



Nonviolent Buddhist Peace Work: Textual Support for Nonviolent Peace Work in Early Buddhism

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Abstract

In this paper I will explore if there is evidence for the support of nonviolent peace work in the early Buddhist tradition. First, I will describe the social science's definitions for the three modalities of peace work, then I will highlight current peace organizations and prominent peace workers in the modern Buddhist tradition. Lastly, I will examine the first four Nikāyas and the Vinaya of the Pāli Buddhist canon to see if the idea of nonviolent peace work, as defined within Peace and Conflict Studies, has textual support.

Keywords: Nonviolent, Buddhist Peace Work, Early Buddhism

Introduction to the Three Modalities of Nonviolent Peace Work

Leading Peace theorist Johan Galtung, founder of the Social Science field of Peace and Conflict Studies, identifies the three approaches to peace work as peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. Galtung states that the goal of these three approaches to peace work are a reduction in conflict and a creation of constructive social mechanisms to ensure lasting social equanimity.¹

The first nonviolent peace modality is peacemaking. Peacemaking is defined as activities that search for creative and mutually acceptable outcomes to conflict.² Peacemaking seeks to transform the attitudes and assumptions of the actors in the conflict, and includes educational peace conferences, encounter forums, interfaith dialogues, and conflict mediation. A contemporary example of peacemaking includes relationship and knowledge building forums sponsored by universities, governments, transnational agencies, local community organizations, and faith-based organizations.

The second approach to nonviolent peace work is peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is defined as activities that build structural and cultural peace. This second approach to nonviolent peace work seeks to transform and eliminate social conflict at the source,³ and is primarily focused on restructuring economic and political causes. Contemporary examples of nonviolent peacebuilding include constructive activities such as sustainable development, the fair trade movement, democratization of governments, institutional transparency, and the international movement for monetary reform.

The third approach to peace work is peacekeeping. Peacekeeping is defined as pressuring and influencing the actors of the conflict to prevent, reduce, and stop violence.⁴ In practice, this entails activities of nonviolent intervention, protective nonviolent accompaniment, civil disobedience, monitoring, fact-finding, networking, and advocacy. Contemporary methodologically centered examples of nonviolent peacekeeping include

¹Galtung, Johan. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: SAGE Publications, 1996. Pg. 271.

²Galtung, Pg. 103

³Galtung, Pg. 103

⁴Galtung, Pg. 103

the organizations: Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), Peace Brigades International (PBI), and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).⁵

Modern Examples of Nonviolent Buddhist Peace Work

In the modern Buddhist faith tradition, there are many examples of nonviolent peace workers and peace organizations. I will describe a few of these examples for the purpose of examining if these contemporary Buddhists have canonical foundation for their activities in nonviolent peace work. In my description I will state the peace worker or organization's name, primary modalities of peace work as articulated by Galtung, and the specific peace work performed. First, I will examine the contemporary nonviolent Buddhist peace organizations: International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), Zen Peacemakers, Sarvodaya, and Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF). Then I will examine prominent Buddhist peace workers: Thich Nhat Hanh of Vietnam/France, Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, Bhante Wimala of Sri Lanka, Bhikshuni Chao Hwei of Taiwan, and Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand.

Buddhist Peace Organizations

INEB is an international network based out of Thailand, but connected throughout Asia and the West. INEB is focused primarily upon peacemaking and peacebuilding by organizing training workshops, interfaith dialogue, educational conferences, and promoting the idea of 'Engaged Buddhism' for the purpose of fostering peace and ecological awareness. Zen Peacemakers is based on the vision of Zen teacher Bernie Glassman, and conducts trainings in meditation for the purpose of community outreach and community building. Zen Peacemaker's primarily peace focus is peacemaking, but it's training is ideologically supportive of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Sarvodaya is a Gandhian Buddhist organization structured in Gandhian principles and formulated by using a Buddhist worldview. Sarvodaya has several branches of its large organization involved in holistic social and village development in Sri Lanka, and is primarily focused upon peacebuilding and peacemaking, but also includes the Gandhian language of nonviolent peacekeeping. BPF, based in California, is a Buddhist peace organization that is focused on publicly exposing

5 McCarthy, Eli Sasaran. *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers: A Virtue Ethic for Catholic Social Teaching and U.S. Policy*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012. Pg. 200.

violence and injustice, and educating the American public about Buddhist social activism. BPF conducts event-oriented peacekeeping in urban areas of the US in the form of protests by using sitting meditation and walking meditation to help generate public awareness of social issues. However, BPF's primary focus is peacemaking through educational conferences and networking Buddhist peace activists.

