

turmoil and crisis, it becomes difficult for people to coexist peacefully with their fellowmen. There is therefore, a great need for tolerance in the world today so that peaceful co-existence among the people of the world can be possible.

The world has bled and suffered from the disease of dogmatism and of intolerance. The land of many countries today are soaked with the blood needlessly spilled on the earth. Whether in religion or politics people have been conscious of a mission to bring humanity only to their own way of life and have been aggressive towards the ways of life of others.

Let us look back on the last century of highly publicized "Progress"... a century of gadgets and inventions. The array of new scientific and technical devices is dazzling... the mobile phone, facsimile, electric motors, aeroplanes, radio, television, computers, internet, space travel, satellites and electronic devices...

Yet in this same century the children of the earth who have developed all these inventions as the ultimate in progress, are the same people who have butchered millions of others by bayonets or bullets, gas or bomb. Amidst all the great "Progress", Where does the spirit of tolerance stand?

Our Duty

Today, more than at any other time in history, peace seems remote and has become the most unattainable commodity in the world. There have been wars and conflicts before, there have also been terrible tyrants and oppressive governments, but never have there been such forces of intolerance which inflict suffering on others around the globe. As Buddhists, we too have a great responsibility to support all right thinking men who endeavour to join hands to stop this madness which is preventing peace.

Is there a phase in human history when people are contented after getting what they desire? Is it not so that the more we feed our senses, the more the craving grows? How good will it

be if men can develop contentment that the Buddha had appreciated.

The Tragedy of War

Millions of innocent human beings now have to flee from their homelands as refugees. There are no words in the human vocabulary that can fully describe the sorrow and agony inflicted by war on the people. "War", according to Albert Einstein, "Is a savage and in-human relic of an age of barbarism". And he is right.

The Buddha stated: *Though one should conquer a million men in the battlefield, yet he, indeed is the noblest victor who has conquered himself.*

Conclusion

It is easy to kill, rob and threaten, but it takes greater strength to control the mind when it is influenced by anger and jealousy. Love and compassion are not symptoms of weakness but of strength. It takes a truly strong man to refrain from taking revenge.

Racial arrogance, religious discrimination, traditional and customary practices, language and cultural differences, political conflicts, superiority and inferiority complexes, capitalism and poverty are some of the main causes which arouse man's prejudice capable of persuading him to inflict violence and bloodshed on others. Selfishness or egoistic ideas will only further aggravate the situation.

Let Peace Prevail On Earth

by

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It is not so important to increase the numbers of those who label themselves "Buddhists", but it is important to increase the number of human beings who do not fear to speak out against war and reject hatred.

By realizing the dangerous situation of the world today, we hope that all people, irrespective of their religious denominations or beliefs, can contribute to peace and harmony.

Our collective task is to convince the world that peace is something which can be achieved not by conquering others, but by conquering the greed and hatred within us.

*Hatred does not cease by hatred;
By love alone does it cease.*

Such is the Buddha's advice to those who preach the doctrine of antagonism, setting men to war and rebellion against one another. Many people say that the Buddha's advice to return good for evil is impracticable. Actually, it is the only correct method to solve any conflict. This method was introduced by the great Teacher from His own experience.

Because we are proud and egoistic, we are reluctant to return good for evil, thinking that others may treat us as cowards. Some people even think that expressions of kindness, honesty, patience and gentleness are signs of weakness. But what harm is there if we could settle our problems and bring peace and happiness by adopting this cultured method and by sacrificing our dangerous egoism?

Overcoming Intolerance

Tolerance must be practiced if peace is to come to this earth. Force and compulsion will only create intolerance. To establish peace and harmony among mankind, each and everyone of us must first learn to practise the ways leading to the extinction of hatred, greed and delusion, the roots of all evil forces. Then tolerance and peace will come to this restless world.

Even today, intolerance is still being practiced in the name of religion, promising to provide short cuts to paradise. If Muslims really follow the concept of Brotherhood, if Christians live by the Sermon on the Mount, if the Hindus shape their life in oneness and if Buddhists follow the Noble Eightfold Path, definitely there will be peace and harmony in this world of ours. In spite of the invaluable Teachings of the great religious teachers people have still not realized the value of harmony and understanding. The intolerance that is practiced in the name of religion is disgraceful and deplorable.

