BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES AND WORLD PEACE

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Abstract

Malala Yousafzai's saying "if you want to end war, then instead of sending gens, send books. Instead of sending tanks, send pens. Instead of sending soldiers, send teachers." Is still in human beings' souls nowadays. In Thailand, Veerachart Nimanong said that mere reconciliation is not enough for solving the conflict in the world especially in the Deep South of Thailand between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims, because reconciliation aims at doing a compromise, which has its limitation only on some particular purposes, whereas the harmony has more scope than the reconciliation. Non-attachment is the essential condition of harmony in Buddhism, which justice based on forgivingness is in Islam. Non-attachment and forgiveness as the essence of sustainable harmony can be conducted through the method of interreligious dialogue of life, action, religious doctrine, and religious experience. According to Buddhist perspectives, all things depend on cause and effect, because of conflict made the war and because of Buddha's teaching made the peace too. This article aims at showing the origins or causes of war and how to solve the problem of war into the perfect peace following the Buddhist perspectives.

Introduction

There should be known about definition of Buddhism, War and World Peace; Buddhism is a religion and dharma that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices largely based on teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha, commonly known as the Buddha ("the awakened one"). According to Buddhist tradition, the Buddha lived and taught in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE in the ancient Magadha kingdom. He is recognized by Buddhists as an awakened, divine, or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings end

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their suffering through the elimination of ignorance and craving. Buddhists believe that this is accomplished through the direct understanding and perception of dependent origination and the Four Noble Truths. (Phrabhramgunaporn P.A. Payutto, 2012)

Two major extant branches of Buddhism are generally recognized by scholars: Theravada Buddhism (Pali: "The School of the Elders") and Mahayana Buddhism (Sanskrit: "The Great Vehicle"). In Theravada Buddhism, the ultimate goal is the attainment of the sublime state of Nirvana, achieved by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path (also known as the Middle Way) (Rahula, 2007), thus escaping what is seen as a cycle of suffering and rebirth. Theravada has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

Mahayana Buddhism, which includes the traditions of Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren Buddhism, Shingon, and Tiantai (Tendai) is found throughout East Asia. Rather than Nirvana, Mahayana instead aspires to Buddhahood via the bodhisattva path, a state wherein one remains in the cycle of rebirth to help other beings reach awakening. Vajrayana, a body of teachings attributed to Indian siddhas, may be viewed as a third branch or merely a part of Mahayana; Tibetan Buddhism, which preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth century India, is practiced in regions surrounding the Himalayas, Mongolia and Kalmykia. Tibetan Buddhism aspires to Buddhahood or rainbow body.

Buddhist schools vary on the exact nature of the path to liberation, the importance and canonicity of various teachings and scriptures, and especially their respective practices. Buddhism denies a creator deity and posits that mundane deities such as Mahabrahma are misperceived to be a creator. Instead, the foundations of Buddhist tradition and practice are the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma (the teachings), and the Sangha (the community)(Thitiwatana, 1977). "Taking refuge" in the triple gem has traditionally been a declaration and commitment to being on the Buddhist path, and in general distinguishes a Buddhist from a non-Buddhist. Development along the Buddhist path is generally accomplished by practicing some or all of the Ten Meritorious Deeds; however, the threefold practice of generosity, virtue, and meditation (including samatha and vipassanā) is often given special emphasis. Other practices include the study of scriptures; cultivation of higher wisdom and discernment; renouncing conventional living and becoming a monastic; devotional practices; ceremonies; the Mahayana practices of Generation stage and Completion stage.

War is a state of armed conflict between societies. It is generally characterized by extreme collective aggression, destruction, and usually high mortality. An absence of war is usually called "peace". Total war is warfare that is not restricted to purely legitimate military targets, and can result in massive civilian or other non-combatant casualties.

While some scholars see war as a universal and ancestral aspect of human nature, others argue that it is only a result of specific socio-cultural or ecological circumstances.

