CHAPTER (V)

BUDDHIST ETHICS

FOR PEACEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Introduction

The world in which we live today is highly complicated and confused with many tangles and problems that disturb peace and destroy beauty in the world.

The whole world is affected by strife, conflict, riots, clashes, violence and many different kinds of war that are totally detrimental to both the material and spiritual welfare of humanity. Therefore, the world today is in great need of peace and freedom from strife, conflict, riots, clashes, violence and wars for the material and spiritual well-being and welfare of mankind.

In this world, from the beginning of times, peace has been desperately needed. Human history has been characterized by one war after another. There is hardly one era of history which is termed as peaceful. Actually, to make the world peaceful, we must cultivate peace not only at the personal level but also at the global level. World peace is indeed the fundamental concern of modern people.

World peace is described as a state of quiet and tranquility. In other words, it is viewed as cessation of wars and hostilities,
absence of violence and strife, and freedom from fear and worries. The seed of peace can be found in the inside of the human being. It cannot be sought from the outside. Peace, by its very nature, is linked to the spiritual aspect of the human being, not to the material sphere.

And also, world peace is the source of human happiness. Most people believe that wealth, power and success constitute human happiness. In fact, without world peace, there cannot be human happiness. In other words, if the world is not peaceful, it will not be happy at all.

There are many problems relating to the environment and natural resources of the earth that destroy the beauty of the world and make the world ugly. The environmental pollution, deforestation, over-grazing, over-fishing, over-urbanization, over-industrialization, and disorganized and excessive extraction of natural resources of the earth are common problems.

Strife, conflict, riots, clashes, violence and wars also destroy the beauty of the world and make the world ugly.

**Eradicating the Main Causes of All Problems**

It is absolutely necessary to scrutinize and eradicate the main causes of all problems in order to maintain world peace and world beauty.
According to Buddhism, all problems of human beings arise as a consequence of man’s passionate desire (lobha), anger (dosa) and delusion (moha). Because men are ridden with the thoughts and feelings of passionate desire, anger and delusion, they are fighting and killing each other and consequently the umbrella of terror spreads over the entire world today.

In other words, as people are being consumed by the fires of passionate desire, anger and delusion, the whole world is aflame with the fires of strife, conflict, violence and wars.

Of the three fires, the first fire that consumes people is passionate desire. That is to say desire for wealth, power, honour, rank, etc. Being consumed by the fire of passionate desire, people think of trying to get the things that they crave for, by hood or by crook. It is just like the inflammable material such as firewood and kerosene that easily catch fire. The more the material is highly combustible, the more the fire becomes vehement. In the same manner, the more the thing that is craved for is found highly pleasurable, the more the fire of passionate desire becomes furious and fierce.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “The world has enough for everyone’s needs, but never even enough for even one man’s greed”. Human beings are fighting among themselves because of that extraordinary craving for more power, more authority as well as more pleasure.197

197 Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda, Buddhist Principles For Human Dignity, p-10.
Passionate desire makes man want more and more and man’s hunger is never fully satisfied. Man has no contentment or satisfaction with what he possesses. This is perfectly true and correct. Man may try to possess things which are originally lacking in his life, imagining at first that he will remain contented with what is available and sufficient enough for his present needs to live on. However, when things are obtained as it is envisaged, he may still crave for more.

One who is earning one hundred dollars a month may hope to get two hundred dollars, and one who gets two hundred dollars may desire to receive three hundred dollars, and so on. In other words, one, who has nothing to ride, wants to have a bicycle. After having a bicycle, he hopes to get a motor cycle and after getting a motor cycle, he desires to have a car and so on. Man’s thirst for getting more and more cannot be quenched. That is the reason why multimillionaires at the present day are making their efforts to get richer and richer.

For instance, any amount of rainwater and water from rivers and rivulets may flow into the vast expanse of the ocean, and yet the mighty ocean never gets flooded. For another instance, any amount of inflammable material may be poured into a burning heap of fire and yet it will be consumed in no time. Whatever combustible material is put in, the fire burns all. Similarly, men’s desire can never be fulfilled.

This discontentment is caused by the influence of thirst (taṇhā). By the impulse of thirst, men go on striving for wealth,
power, and honour. Accordingly, they have become slaves to thirst. The Buddha states: “Ūno loko atitto taṁhādāso- The world is unfulfilled, unsatisfied and enslaved to thirst.”\textsuperscript{198}

Being slaves to thirst, men have to do things as dictated by it. Sometimes, they are compelled to do evil deeds and commit crimes. Some foolish men even kill their own parents as incited by it. The Buddha says: “Ratto attaṁ na jānāti, Ratto dhammaṁ na passati- One who is influenced by thirst does not know the good and does not see the righteousness.”\textsuperscript{199}

Passionate desire makes one extremely selfish and purely self-interested so that he thinks only of his own needs. A selfish man always looks at only self and never considers the feelings of other people. He is occasionally inclined to take advantage of others who cannot avoid coming into contact with him and who fear to oppose his will, and by means of their lives, blood and sweat, he tries to have his desired objects. Sometimes, he even tries to acquire his objects at the expense of the lives of his families as he is motivated by selfishness.

