CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Significance of the Research

All human beings have the same nature that is, fearing of disaster. They all love themselves but are afraid to die. Human beings are trying to fulfill their lives with happiness and avoid suffering as much as they could. Being confronted with disaster, human beings fight and struggle strongly in order to be free from it because they would like to live happily and peacefully. It can be said that peace is the supreme goal of all human beings.

Although human beings prefer peace, many wars and violence in various forms have occurred in our world now and then. History shows that our world has two major world wars. The World War I was a global military conflict that took place mostly in Europe between 1914 and 1918. It was a total war which left millions dead and infrastructure destroyed. Twenty-one years later or in 1939, World War II occurred and ended in 1945. Comparing with the previous one, this caused worse damages and killed a greater number of people.¹

Cold War was the struggle that emerged after World War II between capitalism and communism. It lasted from about 1947 to 1992. Since the formal ending of the Cold War, the world is still confronting various forms of wars. Nuclear weapons are developed by many countries throughout the world while the ideological conflicts still occur until now. The most crucial one is the conflict between the US and some groups of the radical terrorists causing the terrorism war, causing terror in the minds of people thereby losing their peace of mind.

On the other hand, there are new forms of economic and cultural wars. This brings about sufferings and damages to many people in the world and subverts values and good characteristics of various countries. This is the new strategy used to seek for colony in the present era.

¹ Andrzej Sitkowski. UN peacekeeping: myth and reality. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc. 2006. p. 27.
In addition to the war at the world level, the minor wars in various forms still occurred constantly and after each war there are sorrows and destructions.

Now, we focus on the minor conflicts and violence including the individual level. People in the society have different conflicts caused by several factors such as thought, ideology and interests. This often leads to violence in various extents from a family to a community and to a nation. And often, it leads to violence in various extents. This violence is always followed by sufferings and damages.  

Focusing on individual level, peace in the sense of inner happiness and tranquility, it was obvious that people lacked peace in every sense. In the present era, there is extreme materialism, capitalism and consumerism, prevailing in the minds of the people. This leads to competition, gaining advantage by unfair means and living life fast forward. This causes crisis in various ways. On the other hand, people abandon an abstract value and mind development. It makes lives loose a dimension of value and happiness and tranquility of mind.

Because of deterioration and terror of war and violence in various forms and inner unhappiness of life from lacking of peace in mind, people are seeking and striving for peace worldwide. Trying to seek for peace has brought about many concepts, theories, means, and organizations.

1. The Concept of Peace in Buddhism

Buddhism derives from the Buddha’s enlightening of the natural truth. Buddha’s enlightening made him attain purity, light and peacefulness; and it was getting rid of all defilements that caused sufferings and chaos to oneself and others. Then it led to establishing of Buddhism, the way of good, happy and peaceful life.

Buddhism accepts nonviolent deeds; according to the Buddha’s saying, “Nonviolence is the happiness in the world”. Buddhism does not support all kinds of killings and harming other people. Therefore, the Five Precepts are presented as the fundamental rule for the Buddhist. Also, Buddhism teaches loving kindness and tolerance, which is the universal ethics for peace.  

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Buddhism realized the importance of peace. The Buddhists are taught, “There is no bliss higher than peace”\textsuperscript{4}. This religion requests people to study the concept of peace as it mentions that “It is peace that must be studied by all”\textsuperscript{5}. Buddhism vehemently teaches peace in many spheres such as politic, economic and education. In the history, there is no war in the name of Buddhism at all because this religion believes in peace and harmony. Buddhism is widely known as the religion of peace.

Buddhists believe that the Buddha (meaning “the awakened”) awakened to the laws of the universe, which are said to be operating eternally, whether the Buddha discovered them or not. The most fundamental among these laws is the law of karma, or, Buddhist terminology, dependent origination, which explains the genuine condition of things that exist in the universe. In its simplest straightforward form, dependent origination claims that anything (including sentient and insentient beings) can only exist in relation to everything else; if the causes of its existence disappear, then it ceases to exist. Nothing can exist on its own and everything is dependent on other things. All elements, all entities, all phenomena are thus related directly and indirectly to one another in the universe. Any change in this huge interconnected compound of existence would definitely, eventually exerts influence on everything else. Derived from the principle of dependent origination is the Buddhist view of the cosmic world and the human being.\textsuperscript{6}

At the macro level, the universe is represented and seen from a Buddhist viewpoint as a network of jewels, an interconnected and interdependent web of nodes, each of which simultaneously reflects all other hundreds of thousands of nodes in the web. All other nodes would simultaneously reflect this specific node. This network is named “the Indra’s Net” in the Avatamsaka Sutra.\textsuperscript{7} Each node can contain another web-like universe within itself and so forth with an infinite number of webs, i.e. universes. In this vast, endless cosmos, everything is still interrelated even in the most remote sense. According to the Buddhist beliefs, many of us cannot see or be aware of

\textsuperscript{5} Majjhimanikaya upariipannasa, p. 328.
this relatedness as we are confined by all sorts of limitations due to our past experiences and actions. Yet the connections are always there.

