

Towards Non-Violence through Healthy Mind

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INTRODUCTION

The Globe is beautiful, round, and quiet with country-maps surfaced as elegant shapes and splendid features of each country. In spite of keeping its graceful dignity, we hear the worldwide groans of distress, anxiety, and unsatisfactoriness as penetrated deep into the interior of the maps. In tracing, those sounds initiated contradiction and brought about conflict and violence of the world. From the standpoint of Buddhism, the culprit of contradiction is found to be the unhealthy mind of each individual rooted by immoral mental factors such as greed, hatred, delusion, etc. Rooted by those mental illnesses, crimes and poverty occur and then the world becomes unstable. Every religion teaches individually not to harm others, to keep love in one's heart, to have positive thinking, to decrease the discrimination between diversity

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levels in the world, and so on based on good aspects intending for the non-violence or peace building. We can set up peace building with the way of spiritual training. Moreover, corresponding to the age of the globalization, when inhabitants in a country encounter miseries, the world-citizens also have concern for their safety. The reason why is that peace building of a country is interrelated with other countries' peace. The United Nations also focuses on peace building – efforts to reduce a country's risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. In accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goal, peace building requires sustained international support for national efforts across the broadest range of activities – monitoring ceasefires; demobilizing and reintegrating combatants; assisting the return of refugees and displaced persons; helping organize and monitor elections of a new government; supporting justice and security sector reform; enhancing human rights protections; and fostering reconciliation after past atrocities. Internationally, cooperation and national strength through spiritual training as well as government support are necessary demands for the accomplishment of peacefulness whereby all violence is able to cease.

VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

Violence is defined: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation." This definition associates intentionally with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. Globally, violence takes the lives of more than 1.5 million people annually: just over 50% due to suicide, some 35% due to homicide, and just over 12% as a direct result of war or some other form of conflict in accordance with statistics (2004).¹ Violent crime, assault

1. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence

and struggle originated from the mind produced the aggressive bodily and verbal actions. The mind rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion causes to be explosive matters. In fact, explosive situations do not occur all of a sudden. The situations give rise from impure minds filled with disagreement, aversion, unsatisfactoriness, discontentment and so on, like a huge dried heap of rubbish, that have been stored in people's mind for a long time. And these situations instantly explode as if touched with problem-sparks. The flame of fire is able to disperse over the world one country to another. Like forest fire, bad things as well as good things can spread worldwide from day to day due to ongoing globalization. All world citizens desire for good incidents but not bad incidents. Their desires are presumably not distinct or unique, regardless of having different nationalities, religions, complexions and standards in the world. Some have been seeking for happiness and peace to set up their meaningful lives by working hard, associating with good partners, and creating good family lives. Others have been working for happiness and peace for others by relinquishing their lives, creating new materialities, making researches etc. However, the attempts of those groups sometimes get expectedly or unexpectedly to the states which make others traumatized. In trying so, majority of people begin to go astray from the path to the peaceful lives whether they notice themselves or not. They abide by the command of impure mind or unhealthy mind overwhelmed by greed, aversion, and delusion that dissociate from the proper consideration. As a consequence, various violence such as domestic violence, religion violence, politic violence etc., bring about occasionally.

Non-violence signifies a peaceful state or non-force that conveys to the safety of lives. To occupy the state of non-violence, all kinds of violence should be ceased. So long as violence happens, how can there be peace in the world? All world citizens yearn for non-violence that denotes global peace becomes a prominent word in this present. Peace in the heart conquers all opposing forces. It also facilitates human kind to uphold a healthy mind and live a rich and fulfilling life of happiness and contentment. Global peace signifies merely no war, conflict, turmoil and living people in harmony and is attainable

by letting go of selfishness and helping the world with good mind. Yet non-violence in accord with the Buddha's teachings profoundly represents supreme peace which has no defilements and has to be initiated by healthy mind.

THE VITAL ROLE OF HEALTHY MIND

The mind is the most powerful thing in the world and the ultimate source of all happiness or misery as well. One can attain the supreme happiness or can be underwhelmed by the miserable status owing to it. Dealing with mind, the Lord Buddha pinpoints as following: "Mind usually enjoys in the evil"². In accordance with that statement, mind is always tending to the evil like the downstream going, but for the good, mind is like the upstream going. It needs conditional action to gain merit. By the influence of conditional action, the mind spearheads the merit, but if the conditional action is discontinued, the mind will incline as usual towards the demerit. For that reason, the Buddha taught thus: "Mind is agitation, unsteady, difficult to protect, difficult to keep back"³.

