

Buddhism and Peace Theory: Exploring a Buddhist Inner Peace

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Abstract

The main aim of Buddhism is to examine how human mind becomes a root cause of suffering and how it can be addressed. This paper explores how this analysis of the human mind develops inner peace. The analysis proposes inner peace as a non-dualistic peace based on the practice of multiple functions of mind—contemplative mind, a deep cognitive transformation framed by an interdependent, interpenetrating understanding of reality, and compassionate mind—in a synergistic way. Put different, inner peace means an awakening to an ultimate inseparability between our own well-being and happiness and that of others, which inspires us to make an effort to gratify the basic needs of all and promote our freedom and justice and that of others equally.

Introduction

This paper examines a Buddhist inner peace. Peace is a broad and elusive concept. Peace is a subjective or intersubjective concept as different individual actors or groups of individuals define it in distinctive ways (Richmond, 2008: 5). There is no ontologically pre-determined peace; rather, it is a contested concept with no single fixed meaning (Richmond, 2008: 5).

However, one of the problems with contemporary peace research is that the dimension of inner peace has been underdeveloped in peace theory (Brantmeier, 2007: 121). Vaughan argues that the study of the human mind as a social science is “still in its infancy,” (2000: 151) and her critique applies to peace research: despite its diversity and progress through self-critique, contemporary peace theory is still mainly socially-, structurally- or institutionally-oriented¹, and the study of internal dynamics of peace needs further development. Buddhism, since its beginning, has deepened the psychological analysis of human mind turns into a root cause of suffering and how it can be overcome to achieve internal serenity (Burton, 2002: 326). This paper explores how this analysis of the human mind elaborates inner peace and its relevance to peace studies.

The first section explains basic ideas of Buddhism, especially, the Four Noble Truths Doctrine—the core of Buddhism. The second section examines a Buddhist view of conflict dynamics, with the upshot being the proposition of the concept of “the conditioned mind”—a mind shaped by a frame of reference that is conventionally accepted as valid and effective in the practical matters of daily life—and analysis of how it turns into a root cause of conflict. The third section explores a Buddhist approach to conflict resolution and inner peace. First, it examines mindfulness and how it affects dialogue between those in conflict. Then, it delves into the meaning of inner peace. It is proposed as non-dualistic peace based on the practice of multiple functions of the mind—contemplative mind, a deep cognitive transformation, and compassionate mind—in a synergistic way.

In contemporary peace research, social psychology has assumed a central role in examining the psychological dynamics of peace and conflict.² The social or collective dimension of the human mind has been the main focus. What this paper seeks to offer is an expansion of the potential of an individual mind. However, it does not deny the social or collective nature of the human mind or the social influence on the individual mind. Nevertheless, the exploration of the potential of the individual human mind has been underdeveloped in contemporary peace research, and so a Buddhist analysis of the human mind and its application to peace and conflict will enable us to deepen our view of the psychological dynamics of peace and conflict. Particularly, as will be examined in detail, it is important for individuals to develop the capacity and skills to employ positive emotional states represented by compassion and philosophical wisdom that penetrates into a nature of reality including human beings. When they sharpen them, they can make a huge contribution to transforming a collective conflictual situation into a peaceful and

constructive one in which those with different or even opposing values and views can engage in dialogue. The suggestion of the possible contribution of Buddhist views of the human mind explored here does not deny social-psychological roles in peace and conflict studies. Nor does it ignore structural and institutional dimensions of peace and conflict. Rather, by providing contemporary peace research that tends to be socially- and structurally- oriented with Buddhist perspectives of the individual human mind, this paper seeks to expand the purview of how we analyze peace and conflict dynamics.

Methodological Considerations

As is well known, Buddhism is categorized into three major schools – Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Each of these schools has further sub-schools that have respectively developed distinct teachings and traditions, along with the shared objective of uprooting suffering. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine all of those schools and their teachings in detail, in addition to analyzing their contributions to the development of inner peace.

Therefore, the paper employs the following texts and teachings to develop the research: Dhamapada,³ Surangama-Sutra,⁴ Nagarjuna's⁵ Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness, Catustava or Four Hymns to Absolute Reality. However, it must be emphatically noted that although this paper embraces those texts and teachings to unfold the argument on inner peace, the concept of inner peace explicated here is merely one of the possible ideas of what it means to find inner peace in Buddhism, as other texts and teachings would lead us to develop inner peace(s) distinct from the one explored in this paper.