It is stated: “Luddho atthaṁ na jānāti, Luddho dhammaṁ na passati- The greedy man does not know the advantage and does not see the righteousness.”\textsuperscript{200}

While seeking wealth, power and honour with their insatiable desires, without contentment, men compete and fight

\textsuperscript{198} Majjhima Nikāya, Majjhimapanṇṇāsa Pāli, Raṭṭhapāla Sutta, p-259. 
\textsuperscript{199} Khuddāka Nikāya, Nettippakaraṇa Pāli, p-12. 
each other to gain what they want. As a result, the world in which men live is in a state of chaos and it is not in peace.

The second fire that consumes people is anger. Anger, hatred or ill-will leads people to misery. Being consumed by the fire of anger, men spoil their own happiness and peace and disturb happiness and peace of others as well.

When a man is carried away by anger, he becomes brutal and barbarous, and any sense of humanity fades from his mind. It is therefore stated thus: “Kuddho atthaṁ na jānāti, Kuddho dhammaṁ na passati- The angry man does not know the advantage and does not see the righteousness.”

It is due to this anger or hatred that tension arises between one nation and another nation. Blinded by anger, nations try to resolve national dispute by waging war. In this way, the whole world is in dread and fret and it is not calm and peaceful.

The third fire that consumes people is delusion or ignorance. Erroneous idea or wrong perception, which veils the true natures of things, i.e., their impermanence, unpleasantness, and non-self-possessiveness, is regarded as delusion. Being under delusion, people think that things are permanent, pleasant and self-possessive as they do not see their real natures.

Delusion is far more subtle than passionate desire and anger. The manner, in which the fire of delusion is burning, is hard to be understood by the ordinary people for they are too ignorant to

\[201\] Dīgha Nikāya, Silakkhandhavagga Aṭṭhakathā, p-52. Aṅguttara Nikāya, Sattakanipāta, p-471.
realize it. Only when the true natures of things are clearly understood through the insight wisdom arising by the practice of Insight-meditation (vipassanā-bhāvanā), the way the fire of delusion is burning can be realized.

Passionate desire and anger are always led by delusion. In other words, delusion arouses passionate desire and anger. Delusion or Ignorance followed by Moral shamelessness (ahirika) and Moral fearlessness (anottappa) is the primary root of all evil actions. People do evil deeds, without having Moral shame (hiri) and Moral fear (ottappa), based on greed and anger due to delusion or ignorance.

The Buddha says thus: “Avijjā, Bhikkhave, pubbaṅgamā akusalānaṁ dhammānaṁ samāpattiyaṁ, anvadeva ahirikāṁ anottapani- Monks, Ignorance followed by Moral shamelessness and Moral fearlessness is the head of all factors that incite man to perform evil actions.”

Being consumed by the fire of delusion, people do things which ought not to be done, speak things which ought not to be spoken and think things which ought not to be thought. For such improper conduct or actions, disadvantages are bound to be met with in their lives.

When delusion predominates over a man, he cannot distinguish between right and wrong, and he cannot see the good in any noble action and the bad in any base action. Under the influence of delusion, he is determined to get what he wants, no

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202 Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, p-1.
matter who suffers and besides, he dislikes those who inhibit him 
from getting his object of desire. He is ready to do violence to 
anyone who stands in his way or who gets what he desires, 
preceding him.

The Buddha says thus: “Mūḷho atthaṁ na jānāti, Mūḷho 
dhammaṁ na passati- One, who is dominated by delusion, is not 
aware of welfare and does not understand the righteousness.”

It is this delusion that makes people greedy and angry. 
Because of greed and anger, crimes, violence and war arise in 
human society and the world and therefore the world is not restful 
and peaceful.

Passionate desire, anger and delusion are like thick fogs in 
winter. When one is driving a car on a foggy day in winter, as he 
cannot see his way clearly because of heavy fog, his car may 
collide with something or bump into someone and as a result, he 
may be in danger and trouble. Similarly, when man is dominated 
by passionate desire, anger and delusion, he is completely blind to 
danger and trouble and he may act foolishly and wrongly.

The Buddha states as follows:

“Ime kho, Mahārāja, tayo purisassa dhammā ajjhattaṁ 
uppajjamānā uppajjanti ahitāya dukkhāya aphāsvihārāyā.- Great 
King, if these three things (i.e., passionate desire, anger and
delusion) are arisen inwardly in man’s mind, they make disadvantage, misery and distress in man’s life.”

“Lobho doso ca moho ca, purisaṁ pāpacetasāṁ, hirṁsanti attasambhūtā, tacāraṁva samphalam.- Passionate desire, anger and delusion born within himself hurt the evil minded person, like the tree that have bark as its essence (e.g. bamboo, reed) is hurt by the fruit bore within itself.”

