CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the previous four chapters, many contents of the concept of peace were discussed. Now a brief summary of each chapter may be outlined.

5.1 Peace for a stable society

Man wants peace. He wants security in his individual life and stability in his social life. If peace endures, man can hope for a stable society, where he will have opportunities for self-fulfilment as a member of society. If peace endures, he can hope for security in his individual life for carrying on the edifying and ennobling pursuits of a cultural, religious, and spiritual life.

The present thesis is on the concept of peace according to Buddhist philosophy; and it is with special reference to Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace; and in order to apply his concept of peace to establish peace in life, society, and the world. The contents of the thesis are in three main parts: the concept of peace in general, the concept of peace in Buddhist philosophy, and Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace. These contents of the thesis can be summarized as follows:

Chapters One and Two: Concept of peace in general: even though the term “peace” is often referred to as if it is a common word, its meanings vary depending on the context of usage and the peace-scholars’ views. In conclusion, peace means absence of war and other evils like conflicts, violence, injustice etc.; and peacefulness of mind and a presence of goodness like harmony, order, social justice etc.
Peace can be classified into two main types—internal peace and external peace; again both can be subdivided in details as intrapersonal peace and world peace. In addition, peace can be characterized into two more categories, namely negative peace and positive peace; add to it a positive dimension that makes peace more creative and wide.

Tracing a brief history of peace movements and peacemaking, it is found that the quest for peace goes side by side with human society from the ancient age to the present time. The style of the pursuit of peace is different in accordance with each age. People have been trying to seek peace both individually and collectively. They founded organizations both small-in-group and international to prevent conflicts and work for peace. They held World Peace Conference (also in the name of religions) to recognize the importance of peace and to cooperate in creating peace on earth. Concerned with the danger of dangerous weapons, they set treaties prohibiting spreading and proliferating them and even managed to request for nuclear free zones. Efforts to create peace are yet to be done through the field of educations by launching peace studies, peace researches and by establishing the University of Peace. The International Day of Peace (September, 21) was declared to remark the day for peace. And the common and classic way is to protest against war.

Peace studies and peace researches lead to varieties of peace concepts and peace theories. Peace concepts cover many fields including human rights, justice, nonviolence, education, culture, gender, media and environment. Those concepts of peace are studied to know how they are interlinked and how they seek support and help create peace. Theoretically speaking, there may be varieties of peace theories too. But here only the Democratic Peace Theory and Johan Galtung’s theory of peace are presented. The Democratic Peace Theory is based on the idea that representative liberal governments can diminish the occurrence of war. Advocates of this theory believed that a world of democratic countries would be a peaceful world. Johan Galtung’s theory of peace is based on one underlying principle—that ‘peace is the absence of violence’.
According to Johan Galtung, peace and violence cannot be separated. The absence of direct or personal violence (such as harming, killing) is negative peace. The absence of indirect or structural violence (that he called social justice) is positive peace. In order to gain peace, violence must be got rid of.

To study of peace should be in every age; that the whole world is linked cannot avoid the role of the international organization. Thus, the role of the United Nations as the main international organization established to maintain peace is brought into discussion. The important role of the United Nations is to prevent and resolve international conflicts and to help build a culture of peace in the world. These intentions are reflected in the different agencies, departments and programs of the United Nations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). There are other UN organizations that help promote a culture of peace. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, helps to protect the rights of children. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, helps to promote a culture of peace by developing information programs for women, especially with regard to sex education. WHO, the World Health Organization, promotes scientific cooperation in health matters, helps reinforce health systems and assists governments which ask for emergency aid. WFP, the World Food Programme, promotes better nutrition by using food aid to support economic and social development. It is helped in this by the FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which sets up programs to help foster greater agricultural productivity, thereby fighting hunger and poverty around the world. In addition to these institutions, other international organizations are contributing to peace on earth, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional organizations. Furthermore, the United Nations launched the peacekeeping mission through the UN
Security Council. Peacekeeping missions allow the Security Council to watch over the cease-fire and participate in the creation of conditions for peace. On a few rare occasions, the Security Council has authorized member States to use all the necessary means to keep the peace, including collective military action.