Down to the micro level, the human being is viewed as a string of processes governed by the principle of dependent origination. Since everything within a human being (including physicality and thoughts) depends on other things to exist, nothing within this human being is genuinely independent (autonomous). This doctrine of no-self (Pali: anatta; Skt. anatman), however, does not rule out the existence of temporary aggregates capable of responding to environmental stimuli, i.e., our body and mind. Also, it recognizes the diversity among all beings and the uniqueness of each since each being undergoes constant changes while responding and reacting in its own way to all other beings and things around. The ever-changing quality in any beings denotes a vast capacity for change and development possible in either directions, for better or worse. Yet the potentials to transform the status quo are always looming in the horizon.

The principle of dependent origination and the Buddhist view of the universe and the human beings undergird an imperative for people who realize the interdependent nature of their existence and the interconnection among all things — they would develop a strong sense of responsibility for their own behaviors, as well as appreciation and empathy for others. It is from this realization of the true nature of existence that non-harming, compassionate, altruistic action would arise. In the openings of many sutras, the Buddha, the one who awakened to the cosmic reality, is described as naturally expounding four basic mental faculties (Brahmaviharas, “Divine Abodings”; also named appamanacetovimutti, “immeasurable deliverance of mind”): loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha). The Buddha teaches that these four mental faculties, together with the Four Noble Truths, are to be cultivated by all Bhikkhus (Skt. Bhiksus) and later all Buddhists through reflecting upon the sentient beings of infinite numbers who are on their way to become a Buddha³. Yet the altruistic mental faculties are combined with the wisdom developed along with the gradually deepening reflection. This is the guiding principle of all Buddhist practices—the middle way. Through these

mindful actions conducted with moderation can an ideal Buddhist state of existence come true-living in harmony with everything (sentient or non-sentient) in the universe.

This Buddhist way of looking at the world comes, in the opinion of Johan Galtung, a Norwegian peace studies pioneer, closest to the one dynamic, complex peace theory he proposes, in which the world is “precisely a process based on diversity in symbiotic (mutually influential) interaction.” In this world of multi-leveled plurality, according to Galtung, peace is not a stable, end state but a more interactive process of a series of changing and balancing acts, an on-going dialectic between our actions and the world. This contingent view of peace, as shared by many peace scholars and activists in the field, is similar to what Buddhist perceives peace to be. In fact, the complexity and the collectiveness in causes leading to peace or war have long been recognized in the morphological construction of those words. According to Sanskrit dictionaries, the words samnipata, samgri, and samgama, all refer to the concept of peace. These words share the root samvii meaning people do things together, which is also shared by the Sanskrit word referring to war (samit). On the basis of this morphological derivation, both peace and war are produced by the collective, rather than individuals. No single or simple explanation of what builds peace or create war would suffice.

The view of peace as a collective product is well in line with the Buddhist worldview based on the principle of dependent origination which emphasizes the mutual influence of all the elements involved in any situation. With this interdependent frame of reference, Buddhists would prefer a holistic view of peace, instead of peace in separate contexts such as schools, families, or the environment. This is again very close to what many peace studies scholars have advocated as the ultimate vision of peace. From the holistic perspective, the connection between the concept of negative and positive peace becomes clear and imperative in the light of

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the Buddhist law of nature, dependent origination. Absence of war and direct violence only constitutes a temporary peace if there is no justice present in the socio-economic international structure. The injustice and the violence causing suffering in every other node in the web of existence would inevitably and eventually weigh the negative peace away. Though the negative peace is only temporary, unstable and fragile, it is absolutely indispensable on the way to the positive peace. Since each human being and each level of systems are interconnected, to create a positive peace compels efforts of everyone at every level of human structures. The Buddhist view of the interconnected world demands that the ideal of world peace is less rhetoric at the negotiation tables among some “superpowers” in the international level than starting a personal transformation of one’s daily living. And this peacemaking effort is a continued striving at the every very moment because of the dynamic, constant changing nature of all the possible causal forces in this world.

2. The Concept of Democracy in the Buddhist Worldview

As both terms, "Buddhism" and "democracy", are very broad, this chapter will limit their scope.

The term "Buddhism" here will be limited to only Theravada Buddhism, that is, to the teaching of the Buddha found in the Tipataka and clarified by the traditional commentaries of the Theravada School. To open to Mahayana Buddhism would add more and more later scriptures whose canonical list varies from school to school within the Mahayana tradition.

As for the term "democracy", we must distinguish between a "democratic regime" and the "democratic spirit" in a regime. It is possible to have a democratic regime with an absolutist spirit, and an absolute regime with a democratic spirit, not to mention regimes that use the name "democratic" for purposes of obfuscation. For this chapter to take the term "democracy" for the government or regime would be anachronistic, because in the time of the Buddha, such an idea would have seemed impossible and absurd. Hence, our topic, "Buddhism and democracy" is possible only

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if we limit our consideration to the "democratic spirit" as far as it can be found in Buddha’s teachings and practices.\textsuperscript{14}

3. Some Preliminary Remarks

1. The Indians of Buddha’s time could know only two types of regime: absolute monarchy with one absolute king at the head of the state, and oligarchic monarchy with several kings at the head of the state, but close joint authority as absolute as in the first regime.