Buddhist Peace Workers

Thich Nhat Hanh is one of the most famous global exponents of nonviolent Buddhist peace work. He was nominated by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1967 for the Nobel Peace prize for his peace work during the Vietnam War, and coined the term 'Engaged Buddhism.' He engaged in peacekeeping activities while in Vietnam, and has been a prolific peacebuilding and peacemaking author and organizer in the West. The Burmese Buddhist laywoman Aung San Suu Kyi is a political figure in Myanmar whose work has primarily focused upon peacebuilding. She was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1991 for nonviolently striving for Myanmar's democratization. Bhante Wimala is a Sri Lankan monk who has focused primarily upon peacebuilding. He has received numerous peace awards for his work in interfaith and developmentally based peace work. Bhikshuni Chao Hwei of Taiwan has focused upon peacemaking and peacebuilding by founding educational foundations, socially focused academies and nunneries, and through organizing social advocacy campaigns on animal rights. She has also written extensively on environmental protection and human rights. Venerable Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand has primarily focused upon peacemaking and peacebuilding, and in 1993 was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize. He has been a social critic of governmental violence, has been an active proponent of interfaith reconciliation, and has founded numerous developmental peace organizations including INEB.

These nonviolent Buddhist peace worker and organizational examples primarily practice and focus upon the peace work modalities of peacemaking and peacebuilding. Although modern Buddhist peace work primarily focuses upon peacemaking and peacebuilding, the peace worker and organizational examples provided above also teach, support, and occasionally practice peacekeeping. Based upon the examples of peace work from these contemporary Buddhists and the definition of peace work given by Galtung, is nonviolent peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping supported by the texts of the early Buddhist Pali canon? This question will be the focus for the rest of this paper.

Nonviolent Peace Work in the Early Buddhist Canon

Before we examine the early Buddhist canon, I will begin my discussion by first articulating the ultimate resolve and meaning of nonviolent peace work. The commitment to nonviolence ultimately means a rejection of violence as a tool for achieving any ideological goal or aim. This rejection of violence as an ideological or pragmatic tool, means by its nature, that a person or an organization who adheres to the strategy of nonviolence may confront violence at the expense of their health, their lives, or their loved ones lives. Peace work, as defined by Galtung, does not imply passivity. Peace as ‘work’ implies action and livelihood done by peaceful means even in the threat of violence. Every peace worker who commits to nonviolent peace work has to accept that they or their loved ones may die for their conviction and faith that violence is wrong, unhealthy, and unwholesome as an ideological and functional tool.⁶

The Eightfold Path

In the early Buddhist Pāli canon the Eightfold Path was understood as Buddha’s method and remedy that, if continuously developed, culminated in complete freedom from *dukkha* (stress, dissatisfaction, tension, unhappiness, and suffering).⁷ Buddha realized that this eightfold method could help people through the natural and unavoidable factors of living. Buddha’s remedy is divided into eight sections of human experience that produce *dukkha* if lived in an unhealthy or wrong way. Concurrently, if these eight factors of human experience are practiced in a healthy or right way, freedom from *dukkha* will be the result.

The early Buddhist training is comprehensive, practical, and assumes: we have views (*ditthi*), we imagine (*sankapa*), we speak (*vaca*), we act (*kammanta*), we have livelihoods (*avija*), we exert ourselves based on how we perceive right and wrong (*vayama*), we notice phenomena based on how we perceive right and wrong (*sati*), and we, may at some point in our lives, experience profound fixation and altered states of mind (*samadhi*). Correctly practicing in each one of these eight areas of human experience mutually informs and

⁶A nonviolent peace worker must also have the faith and conviction that nonviolence is right, healthy, and wholesome and will produce the ultimate good, regardless if the worker achieves or does not achieve their peace working goals, and regardless if the worker lives or dies in the pursuit of these goals.

⁷In this respect, the early Buddhist canon is an elaboration of the Eightfold method towards liberation.

reinforces the other seven, and simultaneously accumulates towards the Buddhist goal of reducing, not producing, and totally eliminating the feeling and creation of *dukkha*.

For the scope of this paper, and the subject of nonviolent peace work, I will keep my examination focused upon the path factors of right conduct and right livelihood. Focusing on only two of the practices in the eightfold-path is not conducive to the complete ceasing of the underlying psychological and cultural tendencies that produce *dukkha*. Practicing all eight factors by a Buddhist is required to fulfill the training. Each factor reinforces and informs the entire accumulative path, right conduct and right livelihood will help us understand the role that nonviolence and the rejection of ideological violence informed and guided the early Buddhist community.

