

The Role of Deterrence in Buddhist Peace-building

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Introduction: The UN Millennium Development Goals

My paper falls under the heading of the fourth of the five main conference themes, namely 'Peace-building and Post-Conflict Recovery'. It relates specifically to the first item in this pair, namely peace-building. Its focus is not so much on recovery after conflict, but on how to avoid conflict in the first place. As such it has relevance to the eight UN Millennium Development goals, which are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health

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6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Clearly, progress towards the eight MDGs presupposes order and social stability and realization of the goals is difficult if not impossible in situations of violent conflict. War damages the economic infrastructure including agriculture and food production resulting in scarcity and famine (MDG1). It forces schools to close and teachers to flee (MDG2). Women are amongst those who suffer most at the hands of enemy combatants (MDG3). Child mortality increases (MDG4) and maternal healthcare suffers (MDG5). Diseases and epidemics break out (MDG6) and the environment is harmed (MDG7). Finally, the repercussions of even regional conflicts can cause division on a global scale, as nations take opposing positions in the UN Security Council and elsewhere, undermining the possibility of global partnership for development (MDG8).

To see examples of all of these things we need look no farther than the recent example of Syria, where the UN reported in November 2013 that nine million people were in need of assistance. Two million people have fled the country as refugees, and all eight of the MDGs have been seriously undermined in the conflict. The situation continues to deteriorate particularly with respect to goal number 6, concerning the spread of disease. A number of cases of polio were confirmed in November 2013, the first in fourteen years, and a nationwide campaign of vaccination was launched by the UN, the WHO and UNICEF. The country has also become the site of a proxy war between Sunni and Shia Muslims supported by Saudi Arabia and Iran respectively. Finally, the conflict has created deep divisions in the UN Security Council. This scenario is by no means unique and similar problems are reproduced in regional conflicts everywhere.

Buddhism and Deterrence

Clearly, then, peace is a prerequisite to furthering the UN MDGs and today I want to consider one strategy for peace that is not commonly associated with Buddhism, namely the strategy of military deterrence. My argument will be that deterrence is not ruled out by Buddhism's

pacifist teachings, and appears to be accepted even in early Buddhism as a morally acceptable strategy for the avoidance of conflict.

Of course, there are many schools of Buddhism, many strands of Buddhist teachings, and many voices speak to us from diverse sources like the Pali canon, narrative chronicles like the Mahāvamsa, Mahāyāna sūtras and numerous commentaries. Deciding which is the authentic voice of Buddhism is problematic. Using Mahāyāna sources such as the Upāyakauśalyasūtra, the Satyakaparivarta the Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra and the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra -- to name but a few -- it is relatively easy to show that not only deterrence but the outright use of violent force is sanctioned by certain influential Buddhist scriptures. Today, however, I will restrict myself solely to the evidence of the Pali canon, which is generally regarded as representing a consistently pacifist body of literature. As Peter Harvey puts it, 'Within the Theravāda, no canonical text can be found justifying violence'.¹ Accordingly, the Pali Canon will present the strongest challenge to my thesis that a policy of military deterrence is not in conflict with the teachings of early Buddhism.

My claim essentially comes down to this: the Pali Canon does not teach that the *threat* of the use of force by state authorities is in conflict with the Dhamma. Note that I say the 'threat' of the use of force rather than the use of force itself. Here I am not concerned to defend the outright use of military force. Although I believe a case can also be made for this, it would require a longer discussion and is not my aim in this paper.

I define deterrence as a military strategy used by state authorities with the aim of dissuading an adversary from undertaking hostile action. Successful deterrence convinces its target not to engage in hostile action by raising the stakes to the point where the price of aggressive action becomes too high. Deterrence is thus an attempt to achieve an objective without the use of force, and additionally signals an opportunity for negotiation and reconciliation. The reference to *military strategy* and *state authorities* in my definition is in order to

1. Harvey, P. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.255.

distinguish deterrence used by lawfully constituted authorities from its non-military civilian counterparts such as the tactics employed in campaigns of civil disobedience, and the unlawful use of deterrence by criminal, terrorist or other groups who may threaten retribution if their demands are not met.