Rajagrh is an example of an absolute monarchy, while Kapilavatthu (Buddha’s original state) and Ves\textsuperscript{1}li are examples of the oligarchic monarchy states. Buddha never showed a preference for one or the other of these political regimes, but gave guidelines to be followed by the people of both regimes.

2. Buddha had no intention of teaching politics. He seems to have had no preference for any regime or form of government. Any form may be good if it is exercised in a democratic spirit, conforming to His religious teachings; it may also be bad if it counteracts His religious teachings which are required necessarily for religious persons. The only interest of His religious teaching is to lead His followers from a way of life of suffering to one of real happiness.

3. Though Buddha never seemed to denounce the existing absolutism of His lifetime, He established the Sangha--the community of Buddhist monks--which could be considered model for later democratic regimes. Though the word "democracy" was never mentioned in the government of His monks, we can learn His democratic spirit through the process of governing and the regulations of the community which issued from that process.

4. The Democratic Spirit in Buddhism

The Establishment of the Sangha:

The regulations of the Sangha are not a ready-made set prepared before its start, as St. Benedict or St. Francis of Assisi might have done for the Christian monastic orders.

Buddha started his Sangha without any prior regulations. This is understandable, because as founder of His own religion He had no need to obtain

approval from a superior. He was free to evolve his attitude regarding community life, which in the end would develop a democratic character. From the acceptance of the first member of his Sangha it is clear that He emphasized the importance of the quality of life through teaching and formation.15

After Buddha’s enlightenment, He directed His attention first of all to persuading the Pancavaggi (the Group of Five) to enter into His way of life. He preached to them His first sermon, known as Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, at their residence, the Isipatana Marigadayavana or Deer Garden, in Banares State. After the sermon only one of the five, Kondanna understood thoroughly the meaning of life and requested to be admitted as His follower. Buddha accepted him by saying "Come, O Bhikkhu, well-taught in doctrine, lead a holy life for the sake of the complete extinction of suffering."1 In this way Kondanna was admitted as the first Venerable Buddhist Monk. During the first rainy season, 60 monks were admitted by Buddha Himself into His monastic order or Sangha.

During this earliest period, there were practically no regulations, for all the monks had good will and a firm intention to follow the life-style of Buddha Himself. All were under the direct inspiration of Buddha who presided like a loving Father over his beloved sons.

One of the Prescriptions of Buddha, for example, runs as follows: "I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that only a learned, competent Bhikkhu who has completed ten years, or more than ten years, may confer the Upasampada Ordination."16 In such a way, more and more regulations were prescribed by Buddha, to be observed by all the Bukkhus of His Sangha.

The democratic spirit during this period was one of equality among the monks who might come from any caste and status in society: princes, nobles, brahmins, vaisayyas and outcasts. All became equal once they were ordained monks. They were differentiated, how-ever, according to their years of ordination: those later ordained had to be the first to pay respect to those earlier ordained because of the supposition that the earlier ones had more experience in the monastic life than did the later ones.

5. During the Experimental Period

16 Ibid., p. 178.
As more and more people requested to be admitted into the Sangha, the elder monks were delegated to perform the ceremony of admission and also to take the responsibility of training and supervising the novices. We do not know if Buddha delegated such powers to only one monk or to a set of monks for each community. Each delegation had to take responsibility for the community under its care in a spirit of paternal love and under the general control of Buddha Himself.

It is not surprising that during this transitory period, with the rapidly increasing number of new monks to be admitted and trained, together with the new experiences each community of monks encountered, decisions had to be made for uniformity of conduct among the monks. After consultation with the senior monks, Buddha declared one after another the regulations of the whole Sangha. It can be said that most of the actual Sangha regulations resulted from particular cases which occurred to the Sangha at different times. It is believed that Ananda, Buddha’s cousin and one of the senior monks or Theras, had a good memory so as to be able to remember all the regulations and the particular circumstance that gave rise to each of them. Only after Buddha’s death were the collection of regulations reported and the Theras helped Him analyze and rearrange them into a systematic collection, known later as the Vinaya Pitaka.¹⁷

6. Final Development of Sangha

After a certain period of experimentation with the Sangha Organization through delegations under the direct control of Buddha Himself, Buddha saw that his Sangha had matured sufficiently to stand on its own feet. He let it go, being conscious that in time He would have to leave it behind—though surely it would have been better to see the result while He was living with them, so that, had any difficulty occurred, He would be able to suggest a wiser solution. He transferred His absolute authority over the Sangha to all the members of Sangha, so that they might all together decide how to apply the Sangha regulations to each particular case. These were the regulations all of them consented to accept in common as their Constitution on the day of their ordination into the Sangha.¹⁸

Buddha then convened the Bhikkhus and proclaimed to them this Announcement or ํatti:

