CHAPTER 1

BUDDHIST RELIGION AND PEACE: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
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1.0 Introduction

The general viewpoint in Buddhist teaching, especially the standard of moral judgment is included in the first chapter.

The contents of the chapter are generally accepted that the mission of all religions is the same, i.e. to achieve peace. For example, Christianity is a religion of love. Hinduism is a religion of Santi or peace. Jainism is a religion of Ahimsa or non-violence. Peace is the highest aim of good life in Buddhism. Peace includes individual, communal, national, and global peace. ¹ But in the past the larger proportion of religions has helped only select groups of people, fostering harmony and friendship within that group, but greeting others with hostility. This is why religion has been such a divisive force in human history, a catalyst for war and destruction. Among religious circles it must be conceded that religions have had a major role in the appearance of many problems such as disunion, discord, even not a few cases of war and atrocities. In order to really address these problems we should be bold enough to speak up, to be honest and to look within ourselves before we can really teach or appeal to others. We should turn around and search within the religions to find out how does the religion teach us to look on people of other faiths and different groups? Does it teach us to look on others with mutual respect, fraternity and concord, or does it teach us to look on others as inferior, as sinners or heathens, or even something which should be destroyed?

However, the possible ways to choose for the common core of all religions is the purpose of religious practises. All religious practises tend to develop the quality of life according to the aim of each religion. It is not the aim of each religion which is the core of the universal religion, but the purpose to be the same, i.e. the development of the quality of life, such is what all religions need in common. The qualities of life is in the course of prosperity and progress, though it may be varied by different religions. Religions that enhance quality of human life can,

¹ Baidyanath Saraswati, Culture of Peace Experience and Experiment, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts publishers, 1999 p.51.
without difficulty, understand each other, dialogue with each other, study and solve the problems together.

1.1 Modern World in Search of Peace

With the present in Third World countries violence has become a common feature, being nurtured by power-seeking politicians as well as by the very structure of society. Have not racism, starvation, malnutrition, unemployment, exploitation and such other woeful states contributed to violence and terrorism in our part of the world? Those who are in power and the policy-makers must seriously pay attention to this deplorable state of affairs and should devise ways and means to eliminate violence arising out of the very structure of our society. Since World War II, there have been many instances of conflicts resulting in a breach of peace. Considering that war is the common enemy of mankind, let not the horror of war ever be repeated.²

Peace on the other hand is an art of survival without which we cannot speak of happiness neither on Earth, nor of human rights and values, nor of the achievements of human civilization.

The modern world is a world full of chances and options (for people). Never before in history so many choices could and had to be made by the individual (humans). But the modern world is also a world of competing interests, ideas, values, (world-) views, ideologies, religions and cultures - a world full of conflicting interests on all levels, between individuals and groups of people within their societies, between all sectors of societies as well as between economies, nations, states and so forth. If we want to characterize our contemporary world it would be in many ways more appropriate to speak about a ‘Clash of Interests’ instead of “Clash of Cultures”.³

What is the reason for the increase in conflicts in the modern world? Traditional societies are pre-individual societies characterised by the acceptance of one’s role in life and society, the will of God, fate, Kamma, destiny and so on. The Individual and its interest are taken up by and merged with the higher interests of the community/species, etc.; the individual is dissolved in and abdicates vis-à-vis the collective interest—say God/religion and tribe/nation/state - represented by the religious leaders and the head of

state/monarch. The individual did not disappear in these cultures -- it simply did not yet emerge in history.

The rise of the concept of the individual in European history changed drastically the way more and more people viewed the world and themselves within the world and their societies. Today, people accept less and less the bonds of family and society but they wish to express and manifest their individuality in competition to and even on the cost of others and their societies.

With the expansion of the “Western” values and civilization through religious mission, colonization, commerce, science, technology, education and now mainly through the media and pop-culture – in other words with what is called today Globalization – the desire of the individual to manifest and express itself is changing traditional societies and cultures everywhere and becomes more and more the dominant role model for younger generations around the world.4

There are times in the evolution of humanity when preference for the stability of the traditional must give way to the imperatives of the future (and present). Today, it seems that we live in such times.

In its quest to maintain and promote international peace and security the United Nations has proclaimed in 2000 a decade for a “Culture of Peace and Non-Violence”. One of its primary purposes is to achieve within 10 years worldwide the transition from a ‘Culture of War’ to a “Culture of Peace”.5 The goal (for humanity) is the prevention and suppression of acts of aggression and ultimately the eradication of all forms of violence from the hearts and minds of people and the face of the planet.

Already in the 1970’s the UN General Assembly has unanimously condemned aggression as “the gravest of all crimes against peace and security throughout the world.”6 Yet, until today statesmen are still unable and/or unwilling to even agree clearly on how to define aggression (and violence), and still states decide solely for themselves when they resort to force. Partisan self-interest often binds or blinds those charged with speaking for a particular government.

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4 Ibid.
5 Baidyanath Saraswati, Culture of Peace Experience and Experiment, Op. Cit. p.53.

However, this existing situation and international anarchy is unbearable for the people of the world. We have to find ways to bridge the gap between the bad practices of the past and the requirements of a future New World Order of Peace and Love.  

The questions of what constitutes to be a lawful use of force (and can only the UN Security Council authorize force), what is self-defence and what is the right of self-determination (and whether is this right so crucial and compelling that every means to achieve it, including the use of violence, is legally justifiable) are still unanswered. Further, up until today there are no severe consequences of aggression and for those responsible for aggression -- still they are not held accountable by the world (humanity). The most fateful challenge to the international community in our time embraces the dual tasks of creating the structures of authority to move the people of the world from the current state of fear, international anarchy and terror toward a more complete world order of human rights, equity, justice, dignity, harmony and love -- a Culture of Peace - and to have such structures accepted by all and put into practise.

