6

World Peace and Conflict Resolution: A Solution from Buddhist Point of View

Arvind Kumar Singh (*)

Introduction

The peace will not be established until the self consciousness would reveal in the human beings. In this nuclear age, the establishment of a lasting peace on the earth represents the primary condition for the preservation of human civilization and survival of human beings. Nothing perhaps is so important and indispensable as the achievement and maintenance of peace in the modern world today. Peace in today's world implies much more than mere absence of war and violence. In the interdependent world of today, the United Nations needs to be representative of modern world and democratic in its functioning because it came into existence to save the generations from the scourge of war and conflict. Buddhism is

(*) Assistant Professor, School of Buddhist Studies & Civilization &
Director, International Affairs, Gautam Buddha University, Greater, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201308 INDIA, Email: arvindbantu@yahoo.co.in, arvinds@gbu.ac.in

religion of peaceful co-existence and philosophy of enlightenment. Violence and conflict, from the perspective of Buddhist theory of interdependent origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), are, same with everything else in the world, a product of causes and conditions.

Buddhism is totally compatible with the congenial and peaceful global order. The Canonical literatures, doctrines and philosophy of Buddhism are the best suited for inter-faith dialogue, harmony and universal peace. Even today, Buddhism can resurrect the universal brotherhood, peaceful co-existence and harmonious surroundings in the comity of nations. With its increasing vitality in regions around the world, many people today turn to Buddhism for relief and guidance at the time when peace seems to be a deferred dream more than ever. From Buddhist point of view, the roots of all unwholesome actions (Conflict) i.e. greed, hatred and delusion, are viewed as the root cause of all human conflicts. Conflict often emanates from attachment to material things: pleasures, property, territory, wealth, economic dominance or political superiority. Buddhism has some particularly rich resources for deployment in dissolving conflict. Buddhism addresses the Buddhist perspective on the causes of conflict and ways to resolve conflict to realize world peace. The world has enough to satisfy every body's needs but not everybody's greed.

The Concept of Peace in Buddhism

The Buddhist tradition is often praised for its peace *(santi)* teachings and its exceptional record of non-violence *(ahiṃsā)* in Buddhism societies over 2550 years. While these praises are justified, it is important to recognise that Buddhism's contribution lies not primarily in its commitment to peace, per se-most world religions are committed to 'peace' in some fashion but in the unique perspectives and techniques Buddhists have developed for achieving peace within and between individuals and groups. History has shown that violence has not been unknown in Buddhist societies. Wars have been fought to preserve Buddhist teachings and institutions, and Buddhist meditation and monastic discipline have been adapted to train armies to defend national interests and to conquer neighbouring peoples.[1]

---

1. Queen, Christopher, "Buddhism and World Peace: A Turning Point for

Peace therefore, has to be a joint effort that is bilateral rather than unilateral.[2] However, the concept of peace according to some scholars is contested. Some analysts use the term 'peace' in opposition to war; Kriesberg mentioned this is negative peace, defined as the absence of direct physical violence.[3] Barash and Webel's in "Peace and Conflict Studies'' mentioned that, war is one of humanity's most pressing problems; peace is almost always preferable to war. Moreover, peace can and must include not only the absence of war but also the establishment of positive, life-affirming, and life-enhancing values and social structures.[4]

In Buddhism, the concept of peace or *Śanti* is extended to include both inner and outer peace.[5] Inner peace *(ajihata-śanti)*, which is generally known as 'peace of mind', is a mental state free from 'disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions'.[6] Inner peace is a prerequisite for outer peace, which involves interpersonal relations. A person is said to have outer peace when he lives harmoniously with his fellow beings *(samacariyā)*. Outer peace includes communal, natural and global peace. Buddhism believes that peace is as much concerned with individuals as with groups and institutions. The inner peace of individuals provides firm foundations upon, which the entire edifice of social peace is to be built up. In fact, society can remain fully peaceful only if its members fully have peace of mind. Unless there is peace within, there will be no peace without. This truth is revealed

Humanity" in Bhalchandra Mungekar and Aakash Singh Rathore (eds.), *Buddhism and the Contemporary World: An Ambedkarian Perspective,* New Delhi: Book Well, 2007:16.

2. Choue, Young Seek, ''World Peace:The Great Imperative'' in the Institute of International Peace Studies (ed.), *A Road To World Peace*, Korea: Kyung Hee University Press, 1983:84-5.

3. Kriesberg, Louis, ''Peace'' in Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol.3, New York: Routledge, 1998:2044.

4. Barash, David P. and Webel, Charles P., *Peace and Conflict Studies,* Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage, 2002:3.

5. Thepsophon, Phra (Prayoon Mererk)*, A Buddhist Worldview*, Fifth Impression, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn University Press, 2000:58.

6. For more detail, see, Khemananda. B, *The Buddhist Concept of Peace*, Second Edition, Calcutta: Lazo Print, 1996.

in the preamble of UNESCO, *'... since wars being in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed'*.[7] Buddhism, therefore, is the religion of peace. Sunderland has pointed out, "Buddhism has taught peace more strongly among its followers, more effectively, during all its history, than has any other great religious faith to the world".[8] If Buddhist thoroughly followed the Dhamma preached by the Buddha, then there would be peaceful coexistence not only among human beings, but also among human beings, animals and natural environment. In short, the concept of peace in Buddhism, here has both negative and positive meanings. In its negative sense, peace is an absence not only of war and conflict but also of 'structure violence' such as social injustice, social inequality, the violation of human rights, the destruction of ecological balance, etc. In its positive sense, peace means encompasses within itself the absence of conflict as well as the presence of harmony.[9]

Buddhist Point of View on Origin of Conflict:

In the wake of tumultuous times, the world is facing a spurt in terrorism, rising fundamentalism, ethnic conflicts and political aggression; Buddhist heritage eternally stands as a harbinger of peace and harmony. The Buddha appeared at a time that is widely recognized as a period of political, social and spiritual unrest in India. The Buddha's teaching though encompassing a wide range of complex belief systems, started with the Buddha's first preaching which in conventionally equated with the essence of his teaching—the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccānni*). The first two truths discern the Causes of violence and conflict and the suffering caused thereby: first, life inevitably involves suffering or dissatisfaction (*dukkha sacca*); and second, suffering or dissatisfaction originates in desires (*samudaya-sacca*). The third and the fourth prescribe cure for this unpleasant way of living. That is, how to promote a peaceful way of living and ultimately live in peace: third, suffering or dissatisfaction will cease if

