting people who live in polluted metropolises of the developed world are a clear demonstration of this concept.

A few decades ago, new technology led to the invention and application of chemicals that eliminated unwanted creatures or plants that is those humans consider harmful or useless. This technology seemed to provide some short-term benefits. Technological inventions were hailed as the newly found truth, capable of leading mankind away from backwardness. Science was thought to be capable of replacing God, and of meeting all of mankind's needs. However, as time passed, the scientists who authored these inventions came to realize that these same scientific processes were threatening to destroy the world's environment. The destruction of creatures and plants deemed harmful to human lives actually tips the environment off balance, and the concept of dependent arising finally seems to make sense. Realigning this, the world of science is now has since urgently pushed for the protection of endangered species.

Within the context of the theory of Dependent-Arising, when we talk about the existence of an individual, this also implies the existence of the universe. In particular, when we say, "I am living", we mean the whole world is living. If we want to maintain our existence, we must learn to respect the existence of other beings, realizing that we would not be here without our parents. We would not survive without the air that we breathe and the living environment. In fact, our lives would become so meaningless and lonely if we only cared and lived for ourselves.

Ultimately, there is no such thing as absolute truth in this life. There is also nothing absolutely useless or harmful within this dependent-arising world. All creatures, all beings, all living things in this universe play a role, and have a reason for existence. If we could only recognize this fact, then perhaps the tendency to solidify and promote the self, delusions, boundless ambitions, and poisonous minds plotting attacks on each other would find a way to subside.

It is increasingly obvious that this concept of dependent arising is the current trend of social awareness that has been actively promoted by the elites in all societies. The Theory of Dependent Arising has been a part of much discussion lately. Several slogans, announcements, and even the suggestion of a week for "International Buddha's Birthday", all take root from this concept.

Why is it that the human world seems to be sinking deeper into crisis? War, hatred, and division continue to ravage the lives of all beings. Life seems to lose more and more of its values, and the world's environment continues to face reckless and irresponsible exploitations and destruction. One can theorize that this situation reflects the inner conflict within each of us, each cell of the society, and the world (as an individual cell experiences abnormal growth, the damage is not limited to that particular cell but rather spread to the entire body). This inner conflict is the contradiction between "*the cognition and the desire*". This truth can easily be detected in the Buddha's first sermon at the Deer Park, "The root cause for all sufferings is desire (Tanha)".[10]

In order to find a solution for human suffering, in particular at the individual level, we need to sincerely check our motivation. We should ask ourselves if we are truly honest in our desire to remove this inner contradiction, to keep the self under control, and to eradicate the wrong notion that our religion is the only truth and our nation the only worthy country. The fact of the matter is that these delusions are running uncontrolled and causing so much harm, not only at the general level of society, but even within the so-called faith systems and religious lineages, etc. Obviously, the root cause of all these troubles is always grounded in this self-centered attitude. Until we arrive at real and honest answers to the questions just raised, all dreams and plans for a better society and a better world remain illusive and unreachable.

In short, mankind has seemingly envisaged a pathway, if not a solution, to resolving the current crisis. The remaining issue is to follow this pathway for implementation. If humanity truly desires a peaceful, prosperous, and steadily developed world, it will have to abide the Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination and No-self. It has to live with altruism in place of egocentrism – One should lead a life without selfishness, take care of others' needs and take care of others' mind as that of oneself[11]. Above all, to achieve the desired end, all of us, especially Buddhists, have to practice the Buddha's words in their daily lives. In doing so, they can say that they are the disciples of the Buddha, because the Dhammapada runs, *"Practice what you preach. Behave the way you want others to behave. One skillfully taming oneself thus tames others. How difficult is it to tame thyself".[12]*

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[10] *The Middle Length Sayings*, tr. III, .B. Horner, PTS, 1959.
[11] Thiền Học Trần Thái Tông, "Dĩ thiên hạ chi dục vi dục, dĩ thiên hạ chi tâm vi tâm".
[12] *The Dhammapada*, No: 159.

Buddhist Approach as a Psychological Support in an Ongoing War and Political Conflict in Israel: A Personal Account

Thor Gonen & Itamar Bashan
Bhavana House Israel

To begin with, we thank our teachers and the circumstances that have led us to the Path and the teachers and circumstances that have kept us on it.

In one of our meetings with the Venerable Ajahn Sumedho we spoke of our efforts to introduce the Buddhist perspective to Israel, a region torn by conflict and war. Ajahn Sumedho then said: "It must be a great burden to be both Jewish and Israeli. Isn't it?" Indeed, this observation clearly and succinctly summarized our existential experience and that of many others. This paper is a personal account on that matter and should be treated as such.

In reality, it is impossible to isolate phenomena, and, as the Buddha taught, all phenomena are linked to one another. The separatist-elitist approach that separates one from the other can only bring suffering, and when a person sets himself apart from others, the others will dissociate themselves from him and in the end they will reject him. As the Dhammapada, verse 5 states:

> *"Never by hatred is hatred conquered, but by readiness to love alone. This is eternal law".*

Since the early days of history, the Jews, the People of Israel, set themselves apart from their neighbors in the pagan cultural domain in which they lived; they believed in a monotheistic God, the Creator of the universe, omnipotent and invisible, a vengeful and jealous God whose commands must be obeyed. According to the Biblical canon, the Jews were proclaimed the Chosen People, the People that God preferred over the other nations, who were idol worshippers. The "others" were referred to as "Gentiles", a term meaning "others who do not belong to us" or, in a broader sense, a derogatory name meaning "ignorant", based on Jewish tradition which emphasized literacy, scholarship and excellence. This separatist and intolerant approach accompanied them in the various Diasporas, and did not change with the emergence of other monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam. Nowadays, when the political culture in the Middle East has become religious in the negative sense of the word, one tends to forget that the three monotheistic religions now proving to be militant religions characterized by religious zealotry were once essentially religions of love and acceptance. Jewish and Muslim fanatics and extremists have taken over

both in Israel and in Arab states, and have created a situation which makes it difficult to reach compromise and achieve peace.

Some of the Jews never assimilated into the prevailing cultures in the many lands in which they wandered during the years of Exile. Circumstances of segregation and mutual rejection during the two thousand years of Exile, in which the Jews endured oppression, expulsion, blood libels and degradation climaxed in the Holocaust in Europe in the 20th century, when six million Jews were exterminated in 6 years. It is difficult to grasp the dimensions of the hatred that was manifested in the concentration and extermination camps in Europe: the brutal, methodical mass murder of helpless and innocent men, women and children who were uprooted from their homes and deported, in packed cattle cars to unknown destinations in inhuman, extreme conditions, deprived of air, water and food for days on end. In the camps, after the infamous selections, some were sent to slave labor until their strength gave out; others, frozen, naked, barefoot, hair shorn off, were sent directly to the gas chambers and crematoria. The few who survived the Holocaust and the loss of their entire families, communities and property, remained psychologically brutalized for the rest of their lives, and many of them suffered from post-traumatic disorders. This was the situation of the refugees who founded the state of Israel based on their belief in Zionism.

After the Holocaust, some of the survivors decided to build a new society in a sovereign state in which the central ethos was secular, characterized by the image of the tough Sabras who fight to defend their living space and will no longer go like lambs to the slaughter. The founding of the new state, Israel, unfortunately, sowed the seeds of a new tragedy, to dispossession and to a new national conflict, whose bitter consequences continue to consume us. The idea of creating Israel as the independent homeland of the Jewish people in a tiny strip of land surrounded by over twenty Arab states with vast territories, in the geographical location known as Palestine, was probably not groundless, as it is mentioned in the Bible as the Land that was promised to the Jewish people. However, as the area was already populated by Moslem and Christian Arabs - a terrible national conflict resulted.

This is where we, the children of Holocaust survivors in the early 1950's, came into the picture. Despite the perpetual existential threat from the surrounding Arab states, we, as children, identified with the sense of hope, freedom and solidarity of a small people embarked on the road to independence, along with optimism and faith in our ability to build a new society based on righteousness and social justice. The population was small, resources were few, and the fact that we lived "Spartan" lives of modesty and austerity never bothered us. On the contrary, in retrospect, we understood that precisely these conditions shaped us in our childhood and formed a natural basis for the adoption of the Buddhist values of disenchantment, simplicity

and contentment in our adult daily life. As in the life story of Gautama, whose father preferred to keep him ignorant of suffering, our parents preferred not to reveal anything about the Holocaust, financial difficulties, the creation of the Palestinian problem and the threat to the very existence of the state, which, since its proclamation, found itself in a state of siege. As children, we were forbidden to suffer!

We were our parents' hope for a new beginning and compensation for all that they had lost. It was only when we grew older that we began to understand that we were born into the reality of war, terror and perpetual conflict, since the new lives of our parents were built on the ruins of the wellbeing and happiness of others. Our parents ceased to be refugees at the price of making other people refugees, but this was not done out of hatred or ill will; rather it was rooted in a sense of rejection, persecution, survival and lack of choice. Thus, from the moment the state was proclaimed, war became inevitable. Israeli society became one that depends on the sword, with two sets of viewpoints and radical beliefs – the Jewish-Israeli one and the Muslim-Arab one – fighting over a tiny, narrow strip of land. The unavoidable result was and still is - destruction, grief and mourning on both sides.

Although a sense of optimism permeated our childhoods, we felt very little kinship with or belief in the Biblical canon, which formed the basis of our education. The spiritual text, with its abundant extremist descriptions of killing, vengeance and threats if we did not observe the commands of a vengeful omnipotent God, prompted feelings of wonder and alienation in us. Unable to identify with a separatist spiritual value system, we defined ourselves as secular. Since the education that we received was not pluralistic, even though it considered itself to be, we knew nothing about the values of other religions. The meeting with Buddhist writings and practices was, for us as adults, a healing encounter, if only because there is no alienating and divisive duality between "a chosen person" and "an inferior person", and there are no "divine commands", only precepts which every individual takes upon himself over and over again, recognizing their importance in everyday life. We were not born Buddhists, but who is a Buddhist? In the "Vasata-sutta", Majjhima Nikaya 98, the Buddha said:

One is not a Brahmin by birth, nor by birth a non-brahmin.
By action is one a Brahmin, by action is one a non-brahmin.

Israeli society nowadays is a sick society, in the absence of inspiring leaders, and internally split by a political schism between right and left, the ultra-Orthodox extremists and the non-religious, between Oriental and European Jews, between Jews and Arabs, between the poor and the rich, finds itself in a perpetual state of conflict with its neighboring states and with the Palestinian people. It is an exhausted and spent society, caving in under the burdens of tension, warnings of terror attacks, explosions in public places, embroiled in an unending sequence of revenge and

retaliation against the opposite side. Tens of thousands of young people have fallen, and every war takes its toll in more and more young people meant to form the next social cadre.

The Israeli occupation of Arab territories in 1967, considered a miraculous military victory, turned to be a social disaster. The abnormal conditions of continuous military occupation, ruling over another people and settlement of foreign territories, has given rise to a violent and exploiting society, subject to a corrupt, hedonistic and prejudiced, democratically elected, regime. The ongoing conditions of war have produced a society characterized by tension, fury, intolerance, impatience, lack of compassion, physical and verbal violence and psychological imbalance. Young people returning to civilian life after three years of military service no longer have peace of mind. The army has made them tough, bold, fierce and unwilling to compromise. They cannot allow themselves to be gentle, courteous or relaxed. At the same time, the automatic human tendency to seek pleasure: "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we will die" is on the rise. Hedonism has become a new social trait, one that we did not know in our childhoods. Changing conditions have created a new reality and with it a new system of values, very different from the one to which we were born, and the psychological resilience of the Israelis has been undermined during the short space of 60 years.

What was concealed from us in our childhoods was revealed to us in adulthood.

In the Middle East, as in other conflicts, the various parties suffer from blindness, inability to compromise and failure to view reality as it is. As the Buddha said in the "Madhupindika Sutta" (Majjhima Nikaya 18.8), the roots of conflicts, arguments and wars are the various perceptions and ideas originating in mental proliferation (*papañca*). Each side clings to its views, nationalistic opinions and religious beliefs that are culturally conditioned, and therefore very difficult to let go off. Emotionally charged ideas like the perception of Israel as the Holy Land, and Jerusalem as the Holy City, promised to "our" people "forever" by God, easily provoke proliferation. Both sides claim that this tiny area belongs to them. But what is the meaning of "mine", "ours" or "forever"? The inability to see the characteristics of emptiness (*Anatta*) and impermanence (*Anicca*) is the main source of suffering (*Dukkha*) in the Middle East. Can we stubbornly cling to something and not suffer? This is the noble truth about the causes of suffering. Instead of a "land of milk and honey", the biblical description of the land of Israel, the Israelis have begun to depict it as "a land that devours its dwellers".

The attempt to isolate the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries from other political, environmental, cultural and historical conditions causes mutual accusations, as both sides refuse to see the global big picture. Identifying a starting

point of the conflict is futile. As in Indra's net, one event was the inevitable result of other events, as we already mentioned above. Each side blames the other but both sides are blind to the fact that their misery is created interdependently.

All these insights, based on our practice of the Dhamma, had a healing effect on us and gave us a new perspective about life in general and about the conflict in particular. We decided to open a center that would serve as a place of healing for other people. In the year 2002 we founded Bhavana House in Tel Aviv, in recognition of the need for an urban center that would facilitate meditation, teaching, study and practice of the Buddhist Path on a regular basis. The center was opened in the realization that Israel, as a divided cultural and social region, subject to ongoing conflict and existential stress, is an optimal place to learn and implement the Buddhist approach. The activities at Bhavana House focus on organizing short ongoing courses in meditation, teaching the fundamentals of the Path to beginners, and conducting retreats and sitting groups to deepen the training and learning for experienced practitioners. Another activity which we deem very important is the free distribution of Dhamma books as Dana. We translate Pali canon Suttas from English to Hebrew and conduct discussion groups on them, finding them always to be relevant to our daily life. For instance, in 2006, we were faced with the second Lebanon war that was one more purposeless war in a very long succession of national conflicts that has accompanied us since birth, and has exacted its price in victims, and still stirs reactions of rage and pain on the part of Israelis towards their leaders. During that war we translated into Hebrew and discussed with the lay sangha the Attadanda Sutta (Sn 4.15). The Sutta opens with the words:

> *"Violence breeds fear. Looking at people in conflict I will tell you of my dismay, how moved I was. I saw people floundering, feuding with each other like fish in a small pool. When I realized this, dread arose in me".*

Reading these words during war time made the ancient teaching most relevant to our group. This Sutta is the thread of Ariadne for those who wish to find their way out of the labyrinth of suffering stemming from violence, separatism, arrogance and conquest. The Buddha exemplified this in the closing words of the Sutta:

> *"The sage does not speak of himself as someone superior, inferior or equal. At peace, unselfish, he neither possesses nor dispossesses".*

Neither side in the conflict is superior or inferior. Neither side can posses the land or any other thing. Reflecting on that Sutta supported the group to some extent and replaced the usual emotions of fear, anger and hatred that are so common during wars. The compassionate Buddhist non-violent approach, that binds one's welfare to that of others, showed the way to a Path reached by realization, and not by blind

faith. The Path, in which one could develop *metta, karuna, mudita* and *upekkha* in relation to the world and to ourselves, was a great opportunity for transformation and a feeling of comfort.

Practicing and following the Dhamma, we try inquiring the psychological, moral and spiritual dimensions, and to cultivate the ability to pay attention to the quality of the feelings, thoughts and sensations that are aroused in everyday life in the complicated and complex social reality in which we live. During the years in which Bhavana House operates we saw the development of an ever-growing lay-sangha that is deeply committed to the Path, and strives to promote and contribute to harmony, mutual help and peace in our region. Each member of the lay-sangha spreads the Path in his immediate milieu, and widens the human circles of those who meet right view (*panna*) and moral conduct (*sila)* as an alternative way of living. Parents would bring their adolescent children to meditate and to learn and adolescents brought their parents. These are very slow processes and require the perfection (*parami*) of patience on our behalf.

As long as both sides do not relinquish their desire to exclusively possess all of the land and will not understand the interdependent-arising of everyone's suffering, there will be wars. The longer both sides continue to cling to their views and beliefs, the worse will be their suffering. Both sides will have to make concessions and compromise. Bringing the Middle Path to the Middle East is our attempt to influence the extreme situation in this tormented region.

Discipline is Required for Resolving Any Crisis

Dion Oliver Peoples, PhD Candidate and Lecturer
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

We often have these major international conferences pertaining to Buddhism held in Bangkok, and over the last few years I have been honored to be a part of the organizing committees, submitted articles for publication, worked as the editor for the publications, and have even been selected as a panelist on a few occasions. What strikes me the most is how Buddhism is often put up against 'non-Buddhism'. I found that Professor David Loy has even published a similar remark previously, after I wrote the above, which demonstrates that this has been thought about by others: "Buddhism is a personal path of spiritual transformation, not a program for political or economic revolution."[1] Yet here we are, this year, for example: Buddhism and global crisis, Buddhism and politics, Buddhism and economics, and Buddhism and environmental desecration. Although paired with Buddhism, none of the topics are 'Buddhist' in their respective natures. What we have is: humanity's involvement with the planet and society. We have the internalized-individual and relationships with conceptual external phenomena. We have the mind versus material or named-phenomena. We, therefore, need: to be mindful when interacting with external objects or endless subjects. Crises develop when human sensual-perceptions take the 'conceptual' beyond reasoning, or reasonable limits – again, according to the judging mind.

If someone approached a Buddhist with a problematic scenario, and mandated a reaction or educated response, what should be the Buddhist reply towards resolving any institutionalized 'undisciplined' crisis – crises that transcend Buddhism and personal practice? It is advisable to seek out the root causes of any situation. What is the true cause of the debt, environmental crisis or political circumstance? Mindfully, there are multiple approaches towards resolving lack of discipline or 'crisis'. If we are talking to the United Nations, most of these nations are culturally unaware of Buddhism, so to assist in eliminating crisis we should not speak in Buddhist terminology – we need a change in consciousness in a period or culture of distraction, to make fewer distractions.

One person's plea for assistance does not illustrate the complete picture of any problematic scenario – this can lead to propaganda. Opposing parties never like to be told that they are wrong, and should compensate or remedy the situation. Being

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[1] David R. Loy: Money Sex War Karma – Notes for a Buddhist Revolution (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008), p. 139

wrong should not cause embarrassment to someone; in fact, Mao Tse-tung was one of the most influential persons in recent memory to suggest for a person to undertake self-criticism or self-examinations - as a rational assessment of the intellect, the Buddhist would welcome this advice. The problem must be our propagandized-institutions, and as David Loy mentioned: institutional greed is consumerism and corporatism; institutional ill-will is the military; and institutional delusion is our media and propaganda.[2] All are in cahoots or involved with each other.

Yet there is more to be done, more to comprehend. When asked: "What is holding the country back from full development?", Dr. Witit Rachatatunun, [the former assistant secretary of the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand], stated: "People don't understand themselves and not realizing what they need – that is the main problem at the individual level. People aren't sure what a good life should be, what happiness is and how they can achieve it. They believe they have to only consume and indulge their senses in order to be happy."[3] It is their lack of mental-discipline and belief in the propaganda that consumerism is necessary for happiness.

People are indoctrinated into misbeliefs and daily life has become filled with distractions. Public Relations [read: propaganda or advertising] departments were created to make people believe in slogans that generated this misunderstanding of the 'self'. Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud, was a keen American minister of propaganda – he was the first person to use Freud's ideas to manipulate masses of society. He taught that people could want things that they don't need by linking this perception into their unconscious desires. Concepts for mass-population control were derived from his efforts. Today, many Buddhists are distracted by 'Facebook' or other on-line friend sites – some of which encourage users to explore links to various distracting advertisements. From satisfying people's inner selfish desires [*a lack of discipline*], people became happy and docile – temporarily forgetting their suffering. The 'all-consuming self' was bred from this concept, a concept that dominates today. In this necessity for a change of consciousness in a period or culture of distraction we need to learn more about change.

From the previous misperceptions to mindful-manipulation, Freud's ideas have become widely accepted by western societies. Before Freud, any thorough examination of Marx/Engels writings[4], as this researcher has done – could illustrate a determinacy of how propaganda forces manipulate masses - from Marxist theories *concerning religion*, from three standpoints:

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[2] David R. Loy: Money Sex War Karma – Notes for a Buddhist Revolution (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008), p. 139

[3] Vanniya Sriangura: Learning a Better Way (Bangkok: Bangkok Post, 16 January 2009, R13)

[4] Marx, Karl and F. Engels: On Religion, (Foreign Language Publishing House: Moscow, U.S.S.R., 1955) various texts and pages from the compiled material mentioned in the reference section.

⇒ ***Institutional Components***

    a) controls social/anti-social elements

    b) knows materialism replaces religion

    c) promotes societies goals/science – over religion/mystic uncertainties

⇒ ***Religious/Sensuality Components***

    a) harvests mysterious forces – acquiring social attributes

    b) *external thought-forces* control daily life

    c) devious acknowledgement of self, through an intermediary

    d) fights against the 'other world'

⇒ ***Overlapping/Transitional Components***

    a) theoretical/religious activities versus political/practical activities

    b) deviant mediums inspire liberation [such as a charismatic leader]

    c) transformation of society

    d) inspirations of 'mob thought'

       Marx's work generally determines to illustrate the truths of institutional-processes. Above: governing institutions seek to control or eradicate religions, while religions try to free people from such control to inspire people towards higher ideals. Governing institutions could be the problems behind global crises; institutions safeguarding freedoms or ensuring social responsibilities are carried out might be a better solution. Each wants change from the other antagonistic element. The overlapping components are important to understand – how information should be disseminated to the public. Charismatic organizations like the United Nations or certain political leaders can inspire people as religions are known to do – further instilling discipline and ethics into a population, as President Obama is doing in the United States of America during this time of crisis. Change, from the above elements, can be incorporate or be adaptive with the overlapping elements – and from a change of consciousness, a change in institutionalized-democracy can occur.

       The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, in an interview with Jeff Johnson[5], mentioned, or rather to summarize the main-points from that televised discussion:

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[5] http://www.noi.org/webcast/interview/ - BET's Jeff Johnson Interviews the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan – accessed on 10 March 2009

President Obama is seen as a messianic figure to millions of Americans because of the hope and change he inspires within the citizens to recreate a better society. President Obama might seem to be speaking in messianic terms but this should be re-assessed as speaking universally because of the previous conditions that allowed for his meteoric raise in American politics. The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan suggests he is not the messianic figure that the Abrahamic traditions forecast, but President Obama can be seen as a "Herald" [*a messenger, a bringer of news*] – his urgent suggestions for a transformation of society unites communities, generates universal aspirations and inspiration to subordinate personal-individualism towards a greater collective future – highlighting ethical responsibilities and discipline. President Obama is a leader advocating a change in consciousness and the need for greater discipline and sacrifice from humanity. We are now encouraged to read the following perspective:

The Buddha's family was a militaristic-politically advantaged family, ruling over an ancient kingdom. With this sense, derived from a disciplined upbringing and from his own renunciation - the Enlightened Buddha could govern over his own realm of wandering religious renunciates. The Enlightened Buddha had some four decades of personal/public service towards administering over his minions and demanded discipline from his initially unenlightened-followers. He continually, and for practical purposes towards the development of greater wisdom, urged sensual restraint and personal discipline over what one may witness, hear, say, sense, feel, and interpret/think. The Buddha's doctrines overtly emphasize discipline – in this respect pertaining to the senses. An entire one-third of his teachings are dedicated towards episodes that require future restraint or if a violation was serious enough, the infringement warranted expulsion from social-communal dwelling. Nearly every modern society has justified social-legal codes

Late in the career of the disciplined and enlightened Buddha, another rival religious leader passed away. This teacher neglected to leave his pronounced doctrine behind for the benefit of any future disciples. The Fully-Enlightened Buddha, was well-aware of the situation from interacting on several occasions with Jain disciples. The death of Mahavira[6], led his followers into a bitter schism – a crisis certainly paralleling any modern political upheaval. In fact, there were three discourses taught immediately, as a reaction to this circumstantial crisis.

From researching the background of the Saṅgīti Sutta, as the topic for utilizing and applying the Saṅgīti Sutta [the basis for the current researcher's PhD dissertation], there was a direct purpose, a reaction, for the utterances of these three

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[6] According to Hermann Jacobi: Jaina Sutras, Part I, Sacred Books of the East Volume 22 (1884), found at: http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2285.htm "The Kalpa Sutra - Lives of the Ginas" - Mahavira died after 72 years of life, in Papa – in the writer's office of King Hastipala, single and alone, after giving a long lecture.

discourses: *the Pāsādika Sutta,* the *Sāmagāma Sutta* and the *Saṅgīti Sutta* – all were in direct response to the death of Mahavira. This article will briefly look into these three lessons for the benefit of people unfamiliar with these further calls for social-discipline:

The *Pāsādika Sutta* has a description of what transpired immediately after the passing of Mahāvira. The sutta says that after Mahāvira died in Pava, the sect split and the disciples of the Jain leader, Mahāvira disputed various points of their doctrine, not seeing things the same way, seeing methods in certain orders, or out of order, etc. They were, "quarrelling and disputing, fighting and attacking each other with wordly warfare… Even the white-robed lay followers were disgusted, displeased and repelled when they saw their doctrine and discipline was so ill-proclaimed, so unedifyingly displayed, and so *ineffectual in calming the passions*, having been proclaimed by one not fully enlightened, and now with its support gone, without an arbiter."[7] This was reported immediately to the Buddha by Ananda and the novice Cunda [formerly a Jain]. The Buddha, however tells Cunda that he does not blame the pupils for the crisis, because the teacher was to be blamed, the doctrine was to blame, because the teacher was not fully enlightened.

The Buddha would not blame the common people for the current crises, because, as he might state today: the leaders are to blame; globalized economic, political and environmental doctrines are to blame... because the people who designed the theories were not fully aware of circumstances. From the expressions above, a disciple [a disciplined member of a 'school' or a citizen of a nation] should practice the doctrine proclaimed by the wise leader, according to proper conditions: basically, there is a correct teacher for a pupil to be under tutelage and the general well-explained doctrinal-teachings and laws are suitable for implementing - to be practiced by those entering as members of the idealized group. Then the lessons venture into various aspects of philosophy: if one trains to higher levels of morality [ethical, legal-social codes] and with higher levels of practical educated-wisdom, then the ultimate results of training become evident for the practitioner. The details inside this discourse could form a skeleton-outline of higher-philosophical-psychological principles available to anyone.

The *Sāmagāma Sutta*[8] discusses the death of Mahāvira, and again points to the schism that developed after the death of Mahāvira. The verbal daggers being tossed by his pupils' further disgust lay followers, as mentioned above. The sutta is an exposition or additional lesson built upon the previous incident, on how the Buddha's disciples are supposed to behave after his death to ensure the continuation

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[7] Maurice Walshe. The Long Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Dīgha-Nikāya. (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995), # 29, pp. 427-439

[8] Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Majjhiima-Nikāya (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), #104 pp. 853-860

of his teachings. This is reported to the Buddha, who states: "A dispute about livelihood or about the Patimokkha would be trifling... But should a dispute arise in the Sangha about the path or the way, such a dispute would be for the harm and unhappiness of many, for the loss, harm, and suffering of gods and humans. Therefore, in this discourse, Ānanda [the cousin and chief-attendant of the Buddha], states to the Buddha that no one argues about the dhamma, only over livelihood and the Pātimokkha – so the Buddha explains: Six roots of disputes; Four kinds of litigation; Seven kinds of settlement of litigation; and the six sāraṇīya-dhammas – which lead to harmony amongst people who have to live near another – applicable towards solving any social crisis. This discourse should serve as the basis for examining a Buddhist system of social-governing laws or legal code – certainly ample for resolving crisis.

The *Saṅgīti Sutta* is a very long sutta, but a portion recounts the death of Mahāvira and mentions the sectarian split that arose from his death. Here, the Most Venerable Sariputta presents 230 aspects of Dhamma to some 500 Buddhist monks – for reciting, in order to prevent any future-arising schism; this recitation was stated to be well-proclaimed, without disagreement.[9] There are: moral/social situations [the discourse evolved from a moral issue] and meditation or doctrinal themes [the discourse's purpose is to detail doctrine].[10] The Saṅgīti Sutta is a major step in the development of Buddhism – to protect the Dhamma from decay and propagate what has been established towards future generations to appreciate. In response to the external society's lack of discipline: Buddhists were in agreement to be disciplined under the Buddha's teachings, as propagated by Sariputta. Although the Buddha outlived his chief disciples and chief opponents, having the Jain sect co-existing in the same geographical region was highly beneficial to the Buddha's doctrine – and from this crisis situation, Buddhists could better or clearly define their ideological-philosophy vis-à-vis antagonistic positions.

Today's Response:

Antonio Gramsci has claimed that there can be no hegemonic doctrine over society because even intellectuals' dispute over opinions; and even common individual are not solely receptive to the dominance of any group, because individuals *merely borrows thoughts* to guide politically motivated actions. Today, we are all gathered here today to speak on and listen to the borrowed responses and

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[9] Maurice Walshe. The Long Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Dīgha-Nikāya. (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995), p. 480
[10] Dion Peoples: Utilization and Application of the *Saṅgīti Sutta (my completed PhD Dissertation from late 2008 - to be submitted to Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, following a foreign language exam), p. 49*

borrowed remedies to any form of global crisis – and although many of our thoughts, Buddhist or otherwise, are not new – a claim I can state from being the editor of our UNDV publications for several years – we still strive. During crisis situations, people borrow previously available knowledge towards seeking advice and answers – a way to transform the wrong or unwholesome into proper, more disciplined ways. This transformation parallels long-term ideological-personal or conscious-religious decisions – rather than a symbolic or ceremonial temporary approach. Yet, few people are actively-practically involved.

There must be real conscious transformations: reforesting a mountain, waste collection, human rights towards stateless people, socialistic-economic reforms that assist common people, amongst some - these are just a few calamities humanity faces around the globe. We all sit in this room together, but should we do something 'potentially-greater' or productive together: recreate a future forest through transforming barren hillsides with hardwood and fruit trees? Someone else noticed this, recently: "Resolving the economic problem is the hard part. It involves the livelihoods of the people, particularly the poor in rural areas who are battered by hot weather, drought, household debt and no immediate means to relieve their plight... The first task... is to restore our devastated forest resources and watershed areas through massive reforestation and water storage of all kinds. With mechanized contract farming and food to subdue hunger, we can then see our new future."[11] Furthermore, coming from a family that has earned their livelihood from the American timber industry, I know first hand that reforestation is necessary; and this is further entrenched knowing that my former professor, Dr. Apichai Puntasen has instructed students vital issues pertaining to Buddhist approaches to environment and economic 'development' for probably most of his academic career. The answer is not business solutions, but a total national investment into ecological/environmental revitalization, as we see:

Devastation occurs rapidly [thus 'a crisis'!], reforms are implemented over long-durations of time. It takes minute to fall the largest trees, yet it takes a hundred years for another tree to replace the one that was lost. We need mature seed-producing trees and plants to produce future generations of forests. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker illustrated maps to demonstrate 'Thai' *land under rice-cultivation*, from the 1840's, 1950's, 1980, and 1990; they further lead readers to understand that opening crown-owned land was successful for business, and this generated much wealth for the leading families – and decimated the diverse ecological-system. By planting the seeds of capitalistic greed into elite families, along with the development of a national system of citizen-slavery, old Siam and militarized Thailand was able to rape national resources for personal or company

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[11] Sopon Onkgara: Economic Crisis Warrants a Rethink of National Strategy (Bangkok: The Nation, 3 March 2009, 9A)

benefit. Academics have suggested that 80% of Thailand's forests have been lost, although Thailand can now assist with feeding the world as a major exporter of rice and other agricultural products.[12] People are quick to take from the earth – take what was not rightfully given. This lack of discipline is problematic. Few people are planting seeds of environmental-peace [apart from random photo-opportunities]; people are slow to give back, and there might be reasons for such hesitations: private-poverty might prohibit the purchases of new 'economically-beneficial' forest tree-seedlings to plant on public-property; living location might be an obstacle towards traveling to the nearest or distant nationalized forest; and there are the limitations of availability of assisting personnel and time management.

Societies have transformed; democracies and legal codes can be transformed. Today's urbanized people live away from the environments that once sustained them, in former times. How many urban people can or are interested in reclaiming corporate-land, towards improving the earth community? Urban people are trapped in their modern routine lifestyles, stuck in traffic jams for two hours, twice a day, for almost 20 hours a week, which is equal to almost two full days of work or recreation.[13] This alone is another crisis of a personalized nature, becoming social when this travel is mandated by the employer - during tough economic times when other suitable, appropriate-to-skills employment is rare to find in one's local area.

A major factor in the cause of crisis, as can be gathered is: the lack of discipline amongst people of all strata's of society. The common person, although possible, cannot assist much with the various crises facing our societies; and perhaps, there are too few virtuous people around. What the world needs to solve the global crisis are more virtuous people[14], collectively, across the entire social-strata:

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[12] Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker: Thailand – Economy and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); further: seek inside the Google Earth program and see satellite photos of Northeastern Thailand – where one can clearly distinguish the deep greens of Laos and Cambodia from the deforested and brown Thailand.

[13] Personal statistics.

[14] The parallel here is the arahant with someone beneficial for society. In personal communication, Professor Damien Keown is not convinced of my presentation: "I'm still not convinced by the 'virtuous citizen' = arahant equation, because the arahant is normally contrasted with the householder (citizen) in the texts, so I think there are problems in identifying them. However, that is just a quibble..." from: 7 March 2009. I think other people might have this perception as well. I wish to direct attention towards my response to him: "In Theravada Buddhism, some people [*me*] aspire to be arahants. Two householders: Isidatta and Purana - inspectors for King Pasenadi of Kosala, were "lay" noble-disciples - and one was said to even be 'content' or maintained his sexual relations with his wife... notes to the Samyutta-nikaya say Isidatta was a once-returner, and Purana was a stream-enterer, in the Anguttara-nikaya both were once-returners [discrepancy could have something to do with chronology/development of the person's virtues - one story being told before the other]. {Bhikkhu Bodhi editions}. ...If people attained to the higher ideals, more virtuous ideals... maybe this world changes for the better. ...I'm seeing that people, just being content to be a normal hereditary Buddhist, this might not be enough -- but for those that have 'truly converted into the noble lineage' [perhaps I'm also reflecting upon my years-ago readings of William James] - greater changes can occur. These nobler aspirations are available for

The Virtuous Person:

What are the virtuous dispositions or characteristics of a *virtuous person?* They are persons of any sexual manifestation with **pure[15]**, **mindful motives[16]** – they have tranquilized the six-sense spheres and abandon sensual-quests – and are thus highly disciplined people. The disciplined and virtuous person is incapable of: taking what is not given so as to constitute theft, sexual misconduct, telling a deliberate lie, storing up goods for sensual indulgence as formerly performed in the household life; and has lacks laziness-indolence. Virtuous people can attain to higher mental states beyond pleasure & pain, and desires for existence in other form/formless realms – and are purified by equanimity or perceptions pervading with neutrality, without conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. As such, *a virtuous citizen* is not subjected to future aspirations through the extinguishment of numerous 'desirous excesses' that otherwise prevent the attainment of the philosophical 'place' void of conflict, and never comes into further conflicting-existence. Thus, *a virtuous citizen's* deeds are considered good, though some lack creative power and no regard to a sense of self – registering no kammic consequence because their deeds are purely functional.

Conclusion:

Take for instance our various universities – with singular slogans of grand natures. World-illuminating wisdom can be found here – but these leaders are being wrongfully employed after graduation, like a crazed-killer seeking a necklace of fingers. Our universal university system must instill higher virtues into genuine, truth-seeking virtuous-graduates. Although people might specialize in certain or various academic-disciplines – the future leaders of tomorrow must be ethically disciplined to be a true leader.

Virtuous people are of any religion and nationality – they can be found in every humane society. In some societies, virtuous people are called 'rightfully-

unordained people - and I mention this because I was formerly ordained, so I can see the possibilities first hand -- but people don't try or lack discipline, being caught up in sensual experiences." [e-mail: 6 March 2009]. Also additional research clarifies any misinformation on my part: PA Payutto, as translated by Bruce Evans, wrote, "...The fundamental duty of one who has attained Nibbāna is to impart knowledge and encourage wisdom, mindfulness and virtue. This entails living a life that is exemplary in its contentment, virtue and nobility, and which can be adhered to by later generations." [page 252, see references]. This suggestion illustrates the virtuous person could be anyone, lay or ordained. The citizenry can emulate virtuous people, and construct a better society, rather than create better monastic compounds. Aware of the Lay-Arahant principle: death occurs within seven days if not ordained – temples provide the haven from frustrations dealing with worldlings.

[15] [*gone beyond majority-held beliefs of good and evil – with deeds only considered as having no ethical value, because their activity and ideology is selfless and directed towards helping others tread the path already trodden by them, individually*]

[16] [*emancipated from greed, hatred and delusion; and maddening religious quests for rebirth and for the holy life – thus one does not engage into harming the environment or society*]

guided', while others might be determined as an 'arahant'; while in other societies, they look for the heroic/virtuous patriot. People with different social-guidance or philosophical systems of reasoning may disagree upon the value of these 'things'; further we are reminded of wholesome and unwholesome categories of perception, along with many social-regulations which exist to curb greed, hatred or delusion – again this is personal restraint or social-discipline. Powers are placed into the category of morality to suggest that with such 'powers' one should engage into right practices [discipline] which include proper avenues for producing meritorious or virtuous endeavors. With such views, and striving to attain wholesomeness, one is warned [from a virtuous consciousness] not to engage into unwholesome categories.

Karl Popper, in his criticism against Karl Marx, stated: "...the old question 'Who shall be the rulers?' must be superseded by the more real one 'How can we tame them?'"[17] A verse, translated from a segment of daily chanting-recitations for practicing Buddhists, states that the Buddha is the: *Unexcelled Trainer of Those Who Can Be Taught, Teacher of Human & Divine Beings; Awakened; Blessed [Anuttaro Purisa-Damma-Sarathi Sattha Deva-Manussanam Buddho Bhagava].*[18] Here, I must conclude with a revisitation of my previous work, for our Buddhist Conference:

Great people: kings, queens, Brahmins, warrior/headmen; middle-class people of various trades; and even 'lesser-class' people, particularly 'slaves', all being 'human' – all of those types have been trained by the Buddha, as well as the era's selection of deities, because he is 'awakened and blessed' [also in the sense that his titles were not issued via inheritance or political exploitation]. This phrase, translated as, "unexcelled trainer of those who can be taught, teacher of human & divine beings; awakened; blessed," implies all 'undisciplined' people, because the 'rest' are still 'sekhas' or trainees – including deities. Virtually everyone is in need of greater training and discipline, and deities are no exception [including those in other religious traditions].

We are the alleged disciplined-leaders with the experience to rightfully-guide nations and societies, but most of us have renounced the secular-worldly life, for other 'noble'-endeavors. It may be a matter of teaching, metaphorically, an old-dog a new trick. I am not certain that these publications that we have worked on for several years, have even reached the highest offices of the national representatives within the United Nations, and other leading organizations and corporations, since excess copies can be seen around our offices. These individuals, in the meantime, could read the social-ethics found within the writings of Marx's voluminous *Capital* and other

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[17] Karl Popper: The Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume II: Hegel and Marx (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.144
[18] Dion Peoples: A Study of Morning and Evening Monastic Chanting Ceremony in Thai Buddhist Temples (Master Degree Thesis - ISBN 974-53-2611-9 Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Arts, 2006), p. 89-90

important writings, and as Karl Popper suggests: "The principles of humanity and decency were matters for him that needed no discussion, matters to be taken for granted."[19] These principles have been taught since the dawn of agricultural societies; and again, one must plant a seed in order for the next batch of crops to develop.

The various crises developing globally are caused by a lack of social discipline – yet people and those responsible, are not stupid and ignorant people – leaders have skillfully managed to generate wealth for themselves and their businesses, but they are have not tamed their passions. Government mismanagement has lead to our global crises. The transformation away from agricultural discipline [*a transformation which led to the 'creation' of Buddhism*] to a capitalistic-society has led people to forget their true social-responsibilities and the discipline required to secure livelihoods for future nations. Leaders should be virtuous people assisting to uplift current and future generations of people from various types of suffering. We, in this room, know about the existence of suffering – and the path leading away from suffering, words that are better saved for other occasions by our disciplined and enlightened virtuous-siblings.

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[19] Karl Popper: The Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume II: Hegel and Marx (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 220

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⇒ *Dialectics of Nature*

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⇒ *Engels to Schmidt*
⇒ *German Ideology*
⇒ *Juristic Socialism*
⇒ *L. Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*

⇒ *The Communism of the Paper Rheinischer Beobachter [extract]*
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Buddhism and Nonviolent Communication: An Effective Practice for Peace

Prof. Dr. Deborah Bowman
Naropa University – Boulder, Colorado

> *Speak or act with a peaceful mind and happiness follows like a never departing shadow.*
>
> *-The Buddha from The Dhammapada*

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is an effective discipline that utilizes language to connect compassionately, whose theory and practice parallels several foundational Buddhist principles. This paper explores how complementary NVC skill sets can be employed by Buddhists to enhance the development of Right Speech. NVC emphasizes numerous factors that align with Buddhism including intentionality, curiosity, clarity of observation, empathy in relationship, interdependence, basic goodness, nonviolence, non-attachment, an emphasis on contributing to the well-being of others and a balanced pursuit of one's own well-being. These key features of NVC are examined in their suggested application from the perspective of Skillful Means, Right Speech, the Three Jewels, the Four Noble Truths and the Six Paramitas. Examples of the effectiveness of NVC are drawn from its numerous practitioners including the founder, Marshall Rosenberg, who has demonstrated success with this model in situations as diverse as family counseling, educational consulting and international negotiations. The Buddhist path provides practitioners with the opportunity to work with modern methodologies by adapting forms congruent with its basic values. It is recommended that Buddhist practitioners may contribute substantially to the relief of global suffering by learning and utilizing many of the suggested language technologies of NVC.

Intention

The intention of the practitioner of NVC is foremost to its success. Rosenberg describes the core of the work when he shares his intention behind creating NVC as an interpersonal skill:

"I developed NVC as a way to train my attention – to shine the light of consciousness – on places that have the potential to yield what I am seeking. What I

want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart." (2003).

His simple statement reflects trust in the effectiveness of generosity and compassion in the human relationship. Underlying his words is an assumption of the interdependence between human beings and our ability to contribute to each other's happiness. Holding the sole intention to give and receive with compassion is fundamental to each of the four core components of the where attention is trained in NVC. These include observations, feelings, needs and requests.

Clear Observations

The ability of the NVC practitioner to clearly observe a situation is essential. Often in the practice it is necessary to translate this observation into a verbal description that is without judgment or personal prejudice. Communication often breaks down with misperceptions and errors in language patterns that are habitual distortions of the truth. A common example of a language error is when someone states, "I feel you are so unfair". First, this statement reflects a conceptual idea and not a true feeling. Second, it is a generalization that has no specific function. Third, it labels the other person in a way that will typically create more distance than compassionate connection. A clear observation that is understandable might be, "I noticed in our last class you called on two boys that raised their hands and did not call on me when I was the only girl who raised her hand". A key to being received and understood by another person in a potentially conflictual situation is to provide information that is without personal bias, interpretation or evaluation. Removing this bias in our speech is a way to step out of an ego-centered perspective. It also trains our attention on the bare qualities of our observations. It is a step toward making better contact with others through creating a shared understanding of what *is*.

Empathetic Feelings

In NVC focus is placed on empathetically identifying and understanding feelings in oneself and others. Feelings are recognized as states based in body sensations and are expressions of vulnerability. They typically denote when our needs are met or unmet and include many nuances of joy, peace, curiosity, gratitude, satisfaction, confidence, inspiration, affection, grief, fear, anger, shame, confusion, loneliness, frustration and overwhelm. The power of identifying internal feelings states increases self-awareness and helps us to discern better as we have the opportunity to clearly separate feelings from observations. Understanding that as adults we are responsible for our feelings and that situations are not the cause of our

feelings is fundamental to NVC. Paying attention to body sensations and feelings makes our emotions workable and underscores their impermanence. Without this self-awareness we are more likely to *believe* our feelings and to act on them in ways that are harmful to others and ourselves. In naming our more difficult feelings NVC allows us to touch them and more readily let them go.

Genuine curiosity towards the feelings of others and helping others to identify their feelings is a signal that we are interested in connecting to their experience. Nonjudgmental *feeling with* the passion of others is the basis of compassion. We never assume we know what others are feeling but rather offer a heart felt guess in our inquiry. We might say, "I noticed you just now raised your voice louder than usual and I am wondering if you are feeling angry?" instead of "you are so angry". When we inquire about a feeling, following a clear observation, we are much more likely to be met with honesty and lessoned resistance. Even if we guess wrong our generosity to focus on the other person offers them the opportunity to clarify what they are experiencing. They might say something like "no, I'm actually scared I might fail this class" or "yes, I'm very upset you didn't called on me". Either way, we are getting closer to understanding their suffering so we may better offer empathy with a clear reflection. Repeating what they have just expressed lets the other person know we have heard them correctly and that we have no judgment regarding our awareness of their internal state. We could say, "I am hearing you are scared and concerned about passing this class" or "I hear you were feeling upset when I called on two boys and did not call on you, the only girl who raised her hand".

Interdependent Needs

Feeling states are driven by the sense that needs are met or unmet. The feeling of confusion is often driven by the need for clarity. Difficult feelings are typically driven by

perceptions that needs are not met and happy feelings are typically driven by perceptions that needs are met. When people feel lonely they may have a need for community. When someone feels tranquil the need for harmony may be satisfied. The purpose of feelings in this context is not to identify with them but rather to appreciate their utility in signaling a need that we may then choose to satisfy or not. Needs are a reflection that all of life is an interdependent web where exchange is vital to existence. A need is defined by the fact that everyone universally shares this need. Needs in NVC are listed in basic categories that include physical needs, choice, integrity, interdependence, contribution, spirituality and celebration (Rosenberg, 2003). Buddhists can understand the universality of this concept when we reflect on

some of the indispensable needs provided by the three jewels of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Within Sangha we find our needs met for acceptance, contribution, support, warmth and honesty. The Dharma meets our need for truth and clarity. The jewel of the Buddha fulfills our need for guidance and inspiration.

If we were to guess the underlying needs of the young woman in our earlier example we might ask "I'm wondering if you are feeling angry because you are needing equality?" She might say yes or she might say, "No, I need to participate in class. I really want to learn this material." Either way, she has gotten closer to compassionately connecting with her own needs and you have gotten closer to compassionately connecting with her. It is important to make an inquiry regarding both the feelings *and* the needs that appear to be driving the emotions. This creates a deeper understanding of feelings that may be particularly difficult for you or the other person to accept. Focusing attention on the underlying need points in the direction of the shared humanity of the two people in conflict. The individual identification with personal pain and separateness begins to dissolve and the two people can become collaborators in finding solutions to the difficulty.

In order to clearly reflect the feelings and needs of another person we must set aside our own feelings and needs and focus intently on the experience of the other person. This requires that we pay precise attention to our own internal capacity to accomplish this in the moment. If we recognize we are not capable of calming our own emotional state enough to respond clearly we may choose to excuse ourselves and offer to return after an interval of time. When we are able to commit our attention to the other person we continue to offer our willingness to listen and reflect feelings and needs until there is a sense that the other person has "emptied their cup". This metaphor suggests that they have fully expressed themselves and recognize your understanding. It is only in this relatively empty state that a person is then capable of receiving and accurately reflecting your feelings and concerns. When we assist others to clarify their internal feelings and needs we contribute to their welfare and capacity to receive us as well.

Requests Without Attachment

In sharing our feelings and needs it is important to request the willingness of the other person to listen. If we are the teacher in the earlier example, after hearing fully from the student we might ask, "I'm feeling concern and have a need to contribute to your learning, would you be willing to tell me what you just heard me say?" By asking the student to repeat what we said we are requesting her participation. If she responds positively, our question will then help us assess if our communication was effective. We must be willing to trust that however the student

responds, we are receiving important information about the other person or ourselves. We must be willing to accept her response without expectations. If the student is unwilling and we have an emotional reaction we can assume that we asked the question with an agenda and our request was actually a demand. Our non-attachment to her response keeps us open to further inquiry that might help us better understand her feelings and needs. It will also allow us to reflect on our actions including the clarity and openness of our request. Were we using language she understands? Did we have a tone in our voice that was angry? Were we truly making the request from our heart or were we performing the task perfunctorily? A request that comes with expectations is a form of violence. While we may gain temporary results through coercion the long-term effects negates the needs of both teacher and student to freely give and receive.

Requests are the way we seek exchange with the environment and enrich our lives. In NVC they usually follow the expression of observations, feelings and needs. Without the information provided by an observation, the context of our request may not be correctly understood. Expressing our feelings and needs when making a request generously offers the listener the contents of our heart. We make ourselves vulnerable in sharing our humanity by building a compassionate bridge of understanding through universally experienced feelings and needs. When the teacher genuinely expresses concern and the desire to contribute, the student is more likely to understand and trust the intention behind a request.

Effective requests are specific, positive and doable. In the above example the teacher made a simple request that asked for something that the student could readily understand and was free to choose. Had the teacher asked accusingly, "Why don't you quit your lazy study habits so I will want to call on you?" the student would likely fight back or shut down in shame. If we look closely at this last example, the teachers' response was judgmental and the question was actually a request for an explanation and not a specific behavior the student could readily execute. Beginning a request in the negative, the teacher may never discover the special needs of the student or help design a study plan that would meet her needs for learning and participation. Requests that are vague or confusing often leave both parties feeling frustrated and alienated from one another. We often make requests about what we don't want rather than what we actually do want. Let's imagine the student responded by stating, "Don't patronize me". While the student may believe she has made it clear what she wants, a judgment was expressed and the teacher was not offered any concrete action steps that would help the student.

Needs and requests between people intersect in all our exchanges and our job is to trust that a compassionate and honest approach will eventually lead to satisfaction for both individuals. The next step for the teacher may be to patiently

start over by utilizing the NVC sequence of reflecting observations, inquiring about feelings and needs, and making a request. The teacher could say, "When you said you don't want to be patronized, I was wondering if you feel angry and need respect. Is that true?"

When we make this simple request it is important to remember that we are not assuming responsibility for the other persons' feelings or meeting their needs. Our intention is solely to clarify what is true for them in the moment and to create a sense of understanding between each other.

Trusting our Inherent Goodness

Trusting the NVC process means accepting that our purpose is not to change people in order to get our way. It also assumes that the purpose of our empathy is not to manipulate but to create relationship that enriches both people. This balanced approach to the pursuit of our own happiness recognizes our basic interdependence and mitigates the problems created when we approach others from an egocentric point of view. NVC is built on principles that people are essentially generous, compassionate and interested in contributing to the welfare of others. It also assumes that our feelings and needs are purposeful in that they may be utilized to help inform our decisions. If we identify feeling distraught, what need are we not attending to? If we recognize the need for peace, what requests do we make of whom? Would we like to create a space in the day when the children play quietly? Or is the request internal? NVC skills can be applied to our interior dialogue to create greater self-acceptance and confidence in our choices. Does a part of us want to be more diligent in our meditation practice and another part concerned about doing a good job at work and at home? By clearly observing our internal states and deeply listening to our self-talk we notice how empathy and a nonjudgmental attitude towards our feelings and needs creates an open space for creative solutions to arise. We begin to find that we can make doable, concrete requests of ourselves and follow through on our commitments.

The Four Noble Truths

As Buddhists we can better understand both the philosophy and practice recommended in NVC if we look at it through the lens of the Four Noble Truths. These include the awareness of the truth of suffering, awareness of the arising of suffering, understanding the cessation of suffering is possible and learning the path to the cessation of suffering.

Awareness of Suffering

NVC is designed to alleviate the suffering we experience in our interactions with others and in our self-dialogue. It recognizes the many confusions and errors in our speech that contribute to misunderstandings, conflict and difficult emotions. NVC recognizes that many of these patterns are culturally, socially and personally embedded in faulty observations, habitual language and misdirected attention. It shines the light on these painful artifacts of human relationship so we may better understand the nature of our interpersonal suffering. NVC also understands we have introjected these harmful language patterns into our interior dialogue and increase personal suffering with distorted observations, self-blame and unformed goals that translate into ineffective self-requests. In helping us to identify difficult feelings and unmet needs, NVC assists us to delve deeper to the roots of our suffering in ignorance, passion or aggression. Clear awareness of our erroneous thought patterns and distressing emotions is the first step toward holding them with compassion and transparency.

