

MINDFUL FUTURES: BUDDHIST ANTI-WAR RHETORIC
AND THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

by

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Mindful Futures: Buddhist Anti-War Rhetoric and the Pursuit of Peace

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ABSTRACT

For many, the War on Terror symbolizes an age of violence and international conflict. This seemingly unending state of war prompted my exploration of other less aggressive methods that could have been employed in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This thesis examines the religious structures of Buddhist anti-war rhetoric and its complex war histories to discover how enlightened discourses and practices of compassion and mindfulness could be deployed to create more productive futures in war prevention and conflict. Primarily using Burgoon and Langer's (1995) and Richo's (2002) notions of mindfulness, I assess how mindfulness as a practice has the potential to generate new ways of language, thought, and action that foster peaceful futures.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Stephen J. Hartnett

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CHAPTER I

MINDFULNESS AS A STARTING PLACE

While I was out this summer for a stroll in my hometown of Durango, Colorado, I got to thinking about my own internal wars and the loss of my relationship with my ex-fiancé. Thinking of my new relationship and the desire to create a loving space of growth, compassion, honesty, and care, I decided that perusing the relationship/self-help section at the local bookstore would not be a bad idea. In thumbing through several books on broken marriages and the loss of loved ones, I came across David Richo's (2002) *How to be an Adult in Relationships: The Five Keys to Mindful Loving*. While Richo's book focuses on love and the maintenance of healthy relationships, the author introduces the Buddhist concept of mindfulness, a concept that I believe is the key not only to healthy intra and interpersonal relationships but also to the well-being of international diplomatic affairs. Additionally, I realized that mindfulness has the potential to generate new ways of thinking about conflict resolution and war prevention.

Richo (2002) implores readers to see mindfulness as a close watching of the self in all internal and external states and situations, focusing individuals on the present by liberating them from their mental habits of engaging with ego-based fears, desires, expectations, attachments, biases, and defenses. Mindfulness, then, is a calming of the mind and its many mental distractions so that an individual may begin to focus on his or her sense of wisdom and compassion. According to Richo, to be mindful is to be a witness rather than an actor, requiring thoughtful awareness before action is taken. In this sense, individuals can relate to what is happening in the outside world rather than being consumed by it. In essence, mindfulness is a "watchfulness more than [a] watching" (p.15). Prominent Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) writes,

“Mindfulness is not a judge. It is more like an older sister looking after and comforting her younger sister in an affectionate and caring way” (p. 57). Entering this space of quiet self-reflection, Hanh argues, is how individuals begin to know themselves fully.

The word *mindfulness* is a misnomer, as the act of being mindful requires an emptying of the mind, not a filling of it (Richo, 2002). Because mindfulness requires exploring an individual’s self-awareness, meditation acts as its vehicle. Meditation, then, is not escapism but instead a settling of the mind so that a person may examine and let go of the layers of ego that hold individuals captive. Zen master Shunryu Suzuki (1970) explains, “Our minds should be soft and open enough to understand things as they are,” not as we want to them to be (p. 115). According to Richo (2002) and Suzuki (1970), this open state of knowing the self and the world allows for a healthy state of awareness and inner wisdom. Richo (2002) suggests that a commitment to a life experience focused in mindfulness will not only allow individuals to be truthful with themselves but also with others. While Richo and Suzuki encourage readers be present and aware in their daily lives, I should note that realities are not based in any one singularity but in a multiplicity of knowing, understanding, and realizing as each individual has their own unique life experiences.

In sitting with these spiritually rooted reflections on human interaction and purposefulness, I wondered how practices of mindfulness are created and perpetuated in societies. Burgoon and Langer (1995) offer some answers in their article “Language, Fallacies, and Mindlessness-Mindfulness in Social Interaction.” The authors posit that the majority of communication research involves concepts of mindfulness and mindlessness in various contexts. Through language, Burgoon and Langer believe, examples of

mindlessness are taught, learned, and reenacted, thus perpetuating a cycle of mindless language, thought processes and behaviors. The authors write, “Mindlessness refers to both chronic and state conditions in which individuals consider available information and alternatives incompletely, rigidly, reflexively, and thoughtlessly” (p. 102). This in turn produces mindless behavior, ultimately contributing to maladaptive physical, psychological, and behavioral states. This routine use of mindless language can prompt fallacious reasoning as a result of information that is incomplete, generalized and unclear (Burgoon & Langer, 1995). Ultimately, Burgoon and Langer argue that the conditions that create mindlessness are cyclical, perpetual, and can have negative consequences in society.

To illustrate how mindless language is created and perpetuated, Burgoon and Langer (1995) offer four communicative tendencies that lead to their notion of mindlessness. These tendencies include the pursuit of certainty, dichotomization, over learning and habitual responding, and premature cognitive commitments. The first tenet, the pursuit of certainty, suggests that convictions in individuals’ beliefs and behaviors diminish the need for a person to evaluate alternative ideas or consider new information. Facts are taken to be truths or lies, requiring little need for deliberation. Because individuals begin to think in terms of bipolar opposites, a state of dichotomization sets in, providing them with clear choices of action. The use of bipolar phrases such as *good* and *bad* and *right* and *wrong* make the decision process easier for individuals because these phrases already suggest some necessary course of action (Burgoon & Langer, 1995).

The third tendency of mindless communication, overlearning and habitual responding, draws connections between overlearning from repeated exposure to the same

given situations and habitual responses to similar circumstances, requiring little deliberation on the respondent's part. Similarly, limited exposure to new information results in habitual processes when there is an uncritical acceptance of the information provided. Information endorsed by figures of authority reduces motivation to question the information, thus leading individuals to form premature cognitive commitments in their current state as well as in the future (Burgoon & Langer, 1995).

The pursuit of certainty, dichotomization of words and concepts, overlearning and habitual responding, and the forming of premature cognitive commitments all contribute to what Burgoon and Langer (1995) call *mindlessness*, a term that I find to be patriarchal, condescending, and a prime example of Burgoon and Langer's mindlessness. After analyzing the authors' claims of mindlessness as a process of black-and-white thinking (or dichotomization), I found the word *mindlessness* to bear with it superior and dominating overtones, indicating that those who deem words, actions, or thoughts as mindless are an example of righteous authority, ignoring the fact that all people have different ways of understanding the world that are neither correct nor incorrect. While an individual may not necessarily agree with particular actions or words on behalf of another, the disputed or questioned actions and words of another do not mean they are mindless. However, I do believe that the ideas of acritical thinking and habitual responding associated with mindlessness are important to my argument.

