

Buddhism and Peace

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Buddhism teaches that whether we have global peace or global war is up to us at every moment. The situation is not hopeless and out of our hands. If we don't do anything, who will? Peace or war is our decision. The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace, not only peace in this world but peace in all worlds. The Buddha taught that the first step on the path to peace is understanding the causality of peace. When we understand what causes peace, we know where to direct our efforts. No matter how vigorously we stir a boiling pot of soup on a fire, the soup will not cool. When we remove the pot from the fire, it will cool on its own, and our stirring will hasten the process. Stirring causes the soup to cool, but only if we first remove the soup from the fire. In other words, we can take many actions in our quest for peace that may be helpful. But if we do not first address the fundamental issues, all other actions will come to naught. The Buddha taught that peaceful minds lead to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. If the minds of living beings are at peace, the world will be at peace. Who has a mind at peace, you say? The overwhelming majority of us live in the midst of mental maelstroms that subside only for brief and treasured moments. We could probably count on the fingers of both hands the number of those rare, holy persons whose minds are truly, permanently at peace. If we wait for all beings in the world to become sages, what chance is there of a peaceful world for us? Even if our minds are not completely peaceful, is there any possibility of reducing the levels of violence in the world and of successfully abating the winds of war? To answer these questions, let us look first at the Buddha's vision of the world, including the causality of its operations. Then, in that context, we can trace the causes of war. When the causes are identified, the Buddha's suggestions for dealing with them and eliminating them can be discussed. Finally, having developed a Buddhist theoretical framework for understanding the nature of the problem and its solution, we can try to apply the basic principles in searching for concrete applications that we can actually put into practice in our own daily lives. Classified as one of the largest religions in the world, Buddhism is heavily concentrated in the Indian subcontinent. Buddhism is seen as a religion that leads more to spiritualism rather than religious teachings. Founded by Buddha, one must achieve their own spiritual awakening, or nirvana,

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through meditation and ethical living. Most Buddhists spend a large portion of their time in self-reflection or meditation as a way to liberate themselves from perceptions of inadequacy. One must reflect on the actual consciousness of being in order to liberate them into nirvana. Through human desires, Buddhists believe that suffering is an imperative part of life's existence. Due to the temporary time spent in human life, suffering is inevitable whether from the beginning or to the end of one's life. Buddhists have developed a way to end that suffering by following the teaching of the Four Noble Truths. The four dukkha, or sufferings, undertaken in one's life consist of suffering from the beginning or understanding that suffering exists, craving to be or not to be part of the intimate world, removing all suffering from one's life and finally the actual cessation of the suffering from one's life. Many things can cause suffering in one's life from physical and mental, people and situation or the feeling of inadequacy. Buddhists also follow an eightfold path of wisdom (views, intention, knowledge and liberation), ethical conduct (speech, action and livelihood) and concentration (effort, mindfulness and concentration). All of these paths can be achieved together or individually depending on the individual. Buddhists are deemed to be peaceful while trying to maintain all ethical conduct in order to achieve their spiritual nirvana. Being in the right mind and choosing the right actions and conducts allow a better moral upbringing in order to not bring corruption or harm to themselves or to others. For many, this is seen more so as a philosophy of spirituality than of a religion as the teachings are specific to goodwill over teachings from a deity. Followers of the Buddha ask their bodhisattvas or highly awakened beings for protection and blessings as a sign of reverence and respect over that of worship. Buddhists do not worship any deities nor the Buddha, but rather pray and worship for their own inner peace. Sects of Buddhism exist throughout Southeastern Asia, but one thing remains in stone for all the followers of Buddhist teachings: one needs to spend their time working on spiritual nirvana as a way to remain whole.

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