“Tiṅadosāni khettāni, rāgadosā dosadosā mohadosā icchādosā taṅhādosā ayaṁ pajā.- Weeds are the bane of fields. Likewise, lust, hatred, delusion, desire and craving are the bane of this mankind.”

When a man has stilled the raging torrents of greed, hatred and ignorance, he becomes conscientious, full of sympathy, and he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings.

These passionate desire, anger and delusion overwhelm men’s senses and reasons, and cause all the economic, politic and social troubles and problems in the world. Strife between communities and wars between countries arise out of them. All the evils in the world are produced by them.

Therefore, it is not possible that all the economic, politic and social troubles and problems in the world are completely vanished by solving only in economic, politic and social terms, without pulling up the real roots of them which are passionate desire, anger

204 Samyutta Nikāya, Sagāthāvagga Samyutta, p-70.
205 Samyutta Nikāya, Sagāthāvagga Samyutta, p-70.
207 Ashin Thittila, Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures, p-67.
and delusion. It is just as grass cannot be extinct by merely cutting blades. Only if the root is eliminated, grass will be extinct.

As long as those passionate desire, anger and delusion are firmly rooted in the minds of people, there will be conflicts, quarrels and violence, and then there will be no peace in the world. According to Buddhism, passionate desire should be overcome by generosity; hatred by love and delusion by wisdom.

To make the world peaceful, negative and unwholesome states of thought and feeling such as passionate desire, greed, lust, anger, hatred, ill-will, delusion and ignorance must be banished from people’s minds; equally, positive and wholesome states of thought and feeling such as generosity, liberality, love, compassion intellect and reason must be cultivated in the minds of people.

Negative and unwholesome states of thought and feeling are harmful to oneself and others. On the other hand, positive and wholesome states of thought and feeling are helpful to oneself and others. While negative and unwholesome states of thought and feeling lower human character and dishonour human dignity, positive and wholesome states of thought and feeling elevate human nature and ennoble the human race.

It is worthwhile eradicating negative and unwholesome thoughts and feelings and cultivating positive and wholesome thoughts and feelings for it internally brings about peace in our minds and externally harmony in our relations. Once our minds are at peace and we live together in harmony, world peace will become very real.
Here, right thoughts (sammā-saṅkappa), i.e., the thoughts of selflessness, benevolence and kindness to all living beings, are essential for world peace. The concept of right thoughts has great social implications. Right thoughts indicate here the ennoblement and purification of human intentions. If our intentions are right and pure, social tensions and international conflicts can be resolved and we can build a better and happier world.

Peace, which we all desire, such as peace in our minds, peace between neighbours and peace among nations, is not a miracle which God performs, but it is a goal which we have to achieve by our own actions. Knowing that negative and unwholesome thoughts and feelings tend to make the world chaotic and to cause unhappiness for beings that live in it, we should try to discard them. On the contrary, knowing that positive and wholesome thoughts and feelings tend to make the world peaceful and to generate happiness, we should cultivate them.

The environmental pollution such as air-pollution, water-pollution and land-pollution, deforestation, over-grazing, over-fishing, over-urbanization, over-industrialization, and disorganized and excessive extraction of natural resources of the earth such as digging for coal, copper and mine, and extracting electricity, gas, and oil, which destroy the beauty of the world and make the world ugly, also result from human passionate desire, greed, delusion and ignorance.

Humans make the environment polluted and destroy the environment instead of making it clean and protecting it. Humans
are keen on collecting profits, rather than taking care of the earth. Humans’ daily lives largely rest on the environment. Only good and clean environment can bring about nice and pleasant atmospheres. Humans often neglect this perspective, and are suffering as a result.

The environmental pollution can cause diseases, and deforestation and disorganized and excessive extraction of natural resources of the earth can cause global warming, depletion of the earth’s ozone layer, land degradation, depletion of food sources and water, loss of biodiversity and fertility, and climatic changes. Humans should therefore cleanse and protect the environment as much as they possibly can.

Humans should also cultivate a sacred attitude towards the environment in which they lives and should produce environment-friendly products. Mother Nature fosters humans and other living beings. Therefore, it should be considered to be the mother of human race. It should not be neglected, but should be protected and made to be green and lush.

Even Lord Buddha gave special and weighty consideration for the environment. During the second week after attaining the Enlightenment, as a mark of profound gratitude to the Bodhi tree that sheltered him during his endeavour for Enlightenment, He sat down at a certain distance and gazed at the tree with unclosed and motionless eyes for one whole week.

That is a good example of Lord Buddha’s sacred attitude towards the environment and that example silently teaches us a
great moral lesson that nature should be respected well and that it further emphasizes that nature requires a friendly attitude and profound gratitude from human beings.

