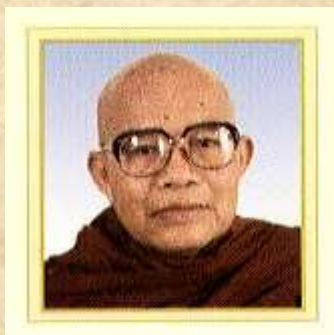


# WORLD PEACE

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What humanity needs today is peace in the world for as we know the situation in all parts of the world is very chaotic. If we read the newspapers, listen to the radio or watch the news on television, most of the things we things we read, hear and see contain violence, cruelty, violation of human rights and injustice. Even in countries where Buddhism is the main religion or state religion such problems are experienced, even though the Buddha's main teachings are development of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity within human society, The Buddha taught that men become noble by virtuous conduct and charitable deeds and become outcasts only by misconduct and miserliness, not by birth. Thus Buddhism offers rights, responsibilities, justice and dignity to human society. It is universally applicable and, offers freedom of thought and allows tolerance and respect towards others. Most of the world's religions teach the people to develop morality, love and respect o others, however, whatever we witness in this world indicates that we are moving in the wrong direction. The human ethic of morality is being ignored everywhere. It is, indeed, a rarity for a person to be able to live with dignity and be treated justly. Now we have to find out why things are happening like this and how this situation has come about. This is the one point we have to discuss in detail.

If we observe out Buddhist countries, morality and an ethical way of live is fast disappearing, the human qualities of righteousness, truth and justice are very

hard to find. According to the Buddha, the main cause of these problems is in the human mind. Whatever violence, cruelty and hatred we experience in our life is purely the result of the untamed condition of our mind.

*"There is no fire like lust, no grip like hate;  
no net like delusion, no river like craving "*

and *"If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, then suffering follows"* said by the Buddha. If we do not tame our mind no one can help us to live a happy and peaceful life. As the Buddha told us, it is a well directed mind that elevates one, not the endeavors of a mother, father or relative no matter how sincere they may be. If we study the conduct of our Buddhist communities we find that the majority of people practice Buddhist traditions alongside cultural influences involving superstitions or particular rites and rituals. Very few members of the community actually understand and practice what the Buddha really taught and wanted us to be. The Buddha always wants us to follow his teachings honestly not just through blind devotion to him. Therefore, every one, in Theravada Buddhism has to take the three refuges with the five basic precepts on every occasion in day to day life.

The three refuges are:

Budham Saranam gacchami,	I go to the Buddha as my refuge;
Dhammam Saranam gacchami,	I go to the teaching as my refuge;
Sanghamm saranam gacchami,	I go to the noble order as my refuge;

We regard the Buddhas as a great physician who can diagnose our disease or illness. The Buddha said there are two kinds of diseases, physical and mental. There are very few people who are free from physical disease for one week or one year or even a hundred years, just as there is no one free from mental disease even for one moment. Disease here means dis-ease. If something happens in our body or mind then we feel a disease, just like the person whose mind is overwhelmed with anger, desire, delusion or jealousy etc. then his or her mind is not at ease it is diseased.

We are all human beings suffering every moment, every day with these kinds of diseases, therefore, we must take refuge in the Buddha. The Buddha gave us the dhamma as medicine i.e. Sila-morality, Samadhi-concentration or control of the mind and Panna-Wisdom or purification of the mind. If we don

not use the Dhamma as our way of life, we will never become free from the round of suffering. Just as if the doctor gives us a medicine and we don't use it, but keep it in the shrine room as the precious stone, pray over it many times a day, will our disease be cured? If we don't apply the three teachings of the Buddha, how can we cure disease? In fact, we can not be called Buddhist as well. When we take refuge in the Noble order, it means we are following their path. Anyone, whether man or woman, ordained monk or layman become a Noble One through application of the teachings of morality, concentration and wisdom, we are following their path.

Thus, when we apply the teachings in daily life, only then are we truly taking refuge in the Buddha Dhamma and Sangha, we become Buddhist. Buddhism is not a religion of grace but a religion of practice, "You should work for your own liberation, for the tathagatas only show the way" says the Buddha. If one does not apply the teachings in day to day life, even if one says "Buddham saranam gacchami, dhammam Saranam gacchami and sangham saranam gacchami" a hundred times in a day is not a Buddhist.

