

BUDDHIST SOLUTIONS

*for
the twenty-first
century*



P. A. PAYUTTO

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for the Twenty-first Century

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By
P.A. *Payutto*

Translated and Compiled by Bruce Evans

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Buddhadhamma Foundation

87/126 Tesabahl Songkroh Rd.,
Lad Yao, Chatuchak, Bangkok, 10900
THAILAND

Tel. : (66-2) 589-9012 ; Fax : (66-2) 580-5127

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PREFACE

The Buddhadhamma Foundation has expressed a wish to compile a small number of my talks and writings on social matters into one book, entitled *Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-first Century*. A similar title, *A Buddhist Solution for the Twenty-first Century*, was previously used for an address written by me for the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, 1993, and that talk is included as Part Three of this collection. In addition, there is another talk, originally entitled "Buddhism and Peace," given in Bangkok in 1986 at the International Conference on Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace, previously published by the Buddhadhamma Foundation as *Freedom, Individual and Social*. It is here printed as Part Two of the book, entitled "On Peace." Part One is from a previously unpublished translation, by Bruce Evans, of a talk given in the Thai language entitled "The Making of a Democracy," given to a group of Thai people in New York in 1992 shortly after the May political riots in Bangkok.

I would like to offer my appreciation to the Buddhadhamma Foundation for undertaking the work, and hope that it will prove to be of some help to those interested in new applications of

Buddhist teachings, new perspectives on politics, and in social well-being in general. May some of the ideas presented herein take root and help to clarify some of the confusion that presently envelops our society.

P. A. Payutto
Bangkok, December, 1994

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THE MAKING OF DEMOCRACY

When they think of democracy, most people think of its forms and its physical structure, such as the senate, the house of representatives, the courts, and the powers of legislation, administration, and arbitration, but little thought is given to the truly indispensable part of democracy, which is its heart. The heart of democracy, its real substance, is an abstract condition. Without this substance, the structure is meaningless. To obtain democracy, we must look deeply into its substance or heart, not simply its structures.

Structures do have their place: water without a glass or cup is very difficult to drink. structures must also be appropriate to their intended purpose: a vessel for holding water must be properly designed: those that leak or are pervious are obviously unsatisfactory, as are those that are too big or too small; a very thin vessel with a very small base will easily fall over, while a very short vessel with a very wide aperture will be difficult to hold and the water will easily spill. We must choose structures that fit our objective in the best possible way.

This is the importance of structures. On the other hand, struc-

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tures without substance serve no purpose: we may feel very pleased with ourselves at having a glass, but without water to put in it, the glass is meaningless. The substance and the structure must exist together; either one without the other will not be truly effective. However, what we really want is the substance, not the structure. The structure's only meaning is in its capacity to contain or support the substance.

It is the same for democracy. There must be a structure, but there must also be substance. More important than the structures of democracy is whether we can ensure that those structures will really support democracy's heart, and not become empty, polluted or false. True democracy cannot be obtained by copying a set of structures.

We do not pay enough attention to the substance of democracy and the kind of structures that are most fitted to it—some countries simply copy entire structures from other countries, and then use them in dishonest ways, or use them incorrectly or inefficiently, or use them for the wrong objectives. We could use a water glass for drinking alcohol, or for splashing mud onto other people, or simply for putting on display, or we could indeed use it to drink water from, but not look after it, letting it become dirty and scratched.

Even in choosing a suitable structure for such a trifling item as a drinking glass, there are many factors to consider. How much more circumspect must we be to devise suitable structures for democracy?

DEFINING DEMOCRACY

In olden times countries were usually governed by monarchies, in which the King had absolute power. In such a structure, the assumption is that the greater mass of people are not capable of governing themselves, they need the guidance of one who is more gifted or capable. In more recent times we have come to feel that people are more educated and possess sufficient knowl-

edge and understanding to govern themselves, to think rationally and make decisions for themselves, to discern between right and wrong and to act accordingly. When people govern their own country like this, it is called "democracy."

Any people who are to govern their country must first know how to govern themselves. If the individual members of society are incapable of governing themselves, they will be incapable of governing each other or governing the country. Therefore, to further clarify our definition of democracy, we should say, "Democracy is government by a population of people who know how to govern themselves." When individual persons know how to govern themselves, they will then be able to help in the government of the country.

LIBERTY

Liberty is first and foremost the absence of stricture or limitation. According to this definition, most people would interpret liberty as the freedom to do what they please. But consider: will people with such an understanding be capable of governing themselves? It seems very unlikely. They will most likely experience only failure in life. If they wanted to sleep rather than study or go to work, they would go to sleep. We may have traffic laws, but if nobody takes any notice of them, the roads will be in chaos. Those who see liberty as the freedom to do what they please will not be able to govern themselves.

No country, even the freest, will allow people to do everything they please. Liberty, then, must mean the freedom to create or act constructively, but not to destroy. As an example, we are free to search for knowledge, but there are restrictions on the amount of alcohol we can consume, and the times and places we can consume it, and while we are free to earn money, there are restrictions on how we can earn it.

So now we have developed a definition for the word "liberty," one which is often quoted—"the right to act or speak so

long as it does not violate the rights of others." That is, one is free to speak or act conditionally, or under the limitations and restrictions of the law. This is, in other words, conditional liberty.

Some people would understand conditional liberty as the freedom to do as one pleases, but in a limited way. Where there are conditions, there are restrictions. As long as there are restrictions, there can be no true liberty, and such an understanding falls short of the full meaning of liberty.

The word liberty can be looked at on many different levels. Let us now look at it in the light of the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha's teaching is said to be the teaching of a liberated one, one who has attained true liberty. A person who attains the highest goal according to Buddhism is one who realizes the truth, and is completely and truly free. While it is possible to be partially free, as long as the truth has not been fully realized, there can be no true or absolute freedom.

On the lowest level, liberty is understood as the freedom to do what one pleases. A little higher than that is the freedom to do what one pleases within limitations—conditional liberty. Higher than that, and more in keeping with the Buddha's teachings, is the definition of liberty as a balance or harmony. That is, there is the perception that we have liberty, but our liberty is related to the liberty of other beings. This is very similar to conditional liberty, but it is more a product of wisdom and understanding than external coercion, and it does not lead to such a feeling of oppression. Wisdom is an important factor for the realization and maintenance of true liberty.

Personal liberty is related to the liberty of others. Our own liberty must not infringe on or harm the liberties of others. If we are endowed with reflexive awareness, we will naturally avoid infringing on the rights of others, and will be able to appreciate and respect them.

Another meaning of liberty is the readiness to give others a chance. This kind of attitude is essential in a democracy. With-

out this readiness to give others a chance, liberty is a very selfish thing, something that is good for oneself but not for others. Personal liberty and the liberties of others must be coexistent, there must be balance. When liberty is coupled with the readiness to give space to others, there is balance. In other words, personal liberty which is countered by the equal liberty of others leads to balance or harmony. It is liberty that is limited by equality, which is one kind of balance, and is a characteristic of the Buddhist Middle Way. Some Western scholars call the state where freedom is balanced by equality the midway point, the meeting ground of democracy.

Those who perceive liberty as the freedom to do what they please will find it impossible to find the liberty they desire, no matter where they go. Their attempts to find it will fail—either they will have to compromise their desires or society will collapse and anarchy prevail. Even in the most liberal societies, which pride themselves on their freedom, liberty must be constrained by restrictions, such as social regulations, laws, public consent and tradition. In America, for instance, which is considered a very free country, there are a great many restrictions and regulations. The people also relate to each other in ways which are mutually restrictive. For instance, you may want to extend your house, connect water pipes or install more electrical wiring, or you may want to let your garden go to ruin—it is your house, after all. But if your actions did not conform with the laws or the tacit social agreements, and caused trouble for others, you would probably be sued. Someone who could not adjust to this way of doing things would feel very oppressed living in America.

While liberty in this sense is more advanced, it is still not perfect, so now let us look at some of the more profound levels of liberty.

DEMOCRACY AS FULL REALIZATION OF HUMAN POTENTIAL

There are two ways in which liberty can be seen: one is freedom to acquire, and the other is as freedom to give. The freedom to acquire is readily understood and often referred to, but freedom in terms of giving is rarely considered.

Let us first look at liberty as freedom to acquire. Such liberty is the right to acquire the benefits that are one's proper due under the democratic system, to which all people should have equal access. If only one group of people has access to this benefit, while others do not, then it can be said that the people in general do not have liberty. This kind of liberty is called "freedom to acquire."

Giving should also be free. The free opportunity to give is a very important right. It is the heart of the causal side of democracy, unlike the freedom to acquire, which is the resultant side. Before there can be a result there must be a cause. Without liberty to give, liberty to receive will be unrealistic.

The democratic system is the system of government which seeks to provide maximum opportunity for people to express their social potential. Liberty here, then, is the ability to contribute personal potential to overall social growth. Everybody has their potential and abilities, but they cannot be expressed without freedom. Without liberty, people cannot voice their views or make use of their intelligence. Society in turn derives no benefit from their potential. Undemocratic governments tend to close off or limit opportunities for people to use their potential, and so they do not make the most of their human resources. In a democracy, people's abilities and intelligence are allowed to participate freely in social development, and this is one of the strengths of the democratic system. It is one of democracy's "causal factors." If people seek only what they believe are their rights, while neglecting this causal factor, democracy will not work.

We must take careful note of these causal factors in democracy. How can we maximize opportunities for people to express

their full potential? This is where the liberty to give comes in. It is a kind of liberty which is often overlooked. A well-developed democratic government will try to provide opportunities for its people to fully utilize their potentialities, each according to his or her abilities, as a factor in social development. When people are provided such an opportunity, they will tend to think in terms of how they can contribute to the constructive growth of society. Any democracy which provides such an opportunity can be expected to prosper.

When we speak of liberty, we tend to either look on it as the freedom to indulge our desires, or the freedom to acquire our rights. Rarely do we think of the causal factors in democracy. Some people even look at participation in terms of what they stand to gain out of it—their rights to obtain an equal share of the benefits like everybody else. If everybody thought like this, democracy would not succeed. The word "participation" refers to collective constructive effort; putting one's share, one's abilities, into the collective effort to create benefit in society. The emphasis is on giving, not on getting.

Giving other people an opportunity, as mentioned before, is another kind of liberty in giving, and it must also be applied to collective effort or participation. When liberty to obtain is supported by liberty to give, there is balance and moderation. It is the Middle Way, which is the surest way to the prosperity and growth of democracy.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Another word which is often used in conjunction with liberty is "rights." Webster's Dictionary defines the word "rights" as a "power or privilege to which one is justly entitled." In general it refers to those things which a person can be expected to obtain, as his or her rightful privilege.

The ability to pursue and obtain one's rights is an important indication of liberty. Thus the words "rights" and "liberty" tend

to go together. Sometimes it is even said "the right to liberty." Sometimes the two words are used interchangeably, such as in the phrases "civil rights" and "civil liberties."

Because rights are an indication of liberty, we tend to gauge liberty by whether or not its members have rights. Many laws are legislated in order to protect the rights of the citizens of democracies. On the highest level, there is the constitution, dealing with the fundamental rights and liberties of the people, such as the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of association, and so on up to freedom to protect one's property, equal rights in education and employment, equal rights in travel, livelihood, use of public services and equality before the law.

However, sometimes we tend to give so much attention to our rights and liberties that we forget that there are duties required of us. Rights must be balanced by duties. The people of a democracy have rights, and they also have duties; having obtained their rights, they must perform their duties. Rights are something which is acquired, duties are something which require giving. For example, all members of the population are required to study and to conduct their livelihoods properly; they have duties in regard to their families, to the community, to the society, to the country; they must attend the necessary functions required to conduct community business; they must help to maintain community facilities and property; they must help to conserve the natural environment; they must uphold the laws, and they must pay taxes.

When people perform their duties toward the community and the government in accordance with their station, a good society or democracy will have something to give them in return, which is their rights. If the people did not participate in creating the causes for these rights, which are their duties, what would the society have to give them? If you are going to demand your rights, you must not forget your duties. To put it another way, only those who have performed their duties well are truly entitled to

demand their rights. Rights so demanded or claimed must be used properly. Those who know how to perform their duties correctly will be also know how to use their rights correctly.

Rights must arise with duties, and those who perform their duties will value their rights highly. It is the duty of a democratic government to create an awareness of the importance of duties, so that the people understand that rights obtained are to be offset by duties performed. People should ask themselves what needs to be done in exchange for the rights they are to obtain, and think more of what they can do or give than what they can get. This attitude is exemplified in the famous statement by President John F. Kennedy — "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

When rights are coupled with duties there is a balance between getting and giving, between receiving and relinquishing. When this kind of balance arises we have the Middle Way which leads to good democracy.

LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The word duties is often mentioned in connection with the word responsibilities. Rights come with liberties, while duties come with a sense of responsibility. And in the same way that rights must be balanced by duties, liberty must be balanced by responsibility.

Liberty coupled with responsibility means having a sense of responsibility toward our liberty and its use. The responsible use of liberty can be divided roughly into two stages: responsibility toward things we have already done, and responsibility before acting, or acting with a sense of responsibility.

The first kind of responsibility is that which is applied to actions after they are done. That is, having acted according to our freedoms, we accept responsibility for the results, whatever they may be. If the result is deleterious, we accept the blame, we do not try to brush it off onto others. Although this kind of

responsibility is better than not accepting responsibility at all, it is not the ideal. Its use is limited because it is applied at the level of results rather than causes—it may be too late to rectify any damage done. While it does indicate some mental virtue, it is not based on wisdom.

Thus we can divide responsibility into different levels: on the lowest and most dangerous level are those who do not accept responsibility for their actions at all, who do not apply themselves to the duties required of them, and who, having abused their freedoms, shrug off any responsibility for the consequences. The second group, slightly better, consists of those who accept responsibility, but only after the event. The third group are those who truly accept responsibility for their actions, who have a sense of responsibility even before they make use of or express their liberties. They are the most desirable members of a democracy. Theirs is a responsible kind of liberty, imbued with a sense of awareness and caution. They reflect on the results that are likely to arise from their actions and try to ensure that they only perform actions which will lead to good results. In addition to having responsibility toward their own work and actions, which they will try to perform as well as possible, they will screen their actions with the reflexive power of wisdom and circumspection, with an awareness of the facts, the benefits and drawbacks, and with the aim of conforming with that which is true and good.