Let the Sangha, reverend Sirs, hear me. This person N.N. desires to receive the Upasampada ordination from the venerable N.N. with the venerable N.N. as his Uppajjhaya. If the Sangha is ready, let the Sangha confer on N.N. the Upasampada ordination with N.N. as Upajjhaya. This is the ํatti (announcement). Let the Sangha, reverend Sirs, hear me. This person N.N. desires to receive the Upasampada ordination from the venerable N.N. The Sangha confers on N.N. the Upasampada ordination with N.N. as Upajjhaya. Let anyone of the venerable brethren who is in favor of the Upasampada ordination of N.N. with N.N. as Uppajjhaya be silent, and anyone who is not in favor of it, speak. And for the second time I thus speak to you: let the Sangha etc. . . . (as before). And for the third time I thus speak to you. Let the Sangha, etc. . . . (as before). N.N. has received the Upasampada ordination from the Sangha with N.N. as Uppajjhaya. The Sangha is in favor of it, therefore it is silent. Thus I understand.19

Surely this kind of democracy is a strict one, for any decision of the Sangha requires a unanimous vote. As to be silent at the moment of the vote means a vote in favor, such voting respects any kind of minority.

Such a strict democracy can be practiced within the Sangha because we can presuppose that all and each one of the monks has been well formed and has a good intention for the common welfare of the Sangha. As such democracy is appropriate to the Sangha, it has progressed continually to today.

It is to be noted that by this particular democracy, the Sangha members can vote only for the applications of regulations to particular cases. Buddha did not allow them to vote for the abolishment of the Sangha. As for the votes for change, Buddha allowed them only for minor regulations and still required a unanimous vote. During the Buddha’s lifetime, no such voting had ever been heard of. However, this allowance was like a time bomb within the Sangha, awaiting explosion at any time after Buddha’s death.

The adjective "minor" is very imprecise when it qualifies the noun "precept". Any change of precept with the intention of "adaptation for the better" can be considered a "minor precept". Such interpretation happened many times after the death of Buddha, leading to the split of Buddhism into Hinayana and Mahayana, and to the split of each into a number of sects until today.

7. Characteristics of Buddhist Democracy

Buddha’s words are the final appeal. Buddha did not delegate any person or any group of persons to approve the actions, nor to modify the regulations. At His death, the oral teaching of Buddha came to an end. No one had the right to add or to subtract a word of Buddha. What disciples can do is to interpret and clarify the Buddha’s words. Buddha’s words are like a constitution which came from Buddha alone. He might consult in order to obtain opinions, but He always gave the final decision, and no one could change it.

Therefore the democracy of the Buddhist Sangha is limited to the application of the regulations, and does not extend to making and modifying the regulations, except when a regulation is minor and the community unanimously gives it consent by silent vote.20

This means that the Sangha government is absolutist in the formation of the Constitution, but democratic in its application. The Mahaparinibbana Suttanta expresses the vision and the reason of Buddha:

I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine in respect of the truths. Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as a closed-fist teacher who keeps some things back. Surely, Ananda, should there be any one who harbors the thought, ‘It is I who will lead the brotherhood’, or ‘The order is dependent upon me’, that is that he should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the order. Now the Tathagata, Ananda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the order is dependent upon him.21


Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves.

It may be, Ananda that in some of you the thought may arise, ‘The word of the master is ended, and we have no teacher more.’ But it is not thus, Ananda, that you should regard it. The truths and the rules of the Order which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you.

It is to be noted that the Sangha Constitution or the Vinaya should be distinguished from the Universal and Eternal Dhamma which cannot be determined at will or modified by any convenience or inconvenience. Only the Vinaya can be modified according to their appropriateness to the circumstances. Nevertheless, even here He allowed for modifications with regard only to the minor Vinayas.

All monks have equal rights regardless of family background or personal prestige. In the Indian context of Buddha’s time, caste discrimination was taken strongly into account. But Buddha’s Vinaya went against the current and this became the strong point of His Sangha Community. People of all castes found equal right of recognition in His Sangha and equal right to the perfect purification or Nibbana status. Read the following passage and imagine a triumphant tone of Buddha in pronouncing it:

Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great rivers that is to say, the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Aciravati, the Sarabhu, and the Mahi when they have fallen into the great ocean, renounce their name and lineage and are there forth reckoned as the great ocean.

Just so, O Bhikkus, do these four castes the Khattiyas, the Brahmins, the Vessa, and the Suddas, when they have gone forth from the world under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata, renounce their names and lineage, and enter into the number of the Sakyaputtiya Samanas. 22

Any monk who has been such for a lesser period is to venerate the older one. This means that an outcast monk is to be venerated by a monk from the Brahmin caste, if the former has a longer period of monkshood. Such a practice could not be imagined at that time outside the Buddhist community.

A fraternal democracy is recommended. Buddha recommended six conditions for his monastic community. Buddha seems to have known how difficult this was, for in stating this He did not use the categorical imperative, but a persuasive form:

So long as the brethren shall persevere in kindness of action, speech, and thought among the saints, both in public and private so long as they shall divide without partiality, and share in common with the upright and the holy, all such things as they receive in accordance with just provisions of the order, down even to the mere contents of a begging bowl so long as the brethren shall live among the saints in the practice, both in public and in private, of those virtues which are productive of freedom, and praised by the wise; which are untarnished by the desire of future life, or by the belief in the efficacy of outward acts; and which are conductive to high and holy thoughts so long as the brethren shall live among the saints, cherishing, both in public and in private, that noble and saving faith which leads to the complete destruction of the sorrow of him who acts according to it. So long may the brethren be expected not to decline but to prosper so long as these six conditions shall continue to exist among the brethren, so long as they are instructed in these six conditions, so long may the brethren be expected not to decline, but to prosper.  