As a military policy deterrence is aimed at neither victory nor defeat, but instead the avoidance of either. As such, it seems to offer a ‘middle way’ that avoids the problems associated with both ‘extremes’. Defeat involves the negative outcome that one side loses, with all the social, economic and psychological damage that entails. And victory is also not free of problems for it will always be purchased at a price, sometimes an extremely high one when measured in terms of loss of life and the economic cost of warfare. There is also the risk of a spiral of revenge and retaliation, as the defeated party yearns for vengeance against the victors. For example, historians tell us that the Second World War was in no small measure due to the defeat of Germany in the First World War, and the likelihood of this cycle recurring elsewhere is not difficult to imagine.

We even see evidence of this cycle of revenge and retaliation in the Pali Canon. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (i.82f), the Buddha refers to two battles fought between King Pasenadi and King Ajātasattu. In the first Pasenadi is defeated, but he later returns to defeat Ajātasattu. The matter did not end there, and Ajātasattu subsequently attacked and conquered the kingdom of Kosala. Perhaps it was these very events that caused the Buddha to reflect during a sojourn in Kosala on a question very close to the one we are discussing now. We read, in the words of Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s translation of S.i.116f: ‘this train of thought arose in his awareness: “Is it possible to exercise rulership without killing or causing others to kill, without confiscating or causing others to confiscate, without sorrowing or causing others sorrow — righteously?” Unfortunately Māra intervenes before the Buddha has a chance to answer this vital question, but I suggest that with respect to a strategy of deterrence his answer would have been in the affirmative. This is because, as noted above, deterrence is the most ‘Buddhist’ of the possible strategic responses to the threat of enemy attack: it steers a middle course between aggression and pacifism and protects the innocent from attack without resorting to violent force.

Nuclear Deterrence

In modern times deterrence has been most commonly associated with the use of nuclear weapons, and I would like to say a word about that before proceeding. It has been argued that the possession of nuclear weapons during the cold war preserved the peace of the world for many decades. While this may be true, there is a particular danger associated with nuclear weapons as a policy of deterrence. This is that these weapons raise the stakes to an unacceptably high level, and the consequence of their use, either deliberately or accidentally, would have catastrophic consequences for humanity. Some commentators have suggested, rightly in my view, that rather than make the world a safer place the possession of these weapons actually makes it more dangerous. This is because there is no way to use this deterrent proportionately. It is either all or nothing. A conventional army, on the other hand, can be deployed flexibly and in the numbers required in different situations. Accordingly, I am not endorsing here a policy of nuclear deterrence and my remarks apply only to deterrence involving the use of conventional weapons.

Buddhism and Pacifism

Perhaps the suggestion that Buddhism would approve of even the *threat* of military force sounds strange given the widely-held stereotype of Buddhism as exclusively a religion of peace. As recent studies have shown, however, this stereotype is no longer sustainable. In the course of its long history Buddhism has been involved in violent conflict in almost every part of Asia. Peter Harvey notes that history does not seem to record any Buddhist king who did *not* seek to repel invaders by force.² Supporters of Buddhist pacifism may claim that the historical and contemporary examples of conflict show only that Buddhists – like followers of many other faiths – have, at certain times and places, fallen short of the high moral standards of their religion. After all, Buddhists are only human. Of course this is true, but it has also been suggested that there is an ambivalence or ambiguity in Buddhist teachings regarding the use of force. On the

2. Harvey, P. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.243.

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one hand Buddhism teaches that the use of violent force is wrong, but on the other appears to accept, tacitly at least, that force is necessary to secure social order; a good Buddhism strongly supports. Political stability and social order are viewed by Buddhism as desirable for many reasons, not least because without them it is very difficult to follow the religious life. Monks depend on the laity, and the laity need order and security to pursue their careers and professions. This applies to the sangha as well, and one of the traditional roles of Buddhist kings was both the protection and purification of the sangha. Tambiah sums up the triadic relationship between king, sangha and people as follows:

Kingship as the crux of order in society provides the conditions and the context for the survival of sasana (religion). They need each other: religion in being supported by an ordered and prosperous society is able to act as the 'field of merit' in which merit making can be enacted and its fruits enjoyed, while the king as the foremost merit maker needs the sangha to make and realize his merit and fulfill his kingship.³

The Buddha lived in a time of political upheaval, and knew very well both the value and fragility of social order. Perhaps this is why we do not find him teaching that in order to avoid any conflict with ahimsā the justice systems of the early republics and kingdoms he knew should have been dismantled, the police force disbanded, judges retired, and prisoners set free. He knew that social order would not survive without the rule of law backed up by the power to enforce it. In this respect, the king himself, and the ministers and officials who represent him, are a deterrent to social disorder.

We see this clearly in the Aggañña Sutta where a king is elected in order to combat crime, disorder and anarchy. The sutta tells us that the people seek to elect 'a certain being who should be wrathful when indignation is right, who should censure that which should be

3. Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: a Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology ; 15. Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.41.

censured, and banish him who deserves to be banished'. A king who is on occasion wrathful, and who censures and banishes is the very embodiment of coercive authority, and by his very nature a deterrent to crime and disorder. This king is said to be 'the best among men, the most handsome and most perfect in conduct.' On one occasion in the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha says that one of the five qualities that enables a king to rule abidingly is 'his strength in the four divisions of his army, loyal and alert to commands' (*Gradual Sayings* vol 3. p.115).

Deterrence and the Cakkavatti

The primary evidence for my claim that the use of military deterrence is morally legitimate is shown in the figure of the Cakkavatti, a figure whose appearance marks the origin of Buddhist political theory. The Cakkavatti is, so to speak, the secular counterpart of the Buddha, if the use of the term 'secular' is not anachronistic in the context of ancient India. The Buddha and the Cakkavatti represent the 'two wheels of dhamma', one supreme in religious matters and the other in the political sphere. The two career pathways of 'World Conqueror' and 'World Renouncer' are both legitimate options for a wise individual, and at times the distinction between them blurs. The Buddha tells us he was a Cakkavatti in 'many times seven' lives (*Gradual Sayings*, vol IV p.54). In his last birth the prophesy was made that he would become either a Buddha or a Cakkavatti, both of whom are recognized as mahapuruṣas in the Lakkhaṇa Sutta. The careers of the two are often compared in suttas like the Mahāpadāna Sutta, and they are portrayed as two sides of the same coin, and as having both complementary and symmetrical roles. The Cakkavatti concerns himself mainly with worldly affairs, but when his reign is concluded he retires from the world to devote himself to religious practice. On the other hand, the Buddha is sometimes referred to as 'Conqueror' and 'Vanquisher', for example in the first chapter of the Mahāvamsa. In later history it was common for Buddhist kings to take the title of 'bodhisattva' and declare themselves as incarnations of Maitreya, the future Buddha. Finally, at death, both Buddha and Cakkavatti are said to be worthy of a stūpa to enshrine their remains. In sum we can say that the Buddhist ideal is a symbiotic relationship based on a division of labor in terms of which both the spiritual and material dimensions of life are properly integrated, nourished and regulated.

The above close linkage indicates that whatever a Cakkavatti does is in accordance with the Dhamma, and I take this as basic to my argument. The Traibhūmikathā says of Cakkavatti kings ‘When they speak words or utter commands they do it in accordance with the Dharma.’⁴ Let me go on, then, to demonstrate the relevance this has to my claim about the early Buddhist endorsement of deterrence. There are references to Cakkavattis throughout the Pali canon and the Jātakas but a *locus classicus* is the Cakkavatti-sihanāda-sutta or ‘Discourse on the Lion’s Roar of the World Conqueror’. The Cakkavatti-sihanāda-sutta speaks approvingly of the Cakkavatti as ‘conqueror of the four quarters who had established the security of his realm’. The king achieved his conquests by following the magical wheel that led him to each of the four continents in turn. For example, the text tells us that ‘The Wheel turned to the east, and the King followed it with his fourfold army. And in whatever country the Wheel stopped, the King took up residence with his fourfold army. And those who opposed him in the eastern region came and said: “Come, Your Majesty, welcome! We are yours, Your Majesty. Rule us, Your Majesty.”’