Sila-morality, the foundation of training includes all the virtues of the honest respectable person, it has been identified with virtues in general, and purification of the body, speech and mind by refraining from unwholesome actions. It is usually understood as five moral precepts (Pancasila) which constitute the layman's definitive code of practical ethics. Man is a social being and develops his character in relation to the society in which he belongs, so whatever he does, leaves its impression not only on himself but also on that society. The practice of the moral precepts must, therefore, also leave their impression. The five fundamental moral precepts are:

1. Abstaining from the harming or taking of life.
2. Abstaining from taking what is not given
3. Abstaining from misusing the senses or sexual misconduct.
4. Abstaining from false speech
5. Abstaining from taking intoxicating drinks or drugs.

The moral conduct or precepts are built on the vast conception of loving-kindness and universal compassion. It will establish friendliness and the value of life not only between men, but also with all living beings. Samadhi-concentration is purity of the mind (citta-visuddhi). Through the practice of concentration one

can maintain a good standard of morality. It is a very essential practice to discipline one's own mind. Whatever crimes, violence or crudely happen in the world are because of untrained or untamed minds. So the practice of concentration is very important to live harmoniously in society.

**Panna**-Wisdom is the right understanding of life being impermanent, suffering and as the absence of a soul or ego, through wisdom one can uproot all traces of impurities which are latent in the mind as mental dispositions. It, therefore is total purification of the mind. When the mind is pure and free from ignorance, then one experiences the ultimate peace, the bliss of Nibbana and releases the truth within.

Nowadays we are talking a lot about loving-kindness and compassion, but we are not putting them into practice, as a result, national morality has declined to its lowest and it would be unfair to blame any individual person or group, we all have to accept our own responsibilities, The main cause of these problems is the human mind, the impure or wicked mind is the creator of all the world's crimes, violence and undesirable situations. So it is necessary for us to practice the Buddha's main teachings of not harming any living being doing good and purifying our minds through the practice of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, It is very common in all schools of Buddhism that the members of the order are engaged in material development, building pagodas, temples and the membership, but not teaching what the people need, yet they teach what people want to hear It will be wrong to judge whether Buddhism is developing or not on material growth. The judgement must be based on the application of the Buddhist principles.

To revive the Buddhist heritage in the Buddhist countries the first essential action is to have to discuss the practice of morality and find the way how we are going to switch the emphasis now placed on traditional customs, rites and rituals, to the living of the dhamma in every day life. In Theravada Buddhism, the recorded teachings of the Buddha in the Pali language and their translations are valuable; most monks understand the meaning of what the Buddha taught for human beings to experience happiness and peace of mind, but the majority of monks and those who know the Dhamma don't encourage the people to apply it. In Mahayana Buddhism, as we understand, there are many profound teachings of the Buddha translated into Chinese, it will be great benefit for many if

members of Sangha endeavor to understand them, explained in modern languages and encourage lay people to follow them.

If everyone in a country follows Buddhist principles then it would be impossible for any violence, cruelty and injustice to occur. Some may say that the main cause of these problems are political, economic or social structures, but for me the political, economic and social factors are not the primary causes. If the majority of people practice Buddhist principles then the politicians and rulers will emerge from that society and will in turn exercise such qualities in government and their own social lives. Therefore I would like to say that all these problems are based in the human mind. The Buddha advised us not to do any evil rather to do good for humanity and purify our minds. If many people in the world follow this advice honestly we can hope for everlasting peace and happiness in the world.

It is very important to preserve and to rebuild the Buddhist heritage as we witness the Buddhist principles declining every day where Buddhism has a stronghold. One of many reason is the way we practise Buddhism which influences our own culture and traditional, what I mean is we don't practise the real teaching of the Buddha, rather our own culture. For example, when we teach Buddhism in the West, we don't teach our particular culture and traditions but explain what the Buddha really taught for mankind. If we teach, for instance, Theravada Buddhism, Emphasis only what the Buddha said in Tripitaka, Pali canon without Burmese, Thai or Sri Lanka culture and traditions, then Westerners can understand and accept very easily. In the same way if we teach Mahayana Buddhism according to Mahayana Sutras they will be able to understand and accept without relating to a particular culture and traditions. Therefore, we find there many people in the West who are committed to Buddhist teachings, follow them in practice in their daily life without any problems or difficulties. If we are able to distinguish between our culture and Buddhism the people in our countries will be able to understand both distinctly. They will preserve our own culture and traditions the same time apply the main principles of Buddhism in day to day life. The young generation will then understand Buddhist principles without any question. To promote this we need to take action as soon as possible, to publish proper literature and where possible produce appropriate radio and television programs. Simultaneously training schemes need to be set up to train those who can work in the field in their respective countries. I hope this is the way we can preserve our noble heritage

and promote the teachings of the Buddha for future generations. We can then find everlasting peace within not only our community but throughout the world.