In the modern world, the rapid development of science and technology is amazing. Science is interested in demonstrating the orderliness of phenomena and tries to discover laws after laws while technology utilizes the scientific discoveries to produce things that human beings need as well as crave for. Mass production of consumer goods, followed by a discovery of the means of mass communication and mass transportation, certainly improves the physical well-being of humans, and there is no doubt that physical well-being is essential for human happiness and welfare. However, scientific and technological developments devoid of ethical understanding and moral foundations can raise bad consequences.

On the one hand, science and technology thus provide for the immediate satisfaction of human needs as well as greed, but on the other hand, science nurses a nuclear child that threatens the very survival of the earth that we inhabit, and technology is consuming incredible amounts of natural resources of the earth, and dumping toxic waste into the environment, endangering all forms of life on earth.

These are the consequences of the gaps between scientific knowledge and ethical understanding, and between technological advances and moral foundations. Scientific knowledge without ethical understanding and technological advances without moral
foundations can generate harmful consequences to the world’s beauty. Therefore, ethical understanding and moral foundations are the most important facts for beautiful world.

As already described, conflicts, riots, clashes, and violence, resulting from human anger or hatred, also destroy the beauty of the world and make the world ugly.

Therefore, to make the world beautiful, passionate desire, greed, anger, hatred, delusion and ignorance should be eradicated. Scientific and technological developments should be followed by ethical understanding and moral foundations.

**Peaceful and Beautiful Countries**

It is also important to peaceful and beautiful world that all countries all over the world should be peaceful and beautiful. If the world comprises peaceful and beautiful countries, world peace and world beauty will be realized. To build a peaceful and beautiful country, good government is essential.

Rulers or governments should govern their countries justly. The people should not be oppressed and exploited; and should not be tortured and persecuted. Excessive taxes should not be imposed; and cruel and inhuman punishments should not be inflicted. If governments rule the country not with might and force but with righteousness and justice, then there would be genuine peace in the country.
The whole country can become chaotic and unhappy when the heads of its government, i.e., the king, the president, the prime minister, chief ministers, ministers and administrative officers become corrupt, degenerate and unjust. Therefore, for a country, to be happy and peaceful, it must have a good government.

In this connection, the ‘Ten Duties of the King’ (dasa-rāja-dhammas) is explained by the Buddha in the jātaka text to form a good government.

Here, the term ‘the King’ (Rājā) of old should be replaced today by the term ‘the Government’. The ‘Ten Duties of the King’, therefore, apply today to all those who constitute the government, such as the king or the president, the prime minister, chief ministers, ministers and administrative officers, etc.

Of the ‘Ten Duties of the King’, the first is charity, generosity, or liberality (dāna). The ruler should not have craving and attachment to wealth and property, but should give it away for the welfare of the people.

The second is a good and high moral character or moral conduct (sīla). He should have high standards of morality. He should not destroy the lives and properties of the people; and should not persecute, exploit, cheat and deceive the public.

According to Buddhism, the ruler should at least observe the five precepts that are: (i) Abstaining from killing (Pāñātipātā veramaṇi), (ii) Abstaining from abusing the country’s property

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(Adinnādānā veramaṇi), (iii) Abstaining from sexual misconduct (Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇi), (iv) Abstaining from false speech (Musāvādā veramaṇi), and (v) Abstaining from taking intoxicating liquors, spirits and drugs (Surā meraya majja pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇi).

The third is renunciation or sacrifice (pariccāga). He should renounce or sacrifice everything for the good of the people. He should be prepared to give up all personal comfort, name and fame, honour, and even his life for the interests of the people, if circumstances compel.

The fourth is honesty, integrity, uprightness, or straightness (ajjava). He should be free from desire (chanda), hatred (dosa), stupidity (moha), and fear (bhaya) in the discharge of his duties; and should be sincere in his intentions, without being biased and prejudiced in favour of or against anyone.

The fifth is gentleness, mildness, and softness (maddava). He should have soft heart and mind; and should be mild and gentle in his physical and verbal behaviours.

The sixth is austerity (tapa). He should lead a simple and austere life, and should not indulge in a life of luxury. He should have sense-control and self-control.

The seventh is freedom from anger, hatred, ill-will and enmity (akkodha). He should not get angry, but should restrain his anger. He should bear no grudge against anybody.
The eighth is humanity or mercy (avihiṁsā). It means he should not harm the people by the acts of violence, by the imposition of excessive taxes, etc. On the contrary, he should treat the people with love and humanity, and should try to promote their welfare by avoiding everything which involves destruction of their lives and properties.

The ninth is endurance, forbearance, patience and tolerance (khanti). He should possess an ability of endurance and should be able to bear hardships, difficulties and problems. He should also be tolerant and should be able to take criticism and insults without losing his temper. He should do everything for the welfare of the people, regardless of difficulties and problems, of criticism and insults.