As scholars and people searching for better ways of living, communicating, and interacting, I believe taking a step back to assess the internal and external conditions that are unfolding in the world daily are important. Therefore, I have chosen to use the phrase *habitual processes* instead of mindlessness, as I believe this term offers communicative

possibilities in situations of black-and-white that could use a little more grey, or critical assessment and compassionate insight. For the remainder of this paper, I will use the phrase *habitual processes* in place of Burgoon and Langer's *mindlessness*.

For many, transitioning language, thoughts, and actions from a state of habitual processes to one of mindfulness can be difficult; thus, Burgoon and Langer (1995) recommend seven modes of restructuring language so that individuals may begin to speak, think, and act more mindfully. The authors' first argument suggests replacing dichotomized words and phrases by reducing individuals' use of static words, thoughts, and actions and instead employing communicative practices that are fluid, providing endless possibilities to the rhetor. For example, instead of perceiving situations as being either A or B or C, the hope is that individuals begin to see A, B and C as part of a continuum. This use of a fluid communicative practice can be enacted in language by using terms that are composite descriptors like "serious but playful" (p. 123). A second alternative for mindful language modification is the use of conditionality in given contexts by using expressions like "from one perspective," "considering this point of view," or "perhaps." These conditional expressions signal the listener to consider alternative understandings of the information provided.

The third recommendation exemplifies the importance of context in everyday communication. This allows individuals to view "facts" as inferences instead of truths. Similarly, the fourth remedy acknowledges context dependency and its value in descriptive assessment of particular situations because different frames of reference may be more relevant to a particular circumstance than others. The fifth key to mindfulness in language recognizes the importance of specificity as it relates to similarities and

differences of individual subjects. As an example, Burgoon and Langer (1995) write, “Recognizing that ‘this’ flower is different from ‘the’ flower directs our attention to the particularities of the flower. It suggests that previous knowledge about flowers is not enough to understand ‘this’ flower” (p. 124). Communicating with specificity allows for fewer generalizations to be made and moves individuals to consider alternative perspectives. In taking this thought one step further, the authors suggest reducing the use of anaphoric expressions like “this,” “that,” and “it” and instead using detailed descriptors of the thoughts to which they refer.

The final recommendation the authors make is that of intentionally switching modes of analysis from abstraction to a broader means of analysis and vice versa. This direction and redirection of the critical mind helps contextualize remarks made in conversation by suggesting alternative contexts. The authors use metaphor as an example, stating “the more novel, the more thought provoking” (Burgoon & Langer, 1995, p. 125). Ultimately, Burgoon and Langer advocate for more mindful practices in language. Using their seven remedies, the authors believe that what may have been unqualified truths can now be seen as sets of data open to analysis and critical thinking. Moreover, when these steps are employed then arguments based in fallacious reasoning are open to assessment so that individuals may find their own sense of rationality instead of relying upon habituated thought processes.

Assessing Richo’s (2002) concept of mindfulness as a practice that frees people from their mental confines, thus allowing an embrace of the self and others, and Burgoon and Langer’s (1995) understanding of mindfulness as a means of breaking free from language that misinforms and misguides individuals, I contemplated how these practices

could be applied to larger conflicts and sociopolitical situations. In reflecting on the events of September 11th, I recall witnessing a sense of urgency and fear in response to the terrorist attacks. Society began conflating terms like *terrorist* with *Muslim* and *Arab*. Former President Bush regularly made references to the War on Terror as a war of *good vs. evil*, implying a clear mode of recourse for those blinded by anger or fear, demonstrating Burgoon and Langer's (1995) account of dichotomization as a means of language appealing to particular intended outcomes ("In the World," 2006). On September 12, 2001, headlines across the nation read, "Bastards!" "Outrage," "Bush Vows to Strike Back," "Terror," and "Evil" (Newseum, 2014). I believe that the use of such language and violent imagery reported in the media slowly began to infiltrate Americans' psyche, creating visions of terror meant to serve as propaganda for a larger national agenda—war. This acritical digestion of such propaganda fueled habituated thought processes in some Americans. I had many friends who believed the narratives of fear and hatred they were being fed, causing in them angst and need for reprisal. This need for punishment of the "other" that had inflicted such harm to their American home highlighted for me the lack of compassion and critical thinking missing from political discourse. Where was that awareness we so desperately needed?

In sitting with these thoughts, I could not help but wonder, then, what the response to the September 11th attacks would have been if American citizens and U.S. government leaders had paused, sat in silence, and practiced mindfulness to its fullest before responding? Furthermore, I questioned if the post-9/11 War on Terror was a war of true defense or a war of aggression? These questions led me to ponder the application of mindful, Buddhist rhetoric as alternative responses to war. I wanted to know what anti-

war messages were being sent to the public and U.S. and international policy makers from Buddhists advocating for responsive measures of compassion and peace. In hoping to understand the reactive and aggressive measures that have now left the U.S. and several Middle Eastern nations in a state of heartache, loss, economic turmoil, and general environmental chaos, I examine the structures of Buddhist anti-war discourses and their complex war histories to discover how these enlightened discourses of compassion and peace could be deployed to create more productive futures in war prevention. While I began this journey as a critic, the more I read on Buddhism and its fundamental teachings, the more I believed in the productive and enlightened attributes of Buddhist thought and the less I wanted to criticize its discourse or the discourse of its spiritual leaders. As such, the following chapters oscillate between my critiques as a communication scholar and those assessments made as a spiritual believer in support of peaceful and compassionate Buddhist doctrine.