All people, as citizens of the community, have a right to speak on political matters. However, we should not think only of exercising our rights, but also reflect whether what we are about to say is truly vital or beneficial to the community. Our views must be tempered with mindfulness, circumspection and wisdom to the best of our capability. We should not allow matters of vital importance to the country to become mere games or ways of letting off steam, or venues for showing how clever we are. They are opportunities to contribute to social well-being.

A sense of responsibility not only ensures that our actions

and speech are circumspect and useful; it also has a beneficial effect on our mental state and our relationship with others in the community. One with a sense of responsibility will not see the limitations on liberty necessitated by living in a community as a hindrance or a shackle, but will be able to live at ease within them. Such people will be willing to abide by the restrictions that exist and use their rights in such a way that does not cause disorder in the community.

If we do not develop a sense of responsibility we will feel restricted and confined even in the most liberal of countries, such as America. In America you can't even do what you want with your own possessions without running into laws and restrictions. If liberty is defined as the freedom to do what you want, then you might find very little of it in America.

The more freedom there is, the more is a sense of responsibility necessitated. If liberty is coupled with a sense of responsibility, a balance — a Middle Way — will result, ensuring the creation of a true democracy.

INNER AND OUTER FREEDOM

There is another kind of freedom which lies on a more profound level. In order to have true freedom on the outer level, it is essential to have inner, mental freedom. Mental freedom is freedom from oppression by those qualities which force our minds to fall from what is true (*dhamma*), the defilements of greed, aversion and delusion, or craving, conceit and views. When the mind is under the influence of these defilements we are unable to abide in righteousness (*dhamma*) and our minds deviate from the truth (*dhamma*). When the mind deviates from the truth, our actions in the outer world fall from virtue. We act for selfish advantage through greed or under the influence of hatred or delusion. When freedom is polluted by these defilements it becomes indulgence and righteousness is hampered. When people's minds are enslaved by defilements, all they can contribute to the com-

munity is more greed, aversion and delusion. Instead of constructively creating a better society they help to drag it down. Thus, freedom from the defilements is the most important form of freedom.

Craving (*taṇhā*) is the desire for selfish gain, the desire for personal advantage and satisfaction (desire for consumption).

Conceit (*māna*) is the desire for eminence and greatness, the desire for importance or power over others (desire for dominance or influence).

Views (*ditṭhi*) refers to stubborn attachment to personal ideas, the desire for others to accept one's views, blind attachment to ideas, schools of thought and ideals (fanaticism and bigotry)

These three defilements are all forms of selfishness. Whenever we are lacking in mindfulness we will fall into their power, resulting in trouble for ourselves and others.

Liberty can only be successful and lead to true democracy when people use it with a wisdom that is impartial and sincere. If the mind is in the grip of the defilements, how can impartial and sincere wisdom arise? As long as we are guided by greed, aversion and delusion, our "wisdom" is also guided by these things. Our thinking will be attuned to personal gain and destruction of our enemies, and immersed in delusion. It is impossible for any benefit to arise in society in such a situation. Thus, inner freedom is essential for the attainment of outer freedom.

It is this inner freedom which is most often overlooked. Everybody wants to express their views, everybody wants to fulfil their desires, but few are interested in finding inner freedom. In Buddhism it is said that one who is truly free is one who has attained the truth, who is enlightened. Ultimately, it is the *Arahant*, who is completely free of all selfishness. The actions of such a person are free of selfish motives or the influence of hatred, enmity or delusion. Such people are said to be truly free, both internally and externally. The inner and the outer are in harmony, and as such this is the most comprehensive kind of

freedom.

Thus, we cannot look at liberty as simply the freedom to do as one wishes. Such a view is the least intelligent and leads to no good result. We must understand freedom on many different levels, with the highest being the freedom of the mind from the influence of all defilements.

The importance of inner freedom is that it frees our thinking from bias. When the mind is freed from bias, our intelligence is pure, our thinking is clear, and we are able to look at things as they really are. Members of a democratic society must be able to use their wisdom—they must be able to look into the true causes and conditions behind things, and their actions, speech and expressions must arise from wisdom and understanding.

The importance of liberated thinking cannot be overestimated. It is the highest level of liberation. True liberty can only be attained when there is liberated thinking. External expressions of liberty must be controlled by an understanding of that which is true and good rather than the mere awareness of what doesn't break the law or infringe on the rights of others. It is adherence to the law both in letter and in spirit.

When the members of a community know how to govern themselves, each has the freedom to choose his or her own actions, and each takes responsibility for those choices. People will not make choices simply on the basis of personal preference, in expectation of personal gain or on the basis of ignorance or lack of circumspection. They will consider beforehand whether or not their choices are conducive to the benefit of the community. Their decisions will be made with wisdom, and wisdom must arise as a result of development. This is why the role of education in a democratic community is so important.

One of the most important of democratic forms is voting. Democracy adheres to the voice of the majority. Such a form can only be truly effective and useful to the community when it is supported by heart—that is, when the voters are intelligent and use their voice responsibly rather than through greed, aver-

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sion or delusion. If one thousand idiots held a vote to decide whether the world was flat, the world would not be flat even if the vote was unanimous that it was. Then there is the story of the band of monkeys trying to cross a raging river—they reasoned together that kapok, being light and fluffy, was the ideal substance to make a raft from. When the kapok became soaked with water, of course, it became heavy and dragged the unfortunate monkeys to their doom. As it is said: the ignorance of the masses leads the way to great destruction.

A teacher can't be bothered teaching, so he gets the students to have a democratic vote on whether to study or to play. The students immediately put their hands up in favor of playing. Whenever the teacher wants to rest he takes a vote and always gets the results he wants—he gets to rest, and the children get to play, but the examination results are terrible.

In the last century, King Chulalongkorn ceded the parts of Thailand east of the Mekong River to France and parts of the southern peninsula to England to try to stave off the threat of colonization by these two countries. At that time, if the voice of the majority was sought, the people, who were bitter, would have chosen to fight with France and England, a course of action which would have probably cost Thailand its independence, like Burma before it.

LIBERTY BASED ON WISDOM IS THE FLAG OF DEMOCRACY

In a democratic system the voice of the majority holds reign. It is like the voice of heaven. If we don't want to see the voice of heaven becoming a voice of hell we must develop democracy by developing the quality of its citizens. They must be taught to use wisdom, to make intelligent choices through thinking that is free of the influences of greed, aversion and delusion. They must also be able to maintain their equilibrium when learning of news events through the media so that they can extract the real essence of the situation, and see it in a way that is attuned to

preventing loss and encouraging progress and betterment. News from the media should be listened to with care and discernment. Even though there may be certain aspects of it which are particularly arresting, we should regard them as simply points from which to embark on a reasoned analysis of the situation. We should consider things in depth and for a suitable period of time before acting upon or making any decisions on them. This applies particularly to news that is exciting or disturbing, such as advertising, which should always be greeted with scepticism.

Most people like fun and pleasure. Given the choice, they will usually watch or listen to entertainments that are exciting and entertaining rather than documentaries or academic programs. Before people can use wisdom, they must have it, and before they can have it they must develop it. If we want to develop wisdom we must be prepared to look at some serious programs such as documentaries. It is all right to look at some entertainment, but not exclusively. Wisdom would be very difficult to develop if we spent all our time looking at light entertainment. We should learn to exercise our discernment when we are enjoying entertainment and consider the merit of what is being said from many different perspectives. This is the way to develop wisdom and discernment.

Good speech has certain characteristics. It should be true, not misleading or deceiving; it should be reasonable and not frivolous; it should be helpful and constructive, not provocative; it should be polite, kindly and beneficent, not vulgar; it should not be slanderous and divisive or argumentative; it should also have such characteristics as being timely, moderate, reasonable, and soundly based. In terms of results, ideal speech should be easily understood, inspiring and a joy to listen to.

When listening to others, try using these standards to gauge their speech by. Do they speak correctly, truthfully, reasonably, and usefully? Look also at their motivations: are they speaking from a pure motivation, or does their speech betray some ulterior motive? Are they speaking simply out of greed, aversion or

delusion, or trying to rouse those qualities in the listener?

In order to judge a situation, we must know about it—and that means really know about it. We must ask ourselves whether we really know about this subject, whether we really know the facts of the case, and if not, refrain from making a judgement about it. If we do not yet know the truth about something, we should at least keep an open mind.

People these days are very attached to and taken in by speech that incites extreme reactions. If it isn't for inciting desire and attraction, it's for rousing hatred. People are easily drawn in and roused to follow all sorts of causes. Things that are truly beneficial and based on truth and reason must be treated with care and circumspection. If there is some excitement in the mind you should avoid making any decisions. Excitement is a sign that our minds are not being circumspect and that democracy has yet to arise. If we want to develop a true democracy we must use wisdom, and aspire to truth, to what is useful and important.

The applied use of wisdom is the essence of democracy, and only when we are free of the influence of defilements will we be able to use that wisdom purely, justly and fully. Only actions and expressions arising from the careful and sincere use of wisdom will lead to good results.

Thus, liberty must be based on the wisdom of one who has a free mind. One who can govern oneself is one who has wisdom, and such wisdom is imbued with freedom. Wisdom is thus the connection between external expressions of free action and freedom as an internal quality. When external freedom issues from internal freedom, or is controlled by the free mind, the result is balance. There is a balance between internal and external freedom, and this state of balance is the attainment of the Middle Way.

Balance is not a state of inertia. It is rather a channel through which wisdom functions and moves most fluently. When external behavior is used as a vehicle for obtaining knowledge and developing wisdom, knowledge is free of biases and penetrates

to the truth. When wisdom is applied to external behavior it becomes constructive.

With just this much, democracy is viable. People who are endowed with wisdom, who can govern themselves, will be able to organize a good and fair democracy, in accordance with causes and conditions, time and place. Without such wisdom, democracy will be only an external form created out of ignorance, and arguments about the various forms it may take will be rife. That is why it is important to grasp the heart of democracy — government by a wisdom that is liberated.

The important kind of wisdom is knowledge of the Dhamma — truth, righteousness or goodness. The task of wisdom is to lead people to Dhamma. When they have reached the Dhamma, when their wisdom is immersed in the Dhamma, they will then live and act in accordance with it, and it is then that democracy attains heart and is properly founded.

2

GOVERNMENT BY DHAMMA

Self esteem is a natural condition, and most people seek power, position and success over others and fear losing the advantage. These drives are a result of what in Buddhism we call the mental defilement of conceit, or, in more modern terms, the instinct for self preservation. As long as people are still uneducated, still underdeveloped— as long as they cannot live with wisdom—their actions will be driven by such desires.

In a community, however, such drives, if not contained or suitably controlled, easily become causes for conflict and division. They are an important obstacle to social development and peaceful coexistence. As an example, if, in a public meeting, the speakers' **only** intention is to show how clever they are and feed their egos, and the listeners are not interested in opening to the views of others, the meeting will probably turn into a heated argument and lead to no good result. The only way out is to release tension by injecting some humor into the meeting or to appoint a chairman to keep things under control and make the final decisions. In both cases the meeting is not as effective as it could be.

Meetings are an important function in a democratic system because they provide a channel through which people can offer their personal potentials for the social good. They are a melting pot for the collective knowledge of their participants. They also provide a way for us to add to our own storehouse of knowledge through listening to the ideas of others. However, when they are not properly conducted they do not achieve the desired results and become obstacles to the development of democracy.

This being the case, how do we rectify the situation? The solution lies in finding some common factor which all the participants in the meeting can equally look up to and surrender to, something which is larger than each of the individuals within it.

In an autocracy, everybody surrenders to the power of the autocrat. They must listen to and believe in what he says. They live and work together harmoniously and abide by the laws out of fear and subjection to the autocrat's power. However, we have seen that submitting to power figures out of fear is not a very desirable motivation for behavior.

If they aren't bowing to a human power figure, societies often submit to a supernatural one, what they call "God." With God as the ultimate authority, there is a common ground to which all the members of that society can submit. However, this is still not a satisfactory method for people who desire democracy because it is another form of autocracy—it is tainted with fear, and thus does not allow for full development of personal potential. It is also not free of the possibility of factionalism—many gods lead to many factions.

People in countries which have a strong sense of nationalism are fired by a strong drive to make their country into a great power, and everybody submits to the good of the country. Even though there may be conflicts and contention on a personal level, whenever a matter of national concern arises, all forget their personal grievances and conflicts of interests and harmoniously give themselves to the national cause. However, this method is not in accordance with the real meaning of democracy and it has its

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hazards—it leads to fanaticism and intolerance. The sense of beneficent interest is only for one's own race or nationality and one can easily be persuaded to exploit others.

Another ground of common interest is adherence to an ideal, which can be just as powerful as nationalism. People can easily surrender to strong ideals or political views, and groups of people with similar political ideologies are easily mobilized to realize their aims. It is not *only* an intolerant kind of harmony, but also leads to a very extreme kind of energy. People with strong political ideals tend (like religious fanatics) to be very zealous in their undertakings, but only in favor of their own attachments and ideals. As long as their ideals are seen as valid they can be extremely zealous, wiping out anything or anyone that stands in their way, but as soon as their fervor weakens they return to their original state, having gained nothing in terms of personal development. Political zeal does not lead to personal development because the zealots are not acting from wisdom: their zeal is not coming from their own inner understanding, but from an externalized ideal. Since it is not wise thinking, it is not desirable in a democracy.

Those who are not motivated by any of the above causes tend to be unmitigated individualists. Even so, there are times when even they can be inspired to forgo personal benefit for the good of the community, such as when war threatens. When their country is threatened by an aggressor people can be easily brought together and mobilized. But their "sacrifice" is made in order to protect self interests, and as soon as the threat is over they go back to their previous individualism.

In face of all this, what is the position of a democratic society? It has been said that people who are working together to create a democracy must be motivated by wisdom. The aim is to create a society that is of optimum benefit to both the individuals within it and the collective whole, and this aim is realized by carefully looking into things and perceiving that which is based on truth, benefit and goodness.

People who are motivated by a desire for truth, goodness and benefit will try to find that factor which can be most effectively used to solve the problems of life. They will be willing to sacrifice their time and energy and will be open to information from all sides, as long as it leads to an understanding of the truth. They will not be concerned with minor details which are irrelevant to their search for truth, such as personal disputes and emotional reactions. With the true facts of the incident clearly before them, these minor details will be passed over. The desire for truth is what motivates their action, and it is to the truth that they are willing to submit themselves. With such an attitude, meetings will be imbued with an atmosphere of research and learning, and this is the most desirable environment for a democracy.