Foundational aim of Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy founded by Gautama, the Buddha, and developed by the subsequent masters throughout its history. The main focus of Buddhism is the human mind, which is stated in the Dhamapada: "All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind." (Fronsdall, 2005: 1). Further, the Surangama Sutra states, "The Tathagata has always said that all phenomena are manifestations of the mind and that all causes and effects including (all things from) the world to its dust, take shape because of the mind" (Luk, 2001: 16). These statements do not mean there are no objects outside our minds. Rather, they signify that "the qualities of things come into existence after the mind, are dependent upon mind and are made up of mind" (Lai, 1977: 66). On a Buddhist view, the state of the world around us is a reflection of the condition of our mind (Ramanan, 1978: 71).

As the condition of our mind frames the state of the reality, the root cause of suffering or problems facing us is also attributed to our mind, as stated in the Dhamapada: "Speak or act with a corrupted mind, and suffering follows as the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox" (Fronsdall, 2005:1). However, when we overcome the cause of suffering, we can achieve inner serenity and well-being: "Speak or act with a peaceful mind, and happiness follows like a never-departing shadow" (Fronsdall, 2005: 1). Thus, it becomes crucial to make a critical analysis of the nature of one's mind or the principles of epistemic function to deepen our understanding of the internal dynamics of suffering, including conflict and violence: Critical reflection on how mind becomes the root cause of suffering and contemplation and practice of the way to resolve it constitute the core of Buddhism (Matsu, 1981: 15). The Four Noble Truths Doctrine assumes the central role in understanding and addressing human suffering in line with the dynamics of the human mind.

Analyzing the Four Noble Truths doctrine

The Four Noble Truths Doctrine is the Buddha's first and foundational teaching (Geshe Tashi, 2005: 7) and the doctrinal framework of every school in Buddhism (Yun, 2002: 10). According to Pereira and Tiso, the Four Noble Truths are "truths of pain, origin of pain, suppression of pain and the way to suppress pain" (1988: 172).

The first noble truth states that from a Buddhist perspective, our life is basically filled with

suffering and trouble (Rahula, 1974: 2). However, this statement does not refer to a pessimistic or a nihilistic view of reality. Rather, the acknowledgement of our reality being full of suffering leads us to a deeper and more profound question: “What is the root cause of suffering?” This is the core of the second noble truth.

The second truth proposes the cause of suffering (Rubin, 2003: 43). It derives from craving, that is, a mental state of attachment characterized as the tendency of mind to cling to certain specific objects or views (Burton, 2002: 326). Besides craving, ignorance is recognized as a fundamental cause of suffering (Cho, 2002: 430). It is understood as our basic misapprehension of the nature of reality (Geshe Tashi, 2005: 60), or lack of self-awareness and correct knowledge of reality (Cho, 2002: 431). The basic feature of ignorance is that we tend to see things, including human beings, as having a permanent, or fixed nature and cling to anything that reinforces our concept of permanence, pushing away those views that threaten it (Geshe Tashi, 2005: 60). Further, craving and ignorance give rise to three mental defilements: greed, anger, and delusion (Olendzki, 2003: 23). Thus in Buddhist view, suffering is mainly psychological and subjective in nature. Stated otherwise, the human mind itself is the locus wherein the gap between reality and the human hermeneutical reality represented in conceptual or linguistic rendering accompanied by desire takes place, which results in suffering (Park, 2008: 87).

The third truth claims that a human being will be inspired to overcome suffering by knowing its root cause (Yun, 2002: 30). The claim here is that suffering is neither everlasting nor beyond human reach: rather, since our own craving and ignorance cause us suffering, we can resolve suffering when we properly address those causes (Yun, 2002: 30). As both suffering and liberation from it rely on our minds (Park, 2008: 190), the solution is within our minds.

The fourth truth proposes the way to address suffering and achieve mental well-being and serenity, which is generally called the noble eightfold path (Rubin, 2003: 35). It is: right view,⁶ right thought,⁷ right speech,⁸ right action,⁹ right livelihood,¹⁰ right effort,¹¹ right mindfulness,¹² and right concentration¹³ (Rahula, 1974: 12). The gist of the fourth truth is that when we resolve our suffering, three angles – ethical conduct (right speech, right action, right livelihood, and right effort), mental discipline (right mindfulness and right concentration), and wisdom (right view and right thought) need to be considered (Rahula, 1974: 16). When wisdom (an insight into the nature of reality, mental discipline (to monitor our internal dynamics), and ethical conduct (practicing a moral life with honesty, altruism, and compassion) are well integrated, we can break suffering and build a positive and harmonious relationship (Geshe Tashi, 2005: 126).

A Buddhist analysis of conflict dynamics

The implication of the analysis of the Four Noble Truth Doctrine is that the main cause of our problems is internal. Although external conditions or causes cannot be ignored, looking at them alone and seeing them as externally created blocks us from deepening the understanding of our problems: Examining our own mind and its dynamics enables us to grab the inner cause of the problems that we encounter and to explore what state of mind we should achieve for peace. This section examines a Buddhist view of conflict dynamics based upon the idea that conflict and violence of any kind begins with our thinking (Park, 2008: 115).