7. Paitoon, Sinlarat (ed.), *Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University: 17.

8. Quoted in Sri Dhammananda. K, *Great Personalities on Buddhism*, Malaysia: B.M.S. Publication, 1965: 77.

9. Thepsophon, Phra (Prayoon Mererk)*, Op. Cit,*88.

all desire cease (*nirodha-sacca*); and fourth, this state can be realised by engaging in the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya aṭṭaṃgika magga*).[10]

To end political conflicts, the Buddha had not only the right compassionate 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. Moreover, in the midst of wars, Buddhist monasteries have often been heavens of peace. For Buddhism, the roots of all unwholesome actions - greed, hatred and delusion - are viewed at the root of human conflicts. When gripped by any of them, a person may think 'I have power and I want power', so as to persecute others (*Tǐμ' imāni kho bhikkhave akusalamūlāni. Katamāni tīμi? lobho akusalamūlaṃ, doso akusalamøūaṃ, moho akusalamūlaṃ...*).[11] Furthermore, the Buddha says that sense-pleasures lead on to desire for greater sense-pleasures which leads on to conflict between all kinds of people, including rulers, and thus quarrelling and war.[12] The Mahāyāna poet Śāntideva pointed it in his *Śikṣā-samuccaya*, citing the *Anantamukha - nirhāradhāranī*, "Wherever conflict arises among living creatures, the sense of possession is the cause".[13] Apart from actual greed, material deprivation is seen as a key source of conflict.

It is clear then that Buddhist approach to political conflicts is *Ahiṃsā* (nonviolence), to be achieved by practicing the Dhamma of the Buddha. So practicing the Dhamma is the basic requirement for ending political conflicts, as it is said in the *Dhammapada*:

> *Yathāpi ruciraṁ pubbhaṁ*
> *vaṇṇavantaṁ agandhakaṁ*
> *evaṁ subhāsita vācā*

---

10. Coomaraswamy, Ananda K, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, Third Indian Edition, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2003:81-82.

11. A. I. 201-202.

12. MLS. I. 86-87.

13. Ss. 20.

aphalā hoti akubbato.[14]

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 Dhamma.

Buddhism considers external causes of violence or conflict as consequence of a general orientation common to all living beings: avoiding harm and obtaining happiness. Anything contrary to this would result in disturbing one's peace and lead to violence or conflict. If people want to live an ultimately happy life with no harms toward them at all, Buddhism teaches, they should start with avoiding causing harm to others, physically and verbally at the personal level.[15] If one can become friendly to all the beings of the world, hatred will disappear from the world.[16] According to Buddhist teachings, all fear death, none in unafraid of stick and knifes. Seeing yourself in others, do not kill do not harm,[17] bad words blaming others, arrogant words humiliating others, from these behaviours, come hatred and resentment... Hence violence or conflicts arise, rendering in people malicious thoughts.[18] Albeit external and physical wrongdoings as well as social injustice are causing conflicts and violence originate all from the state of human's mind.[19] Since the violence and injustice are responses toward external stimuli are produced by people's psychological conditioning. From Buddhist perspective causes of any conflict lie internally in the mental operation within each being. In other words, physical and structural violence are the product of human

---

14. Dh. 51.

15. Yeh, Teresa Der-lan, "*The way to peace: a Buddhist perspective*", international Journal of PeaceStudies, Vol.11, Spring/Summer, 2006:95.

16. Jatava. D.R, *Buddhism in Modern World*, Jaipur, Rajasthan:ABD Publishers, 2007: 9.

17. Dh.18.

18. Dh. 8.

19. One famous early Buddhist text describes the mind as naturally radiant but defield by adventitious defilements, or 'visitor', described as literally coming from outside to disturb it. The poverful 'roots' of greed, hatred and ignorance are created many external problem of the world today. Shaw, Sarah, *Introduction to Buddhist Meditation*, london and New York, 2009:41, and see also Dh.1.

mental status such as fear, anger, and hate, which are considered in Buddhism to be the internal causes to violence and conflict.[20] Even when no threat of personal safety or collective interest is perfect, conflict may occur, from the Buddhist perspective, as a result of our two major mental attachments to subjective views, opinions and desire for materials, relationships. The stronger the attachment is, the more obsessive one would be, the more external behaviours one would engage, and the more severe the conflict world become.[21]

The *Sāmagāma-sutta*[22] of the *Majjhima Nikāya* introduces to the early Buddhist monastic community seven methods for resolving their individual and group conflicts. The *sutta* takes into account a conflict that arose among the followers of Jainism after the death of Mahāvīra, the leader, and prepares the Buddhist monastic community not to fall into a similar situation after the death of the Buddha.[23] The *sutta* states that with the death of the leader, a conflict arose among the Jain monastic disciples over doctrine and discipline. The news was eventually brought to the Buddha by his disciple ânanda to obtain his vision in order to check similar occurrences in the Buddhist religion with the demise of the Master.[24] The Buddha's reply was: "A dispute about livelihood or about the disciplinary rules would be trifling. But should a dispute arise in the monastic community about the path (*magga*) and the way (*paṭipadā*), such a dispute would be for the harm and unhappiness of many, for the loss, harm, and suffering of gods and humans." The Buddha then began to expound the roots of conflicts and the methods for resolving them. The *Sāmagāma-sutta* highlights six psychological roots of conflict[25] as follows:

---

20. Payutto, Bhikkhu P.A, *A Buddhist Solution for the Twent-First Century*, Twentieth Impression, Bangkok: Pimsuay Printing, 2003: 5.

21. Yeh, Teresa Der-Lan, *Op.Cit*, 96.

22. MN.II.243-251.

23. DN.III.117-141.

24. It seems that Ānanda was well aware of the dispute that had broken out among the monastic community at Kosambī, see the *Kosambiya sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.

25. MN.II.245-247.

1. One who is angry and resentful lives with a root of conflict.
2. One who is contemptuous and insolent lives with a root of dispute.
3. One who is envious and avaricious lives with a root of dispute,
4. One who is deceitful and fraudulent lives with a root of dispute.
5. One who is with evil wishes and wrong views lives with a root of dispute.
6. One who adheres to one's own views, holds on to them tenaciously, and relinquishes them with difficulty lives with a root of dispute.