Right Conduct and Right Livelihood

Right Conduct and Right Livelihood come fourth and fifth in the list of the eight practices. Conduct means any physical action that we perform or do with our bodies. Livelihood means any ‘work’ or ‘ways of living’ that we utilize in order to survive. The early Buddhist attention on defining right conduct and right livelihood is important for our understanding on what actions and work is acceptable and unacceptable in early Buddhism, and consequently for our modern Buddhist examples.⁸

The early Buddhist discourses divide ethics into two divisions. In Pāli this is *samma* and *miccha*. *Samma* and *miccha* translate respectively into ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and they have the evaluative meaning of ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’, ‘wholesome’ and ‘unwholesome.’ The ethical duality of Buddhist practice is divided in this way to help a Buddhist practitioner understand what pragmatically leads towards the goal of liberation from *dukkha*, that the eightfold path expounds, and what does not.⁹ This ethical approach of the eightfold path is actually the path’s sixth practice: *samma vayama* or ‘right effort.’

The Eightfold Path is also divided into two groups of practice: one for householders and the other for renunciants. The distinction of practice between householders and renunciants

⁸‘Being Buddhist’ and the practice of Buddhism is not exclusively psychological reconditioning. Right Conduct and Right Livelihood are direct canonical and foundational norms of early Buddhist practice.

⁹‘Wrong’ implies any phenomenological volition that produces or reinforces *dukkha*, and ‘right’ implies any phenomenological volition that does not produce or reinforce *dukkha*.

was produced because renunciants were instructed to practice 227 guidelines of training in their vocational commitment, whereas householders were instructed to train in five of these rules when beginning their household practice upon the path.¹⁰ This duality of Buddhist training is not dogmatic, polarized or intended to limit a householder in their progress and development on the path, but was functionally created to help a householder remember their training in the midst of their household responsibilities.¹¹ The five training rules for a Buddhist householder are restraining: from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from consuming intoxicants.¹²

Three practices of right conduct are echoed and contained in these initial five training rules. The discourses define ‘conduct’ that is ‘wrong’, for both renunciants and householders, into three actions of body: killing living beings, taking anything that is not given, and sexual misconduct. Right conduct is defined as the practice of avoidance, refraining, and restraining from these three actions.¹³ The discourses define killing living beings as destroying or taking life from a being.¹⁴ This involves the actions of: murder, getting ones hands bloody, giving physical blows, violence, and not acting with mercy.¹⁵ Right conduct is the rejection of killing, fighting, and violence as ideologically right. The discourses state that a Buddhist practitioner has, “laid aside the rod and weapon.”¹⁶

The practice of right livelihood, although also echoing and supporting the five householder training rules, is more socially and economically analytical than Right Conduct on: how *dukkha* is produced and what is acceptable and not acceptable for a Buddhist

¹⁰“Gihī Sutta: The Householder” (AN 5.179), translated from the Pāli by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an05/an05.179.than.html>.

¹¹ A householder is not limited to these five training rules, and can train more extensively in the Eightfold path if a householder wants to.

¹²Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012. Pg. 792.

¹³Bodhi, AN. Pg. 1517.

¹⁴The definitions of the additional two forms of Wrong Conduct are: Taking what is not given is defined as stealing the wealth or property of others. Sexual misconduct is defined as having sexual interactions with a person: that goes against the ethics and security of their family; that goes against their personal or cultural ethics; who is married; whose violation entails possible punishment; and who is already engaged to someone else.

¹⁵Bodhi, AN. Pg. 1519.

¹⁶Bodhi, AN. Pg. 1521.

practitioner. ‘Livelihood’ in English is defined as ‘source of income’ or ‘means of support.’ Sources of income and ways of maintaining a lifestyle can be economically sustained through investment, usury, manufacturing, trade, purchasing, owning, selling, combat, or agriculture. The early Buddhist discourses describe the five ways of living that are wrong, for both renunciants and householders, as: livelihoods that involve weapons, owning human beings, animals for meat, intoxicants, and poisons.¹⁷ Therefore, wrong livelihood means a way of living that generates income, a lifestyle, or economic wellbeing from the five types of economic involvement stated above.