9/11

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I sat at my desk in my 8th-grade history class not understanding the televised devastation that was unfolding before me. As a 12-year-old girl, the implications of the 9/11 terrorist attacks were unclear. I did not know what was happening, nor did I really care. I was several states away, in Colorado, where this tragedy physically did not touch me or affect any of the people I knew or loved. It was not until the next day when my little sister came home from school in tears that I began to feel the backlash of what had happened. Just days after the attack, one of my sister's 7th-grade classmates told her that he was going to bring a shotgun to school and kill her for being Arab. Up until this point, my peers, friends, teachers, and even strangers

appreciated and welcomed my diverse heritage as a young Arab-American female. But on this day, I knew that people would begin to see me and my family differently. While my sister and I were two of several thousand Arab Americans feeling the repercussions of the September 11th events, others throughout the U.S. were experiencing traumas of their own. Over 3,000 civilians and 400 police officers and firefighters were killed that day (“9/11 Attacks,” n.d.); another several thousand were left without mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, and partners. The *Indianapolis Star* called September 11th the “Day of Death,” while other newspaper headlines read “Terror,” “Outrage,” “Evil Acts,” “Attacked,” and “Darkest Hour” (Newseum, 2014, p. 1). As a young 12-year-old girl, I did not understand the implications of the attacks; only now in my older years, am I able to understand the horror that would forever be part of global history.

To American policy makers, the attacks of September 11th were not only an attack on Western ideals and the U.S. government but also an attack on the American family, the soldier, the home, and working men and women of the nation; thus, swift action was necessary. On September 20, 2001, in his State of the Union address, President Bush announced the commencement of the War on Terror. The former president implored U.S. citizens to take a stand against terrorism and to seek vengeance for the perpetrators responsible for the heartrending events of 9/11. Foreshadowing the long and arduous road ahead, the president stated, “Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen” (Bush, 2001, p. 2). Indeed, this battle was and continues to be unlike any other war. As a result of President Bush’s initiation of the War on Terror, several military operations have been launched under the guise of terror prevention—

most notably, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In its idealized and packaged form, the War on Terror was sold as a U.S.-led initiative to eliminate al-Qaeda and all other terrorist regimes in the hopes of maintaining democratic ideals of security, freedom, justice, and peace. Ultimately, President Bush was promising to defend American fortitude. What was perhaps unforeseen was over a decade of international unrest and America's spiral into what Mark Danner calls "the forever war" (Danner, 2005).

A Brief History: The Afghanistan and Iraq Wars

Afghanistan

On October 7, 2001, the Bush administration commenced Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan, a U.S.-led initiative to remove al-Qaeda and the Taliban from power. At the time, the Taliban had control of the majority of Afghani land. Joining forces with Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization (al-Qaeda), the two parties sought to eliminate Western practices in Afghanistan, including music, television, sports, and dance. Furthermore, Afghani women were banned from appearing in public or holding a job outside of the home (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan [RAWA], n.d.). Not only were these oppressive practices upsetting to the democratic values of the U.S., but the Bush administration believed there to be an undeniable tie among Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and the September 11th terrorist attacks (Wintour et al., 2001).

In acting upon this belief, President Bush gave an international address just days after September 11th, giving the Taliban several ultimatums to which they were to comply or "share in [the] fate" of their terrorist brothers ("Bush gives Taliban ultimatum," 2001, para. 5). These demands included the delivery of all al-Qaeda leaders to the U.S., the

release of imprisoned foreign nationals, the closure of every terrorist training camp, and U.S. access to all terrorist training camps for inspection (“Bush gives Taliban ultimatum,” 2001; Wintour et al., 2001). Rejecting these demands on the basis on the U.S.’s lack of evidence to support Osama bin Laden’s involvement with the September 11th attacks, the Taliban’s ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, told reporters, “If there is no evidence and proof, we’re not prepared to give up Osama bin Laden” (Kempster & Marshall, 2001, para. 3). While the ruse of international negotiations was at play, the U.S. was simultaneously preparing for war. In October, 2001, troops moved into the city of Kabul, beginning the War on Terror (“Afghanistan Profile,” 2014).

While the Bush administration managed to temporarily squash Taliban activity in Afghanistan, terrorist organizations still ran rampant, further prolonging America’s incursion abroad. Following the Bush administration’s decision to declare war in Afghanistan, the nation has seen numerous surges of U.S. soldiers deployed onto Afghani soil. Following in the footsteps of President Bush, in 2009, President Barack Obama called for yet another increase in troops. Initially requesting an additional 30,000 troops to the 33,000 already standing, only a fraction was approved by Congress (“Start of Afghanistan,” 2009; “Afghan troop numbers,” 2010). However, in June, 2011, President Obama announced that several thousand troops would be withdrawn so that the U.S. could “focus on nation-building at home” (Landler & Cooper, 2011, para. 2). Today, the Obama administration uses the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States as a means to enforce American government ideals abroad. The document establishes, among other principles, the importance of the protection and promotion of democratic values, the advancement of

long-term security, and the push for social and economic development (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). While this agreement presupposes the betterment of Afghanistan, it has proven to be a catastrophe, as 2014 headlines still reflect the damages of the War on Terror. An example of these damages can be seen in *The Hindu's* March 8, 2014 headliner, "Blast in Afghanistan Kills District Governor." Needless to say, civil unrest in the Afghani nation is unending.

As a result of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan, both the U.S. and Afghanistan have seen grave losses economically, socially, and politically. According to the National Priorities Project (2014), "Every hour, taxpayers in the United States are paying \$10.45 million for the cost of war in Afghanistan." Additionally, Costs of War (2011a) estimates that between 16,725 and 19,013 Afghani civilians have been killed since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan. In 2004, just a couple of years into the war, the life expectancy of an Afghani civilian was 42 years of age; furthermore, only 25% of children were expected to live past the age of five. Due to the extreme environmental and social damage as a result of the war, poverty, malnutrition, and diminished access to clean water and health care have been exacerbated. This state of national degradation is what the humanitarian relief community deems "complex emergencies" (Costs of War, 2011a, para. 5). In a CNN report on the war's 10th anniversary, reporters accounted for the deaths of more than 2,700 U.S. troops and their Western partners (CNN Wire Staff, 2011). Of those deaths, 1,780 were American, 382 were British, and 157 were Canadian. Since the war's beginning, the number of casualties has risen exponentially, with a significant jump in deaths between 2008 and 2009. Approximately 296 coalition troops died in 2008; this number rose in 2009 when an

additional 517 coalition troops were killed. That year, President Obama authorized a surge of 33,000 U.S. soldiers to diffuse the violence (CNN Wire Staff, 2011). These decisions ultimately led to more deaths for both Afghanistan and the U.S.