Mind is pure by nature⁴ indeed; nevertheless, it becomes contaminated or grimy by defilements⁵ that are the source of suffering as well as of the unhealthy mind. Whosoever puts his hand in fire is certainly scorched; likewise, the defilements act in the mind of everyone to be burning and oppressing. Since people possess impurities of defilements in the mind, they have to undergo great hardships. The more defilements they reduce, the more peaceful life they have. No one has peace unless he cleanses his mind polluted with defilements. Healthy mind furnishes happy, peaceful and harmonious community. Much defilements and lack of intelligence empower people to become

2. Dhammapada Pā'i, 30

3. Dhammapada Aṅṅhakathā. I, 181

4. Sabbampicittaṃ sabhāvato paṭṭhameva (Mūlapaṭṭhāsa ṭīka, I, 95)

5. There are ten kinds of defilements, namely: greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), delusion (moha), conceit (māna), wrong view (diṭṭhi), skeptical doubt (vicikicchā), restlessness (uddhacca), sloth (thina), moral shamelessness (ahirika), moral fearlessness (anotappa)

cruel, vulgar, and experience much sufferings.

Along the one's ages, mental sufferings are encountered more often than physical sufferings. From the research view, people are able to endure more physical sufferings than mental sufferings such as grief, sorrow, lamentation, despair, etc. A great number of suicide cases crop up for unbearable mental pain. Mostly people deduce that only mental and physical pains are suffering, and they do not confront with any suffering, as they possess prosperity and good health. Even though one has great wealth, he has to worry for safety of his properties. Unexpectedly, if it is lost, the fire of sorrow will burn him; in this way, suffering befalls him. Suffering is therefore unable to separate from life whether rich or poor. Suffering will be extinct merely in the state of non-violence of the mind.

Outer non-violence is offered by inner non-violence that is a healthy mind. If there was non-violence inside and outside of human beings, the world could be decorated with smiles on people's faces and the sounds of laughing, helpful hands ready to welcome, and warm-hearted minds. If so, the world would certainly be graceful and splendid. In other words, only with the decorated healthy mind, the world will be glorious. Healthy mind can be acceded through one's controlled mind. As to the controlled mind, the *Dhammapada* stresses thus: "Irrigators regulate the waters, fletchers straighten arrow shafts, carpenters shape wood, and the good control themselves"⁶. Moreover, the significance of controlling one's mind with mental training is underlined as follows: "Let a man guard himself against irritability in thought; let him be controlled in mind. Abandoning mental misconduct let him practice good conduct in thought"⁷.

To illustrate that, the Buddha spotlights in Mahāgosi³ga sutta⁸, the embellishment of Sal Grove is dependant on the monk who strives on his mental training by folding his legs crosswise and making determination thus: "I will never get up from my posture

6. Dhammapada Pā'i (Verse 145), 34

7. Dhammapada Pā'i, (Verse. 133), 46

8. Majjhima-nikāya, I, 272-281

until the extinction of the intoxication of mind (*āśava*) with steadfast mindfulness on the mediation object”. From the aforementioned *sutta*, it is claimed that the splendid world is adorned with the conquest of mind. The indispensability of a training mind is declared by the Buddha in that only mind-conquest which brings peace and happiness is the greatest conquest. That is why, to achieve mind-conquest after determining that “Today’s mind should be more improved than yesterday’s mind” we should practice mind exercise to be as a culture, calm, and peaceful.

THE WAYS TO CULTIVATE HEALTHY MIND

In preaching the *dhammas*, the Buddha taught not only supramundane *dhammas*, but also worldly affairs such as ways of economy, ways for good humanity, ways for longevity etc. Those *dhammas* appropriate for every age need not to upgrade so far. Of them, mental training embraces both worldly and unworldly profit. True mental training offers pristine purity of mind by which leads to supreme happiness (*Nibbāna*).