Therefore, the first type of Wrong Livelihood, that is to be avoided, is maintaining a lifestyle and living through the use, investment, trade, and manufacture of weapons. The simple logic of ‘source of economic sustenance’ reverberates throughout the rest of the four wrong livelihoods.¹⁸ Besides these first five wrong livelihoods, there are five additional livelihoods that are stated as ‘wrong’ because they do not support and reinforce maturation and accumulative focus upon the eightfold-path.¹⁹ These additional five forms of wrong livelihoods are maintaining a source of living through the use of deceit, disloyalty, foretelling the future, trickery, and usury.²⁰ Besides these ten wrong livelihoods there are many more livelihoods that renunciants are instructed not to engage in and avoid in their practice of the eightfold path, but for this paper, I will conclude my examination with these ten.²¹

¹⁷Bodhi, AN. Pg. 790.

¹⁸The elucidation of the additional four forms of Wrong Livelihood are: The second Wrong Livelihood is maintaining a lifestyle and source of living through the investment, selling, trading, buying, and owning of humans beings such as slavery, prostitution, and indentured servitude. The third Wrong Livelihood is maintaining a lifestyle and source of living through the selling, butchering, raising, and trading animals for meat. The fourth Wrong Livelihood is maintaining a lifestyle and source of living through the investment, selling, trading, and manufacturing of intoxicants. The fifth Wrong Livelihood is maintaining a lifestyle and source of living through the investment, selling, trading, and manufacturing of poisons.

¹⁹These additional five Wrong Livelihoods are stated by the Buddha to a community of renunciants, but are in reference to the normative practice of the Eightfold Path.

²⁰Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995. Pg. 938. “Mahacattarisaka Sutta”

²¹Bodhi, AN. Pg. 291. In the AN there is a paragraph that states additional actions that a person commits who is overcome with the three unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. These additional unwholesome actions are inflicting someone, under false pretexts, to imprisonment and confiscation of property based in the thought, ‘I have power and I want power.’

Buddhist Rejection of Ideological and Structural Violence

Early Buddhism expected people to act and live in a local and global context. With this pragmatic foresight, early Buddhist texts instruct people in which actions and livelihoods are right and wrong within human culture. It is understood, in the discourses, that action and livelihood are unavoidable and even necessary, but violent actions and livelihoods are wrong. A clear and direct example of this is illustrated in the story of Yodhajiva the headman. Yodhajiva asks the Buddha about the destiny of a fallen warrior who dies in conflict, and instead of going to heaven as the headsman's culture foretells, the Buddha says the only destination for someone who has wrong views about the belief of violence is hell.²² Regardless if a person believes or does not believe in heaven and hell, the story illustrates that to believe that violence will lead a person to an experience of happiness is a wrong way of thinking. This rejection of violence in any ideological form of physical conduct and livelihood is a strategic adherence to nonviolence.²³

An example of this adherence to nonviolence and a rejection of violence, in the early Buddhist renunciant community, is exemplified in a dialogue contained within the Kakacupama Sutta. There was a monk named Moliya Phagguna who would become angry and aggressive to any fellow monk who spoke in dispraise of a nun in his presence. On hearing about this, the Buddha called Venerable Phagguna to his side and told him that it was not proper for a man who, out of faith, has initiated into the renunciant life to be overly protective of nuns. The Buddha continues his conversation with Venerable Phagguna by saying that he should abandon his previous thinking, and if any one speaks disparagingly of a nun, or even if an attacker gives a nun a blow with his hand, with a clod of dirt, with a rod, or with a knife he should train himself by thinking, 'My mind will be unaffected, and I shall utter no evil words; I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate.'²⁴ The Buddha repeats these words by saying to Ven.

²²“Yodhajiva Sutta: To Yodhajiva (The Warrior)” (SN 42.3), translated from the Pāli by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013, www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn42/sn42.003.than.html

²³In early Buddhism, this strict adherence to the rejection of violence even in midst of violent conflict is illustrated in the Angulimala Sutta. Venerable Angulimala, although knowing how to utilize violence from his training and life as a bandit, did not resort to his knowledge of violence when he was viciously attacked.

²⁴Bodhi, MN. Pg. 218. “Kakacupama Sutta”

Phagguna that if someone should attack him verbally or physically his training should be the same.