In 2001, at the beginning of the U.S.-led military campaign, polls conducted by Gallup, *USA Today*, and CNN reported that 88% of Americans thought that the U.S. should take military action in retaliation for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (AEI Studies in Public Opinion, 2008). However, as the war drew on, citizens began to question U.S. motives and rationale. Between the start of the war in 2001 and 2011, thousands of American and international citizens have protested the Afghanistan War (Democracy Now, 2001; “Protest in London,” 2011”). Unfortunately, regardless of the voices of the people, Operation Enduring Freedom was only the beginning of other international invasions to come because, as Buddhist history will show, violence only begets violence.

Iraq

Claiming that Saddam Hussein could launch nuclear warfare on America, on March 20, 2003, the U.S. commenced armed conflict in Iraq—Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq War, 2013). The Bush administration argued that this war was founded on the basis of Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction. Prior to this launch, however, the Bush Administration requested the work of the Office of Special Plans (OSP), headed by Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, to find evidence that fulfilled the administration’s pro-war needs (Alexandrova, 2005; Hersh, 2003). In a *New Yorker* special on the pre-war invasion of Iraq, journalist Seymour Hersh suggests that the OSP was created in order to find evidence that supported the accusation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

regarding Iraq's "hostile intentions [and] or links to terrorists." This included evidence that supported Saddam Hussein's alleged ties with Al Qaeda and Iraq's supposed arsenal of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons (WMDs) (Hersh, 2003). U.N. inspections then took place, searching for evidence that would validate these claims ("Iraq War," 2013). However, before the U.N. inspections committee could complete its investigation, the Bush administration launched the Iraq War.

According to U.S. Army General Tommy Franks, the objectives of the invasion were to:

First, end the regime of Saddam Hussein. Second, to identify, isolate and eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Third, to search for, to capture and to drive out terrorists from that country. Fourth, to collect such intelligence as we can related to terrorist networks. Fifth, to collect such intelligence as we can related to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction. Sixth, to end sanctions and to immediately deliver humanitarian support to the displaced and to many needy Iraqi citizens. Seventh, to secure Iraq's oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people. And last, to help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government. (Sale & Kahn, 2003, para. 3)

The belief that the U.S. is the savior of this nation, restoring order and bringing justice to the land, is one of an exceptionalist attitude. These objectives clearly outline who the mission is for, with America being first on the list of objectives and Iraq last. This ordering also foreshadows an interest of capital gain in that America's seventh objective is to secure the oil fields, with Iraqi soil holding the second largest oil reserves in the world (Global Policy Forum, 2014). Moreover, the narrative of WMD's is still being implored to assure both troops and citizens of the necessity of U.S. forces in Iraq. Ultimately, this mission is one of gain, not of aid.

After a short time of the America's insurgency in Iraq, what little remained of the Hussein regime fell on April 13, 2003 ("Iraq War," 2013). On May 1, 2003, President

Bush gave a speech aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, located off the San Diego coast. With a “Mission Accomplished” banner waving in the background, the President declared, “In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed” (Cline, 2013). In essence, the president was announcing victory as a result of the swift defeat of initial Iraqi forces in the first few months of the war. However, as a result of Iraq’s initial defeat, many Iraqi leaders fled into hiding (“Iraq War,” 2013). On December 13, 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured by U.S. forces and was later convicted of crimes against humanity. This sentence resulted in his execution on December 30, 2006 (“Iraq War,” 2013). After the overthrow of Saddam’s regime and Saddam himself, the Iraqi nation was left in a very unstable state. Waves of looting, severe violence, and criminal activity broke out as acts of reprisal against the former ruling party (“Iraq War,” 2013). This violence was mainly directed at government offices, public institutions, and occupying troops. As a result, full-scale guerrilla warfare ensued, causing civil war in Iraq. The next several years were met with exponentially rising death tolls as the U.S. desperately sought to introduce a democratic government by way of violence, resulting in further civil unrest (“Iraq War,” 2013).

In January, 2007, in response to the growing chaos, President Bush announced a plan to temporarily increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq by more than 20,000. As a result of this new insurgency, 2007 was the deadliest year for U.S. forces. As the year progressed, however, a drop in violence left U.S. policy makers hopeful and led to the withdrawal of a number of the additional troops (“Iraq War,” 2013, p. 5). In November, 2008, the U.S. and Iraq approved the U.S.-Iraq Status of Force Agreement that redefined the legal framework for U.S. military activity in Iraq and set a timetable for withdrawal

of U.S. forces. Under this agreement, U.S. troops were scheduled to leave Iraqi cities by mid-2009, with a complete withdrawal of troops by December 31, 2011 (“Iraq War,” 2013). This projected timetable would be expedited with the election of President Barack Obama. Indeed, in February, 2009, President Obama announced that combatant U.S. forces would be withdrawn by August 31, 2010, with the remaining troops due to pull out by the end of 2011 (Baker, 2009). On August 18, 2010, the last combat brigade withdrew from Iraq while 50,000 U.S. soldiers remained in Iraq to act as a transitional force (Engel, Gubash, & Johnson, 2010). As part of this ending, transitional act, Operation Iraqi Freedom was renamed *Operation New Dawn*, a U.S. governmental initiative wherein the remaining 50,000 U.S. service members conducted stability operations, transitioning from what once was a U.S. military presence to one that is predominantly civilian (“Operation New Dawn,” n.d.). This operation ended on December 15, 2011, formally concluding the Iraq War (Ryan & Markey, 2011).