At first, to develop an analysis of how our thinking becomes a root cause of conflict, the concept of “the conditioned mind” is proposed as it helps to explain how our thinking can become a root cause of conflict. The conditioned mind is characterized as the mind shaped by the belief and form of truth that are conventionally accepted as valid and effective in the practical matters of social or cultural life (Wright, 1986: 23). From time immemorial, human beings have developed conceptual thought or linguistic knowledge as the main tool to make sense of the world of experiences in abstraction and to communicate them with fellow human beings (Ichimura, 1997: 92). As collective entities, our minds are inevitably framed by socially embedded assumptions and habitual ways of interpretation that we hold to respond to a given life (Gunnlaugson, 2007: 136).

We inhabit socially constructed, historically evolved and succeeded life-worlds that form certain

cultural patterns – such as identities, beliefs, values, and norms – as scaffolding for meaningful experience (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013: 35). We build and accept a certain frame of reference – a certain pattern of worldviews, cultural values, political orientations and ideologies, religious doctrines, and moral-ethical norms – to construct a conceptually framed reality to lead a meaningful life (Mezirow, 2003: 59). Culture or society of any form molds our minds to conform to certain norms, limits the types of experience or categories for experience available to us, and determines the appropriateness or acceptability of a given state of awareness or communication in the collective situation (Goleman, 1993: 19). The conditioned mind is essential to make sense of reality and acquire ways to think, infer, behave, and interact with other people in a certain and supposed manner.

Social conditioning or constructing a frame of reference is connected to an expression of our eagerness for psychological security in the face of the uncertainty of practical life (Gordon, 2006: 18). According to Loy, security refers to “the conditions where we can live without care, where our life is not preoccupied without worrying about our life,” (2002, p. 8) and that involves stabilizing ourselves by controlling and fixing reality with certain attributes (Mipham, 2002: 15). Put differently, the fragility or instability of constructed views or presuppositions is seen as a threat to security. Getting ourselves conditioned by a particular frame of reference gives us a sense of security as it enables us to understand reality in a stable and predictable manner.

However, while becoming socially conditioned is essential for us to make sense of reality and lead a meaningful life, potential danger lurks within the establishment of a socially patterned frame of reference. The fundamental problem with the conditioned mind lies in our propensity to absolutize any particular frame of reference, socially conditioning us as universal or complete (Gomez, 1976: 142). Once we establish a particular frame of reference or discursive thought and cling to it as complete, it causes us to fix upon the real – objects, persons, group of people, and events – by various, supposedly unchanging attributes (Chang, 1971: 74). Forming sedimented and habitual ways of seeing the real with fixed perspectives on what and how things are and are not restricts patterns of awareness and limits our intentional range and capacity for meaning-making commitments (Hershock, 2006: 14).

When we build some particular thought or frame of reference and claim completeness for the perspective constructed, that causes us to be dogmatic and exclusive of other views or thoughts (Ramanan, 1978: 107). As fixed ideas of identity become strong and extreme, we exclude other identities or views of identity (Ramanan, 1978: 107). The extreme attachment to our own views can lapse into polarity or negation of other views, values, and ultimately of people who are different from us (Der-lan, 2006: 96). Once the frame of reference is seen as complete, we are prone to feel threat, anger, or hatred towards those with different frames of reference, which can provide us with a self-serving justification of discrimination or injustice, and impede engagement in communication with those holding different or opposing views and perspectives (Der-lan, 2006: 96).

What should be further discussed is the basic mode of thinking in a socially conditioned state. Though becoming conditioned by social frame of reference is natural and essential to us, as Wade insightfully claims, it is fundamentally of a dualistic nature of thought (right/wrong, good/bad, black/white) and divides the world into “an in-group and out-group” (1996: 121). Furthermore, those people who exhibit dualistic thought are informed by the principle of the excluded middle (Nicolescu, 2006: 2) or “either-or” stance (Nagatomo, 2000: 213). This “either-or” logical stance tends to prioritize one over the other by sharpening the dichotomous relationship between “the in-group and out-group,” whereby an imbalanced attitude framed by extreme in-group self-interest and desire, is favored and promoted (Nagatomo, 2000: 213). Consequently, an individual, relying on the strong in-group ego-consciousness, becomes the generative factor for creating and cementing the discriminatory and oppositional relationship (Nagatomo, 2000: 220).

