



Towards Eternal Peace

by
Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

In the year 2000, the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw received an invitation from the United Nations on the occasion of the 'Millenium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders' on 28th August 2000. Along with members of the other world faiths, the Sayadaw was asked please to submit and deliver an address 'offering specific proposals relating to ways in which religious and spiritual leaders can contribute to peacemaking in the world'. The Sayadaw submitted 'Towards Eternal World Peace'. But owing to illness, the Sayadaw was unable to go, and the talk was never delivered.





Towards Eternal Peace

The first time, the king of celestial beings, Sakka, went to see The Buddha, he asked The Buddha a number of questions. His very first question had to do with war and peace.

He said that human beings, celestial beings, and other beings all have a wish. Their wish, he said, is:¹

**Would that without enmity, without violence,
without hostility, without malevolence,
we might live in friendliness.**

But, said Sakka to The Buddha, even though human beings, celestial beings and other beings have this wish, they live in enmity, with violence, with hostility, and with malevolence.

Everyone wishes to live in peace, free from enmity, free from any threats either by weapons or by trade, free from enemies, free from worry and grief, and free from anger, yet they live with those things. Why is that? Sakka asked The Buddha:

What fetters them, Venerable One?

The Buddha replied:

The fetters of envy and possessiveness.

The fetters the Buddha here discusses are certain attitudes.

- (1) When one person surpasses another person in wealth, prestige, knowledge, etc., an attitude develops, resenting that person's success.
- (2) When one family surpasses another family in any way, an attitude develops, resenting that family's success.
- (3) When one company surpasses another company in any way, an attitude develops, resenting that company's success.
- (4) When one people surpasses another people in any way, an attitude develops, resenting that people's success.
- (5) When one country surpasses another country in any way, an attitude develops, resenting that country's success.
- (6) When one group of countries surpasses another group of countries in any way, an attitude develops, resenting that group of countries' success.

This attitude of resenting another's success is envy (*issā*).

- (1) Finding it unbearable to share one's wealth, residence, relatives, prestige, knowledge, etc. with others is meanness and stinginess, an attitude of possessiveness (*macchariya*).
- (2) Finding it unbearable that others should become as wealthy, prestigious, knowledgeable, etc. as oneself is to grudge others their success, an attitude of possessiveness.

¹ D.ii.8 'Sakka-Pañha-Suttam' ('The Sakka-Questions Sutta')

- (3) Finding it unbearable that the wealth, prestige, knowledge, etc. of oneself, of one's family, of one's company, of one's people, of one's country, and of one's group of countries should be criticized, threatened, attacked, or ruined by other people, by other families, by other companies, by another people, by other countries, and by other groups of countries is pride, an attitude of possessiveness.

The basic cause for the arising of these two attitudes is loving self and not loving others. As a rule one loves oneself, one loves one's family, one loves one's company, one loves one's people, one loves one's country, and one loves one's group of countries. And, as a rule, one does not love others, one does not love other families, one does not love other companies, one does not love other peoples, one does not love other countries, one does not love other groups of countries. This attitude of love and craving for one's own, as opposed to hatred and anger towards others, is the basic cause for envy and possessiveness. If those causes are done away with, envy and possessiveness will also be done away with.

The basic causes for envy and possessiveness can both be completely uprooted and destroyed by The Buddha's so-called Middle Path. The Middle Path is three kinds of training:

- (1) Training in morality.....(*sīla*)
- (2) Training in concentration.....(*samādhi*)
- (3) Training in wisdom.....(*paññā*)



First one needs to develop pure morality. Basic pure morality means that one abstains from five things:

- (1) One abstains from any kind of killing.
- (2) One abstains from any kind of stealing.
- (3) One abstains from any kind of sexual misconduct.
- (4) One abstains from any kind of lying.
- (5) One abstains from taking any kind of wine, liquor, or other intoxicant.

These five abstinences are basic pure morality, and they are found in one way or other in the right practice of almost all religions.

When one has thus developed pure morality, one may undertake the second training, which is training in concentration. That means one develops a mind that is concentrated on only one pure object: we call it concentration meditation (*samādhi-bhāvanā*). One may develop concentration up to a very high level, which we call *jhāna*. There are a number of pure objects one may use to develop such *jhāna* concentration.