Despite the paralysis caused by the fear of change and/or adhesion to power, the evolutionary thrust toward a more just, equitable and fair rational social order is irresistible. The dispersion among a growing number of nations of the means of mutual annihilation, the rapidly growing destruction of our life support system (natural environment) and the rise of international terrorism has already compelled collaboration in areas beyond the dreams of yesterday. The sea, the skies, and the air we breathe are only a few of the arenas in which the need for collective cooperation and security is being increasingly recognized and implemented.

It is a dangerous anachronism that States, restricted only by the limits of their power, still exercise unbridled discretion to determine for themselves when they may resort to force and take up arms against their neighbours or others. We have to restrain the perpetuation of this international anarchy. It has become much too hazardous to remain tolerable.

No one pretends that by defining violence and aggression a peaceful world will thereby be assured. Violence, aggression and belligerency are not a virus which can be eradicated by a verbal

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7 Ibid.
formula, vaccination, an international campaign or an UN decade. No formulation, no matter how detailed or precise, can hope to eliminate disagreements about interpretation or application. It can only serve as a guide in helping to indicate some of the relevant factors which must be taken into account in determining the circumstances under which the application of violence is tolerable in international society.\(^9\)

The people of the world, who are the victims of aggression, must have at least some objective criteria by which to begin to measure the validity of actions which may affect the destiny of us all.

The movement toward a rational world order - a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence and Love - will be a long and tedious journey from the very important first step to clearly define aggression to the prevention and resolution of conflicts to finally the total banishment of the idea to use violence to settle disputes and conflicts on all levels. A Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind, and an International Criminal Court are just a few of the steps along this way to deal with such major international crimes as aggression, genocide, apartheid and other crimes against humanity.

People are asking what is the use of a definition, of a court, of an UN decade etc. - things which are unenforceable - and why should time, effort and money be wasted in pursuit of a utopian dream. Our answer is: In a world filled with fear, war and terror, we have to choose to either live with despair or with hope. We have chosen to live with hope -- and we invite you to do the same.

1.2 The Vitality of Peace in Social Welfare

The people of our time are both informed and concerned about the condition of the world. They know there are many dangers and challenges threatening the welfare of human society. They know, too, about the politics of disunity, power, greed, and mistrust that have caused so much destruction in the past and which could cause even greater catastrophes in the future. These same people also know that the leadership of the world will be transferred to them in the not too distant future and that they will be called upon to find solutions to the problems of human society.

History shows that although every new generation of people does everything in its power to improve the conditions of the world, its success nevertheless depends on the level of its preparation -- not only to assume leadership but also to improve the quality of that

leadership. But to do this, our youth need training and experience for leadership. The lessons given to them must be different from those we learned from our parents. The world we are entrusting to our children is not safe, clean, or free of violence, hunger, or war. The world today is disunited and burdened with many problems, but it is also immeasurably rich with scientific discoveries, technological advancements, and early indications of the awakening of humanity's conscience. The world today is simultaneously exciting and burdened progressive and retrogressive, peace seeking and aggressive, and concerned and self-centered.

Today's young people need to learn a new way of dealing with the challenges facing them. They need to create a united world, organized in a manner such that its entire people will be free and able to live in a safe, just society. A world in which health, education, shelter, food, and other essential needs will be available to everyone as their basic human rights - a world that will provide the opportunity for all people to have meaningful jobs and to be useful, creative citizens. This is a world different from today's world, and its accomplishment will require a new way of thinking about our selves and our relationships with one another.

1.3 Peace and Religions in the World

The principles discussed so far are in accordance with the ethical teachings of all world religions. We maintain that every major religions of the world - Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism - share similar ideals of love, the same goal of benefiting humanity through spiritual practisie, and the same effect of making their followers into better human beings. All religions teach moral precepts for perfecting the functions of mind, body, and speech. All teach us not to lie or steal or take others' lives, and so on. The common goal of all moral precepts laid down by the great teachers of humanity is unselfishness. The great teachers wanted to lead their followers away from the paths of negative deeds caused by ignorance and to introduce them to paths of goodness.10

All religions agree upon the necessity to control the undisciplined mind that harbours selfishness and other roots of trouble, and each teaches a path leading to a spiritual state that is peaceful, disciplined, ethical, and wise. It is in this sense that we

believe all religions have essentially the same message. Differences of dogma may be ascribed to differences of time and circumstance as well as cultural influences; indeed, there is no end to scholastic argument when we consider the purely metaphysical side of religion. However, it is much more beneficial to try to implement in daily life the shared precepts for goodness taught by all religions rather than to argue about minor differences in approach.

There are many different religions to bring comfort and happiness to humanity in much the same way as there are particular treatments for different diseases. For, all religions endeavour in their own way to help living beings avoid misery and gain happiness. And, although we can find causes for preferring certain interpretations of religious truths, there is much greater cause for unity, stemming from the human heart. Each religion works in its own way to lessen human suffering and contribute to world civilization. Conversion is not the point. For instance, we do not think of converting others to Buddhism or merely furthering the Buddhist cause. Rather, we try to think of how we as a Buddhist humanitarian can contribute to human happiness.