Once we see and treat the other as something disconnected from us-- as a result of establishing a conceptual boundary that is based on dualistic or dichotomous thought-- it tends to become easier to propagate violence of any kind against the other outside the boundary, whether it is an individual or group of individuals (Hart et al, 2000: 2). In dualistic logical and epistemological structures, we tend to project negative qualities upon the outsiders and see these qualities as objectively belonging to them (Wilber,

1993: 190), which promotes self-righteousness and justifies discrimination against them. Furthermore, the mind in dualistic stance swings from one extreme to another, and clings to dead-ends (Ramanan, 1978: 107), whereby the values, ideas or norms of our own group are not viewed as one of many alternatives, but the only right one: other possibilities are dimly conceived or denied (Wade, 1996: 121).

Social conditioning, though essential to us, is dualistic or dichotomous in nature, which can cause us to exaggerate differences between people and create supposedly firm boundaries between “the in-group and out-group” (Waldron, 2003: 165). Once those boundaries are built, we reify them into fixed entities that segregate us from one another by imputing intrinsic and insurmountable differences (Waldron, 2003: 165). Consequently, this blocks the dialogue or interaction that is needed to establish a harmonious or constructive relationship. Whereas socially built distinction made by a frame of reference is a natural phenomenon, it also becomes the crux of the problem by its very nature (Wilber, 1993: 228).

Examining a Buddhist conflict resolution and inner peace

Mindfulness

As our socially conditioned minds have been absolutized and become the root causes of conflict and violence, methods need to be sought to break them (Muller, 1998: 5). Once we become conditioned by certain thoughts or frames of reference, we tend to remain imprisoned in this conditioned state, which constricts the purview of our thought (Welwood, 2000: 92). Therefore, the first step towards conflict resolution is to dis-identify ourselves from this conditioning through reflection. In this way, mindfulness is proposed as a practical method for resolving conflict.

Mindfulness refers to disciplining our minds by focusing on a certain object of thought, while letting go of all other thoughts and emotions to observe whatever arises in consciousness (Kabat-Zinn, 1994: 4). For example, Mahasatipatthana Sutta shows, “A monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world; he abides contemplating feelings as feelings; he abides contemplating mind as mind; he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world” (Walshe, 2012: 335). The engagement in mindfulness capacitates us to develop the ability for moment-to-moment awareness of internal states such as feelings, emotions, thoughts, and attitudes. Instead of being controlled by our habitual behavioral patterns, emotions, and thoughts, we can turn the contents of our consciousness, thoughts, feelings, and reactions into objects of reflection and analysis (Hart, 2001: 8).

Through the practice of mindfulness, we cultivate a first-hand awareness and experience the social conditioning of our thinking and knowing, becoming less identified with our habits of mind and standpoints (Gunnlaugson, 2007: 139). Practicing mindful disengagement creates a space in our own minds for the development of enlarged awareness and attentiveness to broader dimensions of how the mind can work, by going beyond socially built presuppositions and sedimented habits of thinking and knowing (Hart, 2001: 12). By developing the ability to observe our minds, we can temporarily mute external factors and discover the role of our mental and emotional habits in framing our perceptions of reality (Chappell, 1999: 199). In other words, we come to realize that the contents of reality depend not so much on what happens to us, but on what attitudes, understanding, feelings and reactions we give to those events (Chappell, 1999: 199).

As we practice mindfulness, by monitoring how our mind works and controlling emotions, we can gain a deeper and more profound intellectual insight into the nature of reality, to address an absolutized conditioned state that causes negative feelings and dogmatism (Daneth, 2006: 62). The conceptual thought or frame of reference provides us with a lens through which to view and organize our world and build our lived experience. Therefore, it becomes imperative to correct our misunderstanding of socially constructed conceptual thought when it causes us conflict and violence (Orr, 2014: 47). Though exchanging information and opinions between/among those in conflict is important, it is more

crucial to change the foundational cognitive structure that affects how information and viewpoints are understood and given meaning (Zajonc, 2006: 1), so that more positive, constructive values and perspectives can be explored. Through contemplative practice that disassociates us from frames of reference that create ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ boundaries, we are awakened to the interdependent and interpenetrating nature of reality or conceptual thoughts that form our reality (Apffel-Marglin and Bush, 2005: 15).

For instance, the interdependent and interpenetrating nature of conceptual thought that establishes our reality is expounded upon by Nagarjuna: “Without one there cannot be many and without many it is not possible to refer to one. Therefore, one and many arise dependently and such phenomena do not have sign of inherent existence.” (Komito, 1987: 80) He also states that “If there is existence, then is non-existence; if there is something long, similarly (there is) something short; and if there is non-existence, (there is) existence; therefore, both (existence and non-existence) are not existent.” (Tola and Dragonetti, 1995: 128). He further states, “Unity and multiplicity and past and future, etc., defilement and purification, correct and false – how can they exist per se?” (Tola and Dragonetti, 1995: 128).