Therefore, in a democratic society, people will yield to each other for the sake of truth, goodness, reason and benefit, for that condition which is really attuned to solving problems. Take a look at any relatively successful democratic society and you will see this aspiration for truth at work.

Truth, goodness, reason, benefit and problem solving can all be described with the one Buddhist term "Dhamma." Thus it could be said that in a democratic society, people will yield to each other out of respect for the Dhamma, and the Dhamma is held above any one individual or any personal interests.

People who uphold, respect and submit to the Dhamma are called in Buddhism "Dhammādhīpatēyya," they are "governed by Dhamma." In a successful democracy, all people must be Dhammādhīpatēyya, all must uphold the supremacy of the Dhamma.

The drive that causes people to cling to selfish interests and to compete for dominance and fame is called in Buddhism māna (conceit). If the search for power and influence becomes so extreme that it is an obstacle to the search for truth and righteousness, if it has a destructive effect on community well-being, māna is said to be at odds with Dhamma. Wherever māna obstructs Dhamma it must be checked. Māna must yield to the Dhamma, and people must practice according to the-

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māna. This is what is meant by adhering to the Dhamma.

Taṇhā, craving, must also yield to the Dhamma. If the search for personal happiness is so extreme that it has a destructive effect on the Dhamma, such as when people take advantage of each other and resort to crime, *taṇhā* must be checked. Craving must yield to the Dhamma, and people must practice in accordance with the Dhamma rather than craving. This is another way of adhering to the Dhamma.

Views (*diṭṭhi*) are another condition which can obstruct Dhamma. While everybody has views of some sort, we must be able to let go of our views and listen to others, even those with which we do not agree, for the sake of the Dhamma, that which is true, good and beneficial. If, having carefully considered the Dhamma, one's personal views are found to be wrong, one must be willing to renounce them and embrace the Dhamma. Even if you are attached to an ideal or school of thought, you must remain open to other sources of knowledge. If you are spreading some teaching or religion, you must do so in a way that accords with the Dhamma, not in a way that is bigoted or that oppresses or deceives others. In this way, views, too, must submit to the Dhamma

By adhering to the Dhamma even in a negative sense, by giving up pride, craving and views in favor of the Dhamma, people are capable of governing themselves. When they have this capability, democracy becomes a viable reality. The kind of people who can govern themselves are those who uphold the Dhamma. Thus, democracy is government by people who are (in the main) *Dhammādhīpateyya*, who do not let the operation of craving, pride and views take precedence over the Dhamma.

Abraham Lincoln coined the phrase "government of the people, by the people and for the people." This idea is widely upheld as a standard definition of the word democracy. However, it is unlikely that Lincoln intended democracy to be merely government by the people. The point of his statement is the relationship between government and the people. When we are dealing with democracy we must also look into its people. If democracy is government by

the people, it follows that the quality of a democratic state is determined by the quality of its people. Whether a monarchy is good or bad depends on the quality of the monarch. Similarly, the quality of a democratic government, where the people are the administrators, depends on the quality of its people.

The greatest kind of monarch is the universal emperor. In the Buddha's teachings it is said that a universal emperor must have the quality of being *Dhammādhīpatēyya*, he adheres to the Dhamma. An emperor or monarch who does not adhere to the Dhamma will only be interested in his own happiness and pleasure. He will follow his moods and govern according to his own desires, exercising his power to oppress the people. An emperor or monarch who is established in the Dhamma (*Dhammādhīpatēyya*) will use his wealth and power to create benefit for the people in the kingdom, and the people will live happily.

In a monarchy the highest power rests with the monarch. That is why good government hinges so much on the monarch being an upholder of Dhamma (*Dhammādhīpatēyya*). In democratic government the power lies with the people, and so the responsibility for quality of government becomes that of the people. In other words, wherever the power lies, that is where there must be *Dhammādhīpatēyya*.

If the people do not adhere to the Dhamma, if they do not use wisdom but simply follow their own desires and preferences, they will not be able to govern themselves and democracy will not work. It is the people themselves who will suffer exploitation and contention. In the end they may invite a dictator to take over for them and put things under control.

For democracy to work, the people must be educated and trained to become *Dhammādhīpatēyya*, upholders of the Dhamma. When they possess this quality, it can be expressed through the vehicle of the democratic system.

The Dhamma which is to be upheld may be divided into two main levels. The first is the level of righteous conventions, rules and regulations. The second, higher level is that of truth, righ-

teousness and benefit. It is so much higher than the first level that it is virtually impossible for most people to see. As long as Dhamma in the higher sense is not clear, we must in the meantime adhere to Dhamma in the lower sense by maintaining and abiding by the laws and regulations.

Since the people of a democracy must be governed by Dhamma, it follows that their elected representatives must also be upholders of the Dhamma. They must understand that democracy does not mean simply following the wishes of the masses or indulging them to get their votes. The people are in a sense the holders of power in a democracy, even though they all have to bow before the laws of the land. As the holders of power (through their votes) we must be careful not to fall for the fawning and indulging of politicians who want our votes. We should rather adhere to the Dhamma, and respect those politicians who most closely adhere to the Dhamma, even though they may sometimes prevent us from indulging our desires.

Politicians who do not uphold the Dhamma are fickle. While they are on the election campaign they promise everything, but once they get elected and attain power they use their power to oppress the people and serve personal interests. A good politician who upholds the Dhamma is established on constant principles. He doesn't oppress the people, but he also doesn't pander to their whims or indulge them in ways that are destructive. He maintains the Dhamma, because his aim is to serve the people.

TO DEMAND DEMOCRACY IS TO DEMAND DEVELOPMENT

There are two discernible features of a democracy. One is that the life-style of its people will be moderate, and attuned to the Middle Way. Its factors and functions are balanced and in harmony, neither deficient nor in excess, neither too strict nor too slack. There is an awareness of moderation and balance. The other is an awareness of human potential. All people have a potential that is capable of development and utilization to realize a fulfilling life

and constructive and harmonious community.

The recognition of human potential also implies that human beings require development. Their wisdom and mindfulness need honing so that they can look at things with discernment and use their liberties intelligently. Wisdom that is well developed informs us of the proper and balanced way to live. Thus, human development culminates in the development of wisdom and also in the attainment of a good and balanced life-style, which is democracy. The two are the same.

Creation of democracy is a task that requires concerted effort, which implies concerted use of wisdom. Concerted effort does not mean extremism or fanaticism; it refers rather to single-minded application to the task at hand, to patience and perseverance rather than sporadic bursts of energy followed by inaction. It entails maintaining our sense of balance in the face of crises rather than getting all excited over them for a short time and then forgetting all about them. We must be able to look into problems with wisdom and impartiality to gauge just what their causes are and only then will we find real solutions to them.

The ability to investigate in this way is not something that can be created overnight, it requires prolonged and persistent education. Long term plans demand consistency and keen intelligence. Democracy is not an instant commodity which can be just plucked off the shelf, and it can't be demanded through demonstrations. Without sufficient understanding of the way to develop a democracy we may end up spending all our time running around the beginning of the path and never getting there. Demands for democracy should be based on an awareness of both its forms and its heart. Most of the demands for democratic reform we hear of these days are for the forms of democracy rather than its heart. Demands for democracy are in effect demands for development, and that begins with us. We must be able to look into ourselves and see whether there is democracy in our heart.

3

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND FRATERNITY

LACK OF UNITY IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

According to the democratic tradition, a democratic society must have the three essential qualities of liberty, fraternity and equality. In the United States, which is generally regarded as being at the vanguard of democratic reform, the stress has been very much on liberty and equality. Equality keeps liberty within moderate bounds, and together they produce what might be called "equal liberty." The third quality, fraternity, is not often mentioned, and when it is it is used in a different sense from that which was originally intended. It is used to refer to student bodies or organizations.

Although American society does not overtly recognize or extol fraternity, this is not to say that fraternity has not played a major role in the development of American society. In fact fraternity, albeit under different names, has played a vital role in the growth of the American nation. As a country peopled by many different nationalities, races and religions, the "great melting pot," it could only function smoothly if these different groups learned to live together in harmony, and some measure of success has been achieved in the U.S. in blending so many different races together under one flag—more, some say, than any other

nation in history.

However, American society has also experienced a great deal of racial, religious and cultural friction from its very beginnings. The melting pot has not been as successful as first meets the eye, and the problem of unrest has been growing. Modern writers such as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Andrew Hacker and William J. Bennett* have analyzed these problems in depth and found little in the way of solutions for them.

Why I have mentioned these problems with the American dream is in order to point out the importance of the often overlooked quality of unity, harmony or fraternity, as it is called, in the creation of democracy. This third of the three essentials is probably the least strongly emphasized in American culture. While the importance of and relationship between the three qualities is recognized, the importance of the system as a whole is not clearly appreciated, with the results that lack of fraternity has become a chronic condition in American society,

NO LIBERTY OR EQUALITY WITHOUT FRATERNITY

Usually problems of democracy are looked at from the perspective of liberty before all else: that is, from the first of the three essentials (liberty) to the second (equality) to the third (fraternity)—without equality of liberty, or equal rights, people start to ask, "They can do it, why can't I!" This is lack of equality, without which there can be no unity. Conversely, it could be said that if we cannot unite, if there is no fraternity, it is because we have no equality; we have no equality because our liberties are not the same. This is one way of describing the social problem.

However, problems can manifest in the opposite way. They may begin at fraternity, and from there spread to equality and to

* Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York; W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); William J. Bennett, *The De-Valuing of America* (New York; Summit Books, 1992); Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations*, (New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992)

liberty. When people are disunited, when they have no fraternity, they live in suspicion and fear of each other, and start thinking, "They can do it, why can't I!"; "They have it, why don't I!" Lack of equality and liberty (that is, liberties are not equal) naturally follow. If this kind of thinking takes over, even trivial matters turn into serious problems.

The family is the simplest example of this. Brothers and sisters in a family situation can easily experience problems with their liberties if the parents treat them unequally or with favoritism. When they begin to feel that they have no equality they get divisive and argumentative — they lose fraternity.

Sometimes the problem is not a result of bias on the part of the parents but simply lack of warmth between the children themselves. They begin to mistrust each other. As soon as one of them gets a gift or reward the others get jealous. They don't want to get jealous, they can't help themselves, it is an automatic reaction. Small misunderstandings become major incidents, and no-one wants to give in. They are always taking sides against each other, always complaining that they have not received their fair share or their due rights. The whole family is full of suspicion and lacks love and happiness.

Conversely, in a family where the children are loving and harmonious and the parents are not biased, any gains that arise are shared equally. Sometimes the sharing may not be exactly equal, but no-one complains. It may even happen that one will give up his or her share for the others; those who receive a large share refuse to take it and instead share it around. Potentially volatile situations do not erupt into major incidents; major incidents become minor ones and minor ones disappear altogether. This is because the family has fraternity, the members of the family look on each other with kindness and togetherness.

Similarly, it is necessary to work for social harmony from both ends of the democratic equation. Firstly by ensuring liberty, and from there to equality and fraternity. When people have an equal share of the proper kind of liberties, there is equality, which

minimizes the possibility of friction arising and increases the possibilities for social harmony.

Note that I say "possibilities." Social harmony is not a fore-gone conclusion in this scenario, only a possibility, because liberty and equality are not the **only** factors required, and are not sufficient, for the arising of kindness, harmony and fraternity. There are many factors other than lack of equality which are instrumental in creating suspicion, fear and division in the world. Moreover, the word equality can be seen to have a much broader meaning than the common understanding of equal rights and equality in the face of the law. In its more profound senses, which I will go into presently, equality can be an important factor for the birth of fraternity and unity.

Secondly, we must work toward solutions to social problems from the last to the first of the three essentials: by creating a sense of harmony and mutual kindness, people are encouraged to look on each other as friends and relatives, and equality and liberty will strike a natural balance. Practically speaking, it is necessary to work from both ends, by providing equal liberties and also creating a sense of fraternity.

Problems with lack of fraternity may take many forms, because the factors which may lead to dissension are many. Race, country, locality, religion and belief can all become causes for conflict, and each of these may require its own particular solutions. However, regardless of which factor is the main cause of discrimination, we must always be careful to avoid refusing access to the means of intellectual and personal advancement on account of it. When people are given unequal access to opportunities for personal advancement, huge disparities arise in the social structure, which only makes problems harder to rectify. Pride is a natural condition, and it tends to create suspicion—people are ever wary that they are being criticized or insulted. They forget to look at themselves. Problems cannot be solved by expecting others not to insult us. We must look into and examine ourselves. Democracy is the society of personal development.

In a democracy we must learn to let go of personal pride, but at the same time make ourselves worthy of respect.

This is where the importance of education in a democracy comes in. One of its duties is to ensure that people as a whole are sufficiently intellectually developed to prevent dissension from getting out of hand.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

In countries in which democracy is not very mature, social problems will tend to pertain to lack of liberty and equality. They are problems for the people at large, and as such, the people will be mobilized to work together for reform. While the roots of disharmony are there, when people are mobilized for a common goal, disharmony is dormant and lack of fraternity is not obvious.

In countries, however, where democracy is more well-established and mature, demands for liberty and equality, which are now more available, are no longer so urgent. Then lack of fraternity or unity will begin to manifest, and it is this problem which is most critical and difficult to alleviate. It may even be the dead end for human civilization.

An obvious example is in America, where the people are guaranteed liberty and equality of a high degree, but at the same time they are experiencing problems with conflict and mistrust on account of race, color, custom and even sex. We see factionalism spreading all over the world, and rather than harmony, conflict and mistrust seem to be legacy of democracy. A clear example is the once mighty Soviet state, which, while under authoritarian rule, appeared to be one homogenous and stable mass, but which, when liberty was allowed in, immediately broke up into disputing factions. Such problems are becoming more intense, not less, and no answer is in sight.

There is hardly a country in the world whose population is made up entirely of one race. Most countries are made up of

mixed races, ethnic groups, religions, languages and customs of varying degrees. These differences are potential hot-houses of contention, and they are ignited by a lack of fraternity.

Once the struggle for rights and liberties is over, lack of fraternity, which has laid dormant, emerges and once again agitates problems with liberty and equality. This time, lack of liberty and inequality arise in new forms: they are seen in terms of groups, races, colors and religions rather than individuals.