The tenth is non-opposition (avirodha). It means he should not oppose the will of the people, and should not obstruct any measures that are conducive to the welfare of the people. In other words, he should rule the country in harmony with the people.

If a country is ruled by men who are endowed with those ten qualities mentioned above, it is needless to say that that country must be happy and peaceful.

The government should also have respect for human rights and democratic rights such as freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of action, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, freedom of the expression of wishes and freedom of choice as they are the ones that are indispensable conditions of the peaceful country.
The government’s abuse of human dignity and violation of human rights result in conflict, strife, violence in the country and even lead to the civil war. Without respecting human rights and values, achievements of human civilization cannot be possible.

The government should not solve the political problems such as peaceful protest and demonstration through the method of violence. This method can never be successful and makes worse the problems rather than solving them, increasing the hatred.

The only way to solve the political problems is to create a framework for democratic dialogue and debate that are not dealt with military or terrorist force, but mandated and moderated by the rule of law.

The government should democratize the administration of the country for only the country that emphasizes democracy, justice and liberty can be peaceful.

Having respect for human rights and democratic rights brings peace to the country and to the world while the violation of human rights and democratic rights breaks peace in the country and in the world. Therefore, the government should have respect for human rights and democratic rights to create peace in the country and to contribute peace to the world.

The government should also try to bring about good economics in the country for economic development is also essential for a peaceful country.
The Buddha clearly states that poverty (dāliddiya) is one of the causes of immorality and crimes such as theft, robbery, banditry, violence, murder, etc.\textsuperscript{209}

According to the supreme Buddha, it is impossible for the government to suppress immorality and crimes completely through the methods of punishment such as fining, imprisonment, banishment and execution, without developing the economics of the people. In other words, the Buddha states that in order to eradicate immorality and crimes completely, the economic condition of the people must be improved. To develop the economics of the people, the Buddha suggests that grain and other facilities for agriculture should be provided for farmers and cultivators; capital should be provided for traders and those who are engaged in business; adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed in the government service. By doing so, as the people are engaged in their works and service, and contented and satisfied with their incomes, they will not commit immorality and crimes, and consequently, the government revenue will be increased, and the whole country will have no fear and anxiety and will be peaceful, freed from immorality and crimes.\textsuperscript{210}

The government should therefore provide the people with opportunities for earning a sufficient income, and should create chances of jobs, works, professions and occupations for the people. Creating chances of jobs and works is a necessary measure to eliminate poverty, especially among the working classes in both

\textsuperscript{209} Dīgha Nikāya, Pāthikavagga Pāli, p-56.
\textsuperscript{210} Dīgha Nikāya, Silakkhandhavagga Pāli, p-128.
town and countryside, whose families are generally large with many dependants.

It is the duty of the state to produce inexpensive and high-quality articles and goods for the populace in the country. Production that is centered on elevating the standard of living of the populace at large, rather than on enhancing the wealth of a privileged few, using appropriate technology, with just distribution of resources, will increase real wealth and help to improve the quality of life of the masses, provided they also cultivate a wise sense of values. Otherwise they will always remain poor.

Governments should recognize that the world is in one. Without recognition of the oneness of the world in all its aspects, spiritual as well as social, economic as well as political, there will never be world peace. Having a genuine spirit of world fellowship is the real basis of world peace.

Nowadays, governments abuse the world’s natural resources and produces ordnance such as guns, anti-aircraft guns, cannon, supersonic fighters, tanks, atomic missiles, laser bombs and nuclear weapons to strengthen arms force, regardless of the eventual destruction of the earth itself.

Such massive diversion of natural resources to arms and ammunition condemns countless human beings to disease and starvation. Furthermore, the destructive force of such weapons brings about the destruction of the environment and the ugliness of the world, before and after they are produced.
Therefore, governments should use natural resources to produce things that are not destructive to the environment and that are constructive to the beauty of the world.

The country that is governed by good government can be peaceful and beautiful, and the world comprising peaceful and beautiful countries can be peaceful and beautiful.

**War and Peace and Beauty of the World**

The world today is chaotic with wars and human beings live in constant anxiety, fear and tension. Producing and brandishing the powerful instruments of death that are capable of unimaginable destruction, great world powers threaten and challenge one another, boasting shamelessly that one could cause more destruction and misery in the world than the other.

Arming themselves with different kinds of weapon, nations all over the world are suspicious of and belligerent one another. The armies of great countries are larger and weapons of the present day are more powerful than they were ever before in the history of the world, yet there seems little prospect of the establishment of world peace.

War and suffering go hand in hand. Because of war, lives and properties of men are lost; natural resources of the earth are perished; and peace and beauty of the world are disturbed and ruined.
The best solution to the problem of war rests with the changing minds or hearts of the governments all over the world and there would be no any other way.

From Buddhist point of view, mental culture is very significant for mind or heart is the seat of feelings and thoughts and it is the fore-runner of all the other things. The Buddha says: “Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, manoseṭṭhā manomayā.- Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought.”