Pointing out the fundamental similarities between world religions, we do not advocate one particular religion at the expense of all others, nor do we seek a new ‘world religion.’ All the different religions of the world are needed to enrich human experience and world civilization. Our human minds, being of different calibre and disposition, need different approaches to peace and happiness. It is just like food. Certain people find Christianity more appealing, others prefer Buddhism because there is no creator in it and everything depends upon your own actions. We can make similar arguments for other religions as well. Thus, the point is clear: humanity needs all the world's religions to suit the ways of life, diverse spiritual needs, and inherited national traditions of individual human beings.\(^{11}\)

It is from this perspective that we welcome efforts being made in various parts of the world for better understanding among religions. The need for this is particularly urgent now. If all religions make the betterment of humanity their main concern, then they can easily work together in harmony for world peace. Interfaith understanding will bring about the unity necessary for all religions to work together. However, although this is indeed an important step, we must remember that there are no quick or easy solutions. We cannot hide the doctrinal differences that exist among various faiths, nor can we

\(^{11}\text{Ibid. p.16.}\)
hope to replace the existing religions by a new universal belief. Each religion has its own distinctive contributions to make, and each in its own way is suitable to a particular group of people as they understand life. The world needs them all.

There are two primary tasks facing religious practitioners who are concerned with world peace. First, we must promote better interfaith understanding so as to create a workable degree of unity among all religions. This may be achieved in part by respecting each other's beliefs and by emphasizing our common concern for human well-being. Second, we must bring about a viable consensus on basic spiritual values that touch every human heart and enhance general human happiness. This means we must emphasize the common denominator of all world religions - humanitarian ideals. These two steps will enable us to act both individually and together to create the necessary spiritual conditions for world peace.\(^{12}\)

We practitioners of different faiths can work together for world peace when we view different religions as essentially instruments to develop a good heart - love and respect for others, a true sense of community. The most important thing is to look at the purpose of religion and not at the details of theology or metaphysics, which can lead to mere intellectualism. We believe that all the major religions of the world can contribute to world peace and work together for the benefit of humanity if we put aside subtle metaphysical differences, which are really the internal business of each religion.\(^{13}\)

Despite the progressive secularization brought about by worldwide modernization and despite systematic attempts in some parts of the world to destroy spiritual values, the vast majority of humanity continues to believe in one religion or another. The undying faith in religion, evident even under irreligious political systems, clearly demonstrates the potency of religion as such. This spiritual energy and power can be purposefully used to bring about the spiritual conditions necessary for world peace. Religious leaders and humanitarians all over the world have a special role to play in this respect. Whether we will be able to achieve world peace or not, we have no choice but to work towards that goal. If our minds are dominated by anger, we will lose the best part of human intelligence -

\(^{12}\) Ibid. p.17.

\(^{13}\) Ibid. p.18.
wisdom, the ability to decide between right and wrong. Anger is one of the most serious problems facing the world today.\textsuperscript{14}

Religions do promote a “we-they” feeling at present world. People who belong to a particular religion feel that they are the chosen ones, with a special revelation or relationship to the divine. From this point of view, the others are not merely different, but inferior. When persons from other religions are not seen as enemies, they are regarded as potential converts. Such a view of the “others” may lead to proselytism rather than violence. But when the others are seen not merely as different but as opponents or competitors in the economic, social, political or religious spheres, the religious difference can be used as a tool for deionization. We are God’s chosen ones, while the others are the “children of the devil.” Such deionization makes it easy for us to attack others with both fervour and peace of mind, especially when we feel that we are defending our religious identity against the onslaught of “infidels.”

There may not be any war today that can be explained solely in terms of religious antagonism. But the destruction of places or peoples in the name of religious faith (often mixed with other motives) is today common in many places. Abortion clinics have been attacked in the United States; Hindu mobs have killed Christians and Muslims and destroyed churches and mosques in India; Muslims have shot down Hindu families in Kashmir; Christians and Muslims have killed each other in Indonesia.

We know the fervour against “atheistic Communism” that animated not only the United States and Western Europe, but also the church during the cold war. Violence was avoided more by a balance of armed terror than by considerations of peace. Islamic-based revolutionary movements in Iran and the Middle East were inspired by a self-defensive move both against the materialistic secularism of the West, represented by the United States, and the atheistic Communism of the North, represented by the Soviet Union. A similar twofold defensive move enabled Bhikku Buddhadāsa\textsuperscript{15} of Thailand to promote a peaceful revolution through his doctrine of Dhammic socialism (Dhamma means moral order) based on a modern interpretation of Buddhism. Even today there are Christian theologians who defend armed revolution in defence of social justice.


\textsuperscript{15} Buddhadāsa Bhikku, Dhammic Socialism, Bangkok: Thai Inter religion commission for Development press. 1993, p. 3.
in the name of Christianity. The jihad in Islam began as a struggle against one’s own evil tendencies, and was then used to justify defensive wars, somewhat like Christian just war theories. And if one is defending oneself and one’s values, what is more sacred than religious values? And if a group can offer a religious motivation for its struggle, it succeeds in providing an absolute ground for its cause. It also provokes a deeper commitment: people who die in such a conflict are not merely heroes, but martyrs.

We now have some ideas why a religion is used as a motive for war. On the one hand, we wage war to defend not only our lives, but also our properties, economic and political “interests.” But a secularized consciousness may not grasp that people also wage war to defend their way of life and values. And for a believer, the values of religion are the most sacred. In a secular society in which religion is completely privatized, however, this may not be seen as something worth defending. This very attitude may be enough to provoke the antagonism of the true believer.

But if religion is such an ambiguous phenomenon, can it be a factor in peacemaking? We think that the answer is yes, there cannot be any lasting peace without religion(s).

Religion-free economic and political orders are the discovery of the Enlightenment, which posited that human reason is the ultimate mentor of everything. In this worldview every sector of society is seen as autonomous. Economic structures are driven by the pursuit of profit in the context of free trade. Political order is a balancing of interests of various groups in society. But free trade has led to a world that is polarized between the rich and the poor, both internationally and locally. Moreover, the free movement of global capital has only made the gap worse. And the balancing of political interests is not a realistic goal in a world that is dominated by one superpower. At most, it is a balancing act between a few powerful nations that ignores the interests of the other nations in the globe: freedom and prosperity for us, the rest be damned.