Unus intersperse (one among equals) democracy is an ideal of the Sangha. Buddha’s words: "Think not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood" show that, though the eldest in years of monkshood is venerated by all the other monks, he is not by any means the leader of the whole community in the administrative affairs. He is only one among equals. To conduct an administrative affair, any monk of any number of years of monkshood may be chosen by the community. He is still one among the equals and has to venerate those monks of his community who have been monks for a longer period.

8. Buddhist Perspective on Causes of Violence/Conflict/War

Buddhism, being a religion with a claim of the reality of existence, has well acknowledged causal forces that could constitute the hindrance to a harmonious living on every level of human actions. Violence and conflict, from the perspective of Buddhist principle of dependent origination, are, same with everything else in the

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world, a product of causes and conditions. To eliminate violence and conflict, all we have to do is to resolve the underlying causes and conditions. Using human body/consciousness as a division, the Buddhist analysis of the causes of violence and conflict is arrayed along three domains: the external, the internal, and the root.  

The External Causes of Violence and Conflicts

The Buddha looks at the external causes of conflict as consequences derived from a general orientation common to all living beings: avoiding harm and obtaining happiness. Anything contrary to this would result in disturbing one’s peace and lead to conflict. If people want to live an ultimately happy life with no harms toward themselves at all, the Buddha teaches, they should start with avoiding causing harm to others, physically and verbally at the personal level, since people are afraid of physical violence and resent harsh words; and the physical and verbal harm we inflict upon others usually leads to hate and conflicts that, in turn, would bring harm to us and cost our happiness. As stated in one Buddhist Scripture,

All fear death. None are unafraid of sticks and knives.  
Seeing yourself in others, Don’t kill don’t harm.  
Bad words blaming others. Arrogant words humiliating others.  
From these behaviors, Come hatred and resentment.  
Hence conflicts arise, Rendering in people malicious thoughts.

And these malicious thoughts would, in due term, result in harm upon us since none are really exempt from the influences of all others, including the people we harmed. The Buddhist principle of dependent origination crystallizes the imperative of many peace workers’ advocacy for nonviolent interpersonal communication and interactions as they are indispensable to what human pursue – a life of happiness. That is, practicing nonviolence in speech and action would ultimately benefit the practitioner.

In larger contexts, Buddhism recognizes the indirect form of violence in the social systems to be external causes of conflicts as well. Violence, conflict and war

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caused by injustice in political and economic structures bring even more harms to people on a grand scale. How to promote human rights and equality along the social, legal, political, and economic dimensions of our collective structures, not for the benefits of ourselves but for all’s, thus becomes part of the Buddhist mission to eliminate the potential causal forces of violence and peace. Recognizing the material needs for sustaining human living, Buddhism postulates the principle of Middle Way as a criterion in making decisions on all levels of activities and encourages frugality as a positive virtue. The relentless pursuit of economic development and personal property regardless of environmental or moral consequences is considered not in accordance with the Middle Way since it destroys the balance between consumption and resources, as well as material gain and spiritual growth.

The Internal Causes of Violence and Conflicts

Albeit external verbal and physical wrongdoings as well as social injustice are causing conflicts and violence, Buddhism contends that these behaviors and structures originate all from the state of human mind, since the violence and injustice are responses toward external stimuli produced by people’s inner mind operation. That is, the deeper causes of any conflict lie internally in the mental operations within each being. For example, confronted with the threat of physical and verbal harm, it is natural for us to feel fear, dislike, resentment, anger or hate. Out of this negative caste of mind, we would again resort to a violent response, and hence a conflict arises. Similarly, institutions or groups would respond to adversity with establishing policies or laws trying to protect whatever interest they perceive to be under threat or attack, which would cause conflicts since others’ interest and well-being might be undermined by these measures. In other words, physical and structural violence are the product of human mental status such as fear, anger, and hate, which are considered in Buddhism to be the internal causes to violence and conflicts.

Even when no threat of personal safety or collective interest is in presence, conflicts may occur, from the Buddhist perspective, as a result of our two major mental attachments to, first, subjective views, opinions and, second, the desire for materials, relationships. The stronger the attachment is, the more obsessive one would be, the more extreme behaviors one would engage, and the more severe the conflict would become. The attachment to views refers to insistence on the correctness of one’s own views, ideas, and ways of doing things. It would elapse into prejudice, polarity, negating other views and ways of life and ultimately negating people who are different from “us”. The Buddha sees this attachment to difference as one major cause of in-group and inter-group conflicts. Two thousand years later, this has also been identified by modern scholars as central to conflicts between ethnic, social, religious groups and individuals.\(^{30}\) The second major cause of conflicts, the attachment to desire, refers to want for material goods and longing for affection and belonging in human beings. It can easily go beyond the level of necessity and become greed. The greedy desire to have and to own drives individuals, groups, and nations into competition for what they want, followed by conflicts and even wars. As depicted in Vibhasasatra:

*For the sake of greedy desire, kings and kings are in conflict,*

*So are monks and monks, people and people, regions and regions, states and states.*\(^{31}\)

This competition is discerned by the Buddha as a lose situation:

*If we win, we incur resentment toward ourselves. If we lose, our self-esteem is hurt.*\(^{32}\)

None benefits from this competition derived from greediness. Even winners accrue negative feelings from the lost party that inevitably plants seeds of future conflicts. The internal cause of violence and conflicts as analyzed through a Buddhist perspective, corresponds to many peace educators’ emphasis on intrapersonal peace building and the United Nations’ campaign for a culture of peace. The focus on

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individual and inner transformation of attitudes on and interpretations of what happens externally, which in turn would motivate appropriate change in behaviors, is considered more effective in eliminating the causes leading to violence and conflicts on all levels of human interactions.  

**The Root Cause of Violence and Conflicts**

Behind the mental, behavioral and structural causes of violence and conflict, Buddhism goes even further to the ultimate fundamental cause leading to all the suffering inflicted by violence and conflict. Buddha attributes all our attachments, the resulting harming behaviors and the suffering hence caused, to the human ignorance (avijja), that is, we cannot see the world as it is and see our self as such. We are ignorant to the cosmic reality that everything in the world is inter-related, interdependent. Not adopting the Buddhist worldview, we thought we are separate from others as an independent entity: our views are different from theirs; our properties are certainly not theirs. Hence we develop our attachments to views and desires through the reinforcing notions of “me” and “mine.” We are not impartial in looking at things. We tend to focus on the harm that is done to us, instead of examining the whole event in its context with all the causes and conditions conducive to its happening. This ignorance to the principle of dependent origination alienates us from what really happens in the situation and the complex set of conditions around any given event, and thus rids us of the possibility of making correct assessment of the event and react accordingly in time. Without the lucidity to discern the causes, development and effects of specific events, we are inevitably causing conflicts and doing harm to others as well as ourselves all the time. Even wars between states come out of great fear and the collective ignorance. This ignorance is what Buddhism identifies as the very root cause of violence, conflict, and war, which prevents human beings to live a peaceful life.

9. **Approaches to Peace in the Buddha’s Teaching**

The Buddha’s teaching, though encompassing a wide range of complex belief systems, started with the Buddha’s first preaching which is conventionally equated

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with the essence of his teaching—the Four Noble Truths (catur-aryasatya). The first two truths discern the Causes of violence and conflict and the suffering caused thereby: first, life inevitably involves suffering/dissatisfaction (duhkhasatya); and second,

Suffering/dissatisfaction originates in desires (samudaya-satya). The third and the fourth prescribe the cure for this unpleasant way of living, that is, how to promote a peaceful way of living and ultimately live in peace: third, suffering/dissatisfaction will cease if all desires cease (nirodhasatya); and fourth, this state can be realized by engaging in the Noble Eightfold Path (marga-satya).

In fact, all the Buddhist practices are developed in accordance with the Four Noble Truths; that is, they are designed to enable people to alleviate this suffering and to realize a peaceful state of existence at all levels. In this section, the Buddhist approaches to peace can be categorized in four dimensions in the holistic/integrated model of peace in the field of peace studies: intra-personal, interpersonal, in-group, and inter-group.

The researcher was interested in the study of the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism: relevance in the contemporary world.

1.2 The Purpose of Research
1. To study the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism.
2. To study the approaches to peace and democracy in the Buddha’s teaching.
3. To study the processes of Buddhist peaceful and democratic conflict management.

1.3 Usefulness of the Research
1. To enhance our knowledge of concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism.
2. To enhance our knowledge of the approaches to peace and democracy in the Buddha’s teaching.
3. To enhance our knowledge of the processes of Buddhist peaceful and democratic conflict management.
4. Providing information for further study about peace.
1.4 The Scopes of Research

This study is a basic research that shall focus on the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism: relevance in the contemporary world. And it says to the approaches to peace and democracy in the Buddha’s teaching and the processes of Buddhist peaceful and democratic conflict management.

1.5 Methodology of Research

This research is a documentary research. Firstly, the researcher will study the data concerning peace issue from various documents in order to obtain general contents of peace. Then the study will be focused on the Buddhist documents, which are Tipitaka scripture and texts about Buddhism with the purpose of understanding and reflecting over the Buddhist concept of peace and democracy. After that, the researcher will investigate the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism: relevance in the contemporary world. Finally, all critiques will be presented in detail.

1.6 Review of Literature

The available research works and books are reviewed below in order to show which one can support this thesis; and in which way this thesis differs from those.

The research work-Religion and Peace: A Comparative Study of Peace in Brahmanism-Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism. By Caroonsak Chummanon investigates into the teachings and practices related to the concept of peace in Brahmanism-Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism. The focus of the research is on a study of the religious methods for peace; and review of the strategies for peace used by Mahatma Gandhi. It is found that these two religions consider the teachings, and the methods to attain peace as the core of practice. Brahmanism-Hinduism considers the source of peace to be Brahman or Paramataman, the ultimate aim of religious practices while Theravada Buddhism considers it to be Nibbana or Nirodha, the supreme state of blissfulness arising from the absolute extinction of suffering. The researcher also concentrates on the study of the concrete examples from Mahatma

Gandhi, who took the Satyagraha Path and Ahimsadharma as the guideline to develop individual and social peace.

