

A Buddhist Perspective on Nuclear Weapon
Ven. Dr. Chung Ohun Lee
“Nuclear Weapons and the Moral Compass”, April 30,
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We are deeply grateful to the Mission of the Philippines and the Global Security Institute for bringing us together today.

Every life is precious and must be protected. Thus, working with you to end the threat posed by nuclear weapons is our commitment.

Our actions can destroy or honor the interconnected web of life and thus the destiny of all sentient beings. Our actions not only impact ourselves of today but also future generations. Never before has such responsibility to act with moral and ethical insight been greater.

Buddhist ethics emphasize the importance of non-harming. This means cultivating a non-harming attitude towards oneself, other people and to all living beings. It means being compassionate, gentle, considerate and respectful towards one self and others.

In Buddhist ethics “Do not hurt others in ways you would find hurtful” is fundamental. Nuclear weapons offend this value.

To unleash the destructive capacity of a nuclear bomb anywhere would have terrible moral, ethical and

spiritual consequences upon the destroying nations values and the individuals who acted so heartlessly. The adverse impact on the victims would be horrible beyond words. In sum, one can hardly imagine an action more offensive to Buddhist morality than the use of a nuclear weapon.

Fear and the overarching desire to protect something we have created, the State, have driven the creation today's arsenals which add up to more than 17,000 nuclear weapons. Their stated purpose is to help obtain security. We see a deep paradox– the more perfected the weapon, the less security is obtained.

The more we modernize the weapons the more attractive they become. The more states with the weapons the more danger we all face.

In Buddhist ethics protecting innocent lives is a high value. Nuclear weapons offend this value.

We are living in the interdependent and interconnected global society. Thus each one of us has an important responsibility for our world.

We have duty to create the culture of peace instead of the culture of violence and war. “The Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue

and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.”

We reject Nuclear Weapons based on the ultimate Buddhist goals of nonviolence and protection of all living beings.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon described this issue so well, “There are no right hands for wrong weapons.”

We pledge to work together with all people of good will to obtain this moral imperative. Nuclear weapons are immoral. Let us work together to rid the world of all of them. Thank you.