As the *Sāmagāma sutta* records, the following four types of conflict are best resolved by way of a formal process (*adhikaraṇa*), to use a broader term, via mediation which are as follows:[26]

1. Conflict due to a verbal dispute (*vivāda)*.
2. Conflict due to an accusation (*anuvāda)*.
3. Conflict due to an offence (*āpatti)*.
4. Conflict due to proceedings (*kicca)*.

Conflicts as depicted in Buddhist Literature:

Non-violence and peace are the quintessential teachings of Buddhism. These teachings have been strongly represented in its value system. This does not mean, though, that Buddhists have always been peaceful; Buddhist countries have had their fair share of war and conflict for most of the reasons that wars have occurred elsewhere. Yet, it is difficult to find any plausible 'Buddhist' rationales for violence. Buddhism has some particularly rich resources for deployment in dissolving conflict. The canonical texts of Theravada Buddhism are testimony to resolving social conflicts arising from crime and poverty, and interminable disputes and confrontations among the many competing religious and philosophical schools of the time. The changing scenario of the globe has pushed it to the brink of war and catastrophe. There are

---

26. Bhikkhu Bodhi translates the word *adhikaraṇa* as "litigation," and Horner as "legal questions." For detailed explanation, see Vin.II.88-93. These seven methods are so recognized that they form the last seven rules for the monastic disciples (*pātimokkha*). See C. Prebish, *Monastic Discipline*, Pennsylvania, 1975: 106-109.

weapons of mass destructions and in this situation peace will not be established until the self consciousness would reveal in the human beings. In this nuclear age, the establishment of a lasting peace on the earth represents the primary condition for the preservation of human civilization and survival of human beings. Nothing perhaps is so important and indispensable as the achievement and maintenance of peace in the modern multi-polar world.

There is a reference in that once the Buddha has prevented a war between the Sākiyas and the Koliyas,[27] on the issue of use of water of a dammed river (Rohini) that ran between their territories and when the water - level fell, the labourers of both peoples wanted the water for their own crops. The Buddha being an enlightened person perceived this dangerous situation and then flown to the area to hover above the river. Seeing him, his kinsmen threw down their arms and bowed to him, but when people were asked what the conflict was about; at first no-one knew, until at last the labourers said that it was over water. The Buddha then got the warrior-nobles to see that they were about to sacrifice something of great value - the lives of warrior - nobles - for something of very little value - water. They, therefore, desisted. In this way, over the centuries, Buddhist monks have often been harnessed by kings to help negotiate an end to a war. Mahāyāna texts explicitly suggest that warring parties are more ready to settle their differences under the mediation Buddhist monks.

In one of the *Jātaka* story,[28] the Bodhisattva is said to have been a king and was told of the approach of an invading army. In response, he says 'I want no kingdom that must be kept by doing harm', that is, by having soldiers defend his kingdom. His wishes are followed and when the capital is surrounded by the invaders, he orders the city's gates to be opened. The invaders enter and the king is deposed and imprisoned. In his cell, he develops great compassion for the invading king, which leads to this king experiencing a burning sensation in his body. This, then, prompts him to realise that he had done wrong by imprisoning a virtuous king. Consequently, he releases him and

---

27. Dhp. Verse No. 197-199. 173-174.

28. J. II. 400-403. *Idaṃ vatvā mahārājā kaṃso Bārāṇasiggaho dhanuṃ tūṃiñ ca nikkhippa saññamaṃ ajjhupāgamīti.*

leaves the kingdom in peace. Here, the implied message is that the king's non-violent stance managed to save the lives of many people on both sides. In line with this approach, are such verses as:

> *Conquer anger by love, conquer evil by good,*
> *conquer the stingy by giving, conquer the liar by truth.*[29]

Though he should conquer a thousand men in the battlefield; yet he, indeed, is the nobler victor who should conquer himself:[30]

> *Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ, asādhu´ sādhunǎ jine, jine kadariyaṃ dānena saccena alikavādinaṃ. Etādiso ayaṃ rājā, maggā uyyāhi sārathiti.*[31]

A particularly striking example of the Buddha's comments on conflicts is found in the Sakka-*pañha Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. Here Sakka tells the Buddha that all peoples "wish to live without hate, harming, hostility or malignity, and in peace." In spite of this, they actually live in "hate, harming one another, hostile and malign"[32]. Sakka asks why this is so. This initiated a discourse in which the Buddha traces the cause of conflict and hostility, jealousy and avarice, likes and dislikes desire and finally to what is called *papañca,*[33] which among other things means the "expansion" or distortion of perception. In another discourse, we find the Buddha engaged by an unnamed questioner in a dialogue on "quarrels

29. Dhp. Verse No. 223. 190.

30. Ibid. Verse No. 103. 97. *Yo shassaṃ sahassena, saṇgame mānuse jien. Ekañ ca jeyya m'attǎnaṃ, sa ve saṅgāmajuttamo.*

31. J. II. 3-4.

32. Walshe, Maurice, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996: 328

33. We can broadly accept Nanananda's explanation of *papañca* as conceptual proliferation, i.e., it refers to all that we "think" about a person or an object perceived, all that we associate with that object/person (e.g., regarding him/her as a representative of a particular class, caste, race, colour, ideology etc., which may arouse deep-seated prejudices and emotions). Such "proliferation" amounts to misperception or distorted perception. On the other hand authentic perception is what the Buddha describes thus: "In the seen there will be just the seen" (Ud 8): it is not coloured by "expansion" or "proliferation".

and disputes"[34]. Again he traces the origin of disputes to sense perception and to its distortion or the condition of *papañca*.

The *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*[35] teaches how to handle perceptions such that they do not lead to latent tendencies[36]; and this is the art of living without conflicts. When this is referred to the Elder Mahākaccāna for a fuller explanation, he gives an analysis of the various stages of sense-perception as they occur in any ordinary person. He points out that "thinking" (*vitakka*) follows perception and it is this that leads to distorted perception (*papañca*) and thence to violence and conflict. The *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*[37] gives another explanation of the origin of conflict. It is wrong perception, which really amounts to ignorance or delusion. The ignorance or wrong perception is responsible for all conflicts. Theravada canonical texts often trace the origin of conflicts to opinions, beliefs and ideologies. The Discourse to *Vāseṭṭha*[38] deserves more close attention and in this epic exposition of the Buddha's teaching of the biological indivisibility of humankind analyses methodically how the notion of "difference-by-birth" has come to occupy such an important place in our consciousness. In four words - *dīgharattaṃ anusayitaṃ diṭṭhi-gatam ajānataṃ* the discourse brilliantly sums up the unconscious evocative power of the idea of "difference-by-birth". The distorted "view" (*diṭṭhi*), "ignorant persons" (*ajānataṃ*) and "latent tendency" (*anusaya*) are interlinked. The mistaken view has remained in memory for a long time and has become a mental habit. An example of this is the notion of *nāma-gotta* or name-and-clan, i.e., the common assumption "I am of such-

---

34. Sn 862 – 874: Norman, K.R., *The Group of Discourses (Sutta Nipata)*, Volume I. London: Pali Text Society, 1984: 144 f.

