

# HOW TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN PEACE

By Ven. H. Gunaratana Thero

Many religionists and philanthropists as well as politicians are busier today than ever before harping on an unknown tune – unknown to themselves, let alone others, while some other so-called peace lovers are strengthening their strategic points with nuclear build up and sending peace missions from one corner of the world to another. At the same time genuinely peace loving innocent people pay their regular visits to religious places and pray sincerely to their gods begging them to bestow peace upon them and some of their own counterparts do burn joss-stick, joss-papers, candles and incense expecting to gain the same object.

In spite of all these practices people are more unhappy and peace has retarded farther than ever before, reason being that none of these practices has been directed in a proper perspective. In order to achieve what they expect they should perceive themselves the bull's eye of the target and hit at it. They must cultivate peace in their own minds first and then they can bring peace to their neighbours. It is quite logical that a man cannot give others what he does not possess. Similarly peaceful co-existence is just a dream in a society where individuals do not fulfill their duties to one another.

The Buddha advocated that a man, who does his duty towards his parents, wife and children, his relatives and his neighbours, would live peacefully. The man who neglects them would never know what peace is. In a family where the parents are given the highest respect, young ones obey the elders, parents and children fulfill their duties towards one another, members do not gossip, truth is spoken always and everybody practises charity and truthfulness then peace and prosperity are ensured, happiness is dominant and gods protect such people; moreover they will not be affected by any evil spirits. Conversely whichever family is void of these qualities would face adverse effect.

Peace in fact cannot be achieved by emotional approach, by stirring up and arousing public feeling, as some people believe and implement it, but it can only be achieved by learning how to promote peaceful co-existence of plural society where people uphold views diametrically opposite to one another. It could be achieved through gradual and systematic inculcation and cultivation of peaceful thoughts in children's minds while they are at home or in school by teaching and training them not to be greedy, covetous and jealous, not to disturb others' happiness and not to conceive and breed anger and hatred. Children, as a matter of nature, are ready to imitate the elders and parents and hence it is the parents who should be meticulously mindful of and sensitive to the maintenance

of peace and order in their own individual families in particular and in the whole country in general. Should the parents overlook this momentous social problem, its inevitable consequence will be the juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most serious problems that all civilized societies have to face exclusively. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the parents neglect their children who on their part do completely lose the filial love and obligation towards their parents. On the one hand parents complain of their children's ungratefulness and on the other hand the number of such unruly youngsters do grow daily by leaps and bounds. From the psychological point of view, these are some of the conditions which promote the development of moronic and eccentric state of mind. Before the discovery of the causes of moronic condition, little attention had been paid to its effect on society as a whole. But along with the extensive study of its nature and seriousness, the world, being alarmed, has been contriving to solve this problem and has unanimously agreed that so long as the parents encourage these conditions to breed in children's minds, on whom the future of the world depends, the chaotic eventualities and irresponsible attacks on human life is inevitable. Buddhism therefore contributing the greatest share to the eradication of these social evils, ensures world peace which is more remote to many people than to genuine Buddhists.