

FROM VIOLENT COMBAT TO PLAYFUL EXCHANGE OF FLOWERS

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I am very pleased to welcome you to the fourth International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace in cooperation with the Mongolian Buddhists and the ABCP Headquarters. I hope that your endeavors as organizers of this conference and people who seek to establish global peace will always be successful.

Lord Buddha said that there is no greater bliss than peace. There is not a single theologian who does not espouse this. Lord Buddha urged us to love all beings in the six realms like a mother who loves her only son. The Old Testament of the Bible teaches the love of one's neighbor as oneself. I believe that there is an identical lesson in Islam. Since the concepts of love in Christianity and loving-kindness in Buddhism are central to the respective religions there is enough reason for humanity to love one another. Unfortunately, humanity does not choose to love and therefore makes mistakes. According to UN information published three years ago there have been over 150 wars in different parts of the world involving seventy countries in the period from 1945 to 1986. This has resulted in the deaths of approximately thirty million men, women, children and old

Buddhism and Nonviolent Global Problem-Solving

people. This occurred in the "peaceful years." This is a clear expression of jealous competition predominating over love. Its consequence is mistrust and over one thousand billion US dollars expended annually in the world for military purposes. If we take account of the world military expenditure, in every single minute almost one million US dollars are spent for military purposes. If we were to redirect these funds towards the elimination of hunger, the problem of illiteracy, and work for peace, our planet would be without hunger and without illiteracy. These powers could, if they were to not give this amount of money as charity to other countries, solve internal problems such as unemployment and other pressing difficulties.

Armament results in a freeze on sociocultural expenditure, a retardation of development, and the disintegration of the economy. Since armament aims at killing, it is also against the mercy of religion. However, this year the USSR and the USA did away with medium and short range missiles for the first time in the history of nuclear weapons. This is exemplary. I want to congratulate them for it. In this manner nuclear and other weapons must be eliminated in the future. Since ancient times humanity has aspired to disarm. The seventh century Buddhist poet Shendideva wrote:

May the rains of lava, blazing stones and weapons
from now on become a rain of flowers,

And may all battling with weapons
from now on be a playful exchange of flowers.

In the Old Testament of the Bible there is a passage that they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. I am fully confident, therefore, that this seminar, wishing for peace, can contribute considerably to a reduction in the present stock of weapons.

Opening Address

In my view, armament is the highest demonstration of immorality. There is a Latin proverb saying one should prepare for war if one wants peace. I think this idea is out of date since at this time the preparation for war means to destroy oneself and others completely. Is it possible to destroy oneself and others? Yes. Is it moral? No. I want to call for a morality of peace for the sake of peaceful living. The tradition of living in harmony with one another has been destroyed to a certain extent. By virtue of modern communication we watch and listen to good and bad developments in the world. These bad developments which have been heard and seen contribute to immorality the world over. In fact, I warn that immorality may succeed in destroying humanity before nuclear weapons do. I do not know whether there are statistics about immoral people of the world, but such statistics would undoubtedly frighten us.

There are several reasons for the immorality to which humanity is subjected. One is the chronic habit of one philosophy negating another. Another is the propaganda that divides the world into parts and makes each the enemy of the others. Further reasons are the great gap between the living standards of people, various prejudices, and so on. Please, dear scholars and venerables, consider this matter more seriously. We must implant in the minds of the masses the idea that we are one humanity living on only one planet. Basically each of us has an equal right to live a full life.

Nowadays one of the most important problems facing humanity is environmental degradation. This matter is being discussed at the United Nations. But there are no noticeable results to be seen and sensed. Every religion has wisdom for protection of nature. First of all, I want to dwell briefly upon the Buddhist way of protecting nature which I know a little about.

Before the arrival of western civilization our continent had not been destroyed except by cultivation of land for agricultural

Buddhism and Nonviolent Global Problem-Solving

purposes. Our ancestors bequeathed lofty mountains, clear water, dense forests, and a vast steppe to us, the present generation. However, we are to hand down excavated mountains, a hollowed steppe, polluted air, and unclear water to a succeeding generation. Aware of this, some Buddhists have been working for the protection of nature. Recently Thai Buddhists in cooperation with Tibetans living in India have conducted a dialogue on environmental protection. It was the first such work among Buddhists. This work should be linked with tradition. Buddhism arrived in Mongolia over two thousand years ago and elaborated the matter of nature protection. Now we have *shastras* [commentaries on *sutras*] on water, trees, earth, sun and moon. These *shastras* which mention many aspects of nature protection are very valuable. Mongolia is no exception in this matter. I hope that you all will not only speak about political security in Asia and the Pacific, but also about sociocultural and ecological security in this vast area. I hope you reach agreement on how to cooperate in solving these problems.

My colleagues told me that the organizers of this seminar aspire to a nonviolent method to peace. This is very inspiring. Tit for tat struggle has produced armaments which can destroy the world. Impatient husbands and wives may divorce each other only to lead a gloomy life. These are small examples, but they also have social consequences.

Everybody knows that all are interrelated in the world. We all live in separate countries and in separate families, but we live on one earth. We are linked with each other at least by trade. Therefore, it is not proper that one person's enjoyment is achieved through the suffering of another. We all must enjoy life together. To do so, we must take concerted action to solve various problems. In my view, this opportunity presents itself. In international relations there is now a turning point from confrontation to amity, from opposition to compromise. To further this tendency we must make our contributions.

Opening Address

May I express gratitude for your listening to my long address. I declare this seminar open.