To alleviate such problems we must work from both directions—on the basic level ensuring that all groups of people receive equal rights and liberties, and on a deeper level encouraging the growth of fraternity. However, it is not so easy to instill a sense of fraternity, because we must deal with the mind—attitudes, beliefs and values—within which there are many obstacles, such as attachment to race and color, intellectual and cultural arrogance, and attachment to personal beliefs and social preferences. When the mind is not inclined to kindness, harmony and fraternity cannot really arise. Things that should not become problems become problems, and small problems become big problems—because the mind is set in a hostile attitude.

We need to reflect that all human beings are the same kind of animal, descended from the same ancestors, but, having multiplied and wandered far and wide, we have split into groups. Now the world is getting smaller, and we are forced to once again live on close terms. We are one community and we must relate to each other as such. With such an understanding we will be able to do away with discrimination and dissension and become more harmonious, to unify into one world community of diversity within unity.

This may be the last great problem awaiting solution for the human race. It is the final test of whether we will be able to really develop human potential and attain to a peaceful and liberated community or not.

Politicians, administrators, social reformers and all who de-

sire a working democracy must be far sighted. We should not look only to expedient, short-term goals such as liberty, human rights and equality, but prepare a long term plan. Politicians who are abreast of problems in the future will have to rise above the contemporary situation and see things in a more universal perspective. They must be able to rise above temporal restrictions and aim for solutions for the human race as a whole, bearing in mind the universal problem that exists the world over — lack of **fraternity**. In order to address this most deep-seated problem, a certain amount of genius is required. The problem is beyond the scope of political, administrative and economic means, which are materialistic approaches. It is a mental one, connected to attitudes and values, and it requires the collective wisdom of religion, philosophy, ethics and the humanities to address. In short, all branches of human knowledge should be applied to addressing this problem, and it will only be solved if humanity can progress to a new level of being.

The word "democracy" used to describe this harmonious society is simply a name based on one perspective of its structure — the emphasis is on administrative power, which is in the hands of the people. But if we look from a different perspective, we might call it something else, such as in the distant past in India when such a political system was called *sāmaggīdhamma* "the system of harmony." The emphasis here is different — the relationship between people. This is the real heart of a democracy and is what ensures its stability and success.

EQUALITY AND LIBERTY FLOURISH ON UNITY

In Buddhism liberty, equality and fraternity are viewed as inter-related conditions. Fraternity can be compared to a sports field, stadium or meeting hall where sportsmen, actors and seminar members gather together freely, each of them with the same rights and liberties. Each person is in his rightful place and they all relate together with kindness. The manifestations of liberty

and equality function freely within the bounds of that place. When all of the people have equal rights and express them harmoniously and in accordance with their respective positions, everything flows smoothly.

In Buddhism there is a teaching describing the main principles of fraternity with repercussions on liberty and equality, known as the *sārāṇīyadhamma*, the conditions for fraternal living. The meaning of the teaching is similar to that of fraternity — principles for generating harmony and cohesion in society. The gist of this teaching is that a democratic society must be endowed with some unifying principle, something which causes people to think of each other with kindness. Harmonious actions can be expressed in different ways, but they must always be imbued with goodwill (*mettā*), a desire for others' benefit, and this in turn implies wisdom. Wisdom must be imbued with goodwill, and goodwill must be founded on wisdom. Goodwill without wisdom, such as when we cast aside our critical abilities in order to help a friend, can lead to bias. Wisdom without goodwill may cause insensitivity to the well-being of others and actions, albeit unintentional, which are harmful to them. Thus both wisdom and goodwill must be used in balance.

THE SIX CONDITIONS FOR FRATERNAL LIVING

The six *sārāṇīyadhamma* are as follows:

1. Actions based on goodwill: such actions help to create a feeling of togetherness, and as such add to the stability of the community and provide the basic structure within which people can constructively express their full potential.

2. Speech based on goodwill: this is important in meetings and discussions. Debates and discussion conducted with aversion rather than wisdom only lead to arguments and resentment. When we speak with goodwill, we are motivated by a sincere desire for understanding and harmony, and we speak constructively. Without goodwill, problems become causes for argument

and eventually lead to aggression.

3. Thoughts based on goodwill: when goodwill is incorporated into our reasoning it helps to counteract the negative forces of greed, hatred and delusion. Instead we consider things with a clear intention for mutual benefit. Moreover, thinking based on goodwill imbues our bearing and facial features with pleasant attributes, and a pleasant smile is the forerunner of harmonious speech.

Goodwill goes much deeper than this. It is a nondiscriminatory kind of love. All people are seen as equal, all are friends in birth, aging, sickness and death, all abide by the same laws of nature, and all must die just the same.

With goodwill in our hearts we do not deal with others out of ulterior motives; we do not meet them with a desire to find their similarities while holding on to our differences. Rather we accept the differences along with the similarities. There may be superficial differences, such as race, nationality, belief and intelligence, but we can accept them as they are, we don't make them into causes for dissension or hatred. We are always ready to unite with others because we recognize the fundamental similarities in all people.

4. *Sharing* of rightfully acquired gains: when people lack proper education they are filled with selfishness, and they search only for personal gain. They are unable to share with others, and this leads to great disparity in the levels of income of different sectors of the population, which is one cause for contention and conflict. Sharing is an important antidote to this. Buddhist monks, for example, share their gains in all respects—food, clothing, shelter and medicine. If modern day society adhered to this Buddhist principle it would be a great improvement. People would not be so motivated toward personal gains at the expense of others. The Buddha said *nekāsi labhate sukham*—"One who eats alone eats not happily." Some may disagree with this, but in fact any happiness that arises from "eating alone" is tainted with separation and alienation. If, on the other hand, we share with others, we obtain a much warmer kind of happiness.

Buddhism holds that human development must progress by stages. A completely undeveloped person will find happiness in a selfish way—he must obtain, he must gain, he must get and consume before he can be happy. For such a person, giving to others is seen as a loss, not a cause of happiness.

A more developed person will appreciate a subtler kind of happiness which arises from giving. People with virtue will appreciate this kind of happiness. A simple example is parental giving. Why is it that parents feel happy when they give something to their children? It may be something that the parents themselves want, but if their children ask for it they will give it readily. It is because their minds are imbued with goodwill for their children. Whenever there is goodwill in the mind, sharing is a possibility, and giving is a cause for happiness.

Parents love their children so they easily feel goodwill for them. Friends, too, can easily feel goodwill toward each other. If we were able to spread these feelings to wider circles, to all our fellow human beings and all residents of the world, we would feel happy whenever we had the opportunity to share with them. This is the way a developed mind will think. It is expressed in one part of the blessing chant given by monks—*sukhassa dātā medhāvī* sukham so *adhigacchati*— "For the wise, to give happiness is to receive it."

The well-trained and virtuous person is able to experience this higher kind of happiness, the happiness of giving. It is a relaxed and buoyant kind of happiness. In Buddhism it is taught that the ability to give should be developed through training, and the ability to experience happiness from giving is considered to be a gauge of mental maturity. People who are so developed will be the ideal members of a democratic society.

5. *Uniform* moral conduct; a harmonious society must consist of people with a certain level of morality, who respect the laws and regulations of the country and are honest toward each other. If people's conduct is not uniform, the laws are not effective or fair, and crime is rife, no matter how democratic a society may be, it will not be harmonious and development will be very dif-

ficult. A truly harmonious and peaceful society should be based on the five precepts." A respect for the laws and regulations of the land, in which all share the same principles and are equal before the law, is also necessary, especially in a democracy, and such a feature is a sign of a democracy's administrative success.

Lack of discipline or self restraint is a sign of an inability to govern oneself. If the members of a society are not able to govern themselves, and if a society displays such a trait, it becomes a good excuse for dictators to arise and restore order to the land. The dictator says, "If you can't govern yourselves, I'll have to govern for you." If social unrest is especially extreme or prolonged, the desire for such a government will naturally arise, and we are thrown once again into totalitarianism. A society that is weak in discipline and moral restraint places obstacles in the path of democracy and destroys any chances for its development and survival.

6. Uniform *views*: harmonious views, ideals and principles of belief are also important factors for ensuring harmonious society. Members of a democracy should at least possess the same beliefs in relation to democracy, beginning with the common acceptance of the democratic state, and ideally they should also have a common understanding of the heart of democracy and the meaning of liberty. Without such a common understanding, problems are bound to arise. Simply by understanding that liberty is the freedom to do what one pleases we are inviting contention and disharmony.

Views are related to intelligence and wisdom, of which there are many different levels. On the basic level, to understand and uphold the principles of democracy is sufficient to ensure some social cohesion, but a deeper level is required to ensure long lasting fraternity and unity. It entails understanding the truth of nature, the way things are, the way they work; understanding that all things are impermanent and bound for disintegration

* The five precepts are the basic moral tenets of Buddhist practice. They are to refrain from: 1. killing, 2. stealing, 3. sexual misconduct, 4. lying and 5. taking intoxicants.

and that nothing is eternal.

What is the use of such an understanding? It leads to removal or weakening of attachment and selfishness. What is particularly desirable in this context is the removal of avarice and grasping (*macchhariya*), of which in Buddhism there are said to be five kinds. Here I would like to point out only two* which are directly relevant to our discussion of democracy.

1. *Kulamacchhariya*: avarice and grasping on account of family name, clan, or group.

2. *Vaṇṇamacchhariya*: avarice and grasping on account of race.

With the mitigation of these two kinds of grasping, contention and discrimination are done with and harmony, fraternity and unity are assured. When the people are imbued with goodwill, when they see each other as relatives, the problems of liberty and equality will naturally strike a balance, and the threefold essentials of democracy — liberty, equality and fraternity — will be realized.

This last of the six conditions for fraternal living is of vital importance: people must have some common understanding and belief in the principles of democracy. When they understand and see the world in the same way, as it really is, democracy will be truly stable.

Summarizing once more, the six conditions for fraternal living are:

1. Kindly bodily conduct.
2. Kindly speech.
3. Kindly thoughts.
4. Sharing of gains.
5. Uniform or harmonious moral conduct.
6. Uniform or harmonious views.

By abiding by these six principles harmony is assured. We relate to each other with kindness, speak to each other with kindness, think of each other with kindness, share our gains, abide by the laws and regulations of the society and refrain from

* For the other three *macchhariya*, see Chapter 5.

harming or exploiting each other, and ultimately have beliefs or understanding that is harmonious. In this way, unity will arise and progress is assured.

4

ON PEACE

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR IN NEED OF PEACE

The current year of 1986* has been designated the International Year of Peace, but looking at the state of the world today we may wonder if the present time is entitled to that cheerful and honorable appellation. I think we should rather call it "The International Year in Need of Peace." Obviously, we are now living in a time when the world is badly in need of peace. It is not peace that prevails in the world, but its antithesis, war and violence.

People are too familiar with reports of racial conflict, terrorism, ideological persecution and the threat of nuclear destruction. In addition to these more lethal operations, so many conditions pointing to a state of social disorder and degeneration predominate, such as domestic crime, drug addiction, environmental pollution, the energy crisis, unemployment, mental disorders, suicide and violence. Seemingly, people are

* From a lecture entitled "Buddhism and Peace," delivered in Bangkok, 1986, at the International Conference on Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace.

turning all their efforts into making the earth an unsafe place to live. Peace and happiness seem to be moving further and further away.

The official symbol or logo of the International Year of Peace portrays a dove above two hands, enclosed by an olive branch. To stray a little from the traditional symbolism, the dove represents peace and the olive branch prosperity, while the two hands stand for the whole of mankind. The dove looks like it is flying out of the enclosure of the olive branch, away from the two hands, which are trying to hold it back. In an arbitrary interpretation to suit the current situation, peace has slipped out of the hands of mankind who, even in the midst of wealth and affluence, can find no way of getting it back.

It has been the hope and dream of humanity that, with scientific and technological advances, we will be in possession of all that we want and in control of everything with which we come into contact, and so live happily. Truly, we have succeeded to a considerable extent in scientific and technological endeavors. We seem to be equipped with all that we need to make ourselves and our society happy and peaceful.

However, on the contrary, problems have so increased that we cannot find peace and society is in turmoil. While the life span of human beings has been lengthened through medical advances, more and more people, especially the youth, find their lives in society so unsatisfactory that they seek to shorten them through suicide. These people turn their hate and dissatisfaction onto themselves, while many others turn it outwardly to create conflict with their neighbors and trouble in society. Moreover, our efforts to conquer nature have polluted the natural environment, with adverse effects on health and well-being. Nature is not on good terms with humanity. Finding no peace with nature, our hopes for happiness are all the more frustrated.

All in all, humanity fails to realize peace and happiness; our dream does not come true. The Year of Peace turns out to be not the year in which peace prevails, but the year in which peace is

badly needed. The road to peace turns out to be the road out of peace, and the path to happiness becomes the path away from it. Peace and happiness are on the wane, while troubles and miseries grow.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR PROBLEMS

Here, the question is very simple: Why has this been so? And to this, the answer is also simple: Because the individual human being has not been developed. Truly, we have developed all kinds of things in the name of civilization, including science and technology, but we have paid too little attention to the development of ourselves. We think of ourselves as enjoyers of developments, not as objects of development. Our problems are much the same now as they were before, this year as three or ten thousand years ago, and our motives for action are of the same nature, even though they may take different forms.

Legends and history tell us of kings, princes and warriors of yore who waged wars with one another to win the hands of beautiful princesses. Others invaded their neighbors and pillaged the towns and cities of the defeated. Today, conflicts grow between industrial powers, and we witness the trade warriors battling for resources and markets. Kings of olden times marched their troops into war, expanding their empires in order to be hailed the greatest emperors or the most powerful conquerors. In ancient times, fanatical rulers persecuted people of other faiths and went into religious or holy wars. Modern nations sponsor wars in different parts of the world in order to spread their political and economic "isms," or to maintain their influence and privileges.

Primitive peoples fought one another with sticks and stones, feudal warriors fought with swords and bows, and modern soldiers fight with grenades and missiles. With rapid and extensive means of communication and with the equipment and weapons provided by scientific and technological advances, modern problems appear in a vast variety of manifestations, affecting mankind

on a wider scale and in greater severity than ever before.

In spite of all the ostensible differences, the motives behind these actions are the same. All forms of war, conflict, rivalry and quarrel, whether between individuals, groups or nations, whether current or in the distant past, can be traced to the same three categories of self-centered motives or tendencies, which are:

1. Selfish desire for pleasures and possessions (*taṇhā*);
2. Egotistical lust for dominance and power (*māna*);
3. Clinging to view, faith or ideology (*diṭṭhi*).