Happiness is a state of mind which cannot be found in the material things as well as cannot be bought with all money in the world. Regarding happiness, there are four kinds, namely happiness of sensual pleasure (*kāma sukha*), happiness of absorption (*jhāna sukha*), happiness of fruition (*phala sukha*), and nibbanic happiness (*Nibbāna sukha*). Of them, the happiness of sensual pleasure is the ideal happiness for the common people. In truth, gratification of sensual pleasure is illusive, temporary and inferior happiness associated with sorrow and worry in line with causing to enhance the demerit and to lead to the deplorable states. From first material absorption up to the fourth immaterial absorption are included in the happiness of absorption regarded as the medium happiness on account of having between the happiness of sensual pleasure and the happiness of supramundane. Having attained at least first path wisdom and fruition, one gets the happiness of fruition is the superior happiness owing to termination of misery. Nevertheless, the nibbanic happiness (*Nibbāna*) or the noblest bliss of supramundane is supreme and genuine happiness, incomparable with

any bliss owing to eradicating sufferings utterly. Thus, the Buddha said in the *Dhammapada* thus: “*Natthi santiparaṃ sukhaṃ*”, “There is no happiness (*sukha*) that excels *Nibbāna*”.

In order to attain the *Nibbāna* the Buddha instructed the way to the eradication of impure defilements by noble eightfold path or threefold training. Only with the knives of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), the enemy called defilements can be cut off. By observing morality, one can cut off the grossest form named the aggressive defilements (*vitikkama kilesā*); by establishing concentration, one can cut off the moderate form named the obsessive defilements (*pariyutthāna kilesā*), by developing wisdom, one can cut off the most subtle form named the latent tendency defilements (*anusaya kilesā*). Thus, all defilements are totally uprooted by only the inner way or understanding of all mental and physical phenomena of one’s life. Eliminating defilements accordingly is fit to be the prime objective for the superb Buddhists. Through insight meditation, they can triumph over the defilements in success. They cannot attain the Supreme Bliss (*Nibbāna*) or cannot find out the Exit of *Saṃsāra* without practicing insight meditation. In order to escape from various miseries, they should thereby practice insight meditation compulsorily as the qualified Buddhists. Merely insight meditation discovered by the Buddha is the unique authentic route to cope with the worldly problems in daily life and to accomplish unworldly position as well.

Apart from insight meditation, how should one exercise mind training to be healthy? As the mind is accompanied by unwholesome *dhammas* such as greed, hatred and delusion, it becomes unhealthy, whereas as the mind is accompanied by wholesome *dhammas* such as non-greed, non-hatred, non-delusion, it becomes healthy. Only with the practice of mind-checking exercise, the mind can be pure and healthy. To examine one’s mind the Buddha exhorted his disciples in *Gaddulabaddha sutta* thus: “Check your mind yourself always. Owing to impure mind, living beings have to undergo unpleasant episodes in their lives; yet on account

of pure mind, living beings have to face with pleasant experiences¹⁰. In examining one's mind, as soon as lust, hatred etc., arises in his mind, he ought to know suddenly his occurring impure mind in view of such unhealthy mental state. With the ways to cure the ill mind, his evil mind should be substituted to recover from mental sickness. The following table is describing various mental diseases and some effective ways to cure mental illness.

No.	Names of mental disease (kilesā)	The ways to cure the unhealthy mind
1.	greed, craving (<i>lobha</i>)	performing charity, cultivating contentment, cutting off attachment
2.	anger, anxiety (<i>dosa</i>)	developing loving-kindness, considering the faults of anger
3.	ignorance (<i>moha</i>)	establishing awareness in good activities
4.	conceit (<i>māna</i>)	contemplating danger of ageing, sickness and death, cultivating humble mind
5.	wrong view (<i>micchādiṭṭhi</i>)	reflecting on the nature of non-self
6.	skeptical doubt (<i>vicikicchā</i>)	cultivating reasonable faith
7.	sloth, dullness (<i>thina</i>)	making effort in good activities
8.	distraction (<i>uddhacca</i>)	establishing right concentration, reviewing in good doings
9.	shamelessness (<i>ahirika</i>)	observing precepts
10.	fearlessness (<i>anotappa</i>)	observing precepts

As arising anger, for instant, he should know at once his mind with the arisen anger, and then loving-kindness is one of the ways to dispel anger should be substituted for his evil mind. In such way, he can terminate anger in soon enough so that it won't grow. If one usually undertakes substitution of good mind in this way whenever evil mind occurs, mind training will come to be a habitual practice for him in all time. He will never do any hostile and quarrel with others. He will be, as a result, a good person for his family, for his relatives, for his friends, for his community, for his state, and for his world. If the world was filled with such kind of peacemaking persons, the peaceful world

10. Saṃyutta-nikāya. II, 123

would be gradually built with no war, no conflict and non-violence.