The consequences of the Iraq War were vast and devastating. Like the Afghanistan War, “every hour, taxpayers in the United States are paying \$824,328 for the cost of war in Iraq” (The National Priorities Project, 2014). Additionally, Costs of War estimates the death of between 123,000 and 134,000 Iraqi civilians (2011b). As of February, 2013, an estimated 6,650 American civilians have died as a result of both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars combined (Costs of War, 2011c). Moreover, the Central Statistics Organization (2011) estimates that between 800,000 and a million Iraqi children have lost one or both parents. In a 2008 report by the International Organization for Migration, the agency reported the internal displacement of roughly 2.8 million Iraqi citizens and over two million Iraqi refugees, resulting in a total of five million internally

and externally displaced citizens. Consequences of this displacement include the lack of potable water, health care, education, electricity, access to food, and other basic services. Furthermore, cholera had become a regular epidemic (Glanz & Grady, 2007). Hartnett and Stengrim (2006) report that the overwhelming destruction of Iraq's civil infrastructure will result in U.S. corporations gaining hundreds of millions of dollars in profit for the next several decades as a result of Iraq's U.S.-made chaos. In the U.S., post-9/11 war veterans faced problems of their own. An estimated 203,000 veterans were unemployed in February, 2013; in 2012, that number totaled 154,000 (Briggs, 2013). From these data sets of both Iraqi and U.S. war-time consequences, I have concluded that the War on Terror never had a winner but instead inflicted grave losses on all. It is this realization that has inspired me to turn to Buddhist practices of mindfulness not only for a new lens through which societies can adopt compassionate modes of living in times of conflict but also as a means of preventing future war and all of its associated losses.

Research Design

Data

I have examined a combination of 50 classic and contemporary resources in order to discover the religious structures that undergird Buddhist discourses that both advocate for and protest against war. Many of these texts illustrate how these religious frameworks and Buddhist war tenets relate to the attacks of September 11, 2001. Because I use rhetorical history as my methodological approach, I have examined a combination of book and book chapters, post-9/11 articles from the Buddhist magazine *Tricycle*, academic and lay articles, and news reports and newspaper articles in order to show the

development of Buddhist war discourse in classic and contemporary times. In Chapter 2, my sources of data mainly consist of scholarly books, book chapters, and academic articles, which I have consulted in order to develop a rhetorical history of the main tenets of Buddhist thought as they relate to war. These data illustrate the discourses that have traditionally reinforced pro-and-anti-war thought through the use of discursive devices like the Buddhist Dharma and other canonic texts, the teachings of the Buddha and other prominent Buddhist figures, and Buddhist folklore, which is still used as a contemporary method of instilling norms of moral conduct into practitioners. In addition, these data range in length and date as contemporary teachings of the Buddhist Dharma are similar to those prescribed when Buddhism became a religion nearly 2,500 years ago. My goal in Chapter 2, then, is to provide a broad overview of classic Buddhist religious frameworks to illustrate religious Buddhist thought that is still prevalent in contemplating war, violence, and peace in today's Buddhist societies.

Whereas Chapter 2 offers a sweeping map of Buddhist religious discourses regarding war and peace, in Chapter 3, my sources of data are mainly comprised of lay magazine articles, news reports, and news articles that were written by prominent Buddhists following the attacks of September 11th to illustrate the use of foundational Buddhist discourses in contemporary war-time situations. One key source of data in this chapter is a special series excerpted from the Buddhist magazine *Tricycle* entitled "September 11th: Practice and Perspectives," wherein eight influential Buddhist leaders express their outlooks on 9/11 and suggest various paths of response to the War on Terror. My goal in Chapter 3 is to outline the main Buddhist responses to the War on Terror as they are indicative of the foundational tenets discovered in Chapter 2,

illustrating a perpetuation of classic Buddhist discourses relating to war, violence, and peace.

Data Analysis

As my research is interested in both the classic and contemporary discourses that construct Buddhist pro-and-anti-war rhetoric, I will be using rhetorical history as my methodology to explain Buddhist phenomena relating to violence, war, and norms of morality and spirituality. According to Zarefsky (1998), “Rhetorical history is the study of the historical effects of rhetorical discourse” (p. 25). Analyzing the distinction between rhetorical discourse/criticism and rhetorical history, Turner (1998) suggests that if “rhetorical criticism seeks to understand the message in context, [then] rhetorical history seeks to understand the context through the messages that reflect and construct that context” (p. 2). As such, rhetorical history is interested in assessing the rhetorical foundations of particular communicative events so as to provide an understanding of, and an appreciation for, rhetoric as a process rather than a product of discourse (Turner, 1998). Turner further explains, “Rhetorical history is a social construction not only in the sense that rhetorical processes constitute historical processes but also in the sense that historical study constructs reality for the society in which and for which it is produced” (p. 8). Developing rhetorical history to map Buddhist pro-and-anti-war rhetoric, I assess how Buddhist discourses have reinforced norms of violence, war, and/or peace. Moreover, my analysis points to the power of this discourse to transform the self via practices of mindfulness, compassion, altruism, and pacifism.

To understand how these discourses are created and perpetuated within a rhetorical history framework, Zarefsky (1998) suggests four kinds of inquiry. These four

“senses,” as Zarefsy calls them, include: the history of rhetoric, the rhetoric of history, historical studies of rhetorical practice, and rhetorical studies of historical events. For the purposes of my study, senses one and four are the most significant, thus are the senses that I will focus upon. The first sense (the history of rhetoric), entails studying the principles of discourse, which, according to Zarefsky (1998) includes the study of “presumptions, identification, terministic screens, and hegemony” and other rhetorical principles that have been developed in societies and eras from classic to contemporary times, thus helping individuals and societies understand their states of knowledge (p. 26). This sense is exemplified in Chapter 2, where I illustrate historic Buddhist discourses primarily outlined in religious texts and narratives that date back to the beginning of Buddhism as a religion nearly 2,500 years ago.

Zarefsky’s (1998) fourth sense (the study of historical events from a rhetorical perspective), is elusive in that the study of a historical subject can be interpreted in a multiplicity of ways depending on the historian and his or her purpose for conducting the research. As an intellectual interested in the evolution of communication and communicative practices, Zarefsky (1998) argues that for scholars like me, history is viewed “as a series of rhetorical problems [and] situations that call for public persuasion to advance a cause or overcome an impasse” (p. 30). This fourth sense is critical for my research as my interest in Chapter 3 is to discover the Buddhist rhetorical frameworks that undergird Buddhist responses following the attacks of September 11th to show how concepts like mindfulness and compassion have and can be used in conflict resolution.