The mind or heart, which forms the basis of human actions, should therefore be calm and clean.

Supersonic fighters or atomic missiles do not operate themselves. In fact, it is man who makes them operate. It is also government officials that give orders to operate them. They have hearts to feel and minds to think. But, they do not see their own fellow human-brothers who die and bleed in the battle-fields, and who suffer and lament outside the battle-fields. They do only see position, posts and power.

Nowadays, conscription prevails in many countries of the world. Governments try to bring their army forces up to strength. The country’ youths are compelled by law to serve a certain term in the army. In some countries, governments amass child-soldiers. Such conscripting the youths into the army and amassing child-soldiers reduce a countless number of families to desolation and destitution.

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211 Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Yamaka Vagga, verses-1/2.
Governments in a country should consider the lives and the feelings of the people, and should not see only position, posts and power.

Furthermore, in order to maintain peace, state leaders all over the world should work towards the essential objective of cooperation in achieving disarmament. The might of armaments produce suspicion and fear. It is impossible to achieve genuine and lasting peace in the world as long as suspicion fear prevails in the lives of people. Genuine and lasting peace can be achieved only when people can live happily and peacefully, freed from suspicion and fear.

Here, we can easily understand that why governments throughout human history did not succeed to bring about a permanent world peace. Governments, by their very nature and disposition, tend to be selfish and inconsiderate to the needs of others. Indeed, we often hear government officials speak of their respective national interests, such as American interests, Chinese interests, Russian interests, British interests, French interests and so on and so forth.

In fact, governments should cultivate an altruistic attitude. It means that governments must be concerned about the human welfare. Such a concern will move them to do anything that is legitimate and appropriate to the end of human welfare. Governments will become instruments of peace when they start viewing the whole world as one global family and thinking world interests instead of national interests.
Meeting aggression with aggression will never lead to the extinguishing of hostility. Only by meeting aggression with non-aggression, hostility will be extinguished. In other words, peace will never be achieved by meeting violence with violence, force with force, and war with war.

Here, Buddhism, as an ethical teaching, recommends the cultivation of love. Love is the only effective answer to violence, force and wars that are erupted all over the world as it is capable of subduing anger or ill-will.

The Buddha said: “Na hi verena verāni, sammantidha kudācanāṁ, averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano. - Hatreds do not cease through hatreds anywhere at any time. Through love alone do they cease- this is an eternal law.”

This admonition should be followed by all governmental and political leaders of the modern world irrespective of isms and ideologies. Meeting hatred with love should be applied in national and international affairs. It is definitely not easy to meet hatred with love, but it should be tried one’s best. All leaders in the fields of government, politics or any other fields are requested to lead a life of love, based on the moral principles to make the world peaceful.

To hate one another, to kill one another, etc, lead people to living in eternal fear and suspicion like wild animals in a jungle. But, the practice of love gives all living beings freedom from fear,

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212 Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Yamaka Vagga, verse-5.
worry and anxiety. It is a way of improving a happy environment. It leads mankind into a world of non-violence and peace.

In dealing with the policy of non-violence and peace, the Buddha preached it more than 2555 years ago. Mahatma Gandhi’s policy of non-violence and peace is, in fact, an embodiment of the Buddha’s ideology.

Mahatma Gandhi’s political success in modern India is an additional substantiation of the view that the Buddhist ethics of ahimsā can have social and political implications. The movement of Gandhi was a vindication of the practical applicability of the Buddhist concept of non-violence on a national political scale.213

Buddhism advocates non-violence and universal peace amongst nations, and deplores violence and war. Buddhism does not approve of any kinds of war. From Buddhist point of view, there is nothing that can be called a ‘just war’. Buddhism also does not accept the principle of ‘might is right’ and the position that the mighty is just, but the weak is unjust.

The result of war is nothing but mutual annihilation and bloodshed along with the total destruction of humanity. If a war breaks out between the two countries, many other countries will also be affected.

Furthermore, war does not bring both the victorious and the defeated the good. The victorious is hated by enemies and the defeated dwells in pain. The Buddha says: “Jayarṅ verarṅ pasavati,

dukkhaṁ seti parājito, upasanto sukhaṁ seti, hitvā jayaparājayaṁ.- 
Victory begets enmity; defeat breeds misery. He, who discards both victory and defeat, lives happily and peacefully.”  

Both conquest and defeat should therefore be renounced.

Buddhism strongly condemns war on the ground of the great losses it brings on humanity. It says that devastation, famine and other such evils have been brought on by war.

The Buddha praises self-conquest rather than the conquest of others. In other words, the Buddha commends one who conquers oneself rather than one who conquers millions by military warfare. The conquest of others does not bring happiness and peace to man and the world. The only conquest that brings happiness and peace to man and the world is self-conquest.