The Arising of Suffering

Clearly understanding the cause of our suffering helps us alleviate habitual patterns of ego that separate us from intimately knowing one another. Inquiry in NVC is designed to help us get beneath defensive language and posturing that is the mark of self-clinging and alienation. Empathetic contact involves the willingness to reveal our personal vulnerabilities and caring for others. The basis of empathy is that we are not separate entities but interdependent without a self to defend, protect or divide us from others. While interconnected we remain responsible for our consciousness and the suffering that arises when we perceive reality through the veil of our addiction to the self. We mistakenly confuse strategies to get our needs met with our true needs for enlightenment, truth and community. When strategies are confused with needs they are considered tragic expressions of needs and include all our attempts to buy, seduce, control, ignore, manipulate and force our way in the world. Genuine contact with others opens us to loosening boundaries we have falsely created leading toward greater satisfaction in relationship.

The Cessation of Suffering

Freedom from suffering is based in the example of the Buddha, our recognition of the truth of his teachings and following his example in cultivating the qualities of the Eightfold Noble Path. These eight are then the cause of awakening and include Right View, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right

Livelihood, Right Diligence, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration (Nhat Hanh, 1999). NVC strives to make our speech clear and empathetic and by doing so eliminates the cause of future misunderstandings. The cessation of suffering begins to occur for those on the path with small incremental moments of awakening when we are open to the experience of nonduality. Opportunities for stirring this experience are available in relationship when we are able to freely open our hearts and mind. Compassion based in the experience of nonduality has the greatest scope of understanding and effectiveness. Buddhism and NVC recognize the seeds of compassion in every human heart.

The Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

The Buddhist path of study, contemplation and meditation empowers its practitioners to realize the vast nature of mind and thus alleviate suffering. To an enlightened master there is no conflict between self and other: self and other do not exist. The path of a Bodhisattva in the Mahayana and Vajrayana tradition is of one who has this realization and chooses to continue to work for the benefit of all beings. The Bodhisattva may be considered a symbol for all Buddhists who understand their engagement in the world is a dimension of the Buddhist path. Study and meditation inform a contemplative approach to living that includes our interactions with others. NVC requires that we continually reflect on our speech and listen deeply to the messages we receive from others. Nonattachment to outcome in our human relationships offers freedom to others and encourages us to practice letting go on a daily basis. We recognize our misunderstandings and frustrations are based on a limited view and work towards an all-encompassing view. At the same time, our path is not passive. NVC encourages us to find our voice and offers tools for speaking up when there is injustice, prejudice and violence. Based in language skills that bring forward our inherent compassion, apathy and anger dissolve, and mutual understanding is cultivated.

The development of NVC is a life long process. Commitment to the six Paramitas on the Buddhist path lays a strong foundation for an effective NVC practice. As we have seen in our examples, Dana, or generosity, is at the core of opening our heart and loosening our resistance in communication. Our vow not to harm, Shila, helps us keep watch over words in a disciplined manner so as not to coerce, confuse, label or violate others. Kshanti, or patience, is essential as we learn compassion-based skills and continually listen and communicate until understanding and harmony is generated. With Virya we diligently create the energy and enthusiasm to continue in our efforts. We practice the components of NVC as if we were learning to play the notes on a piano, with faith that over time our effort will become the *effortless effort* of a Zen concertmaster. Dhyana, the practice of

meditation, including concentration and contemplation, provides us presence of mind in our everyday exchanges with others. Prajna becomes wisdom in action, something we continue to seek and discover as we build skillful means, compassion and experience over time.

In Right Speech, one of the practices of the Eight Fold Noble path, there are four parameters: telling the truth, not creating discord between others, not speaking cruelly and not exaggerating (Nhat Hanh, 1999). We can see how NVC embraces all of these concepts. Acute attention is paid to describing reality as truthfully as possible in observations and reporting internal states. In inquiring about the experience of our dialogue partners we are careful to not make assumptions and always ask if our guesses about feelings and needs are correct. NVC counters creating discord (speaking with a forked tongue) by encouraging a straight path to working through conflict. It offers tools for speaking directly to those with whom we have differences and for asserting our needs nonviolently. Cruel, evaluative, judgmental, critical and labeling language is avoided in NVC. This includes accusatory language that labels or interprets the behavior of others. It emphasizes deep listening and personal sharing to get below defensive language that pits people against each other. In avoiding judgmental language that conveys we are right and the other person is wrong, NVC provides a framework for mutual understanding. NVC requires that we not exaggerate the truth in requiring us to carefully consider our choice of words in how we describe situations, internal states, and make requests. Statements like "you always…" or "you never…" elaborate the truth and are habitually used as vehicles to drive home a righteous stance with underlying anger in our tone. Using mindfulness to calm our emotions and speaking with greater precision we avoid escalating conflict with dramatic embellishments.

Relationship is the Quick Path

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche is known to have said, "relationship is the quick path" in reference to the power of leveraging the human encounter to transform consciousness. We receive immediate feedback on the state of our mind through our interactions. Right Speech enfolds out of Right View and Right Thought and has an interactive effect on the development of our view of reality and how we think about it. People employ language in archaic ways that include the use of judgmental and evaluative terms that create an *enemy image* in the mind (Rosenberg, 2008). When we refer to others as bad, stingy, selfish, mean, lazy or rigid we solidify a hostile attitude in our mind that limits our perception and likely invite defense or humiliation in the mind of the other person.   When we berate ourselves with negative terminology we make us the enemy and limit our capacity to compassionately learn

from our own mistakes. We can also see how enemy images create an instantaneous emotional response that further escalates confused and distorted thinking.

Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche encourages us to develop a *mindful gap* in our awareness by learning to hold still with the emotion and not react. Then we can separate ourselves into experiencer and observer of the emotion and we avoid becoming overwhelmed. The space we create offers an opportunity to *clearly see* a broader view of the entire situation and *let go* of our mental and energetic fixation (Dzogchen Ponlop, 2008). While NVC does not specify these three steps of mindful gap, clearly seeing and letting go, its invitation to clearly delineate observations, feelings, needs and requests suggests a similar process of mental clarity regarding emotions. In its recommendation for deep inner listening we may understand NVC as a contemplative, interpersonal practice on the quick path.

NVC Dialogue in Action

Returning to the example of teacher and student, let's go back to the first remark of the student and imagine the teacher has mastered the NVC vocabulary.

Student: I feel you are so unfair. *(Notice the common use of "I feel…" is followed by a concept instead of a true feeling. The word "so" is a common exaggeration.)*

Teacher: When you say "unfair", I'm curious if you are feeling angry and needing equal treatment. *(He says this in the spirit of kindness and not to correct her.)*

Student: No, you just don't get it.

Teacher: When you say, "I don't get it", are you feeling frustrated and need to be understood?

Student: Yes, I'm frustrated and sick of being ignored because I am a girl.

Teacher: I appreciated you letting me know you are frustrated. *(He shows appreciation for her willingness to share openly and repeats her feeling so she knows she is heard.)* When you say, "ignored as a girl", I'm wondering if you need attention to your learning process and equal treatment? *(Often more than one need is present.)*

Student: Yes, I want to be called on when I raise my hand.

Teacher: I hear you want to be taken seriously as a person and called on when you raise your hand. *(Repeating a statement is not necessarily agreeing with someone as the intent is to make sure the other person knows they are heard.)* Is there anything else that you are feeling? *(The teacher asks about anything else to make sure the student has emptied her cup and is in a receptive place to hear his concerns.)*

Student: No, thanks for listening.

Teacher: I appreciate your willingness to come and tell me about your concerns and I would like to contribute more to your learning. Would you be willing to hear my concern? *(He embeds his observation, feeling, need and request in these two sentences.)*

Student: Sure.

Teacher: When you raised your hand in class and I didn't call on you, I was feeling reluctant because you failed the last oral exam and I needed assurance you had studied enough to answer correctly. Would you be willing to tell me what you just heard me say?

Student: That I'm a failure and you don't want to embarrass me.

Teacher: When you say "failure" I'm curious if you are feeling sad and scared and needing support in your studies? *(Instead of repeating his earlier statement he switches to identifying her feelings and needs when he hears the painfully expressed label "failure".)*

Student: Yes, my mother is sick and as the oldest girl I need to take care of my baby brother and sisters because she is in the hospital. There's no time to study.

Teacher: *(Allowing time for silence to connect to his heart.)* When you tell me about your mother I feel sad for you and your whole family. When I hear caring in your voice I'm guessing you also have a need to contribute to the welfare of your family. Is that true?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Would you be willing to explore with me ways to work with this challenging situation so you can continue your studies?

Student: *(crying)* I would like that.

As we can see in this example it is not necessary for both people in the dialogue to know NVC to intervene effectively. When working with others who are angry, upset or resist our efforts it is common to discover fear and sadness beneath their initial reaction when we continue to probe compassionately. When others says no to our request it is a signal to investigate deeper into their feelings instead of focusing on our own reaction to their response. This is a time to utilize mindfulness as we notice our reactive emotion, and in that gap, see clearly and let the feeling go. We are then able to bring our full attention back to the other person.

Conclusion

NVC provides us a powerful methodology to take the dharma into personal and socially engaged situations. Marshall Rosenberg has examples of working in situations of tribal and ethnic warfare and has been successful in reconciling many groups and individuals, including Serbs and Bosnians who experienced extreme violence between each others' families. In 2008, an educational workshop in NVC was taking place in Thailand a week before the Bangkok airport was shut down. While participants came seeking nonviolent tools for many reasons, individuals loyal to either the red shirts or yellow shirts came knowing they would have the opportunity to work side by side in the training. Much to everyone's relief at this volatile time, in demonstrating the methods of NVC, the teachers were able to facilitate compassionate communication regardless of the issues that arose.

While the practice may appear simple, most individuals do not find it easy. As Buddhists we can understand the degree of mindful attention and maturity on the path that is necessary to master the skills. It is also common, for those recently introduced to the approach, to experience significant moments of connection and reconciliation when utilizing NVC in relationship. Beginners often find simply holding the intention of compassionate connection enough to create greater understanding in approaching others with their requests.

This paper touches on essential elements of NVC as it relates to the role of Buddhism in alleviating suffering in the world. It also explores how Buddhist teachings and mindfulness practice may enhance the effective use of NVC. I feel optimistic that these methods have much to contribute to global understanding and peace. May this work increase clarity and compassion in the mindstream of all sentient beings.

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Relatives in Dhamma (*Ñātidhamma*) - the Basis for Peace among Religions

Dr. Veerachart Nimanong[*]

Introduction:

My attempt to present this topic is to link the concept of 'Relatives or Kinsmen in Dhamma' (*Ñātidhamma*) to the circumstance of inter-religious dialogue between Buddhism and other religions. My investigation of this concept will be confined only to Theravada Buddhism. Once the Buddha said that a 'trustworthy person is the best kinsmen or relative' (*vissāsā paramāñāti*). Thai proverb also says that: 'relative is counted by generosity and not by blood'. According to Theravada Buddhist hermeneutics based on the Nettippakarana text, this stanza can be guided by this mode of conveying of the meaning, "whoever can understand the three common characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self is known as 'relatives in dhamma' (*ñātidhamma*)." The term 'relatives in dhamma' (*ñātidhamma*) is equivalent to 'friends in dhamma' (*sahadhamma*) and it is also close to the term 'admirable friend' (*kallañānamitta*). It should not be understood literally as kinsmen by blood through the worldly human language, but only the Dhamma language.

We may say that Buddhism and Hinduism have close relationship with one another. However, Buddhism has its own unique characteristics, which can be classified into three phases, viz.: Reformation or reinterpretation, revolution and reconstruction as related to Hinduism as follows:

1. In the phase of *reformation*: the Buddha rejected the caste-system, the immolation-sacrifice and so on. Although the Buddha was born in a royal family, he by *self-sacrifice* renounced the world being moved by human suffering. Inequalities in the social order led to various forms of suffering like exploitation, untouchables, corruption and immorality of the ruling class. The most important thing is that the Buddha reinterprets cast system of Hinduism into the relative doctrine of six types of duties based on the six directions, say for example, parents as the east, teachers as the south, wife and children as the west, friends and companions as the north, servants

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[*]Dr. Veerachart Nimanong, Pali-Dhamma Studies VI, B.Ed., B.A. (Buddhist Philosophy), M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. (Philosophy), Head of Philosophy Department, Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. Tel. (662) 300 4543 Ext. 1325; Fax. (662) 7191521; House Tel. (662) 945 2516 Or Cell Phone: (666) 515 2891 Email: vnimanong@yahoo.com; www.veerachart.au.edu

and workmen as the nadir, and monks as the zenith, (D. III. 189-192). Besides, the women's emancipation (*vimutti*) had an important place in Buddhism. Women are admitted to the *Sangha* on an equal basis along with men. Both men and women have equal rights. The Buddha also repudiates the efficacy of ceremonies and sacrifices. Therefore, self-sacrifice is more praiseworthy than any other sacrifices.

2. In the *revolutionary* phase: the Buddha brought about a total and radical change in some respect in the traditional beliefs. The doctrine of 'permanent self' (Atman), for example, was rejected and replaced by the doctrine of 'non-self' (anatta), the Hindu yoga by insight meditation, and sensual indulgence and self-mortification by the middle path.

The Buddha strongly condemned the religious austerity which was a common practice among the Brahmanas and the Jains. The Buddha denounced `self-mortification' (*attakilamathanuyoga*) as equally unworthy and unprofitable. He recommended simple life and strict self- restraint. He was also disgusted with the `sensual indulgence' (*kamasukhallikanuyoga*) which prevailed in India at that time. A man who can control sexual enjoyment is regarded as a noble and strong man by the Buddha. According to a Greek philosopher, virtue always lies between the two extremes: Courage between cowardice and foolhardiness, and liberality between prodigality and illiberality, so also the Buddha finds virtue in the `Middle Way' (*Majjhimapatipada*). By avoiding the two extremes the Buddha has gained perfect knowledge of the Middle Path to *Nirvana*.

On the other hand, when man is mentioned by the terms *ayatana* `sense-fields' and *dhatu* `elements,' he is to be analyzed on the basis of his physical and mental environment. The doctrine of *Atman* is, therefore, superseded by the doctrine of *Anatta.* The basic problem of Buddhism is concerned with human suffering. The Buddha's teachings highlight the problems of suffering in various forms. Sickness is one of these. It is said that as long as a man is alive, he is subject to sickness (*payadhi*) and old age (*jara*). One has to find an abiding solution to these problems.

3. In the phase of *reconstruction*: which is the most important among them, the Buddha discovers a new 'truth' (*sacca*) called the Four Noble Truths, the Dependent Origination, 24 relations and so on.

The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths enumerated by the Buddha in his first sermon known as *Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta* at the Deer Park near the city of Varanasi is regarded as the most basic one, profound as well as original for the revelation of which he deserves to be called the Buddha. It is apparent that the Four Noble Truths are nothing but the gradual self-development with the aim of breaking away from the *karma* and *samsara* to the state of *Nirvana*.

I.   Theory and Practice: Meaning and Significance of 'Relatives in Dhamma'

What is the concept of 'Relatives in Dhamma' (*Ñātidhamma*) in Theravada Buddhism? Does it appear in the Buddhist texts? It is consisted of two terms, one is 'Ñāti', and another one is 'Dhamma'. 'Relatives in Dhamma is found used quite often in Thai Buddhism among Thai people, who confessed themselves as Buddhists, who observe five precepts, (of non-killing, non-stealing, non-sexual misconduct, non-telling a lie, and non-taking intoxicant) and practice meditation as general Buddhist in the Thai society. When the word 'relatives in Dhamma is uttered in any occasion, followers of the five religions, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, in Thailand will understand its implication and the feeling of being brotherhood will be immediately furnished with readiness of collaborations. 'Relatives in Dhamma' is found used as the formal word by Santi Asoka Buddhist movement in Thailand. 'Relatives in Dhamma' is close to the word 'Relative-Layman' (Yard-Yoam). The only difference is that while 'relative-layman' is applicable to only layman, but 'relatives in Dhamma' is applicable to both monks and laymen.

The Concept of 'Admirable Friends' (Kallañānamitta) as Corollary Doctrine of Friends or Relatives in Dhamma:

The idea of 'admirable friends' in Buddhism is counted from the Buddha, Arahants, and teachers, down to parents. Those people are taken as the trustworthy persons, with whom ones should associate, because they are wise in leading their lives. When ones associate with the wise, ones would become wise. As the Buddha also said: "Indeed he who moves in the company of fools grieves for long. Association with fools is ever painful like partnership with an enemy. But happy is the association with the wise, like meeting one's one kinsmen, (Dh. verse 207).

The Anguttara Nikāya (AN. 8.54) defines 'Admirable Friends' thus: "And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders' sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He strives for perfect conviction [in the principle of kamma] in those who are perfect in conviction, perfect virtue in those who are perfect in virtue, perfect generosity in those who are perfect in generosity, and perfect discernment in those who are perfect in discernment. This is called admirable friendship." Why does the term 'Admirable Friends' be concerned with the Buddha's doctrines of 'virtue', 'kamma', and 'generosity'. This would be the matter of later discussion.

The Meaning of Relatives or Kinsmen 'Ñāti':

In the Dhammapada Text, the Buddha said: "Health is the highest gain and contentment the greatest wealth. *Trustworthy person is the best kinsman*. Nibbana is the highest bliss, (Dh. Verse 204). To have proper understanding of the idea of 'relatives in Dhamma' is to understand the concept of 'man' in Buddhism. Man is a psychophysical combination, which is the result of kammic accumulation. Man is the creator of himself through the doctrine of kamma and rebirth.

What is the true idea of man in Buddhism? The most apt reply is that man is `a psycho- physical complex' (*nama-rupa*) conditioned and determined by what is called an antecedent state in the process of `becoming' (*bhava*) in which both action (*karma*) and reaction (*karmaphala*) play an essential part in the development of personality. On the other hand, man as perceived from within and without, is analyzed into a collection of `five aggregates' (*pancakkhandha*) of changing elements, namely, the group of his looks, sentiments, perceptional outfit, mental pre-dispositions, and acts of consciousness such as remembering, thinking and so on. The first group is called `matter', as named earlier, but the last four are together termed `mind', and they are collectively called *nama-rupa*. There is another classification of the elements of man, which is divided into two groups of cognitive faculties and of the different categories of the objects. The two groups are called `bases' (*ayatanas*), which are of twelve kinds in number, divided into six cognitive faculties known as `six internal bases' and six categories of corresponding objects known as `six external bases'. The internal bases are also regarded as receptive faculties and the external ones are objects. These twelve bases, both internal and external, are sufficient for the formulation of the idea of man.

Buddhism regards man's life in its reality as composed of the groups of the constituents, say, "five aggregates": "When certain things of their various parts combined, we speak of `chariot' or `car', just so when these five aggregates are there, we use the designation `man' or `being', (SN,I,135). Generally speaking, the purpose of analysis is to enrich the understanding of man about what he is not, technically called non-self. It may be noted here that the five aggregates are just classificatory groupings; they should not be conceived as compact entities (heaps or bundles), for actually only single representative of these groups, mostly variable, can arise with any state of consciousness. The five aggregates are frequently mentioned with the eighteen elements and twelve senses bases.

Human Nature According To Buddhism: Buddhism regards the human being as superior to all. The human being is entirely different from other animals in respect of mentality that is somewhat complicated. It is like dense forest that has no entrance and is difficult to penetrate, in comparison with the nature of an animal,

which is much easier to understand. The Buddha realizes that man, while being tempted to perform evil actions, could be properly directed towards the performance of good actions (*kusalakamma*). According to Buddhism, there are three `immoral roots' (*akusalamula*), namely, lust (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), which are regarded as the original cause of ignorance (*avijja*). It is, therefore, said that the real nature of an ordinary man is always entangled with the impurities (*kilesas*) and worldly pleasures and he is always guided by ignorance. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha said: "Oh! wise man, it is true that not easy to control are evil things, do not let greed and wickedness drag you to prolonged suffering,"(Dh,v.248).

According to the Buddha, good or evils are to be considered as two aspects of human nature, and man usually performs either wholesome or unwholesome *karmas*, because of the conflict of the two aspects as already mentioned. Hence in the *Anguttara-Nikaya*, (AN,I,93) the Buddha classifies human beings into four kinds: (1) Some come from darkness but will only go to darkness, (ii) Some come from darkness but will go to light, (iii) some come from light but will go to darkness, (iv) some come from light and they will go to light. The Buddha appreciates the last one as it signifies one of not only noble birth, but also of good conduct. Such a person will never suffer in this life and in the life to come.

In short, man is defined by his actions - what he did, what he is doing, and what he will do; so his nature is conditioned by his own action or kamma. In short, the main purpose of the Buddha's denial of the self is to enable his disciples to shed the grasping of the self. So long as grasping of the self in any forms persists, there can be no real liberation.

Man is Non-self (Anatta): Buddhism is particularly known as *Religion of Selflessness*. Of all the major religions in the world, Buddhism is the only religion that preaches the doctrine of 'non-self' (*anatta*) in Theravada Buddhism or 'emptiness' (*sunyata*) in Mahayana Buddhism. This doctrine is one of the main cornerstones upon which Buddhism is built. In the commentary, the Buddha's discovery of non-self is confirmed thus: "whether the Buddhas arise in the world or not, the characteristics of impermanence and suffering become known to man, But the characteristic of non-self will not be known to man unless the Buddhas arise in the world," (*Sumangalavilasini*, II, 55). Buddhism denies all kinds of permanent souls (*atman*), but accepts the doctrine of *Anatta*, which is based on the analysis of the five *khandhas* in the *Anattalakkhana-Sutta*, (DN,II,100). The Buddha's reasons for denying the self are centered on the analysis of nature of man.

The denial of the soul opposed to the doctrine of *Atta*, which is propounded by the Upanisadic thinkers, who believe that the soul is "autonomous", that it is the "inner controller of name and form." The Buddha asserts that what is

apprehended as "self" or "*Atman*" is only an illusion deriving from the combination of the five *khandhas*. The so-called five *khandhas* are sometimes called the `five groups of attachment' (*pañcuppadanakkhandha*), which cannot be regarded as a permanent soul or self, for each of them falls into the common characteristics of `impermanence' (*anicca*), `oppression' (*dukkha*), and `not-self' (*anatta*).

The Meaning of 'Dhamma':

According to Theravada Buddhism, the term 'dhamma' means the Buddha's teachings, which consists of three baskets (Tipitakas) of Vinayapitaka, Suttantapitaka, and Abhidhammapitaka. It's very interesting to look into the meaning of Dhamma as given by Prof. Y. Karunadasa, who interpreted the term 'Dhamma' as consisting of two kinds of meaning. The first meaning of Dhamma is a kind of five types of an analysis of man into 'mind and body' or 'five aggregates', or 'twelve sense bases', or 'six elements' or 'eighteen elements'. But the second meaning of Dhamma is called the ultimate truth, which is known as the Doctrine of Dependent Origination and is common to all schools of Buddhism, (Karunadasa, n.d., pp. 1-33). As we have already known that different schools of Buddhism of both Mahayana and Theravada have different divisions of the kinds and the numbers of Dhamma. Sarvastivada Buddhism divided Dhamma into seventy-five kinds, Theravada Buddhism divided Dhamma into 81 kinds, and Yogacara Buddhism did it into one hundred kinds, (Buswell, Ed., 2004).

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a Thai Buddhist scholar, although he died many years ago, but his idea of Dhamma is still alive; he defied Dhamma as God through his hermeneutics, which is based on the theory of two kinds of language, i.e. human language and Dhamma language.[1] The word 'relatives in Dhamma' is equivalent to 'friends in Dhamma. If Dhamma is interpreted as God, then 'relatives in Dhamma' or 'friends in Dhamma' are equivalent to 'relatives in God' or 'friends in God'.

The Buddha once said: "All conditioned things are impermanent, all conditioned things are subject to suffering, and all Dhammas are non-self." Man is taken as the conditioned thing, for man is consisted of the psychophysical combination, so man is subject to the natural law of impermanence or change, suffering or uncontrollable; and non-self or no-substantiality. The nature of man

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[1]Buddhadasa has been recognized among the Thai scholars as the father of Buddhist-Christian Dialogue, because he had 3 vows, which serves as the ultimate mission in his life, posted at the entrance of his temple: (1) To help everyone to realize the essence of their own religion; (2) to help develop mutual understanding between all religions; and (3) to help drag the world out of materialism. These three vows of him could facilitate the inter-religious dialogue very well.

whatever his race or nationality may be, must be subject to this law of nature, so human being is called as friend to one another through the law of common nature.

To be friends or relatives in Dhamma is to help each other to understand the natural law of impermanence, suffering and non-self. This law is technically called as the 'Three Common Characteristics', which all living beings will have to experience throughout their lives. There are two ways to understand and appropriate this law, namely (1) by studying texts or using reason with the help of language and (2) by practicing mediation or using experiences through the observation of six senses. And these two methods are interrelated to each other. Those two methods can be understood through the explanation of the law of 'Four Noble Truths' (*caturāriyasacca*) and 'Insight Mediation' (*vipassanā kammatthana*).

The Four Noble Truths:

The explanation of man according to the Four Noble Truths should be brought into consideration here. Among the Four Noble Truths, the first truth called suffering is the nucleus around which the remaining truths assemble. The first truth implies all the problems of life comprising birth, old age, disease, death, despair and so on. In short, anything that exists, including the five *khandhas* and twelve *ayatanas*, is suffering. Buddhism regards the five *khandhas* themselves as suffering. They are like a burden: it means that life is a burden. To be is to suffer and the way out would consist in going out of the existence. Suffering is thus the essence as well as the destiny of man. The most important factor of the miserable condition is inherent impermanence (*anicca*) of man and things. When the existence is impermanent, then there is nothing called permanent soul or self, there is only becoming (*bhava*). It is said that this replacement of the *Upanisadic* idea of Being by that of Becoming and the view of the universe as uninterrupted and ununified stream of momentary particulars is the distinct contribution of Buddhism to Indian thought. The second truth affirms that there is a cause of suffering called ignorance (*avijja*) that makes man cling to the sense of his ego and through it to the world by not knowing things as they really are. This truth includes the law of cause and effect (*paticcasamuppada*) and the immutable law of *karma* and rebirth. And by stopping the operation of the cause of suffering, it is possible, as affirmed by the third truth, to uproot suffering. This truth indicates the law of *Paticcasamuppada* in the aspect of the Dependent Cessation, otherwise called *Nirvana*. The fourth truth delineates the method one has to adopt in order to achieve complete freedom from suffering. When the ignorance is uprooted, one becomes a perfected man or *Arahant*. This truth suggests the way of life called the Middle Way (*Majjhimapatipada*), comprising the

eight constituents of the Noble Path. And they are further organized into the `Threefold Training' (*tisikkha*) as a short practical way.

The Anti-Speculative Attitude: As we have already known, the Buddha is an ethical teacher, a reformist, a revolutionary and a reconstructionist, but not a metaphysician. The message of his enlightenment reveals to man the way of life that leads beyond suffering. When the Buddha was asked about the metaphysical questions (*avyakatapanhas*),(DN,I,187-188), as to `whether the world is eternal' (*sasato loko*), `whether the soul is identical with the body' (*tam jivam tam sariram*), and so on, he avoided discussing them. According to him, discussion of the problems for the solution of which there is not sufficient evidence leads only to different partial views like the conflicting one-sided accounts of an elephant given by different blind persons who touch its different parts.

Ten metaphysical questions which mainly pertain to three perennial issues, viz., the world, the soul and salvation, are unanswered by the Buddha as they are meaningless and useless in as much as they are not conducive to the destruction of suffering. Buddhists believe that there must be some reasons for the Buddha in not determining these questions. The real position is that the problem of the world can be interpreted in terms of *samsara*, the problem of the self in terms of the five *khandhas*, and the problem of an *Arahant* after death in terms of *Dharma* or *karma*. It means that all these problems can be understood by analyzing the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* or the Four Noble Truths. This amounts to saying that the Buddha had already answered the metaphysical questions. In other words, it can be said that the Buddha had analyzed only the things that are realistic and not merely apparent.

According to the Buddha, the outer world is far reaching. Even if a man possessed super pace and speed were to go across the universe with the speed of a shaft or storm, by continuously traveling for a full span of a hundred year, he would not find the end of the universe, but would die on the way (AN,IV,429). The Buddha pointed out that by such a traveling one can not reach the end of the universe and without reaching the end of the universe will not simply arise the end of suffering. According to the Buddha, in the world of this very six-feet-long-living body, along with perceptions and thoughts, he proclaims the world or suffering to be, the origin of the world or suffering, the making of the world or suffering to end, and the path leading to the end of the world or suffering (AN,IV,420). The outer world is far reaching, but one can reach the inner world, of which *Nirvana* is the capital city, where the stars do not shine, nor do the sun and the moon (DN,I,233). The Dhammapada says: "Having slain mother (craving), father (ego-conceit), two warrior kings (eternalism and nihilism), and destroyed a country (sense organs and sense

objects) together with its treasurer (attachment and lust), ungrieving goes the holy man, (Dh. verse 294).

Buddhism and science can get along side by side with each other. Hayward, a well-known physicist, in his book entitled *"Shifting Worlds, Changing Minds: Where the Sciences and Buddhism Meet"*, has declared the correlation of Buddhism and Western scientific tradition. There are 7 standards in scientific research, which can be listed in order thus:

1. The objects to be experimented.

2. The materials, instruments and tools are necessary for the experiment.

3. The theory of the experiment.

4. Methods and steps to work out the experiment.

5. Results of the experiment.

6. Requisites for attention and precautions in working out the experiment.

7. Conclusion to clarify the validity of the theory and its practical results.

As comparing these scientific standards with the structure of Suramgama-samadhi-sutra, some similarities are there in forming a discourse as follows:

1. The reason for the Buddha to teach the discourse.

2. The objects of real mental training (i.e. seven permanent objects of mind).

3. The theory of the real mental training (to clarify the ability of knowing, which is carried off four parts and seven elements of the Buddha's nature).

4. Methods and steps of Enlightenment (i.e. twenty-five perfect methods and seven holy fruits).

5. Benefits of mental training of individual and human beings (to declare the nature of mind and benefits can be gained after spending a process of mental training).

6. Requisites for attention and precautions in mental training (to point out the wrong or right of seven elements, as well as to persuade us how to be good in mental training).

7.   Conclusion (to clarify the practical result).

Dependent Origination: This causal law can be expressed by a formula: "when this is, that is; this arising, that arises. When this is not, that is not; this ceasing, that ceases." Its general principle can be illustrated by a series of twelve factors: "Conditioned by ignorance are mental and kammic formations…. Conditioned by birth are old age, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair…. Through the cessation of ignorance, mental and kammic formation cease….Through the cessation birth, old age, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair cease," (M.III.63). Stated in another way, everything depends on everything else. For example, a human being's existence in any given moment is dependent on the condition of everything else in the world (and indeed the universe) at that moment but, conversely, the condition of everything in the world in that moment depends in an equally significant way on the character and condition of that human being. Everything in the universe is interconnected through the web of cause and effect so that the whole and the parts are mutually interdependent. The character and condition of entities at any given time are intimately connected with the character and condition of all other entities that superficially may appear to be unconnected or unrelated.

Because all things are thus conditioned and transient (anicca), they have no real independent identity (anatta) so do not truly 'exist', though to ordinary minds this appears to be the case. All phenomena are therefore fundamentally insubstantial and 'empty' (*sunya*).Wise human beings, who 'see things as they are' (yatha-bhuta-ñana-dassana), renounce attachment and clinging, transform the energy of desire into awareness and understanding, and eventually transcend the conditioned realm of form becoming Buddhas or Arhats. An example to illustrate: You go on summer holiday to a hot climate, such as Arizona, Spain or Australia. It's a hot clear day and you're sunbathing by the hotel pool with the sun beating down on you. You begin to feel hot, sweaty, uncomfortable, and soon feel thirsty. You get a drink to quench your thirst, and think "It's too hot to sit by the pool today, I'm going back to my hotel room where it's cooler, to read for a while". With "hot summer sun" as condition, Sweat, thirst and discomfort arise. With "cool hotel room" (or "NOT hot summer sun") as condition, Sweat, thirst and discomfort do NOT arise. This draws attention to the constant flux of "Coming to be, and Ceasing to be" that is happening all the time.

With respect to the destinies of human beings and animals, dependent origination has a more specific meaning as it describes the process by which such sentient beings incarnate into any given realm and pursue their various worldly projects and activities with all the concomitant suffering involved. Among these sufferings are aging and death. Aging and death are experienced by us because birth and youth have been experienced. Without birth there is no death. One conditions the

other in a mutually dependent relationship. Our becoming in the world, the process of what we call 'life', is conditioned by the attachment and clinging to certain ideas and projects such as having a family or making money. This attachment and clinging in turn cannot exist without craving as its condition. The Buddha understood that craving comes into being because there is sensation in the body which we experience as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. When we crave certain things such as alcohol, sex or sweet foods it is the sensation induced by contact with the desired object that we crave rather than the object itself. Sensation is caused by contact with such objects of the senses. The contact or impression made upon the senses (manifesting as sensation) is itself dependent upon the six sense organs which themselves are dependent upon a psycho-physical entity such that a human being is.

Insight Meditation:

In the Theravāda Buddhism, Vipassanā as practiced in the Theravāda is the understanding of the Four Noble Truths that were taught by the Buddha. It is understanding the transitory nature of phenomena and the selflessness of persons, that the conceptual consciousness, "I" does not exist. Most of Theravāda's teachers refer to knowledges evolving during practice. The meditator gradually improve his perception of the three marks of existence until he reaches the step sensations constantly disappear, which is called bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa, knowledge of dissolution. The yogi will then experience fear and ceasing of attachment, and eventually will reach the step of saṅkhārupekkhāñāṇa): knowledge of equanimity of formations. This step leads to the attainment of nibbāna. In practice one can use various methods to do Vipassanā Meditation. For example one method is that there are 40 topics that can be concentrated by the meditator such as impermanence, suffering, illness, and so on. The meditator can meditate on one of these until he sees the truth in everything in the universe.

The insight meditation must be accumulated gradually from observing precepts, practicing concentration and then developing insight meditation.[2] The three

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[2]In the Mahāyāna: Mahāyāna Vipaśyanā consists of meditating on the two truths: conventional truth and absolute truth. One realizes that phenomena likewise have a lack of inherent existence, and have the nature of emptiness (śūnyatā). This is determined by the inferential path of reasoning and direct observation through meditation. Gradualism or Sudden Illumination and the realization are debates in the Mahāyāna. Nevertheless, Huineng, sixth patriarch of the Zen, considered the practice cannot be described as gradualistic nor sudden illumination, but implies people with more or less clear minds. In the Vajrayāna: Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen use Vipaśyana extensively, though in a different manner than in the Theravāda. In the Vajrayāna (tantric) path, the true nature of mind is pointed out by the guru, and the practitioner takes the path of direct experience.

steps are called the (i) morality or precept, (ii) concentration or tranquility meditation, and (iii) wisdom or insight meditation. The three steps called the Threefold Training must be followed continuously. The proper practice of these three domains leads one to the extinction of wheel of life and to the state of noble man.

1. The Morality: Morality, in the sense of moral conduct, is broadly classified under two categories: (i) for the members of the Monastic Order (*Sangha*), and (ii) for general people. As regards the first category, it is divided into three groups: (i) The rules for monks consist of two hundred and twenty-seven rules, (ii) there are three hundred and eleven rules for female monks, and (iii) there are ten rules for male and female novices. This is a brief mention of the first category. With regard to the second category, it refers to two groups: (i) five precepts are laid down for male and female followers, and (ii) eight precepts, which are advised to observe on the full moon day and waxing and waning half moon day.

The point to be emphasized is that there are five precepts, which are regarded as human virtues and that a person who possessed the five precepts is called a virtuous disciple. The virtuous man must refrain from killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling a lie and taking intoxicating drinks. If one makes malpractice of these, then one exterminated the roots of one's manhood. A man who does not shun these evils has no morality, indeed, and after death he will fall to the deepest hell. The very least result of killing is the shortening of one's life, that of stealing is loss of one's wealth, that of sexual misconduct is breeding rivalry and hate, that of telling lies is being falsely accused and that of hot drinks is being afflicted with insanity. "Though Buddhism condemns the destruction of animal life as a thorough evil, it nevertheless does not hold the belief that under all circumstances also the partaking of meat is an immoral act," says Nyanatiloka. The Buddha himself says that a man becomes impure not because of taking fish or meat but because of greed, hate and delusion. He maintains that `meat can be used under three conditions, when it is not seen, heard and suspected to have been killed especially for oneself.' The Buddha once refused Devadatta who asked him to introduce vegetarianism among monks by suggesting that it was up to them to lead a vegetarian or non-vegetarian life according to their own convenience.

2. Concentration: In general, concentration means one-pointedness of mind. Concentration characterizes the one pointed- ness of mind and it is the bliss, the peace and the power of mind. A person whose work is supported by the strength of *concentration* can work more and better. A student whose mind is peaceful can master the subject in short time. The meditator has to choose the theme of concentration suitable to his temperament. The theme of concentration is classified

into forty kinds to suit the temperaments of the meditator. The concentration meditation will lead one to the tranquility of mind only.

3. Wisdom: Wisdom or understanding means knowledge and insight of the real nature of things. It is the understanding of things as they really are. This is the final step of *Buddhism*, for only wisdom can penetrate and eliminated the root cause of life called desire and ignorance, while in observing precepts the coarse type of defilement is eradicated, and in practicing concentration, the more subtle type of defilement is eliminated. Therefore, wisdom is regarded as penetrative knowledge. The training in higher wisdom means the development of wisdom to penetrate into suffering, its origination, its extinction and the path leading to its extinction. There are two main kinds of insight meditation as under: 1. Tranquility Leading to Insight: According to this process, mind becomes one- pointed at the outset with the potentiality of some objects of meditation. 2. the Insight Leading to Tranquility: According to this process, first of all the meditator depending on wisdom considers the nature of things in respect of impermanence, and so on. Then his mind, released from the mental-objects, becomes one-pointed providing an insight into the Noble Path.

The Eight Noble Paths or the Middle Path: And it should be mentioned here that the Buddha declares the Middle Path for the purpose of celibate life of his disciples, he never craves after reputation or greatness or nobility of character. Here the Buddha's declaration of following the Middle Path between the two extremes is very well-known to everybody. According to the ethical point of view, the middle path is understood as the path stand beyond two extremes of sexual indulgence and self-mortification. The eight paths are known with the starting point of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration and right mindfulness. The first two paths are known as the higher training in wisdom, another three paths in the middle are reckoned as the higher training in precepts, and the last three paths are recognized as the higher training in the concentration. The wisdom, precepts and concentration are the gradual path for the Buddhists to be tread as the way leading to the perfect man in Buddhism.

Meditation Practicing Traditions in Thai Buddhism: There are five methods of practicing the insight meditation in Thai Buddhism. Buddhism in Thailand is culturally called Thai Buddhism. Five mediation techniques are being taught and practiced in Thailand. The first type is known as 'Consciousness Development method' (cittabhāvanā) with the focus on contemplation of your thought together with repeatedly uttering the word 'Buddho', while the practitioner is sitting meditated the psychophysical formation, which is consisted of changing, suffering, and non-substantiality-characteristics. The prominent master of this method is known as Venerable Ajariya Mun Bhuridatta Thera. The second method is

known as 'Rising-Falling Meditation of the Abdomen' with an emphasis on the observation of the movement of one's abdomen through breathing in and breathing out. The prominent master for this method is known as Phra Theerarājamahāmunī (Chodok) of Wat Mahathat. The third type of meditation practice is called 'Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's Breathing in-out or Ānāpānasati' with an emphasis on breathing in and breathing out observation of 16 steps of contemplation, which can be done through the nostril down to the belly, the center of body. The way that the practitioner is observing the running of air from the nostril to the throat, the intestine, the stomach until the belly, is called breathing in-out meditation method. The fourth type of meditation practice is called 'Dynamic Meditation of Ven. Tian' with an emphasis on the fast movements of four body-postures, consisting of standing, walking, sitting and lying down. The fifth type is called 'Dhammakaya Method of Ven. Sod' with an emphasis on contemplating on the crystal ball that running through nostril down to the stomach, the center of body.

The Buddha once said: "Those wise ones who are devoted to meditation and who delight in the calm of renunciation, such mindful ones, Supreme Buddhas, even the gods hold dear, (Dhammapada, verse 181). In the Visuddhimagga, composted by Buddhaghosācāriya, we could find a great deal mention of the benefits of the Insight Meditation practice. When one practices insight meditation, one's mind will be cherished with the following qualities. One cultivates the 'light of wisdom' in dispelling the 'darkness of ignorance' in life. One eradicates the wrong view of life. One eliminates the 'multiplier' of adverse feeling or suffering in life. One gets relief from mental wandering and suffering. One achieves wholesome and highly beneficial memory power. One is able to cope effectively with extremely harmful memory power. One attains a mind with the most complete and highest degree of freedom. One acquires the right techniques of living through direct and full awareness and realization, leading to the attainment of 'perpetual happiness' or Nibbana, (quoted in Ussivakul, 1996, p. v.) The before mentioned qualified person will be able to live with other peacefully.

II. Relatives in Dhamma as Pluralism and the Basis for Dialogue:

Dialogue is the special means for mutual understanding. Four types of dialogue of life, action, doctrine and spirituality are highly recommended to practice among different faiths. By studying other religions ones can understand their own religions quite better. The idea of 'Kinsmen in Dhamma' will open ways for dialogue of all types. I do agree with S. Wesley Ariarajah, who reasons thus: "The collaboration and cooperation of religions should be aimed at promoting a culture of dialogue in the community. A culture of dialogue respects plurality; it does not take

the otherness of the other as a threat to its own identity. It helps to preserve ones own identity, but forms its identity not in isolation but in relation to the other. It is both committed and open. It enables peoples to function in cooperation and collaboration with others," (1991, p. 13). There are 10 basic ground rules of inter-religious dialogue as follows: 1) the primary purpose of dialogue is to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality and then to act accordingly; 2) inter-religious dialogue must be a two-sided project within each religious community and between religious community; 3) each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity; 4) each participant must assume a similar complete honest and sincerity in the other partners; 5) each participant must define oneself, say for example, the Buddhist can define from the inside what is means to be a Buddhist; 6) each participant must come to the dialogue with no fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are; 7) dialogue can take place only between equals, for example, each side should not view each other as superior or inferior; 8) dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust; 9) person entering into inter-religious dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and one own tradition; and 10) each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion from within. John Dunne speaks of 'passing over' into another's religious experience and then coming back broadened and deepened, (Jutakarn Yothasamuthr, 2002, p. 74).

Pluralism in Buddhism: The Kalama people approached the Buddha with the following issues. Different religious teachers come to our city. They speak very highly of their own theories but oppose, condemn and ridicule the theories of one another. We are now in a state of doubt as to which of these recluses speaks falsehood. Then the Buddha said:

Kalamas, you have a right to feel uncertain for you have raised a doubt in a situation in which you ought to suspend your judgment. Come now, Kalamas, do not accept anything only on the grounds of *tradition or report or because it is a product reasoning or because it is true from a standpoint or because of a superficial assessment of the facts or because it conforms with one's preconceived notions or because it is authoritative or because of the prestige of your teacher. When you, Kalamas, realize for yourself that these doctrines are evil and unjustified, that they are condemned by the wise and that when they are accepted and lived by, they conduce to ill and sorrow, then you should reject them.*

From Kalama Sutta, one may conclude that there were varieties of religious beliefs in the Buddha's days. People have a great opportunity to examine and verify the teachings of many religious scholars in order to find out which was suitable for them and which the road to the ultimate truth was. When the different religious beliefs clashed, dialogue is the most desirable in situation for religious pluralism, for

the purpose of mutual understanding and enrichment, for dispelling suspicion and prejudices, and for harnessing moral and spiritual values and so on.

Pluralistic forms and contents of Buddhism: Masao Abe is right in observing thus: "Buddhism, throughout its long history, has existed and spread throughout Asia within a religiously pluralistic situation: in India, it coexisted with Brahmanism, Jainism and many diverse forms of Hinduism; in China with Confucianism and Taoism; and in Japan with Shinto and Confucianism. Thus, for the Buddhists, the experience of 'religious pluralism' has not been the serious shock." He further said: "Another reason for the great diversity in Buddhism than Christianity may be found in the fact that, while Christianity is based upon faith in One God, Buddhism takes its foundation in the law of 'dependent co-origination' or 'emptiness' (śūnyata). When faith in One God is essential to a religion, diversity in that religion is naturally limited and a pluralistic relation to other religions is difficult to maintain. In contrast, when 'dependent co-origination' or 'emptiness' is the basis of a religion, diversity in that religion will be significant and a pluralistic relation to other religions is easily maintained," (1995, p. 18).

According to Abe, pluralism in our time includes not only 'religious pluralism', but also a conflict between religion and non-religion. As examples of such religion-negating ideologies, scientism, psychoanalysis, Marxism and nihilism, particularly Nietzschean nihilism are deserved to mention, (1995, p.19). When Bertrand Russell explained Nietzsche's philosophy, he made use of Buddhism as counter-argument, (Russell, 1961, p.738-739).

Relatives in Dhamma or God in Buddhism and Christianity: The Ten Commandments in Christianity are actually related to the Buddhist ten wholesome actions. The idea of Christian love of God and your neighbors are close to the Buddhist ideas of service to the society and purifying yourself. There are so many Christian teachings similar to those of Buddhism. Let's consider the following teachings of Christianity. The Sermon on the Mount teaches: "You heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven," (Matthew 5: 43-44). The ideal of equality was emphasized in Christianity also. Christ, in the same way, looking around on those who sat about him, said: "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother," (Mark 3: 34-35). St. Paul says: "Before Christ both master and slave are one." "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slaves nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," (Galatians 3: 26-29). The idea of toleration is there in Christianity (Matthew 5: 39-40) "You have heard it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: Offer no resistance to the

wicked. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if someone wishes to go to law with you to get your tunic, let him have your cloak as well." The Christian ideas of sacrifice and charity are there: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money," (Matthew 6:24). It is stated in other places: "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too," (Matthew 6:19-21).

In Buddhist practice, love is achieved when it is accompanied by other mental attitudes. The four states are often described as the Sublime Conditions (Brahma-vihara). They are love, sorrow at the sorrows of others, joy in the joys of others, and equanimity as regards one's own joy and sorrows, (D.II.186-187). Each of these feelings should be deliberately practiced, beginning with a single object and gradually increasing till the whole world is suffused with such feeling.

Relatives in Dhamma or God in Buddhism and Islam: The concepts of peace and justice are common to both Buddhism and Islam. Buddhism and Islam emphasize peace both inside the mind and the society and the peaceful mind and society can be obtained to justice. Justice in Buddhism is concerned with the doctrine of Kamma, the main idea of which is based on action done by everyone through body, speech and mind with intention. Sustainable peace and harmony among all religions are to be achieved through Islamic doctrines.

The Buddhists do agree with many teachings of Islam. Let's consider the following Islamic teachings similar to those of Islam. The Qur'an proclaims the unity of religions. The truth of religion is not the exclusive monopoly of any one religious group but was shown to all. Qur'an claims the salvation is the result of devotion to God and righteous living. It does not depend on any race, notion, and group. This principle has opened the door for harmony and pluralism to every human being and ended the monopoly of any particular religion as the Qur'an states thus: "Jews and Christians will never be pleased with you (O Muhammad!),unless you follow their religion (s); say (to them): the guidance of God (not of Jews or Christians) is the guidance," (2:120). Harmony has to be grounded on forgiveness and forgiveness has to depend on non-violence.

Forgiveness based on Non-Violence: Just as it is important to believe in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, it is also necessary to base human relations on forgiveness. We cannot expect Allah's forgiveness unless we also forgive those who do wrong to us. Forgiving each other, even forgiving one's enemies is one of the

most important Islamic teachings. In the Qur'an Allah has described the Believers as "those who avoid major sins and acts of indecencies and when they are angry they forgive," (al-Shura 42:37). Later the same Sûrah Allah says, "The reward of the evil is the evil thereof, but whosoever forgives and makes amends, his reward is upon Allah", (al-Shura 42:40). In another place the Qur'an says, "If you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, indeed it is better for the patient. Endure you patiently. Your patience is not except through the help of Allah", (al-Nahl 16:126-127). Forgiveness is never rendered possible without non-violence practice that makes Islam widely known as the religion of peace, because non-violence teaching is also taken as the cornerstone for Muslims to live their lives with other fellow beings. So a verse of non-violence doctrine deserves to be mentioned thus: "Whosoever slays a soul, not to retaliate for a soul slain nor for corruption done in the land, should be as if he had slain all mankind. And whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind," (Sûrahal Ma'idah 5.32). Also such a non-violence has been echoed in Sûrah al An'âm 6.151: "Do not take any human being's life (the life) which God has declared to be sacred -- other than in (the pursuit of) justice: this has He enjoined upon you so that you might use your reason." Islam also ascertains the principle of non-violence through this verse in Sûrah al Isrâ 17.33: Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life for he is helped (by the Law). We can say that finally the forgiveness as based on non-violence can be successfully achieved, because the Muslims have in their minds the character of Tolerance as it is put in the Qur'an thus: "And tell my servants that they should speak in a most kindly manner (unto those who do not share their beliefs). Verily, Satan is always ready to stir up discord between men; for verily; Satan is mans foe.... Hence, we have not sent you (Unto men O Prophet) with power to determine their Faith," (17:53, 54).

Justice is the truth of the Islamic Middle Way: The doctrine of Middle Way is said to exist not only in one but in all religions especially in Islam. To understand justice quite clearly, a verse in Sûrah an Nisa' (4.135) must be closely studied: "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (the truth) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do." The Muslims have always been giving the justice to all things not only to human being but to the nature and environment. So Islam is also known as the religion of the Middle Way. To have a proper understanding of the Middle Way we have to read the well-known verse no. 143 of the Sura Al-Bacarah (the Cow), in which the Almighty says: "And thus have we willed you to be a community of the

middle way." It is this God-ordained 'middle way' that we Muslims have lost. And we must find it in harmony with today and tomorrow's hope for moderation and a better quality of life for us all. A man of dialogue must possess the moderation in one's nature. The moderate manner is the character of religious person. The inter-religious dialogue is possible if and only if it is done by the moderately religious person in all religions.

Interfaith Dialogue: With regards to interfaith dialogue, Qur'an invites Muslim to establish contact with other religions and there is no sign of opposition to it. To confirm this point, one has to look upon this "Call all mankind unto your Sustainer's path with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner", (16: 125; 29:46). Muslims cannot rest until all human beings have achieved the Divine Will to the full extent of their personal abilities, until every creature has been transformed by his and her efforts into the fullest possible actualization of the Divine pattern. Thus, every Muslim is a world missionary. Muslims not only call all human beings to God but also carry them to salvation and achievement.

Concluding Remarks:

As we have already seen that the term 'relatives in Dhamma' can be meant at least three aspects, namely (1) friendship among human beings, (2) the relatedness of the whole teachings of the Buddha, and (3) the relationship between the Buddhist teachings and the teachings of other religions, especially the golden rules, which says that "Love others and they will love you". The friendship or kinsmen signifies duties and responsibilities that all men will have to render to others and their own selves. Say for example, every man or woman has his or her own responsibility towards the community surrounding him or her. In terms of relatives, he or she can act and play roles as father or mother in case he or she has a child. He or she plays a role of boss, if he or she is doing a business. Almost everyone plays more than one role and duty in the society. So those activities are taken as relatives in the sense that the person has been related to many people according to his or her roles.

Buddhism is a religion of reason as well as of salvation. The Buddha never rejected whatever is found in reason and is in accordance with objective truth, no matter who stated it. *Buddhism is the Religion of Peace*: Peace is the main teaching of the Buddha as his saying thus: "There is no higher happiness than peace (*natthi santi param sukham*)," (Dh.202). The meaning of peace here is Nibbana. The Buddha always instructs his followers to be patient towards others and not to return violent

means to solve conflicts: "Though thieves and bandits were to cut limb by limb with a double-edged saw, even then one who defiles his mind (feels angry about it) is not the follower of my instructions," (M.I.129). Elsewhere, the Buddha teaches his followers to meet anger with love and not with anger, and to conquer evil with good and not with evil: "Conquer anger with love; conquer evil with good; conquer the miser with generosity; and conquer the liar with truth," (Dh. 223). The Buddha always instructs his followers to cultivate and spread the unlimited loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity towards others (D.II.196).