Significance

My study is significant for several reasons. I believe that this research has the potential to restructure the way language is used so that individuals may be more inclined to engage in more mindful practices and less in habituated processes. My hope is that this use of mindfulness will encourage compassionate modes of speaking, thinking, and behaving that can be applied in national conflicts to prevent future wars. While governments choose to engage in war for a number of reasons, some of which include fear, future war prevention, retaliation, defense, the attainment of land and valuable resources, and the cultural colonization of groups for the “betterment” of others, I believe that the majority of wars could be prevented if both parties—the initiator and the retaliator—paused to think of not only the consequences of their actions but also the basis for war and its consequences. This self-reflexive time among government leaders and citizens would create room for mindful ways of speaking, thinking, and behaving in potential war situations. Ultimately, my hope is that Buddhist practices of mindfulness and compassion will allow for fewer wars to be fought, fewer lives to be lost, and more utopian and humanitarian ways of co-existing to be developed.

Outline

This study unfolds in four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, which includes 9/11 and the War on Terror; defining mindfulness from both a spiritual and scholarly perspective; contextual foregrounding of concepts pertinent to my study; my research question; a research-design section, which describes my data and methodologies used for data analysis; the significance of my study; and an outline of the chapters. Chapter 2 develops a rhetorical framework of Buddhist tenets of war and peace based on

Buddhism's histories, examining how traditional Buddhist discourses and practices act as both a device that supports and opposes war. Chapter 3 offers a rhetorical structuring of Buddhist responses to the attacks of September 11th. Chapter 4 is a concluding chapter that summarizes my findings and discusses Buddhist principles of compassion and mindfulness and their application as a means of future war prevention. This final chapter also includes a limitations section and suggestions for future research. As a supplemental text, my appendix includes a chapter I have written on mindful practices and the preservation of a Zen Center that many live-in practitioners called *home*. While I did not feel like my autoethnographic account of mindfulness at the Zen Center quite fit with this thesis, as it makes no reference to war and/or peaceful discourses, I have included this chapter as an appendix to show readers how mindfulness can be enacted in daily practice.

CHAPTER II

PRO-AND-ANTI-WAR FRAMEWORKS

IN CLASSIC AND CONTEMPROARY BUDDHISM

At its fundamental level, Buddhism opposes violence and war; however, various Buddhist sects justify war as a means of preservation, salvation, and maintenance of the Buddhist Dharma. To make sense of this apparent contradiction at the heart of Buddhism, in this chapter I examine the religious tenets that have traditionally condemned acts of violence as well as fostered them. This chapter is broken up into two sections. The first addresses the tenets structuring Buddhist discourses that deem war inherently wrong, and the second section outlines the tenets of just-war theory in Buddhism, followed by an explanation of the larger religious frameworks that deem war necessary and productive to society. Each section includes religious and scholarly examples that act in support of either claim followed by my critical analysis of the mindfulness or habitual processes of those practices as they relate to peaceful discourses. My objective is to highlight those religious frameworks that promote mindful speech, thought, and behavior, thus propose how such actions could be productive in war prevention.

The Dharma and Principles of Peace and Non-Violence that

Structure War as Morally Wrong

He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me, he robbed me. Those who harbor such thoughts do not still their hatred. Dhammapada, v. 3

All tremble at violence, all fear death. Comparing oneself with others, one should neither kill nor cause to kill. Dhammapada, v. 129

He who has renounced violence towards all living beings, weak or strong, who neither kills nor causes others to kill, him do I recall a holy man. Dhammapada, v. 405 (Keown, 2005, p. 71)

At its most basic level, most mainstream versions of Buddhism condemn war as an evil and attest to its futility in gaining a meaningful resolution to any conflict (Brummans & Hwang, 2010; Ferguson, 1978; Hanh, 1991; Jayasuriya, 2009; Keown, 2005; McTernan, 2003; Neumaier, 2004; Premasiri, 2003; Queen, 2007). While various sects of the Buddhist tradition differ in some of their religious convictions, most Buddhist traditions contain the same fundamental teachings on violence and war. Within the *Dharma*, the teachings of Buddha, the Four Noble Truths, the Five Precepts, and the Eightfold Path offer remedies to the condition of human suffering and propose peaceful ways of existing and coexisting in the world.

One of the main concepts in understanding Buddhism is the first of the Four Noble Truths: that all life is suffering. For many Buddhists, suffering is understood not only as a personal experience wherein individuals are plagued by feelings of dissatisfaction and a “thirst” for more, but also a condition that affects societies at large (Neumaier, 2004; Premasiri, 2003; Queen, 2007). Poverty, social injustices, war, and the cruelty of humans have caused most contemporary Buddhists to practice nonviolence, generosity, compassion, and selflessness as a collective practice intended to help minimize world suffering and offer spiritual gestures of love and compassion in place of pain (Queen, 2007). According to the *Dharma*, suffering can be remedied in a few prescribed ways, including: abstaining from harming other sentient beings; practicing lovingkindness, compassion, sympathy, joy, and equanimity; learning to be selfless and interdependent; devoting the self to a paradigm of enlightenment and liberation; adhering to the steps of right action, speech, and livelihood, as outlined in the Eightfold Path;

allowing an openness so that individuals may achieve inner peace; and a devotion to the Buddhist Dharma and its moral leaders (Ferguson, 1978; Queen, 2007).

In the pledge to right action, one of the steps prescribed in the Eightfold Path, practitioners can find the guiding doctrines that are designed to protect all sentient beings from harm or injury (Queen, 2007). This principle of non-harm or injury to others can be found in the first of the five precepts: abstention from taking life. In one of the early canonical texts, the Buddha states, “Warriors who die in battle go not to heaven but to a special hell, since at the moment of death their minds are intent on killing living beings” (Keown, 2005, p. 70). For Buddhists, this idea of intent is central to the law of *karma*, the belief that an individual’s current life is shaped by the acts of the preceding ones; thus, Buddhist ethics of non-harming are grounded in the belief that harmful intentions, which are necessary for acts of violence and war, have negative karmic consequences (King, 2000; Neumaier, 2004). According to Keown (2005), killing or harm to others is bad karma even in cases of self-defense or the defense of others. In essence, harming another ultimately harms the self as this karma will negatively affect an individual in his or her spiritual life (Neumaier, 2004). Whether or not the concept of karma is a means of checks and balances that constitutes the continuance of negative or positive life cycles is contested by many. Karma, then, is primarily viewed as either a reality that will constantly affect the self, or as an allegory for interdependence. In both cases, foundational Buddhist philosophies necessitate an adherence to spiritual frameworks that offer a mindful means of response from violent acts.