Striving for Peace

Peace is always obtainable. The way to peace is not only through prayers and rituals. Peace

is the result of man's mental development, harmony with his fellow beings and with his fellow beings and with his environment. The peace that we try to introduce by force is not a lasting peace. It could be likened to a truce between the conflict of selfish desire and fleeting worldly conditions.

Peace cannot exist on this earth without the practice of kindness and tolerance. To be tolerant, we must have proper understanding, with unbiased mind.

The Buddha says, "*No enemy can harm one so much as one's own thoughts of craving, hate and jealousy.*"

Buddhism is a religion of understanding because it preaches a life of self-restraint and self-reliance. Buddhism teaches a life based not on rules, but on principles. Buddhism has never persecuted or maltreated those whose beliefs are different. The Teaching of the Buddha is such that anyone can practise the Noble religious Principles even without any religious labels.

The world is like a mirror; if you look at it with a smiling face, you can see your own, beautiful smiling face. On the other hand, if you look at it with a grim face, you will invariably see ugliness. Similarly, if you treat the world kindly the world will also certainly treat you in like manner. Learn to be peaceful with yourself and the world in return will also be peaceful with you.

Man's mind is given to so much self-deceit or egoistic ideas that he does not want to admit his own weaknesses. He will try to find some lame excuses to justify his wrong action so as to create an illusion that he is blameless. If a man really wants to be free from problems, he must have the courage to admit such weakness.

The Buddha says: *Easily seen are other's faults; hard indeed it is to see one's own faults.*

Greed and Hatred lead to Conflict

The history of mankind is a continuous manifestation of man's greed, hatred, pride,

jealously, selfishness and delusion. It is mentioned that during the last 3,000 years, men have fought 15,000 major wars. Is this the characteristic feature of man? What is his destiny? If they are really human how can they bring destruction to their fellow beings?

Although men, have discovered and invented many important things which people have not known before, they have also made great advances leading towards the destruction of their own kind by misusing this new discoveries. The world has become a store-house of military hardware as a result of a little game called "Military Superiority"

Treaties, pacts and peace formulae have been adopted and millions of words have been spoken by countless world leaders throughout the world who proclaim that they have finally found the way to maintain and promote peace on earth. But for all their efforts, they have not even succeeded in removing the threat to mankind. The reasons for this is that we have all failed to educate our young to truly understand and respect the need for selfless service and instil in them the danger of selfishness. To guarantee true peace, we must use every method available to us to educate our young to practise love, goodwill and understanding.

The Buddhist Attitude

We can happily say that for nearly 3000 years there has never been any serious discord or conflict created by Buddhists that led to war in the name of this religion. This is the result of the dynamic character of the concept of tolerance contained in the Buddha's teaching.

Buddhists should not be the aggressors even in protecting their religion. They must try their best to avoid any kind of violent act. Sometimes they may be forced to go to war by others who do not respect the concept of the brotherhood of man as taught by the Buddha. They may be called upon to defend their fellow men from aggression, and as long as they have not renounced the worldly life, they are duty-bound to join in the struggle for peace and freedom. Under these circumstances, they cannot be blamed for

their actions in becoming a soldier or being involved in defence.

However, if everyone were to follow the advice of the Buddha, there would be no reason for war to take place in this world. It is the duty of every cultured man to find all possible ways and means to settle disputes in a peaceful manner, without declaring war to kill his fellow men. The Buddha did not teach His followers to surrender to any forms of evil powers.

Such sentiments have been echoed in the teachings of other religious leaders who came before and after the Buddha, but the Buddha alone has stated in no uncertain terms that there can be no excuse whatsoever for attack or even retaliation. There is no excuse for aggression of any kind for the Buddhists. He says: "We should not be the aggressors but the defenders."

Humanity must work together

To obtain peace, we must share the richness of the earth. We should not deprive the living right of others. It is simply inconceivable that five percent of the world's population should enjoy fifty percent of its wealth, or that twenty-five percent of the world should be fairly well-fed and some over-fed, while seventy-five percent of the world is always hungry. Peace will only come when nations are willing to share, the rich to help the poor and the strong to help the weak, thus creating international goodwill.

The world cannot have peace until men and nations renounce political arrogance, religious intolerance and the greed for territorial control. Spirituality can affect the necessary change of heart and bring about the only real climate of peace and tolerance.

All religions teach people not to kill; but unfortunately this important religious principle is conveniently ignored. Some bring religious labels, slogans and banners into their battlefields. They do not know that by so doing they are only disgracing the good name of religion.

People are passing their days in fear, suspicion and insecurity. In this time of