In short, Buddhism has two levels of the meaning of Relatives in Dhamma, in the ethical or mundane level, 'relatives in Dhamma' can be understood as the human relations based on duties, between parents and children, pupils and teachers, husband and wife, friend and friend, master and servants, and laymen and monks. And in the supra-mundane level, the 'relatives in Dhamma' is to be grasped with the doctrine of 'dependent origination', covering the relations of all religious teachings. The hermeneutics of two kinds of truth and two kinds of language is beneficial tool for understanding the concept and for inter-religious dialogue.

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Buddhist Approach to Political Conflicts and Peace Development

Dr. Kudeb Saikrachang[1]*

Introductory Remarks:

The purpose of the paper is to discuss "political conflicts" and "peace development" in Buddhist perspectives, using both a survey of Buddhist literature and a critical analysis.

In the discussion, "political conflicts" and "peace" are taken as antonymous to the extent that it can be said "where there are political conflicts, there is no peace." However, the two are also seen as inter-connected to the extent it can be said "one can bring about an end to the other".

Portrayed as defilements or unwholesome (**akusala**), political conflicts are eligible to cause unhappiness and violence in society, so there must be strategies to end them.

On the contrary, "peace" is portrayed as wholesome (**kusala**), conducive to happiness and non-violence in society and for that result there must be strategies to develop peace.

Buddhist Approach to Political Conflicts:

When Prince Siddhattha renounced the world, he left behind him "political conflicts" deeply rooted in the ancient Indian caste system. **But was he running away from the conflicts? No, absolutely not. On the contrary, he was seeking ways to fight them.** And after attaining enlightenment and became the Buddha on the Day of Vesak, he was best equipped to fight the conflicts.

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[1] Dr. Kudeb Saikrachang, in 1992, decided to run for a seat of the House of Representatives in his home province of Si Sa Ket. He won the seat six consecutive times, and served in various political positions: Deputy Government's Spokesman, Deputy Secretary-General to the Prime Minister, Chairman of the House's Committee on Religion Art and Culture and Chairman of the House's Committee on Foreign Affairs. However, his political career came to an end on 2 December, 2008: The courts ruled that he and others are currently banned from politics for five years. The ban was a result of the dissolution of the People Power Party amid tense political conflicts in Thailand. *[UNDV Editorial Committee Disclaimer: therefore, because of this contention – there was as split decision to publish his paper. We silence our political opinions here, and offer this contribution to Buddhism.]*

From a strategic point of view, it is believed that **before launching the mission** to free mankind from all kinds of suffering including political conflicts, the Buddha **needed time to plan strategies.** That serves to be one of the reasons why **he spent about two months before kicking off the mission, delivering the first sermon** on Asalhapuja Day.

The heart of the strategies was to change people from inside, not from outside. That's why **he tried to change the mind of the people**, believing it would be difficult, if not impossible, **to change the system** should the minds of people remain unchanged.

Conflict- free community:

After gaining a considerable number of disciples, the Buddha decided to set up his own community or the Sangha, designing it as an ideal community completely free from all kinds of conflicts. All members of the Sangha lived together in the spirit of equality, liberty and fraternity, leaving behind them all previous privileges they might use to have in the past and *now observe* the same rules under **the so-called "Government by Dharma".** Indeed, the community served to be an ideal model for conflict-free societies because, as pointed out by Ven. P.A. Payutto, "such a community had no causes for conflicts and division because all members had no *drive* for power, position and success over others. (Payutto, 2001: 18)

Conflict-free Mission:

When the Buddha started his mission to propagate the Dharma by sending the first batch of sixty missionary monks to different places, he made it clear to them that they had to **avoid conflicts at all costs** and had to **think only about the benefits and happiness of the people**. As quoted by Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Thepsophon[2] from Vin.4.21 "Bhikkhus! May every one of you go further for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the benefit, the happiness of gods and men. (Thepsophon; 2005: 116). He also gives a good example of a missionary monk called "Punna" who was tested by the Buddha prior to his mission to the city of Sunāparanta where people were said to be fierce and rough.

During an entertaining question-and-answering session between the Buddha and the above mentioned missionary monk, the Buddha clearly illustrates the Buddhist approach to "political conflict". The Buddha example, when asked what he

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[2] *Now promoted to the higher rank of Phra Dhammakosajariya

would think about **if he was threatened and abused by the people** of Sunāparanta, he said that was still better than being hit with the fist. And finally when asked what he think about if the people of Sunāparanta killed him with a sharp knife, he said he would think that there were some disciples of the Buddha who, being disgusted by the body and life, sought weapons to kill themselves. But in his case it was better because he obtained such weapons without even asking for. Upon hearing all the answers, the Buddha highly praised Punna, saying that he would do a good job in the city of Sunāparanta.

Dharma to End Political Conflicts:

To help end political conflicts, the Buddha had not only the right strategies, but also the right messages. In Buddhist point of view, political conflicts arise from tanhā (craving) māna (conceit), ditthi (false view), lobha (greed), dosa (hatred) and mōha (delusion). So to end political conflicts, people have to kill off those defilements from their minds. It is also necessary for people, particularly political leaders, to practice the four aspects of bhramavihara dharma namely; mettā (loving-kindness), karuna (compassion), muditā (appreciative gladness) and upekkhā (equanimity).

Most importantly, rulers or political leaders also have to practice rājadhamma comprising dāna (generosity), sila (morality), pariccāga (self-sacrifice), ajjava (honesty), maddava (kindness and gentleness), tapa (austerity), akkodha (non-anger), avihimsā (non-violence), khanti (patience) and avirodhana (**conformity to the law**).

It is clear then that Buddhist approach to political conflicts is Ahimsa (non-violence), to be achieved by practicing the Dharma of the Buddha. So practicing the Dharma is the basic requirement for ending political conflicts, as it is said in the Dhammapada:

> *Yathāpi ruciram pubbham*
> *vaṇṇavantam agandhakam*
> *evam subhāsita vācā*
> *aphalā hoti akubbato. (Verse 51)*

Just as a beautiful flower, lacking in scent, cannot give the wearer the benefit of its scent, so, also, the well-preached words of the Buddha cannot benefit one who does not practice the Dharma.

Buddhist Approach to Peace Development:

As earlier discussed, when Prince Siddhattha renounced the world, **he was not running away from conflicts. On the contrary, he was seeking ways to fight them.** That's why he lived an ascetic life, spending as long as six years training his mind by all means. Through the practice of samatha or tranquility meditation he attained the absorption, the highest state of tranquility, but he attained Enlightenment only after he practiced Vipassana or Insight Meditation, as quoted by Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Thepsophon as saying "the most important Sutta on Vipassana meditation is Mahasatipatthanasutta which contains details of anapanasati meditation associated with in and out breathing (Thepsophon; 2005: 52) By attaining Enlightenment, he reached the perfect state of peace called Nibbana, explained in the Dhammapada verse 202 as "natthi santiparaṁ sukhaṁ: there is no bliss that surpasses that perfect peace (i.e.: Nibbhana)

The late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explains Vipassana meditation as mental training aimed at raising the mind to such a level that it is no longer subject to suffering. The mind breaks from suffering by virtue of clear knowledge that nothing is worth grasping at or clinging to. (Buddhadasa; 2005: 121)

Meanings of Peace:

As pointed out by Ven. Ashin Paññabala, peace in Buddhism combines four primary issues: happiness, peace, freedom and security (Paññabala, 2005: 11). The highest happiness is Nibbhana (paramaṁ sukhaṁ), the supreme state of sublime peace (anuttarasasamivihārapada), the liberation of deliverance (vimutti) and the supreme security from bondage (anuttarayagakhama).

So it is quite clear that in Buddhist point of view, peace and happiness are identical. As pointed out by Ven. P.A. Payutto, peace (santi) and happiness (sukha) are synonymous: an unhappy person cannot find peace and there can be no peace without happiness. Buddhism prescribes freedom as another synonym for peace and happiness. Endowed with freedom, people can live happy and peaceful lives. (Payutto; 2001: 50)

Concept of Peace Development:

It is clear that in Buddhist point of view "peace" has two levels of meanings. At super-mundane level (lokuttara), peace means Nibbhana, the highest state of happiness. So to develop "peace" at that level one has no other means but vipassana or insight meditation as mentioned earlier.

At the mundane level (lokiya), peace means "non-violence" or "peaceful co-existence". To develop peace in this meaning requires the practice of the Dharma, starting with observing the five precepts; abstaining from killing, abstaining from steeling, abstaining from sexual misconduct, abstaining from lies and abstaining from taking intoxicating drinks and drugs. Then the process continues with attempts to obtain sila (morality), samādhi (concentration) and paññā (wisdom). With that comes the Noble Eightfold Path because sila comprises right speech, right action and right livelihood, samādhi comprises right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration and paññā comprises right understanding and right thought.

Peace Development in Practice:

In Buddhist countries, monks always play a key role in peace development. They can be called "peace carriers" because their yellow robes are symbols of peace. They teach people to obtain sila, samādhi and paññā so that they can live in peace, harmony and non-violence.

In Thailand, for instance, monks have been engaged in peace development since the early history of the country.

In Ayutthaya period, some five hundred years ago, one chief monk was even brave enough to advise to the king not to use violence. The story has it that King Naresuan, the Great was about to execute his four soldiers who failed to protect the feet of his royal elephant while battling with the foreign enemy on the elephant's back. Fortunately, King Naresuan headed off the enemy and won the battle. But the four foot keepers were doomed due to their failure in performing their duty. However, just prior to the execution, a chief monk came to the King and asked him to stop the killing, saying that failure by the four soldiers made the whole world clear understand the charisma of the King because despite absence of elephant's foot keepers, the King still won the battle. Upon hearing the chief monk, King Naresuan ordered the execution to be cancelled.

In recent history when hill- tribe people in northern Thailand were living in "violence", a group of missionary monks went to them and brought their lives to peace. At that time, most hill- tribe people were non-religious. They lived in "violence" in the forms of "drug trafficking", "opium growing" and "destructive farming". The monks taught them the Dharma and finally brought them back to peace. Nowadays, a number of hill- tribe men have become Buddhist monks and novices, freeing their society from all kinds of violence.

When the giant Tsunami hit Southern Thailand in 2004, monks played a very significant role helping the victims regardless of nationalities and faiths. Even

tough they and their temples were also hard hit, monks in the southern provinces of Phuket, Pang-Nga and Krabi as well as monks from other regions were working very hard to rescue other victims. Their temples became "sanctuaries" for the victims, particularly the foreigners. Besides, the temples were used as places where dead bodies were kept for identification and cremation. It was reported that crematoriums in many temples broke down because they were used to cremate dead bodies beyond their burning capacities. Noteworthy is the fact that the monks had endeavored to do such a hard work not because they were forced to do but because they were willing to perform their duties as "peace carriers".

Last but not least, in the restive South, monks have been showing to the world that as disciples of the Buddha they stick to peace under any circumstances. It is known that a large number of monks have been killed by non-Buddhist militants during the past five years. However, even though they have been facing violence, monks have firmly continued on their path of peace. Unarmed as they are, they still go on with their morning alms rounds as usual despite the fact that they are at risk of being beheaded anytime, showing that Buddhist monks have always been firm on their commitment to peace.

At an international level, the role of Thai Buddhist monks as "peace-carriers" is also noteworthy. The late Buddhadasa Bhikku has been recognized worldwide as a peace crusader because he produced hundreds of books for world peace. Also well-known is Ven. Phra Bhramakunabhorn (P.A. Payutto) who has delivered lectures for world peace on several occasions and has written a number of books for world peace, winning him the "education for peace" award.

Finally, up-and-coming is the role of Mahachulalongkonrajavidhayalaya University (MCU) under the leadership of Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dhammakosajarya (formerly Phra Thepsophon). The university is playing a vital role, coordinating joint efforts of all Buddhists worldwide to express their voices for world peace. Their voices have been heard even in the world center like the United Nations. It is hoped that world leaders will also hear their voices and think more about "peace" than "violence" or "war".

Concluding Remarks:

It can be concluded then that Buddhism can help bring about an end to political conflicts and can bring about peace to the world. However, one may question **why, in the case of Thailand, Buddhism cannot help bring about an end to the on-going political conflicts which have become the talk of the world**. The answer is clear. **Buddhism cannot help because those people in conflicts fail to practice the Dharma**. As earlier said, the well-preached words of the Buddha

cannot benefit one who does not practice the Dharma. So, when those in conflicts, most of whom have proclaimed themselves "Buddhists", fail to practice the Dharma, how can Buddhism help? **Those Buddhists, forgetting all the aspects of the Dharma, have no *mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā*, *upekkha*, etc. They even don't know the word "forgiveness". That's why they play "destructive politics" aimed at killing one another to death, bringing about the unprecedented division among the Thai people.** So, the only way to end political conflicts in Thailand is for all those people in conflicts to practice the Dharma of the Buddha, but **when they will come to their mindfulness and practice the Dharma as good Buddhists remain to be seen.**

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A Buddhist Approach to Political Conflict & Peace Development

Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso Mahathera
Buddhist Society of Western Australia

A few years ago, the then Premier of Western Australia, Dr. Geoff Gallop, interrupted an argument during a cabinet meeting. According to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure at that time, Dr. Gallop thumped the table to quite his cabinet ministers and proclaimed We should be more Buddhist about this!

So, even in modern Western democratic governments, senior politicians have some idea of a Buddhist approach to political conflict. In this presentation, I will describe what I think that approach is, and how it can produce a political leadership with less conflict and more peace.

In particular, I will explain how Mindful Listening is the first step to overcoming conflict by discovering the causes of the conflict. Then I will continue by describing Wise Listening where one joins ones own views with the views of others, rather than using them as a basis for conflict. Combining instead of contrasting opinions leads to a more accurate understanding and, consequently, a great reduction in conflict. Next, I will introduce the Buddhist practice of Metta Meditation as a means of putting Compassion in Politics. Following on from compassion, I point out that Justice Does Not Mean Revenge, thereby remedying a common confusion that perpetuates conflict, and I will also emphasize the rare but effective method of Learning from the Successes of the Past rather than learning from mistakes. The paragraphs on Solving Conflict by Establishing Other Priorities will show another traditional Buddhist method of transcending conflict by pointing out other, more important, issues. Lastly, I will deal with strategies for Preventing Political Conflict in the future, such as by Electing Effective Leaders. In this way, I aim to make some contribution, a Buddhist contribution, to healing the sickness of political conflict and developing a sustainable peace.

Mindful Listening:

One morning, I was passing by our monastery's kitchen just before the morning meal. I looked in the window and saw six Thai ladies all talking while preparing our lunch. There were only six people in that kitchen, and all had their mouths open, talking. I wondered who was left to do the listening. No-one was doing any listening. All were doing the talking. What a waste of time that talking was!

The first contribution that Buddhism can offer for solving political conflict is sharing its unique meditation methods for developing mindfulness. The mental training that forms a large part of Buddhist meditation practice, teaches one how to keep ones awareness in the present moment; and how to establish inner silence, where one abides in a state of knowing that is undistracted by any inner thoughts. Such a level of mindfulness allows one to Totally Listen, fully receiving the message being conveyed, not only by the words but also by their tone and their accompanying body-language.

Too often conflict arises because we don't know how to listen to one another: two sisters were arguing over an orange. You had the previous orange, so this one is mine! No Way! You had the previous two oranges, so I deserve this one. Their reasonable arguments over who deserved the orange were going nowhere, so they decided on a compromise. They cut the orange in half. The first sister peeled her half, threw the peel in the trash can, and ate the delicious flesh. The second sister peeled her half of the orange, threw the flesh into the trash can, and used the peel as an ingredient in the cake that she was baking. If they had only listened to why each wanted the orange, one sister could have eaten twice as much orange flesh and the other could have got twice as much peel for her cake! They would have avoided the pain of an argument too.

Only when we listen mindfully, that is in silence in the present moment, can we hear what the other person really wants.

Wise Listening:

When we learn how to listen mindfully, we obtain a fuller picture of the problem. At a recent leadership conference in Australia, attended by the Australian Prime Minister. Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer, two State Premiers, plus a host of influential CEOs and Professors, the Australian academic who gave the welcoming address related the famous Buddhist simile of the Elephant and the Seven Blind Men. I will tell this story again, putting it in a new context:

A country was in political turmoil with their leaders spending too much time arguing and their followers destroying their economy with strikes and demonstrations. So the King arranged a special TV show. He had a kangaroo brought into the studio and then had seven blind men, who had been blind since birth, feel that kangaroo and tell the audience what a kangaroo was. They had all heard the word kangaroo, but none had ever felt one, let alone see one. The first blind man felt that there were two heads! (Because the kangaroo had a Joey in her pouch) Aaagh! He screamed, a kangaroo is a two-headed monster. The second blind man felt the kangaroo's body

and it was so soft he said that a kangaroo is a large soft cushion upholstered in fine cashmere. The third blind man put his hand in the kangaroo's pouch and declared that a kangaroo is a ladies designer handbag, probably Louis Vuitton. The fourth blind man felt the kangaroo's tail and smiled knowingly. Ah-Ha! I felt something like this before, at a similar test when I lived in India a long time ago. On that occasion I said it was a snake, but later I found out that it was the trunk of an elephant. You can't fool me twice! A kangaroo is an Australian elephant. The fifth blind man felt the kangaroo's legs. Hmm, he pondered. I know a kangaroo comes from Australia and these things that I'm feeling are bent. I know! A kangaroo is a type of Australian boomerang. No Way! shouted the sixth blind man feeling the sharp paws, a kangaroo is a back scratcher. The seventh blind man who felt the kangaroos independently rotating ears decided they fitted the description he had heard of Yoda, the Jedi, from Star Wars and insisted a kangaroo was an Australian Jedi Knight. Then they all argued insisting that they alone were correct.

This story, in one form or another, needs to be told again and again to remind those in power that personal experience is never sufficient as proof of truth. Instead we must listen to one another, embrace with respect each others wisdom, and combine it to form a bigger and better picture. Most political conflict would cease if adversaries would mindfully listen, with genuine respect, to their opponents. Also, combining their wisdom would produce more effective solutions. Just like those seven blind men above, who eventually stopped arguing and combined their knowledge, coming to the conclusion that a kangaroo is like a large cashmere covered cushion on two big boomerang legs, with two back scratcher like paws in front and an elephant like trunk at the back, a handbag like opening at the front from which appears one small head, a larger head in the usual place with two Jedi Knight ears on top. That is not a bad description of a kangaroo for one who will never see one.

Compassion in Politics:

The Buddhist principle of compassionate wisdom is rarely used to settle political conflicts. When it is employed, it is very effective. The former Prime Minister of Thailand, Dr Sannya Thammasak, once told me that during his time in the highest office, there was never a problem that couldn't be solved when he approached his political opponent alone, as a friend, and discussed the matter amicably. A large proportion of conflict in politics is not about policy but about persons. When one generates genuine compassion, especially through traditional Buddhist Metta Meditation, then agreement becomes more likely.

The following anecdote is about an Australian Buddhist using Metta Meditation to win a lucrative business deal, but the method applies just as well to winning a difficult political deal:

Julie from Sydney had her own business in the fashion industry. She had been negotiating a deal with a large company in England and they invited her to London for the final discussions about the contract. When she arrived at Heathrow, she had barely enough time to check in at her hotel, shower and change, before taking a taxi to the company's head office. When she entered the boardroom tired and jet-lagged, the other directors told her that the CEO was in a very, very bad mood, having shouted at everyone that morning, and that there was no way he was going to sign her contract. They advised her to take the next plane back to Sydney. She refused and sat in a corner of the boardroom, practicing her Metta Meditation while she waited for the arrival of the CEO. A few minutes later the CEO burst in, glared at Julie, and screamed Who is she? And what does she want?! Julie got up, went up to the furious CEO, and said You've got such beautiful blue eyes, just like my baby Holly back in Sydney! She later told me that she didn't know from where these words came, they just fell out of my mouth. The CEO was stunned. His anger evaporated and he replied politely Really? Within the next ten minutes the contract had been signed and the CEO left the room. Julie, however, was not allowed to leave yet. The other directors crowded around her asking How did you do that? Teach us what you just did.

If our World Leaders would learn Metta Meditation and practice it just before their next summit meeting, then there would be fewer arguments and more agreements signed.

Justice Does Not Mean Revenge:

Because positions of power rotate regularly in many countries, incoming administrations are often pressured to right the wrongs of the previous Ministers. Too often, this takes up time and resources that are desperately needed elsewhere. All too often, the call for Justice is but a disguise for seeking revenge.

Buddhist teachings specifically reject the desire for revenge as unhelpful and unnecessary. As they say here in Australia, Why seek for revenge when Karma will get the bastards anyway! If Buddhists would put their understanding of the Law of Karma into daily practice, then they would not waste so much energy and time seeking to punish the corrupt and incompetent of former regimes. No one gets away with bad deeds, said the Lord Buddha, so why don't we Buddhists accept these wise words of our Teacher, let the past go, and allow the incorruptible Law of Karma to settle these matters in good time.

A middle-aged Australian prisoner in my meditation class in jail asked to see me after the session. He'd been attending for several weeks and I'd got to know him quite well. Ajahn Brahm, he said, I wanted to tell you that I did not commit the crime for which I was locked up in this jail. I am innocent and I'm telling the truth. I wouldn't lie to you, Ajahn Brahm, not to you. I believed him. His manner convinced me he was telling the truth. I started thinking how unfair this was and began contemplating how I could undo this terrible injustice. Then the prisoner interrupted me. With a mischievous grin he announced. But, Ajahn Brahm, There were so many other crimes where I wasn't caught that I guess this is fair! He understood how the Law of Karma settles things.

Justice would then mean learning from the past, and not wasting time punishing the players from the past. Our priority should be establishing safeguards and strategies so that those problems are less likely to occur again. In short, Justice is to be sought in creating a better future, not in settling scores from the past.

Learning From the Successes of the Past:

When we look back upon the past, we mostly gaze at what went wrong. We become obsessed with the corruption, mismanagement and incompetence of our leaders, and this makes us very angry. We attempt to overcome our own anger by pursuing those responsible and punishing them. However, in our pursuit of retribution, we do not settle our anger but only make it worse. We make more conflict, and move even further away from peace. The fundamental psychological mistake is that we are focusing on the wrong lessons from the past.

Ajahn Chah would often relate the story of the two chicken farmers, but before I proceed with this enlightening metaphor, I must warn my audience about the coarseness of the language to be used. Ajahn Chah would use the coarse and earthy language of the Northeast Thai villagers, which is why he could communicate with them so effectively. I will do the same. I justify the use of such language by referring my listeners to the Aranavibhanga Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya No. 139) and the Vinayapitaka where the Buddha said that the Dhamma should be taught in the local language.

Once there were two chicken farmers. The first chicken farmer went into his chicken shed early one morning to collect the produce of the night before. Having entered the shed with a basket, he then filled his basket with chicken shit and left the eggs in the shed to rot. He then took the shit-filled basket back into his home, whereupon he made the whole house stink. His family was not happy. He was a very stupid chicken farmer.

The second chicken farmer also went into his chicken shed early one morning to collect the produce of the night before. However, he filled his basket with chicken eggs. He left the shit in the shed to rot. It would become valuable fertilizer later, but you don't store it in your own house! He then took the egg-filled basket back into his house, made a delicious omelet for his family, and later sold the rest of the eggs at the market for cash. His family was very happy. He was a very wise chicken farmer.

The meaning of this simile is this: When you go into your past, to collect the produce of the days before, what do you put into your basket and bring home with you? Are you shit collectors, or egg collectors? Do you remember the things which went wrong and carry that into your present, or do you let the mistakes rot in the past and, instead, bring all that went right into your present?

Ask any psychologist. When you remember what went wrong in the past, you get frustrated, then angry, then, finally, depressed. Bad energy turns to no energy, as one drowns in despair. On the other hand, when we let go of the mistakes of the past, our own as well as those of others, and focus on all that was done well and brought success, then we get inspired, motivated and happy. We get encouraged to go forward. It should be obvious to you now that we learn much more from what went right than we ever learn from what went wrong. In this way, we are more likely to repeat the strategies that produced success in the past. We become more successful, and happier. Moreover, the bitterness that is the cause of so much conflict in the world is avoided. Much conflict can be solved in this very Buddhist way.

Solving Conflict by Establishing Other Priorities:

The violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Indonesian province of Aceh was interrupted by the devastating 2006 Tsunami. The immediate needs that arose from the tragedy took priority over the conflict, giving both sides the opportunity to work together to restore the basic necessities of life. When adversaries saw something more important than their reasons for conflict, a peace agreement was drafted and soon signed.

This is but one example of how conflict can be solved and peace restored if we can establish concerns that are clearly more important than the reasons for conflict. In the Buddhist tradition, The Lord Buddha stopped a war over irrigation rights to the Rohini River by asking the question What is more valuable, blood or water? Both parties, prepared for war, answered that human blood was far more valuable. Then why are you about to waste so much valuable blood on something much less precious like water?, asked the Lord Buddha, and that ended the conflict.

Ajahn Chah would often tell the story of The Chicken and the Duck as a simple but profound example of how hostilities may be avoided by recollecting something far more important than conflict. The simile has been successfully used to prevent many arguments in marriage, but it is also applicable to resolving conflict in politics.

A newly married couple went for a walk together in a wood, one fine summers evening after dinner. They were having such a wonderful time being together until they heard a sound in the distance: Quack! Quack!

Listen, said the wife, that must be a chicken.

No, no. That was a duck, said the husband.

No, I'm sure that was a chicken, she said.

Impossible. Chickens go Cock-a-doodle-doo, ducks go Quack! Quack! That's a duck, darling, he said, with the first signs of irritation.

Quack! Quack! it went again.

See! It's a duck, he said.

No, dear. That's a chicken. I'm positive, she asserted, digging in her heels.

Listen wife! That is a duck. D-U-C-K, duck! Got it? he said angrily.

But it's a chicken, she protested.

It's a blooming duck, you, you

And it went Quack! Quack! Again before he said something he oughtn't.

The wife was almost in tears. But it's a chicken.

The husband saw the tears welling up in his wife's eyes and, at last, remembered why he had married her. His face softened and he said gently, Sorry, darling. I think you must be right. That is a chicken.

Thank you, darling, she said and she squeezed his hand.

Quack! Quack! - came the sound through the woods, as they continued their walk together in love.

The point of the story that the husband finally awakened to was, who cares whether it is a chicken or a duck? What was much more important was their harmony together; that they could enjoy their walk on such a fine summers evening. How many marriages are broken over unimportant matters? How many divorces cite chicken or duck stuff?

When we understand this story, we will remember our priorities. The marriage is more important than being right about whether it is a chicken or a duck. Anyway, how many times have we been absolutely, certainly and positively convinced we are right, only to find out we were wrong later? Who knows? That could have been a genetically modified chicken made to sound like a duck!

(For the sake of gender equality and a peaceful life as a monk, each time I tell the story I usually switch around the one who says its a chicken and the one who says its a duck.)

Conflict is solved by realizing that there is something far more important, also by remembering that we are not always right. Just as in the story, above, about the seven blind men and the kangaroo, giving ourselves space to be wrong, also undermines the causes of conflict.

Another humorous anecdote was told to me by a friend who resided in the Laotian city of Luang Prabang, during the time of the Vietnam War: My friend was taking his lunch at a particularly good little restaurant on the outskirts of the city. He noticed some government soldiers also taking a leisurely lunch at a nearby table, with their M16 guns leaning against the bamboo wall. One can imagine his terror on seeing some communist fighters, members of the Pathet Lao, also enter the restaurant carrying their guns in their hands. Before he could dive under the table for safety, the communist soldiers simply sat at another table, put their guns against the restaurant wall, and ordered lunch! He told me that in those days in Laos, lunch took priority over war.

When we argue convincingly that revenge is counter-productive, and establish that there are mutual concerns that take priority over the causes of a conflict, then peace becomes possible. For example, such mutual concerns as the future security of our children, the scourge of illegal drugs, or the sustainability of our common home, Planet Earth, - if these were given the importance I think they deserve, then many political conflicts would be put aside. Nothing unites erstwhile adversaries as effectively as a common enemy.

Preventing Political Conflict:

The Lord Buddha remarked that when a community meets together regularly, with mutual respect, then harmony can be expected to grow. Much political and social conflict in the world arises because we don't meet together regularly with mutual respect. Many sections of society don't meet at all! They are effectively segregated by religious affiliation, income level, social status, political leanings, and other barriers.

The violent conflict in Northern Ireland between the Protestant Christians and the Catholic Christians lasted many centuries. Happily, there now seems to be an end in sight of that war, although many barriers between the two communities remain. One of the strangest of physical barriers, I was told, lies beneath a road that separates two cemeteries. On one side of the road is the Catholic graveyard, and on

the other side the Protestants are buried. Underneath the road lies a two meter deep brick wall, presumably so that the worms that eat the Protestant corpses wont be able to crawl over to the Catholic cadavers an contaminate them, and vice versa!

I was fortunate to have been born into a relatively poor family in a part of West London with many immigrants. I went to a school with people from all backgrounds. I soon became color blind, by which I mean that I didn't care what the color of their skin was, or their religion; if they were good at football then I wanted them in my team! I realized from those early life experiences that it is almost impossible to have any serious conflict with a person that you have grown up with.

Understanding this, perhaps it is time to do away with all religious schools and universities. They only perpetuate the divisions that cause distrust. Even elite schools that segregate the rich children from the poor kids might also be pressured to give even more scholarships to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, for the sake of better social cohesion in the future. Our children are the politicians and generals of the future, and exposing them throughout their school life to a representative cross section of our worlds population, might remove the sheer ignorance, and prejudice, that is the cause of so many conflicts today.

Promoting Cooperation over Competition:

Our leaders are far too competitive and lack the required the skills for effective cooperation. I recall an illuminating cartoon in a newspaper featuring two dogs:

The dogs had their collars tied together with a 2 meter long rope, and they where struggling to reach their own food bowls, full of delicious meat, but placed 3 meters apart. There was a desperate tug-of-war as each dog used all of its might to pull the other dog away from their bowl, so he could reach his own bowl. In the next frame of the cartoon, both dogs had an insight. They both went together to one of the dog-bowls and shared it. Then they went to the other bowl and shared that one too. In the final frame of the cartoon both dogs where curled up together, with full stomach, happily asleep. If we cooperate, we all get more.

Unfortunately husbands and wives don't cooperate. Children don't cooperate with their parents. Workers in the same office waste time competing instead of cooperating. And political parties find it impossible to cooperate and end up ruining their economy and destroying their national prestige.

Perhaps, this is because we are not trained from an early age in the skills of cooperation. Having taught in a high school in England before I became a monk, I remember with dismay how competitive school children were. So I propose a change

to the education system. At the end-of-the-year exams, each pupils personal score should only contribute 70% to their final grade. The remaining 30% would be made up of the average score of the whole class to which they belong. That way, our school children would be rewarded for helping each other. It would be in the interest of the gifted children to help those in their class who were having difficulty with a subject. By rewarding cooperation, we would be promoting the skills required for effectively working together later in life. When some of those children become leaders, they will be able to bring harmony and peace into the world.

A monk developed such deep meditation that he could visit the Hell Realms. He was surprised to see the hell beings sitting at a large table in front of a sumptuous banquet of the most delicious of foods. However, their spoons, forks and chopsticks were over a meter in length and they could not manage to put the food on the end of their utensils into their mouths. It was torture! They could see the food, they could smell the food, but they could not eat the food.

Then the monk went up to heaven. He was even more surprised to see the heavenly beings sitting at a similar table in front of another sumptuous feast, also with spoons, forks and chopsticks over a meter in length. But they were all happy and well fed. Because, you see, they were feeding each other! Cooperation is heaven.

Electing Effective Leaders:

We delegate responsibility to solve inter-communal conflicts, preserve the peace, and maintain good order in society, to our elected representatives. Without effective leaders, conflicts and other problems will continue to threaten our world.

One problem in some modern democracies is that leaders are elected on the strength of what they promise, not on their proven record. This results in the most convincing salesmen or saleswomen (some would say con- artists) getting elected to government. This was not always the case.

A person standing for political office in an election is called a candidate. The term comes from the Latin word for white. This is because in ancient Rome, a person standing for election to the Roman Senate would wear white garments as a symbol of the purity of their past conduct. How many candidates in democratic elections today could honestly wear white as a symbol of their spotless record of virtue?

The senior members of a political party in a Western democracy were choosing the candidate for an upcoming election. The final three candidates were asked the same question: What is two plus two?

The first candidate thought for a while and answered Five.

The second candidate took out a pocket calculator and, after pressing a few

buttons, answered Four.

The third candidate simply answered What is two plus two? Whatever you tell me it is, Boss!

Who do you think was selected to be the politician? Thus, it would be better to choose our future political leaders not on the basis of what they promise to do for us, but solely on their past record of ethical leadership. As the Buddha often remarked, the future is uncertain, so how can anyone trust such sweeping political promises. A far more reliable guide, a Buddhist guide, would be to look at their past conduct. One becomes an honorable person (a Brahmin) due to one's past virtuous conduct, not because of one's family, and certainly not because of one's promises! (Dhammapada, verse 393)

Conclusion:

I hope to have demonstrated that Buddhist teachings, psychology and attitudes have much to offer in the modern political arena. It has yet to be tried. Even in countries with a Buddhist majority, most of the leaders were educated in elite Christian schools and then attended Western, Christian based, universities. Authentic Buddhist principles were largely absent from their most impressionable years. In these critical times of economic uncertainty, climate threat, and sectarian terrorism, a new way of thinking is necessary.

Wisdom, Loving-Kindness, and Politics:
A Buddhist View on Current Political Situation in Thailand

Somparn Promta
Chulalongkorn University

Part One:

The current political situation in Thailand can be viewed through either hope or hopelessness. I choose to look at it through hope, even though there can be several questions about such optimistic tendency. Sometimes when looking around and seeing nothing but darkness, to say to oneself, "Tomorrow will be better than today," is the best thing, at least to make the person feel comfortable within such a hopeless circumstance. I believe that one of the basic natures of Buddhist teaching is to find some light among the hopeless dark, as found in the story of Mahajanaka the Bodhisatta. Buddhism teaches us to believe that there must be some way out of the problem. Mahajanaka keeps swimming across the ocean when the rest of people decide to die as they see that there is no hope left within such situation. When being asked why he still swims while fully aware that the shore can never be reached, Mahajanaka says that: because it is not right to not swim. I think the answer of the Bodhisatta in this story hides something very important in terms of ethics. I am not sure if we can distinguish between ethics of the heart and the one stemming only from reasoning. But I am sure that the ethics as given us by Mahajanaka is of the first one. Political philosophy, especially the one originating in the West, is much based on reasoning and argumentation. Heartless politics can be found here and there over the world. Some philosopher says that politics is an evil, but it is necessary. We may hate it, but we can never deny it. I am fully aware that it is not easy to bring morality to the people who are in the stream of political conflict. Great religious persons of the world, such as Mahatma Gandhi, were killed because of politics. We know that if religious persons stay away from politics and watch silently they will be safe. I agree with such a suggestion and accept that there might be some point in the time that we know, "It's time to be silent." But before that, we should speak.

Two years ago I had joined the protest against Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra. Even now I am sure that I am not wrong in doing so. I still remember the reason I gave to myself why I should join the protest. Shortly speaking, I think that it is not morally right to be silent when knowing that the prime minister of my country denies to pay tax, using a loophole or gap in law, in selling his property valued 73 Billion Baht (approximately: 2,085,714,825 US Dollars), to a Singaporean government fund. This is not fair, not very fair. It seems that at that time a word of Irish political and social

thinker, Edmund Burke, who says, "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing,*" had some influence over my thought. One day I met a senior Buddhist professor and he did not know that I had joined the protest. He said to me, "If those persons who are protesting were really Buddhist, such a thing would not have happened." For him, the political protest stems from anger and true Buddhists should avoid joining such an activity.

Religious people are those who inclined to stress the inner life. So, I understand what said by him. The peace of mind is valuable in Buddhist teaching. But we cannot practice the *Dhamma* if the country is in the state of war. According to Buddhist belief, the soldiers perform the bad *Kamma* when they go to the war and kill the enemies. They still do the bad things even for the protection of the nation. I think the soldiers have the rights to doubt if this is fair as what happens from their bad *Kamma* is the peace of society and the chance to practice the *Dhamma* of the good persons. In short, we need their evils to be the good persons. The over stress on inner life, in my view, leads to two important unwanted things. First, Buddhist ethics could be argued as a heartless morality. Second, the good Buddhists are those who use other's hand to do the evils and then do not hold any responsible.

The best example of the first thing is a case of the girl who is pregnant by rape and she extremely wants an abortion. A popular Buddhist ethic as found in monk's preaching says that the girl commits an evil if she chooses to take abortion. It is true that in taking abortion a person needs killing and killing is an evil, so the girl commits the evil in this sense. Some Buddhist may argue that it might be the bad *Kamma* of the girl's past life that makes this bad thing happen to her in this life, so she deserves it. But, as given by the Buddha himself, Buddhism is not a totally deterministic religion. The Buddha says that some bad things happen as the results of bad *Kamma*, but some are not. So, who knows if the girl was raped as the result of her past bad *Kamma*? What I want to say here is: the complicated factors of a moral event and the limitation of human knowledge concerning the work of *Kamma* should be used as the grounds in moral reasoning for making our judgments as fair as possible with people concerned. And one way to reduce being heartless of our morality is to compensate a person who was forced by conditions to do evils by the fair social morality. For example, Buddhist community should set up the law allowing the girl to take abortion if she needs.

The best example of the second thing can be found easily in Buddhist society like Thailand. Good Buddhists do not kill animals. What they do is going to the market and buying the dead bodies of animals that are already killed by others. They pay them for doing the beneficial evils. It is strange to see that in this case money can be used to order people to do the evils on behalf of us. In the same way, we pay the soldier, the police, even the judge for doing the necessary evils like killing our

country's enemies, shooting the thieves who deny to be arrested, or sending some very bad persons to death by law. Some Buddhist may argue again that Buddhist ethics holds that the mind is the forerunner of everything in human life, meaning that which state of mind will determine which action to be good or bad or neutral in terms of *Kamma*. We just pay tax to the government. We never say that from our money the government should do the evils as said on behalf of us. So, if there will be the evils from this, we who do not think beyond paying tax as the duty of citizens of the country should not be required to hold responsible for what happening. This argument is not different from the one which says, "We just pay the fish sellers in the market. We never wish any killing. We just need food. We are so sorry for that."

One of the basic beliefs in political philosophy, as found in the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, holds that the political state is necessary for cultivating and protecting a person's life. Some political philosophers even argue that there cannot be good things outside the state, meaning that without the state the individuals are nothing. In the time of the Buddha, all Buddhists lived in the political state. They were protected by law including the Buddha himself. Suppose at that time there was no political state, the Buddha and his followers lived in the state of nature, a state in which people lived without law; the question is: can Buddhism be established as found today. For the above philosophers the answer is no. Even the enlightenment of the Buddha was supported by political state. It is true that the Buddha attained enlightenment in the forest, but the forest was included in the political state. The law was effective in such area as part of the state. It should be noted that all religions of the world were originated inside political state. This might suggest something important concerning the relation of religion and politics, even though looking from religious perspective politics can be considered as a possible source of evil.

Turn back to what the professor said to me again. It is true that some political activities are run from defilement, but it might not be true to say that Buddhists have no any obligation to contribute to politics, or to make politics better. Mahatma Gandhi says that religion and politics should merge into each other. The Hindu ethics is mainly based on the concept of duty. The practice of *Dharma* in Hinduism is the following of one's own duties. There are two main duties of a human being. The first is the duty to oneself. The second is the duty to society. In Buddhism, even though traditionally we do not define the *Dhamma* as duty, this does not mean that we cannot do. Actually, the life of the Buddha himself tells us how much Buddhism teaches about social obligation. By the word 'social obligation' we mean an action performed by a person for the benefit of other person and the action is done because the person thinks that it *should be done*. The Buddha has attained the highest perfectness of life through enlightenment. He does not need anything for his own life. But he sees that others in the world need and he *should* share what he has discovered

with them. In a *Sutta* the Buddha says that the highest good person in Buddhism is the one who acts for both *his own benefit* and *the benefit of other person*.

Buddhism teaches about suffering. In normal state, the state in which we have no problem with politics, we usually think about suffering in traditional sense, the suffering of individual's life originating from desires. This kind of suffering is one of the core concepts in Buddhist philosophy. However, besides this kind of suffering, we also find that there is other which is of importance as well. It is social or political suffering. During the Nazi tyranny, the great number of the Jews greatly suffered that immoral ruling. Suppose Buddhism *were* adopted by the Jews, what would we think? Buddhism will choose which one between keeping silent and saying that it is the duty of the Jews to love each others and share that political suffering on the basis of wisdom and loving-kindness? Every kind of suffering is something to be overcome. While individual's suffering of life can be overcome by one's own energy alone, political suffering needs a thing called 'collective' energy, meaning that every person has moral obligation to share his or her action with others. We should not forget that the political state is a necessary tool for living a meaningful life in this world. Not sharing one's own energy to make politics good is immoral or not fair in the sense that you take but do not give like others. Like other necessary tools of life such as the earth, the forest, the sea, and the sky, politics needs the taking care from us.

Part Two:

Politics in its nature is the art and science to handle the conflicts between different groups of people in society. According to Western political philosophy, the best way to manage those conflicts is to set up some system to play the role like the program in the computer. They believe that if we have the good system, conflicts as said, will not be problematic anymore. The political system used in Thailand today, a democratic system, is the one we have adopted from the West. Like Europe, before having democracy Thailand used to be ruled by the absolute monarchy. The change from absolute monarchy to democracy is usually violent. But we do not find this in the case of Thailand. However, not having violent change does not guarantee that democracy in the land must be stable. Thailand, after the 2475 (CE: 1932) change in the system of government or 'revolution', has suffered the continuous unstable politics. We have had at least 18 constitutions during the past 77 years, meaning that we have approximately a new constitution every 4 years. According to Buddhist concept of *Dukkha*, one of the *Three Characteristics of Things*, a thing that is not stable usually has greater stress inside than a stable one. What the stress we have inside Thai society? Why Thailand which is a Buddhist land has such stress? Does

Buddhism have no any role in making Thai politics competent to manipulate such stress? These questions are all of importance.

Political Stress inside Thai Society:

One kind of stress is a state in which a person is forced to *suddenly* face something normally needs time to be acquainted with. For example, recently the villagers of Northeastern Thailand, which is my homeland, were asked by the government to join the program in which they must be trained to use the computer. The government officers said to them that in the Internet there are so many valuable things including the news about world agriculture. If these farmers can use the Internet they can know how to plan their work each year and in the long-term future. In the TV news, I saw the eyes of some villagers and inside these eyes I felt their stress. It is the stress stemming from not knowing that why they have to learn to press their finger on the keyboard and watch things on the screen which are totally strange for them. They need the open sky, the sun, the rice field, the air, the rain… not sitting in a close room in the front of strange machine. The officers may say to them, "This is a great thing. You must love it." Unfortunately, before we love something we should know what it is. The villagers are in stress because they are forced to love what they do not know what it is!

The 2475 Revolution was done not by the people but by a small group of soldiers and middle-class elites. Some of them were Western-educated and influenced by Western revolutions such as the one of France. Since then the long standing monarchy was forced to be under the constitution and Thailand has been ruled under the new form of government called democracy. There are two things worth mentioning about this new form of government.

First, there was a seemingly permanent deep conflict between persons who were involved in the revolution—the soldiers and the middleclass civilians. The former ones were those who did not understand the meaning of democracy and the main reason pushing them to join the revolution was the chance to have political power. The latter ones seemed to be those who appreciated democracy and felt that there were many good things in democracy that cannot be found in absolute monarchy—for example, the acceptance that all persons in the community were equal as human beings and no one could have the social position over the rest. In Thai politics, there are two political groups playing the role in changing the politics—the army and the political party. The army has the gun and when they feel that the political party may harm them the coup is done. And this is the reason why we have a new constitution every 4 years. Even now no one in Thailand including political experts can guarantee that the coup is totally extinct from Thai politics. It

can occur anytime because there is a permanent deep conflict as said above in Thai politics. It is a conflict between two key actors of Thai political drama: the army and the political party.

Second, even though we can look at the 2475 Revolution positively and thank those who made the great change in Thai political history, their work still can be seen like pushing the farmers to use the Internet as said above. There is a great evil in Thai politics that widely accepted as an unquestionable event: it is the vote-buying which takes place in rural areas of the country and in the poor community in the city. My family lives in a far village in Northeastern Thailand and I know from my parents and my brothers and sisters that every new election is a time to make money for the villagers. They like it. There is a very popular folksong named "*The Sunlight Eater*" sung among the villagers as follows:

> We live in the poor villages
> No education here
> Like the buffaloes, we work hard
> When we are sick, we have no any hospital
> When we want to learn, we have no any school…
>
> Perhaps we are born as the unwanted for the country
> We suffer, we struggle, hoping to have a better life some day
> But now we are old and never have a happy life just for a moment…
>
> A time for new political election comes again
> They come to our villages with things
> They say "choose me and I will protect you"
> They give us things…
>
> It might be good to have political election every month of year
> It might be good to have political election every month of year
> If this really happens
> We, the sunlight eaters, must be happy

Politics in its real nature cannot be separated from surrounding conditions of the society. Democracy is a political ideology that originates from the certain social conditions. Even though democracy as a pure form of political thought can be borrowed from its birthplace to other lands, we should accept that it may not work if the land where it is borrowed to implant does not have enough potential and responsibility. As I understand, democracy requires the potential to know the essence of this political ideology. Along with this potential, the people must have the responsibility. Democracy gives people a power of self-government. When a power is placed in the hand of a person, the elected should know that the power can harm oneself and others if misused. So, the elected must learn to be prepared for

responsibility. Normally, if a person knows what the essence of democracy is he might know further how to hold responsible as the user of this political ideology. In the West where democracy originates naturally, people have the long history associated with it. So, democracy is not a strange thing for them. Very differently, most of Thai people especially the farmers in the villages who are the majority of the whole population do not have the backgrounds involved with this kind of political ideology. For them, it is an alien coming from outer space one night and they have found it given at the door in the next morning. It is a sudden event.

Democracy as a kind of political belief, like other political beliefs, has some weakness in it. The most explicit weakness of democracy is that it is based on the voice of majority. In terms of morality, a number has no any meaning. If that thing is morally wrong, it must be wrong forever notwithstanding the voice of majority claims that it is right. This weakness of democracy should be understood as a thing cannot be avoided. People in community always have different opinions including the political ones. Ideally, democracy chooses to do something on the basis of general will of people in the country. The best of general wills is the one obtained from a consensus of every person. The next is the one gained from the opinions of majority. John Stuart Mill, one of the leading thinkers of democracy, accepts in his *Utilitarianism* that the use of majority's opinion in determining public policy does not guarantee that such a decision is always morally right. He says that sometimes the voice of majority could be unjust to minority. In this sense, democracy sometimes stands not far from majority's tyranny.

A way to prevent the weakness in democracy as said above is to have good quality people. In Buddhism, sometimes the conflict concerning the interpretation of *Vinaya* is judged by the voice of majority. Buddhism accepts that there could be a case in which the majority that wins the vote is bad. To avoid this possibility, the members of monk's community should be trained to possess moral qualities. We believe that good majority will never harm minority. In democratic community, education is basically required to provide society with good persons. John Dewey discusses this much in his *Democracy and Education*. It seems that for Dewey, democracy without education is a terrible thing.

Turn back to Thai society again. Most of people in the villages are those who have no enough education. So, looking from the view of Dewey, it is very difficult to hope these people playing the positive role in democracy. The lack of vision and imagination about the importance of democracy of people is a gap that leads to the corruption of the system by the immoral politicians. Ideally, in democratic society people are those who determine their own fate by their own opinions. But in Thailand people have been used just as a means to political power by the politicians. Some political activist says that political freedom inside Thai politics is a '*ten-second*'

freedom. This means that people are allowed to have absolute freedom within ten seconds when they stand in the front of vote-box and choose some politicians to be their representatives in the parliament. After that everything will be in the hand of the politicians. They will do things they want to do on the basis of their benefits. People are forgotten. Freedom of citizen to have good government that acts for the benefits of people which is the one ideal in democracy may be meaningful somewhere in the world. But inside Thai politics it is just an empty word!

Conflicts between the Village and the City:

Northeastern part of Thailand is very interesting in that it is the biggest part, approximately 35 % of the whole population, meaning that it has the highest political power in Thai society. People of this part are the poorest among Thai people. Most of them are poor peasants in the far villages and some of them are the low-skilled and low-paid workers in the cities. There are some sociological and anthropological data about the people of this part of Thailand, which sometimes are called "*Isan People*," as follows.

(1) They usually think that they do not belong to Thailand. This may sound strange. I remember that when I was a child some of our village-dwellers went to a city called "Bangkok." When they came back and were asked, "Where do you come from?" They always said, "I just come from Thailand." Even now when *Isan* people in the village talk about Bangkok or something related to Bangkok they still use the words "Thailand" or "Thai" to refer to these things. For example, they say "Pai Thai" to communicate that "Go to Bangkok." This sentence is literally translated as "Go to Thailand." When they speak the language used by the Bangkok people, they say "I speak Thai."

(2) The majority of Thai monks are from this part of Thailand. This comes from a very simple fact that when a poor boy in the village wants education the only way possible for him is to be ordained as a Buddhist novice. Around 30 years ago, I was such a boy in the village. My parents could not support me to study in the public school as it was located in the city very far from our village and we had no money. I was ordained as a novice in the village monastery to have a chance in education. Later I came to Bangkok and studied at a Sangha university, Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, before leaving the monkhood and joining a post as a lecturer in Philosophy Department at Chulalongkorn University. Without this opportunity, today I might be a peasant in the village like most of my friends. Most of monks and novices in Bangkok are *Isan* natives. And most of Sangha university students are *Isan* natives as well. In terms of sociology and anthropology, it can be said that *Isan*-land is the land where the great number of poor people live. The poverty pushes them

to leave their motherland to seek a better life somewhere outside the villages. There are two places for them. First is the factory or other low-paid job in the city. Second is the monastery in the village and later in the city. There are around 70,000 taxi drivers in Bangkok. Over 70% of them are *Isan* people.

(3) *Isan* is the land where the study of Buddhism highly flourishes. This can be seen easily through a simple fact that most of Buddhist saints of Thailand are *Isan* native and there are a great number of *Vipassana* (meditation) schools and *Pariyatti Dhamma* (textual and doctrinal study) schools inside this part of Thailand. It could be the influence of the highly flourishing of Buddhism in this land that *Isan* region has long been recorded as the part of Thailand where a number of committing suicide is lowest. Among Buddhist countries, Thailand has the lowest suicide rate (Sri Lanka 23.9, South Korea 26.1, Singapore 9.9, and Thailand 7.3 per 100,000 population). And within Thailand the Northeastern region has the lowest rate. It should be noted that *Isan* people are the poorest of the country, but their suicide rate is lowest. This fact could be related to another fact, as cause and effect, that the study of Buddhism inside this land has been long highly successful.

(4) *Isan* is always claimed to be the land where the vote-buying in political election has been widely practiced. And sometimes the persons who assist the politicians in vote-buying are claimed to be the leader monks of the villages. The process is: the politicians come to the monks and ask them to recommend their names to the villagers. If this is true, it seems we have a contradiction between two things. First, Buddhism highly flourishes in this land. Second, but Buddhism seems to support immoral actions in politics, or at least Buddhism does not do anything to prevent or blame such immoralities.