The realization of our dependence on any conceptual or linguistic framework enables us to understand that any form of symbolic knowledge that shapes dichotomous human relations cannot be seen as existing outside of the purview of interdependency (Muller, 1998: 5). This does not imply the total erasure of difference or demise of all distinctions into an all-frozen sameness, but advocates a reformulation of dualistic thinking. What needs to be known here is that dualistic “either-or” thinking, though important in some circumstances, is “only one product of the total functioning of the mind” (Tart, 2000: 28). In being awakened to the interdependent and interpenetrating nature of the symbolic or linguistic knowledge that forms dichotomous relations, we can affect a shift in perspective from a dualistic stance to a non-dualistic stance (Nagatomo, 2000: 232), wherein *prima facie* opposing views are not seen as fixed pairs of opposites, but as inter-relational constructs. When we transcend dualistic thinking, we become empowered to hold multiplex, complementary, “both-and” dialectical thinking, and to appreciate that the opposite of a deep truth is another deep truth (Braud and Anderson, 1998: 12).

Dialogue and mindfulness

Arguably, dialogue-- for which the need emerges from the increasing acknowledgement that our changing reality demands a new global ethic and perspective of one another-- has become one of the core methods to transform a violent and antagonistic relationship into harmonious one (Der-lan, 2006: 98). The main objective of dialogue is not just to share information, but to uncover the processes that shape us and the struggle we are having, so that mutual respect and a sense of solidarity can be aroused (Der-lan, 2006: 98). Dialogue can be seen as an intersubjective phenomenon, wherein those with distinct or even opposing perspectives promote mutual understanding and transformation.

How can mindfulness contribute to intersubjective dialogue? As it mainly focuses on empowering individuals to monitor and control their mind-states and change perspectives, the practice of mindfulness transformation assumes a crucial role in creating a mind-state to engage in a constructive dialogue with others. What must be addressed before and during dialogue is a reactive and impulsive interaction between/among those with distinct values, perspectives, or frames of reference.

Mindful observation of our own mind-state slows down the stream of consciousness, and suspends impulsive and automatic reactions when encountering different ideas, values, or identities. Mindful suspension of habitual reaction facilitates the transition from being focally embedded in our thoughts and feelings, to being free to witness them consciously, which leads us to a different self-sense and a more complex, multi-faceted form of consciousness that appreciates distinct views and ideas (Gunnlaugson, 2007: 144). The practice of internal observation exposes and deconstructs socially conditioned positions of belief, value, and thought, freeing our minds to notice and appreciate multiple perspectives and unexpected insights (Hart, 2004: 38).

Dialogue requires the openness to be challenged and transformed by encountering others’ viewpoints and values, as well as the willingness and ability to engage in active listening and

understanding of them (Ferrer, 2002: 166). Dialogue demands us to let ourselves be changed in our point of view, attitude, values, and mode of thinking, which requires internal and reflective awareness of our own mind-state to free us from any fixed frame of reference (Hadot, 1995: 35). The enhancement of reflective self-awareness prevents extreme attachment to a particular conditioned state, serves to loosen the power of our habits of thought, and makes our minds a more hospitable place for openness to differences, diversity, and creativity (Claxton, 2006: 110). By learning to be less embedded or reified in a perspective or frame of reference through mindful observation of our internal states, we can develop a different basis or relationship to our own mode of thinking and emotional processes (Gunnlaugson, 2007: 145).

Furthermore, the integrative expansion of experiential range, as a result of the practice of mindfulness and perspectival shift, enables us to engage interpersonal and intergroup interaction in a more extensive and inclusive manner (Firman and Gila, 2002: 34). Recognizing the interdependent and interconnected nature of human relations makes us aware of the need to approach the phenomenon of conflict from a perspective that is distinct from conventional dualistic or dichotomous logic. Normally, when conflict is characterized by the pursuit of incompatible or contradictory goals, or by a clash of values, ideologies or perspectives (Ramsbotham et al, 2011: 8), conflict dynamics tends to be shaped by dualistic or divisive thoughts and perceptions. However, by detaching from a fixed standpoint through mindfulness and perspectival change, the structure of conflict is perceived from a standpoint of mutual interdependence and interpenetration (Park, 2008: 186).