This somewhat utopian scenario (which, incidentally, seems to provide a justification for colonialism) describes how opposition to the Cakkavatti disappears as his fourfold army advances. The use of force was therefore not necessary as a means of conquest. But what persuaded the peoples of the four regions to abandon their existing form of government and accept the Cakkavatti as conquering ruler? It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the massed ranks of his army advancing into their territory might have had something to do with it. A less cynical view is that it was purely the moral character of the king that won people over, but in that case what purpose did the army serve? The king could easily have visited each continent with a small diplomatic mission and won the inhabitants over by his charisma, righteous conduct and teachings, a task one imagines would have been easier in the absence of the threatening presence of a vast army equipped with ‘bows and arrows, lances, swords and javelins.’⁵ I suspect, however, that without his army the king would have found

4. http://www.li.mahidol.ac.th/e-resource/asean_ebook/10/, p.159. Consulted 29 January 2013.

5. Ibid, p.171.

it much harder to win hearts and minds. The Thai Traibhūmikathā, which has a good deal to say about Cakkavattis, injects a note of realism when it tells us that not all the lords and princes of the four continents, each with their five hundred vassals, rejoiced equally in the Cakkavatti's teachings,⁶ suggesting that in the absence of his army the Cakkavatti's conquest would not have been so easy. It seems that the Cakkavatti and his army are inseparable, and since the mere existence of an army signals the possibility of the use of force it is hard to escape the conclusion that the Cakkavatti's army acts as a deterrent to those both inside and outside his kingdom who might pose a threat to its stability. The Traibhūmikathā mentions that the Cakkavatti's bejewelled wheel or cakkaratana is known both as the 'precious wheel' and 'the tamer of enemies'.⁷

The Cakkavatti's Dilemma

So far I have suggested that the existence of the Cakkavatti's army is evidence that early Buddhism endorses a policy of deterrence. Let me now consider some evidence that seems problematic for my thesis. This arises from the pacifist teachings found throughout the canon that seem to suggest that any hint of the use of force is immoral and inevitably produces bad karma. This, of course, places the king in a 'catch-22' situation whereby in seeking the good end of stability and social order he inevitably does wrong in using force as a means. Tambiah describes how the dilemma arises, first of all highlighting the importance of dhamma in kingship: '... the code of kingship embodying righteousness (dharma) has its source in this dharma and is ideally a concrete manifestation of it in the conduct of worldly affairs'. He goes on to add 'dharma informs and suffuses the code of conduct of the righteous ruler' and notes that when describing a Dhammaraja in the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha says 'Herein, monk, the rajah, the wheel roller, the Dhamma man, the Dhamma rajah, relies just on Dhamma, honors Dhamma, reveres Dhamma, esteems Dhamma; with Dhamma as his standard, with Dhamma as his banner, with Dhamma as his mandate, he sets a Dhamma watch and bar and

6. Ibid, p.189.

7. Ibid, p.177.

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ward for folk within his realm'.⁸

At the same time, it is the very emphasis on the priority of Dharma to politics that causes the conflict many writers have observed. Again, in the words of Tambiah:

It is this total application of dharma to politics that in theory insisted on the principle of nonviolence (ahimsa), noninjury and compassion (karuna) in statecraft, an ideal that sometimes collided with the practicalities of statecraft. It is perhaps this tension that finds expression as an 'identity crisis' among the great kings of Buddhist polities – and its resolution in terms of the renunciation of violence *after* accomplishing conquest and empire building.⁹

This view, while very common, is one that makes the Buddhist social vision incoherent. It seems contradictory to say that according to Buddhist teachings a king has a duty to protect the social order but that in executing that duty he sins against the Dharma. If this were true, it would follow that 'only a fool becomes a king' as the title of a paper by Michael Zimmerman aptly describes it.¹⁰ However, I do not believe that Buddhism undermines its own teachings in this way or that it is so inconsistent as to leave a glaring contradiction at the heart of its social program by demanding that a king protects his realm while denying him the tools to do the job.