I believe that what I have suggested above concerning the nature of *Isan* people play the major roles in Thai politics especially the conflicts between the village and the city during the past two decades. There is a famous saying about today Thai politics, "The villagers choose the government to be banned later by the city-dwellers." That is, as the villagers, most of them live in *Isan*, are the majority, so in every political election they are the persons who choose which political party to act as the government. The chosen more or less represents what kind of the chooser is, so the politicians chosen by the villagers are considered by the city men not qualified to rule the country. The politicians who are chosen by the villagers usually are local mafias or those who silently have black power in hand. People usually fear them. Some years ago, the political parties that won majority vote were not able to choose their leader to be the prime minister because the US government had the blacklist for this person concerning the involvement in drug trade. This politician was chosen by the Northern villagers and it was widely known among the press that he was recorded in the blacklist of the US government as a person who was believed to

be involved in the drug-trade line from Burma to America through Thailand. So, it can be said that a serious political problem in Thailand is—people from the villages choose unqualified persons to act as national politicians and the city people see that these politicians should not be allowed to represent the whole nation. The villagers think that the politician that they choose represents only their village. They do not think about being representative of the whole nation as the city people think. And this is a root of conflict that causes a long-standing suffering in Thai politics.

Red People and Yellow People:

The phenomenon concerning the happening of two groups of people who call themselves the red and yellow people now is very interesting. Recently, the present prime minister admitted that his government has suffered a number of political crises making it is difficult for the government to do its job. One of the crises, he said, is Thailand has been divided into two parts: the red and the yellow; and for him this kind of political separation was never found in the Thai history. According to me, the separation between the red and the yellow as now seen is the highest peak of the long-going conflict between the village and the city as said above. Roughly speaking, the yellow people are those who were organized three years ago to protest against Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra. This group of people mainly consists of educated middleclass and rich city people. On the contrary, the red people were those who united to support Dr. Thaksin. Most of them are low-educated villagers and low-skilled workers from *Isan* and Northern regions.

It should be noted that as regards Buddhism there are two groups of Buddhist monks joining the red and the yellow. The monks who join the yellow are from Santi Asoka; the monks who join the red are from the Sangha university. Santi Asoka could be viewed as a school of Buddhism in Thailand that belongs to the new movement of Thai Buddhism which includes the Dhammakaya, the Buddhadasa's, and the Santi Asoka. The new movement of Buddhism is normally identified as an attempt to apply the teaching of the Buddha to the modern world. Certainly, they have different ideas about the making of Buddhism relevant to modern people. But all of them share one basic characteristic that they are not based on the rural tradition as the traditional mainstream Buddhism. The simple difference between the mainstream Buddhism and the new movement Buddhism is that while the former is mainly adopted by the villagers the latter is appreciated by the middleclass in the city. The Sangha university even though runs educational activity as the university in modern sense, its root is firmly based on the rural tradition. As Karl Marx analyzes, the class dominates the worldview. The monks in the Sangha university (the administrative persons, the teachers, and the students) are all born in the village and brought up within the village tradition. So, we can say that their class is the village

class while the class of Santi Asoka is not the village class even though its leading monks largely come from the village and many of its monasteries are located in rural areas.

Part Three:

From what we have considered above, it can be seen that with regard to Buddhism Thai politics cannot be considered without referring to two things—first, the difference between the village and the city in terms of worldview; and second, the role of Buddhism in both areas. As it is one of the objectives of this article to seek a way out from political crisis that Thai society is confronting now, and personal belief of the author of this article on the moral and intelligent power of Buddhism for the solution of any problem in the world is rather positive, the following will represent the author's attempt to share his ideas how Buddhist ethics gives a creative solution for the political crisis as said.

Wisdom:

We know that one of the main important teachings of the Buddha is concerned with a thing called wisdom. There are so many meanings of the term, but the one I choose here is: *wisdom* means *deep understanding*. Suffering in Buddhist perspective is a natural phenomenon occurring when we do not understand things as they are. The confrontation between the red and the yellow needs wisdom in this meaning very much. As I have said at the beginning of the article that I used to join the protest against Dr. Thaksin, but this does not mean that I have admitted myself as the yellow. Political protest is a complex phenomenon in the meaning that there are many conditions existing inside it and sometimes the persons who are involved in the same political protest are of the different aims. For example, my aim in joining the protest is one single and very simple: I wanted the prime minister to hear that I did not accept him to act as the leader of my country anymore for the reason that what he had done in selling his personal properties to a Singaporean fund without paying the tax is viewed by me as an unacceptable action in terms of *morality*. I do not know other persons who join the same protest with me have what objectives. But this does not cause any problem as I have my principle that the leaders of the protest are those who officially represent the protest. As far as they have the same objectives with me I will keep joining them. Certainly, in political protest the violence in terms of hate speeches sometimes cannot be avoided. I believe that political protest can and should be run without hate speeches and other violence. When I hear some person talking about Dr. Thaksin through very vulgar words, I talk to myself this is not necessary. At least Dr. Thaksin is a human being; he should be respected as a human, and not an

animal. In Buddhist teaching we have no rights to act violently even to animals, so how much we should respect our human fellows notwithstanding they are our political enemies.

The political protest can be of either moral or immoral type. And the first thing to be accepted by Buddhists is that we must not join the protest which an inner feeling tells us "might be immoral." What is the difference between these two types of political protest? The moral one is that can be explained and the immoral one does not have this property. When Mahatma Gandhi and his Indian fellows protested against the law set up by government in South Africa, they had the reason explaining why they united to protest. In the case of Dr. Thaksin, I think we have such reason. Turn to the protest by the red people. They said that the present government has robbed democracy from the hand of the people. For them, the majority of Thai people have chosen the political party leaded by Dr. Thaksin. Even though Dr. Thaksin did not play the role as the prime minister anymore, by moral rights his party still deserves to act as the government. This reason can be accepted. So, the political protest being run now by them is moral.

There is one thing spoken among the yellow people. It is true that the political party leaded by Dr. Thaksin has won the majority vote, but if we see that all the politicians inside this party are not qualified to act as the prime minister of the country, why we should respect such majority vote? Some of them even say that the villagers should have a limited political right if we want to see the future of Thai politics. It should be noted that to support the above view, the famous saying of the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu concerning the true definition of democracy is usually cited. Buddhadasa says, "Democracy should not mean a rule *by people*; but should mean a rule *for the benefits of people*." In his book about political philosophy from a Buddhist perspective named *Dhammic Socialism*, Buddhadasa argues that in Buddhist view a form of political system is not as important as its content, meaning further that the dictatorship that acts for the righteous benefits of people can be accepted by the political philosophy of Buddhism. Actually, he argues against democracy that this system of politics requires a good majority to make politics good and it is very difficult to have such a thing except by miracle. Dictatorship is better as it does not require this thing. Buddhadasa cites King Asoka as the example of the dictator who acts for the righteous benefits of people. According to Buddhadasa, King Asoka is dictator in the sense that he rules the country by himself alone, but he is a good dictator. Dictatorship in Buddhadasa's view has the strong point in that it works quickly as everything depends on one single person only. It seems that the Thai parliament is not attractive to Buddhadasa. He criticizes democracy as a system in which people talk and talk and do nothing.

The question if political philosophy of Buddhism adopts a thing claimed by Buddhadasa can be answered in various ways. Some Buddhist scholar in Thailand does not accept that the political theory given by Buddhadasa represents the actual one to be given by the Buddha himself. For this kind of scholar, the spirit of Buddhism can be found much in democracy. For example, the Buddha gives the administration of the Sangha to the Sangha itself after he sees that the community of monks is firmly established. This can be compared to giving administrative authority to people in democracy. However, some Buddhist scholar argues that the Buddha never gives absolute power to the Sangha. He still acts as the giver of the monastic rules to be used in the Sangha. For this kind of scholar, political philosophy of Buddhism endorses a ruling system in which the absolute authority is given in the hand of one single person who deserves rather than a system in which the same thing is given in the hands of all members of the community like democracy.

The red people are those who believe that democracy is the best form of political pattern; at least it is better that absolute monarchy. On the other hand, the yellow people admit that democracy is the political system that has the lesser evils comparing with other systems; but this does not mean that in some special situations we should not allow a thing that does not follow the rules of democracy. For example, the yellow accept the coup that was done to expel Dr. Thaksin was on the conditions that it is done to prevent political violence predicted highly to happen during that time.

Theoretically, the view of the red is more consistent than the yellow when the red say that all political acts must follow democratic rules. But in terms of practicality, we can doubt if this rule, as given by the red, most benefits people. Once I said in a TV discussion program, "I accepted that in some hopeless situations we need something outside democracy to protect democracy itself." In the program I was asked how I thought about the saying of Dr. Thaksin about a thing he called 'authority outside the constitution.' According to Dr. Thaksin, he feels that there is some person whose political power is not given by the constitution existing in Thai politics and he thinks that having such a thing does not follow democratic rules. My answer was: first, I accepted that having such a thing does not follow democratic rules as Dr. Thaksin said; but second, this does not mean that this thing is necessarily a political evil. In the past, King Naresavara commanded to kill the leader soldiers on the grounds that they did not follow him making him alone enter the enemy's army. At that time, the Patriarch came to the king and asked for soldiers' life. In my opinion, the Patriarch is a power outside the system as claimed by Dr. Thaksin. But Thai society had benefited from this kind of power many times.

If we accept a very simple truth that no any system in the world can be the absolutely closed system in-and-by itself, democracy should not be viewed to be the

closed system in the sense that no outer power is allowed even to protect democracy itself. Such a claim is very dangerous and not reasonable. At the time of Dr. Thaksin, he and his government were accused of being involved in various kinds of corruption. Actually, we know that the corruption was common phenomenon in Thai politics. But the degree of the corruption at the age of Dr. Thaksin was believed something very special. Now it is believed that Dr. Thaksin possesses the wealth of at least 100,000 million baht. How a person can accumulate such a wealth within 4-5 years without corruption. I think this public doubt toward Dr. Thaksin is reasonable. And it means further that this case can be cited as the example of the evil of democracy in the sense that it possibly allows legal corruptions. The question is: if this kind of evil can be stopped only by the help of moral power outside the constitution, we have what reason not to accept it?

As Buddhists, I think the red people should understand this logic of the yellow. However, the red also have their own reason when they say that democracy is a system in which we have a limited time for everything. Dr. Thaksin must go away some day. We can write the constitution which says that a person cannot be the prime minister over two times. By this rule, no one can manipulate the country and this is the positive characteristic of democracy. The question is: why the yellow do not learn to wait?

Ultimately, I think the problem comes from a fact that the red and the yellow use two different things and they do not know they are using different things to support their views. The first thing is a political theory. The second thing is a meta-political theory. The difference between these two things can be illustrated as follows:

(1) Suppose there is a political doctrine saying that no one can be the prime minister over two times. This is adopted by people in the country. We can say that this political practice follows the political theory. Or, we can say that a statement which rules that "no one can be the prime minister of the country over two times" is a political theory.

(2) In any political theory, there can always be an attempt to corrupt the system. The corruption of the system can be of two kinds. First, corrupt by breaking the rule. Second, corrupt by changing or modify the rule. Suppose a politician, after being the prime minister two times, does not go away but makes a coup to be the prime minister further, his action is a corruption by breaking the rule. Suppose the politician does not use that way, but chooses to change the rule from "over two times" to "over three times" or even cuts such a rule off, his action is a corruption by changing the rule. In the history of world democracy, we usually find that the second kind of corruption is widely used. Dr. Thaksin himself was accused of changing the law to make him and his family benefit in doing

business. What he had done is legal because it follows the law. Even the selling of his properties to the Singaporean fund is fully legal. But a lot of people in Thai society think that it is a corruption. It is a corruption by changing the rule for one's own case.

(3) It should be noted that at the level of political theory, there could be the corruption of the system and such a problem cannot be solved by the theory itself. Democracy is a political theory which is based on the voice of majority, meaning that by using the majority vote anything can happen including the corruption of the system through changing the rules. The problem as stated can be solved only at the meta-theory level—for example, the protest against the attempt to change the rules by people outside the parliament. In the past of Thai politics, sometimes the political parties that won majority vote had tried to change the constitution for their own benefits. In terms of political theory, we can do nothing as the rules of democracy say that the voice of majority in the parliament is the final judgment. To let this thing happen could be considered as the harm to democracy itself. So, we can say that any political theory needs the meta-theory to solve the problems occurring to the system and being unsolvable by the system itself. A theory without meta-theory cannot be stable and is at risk.

The meta-political theory can be of several forms. I think that a thing called by Dr. Thaksin as "an authority outside the constitution" in some proper situations can be considered as a kind of the meta-theory. I have argued somewhere that nature always provides the system and the meta-system to work side by side. For example, when we break our arm, the system of body has its way to join the broken bone by itself. However, external tool provided by the doctor will help the bone to work more effectively. But we should know that it is the bone itself that joins. The tool provided by the doctor just supports. In the same way, the protest of people cannot change anything if the government does not listen to the voice of people. This is the limitation of the meta-system.

The Buddha in some sense could be considered to act as the meta-system of the *Vinaya* in Buddhism. There is a well known story about the conflict between two groups of monks in Kosambi, being recorded in the Buddhist text. This conflict starts with the different opinions of two senior monks concerning the interpretation of the *Vinaya*. As these two monks have their own followers, later the conflict extends to be the one between two large groups of monks. The Buddha tries to make them compromise but fails. When seeing there was nothing left to be done, the Buddha does not say or do anything more, leaving the confronting groups of monks and staying alone in the forest.

From the above story, it is worth remarking that the Buddha himself is the monastic rule giver. Even the rule that causes the conflict between the monks is given by him. So, as the rule giver, one would imagine the Buddha is in the position to judge who is right and who is wrong between these two monks. But this does not happen. I believe that the best explanation for this is that the Buddha considers himself as the meta-system, and not the system itself. I endorse the view that between democratic spirit and totalitarian spirit the Buddha appreciates the former. Consider the following word that the Buddha gave shortly before his passing away:

> What, then, Ananda? Is there anything that the Sangha expects from me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine in respect of the truth. Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps something back. Surely, Ananda, there could be a person having the thought, "It is I who will lead the Sangha," or, "The Sangha must be dependent upon me." It is he who should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the Sangha. Now the Tathagata, Ananda, does not think that it is he who should lead the Sangha, or that the Sangha must be dependent upon him. Why then should he leave instructions in any matter concerning the Sangha?

The above attitude of the Buddha toward the administration of the Sangha can be viewed being based on his teaching about the nature of things in the world which follows the law of impermanence, the law of stress, and the law of selflessness. According to Buddhist belief, things in natural world are conditioned and co-arising. There can be nothing to play the role as the core of things in the sense that this core will manipulate the whole system without the help from the peer conditions. The community of monks, or the Sangha, falls under this nature and the Buddha himself knows this best. However, the above attitude of Buddhism does not mean a lack of responsibility. The Buddha is the person who holds fully responsible in taking care of the community of monks through acting as the meta-system. When the administration of the Sangha is given in the hand of the Sangha itself, this means that the Buddha has accepted that the Sangha will have self-rule. And this is based on the Buddha's belief that as rational beings his followers will be able to rule the community by their own wisdom. It can be said that the rule run by the Sangha is a system. The Buddha never interferes with this system because if he does so there will be a self-contraction in his position. But by giving the system to the hand of the followers, it does not mean that the Buddha will not do anything to make the system sustainable. We know that after giving the Sangha administration to the hand of the Sangha itself, the Buddha has stayed in the position of the King of Dhamma. The role of the King of Dhamma is to act as the moral voice pointing the way out of the crisis

when the system itself cannot do anything. This voice is advice, and never a command. And this voice can be fruitless if the system itself does not listen to. We have seen that before leaving the Buddha tried to voice something, but the confronting monks did not listen to. Finally, the Buddha admits that the system is in the highest position, while the meta-system stays lower.

Civil disobedience is another tool used in democratic community as the meta-system. The simple meaning of this term is not acceptance to co-operate with the government who is using the system on the grounds that such a system is an evil and the people have moral rights to not follow the evil. However, as a kind of meta-system, civil disobedience must be strictly used otherwise it may lead to the breaking of the system which is immoral according to Buddhism.

So, we can say that the conflict between the red and the yellow comes from the use and stress upon different things. The red stresses the system, claiming that the problems of Thai politics are centered on the political power outside the system. I admit that their claim is very strong as later it is evident that before Dr. Thaksin was ousted there was a group of higher position persons holding a meeting and discussing the future of Thai society under the rule of Dr. Thaksin. However, what the red can claim reasonably is just that there was a group of persons gathering and discussing about the fate of Thailand under the rule of Dr. Thaksin. If we accept that Thai people have moral rights to do such a kind of things and do something inside the level of meta-system, what done by that group of higher position people cannot be accused of violating democracy in Thai society. As known, the government of Dr. Thaksin was ousted by the coup. This can be claimed not right according to democratic rules. Even though we can optimistically consider, that may be false, the happening of the coup as a tool used in meta-system to prevent the possible violence, the argument of the red remains strong because the coup in its essence is the breaking of the system which is beyond the role of the meta-system. Even the Buddha, who can be considered as the owner of Buddhism because he gives rise to it, never interferes with the rule of Sangha as found in the Kosambi case because he knows the limitation of his own position as the meta-system.

There is one serious ethical question if in some special situations the breaking of rule for public benefits can be done. I think there could be 'yes' and 'no' for this question which is equally reasonable. And the conflict between the red and the yellow is basically based on the different answers for this question. How Buddhism advises Buddhists when being confronted with this kind of dilemma. It seems that the following advice from Buddhism is based on the awareness that any solution of the problem requires a good person. It is useless to give any advice if the people involved are not good. First, we should learn to understand the reason of the opposite. The red and the yellow should learn to understand each other's opinions.

From above, it seems that both sides have their own opinions and these opinions are equally reasonable. One side stresses the system while another side stresses the system as well but admits that in the case where the system fails to operate the proper meta-system can be accepted. Second, following such understanding, the doctrine of selflessness best serves as a way for the solution of the problem. Selflessness here means an attitude of mind which whispers inside, "We should give the way first to let the problem be solved." After I had joined the protest against Dr. Thaksin, I talked to myself that I had done my job completely. If Dr. Thaksin did not listen to my voice, that was not my business. I believe in the *Kamma*. And more importantly, Buddhism teaches me that my personal life is of more importance than politics. One of the sufferings to happen in human life is caused by a lack of wisdom to arrange the priority in life. All of us, both the red and the yellow, must die some day. No one can win the truths of life such as death. One day Dr. Thaksin will die; and I as well. So, it is not wise to sacrifice everything in our life to political activities. Political conflicts in the history of humankind that later lead to the great tragedies would not have caused such sufferings if the humankind could distinguish which is the most priority of life and which is not. No one among great political leaders of the world had the peaceful life as the result of political activity. On the contrary, if some of them will have such a peaceful life it is always the result of religious practice, for example, what happening to King Asoka.

In conclusion, applying wisdom to the subject, it can be summarized that as Buddhists the red and the yellow should learn to understand the opinions of each other. In my view, the red and the yellow do not really have the conflict in the sense that one side takes 'A' while another side takes 'not A.' They just hold 'A' and 'B' respectively. And this makes it easier to be solved. So, the problem is how the both sides will know actually they are not in the conflict. Furthermore, the principle of wisdom in Buddhism teaches that life is more important than anything including politics. It is so sad to see that our human fellows are 'brainwashed' to reduce everything in their life into one single entity named politics. How to make a balance between a life as an individual and a life as a member of political society? Wisdom helps much in answering this question.

Loving-Kindness:

Actually, I am interested in this teaching more than wisdom. That interest comes from my recent studies about the nature of Buddhist ethics. My thesis is that between reason and emotion the latter plays more important role in morality. That is, the real morality must be based on feeling or emotion. As I understand, modern philosophical ethics, such as the ones of Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill, is usually based on reason. According to Kant, a good action is the one having the

property of universality, that is, all educated persons will agree without any self-contradiction. According to Mill, a good action is the one having the property to promote happiness of a greatest number of people. Even though these two thinkers are different in their theories, but they are the same as they base their theories on reason. Wisdom's working in my understanding stays close to reason in the sense that it judges and weights between things. Actually, there is nothing wrong with wisdom in that sense, or even with reason. I just see the limitation of it and believe that such a limitation might not be found in emotion.

The limitation of reason is a lack of emotional force. Or, we can say reason thinks and speaks but does not necessarily act. On the contrary, feeling does not need to think and speak, but it acts. The difference between reason and emotion lies in that reason needs a medium to enter a truth while emotion does not need. For example, we read a poem about injustice. The poem is presented through a medium of language. Certainly, a good poem can provide the reader with a deep understanding and feeling about the subject. But comparing with a person who directly faces the injustice by himself or herself, what perceived by the reader of the poem can never be vied. In reading the poem, the subject (the reader) and the object (the injustice) are divided by the language. It is the language that filters the truth about injustice and how much the reader can enter the truth depends on the quality of the language used. Unlikely, in facing the injustice directly, the subject and the object are not divided by anything. When there is no medium or filter, the subject can enter the truth 100 %.

My understanding about loving-kindness is partly related to the understanding of Buddhist ethics in terms of virtue ethics. In ethical studies, we distinguish between rule ethics and virtue ethics. Rule ethics is an attempt to define goodness as an action that follows some ethical rules. And such rules are normally defined by reason. On the contrary, goodness in virtue ethics is believed to be a property of action that comes from the good person. And the good person is believed to be a person who has cultivated himself or herself through a kind of practice which could be either religious or non-religious.

In my understanding, rule ethics, as mainly based on reasoning, sometimes allows a strange thing in terms of morality. For example, many modern ethicists argue that animals have no any position as person because they have no wisdom. So, meat-eating is not wrong. For them, the use of animals in scientific experiment is not wrong as well. In Buddhist texts, there are so many stories telling that the noble persons in Buddhism are those who cannot harm other even for self-protection and 'other' in this context sometimes are just animals such as a crane. Buddhist ethics at the beginning stage may give a number of moral rules to follow, for example the statements concerning the five precepts. But this kind of rules is not intended to show that Buddhist morality is based on reasoning. On the contrary, it is given to train

human behavior. The more a person is trained the more he or she will feel the harm to other is an evil. It is the subtle feeling occurring in the depth of mind, and not a result of reasoning anymore. Through reasoning, the eating of animal flesh could be argued if right; but through the mind of a well trained person in Buddhism, the inner feeling will say it is not right and no argumentation needed for this kind of person.

Loving-kindness in its original Pali term, *Metta*, is something rather denoting a feeling than reasoning. '*Metta*' derives from a word '*mitta*' which is literally translated as '*friend*.' In short, loving-kindness is a state of feeling that all sentient beings in the world are our friends, or family's members. In a Mahayana text, the *Lankavatara Sutra*, it is said that meat eating can never be permitted in Buddhist ethics because allowing this thing is equated to allowing eating our own father, mother, brother, sister, relative, friend, and so on. It should be noted that in practicing loving-kindness the whole word is reduced in to a big family where a person is a member and the rest of sentient beings are also the members of this family. The principle of wisdom in Buddhism may suggest that as all sentient beings are subject to suffering, so we are friends under the same sky of suffering. But, in terms of logic, merely sharing suffering does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that we are the same family's members. The wars of the world still happened though people knew we shared the truths of life such as death, sickness, and old age. To prevent such wars, people must really feel the brotherhood of humankind.

I believe, as suggested by two British philosophers John Locke and David Hume, that sense-perception is a great source of knowledge and emotion. So, the feeling of brotherhood can never occur without the sensual contact between people. It is interesting that in Bangkok where the traffic causes emotional stress to the people, the motorcycle riders are those who commit a crime lesser than the car drivers. We usually find that a sudden murder on the street happening just because two car drivers have a very little conflict. My theory about this is that the car drivers are located in their 'closed world' which is the car. Persons in the cars do not have a sensual contact to each other. Differently, a motorcycle is an open vehicle, comparing with a car. When you drive a motorcycle and have a conflict with other, you and that person can look at each other's eye. This does not happen in the case you drive a car, especially the one covered with dark film. The villagers have a little conflict while the city men have much more. That is because the villagers do not live in the closed world, but the city men do. People in the big cities such as Bangkok may not know the name of a person living in a room next to them in the same floor of condominium. They live in 'my closed world' and have no any sensual contact with each other. Within this context, we cannot hope a feeling of brotherhood.

The lack of directly sensual contact leads to a thing I would like to call a TV watcher's culture. In evenings, we have dinner and watch the TV news. Some days,

we see a lot of people being in a great suffering. But we just see and feel nothing. On daily TV screen, there are so many pictures of suffered people in the world. But these people are the stranger. We do not know them. And this is why we do not feel anything even though we are watching them cry. After coming home from South Africa, Gandhi had spent a period of time journeying into various parts of India. Actually, Gandhi could read about India, but reading and directly seeing are of great difference. In Hinduism, the noble person is called '*Sanyasi*' which literally means the wanderer. Even the Buddha and his followers are also the wanderers. Real life in Buddhist perspective cannot be found in the closed room where you only live alone, but it is waiting us under the open sky, at villages, at towns, at the market, at café, at the shore of the sea, on the road, and so on. Love and sympathy need real contacts with things.

As said previously, the village and the city in Thai politics have been long separated. The recent uprising of the red people should be viewed positively as a chance for the yellow people in the city to learn about their suffering. Previously I have cited a folksong named '*The Sunlight Eater*' which illustrates political consciousness of the villagers in general. Some of political analysts have suggested that it could be possible that the red people are the minority among the villagers who may play the positive role in Thai democracy in the sense that at least these people have clearly stated that they do not need the coup and do not need democracy under the guidance of the army. They want democracy for which people alone hold responsible. However, the yellow people in the city still have the rights to doubt that if the uprising of the red naturally originates. Most of the leaders of the red are not the villagers, but the politicians who used to work under Dr. Thaksin. It is highly possible that all about the red is just a means created and used by Dr. Thaksin to return to his power again. If this is true, the evil-doers are not the villagers, but Dr. Thaksin and his political servants.

There are many things in Thai current political events that we do not know. This article is written under the awareness that it is very hard to look at politics through a simple mind because politics is a game of power and the politicians are those who can do anything for their power. Thai politicians have very low moral standards. Fortunately, the leaders of the yellow are not politicians, so their activities can be highly sure to be free of hidden political aims. On the contrary, most of the leaders of the red are politicians. Even their struggle can be doubted being done for Dr. Thaksin alone, and not for Thai society at all. Sometimes an attempt to apply religious teaching to politics is viewed useless because the first condition for religious teaching, which can be compared to a seed, to be grown in anything is that such as thing must be appropriate like good earth to receive good seeds. Politics is usually compared to the cement street where no seeds of the tree can grow. In his book, *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli says that the ruler does not need love from

people, but needs fear. So, to rule means making people fear. Even though Machiavelli's theory does not represent the whole political view of the world, this tells us something important, that is in politics sometimes what highly endorsed by religion such as love and sympathy are considered not necessary. In legal philosophy, there is a philosophical school named '*Legal Positivism*' which states that law and morality must be separated. Certainly, the philosophers of this school have the reason to support their theory and I accept that such reason cannot be rejected easily. But the point I want to stress here is that religion and politics have different opinions. And this makes religion have a limited potential to apply religious view or gives some advice from religion to politics.

However, if we distinguish people from politicians, to apply religious teaching to politics might be higher possible. More specifically, I do not hope to apply the teaching of loving-kindness at the level of politician, but I hope this thing at the level of people. Political violence at the level of people usually originates from the lack of knowledge. But at the level of politicians, such violence can happen even though they know. In terms of morality, a person who commits a crime because of misunderstanding the event deserves forgiving. While writing this line, I saw a number of red people trying to injure, or maybe kill, the government officer who drove the prime minister's car. This is very sad picture ever appears on TV screen. It is interesting that among the red people who gathered to injure the government officer, I saw a Buddhist monk running to the prime minister's car and hitting it. For those who did not see what happened in the protest of red people, this may be unbelievable. Normally, in any political demonstration, the leaders are those who know real situations. People who join the protest are naturally blocked to know the real things happening outside the protest. In the context of being 'brainwashed' people can commit crimes even a Buddhist monk is not exceptional.

One important meaning of loving-kindness is that violence must be avoided as much as possible. But this does not mean that we cannot use it if necessary. Violence which is performed on the basis of loving-kindness cannot be compared with the one being done on the basis of hatred. The monastic rules give the highest offence to a monk who violates the *Defeat Rule*, which is the highest monastic crime, to be expelled from the community of monks. This may be asked if it is against the teaching of loving-kindness. The answer from Buddhism, as found in a statement distinguishing between violence (*veram*) and education (*sasanam*), is not necessarily yes. It depends on the attitude behind the punishment. If it is done to educate a person, it cannot be viewed as violence.

Part Four:

From my personal experience in writing the articles concerning the teaching of Buddhism, I have to confess that this article is very difficult to write. And the difficulties, I fully know, come from a very simple truth that I am trying to apply the teaching of the Buddha, which is meant to deal with the cessation of suffering in individual life, to politics. In terms of theory, it is not difficult to present a thing called political theory based on Buddhist teaching. But the article tries to use Buddhist teaching for solving current political conflicts in Thai society that may be considered as a wrong attempt because it attempts in a wrong time. Religion is not needed during wartime. Religion is needed after that. It seems that Buddhism should wait after the political crisis in our country has completely ended. And the end may possibly result in the great damage of the whole country. At the beginning of the article, I have said that I write this article with hope. Arriving at this time, maybe I should say that such a hope seems to be highly impossible a dream.

The very sad truth is that Buddhism in our country cannot play the role in leading people. We have the selfish politicians. We have people in the villages who do not know anything about political virtues. These people are exploited by the selfish politicians to believe that they know well about democracy. Democracy for them is nothing but the voices of majority which possibly include the voice of blind and selfish majority.

The Sangha education in our country may be successful in creating a number of monks who know well about the texts. But we extremely lack intellectual monks who transcend the limitation of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Most of Thai monks are sons of poor farmers in the villages. And the largest number of them is from *Isan* region. Basically, *Isan* people including monks have a very little feeling that they belong to Thailand. For them, a word 'Thailand' means the land of central language speaking people. The current political conflicts in Thailand have a root on this feeling of *Isan* People. Buddhism in *Isan* villages plays important role in terms of culture. That is, it makes *Isan* people proud of their culture and ethnicity. This is its positive role. However, it also causes the bias especially political bias. I know a lot of *Isan* monks. They may have different views about other things, but one thing they share is they dislike a political party which, in their view, does not represent *Isan* people. It is very hard to find an *Isan* monk who loves Democrat Party which is now serving as the current government. The monks who joined the red people are those who dislike Democrat Party, and I believe that the monk whom I saw in the TV news running to the prime minister's car and hitting it violently might be *Isan* monk.

Buddhism is a religion of all humankind. The spirit of Buddhism is not limited within any ethnicity and culture. I accept that the monk who hits the car of prime minister must be extremely oppressed by something. *Isan* region is the poorest

part of Thailand and has been long ignored by the past, even current, governments. So, the lack of intellectual monks as said cannot be considered separately from the economic and social injustice in our country. As far as the political party is not concerned, Thai monks have the potential to transcend the limitation as said. The Sangha should have a culture not to support any political party. The Buddha himself never supports any king or any kingdom during his lifetime. To be the master of all humankind, the Buddha cannot support anyone specially. So, to follow the Buddha's step, the monks should be aware that they do not belong to some regions only, but they are the teachers of all people in the nation. The monks should act as the teachers of politicians, and not the members of the political party.

Between Meditation and Peace-making

John A McConnell

A question to begin with:

I should preface this paper by saying that it will not be very academic. What I want to address is a simple question that every Dhamma-practitioner who wants to engage with the world comes up against. We know that practising Dhamma can make us happier in ourselves. I want to ask, how we can use Dhamma to engage with the problems we encounter in the world. That is, how can what happens in meditation help to bring about change in the world outside—the 'real world' as some might say? How can we use Dhamma to heal when there is sickness and how can we use it to make peace where there is conflict?

I am afraid I cannot justify my conclusions by any kind of scientific study. Rather I just share my own intuition and experience and hope it will be of some value. Our audience is mostly composed of student monks, so I frame my conclusion as a series of practical steps which, I hope, will provide way-posts for those who wish to experiment.

A personal note:

I link these two seemingly disparate areas, healing and peace-making, because both relate to realities that seem beyond control and because of my own early experience. My approach to peace-making was definitely empowered by an experience of healing. At that time when I was learning to meditate, nearly forty years ago, I was suffering from an eye disease that doctors thought would lead to blindness. The cause was unclear and their speculation was that this might possibly be the first stage of a degenerative disease. Medical treatments proved unsustainable and I was quite anxious—at times despairing.

While it seemed likely that my condition would worsen as the consultant had predicted, at least I could live the situation authentically, that is in as real and creative a way as possible, in a way that felt true. Reflecting on life as a whole, the stillness of meditation and prayer stood out as real and healthy—and was clearly the place to begin. My condition became a kind of touch-stone for spiritual depth. If meditation meant anything it had to tackle this suffering in a way that was not cosmetic, but real.

I feel almost grateful for the condition now because it brought me to a place where, for the first time in my life, I really tried to live life from a spiritual basis— tried to engage with my suffering from the kind of self-less awareness I was beginning to encounter in meditation, rather than from self. It was in this context that

Buddha's teaching proved so valuable. Basically, it helped me engage systematically with suffering that was, until then, amorphous and unpredictable. Rather than being victim of the situation I began to actively engage.

I won't go into that story now, but I would like to tell you something I learned from the episode. It concerns the relative emphasis we give to the phenomenal world on the one hand, and spirituality on the other. At the beginning I thought:

> *'If only I can be rid of the eye-disease I can be happy'.*
> *What I came to realise is that it is almost exactly the other way around:*
> *'If only I can be happy, I can deal with the eye-disease'.*

I don't want to exaggerate the results, and certainly not suggest that meditation is somehow an alternative to medicine. But, yes, there was some kind of healing, first of mind and then of body. There was certainly enough of a change in my life for me to gain the sense that spirituality was not just a motivator for action, but a practical resource—something to be experimented with and applied to all human suffering. Later, when I was trying to facilitate dialogue between parties in a situation of insurgency, I found, once again, that spirituality was a resource I could apply every day.

The peace-maker has neither guns nor the disposition to exert pressure. Rather the key resource is the quality of awareness and compassion that s/he brings. And the aim is to do something more subtle than pushing people towards a particular solution which happens to suite our values or foreign policy. Rather, we seek to work with the actual causes of the conflict in people's minds and hearts.

And what do we need to be able to achieve that? Well, we need to be in touch with how people think and feel—attuned to their suffering and able to notice the subtleties of their responses. We need to be able to be still in the midst of the sometimes turbulent dynamics of conflict. And that, of course, brings us right back to what we do when we sit on our meditation cushions each morning. So it is these links that I would like to sketch out.

Dhamma is always experimental, always therapeutic:

Another basic thing I would like to emphasise about Dhamma is that it is always experimental, always therapeutic. By experimental I mean that the intellectual truth is insufficient—we need to discover, and rediscover, the true nature of existence in the here and now. This attention to experience is there, or should be there, throughout the spectrum of our activity—from a daily practice of meditation in which we try to be open to the flux of mind-body, through to the most complex mediation process. The common factor is that we are working with the dynamics of suffering—experimenting with the flow of reality.

And what is the nature of that experiment? The Buddha was very clear that it is therapeutic: Dhamma is about suffering and liberation from suffering. That is the central theme of each experiment whether we work with our personal suffering or that of the community.

The four Noble Truths a framework:

The Buddha's central teaching, encompassing all his other teachings, is that of the four noble truths.   He talks of it as the 'elephant's footprint' into which those of all the animals of the jungle can fit1.   Basically, the four noble truths is a framework for engaging with suffering and turning it around.

Each truth has two parts, a statement of the truth and practical advice as to its application in practice[2]. I write the advices in bold and with exclamation marks since they are often omitted in descriptions of the four noble truths, and they do bring out their practical intent.

> *There is suffering—understand it!*
> *Suffering is caused by mental clinging—let it go!*
> *Cessation of suffering results from cessation of clinging—realise it in experience!*
> *The way to end clinging, and so end suffering, is through the eight-fold path—cultivate it!*

As we can see, the four truths taken together, read like a medical model—a framework for deciding the right therapy.

As well as providing an overview of the Dhamma, I think this framework has a very practical application each time we meet suffering. It is suggesting a mindful and reflective response, in contrast to more usual reactions of anxiety, stress and frustration. Just as we need to diagnose and treat each time we are ill, so we apply the framework afresh each time we find ourselves with suffering.

Now I like to focus on the first two truths, exploring how they can be applied to peace-making. In the context of workshops lasting several days, students would have time to recall times of anxiety and conflict in detail. We don't have that space here, but I would ask you, as you reflect on what I have to say, to recall some serious conflict of which you were part. You may have been a conflictant, or perhaps someone caught up in the situation, or even just someone looking from afar and wanting to help.

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[1] MN 28
[2] Dhammacakkappavatana Sutta, SN LVI

1st Noble Truth:

The first noble truth alerts us to the existence of suffering and asks us to understand it. How can we come close to our suffering? Not by thinking and speculation, that's for sure. They were part of the process by which suffering was built in the first place. No, we come close to suffering by allowing ourselves to be open to it, to see what is happening. The words are simple enough, but since our minds are so used to avoiding, combating or losing ourselves in suffering, we need a meditative technique to achieve it.

When we do open to our suffering, and begin to observe it, we notice two things about it. The first is that there are two distinct kinds of suffering, outer and inner. And the second is that suffering is not a state, but is always in process, always changing.

The simile of the two arrows:

If we practise mindfulness in a situation of conflict we will find that the suffering is there, inside and outside. Outside, there is perhaps some tension in a relationship, or maybe danger. Perhaps we belong to a group that is being targeted and leave home in the morning not knowing if we will see your children again. Inside we feel some degree of insecurity and stress. Or we may be very fearful, close to vomiting each morning, listening for bad news over breakfast and anxious for what may happen in the future. Or we may be frustrated and angry at the politicians who seem totally incompetent at solving the problem and imagine the things we really care about melting before our eyes.

The Buddha described these two dimensions of suffering in the simile of the two arrows. He poses a question: since those who practise Dhamma, and those who do not, both experience the same range of feelings (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral) what is the difference between them? The simile identifies two kinds of suffering – discomfort and anxiety. The person who does not know Dhamma: '…experiences two kinds of feelings, a bodily and a mental feeling. It is as if a man was pierced by a dart and, following the first piercing, he is hit by a second dart. So that person will experience feelings caused by two darts.' It is similar with an untaught worldling: when touched by a painful (bodily) feeling, he worries and grieves; he laments, beats his breast, weeps and is distraught. So he experiences two kinds of feeling: a bodily and a mental feeling.[3]

The first arrow represents physical discomfort and we can extend it to mean that element of suffering that just happens. It would include the physical symptoms and discomforts of ill-health, or the insults, injustices and brutal events that occur in situations of conflict. These all happen to us. We may or may not have contributed to the event, but the event itself is not of our choosing.

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3 Samyutta Nikaya XXXVI.6 Sallatha Sutta Tr. Nyanaponika Thera, (www.accesstoinsight.org).

The second arrow has to do with how our mind has processed the first arrow—building anxiety, stress, despair and so on. When I had the eye-disease I became anxious and despairing about the future. Or we may react to an insult by feeling humiliated and angry for days for not having responded more effectively. Or, after hearing of an attack on someone in the next town, we may imagine again and again what it would be like, keep thinking that we will be next—and end up very stressed. These are examples of the second arrow, mental suffering.

While what happens and anxiety interact with each other, actually they are very different. The first arrow is experienced through the senses while the second arrow is more a build-up of emotion. We worry about what might happen, imagine arguments with certain people who might be behind it, until we feel angry, agitated and insecure.

Without mindfulness there is just the intolerable conflict—'War is hell,' as Truman said. When we are anxious, we normally don't make the distinction between first and second arrows, but try to get rid of the whole problem all at once. We just want to get rid of the horrible illness and feel OK again. Or we just want to put the opposition in their place and not feel obstructed any more, or be out of the dangerous situation. We see it as one problem, but actually, there are two, and they are different in their causal dynamics—so we need to distinguish them and handle them separately.

The first noble truth and meditation:

The first noble truth has implications for how we meditate. There are of course different styles of meditation, some cultivating particular states of qualities, others more attuned to observation. It is this latter grouping that we are interested in here. Relevant to the first noble truth and the injunction to 'fully comprehend' suffering, is that our meditation technique lets us be open to suffering.

Of the five spiritual faculties (indriya)—faith (saddhā), energy (viriya), mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi) and understanding (paññā)—it is essentially mindfulness, the non-selective, open dimension of awareness, that lets us experience just what is there. Mindfulness is openness to reality, without selection or distortion—without judgement. Practising mindfulness, we don't impose what we might want to be the case, nor fight off what we feel uneasy about, but just be open to the flow of body and mind.

Mindfulness and concentration need to be in balance. If the object of attention is complicated, or effort of concentration too strong, that will tend to reduce mindfulness and so exclude other areas of experience. We get most non-selective openness by having just light attention. Thus, in order to apply the Buddha's advice for the first noble truth, concentration should be as light as possible—just enough to orient the mind amid the flux of experience so that mindfulness can be open to meet the stuff we normally don't like to look at.

This places more emphasis on mindfulness, in particular on our capacity to become mindful. What we may not realise is that actually, mindfulness is very resilient. Over the years I have worked, and meditated, with many people who are seriously ill. I can think of cancer patients, weakened by the disease and in the middle of chemotherapy, toxic chemicals affecting every organ in the body. I could not possibly expect sustained or deep concentration from them—but they could always become mindful.

I remember one man who, in a late stage of multiple sclerosis, had lost much of his memory—even he could become mindful. It is this simple act of becoming mindful that can lead to deep, insightful awareness.

Similarly in situations of conflict, especially if events are taking place around us, there may not be space to cultivate concentration to any degree, but we can always become mindful. Even if for a few moments before we need to meet a conflictant or face a difficult situation, we can become mindful of the suffering this time, mindful of feelings of stress and uncertainty.

Second noble truth - Suffering caused by clinging, not external events:

The second noble truth tells us that suffering does not occur by itself, but as the result of mental clinging. The more normal assumption would be that external events were the cause of our suffering. At the time I had the eye-condition I spoke of, I thought that this was the cause of my suffering. And people in conflict think that other people, and their actions, are the cause of their suffering. While not denying that external events have their impact, the second noble truth points directly to mental clinging, and an internal event, as the cause.

The Buddha's advice concerning this truth is that we let the clinging go, abandon it. In practice, I think we can only let go what we are aware of, so I interpret this as to know and let go the clinging.

We can see that these mental clingings are important—but what exactly are they? Sure, we can reel off a list from the Buddha's teaching. But I like to ask, do we really know what our second noble truth clingings are? Can you identify the mental clingings that cause your suffering? If I ask you to write a list of ten, could you do it? I think not—why? For a number of reasons. First, they are normal, part of everyday life, so they probably won't stand out as unhealthy or unskilful. Friends would be more likely to guess at them than we. Secondly, they are habitual, and like all habits, occur automatically. Thirdly, they are often largely unconscious. In the Buddha's terms, they are governed by avijja—ignorance.

How to know our clinging:

Now, how are we to know and let go of such clingings if we do not know what they are? More precisely, what can we do practically, say in the next twenty

minutes, that will show us our second noble truth clingings and give us the chance to deal with them?

The answer is that we encounter them when we try to be mindful. Think what happens when you try to practise mindfulness meditation. The task seems simple enough—put light attention on breathing and just be open to the flow of experience— but somehow we cannot do it. We get caught up in thought and feeling, and our mind is immediately far away.

And what of these distractions? Do we choose to get distracted? No— usually, they come automatically. Is the distraction something new, or something we have thought about many times before? It may well have been new if the stimulus came from outside, but if it was a thought or feeling then it will likely be something that we have visited many times before.

In other words, the mental processes that tend to distract us are normal, habitual and semi-conscious—just the kind of thing that would be second noble truth clinging. That is not to say that all distractions are second noble truth clingings, but it is to say that it is likely that some will be.

And if we are in conflict what will distract us? Of course it will be some aspect of what has been done to me, or future danger, or what I would like to do to others—or more likely some interminable dialogue in which I justify and re-justify my position.

Working with clinging in meditation:

As I said earlier, my way of meditating is to be lightly mindful of breathing, just knowing that it is taking place rather than attending to particular sensations, then open to the flow of experience—sensations, mood, flickers of thought etc. After some time I get distracted. When I realise I have been caught up, I just relax into the awareness that is already there and observe what is happening that moment. So, I become present to the pattern of clinging, or at least its tail-end, and at the same time let go of it.

I don't like to use the word 'distraction' since it implies that these mental processes somehow ought not to be there. As we have seen, these patterns may be quite significant—and just the kind of thing we should be working on in meditation. So, I prefer to think of them as established patterns of clinging that have caught us up. Just as, following the first noble truth, we welcome suffering so, following the second, we should welcome the arising of patterns of clinging—know the clinging and let it go.

If we are in conflict, the disturbing clinging will probably relate to that situation. Without our realising what is happening, consciousness narrows down to an internal dialogue with someone who insulted us last week. We are imagining it, but it has happened automatically, without choice, so we don't notice that we are

doing it. After some seconds or minutes, or tens of minutes, we realise we are caught up.

The moment when we realise we are caught up, already we are mindful—so we can relax, find breathing once again, and just be open to what is there. We will find that the story begins to break up and the interwoven feeling comes to the surface. Imagine a piece of purple silk. It is made from two colours of thread, blue and red, but we see purple. In the same way, feeling is woven into the narrative of thought processes. Now imagine I take away all the blue threads—what will you see? Suddenly, you see a colour you never guessed was there, bright red. In the same way, as the story element of the distracting process peters out, so feeling appears, often quite strongly.

If we are inexperienced we will blame ourselves for getting distracted and think we have failed again. However, if we follow the advice of the second noble truth, we know that this is an opportunity. I say 'opportunity' because we cannot know and let go of clinging unless it is actually there, tugging at the mind-body. So the fact that it comes up in meditation is a real chance to experiment with it—in laboratory conditions, if you like.

Actually, the moment we realise we are caught up we are already mindful, and our task is to know this particular clinging—the one that is there right then—so we don't want to suppress the clinging, or jump away from it. Rather, we just be still and aware in the midst of whatever is there, accept the feeling, and observe what is happening in the present moment.

Mindfulness of suffering discloses its causes:

Thus, just by being willing to sit with our suffering, and becoming mindful again and again, the mental habits that feed the suffering begin to show themselves.

An analogy that occurs to me is that this is like the warning lights on the dashboard of a car. Some are red (meaning there is grave mechanical danger) and some are orange (meaning there is something to be attended to but it is not so urgent). And these little lights have helpful symbols intended to suggest where the problem is. The symbol for low level of coolant in the radiator has a sketch of a radiator with a cross over it for example.

Suffering is just like that. When it is there you know something is wrong. Keep being (or becoming) mindful of it for a while and you will start to see the unhealthy processes that contribute to it. And you find them because they come and disturb your meditation.

Knowing feelings as feelings:

Conflicts produce a range of intense and often horrible feelings—fear, resentment, anger and disgust to name a few. Woven into the storyline they are

powerful—part of the reality of the situation. Regular practice of mindfulness however, brings us into contact with them as feelings. Keep indulging fantasies of hostility and revenge and the feelings are compounded into strong emotions— become mindful, know the feeling as a feeling each time, and they do not compel us.

In responding to his son, Rahula, who had been having difficult experiences in meditation, the Buddha advised him to let his meditation be like water, like earth, like fire and like the wind:

'Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for … arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people wash clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus and blood in water but the water is not horrified, humiliated, disgusted because of that, so too, Rahula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.'[4]

Like water, meditation penetrates, washes and refines the current stream of consciousness. Gently it flows into difficult areas, first disclosing, then washing away those processes that are destructive.

What does this mean in practice? It means simply, that when difficult experiences arise do not try to fight or repress them, but be mindful and aware. If despair is there watch it, breath by breath. Watch the course it takes, the shades of feeling, the seeming endlessness of it. Notice the tendency to get away, to slip into some other experience or thought, and just be still within the flow of feeling – meet it with awareness, with acceptance. You don't have to accept it for all time – just this breath, this moment of feeling.

The mechanisms of attachment--recognizing sequences:

As we persist in the practice of mindfulness, we notice more and more of the nuts and bolts of our clinging. For example we might notice that we keep returning to a particular memory, and that a certain feeling follows. This feeling sometimes seems associated with a tension in the chest perhaps. And whenever we have this feeling there are flickers of thought running through it, a kind of rapid oscillation between feeling and the thought that builds emotion and leads to a craving or tendency to act.

Or, we might notice that react emotionally to someone, or something, or the thought of the same. When we are mindful of that we find the mind straining to articulate that pattern once again, throwing up the emotion-laden thought, wanting to

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4Majjhima Nikaya (hereafter MN) 62 v. 14 The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, Tr. Ñāṇamoli Thera and Bikkhu Bodhi

express resentment again and again. And sometimes we find ourselves articulating a belief about self or other. The words just come, imbued with attitude, some judgement or summation of who or what we are. As we notice more and more, we find echoes of the paticcasamuppada sequences in the suttas.

Here, for example is Ven Maha Kaccana's diagnosis of Dandapani's condition. Dandapani was the very anxious, conflictual man who tried to start a debate with the Buddha in the Madhupindika Sutta. He came to the Buddha with his own, confused agenda – anxious to affirm his identity as sage and debater and ready for a confrontation. When the Buddha offered the inner peace that he really needed poor Dandapani did not know what to say. It was an opportunity lost—a sad moment. In response to queries from the monks, Ven Maha Kaccana describes how Dandapani became like this in terms of a sequence of mental states:

> With contact (phassa) as a requisite condition, there is feeling (vedanā). What one feels, one perceives (jana – labels in the mind/ saňňā perceive, ideate). What one perceives, one thinks about (vitakka). What one thinks about, one complicates (papanca – sometimes translated as 'proliferate' or 'project'). Based on what a person complicates, the perceptions and categories of complication assail him/her with regard to past, present, and future ideas cognizable via the intellect.[5]

There are things here that we can recognise immediately, particularly how early labelling shapes how we identify something, and how thought and feeling interact in prolonged worry about something. The translation of papañca that seems to fit best with my own experience is of 'projection'[6] of thinking into our sense of reality. We worry about something till the point comes where we no longer know it as thought—it seems real. So, Dandapani is caught up in the confusions of his mind. The sutta says that papañcasaññāsankhā is the result. Papañcasaññāsankhā means something like projected tangle of ideas and perceptions. Dandapani was living a tangle of ideas about himself and the world.

Actually, we are all like that to a greater or lesser extent. We all live in our own worlds, the landmarks of which are not realities but objectifications of our own ideas and feelings. Then, of course every sutta with a paticcasamuppada sequence tells us, that if we can be mindful of one stage, then the cycle will not progress to the next. So, if we can be mindful of feeling it will not stimulate more thought. Then, without the support of thought, feeling will settle down, so projection into our sense of reality (papañca) will not take place and we will not live such deluded and confused lives (papañcasaññāsankhā).

This applies directly to the way in which stress builds up when we are in conflict. Indulge the clinging and, whether we are peace-maker or conflictant, stress keeps building. Gradually, self gets caught in the web of speculation, suspicion and fear created by the conflict, powerless to do anything. However, if we keep

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5 Madhupindika Sutta MN18

[6] Originally by Wimalo Kuhlbartz I think.

becoming mindful of feeling and let go of the tendency to react then, even though the situation is difficult, we have a kind of inner peace and can respond with timely friendliness and wisdom.

Why distractions are good:

Now, just as the clingings of daily life invade our meditation sessions and make life difficult, so our experiments on working with those patterns begin to influence how we handle them when they come up in everyday life.

If we are disturbed by memories of an insult and fantasies of retribution, and keep becoming mindful, that will influence how we respond to the real situation. Keep letting go the tendency to react in meditation and we will not feel the same compulsion to react when we encounter the offending person the next day.

Distractions might infect our meditation, but that is the price for meditation transforming our lives—it is worth it and highly relevant to peace-making. If it was not for 'distractions' we would be meditating in a vacuum and it would not affect our lives one bit. To be an effective peace-maker we need this constant deepening of our responses. Becoming mindful of 'distractions' is a very effective way to achieve it.

Non-self-centred awareness:

We have talked about the process of letting go the patterns of clinging that come up. However, there is a complementary dimension to this. As we progressively let go of clingings that support our self-centred, semi-deluded worlds, another dimension of consciousness begins to appear—non-self-centred awareness.

I will always remember my friend Supaporn Pongpruk, just weeks before she died. This was a time when she had tumours in breast and spine, and she was slowly becoming paralysed. Each day brought fresh symptoms. She would become still amid the discomforts and feelings that were there. She said:

I let everything go now. While it be in my mind I let it go.
Then, some minutes or hours later she would say,
John, my mind be peaceful now.