If not refined, wisely channelled or replaced by wholesome mental qualities, these three self-centered tendencies grow in people's minds, making their behavior a danger to society.

Firstly, the selfish desire for pleasures and acquisitions leads to attachment to wealth and greed for possessions. Its influence in causing crime, exploitation, corruption and conflict is too obvious to warrant description. This also explains why, while the wealth-creating possibilities of new technology now seem boundless, the gap between the rich and the poor widens, and the polarization of wealth and poverty becomes stronger and sharper.

New agricultural technologies have made food for all a perfectly realizable objective, yet starvation is widespread and hundreds of thousands of human beings starve to death. Advanced technology and new economic strategies are used to serve the profit-making of the industrialized countries, so that developing countries only help to strengthen the economies of the developed ones. The profit-maximizing approach of the current economic system and the consumer culture serve only to divert world savings away from developing countries and make the developed countries richer. Modern modes of production lead to the benefits of capital accumulation; while costs are borne by all, benefits accrue to few, the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. The number of what the World Bank calls the "absolute poor" is around 800 million. In spite of numerous foreign aid programs and advances in production technology, the world faces economic crisis, and the unequal distribution of wealth

prevails. Moreover, craving for sensual enjoyment and sensual indulgence lead to the squanderous consumption of natural resources and the pollution of the environment, resulting in the depletion of resources, health problems and aggravation of poverty. With hunger and mass misery prevailing, the risk of war increases and world peace is unrealizable.

Secondly, with craving for dominance and lust for power, individuals, parties and nations vie with one another for supremacy. Even in the absence of an open conflict, they live in fear, distrust and anxiety. At national and international levels, this is detrimental to mutual security and development. Political leaders resort to arms as props for political power. Developed countries lend aid to developing countries with ulterior motives, such as the creation of permanent dependence. At the same time, many people in developing countries are careless or dishonest in the handling of aid and loans. Foreign aid programs are surrounded by a climate of disillusion and distrust.

At the global level, the world has for many decades been dominated by the hostile relations of the superpowers and the arms race. World military expenditure is well over \$1.5 million every minute of every day. A UNDP administrator in his statement to the UN General Assembly Second Special Disarmament Session in 1982 said:

"All the technical cooperation UNDP has been charged to provide to developing countries over the next five years will cost less than the sum that will be consumed in world armaments expenditures in the next four days."*

The late Lord Philip Noel-Baker, at a conference in London in January 1977, said to the effect that for an expenditure of \$500 million, about the cost of an aircraft carrier, the WHO could eliminate malaria, trachoma, leprosy and yaws—four dis-

* Quoted in Inga Thorsson, 'Disarmament and Development', Third World Affairs 1986 (London: The Eastern Press Ltd. for Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, 1986), p. 368

eases that impose a heavy load of economic loss and human suffering on the Third World—forever.*

This shows how human, material and financial resources have been used far more for negative and destructive purposes than for positive and constructive ones. The arms race is worsening the economic crisis and making the world over-armed and undernourished. It is a threat to world security and human survival, both militarily and economically. Militarily, the military forces and arsenals of the superpowers have grown far beyond their defensive requirements, to the capability of eradicating all life from the earth many times over. Economically, as the arms race and social development compete for the same resources, escalating worldwide military expenditures have a negative effect on economic growth and development and human welfare in general. The nuclear arsenals kill millions of human beings even without being used, because they eat up the resources without which people starve to death. With or without wars, human society cannot fare happily or in peace.

Thirdly, last in order but not least in controlling power, is clinging to view, theory, faith or ideology. People have clashed on account of differences in faith and beliefs since ancient times. Some waged wars with their neighbors out of religious fanaticism, even marching their armies to faraway lands to enforce their faiths onto other peoples and make conquests in the name of their Supreme Being. While conflicts between religious groups and factions still continue today, modern people add the wars and conflicts of economic systems and political ideologies. Nations have divided into competing ideological blocs. Religious and ideological persecution and wars between religious groups and factions with different ideas for the best way to achieve happiness for all, can be found in many parts of the world. Predictably, not finding any peaceful means of ideological propagation and coexistence, what will prevail is not the world peace and happiness that those faiths and ideologies prescribe,

* *Ibid.*

but human suffering and death.

On the present-day global scene of war and conflict, it is not specifically any one of these three motives that drives people to the battlefield, but rather all three of them combined, and their combination only makes the situation more serious, the problem more complicated and the solution more difficult.

For example, two major powers may be backing the warring parties in a small country, one on each side, by providing them with supplies of weapons, simultaneously making profit through arms sales and keeping the smaller countries in a state of dependency through debt. Employers want to pay the least and get the most profit, while employees want to work the least and be paid the highest wages. With each party wanting the upper hand, conflict is inevitable. To strengthen their claims, they turn to economic ideologies for support. A conflict of gains becomes also a conflict of ideologies, and sympathizers take sides. The conflict grows in all possible ways, at the expense of any hope for peace.

THE UNDEVELOPED CONDITION OF HUMANITY

How can we stop wars and conflicts? How can we be sure that peace will prevail and endure! Some might say that love and cooperation must be established in place of competition and conflict, but this seems impractical. We have to further ask: How can we turn hostility and conflict into love and cooperation? So long as people are overcome by any of the three self-centered tendencies, true love and cooperation are impossible. If we act on any of them, we cannot be on good terms with one another. We will only hurt others and cause anger and resentment. With our own desire countered, challenged or defied, we fall prey to anger and hatred, and they lead only to hostility and conflict, not love, cooperation or peace.

When two sides are in conflict, one or the other must first act for peace. But that would mean losing, and each side would feel

it is forced to struggle for victory. The real solution must be made before the conflict starts. More specifically, there must be a fundamental change in our behavior, so that we will no more engage in conflict. To get to a real, practical solution, we must turn to the answer to a more fundamental question.

Enabled by science and technology to increase both the capability to solve most problems and the capacity to destroy everything, why do human beings tend to choose the latter? Why has the abundance of human talent and material resources been devoted to such negative and destructive purposes as militarization, instead of being positively utilized in developing a stable and lasting peace? The answer is simple: because we have been so engrossed in the development of things outside that we have neglected the task of developing ourselves, leaving ourselves almost unchanged, following the impulses of instinct rather than the guidance of wisdom. Professor Albert Einstein acknowledged this when he said that the atomic bomb has changed everything except the mind and the thinking of man."

Science and technology serve to advance the frontiers of human knowledge and potential, for better or for worse. They provide us with free and full scope to exercise our will on the material world. If our actions tend toward peace and happiness, everything on earth is on our side to achieve it. If we turn towards war and misery, we can exterminate ourselves in a matter of seconds. Which direction we will take is the question of human development. If we develop ourselves properly, we will be able to steer technology and all other vehicles of civilization towards the goal of peace and mutual well-being.

Unfortunately, the development of our inner core, the mind, and the formation of character and spiritual values, has not kept pace with the rapid progress of technology. Though we have developed technical capabilities to a very high degree, we have still not developed the qualities needed to live and deal with our

* Quoted in Willy Brandt, "Peace and Development" (Third World Lecture 1985), *Third World Affairs* 1986, p. 350

own selves, with others and with our natural and technological environment.

The undeveloped or underdeveloped condition of humanity, of our mind and character, and of our liberating wisdom, is discernible in many ways:

Firstly, we behave unintelligently in relation to happiness. We look at happiness as something we are in search of, that is, something unattained, not already in hand. In other words, we ourselves are here and now not happy and we are looking for something to make ourselves happy. With this attitude, we mistreat happiness both in time and in space. In time, happiness is a state we hope to realize some time in the future, something in prospect. In space, happiness is a state to be attained through external objects. Either way, we cannot find true happiness. Unhappy people must forever run after happiness, and their happiness must depend on things outside of their control. Many people even sacrifice their already existing happiness, essentially the inner peace and happiness of the mind, to chase after a promise of happiness, like a dog that drops a piece of meat in its mouth in the hope of catching its reflection in a pond. If we succeed, we get a superficial happiness, at the cost of the profound one. If we do not, our loss is twofold and anguish is our lot.

In the contest for pleasure objects, unhappy people inevitably create conflict. One person's gain is another's loss. Moreover, this restless search for happiness goes on at the expense of inner happiness and peace of mind. Thus, in the process of forever running after pleasure, peace and happiness are not to be found either within or without. This also shows how irrational people can be. We people in the modern age may have scientific attitudes towards the outer universe, but regarding ourselves, our life and mind, our approaches are not scientific at all. The way we treat our lives and deal with peace and happiness is scientifically irrational.

We must find happiness in the right and proper way, here and now, not in a promise of pleasures from outside. For the happy

person, incidental pleasures enhance happiness, but for the unhappy person, they can give only extraneous and fleeting satisfaction, bringing anxiety and tension with their coming and regret and sorrow in their wake. Just as the beauty wrought by cosmetics and decoration is not real beauty, even so the happiness of external pleasures is not real happiness. And just as cosmetics and decoration can enhance real beauty, so can incidental pleasures enhance real happiness. It is the lack of real happiness which leads to trouble and conflict in society. Over and above all else, the development of a happy individual is the prerequisite for peace, and the development of the individual is the central question of development.

Secondly, unhappy people, in their efforts to find things to make themselves happy, resort to unskillful methods for obtaining them. They seek enjoyment at the expense of others: as a man who seeks pleasure by going fishing with rod and line enjoys himself by causing suffering to the fish, so people tend to seek happiness by hurting others, either directly or indirectly. Most people do not care what will happen to other lives or the natural world as a result of their selfish actions. The result of this is violations of human rights, injustice, poverty and environmental pollution.

In such an unfriendly and depressed atmosphere, people cannot enjoy real peace and happiness. As the Buddha said: "Whoever seeks happiness by inflicting suffering on others is embroiled in hostility and bound to enmity." In fact, it is the one who hurts who will first be hurt, rather than those he wants to cause loss and trouble to. In the words of the Buddha: A man spoils himself first before he hurts others.** Some people even seek to enjoy themselves at the expense of their own lives. Drug addicts and alcoholics are like this: all the pleasure-seeking activities of these unhappy people are obstacles to peaceful living. They are the behavior of an undeveloped or underdeveloped person.

* Dhammapada, verse no. 291

** Anguttara-Nikaya, Vol. III, p. 373

People who are developed, in contrast, are happy within themselves and seek enjoyment through means which bring happiness to both themselves and others. In other words, they are characterized by their inherent happiness and the ways by which they enjoy themselves, in which they diffuse happiness to people throughout society.

To put it another way, we share with others what we have, both consciously and unconsciously. If we have happiness, we share happiness; if we have unhappiness, we share that. The unhappy person, in particular, is weighed down with his suffering and tries to relieve himself of it by throwing it off onto the people around him. Thus, the undeveloped, unhappy person will render a peaceful society impossible.

Again, so many people in this technological age, having succeeded in obtaining material gains and sensual pleasures, in no long time become bored and discontented. They find that these gains and pleasures do not give them real happiness. Tired of the ceaseless quest for happiness, surrounded by the ever-increasing problems rampant in society and around the world, and finding no better means of realizing happiness, they become bored, frustrated, anxious and confused. They live unhappily, without peace of mind. This condition is growing to be characteristic of present-day society.

In sum, our failure to secure peace and happiness lies in that, being unhappy and not training ourselves to be happy, we struggle in vain to realize peace and happiness by setting out in these two wrong ways:

- by seeking to make ourselves happy with pleasures from outside, and in so doing covering up, or plastering over, our unhappiness with extraneous pleasures. As the inner person has not been changed, the process of covering or plastering has to run on endlessly. And because unhappiness is there deep inside, it will never vanish, despite any amount of plaster or cover up. And as this process of unrestrained pursuit of ever-increasing pleasures has to go on in competition with other people, it re-

sults in resentment, conflict and the loss of peace and happiness in society;

alternatively, with our inherent unhappiness, we seek to make ourselves happy by throwing it off onto others. Other people then react and retaliate in kind, and so instead of finding happiness we only spread unhappiness far and wide.

Thus, the process of searching for happiness becomes the process of driving peace away. In other words, desiring one thing, we create the conditions for another: desiring happiness, we create the cause for suffering; desiring peace, we create the conditions for hatred and conflict.

FREEDOM AS THE GUARANTEE OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS

In Buddhism, peace (*santi*) and happiness (*sukha*) are synonymous: an unhappy person cannot find peace, and there can be no peace without happiness. In the Buddha's words: "There is no higher happiness than peace."* However, Buddhism prescribes freedom as another synonym for peace and happiness. Only the free person can be possessed of peace and happiness. Endowed with freedom, people can live happy and peaceful lives. There are roughly four levels of freedom, the achievement of which is indispensable for the realization of peace and happiness. They are:

1. *Physical freedom, or freedom in relation to the physical environment.* This includes freedom from lack of the basic needs of life—food, clothing, shelter and health-care; safety from life-threatening calamities and unfavorable natural conditions; and the detached and wise use of natural resources and technology so that we can derive benefit from them without being enslaved by them.

2. *Social freedom, or freedom in relation to other people, the community or social environment.* This is represented by freedom from persecution, exploitation, crime and injustice,

* Dhammapada, verse no. 202

violations of human rights, violence, terrorism, and war; it is the non-violation of the Five Precepts, or, in more positive terms, a harmonious relationship with neighbors, social well-being, and such values as equality, liberty, fraternity, discipline, respect for law, tolerance and cooperation.

3. Emotional freedom, or freedom of the heart. Ideally, this refers to the state of freedom from all traces of mental defilements and suffering, the state of mind that is unshaken by worldly vicissitudes—purified, sorrow-free, secure, and profoundly happy and peaceful—which is called *Nibbāna*. Emotional freedom includes the absence of all kinds of mental illness and negative mental states, or, in positive terms, the presence of such beneficial mental qualities as love, compassion, mindfulness and concentration. It is perfect mental health, consisting of mental clarity and purity, peacefulness and happiness.

4. Intellectual freedom, or freedom of and through knowledge and wisdom. Included in this class of freedom are unbiased learning; freedom of thought and judgment and the exercise of knowledge and wisdom that are free of prejudices or self-interest; and the knowledge of all things as they really are, or insight into the true nature of all things, together with the emotional freedom which is its corollary and the life-view and world-view that are based on that knowledge.