It seems to me that the conflict of ideals is more apparent than real, but demonstrating this will require some reconstruction of what

8. Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: a Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology ; 15. Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.40.

9. Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: a Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology ; 15. Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.42.

10. Zimmerman, Michael. 'Only a Fool Becomes a King: Buddhist Stances on Punishment'. Available online at http://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/pdf/Only_a_Fool_Becomes_a_King.pdf, consulted 5 January 2014.

we commonly assume to be the Buddhist position, a task I cannot enter into here. For now I will confine myself to the simpler task of showing why deterrence does not conflict with even the standard interpretation of Buddhist teachings to the effect that any use of violence is wrong.

While the Pali Canon shows a clear preference for peace, it does not seem to disapprove of kings having armies, as we see in the example of the Cakkavatti. If the existence of an army was in conflict with the Buddha's teachings, we might have expected him to make this view known in the course of his many conversations with local rulers. The Buddha held an audience with kings on many occasions, and on one well-known occasion reported in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta was explicitly asked for his opinion on Ajātasattu's plans to attack the Vajjians. Rather than condemning any use of violent force, as we might expect from a confirmed pacifist, the Buddha sent back only a mild and somewhat cryptic response praising the customs of the Vajjians. One can surmise that for various reasons he did not wish to meddle too deeply in politics. Perhaps he feared for the existence of the sangha if the king should be angered by his response. Such concern may also be seen in his agreement to a request from the king of Magadha not to allow serving royal officials to join the sangha (Vin.i.73f). Or, perhaps, as a member of the warrior caste himself he was simply a political realist who accepted the inevitability of conflict between states. His relations with the powerful kings of Magadha, Kosala, Kosambi and Ujjeni suggest he had no objection in principle to monarchy as a form of socio-political organization. After all, in his own words he had been a Cakkavatti himself who had 'conquered the four ends of the earth, bringing stability to the country' (*Gradual Sayings* 14.p.54). Perhaps it would seem hypocritical now to tell another king not to do likewise. Whatever the reason, he missed a golden opportunity to deliver an anti-war message at the highest diplomatic level. In this case an actual military attack was imminent, and the Buddha did not condemn it. This being so, there is all the more reason to think that he would not oppose a policy of simple deterrence.

Moreover, nowhere do we see the Buddha mounting an anti-war crusade, or taking a firm stand against the use of military force of the

kind we see in anti-war demonstrations today. Such campaigns by Buddhists are very common now particularly among the Nichiren-derived Japanese new religions like Soka Gakkai, Rissho Kosei-ki and Niponzan Myohoji. By contrast, the Buddha's position on the matter was far more muted. It is largely this silence on the use of force by kings that leads me to think that the Buddha would not oppose a policy of deterrence by monarchs or states. After all, if peace can be secured through deterrence it is much preferable to fighting a bloody war with all the horrors that entails. Nor do we find the Buddha condemning the profession of soldiery. If he believed that war was intrinsically immoral he would surely have included soldiery in the list of professions that laymen should not undertake (A.iii.508). Of course this list of five commercial activities begins with trade in weapons (cf. A.v.177), but the prohibition seems predicated on profiting from the harm that might arise from their improper use. The legitimate possession of weapons by the state is a rather different matter, and has little to do with trade or commercial activity. In any event, soldiers *use* arms, they do not normally trade in them, and I do not think that being a soldier is anywhere included as a prohibited occupation under the 'right livelihood' limb of the eightfold path. In many Buddhist societies, moreover, a military career is highly respected and military service is compulsory. Buddhist monks, moreover, are often attached to the military as chaplains, for example in Thailand and Korea.¹¹

Contrary Evidence

Certain canonical passages seem to tell against the view expressed above and suggest that the profession of a soldier is intrinsically immoral. For example, when asked about the fate of soldiers who die in battle the Buddha says that they go not to heaven but to a special hell since at the moment of death their minds were full of hatred (S.iv.308f).¹² I would make two points in reply to views of this kind.

11. Also in Western countries like the USA.

12. The point is echoed by Vasubandhu who claims that when an army kills all the soldiers in the army are as guilty as the ones who do the killing except those who have previously resolved not to kill even to defend their own lives (AKB iv.72c-d).