Four of those objects of meditation are what we call the four sublime abidings (*Brahma-vihāra*):

- (1) The sublime abiding of lovingkindness.....(*mettā*)
Having developed this meditation up to *jhāna*, one abides with lovingkindness towards all beings: lovingkindness towards those one respects, lovingkindness towards those that are

dear to one, lovingkindness towards those that one is indifferent towards, and even lovingkindness towards one's enemies. One will have broken down the mental barriers between the different kinds of people: one will have lovingkindness for all beings without exception.

- (2) The sublime abiding of compassion.....(*karunā*)
Having developed this meditation up to jhāna, one abides with compassion for all beings: compassion for those one respects, compassion for those that are dear to one, compassion for those that one is indifferent towards, and even compassion for one's enemies. One will have broken down the mental barriers between the different kinds of people: one will have compassion for all beings without exception.
- (3) The sublime abiding of congratulation.....(*muditā*)
Having developed this meditation up to jhāna, one abides rejoicing at the success of others: one rejoices at the success of those one respects, one rejoices at the success of those that are dear to one, one rejoices at the success of those that one is indifferent towards, and one rejoices even at the success of one's enemies. One will have broken down the mental barriers between the different kinds of people: one will rejoice in the success of all beings without exception.
- (4) The sublime abiding of equanimity.....(*upekkhā*)
Having developed this meditation up to jhāna, one abides equanimous towards all beings: one is equanimous towards those one respects, equanimous towards those that are dear to one,



equanimous towards those that one is indifferent towards, and equanimous even towards one's enemies. One will have broken down the mental barriers between the different kinds of people: one will remain equanimous towards all beings without exception.

Having developed these four sublime abidings up to the deep concentration of jhāna, one may actually abide with equal loving kindness, compassion, congratulation and equanimity towards all beings without exception.

The force of these four sublime abidings drives selfish love and hatred far away. And anyone who successfully develops these sublime qualities enjoys true peace. But one can enjoy this peace only so long as the meditative concentration is high, for as the concentration relaxes, so does the sublime abiding slowly vanish, and selfish love and hatred may return: the true peace of such jhāna concentration is an only temporary peace. That is why one must take the next step too, and transform the temporary peace into eternal peace.

The sure way to transform that temporary peace into eternal peace is to practise the third training, which is training in wisdom, The Buddha's way of insight-meditation (*vipassanā·bhāvanā*). Insight meditation is to investigate one's mind and body, in order that one may properly understand the psycho-physical phenomena that make up one's being.

Having trained in pure morality, one may train in concentration to attain jhāna. When one has developed jhāna concentration (*jhāna-samādhi*) one's mind becomes very powerful, and it radiates very bright and penetrative light. Using this mind-produced light, one may analyse the body and discover that the body is made up of billions of very tiny particles that we call *rūpa-kalāpa*: clusters of matter. They are believed to be many times smaller than the invisible atom.

All animate and inanimate matter in the whole world is composed of such *rūpa-kalāpas*: tiny particles that by their very nature arise and dissolve with immense speed.

But insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) does not arise by seeing these particles. For insight knowledge to arise, one needs to investigate ultimate reality; one needs to discern and analyse the material elements that make up the *rūpa-kalāpas*. Doing so, one sees that the individual *rūpa-kalāpa* is made up of four main elements:

- (1) the element of extension,
which we call the earth-element... (*paṭhavī-dhātu*)
- (2) the element of cohesion,
which we call the water-element..... (*āpo-dhātu*)
- (3) the element of heat,
which we call the fire-element..... (*tejo-dhātu*)
- (4) the element of motion,
which we call the air-element..... (*vāyo-dhātu*)



Rūpa-kalāpas are made up of also other material elements, we call them derived materiality. For example:

- colour..... (*vaṇṇa*)
- odour..... (*gandha*)
- flavour..... (*rasa*)
- nutritive essence..... (*ojā*)

In order properly to understand matter, one needs to exert sufficient effort to be able systematically to discern these ultimate realities clearly, with the insight wisdom of what we call Right Understanding Knowledge (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi-Ñāṇa*).

Having investigated ultimate matter, one needs then systematically to discern the elements of the mind, to understand that the mind is made up of consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasika*), which also arise and dissolve with immense speed.

There are many meditators in our meditation centres who are able clearly to discern these realities about matter and mind.