Through this practice, Supaporn discovered a real sense of release and, over time, developed deep confidence.

Each time we let go of clinging or resistance in this way, we release from the self-centredness that distorts consciousness. What do we release to? We release into awareness. And that awareness is not something produced by the meditation—it is there already, our deep spiritual nature. Even in the midst of extreme adversity there

is a quality of awareness that can know things as they are and be at peace. Thus, at one and the same time, we get to know our habits of clinging—and learn to rest in awareness. And, strange to say, it is just this combination of realism and inner peace, and the sensitivity that comes with it, that lets us be most helpful to those in conflict.

Practising metta:

We use different words, and have separate practices to cultivate awareness and loving-kindness, but the reality is that the non-self-centred awareness we come to in meditation is not neutral or value-free, but is both present and caring. It always feels right to cultivate metta, and it is very valuable to our role as peace-maker.

One really good quality of metta is that it is not reactive. There is too much reactivity of mood in conflict. Just with looks people can put each other in bad moods. If we have a regular practice of metta, we can initiate an atmosphere of good-will.

When I have mediated in war situations, I had to meet and keep a good relationship with people who had done terrible things. Do you know, I never went to a meeting with conflictants without becoming mindful and extending metta to myself, to them and to the victims of the war. And it always seemed that the meeting was underpinned by that healthy energy.

Also, there is a kind of courage that comes with metta. I remember I used to be quite fearful of crossing front lines—leaving the machine guns of the army behind and approaching the forward positions of the guerrillas. Again, I cultivated metta to myself and to them—and always I could meet them with a smile.

Engaging with the external conflict:

I have left the next step, engaging with the conflict outside till late in the sequence, but actually, you can do it (or events might require that you engage) any time. Also, while I call it the external conflict, actually it has an internal dimension as well. Indeed it is unskilful mental processes that power it.

We talked of how, because of our indulgence of clinging, we project a semi-fictional reality. As we might expect, people in conflict are particularly susceptible to this kind of semi-fictional living. Conflictants do not communicate properly with each other, so misunderstandings abound and emotion builds up around them. You might think that political leaders should be well informed, but it is not always so. Apart from perhaps putting too much emphasis on ego, they are often heavily dependent on advisers, and successful advisors are people who learn to say what the leader wants to hear. And they can have their own agendas too of course. So, leaders are sometimes ill-informed too. Their resulting choices and behaviour can be deadly.

Basically, if we want to intervene skilfully in conflict, we need to be able to shift focus from apparent objective realities, the identities of the various parties, the issues at stake and the rights and wrongs, to the mental processes that constitute them and give them meaning. For example we might need to know why a party gives priority to one thing, what fear or expectation lies behind a particular decision, or why they seem to have deceived the other side over some matter.

These are topics that no conflictant will discuss with enemies, or even neutral observers. There needs to be a relationship of trust and friendship before that kind of dialogue can take place. So we need to relate to them as kalayanamitra, again building on the spiritual qualities that have developed in the course of our personal practice.

Using the akusala-mula to analyse conflict:

The akusala-mula (the unhealthy roots of action) are both very simple, but also incredibly useful in analysing conflict. We can take any conflict and find them interacting from start to finish. And, once we have analysed the situation in this way we can usually see for ourselves that unskilled thinking on all sides has contributed to the problem.[7]

I remember one participant in a workshop for garment factory workers. She was called Gai, and she described how she had lost her erstwhile friend, Daeng. Both were from the same visage and had been good friends. I will tell you part of the story. There were problems in the factory as the management tried to increase production to fulfil a contract with a German clothes retailer. Anyway, within this situation Daeng had shouted at, and humiliated Gai, who headed a small group of workers making collars, in front of her staff.

We analysed the conflict, beginning with the lobha of the businessman, going on to the lobha and moha of the director (because he assumed the factory could fulfil the order without thinking it through), to the lobha and moha of Daeng (who imagined she might get promotion and be able to afford a house), then to the manager's dosa (because he blamed the supervisors for lower-than-expected production) and moha (because he didn't question his own plan or culpability). The telling-off undermined Daeng's dream of promotion (lobha and moha) and left her with an irritated, resentful disposition (dosa). Then, at the end of a double shift, she came across Gai relaxed and smiling with her staff. Suddenly it seemed that it was Gai's attitude that was holding the company back from achieving its aims (moha) and she exploded in criticism and blame towards Gai (dosa).

Gai lost face and actually thought that Daeng had done this deliberately to hurt her (moha) and she felt very angry at Daeng (dosa). It did not occur to her that

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[7] For more detail on the use of the akusala-mula to analyse conflict, please see my book, 'Mindful mediation'. There is a Thai translation.

her relaxed attitude was somehow out of tune with the change in culture in the factory (moha). And so on. Gai and Daeng had not spoken to each other since.

After she had completed the analysis Gai burst into tears. I asked her why she was crying and she said that she just realised that she had lost a good friend and that it need never have happened. In other words, having analysed the conflict in terms of the akusala-mula, she could see that mistakes had been made on both sides, and that Daeng was not a bad person after all.

Peace-makers pick up akusalamula from the conflict:

One thing you might not realise is that peace-makers often pick up some of the lobha, dosa and moha that are driving the conflict. There might be logical reasons for this, like a conflictant blaming us for something, but sometimes we just seem to pick it up. So we might find one party particularly frustrating and unreasonable, which we did not before.

However it happens, our response is the same—to keep becoming mindful and letting go the tendency to react. Then we cultivate metta and find a tactful way of addressing the issue involved. Again, it is good that we pick up the defilement because it lets us work on it both for ourselves, and for the conflictants. Our meditation introduces mindfulness into the situation. Even though the conflictants might not meditate themselves, they can pick up on some of the clarifications that result.

Changing akusala to kusala:

The akusala-mula, however powerful they may seem, are completely impermanent. They depend on lack of awareness to continue, and once we become mindful they begin to weaken.

I have neither space nor time here to do justice to this topic, so I put the information in grid-form and refer the reader to my book, Mindful mediation.

Akusala Unmindful and self-centred	Kusala Mindful and non-self centred	Common energy	Skills appropriate to change akusala to kusala in peace-making
lobha focus on greed	alobha focus on need	wants	Mindful evaluation of what all parties really need, Mediation/negotiation
dosa resentment	adosa non-hate	attitudes	Metta meditation, Goodwill,

	metta, karuna		Forgiveness, Caring criticism, Receiving criticism mindfully.
moha delusion	amoha clear-mindedness	understanding	Mindful understanding, Holding different perspectives in mind, Active listening, Clarifying misunderstandings.

The suttas are replete with practical advice for changing energy from akusala to kusala in the course of conflict. For example, in relation to 'caring criticism', the Buddha gives good advice for making criticism:

> 'Five points, friends, should be present inwardly to a brother who is desirous of chiding another. I will speak at a timely moment, not at an untimely moment. I will utter what is true, not what is fictitious. I will speak mildly, not roughly. I will speak for a desire for his good, not for his hurt. I will speak with love in my heart, not enmity.'

The suttas are replete with practical wisdom of relevance to making peace.

Putting it together--Processes of Peace-making and Healing

Step 1:

We begin with present suffering. The suffering of conflict is sure to involve fear, insecurity and resentment. In order to engage with it in a constructive way we need a spiritual practice—one that lets us come close to and get to know such experiences.

Following the first noble truth, when suffering arises, become mindful and get to know it. Try to distinguish between first and second arrows – things that happen and mental suffering. Their dynamics are very different and need to be dealt with separately. We can deal with the second arrow, first.

Step 2:

Anxiety is like a warning light on the dashboard. Whenever you see it, you know that something is wrong and you need to become mindful. Put light attention on breathing and be mindful of the flow of experience. You will find that the story element falters and feeling comes up strongly. Often that feeling will be fear. This is good since it provides the opportunity to work with feelings that normally compel us. Rather than trying to escape or reduce the fear, just try to be still within it. Get used to meeting it as a feeling.

Step 3:

After a while you will be distracted—that's good too. Distractions are just the kind of mental habit that powers your suffering so it is good to get to know them. Immediately you realise you are distracted, just become mindful and observe what tumbles through. There will be some kind of thought←→feeling sequence. Be mindful of feeling—breathe gently through it. You will see the mind tending to go over into thought or action. Keep letting go this tendency and just be mindful of the flow.

Step 4:

Then something you can't do, but which happens naturally—your consciousness re-orients from self to awareness and the mind becomes still. The external problem may be there, some fear may still be there, but you are not running from it any more. There is a sense of inner space or freedom.

Step 5:

You can use this space to cultivate healthy energy towards self and others. You can cultivate attitudinal energy with the brahmavihāra. As your attitude becomes more open and kind, you will find that you feel better about yourself too—more able to recognize and accept your own limitations.

Step 6:

Now, turn to the external situation. Live it with mindfulness and observe the interactions within and between yourself and others. You will find the lobha, dosa and moha of the conflict spilling into your consciousness. This is good since it gives you the chance to be mindful and begin to work on the defilements that power the situation. Looking at the way the society operates, how can you place yourself so as to make peace more effectively.

Step 7:

The akusala-mula are not permanent—with awareness and skill they can be transformed into healthy energy. Try to discern ways in which you can change akusala to kusala. Be willing to experiment with ways of putting them into practice and learn from the experience.

Human Nature and Conflict: A Buddhist Perspective

Venerable Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahaso
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

1. Introduction

In the present world, with its diversity of cultures, languages and religions, it is very easy for conflict to arise between two people or two groups. There are many reasons why human beings and societies conflict. In fact, conflict that arises in this context could even be a natural and necessary thing in human life.

According to Chaiwat Satha-Anand, since earliest times, human beings and societies have always had conflict; in fact, it has been unavoidable since they were born in different social environments. This raises the question of whether conflict is good or bad.

As conflict theorists have said, the human being is a social animal, who forms one unit in his society. People attempt to look for physical resources, in order to satisfy their desires. At the same time, as long as they do not fully understand the nature of their desires, they have unlimited needs. As a result, they fall into the trap of suffering that arises from conflict.

In 1993, the American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, gave his opinion that the source of conflict does not arise from idealism or economic problems, but from cultural foundations. He concluded that this is the clash of civilizations.[1] Various Thai political scholars, such as, Teerayuth Bunmee[2], Surachat Bamrungsuk[3] and Rohim Pramadhave[4], have agreed with him and asserted that nationalism, ethnocentrism and religion are sources of conflict and violence.

Does Buddhism, which is called 'religion of peace',[5] agree or not that the 'conflict is the nature of human beings and societies'?

In fact, the Buddha tells us, 'I only teach suffering and the cessation of suffering'. In these terms, we might understand that conflict is one form of suffering

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1 See in Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993
< http://www.zmag.org/terrorframe.htm 221144releasedateCPMPWBContentsP.Member P>.
2 Teerayuth boonmee, **Road Map: Thailand** (Bangkok: Saitarn,2004), p. 36-37.
3 Surachart Bumrungsuk, "War across state and War in state: From the world-situation to the south of Thailand", in **Mathichon** (1249): 33.
4 Rohiem Pramath, **war in the future**,)Bangkok: Mathichon, 2006), p.36.
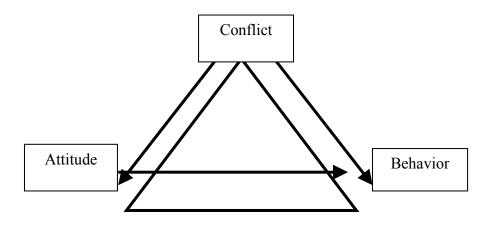5 Khu.Tha. (Pali) 25/202/52. (Pali) 25/787-794.

and that we should learn, understand and manage it. The important question is how human beings and societies live with conflict in the present time?

2. What is Conflict?

We will begin by defining the word 'conflict', because it is a key-term in our discussion. 'Conflict' comes from the Latin language. 'Configere' connotes fighting, warfare, incompatibility and opposition. Conflict is used for both people and groups who have beliefs, attitudes, needs and benefits that are absolutely different, so that they debate, dispute, and even kill each other[6] as a result.

According to the Thai Royal Academy dictionary, conflict means 'resistance', which is to say, disobedience, violation and persistence, and also 'objection', that is, dispute and opposition.

Moreover, Johan Galtung, the Norwegian peace-keeper, said that conflict is related to mankind's behavior. Conflict arises because people are concerned or understand that there are some groups who are working against their advantage. Thus conflict, in his definition, goes together with attitude and behavior. He suggested that they exist in a relationship of cause and effect, as illustrated in the diagram below[7], relating Conflict, Attitude and Behavior:

In Buddhist doctrine, the terms used for conflict are: 'dispute', 'debate', or 'quarrel'.[8] People or groups might conflict about views values, data, interests and

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6 Reymond W. Mack and John Pease, **Sociology and Social Life**, (New York: D Van Nostrand Company, 1973), p. 68.
7 Phuthisarn Chumpon, "Peace under condition of conflict in social and politic", in **human and peace**, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn, 2001), p.47.
8 Khu.ma. (Pali) 29/97/209.

structures. As they cannot solve these problems or find the best solutions, conflict arises. In other words, conflict usually arises in the first place from trying to defend one's own interests against other people's in areas such as, views or material resources. In cases where some people or groups cannot do so successfully, they will dispute, attack, fight and hurt each other.

To sum up, one might define conflict as follows: (1) in its positive meaning, conflict is something that leads to creative thinking and the more successful development of organizations and society in general. (2) In its negative meaning, conflict is something that organizations and society cannot manage, and so violence or quarrels will result.

3. Why do Humans and Societies Conflict?

There are many reasons why human beings and societies conflict. First of all, we will consider this term as it is understood in Buddhism. Generally, it is an indisputable fact that people come from different cultures, speak different languages, follow different religions and at the same time, confront increasing globalization.

However, in my opinion, conflict arises when two people or two groups want the same thing at the same time; conversely, in most cases, if the same thing is desired by more than one person or group at different times, conflict is unlikely to arise. Thus, 'conflict' can be defined as irreconcilable interests.

We may conclude that, from a Buddhist perspective, the causes of conflict are multiple. They include desire, arrogance, and delusion.

1. Desire refers to acquisitiveness and aspirations. Acquisitiveness includes the need to 'possess' material goods and also people, whereas aspirations concern the wish for status, power and position. Furthermore, the world's natural resources would be sufficient for all the world's people, but a greedy person always wants more, because materialistic capitalist societies do not have unlimited raw materials. Such societies, therefore, will go to great lengths to obtain all the available resources, even though this means depriving other groups. Failure to negotiate results in conflict.

We can illustrate this with reference to the following story from Buddhist scripture: the brahmin Aramadanda asked Mahakaccayana, "What is the cause of conflict between king and king, Brahmin and Brahmin, or wealthy person and wealthy person?" The latter replied that whenever human beings grasp tightly, adhere, or are sexually aroused or held by desire[9], they come into conflict. Also,

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9 Ang.Tuka) .Thai (20/38/83.

parents and children, siblings and other relatives come into conflict, quarrel and attack each other because of desire.[10]

According to Tipitaka, Koliya and Sakya, who are relatives of the Buddha, fought because they wanted water for agriculture, and kings Pasenadi of Kosala and Ajatasattu fought because they wanted to control part of the land which is on the border between their countries. When we analyze these two examples, we can see that conflict arose between these people because they were controlled by desire.

However, in my view, desire in this case covers the need for power, too. Power in itself is neither good nor bad, but in this case, 'power' refers to politics, money and social control. These kinds of power tend to corrupt the mind; the love of power leads to the desire for even more power and control. When everyone wants power, conflict arises, because nobody wants to be subjected to the power or authority of anyone else.

2. Arrogance refers to human beings' preference for showing themselves that they are better than other people in term of status, personality, property, education, work or knowledge.[11] As a result, somebody who has been insulted sometimes disputes, quarrels and even kills. In this case, the Buddha said that anyone who really likes to say and think that he is better than other people, is highly likely to conflict within his society.[12]

A good example of this is the case of the kings of Sakya who believed that they were racially superior to all the other kings of Jambudipa. They therefore refused to associate with or marry into other groups. When King Pasendi of Kosala, born as a commoner, wanted to marry a relative of Sakya, they brought him a slave. Not long afterwards, he had a son, *Vithudabha*. The kings of Sakya did not want to welcome him, when the boy went to visit them in Kapilavastu. When *Vithudabha* learnt that he was not their grandson, but the son of a slave, he and his soldiers went to kill all the kings of Sakya.

For this reason, the Buddha said that Bhikkhus should not claim that they are better people because they observe many precepts or have great merit.[13] Whenever people are arrogant, they do not like to listen to or understand each other. In general, active listening is extremely important, because it involves opening one's mind in order to understand another person's feelings and needs. However, selfishness obstructs creative thinking, causing an inability to accept a diversity of views.

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[10] Khu.chu. (Thai (30/136/443-444.
[11] Khu.chu. (Thai) 30/103/351-353; compare in Khu.ma. (Thai) 29/178/508-501.
[12] Khu.ma. (Thai) 22/77/231.
[13] Khu.ma. (Thai) 29/153/420.

3. Delusion is a form of ignorance, which can be compared to a shadow over the mind that prevents us from seeing things as they really are. Thus, good and evil can become confused; advantages can be perceived as disadvantages and vice versa.[14]

The Buddha said, 'Whoever holds extreme opinions quarrels very easily[15] and has difficulty avoiding disputes.'[16] On another occasion, Mahakaccayana asked the Buddha what the cause of conflict between monks was. The Buddha replied that whenever monks refuse to accept different views from their own, cling to material things or are sexually aroused or controlled by desire, conflict arises, easily.[17] According to the Tipitaka, conflict arose between Vinayadhara Bhikkus and Dhammadhara Bhikkus in Kosambi, even though they had been good friends before, because they had different views on the interpretation of the Vinaya.

To sum up, most conflict arises from desire, arrogance and delusion, all of which the Buddha counseled against, because they prevent clear thinking and impede effective social and professional relationships. Whenever a human being can be brought to understand this, inner peace becomes possible, and this is the basis for true happiness in human society.

4. Is Conflict Natural and Necessary for Human Beings and Societies?

The 'Three Characteristics' are principles which can completely explain the state of conflict: impermanence, suffering and selflessness. Everything in the world is characterized by these, especially of conflict.

Although some political conflict theorists claim: 'conflict leads to permanence', according to the characteristics, permanence also leads to conflict. The thoughts and actions of human beings and societies change continuously, and cannot endure and be sustained. As a result, they must be uncontrollable even if we wish to control them. So, as soon as expectations about benefit and position are not met, conflict arises.

In fact, when one understands the rules of the characteristics, it is very easy to explain whether or not **'conflict is necessary and natural for human beings and societies'**. Before we answer this question, we should first define 'human beings' in this context; they are people whether unenlightened or Arhat.

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[14] Khu.ma. (Thai) 29/115/341.
[15] Khu.ma. 29/82/243.
[16] Khu.su. (Thai) 25/803-807/694.
[17] Ang.thuka.a. (Thai) 2/38/48.

However, when we analyze human beings, using the concept of the characteristics, whenever they are consumed by passions, which include desire, anger and delusion - all of their actions, including thinking and speaking, will depend on merit (kusala) and evil (akusala). In this case, conflict is a normal thing that will arise among unenlightened human beings. According to the Tipitaka, the conflict that arose between Vinayadhara Bhikkus and Dhramadhara Bhikkus in Kosumbi, or relatives of the Buddha: the Sakya and Koliyas, about water in Rohini River.

All of these examples suggest that it is very difficult to avoid conflict, because people generally, have to make contact with others, relating to work, politics, economics and family. So conflict occurs, because human beings and societies have to live together in the world and satisfy their physical needs or work together.

Therefore, according to Buddhist doctrine, conflict is a natural and even necessary aspect of human life; thus it is neither completely good nor completely bad. At the same time, we have to ask ourselves how to live with conflict in the best possible way. In addition, we should take time to consider the reasons why human beings and societies find themselves in conflict.

5. Do Arahats Conflict?

According to Buddhism, Arahat means one who has attained the goal of enlightenment or awakening. With this term, we refer to the inner reality of their mind. In fact, it is not possible to say that Arahats have conflict because they have achieved complete enlightenment. The Buddha said that 'Oh Akkhinivesana bhikkhu who is enlightened, does not dispute or quarrel with other people in the ways of the world',[18] and 'Munis who have wisdom …[are] enlightened [and do] not dispute'.[19]

On the other hand, it is possible that the Arahats had conflict but worked on and managed it within Sangha, and it is also possible that Arahats, who understand absolute truth, can understand all conventional truth, whereas before reaching enlightenment, they did not have different knowledge or ideas.

According to Milindapanha, Nagasena said that 'to know all things is not, generally, the nature of all Arahats; some of them do not know certain things, such as the names and ancestry of people; some of them only know *vimutti*, some of them only know Abhinna. Only an omniscient person knows everything'. [20] In this case, Arahats have unlimited knowledge about some things, so a possible interpretation is that they may have different views and understandings of other things.

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[18] M.M (Pali) 13/206/182. M.M. (Thai) 13/275/243.
[19] M.M. (Pali) 29/112/335.
[20] Milindha 3/227-279.

In the first grand council held by Buddhists for the purpose of revising the Tipitaka[21], three months after the Buddha died, five hundred Bhikkhus met to discuss the minor training rules and what the Buddha mentioned before he died. After they had spent a long time trying to resolve this question, they were finally unable to find a resolution. They had a lot of answers, and each answer was very different in each group. So this is a good example that proves that Arahats can have conflict too.

6. Sins of Conflict that Damn Human Beings and Societies

From a Buddhist perspective, there are many reasons why conflict damns human beings and societies.

1. Losing mental balance: The Buddha often said, 'passions come from quarrels'. When we analyze his words, we can see that he was suggesting that dispute prevents human beings from finding the best resolution; as a result, their minds will lose equilibrium, because passions will overpower and possess them, and when they can no longer control themselves, violence arises. In this case, Saphiya Bhikku concluded: [22]

> 'People do not realize that they are ruining things in
>
> this world. When they clearly understand that conflict
>
> leads to loss, disputes can be managed easily; however,
>
> some of them behave as if they will never die, which
>
> makes it impossible to resolve problems'.

According to this explanation, when people are unable to manage conflict, not only does this lead to loss of mental balance, but it also destroys harmony in society. From this case, Buddha concluded that 'people should refrain and abstain from quarrelling, not participate in it, and keep their minds free from passions'[23]

2. Loss of property: According to Khutthakanikaya Chatakha, when two otters, who have caught a fish in the lake could not share it, they disputed with each other for a long time. Then, a fox approached them. They asked him to divide the fish fairly. So, he gave one of them the head, and the other the tail, and took the main part of the fish, home to his wife.

As a result, the two otters came to understand clearly that 'if we do not dispute, the main part of the fish will feed us for a long time, but because we

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[21] Vi.Ju. (Thai) 7/441/382.
[22] Khu. Thera. (Thai) 26/275-276/388.
[23] Khu. Ma. (Thai) 29/63/203.

quarreled, the fox took the fish to his wife. In this case, The Buddha concluded: 'Of all the human beings in the world, those who have disputed and quarreled will go before a judge in order to find a solution, and then they will lose a lot of their property'.[24]

3. Failure of reconciliation in society: In my opinion, 'Sangha society' was designed by the Buddha to serve as a model for eliminating individual and social suffering, especially in the case of managing conflict. In fact, The Buddha clearly emphasized Sangha. So even if somebody like Devadatta tries to destroy harmony in Sangha, his action is a mistake according to Dhamma; *Anantariyakarma* and *Vinaye*; *Abhatti Sanghatnisesa*. This is a particularly strong reason for the Buddha's saying, '*Sukha Sanghassa Samakke*', 'harmony is the source of happiness between two groups.'

The Buddha tried to establish Sangha as a 'society of reconciliation' and 'assistance in good conduct'. He described the dangers of quarrelling as a wrong view[25], and desire to win[26], in order to obtain the things of the world: possessions, rank, reputation and individual happiness[27]; when people understand this, they should distance themselves and abstain from quarrelling.[28]

To sum up, the sinfulness of disputes and quarrels has five negative aspects: the loss of property, of time, of feeling, of opportunity and of friends.

7. Value and Significance of Conflict

Buddhism would argue that sinfulness sometimes occurs from conflict. On the other hand, in many situations, conflict also leads to many benefits for human beings and societies.

1. Conflict leads to develop oneself: There are many reasons why Siddhattha became a renunciate until he achieved enlightenment. In my opinion, conflict inside his mind was one important reason for his making this decision.

According to Tipitaka, before the Buddha became a monk, he had to confront important questions, such as why human beings have to be born, grow old, suffer pain and die, in spite of the fact that his father, Suddhodana, tried to prevent him from asking such questions from his earliest childhood. However, the most important question, which was a turning point in his life, was that of 'true happiness'.

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[24] Khu. Cha. (Thai) 27/38/261.
[25] Khu. Ma. (Thai) 29/63/203.
[26] Khu. Ma. (Thai) 29/67/203.
[27] Khu. Ma. (Thai) 29/63/203.
[28] Khu. Ma. (Thai) 29/63/203-204.

Although he tried to answer this question again and again, he did not solve the problem until he met a priest (samana). As a result of this meeting, he chose to become a monk, not long afterwards, and he discovered that there can be harmony in a state of conflict: Nirvana. This case is the same as that of Yasa, who left home and went into the forest, saying that there is trouble here, and there is objection here. Unfortunately, when he met the Buddha, he had conflict in his inner mind.

2. Conflict leads to political development: In my opinion, conflict is fundamental to politics, because in the past conflicts that arose in societies usually led to the establishment of states. According to Aggañña Sutta, establishing a system of monarchy is related to conflict, because most people have physical needs, such as land for living and agriculture[29].

In this case, they consulted together and concluded that 'we should share rice and separate land for living'. However, some of them were unable to conform with the first agreement, and also stole their neighbors' rice: those who had desires wanted more material things than they needed and tried to keep their own part and also steal other parts which nobody offered them[30].

Not so long afterwards, they quarreled again and again, because some of them could not maintain the ground rules about sharing. Other groups said that you make mistakes because of trying to keep your own part and take other parts, which was not permitted, in other times, so you should not act like this'.

Furthermore, conflict was widespread, and led to violence: people fought and destroyed each other. So, one of them suggested, 'Evil occurs in our group: stealing, censuring, telling lies and destroying by weapons. So, we should appoint somebody who can negotiate, give advice and punish those who make mistakes with regard to our rules.

As a result, they chose somebody in their group and appointed him as king, in order to share agricultural land equally. Therefore, the king in this context means 'agriculturist' whose job is to share rice and land for parties smoothly.

3. Conflict leads to the establishment of Vinaya: The Vinaya is fundamental and comprises rules for Buddhist monks to follow, in order to eliminate passion from their minds. However, establishing the Vinaya did not occur from Buddha's will, but it is based on monks' mistakes. The Buddha said, 'I did not establish the Vinaya until after monks had made mistakes in Sangha and society'.[31]

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[29] Ti. Pa. (Thai) 11/129/96.
[30] Ti. Pa. (Thai) 11/129/94.
[31] Vi. Ma. (Pali) 1/21/13.

The Buddha realized Mahavira did not establish rules for his followers as a result, after his death, they did not know and understand what the rules were, and had different views and practices. Later, disciples following his rules conflict, quarrel and separate from their group. It was with reference to this that the Buddha established the rules for Buddhist monks.

There are such good examples in this case, such as Daniya taking public wood to build his kuti, a personal hut. As a result, King Bimbisara and the villagers blamed him. From this case, the Buddha established this Vinaya: 'the monk who takes public wood to build the Kuti must be making *abatti* (mistake), and *parachika* (lose his monkhood)'. [32] In another case, 'the monk who tries to destroy Sangha (group of monks) must *Apatti Sanghatises*'.[33]

From the above discussion, we can see that a similar goal in providing Vinaya and law is to manage conflict in societies; the former resolves conflict in groups of Sangha, whereas the latter resolves problems in groups of lay people. Furthermore, regarding the law, in many cases, this can lead to conflict as well.

Regarding the above saying, in the case of the Buddha, his established rules are very flexible, and also not static. In considering this issue, it is very important to understand that establishing rules is not a question of covering the mistakes that some monk has made. The Buddha will establish new rules. This is the meaning of '*Anubanñatti*'.

4. Conflict led to the first revision: In my opinion, conflict led to the first revision of Buddhist scripture, and had an influence on the revision. In considering this issue, it is very important to answer the following questions:

(1) Why did monks have to have a meeting in order to set down the Buddha's teaching, three months after he had passed away?

(2) When Kassapa heard the words of Supatta, who criticized the Buddha, saying to the monks, 'you should not cry; it is a very good thing that the Buddha has passed away, because nobody should assert that one thing is wrong and another is right, or that one thing should done and another should not be done'[34], he was very concerned that the Vinaya should be revised to prevent unrighteousness from spreading and righteousness from decreasing. He said that *Avinaya* would spread and *Vinaya* would decrease; that *Adhammavãti* would gain power and *Dhammavãti* would lose power; *Avinayavãti* would have power and *Vinayavãti* would lose power'[35]

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[32] Vi. Ma. (Pali) 1/87/76.
[33] Vi. Ma. (Pali) 1/409/309.
[34] Vi. Ju. (Pali) 7/437/376.
[35] Ibid.

In order to be reasonable, Mahakassapa referred to Supatta's words again. Sangha was the first to begin revising the Buddha's teaching at the cave of *Sattabanbot*, beside *Vebarabanbot* Mountain near *Rachachur*.[36]

This is the most likely explanation for why the first revision was made three months after the Buddha passed away. Therefore, in this case, it is possible to argue that conflict was necessary and significant for the first revision. It would not have been possible for Mahakassapa to start the first revision if he had not looked into the causes of the conflict that had arisen in the group of Sangha.

5. Conflict leads to economic development: According to *Kuthatanta Sutra*[37], King *Mahavichitarach* had many properties, and wanted to retain them for as long as he lived. So, he wished to offer a sacrifice in order to give satisfaction to the group of angels, who, according to his ideas, were persons who could give everything to him.

In this case, the king's chaplain, who was a Brahmin, stated that the heart of the king is his people, even if the king cannot understand their needs, and that therefore it is possible that some of them will protest against him, and destroy his properties.

However, the king's advisers said, 'our county has enemies who persecute us and thieve from our homes, villages, and cities; if you, as the king, perform an act of worship, this is the right thing to do'. Moreover, the king's advisers argued convincingly that suppressing enemies such as thieves by killing, confinement, fines, blemish or deportation will not completely eliminate theft, because the thieves who are not caught will continue to steal. As an alternative, the king's advisers suggested a process of administrative science and economic development:

(1) The state should develop the economy for the poorer classes by providing plants and foods to people who were diligent, so that they could practice agriculture and raise animals, subsidizing them until they could help themselves.

(2) The state should develop the economy for the middle and upper classes by providing material and financial support, in order to permit them to buy products and goods from the agriculturists. This is an excellent way for rotating goods and services.

(3) The leader of the state should motivate administrators by offering food and raising salaries when they attempt to work very hard in order to serve people and develop the country continuously.

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[36] Vi.Ju. (Thai) 7/438/377.
[37] Ti. Si. (Pali) 9/323-358/127-150.

In considering this issue, we can see the importance of proceeding with a dual policy to develop the country. The king's advisers concluded, 'Whenever citizens are diligent, concentrate on their work, do not confine or take advantage of other people, the people in their country will be able to live peacefully, and people will be happy and families will have happiness'.

8. Summary

To sum up, from the Buddhist perspective, conflict is necessary and natural in the world, because the suffering of human beings and societies is one. However, there is one single thing that has no conflict in Buddhism, which is *Niravana*: ultimate truth.

Furthermore, from the above discussion, objectively speaking, conflict leads to the development of inner values of human beings, and moreover, in a subjective sense, conflict led to the establishing of the Vinaya, first revision, and developed the economy as well. So, conflict in Buddhism can be a good and a bad thing. Essentially, how should we view conflict? We would be able to live with each other happily and peacefully in a different and pluralistic society.

Roles of Religious Leaders in Conflict Resolution
in the Deep South of Thailand

Parichart Suwanbubbha

Abstract

It is the effort to understand the undividable relationship between religion and politics especially in terms of national security from Buddhist perspective. The religious misunderstandings are mentioned in order to understand one of root causes of mistrust in the communities. What are the concrete ways to use spiritual values and practices of religions especially in Buddhism to heal social suffering in Southern Thailand? The examples of 'Beginning a New' to heal the previous suffering from Buddhist perspective will be introduced. Moreover, the three heritages of *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu,* are proposed here. Furthermore, the proper attitudes based on religious belief in dealing with other traditions in a multi-ethic and multi-religious context are clarified, including a concept of 'deep democracy' which is based on the spiritual development and 'peace education' is clearly discussed. Finally, the dialogue methods would be appropriately suggested briefly in the training of members of religious /spiritual communities in order to engage them in deep listening to any social suffering and conflict in this region.

Religion and Politics

It is believed that religions and religious communities are powerful to be able to inspire and unite the confidence and trust of followers not only in terms of religious belief and practices but also social, economic and political well-being. However, it is always argued whether and how much religions and religious people should involve with the mundane affairs especially political dimension.

It is true that both religious / spiritual and mundane dimensions such as politics go hand in hand in promoting harmony and life skills of people's well-being. The departed point is the former points to the ultimate reality whether *nibbana* or *Alloh* or *God,* the latter does not aim at it. However, according to Buddhist teaching, everything is interconnectedness, that is,

If this is, that comes to be; from the arising of this, that
arises; if this is not, that does not come to be; from the
stopping of this, that is stopped.

Majjihima Nikaya II: 32

Applying this teaching to the violent situations in the South, it is therefore clear that the duty of conducting conflict resolution seems not to be only the responsibility of a group of security personnel but also of everyone including religious leaders and followers.

Moreover it is also obvious that there is more effort to create religious identity and differences as one source among others causes of violence .in Pattani, Yala, Narathivas and four districts of Songkhla by the insurgent groups. For example, killing monks and imam (religious leaders) and burning religious places of both Buddhist and Muslim communities. These events may more or less invoke the misunderstanding between both sides. That is to say, most of insurgents are seen as Muslim members. In fact, if all people understand one factor of the culture of peace holistically, ones will not stereotype all Muslim sisters and brothers as insurgent rebels. In practice, some of people may get lost and increase the mistrust and suspicion of each other.

Different Identity

In addition, as we know, the majority of population in the Southern Thailand is Malay Muslims who are Thais. An identity such as Buddhists, Muslims, Thais and Malays is full of their unique characteristic and autonomy. It needs the tolerance, compassion, peace education and heartful communication to learn, to grow the understanding and sympathy to differences of all these identities.

As a result, what we heard from the dialogical circles conducted by Mahidol University Research Center for Peace Building, we learned there are a lot of misunderstandings from both Buddhists and Muslims. For example, one of Buddhist monks asked for the explanation from Muslim friends that according to his own experience, some young Muslim children usually hid their faces and ran away after they saw an ordained one of other religion. This is the simple misunderstanding which is passed on from their seniors. In the Buddhist-Muslim dialogue, Muslim religious leaders had a chance to explain the correct teachings and practices in accordance with their scripture.

From Muslim experience, one of the partners in dialogue shared the uncomfortable feeling derived from the public that is more or less is Buddhists. That is to say, most of the time, people often misunderstand that halal food is the same as vegetarian food.

If there is no choice, Muslims sometimes need to compromise with the limited conditions.

Furthermore, Buddhist friends from the sensitive security area would like to respect the Muslim culture and identity of women's wearing veil to cover their faces leaving only eyes. The point is what should they do appropriately in accordance with both the search for national security and respect for Muslim identity In case of ignoring and less respect to other identity, the conflict will certainly happen. This may be raised up to religious misunderstanding.

These examples seem to be small issues comparing to prejudge and conclude Islamic teaching as violent action of *jihad* which needs a lot of careful explanation and understanding. Yet, it is still important to consider these issues, Therefore, this is a starting point of the roles of region to support political and security movement.

Up to this point, ones may realize the important roles of religious leaders and communities. Since religions are composed of the true, the good and the beautiful. Religions provide the code of proper conduct for people to live together peacefully. In case that the religious leaders could encourage people to translate the good teaching into action, it would be good enough to use religious essences to support politics.

Roles of Religious Leaders

According to the famous late Buddhist monk, *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*, he pointed to the proper and expected duties of (Buddhist) followers including every one in religious communities.

The three heritages of *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu* are 1) studying and practicing holistically the teachings of ones' own religion, 2) cooperating and having good relations with other religions, 3) fighting with materialism. Concerning the first heritage, it is true that not knowing and understanding enough ones' teaching will lead to the wrong or improper practices. For example, *jihad* in the scripture is full of conditional and definite explanation. It is not too easy for anyone to call for *jihad* as they wish. Therefore both Buddhists and Muslims need to learn about their own teaching clearly in order

to avoid the unnecessary misunderstanding as examples mentioned previously.

Concerning religious teachings as a preventive factor and a transformed conflict, the teachings and actions could also be regarded as 'healing method' for the suffering pasts due to violent situations. That is, meditation is obviously a way of being in the present moment. 'Beginning a New' is another practice in a community to help suffering people to forget in order to forgive healthy. That is to say, before sharing the hurt feeling, ones should talk about the goodness of that person for 2 times. Then the members in that community listen to what both sides want the community to support.This is a practice belonging to 'Plum Village', a Zen Buddhist community in France.

Applying this practice to the violent situations in the South, if both government and the insurgent groups would like to forgive each other and begin a new relationship, they may follow this practice from the religious community in order that the dream of 'the national forgiveness day' may become true!

Concerning the second duty, religious leaders should realize the necessity of the implied intra and inter-religious dialogue. The heartful and peaceful communication through 'deep listening' is encouraged to get rid of bias and create the learning and transforming any conflicts. In practice, from time to time, ones conduct dialogue between Buddhist and Muslim leaders to hear each side's limitation, obstacles and unpleasant experiences of harmonious living together. However, it is also urgent to call for the gathering of followers within the same religion to listen to each other about the traditional and new understanding and practices of people in the daily life especially in the violent contexts.

The last heritage seems not to be directly related to the violent situations in the Southern Thailand. In fact, the cooperation of religious leaders in fighting with 'materialism and consumerism' is an inherent factor to reduce conflict and violence. That is, one of root causes of violence in this area is not only the effort of some groups of people to be independent but also the competition of sharing 'benefit' of illegal goods, drugs and other resources. Teachings and practices in all regions advice people to have awareness and be mindful to control the unlimited desires of people. The attachment of benefit leads to injustice and oppression which are considered as 'structural violence'. Wherever there is no justice, no sincerity and no truth keeping, another kind of violence, called 'liberative violence' may burst out. In the deep south of Thailand , some of Muslim local people may be treated partially and lose benefits due to not being able to speak Thai, due to the bias

and not understanding of Malay culture and Islam. Therefore religious leaders can play important roles to fight with materialism which is another way of conflict transformation.

To be sure, religious communities which include teachings and practices of religious followers and leaders' roles can be able to be supportive to national security and politics.

Furthermore, it seems that the strength of religious leaders is in the light of promoting inner / spiritual development of followers. This uniqueness of religious dimension is also related to a concept of deep democracy. Monks and Imam should be leaders to practice 'deep democracy'. In this paper, the Buddhist teachings will be referred in order to show that religions could support political movement.

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What is Deep Democracy?

The term 'Deep Democracy' was developed by *Arny Mindell* in 1988. Mindell, a physicist and Jungian Analyst had researched and written extensively on how awareness creates reality and how we perceive it on different levels, creating different frameworks of reality. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_democracy)   Later Mindell related this understanding to a political principle, Deep Democracy then is an attitude that focuses on the awareness of voices that are both central and marginal. All voices including the wisdom inherent in minority, states of awareness, and frameworks of reality are important, whereas 'classical democracy' likely focuses on majority rule and simply ignoring or overriding the unsaid voices of the marginalized. Due to the lack of open communication, Deep Democracy, instead, allows such unheard voice and freedom to act in spite of power differences. 'Conflict here is seen not as something to be avoided, but as an opportunity for learning and change. The earlier a conflict is expressed and spoken about in the open, the less painful it will be'. (Nelson and McCarthy 2006, 36)

> *Just as conventional democracy strives to include all people*
>
> *in a political process, Deep Democracy further this by striving*
>
> *to foster a deeper level of **dialogue** and **inclusivity** that is open*
>
> *to including not only all people in the sense of the right to vote*
>
> *but is also open to allowing space for various and competing*
>
> *views, tensions, feelings, and styles of communication in a way*

> *that supports awareness of relative rank, power, and privilege*
>
> *and the ways in which these tend to marginalize various views,*
>
> *individuals and groups.*

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_democracy)

To be sure, Deep Democracy focuses on not only everyone based on different view points, term of references and values but also every feeling be represented. For example, when one deals with the conflicts and violence in the South, it cannot be sustainable without addressing the Deep Democracy aspects, the feeling of hate and revenge, the hope for a peaceful life together, the despair of not being accepted and low self esteem etc. Therefore, 'Deep Democracy is awareness of the diversity of people, roles, and feelings, and a guesthouse attitude toward whatever comes to the door of one's attention.' (Mindell 2002, vii)

Is there anything wrong with the traditional democracy? Generally speaking, a democracy is 'a form of government in which ordinary citizens may take part in governing'. Democracy can be characterized by free and just elections, by the right to vote and to stand for election, by freedom of association (speech, assembly), and by access to alternative information sources (http://www.politicsdefined.com /content/democracy.htm) Therefore it seems democracy is suitable for letting people to have a collective decision making and power sharing. But in reality and practice, how much democracy works if it does not start from and emphasize on 'awareness' of each individual. 'Awareness' may imply the notice of inclusivity as one member in the large whole who is included and care for the good of the whole. Whenever the voices, ideas and feelings have been heard, it may have 'a transformation of separation to interconnectedness in the civic arena…at its essence, Deep Democracy is the inner experience of interconnectedness.' (Wilson 2004, 1)

> *It is the exercise of one's membership in a larger whole, the acceptance*
> *of one's responsibility for that whole, and the desire to act for the good*
> *of the whole: the realization that 'I care'…From a system perspective,*
> *Deep Democracy is an open dynamic system springing from the diverse*
> *points of creative tension between individual and community held in place*
> *by the transformation of self through greater understanding of compassion*

> *for, and relationship with an expanding circle of others…Deep Democracy*
>
> *will not be created by a master plan, experts, or government officials, but*
>
> *rather by small daily acts of engagement.*
>
> (Wilson 2004, 2)

Therefore, Deep Democracy focuses on of 'awareness' of each member including the minority to take part in activity of the whole group through the realization that *everyone is interrelated in one way or other ways*. **'Deep Democracy is a facilitation methodology based on the assumption that there is wisdom in the minority voice and in the diversity of viewpoints, and that this wisdom has value for the whole group**…It is most useful when things are unsaid and need to be brought into the open…'(Pruitt and Thomas 2007, 217)

Interconnectedness for Supporting a Content of Deep Democracy and Peace Education

One of important Buddhist teachings which is useful for consideration is the teaching of *interconnectedness*. To repeat the reference once more: *'When there is not this, there is not that. Ceasing this ceases that.'* (M.II:32) Everything depends on each other. Especially, Buddhists believe in the concept of rebirth. Therefore, each individual may be born as relatives, brothers, sisters in the great numbers of their reborn time. This teaching suggests us to think that everyone may be related in some ways or other ways. For example, Muslim friends may be our parents or members in our family in some of the previous life. Their lives are also valuable and should not be considered as 'burden' of society. Even any suspected insurgents and the already proved insurgents still need to get 'compassion' from all people. One of another culture of peace is 'a kind of hating of the evil' of those insurgents but still need to express 'loving-kindness' to their insurgents' humanity as well. This understanding is 'peace education' necessary for the roles of religious leaders to translate the good teachings of universal love and mindfulness to the whole. Other people could depend on them in terms of being good lessons of natural law of reality. That is, all seek for happiness and avoid suffering.

Generally speaking the Muslim friends are considered as the minority group in society and often excluded and lack of access to resources and power. In fact, in Deep Democracy, these people's need and voices are valuable. In Deep Democracy, they are most welcome to share and join in

decision-making to proceed having taken account of the insight of wisdom of the minority view. This *interconnectedness* teaching also implies to a concept of *diversity*. When each unit in this universe moves, it affects on others as well. ***Therefore one should realize not only the importance of the diverse identity of each one such as gender, race, age, health, social rank, education, profession, sexual orientation, religion and language but also be aware of maintaining the harmony among this diversity of relationship.*** Although each unit may possess different kinds of identity and autonomy, each still depends on each other and should be able to live together peacefully. Each person's action will affect more or less on others in one way or other ways. Therefore the crisis such as ecological destruction, structural and domestic violence including terrorism which is the important factors for the sustainable democratic system should not be considered as personal responsibility of any houses or any communities but people should identify themselves as parts of the problems to reduce them together. By being aware of the interconnectedness and diversity, Deep Democracy will have a chance to work efficiently. This kind of understanding is considered as 'peace education' which is really important for the rise of religion-based political movements.

The Basis for Deep Democracy

In order to allow the unsaid voices to be heard, it is suggested to build these following three habits in our culture. (Wilson 2002, 2)

1. The habit of listening to understand the 'other' before advocating a position.

2. The habit of reflecting on, and revealing, one's own assumptions and values.

3. The habit of sensing together the emergent future of the whole organism or field.

For the first habit, it usually goes well with the nature and process of dialogue. In other words, one of the core practices of Deep Democracy is 'dialogue.'

The Habit of Listening in Dialogue as a Basis of Deep Democracy

According to Wilber, '*Mutually respectful dialogue is indeed the time-honored method of linking self and other in a dance of understanding, a dance which is deeply conducive to integral embrace.'* (Wilber 2001, 138) As we know, Dialogue focuses on '*deep listening'* (Bohm: http://www.Thedialoguegrouponline.com/ whatsdialogue.html). Roughly speaking, deep listening is not only hearing but understanding the standpoints of others. As Swidler (Swidler 1987, 6) explains more that we would do dialogue in order to *learn* about *different* reasons, positions, needs and stories of others, then *grow* the understanding, loving-kindness and sympathy to others. We may *change* the misunderstanding, bias, suspicion, prejudices and prejudgment towards others, after dialogue we can cooperate to join hand, head and heart to reduce the problems of humanity. Such kind of deep listening could take place when people have 'mindfulness' and intend to hear and listen to other people's stories. Put in another way, 'Deep Democracy starts with the practice of civic dialogue, where one begins to listen to know the 'other,' to see through others' frames, and to recognize and expand one's own frame. (Wilson 2004, 2)

According to a famous Buddhist Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh, the important of 'listening' is well described. That is, '*for dialogue to be fruitful, we need to live deeply our own tradition and, at the same time, listen deeply to others. Through the practice of deep looking and deep listening, we become free, able to see the beauty and values in our own and others' tradition.* (Ellsberg 2001, 136)

In additions, listening to others with compassion, with non judgmental attitudes and with sympathy are the core factors of deep listening in dialogue. Such kinds of listening require a lot of process of inner value and practices such as loving kindness, broad-minded and authentic sympathy and empathy. Up to this point, one may agree that Deep Democracy involves with inner experiences of people. Therefore it may not too far to consider: 'Listening not only makes democracy work, it infuses it with a climate of mutual regard, comfort and pleasure in working together.' (http://.geonewsteller.org/democracy.pdt)

However, practicing the habit of listening to the minority and less power's voices is important. In Deep Democracy, the minority voice of 'no' may happen, we need to encourage people to spread the 'no.' In this way, Deep Democracy invites conflict and disagreement.

> *When Deep Democracy encourages conflict, it is based on an assumption that conflict is already present and actually inevitable. The idea here is to try to bring it on as early as possible so that it will be less painful and explosive and more generative and transformational…The result, when this process works at its best, is a lively openness and transparency and a very powerful strengthening of relationships and collaboration.*
>
> (Nelson and McCarthy 2006, 39)

Applying this above concept to our work, during the process of dialogue, any tension may take place, it is a good time to challenge them about various virtues. Once in our work of conducting dialogue done of *Mahidol Research Center for Peace Building,* we conduct dialogue to solve the problem of garbage disposal between Buddhist government officers and Muslim local villagers. For sure, it is not the problem of different religious belief but it is the claim to support their position and actions that each side is right. What I like to highlight is the social status between these two groups is not the same. The former is governmental officers such as Mayor of the district and his followers, the latter is local Muslim people. One of the ground rules of dialogue is realization of '**full equality and participation'** of both sides. The former asked for the right to explain first in order to win over in doing Dialogue. The facilitator did not allow any privilege without following the ground rules. We need to keep on rules and allowed that dialogue group and the minority of less power to think it was possible to say 'no.' The officers then were not pleased at all. In addition, we would like to remind them of understanding a concept of 'power' by letting them participate in the activity of power. This activity is: having a pair of partner in dialogue to take turn sitting on the floor and stand in front of his or her partner. Each one has different identity such as a man or a woman, an officer or a local villager, junior or senior, a Muslim religious leader or a Muslim young lady etc. They took turn to sit and stand and they described how they felt sincerely. Each person experienced both pleasant and unpleasant feeling. It seemed that they could sympathize the position of the others. Then we added more body of religious knowledge what is the criteria to judge people in accordance with Buddhist and Islamic teachings. By this way, we think that they have more or less a chance to cultivate personal growth and tolerance. We added more teaching to support the concept of human dignity and security. We then realize that process of dialogue did work more effectively when we related their doing dialogue with religious dimension.

The Habit of Reflection in Buddhism

It is very interesting to learn that Buddhist teaching emphasizes on not only mindfulness but also reflection. Once in the scripture, the Buddha teaches the importance of reflection to Rahula, his son.

> *'What think you, Rahula? What is a mirror for?'*
>
> *'To reflect, Sir.'*
>
> *'In just the same way you must reflect again and again*
>
> *before doing every act, in speaking every word and in*
>
> *thinking every thought.*

(M.I: 415)

As mentioned earlier, Deep Democracy invites the minority voice to take part, it also 'requires educating ourselves to notice all our inner experiences while dealing with the outer world, holding an awareness in a given moment of feelings, dreaming, and social power'. (Mindell 2002, 14) By being able to notice and be aware of, one should practice reflecting on what we hear, listen and experience. This kind of habit is always encouraged to practice whenever we hear all rumors especially the political rumors and all exaggerated political campaign. Reflection also represents the value of being aware, mindful, be self critical and be in the present moment and realize what things are as they are. These kinds of inner value are found immensely in Buddhist teachings and work well in the process of Deep Democracy.

The Habit of Sensing together the emergent Future of the whole Organism or Field

From Buddhist perspective, there are two important quotations to encourage us to hope for developing and transforming together for the whole. That is,

> *'In this one-fathom long body along with its perceptions*
>
> *and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the*
>
> *world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to*
>
> *the cessation of the world.'*

(S.I: 62)

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It implies that 'we are the world'. Whatever we like to develop and change is possible for us (human beings) to make it. It depends on our self realization of 'we, the people' (although we are the minority in the group).We altogether can make an effort to solve the hopeless problems. Only do we know ourselves then we can become 'masters' to change things and make a difference. It also goes well with the important point of Deep Democracy 'to get clear in yourself about who you are and how you are the world. If you are open to yourself, you will feel better and be more open to others as well.' (Mindell 2002, 33)

Another Buddhist teaching of 'the whole world is one family' is useful to confirm our effort to transform of separation to interconnectedness. *'Monks, it is not easy to find a being who has not been a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a son, or a daughter, in this endless repetition of existence.'* (S.II) To repeat, the concept of the whole universe is one family is clearly emphasized as in a beautiful poem of Thich Nhat Hanh.

> *There has not been a moment*
>
> *When we have not **inter-been.***
>
> *Therefore you know*
>
> *that as long as you continue to breathe,*
>
> *I continue to be in You.*

(Ellsberg 2001, 55)

By being aware of interconnectedness, one may remind oneself of a meaningful cooperation in 'nurturing the capacity of individuals and the group to find their voices and connect with others'. (Wilson 2004, 2) By doing so, one may learn (civic dialogue), know (civic knowing) and sense (civic willing) together what should be done and set a shared vision for the community through the co-creative process of making the invisible visible (civic manifesting). Then one may call these core practices as an invitation for 'participatory consciousness' (Wilson 2004, 2) Deep Democracy proposes the 'full participation' of the inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes as 'outer work.' At the same time it furthers challenging for the cooperation of head, hands especially inner quality from mind, heart and spirit as 'inner work' to become 'oneness' even with the ones who their voices are different from the majority. Then the call for morality and its place in Thai politics may be possible. Violent conflicts which may have their origins in human insecurity should be reduced.