First, I am not defending the use of armed force in battle, so the guilt or karmic fate of soldiers who fight or die in battle has little direct relevance to my case concerning deterrence.

Second, the state of mind of soldiers in battle and their intentions at the moment of death are probably many and varied. Some may be motivated by hatred of the enemy but others may not be. When the Buddha refers above to soldiers who die in battle going to hell, he explicitly links this to a particular 'low,' 'depraved,' and 'misdirected' state of mind in which the central motivation is 'Let these beings be slain, slaughtered, annihilated, destroyed, or exterminated.' Other soldiers, however, may not share this motivation. They may, for example, be intent mainly on defending their own lives, or those of their comrades or civilians, from enemy attack. Again, they may be simply doing their jobs in a professional manner, and there is a good deal of empirical evidence to suggest that this is the most common state of mind of professional soldiers in combat. What may or may not be in the mind of a soldier in battle therefore is an empirical question about which it is difficult to generalize, and it need not follow that a soldier does anything morally wrong by fighting. In any event, the question has little bearing on the morality of deterrence since the issue of deterrence is one of general moral principle, not individual psychology.

The same might be said for many of the other problems with the use of force the Pali canon mentions. We are told again and again that the use of force is wrong primarily because of the state of mind of the one who uses it. Let me give just a few examples. As Peter Harvey reports, commenting on M.i.186f, 'the Buddha says that sense-pleasures lead on to desire for more sense-pleasures, which leads on to conflict between all kinds of people, including rules, and thus conflict and war.' Citing Sn.766-975, Harvey goes on to note 'The Buddha also referred to the negative effect of attachment to speculative or fixed views ... Grasping at views can be seen to have led to religious and ideological wars'.¹³ Hatred (D.ii.276f) and fear (D.iii.182) are also said to motivate violent actions. A variety of strategies is recommended

13. Harvey, P. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.240.

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to defuse these destructive emotions, such as meditating on loving-kindness (Vism 298-306). The Dhammapada states 'Whatever harm a foe may do to a foe, or a hater to a hater, an ill-directed mind can do far-greater harm' (Dhp.42).

These critiques of violence bear mainly on the negative psychological motivation or state of mind of those who resort to force, and do not show that the use of force itself is morally wrong. Or to put it another way, the use of force is seen as wrong because of the negative states of mind that motivate it. The Pali Canon does not seem to consider the possibility of the use of force when disengaged from such negative states of mind. Is such a thing possible? Again, this seems to be a question for empirical investigation, but I can see no reason in principle why it should not be. For example, parents may sometimes resort to force when disciplining their children, but it would sound strange to say they do so out of hatred for their child. Their motivation is more likely to be love and a desire to steer their child away from bad behavior. A similar distinction might apply in the case of staff in a mental institution who forcibly restrain a patient who is intent on self-harm.

If we can detach the use of force from negative psychological states, as the above examples suggest, the vast majority of objections to its use in the Pali canon fall away. In the case of deterrence, furthermore, no force is actually used, and it is much easier to show that the psychology underlying it may not be of a negative kind. The Cakkavatti and the soldiers in his army do not appear to be motivated by hatred, for example. Nor, we could add, is there any reason to think their minds are defiled by greed or delusion as they pursue their conquest by Dharma across the four continents. On the contrary, they seem to be inspired by noble ideals such as peace and brotherly love.¹⁴ The Dīgha Nikāya tells us 'The ideal king should cleanse his mind of all traces of avarice (lobha), ill will (dosa), intellectual error (moha), and strive to

14. The *Traibhūmikathā* says that in the Cakkavatti's entourage, 'Everyone was happy and light-hearted. They had only good words for one another, praising and admiring each other's finery. They sang, and danced, and played about.' Ibid, p.175.

cultivate the virtue of noninjury (avihiṃsā), to rule without the aid of force (daṇḍa) and weapons of destruction (sattha)' (D.ii.p.186). If a king can rule without the use of force, so much the better, but it would appear that so long as his mind is cleansed of greed, hatred and delusion he would seem to be acting in accordance with Dhamma in using force to secure social order.