When one has seen clearly that the ultimate mental and physical realities arise and dissolve very quickly and all the time, one understands that matter and mind are impermanent (*anicca*). Having seen for oneself that matter and mind are impermanent, one understands also that matter and mind are as such unsatisfactory, as such suffering (*dukkha*). And having seen for oneself that matter and mind are

impermanent, and therefore unsatisfactory, one understands also that matter and mind are without a self (*anatta*): a self cannot be impermanent or unsatisfactory, can it?

Understanding that all matter and all mind are impermanent, unsatisfactory and without self is understanding what we call the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkham Ariya-Saccam*).

But the meditator who has clearly discerned and defined these ultimate material realities and ultimate mental realities with his wisdom-eye needs to understand more than that all matter and mind are impermanent, unsatisfactory and without a self: such an understanding is insufficient to yield eternal peace. One needs also to understand the relationship between matter and mind.

The meditator needs with his own wisdom-eye to discern how the material entities and mental entities arise owing to ignorance about the ultimate realities (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upādāna*), kamma-formations (*saṅkhārā*) and kamma-process (*kamma-bhava*). One must realize these causal relations not only as theoretical concepts described by the Buddha, one must also penetrate the actual realities with one's Right Understanding Knowledge.

There are many meditators in our meditation centres who are able to penetrate and vividly discern these causal relations with their own wisdom: they understand that the Noble Truth of Suffering arises owing to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayam Ariya-Saccam*).



When these two truths have been penetrated with wisdom, one understands that men, women, persons, human beings, and celestial beings do in the ultimate sense not exist: in the ultimate sense there exist only causes and effects. Matter and mind are nothing other than formations formed by causes: they are what we call formed entities (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*). As just explained, these formed entities arise and dissolve with immense speed: that is why we call them impermanent entities (*anicca-dhamma*). Because they are thus all the time subject to rapid arising and dissolution, they are as such also what we call unsatisfactory entities, entities of suffering (*dukkha-dhamma*). And being thus impermanent and unsatisfactory, they do not comprise or conceal any person or self or ego, which means they are what we call insubstantial and impersonal entities (*anatta-dhamma*). The knowledge that penetrates the true nature of impermanence, the true nature of unsatisfactoriness and suffering, and the true nature of not-self or non-ego is what we call Insight Right Understanding (*Vipassanā Sammā-Diṭṭhi*).

When one fully develops Insight Right Understanding, there arises what we call the Noble Path-Knowledge (*Ariya-Magga-Ñāna*): it is the knowledge that clearly and vividly penetrates Nibbāna, the unformed element. To realize the unformed element Nibbāna is to penetrate to incomparable supreme bliss, and eternal peace: we call it the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

(*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*). The Noble Path-Knowledge that penetrates Nibbāna is associated with eight factors, which we call the Path-factors:

- (1) Right Understanding..... (*Sammā Dīṭṭhi*)
- (2) Right Intention..... (*Sammā Saṅkappa*)
- (3) Right Speech..... (*Sammā Vācā*)
- (4) Right Action..... (*Sammā Kammanta*)
- (5) Right Livelihood..... (*Sammā Ājīva*)
- (6) Right Effort..... (*Sammā Vāyāma*)
- (7) Right Mindfulness..... (*Sammā Sati*)
- (8) Right Concentration..... (*Sammā Samādhi*)

These eight factors are what we call the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccam*).

That Noble Path-Knowledge has the power to eradicate mental defilements (*kilesa*), for it is mental defilements that are the real causes for suffering. There are four Path-knowledges, and at the arising of each one, certain defilements are eradicated: the fourth arising of the Noble Path-Knowledge sees the complete eradication of all defilements, which means selfish love and hatred will also have been completely eradicated. When selfish love and hatred no longer exist, envy and possessiveness no longer exist either.

When envy and possessiveness no longer exist, the meditator will have attained eternal peace: for himself. But if such effort is exerted so that the majority of world citizens attain such eternal peace



each one for himself, then eternal peace in the whole world will be an undeniable reality.

When envy and possessiveness no longer exist, no one will resent the wealth, prestige, knowledge, etc. of others, but everyone will rejoice in others' success. And no one will find it unbearable to share their wealth, residence, relatives, prestige, knowledge, etc. with others, but everyone will gladly and generously share whatever they have with others. No one will find it unbearable that others should become as wealthy, prestigious, knowledgeable, etc. as themselves, but everyone will rejoice in others' success. When everyone rejoices in the success of others', gladly and generously shares whatever they have with others, it is inevitable that no one will criticize, threaten, attack, or ruin others: it is inevitable that there will be eternal world peace.