Example of introducing Deep Democracy through Dialogue

It is said that most conflicts in our time may be derived from one factor of miscommunication and prejudgments of others. It is the judgments that others are wrong and belong to the different groups whether majority or minority. At the Youth Detention Center, Songkhla, older children who have been living in this place longer usually control a group of young and weaker children as their followers. They even can order and violate the weak's rights through physical, mental violence. They may injure and abuse them in accordance with their wishes including sexual abuse. Then Mahidol University Research Center for Peace Building proposed to conduct 'dialogue' for the selected groups of children. We believe that through the nature and process of dialogue can reduce tension and conflicts due to an opportunity to have 'deep listening' to the reasons, feeling and suffering of others.

How does dialogue work? David Bohm (1917-1992) a well-known quantum physicist introduces that dialogue comes from the roots 'dia' (through) and 'logos' (meaning).(Bohm,1996) Dialogue then signified 'meaning flowing through us'. It means that though the nature of dialogue, people may be able to hear and listen to each other although our idea, thought, view point may be different. We would like to listen to and learn what others people think, feel and experience without judging them by their physical gesture, or working or even the words. Above all, we are encouraged to listen to each other based on the feeling of loving-kindness.

Through 'deep listening', the older children are encouraged to listen to the weaker children with loving kindness and think along that both 'you' and 'I' are encountering suffering of limited freedom and the same harsh situations and strict regulations. Both of us would like to leave this detention as soon as we can. We are facing the same destiny, how come we would like to add more suffering to each other. Thinking and listening to others like this are based on the loving kindness mind. Then the nature of dialogue gives a chance for children to say, to share and to learn the situation, reasons and feeling of others. For example, many children complained that they experience emotional violence every time when staffs search for illegal drugs in their sleeping dormitory because they lost the 'encouraged objects' such as his girl friend's picture, their parents' letter. They also ask for the possibility to bring a note book to write in their dormitory. Then some staffs who participate in dialogue have a chance to explain why such regulation was derived from. They said this prohibition of bringing something to the dormitory was due to some children used paper for making illegal drug. Such kind of learning could happen only on the process of dialogue when both sides develop 'trust' to each other and then are able to say something frankly.

Please note that this process is not easy because the staff have authority and any kind of measure of discipline to control and punish children.

Furthermore, listening to others with loving-kindness should go along well with the habit not to judge others as 'wrong', only 'different' or 'opposite' do be allowed to follow later.

The purpose to 'suspend' the thoughts (of judging others) can happen when each person is mindful to observe one's mind. It sounds too difficult for children to practice such mindfulness. In fact, there are some activities to prepare them which we are going to describe later.

Above all, listening to others on the basic thinking to respect human value and dignity are important to indicate to children in the detention. That is to say, the way to live peacefully with people especially people from different culture, belief and status, ones need to realize the 'golden rules' in most religions. 'Do to others what you like them to do to you.'

What the group involves is not only ending the suffering of each other but they are also practicing DEEP DEMOCRACY.

Up to this point, one may realize the dream of Deep Democracy to become possible in Thai context. I believe any religions more or less usually support the movement of Deep Democracy. In case of Buddhism, it is only asking for the possibility of expansion of Deep Democracy by translating the related Buddhist teachings and attitudes into action of each individual. Then the separation, loneliness, and conflict will be transformed into interconnectedness and harmony of the whole.

Furthermore, this explanation is a kind of nonviolence which is 'something we construct and grow into.' As Gandhi stressed, 'nonviolence is a continual series of 'experiments with truth' through which we gradually learn how to be nonviolent.' (Laura Slattery and others 2005, 7). Although this concept of deep democracy is new in Thai society but its essence of nonviolence and inner development is already existed in the teachings and practices of all religions. Therefore in encouraging

religious leaders and communities to take part in transforming our lives and our society is providing and conducting 'dialogue and deep democracy' and spreading this knowledge and practices as a culture in daily life in Thai society. By such doing, the rise of religion-based political movements could be happen through the cooperation of all religious leaders and communities.

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Building Capacity to Manage Global Crisis: Lessons Learned

Gregory Cran

Conflict, in particular violent conflict, has had devastating consequences on civilian populations, impacting regional investment and parliamentarians' ability to govern. Conflicts have emerged from fervent ideological and hegemonic practices, inadequate and corrupt systems of governance, conflicting relations among differing groups, or from environmental degradation or land-use decisions that negatively affect those living in the area. These are situations that often begin small, but then escalate due to a number of factors, not the least of which is an inability on the part of local authorities to recognize the nature and extent of the problem. This escalating effect has led to overly aggressive forms of tactical intervention, counter measures, political turmoil and confusion, leading to growing resistance to and for change.

Managing conflict before it escalates into violence is the greatest challenge facing not only parliamentarians, but also civil society organizations (CSO), non-government organizations (NGO) and others. Managing conflict effectively means that parliamentarians and others must learn that using blame rhetoric is not a solution; instead parliamentarians and other parties need to recognize the need to engage the public in co-managing conflict, be it environmental degradation, systemic violence or corrupt systems of governance.

The role of parliamentarians in managing conflict and improving governance systems and practice has been a source of concern for the United Nations, World Bank Group, international NGOs, Buddhist communities and religious organizations and for parliamentarians themselves in their efforts to address poverty, anti-corruption and inter-group violence. In October 2004, a study group session in Colombo, Sri Lanka brought together a group of parliamentarians from conflict-affected countries with World Bank specialists, representatives from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and conflict resource people from Canada, Sri Lanka and Serbia. Here parliamentarians discussed a range of governance and conflict management issues they faced and identified the need for further dialogue within their respective regions.

However, can dialogue alone lead to constructive change? Conceptually, despite good intentions, dialogue suffers if the parties are not well informed and the process itself is not skilfully managed.

This paper is not written from a Buddhist perspective, but rather instead its purpose is to inform those interested in 'peace the Buddhist way' to recognize the

need to look beyond the reductionist approaches the conflict literature and practitioner models often prescribe. Dialogue (and other process forms of intervention) is shaped by the assumptions one makes about conflict, which influences how we think about 'solutions'. The challenges Thai parliamentarians faced in their government's attempts at intervening in the wave of violence in southern Thailand, without first understanding the nature of conflict, is a key example. This paper draws on the Thai government's intervention approaches taken since 2004. The intent, however, is not to rewrite the history of southern Thailand or the long standing secessionist identities, but rather to note the lessons that emerge as the situation continues to unfold.

This paper introduces a framework that posits that there is an interrelationship between individual and group identity, cultural infusion and structural conditions that influence relational patterns, which in turn influence structural conditions, cultural infusion and one's identity. The framework is a composite of various fields of study and how these fields have focused on parts of a whole, rather than the 'system' of how we come to be who we are with each other. The paper is based on the notion that relational patterns between individuals and among groups of individuals are not only interrelational but inseparable when it comes to understanding how conflict stories emerge. The application of this framework (in regard to the situation in southern Thailand) highlights some of the contributing factors that strategic interventions, be it through dialogue or other expressive means, must consider.

Conflict in Southern Thailand:

In 2005, a group of parliamentarians from Thailand attended a study group session at Royal Roads University. The parliamentarians represented the three main political parties at the time, namely – Thai Rak Thai Party, Democratic Party and Chart Thai Party. Although the agenda for the study group session was resource-based conflict and anticorruption, the key concern was the violence in southern Thailand and the need to discuss this issue in detail, which they did by setting aside their party differences and examining the conflict collectively, sharing whatever information they had. When asked of their understanding of the conflict, some thought the conflict was the violence (rather than seeing violence as a rupture), while most admitted they did not know. Many remembered the stories they were told about the history of the Malays and the attempts of some of the Malay sultanates to secede from Thailand. All were aware of the rise of the ethnic Malay Muslim identity and of the key events that recently occurred.

Although the history of the growing unrest in the three southern provinces is a significant factor in understanding the nature of the conflict, what was of greatest concern to the Thai parliamentarians were more recent events in 2004 and 2005 which left approximately 800 people dead. Numerous media reports cite January 4, 2004 as the start of the insurgency when an army arsenal, 18 schools and police posts were torched, along with several bombs being set off the following day. Four senior ranking soldiers were killed escalating into large scale violence where insurgents killed approximately 600 people in a series of shootings and bombings in the area. However, a series of drive-by motorcycle shootings, killing approximately seventy police officers, had taken place over the previous three years. The Prime Minister and other government officials had often denied that there was a conflict and that these earlier incidents were unrelated.

The next event following the January 4 attacks occurred April 28, 2004 when another series of attacks on police posts and army checkpoints occurred throughout Pattani, Yala and Songkla, resulting in the deaths of 107 people, mostly teenagers who had armed themselves with knives and machetes. This led to the showdown at the Krue Se Mosque, where 32 insurgents had retreated, when the senior army commander ordered an assault on the historic Mosque, after fearing reprisal by local Muslims living in the area.[1] However, the most troubling event by far occurred on October 25, 2004 when a demonstration outside a police station ended in the deaths of approximately 85 Muslim men and boys who suffocated from being stacked in the back of army vehicles after being arrested and transported to an army base.

There was much speculation among the parliamentarians as to whether the attacks were perpetrated by what the Prime Minister referred to as merely "criminal gangs" or what others described as the actions of separatist groups, such as the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO),[2] the Gerakan Mujahideen Islamiya (GMIP), the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), or some of the smaller fringe groups. Adding to the problem was a growing concern about transnational organizations, like the Jemaah Islamiya (JI), becoming a key actor in the region and the recent influx of *Madrasas* (Islamic schools), especially those that have a reputation for radical teachings. There was also a growing concern that the targeting of Buddhist monks would increase the likelihood of sectarian violence as the situation became characterized by the media as a religious conflict.

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[1] The Nation, "Southern Carnage: The Kingdom Shaken", 29 April 2004.
[2] PULO was a popular separatist movement in southern Thailand during the 1960s and 1970s claimed to represent the interests of the Malay people in their fight against Thai colonialism. They have recently resurfaced as the New PULO.

Labelling Conflict:

Identity and conflict emerge from stories about injustice, hegemony and suspicion. These are stories that focus on matters of difference, rather than sameness, fuelled by 'us versus them' rhetoric. Which injustices led to violence is not known, although it is clear that the heavy handed approach by the Thaksin government provided insurgents with an opportunity to use negative public sentiment to consolidate their role among those living in the south as well as those belonging to other likeminded organizations. As Harish (2006) concluded:

…torture and detention by security forces…the use of 'blacklists' and random disappearances of civil society personnel…the imposition of martial law in January 2004 and the enactment of the new Emergency Decree in July 2005 have only served to increase concerns over human rights offences in southern Thailand. Such actions have been exploited by the rebel groups to garner more support for the insurgency (p. 18).[3]

Conversely, framing the conflict as the responsibility of criminal gangs, Jemaah Islamiya or other terrorist organizations, has sparked fear and provided the government with a justification for the aggressive use of police and military tactics and disregard for human rights. The fine balance between managing policing and security operations and maintaining civilian and constituency support has led the then Prime Minister to impose marshal law one day (January 2004) and dropping one hundred million origami cranes as a peace offering over the three southern provinces on another (December 2004). This event, which coincided with King Bhumibol Adulyadej's birthday, was inspired by the Prime Minister who called on Buddhist Thais throughout the country to contribute to this peace gesture shortly after the October 25th incident when 85 Muslim men suffocated to death.[4]

Analyzing conflict is challenging if there are limited options for viewing and characterizing the conflict setting. If the conflict is characterized as a religious conflict, the situation is viewed as a struggle between two sets of religious beliefs. However, characterizing the conflict as a struggle between Muslims and Buddhists is tenuous when you take into account it is not occurring elsewhere throughout Thailand. The argument that the south was historically Malay does little to explain how people have come to be in conflict or, for that matter, how some view violence as morally justified. Hence, it is important to consider what makes the situation different in the south of Thailand.

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[3] Harish, S.P. (2006). Changing Conflict Identities: The Case of the Southern Thailand Discord. Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies No. 107, Nayang Technological Institute, Singapore.
[4] Morris, K. (2004). Thais Drop Origami Peace Bombs. BBC Online News.

It is important to recognize the interrelationship between individual and group identity, cultural influences, relational patterns, and the structural conditions in which individuals and groups are situated in order to understand how conflict emerges. The notion of 'self' is shaped and formed in relation to how we think of the 'other.' In other words, how one views 'others' is influenced by personal history and experience, cultural notions and beliefs, social structures, and individual and family circumstances. All of these experiences and beliefs are situated in an environment infused with structural and systemic conditions that in themselves influence cultural notions, social structure and circumstances, each interrelated and inseparable from one another.

	Self	Other
Internal	Identity	Relational patterns
External	Cultural influences	Structural conditions

You cannot separate the individual from the structural conditions of his or her environment in the same sense that you cannot separate the individual from his or her cultural elements, or from his/her own cognitive processes, or from the relational patterns that emerge with others. As such, when attempting to understand conflict it is important to consider the conflict patterns that have emerged, the beneficiaries of continuing conflict, and the conditions that impede change and the influence those conditions have on how people interact.

Escalation of Conflict:

If we view a conflict setting over time we would see the escalating effect that conflict often takes prior to rupturing into crisis and violence. For example, what began as resentment due to hegemonic and corrupt practices toward a group of people, in this case Malay people by authorities, eventually transformed into irredentist rhetoric and mythologized into 'us and them' narratives. This gave the PULO, GMIP and BRN organizing strength as stories of injustice circulated.

A closer examination of the conflict in the south presents numerous possibilities as to why the conflict escalated. For instance, following the imposition of marshal law in January 2004, fear and resentment of arbitrary arrests and the continued brutality shown by police during clashes with protesters and others fuelled public anger and raised tensions. Furthermore, the perceived injustice felt by family members, friends and colleagues of those killed or maimed by government security forces, coupled with the government's failure to bring those responsible to justice similarly fuelled public disquiet. These actions, whether distorted or otherwise, fuel conspiracy theories and an 'us and them' mentality which eventually lead to strategic alliances among political hard-liners. The end result is often overt or covert retaliatory measures by these groups.

The actions of police, army officers and civil servants, all of whom serve as the face of government, either mitigate or animate anger, resentment or fear. Much depends on their skill and ability to manage protests and exercise their authority with respect to due process and human rights. In a BBC news report Dr. Farish Noor[5] stated that "[e]verywhere [he] went [he] saw police and army roadblocks, manned by young soldiers who nervously kept their fingers on the triggers of their guns." Without adequate training of front line authorities crisis situations are more likely to occur and identity conflict intensifies making it more difficult to mitigate the crisis.

Escalation & De-escalation of Conflict

De-escalating Conflict

- Counter measures applied
- Aggressive tactics employed
- Emergence of political hard-liners
- Perceptions distorted
- Concerns made public
- No response
- Stories of injustice

- Crisis Intervention

- Conflict Management

- Conflict Provention

There are many forms of intervention, ranging from measures to maintain social and economic stability, to containing violence and controlling social and political upheaval. Maintaining social stability means creating the right conditions for cooperative relations through effective governance. This is what John Burton (1990) calls "conflict prevention" or achieving a collective balance among the interests and aspirations of all constituents. Ideally, this is built on a civil and judicial foundation

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[5] BBC Online Report November 18, 2004.

that is seen as just and fair. *Conflict provention* takes into account environmental influences, which consist of:

- *Structural conditions,* such as state rules and regulations (or lack of rules and regulations), organizational policies and practices, enforcement measures and accessibility to or control of media and other communications; and

- *Systemic conditions*, such as societal norms and other cultural expectations, economic conditions, corrupt and hegemonic practices.

When conflict persists or escalates the second stage of intervention consists of managing conflictual relations by removing the dissonant factors. *Conflict management* is where stakeholders, be they parliamentarians, NGOs or CSOs, co-manage a conflict situation using a problem solving or dialogical process intended to encourage collaboration and an outcome mutually agreed to by the key individuals (persons of influence) and their organizations.

The third level is 'crisis intervention' which, of all three levels, is the most challenging as it often requires extensive resources, for both the short and long term, to address the imbroglio that results from chaos, whether it is violence and political turmoil. *Crisis intervention* occurs when chaos erupts and decisive action is needed to change the effect or course of action, bringing violence and political turmoil under control.

The announcement by the Prime Minister at the time, Thaksin Shinawatra, of the formation of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) in March 2005 after more than a year of upheaval, headed by a former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, an outspoken critic of the Thai government's handling of the unrest, is an example of crisis intervention. The NRC was made up of prominent members of society whose mandate was to examine the causes and the extent of the violence. Within the first month, the NRC released a report examining the 107 people who were killed by police April 28, 2004 and the extra judicial executions of the Muslim insurgents at the Kru Se Mosque in Pattani later in the day. They also released a report on the October 2004 deaths of protesters at Tak Bai in Narathiwat who were arrested and subsequently suffocated to death after being detained and put in the rear of army vehicles.

The NRC spoke of the need to end martial law, promote justice and the rule of law, compensate the victims of violence, address economic problems through education, and support cultural diversity. On June 5, 2005 the NRC recommended introducing Islamic Law; allowing Pattani-Malay (Yawi) as a working language in the region; and establishing a Peaceful Strategic Administrative Center (a rebirth of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center that former Prime Minister

Thaksin Shinawatra disbanded in 2001), that would include an unarmed peacekeeping force as well. Although, at first, there appeared to be political support for these recommendations, in the end they were opposed by former General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Privy Council, who at the time seemed to have the last word on the matter.

However, *crisis intervention* has the potential to create unforeseen circumstances that are unpredictable in their outcome. Political turmoil continued after the release of the NRC's reports and words were exchanged between the Prime Minister and his Commander in Chief of the Royal Thai Army, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin.[6] On August 15, 2006 General Sonthi accused the Prime Minister of political interference and asked the government to "Free the military and let it do the job."[7] General Sonthi asserted that he would negotiate with leaders of the insurgency, thus breaking with government policy. This strategy was unworkable, though, as it was still not clear who was behind the insurgencies.

On September 19, 2006, while the Prime Minister was in the United States speaking to the United Nations General Assembly, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin and other military officers led a military coup against Thaksin Shinawatra's government dissolving Cabinet, Parliament and the Constitutional Court. In doing so, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin temporary assumed the powers of the Prime Minister's office. *Crisis intervention* was driven by a need, in this case a coup, to contain a volatile political situation.[8]

General Sonthi, as prime minister pro tem, reinstated the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center and the Civilian-Police-Military Task Force, both of which had been dissolved by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001. At present there is no indication as to whether the reinstatement of these institutions will lead to the arrests of those responsible for the violence; nor is there any indication that the arrest of those who perpetrated the violence would end the violence.

Looking forward, the next step is to develop strategies to change the conditions that gave rise to the conflict in the first place. This leads to the question as to whether the separatist campaign of Bersatu (Bersatu, which means *united* in Malay) is an umbrella organization of PULO, BRN and smaller splinter groups), and others is a political solution, rather than one that addresses the underlying influences.

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[6] General Sonthi is the first Muslim to assume the role of Commander in Chief. He was appointed to the post in October 2005. One of his key supporters was former General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Privy Council.

[7] The Bangkok Post, "Deep South: Army wants peace talks but unsure who with", 19 September 2006.

[8] The political situation was becoming more volatile due to increased protests and the potential for violence in Bangkok, allegations of conflict of interest and corruption directed toward the Prime Minister and an election to be held in October 2006 with the polls indicating that the Prime Minister and his Thai Rak Thai party were likely to win another majority government, based on his popular support in the rural areas of Thailand.

Furthermore, it is prudent to consider whether implementing the NRC recommendations would alter the conditions which brought the parties into conflict in the first place. It is important for the new political regime in Bangkok to question the assumptions they are making with respect to the conflict, the ways in which they can broaden their understanding and what strategies they can implement in the short and long term to change the conflict.

Building Capacity to Manage Conflict and Change:

The ability to manage conflict and change begins with an assessment of what is known or not known about the conflict. This means identifying the interrelationship of factors influencing the conflict setting. Such an assessment enables parliamentarians and others to identify the questions that need asking before intervening or embarking on a course of action. For instance, if we use an interrelational framework we would see a number of questions arise.

Identity

How is conflict being described and how does the conflict influence people's identity? What assumptions are being made?

Relational Patterns

What are the competing stories and how do these stories or events influence how people interact? What is the relationship like between NGOs, civil society organizations and government?

Cultural Influences

Who benefits from seeing the conflict continue? Who believes they have entitlements? And who believes they don't? What influencing factors undermine change? Where do individuals turn for answers? How are conflict stories managed by media? Who gets listened to and who not?

Structural Conditions

What conditions impede change and how do these conditions influence how people think or interact? What security and safety risks have been identified and how are these risks being managed by those in authority?

After assessing what is known or not, the next set of questions should focus on the *intervention* role. Intervention ranges from dialogue and diplomacy to use of force. Much would depend on whether the conflict setting is manageable and there is mutual concern among key actors to end or prevent violence. Some examples of questions include: Is the conflict manageable? If one was to alter certain conditions what impact would this have on the conflict stories? Which conditions are more pressing than others? Are key actors from NGOs and other civil society organizations willing to assume a strategic role in co-managing the situation? In crisis situations what measures are needed to de-escalate the conflict? How well prepared are crisis managers when it comes to public safety, disaster management, crime enforcement and prevention?

How one thinks about the conflict typically shapes how one thinks about intervention. If violence is seen as the actions of a criminal element then intervening would be seen as a policing responsibility. If, on the other hand, the conflict was civil unrest presumably the intervention would be seen to have a political dimension. Here, law enforcement's role would be maintaining the peace, while political strategies or interventions would be considered and possibly acted on.

For Taksin Shinawatra violence in the south was seen as a policing problem. As a former police officer,[9] with graduate and post graduate degrees in criminal justice, in July 2002 he viewed the killing of police officers as strictly a criminal justice matter where tougher measures were required to stamp out the problem.[10] Later, his Minister of Interior Purachai Piemsomboon, after visiting southern Thailand, characterized the situation as the work of drug traffickers. This led to enforcement measures to suppress drug trafficking, not only in the south but

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[9] Thaksin Shinawatra was Deputy Superintendent of the Policy and Planning Subdivision of the Metropolitan Police Bureau of the Royal Thai Police.
[10] BBC News Report (July 11, 2002). "Thailand Tackles Violence in the South".

throughout Thailand as well. Within three weeks of this new drug enforcement campaign six hundred suspected drug dealers had been killed, which led the National Human Rights Commissioner of Thailand Surasee Kosolnavin to dub the government's anti drug campaign as "an eye-for-an-eye"[11] and condemned these practices as human rights violations.

By 2004, the Prime Minister changed his view noting that the insurgency was akin to the global war on terrorism and that the issue had been influenced by organized crime. This meant that the situation was no longer simply a policing operation as it now required military intervention as well. The manner in which he chose to intervene in the growing unrest was to reshuffle between the military and the police, appointing someone new to the position each time.

Effective Leadership:

Effective leadership, in this case, understands enough about the conflict situation to know when to act, what measures to take, and what risk advantages and disadvantages there would be for certain intervention measures over others. The challenge in being an effective leader lies in the conceptualization of leadership itself and how these conceptualizations manifest into governance practices. For example, the leadership style of Thaksin Shinawatra has often been characterized as 'chief executive officer', as if heading a corporation rather than a country. Teerayut Bunmee from Thammasat University described his leadership style as "Thaksinocracy", loosely defined as a corporate merger between autocratic and dictatorial (as one would find in the private sector), and democratic governance.[12] This type of leadership may have been looked on favorably by those who linked his leadership role to the significant improvement in Thailand's gross domestic product,[13] in particular since the Asian currency crisis in 1997. However, his rural assistance programs, his crackdown on drug trafficking, his ministerial restructuring and other policy changes were not without controversy. They were seen by some as badly needed reform and by others as a consolidation of power, leading to violations of human rights, political interference and conflict of interest.

This polarized view of leadership is not unique to south-east Asia, but indicative of many parliaments in both developed and undeveloped countries. Clearly, constituents are willing to accept certain leadership styles as long as there is a suspension of disbelief about the 'leading' role and the values he or she infuse into the governance process. Heavy handed enforcement may be seen by some as

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[11] BBC News Report (February 24, 2003). "Thai Drugs War Attacked".
[12] Bunmee, Teerayut (September 19, 2006). "Four Years of Thaksinocracy". *Mathichon Weekend* 27 (1250): 9-11.
[13] GDP grew from THB 4.9 trillion to THB 7.1 trillion.

unacceptable, but, for many, enforcement may be what is needed for change to occur. Notwithstanding, tough measures have its price when suspension of disbelief has been challenged, most notably through signs of corruption and abuse of power for personal advantage by those in leadership roles.

If conflict is viewed as a systemic or structural problem (or set of conditions) to be addressed outside the legislative process or through law enforcement measures, then effective leadership recognizes the need for involving key constituents in the change process. For instance, bringing parliamentarians together with NGOs, civil society organizations, universities and others (key people of influence) is an important step for managing conflict and change. In doing so, it is important to ensure that those who do come together are willing to set aside political differences to view the conflict setting from a mutual vantage point. This is a managed process that requires skill and direction, in particular where relations among the key actors has not always been favorable or constructive. Many NGOs and other civil society organizations are often viewed by parties in power as oppositional and therefore unsuitable for building a coalition. Situations like these benefit from trained resource people who have the depth, experience and understanding to recognize influencing factors and how they might assist.

Conclusion:

Managing conflict is a challenge for both parliamentarians and civil society. There are many lessons to learn from the situation in southern Thailand, not the least of which is the need to better understand the nature of the conflict. We have learned that decades of hegemonic and corrupt practices by government (and other authorities) eventually lead to conspiracy narratives and political opportunism that soon manifests into strategic alliances among political hard-liners. When insurgency and public demonstrations occur, inadequate training often brings about aggressive police and military tactics, fuelling a retaliatory response.

Managing conflict effectively requires leadership skills that begin with analysis, meaning knowing something about how conflict patterns emerge, how certain structural and systemic conditions either stabilize or de-stabilize on-going relations, and more importantly knowing when to intervene and when not. A skilfully managed intervention process is a competency that is developed through training, emulation and practice, rather than acquired through position or rank. The capacity to manage conflict, and the uncertainty that results, is the basis of effective leadership and governance in conflict-affected countries.

Viewing conflict and intervention from an interrelational construct helps inform Buddhist practice. The way in which we define who we are, and how we

view others, unfortunately draws its reasoning from our assumptive self. Without questioning our assumptions we are left with vacuous reasoning and understanding. To enhance our capacity to understand how we come to be in conflict with each other, we begin by removing the obstacles to understanding through discipline and practice, thus adding strength to the Buddhist perspective.

Post Scriptum:

In viewing the situation following the *coup d'état,* we find that numerous political attempts have been made to address the situation in southern Thailand. For instance, in 2007 former Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont apologized to the Malay Muslims for the Tak Bai incident that occurred in October 2004. However, this attempt at reconciliation did not defuse the violence, but rather led to an increase in further attacks. After months of conciliatory efforts, in May 2007, enforcement was intensified after three insurgency attacks in Narathiwat and Yala claimed the lives of 25 security officers. The military targeted villages in Yala and Narathiwat to either arrest the insurgents or expose them to the public. Aggressive military and security personnel tactics has led to a litany of protests and claims of human rights abuse.

A year later, Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej placed the blame for the deaths of 78 civilians during the Tak Bai incident on the Malay Muslims themselves, who were being transported to Tak Bai police station. He claimed that those arrested during the protest were weak from fasting during Ramadan, lacking water and food, and died after falling on one another. His statements not only confused the situation even more, but left many angry, some acting out their anger in further violence and others asking for a public inquiry.

The current Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has taken another approach to the situation. He was quoted in *Forbes* magazine in February 2009 as saying:

For the past few years the approach of government has been that this was a matter for the security forces and that somehow you could use force to either contain or reduce the problem…the approach of my government is different. We said development is the key, justice is the key, and we already have been down south. I went with a number of cabinet ministers, so we can pursue an economic, education and cultural agenda parallel to the work of the security forces. Our main message is that this issue is a high priority for the government, and I am not leaving it to the police and the armed forces.[14]

However, as Dr. Sukree Langputeh from Yala Islamic College asserted "[g]overnments come and go in Thailand, but the people in the three southern border

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[14] Forbes Magazine, February 16, 2009.

provinces are still waiting for the state to develop a collaborative agenda with them".[15]

Prior to 2004, the situation in southern Thailand began with Malays feeling that the treatment they were receiving by Thai authorities was unjust and both their concerns and their contributions to Thai society having gone unnoticed. Raising concern, at first ignored, then escalating into violent attacks, triggering a reaction by government and enforcement agencies, did not address the situation, but rather fuelled frustration and anger with many seeing violence as their attempt at a political 'solution'. The counter-actions of the Thai government to these insurgencies have exacerbated the problem to the extent that international human rights organizations, other governments, and other insurgency groups have now come to support one side or the other, leaving little room for dialogue and reconciliation. Although the situation in the south continues to be plagued by violent actions and aggressive counter measures, there have been meaningful attempts to bring peace to the region by non government agencies, universities, Buddhist and Muslim leaders and others. Notwithstanding good intentions, these efforts remain meaningless without addressing a broad spectrum of issues that have emerged since the violent attacks began. The key emergent issues are the lack of justice and human rights, compensation for those who died during the Tak Bai and other incidents, and a political commitment to stay a course of mutual engagement and design.

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[15] http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/282

Buddhist Reflection on Conflict Management through Dialogue:
A Discussion in the Light of Pāli Literature

Dr. Siddharth Singh,
Reader, Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies
Banaras Hindu University, India

Introduction:

How can we comprehend the Buddhist understanding of dialogue in the contemporary world and what can be the significance of that in the today's perspectives is a major question before the writer of the present paper. Let's think first what prompts us to reflect upon the importance of dialogue. What are the chief causes of most of the problems in the present day's world? Some countries are suffering from political crisis and some from social problems. Many countries are traumatized of the conflicts among different religious groups. The misapprehension regarding each others religion, culture and society is being increased day by day among its followers. Different priests and religious teachers are trying to establish a sort of belief in their adherent's mind that their own religion and social structure is the best among all, their Gods are the supreme God and all other existing religious and communities are a danger for their own religion, culture as well as society in one way or another.

This mind of every one of us has its own categories to understand the things, its own preconceived notions towards others and its own prejudices regarding every thing. Regarding our neighbors, regarding inhabitants of our neighboring cities, regarding inhabitants of other countries, regarding inhabitants of other continents, we have our predetermined opinions. Every individual has fixed ideas for other individuals and every group of human beings also has their own for other communities. When we happen to be alone, we judge others from our own personal definition of ethical or unethical, civilized or uncivilized behavior. When we are with our family members, we make remarks towards our neighboring people and try to find out any reason to criticize them just because that they are not as we want them to be. When we sit with our own city - men as well as with those of our neighbors, we discuss those differences which we have with the inhabitants of other cities and, lastly, we come to the conclusion that we are far better than those people of other cities. And we hold the same kind of discussion in the company of our own countrymen regarding other countries. We evaluate their food habits, living style, dressing sense, religious beliefs etc. and find a huge difference from ours own. Lastly, off course, we consider ourselves better than those. Similar approach we do

have in our mind-set regarding other factors of the life like caste, creed, color and religion.

Whatever we claim to know about other communities and nationals is supplied to us largely through indirect mediums like different electronic and print medium and we develop a rigid picture of them. Accordingly, we incline to hold numerous nationalistic, social, political and religious ideas which make us feel that our nation or religion is better than others and this tendency prevents us from considering other culture or religion with the same respect as we have for our own.

As soon as we commence to interact with others and begin to realize the truth about their culture, we observe that the differences are not as wide and deep as we had thought of it. These differences appear as a difference because we have made multitude of personal, social, religious and national fixed ideas concerning every aspect of life whether it is the style of living in day to day life or the issues of moral values. Whosoever or whatsoever society does not appear to us in the accordance with own definition of right or good, we immediately declare it a wrong way and inferior to ours own. Even if one knot of our heap of preconceived wrong notions is untied, several other knots of the mind are being built up day after day.

Any kind of human, regional or political cooperation is out of the question without removing the erroneous conception about each others, and above all, getting rid of our mindset of having wrongly framed "ismistic" approach within us. Neither we should expect everyone of the world to be like us nor should others do so. Then what is the formula to attain a harmonious and co-existing society with several colors inside it? This situation generates the great need of mutual dialogue in order to enhance our understanding of different people, society, political and religious traditions and cultural beliefs.

Buddhism certainly can give a tremendous insight to us how we should deal with the members of our larger family. Pāli literature, especially Tipiṭaka, is comprised of enough instances to show the Buddhist reflection on dialogue in order to proceed towards making of a harmonious world.

Buddhist Understanding of the Importance of the Dialogue:

The corollary of Buddha's teachings is virtually a repudiation of every sort of knots, taboos and preconceived notions of our mind. It affirms that the realization of the true Dharma leads us beyond the sense of all differentiations, even between the Buddha and other things. We find the example of a monk Vakkali, who was so obsessed with the body of the Buddha that he spent all his time admiring the physical body of the Buddha. Observing thus, Buddha told him,

"He, who sees Dhamma, sees me; he who sees me sees Dhamma. Truly seeing Dhamma, one sees me; seeing me one sees Dhamma." [16]

Just before his Mahāparinibbāna, the Blessed One spoke to Ānanda:

"It may be, Ānanda, that to some among you the thought will come: 'Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no longer.' But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known as the Dhamma and the Discipline, that shall be your Master when I am gone." [17]

So, the message is fairly lucid from the above lines that Buddha did not found his Dhamma and Saṅgha by the purpose of running a religious business under the priesthoodness of successive leaders. The prime rationale of the Buddha's teaching was to liberate the people from their mental tangles, not to establish himself as a God of them. As soon as the mental tangles of one are untangled, a person doesn't see any difference between others and himself. It is the very objective of the ultimate knowledge in the Buddhism and it has been in the spirit of Buddha's discourses from its commencement. Defining the very objective of his Dhamma, Buddha has pronounced:

"Monks, I have taught the Dhamma compared to a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Understanding the Dhamma as taught compared to a raft, you should let go even of Dhammas, to say nothing of non-Dhammas." [18]

This statement of Buddha echoes with the message that it is the Dhamma which is for human beings, not human beings are for the Dhamma. "Dhamma is a means, not a goal" – the very same thought continued in the whole history of Buddhism till date.

And one should proceed towards the fruitful dialogue keeping it in his mind. Any political, social or religious thought whatsoever can not be put on high esteem neglecting the ultimate goal of the humanity and the goal is peace. And that peace is never approachable without having dialogue from the followers of the holders of the other views. Buddha had realized long back the need of a common platform to settle the differences by sharing the ideas. Considering the necessity of dialogue with the recluses of other faiths and Brāhmaṇas for the welfare of the entire humanity, Buddha appeals to them:

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[16]. Feer, M. Leon (Ed.). *Saṁyutta Nikāya* . Vol. III , London: Pali Text Society, 1975, p.120

[17]. Vajira, Sister & Story, Francis (Tr.). *Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta*. Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html (Accessed on Dec. 5, 2008)

[18]. Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.).*Alagaddūpama Sutta*. Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than.html (Accessed on Feb. 8, 2009)

"As for those things, on which we do not agree, let us leave them alone. As to those things on which we agree, let the wise put questions about them, ask for reasons as to them, talk them over, with or to their teacher, with or to their fellow disciples."[19]

It is interesting to see that Buddha was not in the favor of having dialogue or, better to say, debate just for the sake of exhibition of the knowledge. On the futile metaphysical questions raised by *Poṭṭhapāda* and on being asked the reason why Buddha did not expound those, he says:

"They are not conducive to the goal, are not conducive to the Dhamma, and are not basic to the holy life." [20]

To Buddha, the objective of the dialogue was to address the real human problems rather than imaginary or metaphysical problems. *One should either keep noble silence or should have dialogue on the Dhamma*,[21] he says.

Any kind of successful mutual dialogue can only be possible if every group participating in the dialogue and related of or involved in the conflict or disagreement could have a certain amount of respect for and confidence on other groups or faiths. One must look into the attitude of Buddha towards other doctrinal views. Once an officer of *Vesāli* named *Sīha Senāpati*, who was the follower of Jain tradition, went to Buddha and having dialogue with him and influenced by his qualities and philosophy, determined to take refuge under Buddha. Buddha counseled him not to take decision so hastily and said: "*Make a thorough examination of the matter, Sīha. Investigation is profitable to well-known men like yourself.*" This statement of Buddha was pleasant to *Sīha Senāpati* and he spoke:

"Had I been won over as a disciple by some other sect, they would have paraded through the whole of Vesāli with banners, shouting: 'Sīha, the general, has joined our discipleship'. But the Exalted one merely advises me thus: Examine the matter…."

Saying thus *Sīha Senāpati* again affirmed his wish to become lay – disciple of Buddha. Observing his determination, Buddha accepted him as a lay – disciple but with a lesson:

[19]. Rhys Davids, T.W.(Tr.).*Dialogues of the Buddha (Trans. of Digha Nikaya).*Vol. I., Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2000, pp. 224-225

[20].Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.). *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*. Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.09.0.than.html (Accessed on Feb.9, 2009)

[21] .Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.). *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*. Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.026.than.html (Accessed on Jan 2, 2009)

"Your family, Sīha, for many a day has been a will-spring to the Nigaṇṭhas (followers of Jainism), wherefore deem it right to give alms to those who approach you." [22]

The very same Buddhist attitude of honor and respect towards the holders of the opposite views continued even after the time of Buddha. The great Indian Buddhist emperor Asoka (3rd B.C.) declares in his Rock Edict:

"One should not honor only one's own religion and condemn the religion of others, but one should honor other's religions for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honors his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking "I will glorify my own religion". But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines, professed by others." [23]

The above lines of King Asoka, inspired by Buddhist teachings can certainly be a manifesto of peace in today's multicultural society.

Once King *Ajātasattu* of *Magadha* wishes to attack the Vajji princes of *Vesāli* and conveys this message to Buddha through his chief minister *Vassakāra*. Buddha states that as long as Vajjians are following the seven factors of Non – Decline *(Aparihāniya Dhamma)* in their life, the magnificence and happiness of their life can not be diminished and it is impossible for King *Ajātasattu* to conquer *Vesāli* by fair means.

The very first factor of all seven portrays Buddha's view of the importance of having dialogue in his following lines: *"So long as the Vajji princes assemble frequently and have many meetings, the furtherance of their welfare and prosperity is to be expected, not their decline."*

The second factor again says:

"so long as Vajji princes assemble and disperse in harmony and unity, and carry out in harmony and unity the affairs of the Vajji country, the furtherance of their welfare and prosperity is to be expected, not their decline." Vassakāra, after hearing thus, says: *"If the Vajji princes are endowed with even a single one of these factors of Non – Decline, the*

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22. Hare, E.M.(Tr.). *Gradual Sayings (Aṅguttara Nikāya).* Vol. IV, London: Pali Text Society, 1978, p.127
23. Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught* . New York: Groove Press, 1974, pp.4-5

furtherance of their prosperity is to be expected, not their decline; how much more so if they should be endowed with all the seven factors. Venerable Gotama, there is no possibility of King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of Queen Vedehi, overcoming the Vajji princes in battle." [24]

Here, Buddha's standpoint is quite clear regarding the purpose and objective of the dialogue. In the first factor, he emphasizes the importance of the dialogue in order to proceed towards absolute harmony and unity in the society and in the second factor; he affirms the implementation of the outcomes of that dialogue process within the society.

Problems of Dialogue and Buddhist View:

Observing the problems of any dialogue process, the writer of this paper has endeavored to classify the problems and demonstrated how Buddhism deals with those issues. These are along these lines:

Problem of Projection of Own Theory as an Ultimate and Supreme Theory:

A primary problem in the beginning of any dialogue occurs if the participants appears in the dialogue with their preconceived notions for the holders of other views and consider theirs own views in the supreme position. They think themselves as protector of a specific doctrinal view they belong to and take it as their duty to guard even the dark side of their view. Buddhism has been extremely liberal regarding this issue. Buddha, himself, was not in the favor of being projected as the only omniscient personality of the world. Once, before his *Mahāparinibbāna*, Buddha was staying at *Pāvārika* mango groove of *Nālandā*. There, Sāriputta came and after paying obeisance, uttered the lines:

> *"Venerable sir, I have this faith in the Bhagavā that there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be, any Samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who can excel the Bhagavā in Enlightenment."*

Listening thus, Buddha said:

> *"How is it, Sāriputta; do you know definitely in your mind the minds of those Homage-Worthy, Perfectly Self-Enlightened Bhagavās of the past, to be able to say "such was their Sīla, practice of morality, such was their mental discipline(Samādhi), such was their Paññā, wisdom, such was their way of living and such was their emancipation?"*

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[24]. Rinpoche, S. (Ed.). *Ten Suttas of Dīgha Nikāya (Reprint)*. Varanasi :Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1987, pp.189 - 191

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir." Sāriputta answered.

Buddha further asked: *'How is it, Sāriputta, do you know……Bhagavās of the future'.*

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir." Sāriputta answered.

Buddha further asked:

> *'"How is it, Sāriputta, do you know………the present Buddha…. to be able to say "such is Bhagavās Sīla, such is his mental discipline (Samādhi), such is his Paññā, such is his way of living and such is his emancipation"?*

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir." Sāriputta again answered.

Buddha, then asked to him that if he does not know the Exalted Ones of the past, the future and the present, then how can he proclaim: *"there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be any Samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who can excel the Bhagavā in Enlightenment"*[25]?

Buddhism never supported any kind of fanaticism within its system in its whole historical development. He even gave this freedom to his disciples to abolish the lesser and minor disciplinary rules if they felt the need of it in the future.[26] The scholars and preachers of Buddhism never claim the lines of Tipiṭaka as unchangeable truth, historical single handed creation and so on; yet the Tipiṭaka's own tradition depicts the *'Kathāvatthu'*, the fifth and celebrated text of Abhidhamma Piṭaka, as a creation by a later Buddhist teacher, *Moggaliputta Tissa* of 3rd BC i.e., not less than approximately 200 years after the Buddha's *Mahaparinibbāna*.

Buddha, while educating to a young man named *Sigāla* the true way of worshipping the different directions, puts both the contemporary religious traditions namely *Samaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇa* at the same platform symbolizing as the Zenith. He further suggests him to pay same respect to the sages of both the traditions in five ways i.e. by affection in act and speech and mind; by keeping open house to them, by supplying their temporal needs. [27] *Nāgasena*, in the *Milindapañho*, says:

> *"Buddha not only praises the honor of himself, but rather praises the honor of whosoever in the world is worthy of honor."*[28]

The positive gesture of respect and honor towards opponents, which is an inevitable pre-condition to have any thriving dialogue with them, is embedded in the

[25]. Ibid, pp. 200 - 201
[26]. Ibid, p. 287
[27]. Carpenter, J Estlin (Ed.). *Dīgha Nikāya* . Vol. III, London: Pali Text Society, 1976, p.191
[28]. Trenckner, V(Ed.). *Milindapañho*. London: Pali Text Society,1962, p.241

fundamental approach of Buddhism, and this virtue is the driving force for the Buddhists to open their arms most conveniently for the other views.

Overemphasis on the Differences and Overlooking Similarities:

Another major impediment in any dialogue process is our overemphasis on the differences of the views and life whereas we often neglect the immense similarities of the basic human feelings among us. We exaggerate the differences, mostly to place our own culture at superior position while comparing with any other culture. If I ponder on the issue of religious conflict citing the example of Indian society, I observe that the biggest paradox of our educational system is that, on the one hand more than ninety nine percent of our population is religious but on the other hand we do not employ any method of providing balanced teaching of different religions in our academic curriculum in our school system. That gap of our knowledge of religion is filled up by our family members, mostly parents and grand parents. Off course, family members are also aware of a very few characteristics of the religion and that also of only their own religion. The parents and grand parents, generally with the desire to strengthen our commitment to our own religion, educate us with the overemphasis on the greatness of our own religion and put it at the supreme place among all the religions.

The scene is not very much different if we consider the approach of the scholars of religious studies. A scholar whosoever is involved in the study of any particular religion is generally, at least in India, believed to be a religious person, and accordingly, that person also takes it as his responsibility to be committed to that particular religion he is scholar of. In order to justify his position he firstly tries to prove the exclusivity of that particular religion and project it as a better religion than all others. We put a lot of energy to search the differences rather than having a look on the possibility of the similarities among us.

Certainly, the solution of the above problem can not be assimilation of the different views in one. We should rather think how we could have a harmonious relation without abandoning our own identity. Buddhism shows a path here. Buddha advocates the necessity of dialogue on the common minimum ground rather than having bitterness without establishing dialogue at all to each other. Buddhist answer to this problem can be seen in the aforesaid statement of Buddha in the *Kassapa - Sīhanāda Sutta.*

Intolerance to Criticism:

Emerging trend of intolerance towards healthy criticism of own views is another problem in the achievement of positive result of any dialogue. It, sometimes, becomes necessary for any party involved in the dialogue process to point out the genuine errors of the other party which requires a great deal of tolerance on the part of the other side. Actual examination of the capacity of tolerance of any individual or group takes place when the situation of tension appears before it. Buddha narrates a story which depicts that being calm and of composed behavior in the perfect situation is extremely easy but that doesn't say much about the qualities of a person. How do you maintain your equilibrium in the exceedingly adverse and undesirable circumstances actually tells what you are?

Once, in *Sāvatthi*, there was a lady of a household named *Vedehikā*. She had a tremendous image in the whole society of being a gentle, even – tempered and calm lady. Vedehikā had a slave named Kālī who was hard-working, skillful and efficient in her work. A day, thought occurred to the mind of Kālī: *"Is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that he anger present in my lady doesn't show? Why don't I test her?"*

So Kālī got up after daybreak. Then Vedehikā said to her: *"Hey, Kālī!"*

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up after daybreak?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?" Angered and displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī:

> *"Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it's just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't I test her some more?"*

So Kālī got up later in the day. Then Vedehikā said to her: *"Hey, Kālī!"*

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up later in the day?"

'"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?" Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then Kālī decided to go for further test of Vedehikā.

So Kālī got up even later in the day. Then Vedehikā said to her: *"Hey, Kālī!"*

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up even later in the day?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?" Angered & displeased, Vedehikā grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

> Then Kālī, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbors:

> *"See, ladies, the gentle one's handiwork? See the even-tempered one's handiwork? See the calm one's handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?"*

> After that this evil report about Lady Vedehikā circulated: *"Lady Vedehikā is vicious. Lady Vedehikā is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is violent."* Illustrating the above parable, Buddha says to the monks:

> *"In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, and calm."* [29]

Instead of endorsing the tolerance not just for the sake of tolerating any person or idea, Buddha rather recommends the cultivation of the feelings of four sublime states i.e. *Bhrahmavihāra* not only for friends and kindred, but also towards enemies. Moreover, Buddhism counts those four sublime states among forty subjects of meditation (*Kammaṭṭhāna*'s), in order to achieve supreme knowledge. Those are (1). *Mettā:* i.e. extending unlimited Universal love and good will to all living beings without any kind of discrimination, 'just as a mother loves her only child';[30](2). *Karuṇā:* i.e. compassion for all living beings who are suffering, in trouble and affliction (3). *Muditā:* i.e. sympathetic joy in others success, welfare and happiness and (4). *Upekkhā:* i.e. equanimity in all vicissitudes of life. The application of these sublime states is expected from every Buddhist in such a great extent by Buddha that he conveys his message through an example:

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[29]. Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.).*Kakacūpama Sutta.* Access to Insight.
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.021x.than.html (Accessed on 20 Jan., 2008)
[30]. Anderson, Dines & Smith, Helmer (Ed.). *Sutta - Nipāta* . London: Pali Text Society, 1965, p.26

"Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: 'Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves." [31]

Buddha was well aware that the criticism by others can never be avoided. Criticism and praising by others are a part of life and one should not abandon his noble path from the fear of condemnation or in the desire of praise. Buddha says:

"It is an old saying, not only of today. They (i.e. people) blame them who sit silent, they blame them who speak much; them who speak little too they blame. There is no one who is not blamed in this world." [32]*There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a person who is wholly blamed or wholly praised."* [33]

No consideration to self-evaluation:

A successful dialogue requires an open mind of all the involved parties to be ready for self – evaluation. An individual or a group having prejudiced mindset can never contribute in a very constructive way to any dialogue process. Buddha always kept opened the door of his teachings for any kind of evaluation. In point of fact, Buddha often illustrates the six attributes of his Dhamma while delivering the sermon:

"Well preached by the Blessed one is the Dhamma (svākkhāto), realizable in this world (saṅdiṭṭhiko), of immediate result (akāliko), inviting everyone to come and see (ehipassiko), onward-leading (opanayiko) and to be understood individually by the wise ones (paccattaṁ veditabbo viññūhi)." [34]

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[31]. Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.).*Kakacūpama Sutta.* Access to Insight. http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.021x.than.html (Accessed on 20 Jan., 2008)

[32]. Mahathera, Narada (Ed. & Trans.). *Dhammapada.* Calcutta: Mahabodhi Society of India, 1991, Gāthā No. 227

[33]. Ibid, Gāthā No. 228

[34] . *Vattha Sutta. Majjhima Nikāya* .Vipassana Research Institute. http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/ (Accessed on March 30, 2009)

Here, *ehipassiko* quality of the Dhamma needs especial attention in the present discussion that it invites everybody to come and see the Dhamma. In other words, it invites all people to verify for themselves, that it really leads to the goal, that by practicing it, one can reach the *Nibbāna*. It doesn't force anyone to accept it by blind faith. One must "come and see" and make an effort on the way to the goal.

Buddha's address to *Kālāma* community depicts Buddha's stress on the importance of the evaluation of every sort of view including his own teachings. He, while addressing the *Kālāma* community, exclaims:

> "*Kālāmas, it is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter, which is doubtful. Now, look you Kālāmas, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Do not be led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: ' this is our teacher'. But, O Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome (akusala), and wrong, and bad, then give them up……And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome (kusala) and good, then accept them and follow them.*" [35]

Buddha's pronouncement of evaluation is seen in another important example also. Once a mendicant named *Suppiya* was going along the high road between *Rājagaha* and *Nālandā* with his disciple *Brahmadatta*. *Suppiya* was dispraising Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha in many ways, but on the contrary, his pupil *Brahmadatta* was praising Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. Buddha's disciples reported this fact to him. Buddha said:

> "*Brethren, if outsiders should speak against me, or against the Doctrine (Dhamma) or against the Order (Saṅgha), you should not, on that account, either bear malice, or suffer heart - burning, or feel ill – will. If you, on that account, feel angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your self – conquest. If, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that, and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of theirs is well said or ill?*" [36]

In the similar way, Buddha further cautioned his disciples not to be delighted by the praising of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha either as it may also be an obstacle for them or prevent them from the process of introspection.

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[35]. Rahul, Walpol. *What the Buddha Taught* . New York: Groove Press, 1974, p.2-3

[36] .Rhys Davids, T.W.(Tr.).*Dialogues of the Buddha(Trans. of Dīgha Nikāya)* .Vol. I., Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2000, p.3

Buddhist Methodology to Solve the Conflict through Dialogue:

The theory of interdependence (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), undeniably, is the linchpin of the whole of the Buddhist philosophy and *Paṭiccasamuppāda* establishes the basic fact of the life that the existence and survival of every living and non – living thing is dependant on several other causes and conditions. Those causes and conditions may be either living things or non – living things or may be both at the same time. If there is nothing without cause and condition, then according to Buddhist philosophy, we must think not of only our survival and protection but of the protection and progress of every aspect of this cosmos as every minute thing of the world is connected with us and, in a way, contributing to our own development. Nothing of the world can be seen as unimportant and unnecessary as the every thing of the world is depending on several other factors which we, many times, might be not aware of.