Peace is related to religion too. This is because religion is one of the great driving forces in human nature, both individually and socially. Religion is an important social factor. Religion offers certain standards of conduct for man and others. Throughout the ages religion has served as an inspiration for peace. Religion provides valuable resources for peacemaking. Within each of the great religions there is a moral trajectory challenging adherents to greater acts of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. All major religions have imperatives to love others and avoid the taking of human life. At the core of the great religions is the injunction to care for the other, especially for the one in need. Compassion for the stranger is the litmus test of ethical conduct in all great religions. So is the capacity to forgive, to repent and overcome past transgressions. The key to conflict prevention is extending the moral boundaries of one’s community and expressing compassion towards others. There are many other religious principles that provide a foundation for creative peacemaking. Nonviolent values pervade the Eastern religious traditions. The religious emphasis on personal discipline and self-restraint also has value for peacemaking. It provides a basis for constraining the impulses of vengeance and retaliation that arise from violent conflict. The power of imagination within religion provides another basis for peacemaking. The moral imagination is necessary to envision a more just and peaceful order, to dream of a society that attempts to reflect religious teaching.

Chapter Three: The concept of peace in Buddhist philosophy: in Buddhism, peace is equivalent to the Pali term “Santi”. Regarding its meaning, Santi encompasses external or social peace, peace of mind, and supreme peace, Nibbana. External or social peace is a state of
peacefulness which occurs when morality of people in society is high till that there is no harming and fighting. Peace of mind refers to tranquility of mind obtained from practicing meditation or *Samadhi* till that mind reaches the state of absorption or *Jhana*. Supreme peace *Nibbana* is the state of cessation of all formations and the state of having nothing and being nothing, achieved from destruction of all defilements. These meanings of peace also lead to the classification of peace in Buddhism.

Because the dimension of dhamma in Buddhism is classified into two, namely: *Lokiya* or mundane and *Lokuttara* or supra-mundane; therefore, levels of peace are divided into two in accordance with those dimensions too.

To deal with the problem of peace, Buddhism has taught the Four Noble Truths. According to the principle, the Four Noble Truths talk about suffering (*dukkha*), cause of suffering (*samudhaya*), cessation of suffering (*nirodha*), and the path leading to cessation of suffering (*makka*); but they can be applied to manage the problem of peace effectively too. That is, the problem of peace should be dealt with in accordance with the three stages of *ñāṇa* (insight) in the Four Noble Truths, namely:

The first stage: *Saccañāṇa* (insight into the truth). It is the stage of understanding completely the total truth of the problem based on the four main fundamental questions: What is it? Where does it come from? What is it for? And how is it to be created?

The second stage: *Kiccañāṇa* (insight into the duty to be done). It is the stage of realizing as to how to do with it or what it should be done.

The third stage: *Katañāṇa* (insight into accomplishment). It is the stage of examining or checking everything about the problem of peace which should be done, and which has been already done.

Regarding the cause of having no peace, Buddhism accepts that war is the cause of having no peace. Because war is destruction and
Buddhism totally prohibits harming and killing; therefore Buddhism cannot accept any kinds of war including just war. Waging war to win peace is never advocated by Buddhism. Because Buddhism does not support violence. Buddhism teaches people to conquer evil with good. And Buddhism teaches people to conquer oneself and that will be called “great and true victory.” In addition to war, Buddhism regards Kilesa or defilement as the real cause of having no peace. According to Buddhist view, all bad actions and all evils disturbing peace in this world originate from Kilesa or defilement. Therefore, war and Kilesa are certainly the causes of having no peace.

In Buddhism, everything is interrelated in accordance with the law of Dependent Origination (Idappaccayata). Peace also comes under that law. There are some fundamental concepts that inter-link peace. Those concepts are concept of Metta (loving-kindness), concept of Ahimsa (non-violence), concept of Kamma, concept of tolerance, concept of forgiveness, and concept of Dhamma practice. They have to be put into practice; they are the essential factors to establish peace in the world.