35. M. I.108 ff.

36. Nanamoli:201 translation; "perceptions no more underlie that Brahmin" i.e., "underlie" the perceiver, is not quite clear. Nanamoli, Note 227 has "perceptions no longer awaken the dormant underlying tendencies to defilements". I take *sannà na anusenti* as "perceptions do not leave a residue" or do not produce a residual tendency. This applies to the awakened person who is free from *papañca*. We should expect *saññà anusenti* : "perceptions leave a residue", as mark of the ordinary person.

37. Sn: 115 ff.

38. Sn 594-656

and-such lineage", same as differentiation by birth. The last word, a negative form from the root *ñā* (to know) indicates how, unconsciously or without knowledge[39], the notion of differentiation by birth has taken root in the mind. Racial consciousness is unexceptionably an expression of this differentiation by birth, which the *Vāseṭṭha Sutta* determinedly exposes as a misconception, a designation formulated from place to place[40].

Buddhist conception of *diṭṭhi* is by far a flawed cognitive aspect of human consciousness. The cognitive, however, is not its only aspect but counted among mental tendencies are also craving, pride and arrogance, ill-will and aggression[41]. These are among the more complex affective characteristics of the flawed consciousness mentioned in the Buddhist canonical texts as common causes of conflict and violence in society. For example, the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*[42] gives greed, hate and ignorance as those wherewith one creates misery for others, overcome by the hunger for power. What propels belligerent conduct is the thought, "I have power, I want power" (*balava'mhi, balattho iti).*The *Majjhima Nikāya*[43] says that it is due to lusts (*kāma*) that kings, brahmins, householders, parents, children, brothers, sisters, and friends and colleagues get into disputes and conflicts (*kalaha/ viggaha/vivāda*) and end up fighting with weapons of destruction. On the basis of above discussion, one can clearly say that the conflict originates from the same roots as suffering. For that very reason, the way to the resolution of conflicts cannot be different from the Noble Eightfold Path which the Buddha recommended for the "pacification" of suffering. It seems to me that the above would be an approximation to a valid Buddhist approach to the causation of conflicts.

---

39. It is not that one is ignorant for other reasons and then comes to hold this mistaken view; rather, the ignorance and the view are mutually causative.

40. Sn 648 . *samaññà h'esa lokasmiṃ nāmagottaṃ pakappitaṃ/ sammuccā samudāgataṃ tattha tattha pakappitaṃ* : " For what has been disgnated name and clan in the world is indeed a mere name . What has been designated here and there has arisen by common assent" – Norman: 107

41. S.III. 254 names 7 forms of *anusaya*: *kāmarāga, paṭigha, diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, māna, bhavarāga,* and *avijjā*.

42. A. I. 201.

43. M I.86 f.

However, Buddhism does not adopt the skeptical and pessimistic view that we are destined to remain in this state. The Buddha explained that change is a very difficult process but not an impossible one. In fact the whole of Buddhism is an enterprise "to transform man from what he is to what he ought to be"[44], or rather to what he has the potential to be. Aṅgulimāla, the serial killer, is an example of one who underwent a sudden change of heart. Usually however, there are no such short cuts, only a systematic, long-term programme of moral education. It is for such change in society that the Buddha gave his discourses and founded the *Saṃgha*. *The stress on a gradual process of change and training, beginning with moral habits, stretches like a thread across the Buddhist texts. There is a firm belief that discipline, education and the taking of one step at a time can lead people from a state of relative ignorance to greater wisdom. The possibility of gradual change must be admitted alongside the sudden change of Aṅgulimāla.[45]*

Buddhist Teachings: A Buddhist Way to Peace

After gaining a considerable number of disciples, the Buddha decided to set up his own community or the *Saṃgha*, designing it as an ideal community completely free from all kinds of conflicts. All members of the *Saṃgha* lived together in the spirit of equality, liberty and fraternity, leaving behind them all previous privileges they might use to have in the past. 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.[46] The result was that the institution or the *Saṃgha* was developed to teach *Dhamma* to the rulers and to facilitate communication between the rulers and the ruled. The *Saṃgha* symbolizes the unification of means and ends in the teachings of the Buddha. That is, the movement

---

44. Jayatilleke, K. N., *Dhamma, Man, and Law*. Singapore :The Buddhist Research Society, Loy, David R, "How to Reform a Serial Killer: The Buddhist Approach to Restorative Justice." In Online *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Vol. 7, 2000: 52.

45. Harris, Elizabeth J. 1994. *Violence and Disruption in Society*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (Wheel Publication . No. 392/393) :38.

46. Payutto, 2001: 18

working for the resolution of conflict must embody a sane and peaceful process itself. The discipline of the early monastic *Saṃgha* was designed to channelize conflicts of interest among the monks and nuns into processes of peaceful democratic resolution. In order to spread peace and stability in their societies, the monastic *Saṃgha* sought to establish moral hegemony over the state, to guide their societies with a code of non-violent ethical means in the interest of social welfare. The Buddha was venerated as a messenger of peace par excellence. When asked by the wanderer Dighajanu what the gist of his teachings was, he replied explicitly: "*According to my teachings, among the world of the Devas, Maras and Brahma, with crowds of recluses and Brahmanas, deities and human beings, there will be no quarrel whatsoever with anyone in the world*".[47] Further, he declared: "*Oh Bhikkhus, I do not quarrel with the world, only the world quarrels with me. Oh Bhikkus, a speaker of the Dharma quarrels with nobody in the world*".

Buddhist doctrine is based on human ethical values and excellent code of morals, which are universal in nature and encourage the social harmony. These moral codes of Buddhism are as follows:

1. *Pañcaśīla* or five precepts: not killing, no stealing, not committing adultery, no to lie and not ta take intoxicating liquors. *Pañcaśīla* is the guiding principles in attaining moral perfection.
2. *Brahma Vihāra* or four sublime states: the four *Brahma Vihāra* or sublime states namely *Mettā* (loving Kindness), *Karuṇā* (compassion), *Mudītā* (appreciative joy) and *Upekhā* (equanimity) occupy an important place in the social harmony.