The Buddha states as follows:

“Yo sahassaṁ sahassena, saṅgāme mānuse jine, ekañca jeyyamattānaṁ, sa ve saṅgāmajuttamo.- One may conquer thousands of enemies a million times in battle, but the other one conquers himself only one time. Yet the latter indeed is the greatest of conquerors.”

“Attā have jitaṁ seyyo, yā cāyaṁ itarā pajā, attadantassa posassa, niccaṁ saṅnatacārino, neva devo na gandhabbo, na māro saha brahmunā, jitaṁ apajitaṁ kayirā, tathārūpassa jantuno.- Self-conquest is far nobler than the conquest of others. Not even a god,

\[214\] Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Sukha Vagga, verse-201. Sānīyutta Nikāya, Sagāthāvagga Sānīyutta, p-84.


\[216\] Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Sahassa Vagga, verse-103.
an angel, the Evil One, or the Brahma can turn into defeat the victory of a person who is self-subdued and ever restrained in conduct.\textsuperscript{217}

Here self-conquest means the conquest of mental defilements such as, desire, greed, lust, passion, anger, hatred, ill-will, avarice, meanness, niggardliness, envy, jealousy, conceit, pride, etc within oneself.

The Buddha’s teaching of non-violence, peace and love should be applied to all leaders of the world today to achieve world peace.

In history, there was one great ruler who had the courage, the confidence and the vision to apply this teaching of non-violence, peace and love to the administration of a vast empire, in both internal and external affairs. That was Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C.

In his youth, Asoka had a fierce temperament, so much so that he was called Caṇḍāsoka which means fierce Asoka. As a prince, he was appointed as Governor of Ujjenī. As soon as he came to know that his father, King Bindusāra, was at the point of death, he rushed to the capital, Pāṭaliputta, occupied it and killed all the princes bar his own brother.

After he was crowned King, he wished to complete the conquest of the India peninsula, annexing neighbouring countries. Therefore, in the 8\textsuperscript{th} year after his consecration, he invaded and

\textsuperscript{217} Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Sahassa Vagga, verses-104/105.
conquered Kalinga. Many hundreds of thousands of people were killed, wounded, tortured and taken as prisoners of war in the war on Kalinga.

After he saw these horrors of Kalinga war, he repented his actions and regretted what he did, and thus he changed his mind and completely gave up occupying the territories by waging war on neighbouring countries. He then applied the policy of non-violence and peace. He seeks no military victory over anyone. Instead he seeks the conquest by piety (dhamma-vijaya).

He himself led a life of piety, and he also wanted his own subjects and people outside his kingdom to lead that life. He therefore appointed religious officers of various grades to different provinces to help the people to lead a pious life. He erected the rock edicts in places at the periphery of his vast empire and the pillar edicts along high roads or at places of pilgrimage where large crowds gathered.

He himself went on religious tours, as he thought that these would enable him to meet religious teachers and thus he could have religious discussions and confer large charities upon them. He also performed meritorious deeds such as planting trees and medicinal plants, digging wells and tanks, and opening hospitals both for men and beasts, in his own land and in the lands of his neighbours, for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

With regard to the Kalinga war, the Emperor Asoka frankly and publicly expressed his regret, sadness, desires and wishes in his 13th Rock Edict which is one of his famous Edicts.
His attitude in the inscription has been found thus:

“In the war waged against Kalinga, one and a half hundred thousand people were carried away as captives and one hundred thousand were killed and many times that number died there. Thereafter, the King has adopted now having conquered Kalinga, practice and inculcation of the Law of Virtue. Because after the king conquest Kalinga, the remorse or repentance had become in his mind. For, when an unconquered country is newly conquered there occur such things as slaughter, death and the carrying away captive of people and these things are exceedingly felt and regarded as serious by the king. There live everywhere Brahmans and ascetics, people of other religious sects and householders, among whom these virtues are practiced, namely, harkening to superiors, to mother and father and preceptors and proper behavior towards friends and acquaintances, comrades and relatives, as well as to slaves and servants and also steadfast devotion to duties. There to them also occur slaughter and banishment of persons attached to them. And those who are well-settled in life and whose affection remain unreduced or unvarnished their friends, acquaintances, comrades and relatives fall in to calamity. To them that too is a kind of injury. The King regards this lot of all men as serious. So whatever number of man was then killed or wounded and died and was carried away captive at the time of annexation of Kalinga, a hundredth part of the thousandth part of the number is regarded as serious by King.”