In the thesis entitled Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's Concept of Peace: Its meaning and Application in the World Today by Phramaha Nagarin Kaeochotrung, it is found that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's concept of peace is happiness resulting from the morality of society members. His concept is influenced by the following three factors: the first factor is Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's education, the second one is the social, political and economic phenomena in Thai society, and the last one is his own life's purpose. There are three purposes of his teaching about peace: to realize the importance of peace, to participate in peace creation, and to promote morality. The ways to promote his concept are by promoting personal peace and by promoting social peace. In the world today, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's concept of peace can be applied to solve personal problems and Thai social problems: educational problems, social problems, political problems and economic problems. Moreover, it can be applied to improve Thai people, to develop Thai society, and to create an ideal Thai society.

Pimlaporn Wongchinsri has made a study about Thich Nhat Hanh. In her thesis titled An influence of Zen Buddhism that appeared on Thich Nhat Hanh's literary works, she presents how concepts arise and the way of practice in Zen Buddhism. Moreover, she shows how Zen Buddhism plays an important role in the process of literary creating and how it affects Thich Nhat Hanh's literature. From the study, it is found that Thich Nhat Hanh presented his literature through media to pass on sufferings and real situations of people and applies the Zen's practice concept to solve the problems. It is a study of the influence of Zen Buddhism on an entertainment literature of Thich Nhat Hanh. The study is not made on his concept of peace.

In Pham Van Minh's thesis titled-Socio-political philosophy of Vietnamese Buddhism: a case study of the Buddhist movement of 1963 and 1966\textsuperscript{38}, issues like the political activism of Vietnamese Engaged Buddhism in the 1960s, particularly the Struggle Movement for social justice and democracy of 1963 and the Peace Movement of 1966 are examined. It explores the Buddhist leaders' motives and their political means to deal with Saigon military government and senior advisors to the White House. The thesis sets out to prove that socially and politically Engaged Buddhism is inherent in the Buddhist tradition and not alien to Buddha's teachings. It also proves that Vietnamese Buddhism has always been engaged in peace since the dawn of Vietnamese history. The Buddhism Peace Movement is assessed in accordance with Buddhist principles such as non-violence and non-attachment to temporal power. Except a few minor incidents, it was found that the Buddhist leaders strictly adhered to the non-violent principle and Vietnamese Engaged Buddhism could have provided a political alternative, the Politics of Enlightenment, which could avert the unnecessary destruction of the Vietnam War.

Teekayuwat Sawasla-or has made a study about mindfulness and the mindfulness practice presented by Thich Nhat Hanh in his thesis titled-Analysis of Mindfulness Practice According to Thich Nhat Hanh's Approach.\textsuperscript{39} The study found that according to Thich Nhat Hanh, mindfulness is stopping, consciousness, awakening, recollection, awareness, mere recognition, attentiveness, heedfulness, observing mind and the ability to be present in the moment. Mindfulness is significant as the core teaching of Buddhism. Its significance is also in helping one to live in the present moment, being the foundation of all wholesome states until one reaches a state of enlightenment, being the root of peace in every level, and acting as the foundation for conflict solving and for having contentment. Thich Nhat Hanh’s mindfulness practice uses Satipatthana along with Anapanasati. One must practice with aimlessness, non-discrimination, compassion, and joy. The way of practice is: when sufferings caused by ignorance, arise the first thing to do is to alleviate the sufferings followed by practicing Samatha and Vipassana. Practicing with the Sangha, one will


\textsuperscript{39} Teekayuwat Sawasla. \textit{Analysis of Mindfulness Practice According to Thich Nhat Hanh’s Approach}. Unpublished M.A. Thesis of Chiangmai University, Thailand. 2008.
gain support from other practitioners together with critical self-reflection (Yonisomanasikara). The basic elements used when practicing with the Sangha are love, compassion, loving speech, deep listening and deep looking, which are in line with the teaching of Sangahavatthu. In addition, Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness practice is a kind of psychotherapy helping the practitioners to see their emotions to understand situations as they are. The means and methods used in mindfulness practice are similar to the ones used in Gestalt Psychotherapy School where mindfulness is the main emphasis. Deep listening is an important basis of counseling. Non-discrimination can be found in Transpersonal Psychology, assisting one to decrease egocentricity until the person becomes one with other beings. The practice of this tradition also establishes a mindful culture.