These four levels of freedom can be reclassified as three by putting the third and the fourth levels together as one and the same level, called "spiritual" or "individual" freedom.

The four (or three) levels of freedom are interrelated and interdependent. Without a minimal amount of physical freedom, the road to the other three levels of freedom is blocked. Without intellectual and emotional freedom, the wise use of resources, which is physical freedom, is rendered impossible. Lacking the freedom of knowledge and wisdom, the heart cannot be free. In the absence of the freedom of the heart, social freedom is only a dream.

Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-first Century

With this fourfold freedom, real peace and real happiness, both within the mind of the individual and externally in society, are secured.

With physical freedom, we are relatively free from the oppression of natural forces, and at the same time we do not exploit nature. Rather we make wise and unselfish use of natural resources to achieve mutual well-being for both man and nature. So we live at peace with nature. Equipped with all the facilities provided by science and technology as our servants, rather than our masters, we can be said to have fulfilled the physical aspect of the good or ideal life. With this physical freedom as a foundation, we are in a good position to realize the other three aspects of freedom.

PROPER ASSESSMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

With such obvious advances in science and technology, physical freedom should have been achieved by now. However, on the contrary, it turns out that despite all scientific and technological achievements, the problem of human suffering, even at the physical level, is on the increase. This seems to be the dilemma of human progress. A solution lies partly in our disenchantment with the wish-granting power of science and technology, and partly in the readjustment of our relationship with them.

So far, humanity seems to have put too much trust in science and technology, as if they were the sole designers of our ideal life, and we have become increasingly dependent on them to the neglect of individual development. We do not realize that the fulfillment of a good life depends on us, the creators and masters of science and technology. We ourselves need to be so developed that we can master their use for our own freedom and well-being — otherwise, we may be destroyed by what we have created.

We have been so much enchanted by scientific and techno-

logical progress that we have been deluded into believing that we have conquered nature, and that with this conquest of nature, all problems will be solved and heaven will be established on earth. But the nature that we think we have conquered, the external material world, is not the whole picture. The other half of reality, our human nature, is within us. In the struggle to conquer the material world of nature, we often neglect our responsibility to master our inner nature and tend to lose control over it. This inner nature has grown stronger and stronger and has largely taken control.

Thus, while congratulating ourselves for the conquest of nature, we have unwittingly been conquered by the nature inside us and obediently come under its control. It is this unconquered controlling nature within us that has frustrated all our hopes of turning the earth into paradise. It is this nature that keeps our inner selves unhappy under the plaster of superficial pleasure, and causes the unhappy person to diffuse unhappiness, and the unpeaceful person to diffuse violence and conflict in society. It is this uncontrolled inner nature which has caused us to become slaves of technology rather than its masters, and to derive more harm from technology than benefit. It is also the reason so many efficient measures to solve the problems of mankind do not work.

By way of illustration, while scientific and technological advances have brought more than adequate abundance of consumer goods to satisfy the basic needs of people all over the world, requiring only proper distribution to achieve mutual well-being, it is not distribution that is carried out but appropriation, and more poverty and conflict are created rather than peace and well-being. Similarly, factions and nations continue to fight, notwithstanding the solution to their differences seeming very simple.

Modern people pride themselves on their scientific attitudes. Unfortunately, our attitude to science and technology is less scientific than it should be. We do not know science and technology as they really are and thus cannot deal with them in

a scientific way. This implies that our knowledge of nature is still inadequate to maintain a right and proper relationship with it.

In order to understand how to realize freedom, we need to understand the true nature, the capabilities and limitations, of science and technology. Scientific knowledge is limited to the data received through the sense organs. Its domain is the material world, its knowledge of which is really enormous. However, science knows little about the human individual. When people are depressed and frustrated and their minds are filled with fear, unrest and anxiety, science and technology can be of little help. Crime, violence and immorality still abound, even in the countries which are most advanced in science and technology. Despite all the advances in science and technology, the inner person is left basically unchanged. Modern problems remain the same in nature as those afflicting our ancestors, differing only in their wider variety and greater magnitude.

In spite of their unprecedented advances, science and technology bring to the undeveloped person only heightened feelings of dependence and insufficiency, and, with their destructive potential, insecurity and anxiety. Science and technology have rendered great help to mankind in the conquest of nature (on the material level) but they cannot provide moral guidance and control of our minds. We may be able to conquer the world but we cannot conquer ourselves. The individual, the mind, our inner nature and our development, along with our real peace and happiness, are beyond the domain of science and technology. They are not their province but the domain of the Dhamma, or religion in a special sense of the term.

Accordingly, we have here two complementary fields of striving for freedom and perfection, the inner and the outer. Preoccupation with the outer to the neglect of the inner leads only to partial success, or even to total failure. Success in achieving freedom, peace and happiness lies in the proper recognition and understanding of the nature, value, capacity and limitations

of each of these two domains as they really are, and in our attitudes and actions in conformity with such understanding.

THE LOSS OF THE WAY TO FREEDOM

The process by which freedom (and peace and happiness) is achieved is called development (*bhāvanā*), and in Buddhism human development is synonymous with education (*sikkhā*). Just as freedom is of four levels, development or education is four-fold: physical development, leading to physical freedom; social development, leading to social freedom; emotional development, leading to emotional freedom; and intellectual development, leading to intellectual freedom.

As for physical freedom and physical development, a considerable contribution must be credited to science and technology, whose immense achievements must not be underestimated. Scientific and technological development has provided such material abundance that goods and facilities are more than enough for all people. Science and technology have brought physical freedom within easy reach. It is up to us whether we will utilize them to contribute to our happiness or to our woe. In other words, people of today are equipped with almost unbounded technological potential, to be used either for positive purposes, allowing all people to live in comfort, or for negative purposes, putting mankind to wholesale destruction. Here end the function and responsibility of science and technology.

Nature may be increasingly plundered in the interests of accumulating wealth, thereby widening the gap between the rich and the poor; greater and greater amounts of money may be spent on arms production, indirectly rendering food, education and health care inaccessible to large numbers of people; more and more people may die in armed conflicts between religious, racial and ideological factions; natural resources may be selfishly exploited and lavishly consumed, depleting resources and causing environmental pollution—but science and technology are not

to blame for these problems. The fault lies with humanity itself. We fail to make wise and proper use of science and technology and seek their services for the maximization of the three self-centered impulses: selfish desire for pleasures and material possessions, ambition for dominance and power, and rigid attachment to views and ideologies. How can we find fault with scientific and technological developments when they are merely products of human creation?

THE ONE SOLUTION

It is at this point that the contribution of true religion, or Dhamma, is needed. Development of the human individual must be carried out so that we can make wise and proper use of science, technology, human and natural resources to realize a good life and harmonious society for all mankind.

Right education or right development is the long-term and sole solution to the problems of humanity. It entails a fundamental change in the pattern of human thinking and behavior. Any proposed solutions other than this are superficial and impractical. Stopgap solutions may seem easy, but they are plagued by uncertainty and lead only to an impasse. Words may sound beautiful, but they are lacking in practicality. For example, in a military conflict, we may say that if one party stops, problems will be solved, but in practice, the contestants can never agree on who is to be the first to stop. Naturally finding no agreement, each side claims that it is forced to take action and the conflict merely escalates. This is the usual pattern of thought and behavior of the undeveloped human being, and it needs to be changed if any solution is to be realized.

The undeveloped human being thinks unsystematically, usually under the influence of fleeting motives or inherent tendencies. With the arrival of science and technology, we are taught to think systematically. In terms of science, we think: What is it? This may be followed by a thought in terms of tech-

nology: What is its use? What use can we make of it? Here ends the thought in terms of science and technology. Beyond this point, people again think at random or habitually, influenced by selfish motives or inherent tendencies.

Thus, scientific and technological thinking do not bring about any fundamental change in our pattern of thought and behavior, and they contribute little to personal development. Moreover, such thinking is rife with loopholes through which inbred motives and tendencies can influence us. Scientific and technological thought is at the service of habitual and arbitrary thinking and is used to expand their dimension and magnitude. The motives or tendencies to be served are usually the three self-centered ones mentioned above.

Following the first phase of scientific thinking, "What, how and why is it?" and the second phase of technological thinking, "How can it be used!" modern thinking continues with: "How can I make use of it to gain profit or enjoyment? How can I use it to dominate my neighbors? How can I use it to win people over to my faith or ideology?" The human thinking process can thus be shown in three phases: in terms of science, of technology and of exploitation. The first two pave way for the third. Certainly, it is the third phase that will direct and control subsequent actions. With selfishness pervading the whole process, any hope for peace is surely frustrated.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS THE PREREQUISITE FOR PEACE

The service of religion, or the Dhamma, is indispensable here. Systematic thinking, free of harmful motives and self-centered tendencies, must follow the first and second phases of scientific and technological thinking, as the third decisive phase. People have to be trained to think in terms of ethical or moral values such as: "How can this be used to enhance the quality of life or to promote the mutual well-being of mankind!" If moral thought becomes the third phase of the thinking process, moral behavior

and actions will follow, completing a whole process and leaving no loopholes for unwholesome tendencies. Now the thinking process consists of these three phases: scientific, technological, and ethical. Science, technology and the Dhamma or religion are harmoniously integrated, each finding its proper and complementary role. A fundamental change in the pattern of thought and behavior has been achieved.

However, the thinking process need not necessarily consist of all three of these phases. The scientific and technological phases exemplify neutral phases in general and can be dropped or replaced by some other neutral phase. Only the Dhamma or ethical phase is necessary. The human mind naturally contains both moral and immoral tendencies. If moral ones are not to the fore, immoral ones will be. (However, with true knowledge or insight, which usually requires a great deal of mental training, it is possible to have a pure process of thought, beyond both moral and immoral qualities.)

Today, how to think (clear thinking) is an emphasis in education. We need to be taught how to think clearly. Many people, however, consider clear thinking only in terms of scientific or intellectual terms. Their "clear thinking" is too shortsighted to realize the aim of education, which is to develop the individual human being so that problems will be solved in the right way and a good life will be attained. With moral awareness included in the process, clear thinking is complete. Moral awareness reveals the relationship between the natural order and human well-being. In such a balanced thinking process, intellectual thought and moral thought are integrated, producing thought that is rational, sound and wholesome. Then clear thinking means thinking which is in accordance with truth, imbued with reason, and favorable to a good life. When this kind of right thought arises, true religion is there.

This right process of thinking is the connection through which mental or emotional development can induce and occasion physical and social development, and through which mental

or emotional freedom can contribute to the achievement of physical and social freedom.

Deeper into the sphere of mental or emotional development is the readjustment or purification of the contents of the mind itself. This aims at liberation of the mind from the influence or controlling power of unwholesome motives and impulses through the removal of the three self-centered tendencies—selfish desire, selfish ambition and intolerance. In place of these three unwholesome qualities, their three opposite ethical values will arise, viz:

1. Wise association with pleasures of the senses and material possessions and a resolve to make use of wealth for the realization of common well-being
2. Respect for, and appreciation of, the value of life, the ways of other people, and social harmony
3. Detached search for truth, with an attitude of tolerance and good will to those who have different views.

Usually, the three self-centered tendencies are not immediately given up by generating the three counter-values, and the latter are not directly brought about to replace the former. The destruction of the former and the growth of the latter are, as a rule, the corollaries of the development of such virtues as loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, and the practice of such ethical principles as generosity, kindly speech, service, and participation.

The development of the heart requires development of wisdom, as real freedom of heart can only be realized through freedom of knowledge or wisdom. Accordingly, the total eradication of the three self-centered tendencies can only be actualized when there is Enlightenment, or the full understanding of life. When wisdom is lacking, or still in the early stages of its development, we have to depend on the three self-centered tendencies for our self-preservation, at the risk of their harmful consequences. Once wisdom or true knowledge has been developed, we can do away with them.

There are many practices that are helpful to the development of the heart. Some bring about temporary freedom, others lead to absolute freedom, but what distinguishes them is wisdom, true knowledge or insight. Any practice without wisdom can achieve only temporary freedom. This is evident in the practice of meditation. Generally speaking, there are two kinds of meditation: calming meditation and insight meditation. Calming meditation with concentration as its essence leads to temporary freedom. Insight meditation, in which knowledge of the true nature of things is the guiding principle, can lead to absolute freedom. Wherever there is freedom, there are peace and happiness. Along with temporary freedom come temporary peace and happiness; inseparable from absolute freedom are perfect peace and happiness.

A really happy person has happiness inside. If he is provided with pleasures, he enjoys happiness to the full. If he is deprived of pleasures, or if some misfortune befalls him, he can still find happiness. The plaster of unhappiness does not have any real effect on such a person.

Only the really happy person has real peace, and only the person who has peace can be really happy. The person who has happiness radiates happiness, and the person who has peace diffuses peace. People who have no peace of mind tend to destroy peace—in their family, among neighbors or wherever they happen to be. Those who are at peace with themselves naturally and automatically live in peace with everyone. They are happy and peaceful in the full sense of the terms. Their peace and happiness are true to life; and it is this truly happy and peaceful person who is the fully developed and educated human being. The development that creates this free, peaceful and happy person is entitled to the term Peace Education.

In order to achieve freedom, peace and happiness, we need the interrelated and interdependent service of the four spheres of development and the interrelated and interdependent fulfillment of the four levels of freedom. In an integrated process of

development we need to deal wisely with the two principal domains that affect our lives: the inner, personal world and the outer, physical world. Success in the solution of problems, and the creation of peace, lies in the proper understanding and recognition of the relationship between these two domains, and their limitations and capabilities, and in action in accordance therewith.

Regarding the outer world, we have to appreciate the roles of science and technology and social institutions in the development of freedom. When science and technology are rightly used they can be complementary to the Dhamma, or religion, in achieving physical freedom. Effective and efficient social, economic and political systems and organizations are indispensable if social development is ever to effectuate social freedom.

However, it seems that today we already have such an abundance of these physical and social tools of development that there is a danger of misusing them and people, being unprepared for their wise and proper use, derive more trouble from them than benefit. Now we should stop giving them priority. Although some among us should continue with the job of improving and advancing science, technology and social, economic and political systems, more attention should be paid to the comparatively long neglected task of developing the human individual. This should be our top priority of today.