Turning from canonical sources for a moment, we find a variety of perspectives on the use of force by kings and the dilemmas they face in the Jātakas. Indeed, Stephen Jenkins describes the Jātakas as 'perhaps the most important Buddhist source for statecraft'. He goes on to add 'The Jātakas frequently valorize intentions to capture the enemy alive or to win without bloodshed through intimidation'.¹⁵ This policy of winning without bloodshed through intimidation comes very close to, and perhaps is identical with, the strategy of deterrence I am discussing in this paper. At the same time, the Jātakas as a collection reveal an inconsistent attitude to the use of force by kings. As Jenkins notes, 'the Jātakas tales are full of stories of Buddhist warriors, often the Buddha himself in a past life, and occasionally romanticize their heroic deaths in battle'.¹⁶ However, taking a diametrically opposite position, the Seyya Jātaka tells the story of a king who refuses to fight in defence of his kingdom because it will lead him to harm others. In this particular case all turns out well, and the king is subsequently released and his kingdom returned. In real life, however, such a happy ending is unlikely. When the Buddha's relatives, the Sakiyas, refused to defend themselves they were massacred by king Viḍḍabha. The Sakiyas, interestingly, saying they preferred to die rather than take the lives of others, fired their arrows at the spaces between the ranks of soldiers in the opposing army, apparently seeking to deter their advance.¹⁷ In this case the strategy of deterrence was not

15. Jenkins, Stephen. "Making Merit through Warfare According to the Arya-Bodhisattva-gocara-upayavisaya-vikurvana-nirdesa Sutra." In *Buddhist Warfare*, edited by M.K. Jerryson and M. Juergensmeyer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p.67.

16. *ibid.*, p.68.

17. Burlingham, Eugene and Charles Rockwell Lanman. *Buddhist Legends*. [Harvard Oriental Series. Reprints v. London]: Published for the Pali Text Society

successful, but it seems to confirm that deterrence as a strategy is not incompatible with the precept against taking life. The Jātakas seem to have no problem with the institution of kingship itself, comparing a realm (rattha) without a king to a woman without a husband, and stating that 'Just as the tree is the refuge of birds, so is the king the refuge of his people' (Jātaka 432).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think I have shown that deterrence has a place in Buddhist peace-building. Presumably one reason a standing army is maintained by a Cakkavatti, whether mythological or historical in the case of Aśoka, is to deter aggression from neighboring states, and if so, it would seem that deterrence is recognized as a legitimate Buddhist military strategy. This means that the possession of an army and its use for the purposes of deterrence is not in conflict with the moral teachings of the Pali canon. To quote the words of Aung San Suu Kyi, 'Armies are meant to defend the people, to protect the nation, to make sure that the peoples of the land enjoy all the rights of citizenship within the framework of a fair and just constitution.'¹⁸

This is as far as I wish to go at the moment. I hope to have shown that the notion of the Buddhism of the Pali Canon as strictly pacifist and as opposed to the existence of state armies and the possession of weapons is not sustainable. The further question is whether using the army in a more aggressive way, for example by committing troops to battle, would be in breach of Buddhist moral teachings. If it is, there seems no hope for Buddhist kings other than to incur bad karma when doing a duty that Buddhism enjoins on them. Many Buddhist kings in history have received the title of 'Dhammarāja', but it seems that if their duty is inherently in conflict with the Dhamma then 'Adhammarāja' would be a better epithet. My own view is that such inconsistency suggests that the moral teachings on pacifism in the Pali canon stand in need of a

by Luzac, 1969, vol iii p.44.

18. Speech made on 29 November 2013 at the award of an honorary doctorate from the Australian National University at Canberra. Reported in the Thai daily newspaper *The Nation*, Monday December 3rd 2013.

constructive reinterpretation, but that is a project for another time. For now I suggest that including military deterrence as a morally permissible method of peace-building adds an additional strategy to the resources for avoiding conflict. And, as noted at the start, the avoidance of conflict is essential for securing the eight UN UDGs.