Can the free pursuit of profit and the balancing of interests lead to lasting peace? We doubt it. For true peace we need a sense of human, moral and spiritual values; recognition, respect and acceptance of the dignity of persons-in-community and their cultural and religious identities; and an appreciation and quest for the common good, local and universal, leading to justice and equality. We do not think that a mere nonreligious, secular order can deliver this. The failure of contemporary efforts at imposing a certain ecological discipline on the nations of the world is but one example. The
manipulation of various international agencies, especially by the more powerful countries, is another. Religion is the sole prophetic force that continues to challenge our imperfect efforts at community building in the course of history. No religion actually preaches violence, and religions alone speak of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Religions have tended to justify existing socio-political orders. But every religion has had prophets who speak in the name of the Absolute, condemning the sort of idolatry that seeks to divinize or absolutist human structures in every field. Every religion has therefore an inbuilt prophetic structure, which must be encouraged. Prophecy, however, may not emerge from the official heads of religions. Religious leaders on the whole have not been prophetic, apart from showing sympathy and urging restraint in retaliation.

All religions accept the common destiny of all peoples and are well disposed to the pluralism of religions. They do not encourage inter religious conflict. Buddhism has not set store on any particular rituals, but rather has proposed a way of meditation for every person. Hinduism has always seen different religions as various ways to spiritual liberation, just as all rivers lead to the sea. Christianity has come to recognize the salvation presence and action of the Spirit of God in all religions in ways unknown to us. Muslims refer to the injunctions of the Koran that advice them to respect diversity in religion. Since God has not made everyone a Muslim, God’s will be accepted. People of different religions must be allowed to go their own way: “Unto you your moral law, and unto me, mine”. What such openness presupposes is respect for every person and group as sharing in a common destiny, even if we think that our own way is better. We will exclude no one from God’s love and mercy, because all are children of one God.

Religions must also be helped to purify themselves. Inter religious dialogue that enables every religion to look at itself in the light of an “other” can help a process of internal reform. But beyond inter religious amity, religions can and should agree on the defence and promotion of common human and spiritual values, even if each religion justifies them in terms of its own principles. Justice and peace are the teaching and goal of all religions. In the post -- Second World War years all religions have produced theologies of liberation seeking to promote justice and community. In the end, all religions wish peace.

It is not that we need to establish “theocratic” states. Economics and politics should retain their autonomy. But their autonomy will not
be absolute. Both will have to be responsive to moral values and principles and dialogue with religions.

All religions recognize that people are imperfect and sinful and that occasional conflicts are inevitable. Hence there is need for forgiveness and reconciliation. Positively this is spelled out as love and compassion for the other. Only religions can promote this. Mere human reason and the balancing of self-interests will not lead us this far.

Every crisis, as the saying goes, is an opportunity. The crisis we are living these days and months is a challenge to think of a new world order based on principles of freedom, justice and community inspired by the different religions in dialogue. The flushing out and bringing to justice of a network of terrorists is not going to bring peace. It is not even the first step. It is simply the removal of an irritant. If the situation is not changed radically, new terrorists will replace old. The real task is to start building up a society of justice and equality.

In short, we need a conversion. A time like this brings out the best and the worst in us -- our courage and generosity, but also all our prejudices: our individual and collective egoism, our narrow nationalism, our double standards, and our sense of hurt pride. We need a new vision of human and world community. We have to find new ways of empowering people to shape it. This is the only way to true peace in the world.

1.4 Peace in Indian Thought

India, fortunately, is the home of all world religions and birthplace of four: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Bhaism have found a hospitable home in India.

India has been the home of religion and philosophy. It is called a Dharma-Guru or Dharmacharya. It has various types of seasons so liberally appealing to man. Thus, India has been the home of abundance, with bounty of nature universally available at all times. This was the reason for which it became the “Golden Bird” for the foreigners, who repeatedly invaded and plundered it.

In the bosom full of milk such as that of India the thought process took various sides, claiming to have covered all possible directions, it

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could stand erect, aloft in the nuclear age, to subdue those modern scientists who wandered away from the nobler path of humanity and again entered the camp of savagery or barbarism. The Gandhi thought stand out pre-eminently as the beacon of light in this regard and proclaims the religion of peace as enshrined in the states of the United Nations.

The modern problems of the world are all created by some politicians and their associate economists and advisers devoid of any ethical code relevant to the peaceful existence of the human society free from scarcity, hunger of disease. The modern war armaments, so powerful and destructive, are the creation of that evil mind which wants to gulp the morsels of other mouths, compelling them to share and a degenerated standard of living. The modern warfare technique has reached that stage where the basic safety of any life on this Globe has been seriously challenged. Such developments, devoid of the basic religious values, come as a grave danger to human society.

The moral basis for peace comes from religions. Religion has been the source of values. Mahatma Gandhi identified truth and non-violence as the twin principles of morality. The genius of Gandhi was that he extended Satya and Ahimsa 17 to the social realm. This was his historic contribution. Let us quote Gandhiji himself. We have to make truth and non-violence, not matters for mere individual practiše but for practiše by groups and communities and nations. That at any rate is my dream; I shall live and die in trying to realize it. Indeed he lived and died for non-violence and truth.

Peace, as Gandhi envisaged it, is far more than the absence of war and violence. 18 It is a state of positive and constructive world view and world order, where individuals, groups and nations eschew to dominate or explicit one another and lives in cooperation and mutual aid. This means that peace needs a new life-style and a new culture. However, such a philosophy of civilization of peace does not work in a vacuum. Therefore Gandhi enunciates both an epistemology of peace and non-violence and also formulates sociology of peace.