In 2013 war resulted in 31,000 deaths down from 72,000 deaths in 1990. The deadliest war in history, in terms of the cumulative number of deaths since its start, is the Second World War, from 1939 to 1945, with 60–85 million deaths, followed by the Mongol conquests which was greater than 41 million. Proportionally speaking, the most destructive war in modern history is the War of the Triple Alliance, which took the lives of over 60% of Paraguay's population, according to Steven Pinker. In 2003, Richard Smalley identified war as the sixth (of ten) biggest problem facing humanity for the next fifty years. War usually results in significant deterioration of infrastructure and the ecosystem, a decrease in social spending, famine, large-scale emigration from the war zone, and often the mistreatment of prisoners of war or civilians. Another by product of some wars is the prevalence of propaganda by some or all parties in the conflict, and increased revenues by weapons manufacturers.

World peace or peace on Earth is an ideal state of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and peoples. This ideal of world non-violence provides a basis for peoples and nations to willingly cooperate, either voluntarily or by virtue of a system of governance that prevents warfare. While different cultures, religions, philosophies, and organizations may have differing concepts about how such an ideal state might come about, they have in common this ideal of a cessation of all hostility amongst all humanity.

World Peace could be established through religious or secular organizations that address human rights, technology, education, engineering, medicine, or diplomacy used as an end to all forms of fighting. For example, since 1945, the United Nations and the 5permanent members of its Security Council (the US, Russia, China, France, and the UK) have worked to resolve conflicts without war or declarations of war. However, nations have entered numerous military conflicts since that time.

The Causes of Making War from Buddhist Perspective

After study and analysis, there are two main factors to cause the greatest conflict called war in the world in the Buddhist perspective as follow;

1) The internal factors such as craving, view, perseverance. Craving is the cause of great conflict called war. Because of being lover and beloved on, human beings have the conflict and fight for that. For example the Aramadhanta Brammin had asked the Venerable Kajjayana that what were the factors caused conflict between kings, Bramins, and wealthy persons. The answers were to attach the sensuality, to stay in the power of craving and to be covered by passion. Moreover, craving can be cause of conflict between parents and children, relatives, friends, and all human beings around the world.

All of them would hold the guns, swords and so on to fight each other for getting that pleasure or sensuality until their deaths. In the Buddha's time, there was the war of Water between Sakaya family and Koliya family. In fact from the ancient time to the present time, the world will never stay without war. The form of war may be different such as; religious war. Because of different belief and worship, they have tried to destroy other religions for only their own Gods. That war based on sensuality attached in their minds and souls.

There were found that three roots of the greatest conflict following the Buddhist perspectives were; craving, view and perseverance. These factors had broken the human beings' ability and potentials. It would be so slow to develop their energies, organization and society. The quarrels among them come to kill each other or all.

2) The external factors caused the great conflict called war were; the facts or information, benefits, relationship, and ethnic.

After study and analysis, the war comes from the great conflict between human beings, who would be different in culture, traditions, religion and so on. Having different belief makes them fight and kill each other for getting the benefits from each other too.

According to the speech of Buddhism and Peace - Jan Willis, he said that for centuries, Americans, in general, had enjoyed unprecedented periods of peace and prosperity. Those feelings of security and invincibility suddenly came crashing down, however, with the horrific events of September 11, 2001 when a major terrorist event of catastrophic proportions occurred within our borders, on our home ground. No longer were we simply observers of human carnage; we were its targets. And though not all of us were completely surprised that hatreds of this sort were festering in the world around us, very few of us were prepared for the virulence of the anti-American sentiment that visited such devastating loss of life upon our shores.

Ethnic and racial prejudices run rampant in today's global, multicultural society; our world is filled with conflict. Serbs disdain Croats, the British war with the Irish in Northern Ireland, in Israel there are precious few moments of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Rwandans slaughter each other in the name of tribal purity and, all over the world, wars are waged in the name of religion. Everywhere one looks, ancient hatreds are played out in the contemporary world with devastating consequences.