In understanding conflict as a phenomenon of mutual interdependence and interpenetration, we come to realize that it is impossible to draw a complete line or picture that judges the parties in the conflict as being absolutely right or wrong; rather, those in conflict are interconnected to each other (Park, 2008: 186). They are closely interwoven on a fundamental dimension, despite their conflictual and dichotomous relationship and clash of distinct values, perspectives, and seemingly incompatible or contradictory goals (Park, 2008: 186). With a dualistic view of conflict transcended, violence against others becomes an act of violence against ourselves, and is understood as an undesirable and unrealistic option or course of action in the transformation of a conflictual situation (Brantmeier, 2007: 152).

When we realize the interdependent and interpenetrating nature of conflict and consequently reject the use of force or violence as a solution, we can also overcome the belief that our goals, values, and perspectives are mutually incompatible and antithetical in an absolute sense. As a result, it becomes imperative to go beyond the pursuit of incompatible objectives and explore new values and goals that take both parties' needs into consideration (Braud and Anderson, 1998: 12). When we are awakened to the fundamental interdependent and interpenetrating nature of conflict, we cultivate our self-transformation and openness to different, or even opposing, views or frames of reference, which becomes the scaffolding to explore mutually satisfactory visions and goals.

Thus, we can see an intimate connection between dialogue with others and that with ourselves. Dialogue has two dimensions – intersubjective dialogue and internal dialogue – and both need to be equally considered and practiced. Mindful and reflective encounters with ourselves sharpen our capacity for constructive and productive encounters with others, who are conditioned with distinct frames of reference to make new interpersonal and intergroup relationships possible (Hadot, 1995: 45).

On a Buddhist Peace

Thus far, we have examined a Buddhist view of conflict dynamics and its approach to resolution. How might peace be characterized from this analysis? It is to be understood as a non-dualistic peace, based on the practice of multiple functions of mind – contemplative mind, cognition of reality including human relationship as interdependent and interconnected, and compassionate mind – in a synergistic way.

As examined in previous section, one of the most powerful transformative methods for conflict resolution is contemplative practice, including mindfulness, which helps us achieve a mind-state that is not imprisoned by an attachment to any particular view or frame of reference that creates social/cultural boundaries (Bush, 2011: 184). Consequently, each individual develops the capacity to transcend particular

identities while simultaneously honoring them, to move between/among distinct worldviews, perspectives, and frames of reference, in order to explore the creation of new ones with others in an interdependent and interpenetrating context (Zajonc, 2006: 3). This awakens us to the ultimate undivided nature of human beings. The dynamics of peace arise from interior self-transformation, that is, transcending the fixed ego-self and freeing the self for others, to realize and enact compassion (Coleman, 2006: 8).

Compassion - an exercise of our courage to transcend the dualistic view of human relationships to one that is interdependent and interconnected (Park, 2008: 184) - is an acknowledgement of shared humanity and of an ultimate equality of suffering of all human beings (Pruitt and McCollum, 2010: 141). It is a capacity to feel others' pain, sorrow, despair, or suffering as our own based on the clear awareness of interdependent origination of our existence (Hoyt, 2014: 26). A compassionate mind inspires the development the quality of kindness-- a universal and unselfish love-- that extends ourselves to friends, family, and ultimately to all people, including those with whom we are in conflict. It drives us to take action, care for, and serve others (Pruitt and McCollum, 2010: 141).

Transcending the division between self and others, to embrace an ultimately undivided relationship between one another, does not mean to deny the uniqueness or individuality of an identity, whether it be individual or collective. Rather, it is a qualitative transformation of the way we view the nature of identity. Instead of seeing our identity as an independent and fixed existence, we make a perspectival shift to understand it as the interdependent web of life with no fixed nature (Loy, 1993: 501). Realizing identity as an open and dynamic living system that lies within an even larger interdependent and interpenetrating system, leads us to understand an ultimately non-dualistic relationship between ourselves and others (Rothberg, 1992: 63). We come to recognize that we cannot separate ourselves from the inter-relational web of life without damaging both others and ourselves (Loy, 1993: 501).

Consequently, we become aware that our own well-being and that of others are inseparable: without considering and acting to promote peace for others, our own peace would be impossible (Vaughan, 2002: 23). Non-dualistic peace, based on a compassionate mind, is to be understood as a transition from self-centered, dichotomous tensions of in-group and out-group processes to an all-inclusive state of awareness of our fundamental interdependence and interpenetration. This awareness drives us to make an effort to gratify the basic needs of all, promote freedom and justice for both ourselves and those with distinct identities, and resort to peaceful methods of managing differences constructively and creatively.