The concept of national security is outdated. It is now related to the global context. Gandhi had declared about unilateralism with the greatest emphasis at his command: 'Whether one or many, we must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether, even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race of armament is to

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commit suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence, the last hope of the world will be gone.' Economically, the armaments race is disastrous; strategically it is futile, politically it is like a blind alley. Legally or morally, it is a crime against humanity. Unilateralism, if it fails, might risk the lives of an entire nation, but the present policy of nuclear proliferation risks the lives of all humanity and dooms future generations. If unilateral steps are taken, the moral, social and economic strength of a nation will protect it from its adversaries better than nuclear weapons or nuclear alliances.\(^1\) Gandhi had made many references to unilateral non-violent national defence in his writing: 'It was a Czech', 'How to Combat hetaerism?' ‘Appeal the Every Japanese’ and so on.\(^2\)

Like the structure of defence, technology has also affected our politics and its democratic fabric. Political leaders ‘recognize violence as the foundation of realistic politics’.\(^3\) Modern technology necessarily brings in centralization, which implies concentration of power. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Centralization adds to the complexity of life, which is a destruction of all creative moral endeavours. It damages initiative, resourcefulness, courage and creativeness and diminishes opportunities of self-government, so the more centralization the less democracy.\(^4\) Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. So to root out violence in the structure of politics, Gandhi had a vision of self-sufficient and self-managed village republics serving as the grassroots democracy as an alternative to a centralized party system and parliamentary democracy.

The Gandhian concept of Pax Mundi is neither utopian nor simply ethical-spiritual but also structural and holistic. Unesco’s declaration of peace – making, that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men the defence of peace must be constructed, is significant and fundamental, but structural aspects needs to be highlighted. The minds of men do not work in a vacuum. They are conditioned by structures of society. Unless our socio-economic and political system is re-oriented towards peace, our minds cannot grasp it properly. Even our societal framework is determined by our technological model. These days we talk

about dependence theory without realizing that Gandhi had described the international dialectics of industrial development long before the model of centre versus periphery was introduced. The foresight of Gandhi can be assessed in his warning against the mad rush to industrialism: ‘God forbid that India should ever take industrialism after the manner of the west. The economic imperialism of a single island (U.K.) is today keeping the world in chains. If the entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts.’ Max Weber reminds us that we must develop a universal development concept. He says: ‘Good fortune thus wants to be legitimate fortune.’ Gandhi therefore said: ‘You cannot build non-violence on factory civilization. The rural economy eschews exploitation. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society. Gandhi was convinced that the ‘mania for mass-production is responsible for the world crisis’ No scheme of global peace can prove lasting unless it is linked to the creation of an equitable world economic order. Similarly, one of the great impediments in the creation of international understanding and peace is our sacrosanct faith in the doctrine of ‘national sovereignty’ Gandhi’s dialectical approach to sovereignty is useful, by which the role of sovereignty can be reduced but which does not violate principles of equality and justice. In fact, the ideal of ‘one world’ is the natural Gandhian ideal, but so far as it is not achieved, Gandhi advocated, ‘think globally and act locally’. The ideal of a global village is a legitimate step towards overcoming aggressive nationalism. We have also to develop education for peace. In the total crisis of the world, education has its full share. Unfortunately, we have inherited a philosophy of struggle for existence, which is often portrayed as a battle between creature and nature, neglecting man and his tendency to learn the laws of harmony between himself and the universe. Because of increasing world tensions threatening the very survival of man, peace education has become important.

True, violence has lost its dynamics in this thermonuclear age but ‘the hold of violence is so great that even though violence has failed a thousand times, we still put faith in its capacity to succeed.’ Perhaps it is rooted in our mental dispositions. It might be that man has inherited from

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the animals the instincts of aggression, hate and jealousy.26 He still retains many things that he possessed before he became man. We need a mind which is free from its own conditioning. Hence during very ancient times, there had been provision for the study of military science but so far as the science of peace was concerned, it was left only to religious saints and seers. Today, we badly need a science of peace and non-violence in all our educational curricula and research. We have spent tremendous amount of time and resources to explore the science of violence now it is high time to turn our attention towards the power of non-violence. The only alternative to non-violence is non-existence. What is needed is an intellectual revolution. If we can discard the absolutist style of our thinking, there is hardly any scope for religious fundamentalism, national chauvinism, or even ideological fanaticism. But the ideology of *Pax Mundi* presupposes a *Pax Mundi* in our societal structure also. If bloodshed and murder are violence, exploitation is also violence. A society free from inequality and exploitation can pave the way for *Pax Mundi*.

However, today we live in a world where all human beings are invited nationally, culturally and denominationally. Though the society is divided into various nationalities, cultures and religions, we hope that there would be unity through this disintegration. It is not at all an exaggeration if we say that we did not feel this necessity of peace and Unity in the past as we do feel today. The entire universe today is closely integrated through the modern scientific and technical productions as well as the social and political concepts. If the human beings are to live in peace in future this universe should be their home. If so, we should extend among the nations, the feelings of fraternity and compassion.27

We would like to mention certain organizations which co-strive to instill in men the feelings of fraternity, mutual compassion, forbearance and the peaceful co-existence which are our objectives too. The efforts made by these organizations to build a world in which man loves man, man lives with non-interference, and man safe-guards his self-respect.

We must be aware of the fact that India is a great country which once upon a time bestowed the mankind with the social and cultural concepts through the Buddhist missionaries. It is well known the great king Ashoka propagated throughout south-east Asia, the philosophy of socialism — the doctrine of “Ahimsa — non-violence” and the peaceful co-

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existence which we are trying today to bring about by creating the peaceful world.  