Since September 11th, we now know that such hate-filled actions are not just events that can be observed from a distance, on television, from the safety of our living rooms. It is no longer the case that we can view ourselves as simply the innocent observers of the "bad guys."

Of course, we had known that guns in our schools and in our homes had become a threat worthy of serious investigation; that violence both abroad and at home has come to the fore in our time. Still, we had not made much progress either in averting or dealing with it. In the aftermath of September 11th, the pressing question becomes: What must we do now? As one Western Buddhist, Lama Surya Das, remarked on the day immediately following, "Of course, the criminals who have perpetrated this act of terrorism must certainly be brought to justice. Terrorism cannot be allowed to continue. We must condemn the crime, but not let our

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anger escalate into unreasonable aggression, racism, and even more violence in the world we must get to the roots of this, not just punish individuals."

Following this speech, we can learn and understand the big problems in our world called war, which had a lot of causes to make it happen for some purpose. And it will never end or disappear from our minds now and forever.

Roles of Buddha's Teachings to Solve the Problems of War into Peace

Jan Willis said "Peace" is the ideal of an ill-constituted type of human being. I say those who have inner peace (mental and physiological) do not need outward peace, and may even like some fuss (this is an understatement). People who do not have inner peace, who are mentally and physiologically disturbed, need outward peace to completely indulge in their decadence.

True peace would be matter at 0 degrees Kelvin - the universe frozen over. This state will never come about because it is not there now. Existence will always be in a state of flux, there will always be war, strife, and that is a good thing, because, as Heraclitus says:

"We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife."

Peace is commonly understood to mean the absence of hostilities. Other definitions include freedom from disputes, harmonious relations and the absence of mental stress or anxiety, as the meaning of the word changes with context. However, there are others who would say that the absence of hostilities would refer to only those hostilities which are evident and that true peace only springs from the heart of each individual.

1) The Basics of Buddhism to peace from Jan Willis's speech

Between 563 BCE and 483 BCE there lived in the southern regions of modern day Nepal, a man named Siddhartha Gautama who had been born a prince of the Sakya clan but who, at the age of thirty-five, after meditating and attaining a state called "Enlightenment," began teaching a completely new doctrine in India. That doctrine has since come to be known as Buddhism. At the end of his life, the "Buddha," as his followers have ever since referred to him, said that he had spent the previous forty-five years teaching only two things: suffering, and its cessation. Indeed, his emphasis upon the suffering inherent in samsara (literally, the realm of "continual going") has caused many over the centuries to view the tradition as pessimistic. In reality, the Buddha preached a doctrine which demands an in depth analysis of suffering and its causes as a means of bringing about suffering's end and, therefore, of ushering in a new and lasting peace, tranquility and insightfulness.

The most succinct formulation of the Buddha's doctrine was provided in the very first sermon that he delivered. That "First Sermon" set forth the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, namely:

- (1) There is suffering (Duhkha).
- (2) There is a cause of suffering (duhkha-samudaya).
- (3) There is the cessation of suffering (Duhkha-nirodha); and
- (4) There is a path leading to the cessation of suffering (Duhkha-nirodha-marga).

According to the first Noble Truth, suffering is defined as follows: "Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain grief and despair are suffering; association with the unpleasant is suffering; dissociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering." However, there is the further injunction to understand what is meant by the term duhkha in all its connotations. With

regard to this, Buddhist texts further delineate "three types/levels of duhkha," namely: suffering 'plain and simple,' that encompasses every kind of physical and mental pain, distress or uneasiness; the 'suffering produced by change,' especially that suffering brought on by the sudden shift of a happy state changing into an unhappy one; and the suffering which is 'inherent in samsara,' that is that type which occurs because of the very nature of all existents within samsara, namely their being ultimately impermanent, painful, and empty of independent existence.