These four sublime states are also known as *appamannaya* or illimitable as they lead on beyond all barriers which divide one man from another man, one community from another community and one nation from another nation. They are the path of happiness, social amity and universal peace. Their cultivation would lead us to universal brotherhood and social harmony.[48] Cultivation of cosmic

47. M.I. 109

48. Bahadur Singh, Shiv, *Buddhist Ethics and Social Harmony: An Essence of Social Development*, in Peoples Dion (ed..), "*Buddhism & Ethics*", Symposium

religious feeling would alone resolve the conflict and usher in an era of new spiritual renaissance in 21st Century. Buddhism advocates of cosmic religious feeling and compassion. Albert Einstein writes, "*The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison and he wants to experience the Universe as a single significant whole. The beginning of cosmic religious feeling already appear at an early stage of development e.g.; in many of the Psalms of David and in some of the prophets. Buddhism, as we have learned especially from the wonderful writings of Schopenhauer, contains a much stronger element of this.*"[49] He further states, "*The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking*" and warned the people of the world that they would bring unprecedented disaster upon themselves "*unless there is a fundamental change in their attitudes towards one another as well as in their concept of the future*".[50]

Concept of Peace Development:

Peace in Buddhism combines four primary issues: happiness, peace, freedom and security. The highest happiness is *Nibbāna* (*paramaṁ sukhaṁ*), the supreme state of sublime peace (*anuttarasasamivihārapada*), deliverance (*vimutti*) and the supreme security from bondage (*anuttarayagakhama*). The 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.[51] It is clear that in Buddhist point of view "peace" has two levels of meanings. At super-mundane level (*lokuttara*), peace means *Nibbāna*, the highest state of happiness. So to develop

---

Volume, Thailand, Academic Papers Presented at the IABU Conference on Buddhist Ethics, 2008: 582.

49. Einstein, Albert, *Cosmic Religious Feeling* in Quantum Questions, ed. Wilson, Ken, Sambhala Publication, Boston, USA, 2001: 104.

50. United Nations, *Disarmament*, Vol. III, No. 3, November, 1980: 59.

51. Payutto; 2001: 50.

"peace" at that level one has no other means but *Vipassanā* or insight meditation as mentioned earlier. At the mundane level (*lokiya*), peace means "non-violence" or "peaceful coexistence".

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 *Śila* (morality), *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Pañña* (wisdom). With that comes the Noble Eightfold Path because *Śila* comprises right speech, right action and right livelihood, *Samādhi* comprises right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration and *Pañña* comprises right understanding and right thought.

How to establish peaceful society is the most burning issue in the present world scenario. In this dispensation, Buddhism can play a decisive role for providing sustaining and preserving the world peace. The foundation of peace and security can strengthened within the framework of Buddhism, which is quintessentially tolerant, cosmopolitan and portable. The duty of religion is to guide humanity to uphold certain noble principles in order to lead a peaceful life and to maintain human dignity. The Buddha introduced a righteous way of life for human beings to follow after having himself experienced the weakness and strength of human mentality. Buddhism is essentially a practical doctrine, dedicated primarily to the negation of suffering and only secondarily to the elucidation of philosophical issues. But of course, the two realms – the practical and the philosophical are not connected. The thought (*pariyatti*) and the practice (*paṭipatti*) are to move together side by side, just like the two wheels of chariot for righteous and smooth way-faring for human life. It is the system of only one problem and one solution with a path existing between the two. The only problem is the suffering of human beings (*dukkha*) and the solution is the attainment of eternal peace (*nibbāna*) and the path to attain this is Eight Fold Path (*aṭṭhāngika magga*), which is a dynamic principle gradually leading towards amelioration and complete harmony in the universal social order, non-violent in character and saturated with peace and tranquility.

The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace, not only peace for human beings but peace for all living beings. The Buddha taught that the first step on the path to peace in understanding the causality of peace. The Buddha was of the view that peaceful minds lead to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. Of all the teachings of the Buddha, one can say that *Bodhicitta* is the forerunner of peace. The Buddha exhorts: *"cetanā ahaṃ bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi"* (O monks, volition is the action). The Buddha further states in the *Dhammapada* as under: *Sabba Pāpassa akaranāni, Kuśalassa upasampadā; Sacitta pariyodapānaṃ, Etam Buddhana Sāsanam* which means 'abstaining from all sorts of sin, doing good to all living beings and making one's mind pure is the *Buddhadhamma*. So, when *Bodhicitta* is attained, peace is established and violence and hatred are annihilated. In this regard, the Kaliṅga war of King Aśoka may be cited. According to the 13th Rock Edict[52], King Aśoka adopted *dhammaghoṣa* i.e. the sound of Righteousness instead of *bherighoṣa* i.e. the word of trumpet after having seen the mass instruction of life and materials during the war. To inculcate the sense of maintaining peace, tranquility and serenity in the world, one must follow the middle path, which has eight gradual steps (*ayameva āriyo atthangiko maggo*). As a whole, the Eight Fold Path has three steps, namely, *Sila* (Comprising Right Speech or *samma-vāca*, Right Action or *samma-kammānto* and Right Livelihood or *samma-ājivo*), *samādhi* (comprising Right Effort or *Samma-vayāmo*, Right Mindfulness or *Samma-sati* and Right Concentration or *Samma-samādhi*) and *Paññā* (comprising Right View or *Samma-ditthi* and Right Resolve or *Samma-samkappo*).

Śila is the first step which curtails the physical and vocal misdeeds, *Samādhi* curtails the mental misdeeds and *Paññā* makes the dawn of Right Understanding under the light of which the nature of reality is visualized. *Śila* i.e. attainment of supreme wisdom are the three basic principles of Buddhism to be disentangled from entanglement. When this principle is duly followed, four defiling factors (*āsava*), five hindrances (*nivāraṇa*) and ten fetters (*samyojana*) will automatically came to their end and there must be appearance of four sublime ways of living (*brahmavihāra*), five perfection (*pāramitā*) to cease the

---

52. Bapat, P.V., (Ed.), *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Publication Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1966: 56.

mental disorder. This is why the middle path is considered as the most suitable therapy for treatment of common neurosis of human beings which ultimately will be an answer to resolve conflict. Enmity is the biggest hurdle for achieving peace in the world. It is universal truth that enmity begets enmity. The Buddha exhorts in the *Dhammapada* that by enmity none conquers, by non-enmity enmity will be conquered. It is universal truth '(*Nā hi verena verani sammantidha* '*Kudacanaṃ, Averena ca Sammanti esa dhammo sanantano)'.* It is again *Bodhicitta* which overthrows enmity and thus paves the way for peace and harmony in the world over. Peace, according to early Buddhist tradition, is a psychic phenomenon. What we call peace is a nearer expression of '*Santa Citta*'. This can be attained by a layman through following the *Brahmavihāra* teachings of the Buddha, which is construed as the sublime ideas.