Through the adherence to, and devotion of the Dharma and its foundational doctrines of peace rather than violence, practitioners are not only attempting to alleviate their own personal suffering but also the suffering of others. Queen (2007) writes,

The ethical implications of these doctrines have been obvious to Buddhists through the ages: realization of the impermanence and interdependence of selves in society and nature entails the deepest respect for all. To tear this [interconnectedness of individuals] through violence entails dire consequences. (p. 22)

Similarly, Peter Harvey, according to Jayasuriya (2009), summarizes the Buddhist attitude toward war and conflict, stating that non-violence and peace are foundational characteristics of the Buddhist paradigm. These characteristics act as rich resources in times when conflict resolution is needed. Harvey further suggests that Buddhism is a unique religion in that instances of righteous wars are fought with ideas and the message of peace is delivered without bullets, “not with military armor but with love, compassion, tolerance and benevolence” (as quoted in Jayasuriya, 2009, p. 428). While Harvey’s insights of Buddhism ignore the realities of war in countries like Tibet, Burma, and Sri Lanka, Harvey and Queen attempt to capture the essence of traditional Buddhist discourse—that love, restraint, and compassion offer solace in an age of suffering.

For many Buddhists like Thich Nhat Hanh, this age of suffering is grounded in political, spiritual, and cultural movements that are being directed with violence, creating death and fueling hatred and anger. Thich Nhat Hanh, according to McTernan (2003), believes that the fundamental principle of not killing requires that practitioners develop a spiritual observance, allowing them the freedom to disband inner hatred and instead obtain patience and lovingkindness even in the face of adversity. Through conflict, Hanh argues, individuals have the opportunity to learn more about themselves and others: “with

skill and patience, world conflicts can be resolved non-violently” (as quoted in McTernan, 2003, p. 49). Like Hanh, the historic Buddha Siddhartha Guatama made anti-violent rhetoric part of his spiritual teachings. The Buddha regularly encouraged peace and productive alternatives, demonstrating the futility in waging war (Deegalle, 2009; Premasiri, 2003). In the *Dhammapada* 130 (a canonical Buddhist text), the Buddha said, “Everyone is afraid of violence; everyone likes life. If one compares one’s self with others, one would never take life or be involved in the taking of life” (Ferguson, 1978, p. 47). This concept relates not only to what is understood today as the “Golden Rule” but also bears with it implications of the responsibility that people have to one another and to themselves—collective respect and harmony can never shine unless people first respect themselves and find solace within.

Many Buddhist scholars argue that societal disharmony and conflict arise when individuals’ drives are overrun by the emotional states of desire, hatred, and ignorance (Deegalle, 2009; Keown, 2005; McTernan, 2003; Queen, 2007). As an example, in several classic narratives of war and its causes, Buddhist texts note the ruin of civilizations as a result of kings’ greedy desires for riches, land and power, ultimately creating a devastating environment for societies and their people (Deegalle, 2009; Ferguson, 1978; Premasiri, 2003). One such instance of the ineffectiveness of war is represented in the Buddhist tale of the River Rohini. In this story, two kingdoms fought for the rights to use the waters of the River Rohini. During their quarrelling, the Buddha intervened, asking, “Why on account of some water of little worth would you destroy the invaluable lives of these soldiers, [and the Buddha goes on to caution that] victory arouses enmity and [only] the defeated live in sorrow” (Jayasuriya, 2009, p. 428). The

tale of the River Rohini illustrates the complications of emotionally-motivated human states as a result of the biological drive for resources in times of scarcity. An example of this strife can be seen in years of civil unrest in Pakistan and India for the rights to Kashmir's fruitful land (Choudhury, 2010). In more current events, the War on Terror, particularly in Iraq, has been said to have been a war waged for the attainment of oil, as Iraq holds the second largest oil reserves in the world (Global Policy Forum, 2014), making the tale of the River Rohini yet another allegory for the human condition.

Most classic and contemporary Buddhist literature makes references to the psychological states of greed, hate, and delusion as these states are believed to be the emotional underpinnings of violence and aggression (Keown, 2005; McTernan, 2003; Queen, 2007). Keown (2005) argues that a consequence of these strong negative, emotional states is a need for self-defense, causing in a person a new emotional drive rooted in aggression. These feelings are further exacerbated by the false belief that individuals need to protect themselves from others who are deemed threatening in the wake of agitation. It is in these states of negative, emotional drives that people begin to feel internal suffering and/or project that suffering onto others. Therefore, the Eightfold Path prescribed in the Dharma acts as an instrument of moral grounding so that individuals may gain wisdom, mental strength, and learn restraint in order to reduce the emotional and worldly energies that cause suffering (Neumaier, 2004). Buddhists believe that once individuals begin to relinquish their egocentric preoccupations, people can begin to appreciate a kinship with other human beings. Queen (2007) suggests that through lovingkindness, generosity, and wisdom, human beings can conquer the negative

emotional states of greed, hate, and delusion, thus alleviating the precursors to anger and violence.

One such Buddhist practice designed to cultivate good will towards the self and others is that of *metta bhavana*, or lovingkindness meditation (Ferguson, 1978; Queen, 2007). For many Buddhist scholars, this state of mindfulness through meditation is the foundational practice in Buddhist nonviolence (Hanh, 1991; Ferguson, 1978; McTernan, 2003). In conjunction with the practice of lovingkindness, the practices of “compassion (sympathy for those in pain), joy (appreciating the good fortune of others), and equanimity (maintaining impartiality in times of gain and loss)” help individuals to cultivate attitudes of positivity, relinquishing binding negative tendencies that afflict the self and others (Queen, 2007, 19). However, a focusing in on the self is needed before a person can positively impact others. Ferguson (1978) recounts the following *metta* mantra:

May I be free from enmity,
May I be free from ill-will,
May I be free from distress,
May I keep myself happy. (p. 48)

This act of meditation serves as a mental and emotional tool, assisting individuals in the calming of their minds, thus teaching the importance of self-soothing and restraint. This use of self-restraint or inner-directed force is designed to help alleviate these psychological states of greed, hate, and delusion that foster violence.

In the past, the terms *violence* and *force* have been misguidedly conflated. The term *force* in Buddhist discipline is morally neutral as it relates to the restraint of individuals on themselves for the purposes of enlightened living (Keown, 2005).