The development or education of the human being is a unique task. It is a task of and for the specific life of each person. Unlike other fields of human activity, where the wealth of experience of former generations can be handed down as a cultural heritage to later generations and used by them to climb further up the ladder of civilization, human development or education must begin anew in the span of each and every life. Considering the fact that each of us is the creator, the main player and the sufferer and enjoyer of all problems and their solutions, this task is of even greater importance.

Peace and happiness of the individual are the foundation of

peace and happiness for the whole world. Education for the promotion of peace is therefore one of our most important tasks. Education for human development is the prerequisite for peace. If this right education has been fully and thoroughly carried out, the international year in need of peace will surely become the International Year of Peace, when peace, happiness and freedom prevail all over the world.

In practical terms, the first step is to make our own minds free, happy and peaceful, and then share our peace and happiness among all other people with whom we come into contact.

May all be happy and peaceful, and their mental, verbal and physical actions be contributions to the creation of long years of peace to come. Peace be unto you and all beings.

5

A BUDDHIST SOLUTION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

This is the first time* this century that an international religious assembly of such magnitude has been organized. During the interval of one hundred years since the last meeting of the Parliament, the world has undergone a great many changes. We are now in what is called the "post-industrial Information Society," or the Post-Cold War period. With the end of the Cold War, the tension and fear resulting from the threat of confrontation between the two superpowers and a world divided into ideological camps seemed to dissolve. Many people felt that in the approaching twenty-first century the human race would be blessed with a much more peaceful existence. But it soon became apparent that this was not to be. While the threat of total annihilation through nuclear war seemed to have been averted, one of lesser magnitude, but scattered over the planet in many areas, arose in its place. The wars that have since sprung up all over the globe are much more difficult to control than the Cold War, which, although a tangible threat, was nevertheless very unlikely to actually develop into full-scale aggression. The

* Address to the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago.

threat of nuclear war itself is not over by any means. In fact, with nuclear weapons scattered over a large number of countries, it poses an even greater threat than before.

Although the ideological wars seem to have passed on, we now have more wars arising from racial and religious friction, which are much more passionate and brutal. Civil wars and racial confrontation are becoming more and more common all over the globe. In addition, terrorism is becoming both more common and more violent. The fact that the world has been made smaller through the development of information technology facilitates not only travel and communication, but the spread, of terrorism. Terrorism rides the media of communications technology, making travel no safer than before, and increasing the likelihood of danger in all countries.

Hatred and mutual distrust are intensified by the struggle for natural resources. The avaricious race to amass natural resources not only leads to strife within human society, but also in the natural environment, which gives the problem a double edge. On one hand, there are problems with the environment, and on the other there is an intensification of mutual human destruction.

The environmental crisis and the shortage of natural resources began to become really clear only towards the end of this century, and they are going to have a big effect on the people of the twenty-first. Twenty-first century man will inherit the fruits of twentieth century man's destruction. The enormous amount of natural resources on this planet amassed over hundreds of millions of years have mostly been consumed by humanity in a period of only one or two hundred years.

All of these problems stem from aggression, which is perpetuated under the power of what we call in Buddhism *dosa*, or aversion, and *lobha*, desire or greed. Greed and aversion are very powerful forces in the mind. With the development of technology, and in particular, so-called 'high technology,' which deals with information and communications, greed and hatred have

acquired much more effective tools to work with. Technology has become a hireling of greed and hatred, and technological progress, in the form of industrial development, has been almost exclusively to their ends. Science, technology and the development of information and communications technology have been used to lull humanity into heedless consumption, dullness and intoxication, rather than for the development of the individual or quality of life. They have been used as tools for seeking objects of desire, and in so doing have fired hatred through the contention they generate. In racial and religious antagonism, hatred is already in abundance. This is further intensified by the influence of greed and the struggle for material resources.

Greed and hatred have been the cause of many problems for human beings, both on the personal and social levels and within the environment. In order to really address these problems, it is necessary to bring greed and hatred under control.

The natural conditions of greed and hatred would be much easier to control, and would be much shorter lived, if it were not for the influence of a third condition, which in Buddhism we call '*ditthi*,' views and beliefs. Ideologies, religious beliefs and social values are all aspects of *ditthi*. Whenever greed, anger and hatred are reinforced with beliefs and social values, they acquire a clearer direction, an impetus which channels them into much more destructive activities. Greed and hatred are maintained and prolonged by the influence of views and beliefs, making them much harder to resolve.

Adherence to different ideologies and social values, be it conscious or otherwise, becomes *kamma* on a social scale, which is of far-reaching consequence. *Kamma* literally means action, but in the Buddhist teachings its meaning more specifically implies intentional actions. When actions are based on bad intentions, such as greed, hatred, fear and delusion, they are said to be bad *kamma*—they will produce undesirable results. When actions are based on good intentions, such as generosity, goodwill, patience and wisdom, they are said to be good *kamma*, and will

Buddhist Solutions for *the* Twenty-first Century

produce desirable results. *Kamma* not only operates on an individual level, but also on a collective one. Whole crowds of people can be whipped up into states of anger, excitement or fear, and the actions they perform are accordingly defined by the mental states that influence them. Actions produced collectively produce results that affect the whole community. For instance, when a nation collectively adopts an unskillful social value, such as materialism, the nation as a whole receives the results of that social value, whether it is consciously adopted or not. How much these results affect each individual will depend to a large extent on the amount of commitment each person has to that social value, and the reactions each has to it. Thus, whole societies can be propelled in certain directions through collective beliefs and social values. This is why beliefs are considered in Buddhism to be the most powerful influences on kammic actions. If there is wrong view, wrong belief and unskillful social values, greed and hatred will be exacerbated and difficult to control. Conversely, if there is right view, right belief, and right social values or ideologies, greed and hatred will arise on a much lesser scale, and will be much easier to control or even eradicate.

In the present time greed and hatred are positively flourishing. They are supported or based on a powerful foundation of wrong views. In the preceding decades we experienced problems with ideologies and the world was split into two camps. Now the contention between these ideologies has petered out, but we have not resolved the problems of nationalism, racism and sectarianism. Ideology is a kind of view, and so we come back to the level of views and beliefs to find a solution.

Broadly speaking, the beliefs that have held control over modern human civilization are based on three main perceptions:

1. The perception that mankind is separate from nature, and must control, conquer or manipulate nature according to his desires.
2. The perception that fellow human beings are not 'fellow human beings;' this perception focuses on the differences

between human beings rather than their common ground.

3. The perception that happiness can only be found through an abundance of material possessions.

The first perception is an attitude towards nature; the second is an attitude towards fellow human beings; the third is an understanding of the objective of life.

These three beliefs or perceptions have determined the direction of human development. It is not difficult to see their role in the present time, in which people are almost entirely dominated by them. Held under their power, our resulting actions become *kamma* on the social level. Thus the development of human society is guided by the *kamma*, or actions, of human beings blinded by these three distorted views or perceptions.

When greed and hatred are founded on or supported by views, be they religious, political or otherwise, they will be intensified and sustained, with far-reaching results which are very difficult to put right. As long as the views upon which greed and hatred are based are not set right, it will not be possible to remove greed and hatred.

The sciences and academic disciplines which have led material progress in recent times, and on which modern civilization is founded, have unknowingly developed under the influence of these three perceptions or attitudes. The natural sciences, for instance, have developed under the influence of the aspiration to conquer nature, which is based on the perception of human beings as separate from nature; the social sciences have looked on human beings in terms of their factions and power struggles rather than their status as kinsmen or fellow residents of mother earth; the humanities have developed under the influence of the idea that freedom and happiness are external conditions resulting from control of nature or fellow human beings.

In coming years the population of the world will continue to increase, the resources of the world will continue to dwindle, and the environment will continue to deteriorate. The three distorted attitudes or beliefs will escalate these problems to more

critical dimensions. While the population increases and natural resources dwindle, we continue to perceive our happiness as dependent on sensual pleasures and material possessions, freedom as the power to control external conditions, and fellow human beings as rivals and strangers. We are under increasing pressure to vie with each other for the possession of the earth's resources. Under the mis-direction of these three wrong views, we have also developed life-styles that lead to the proliferation of such social ills as drug abuse, violence, stress, mental illness, suicide, and AIDS—more legacies of the twentieth century for the citizens of the twenty-first century to deal with.

In order to solve the problems of greed, hatred, selfishness and mutual destruction, we must deal with views and attitudes. When we speak of views, we are coming into the domain of religion. Religion deals with views and is itself a kind of view. For religion to be effective in addressing the problems of the world it must be based on good or right views, and must encourage the propagation of such views in the world, rather than encouraging or teaching in accordance with the three distorted perceptions.

The developed countries are in agreement that the perception of mankind as separate from nature, and the desire to conquer nature, are a mistake. Environmentalists stress that we must begin to look on human beings as part of nature and that human beings must learn to live peacefully with it. This is a very good sign. It shows that we are beginning to address the first of these three pernicious views. Although it is a beginning, it is not yet enough. The three views are all interrelated, and all must be addressed in order to really solve the problem.

Another factor involved in modern day problems is the way we look on each other. This is the second attitude which must be rectified. Our different religions are meeting together today to seek ways of helping human beings to live together in peace and relieving the suffering in the world. This is a very noble objective, a very timely effort—perhaps even a little overdue—

but among religious circles it must be conceded that religions have played a major role in creating many of the problems I have been speaking about. Religion has up till now been one of the major causes for disunion and discord, even war and atrocity, in the world. In order to really address these problems we must be bold enough to speak up and look honestly within ourselves before we can really teach or appeal to others. We must turn around and search within our religions to find the causes, the reasons, that in the past people have killed each other and gone to war over religion. If we can find that point, we can then address the problem.

How do our religions teach us to look on people of other faiths? Do they teach us to look on others with mutual respect, fraternity and concord, or do they teach us to look on others as inferior, as sinners or heathens, or something which should be destroyed? Most religions have tended to help only select groups of people, fostering harmony and friendship within their own group, but greeting others with hostility. This is why religion has been such a divisive force in human history, a catalyst for war and destruction.

Many teachings which were suitable for small groups of people are no longer effective in today's "Global Village." They are not relevant to the current situation. Material development has led to a planet linked by rapid communications, but religious teachings are still sectarian and do not prepare us for living together on the global level. It seems that personal human development is not commensurate with the physical world situation. Religions are not yet attuned to addressing the needs of people on a global level. Instead of being factors for mutual peace and harmony in the world, we find that religions are a cause of more and more contention and strife, war and bloodshed.

We must reappraise the role of religions, and reexamine our basic views and attitudes. If religions are to play a constructive role in human development, the foundation of views upon which they are based must be sound. People must be encouraged to

look on each other as equals, to respect and accept each other, and to look on each other with attitudes that are harmonious.

As long as it is not yet possible to look at others in this positive way, we can at least address the negative situation by teaching that to kill other human beings is a sin or an unskillful act. That is, to kill a human being, of no matter what description, denomination, race or group, is always a sin. Let us begin with this basic foundation.

Our lives are characterized by contention and conflict. If we look into the social situation deeply we will see that the reason that such values as human rights and religious tolerance are so important in this age is because we do live in such an age of contention, and our thinking is so divisive and factional. While the importance and esteem of concepts such as human rights and religious tolerance must be acknowledged, we must also recognize that their importance is based on a world still under the influence of divisive ways of thinking. Human thought is still largely rooted in dualism. Human rights are our guarantee of not destroying each other while we are still under the influence of such divisive thinking.

The concept of human rights arose from a historical background of division, segregation and competition. They are a necessary protection from aggression from other parties, an answer to a negative situation: when civilization is plagued by aggression and contention, some form of protection is necessary. The cause of human rights has led to the establishment of laws and regulations in an attempt to maintain harmony within our society. Within developed countries these qualities are very effective and as such are very useful to the global situation. While human rights are useful within the environment of dissension, they are not the ideal. They are only a compromise. Compromise is not capable of leading human beings to true unity and harmony. Compromise is a situation in which each side agrees to give in a little to the other in order to attain some mutual benefit. A quality of force or mental resignation is involved.

In essence, the concept of human rights has three major flaws:

Firstly, the concept itself is a result of division, struggle and contention. The idea of human rights has been established to ensure self-preservation and protection of mutual interests. Human rights are usually obtained by demand.

Secondly, human rights are a convention, purely human inventions which do not exist as a natural condition. They are not "natural rights." Being a human invention, they are not firmly founded on truth. They must be supported by laws and they must be accepted by all parties in order to work. If human rights are to be lasting and firm they must be connected to natural reality, and to do this human mentality must be developed to a stage where people are prepared to honor human rights. Only in this way will human rights be based on a natural truth and thus sustainable.

This leads us to the third flaw of the concept of human rights, which is that they are merely conventions for social behavior. They do not delve into the question of mental motivation. Social behavior is always connected to mental motivation, by which it is both created and directed. If the mental foundation is faulty, even seemingly well-intentioned acts will lead to contention.

While we must acknowledge the demands of human rights activists, we must also analyze their quality of mind before we can clearly understand the situation. When we look into the mental motivations behind many demands for human rights, we find that they are often based on or influenced by aversion, resentment or fear. As long as such feelings are there, it will be very difficult to obtain a truly good result from human rights activities, because the basic feeling behind them is not truly harmonious. When human rights activities are motivated by unskillful drives, the resulting behavior will be too aggressive to obtain the required result.

Abuses of human rights must be addressed within the basic state of mind of each individual, and this is a concern of human

development. It is necessary for us to proceed to a way of thinking, or a perception of human relations, which is more positive. That is, we must see human beings as neighbors of this world. We are all equal in the eyes of the natural laws, we are equally subject to the laws of nature.

However, this in itself is not yet truly positive thinking. We must see human beings as both equal and united. There has been much talk of equality in recent times, but it tends to be a divisive or contentious kind of equality. Such a perception of equality leads to a competitive attitude to equal rights. It is an equality that is based on greed, suspicion and fear. Unity is needed in order to prevent the drive for equality from being divisive. Unity is the desire and inclination to live together, an attitude that leads to cohesion and alliance. It is not simply a compromise on competition — it is the development of cooperation into harmony.

Competition must be balanced by cooperation and supported by what we call in Buddhism *mettā*, unlimited, unconditional, universal love. Few people really understand goodwill or love. They may have love, but it is divisive, conditional, exclusive and discriminative — they have love for their own group, but not for others. Love or goodwill must be spread everywhere, regardless of boundaries, towards all lives that exist within the domain of the natural universe.