THE SUPPORT OF POSITIVE THINKING AND NON-DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS NON-VIOLENCE

Positive thinking is one of advantageous ways to solve the issue of world-violence. In this present, most people are lack of positive mind, positive thinking, positive solution, and positive remark on everything. Simple optimism does not make everything right, but it does give us hope and it makes us relaxed of mind. By optimism, we do not mean blindfolded praise. It is not always offering praise and good deeds. However, it is seeing things from a positive perspective and finding positive answers. If people try to solve the daily problems with positive thinking as much as they can, conflicts, quarrels etc., will be decreased. Positive thinking is adjusting the different views. Unavoidably different views and disagreements are experienced in the human society. As a man, when his view differs from another's view, he gets easily anger, being displeased, upset, and blames that person. It is because of lack of seeing from sides, his side and another's side. Seeing from different sides is not a habit of immature people.

Normally, as one does not agree with another person, he assumed that his thought is right and thought of that person is wrong. For the disagreement with his view, he gets easily anger upon that person without considering other's point of view. He therefore judges that his view is right and the view of that man is wrong. Similar to him, that person also will decide that his own view is right. Right or wrong is just one's personal remark, but not consider on other's side. In elevating positive thinking, one should justify both sides: his view and other's view, what kinds of disagreement come to him. If so done, he will not get angry immediately upon encountering different views. Having adjusted to the disagreement, he will come to understand other's point of view. Then he will not blame or dispraise to other and find out the solution able to accept both sides. Even if the other's view is totally wrong, he should logically discuss with that person gently, softly, or peacefully to agree to the correct aspect. In this way, one should enrich to the positive

thinking rooted by patience, loving-kindness, sympathy, and good will. Positive thinking enables the world harmonious co-existence, peace building, and non-violence.

To solve the issue of conflict or violence in the world, another fruitful way is causing no difference between people. There would be no more war if only we saw each other as human beings equal and same. Every man is born equal and no one should be discriminated on the grounds of his color, race, and religion. Except for the colors, we all are the same made of flesh and blood. But in the real world, the global citizenship is just a concept which has never been fully embraced. We still think we are different. Only with the way of spiritual training, we can make the discrimination between different levels in the world to be lessened despite the fact that material wealth is unable to equitability in the different countries. Spiritual exercises and its amendment are the best remedy to cure mental illness, which is the original affliction of common people. Healthy mind that helps to be peaceful to not only him but others also will be able to set up the security for the world. Opposing hatred, torture, stinginess, discrimination, selfishness etc., healthy mind ought to be constructed with love, sympathy, magnanimity, forgiveness, tolerance, mutual respect and non-violence.

THE WEIGHTY SECTOR OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The role of religious leaders who are spiritual architectures is in large part to motivate healthy and mature spirit by promoting mutual understanding and friendship between different religions. Every religion teaches individually not to harm others, to keep love in one's heart, to have positive thinking and so on based on good aspects intending for the sake of humanity. From the Buddhist point of view, four divine abiding (*brahmavihara*), proper attention (*yonisomanasikāra*), cultivating good-will etc., gives guide lines to be harmonious human society. Despite being theoretical descriptions to raise good mind in each religion, empirically, to harmonize the diversity of minds of the different people is not easy in fact even in a family. This is because people mostly do not abide by the teachings of their own religion in

great faith and respect. As long as people in the world do not apply compatibly their respective doctrine in their lives, the world may still have conflicts, turmoil and hardships.

Religion and spirituality are clearly both important forces of humankind and are also characterized by an extraordinarily rich diversity. The centrality of religious and spiritual leadership on the global commons is increasingly recognized, especially with regard to the prevention and resolution of conflict. The leadership of the religious and spiritual communities is viewed as essential to preventing armed conflict and to resolving it as it occurs, so as to create peaceful and tolerant communities¹¹.

Not all conflicts are said to become violent from the standpoint of positive thinking. Sometimes, conflicts enable the better society with justice, freedom, and harmony by building up a mutual understanding based on a common vision. A conflict management mechanism is known today as “dialogue” and is able to transform conflict and redirect it as a driving force towards a more constructive, harmonious, and good society. Seeking the truth and sharing it with others, dialogue should be a way to solve the issues of misery, disappointment, disillusionment, and conflict. However, it would be no longer relevant to define a harmonious society as the one in which, there is no more problem and violence, a kind of monolithic society of uniformity. In order to set up monolithic society, all the component differences should share their values and visions dealt with the conflicts in a more creative dialogical and relational way to find a better solution. Through mutual respect, dialogue between adherents of different religions should pave the way for relationships. Grasping firmly and friendly relationship between different religions is also a crucial role to materialize the mutual understanding, respect, trust and cooperation each other. Through the enriched mind-purity, understanding and relations, global citizens are expected to come into cooperation towards a more harmonious and sustainable peace and reconciliation of human society based on our respective religious

11. www.Millenniumpeacesummit.org/mwps_about.html

values and teachings.