After this dialogue with Venerable Phagguna the Buddha instructs his monastic community by saying, “Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two handled saw, he who gives rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching.”²⁵ The Buddha then instructs his renunciants to train in uttering no violent speech, to train in compassion for the welfare of his attacker, and to practice non-hostility and non ill-will. The Buddha instructs them to practice developing a mind of loving kindness abundant and immeasurable like the Earth and Space by starting with the attacker and then encompassing the whole world. This means that to live and train in the Eightfold path is to participate in work and develop actions that are loving and not violent, even at the expense of one’s own life.²⁶

Examples of Early Buddhist Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, and Peacemaking

An example of early Buddhist peacekeeping is contained in the story of a murderous bandit named Angulimāla who wore a garland of fingers around his neck of the people he had killed. The local populace were afraid to venture where Angulimāla lived in fear that they would be murdered like the rest of his victims. The locals upon seeing the Buddha walking in the direction of Angulimāla’s territory repeatedly tried to deter him by telling him of the violence that Angulimāla had committed. Upon listening to the violent situation the Buddha silently walked towards Angulimāla in loving kindness and peace. When the Buddha eventually met the murderer, the violent conflict transformed and Angulimāla became a disciple of the Buddha’s who eventually attained complete perfection and liberation upon the path.²⁷

²⁵ Bodhi, MN. Pg. 223. “Kakacupama Sutta”

²⁶ To be initiated in the practice of the five training rules of a Buddhist householder and the Eightfold Path, and to ideologically practice or speculatively believe in the unavailability of violence is a rejection of faith in Buddha’s teachings and the Buddhist initiation.

²⁷ “Angulimāla Sutta: About Angulimāla” (MN 86), translated from the Pāli by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.086.than.html>.

Another example of Buddhist peacekeeping in the early discourses is the story of Venerable Punna. Venerable Punna informs the Buddha that he is going to Sunaparanta to live and teach the practice. The Buddha says that the people of Sunaparanta are fierce and rough, and may insult and ridicule him. The Buddha then says they may attack him with their fists, with clods of dirt, with rods, with knives, and they may even use a sharp knife to kill him. In response Ven. Punna states that he is unafraid and undeterred. To Ven. Punna's response, Buddha praises Punna's peace of mind and resolve, and endorses him to go live amongst the rough and fierce Sunaparanta people.

During Venerable Punna's peacekeeping activity, he is said to have completed fulfillment of the path and to have established 1000 householders in the practice. When Venerable Punna died the Buddha said that he was wise, and did not trouble him with issues related to the Dhamma, but practiced the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma.²⁸ The early Buddhist community, illustrated by the example of Punna who ventured into violent and non-Buddhist territory, were not instructed to live isolated and non-communal lives. They were instructed by the Buddha to be proactive, to mingle with fellow non-Buddhists, and to share the practice of loving kindness and peace that is the Eightfold Path by the examples of their lives.

There are abundant stories of peacebuilding in the early Buddhist tradition. I will quickly illustrate six peacebuilding examples for our discussion. Five of these examples are the stories when: the Buddha first journeyed to find people to practice the Eightfold Path with him, thus creating the first community of Buddhist practice; the Buddha consenting to the construction of the first monastic buildings for the safety and security of his practitioners;²⁹ the Buddha gave instructions on monastic discipline and consented to the preservation of the *vinaya* (training rules) at the insistence of Venerable Sariputta;³⁰ the Buddha's radical acceptance of ordaining women into the renunciant community at the insistence of his stepmother; and the first council that met, after the Buddha's death, to preserve the discourses and training rules through memorization and chanting.³¹

²⁸ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000. Pg.1167-69. "Punna Sutta"

²⁹ Thanissaro, Bhikkhu. *The Buddhist Monastic Code II: The Khandhaka Rules*. Metta Forest Monastery. Valley Center, CA: 2013. Pg. 72

³⁰ Sutta Central. *THE ORIGINS OF THE VINAYA*. Accessed Mar. 2015. <http://suttacentral.net/en/pi-tv-bu-vb-pj1>

³¹ Sutta Central. *THE ORIGIN OF THE COUNCIL*. Accessed Mar. 2015. <http://suttacentral.net/en/pi-tv-kd21>

The last example I will give of the peacebuilding idea in early Buddhist discourse comes in the form of a story told by the Buddha to a king. The Buddha tells the story of a king who wanted to make a great animal sacrifice because of his wealth and fame, but in this story there is a wise chaplain that tells the king that there are gangs of thieves in his kingdom because of poverty. The chaplain instructs the king, that instead of sacrifice, to distribute grain and fodder to those who cultivate crops and raise cattle, to give capital to those in trade, and to give proper living wages to those in government service. The consequence of these actions in the story is that thieves disappeared from the region, the king's nation was tranquil, his revenue grew, and the people of the region had joy in their heart because it was safe to leave their houses open and play with their children outside.³²

The early Buddhist texts are also full of peacemaking teachings and stories. The Eightfold Path which is concerned with reducing conflict, violence, and enmity; and producing peace, accord, harmony, and goodwill for the purpose of attaining an accumulative release from *dukkha* is by its very nature 'peacemaking.' This includes almost the entirety of the early Buddhist canon, but for the purposes of this paper I will illustrate three examples of overt peacemaking in the discourses.