For Buddhist way to peace, it is the Middle Way which avoids the extremes. The Middle Way is a way of good life. It is laid down by the Buddha as a neutral principle that can be applied to and synthesized in accordance with different objectives, situations, and temperaments. Its essence is on “righteousness.”

Peace in Buddhism is classified into three: external or social peace, peace of mind, and supreme peace Nibbana; therefore, the Middle Way has to be applied to correspond to those kinds of peace.

Here, the Middle Way as the way to external or social peace is presented as Buddhist economics for peace and Buddhist politics for peace. Buddhist economics for peace is based on such important factors and concepts as psychological traits and change in attitudes, interdependent understanding, restrained life style, caring attitude on economic resources, sharing attitude on economic resources, resource
recycling, and right livelihood. Buddhist politics for peace is based on the principle of supremacy of the *Dhamma* or righteousness and the virtues of a ruler.

The way to peace of mind is generally accepted as practicing meditation. Practicing meditation is a part of the Middle Way. In Buddhism, there are forty ways of practicing meditation to obtain peace of mind. They are: ten *kasiṇas* (devices); ten *asuphas* (impurities); ten *anussatis* (recollections); four *Brahmavihāras* (the Supreme States); four *arūpas* (the Formless States); Āhāre *Pañikūlasaññā* (Perception of the Loathsomeness of Food); and *Catudhātu-Vavaññhāna* (Analysis of the Four Elements).

The way to supreme peace *Nibbana* is the Noble Eightfold Path. Because Nibbana is *lokuttara* (supra-mundane); the way to Nibbana must also be the same. Therefore, the Middle Way or the Middle Path at this level should be *lokuttara*; it is called by the full name “the Noble Eightfold Path” as it transforms a common man into a noble man. The Noble Eightfold Path is composed of eight factors or components: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. It is declared by the Buddha as the only way leading to *Nibbana*.

**Chapter Four: Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace**: Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk. During the war in Vietnam, he worked tirelessly for reconciliation between North and South Vietnam. His lifelong efforts to generate peace moved Martin Luther King, Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. He lives in exile in Plum Village, a small community in France where he teaches, writes, gardens, and works to help refugees worldwide. Thich Nhat Hanh gathers people of diverse nationalities, races, religions, and sexes in order to expose them to mindfulness-taking care in the present moment, being profoundly aware and appreciative of life. He has conducted many mindfulness retreats in Europe and North America helping veterans,
children, environmentalists, psychotherapists, artists and many thousands of individuals seeking peace in their hearts, and in their world.

Grounded in the social background like the French Indochina War, the Vietnam War and religious oppression; and from the thought background like Bodhisattva ideal from Mahayana Buddhism, Consciousness ideal from Yogacara, Simplicity from Zen Buddhism, and social engagement from Engaged Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hanh mixed social work and still working for peace together. The concept is centered on the practice for self-enlightenment and enlightenment of others, and the practice for internal peace and external peace at the same time.

Focusing on Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace, it is quite strange to know that while other peace scholars try to define peace and hope that one day peace will prevail on earth; on the contrary, Thich Nhat Hanh does not put emphasis on defining peace, but he always believes and teaches that peace is available every moment, true peace is possible; peace is inside us; and we can touch peace right here and now. According to him, it seems peace is peace or peace is the state of peacefulness that naturally exists and it is the seed that is already in our minds. That is why peace is always available for everyone anywhere anytime.

Speaking about external peace and internal peace, it is obvious that Thich Nhat Hanh much emphasizes on internal peace. According to him, internal peace or peace inside us is the real peace and it is a strong foundation of external peace. If people do not have peace in themselves, they cannot give peace to others; they cannot create peace in society. Only when peace is there in human’s heart, external peace is expected. That is why he concluded in calligraphy that “Peace in Oneself, Peace in the World.”

Regarding his peace activities, all activities are based on the concept of “engaged Buddhism”, and the circumstance of the war in the country. Activities’ goal is social change; that is helping people who suffered from war, and stopping the war. To achieve that, he renewed
Buddhism leading to establishing Interbeing Order; he found academic institutes to educate and train new generations who have public minds; he organized the group of people to help the boat people; and he even went abroad to seek for peace in Vietnam.