Following its fundamental philosophy, Buddhism stresses on the great need of harmonious co – existence of the every aspect of the life. Buddhist Saṅgha has been a unique example which resolves its problem in the light of same philosophy. In the guidelines established by the Vinaya rules regarding Uposatha ceremony, one may easily observe that the Buddhist Saṅgha has to conduct their activity through the process of dialogue and the decisions has to be taken unanimously by all the members of the Saṅgha. The identification of the mistakes and decision of the non – violent punishment to the accused is not to be decided by any one person but by the whole Saṅgha after putting the error of that person before all the members.

Buddhism doesn't devote any particular chapter of the Tipiṭaka or later literature dealing with the solutions of the conflicts through the dialogue, but in the various section of Pāli literature we come across numerous instances showing Buddha's way of handling the problem by the process of dialogue which may throw a light on the Buddhist methodology of having a dialogue and managing the conflict through the dialogue process.

Suggestion to Identify the Relevant Questions to be Addressed:

According to Buddha, it should be the most necessary issue for any society or an individual to identify the true and relevant question or the problem it has to address before proceeding towards its solution. If a society or a group or an individual is engaged in solving the wrong and irrelevant issues then the solution of those issues are also not going to help the society in any way. Buddha always warned his disciples not to focus their attention towards those questions the solution of which was of no importance in order to treat the human problems. Observing the

unnecessary engagement of one of his disciples name *Poṭṭhapāda* towards irrelevant metaphysical questions, he said:

> "*This question is not calculated to profit, it is not concerned with the Norm (the Dhamma), and it does not redound even to the elements of right conduct, nor to detachment, nor to purification from lusts, nor to quietude, nor to tranquillization of heart, nor to real knowledge, nor to insight, nor to Nirvana. Therefore is it that I express no opinion upon it.*" [37]

If the concept of relevant questions will not be explicable to us then it would not be possible to achieve the solution of those problems also, as the wrong issues will only lead us towards frivolous act to solve those.

Once a person named Māluṅkyaputta, sitting alone in meditation, was distracted from his practice by philosophical dilemmas. It occurred to him that the Buddha never declared the answers to the questions concerning the nature of the universe, the soul, and the existence of the Tathāgata after death. Bothered by the Buddha's silence on these issues, he visited him an evening and threatened him with an ultimatum that if the Blessed One declares the answers of these metaphysical questions then only he will lead the holy life under him. If not, he will leave the order and return to his former life. In response, the Buddha calmly asks:

> "*Did I ever tell you to lead the holy life under me by the promise to answer these questions?*"

> "*No, Venerable Sir*", Māluṅkyaputta replies.

> "*Did you ever tell me that you would only lead the holy life under me if I answered these questions?*"

> "*No, Venerable Sir*", Māluṅkyaputta replies again.[38]

The Buddha then reveals the cause to him why he is silent in response to metaphysical questions by telling a brief parable about a man injured by a poisonous arrow. A surgeon is sent to treat him, and the man refuses to let him remove the arrow until he knows which caste his assailant belongs to, his name, his clan, how tall he is, what color skin he has, which town he lives in, what kind of bow it was, what material it's made of, what type of shaft it had, what kind of feathers it had, and what kind of arrow it was. This is clearly ridiculous. Not only will the wounded man never know the answers to these questions, but he'll end up dying in the meantime. Similarly, if anyone decides not to lead the holy life under the Buddha until he

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[37] . Ibid, pp.254-255
[38] *Cūlamāluṅkyovāda Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*. Vipassana Research Institute. http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/ (Accessed on March 23, 2009)

answers these speculative questions, the answers will still remain undeclared and the person is still going to die.

Once there arose a situation of a fierce battle between *Sākya* and *Koliya* clan belonging to *Khattiya*'s over the issue of farming by the use of the water of *Rohini* River. Observing the possibility of killing of innumerable beings, Buddha intervened there. He asked first the reason for the assembling of the *Sākyans* and *Koliya*s on the both sides of the river.

People answered: *"The quarrel is about water, Reverend Sir".*

Then the Master asked the King, *"How much is water worth, great King?"*

"Very little, Reverend Sir".

"How much are Khattiyas worth, great King?"

"Khattiyas are beyond price, Reverend Sir".

"It is not fitting that because of a little water you should destroy Khattiyas who are beyond price."

They were silent. Then the Teacher said to them, *"Great Kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not here present today, you would set flowing a river of blood."* [39]

And the Kings stopped the war immediately. In the above context when Buddha is referring the Khattiyas as beyond price, he certainly meant of every human being as more priceless than those external material things humans are having conflict for in day to day life. Khattiyas are referred here because Buddha was addressing to them and in order to make them realized the core of the issue he illustrated theirs life of so much value and priceless.

Here, Buddha shows two paths: first, to have dialogue in order to track down the heart of the problem, and second, to choose the best possible solution. One can as well see the Buddha's method of solving the problems by using skillful means in this dialogue. As is apparent from the above examples, according to the Buddha, the objective of any solution process should be well identified and properly evaluated before departure for its solution. And likewise, while finding the solution it is equally important to ascertain the most appropriate solution by examining the different accessible solutions.

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[39] Burlingame, E.W. *Buddhist Legends (Trans. of Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā)*.Vol. III Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921, p.71

Instruction to Understand Own Doctrine Perfectly Prior to Involvement With Others:

There has hardly been the conflict among the true saints in the world, there has always been the conflict among those who either misunderstood the teachings of their teachers or who wanted to fulfill their own vested interests by misinterpreting their teacher's teachings. Most of the conflict occurs in this world because, those who are involved in any conflict themselves are not aware of their own religious ideals or philosophical ideas in a true sense. Buddhism always put emphasis on the understanding the Dhamma in its accurate way prior to proceed towards its application or to teach it to others. Partial and wrong knowledge is always more dangerous than having no knowledge at all. Buddha evidently says that if one grasps the Dhamma in a wrong way, then it may be severely hazardous for him. He explains his statement with the example of a snake. He says:

> *"Suppose there were a man needing a water-snake, seeking a water-snake, wandering in search of a water-snake. He would see a large water-snake and grasp it by the coils or by the tail. The water-snake, turning around, would bite him on the hand, on the arm, or on one of his limbs, and from that cause he would suffer death or death-like suffering. Why is that? Because of the wrong-grasp of the water-snake. In the same way, there is the case where some worthless men study the Dhamma... Having studied the Dhamma, they don't ascertain the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment. Not having ascertained the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment, they don't come to an agreement through pondering. They study the Dhamma both for attacking others and for defending themselves in debate. They don't reach the goal for which [people] study the Dhamma. Their wrong grasp of those Dhammas will lead to their long-term harm & suffering."* [40]

Buddha does not acknowledge the importance of knowledge for debate or demonstration but to lead a life for the welfare of the whole humanity. Not knowledge itself but a purposeful knowledge is praiseworthy according to Buddha.

Proposing method of dealing with the contemporary issues:

Buddha, instead of setting up the fixed and absolute solution of all the problems by the same formula, had established the proper methodology to understand the problems and to find their solutions. As the time, place and situation become different, the application and solution also may be selected accordingly following the

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[40]. Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.). *Alagaddūpama Sutta*. Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than.html (Accessed on Feb 10, 2009)

same methodology. For example, Buddha's teaching of four noble truths, in a way, establishes a wonderful methodology also to identify and solve the problems. The four truths indicate the fourfold examination of any problem, viz., take a problem, establish its origin, identify its solution, and find out the tools to solve it; just as medical science has four sections: disease, its cause, its ultimate cure, and the medicines for its cure.

Buddha describes the four ways of treating the questions if it appeared before any one. These are: (1) some should be answered directly *(ekaṁsabyākaraṇīyo)*; (2) others should be answered by analyzing them *(vibhajjabyākaraṇīyo)*; (3) yet others should be answered by counter – questions *(paṭipucchābyākaraṇīyo)*; (4) and lastly, there are questions which should be put aside *(ṭhapanīyo)*.[41] Once a wanderer *Vacchagotta* went to the Blessed One and he asked the Blessed One: *"Now then, Venerable Gotama, is there a self?"*

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

"Then is there no self?"

A second time, the Blessed One was silent. Then *Vacchagotta* got up from his seat and left.

Then, not long after *Vacchagotta* had left, Ānanda said to the Blessed One:

"Why, lord, did the Blessed One not answer when asked a question by Vacchagotta the wanderer?"

Buddha answered:

> *"Ānanda, if I – being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self - were to answer that there is a self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of eternalism [the view that there is an eternal, unchanging soul]. If I - being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self — were to answer that there is no self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of annihilationism [the view that death is the annihilation of consciousness]. If I - being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self - were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?"*

> *"No, lord",* Ānanda responded.

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[41]. *Pañhabyākaraṇasuttaṁ, Rohitassavaggo, Catukka Nipāta Aṅguttara Nikāya.* Vipassana Research Institute. http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/ (Accessed on Feb. 21, 2009);
Woodward, F.L.(Tr.). *Gradual Sayings (Aṅguttara – Nikāya).* Vol. II, London: Pali Text Society, 1973, p.54

Then, Buddha further said:

> *"And if I – being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered Vacchagotta would become even more bewildered: 'Does the self I used to have now not exist?"* [42]

Actually, *Vacchagotta* was very much obsessed with these kinds of metaphysical questions and had been visiting the Buddha to ask same type of questions again and again for a long time. Compassionate Buddha would give detailed answers of his questions making him get rid of his confusions. Lastly, observing no result of earlier methods, Buddha applied the method of silence which proved more effective on *Vacchagotta* than any well-expressed answer or discourse.

It was the Buddha's way to maintain silence when the inquirer is merely foolishly inquisitive, or give a detailed reply in any one way out of the earlier mentioned first three methods when He knew the inquirer to be an earnest seeker.

While dealing with the problem at the level of dialogue, all the parties should identify the problems first, and then they should proceed towards the solution either by addressing that problem directly, or by analyzing the problem thoroughly or by putting aside the common trivial issues creating the problem for all the parties.

Setting Certain Guidelines to Solve Conflicts through Dialogue:

The Buddha's way of dealing with the questions sets a guideline how to handle the contemporary problematic issues of world. Each and every problem has its own complexity and enormity and, therefore, requires a particular kind of treatment. First step towards solution through dialogue requires a dignified way of linguistic expression from the side of the entire group involved in any dialogue process. Actually, Buddhism defines a person as a true monk who is controlled in tongue, who is moderate and sweet in speech.[43] Knowing the fact that a single wrong word may spoil the entire dialogue process, Buddha says at another place: **"**Speak not harshly to any one: Those thus addressed will retort. Painful indeed is vindictive speech; Exchange – blows may touch you." [44] As answer to the criticism of him, Dhamma and Saṅgha he advises his disciples to establish the dialogue with the critiques without having any sort of anger on them and unravel their false notions by putting forth the fact before them. He says to the monks:

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[42] . Thanissaro, Bhikkhu (Tr.). *Ānanda Sutta.* Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn44/sn44.010.than.html (Accessed on March 25, 2009)
[43] . Mahathera, Narada (Ed. & Trans.). *Dhammapada*. Calcutta: Mahabodhi Society of India, 1991, Gāthā No. 363
[44] . Ibid, p.97

> "*When outsiders speak in dispraise of me, or of the Doctrine, or of the Order, you should unravel what is false and point it out as wrong, saying: 'For this or that reason this is not the fact, that is not so, such a thing is not found among us, is not in us.*" [45]

Furthermore**,** Buddha, while observing the causes of the conflict among the members of the community, explains that the presence of six sources in a person may be the basis of his conflict with others viz.: (i) anger and ill-will (ii) harshness and mercilessness (iii) enviousness and grudging (iv) craftiness and deceitfulness (v) evil desires and wrong views and (vi) obstinateness and stubbornness because of him being infected of worldliness.[46]

Then he suggests the seven ways of managing the conflict (*Adhikaraṇasamatha*) within any community. At least, three out of those seven are worth to mention in the present discussion on the Buddhist view of dialogue.

First of those seven is called *Saṁmukha Vinaya* i.e. proceeding requiring the presence of group of monks and of the party accused. Describing it, Buddha says:

> "*As to this Ānanda, monks dispute, saying: 'It is dhamma' or 'It is not dhamma' or 'It is discipline' or 'It is not discipline'. Ānanda, one and all of these monks should assemble in a complete order; having assembled, what belongs to dhamma should be threshed out; having threshed out what belongs to dhamma according to how it corresponds here, so should that legal question be settled.*" [47]

Another important way of settling the disputes is explained in the fifth guideline named *Yebhuyyasikā i.e.* decision of majority. It says:

> "*If these monks, Ānanda, are not able to settle that legal question in this residence, then, Ānanda, these monks must go to a residence where there are more monks, there one and all must assemble in a complete order; having assembled, what belongs to dhamma should be threshed out……..so should that legal question be settled.*" [48]

Very important is the last guideline named *Tiṇavatthārako* i.e. covering up as with grass. Regarding it, Buddha says:

> "*As to this, Ānanda, while monks live striving, quarrelling, disputing, much is perpetrated and spoken that is not worthy of a recluse. Ānanda, one and*

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[45] . Rhys Davids, T.W.(Tr.). *Dialogues of the Buddha (Trans. of Digha Nikaya).*Vol.I., Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2000, p.3

[46]. Horner, I.B. *Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima – Nikāya)*. Vol. III, London: Pali Text Society, 1977, p.33

[47] . Ibid

[48] . Ibid

all of these monks should gather together in a complete order; having gathered together, an experienced monk from one of the factions of monks, rising from his seat, having arranged his upper robe over one shoulder, having joined his palms in salutation, should inform the order, saying: Reverend Sirs, let the listen to me. While we were striving, quarrelling, disputing, much was perpetrated and spoken that was not worthy of a recluse. If it seems right to the order, I would confess whatever is the offence of venerable ones as well as whatever is my own offence, both for the sake of the venerable ones and for my own sake,......so as to obtain a covering up as with grass." [49]

After that, an experienced monk from the other faction of the monks also does the same act. It is called *Tiṇavatthārako* i.e. covering up as with grass to settle the disputes.

Conclusion:

No problem is as big as it can not be solved through the dialogue; it was well understood by Buddhism since its inception. Finding solution is not possible without finding the cause. Buddhism is the philosophy which believes that no effect is without cause and removing the cause is the solution itself. When Buddhism investigates any problem, it starts from its root and examines where actually the danger of human beings lies? Where actually this disbelief on others exists? Which factor is responsible for all these religious, social and political problems? Then Buddhism finds that it is the mind and only our mind that has the capacity to make this earth a heaven if it is pure and a hell, if polluted. The problem as well as its solution is the product of mind. The victory and defeat are the mental notions. Love and hatred also exist in our mind. The brightest gift to the humanity has always been offered by the mind and all the ghastly destructions of the world are also the contribution of the mind. The very first verse of the *Dhammapada* begins with the statement: *"Mind is the fore-runner of all conditions. Mind is chief: and they are mind made. If, with an impure mind, one speaks or acts, then pain follows one even as the wheel, the hoof of the ox."*[50] Those who participate in a dialogue with cleansed mind can be most benefited by the outcomes of the dialogue. As a clean and bright cloth catches the color easily in which it is dipped, similarly, an undefiled mind easily grasps the benefits of a useful dialogue.[51]

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[49] . Ibid, p.36

[50] .Mahathera, Narada (Ed. & Trans.). *Dhammapada*. Calcutta: Mahabodhi Society of India, 1991, Gāthā No.1

[51] . *Vattha Sutta. Majjhima Nikāya* .Vipassana Research Institute. http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/ (Accessed on March 30, 2009)

With this foundation, Buddhism opens its door for all kinds of different views for a meaningful dialogue. It never fanatically claims its own standpoint as the only possible correct standpoint. When we say, for example: "My path (or ethics, religion, food habits, behavior etc.) is *also* correct" - then this statement creates no conflict. But when we claim: "My path (or ethics, religion, food habits, behavior etc.) is the *only* correct path", then it produces conflict. Buddhism talks of finding common similar ground to sort out our conflicts rather than overemphasizing our differences, that is why, wherever it travelled in its long history, it neither tried to destroy the contemporary tradition nor it had a conflict with those cultures and it successfully co-existed with them in a great harmony.

Inside dialogue is no less important than outside dialogue. Unless we understand our own standpoint properly, we can never move towards a truthful dialogue with others. Furthermore, a successful and productive dialogue must have the possibility of equal status of all the parties involved in it. Every group must be considered as an independent representative of a certain set of ideas and no party should be considered as superior to others as in that case it would be difficult for other parties to be involved in the dialogue with dignity and honesty. Last, but not the least, the efforts of finding similarities should not be that much stretched that the independent identity of any ideology or philosophy could be endangered. The beauty of the world does not exist in its homogeny but in its diversity with harmonious unity. And that can be achieved only by knowing each other more deeply. No need to say, dialogue is one of the most fruitful methods.

Early Buddhist Theory and Practice of Political Conflict Resolution

Ven. Ashin Sumanacara

Introduction

Political conflict is common in almost every country, especially in the developing countries. The destruction caused by political conflict harms everyone. In the past decades many people have become victims of political conflict. We Buddhists are also the victims of ongoing political conflict.

Historically, Buddhism has been known as a religion of peace and nonviolence. Throughout its long history, it has historically played an important role in conflict resolution and bringing peace. The founder of this religion, the Buddha, taught his follower to practice non-violence and to lead a life without inner or outer conflict.

This essay will discuss the psychological, cultural, religious and spiritual aspects of Buddhism. This essay tends to provide a review of the Buddhist vision of political conflict resolution in the light of conflict resolution studies. It addresses the Buddhist perspective on the causes of political conflict and ways of conflict resolution. Moreover, this essay also investigates how political leaders and parties may be active in resolving political conflict. Basically, the model of political conflict resolution offers a way of transforming of attitude and spiritual method.

The source material for this essay mainly deals with the Early Buddhist Canonical Texts, its Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. The references of Pāli sources mentioned here is accordance to the volume and paragraph/verse number of Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-Rom published by the Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, India.

The Definition of Conflict

Conflict is a state of open, prolonged clash between two opposing parties[52] or individuals; a state of disharmony, struggle or contest between persons with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, goals or interests; a dispute (a disagreement or argument about something important), etc. The synonyms of conflict are contest, combat, fight,

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52 Here, group refers to political parties, labour unions, or religious parties, guerrilla organizations, and especially the indigenous population that lived in the communities and regions.

etc. These nouns denote struggle between opposing forces for victory or supremacy.[53]

According to the US Military Dictionary, "Conflict is an armed struggle or clash between organized parties within a nation or between nations in order to achieve limited political or military objectives. Although regular forces are often involved, irregular forces frequently predominate. Conflict often is protracted, confined to a restricted geographic area, and constrained in weaponry and level of violence. Within this state, military power in response to threats may be exercised in an indirect manner while supportive of other instruments of national power. Limited objectives may be achieved by the short, focused, and direct application of force."[54]

In psychological terms, conflict is a psychic struggle, often unconscious, resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, desires, tendencies wishes, or demands. It refers to the existence of that clash. In political terms, "conflict" can refer to wars, revolutions or other struggles, which may involve the use of force as in the term armed conflict.[55]

Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse define political conflict as "a distinct type of conflict that entails a potential or real breakdown in peaceful, orderly and formalized, democratic relationships at governmental level between two or more parties in society, (of which the government can be one), that has the potential to lead to violence among them, as a result of one or more of the parties promoting their own interests by pursuing objectives or using strategies that are politically incompatible with or unacceptable to one or more of the other parties."[56]

From the above explanations, we can simply say that conflict is a clash or contest between opposing two individuals or parties about opposing or incompatible needs and selfish desires.

Types of Conflict

Conflict can assume a variety of forms, such as community conflict, diplomatic conflict, environmental resources conflict, ideological conflict, religious conflict, interpersonal conflict, intrastate conflict (such as civil wars or election

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53 Combat commonly implies an encounter between two armed persons or parties. Fight usually refers to a clash involving individual opponents." http://www.answers.com/topic/conflict/10/3/2009.
54 "The Oxford Essential Dictionary of the U.S. Military." Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc. 2002.
55 Peaceful political activity between individuals or parties is not regarded as political conflict, but as normal and acceptable political activities, because these activities tend to uplift democratic system and widely accepted in democratic rule.
56 "Contemporary conflict resolution: The prevention, management and transformations of deadly conflict" by Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse. Cambridge: Polity press, 1999.

campaigns), organizational conflict, workplace conflict, family conflict, etc. Some of these conflicts can be the result of political conflict.

In the Pāli literature various terms such as *kalaha* (quarrel, dispute, fight)*, vivāda* (dispute, quarrel, contention)*, virodha* (obstruction, hindrance, opposition, enmity)*, viggaha* (dispute, quarrel)*, ghattana* (striking, insulting)*, yuddha* (war, battle, fight), etc., used by the Buddha indicates the existing of conflict and also signify various types of conflict.

The Impact of Political Conflict

Many countries have experienced various types of conflict in the present day. Political conflict has affected millions of people and has led to significant losses in terms of economic growth and social development. Political conflict generate suffering, both physical and psychological, such as feelings of insecurity, desertion, fear, threat (against everything), cruelty (brutal beatings, abuse, sexual abuse), arbitrary executions, looting, destruction of property, powerlessness, insecurity, abandonment and marginalization, and which, in some cases, result in psychological disorder for the victims. Because of political conflict many people have been forced to become a refugees, are incapable of working and as a result lead a life of misery. Experiences such as these have affected the lives of people and their families, particularly their ability to function both psychologically and socially. Moreover, all types of political conflict involve in economic lost and are a waste of resources. In many cases, the whole societies are directly or indirectly victims of extreme political conflict, caused by either state terrorism (government forces) or violent actions of political parties or insurgents.

In most conflict-affected countries many people are labeled rebels– not only for their political or ideological differences, but also for their condition as poor, indigenous, or powerless people. Moreover, in many countries, political conflicts have caused people to stop trusting each other and government organizations such as armed forces, judiciary, etc. Therefore, it can be said that the most significant consequence for societies affected by political conflict is the violations of human rights– which severely decreases the well-being of the people, and which further increases the existing poverty unrest, and inequality of society.

Causes of Political Conflict

Political conflict can have different causes. Generally, political conflict results because of negative attitude towards the other party or misunderstanding

between people with regard to their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals, or values. For our understanding, the following issues can be regarded as the causes of political conflict:

1) **Power and Control:** Control over political power ambitions can lead individuals or political parties into political conflict. For example, the attempts by a country to expand their territory with force lead to a political conflict.

2) **Ethnic and Religious Causes:** In some country, ethnicity and religion has been altering the shape of the ongoing political conflict. It is to be mentioned that most of political conflict today are due to this category as we see between Israel and Palestine, etc.

3) **Economic Causes:** Political conflict is often generated to get control or access of desired resources such as oil, water, etc. Also, promoting one's own self interest in order to achieve material gain can create a political conflict such as global warming. Again, lack of socio-economic development of developing countries is also causes of such conflicts.

4) **Ideological and Value Differences:** Ideological and general value differences are one of driving force of political conflict.

5) **Social Causes:** Social discrimination, denial of access basic human needs, including identity and security, are also causes of political conflict. Political conflict also arises in various countries on the grounds of race, language, culture, color, etc.

Buddhist Perspective on the Causes of Political Conflict

What are the causes of political conflict according to Buddhism? The answer appeared over 2550 years ago in the teaching of the Buddha. He says that there is no doubt that worldlings[57] experience with *dukkha* (pain, suffering, conflict) owing to the defilements (*kilesā*). The temporary attainment of sense pleasure gives rise to even more defilements. Defilements are the unwholesome qualities that pollute the mind. According to the Buddhist psychology, the ten defilements are – greed or attachment (*lobha*), hatred or ill-will (*dosa*), delusion or ignorance (*moha*), pride or conceit (*māna*), false views (*diṭṭhi*), skeptical doubt or indecision *(vicikicchā)*, sloth (*thīna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), moral shamelessness (*ahirika*) and moral fearlessness (*anottappa*).[58] Unwholesome mental states arise due to these ten factors.

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57 'Worldling', ordinary man, is any layman or monk who is still possessed of all the ten fetters or defilements binding to the round of rebirths, and therefore has not yet reached any of the four or eight stages of holiness.

58 Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha 12

The defilements (*kilesā*) are so-called because they afflict (*kilissanti*) or torment the mind, or because they drag beings down to a mentally soiled and depraved condition.**59** Among them, *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* are three taproots. According to the Buddha, they appear in the mind and destroy one's life in the same way that the bamboo, reed, and banana plant are destroyed by their fruits.**60** Therefore, according to Buddhist psychology, all temptations brought about by the defilements are regarded as the causes of political conflict.

According to Buddhism, greed appears to be the root cause of many of the political conflicts in the contemporary world. For example, conflicts between developed and developing nations can be understood in this context. The second defilement, hatred, is the main cause for the present day religious, racial or ethnic conflict. For example, conflicts between Islam and Christianity or between Israel and Palestine arise mainly due to hatred, although other factors can be associated. Again, according to Buddhist psychology, eight worldly conditions (*aṭṭhalokadhammā*)[61] also may be considered as the causes of political conflict.

Moreover, with regard to the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) we can say that ignorance (*avijjā*) is the root cause of political conflict and with regard to the Four Noble Truths (*ariyasacca*) we can say that craving (*taṇhā*) is the source of political conflict.

Ignorance, the Root of Political Conflict

Ignorance (*avijjā*) is one of the fifty-two mental states (*cetasikā*) and belongs to 'the mental states of delusion (*moha-cetasika*)'. This *cetasika* is present in every ordinary person. According to the Pāli Commentary, absence of knowledge of suffering, absence of knowledge of the cause of suffering, absence of knowledge of the cessation of suffering, absence of knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.[62] Here, suffering refers to conflict as well.

Political conflict is the part of the process of ignorance. It is ignorance itself that underlies almost every political conflict in the world. It is ignorance that prevents us from proper understanding of the issues that lead to political conflict. The Blessed One says,

> "Monks, ignorance is the leader in the attainment of unskillful qualities,
> followed by lack of conscience and lack of concern. In an unknowledgeable

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59 Ibid 13
60 Saṁyutta Nikāya, I: 3
61 The eight worldly conditions are: gain (lābho) and loss (alābho), fame (yaso) and defame (ayaso), blame (nindā) and praise (pasa·sā), happiness (sukha) and pain (dukkha). Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā II: 140
62 Vibhaṅga 226

person, immersed in ignorance, wrong view arises. In one of wrong view, wrong resolve arises. In one of wrong resolve, wrong speech...In one of wrong speech, wrong action...In one of wrong action, wrong livelihood...In one of wrong livelihood, wrong effort...In one of wrong effort, wrong mindfulness...In one of wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration arises."[63]

The Buddha compares ignorance (*avijjā*) as a flood (*ogha*), a yoke (*yoga*), a fetter (*saṃyojana*), and as an obsession (*anusaya*).[64] It clouds one's mental eyes and prevents one from seeing the true nature of things—impermanent (*anicca*), non-satisfactory (*dukkha*) and ego-less (*anatta*). Generally, policy makers formulate and pursue policies without proper understanding of the real issues, because of their own ego or wrong perceptions. Consequently, due to their ignorance they become blind to reality and entangle in serious political conflict.

Craving, the Source of Political Conflict

Conflict is the part of the process of craving. According to Buddhism, there are these six classes of craving: craving for forms (*rūpataṇhā*), for sounds (*saddataṇhā*), for odors (*gandhataṇhā*), for flavors (*rasataṇhā*), for tangibles (*phoṭṭhabbataṇhā*), and craving for mind-objects (*dhammataṇhā*).[65] Craving is the very origin or cause of *dukkha* in the lives of all beings throughout all their existence.[66] According to Buddhist psychology, most of our conflicts are due to our passionate craving. In other words, unlimited or uncontrolled self- interest can create serious political conflict. Unlimited craving can lead nations to exploit others for their own benefit which results in creating conflicts with the exploited nation.

With regard to the six kinds of craving, each kind is held to be threefold, according to its mode of occurrence: craving for sensuality (*kāmatanhā)*, craving for becoming (*bhavataṇhā*) and craving for non-becoming (*vibhavataṇhā*).[67]

Every individual is driven by craving for sensuality *(kāmataṇhā)*. The Buddhist attitude to *kāma* (sensuality) is strongly negative. In Buddhism, *kāma* occupies the first place in all kinds of immoral. In the Bhayabherava sutta*,* Buddha narrates *kāma* as a synonym of 'fear', 'suffering', 'disease', 'abscess', 'bond', and 'bog'.[68] Early Buddhist chronicles describe the history of political conflicts, and

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63 Saṁyutta Nikāya, XLV: 1
64 Ibid XLV: 171. Aṅguttara Nikāya, IV: 10, X: 13, VII: 11
65 Vibhaṅga 232
66 Actually craving is not the only cause for the arising of dukkha. There are numerous causes and effects which are interdependent and related to one another in the universe. But craving is to be understood as the proximate cause of dukkha.
67 Itivuttaka, v.58.
68 Majjhima Nikāya, I: 42

indicate that sense pleasures were the forerunner of such conflicts. Therefore, we can say that craving is the main sources of political conflict.

Buddhism and Political Conflict Resolution

Political conflict resolution or settlement refers to steps taken to end the conflict or at least to reach a reduction of the severity of the conflict, ideally by reaching an outcome that is beneficial to both parties.

Studying the Pāli scriptures reveals that there were political conflicts arising out of the defilements and ignorance even during the lifetime of the Buddha. There are several suttas that reveal how the Buddha resolved various types of political conflict. In one occasion, he even went to a battlefield to stop conflicts between two political parties who were about to fight over the dispute of water of the Rohini river. He successfully resolved the conflict by giving insight to both parties. On many other occasions, his enlightening speeches help both parties to settle their differences.

The Buddhist approach to political conflict resolution is to use non-violent methods and fair behavior to reach agreement or accommodation. We Buddhists have also been victims of political conflict. However, we are known as peace-loving people as we never fought back or attack with suicide bombs in the name of religion. If we were not Buddhist, presumably we would have used violence against oppressors, used terrorism and attacks.

Resolution of Political Conflict through Transforming Human Attitudes

Every religious community in the world is devoted to a similar process, that is, to guide individuals to move away from thinking about their individual needs and to address their obligations to the greater good of society, humanity, or the environment. To achieve world peace free from conflict it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all irrespective of creed, color, sex, or nationality.

The following transforming attitudes which reflect the teachings of the Buddha can be useful in resolving political conflict and promoting peace.

1) Ensuring the Freedoms of Every Human Being

In conflict resolution both parties should ensure each others' freedom. With regard to freedom, Buddhism says three are three kinds of freedom: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of action. Freedom of thought is based on principles of the Dhamma—the universal or cosmic righteousness as conceived in

Buddhism. The Buddha has also recognized one's rights and freedoms in one's quest for material (*attha*) and spiritual well-being (*hita*). He enjoined that one should learn his teaching (*dhamma*) in one's own language (*anujānāmi…sakāya niruttiyā Buddhavacanaṃ pariyāpuṇituṃ*), and prohibited his disciples from presenting his teachings through any privileged linguistic medium of the day.[69] Furthermore, among the characteristics of Dhamma, the first characteristic is that Buddhism calls upon everyone to test its truth —"see it for oneself (*ehipassika*)."[70] This certainly stands for freedom of thought. The second characteristic is that the doctrine is "to be understood individually by the wise (*paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*)."[71] This is also not possible without freedom of thought.

Freedom of speech or expression means the right of individuals to express their views openly. Buddha's well-known advice to the *Kālāmas*, a group of people in the *Kosala* kingdom, may be cited as a good example to show how Buddhism upholds the freedom of expression:

> "…do not be led by tradition (*anussavena*) or by lineage (*paramparāya*) or by hearsay (*itikirāya*) or by the authority of religious texts (*piṭakasampadānena*) or by claims of knowledge (*takkahetu*) and truth that are based on any type of reasoning or speculation (*diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā*), or on the basis of the reliability of the person (*bhavyarūpatāya*), or by respect for your teacher (*samaṇo no garu*). Rather, *Kālāmas*, when you know for yourself these things are unprofitable, blameworthy...and conduce to loss and sorrow, then indeed you should reject them…and when you know for yourself that certain things are profitable, blameless…and conduce to profit and happiness, then indeed you should accept them and abide by them."[72]

The Buddha begins by assuring the *Kālāmas* that under such circumstances it is proper for them to doubt, an assurance which encourages free inquiry. From the Buddhist point of view, the right to the freedom of expression carries an obligation that one should ensure that one's opinions are formed carefully after taking all relevant factors into consideration. Therefore, the right to the freedom of expression must be exercised responsibly by the ruler, political parties, individuals so as not to cause harm either to one or to others.

Freedom of religion means the freedom to practice one's religion openly and it is the basic human rights of every individual according to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The religio-philosophical background in which Buddhism originated allowed full scope of religious freedoms including freedom to

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69 Vinaya Piṭaka, II: 285
70 Dīgha Nikāya III: 159. Saṃyutta Nikāya V:290, XI: 997. Majjima Nikāya I: 74.
71 Ibid
72 Aṅguttara Nikāya III: 66

chose and practice one's own religion. Therefore, freedom to practice one's own religion should be granted to the citizen.

Political leaders and parties should not interfere with the citizen's right to form all kinds of peaceful political, religious, social, or cultural assemblies or associations. The Mahāparinibbāna sutta states that, firstly, people must assemble frequently.[73] Secondly, they should assemble peacefully or in unison (*samaggā sannipatanti*), arise peacefully (*samaggā vuṭṭhahanti*) and transact business peacefully, as in the case of the Vajjians (cf. *samaggā vajjikaraṇīyāni karonti*).[74] Therefore, political parties should maintain peaceful assemblies (and allow others to do so as well).

In thus, by ensuring the rights and freedom of every citizen conflict can be resolved.

2.) Ensuring Social Security

Social security implies social welfare in terms of helping the people who are poor, unemployed, sick etc. It is the state duty to assist the people and extend its protection by ensuring economic and social well-being through social and economic policy.

Social security also refers to security of life and property. Security of person is generally ensured with the guarantee to the right of life. The Dhammapada, categorically states that "all beings desire happiness (*sukhakāmāni bhūtāni*)"[75] and that "life is dear to every living being (*sabbesaṃ jīvitaṃ piyaṃ*)."[76] It urges us that "having taken one's own self for comparison (with other beings) one should neither harm nor kill (*attānaṃ upamaṃ katvāna haneyya na ghātaye*)."[77] It is the very much responsibility of the state to "provide ward and protection righteously (*dhammikaṃ rakkhāvaraṇaguttiṃ*)"[78], as noted in the Cakkavattisīhanāda sutta. In this sutta, the Buddha explains how a cycle of crimes followed from theft to violence, from violence to abusive speech, to covetousness, to adultery, to perverted lust, to lack of respect for holy men and the head of the clan etc. This sutta indicates the social implication that the absence of social security can affect not only the destitute but also society as a whole, leading to a full fledge conflict. Therefore, social security must be provided to deal with the conflict.

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73 Dīgha Nikāya II: 134
74 Ibid
75 Dhammapada X: 131, 132
76 Ibid X: 130
77 Ibid X: 129
78 Dīgha Nikāya III: 58

Buddhism demands that "one should live with friendliness and compassion towards all beings (*sabbapāṇabhūtahitānukampī ca viharati*)"[79], and "having laid aside cudgel and sword (*nihitadaṇḍo nihitasattho*)"[80]. This is recognition of security of person. Thus, the political party leaders should provide all forms of security and protection to all people.

3.) Recognizing Equality between all Human Beings

Buddhism recognizes the fundamental equality of all human beings in respect of their caste or religion, and recognizes that human beings are equal in dignity and rights. The Aggañña sutta of the Dīghanikāya mentions that all human beings are "like unto themselves and not unlike (*aññesaṃ sadisānameva no asadisānaṃ*)"[81] It has to be stated that the Aggañña sutta is based on the premise that all men are born equal with equal social and political rights. Moreover, Buddhism recognizes that men and women are endowed with equal rights. Therefore, in order to resolve political conflict the party leaders or activists should transform their attitude by recognizing the equality between all human beings.

4.) Ensuring Equal Protection and Attention

Equal protection and absence of any form of discrimination is essential for the peace of a country. The concept of equal protection refers to righteous care and protection (*dhammikaṃ rakkhāvaraṇaguttiṃ*). On the other hand, "righteous conduct (*dhammacāriyā*)" and "impartial conduct (*samacāriyā*)" should be the part of the ruler's responsibility towards his citizens as mentioned in Mahāpadāna sutta[82] of the Dīghanikāya. Righteous conduct conveys the idea of equal protection under the law dispensed by righteous conduct on the part of ruler, and impartial conduct conveys the absence of any form of discrimination in equal protection under the law.

Therefore, when a dispute arises, the ruler (or other judge) is expected to pay equal protection and attention, and equal responsibility to both parties, to hear arguments of each side and decide according to what is right.

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79 Ibid I: 8
80 Ibid I: 8
81 Ibid I: 131
82 Dīgha Nikāya II

5.) Promoting Relationships Based upon Respect and Trust

To resolve political conflict, both parties should exercise friendly relation based upon respect and trust. Such an attitude implies understanding and acceptance of each other's point of view. As far as a mutual relation (*aññamañña sambandha*) is concerned, Buddhism goes beyond the "spirit of brotherhood" to the realm of what it calls *mettā* or universal friendliness. In Buddhism, the philosophy of universal friendliness (*mettā*) and non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) derives its validity from this position. Placing the conflict in a relationship context implies respect for all parties. Employing direct democratic and rational methods would help to achieve these goals. Therefore, in conflict resolution, it is the responsibility of both parties to bear in mind the importance of this principle.

Respect (*gārava*) plays an important role in settlement of political conflict. That is to say that it is very important to show respect and love to each other. In our society what we see is lack of respect to each other. Mutual distrust causes insecurity in people's minds. As a result there arises conflict. Without respecting each other there can't be any peace. Therefore, an approach to political conflict resolution should grow and develop gradually from mutual respecting.

Another important attitude is trust (*vissāsa*). Without trust, there can be no peace. One of the major causes of conflict is suspicion and mistrust. Therefore, both parties should develop trust for one another and try not to have secrets between them as secrets create suspicion, suspicion leads to jealously, jealousy generates anger, anger causes enmity and enmity may result in conflict, even war.

6.) Avoiding Destructive Activities

The two parties in conflict should avoid destructive activities when they are seeking political resolution of conflict. Some Buddhist leaders already proved themselves against of destructive activities, among them the most contemporary Buddhist leaders are the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, both of whom have won the Nobel Peace prize for their constant effort in peacemaking and their commitment to non-violence. Their nonviolent approach is an example to all leaders engaging in conflicts.

7.) Avoiding Cruelty and Punishment

In Buddhism any form of cruelty (*vihiṃsā*) is regarded as inhuman (*amānusika*) and degrading. According to Buddhism any form of cruelty or punishment (*daṇḍana*) is painful (*dukkha*), ignoble (*anariya*), harmful

(*anatthasaṃhita*), vulgar (*gamma*), and worldly (*pothujjanika*). Buddhism doesn't deny the need of punishment; however, it suggests that punishment should be mild (*mudu*), and should never be cruel, inhuman or degrading. Also, the Buddhist approach to the law demands that the law be considered in relation to Buddhist ethics and Buddhist social philosophy. The ruler and political parties should avoid cruelty and punishment in order to avoid conflict.

8.) Providing Economic Development

Poverty (*dāḷiddiya*) is one of the causes of political conflict. Providing economic development in the conflict zone may motivate the insurgent parties to avoid political conflict if they see their future perspective becomes better and more hopeful. In this regard, the Brahman Kūṭadanta's advice to King Mahāvijita mentioned in the Kūṭadanta sutta[83] can be worthwhile for the rulers. His advice to the king was that not only the destitute should be assisted, but also those who were self-employed, or hired to carry out various functions. For instance, food and seed-corn should be supplied to those involved in farming and cattle-rearing; capital should be extended to those engaged in trade, and employees in the royal service should receive wages and food. The advice was taken and the people were happy with one another. On the other hand, the royal revenue increased and with this, and the happiness of the people, the King's "weal and welfare" was assured. Thus, further economic development could prevent any types of conflict.

9.) Respecting Each Others Belief and Faith

Respecting each others belief and faith is an important step of political conflict resolution. To do this, it is necessary to promote better interfaith understanding among all religions. This can be achieved when individuals or political parties respect each other beliefs. Second, they must share the common ideals so that one could understand better the believer of opposite part. These two approaches could help us to create the necessary spiritual conditions for conflict resolution.

10.) Ensuring Free and Fair Process of Law

Early Buddhist social teachings upheld the concept of a possessor of the "Wheel of Righteousness", a world ruler or universal monarch (*rājā cakkavatti*), a righteous monarch (*dhammiko dhammarājā*) who rules with proper regard for the law (*dhammaṃ garukaronto*). Among his duties was that of providing care and protection

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83 Ibid I: 331

righteously (*dhammikaṃ rakkhāvaraṇaguttiṃ*)[84], thus giving full effect to the "Rule of Righteousness©.

The ruler should ensure free (*mutta*) and fair (*dhammika*) process of law for any minor or major offence of the citizens. According to the procedures laid down for Buddhist monastic tribunals, the objectives which are to be achieved through an impartial process outlined in the Vinaya Piṭaka as follows:

"When a dispute arises, the king (or other judge) is expected to "pay equal attention to both parties", to "hear arguments of each side and decide according to what is right". Throughout the investigation the judge is expected to scrupulously avoid the "four avenues to injustice (*cattāri agatigamanāni*) such as prejudice (*chanda*), hatred (*dosa*), fear (*bhaya*) and ignorance (*moha*)."[85]

Also, every citizen should be given a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial trial. In this regard, the interests of the citizen (as opposed to the interests of the group) have to be respected and recognized.

11.) Exercising Forgiveness, Tolerance, and Contentment

In order to resolve political conflict, acts of unilateral forgiveness (*khamā*), tolerance (*khanti*) and contentment (*santuṭṭhi*) are essential.

Cruelty and injustices are common in every country affected by conflict. In a peace agreement, there should be a reciprocal process of acknowledgment of cruelty or injustices committed and forgiveness through dialogue between both parties. Transformation also requires negotiations on the future relationships of the former opposition parties.

Tolerance here refers to all kinds of tolerance including religious tolerance. Tolerance is a virtue that is highly valued in Buddhism. To extinguish the fire of hatred and conflict, the political leaders should practice tolerance. They should respect and honor every teachers and followers of other sects and also their teachings.

Buddhism strongly condemns any kinds of attack whether physical or mental, or attacks on one's honor and reputation. Even the Buddha and his disciples were subject to such kinds of attacks by their enemies such as Ciñca, Devadatta, Brahmin Bharadhaja and many others. However, with forgiveness, tolerance and equanimity, the Buddha and his disciples were able to foil completely the vicious aims of these people. Buddha says, "hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through the practice of tolerance and love they cease (*Na hi verena verāni,*

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84 Dīgha Nikāya, III: 61.
85 Vinaya Piṭaka I: 324

sammantī'dha kudācanaṃ; averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano)."[86] According to Buddha's teaching, after receiving vicious attacks, our reactions, and those of our leaders, should be imbued with tolerance. We should be unmoved by the worldly conditions of blame, loss, defame, etc.

Political leaders should also practice contentment (*santuṭṭhi*). When they practice contentment, jealousy and hatred can never overpower them and thereby they feel more comfortable in allowing others to enjoy their lives.

12.) Saṅgha as Mediator

In the early of his mission the Buddha urged his disciples to travel "for the welfare of the many *(bahujanhitāya)*, for the happiness of the many *(bahujanasukhāya)*, through compassion for the world *(lokānukampāya)*, for the welfare *(atthāya)*, benefit *(hitāya)* and happiness *(sukhāya)* of gods and men *(devamanussāna∝).*"[87] With this injunction the Buddha obviously imposed an obligation on his disciples to work for the common good and happiness of many.

In Buddhist countries the Buddhist Saṅgha can play a major role in resolving political conflict. There is nothing wrong if they intervene to resolve political conflict, as did the Buddha. However, they should not take in one side or engage themselves in political intrigue in order to resolve conflict. To be fully successful, they must be seen as impartial.

Spiritual Approach to Political Conflict Resolution

According to Buddhism, we ourselves are the creator of our own conflict. The Buddha says, "By oneself, indeed, is evil done (*attanā va kataṃ pāpaṃ*); by oneself is one defiled (*attanā saṃkilissati*)."[88] "The entire universe is within the fathom-long body," he says, emphasizing that the solution to our problems is to be found within us. The Buddha was aware that the more one looks into oneself, the more one realizes the depth and power of self-conquest. Regarding self he says, "oneself is refuge of oneself (*attā hi attano nātho*)."[89] So, self-reliance is the best way to resolve all the human problems, including political conflict.

Every religion emphasizes the importance of taming the undisciplined mind, the mind that harbors selfishness and other roots of conflict. All religion traces a path leading to a spiritual state of mind that is peaceful, disciplined, ethical, and wise.

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86 Dhammapada I: 5
87 Ibid II: 86
88 Ibid XII: 165
89 Ibid XII: 160

Throughout its long history Buddhism has given a pre-eminent position to mind. All our conscious actions are first conceived in it as thoughts, which are then translated into deeds. This is the reason why Buddhism emphasizes the importance of keeping the mind cleansed of defilements.

The Buddha taught that people can live a peaceful life by avoiding evil and doing good. In the Dhammapada the teaching of all Buddhas is summed up in the following verse, "Not to do any evil (*sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ*), to cultivate good (*kusalassa upasampadā*), to purify one's mind (*sacittapariyodapanaṃ*), ∇this is the teaching of the Buddhas (*etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ*)."[90] The first phrase represents the discipline (*sīla*), the second phrase represents concentration of mind (*samādhi*) and the third phrase represents purification of mind by wisdom (*paññā*). These are the three main principles in Buddhism known also as the threefold training.

Buddhist ethics teaches the individual to restrain himself from evil deeds, and aims at producing a well-balanced full human, by developing his own attitudes and morality. Thus, the first steps in resolving political conflict should be self-restraint by the observance of disciplines. Buddhist disciplines begin with abstaining from taking life (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*). This moral basis aims at making society secure by promoting unity, harmony, and right relations among people. Indeed, non-violence is the foundation of all spiritual attainment.

Sīla is an essential foundation which only controls or checks our bodily and verbal actions. However, according to Buddhism, "mind is the forerunner of all states (*manopubbaṅgamā dhammā*), mind is chief (*manoseṭṭhā*); and mind controls our good and evil behavior."[91] Therefore, second step should be culturing the mind by meditation (*bhāvanā*). Meditation is understood as calming individual's desire and immediate troubles. Buddhist meditation aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances such as craving, hatred, ill-will, etc., and promoting peace in the hearts of men.

In Buddhism, there are generally two types of meditation technique namely, *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā bhāvanā*. 'Samatha' means tranquility; calm, peaceful state of the mind. It also refers to 'concentration meditation'. Visuddhimagga states forty kinds of *samatha* meditation or meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*)[92] which suits one's temperament (*carita*). 'Vipassanā' means seeing things as they are or seeing in different ways what is happening in our mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*). Another term, equivalent to *vipassanā* is 'mindfulness meditation (*satipṭṭhāna bhāvanā)*' and this term is widely used in the psychological literature.

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90 Ibid XIV: 183
91 Ibid I: 1-2
92 Forty kinds of samatha bhāvanā are- ten kasinas (totalities), ten kinds of foulness, ten recollections, four divine abiding, four immaterial states, one perception, one defining. Visddhimagga III: 104.

Although there are many kinds of *samatha* meditation, the cultivation of the four *Brahmavihāra* (Divine abiding)—*mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity) given special prominence in the scripture. According to Pāli commentary, *mettā* is "the sublime emotions which softens and lubricates (the human heart) (*mejjatīti mettā, siniyhatīti attho*)."[93] *Karuṇā* is the sublime emotion which impels one to help another in distress.[94] *Muditā* is the gladness one experiences in the happiness of another.[95] *Upekkhā* is the ability to maintain an even psychological balance in the face of vicissitudes of life. On the other hand, anger is a dangerous negative emotion that defiles the mind and spoils interpersonal relations.

In the Mahā Rāhulovāda sutta, the Buddha asked Bhikkhu Rāhula to cultivate the *Brahmavihāra*. He says,

"Cultivate the meditation on loving-kindness, Rāhula; for by cultivating loving-kindness, ill-will is vanished. Cultivate the meditation on compassion, Rāhula, for by cultivating compassion, cruelty is banished. Cultivate the meditation on sympathetic joy, Rāhula, for by cultivating sympathetic joy, aversion is banished. Cultivate the mediation on equanimity, Rāhula, for by cultivating equanimity, hatred is banished."[96]

Most people lack these four sublime qualities. Instead, they harbor hatred, cruelty, jealousy, intolerance. It is often observed that defilements or negative qualities of the mind are much more in evidence than the positive qualities of mind such as friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, etc. During a conflict political leaders and parties should turn their thoughts toward these sublime attitudes, which will definitely help them to find a resolution. These generate powerful positive emotions, and can be cultivated in their heart. By doing so, they will definitely experience inner and outer peace. In fact, these four sublime states provide the answers to all problems situations arising from social, racial, political, or religious conflicts.

Vipassanā or mindfulness meditation is another way of effectively dealing with political conflict. Mindfulness is a way of paying attention non-judgmentally; to what goes on in the present moment in our body-mind and the world around us. Mindfulness perceives a thought, a feeling, or a situation, as if or as it is. It is based on observing moment-to-moment experience of desire, excitements, pleasures, satisfactions, anxieties, frustrations, disappointments, conflicts, etc. Mindfulness is accepting experience as it is, as it appears to be. Acceptance does not mean that one

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93 Atthasālini 192
94 Ibid 192
95 Ibid 193
96 Majjhima Nikāya II: 120

has to like what comes up (painful sensation, stressful memory etc), it simply means one is willing to be with it rather than trying to push it away.

One of mindfulness meditation's many benefits is that it helps one to develop a greater level of compassion toward oneself and others. By practicing mindfulness meditation, one learns not just to prevent and tame anger, but also to transform the consuming fires of greed, hatred, and delusion appreciation for the wellbeing of others. In short, the way of Buddhist meditation, including *samatha* and *vipassanā* is the way of seeing, developing and cultivating one's mind. Without it, a person cannot resolve his psychological problems for peace and happiness in the here-and-now, as Lord Buddha says, "Bhikkhus, this is the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for attainment of true way, for the realization of *Nibbāna*: that is to say four foundations of mindfulness."[97]

Therefore, the three principles of *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā* should be practiced by all parties, together with the mindfulness meditation and virtues of four *Brahmavihāras*, in conflict resolution. According to Buddhism, unless all people genuinely strive to adhere to these three principles, human beings cannot walk in harmony and in a spirit of brotherhood along the path that leads to the "highest happiness," namely, "Nibbāna". Thus, cultivation of these three principles together with four *Brahmavihāras* and mindfulness meditation become essential requirement to resolve political conflict.

Conclusion

Buddhism is a science of happiness and peace. Anything that leads to unhappiness and conflict is to be avoided. The things that lead to unhappiness are three poisons—greed, hatred, and delusion. People are seeking to satisfy transitory pleasures to find security and permanence in a world that provides neither. So, resolving political conflict leads to happiness and peace. For example, one forgives one's enemy not because of an edict from God but because by doing so one becomes happier. Therefore, resolving political conflict is something one does out of enlightened self-interest.

Transforming human attitudes and the spiritual method both together may help address some of the world's most persistent and seemingly hopeless political conflict. When people are motivated mostly by greed, hatred, and delusion, it is not possible for them to resolve conflict. Therefore, the political conflict resolution methods mentioned above may not resolve all the political conflicts that have been

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97 Majjhima Nikāya I: 145

caused by the existing self-cantered approach, but in the long run it can help to overcome the very basis of the problems that we face today.

Buddhist values and ideal teachings can become an essential factor in creating self-understanding and promoting a legitimate political authority. At the same time, Buddhism can also contribute to the resolution of political conflict and the promotion of peace. The teaching of the Buddha is universal and can be applied universally without reference to Buddhism for the benefit of many.

The analysis developed in this paper shows evidence for the importance of Buddha's teachings for resolving political conflict and promoting social stability. If political leaders and parties examine closely the conflict resolution approaches mentioned in this essay, they can discover new ways to resolve political conflict.