K. Satchidananda Murty and A. C. Bouquet have studied jointly about peace in their book titled Studies in the Problems of Peace40. The book is divided into three parts, the first part of the book by Dr. Bouquet gives an historical account of the progress of various movements for peace and the attitudes towards peace and war in the Hindu, Chinese, Judaeo-Christian and Islamic cultures. The views of men like Dante, William Penn, Grotius, Rousseau, Kant, Bentham and Tolstoy are summarized in this part. The second part by Dr. Murty starts with two essays in historical sociology dealing with the Hindu ideologies of War and Peace, and goes on to discuss the philosophies of ahimsa and forgiveness, like Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity and the thinking of Schweitzer and Gandhi. Other chapters deal with the sociology of political conflict in the west, the rise of nation-states and militarism, the romance of violence and the dynamics of terror; and the philosophies of revolution derived ultimately from Locke and Marx. A chapter is devoted to the exposition of the various psychological and anthropological theories of the causes of war. The last chapter in Part Two examines how in history, at certain times, periods of peace were achieved and then proceeds to identify the concepts on which peace could be founded. Homonoia, tolerance and universal ethics are found to be such key concepts. In the final part, Dr. Murty, inspired by Augustine and Leibniz, outlines some concrete plans.

which may pave the way for peace, while Dr. Bouquet examines the present situation and presents his views on how lasting peace could be secured.

In 2006, Blue Pine Books has published the book that is the most comprehensive on Buddhism and peace to date titled-Buddhism and Peace: Theory and Practice. The book is composed of the thirty-one articles presented at the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace in 1995. Thirty-one eminent scholars and activists among more than forty participants examined Buddhism and peace from the varying perspectives of their expertise. The two major Buddhist traditions, the Theravada and the Mahayana, are equally represented in this book. Likewise, a balance is struck in this book in terms of the number of articles dealing with theory and those concentrating on practice. The result is a collection of essential readings on the application of Buddhist wisdom for peace activists, scholars of religion, social scientists, and others in these troubled times, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike.

In his book-Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas, David Cortright, veteran peace activist and scholar, offers a definitive history of the human striving for peace and an analysis of its religious and intellectual roots. This authoritative, balanced, and highly readable volume traces the rise of peace advocacy and internationalism from their origins in earlier centuries through the mass movements of recent decades: the pacifist campaigns of the 1930s, the Vietnam antiwar movement, and the waves of disarmament activism that peaked in the 1980s. Also explored are the underlying principles of peace-nonviolence, democracy, social justice, and human rights all placed within a framework of realistic pacifism. Peace brings the story up-to-date by examining opposition to the Iraq War and responses to the so-called war on terror.

This is history with a modern twist, set in the context of current debates about the responsibility to protect, nuclear proliferation, Darfur, and conflict transformation.

1.7 Structure of Research

This thesis firstly seeks to apply the historical methodology to analyse the corpus of literature on the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism: relevance in

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the contemporary world. The thesis is arranged thematically in five chapters, and the conclusions from the study are spelt out in Chapter 6.

Chapter I: Introduction. It talks about significance of the research, the purpose of the research, the usefulness of the research, the scope of the research, the methodology of research, the review of literature, and the structure of research.

Chapter II: The Concept of Peace. It explores the concept of peace in general in order to get a whole view of peace study. It begins with the first issue ‘the meaning of peace’ in order to know what is peace according to peace democracy scholars’ definitions and explanations and how is it discussed. The second issue is ‘Types of peace. It is concerned with how peace can be classified. To know briefly about the origin and development of struggle for peace and its movements, the third issue-a brief history of peacemaking and peace movements is explored. An effort to understand and make peace brings about many concepts and theories that are surveyed in the fourth issue-the peace concepts and peace theories. The peace concepts include concept of justice for peace; concept of human rights for peace; concept of non-violence for peace; concept of peace education; concept of peace culture; concept of peace gender (woman); concept of peace media; concept of peace environment. As for peace theories, only some prominent of them are presented, namely the democratic peace theory, Johan Galtung’s peace theory. The fifth issue deals with the United Nations and peace. It shows the important role of the United Nations in dedicating to and keeping world peace as the international organization.

Chapter III: The Concept of Democracy. This chapter explains the definition and origin of democracy; main characteristics and features of democracy; types of democracy; principles of modern democratic rule; democratic institutions and actors; democracy as a value; citizens in a democracy; human rights and individual freedoms in a democracy and civil society and civic action in a democracy.

Chapter IV: The Concept of Peace and Democracy in Buddhism. This chapter discusses the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhist under the following issues: Meaning of peace (in order to know what peace in Buddhism is); kinds of peace (with the intention to know how does Buddhism classify peace); the teaching on the four noble truths and the problem of peace (how can the teaching on the four noble truths help to understand and help to manage the problem of peace effectively); Buddhism
and the causes of having no peace (it aims to find the causes of having no peace according to Buddhist perspective); the fundamental concepts as the factors to generate peace (it analyses the fundamental necessary concepts helping to generate peace); and the ways to peace and democracy it presents how Buddhism shows the way leading to peace, Buddhism and democracy, Buddhism in a democratic world and the Buddha and democratic principles.

Chapter V: *The Concepts and Processes of Buddhist Peaceful Conflict Management.* This chapter is an attempt to give a thorough and detailed description of Buddhist Dhamma principles for peaceful conflict management as appeared in the Buddhist Scriptures (Tipitaka, Attakathā, books, texts, and literatures etc. in Buddhism).

Chapter VI: *Conclusion.* This chapter gives a summary of the thesis, points for discussion and suggestions for further study of the concept of peace and democracy in Buddhism: relevance in the contemporary world.