Furthermore, an expanded awareness of the interdependent and ultimately non-dualistic nature of human relationships paves the way for unity in diversity. In this context, diversity does not merely mean different races, ethnic groups, cultures and religions exist separately. Touching diversity refers to the practice of complex and coordination-enriching interdependence (Hershock, 2012: 368), whereby we experience difference and distinctiveness not as a threat or a subject for hatred or attack, but as an opportunity for mutual insight and inspiration to explore something that is new to all participants. It does not refer to rejecting or abandoning distinct values, worldviews, or norms that condition us socially or culturally. Rather, it refers to their meaningful revision and reorientation, so that we can add new understandings or meanings to them in an interdependent relationship. Unity in diversity means that those with different, or even opposing, frames of reference engage in an exploratory, ongoing, and everlasting process that explicates or unfolds new values and meanings, to achieve and sustain their interdependent, mutually liberating, and transformative relational dynamics.

Truly, the synthetic practice of contemplative mind, cognitive transformation, and compassionate mind is not easy. However, since our actions and words are derived from our own mind-state, it is essential for us to monitor and control our own minds, and to act and speak both constructively and harmoniously (Kosan Sunim, 1999: 121). Conflict in any form does not take a pre-determined course of action or direction beyond our control. Rather, since our intentions, perspectives, and reactions affect how conflict unfolds (Hershock, 2006: 180), interaction based on contemplative practice with cognitive change and compassionate action will be important. Such an interaction can turn conflict into an opportunity for those in conflict to achieve self-transformation and construct new values and truths

cooperatively. As we create subjective and intersubjective realities every day (Vaughan, 1979: 41), every moment of our life can be an opportunity to embody our inner resources required to construct peace (Zajonc, 2006: 3).

An interdependent relationship between inner peace and outer peace

Although the potential of the human mind has been explored for conflict resolution and internal dimensions of peace, the Buddhist inner peace examined here does not dismiss the outer, external dimensions of peace. Rather, they are interdependent. The critical problem with Buddhist inner peace is that it tends to ignore the macro economic and political structures that stifle people's ability to satisfy their basic needs and pursue their envisioned life (Brantmeier, 2007: 147). As Hershock critiques, inner peace could neither be appreciated by, nor applied to those without appropriate food, clothing, and shelter, as well as those without proper access to social services (such as basic education and health care) and political and economic activities (2006: 200).

Recognizing the material needs for sustaining human life, Buddhism takes the middle-way stance as a criterion in making decisions on all levels of activity and encourages frugality as a positive virtue (Der-lan, 2006: 94). Though individual's inner transformation and increasing those with contemplative skills are important to sustainable peace. However, exclusive reliance on inner transformation would frustrate those who consider the short and mid-term efforts such as delivery of basic needs and development of infrastructures are imperative for social and structural dimensions of peace (Der-lan, 2006: 107). Though the compassionate and contemplative mind cultivated within individuals can contribute to constructive conflict resolution and a lasting peace, specific problem areas, such as physical violence or social and structural inequalities, need to be properly addressed.

Promoting human rights and equality for all in society, in terms of social, legal, political, and economic opportunities, is essential to eradicate the potential causes of violence (Groff, 2008: 2). For example, political and administrative reforms, establishment of democratic governance, economic development that satisfies the basic needs of the citizens, and creating and strengthening civil society is important. Structural and institutional transformation is required to correspond to the distinct needs of the different groups in society. Securing multiple voices of those groups being heard and reflected on political, economic, and social policies will serve as a foundation for a durable peace.

However, Buddhism also claims that conditions of the outer world are dependent on the internal conditions of human beings, both individually and collectively. External verbal and physical wrongdoings, as well as social injustices, cause conflict and violence. However, those behavioral, and structural, and institutional causes stem from the state of the human mind since violence and injustice are responses toward external stimuli produced by inner mind operation (Brantmeier, 2007: 126). In other words, the individual and collective outer dimensions of peace somehow represent, and are conditioned by, our individual and collective internal dimensions of peace (Groff and Smoker, 1996: 7). Therefore, developing skills and competencies to practice the multiple functions of the human mind, as explored in this paper, is also crucial to achieve a sustainable peace.

For instance, practice of constant reflection on our thoughts and feelings would serve as a first step to control negative feelings and an excessive selfish thought. As we control our own negative feelings and selfish view, we will learn to resolve conflict with peaceful and constructive means both internally and externally (The Dalai Lama, 2002). As the aim of Buddhism is liberation from suffering through the acquisition of deep insight into the nature of reality – interdependence, interpenetration, impermanence, and emptiness of fixed and unchanging nature of reality including human existence – it can assume a significant role in transforming our understanding of reality and relation to others, including those with different or opposing values and views. Obtaining this wisdom, along with reflective practice, will inspire us to develop the altruistic mental faculties to realize that one's social justice and others' are interdependent and inseparable. Though socially or culturally conditioned habits of perception and reification of reality causes us to have a dualistic or dichotomous view of human relationships (Makransky, 2005: 30) and a self-centered quest for peace and security, training ourselves to cultivate all-

encompassing wisdom and compassion, along with reflective practice upon our feelings and thoughts, will enable us to nurture nonviolent thoughts and actions, as a contribution to achieving a sustainable peace.