Such world peace as a palpable reality can be attained right now, if all world citizens observe five precepts of morality training. That is, if they take upon themselves not to engage in five kinds of action:

- (1) Not to engage in any kind of killing
for any reason.
- (2) Not to engage in any kind of stealing
for any reason.
- (3) Not to engage in any kind of sexual misconduct
for any reason.
- (4) Not to engage in any kind of lying
for any reason.
- (5) Not to engage in the drinking of
any kind of wine or liquor.

That is the first step of the Buddhist training, and we may say it is found in some form or other in the right practice of almost all religions. If all world citizens then take upon themselves to develop meditative concentration, in lovingkindness, compassion, congratulation, and equanimity, the world peace that as an undeniable reality can be attained will be more lasting: but it will still be only a temporary world peace. If all world citizens take upon themselves to develop Path-wisdom, however, the undeniable reality will be indestructible, eternal world peace.

These facts about the gradual attainment of peace for the individual human being are not just so many theoretical concepts, so many philosophical or metaphysical ideas. They are the potentially palpable realities to be realized by any person who undertakes the threefold training mentioned earlier: training in morality, concentration and wisdom. Many people have throughout the ages taken upon themselves those three trainings, and have with success realized



for themselves the peace that they yield: the initial peace of morality, the more lasting peace of meditation, and the eternal peace of wisdom. And those three trainings can also today be undertaken, and the fruits be enjoyed by anyone who is willing sincerely to strive strenuously for eternal peace.

In order that such individual eternal peace may be enjoyed by the majority of world citizens, and thereby eternal world peace be achieved, an earnest appeal is herewith made for everyone to undertake the Noble Practice of the Buddha.

May all beings attain eternal peace.

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

[Invitation from the United Nations]

**THE MILLENNIUM WORLD PEACE SUMMIT
OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS**

OPENING AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AUGUST 28, 2000

Ven. Pha Auk Sayadaw
c/o Dr Mintinmun
15/19 U Wisara Road
Yangon
Myanmar

June 5, 2000

Dear Ven. Sayadaw,

Despite the best efforts of individual religious and spiritual leaders from different parts of the world, the human family is still unable to prevent the eruption of horrible acts of war. Even at this moment, terrible conflicts threaten the lives of large numbers of people in various parts of the globe. There is a growing conviction that new measures must be sought to arrest violent conflict in the years ahead.

It is for this purpose - to find new ways of preventing hostilities and ensuring peace and security - that the world's most prominent religious and spiritual leaders are being asked to gather for a Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders which will take place at the United Nations in New York beginning August 28, 2000.



On behalf of the Secretariat for the Millennium World Peace Summit I write to humbly request your presence at this historic gathering and to invite you to submit a paper of between 1,000 and 1,500 words offering specific proposals relating to ways in which religious and spiritual leaders can contribute to peacemaking in the world in one or more of the following areas:

- 1) the reduction of human and social tensions through the elimination of poverty
- 2) programs and policies for common action toward the preservation and enhancement of the environment.
- 3) cooperative measures for addressing the threat to peace in zones of conflict

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will address those assembled in an opening session that will precede the General Assembly's Millennium Summit of Heads of States and Government. He has described this gathering as the first time that leaders of the religious traditions will convene together at the United Nations. The religious traditions and the United Nations share a common mission: to work to improve the human condition and to seek peace and security for all the world's peoples. The Millennium Peace Summit will explore ways that religious and spiritual leaders and the United Nations can work together more closely to achieve these Goals. The purpose of the Summit is twofold:

- 1) The first is for the religious leaders to sign a united resolution for peace at the turn of the millennium. This past century has been the most violent in the history of humanity, but there is now an upsurge of hope as the world becomes vastly more interconnected. Communications among religions is greater than ever before, and there is widespread recognition of the need to join forces if peace is to be established. Ethnic and religious differences continue to be excuses for violence and religious leaders could play a significant role in assuaging such differences. The signing of a Declaration of Peace will have practical as well as symbolic importance and serve as an inspiration.
- 2) The second purpose is to take the first steps toward the creation of an International Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, a permanent body that will function as a resource for the Secretary General and the United Nations in their efforts to build a lasting peace. Regional Councils will also be formed to address and to advise on local issues.