This does not mean that we can no longer preserve our unique traditions and cultures. Accepting that we do have different birthplaces and backgrounds, preservation of traditions and ethnic cultures may continue. Adapting and fitting in to our native environments leads to harmony and well-being within that particular environment. Ethnic cultures can and should be preserved, being intermediate unitary stages toward the consummate global unity. Thus we have diversity within unity. Preservation of traditions must be done with wisdom and understanding, not with delusion or blind clinging.

If we practice correctly in regard to human development, the

population will grow from isolated groups into a more global community, one which is harmonious both on the communal and global levels.

Well-developed human beings will be free of the quality we call in Buddhism *macchhariya*, covetousness or grasping, on five counts.

The five kinds of possessiveness are:

1. Grasping or avarice of locality and country.
2. Grasping or avarice of group or family, including ethnic and religious groups.
3. Grasping or avarice of material wealth.
4. Grasping or avarice of class or caste, including social standing, skin color and so on.
5. Grasping or avarice of knowledge and learning, including intellectual achievements and attainments.

True human development is characterized by an absence of these five kinds of avarice and culminates in their complete abandonment. When gauging human development, the presence or absence of these five kinds of avarice should be taken into account.

The time has come for us to do away with these five kinds of avarice in order to save the world from the threat of war and destruction. However, in the present time it seems that the opposite is the case. Unlike technological development, which has been for increased communication and interdependence, the basic mental attitude of people in the present time is one of aggressive competition, self-preservation and protection of personal interests at the expense of others. Human rights have become tools for protecting personal interests. They serve to hold the world together while it lives under the domination of divisive thinking.

I have spoken about two important attitudes or views which have influenced human action in the present age: the antagonistic attitudes or perceptions that view life as a struggle against fellow human beings on the one hand and the natural world on

the other. The basic human attitude is one that seeks to conquer. This kind of attitude is no longer viable. We must learn to live harmoniously, both with each other and with the natural environment. We have these two "friends," the human friend and the environmental friend. They are not rivals or enemies which must be conquered, but friends with whom we should learn to cooperate.

In order to really address these two distorted views or attitudes, we must delve into the third basic attitude that has colored human perception, which deals with our understanding of the basic meaning or objective of life. People have long aspired to freedom, but their definitions of freedom are not clear or consistent. The perception of freedom prevalent in modern civilization is absence of external restrictions, the ability to control other people and the natural world. Such a perception of freedom conditions the way we see other qualities in life, such as happiness. If we see freedom as the ability to control or manipulate other things, such as by amassing material possessions or controlling nature, then we will feel that the more material possessions we have, the more happiness we will have.

This kind of perception has bogged down in the present time with the deterioration of the environment, and we find that the natural resources are no longer able to support it. It has led to a situation where we are forced to compromise. In much the same way as we are forced to compromise with each other, we are forced to compromise with nature. If we were to consume or seek happiness as much as our desires directed us to, there would be no end to the ways we would manipulate nature. By doing so we would endanger ourselves—as world resources are depleted and the environment is damaged, our security is threatened. And so we are forced to compromise. In order to allow nature to continue and allow ourselves to survive, we agree to forego some of our personal pleasures. This kind of compromise is done out of necessity, we are not truly happy with it. It is a sacrifice made in order to survive. The reason we have reached this situation is

because of our wrong attitude.

Simply speaking, for human beings to live happily there must be freedom on three levels.

The first freedom is the freedom to live with nature and the environment. We could call this physical freedom. This is freedom from want and deprivation, an adequate supply of the four basic necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter and medicine. This includes freedom from natural dangers, and the ability to deal with such problems when they do arise.

Secondly, we must have freedom in our relationship with our fellow humans. That is, to live safely together without being exploited by others.

However, these first two kinds of freedom will not be truly effective if they are not connected to the third kind of freedom, which is inner freedom, or personal freedom. Human development on the personal level, that which leads to inner freedom, is the most important task for humanity now. Having physical and social freedom, we must learn how to live independently, to be happy and contented within ourselves. This is inner freedom. It is a happiness that is independent of externals, no longer dependent on having to exploit nature or our fellow beings. We become more and more capable of finding contentment within our own minds and through our own wisdom. This ability to be contented without having to exploit nature or our fellow humans is a kind of independence from natural and social conditions. With a more independent kind of happiness, social and physical freedom are more assured. We will then have the best possible relationship with both the natural environment and human society and will no longer feel the need to exploit them.

Internal freedom is the guarantee on which social and physical freedom can be grounded. Without it, happiness must depend on exploitation of the external environment. As long as there is such exploitation, physical and social freedom will not be feasible realities. At best, there must be compromise, a situation

where people are forced to do—or refrain from doing—something in order to preserve the state of the environment. If, however, there is inner freedom, a harmonious attitude to the external environment will be possible, and humanity will attain to a true kind of happiness that is possessed of both harmony and balance.

Human beings possess a potential for a very high level of freedom, but because of the delusion that happiness lies in material possessions and consumption of sense experiences, our happiness is very much tied to material objects. People these days find it impossible to experience contentment within themselves, and they are forced to exploit nature and their fellow human beings. Lacking the ability to be happy within themselves, they must seek it in external conditions. The more people do this, the more problems arise. Not only do we lack true freedom and happiness within our own lives, we lose freedom on the physical and social levels also. Thus it seems that the more material progress there is, the more we lose our ability to experience happiness within ourselves.

With right understanding of the meaning and objective of life and the nature of freedom and happiness, we will relate to the physical environment in a harmonious way. Any material possessions accruing to us will be an augmentation, rather than the crucial factor, of our happiness.

Ultimately, human development leads to freedom from the internal "enemies," to minds that are completely freed of the oppressive influence of greed, hatred and delusion. When our minds are completely freed of mental defilements, we will also be freed of mental suffering, which is the main cause of problems with the physical and social environment. With internal freedom, it is no longer necessary to exploit the external environment; we can instead live in a way that is truly beneficial.

Our relationship with the natural environment should be a balanced one, one that avoids extremes. One extreme is to con-

centrate wholly on manipulating the external environment. The other extreme is to completely disregard it.

It is worth noting that those who aspire to conquer nature and manipulate it to their needs tend to see nature as an entirely external object. When confronted with problems pertaining to internal human nature, such as when asked why they do not do something about selfishness and hatred, they tend to counter that these things are natural conditions for human beings. They feel that this internal nature should be left to operate unrestrained. Thus, their perception of nature is inconsistent. Aspiring to conquer only external nature, they do not consider that internal nature is also a natural condition which can be conquered.

On the other hand, to simply leave nature to wander as it will is also a mistake. The work of addressing environmental problems, seeing to the body's basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine, are necessary duties. For a correct relationship with nature, we must see our situation in a more profound way. We must see ourselves as part of the whole interrelated natural world, not as separate entities or owners or controllers of nature. If we have the insight that we are part of nature, and we see that changes in nature must also have an effect on us, our actions will be constrained, clearly defined and balanced. In our interaction with the natural environment, we will take into account the widest range of factors possible, enabling our actions to be most beneficial for all concerned, including the natural environment. A balance will be achieved. As long as we are aware of our position within the overall natural process, we will be able to successfully act as a factor within that process. Our actions will be guided by wisdom and right view.

In the present time there is a lot of talk about sustainable development and gearing the economy to the ecology. For the economy to be healthy, nature must also be healthy. This is a recognition of the necessity for compromise, as I have mentioned earlier. True success in this regard lies with our ability to change

our basic views on the objective of life and our concepts of happiness and freedom.

Here, we cannot overlook the crucial role of the mass media in inducing and influencing social values and the views of the general public. If the potential of mass media and information technology is directed toward encouraging the three fundamental skilful views and their compatible social values, instead of inducing and intensifying greed, hatred, delusion and all manner of undesirable social values (in which they are currently so skilled), they can be of great help in the solution of global problems and human development.

More fundamentally, although of less prominent influence than the mass media, is education, which should mean more than merely preparing for a job and serving the old competitive system. It should also play a role in human development, in which the encouragement of the three skilful attitudes or views is the objective. Right view can be established in society through such education.

In the field of politics, democracy now rides triumphant. In reality, however, its merit is not yet beyond question and its saving power still doubtful. So long as democracy is dominated by the three wrong views, it will not lead us to real peace and security. Its ideological foundation must be rectified before democracy can realize its ideal.

Today, there seems to be an attempt to pair or even identify democracy with capitalism, as in "democracy and the free market economy" and "free market democracy." It is doubtful whether democracy can be ultimately paired or identified with capitalism, or whether in fact democracy paired with capitalism is really desirable. Capitalism and socialism, ostensibly two different and opposing systems, are both, in reality, united under materialism and are both founded on the three types of aggressive and divisive thinking. The collapse of communist socialism does not spell the soundness of capitalism. On the contrary, it implies that, of the two predominant forms of materialism, as

the failure of one has been witnessed, that of the other can be expected. Too obvious now are cries and complaints about the detrimental effects of economic growth under the capitalist economy. In order for democracy to be sound, it has to clear itself of such harmful elements and establish itself on a sound ideological foundation. Economics needs not only reformation or transformation, but a conversion in its theoretical foundation.

In essence, it is necessary to pursue economic development concurrently and in balance with human development. Otherwise economic growth is illusory. Sometimes economic growth is at the expense of destruction of the natural environment, sometimes it is at the expense of one's neighbors, while sometimes it is at the expense of human dignity. A simple example of this is in the profession of prostitution, where a human being agrees, or is forced, to sacrifice self-esteem for purely financial considerations. Economic growth is also illusory in that some countries with high economic growth have very low economic security, in which case no economic growth and high economic security may be the better alternative.

The situation now is that in order to provide happiness for a small group of people, the larger group of people and the natural environment at large must suffer. Even if the whole of nature were destroyed in the process of seeking happiness, we would not find it. The Buddha once said that even a whole mountain of gold would not be enough to keep a human being satisfied. Even were they to fight each other until the whole of society disintegrates, people would find no happiness. Everybody is searching and struggling for happiness, but few find it.

In the global community the old way of thinking, with its sectarianism and rival factions, is no longer viable. It will not allow the world to live in peace. Ethical systems in the modern world, such as restraint toward nature, religious tolerance and human rights, are merely a compromise made to preserve or sustain the world. They must be supported by more positive ethi-

cal standards and a new way of thinking.

In this regard, Buddhism teaches that:

1. Human beings are one element within the whole natural system of cause and effect, in which all elements play a part. All actions within it should therefore be harmonious and beneficial to that system.

2. All beings, both human and animal, are co-dwellers within this system of natural laws. All living beings desire happiness and shun suffering, and all are afraid to die. They are all the same in this, equal and sharing. There is no distinction or segregation before the natural laws. It is not good to destroy living beings of any description; we should rather encourage universal love and harmony, mutual help and unity.

3. The finest and noblest kind of life is that which is endowed with freedom, and this is true happiness. Over and above external freedom, which is related to the natural environment and the four necessities of life, and freedom from social harassment, is the highest level of freedom—the inner level, which results from inner development. It is mental and intellectual maturity. This leads to an increasingly independent kind of happiness, and this in turn enables us to relate to our external environment and social situation in a much more constructive way.

It must be acknowledged that we do depend on our natural and social environment, so that the first two kinds of freedom are very necessary conditions on which to develop inner freedom. Inner freedom, in turn, is the foundation on which physical and social freedom are based, and it is their guarantee. If human beings develop themselves and achieve more of this inner freedom, it will no longer be necessary for us to demand freedom from the external environment. Instead, positive ethical values will be developed. There can be harmony without having to compromise.

In such a situation, economic growth will be balanced by

human development, which is in accordance with the objective of our meeting together as the Parliament of World Religions, with its purpose of supporting *"future collaboration and action together for peace, the relief of suffering, and the preservation of the planet."*

If we adhere to our old views and perceptions, our striving for happiness will ruin these three noble objectives. On the other hand, if we adopt skilful and harmonious views and encourage the development of inner happiness, we will be able to realize them.

In Buddhism we say that a human being who has reached the highest level of development will have completely destroyed inner greed, hatred and delusion. However, the training is a gradual one, it requires time. For people in general, the surest gauge of development is the absence of wrong view. If wrong view can be given up and right view developed, then even though greed and hatred still exist, even though there is still some selfishness, they will be on a much lesser scale. Since they are not supported by or founded on views, they will not persist on into long-term and widespread levels. Conversely, if greed and hatred are reinforced by views, they will have much more intense and far reaching effects. This is why the Buddhist system of human development stresses the elimination of wrong view.

If right view were to be incorporated into sciences and learning, they would be well-based. The physical and applied sciences and technology would be motivated by a pure desire for knowledge and quality of life rather than a desire to exploit nature for selfish gain. The social sciences would not look at mankind with a reductionistic view of human society disconnected from nature, as a collection of scattered factions caught up in power struggles, but would instead see them as fellow citizens of the natural world. The humanities would concern themselves with the human effort to realize the highest quality possible for a human being, which is inner freedom. This will in turn become a foundation for the proper development of the natural and so-

cial sciences.

Human beings in the twentieth century have created much bad *kamma*, which is going to exert an influence on humanity of the twenty-first century. It is a legacy of problems with which the citizens of the twenty-first century will have to deal. In order to help solve these problems and ensure that the twenty-first century will be a safe one, we must discuss ways of addressing the problems right now. If we can adapt our views as I have mentioned here, there is a possibility that we will be able to solve them successfully.

The three views I have described here are particularly relevant to our time and age, when the natural environment is in such a state of deterioration and depletion. The human social world is shrinking. The time has come for us to learn to live together, and this will only be possible when we are able to develop the freedom that is not dependent on the external environment, and instead learn to help and support it. In this way we will be able to experience the taste of true freedom and true happiness.



"Only the really happy person has real peace, and only the person who has peace can be really happy. ... People who have no peace of mind tend to destroy peace—in their family, among neighbors or wherever they happen to be. Those who are at peace with themselves naturally and automatically live in peace with everyone. They are happy and peaceful in the full sense of the terms. ... The development that creates this free, peaceful and happy person is entitled to the term Peace Education."

Venerable Prayudh Payutto is one of Thailand's most well-known Buddhist Scholars. His writings cover not only traditional Buddhist subjects but also Buddhist perspectives on modern academic themes. In this book, the author discusses modern social trends and politics, offering Buddhist insights into such subjects as freedom, democracy and happiness. He was one of the recipients of the UNESCO prize for Peace Education in Paris, 1994.