The Second Noble Truth declares that the most palpable cause of our suffering is desire and thirst of various sorts, all of which are doomed to be unsatisfactory since they falsely ascribe permanence to what is, in reality, impermanent. However, the root cause of both desire and hatred is the ignorance which posits a false idea about the self's permanence. Thinking, mistakenly, that the self, soul, or ego exists permanently causes us to desire certain things while it generates aversion towards others. Only by extinguishing this false and illusory idea about the nature of our selves, as well as about the nature of things, can a lasting liberation from suffering be achieved. A state of such liberation is called, in the Third Noble Truth, Nirvana. The notion of Nirvana has been grossly misunderstood over the centuries as being a state akin to complete extinction or annihilation. According to Buddhism, however, Nirvana is not viewed as an extinction of the self; rather, it is only the extinction of the false idea about the self. A more contemporary expression for this might be, "Nothing is lost except what's false." Buddhism never denies the existence of a "relative, impermanent and dependent self." It denies only the erroneous view that the self exists as an inherently and independently existent entity.

The Fourth Noble Truth tells us that there is a Path that leads to the cessation of suffering. Once we have determined that samsara is unsatisfactory, we should enter upon the path and, traversing it, through undertaking various methods of meditation and practice, attain the enlightenment of the Buddha. The multifacetness of Buddhist traditions throughout Asia and over its 2600 year history derives from the great variety of meditative techniques and methods offered under the rubric of the "Path."

As early as the days of the great Indian King Asoka (269-232 BCE), Buddhist traditions began to migrate out of India and to spread into the regions of South and Southeast Asia. Hinayana, or less derogatorily, Theravadin Buddhism spread south to Sri Lanka, and north and east to Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. By the fourth to the eighth centuries CE, Mahayana Buddhism had reached as far as Tibet, China, Korea and Japan.

According to recent world census data, there are about 305 million Buddhists worldwide, most of them living in Asia. However, one finds nearly 1 million (some recent sources make this number 4-5 million) Western-born Buddhists also, who live and practice in Europe and the United States.

2) What Buddhism Has to Say about Peace and the Peaceful Resolution of Conflict from Jan Willis's speech;

Like all of the major world religions, at its core, Buddhism is a religion of peace. An early Buddhist collection of verses on practice in everyday life, the Pali (Theravadin) Dhammapada, makes this abundantly clear. Verse five of the text (of 423 verses) states:

"Hatred is never appeased by hatred. Hatred is only appeased by Love (or, non-enmity). This is an eternal law."

The Pali term for "eternal law" here is dhamma, or the Buddhist teachings. So, this verse on non-enmity has to do with a tenet of the Buddhist faith that is fundamental, namely, peace and non-harm. (Moreover, though not often cited, the very last verses of the Dhammapada condemn the class (varna) and other prejudicial distinctions that would divide people.)

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As we move ahead several centuries, we find the famed 8th century Mahayana poet, Santideva, saying pretty much the same thing. For example one finds in Santideva's great work, the Bodhicaryavatara, these verses regarding the dangers of hatred:

"There is no evil equal to hatred and no spiritual practice equal to forbearance. Therefore, one ought to develop forbearance, by various means, with great effort." . And again:

"One's mind finds no peace, neither enjoys pleasure or delight, nor goes to sleep, nor feels secure while the dart of hatred is stuck in the heart"

Buddhist teachings tell us that hatred and aversion, like their opposites desire and greed, all spring from a fundamental ignorance. That ignorance is our mistaken notion of our own permanent, independent existence. In ignorance, we see ourselves as separate beings, unconnected with others. Blinded to our true state of interdependence and interconnectedness, it is this basic ignorance that keeps us divided. Only practice that leads to overcoming such ignorance will help to free us from the prisons we make for ourselves and for others. (Phramedhidhammaporn Prayoon Mererk, 1994)