As for approaches to peace, Thich Nhat Hanh believes in peaceful means. He proposes the practice of mindful living, the practice that applies mindfulness to all activities in daily life. The main practice is mindful breathing or meditation on breath and mindful walking or walking meditation. Furthermore, Deep relaxation, Beginning Anew, Peace Treaty, and the Five Mindfulness Trainings are also the means to peace according to his practice tradition.

Love plays a major role in the peace philosophy of Thich Nhat Hanh. Love is unbending and constant. It is ever present for man. It is never lost. Love and happiness are pure emotions. How can man be uncaring and unfeeling? Buddha’s love is outpouring non-restrictive, ongoing and omnipresent forever. Love rejuvenates itself. The best thing man has to offer is love. Where there is pure love, there can be no taint of despair, greed or negativity. Love is there to be spread, to be shared. Partnership in love is the greatest gift of the Buddha. Love expands, never contracts.

Peace is another word for love. Nhat Hanh worked hard and is still working very hard to make his dream come true. His life is the result of many thousands of months of research. His dedication to mission in life is a thing worthy to be noted. Nhat Hanh advocates emotional and spiritual well-being. The intent of Nhat Hanh is to expound the use of meditative technique which results in peace. Seeking peace is an essential process for spiritual growth. Peace should resonate in man’s life as a right. It should be without fear. It comes with knowledge and with no dogmas, with no fear, with no condemnation. What man needs or wants is peace. Meditative process, which ends up in peace is no occultism; it is not secretive and hidden. It is knowledge which destroys prejudice and greed. It is trance.
Thich Nhat Hanh has contributed a lot towards the development of educational and cross-cultural fields. He has nurtured a holistic view of arts, sciences and healing by peace. He is well known and more famous both in France and America; nay in the whole world. He is the pioneer of questions and answer sessions. He is a man of profound stillness and gentleness. His life is closely interlinked with the relationship of mind, body and nature.

Calmness and serenity of mind are taught by Thich Nhat Hanh. But how to become calmer and more serene? How long can calmness and serenity last? How to love the totality of experience? For answers to these questions, we have to invariably go to Thich Nhat Hanh. In his presence terrible things of the world vanish into nice sentiments. He says that we human beings are like a virus destroying plants. We are in the mess. We need love to overcome this virus. What we need is enlightened community—a family of awakened beings, a country of awakened beings, an enlightened planet. What does it mean when it is said that we need a community of awakened beings? It simply means, overcoming collective ego. The ego is to be transcended. Ego should be made an illusion. When this happens, man becomes completely transformed. His Holiness the Dalia Lama agrees with Thich Nhat Hanh when he says: “I am convinced that human nature is basically gentle, not aggressive.”

Thich Nhat Hanh’s community is extremely traditional. He is very strict on monastic rules of celibacy. Yet he looks at old practices with a fresh new spirit. He invents new practices. He founded a community in Israel where Jews and Palestinians participated in a retreat. “Investigate the real” is Nhat Hanh’s message. “Delve deeply into your own spiritual heritage” is his oft-quoted saying. Thich Nhat Hanh has really revitalized Buddhism, which may be called “Engaged Buddhism.” The Buddhist clerics and the laity should work together for the benefit of a broader

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society. This may also be called ‘reform-minded Buddhist modernism’. It is pacifist Buddhist movement, that Thich Nhat Hanh has advocated. He has infused new blood into the traditional understanding of the Buddha’s teaching by re-emphasizing on peace.

5.2 Study of peace in depth

It was found in the second chapter that peace is studied in various fields leading to many interesting concepts of peace such as concept of human rights for peace, concept of justice for peace, concept of peace education, concept of peace environment etc. Therefore if they are studied according to Buddhist perspective or other religious perspective useful knowledge will be gained to ensure peace.

In the concept of peace in Buddhist philosophy, those fundamental concepts that help to generate peace are briefly explored and studied; there should be a deep study of those concepts. Also there should be a study in depth on the Buddhist economics for peace and Buddhist politics for peace.

Finally, exploring Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace, it is found that his concept of peace relates too to other issues such as religious plurality, a culture of peace, environmental dimension of peace etc.