Mettā destroys ill-will and ego and helps in achieving love and peace for the human beings, which is eloquently mentioned in the *Mettā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta* which is as follows:

> "*Mātā, yathā niyaṃ puttaṃ, åyusa ekaputtamanurakkhe,*
> *Evaṃ pi sabbabhutesu maṃsaṃ bhavaye aparimanaṃ".*

Compassion (Karuṇā) which means eradication of sufferings of other - '*Karunati dayā, anuddayā, hadayanampanaṃ va.'* It is not a simply expression towards being in suffering but a positive attitude to be one with the suffering of others and making right efforts for its gradual minimization - *paradukkhe sati hadayakampanam, kinati va paradukkhaṃ, hiṃsati vinaseti ti attho. Karuṇā* has the characteristics of evolving the mode of removing pain, suffering, and manifestations of kindness. Compassion is the virtue which uproots the wish to harm others. It makes people so sensitive to the sufferings of others and causes them to make these sufferings so much their own that they do not wish to further increase them. *Mettā, Karuṇā, Muditā and Uppekkhā* are in the same way helpful in getting peace and tranquility all around. The Buddha told the human beings to adopt the principle of *Brahmavihāra*:

> *Titthaṃ caraṃ nisinno va, Sayano va yavatassa vigata middho,*
> *Etam satim adhittheyya, Brahmametam vihāram idhamahu.*

The Buddha did not propagate any gospel and dogma. The entire corpus of sermons and teachings is based on pragmatic realism and rational thinking. The Buddha exhorted – "*Atta dīpo Viharatha*" (be light unto yourself). He further states in the *Aṭṭhavagga* of the *Dhammapada*: "*Atta hi attano natho ko hi natho parasidya*" (A man is his lord himself, not come one else). The point is when rational thinking prevails, peace comes automatically. This is applicable to the world peace also. The Buddha gave his followers a full-fledged freedom to think, decide and act. He did not thrust any ideas upon them. Thus, the nationalistic thought based on individualistic freedom paves the way for world peace.

It is well known that there are instances in the Theravāda Canon where the question of social conflict on a mass scale has been addressed. In these, we see that the roots of conflict lie not only in individual consciousnesses, but also that the very structure of society encourages those roots to grow. Two of the best examples of this are the discourses named *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda* and *Kūṭadanta*, both of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.[53] The *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda* shows how successive "universal monarchs" kept social problems at bay by following the sage dictum "whosoever in your kingdom is poor, to him let wealth be given".[54] Peter Harvey sums up that "if a ruler allows poverty to develop, this will lead to social strife, so that it is his responsibility to avoid this by looking after the poor and even investing in various sectors of the economy". Where this is not done, the result will be crime and lawlessness, as is shown in the *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda Sutta*. The *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda Sutta* presents a disturbing picture of how a society can fall into utter confusion because of a lack of economic justice. The extremes reached are far greater than anything envisaged in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* and they stem from the state's blindness to the realities of poverty.[55] The Buddha's comments on hearing of the wars between Ajātasattu and Pasenadi Kosala do not appear to be an endorsement of war; rather they portray his considered opinion

---

53. D.III.58-79 and D.I.127-149 ; Walshe, Maurice, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996: 395 ff. and 133 ff.

54. D.III.70 f.

55. Harris, Elizabeth J., *Violence and Disruption in Society*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (Wheel Publication No. 392/393), 1994: 23.

that war only leads to misery and degradation: "*Victory breeds hatred, the defeated live in pain. Happily the peaceful live, giving up victory and defeat.*"[56] "The slayer gets a slayer (in his turn), the conqueror gets a conqueror... Thus by evolution of *kamma*, he who plunders is plundered."[57] At *Saṃyutta Nikāya,*[58] we get a picture of Sakka who defeats his adversary Vepacitti in battle, but does not even retaliate verbally when Vepacitti insults him in the presence of his subordinates. This is not because he is afraid or weak, but because, being a wise person, he knows that one who does not react in hate towards a hater wins a victory hard to win, which serves the true interests of both contestants.

The question of war cannot be discussed without considering the social significance of the ethical precepts, because war of necessity involves the violation of the first precept. It would be a mistake to assume that the importance given to the observance of the precepts is solely because it is a means of personal moral improvement. We should not fail to note that two things are said about the precepts which are given below:[59]

1. one should observe them (*samādāna*) and
2. one should also advocate and applaud their observance by others (*samādapana* and *samanuṅṅa*)

Because of the long held prejudice that Buddhism is predominantly concerned with individual "salvation", the social significance of such

56. S.I.83.

57. S.I.85.

58. S. I. 221.

59. See A.I. 194-196 and ii.191 f.: the *aluddha/aduññha/amūḷha* observes the precepts and advocates their observance by others (*param pi tathattàya samàdapeti*) whereas the *luddha/duṭṭha/muḷha* violates them and advocates their violation by others, 1.297-299: killing, getting others to kill and applauding others when they kill lead to hell ; abstaining from killing, getting others to abstain and applauding others when they abstain lead to heaven. So for all the "ways of action" *kammapatha*. (The words *samādapana* and *samanuṅṅa* occur here). Dhammika Sutta of Sn shows that there is a three-fold meaning in the first precept : (1) *pāṇaṃ na hane*, (2) *na ca ghātayeyya*, (3) *na cānujaññā hanataṃ paresaṃ* (Sn: 394).

Buddhist views tends to be ignored. The so-called "military option" becomes even more incompatible with Buddhism when we realize that the precepts are invested with this wider significance. That it is possible for individuals to achieve, and abide in, peace and sanity is of course the message of Buddhism.[60] On the other hand, the Buddha did not even pursue the "noble doubt" that arose in him once, as to whether it would be possible to run a state righteously, without killing, conquering, or creating grief to self and others[61]. It is true that the *cakkavatti* king is portrayed as going about with the "fourfold army", bringing "rival" rulers under his nominal suzerainty[62], but he achieves this without firing a single arrow and he does not do so for power or glory but for the promoting of ethical values. Yet it is not unreasonable to infer from this passage that Buddhism found it impossible, even under the best of circumstances, to visualize a state that functions without the backing of an army. It is only a commentary on the human condition, not an endorsement of war.