218 Radhgovinda Basak; Asoka Inscriptions, p-71.
Ashoka’s (Asoka’s) thirteenth rock-edict says that at the end of the eighth year of his reign, he invaded the country of Kalinga, modern Orissa. In that invasion, many thousands of men were killed, several thousands were carried off into captivity and thousands died from the effects of the war. It is well known that this tremendous loss of life proved to be a turning point in the life of Ashoka (Asoka). He repented and decided to undertake no further military campaigns. Instead he began to think of religious conquests, of dhammavijaya. He wanted to spread among his own subjects and among people outside his kingdom a new life, to inculcate among them a love of piety and religion. To this end he appointed officers to go round the country on periodical religious missions. Ashoka (Asoka) thus became a zealous follower of the Buddha and took upon himself the task of making known to the people the teachings of the Lord. He thought that by inculcating the teachings of the Buddha, men and women would become better people.²¹⁹

Later, he embraced Buddhism, and after becoming a Buddhist, his outlook was completely changed and his characters were transformed by the teachings of the Buddha. His ideology became righteous and his characters became kind and gentle, so much so that his name was changed as Dhammāsoka, the Righteous Asoka.

He himself ruled his empire in accordance with Buddhist principles and applied Buddhist principles to the administration of

²¹⁹ P.V. Bapat, _2500 Years of Buddhism_, pp-49/50.
his government as well. Moreover, he admonished the people to cultivate and practise moral virtues, such as tolerance, restraint, love, benevolence, kindness, respect, charity, liberality, purity, honesty, gentleness, mildness, etc, and enjoined them to control evil thoughts, such as anger, enmity, greed, avarice, conceit, pride, envy, jealousy, etc.

In the history of mankind, this is the only example of a ruler, or of an empire that has renounced violence and war and has turned to non-violence and peace, despite reaching the zenith of his power and still possessing the great strength and the full force to continue his territorial conquests.

Here is a valuable lesson to today’s world leaders to turn one’s back on violence and war and to follow the Buddha’s message of non-violence and peace. If this is so, there would be peace throughout the world.

It should be here noted that all rulers should make an effort to instill the senses of love and compassion into the minds of the people, like the Emperor Asoka.

The Buddha not just taught non-violence and peace, He even went to the field of battle itself and intervened personally, and prevented war for the sake of human welfare.

In the days of the Buddha, based on a dispute over the question of the waters of the Rohini River, a violent quarrel arose between two clans, the Sākyas and the Koliyas, and gradually it turned into a war. When they were prepared to fight a war, the
Buddha appeared in the nick of time and convinced them of the folly of killing each other for the sake of a small amount of water that is less valuable than life.

The Buddha questioned the two contending groups:

“What are you quarrelling over?”

“For the sake of water, Lord.” they replied.

“What is the value of water? The Buddha asked again.

“It is of little value, Lord.” they answered.

“What is the value of human lives? The Buddha asked again.

“Human lives are indeed invaluable, Lord.” they answered.

The Buddha said to them “Then, why will you destroy invaluable human lives on account of water which is of little value? Happiness is not present in a quarrel.”

Being thoroughly convinced by the Buddha, they finally gave up war and lived harmoniously.220

This story proves to us that ‘Through non-violence, peace can be achieved.’ is not merely a theory. It also teaches us that we should realize that lives are more valuable assets to us than natural resources; we should apply a policy of reconciliation when quarrels happen between us; and we should make a practical consideration to give up war.

The idea of non-violence and peace would never work, without putting it in practice. In other words, by merely talking world peace, world peace cannot be obtained. To put the idea of non-violence and peace in practice, or to obtain world peace, states leaders should cultivate the mental qualities of love, tolerance and understanding that lead them to cooperation in achieving world peace.

Considering that war is the common enemy of mankind and understanding that it leads to the total destruction of humanity and to the destruction of the beauty of the world, states leaders should let not the horror of war ever be repeated and should give up war, following a policy of reconciliation. They must try to avoid war at all costs to make the world peaceful and beautiful.

**Conclusion**

The world today is torn by heartless crimes, conflict, strife, violence and wars. At the present situation, we are seeing and hearing about much terrible news, such as brutal murders, attacks, bombing, violence, conflict, strife and wars taking place in many parts of the world that produce many homeless and lose thousands of lives on news-channels, radio, journals and everyday newspapers.

There is none but observance and practice of the Buddha’s message of freedom from passionate desire, anger and delusion, of respect and regard for all life and all rights, of self-conquest, of
conquering hatred by love and evil by virtue, of non-violence and peace, of love and compassion, of tolerance and understanding, of truth and wisdom, to find a way out of the situation of fear and tension, to break the cycle of violence, to seek the best solution to war and to make the world peaceful and beautiful.

In a matter of general concern, men’s minds should not be infected with evil thoughts such as greed, lust, passion, anger, hatred, enmity, delusion, ignorance, jealousy, envy, pride, conceit, etc, but should be endowed with virtuous thoughts, such as generosity, liberality, loving-kindness, compassion, contentment, intelligence, wisdom, humility, etc.

In a matter of governmental concern, the ruinous struggle for power should be renounced. Self-conquest should be more respected than the conquest of others. Hatred should be conquered by love. Evil should be prevailed over by virtue. All living beings should be treated with fairness, consideration and love. The policy of non-violence and peace should be applied. The qualities of love, compassion, tolerance and understanding should be cultivated.