ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study the concept of peace in Buddhist philosophy and Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace. From the study, it is found that peace according to Buddhist philosophy is “Santi” that its meanings encompass two levels of peace: Lokiya Santi or mundane peace and Lokuttara Santi or supra-mundane peace; and three kinds of peace: external or social peace, peace of mind, and supreme peace, Nibbana. These kinds of peace are classified into two types— external and internal; Buddhist philosophy puts an emphasis on internal peace rather than external peace. In addition, it is found that Buddhist philosophy stresses on the process of solving the problem of peace via the teaching of the Four Noble Truths, especially the causes of having no peace. Therefore, Buddhist philosophy objects to all kinds of wars and stresses more on the real cause, Kilesa or defilement. Moreover, Buddhist philosophy realizes the importance of other concepts such as concept of loving-kindness, concept of non-violence, concept of tolerance, concept of forgiveness, concept of Kamma or action and concept of dhamma; practice of the concepts will help support peace building. Regarding the way to peace, the finding shows that for external or social peace it is specifically focused; Buddhist economics and Buddhist politics, can be the right way; meditation is the way to peace of mind; and the Noble Eightfold Path is the way to supreme peace, Nibbana. As for Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of peace, it reveals the social background: the French Indochina War, the Vietnam War, and religious oppression; and some ideal from Mahayana Buddhism and socially engaged Buddhism influenced his concept of peace and his peace activities. He emphasizes much on the meaning of peace; he stresses to show the value and importance of peace especially internal peace or peace in oneself. According to him, real peace is possible; peace is everywhere; peace is every step; peace is every breath; and peace is the seed inherited in our mind. For approaches to peace, he proposes the practice of mindful living, mindful breathing, mindful walking, Deep relaxation, Beginning Anew, and Peace Treaty, and the Five Mindfulness Trainings.