Buddhist Way to Conflict Resolution:

The causes of any conflict lie in strong attachment to certain views, and the core of Buddha's teaching is of great help here. All phenomena, in addition to being transient, arise and disappear according to a complex set of conditions. When we apply this truth to conflict, we give up the simplistic, black-and-white picture through which conflict is usually described and perpetuated. Views about the "good guys" and the "bad guys" simply do not correspond to the reality. A resolution of conflicts will be possible if we are able to realize the necessity to learn how to loosen the grip exerted by the unwholesome "roots" on our collective character at least to some extent. Sooner or later, humanity will have to make a valiant struggle towards this end, if it is to escape from the spiral of hate and criminality in which it is now

60. Dhp 197 depicts persons of insight as living in harmony and happiness, even though society is full of haters: *susukhaṃ vata jīvāma/ verinesu averino*. Dh. 103/104 say that no divine force can overturn the victory of the person who conquers self, not others.

61. S. I. 116 : *sakkā nu kho rajaṃ kāretuṃ ahanaṃ, aghātayaṃ, ajinaṃ, ajāpayaṃ, asocaṃ asocāpayaṃ dhammena?*

62. D.III.62.

engulfed. The three major inputs discussed above are derived from the Buddhist conception of attachment (*lobha*), aggression (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) as the three roots of unwholesome action and the opposites of these, namely freedom from attachment, aggression and delusion as being the roots of wholesome action.

If the Buddhists throughout the world are united, they can generate and channel effective action conducive to world peace. The Buddhists are entitled to be peace workers because theirs is a religion that propagates peace (*śanti*) as its universal message. The Buddha was regarded as the '*Prince of Peace*' (*śanti-rājā*). As Rev. J. T. Sunderland has pointed out, "*Buddhism has taught peace more strongly among its followers, more effectively during all its history, than has any great religious faith known to the world.*"[63] In the Buddha's own words:

Caratha, Bhikkhave, cārika´ Bahujanahitāya, Bahujanasukhvya. Lokanukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ [64]

Now, I would like to say something about the peace concept of early Buddhism. The term 'Peace' has both negative and positive meanings. In its negative sense, peace is an absence not only of war and conflict but also of social injustice, social inequality, violation of human rights, destruction of ecological balance, etc. In its positive sense, peace means the presence of unity, harmony, freedom and justice. Thus the concept of peace encompasses within itself the absence of conflict as well as presence of harmony. In the Buddhist framework, the concept of peace is extended to include both inner and outer peace. Inner peace (*ajjhata śanti*) i.e. peace of mind is mental state free from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. The attainment of the ultimate peace of mind is the goal of good life in Buddhism. So, the Buddha once said, '*There is no higher bliss than peace*'.[65] Inner peace is a pre-requisite for outer peace which involves interpersonal relations. A person is said to have outer peace when he has a harmonious living with his fellow-beings (*sama cariyā*) which

---

63. Quoted in K. Sri Dhammananda, *Great Personalities on Buddhism*, B. M. S. Publication, Malaysia, 1965: 77.

64. *Mahāvagga, Vinaya Piṭaka*

65. Dh. 202.

includes communal, national and global peace.

In Buddhism peace is as much concerned with individuals as with groups and institutions. In fact, society can remain peaceful if its members have peaceful mind. Unless there is peace within, there will be no peace without which is also revealed in the preamble of UNESCO i.e. *Since it is in the minds of men that wars begin, it is in the minds of men that the ramparts of peace should be erected*. This very same sentiment is echoed in the first verse of the *Dhammapada* which states:

Mind foreruns all activities, Mind is chief, mind-made are they;
If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind, Then suffering follows him,
Even as the wheel, the hoof of the ox.[66]

All forms of conflicts, quarrels and wars, whether between individuals, groups or nations, can be traced to these three roots of bad actions (*akusala mūla*). First, the selfish desire for pleasure and acquisition (*rāga*) gives rise to crimes, exploitation, corruption, and conflict. As it is said by the Buddha: "*It is on account of passion or desire that kings dispute with kings, kṣatriyas dispute with kṣatriyas, …… It is account of passion or desire that they wage war, having taken sword and shield, having girded bow and quiver and being drawn out in battle-array on both sides*".[67] Secondly, anger is an immediate cause of violence and if not pacified in time, it becomes hatred or ill-will which will not cease easily. That is why, the Buddha said:

"*He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me;*
In those who harbor such thoughts, Hatred never ceases."[68]

Thirdly, under the influence of ignorance, men cling to faith and ideology, resulting in conflict and wars.

In the age of Globalization, 'conflict resolution' stands for a wide

---

66. Dh. 1.

67. MN.I.86

68. Dh. 103.

range of methods of resolving conflicts and disputes between two parties. Among these methods are the negotiation (self resolution), mediation (third party assistance), arbitration (third party decision making), conciliation (third party proposing a non-binding solution), and diplomacy. Buddhism has also adopted mediation, conciliation, perhaps also arbitration. Examples could be drawn by examining the discourses of the Buddha and the conflicts in the monastic community where the Buddha and his disciples intervened.[69] Considering these, Buddha's followers could be considered as the best mediators, facilitators, or conciliators in resolving conflicts. As it is said, Buddhas show the way, it is up to people to walk along it and find solutions. There is a dhammic responsibility for understanding Buddhists to intervene and to serve as mediators, facilitators and conciliators in resolving conflicts and bringing peace to individuals, families, and communities. For this they should prepare and practice appropriate guidelines (*dhamma netti*) which are quite evident from the *Sāmagāma sutta*, in which monks are asked to apply their own guidelines prepared in conformity with the dhamma.[70] The *sutta* presents seven formal conflict resolution methods (*adhikaraṇa samatha*) which are:[71]

1. Conflict resolution by confrontation,
2. Conflict resolution on account of memory,
3. Conflict resolution on account of past insanity,
4. Conflict resolution by the effecting of acknowledgement of an offence,
5. Conflict resolution by the opinion of the majority,
6. Conflict resolution by the pronouncement of bad character against someone and
7. Conflict resolution by covering over with grass.

69. Translations of the quoted paragraphs of this article have been either directly or indirectly taken from *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, 1995.