Brāhmavihāra: A Buddhist Solution to Problems

Aung Shing Marma
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok

Introduction:

The need of peace and harmony in today world is increasing more than before. War and violence are seen in every nook and corner. In everyday news we read about more violence and conflict, amongst us humans. Although we are informed in everyday news still there are millions of people who are pretending that they do not know. The more they or we keep silent the more violence and challenges increases. The problems are impossible to solve with a single group of people. We all must take into consideration and be responsible for all world citizens. If we go, hand in hand, thinking that we have a collective responsibility for solving world problems, then there will be solutions to solve problems. If we do not think of resolving problems and creating peace then there will be no solutions for them. Therefore to be united and work towards these issues, is very important – beyond only 'thinking'. Lets us work with our ideas – towards establishing and launching truthfulness and brotherly messages to every parts of the world, until our message reaches them-all. When we all realize the value of being a human, as the luckiest - humans may final become humane.

Brāhmavihāra as a Solution for World Problems:

The Buddha lived a very short time but he left priceless dhamma-seeds. He also founded a community of monks to work and plant dhamma-seeds in every part of the world – places he could not go or plant for himself during his teaching career. He wanted to plant his seeds in every part of the world but he, simply, could not do it.

Although it was not personally possible, he never gave up his efforts and wish: Soon after his enlightenment he started his journey to save sentient beings. He wandered from one place to another until his teachings became rooted in society. He established a kingdom of truthfulness and compassion. As he expanded his empire with sublime attitudes, he happened upon King Bimbisara of Magadha. There was an urgent need for him to meet the King, preparing the 'fire sacrifice', presided over by the Brahmin priest Kassapa. The Buddha came as soon as he could, because thousand of innocent beings were about to be slaughtered and the environment was to undergo extreme devastation. These innocent "beings" were crying and begging for a help but no one around would raise a compassionate voice. Instead they were supporting

the performance and relishing all sorts of immoral thoughts. The innocent beings had no savior, in whom they could seek refuge or liberation. Nearing the final moments of their lives - then, the Buddha approaches. They wailed out to the Buddha and expressed their suffering in their various languages. Their tearful eyes and expressions emphasized that the world lacks sublime attitudes.

Having seen these innocent beings with tearful eyes, the Great, Compassionate Buddha addressed them directly as his dhamma subject - while instructing the King, Brahmin priest, and bystanders in the social-gathering. These intelligent people did not know that they were killing themselves indirectly with their trilateral weapons: greed, hatred and delusion. They thought to themselves that they were accumulating wholesome karma for the present and future lives. But it was really the opposite scenario. They were not only slaughtering cows, goats, so on; they were also destroying the natural environment. They were not preserving the gift of natural resources. Therefore, it was a need of him, to expound the practice of sublime attitudes to avert these crisis situations for all beings. He taught them to be compassion enough to others if they wanted to experience bliss and be loved by others – in all existences. Therefore each being should be respected for its rights and freedom. Every being has the right of freedom and the right for existence - with the collaboration of the four sublime attitudes. Through this perception, the Buddha undertook the serving of a society in crisis – to establish an empire of truthfulness and practicing the four sublime attitudes (Brāhmavihāra[98]), these are, of course:

(1) Metta (loving-kindness),
(2) Karuna (compassion),
(3) Mudita (appreciative gladness or sympathetic joy) and
(4) Upekkha (equanimity)

Although these are not the core of Buddhist teachings, they are practically needed towards the realization of his heart teachings – The Four Noble Truths. On account of this, the brāhmavihāra's become the key to understanding who the Buddha was and what his teachings are to be for humanity. These sublime attitudes of humans represent one's past, present and future lives. They shape what he was, is and who he will be. In other words, one's character and behavior will be depicted depending on attitude. The Buddha knew practicing these sublime attitudes is very much needed, irrespective of family, society and nations – as the key to peace and happiness.

Therefore these four sublime attitudes are considered to be the noblest of humanity's qualities. Practicing these noble qualities generate peaceful living. They subdue all kinds of unwholesome attitudes, such as: selfishness, hatred, anger,

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[98] Dīgha Nikāya, trans. Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1995, p. 284

jealousy, and ill-will, etc.; and cultivate a benevolent attitude – sympathy, non-hatred, kindness, unity, brotherhood, and so on. It is, therefore these sublime attitudes, known as boundless qualities of a being, that enable the possessor of these virtues to not have any discrimination or ill 'attitudes' unto others. One cultivates these virtues irrespective of sentient-status: human or non-human rich or poor, sex, race, religion, nationality, etc. The four virtues are explored below:

Metta (loving-kindness):

Metta means a practice of bondless love and well-wishes for happiness unto every sentient being. It is in contrast to practicing hatred and ill-will. He who practices the loving-kindness has to see and realize the danger of hatred and the advantage in loving-kindness. On the other hand the indirect enemy of loving-kindness is love. Love associates as a friend of metta but is not good enough to be a real friend to metta because the attitude of love and the attitude of metta is not the same. Metta is more advanced than love. Love sometimes acts with attachment and ignorance while metta is practiced without attachment and delusion. Love can give pain and suffering when the loved one is separated. Love, because of the association with attachment, cannot distinguish reality. Some love can create anger and additional dangerous attitudes when the love cannot be expressed. These unwholesome attitudes harm in this very lifetime and it germinate into the next life – resulting in a hellish life. Metta needs not to guard against anger and other poisonous emotions and can overcome wrong attitudes of love which is endowed with attachment. Metta is medicine for an angry person to cure anger. Hatred does not cease through hatred. Hatred ceases through metta. The more hatred is stored the more problems arise, bringing about self-destruction.[99] Loving-kindness should be developed for purpose of abandoning ill-will.[100] A person pervading with metta wishes for others' happiness – and incidentally, cultivates a benevolent mind. Humane humanity should be harmless and not incur injury upon another, be devoid of physical and mental suffering and be blessed with happiness - protecting themselves and others from sufferings.

On 26 November 2008, we read: India was bombed by neighboring Pakistan. Many innocent people were killed and injured from the bomb blast. Despite India's power: they never revenged the attack. India understands loving-kindness and

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[99] This message of the Buddha was announced by former Sri Lanka President J.R. Premadesa when two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima Nagasaki. He brought unanimously understanding and harmony and peace.
[100] The Path of Purification, Trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, The Corporate Body of Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 2003, p. III, 122

patience enough, as: 'hatred does not cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is the eternal law'.[101]

> At least 184 people were killed and around 714 injured, many seriously, as seven powerful blasts ripped through packed train cars and on stations during rush hour here Tuesday evening in the worst terror attack in India in over a decade.[102]

India never took revenge or waged war with Pakistan although it has enough power. If India retaliated for attack there would be more violence and destruction. As the result of revenge both parties would destroy each other; but this war will not end after war - it will continue until the world is destroyed, when everyone completely vanishes. Although both of them would completely vanish, there would be someone or some group of supporters to attempt defeat unto others in other parts of the world – and the cycle of violence continues. It will never end. Thus, this is why the Buddha's teaching is known as the eternal law of nature - that hatred does not cease through hatred, hatred ceases through love.

Karuna (compassion):

Karuna is the second quality of these sublime attitudes. Karuna is practiced when there is someone who is in a miserable situation like violence or some other instance of suffering. The indirect enemy of karuna is grief, while its direct enemy is cruelty and violence. In other words, grief is a closer enemy and cruelty is a distant enemy. Grief appears as compassion in disguise of karuna but this is not real karuna. The true compassionate person trains from harming others and oneself. The compassionate person works towards the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. The compassion is not something that can be measured. It is beyond and countless. It is a noble attitude of a person, towards the whole world – similar to a mother's compassion for her baby. A mother loves her baby and wants to see it always in happy and healthy. She does not want to see her baby suffering and in any pain. However, a mother's compassion is only towards her own child; the compassion of karuna is towards everyone, without partiality. The compassion is for all and in every direction. The heart is always filled with compassion and willing to serve any being, regardless of stature - it does not matter: human or non-human, and how big the problem is. One must try to the upmost capacity to save others and oneself from dangers.

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[101] The Dhammapada, Sri Dhammananda, k., The Penang Buddhist Association, Penang, 2007, p.45
[102] http://news.indiainfo.com/spotlight/mumbai_bomb_blast/, accessed on March 21st 2009

But a cruel person never wants others to be happier; wants no one to be greater and superior; when there is a person who is better, the desire is to destroy the other. The cruel person wants to bring others beneath them. The mind is directed only inward, and is perceived as greater - others are in subjugated under command.

On 11 September 2001, the world witnessed an act of terrorism against the World Trade Center, in New York City – many people were killed, destroying many valuable things. This was an act of cruel and ill-minded people. Ill-minded people do not bring any good to others. It might be good to them for a minute but they are not really good to humanity. A compassionate person is unlike them – wanting everyone to be happy and live together, happily.

> Just he would feel compassion on seeing unlucky, unfortunate person, so he pervades all beings with compassion.[103]

The Buddha was one of the greatest humans endowed with the greatest compassion. He was formerly a prince and lived with all luxuries in his command. However, he renounced this elite and materialistic social status, as people often forget – to become a true recluse in search of the highest truth and highest good. Not long after the Enlightenment, he journeyed outward to serve society. He worked hard day and night for the welfare and happiness of humanity and others. Unlike us he slept only two hours per day; the remaining 20 hours were spent serving any suffering human or non-human regardless of identity: male/female, rich/poor, young/old, human/non-human, low/high caste, etc. His compassion to them was equal, void of partiality.

Sopaka, a seven year old boy, was tied up with a dead body and left in a cemetery by his step-father. The Buddha surveyed the world, saw him and immediately went to free Sopaka. He adopted Sopaka as his own son. He taught this helpless-boy: the sublime attitudes, and asked him to serve the world with them - despite not being served by his step-father.

> He who has understanding and great wisdom does not think of harming himself or another, nor of harming both alike. He rather thinks of his own welfare, of that of others, of that of both, and of the welfare of the whole world.[104]

Here, above, it is obvious that the Buddha was not only concerned about human suffering and benefit of them; rather, he was concerned with all living and non-living things. In his advice, the phrase welfare of the whole world has a wider

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[103] The Path of Purification, Trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, The Corporate Body of Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 2003, p. IX,77

[104] http://santacittarama.altervista.org/e_buddhism.htm, accessed on March 1st 2009

meaning than usual. It must be understood in a wider sense than the term 'world', in English. It means not only this very world where we are living - it means all world systems including whatever things which exist depending on others within the universe.

A compassionate person wants to see other people happy if he too, is happy. With this soft, it becomes difficult to see beings in suffering. In May 2008 the Nargis cyclone hit Myanmar. Nargis devastated humanity and the environment. Compassionate people, came out with their compassion-filled hearts to help them in their needs. Some sent money, others came directly with personal-labor to assist them. The compassionate person when hearing and seeing suffering of others – the heart melts and is ready to assist. Some compassionate people are in this or another seminar room, today.

Mudita (sympathetic joy):

Jealousy is an opposite mental attitude of mudita. People get jealous of another when others succeed with endeavors; but a person with mudita is likely to rejoice and share other's happiness and success, as one's own success. Jealousy nourishes unhappiness - hatred and anger are no good. Nevertheless, mudita is not such like that, instead, it purifies the mind and develops more happiness by seeing others' successes as one's own success.

For a better understanding of mudita, let's examine a modern situation. The world is full of jealousy – therefore, more challenges face and are amongst humanity. Humans fight one another because they nourish unwholesome factors. When there is a competition among people the defeated get jealous of the victor and try to inflict some sort of harm unto the opponent. The effort is nothing than nourishing unwholesome mental attitudes on others - as the result of nourishing jealousy, many problematic scenarios are encountered.

This year, on 20 January 2009, Mr. Barack Hussein Obama, because of his election victory over John McCain, was sworn in, as President of the United States of America. When he was officially appointed to be the president of the USA, many thousands of people who did not like him continued their hatred and delusion – and jealousy. Some people plot against him, rather than sharing his happiness, talent, effort and luck. On the other hand, there are some people who took his success as theirs and over-rejoiced during this historic, successful occasion. They celebrate a success that is not of themselves; hence, this type of opportunity-taking – to share others' happiness is called mudita. It gives great happiness and peace, even though he is not his relative. This happiness can be contagious – one's family and relatives may experience similar joy.

Upekkha (equanimity):

Upekkha is the last of the mental attitudes of the four in the list. This is another rare quality to see in this hustle and bustle world of today. The synonym for equanimity (upekkha) is neither happiness nor suffering. It is a neutral feeling or neutral mental attitude on others. This type of neutral mental reaction is hard to find in common humans. This mental state quality is seen in arahants. An arahant is a person who has eliminated or eradicated unwholesome factors – hatred, anger and delusion; and is accomplished with supreme morality, concentration, and wisdom.

The Path of Purification gives a deeper exposition which is rather difficult to comprehend which is *unknown*. Unknown or delusion is the closer and further enemies of upekkha. This exposition is, from a religious perspective, a connection to an arahant.

Here, we will look from a general perspective at the common behavior of humans: we assume that the direct opposite mental attitude of upekkha is discrimination. A person with upekkha does not discriminate whatsoever, and they are impartial; unable to be bribed. One wants to see others also as having equal rights, equal justice, and equal freedom. A person without upekkha wishes to stratify people below others, wanting to be greater to others. Hopefully, the term discrimination gives a fair concept in opposition to the term to the equanimity – as it is the feeling of 'neutrality' towards all sentient beings.

But in today world we see social, religious, racial, political, national, color, etc., all group identities harbor elements of discrimination. These discriminatory-factors contribute to competition and fights in the name of said factor. The strife between Israel and Palestine is not new – as it has roots in tribal, racial or religious politics between adherents of Judaism and Islam. There is no upekkha amongst them.

Conclusion:

The citizens of our planet are time-bombs of hatred, anger and delusion - most dangerous for this life and the next life, as well. These bombs must be defused sooner, without waiting for tomorrow or another opportune occasion. This is the urgent need of the conflicted world because of the widespread pain. The damage of the earth is equally our personal pain. Towards releasing this anguish: the uptaking of the Brāhmavihāra (sublime attitudes) becomes important to us. The Buddha left this teaching to us, because he knew that it will be highly important for humanity. This is the only medicine that can solve global crisis. This must be taken into consideration and we must all strive unanimously towards helping and listening to

one another. So, lets us establish these sublime attitudes in us and launch new messages for healing the world, through these sublime attitudes.

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Buddhist Approach to the Political Conflict and Peace:
A Comparison between Communist and Buddhist Methods

Pravin Bhalesain
M.Tech. (IT), IIT Roorkee

Introduction:

Firstly, do we really need to think about Buddhist approach to political conflict? Majority people identify Buddha's teaching only as spiritual teachings or teachings for personal enlightenment or happiness. Some people feel very absurd even to talk on Buddhism and Politics.

Secondly, is it possible to have any comparison between Buddha's teachings and the ideology propagated by Karl Marx? Marx and Buddha are divided by 2381 years. Buddha was born in 563 B.C. and Karl Marx in 1818 AD. Karl Marx is supposed to be the architect of a new ideology-polity a new Economic system. The Buddha on the other hand is believed to be no more than the founder of a religion, which has no relation to politics or economics.[105]

While answering the first question I would like to quote Prof. Richard Gombrich [106] : "I shall argue that Buddhism has a clear and cogent vision of the relation between religion and politics and that the Sangha and politicians have quite different parts to play; but that to say simply that Buddhism must be kept out of politics is dangerous and absurd."

Before we answer the second question we should understand that even though Communism (Karl Marx) was born in Europe, it has destroyed and greatly impacted the Buddhist populations and Buddhist majority countries compared to European countries and any other religions. Especially in the 20th century Communism has swiped Buddhist majority countries. One can see the situation in Tibet, China, Cambodia, Laos, North Korea, and Myanmar, some parts of India or other South Asian countries. So even if people like it or don't like it; the comparison between Communism and Buddhism is necessary. The socio-political awakening for the Buddhist world is must; without socio-political awakening the Buddhist Tradition will not survive, the situation is Asian especially South Asian countries has forced Buddhists to answer Communism.

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[105] Buddha Or Karl Marx , Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 3
[106] Buddhism and Nonviolence, Prof. Richard Gombrich, United Nations Day of Vesak, 2007
http://www.vesakday.net/vesak50/article/pdf_file/08_Buddhism_and_Non.pdf

The dominant forms of Communism, such as Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism and Trotskyism are based on Marxism. In India Naxalism is an informal name used by the Brahmanical Media for Communist Movement based on Maoism. Communists trace back their roots to Karl Marx so this comparison is primarily based between Communism of Karl Marx and Buddhism.

What could a Marxist learn from the Buddha? What can Buddha teach a Marxist? None-the-less a comparison between the two is an attractive and instructive. Marxists keep back their prejudices and study the Buddha and understand what he stood for I feel sure that they will change their attitude. It is of course too much to expect that having been determined to scoff at the Buddha they will remain to pray. But this much can be said that they will realize that there is something in the Buddha's teachings which is worth their while to take note of.

Reasons behind Political Conflict:

Inequality is one of the major reasons behind political conflict and destruction of peace; it can be economical inequality, social inequality or both. Two major reasons which give birth to inequality are Class Struggle and Caste Struggle. Class Conflict and Caste Conflict are roots for inequality that causes instability, conflict between nations as well as individuals. Class Struggle has certainly impacted billions of people all around the world and in addition to Class Struggle the Caste Struggle has affected more than a billion people in India and other countries.

Class Struggle: Division of labour is necessary for civilized society and it has created two classes, Owners and Workers. Along with these two classes the status of a person is defined as upper class or lower class in society. Owner's class and workers class have conflict.

Caste Struggle: Hindu Social Order is based on Chaturvarna [107] , Caste System and the principle of Graded Inequality. Caste is decided by birth and it divides people irrespective of their real and present nature of work. Caste has very firm grip on peoples mind along with the hate cultivated towards each others castes. There are thousands of castes such as Bania, Chamar, Bhangi, Brahmin etc. Chaturvarna is the parent of Hindu Caste System. The relation between Chaturvarna and Caste is out of scope of this paper. Compared to Class System the Caste System is very strange.

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[107] Rig-Veda, Book No. 10, Paragraph 90, Verse No.12. Also quoted in Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 4 verse 13

Difference between European Class System and Hindu Caste System:

Class system is a division of labour. But a person from worker class with his virtue and efforts can go to owner class or vice versa. Social status such as upper class and lower class exists. Even though both the classes exist there is a social dynamics of change. Once a person becomes upper class his status in society changes and if he falls down then also his status changes. Rich can become poor and poor can become rich; accordingly their status changes.

Class division has social dynamics associated with it but that is not the case with Caste division. Caste has some unique features such as: [108]

1. Caste divides Labourers
2. Caste disassociates work from interest
3. Caste disconnects intelligence from labour
4. Caste devitalizes by denying to him the right to cultivate vital interest and
5. Caste prevents mobilization

Caste division is not merely **division of labour but** it is a **division of labourers**. Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour but in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste System is not merely division of labourers – which is quite different from division of labour – it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers. [109]

If a person born in Brahmin Caste leaves his priest job and becomes worker class (or in Vedic terms a 'Shudra') still he possesses his high status in society as upper caste. If a person born in Brahmin Caste does a scavenging job still he regarded as upper caste. Now if a person born in Bhangi Caste leaves his ancestors scavenging job and with his virtue and hard efforts do other job and becomes a part of owner's class still he remains a lower caste and is looked down by rest of the caste Hindus. His status is society does not change also he also carries deep inferiority complex in mind about his lower caste status. This is how caste system is different from class system.

Most of the time people are confused to understand the difference between Varna and Caste especially Brahmin Varna and Brahmin Caste. Also people don't pay much attention to Shudra Varna, cultivation of Shudra Mind and the principle of Graded Inequality; preached and penetrated in the minds of people by Brahminism. Shudras become social police of Brahmanism.

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[108] Philosophy of Hinduism, Dr. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 3, p. 67
[109] Ibid p. 67

The term "Brahmanism" is interpreted by Dr. Ambedkar as, "Let us work hard to uproot Brahminism the spirit of inequality to be misunderstood when I say that Brahminism is enemy which must be dealt with. By Brahminism I do not mean the power, privileges and interests of the Brahmins as a community. That is not the sense in which I am using the word. By Brahminism I mean the negation of the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity. In the sense it is rampant in all classes and is not confined to the Brahmins alone though they have been originators. The effects of Brahminism were not confined to social rights such as inter-dining and inter-marrying. It denied them also the civic rights. So omniscient is Brahminism that it even affects the field of economic opportunities. " [110]

Thus the social dynamics of Varna is lost and Caste fuses deep inferiority complex in peoples mind irrespective of their Class status as owners or workers. Caste denies civic, social and economical rights. There is no social dynamic for any change associated with upper to lower caste. These are the differences between European Class System and Hindu Caste System.

Inequality, Class Struggle, Graded Inequality and Caste Struggle causes political conflict. Peace of mind and peace in society is lost. If we want to solve political conflicts and to bring peace few questions arise. Can we use Communism to end Class Struggle? Can we use Communism to end Caste Struggle? Can we use Buddhism to end Class Struggle? Can we use Buddhism to end Caste Struggle? Which is better solution Communism or Buddhism? Communism and Buddhism both talk about equality. Both has there methods to end inequality so the comparison between their methods is necessary.

Comparative points between Communism and Buddhism - *Remains of Marxian Creed*:

The Marxian Creed was propounded sometime in the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then it has been subjected to much criticism. As a result of this criticism much of the ideological structure raised by Karl Marx has broken to pieces. There is hardly any doubt that Marxist claim that his socialism was inevitable has been completely disproved. What remains of the Karl Marx is a residue of fire, small but still very important. The residue in my view consists of four items: [111]

i.   The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste its time in explaining the origin of the world.

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[110] Dr. Ambedkar, Presidential speech to GIP Railway Depressed Class workmen's conference held at Manmad, Nasik, 12th Feb 1938
[111] Buddha Or Karl Marx , Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 3

ii. That there is a conflict of interest between class and class.

iii. That private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation.

iv. That it is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property.

Comparison between Buddha and Karl Marx:

Taking the points from the Marxian Creed which has survived one may now enter upon a comparison between the Buddha and Karl Marx.

(i) On the first point there is complete agreement between the Buddha and Karl Marx. To show how close the agreement is I quote below a part of the dialogue between Buddha and the Brahmin Potthapada. [112]

"Then, in the same terms, Potthapada asked (the Buddha) each of the following questions:

1. Is the world not eternal?
2. Is the world finite?
3. Is the world infinite?
4. Is the soul the same as the body?
5. Is the soul one thing and the body another?
6. Does one who has gained the truth live again after death?
7. Does he neither live again, nor not live again, after death?" And to each question the exalted one made the same reply: It was this.

"That too, Potthapada is a matter on which I have expressed no opinion ". 28. " But why has the Exalted One expressed no opinion on that?" (Because) 'This question is not calculated to profit, it is not concerned with (the Dhamma) it does not redound even to the elements of right conduct, nor to detachment nor to purification from lust, nor to quietude, nor to tranquillization of heart, nor to real knowledge, nor to the insight (of the higher stages of the Path), nor to Nirvana. Therefore it is that I express no opinion upon it. "

(ii) On the second point I give below a quotation from a dialogue between Buddha and Pasenadi King of Kosala: "Moreover, there is always strife going on between kings, between "nobles, between Brahmins, between house holders, between mother and son, between son and father, between brother and sister, between sister and brother, between companion and companion. . ." Although these

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[112] DIgha NikAya I, 9. Potthapada Sutta
http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/

are the words of Pasenadi, the Buddha did not deny that they formed a true picture of society. As to the Buddha's own attitude towards class conflict his doctrine of Ashtanga Marga (eightfold path) recognizes that class conflict exists and that it is ; the class conflict which is the cause of misery.

(iii)   On the third question I quote from the same dialogue of Buddha with Potthapada;

"Then what is it that the Exalted One has determined?" "I have expounded, Potthapada that sorrow and misery exist!" I have expounded, what is the origin of misery. I have expounded what is the cessation of misery: I have expounded what is method by which one may reach the cessation of misery.

30. 'And why has the Exalted One put forth a statement as to that?'

'Because that questions Potthapada, is calculated to profit, is concerned with the Dhamma redounds to the beginnings of right conduct, to detachment, to purification from lusts, to quietude, to tranquillization of heart, to real knowledge, to the insight of the higher stages of the Path and to Nirvana. Therefore is it, Potthapada that I have put forward a statement as to that. '

That language is different but the meaning is the same. If for misery one reads exploitation Buddha is not away from Marx.

On the question of private property the following extract from a dialogue between Buddha and Ananda is very illuminating. In reply to a question by Ananda the Buddha said:

"I have said that avarice is because of possession. Now in what way that is so, Ananda, is to be understood after this manner. Where there is no possession of any sort or kind whatever by any one or anything, then there being no possession whatever, would there, owing to this cessation of possession, be any appearance of avarice? "There would not. Lord".

'Wherefore, Ananda, just that is the ground, the basis, the genesis, the cause of avarice, to wit, possession.

31. 'I have said that tenacity is the cause possession. Now in what way that is so, Ananda, is to be understood after this manner. Were there no tenacity of any sort or kind whatever shown by any one with respect to any thing, then there being whatever, would there owing to this cessation of tenacity, be any appearance of possession? ''There would not. Lord.'

'Wherefore, Ananda, just that is the ground, the basis, the genesis, the cause of possession, to wit tenacity.

(iv)   'On the fourth point no evidence is necessary. The rules of the Bhikkhu Sangha will serve as the best testimony on the subject.

According to the rules a Bhikkhu can have private property only in the following eight articles and no more. These eight articles are: [113]

Three robes or pieces of cloth for daily wear 1. Lower garment called Antarvaska 2. Upper garment called Uttarasang 3. Covering garment against cold called Sanghati and 4. A girdle for the loins 5. An alms-bowl 6. A razor 7. A needle 8. A water strainer.

Further a Bhikkhu was completely forbidden to receive gold or silver for fear that with gold or silver he might buy some thing beside the eight things he is permitted to have. These rules are far more rigorous than are to be found in any Communist ruled Country.

Communist and Buddhist Means:

If for misery one reads exploitation Buddha is not away from Marx. What are the means for annihilation of misery, sorrow or exploitation? Communist means are (1) Violence and (2) Dictatorship of Proletariats to achieve their goals. Buddha preached different means those can be decided in Four Parts. [114]

Part I – *Pancasilas* - A part of the misery and unhappiness of man was the result of his own misconduct. To remove this cause of misery the Buddha preached the practice of *Pancasila*. The Pancasila comprised the following observations: (1) To abstain from destroying or causing destruction of any living things (2) To abstain from stealing i.e. acquiring or keeping by fraud or violence, the property of another: (3) To Abstain from telling untruth: (4) To abstain from lust: (5) To abstain from intoxicating drinks.

Part II - *Ashtanga Magga* (Eightfold path) - A part of the misery and unhappiness in the world was according to the Buddha the result of man's inequity towards man. How was this inequity to be removed? For the removal of man's inequity towards man the Buddha prescribed the Noble Eight-Fold Path. The elements of the Noble Fight-Fold Path are: (1) Right views i.e. freedom from superstition: (2) Right aims, high and worthy of the intelligent and earnest men; (3) Right speech i.e. kindly, open, truthful: (4) Right Conduct i.e. peaceful, honest and

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[113] The Buddha and His Dhamma, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_buddha/05_01.html
[114] Buddha Or Karl Marx , Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 3

pure; (5) Right livelihood i.e. causing hurt or injury to no living being; (6) Right perseverance in all the other seven; (7) Right mindfulness i.e. with a watchful and active mind; and (8) Right contemplation i.e. earnest thought on the deep mysteries of life. The aim of the Noble Eight-Fold Path is to establish on earth the kingdom of righteousness, and thereby to banish sorrow and unhappiness from the face of the world.

Part III - *Nibbana* - The doctrine of *Nibbana* is an integral part of the doctrine of the Noble Eight-Fold Path. Without Nibbana the realization of the Eight-Fold Path cannot be accomplished. The doctrine of *Nibbana* tells the difficulties in the way of the realization of the Eight-Fold Path. The Buddha called them the Ten *Asavas*, Fetters or Hindrances, they are Ten in number.(1) First hindrance is the delusion of self. So long as a man is wholly occupied with himself, chasing after every bauble that he vainly thinks will satisfy the cravings of his heart, there is no noble path for him. Only when his eyes have been opened to the fact that he is but a tiny part of a measureless, whole, only when he begins to realize how impermanent a thing is his temporary individuality can he even enter upon this narrow path. (2) Doubt and Indecision. When a man's eyes are opened to the great mystery of existence, the impermanence of every individuality, he is likely to be assailed by doubt and indecision as to his action. To do or not to do, after all my individuality is impermanent, why do anything? – are, the questions which make him indecisive or inactive. But that will not do in life. He must make up his mind to follow the teacher, to accept the truth and to enter on the struggle or he will get no further. (3) Dependence on the efficacy of Rites and Ceremonies. No good resolutions, however firm will lead to anything unless a man gets rid of ritualism: of the belief that any outward acts. any priestly powers, and holy ceremonies, can afford him an assistance of any kind. It is only when he has overcome this hindrance that men can be said to have fairly entered upon the stream and has a chance sooner or later to win a victory. (4) It consists of the bodily passions (5) The ill will towards other individuals. (6) Suppression of the desire for a future life with a material body (7) Desire for a future life in an immaterial world (8) Pride and (9) Self-righteousness. These are failings which it is most difficult for men to overcome, and to which superior minds are peculiarly liable a Praisaical contempt for those who are less able and less holy than themselves. (10) The tenth hindrance is ignorance. When all other difficulties are conquered this will even remain, the thorn in the flesh of the wise and good, the last enemy and the bitterest foe of man.   *Nibbana* consists in overcoming these hindrances to the pursuit of the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

Part IV – *Paramitas* (States of Perfection) - The doctrine of *Paramitas* inculcates the practice of ten virtues in one's daily life. These are those ten virtues— (1) *Panna* (2) *Sila* (3) *Nekkhama* (4) *Dana* (5) *Virya* (6) *Khanti* (7) *Succa* (8) *Aditthana* (9) *Metta* and (10) *Upekkha.* **Panna** or wisdom is the light that removes

the darkness of *Avijja*, Moha or Nescience. The Panna requires that one must get all his doubts removed by questioning those wiser than him self, associate with the wise and cultivate the different arts and sciences which help to develop the mind. **Sila** is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to do good; to be ashamed of doing wrong. To avoid doing evil for fear of punishment is Sila. Sila means fear of doing wrong. **Nekkhama** is renunciation of the pleasures of the world. **Dana** means the giving of one's possessions, blood and limbs and even one's life for the good of the others without expecting anything in return. **Virya** is right Endeavour. It is doing with all your might with thought never turning back, whatever you have undertaken to do. **Khanti** is forbearance. Not to meet hatred by hatred is the essence of it. For hatred is not appeased by hatred. It is appeased only by forbearance. **Succa** is truth. An aspirant for Buddha never speaks a lie. His speech is truth and nothing but truth. **Aditthana** is resolute determination to reach the goal. **Metta** is fellow feeling extending to all beings, foe and friend, beast and man. **Upekkha** is detachment as distinguished from indifference. It is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike. Remaining unmoved by the result and yet engaged in the pursuit of it.

Such is the gospel the Buddha enunciated as a result of his enlightenment to end the sorrow and misery in the world. It is clear that the means adopted by the Buddha were to convert a man by changing his moral disposition to follow the path voluntarily. What the Buddha wanted was that each man should be morally so trained that he may himself become a sentinel for the kingdom of righteousness.

Comparison between Communist and Buddhist Means - *Violence as a means?*

Take violence. As to violence there are many people who seem to shiver at the very thought of it. But this is only a sentiment. Violence cannot be altogether dispensed with. Even in non-communist countries a murderer is hanged. Does not hanging amount to violence? Non-communist countries go to war with non-communist countries. Millions of people are killed. Is this no violence? If a murderer can be killed, because he has killed a citizen, if a soldier can be killed in war because he belongs to a hostile nation why cannot a property owner be killed if his ownership leads to misery for the rest of humanity? There is no reason to make an exception in favour of the property owner, why one should regard private property as sacrosanct.

The Buddha was against violence. But he was also in favour of justice and where justice required he permitted the use of force. This is well illustrated in his dialogue with Sinha Senapati the Commander-in-Chief of Vaishali. Sinha having come to know that the Buddha preached Ahimsa went to him and asked:

"The Bhagvan preaches Ahimsa. Does the Bhagvan preach an offender to be given freedom from punishment? Does the Bhagvan preach that we should not go to war to save our wives, our children and our wealth? Should we suffer at the hands of criminals in the name of Ahimsa?"

"Does the Tathagata prohibit all war even when it is in the interest of Truth and Justice?"

Buddha replied. You have wrongly understood what I have been preaching. An offender must be punished and an innocent man must be freed. It is not a fault of the Magistrate if he punishes an offender. The cause of punishment is the fault of the offender. The Magistrate who inflicts the punishment is only carrying out the law. He does not become stained with Ahimsa. A man who fights for justice and safety cannot be accused of *Ahimsa*. If all the means of maintaining peace have failed then the responsibility for *Himsa* (violence) falls on him who starts war. One must never surrender to evil powers. War there may be. But it must not be for selfish ends.

There are of course other grounds against violence such as those urged by Prof. John Dewey. In dealing with those who contend that the end justifies the means is morally perverted doctrine, Dewey has rightly asked what can justify the means if not the end? It is only the end that can justify the means.

Buddha would have probably admitted that it is only the end which would justify the means. What else could? And he would have said that if the end justified violence, violence was a legitimate means for the end in view. He certainly would not have exempted property owners from force if force were the only means for that end. As we shall see his means for the end were different. As Prof. Dewey has pointed out that violence is only another name for the use of force and although force must be used for creative purposes a distinction between use of force as energy and use of force as violence needs to be made. The achievement of an end involves the destruction of many other ends, which are integral with the one that is sought to be destroyed. Use of force must be so regulated that it should save as many ends as possible in destroying the evil one. Buddha's Ahimsa was not as absolute as the Ahimsa preached by Mahavira the founder of Jainism. He would have allowed force only as energy. The communists preach *Ahimsa* (Non-Violence) as an absolute principle. To this the Buddha was deadly opposed. [115]

Dictatorship of Proletariats or Democracy as Means?

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[115] Buddha Or Karl Marx , Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 3

As to Dictatorship the Buddha would have none of it. He was born a democrat and he died a democrat. At the time he lived there were 14 monarchical states and 4 republics. He belonged to the Sakyas and the Sakya's kingdom was a republic. He was extremely in love with Vaishali which was his second home because it was a republic. Before his *Mahaparinibbana* he spent his *Varshavasa* in Vaishali. After the completion of his *Varshavasa* he decided to leave Vaishali and go elsewhere as was his wont. After going some distance he looked back on Vaishali and said to Ananda. "This is the last look of Vaishali which the Tathagata is having ". So fond was he of this republic.

He was a thorough equalitarian. Originally the Bhikkhus, including the Buddha himself, wore robes made of rags. This rule was enunciated to prevent the aristocratic classes from joining the Sangh. Later Jivaka the great physician prevailed upon the Buddha to accept a robe, which was made of a whole cloth. The Buddha at once altered the rule and extended it to all the monks.

Once the Buddha's mother Mahaprajapati Gotami who had joined the Bhikkhuni Sangh heard that the Buddha had got a chill. She at once started preparing a scarf for him. After having completed it she took to the Buddha and asked him to wear it. But he refused to accept it saying that if it is a gift it must be a gift to the whole Sangh and not to an individual member of the Sangh. She pleaded and pleaded but he refused to yield.

The Bhikkhu Sangha had the most democratic constitution. He was only one of the Bhikkhus. At the most he was like a Prime Minister among members of the Cabinet. He was never a dictator. Twice before his death he was asked to appoint some one as the head of the Sangh to control it. But each time he refused saying that the Dhamma is the Supreme Commander of the Sangh. He refused to be a dictator and refused to appoint a dictator.

What about the value of the means? Whose means are superior and lasting in the long run?

Can the Communists say that in achieving their valuable end they have not destroyed other valuable ends? They have destroyed private property. Assuming that this is a valuable end can the Communists say that they have not destroyed other valuable end in the process of achieving it? How many people have they killed for achieving their end? Has human life no value? Could they not have taken property without taking the life of the owner?

Take dictatorship. The end of Dictatorship is to make the Revolution a permanent revolution. This is a valuable end. But can the Communists say that in achieving this end they have not destroyed other valuable ends? Dictatorship is often defined as absence of liberty or absence of Parliamentary Government. Both

interpretations are not quite clear. There is no liberty even when there is Parliamentary Government. For law means want of liberty. The difference between Dictatorship and Parliamentary Govt. lies in this. In Parliamentary Government every citizen has a right to criticize the restraint on liberty imposed by the Government. In Parliamentary Government you have a duty and a right; the duty to obey the law and right to criticize it. In Dictatorship you have only duty to obey but no right to criticize it. [116]

Communists and Religion:

Below is the excerpt from the "Buddha or Karl Marx" by Bodhisattva Dr. Ambedkar:

"The Communists themselves admit that their theory of the State as a permanent dictatorship is a weakness in their political philosophy. They take shelter under the plea that the State will ultimately wither away. There are two questions, which they have to answer. When will it wither away? What will take the place of the State when it withers away? To the first question they can give no definite time. Dictatorship for a short period may be good and a welcome thing even for making Democracy safe. Why should not Dictatorship liquidate itself after it has done its work, after it has removed all the obstacles and boulders in the way of democracy and has made the path of Democracy safe? Did not Asoka set an example? He practiced violence against the Kalingas. But thereafter he renounced violence completely. If our victor's to-day not only disarm their victims but also disarm themselves there would be peace all over the world.

The Communists have given no answer. At any rate no satisfactory answer to the question what would take the place of the State when it withers away, though this question is more important than the question when the State will wither away. Will it be succeeded by Anarchy? If so the building up of the Communist State is a useless effort. If it cannot be sustained except by force and if it results in anarchy when the force holding it together is withdraws what good is the Communist State.

The only thing, which could sustain it after force is withdrawn, is Religion. But to the Communists Religion is anathema. Their hatred to Religion is so deep seated that they will not even discriminate between religions which are helpful to Communism and religions which are not; The Communists have carried their hatred of Christianity to Buddhism without waiting to examine the difference between the two. The charge against Christianity leveled by the Communists was two fold.

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[116] Ibid

Their first charge against Christianity was that they made people other worldliness and made them suffer poverty in this world. As can be seen from quotations from Buddhism in the earlier part of this tract such a charge cannot be leveled against Buddhism.

The second charge leveled by the Communists against Christianity cannot be leveled against Buddhism. This charge is summed up in the statement that Religion is the opium of the people. This charge is based upon the Sermon on the Mount which is to be found in the Bible. The Sermon on the Mount sublimates poverty and weakness. It promises heaven to the poor and the weak. There is no Sermon on the Mount to be found in the Buddha's teachings. His teaching is to acquire wealth. I give below his Sermon on the subject to Anathapindika one of his disciples.

Once Anathapindika came to where the Exalted One was staying. Having come he made obeisance to the Exalted One and took a seat at one side and asked 'Will the Enlightened One tell what things are welcome, pleasant, agreeable, to the householder but which are hard to gain.'

The Enlightened One having heard the question put to him said ' Of such things the first is to acquire wealth lawfully.' 'The second is to see that your relations also get their wealth lawfully.'

'The third is to live long and reach great age.' 'Of a truth, householder, for the attainment of these four things, which in the world are welcomed, pleasant agreeable but hard to gain, there are also four conditions precedent. They are the blessing of faith, the blessing of virtuous conduct, the blessing of liberality and the blessing of wisdom.

The Blessing of virtuous conduct which abstains from taking life, thieving, unchastely, lying and partaking of fermented liquor.

The blessing of liberality consists in the householder living with mind freed from the taint of avarice, generous, open-handed, delighting in gifts, a good one to be asked and devoted to the distribution of gifts.

Wherein consists the blessing of Wisdom? He know that an householder who dwells with mind overcome by greed, avarice, ill-will, sloth, drowsiness, distraction and flurry, and also about, commits wrongful deeds and neglects that which ought to be done, and by so doing deprived of happiness and honor.

Greed, avarice, ill will, sloth and drowsiness, distraction and flurry and doubt are stains of the mind. A householder who gets rid of such stains of the mind acquires great wisdom, abundant wisdom, clear vision and perfect wisdom.

Thus to acquire wealth legitimately and justly, earn by great industry, amassed by strength of the arm and gained by sweat of the brow is a great blessing. The householder makes himself happy and cheerful and preserves himself full of happiness; also makes his parents, wife, and children, servants, and labourers, friends and companions happy and cheerful, and preserves them full of happiness. The Russians do not seem to be paying any attention to Buddhism as an ultimate aid to sustain Communism when force is withdrawn."

The Russians were proud of their Communism. "But they forget that the wonder of all wonders is that the Buddha established Communism so far as the Sangha was concerned without dictatorship. It may be that it was a communism on a very small scale but it was communism without dictatorship a miracle which Lenin failed to do.

The Buddha's method was different. His method was to change the mind of man: to alter his disposition: so that whatever man does, he does it voluntarily without the use of force or compulsion. His main means to alter the disposition of men was his Dhamma and the constant preaching of his Dhamma. The Buddha's way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do although it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would do voluntarily what they would not otherwise to do.

It has been claimed that the Communist Dictatorship in Russia has wonderful achievements to its credit. There can be no denial of it. That is why I say that a Russian Dictatorship would be good for all backward countries. But this is no argument for permanent Dictatorship. Humanity does not only want economic values, it also wants spiritual values to be retained. Permanent Dictatorship has paid no attention to spiritual values and does not seem to intend to. Carlyle called Political Economy a Pig Philosophy. Carlyle was of course wrong. For man needs material comforts. But the Communist Philosophy seems to be equally wrong, for the aim of their philosophy seems to be fatten pigs as though men are no better than pigs. Man must grow materially as well as spiritually. Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation was summarised by the French Revolution in three words, Fraternity, Liberty and Equality. The French Revolution was welcomed because of this slogan. It failed to produce equality. We welcome the Russian Revolution because it aims to produce equality. But it cannot be too much emphasized that in producing equality society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can coexist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all."

Buddhist Approach as compared to Communist Approach:

Communist methodology to end Class Struggle and bring equality consists of,

1. Dictatorship of Proletariats and
2. Violence

Under communist revolution and rule millions of people have to loose their life. Communist method brings equality but at the cost of sacrificing liberty and fraternity. Also once the Dictatorship of State fails there will be anarchy and masses suffer. If mind is changed, if the mind accepts the communists system and loves it loyally and carries it out, it is a permanent thing; it does not require a soldier or a police officer to keep a man in order. [117] But transformation of mind is not achieved through communist methods.

Communists certainly don't have answer for Caste Struggle. Class division is for division of labour but Caste division is not merely division of labour but it is a division of labourers. Caste is a disease of mind but the Communists don't believe transformation of mind voluntarily. Only with physical force the transformation of mind is not possible. They have not understood the difference between Class System and Caste System. Situation of Communism in India is pathetic. Dr. Ambedkar states precisely that, "Communism in India is another bunch of Brahmin boys". Capitalism and Brahminism are the enemies of equality. Communism can provide some solution to Capitalism with its own disadvantages as discussed above but Communism is futile to give any solution to Brahminism and Caste System.

Communists reject all religions without understanding difference between Christianity and Buddhism. I would like to quote Dr. Ambedkar who did not turned to Communism even though he has all necessary reasons to become Communist, "Religion is a very necessary thing for the progress of mankind. I know that a sect has appeared because of the writings of Karl Marx. According to their creed, religion means nothing at all. Religion is not important to them. They get a breakfast in the morning of bread, cream, butter, chicken legs, etc.; they get undisturbed sleep; they get to see movies; and that's all there is. This is their philosophy. I am not of that opinion. My father was poor, and therefore we did not get comforts of that kind. No one has ever lived a life as hard as mine! How hard a man's life can be without happiness and comforts, this I know. I agree that an economic elevation movement is necessary. I am not against that movement. Man must progress economically. But I note an important difference in this matter. There is a difference between buffalo, bull, and man. Buffalo and bull must have fodder daily. Man also must have food. But between the two the difference is this: the buffalo and bull have no mind; man has, along with his body, a mind. Both have to be cared for. The mind should be developed. The mind should become cultured, and that culture has to be developed. I want no sort of relationships with people from a country where it is said that there is

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[117] Buddhism and Communism, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Fourth World Buddhist Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, 20th November 1956

no connection between man and his cultured mind except for his body. I do not need any such relationship. Just as a man's body should be healthy, the mind also should be cultured." [118]

Buddhist Approach:

The promotion of rationalists and egalitarian Buddhist interpretations has become necessary to fulfill the needs of the modern world along with the spiritual flavour of Buddhism.

Buddhism and Non-violence:

The doctrine of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) needs proper interpretations. Prof. Richard Gombrich puts his thoughts on Non-violence as, "Note that I am not arguing for pacifism. This is where the difference between the public and the private sphere becomes crucial. If someone attacks me, I may decide not to respond, even – in the words of Jesus Christ – to turn the other cheek. But if a population has elected me to look after their interests, and they are attacked or threatened with attack, the situation is different: I have a responsibility to protect them. Countries need defense forces to deter attack, and potential aggressors need to know that those forces may be used. There is all the difference between aggression and defense, between initiating violence and responding to it. Here we return to the greatest Buddhist ruler, the emperor Asoka. In his thirteenth major rock edict he told the world how much he regretted having waged war on the people of Kalinga. He hoped never to have to do such a thing again. But he also warned his neighbors that while he would "tolerate what could be tolerated" (his words), they should not provoke him. That surely is the right way for a government to minimize violence." [119]

Rule of Law is necessary but the minds of people should be cultivated in Buddhist upbringing as morals and ethics at the centre. Extremism of non-violence may be disaster for innocent people when it comes to protect them so Middle Path should be followed. The difference between non-violent methods and cowardly methods should be well understood. Protection of innocents is the duty and responsibility of all.

Socially Engaged Buddhist Methods:

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[118] Historic Conversion Ceremony Speech, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Nagpur, India, 15th October 1956
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/txt_ambedkar_conversion.html#26

[119] Buddhism and Nonviolence, Prof. Richard Gombrich, United Nations Day of Vesak, 2007

After the world's historical conversion ceremony at Nagpur on 14th October 1956 where half a million people converted to Buddhism and also took 22 vows; Dr. Ambedkar wrote a reply dated 30th October 2009 to Devapriya Valisinha, General Secretary, Mahabodhi Society of India as, "It was a great event and the crowd that came forward for conversion was beyond my expectation. Thank Buddha, it all went well. We have to consider ways and means of imparting the knowledge of Buddhism to the masses who have accepted His Dhamma and will accept it to my word. I am afraid the Sangha will have to modify its outlook; and instead of becoming recluses, Bhikkhus should become, like Christian missionaries, social workers and social preachers."

Dr. Ambedkar believed that Bhikkhus should not be renouncers in the sense of withdrawing from the world. They should be socially and politically committed to justice. He was attracted by the Mahayana concept of the Bodhisattva, who delays his own liberation out of compassion for less fortunate or less advanced beings. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva ideal lends itself more easily to modern concepts of democracy, human rights and social justice, for it can easily be seen as a compassionate activity in favour of the oppressed and the fight against social and political injustice. Salvation is conceived in terms of the struggle for emancipation and dignity of the oppressed classes of Hindu society. [120]

Could the Buddha answer Karl Marx?

Yes. Buddhists can certainly answer Communists. Buddhists already have equality, morals and ethics in their doctrine. To impart the knowledge what the Buddha taught the Buddhists have to do certain improvement and changes in their present methodology to promote Buddhist teachings.

Does Buddhist have answer for Caste Struggle?

Yes. Caste is a disease of mind. Buddha preached transformation of mind. Buddhists should promote rationalists and egalitarian interpretations to counter Caste. Also Buddhists should understand that, "Shudras are social police of Brahminism". In last few years Buddhism has seen big growth in India but the Buddhists must understand the advice of Dr. Ambedkar that Caste Hindus must not pollute Buddhism with Caste. Buddhists should stress importance of promoting casteless Buddhist tradition.

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[120] Buddhism and Politics, Ian Harris p. 93, published 1998. Originally quoted in "Politics and Ambedkar Buddhism in Maharashtra" by Timothy Fitzgerald

Adoption of Democratic Constitutional Methods:

Buddhists should support Democracy. They should promote Constitutional provisions to bring Buddhist principles in practice. If a Communist State falls, it has happened and it will happen in other Communist rules states, the Buddhist should take initiatives to establish a democratic Constitution enriched in Buddhist principles such as Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Justice. Buddhism can stand with the secular principles. The Buddhist revivalist Dr. Ambedkar is the architect of Indian Constitution who took care to embed maximum Buddhist principles in the free India's secular constitution. Also he gave protection to Religious and Linguistic minorities including weaker sections of society such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He did provisions for the upliftment of the Backward Classes. Then he converted to Buddhism and asked his followers to become Buddhist Missionaries. The political rights are temporary and can fall in short time so along with the Constitutional provisions the Buddhists should promote Buddha's teachings in every contemporary society.

Promotion of Lay Buddhist Organizations:

In Modern world lay Buddhists carry greater responsibility. They should support the Sangha. It is not the only responsibility of the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis (Monks and Nuns) to promote Buddha's teachings but also equally lay people should become active in reaching the suffering masses with love and compassion within their maximum possible capability. Lay Buddhists should run social projects to help people and involve maximum people in Dhamma Activities. Buddhist believes in cultural unity so lay organizations should promote cultural activities. There is a need to develop Lay Buddhist priest order to support basic rituals in common people's life. Buddha Viharas should not be merely meditating centres but those should become centres for study, debate and discussion centres on Comparative Religions, Communism and Social Issues etc. Systematic and organized propagation of Buddha Dhamma by the lay Buddhist is a necessity. Morals and Ethics can not be taught as law but those need to be cultivated and propagated in an organized and institutionalized manner.

Conclusion:

Communists should keep back their prejudices and study the Buddha and understand what he stood for. They should understand difference between Buddhism and other religions. Economical and Social Inequality causes Class Struggle and

Caste Struggle that gives birth to political conflict. Communism is not a proper solution even for Class Struggle as it brings dictatorship of proletariats and believes in violence as the only means. Communism can give equality but not liberty and fraternity. Communism is futile to give any solution to Caste Struggle; also the Communists are not clear with the basic that, "Shudras are social police of Brahmanism".

Communists forget that the wonder of all wonders is that the Buddha established Communism so far as the Sangha was concerned without dictatorship. It may be that it was a communism on a very small scale but it was communism without dictatorship a miracle which Lenin, Mao and other communist leaders failed to do.

Oppressed and poor people are quickly attracted to Communist theories. Maoism which is derived from Communism has won in Nepal and already rocking many states in India. Caste Hindus should learn that Communist revolution has already taken millions of lives in different countries and it is strengthening in India to answer Casteism. It is time for them to understand Bodhisattva Dr. Ambedkar's advice to adopt Buddhist methods to solve their Class struggle and Caste struggle.

Bodhisattva Dr. Ambedkar advised that, "Any religion that can not provide an answer to Communism will not survive. The only religion in my view, that can serve as an antidote to Communism is Buddhism." [121]   also he showed in his book "Buddha or Karl Marx" how Buddhism can answer Communism. His advice is still relevant because Communism had a big impact over the world, especially over the Buddhist world. Buddhists should interpret Buddha's teachings to counter Communism.

Doctrine of non-violence should be interpreted keeping the safety and security of innocent public in mind. Countries need defense forces to deter attack, and potential aggressors need to know that those forces may be used. There is all the difference between aggression and defense, between initiating violence and responding to it.

The ocean of Buddha's teachings should not shrink only to personal salvation, non-violence (*Ahimsa*) and meditation rather we have to develop wider understanding of the Buddhist Tradition to answer Communism and political conflicts. Buddhists should develop understandings on political, economical and social issues and should implement Buddhist approach to solve such issues. Teachings of Buddha related to the economical, social, and political issues needs propagation.

[121] Dr. Ambedkar's speech dated 5th Feb 1956 at the function organized by Mahabodhi Society of India in Delhi

Man must grow materially as well as spiritually. The Buddhists should take initiative in promotion of socially engaged methods along with traditional spiritual methods. Buddhists should develop comparative understandings with Communism and with other religions. People should understand that instead of applying Communist Methods to end political conflicts, Class Struggle, Caste Struggle, Inequality and Graded Inequality they can apply Buddhist Methods. That can help them to find solutions to end political conflicts as well as to bring peace.