The problem occurs as, unfortunately oftentimes is the case, when our own individual likes and dislikes become reified and solidified; when we not only form inflexible opinions, but take them as truths; when we form negative judgments about other human beings and about ourselves and these judgments become for us the lenses through which we view and experience ourselves, the world around us, and its inhabitants. At this point, we have entered into the arena of prejudice of a quite pernicious sort, the sort which causes harm and suffering both for ourselves and for others. And whether it be friendships and loving personal relationships destroyed, or wars fought over religion or contested territory, or one group of beings dominating another or restraining their freedom of movement, at this point we cease being human beings at our best.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "We have only two choices: to peacefully coexist, or to destroy ourselves." Each and every day, we ourselves encounter--and generate--prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. If we are ultimately to survive at all on this tiny planet that is our mutual home, we must learn to appreciate, and to value, each other as human beings and thus to live together in peace. While a general disarming of all nation states would seem the ideal, this process cannot be begun until we have first disarmed our own, individual hearts.

In reality, at our innermost cores we are all exactly the same: we are human beings who wish to have happiness and to avoid suffering. Yet, out of ignorance, we go about seeking these goals blindly and without insight. We live our lives seemingly oblivious to our own prejudices even though they are right in front of our eyes. In short, we suffer because we embrace the mistaken notion of our separateness from one another.

The illusion of separateness actually works to prevent us from finding the beginning of this erroneous spiral. Buddhist traditions tell us that from the very moment the notions of 'I' and 'mine' arise, there simultaneously arise the notions of 'not me' and 'not mine.' That is, from the moment we conceive of 'us,' there is a 'them.' Once the notions of separateness, difference, and otherness enter our thinking, they then go onditerally and figuratively--to color all of our subsequent experience, judgments and perceptions. We see the world in terms of us vs. them, me vs. everyone else, mine vs. yours. We are immediately caught up in a world of mistaken, logically unfounded, and seemingly uncontrollable hatred and prejudice. And all these dualistic bifurcations occur at lightning speed and for the most part imperceptibly.

The very deep-rootedness of this mistaken notion of separateness seems to make it impossible even to imagine its cessation. Yet, as Buddhists also tell us, "By insight is

ignorance destroyed." To the question, then, "Can racial, ethnic and religious hatreds and prejudices among human beings be ended?," the answer arises, 'Yes, it can.' Of course, ending something so deep-seated and unconsciously operative is not an easy task. But it is a task so urgently needed in our current situation that it is well worth undertaking.

The dismantling of hateful prejudices begins with the recognition that we do, in fact, harbor them. Next, we must be willing to look at our own particular prejudices with honesty and resolve. We need to know how and why we, as particular human beings, came to harbor the specific views we do and, through this understanding, to be willing now to replace them with more positive views and behaviors. Lastly, we need to know that we can indeed make a difference; that we can work together for positive change in our own society and in the world. Thus, with understanding and with practice comes a softening of our rigid views. Our hearts can open and, ultimately, we can transform ourselves into loving individuals and loving neighbors; in short, into human beings at our best.

Especially in the West, the Judeo-Christian injunction that one should "love thy neighbor as thy self" is a common ethical and spiritual guideline. Still, very little thought or attention has been given to the extreme difficulties entailed by both parts of this famous phrase. One cannot simply decide to love one's neighbor. Nor are there too many of us comfortable with the notion of loving ourselves. Both these injunctions call for methods to enable us to carry them out. Yet, for most of us, it is precisely such methods that are lacking. Various religious and philosophical systems throughout history have sought to offer useable advice. One of these traditions, Buddhism, it seems to me, offers, in fact, numerous methods for personal transformation for anyone who wishes to tackle this most serious undertaking.

Hatred is learned. It must be our task to un-learn it. Racism and racial profiling is learned behavior. We must strive to un-learn it. Ethnic and class distinctions are learned. We must come to see and to appreciate the common humanity that unites us.