Participation in the Summit is reserved for the most senior religious and spiritual leaders of the world's faith traditions. We are planning for the sessions and addresses to be broadcast worldwide via CNN - as well as on the Internet - so that these messages of hope can reach many tens of millions of people



around the world. We are also planning for the publication of the papers presented and the addresses so that they may have a broad distribution around the world. Greater details concerning the Summit - and the full agenda and arrangements will be sent to you in the weeks ahead.

Your participation in this assembly is the key for its success.

Please accept my personal assurance of our highest esteem

Kind regards,

Bawa Jain
Secretary General
World Peace Summit

The Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious
and Spiritual Leaders

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[Copy of a pamphlet that accompanied the invitation.]

**THE MILLENNIUM WORLD PEACE SUMMIT
OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS**

AUGUST 28 - AUGUST 31, 2000

OPENING AT THE UNITED NATIONS

A Call to the World's Spiritual Leadership

During the last decade, more than 100-armed conflicts have erupted in over 70 different locations around the world. Since the end of World War II, 27 million people have lost their lives due to war. Although religious leaders individually have spoken out against and tried to halt these hostilities, until now there has been no concerted effort to join the world's leading religious figures in a united initiative for world peace, working in conjunction with the United Nations.

Globalization and new communications technologies have done much to join the economies of countries around the world and to create a growing sense of interconnectedness among people. But these advances have not alleviated the problems that plague humankind. The brutality of war and the despair of poverty are as much a reality today as at any time in the past. Human suffering continues at



an intolerable level. To counter these ills, a strong collaboration is needed between the United Nations and the religious and spiritual community.

For this purpose, and to mark the potential of the new millennium, the world's preeminent religious and spiritual leaders will be gathering at the United Nations from August 28, 2000 for a historic World Peace Summit. Addressing the world's population through a telecast from the United Nations General Assembly Hall, these revered leaders will demonstrate their united commitment and determination who work together to eliminate the causes that perpetrate violence and lead to war.

**A NEW COLLABORATION
AMONG RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

"In times of conflict, the world's great religious leaders will together exert moral authority in the zones of conflict to seek nonviolent resolutions."

Bawa Jain
Secretary General
World Peace Summit

83 % of the world's population adhere to a formal religious or spiritual belief system. A single country can contain dozens of different

religions or religious denominations. In North America alone, there are 1,200 Christian denominations. Religion represents an extraordinary force and an extraordinary diversity. Religious leaders can influence how their followers respond to this diversity.

Today, religious differences continue to be a cause of conflict in many parts of the world despite the fact that religious leaders around the world are calling upon their followers to adopt a new vision of tolerance and cooperation.

If peace is to be attained in this new millennium, the human community must acknowledge its spiritual potential and recognize that it is within our power to eradicate the worst form of human brutality — war — as well as one of the root causes of war — poverty. The time is ripe for the world's spiritual leadership to work more closely with the United Nations in its effort to address the pressing needs of humankind.

The World Peace Summit will be a historic occasion, for it will be the first time that an assembly of such prestigious religious leaders from all over the world will gather at the United Nations, marking a new era of collaboration between the different religious communities and between the world's political and spiritual leadership. Religious leaders will address the world's population on how people with diverse belief systems can live together in peace.



BRINGING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INTO THE PEACE PROCESS

Today there are many examples of religious communities cooperating to resolve conflict and rebuild society. For example, the religious leaders in Sierra Leone worked together to help resolve an almost decade-long civil war. Inspired by many such positive examples, and sobered by the abuses of religion in situations of conflict, religious leaders today are invited to reflect on how they might more systematically be engaged in a common pursuit of peace.

During recent conflicts in a number of regions, efforts have been made to engage the assistance of religious leaders. But to be more effective, many of the leaders acknowledge the need for a formalized relationship with the United Nations.

Religious leaders gathering at the United Nations from August 28 will take a number of concrete steps to declare their commitment to work more closely as a community of spiritual leaders and with the diplomatic community of the United Nations to prevent the outbreak of war.

They will work together to discern shared commitments to peace expressed in a Declaration for World Peace. Moreover, an international Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders will be

formed to work with the United Nations and the United Nations Secretary-General in peacemaking and peace-keeping efforts. This Council will add a unique spiritual dimension to the United Nations' difficult task of mediating conflicts between nations and among peoples from different religions and ethnic groups.

"This gathering of the world's preeminent religious and spiritual leaders in a united call for peace will hopefully strengthen the prospect for peace as we enter the new millennium."

Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations

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and Spiritual Leaders

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