Peace lies at the nexus of significant interdependence among diverse physiological, psychological, social, cultural, economic, and political realities (Hershock, 2006: 168). To live in peace should be understood as involving both personal fulfillment and social well-being, the psychological and spiritual quality of life, and objective living conditions (Kosan Sunim, 1999: 121). Durable and sustainable peace is to be understood as an integration of outer peace and inner peace. It means a holistic peace wherein physiological needs of all are secured, structural and institutional justices are addressed, and people develop and enact multiple functions of mind to have positive views of others and become creative in transforming non-violent dispute into an opportunity to promote an interdependent and interpenetrating relationship.

Conclusion and research implications

This paper has explored a Buddhist inner peace within the dynamics of conflict and its resolution. Clearly, inner peace, undergirded by a contemplative mind, cognitive transformation, and a compassionate mind, is not a panacea. As Groff claims, peace is a multi-factor process involving many distinct substantive aspects and dimensions: it is multi-leveled, coping with multiple perspectives, from macro to micro levels in the external world and extending to the inner world (2008: 1). Though individual effort is important, it is essential to reform social conditions to gratify basic human needs of citizens and guarantee their equal access to political, economic, and social activities. Building those circumstances will empower each and every individual to nurture the capacity to practice multiple functions of mind, and to move towards building sustainable peace between and among those with different frames of reference and identities. When inner peace, and methods to achieve it, are seen and examined as part of a continuum of multiple and complex peace process, their practical viability will be heightened in the long run. In short, Buddhist inner peace, as explored here, and Western peace research need further collaboration to complement each other, and produce more concrete theories and methods in a holistic manner.

As Ramsbotham et al., argue that as a global agenda, peace research has entered the phase wherein various values and wisdom from around the globe should be appreciated (2011: 425). Further, if necessary, their complementary relationship needs to be explored to promote shared understanding of the virtue to address unjust social/global structure and achieve harmonious and constructive human relationships. As it is impossible to establish a single peace and conflict analysis approach, it is crucial to be open to views that are different from our own and find creative ways to produce new, dialectically-built understandings of peace and conflict dynamics, while also appreciating existing ones. As peace and conflict are complex and multi-faceted phenomena that demand creativity and flexibility, it is certainly not the time to make a clear and fixed demarcation between Western and non-Western blocks. Rather it is the time for each and every one of us to rid ourselves of narrow, self-imposed perspectives and boundaries, and to promote further dialogue within the larger context that includes both the West and non-West.

Notes:

1. For instance, liberal peacebuilding characterized as the employment of democracy and market-based economy, and reform of a range of administrative institutions in line with modern state system (Richmond, 2008) is a good instance.
2. For instance, Ronald J. Fisher (1990 and 1997), Herbert C. Kelman (1990 and 1997), and Daniel Bar-Tal (2011 and 2013) are good examples.
3. Dhamapada is a collection of sayings of the Buddha.
4. Surangama Sutra is a sutra in Mahayana Buddhism. Especially it has been influentian in Chinese Chan Buddhist school.

5. Nagarjuna is one of the most important Buddhist philosophers, who lived between the second and third century. Chang (1971) states Nagarjuna is a founder and exponent of Madhyamaka philosophy that centers on sunyata (emptiness) doctrine to achieve liberation from suffering. Regarding the details of Nagarjuna's works and Madhyamaka philosophy, Murti's *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Madhyamika System* would be helpful.
6. Yun characterizes it as a correct view of reality, that is, mutual interdependence and ultimate empty nature (2002).
7. It refers to a correct perception that our bodies will eventually decay and disappear and that our emotions and thoughts are temporal and impermanent (Yun, 2002).
8. According to Rubin, it means speaking trustfully, sincerely, and compassionately (2003).
9. It refers to refraining from needless killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct (Rubin, 2003).
10. It means living a reasonable economic life, an altruistic life, and a harmonious communal life (Yun, 2002).
11. It means correct diligence in developing wholesomeness that not yet arisen, increasing wholesomeness that has already arisen, and preventing unwholesomeness from arising (Yun, 2002).
12. It signifies constant awareness of phenomena that are happening at present and careful recollection of phenomena that occurred in the past (Rubin, 2003).
13. It refers to spiritual concentration and mental tranquility achieved through the act of meditation to recall the actions and thoughts in the past, perceive the dynamics of mind at present and cultivate goodwill and compassion (Rubin, 2003).

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