The first peacemaking discourse in early Buddhism that I will share comes in the form of lessons learned from a rival community of renunciants that were in conflict after their teacher had died. The Samagama Sutta tells the story of how after the teacher Nigantha Nataputta had died his community was split into two. They started quarrelling, having deep disputes, and it is said they were stabbing each other with verbal daggers by criticizing each other. When a novice monk approached the Buddha and told him that he does not want to see a bitter division like this happen to Buddha's community, this afforded the Buddha an opportunity to share a teaching on the ways disputes are founded and the principles to create cordiality. The Buddha states that the principles of cordiality that create love and respect, and are conducive to cohesion, non-dispute, concord, and unity in the renunciant community are: bodily, verbal, and mental acts of loving kindness in public and private towards your companions; enjoying things in common without making reservations, and sharing any gain or food with your companions that has been obtained in a wholesome

³²Walshe, Maurice. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya*. Buddhist Publication Society. Kandy, Sri Lanka: 1996. Pg. 133 "Kutadanta Sutta"

way; maintaining the virtues and ethics given by the Buddha; and lastly to maintain the view that emancipates and leads a person who practices it to the complete destruction of stress, unhappiness, and dissatisfaction.³³

This next peacemaking discourse happened shortly before the Buddha's own death, and after a conversation between the Buddha and a chief minister of a king who desired warfare with a neighboring tribe. In reaction to hearing the chief ministers vow to destroy the neighboring tribe through the use of treachery, propaganda, and the strategy of divide and conquer, the Buddha called together his community of renunciants and taught them the principles of social stability that if practiced will lead the community to prosperity and not decline. These principles of social stability are: conducting scheduled and frequent assemblies; meeting in harmony, dispersing in harmony, and attending to work in harmony; appointing no new rules and not abolishing existing ones, but proceeding in accordance with the training rules that have been instructed; showing respect and honor towards the elders of the community; staying devoted to living in dwelling that are in nature; not becoming influenced by craving; and maintaining a continuous practice of Right Mindfulness.³⁴

The last peacemaking discourse I will include is a story of when the Buddha visited three renunciant friends who were living together in nature. Upon seeing the three monastics living comfortably and not having any trouble with each other, the Buddha asks them how they are able to live in peace, having mutual appreciation, not having disputes, and viewing each other with kind and gentle sight. They tell the Buddha that they maintain bodily, verbal, and mental acts of loving kindness towards each other both openly and privately. Venerable Anuruddha, one of the three monastics, says, "I consider, 'Why should I not set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do?' Then I set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do. We are different in body, but one in mind."³⁵

³³ Bodhi, MN. Pg. 853. "Samagama Sutta"

³⁴ Walshe, DN. Pg. 231. "Mahaparinibbana Sutta"

³⁵ Bodhi, MN. Pg. 301. "Culagosinga Sutta"

Conclusion

Based in the examples of early Buddhist peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and peacemaking, the early Buddhist discourses not only supports peace work; but, according to the instructions of Right Conduct and Right Livelihood it is impossible for a practicing Buddhist to participate in work that is not peaceful and nonviolent. Therefore the work of the Buddhist Organizations and Buddhist peace workers is not the exception to the early Buddhist conceptualization of the path divided into eight practices, but it would have been considered the norm.³⁶ The Buddha, through the example of his life, his teachings, and through the actions of his community did not seek a passive and self-enclosed paradigm of action and livelihood, but actively taught, confronted violence, built communities that practiced loving kindness, developed nonviolent practices of ensuring harmony and unity, engaged with non-Buddhist communities, and initiated men and women into the liberating and nonviolent practice of the Eightfold Path.

³⁶Buddhist peace work is not new, innovative, nor is it adapting older texts to a newer context. The early discourses themselves presume the possibility of violent conflict, and prescribe which methods and practices are to be used, and which are not to be used, in response to conflict situations by a Buddhist.