70. Somaratne, G. A., "Modernity in the Ancient Methods of Resolving Monastic Conflicts: A Study of the *Sāmagāma-sutta*", in Bhikkhuni Suvimalee, ed., Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies (SIJBS), Volume 2, Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Sri Lanka, 2012: 38-51.

71. Vin.II.93-104.

The *sutta* presents six principles of cordiality[72] and each of them helps in creating love and respect, and conduces to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity. The six priciples of cordiality are:[73]

1. Acts of loving-kindness,
2. Verbal acts of loving-kindness,
3. Mental acts of loving-kindness,
4. Enjoys virtuous companions in the holy life; without making reservations without any ill-will,
5. Possessed of virtues that are unbroken or which cannot be questioned, and
6. Leads a noble life in accordance with the complete destruction of suffering.

Those who undertake and abide by these six principles of cordiality could endure any course of speech, trivial or gross, which in turn leads to their welfare and happiness for a long time. In such an ideal Buddhist monastic community conflicts will not occur and conflict resolution methods will not be required. But, in the *Sāmagāma sutta*, anticipating conflicts to take place in the monastic community in his absence, the Buddha presented the seven methods of conflict resolution, which bear universal applicability and also compatibility with the modern methods of conflict resolution and it seems to be an important tool to resolve conflict even in present circumstances.

Conclusion

Thich Nhat Hanh proceeds to clarify the Buddhist point of view from which he writes: *In the practice of awareness, which Buddhist call mindfulness, we nurture the ability to see deeply into the nature of things and of human being. The fruit of this practice is insight and understanding, and out of this comes love. Without understanding how we can love is the intention and capacity to bring joy to others, and to remove and transform the pain that is in them.*[74] He further says,

---

72. MN.II.250-251.

73. Somaratne, G. A., Op. Cit.: 38-51.

74. Hanh, Thich Nhat, "*We are the beaters; we are the beaten*", los Angeles Times, 15 April 1991, Quoted in Runzo, Josef and Martin, Nancy M (eds.), '*Ethics*

"To prevent war or conflict, to prevent the next crisis, we must start to have a dialogue for peace right now. When a war or conflict has begun, it is already too late. If we and our children practice *ahimsa* in our daily lives, if we learn to plant seeds of peace and reconciliation in our hearts and minds, we will begin to establish real peace and, in that way, we may be able to prevent the next war or conflict." Conflict can open avenues of change and provide challenges. Conflict-resolution skills do not guarantee a solution every time, but they can turn conflict into an open opportunity for learning more about oneself and others. Conflict can be both positive and negative, constructive and destructive, depending on what we make of it. Surely it is rarely static-it can change any time. The Buddhists would call this *aniccā*. Nothing is permanent. Everything is changing. Yet in many conflicts people are so attached to their views, and tend to blame the other side without examining their own position critically. In this case there cannot be any dialogue for peace and reconciliation. However, we can sometimes alter the course of a conflict simply by viewing it differently. We can even turn our flight into fun. Transforming conflict into reconciliation and dialogue for peace is an art, requiring special skills. Indeed, in resolving a conflict skilful means (*upāya kosala*) is a keyword in Mahayana Buddhist terminology.

Buddhism has historically and philosophically evolved into a balance of power based on conflict resolution and equilibrating threats of war through the cultivation of compassion and mindfulness. This kaleidoscopic survey of Buddhism exhibits that the tradition has strong resources to draw on for conflict resolution, but that these resources and related ideals must sometimes become better known and applied more fully. Buddhists are now active in promoting peace. Ironically, this is a good illustration of the Buddhist teaching that ignorance and dogmatism are at the root of much human suffering. On the basis of above discussion we can say that the prevalent conflict in the society (world) can be resolved through Buddhist teachings. I would like to conclude with Thich Nhat Hanh's saying on peace which is very relevant in present world scenario: *There is no enlightenment outside of daily life. Living in this marvelous reality ~ living in peace, is something we all want. But I would like to ask: Do we have the capacity*

---

in the World Religions'', Oxford: Oneworld, 2007: 222.

of enjoying peace? If peace is there, will we be able to enjoy it, or will we find it boring? To me, peace and happiness and joy and life go together, and we can experience the peace of the divine reality right in the present moment. It is available, inside us and around us. If we are not able to enjoy that peace, how can we make peace grow?

REFERENCES

Barash, David P. and Webel, Charles P., *Peace and Conflict Studies,* Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage, 2002.

Bhalchandra Mungekar and Aakash Singh Rathore (eds.), *Buddhism and the Contemporary World: An Ambedkarian Perspective,* New Delhi: Book Well, 2007.

Bhikkhuni Suvimalee, ed., Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies (SIJBS), Vol. 2, Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Sri Lanka, 2012.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, Third Indian Edition, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2003.

Harris, Elizabeth J., *Violence and Disruption in Society*, Wheel Publication No. 392/393, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society: 1994.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000.

Jayatilleke, K.N. Undated. *Dhamma, Man, and Law*. Singapore : The Buddhist Research Society,

Loy, David R, "How to Reform a Serial Killer: The Buddhist Approach to Restorative Justice." In Online *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* , Vol. 7 (2000)

Mahinda Deegalle, ed., *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*, Routledge, London & New York, 2006.

Nanamoli, Bhikkhu and Bodhi, Bhikkhu, 1995. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha.* Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (M)

Norman, K.R., *The Group of Discourses (Sutta Nipata)*, Volume I. London: Pali Text Society, 1984.

Payutto, Bhikkhu P.A, *A Buddhist Solution for the Twent-First Century*,

Twentieth Impression, Bangkok: Pimsuay Printing, 2003.

Peoples, Dion (ed..), "*Buddhism & Ethics*", Symposium Volume, Thailand, Academic Papers Presented at the IABU Conference on Buddhist Ethics, 2008.

Premasiri, P. D., *The Philosophy of the Atthakavagga*, Wheel Publication No. 162, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society: 1972

Runzo, Josef and Martin, Nancy M (eds.), '' *Ethics in the World Religions''*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007.

Singh, Arvind Kumar, 'Relevance of Buddhism in Attaining World Peace' in Le Manh That and Thich Nhat Tu (eds.), *War, Conflict and Healing: A Buddhist perspective*, HCM City, Vietnam Buddhist University, 2008.

Tilakaratne, A. 1993. *Nirvana and Ineffability*. Kelaniya: Kelaniya University

Walshe, Maurice, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996.