In establishing firm friendship between all regions, one of the striking evidences is the UN Millennium Peace Summit held in New York in 2000. Over 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders from diverse faiths and traditions from all religions of the world met at the summit with an aim to pledge to a commitment to take concrete actions for the achievement of world peace. Again, the World Summit held in 2005 and its effective outcome were emerged. Of them, some of facts concerning peace and collective security are stressed as follows:

We acknowledge that we are living in an interdependent and global world and that today's threats recognize no national boundaries, are interlinked and must be tackled at the global, regional and national levels. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to implement a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing, that no State can best protect itself by acting entirely alone and that all States need an effective, equitable and efficient collective security system, in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter¹².

All religions are challenged to contribute to be the harmonious society that would live not only in mutual respect and peace, but also to contribute positive solution for peace brings about ceasing of conflicts. The role of religious leaders is that is why very pivotal in nurturing mutual respect, unselfishness and positive thinking in their adherents' mind.

GOVERNMENT'S VITAL ROLE FOR NON-VIOLENCE

Like religious leaders, the leaders of the world also have been working for the non-violence or peaceful world from the different dimensions solvable the messy issues. Attempts for state development, reducing poverty etc., are also effectual ways to build peace inside a country. In

12. www.un.org/ga/59/hl60_plenarymeeting.html

Myanmar, the government's programme on rural area development and poverty alleviation, and an annual budget allocated for the projects have raised hope that success will be achieved. Rural area development and poverty reduction have been begun two months after the new government took office. Importance of the private sector is to help people living on a low income to earn higher wages to break the cycle of poverty. Regional governments to build basic infrastructures such as transportation, power and water supply, education, health, and loans that can directly benefit rural people¹³.

Every country in the world has to face challenges and difficulties in a transitional period. It is normal that every country that carries out transformation from one system to another has similar problems. Myanmar has been dealing with the consequences of armed conflicts since the country regained independence in 1948. That is why the country has long been lacking democratic practices. Democracy and civic education are intertwined. Civic responsibility is defined as the responsibility of a citizen. It is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. The importance of civic responsibility is paramount to the success of democracy and philanthropy. Schools should teach civic responsibility to students with the goal of producing responsible citizens and active players at a community and government level. Civic responsibility is tied to the philanthropic sector in many ways. Civic education is a method to promote and enlighten responsible citizens¹⁴. It is a means to actively engage people in the practice of democracy.

The aforesaid ways are able to solve the issue of violence in some extent. However, some crimes, crisis, cheating etc, are still occurring in the rich developed countries wherein educated people are present. Unless controlling unhealthy minds of them, these inconveniences would be still happening. Hence promoting the religious sector,

13. Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham's Speech at the Meeting of Rural Area Development and Poverty Alleviation Work Committee, New Light of Myanmar (9th January 2014), 1

14. Perspective (Civic Education needed in Reform Process), New Light of Myanmar (10th January, 2014), 8

especially government's support for spiritual development, is indispensable for building a peaceful country. If mental culture was taught as training compulsorily in schools, universities, offices, works, associations, prisons and all societies, mental standard would be gradually developed. If so, the global peace would be grasped in the hands of the people. World-peace built up with mental training will make much secure to happen no more violence in the world as well as to cave fine images of future world.

CONCLUSION

Despite diversity of peace efforts, violence and unrest still persist in various parts of the world. The power of diplomacy, dialogues and engagement will be able to conquer the violence across the world. It is not enough to cope with non-violence through external means; it can be attained through inside growing healthy mind. Like patients, all ordinary people are dominated by impure defilements called mental diseases in their mind. With methodological approach, the Buddha taught how to elevate the mind by cleansing the impurities of inferior mental factors. Gradual purification of mind will effectively cause less of quarrels, conflicts and violence between groups or countries. The global ceasefire is a thousand miles journey, but to reach this goal, all we need to do it to win ceasefire in the mind. The close interrelationship between non-violence and healthy mind is obvious and undeniable. Therefore, a healthy mind is the key to secure peace in the future-world. The future of the world largely depends on the present situation of younger generation. How we let them grow up and shape the Globe to be elegant. Shall we let them grow up in peace or with daily trauma and pain of war atrocities? Shall we let them see positive side or negative side of the life? It is up to us.

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