3) How Buddhist Practice Can Help to Replace a War-like Mentality in a War-torn Country, with a Peaceful Way of Thinking from Jan Willis's speech;

If one could simply decide to become peaceful, gentle and caring in all their interactions with other beings and with the world, then we should all be enjoying a culture of peace. Yet, to achieve such a culture is not easy. To do requires effort, resolve, patience, cooperation, and practice. Fortunately, however, practice--and here I mean the varied forms of meditative practices that Buddhist traditions have developed over their twenty-six hundred year history is available. It needs only to be made more easily and widely accessible. My suggestion here is simple: since meditation is the very heart of Buddhism, Buddhists (and others) should avail themselves of its meditative methods to look deeply into the origins of our various prejudices with regard to ourselves as well as towards others--and to transform them. We can change our minds; we can change our views; we can become more peaceful ourselves and, as a consequence, we can help to engender peace in the world. I am suggesting that we make 'hatred,' 'racism,' 'sexism,' and all other Ñisms a sustained focus of our meditations. Let us make them, to borrow a term from Zen Buddhism, our new koans. Transformation is the work of meditation. If we take the present state of things as being dire, we will choose this method and resolve to do the work. (Mererk, 1994)

Lastly, I should say that I do not believe that such methods are limited to Buddhism. An inmate in our state's only women's prison once said to me, as she held up her Bible, "I have all the meditations I need right here". I agreed with her. For what could be better advice than, "Count your blessings"? or "Love thy neighbor as thyself"? What I have found is that, for me, Buddhist traditions have offered methods for helping to do those things. Still, we could all cooperate to form methods that are less ladened with doctrinal or dogmatic theory

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and terminology; methods which speak to us and instruct us without being bogged down in doctrine and belief. As an example, my fourteen-year-old nephew understood what tantric Buddhism is all about when I talked to him about the way athletes use visualization before a game. Buddhism first and foremost is a practical methodology for recognizing and then transforming our ignorance. This has been so from its very inception. The Buddha did not declare himself "enlightened" until he had performed the actions associated with each of the Four Truths Ñ namely, until he had understood suffering, eliminated its causes, realized its cessation, and followed the path. Each of the Four Truths has these specific actions associated with them. It is this pragmatism of Buddhism that I find so appealing and so necessary in our present global community.

Again, it is not enough that we simply use the methods of Buddhism to find inner peace for ourselves (though that is a very important first step). Rather, having found such inner peace, we must share and spread it and this involves further effort and action. My own recent efforts have involved collaboration with a Dutch colleague to develop a series of exercises called 'Ending Hate', which help us to recognize our individual prejudices (about ourselves and others) and to transform them into more positive views and behaviours. I would be happy to speak more about this particular project in our Q&A session.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with these two thoughts:

1) Being a pacifist does not mean being passive.

2) In Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, which is my personal tradition, one is taught to use the end as the means, that is, in order to become a Buddha, we must begin now, to act and think as Buddha. Hence, I believe, like A.J. Muste, that we must stop thinking of peace as some distant and perhaps unachievable goal and make it our goal right now. Again, in Muste's words, "There is no path to peace; peace is the path."

4) Buddhist meditation would be the best for peace;

People around the world come to Thailand for visit and taking course of meditation in order to have the perfect and permanent peace inside their own mind. (Phrarajavaramuni Prayudh Payutho, 1990) How hard to stop the war from the world, but it is very easy to stop the mind in peace. Even if the war would be the cause of disaster, conflict and quarrels among human beings for getting something from each other, Buddhist meditation would be medicine to stop them until having the perfect peace in the world.

Conclusion

Malala's saying "One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world to peace." And "When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." are still in human beings' souls nowadays. All leaders of many countries come to focus how to get the perfect peace in the world, how to stop the great conflict among human beings around the world and how to give smile or happiness to all people around the world. Lord Buddha said that the perfect peace comes from within the mind, do not seek it without, and better than thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace, Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is eternal rule, and we can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves. Where there is the perfect peace, there is no war.



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