Later on, king Ashoka, set an example to the world by practicing this sterling precept for international amity and world-peace. The sight of Kalinga war turned him away from violence and made him a man of peace. The modern world has certainly much to learn from the numerous edicts of Ashoka for the world-peace today. The edicts of Ashoka stands out pre-eminently and proclaims the message that, through the abiding peace among the people as a cardinal principle in the regulation of human affairs, the Buddhist Culture could generate the forces of social adjustment, Understanding, co-operation and integration.

Lord Buddha’s teachings on compassion, on respect of life, non-violence, non-killing will go a long way to change the heart and mind of mankind. Buddha preached that the world of contention and strife into a world of friendliness, of brotherly co-operation and peaceful co-existence - Buddha also advised to love each other and not hate anyone: “Hatred never cease by hatred in this world. By love alone they cease. This is an ancient law”.

But contrary to the Buddha’s expectations, the world has seemingly forgotten his words of utmost importance. Today the world is full of hatred, of enmity, of distrust so much so that people are ready to sacrifice more than 318 million people, just to be the winner. It was in India that Buddhism was established. Its message of peace, love, friendliness, compassion and mutual harmony covered many a continents and islands far and wide. The leaders of modern India always gave utmost importance to the Buddha’s ideals which were indispensable for the welfare of human kind. Mahatma Gandhi was a true disciple of Buddha as far as his principles of truth, non-violence, non-possession, service and sacrifice for the country and countrymen were concerned. Late Jawaharlal Nehru and his principle of Panchasheela emanated from the Buddha’s teachings.

To escape from the state of untouchability the great conversion of the New Indian Buddhists took place at Nagpur in India, on the glorious day of the 14th October 1956 under Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s most able guidance and perfect spiritual leadership. Being a Buddhist Dr. B.R. Ambedkar proudly proclaimed to the world, “Untouchability in every

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30 Dhammapada. 5.
form is abolished and imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offence." There are 90 million Buddhists now in India.\(^{31}\)

Dr. Ambedkar once said; "Buddhism was a democratic movement, which upheld democracy in religion, democracy in society, and democracy in politics."\(^{32}\) Buddhism is taken to be the most suitable religion for democratic society because it places emphasis on three democratic principles, namely liberty, equality and fraternity.

Therefore, it must be asserted that Lord Buddha's message is very democratic and pragmatic. For this, Lord Zealand, a former British Viceroy of India said, "it may as a surprise to many to learn that in assemblies of Buddhists in India, two thousand or more years ago, are to be found rudiments of our own (British) parliamentary system as practised today." In a world of darkness and distress, the Buddha Dhamma still shines across the gulf of twenty-five centuries and it is not yet too late for us to follow its guiding beams and emerge triumphant into a brighter and happier future. At no time in history has the message of Buddha been more relevant than it is now to present day society of Nuclear Age.\(^{33}\)

India is the dear mother which gave birth to great and Noble leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who led the battle of Non-violence (Ahimsā) which help Indians to gain their independence too in the recent past by peaceful means, and also encouraged the people for the creation of a peaceful world.

Today, we should live together or die together. Today no man, no country, no society, can live alone. For this purpose we need peaceful co-existence. Would it be possible for the man to create a peaceful co-existence? The powerful nations have just finished discussing world peace. But hardly anything was done to bring about the peace in the world. We live in a world where nations talk about peace and go in search of Islands to construct store-houses for war implements.\(^{34}\) We live in an age in which we talk of peace while bombing another country.

### 1.5 Buddhism as a Religion of Peace

J.T. Sunderland once said: Buddhism has taught peace more strongly among its followers, more effectively, during all its history,
than has any other great religious faith known to the world." It is true that Santi or peace is the main teaching of the Buddha. As it is said by the Buddha: "There is no higher bliss than peace". Here peace is a characteristic of Nibbāna.

In Buddhism the concept of peace is extended to include both inner and outer peace. Inner peace (Ajjhata-santi) is the peace of mind whereas outer peace (Bahiddha-santi) is the peace of society. The former provides a firm foundation for the latter. Unless there is peace in mind, there will be no peace in society.

According to the Buddha, man can promote both mental and social peace by controlling his greed, hatred and ignorance and at the same time developing wholesome qualities known as the four Divine Bindings (Brahma-vihāra), namely loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and impartiality.

The Buddha always instructs his followers to be true pacifists who live a non-violent life. Any Bhikkhu who uses violent means to solve conflicts is not the follower of my instructions. The Buddha teaches his followers to meet anger with good and not with evil.

From what we have mentioned above, it is not difficult to understand why the Buddhists can live peacefully with followers of other religions. This is due to the fact that the Buddha teaches his followers to have religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence with followers of other faith. The story in Sihasutta is a good case in point. When Siha, a chief follower of the Niganthas (Jainism), declares himself a Buddhist, the Buddha accepts his adherence and allows him house. These are the Buddha’s words:

"Your family, Siha, has been as a well-spring to the Niganthas for a long time. Therefore, you might consider giving alms to the Niganthas who approach you."

The importance of Peace in Buddhism is nothing but ‘perfect happiness’. There will not be peace without happiness. Thus real happiness and true peace are synonyms. "An unhappy man cannot find peace. In the absence of peace, no one can be happy and those who are unhappy cannot live in peace."

Only the happy man has real peace. Only

37 Dīgha-Nikāya 2.196.
38 Majjhima- Nikāya 1.129.
39 Dhammapada.223.
40 Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4.186.
the man who has peace can be really happy. A Man who is happy radiates happiness. A Man who has peace diffuses peace. A Man who has no peace of mind tends to break peace in his family, among neighbours and wherever he is. The man who is in peace with himself naturally and automatically lives in peace with everyone. This is the happy and peaceful Man in the full sense of the terms. His peace and happiness is true to life. The mundane goal of Buddhism is to live a happy life among various kinds of people, in different situations and environment. However, the ultimate aim of Buddhism is the attainment of permanent peace and eternal happiness.

The point of study attempts to explain the principles in Buddhism and The Buddha's way of establishing peace in the world. In the preceding section we have already discussed in the problems plaguing the modern society. Whereas man has reached a high state of scientific and technological advancement, morally and inwardly he has reached a depth of spiritual bankruptcy. As a result man is being plagued by unforeseen dangers, new fears and diseases on an unprecedented scale. Both the rich and the poor are unhappy. Both prosperity and poverty are driving man mad and man is in a very pitiable and helpless predicament.

It is common knowledge that many governments are trying to solve their socio-economic problems through immoral strategy, force and violence. They are trying to end or suppress wars and rebellions by waging another war. They have even popularized the slogan “War for Peace” But we know violence breeds violence and such violence will always prove futile.

From the Buddhist points of view, it is absolutely wrong to end a war by another war and killing by killing. “These kinds of attempts to solve the problems of the world are like cleaning something muddied with muddy water. It only makes matters worse.” The Buddha states that “victory breeds hatred and the defeated lies down in misery.” The conqueror would naturally incur the animosity of many persons, while the defeatist would be buried in a state of sorrow. Yet never would a person engaged in war repent his conduct of violence after the conquest. However, wars and conflicts will not end. The defeated party will still be waiting to take revenge. The problems will be everlasting.

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42Ibid., pp.24-25.
44Dhammapada.201.
Therefore the Buddha states in the same verse that, “The peaceful neither dwell in happiness, victors nor defeated.”

Buddhism believes in Man’s potential to train to better himself. A true Buddhist considers it “his responsibility to better himself. If a human being succeeds in fully bettering himself then he becomes the most excellent and noble of all being.”

Buddhism has been playing an important role in moulding the spiritual, philosophical, social and ethical modes of life of the human beings for more than 2500 years. In the contemporary society there is a dire need for establishing a healthy view of life which should help us re-establish social welfare in the world. Buddhism which has always been a fountain head of healthily ideas can come to our rescue here.

In this context Bhikkhu Tiradhamma comments, “In responding to contemporary social issues one is forced to return to basic Buddhist principles to distinguish the spirit from the mere parroting of the letter. And this takes more than just learning about Buddhism. This requires that one put the teachings to the test of experience. That is one must guide one’s practise by the letter in order to experience the spirit’. Then the dream of social welfare will be realized. In this part some of basic Buddhist ethical principles have been brought out so as to highlight their relevance for establishing social welfare in the modern society as a whole.

Buddhist ethics aims at creating a society in which the ruinous struggle for power is renounced, where peace and tranquillity prevails; where the persecution of the innocent is vehemently denounced; where one who conquers oneself is more respected than those who conquer millions by military and economic warfare; where hatred is conquered by loving kindness, and evil by goodness; where enmity, jealousy, ill-will and greed do not infect man’s mind; where compassion is the driving force of action; where all, including the least of living things are treated with fairness, consideration and love; where life in a world of material contentment, is directed towards the

45Dhammapada,201.
highest and noblest aim of peace, harmony and realization of the ultimate Truth: *Nibbāna*.  

Buddhism places men at the centre of all things where man can achieve his goals – whatever his wishes are (material and spiritual) through his own efforts. It teaches that all men have the right to enjoy all the good things in society according to their ability, capacity and exertion. Buddhism is a religion of free will in which there is no idea of force to follow and practise its own tenets. Instead of discouraging all kinds of blind faith, superstition and unreason, Buddhism encourages and believes in man’s potential for achieving the goal: material or spiritual: by his own efforts.

Buddhism, in fact, does not ignore the material and economic welfare of people. The Buddha was very much interested in the mundane happiness of men. To him, “real happiness and welfare of people was not perfect without leading a pure life based on moral and spiritual principles. But he realized that leading such a life was hard in unfavourable material and social conditions.”

The idea of social welfare thus must go hand in hand with material (economic) and ethical achievement. Besides, it should also be based on human rights, justice, freedom, morality and democracy. As remarked by Prof. K.N. Jayatilleke, “There is a social ideal which is broadly conceived of as ‘the well being or happiness of multitude or mankind. Here ‘well being and happiness’ is conceived of both materially and spiritually. The ideal society in which this well-being and happiness will prevail in an optimum form is conceived of as both socialistic, being founded on the principle of equality, and democratic, as affording the best opportunities for the exercise of human freedom. Such a society is also just, as it is based on principles of righteousness.” Man thus should not deviate from the path of his own social obligations, and righteousness but should try to seek a balance between material and spiritual values.

In fact, Buddhist ethics hold that material welfare is not an end in itself, but is only a means to an end – a higher and nobler end. It is an indispensable means for achieving a higher purpose for Man’s

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happiness. Thus Buddhism recognizes the need of certain minimum conditions, and believes that spiritual development cannot come about without being fostered by certain material factors.

In Buddhist Scriptures we find several sermons of the Buddha instructing his lay disciples about the virtues which lead to material and economic welfare. One of these teachings, for example, is known as “Virtues conducive to temporal welfare – Ditthadham mikhaththa samvattanika Dhamma. When one constantly practises these virtues, they enable one to succeed in worldly life bringing in prosperity, welfare and happiness. There are four such segments of virtues. They are:

1. Being endowed with energy (Uţthāna Sampadā)
2. Being endowed with vigilance for protection (Ārakkha Sampadā)
3. Association with good people (Kalyānamittatā)
4. Leading a balanced life (Samajīvitā).

Given below is brief discussion of this point so as to highlight their relevance for the present study:

1. To succeed in life one must be filled with enthusiasm and energy. One must have first, ambition and a strong desire to succeed. One must strive to be the best in one’s duties. Only those who work hard will succeed. Greater success requires greater power. The Buddha explains “Herein by whatsoever activity a clansman makes his living, whether by the plough, by trading or by cattle -- herding, archery or as a rajah’s man, or by any of the crafts -- he is deft and tireless, gifted with an inquiring turn of mind into ways and means; and is able to arrange and carry out his job. This is called achievement in alertness or to be endowed with energy”.

2. The second virtue advises men to be vigilant about what they earned or possessed. They must know how to use their wealth properly. Then it will give them maximum benefits. To quote the Buddha’s words, “Herein, whatsoever wealth a clansman gets together by work and zeal, collects by the strength of his arm, earns by the sweat of his brow and justly obtains in a lawful manner- such he husbands by watch and ward, thinking, “Now how can I arrange so that Rajahs may not get this wealth out of me, nor thieves filch it, nor fire consume it, nor water carry it off, nor ill-disposed heirs make off

53 Aţguttara-Nikāya 4. 188.
54 Aţguttara-Nikāya 4. 188.
with it." This is called achievement in wariness or vigilant protection.

3. To know how to choose good friends, companions and associates is also no less important for achieving the desired success. Friends can either bring prosperity or ruin in one’s life depending upon whether they are good or with a virtuous person. He indicated “Herein, in whatsoever village or market-town a clansman dwell, he consorts, converses, engages in talk with householders or householder’s sons, young men reared in virtue, old men old in virtue, full of faith, virtue, charity and wisdom. He emulates the fullness of faith in such as are full of faith; he emulates the fullness of virtue in such as are full of virtue; he emulates the fullness of charity in such as are full of wisdom”.

4. Leading a balanced life means neither being too frugal nor extravagant. One must spend on something/s that are essential, useful and satisfying. One should not be carried away by the lures and high fashion of the day. One’s life should be exemplary, free from pretension and harm. Living in this way ensures protection of whatever wealth’s has been acquired and also its proper utilization. The Buddha indicated such balanced livelihood as follows:

“Herein a clansman while experiencing both gain and loss in wealth continues his business serenely, not unduly elated or depressed. Thinks he; Thus my income, after deducting the loss, will stand (at so much) and my out goings will not exceed my income, just as one who carries scales, or his apprentice, knows, on holding up the balance, that either by so much it has dipped down or by so much it has tilted up....but realizes that after allowing for the loss his income will stand at so much and that his out goings will not exceed his income. If these clansmen have but small earnings and living on a grand scale, it will be rumoured of him. This clan’s man eats his wealth like a fig -- tree glutton. And if his earnings are great and he lives meanly, rumour will say of him: This clansman will die like a travelling. Wherefore this clansman... continues his business serenely... knowing that his out goings will not exceed his income.”

Thus the Buddha stressed on the importance of economic factors and moral conduct as necessary for the welfare of society. In

55 Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4. 188.
56 Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4. 189.
57 Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4. 189.
Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta\textsuperscript{58} of Dīgha-Nikāya it is clearly declared that poverty is the cause of immorality, crimes and corruption such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, adultery, etc. The Kūṭadanta Sutta\textsuperscript{59} of the same Dīgha-Nikāya further points out that the method of suppressing crime through punishment was futile and unsuccessful. In order to eradicate those crimes and corruption, first of all the economic welfare of the people must be improved. The material needed for cultivation such as grain, land, etc., should be provided to farmers. Business men and traders should be provided with capital and adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed. Unemployed ones should also be provided with a suitable job according to their specialization and skills. When people are properly employed, earning income sufficient for a living, then social problems will gradually be eradicated. Then social problems will gradually be eradicated. Then harmony, welfare and peace will set in such a society.

The concept of social welfare is born out of the intention of creating happiness and peace in society. That is why the Buddha gives the five ethical conduct rules for those who wish to pursue the Buddhist ideals. There are the five precepts. These fundamental moral conduct rules are universal. They are not limited to Buddhists only. Anyone who requires real peace and happiness for one-self, his near and dear ones and the whole society at large can follow them. These precepts are worth examining. They are:

1. Abstention from killing any living being,
2. Abstention from taking what is not given,
3. Abstention from adultery,
4. Abstention from speaking falsely,
5. Abstention from intoxicating drink.\textsuperscript{60}

These are to be discussed in detail in the sequel. The practise of these moral principles (Pañca sīla) helps one to cultivate five ennobling virtues which correspond to each of the precepts. These five ennobling virtues are:

1. Non-violence, loving-kindness and compassion.
2. Non-attachment and generosity.
3. Contentment and faithfulness.
4. Truthfulness.

\textsuperscript{58} Dīgha-Nikāya 2.399-402.
\textsuperscript{59} Dīgha-Nikāya 1.133–141.
\textsuperscript{60} Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4. 188.
5. Mindfulness, carefulness and clarity of mind.\textsuperscript{61}

These precepts when practised diligently and with conviction will naturally lead to the development of a prudent attitude to one’s own talent and wealth. Such an individual will foster the emergence of a healthy society. Such a society will be devoid of the social evils of violence, crime, hatred, distrust, dishonesty, immorality.

Having examined the general characteristics of \textit{Santi} (Peace) in Buddhism in this chapter, we will elucidate the concept of \textit{Santi} (peace) in \textit{Theravāda} Buddhism in detail in our forthcoming chapters. There we will endeavour to elaborate both inner and outer peace, i.e. internal peace or \textit{Lokuttara Paramattha Santi} and external peace or \textit{Lokiya Santi} in the Buddhist teaching.

\footnote{Dīgha-Nikāya 3.235.; Āṅguttara-Nikāya 3. 203,275.; Vibhaṅga.285.}