Therefore, the use of force in traditional Buddhist practices is directed at the individual,

not at society or others (Deegalle, 2009; Premasiri, 2003). The Buddha teaches practitioners to restrain the five senses in order to progress in the path of enlightenment. This particular instruction is important as it demonstrates the religious expectation that individuals are to demonstrate strong self-control in order to be free of persuasions and enticements. This self-restraint or force comes in the form of adherence to the Dharma and its practices so that people may ultimately live a life free from suffering and alleviate the suffering of others. As such, the Dharma serves as a recipe for self-realization through self-control, a dampening of the senses, and the defusing of internal and external conflicts. Through the control of an individual's negative emotional states, negative behaviors can be harnessed, and therein lies the potential for inner and outer peace.

The concept of peace is central to both historic and contemporary forms of Buddhist teachings. At its basic level, peace must begin with a transformation within an individual. As noted in Deegalle (2009), the *Dhammapada* explains, “One may conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, yet he is the best conqueror who conquers himself” (p. 75). When individuals find their own inner peace, letting go of craving, agitation, suffering and aggression, then both they and society at large feel contentment (Queen, 2007). Teachings such as the ones noted above have earned the Buddha his title as the king of peace, or *santiraja*, as well as show the contradiction in Buddhist narratives of pride and opposing philosophies that teach a relinquishing of ego. This contradiction is exemplified in the following example: In meeting the Buddha for the first time, a local Brahmin praises the Buddha, exclaiming:

You deserve to be a king, an emperor, the lord of chariots, whose conquests reach to the limits of the four seas . . . Warriors and wealthy kings are devoted to you—exercise your royal power as a king of kings, a chief of men!

The Buddha replied: I am a king . . . supreme King of the Teaching of Truth; [but] I turn the wheel of peaceful means—this wheel is irresistible. (Queen, 2007, p. 16)

In this instance, the Buddha is declaring himself a supreme king and the teacher of truth. Classic fables such as this one illuminate the contradiction of Buddhism as a religion that looks past the self, while, in fact, solely focuses on the self. Nevertheless, I believe that while contradiction lies at the heart of Buddhism (like it does with any religion or philosophy), that Buddhism intends to promote peace within the self so that this peace can be realized in societies.

For most Buddhists, observance of the steps in the Eightfold Path offers practitioners prescribed tools as a means of promoting inner and outer peace. In the step of right action, inner and outer peace stem from the other steps of right living. In his observance of the Eightfold Path, Thich Nhat Hanh, according to Queen (2007), suggests that right views establish a framework for meditative and ethical practice, while right aspiration and right effort motivate followers to sustain Buddhist practice. In right mindfulness, practitioners are encouraged to seek new enlightened attitudes that can later be applied to situations, relationships, and moment-to-moment living. Thus, in right concentration, practitioners move from simply performing peace to being peace (Queen, 2007, p. 20). Through these conscious manifestations of right living outlined in the Eightfold Path, Buddhist followers are provided with instruments to guide them in their personal embodiment of peace, even when obtaining societal peace may not be an easy task.

In discussing compassion as a pillar of world peace, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet (n.d. a), advocates for real love and compassion as altruistic characteristics

that can ultimately bring peace to societies on a global level. Real love, His Holiness argues, is not based in attachments or egocentric bearings because these attachments to people or objects may one day fade, and feelings may change. Real love, then, is based in altruism; the same is true of genuine compassion. These peaceful traits remain responsive to the conditions of human suffering and, as such, are interested in the well-being of communities. The Dalai Lama claims, “The kind of love we should advocate [for] is this wider love that you can have even for someone who has done harm to you: your enemy” (para. 19). When individuals are faced with adversity and subsequently lose control over their minds, thoughts, and behaviors, clear judgment is compromised and anything could happen, including war. It is then, His Holiness argues, that the practices of compassion and real love in communities have the opportunity “to create the structure of world peace” (para. 23). For centuries now, each of the 14 Dalai Lama’s have claimed similar sentiments founded in love as a recipe for peace. However, these discourses are in itself a habituated process of language, thought, and actions. While the repetitious rhetoric of love as a cure-all is hopeful and beautiful, these discourses have also proven to be paralytic in nations like China, India, and Tibet. Is the case, then, that such messages of love and peace are perpetuated because human beings live in a system of hopelessness fostered by so many negative human conditions that perpetuate violence?

In turning to the *Dhammapada*, the basic social rules of behavior and good will toward others are noted as follows:

Anger must be overcome by the absence of anger;
Evil must be overcome by good;
Greed must be overcome by liberty;
Lies must be overcome by truth. (Ferguson, 1978, p. 46)

These messages of benevolence suggest a positive alternative to those negative emotional states that ultimately breed violence. Labenek and Hrdina (2012) argue that peace can never be built upon domination and oppression. For this reason, initiating war and violent means of authority almost always end in some form of destruction. Explaining this concept further, the authors assert, “To create peace through domination and oppression only deepens the cause for further conflict and does not truly resolve the pandemic of violence—as violence only begets more violence” (p. 203). Similarly, the Dalai Lama (n.d.b) argues that building military systems as means to preserve peace serves as a temporary measure. As long as there is a lack of trust and good will towards others, there remains a multiplicity of factors that could upset the balance of power—peace of any lasting measure can be secured only in genuine trust (His Holiness, n.d.b).

One example of violence breeding more violence can be seen in the historic reign of Mao in China. In discussing Mao’s political power, the Dalai Lama, as cited in McTernan (2003), posits that Mao’s political power was maintained through the end of a gun barrel. The Dalai Lama acknowledges that violence, then, only meets short-term objectives but ultimately has long-lasting effects. Based on the Dalai Lama’s belief that “violence begets violence,” he advocates for a new mindset that people begin to see war for what it really is, “a fire that spreads and whose fuel is living people” (as quoted in McTernan, 2003, p. 49). Unjust government systems and social institutions that compromise peoples’ being only end in a cycle of hate, delusion, and greed, further perpetuating mistrust and violence.

A Rhetorical Structuring of the Buddhist Frameworks that Foster Mindfulness and Habituated Processes

The previous section examined the dominant religious tenets that oppose violence and war. While the sections on peace and violence are key, the bases for these religious frameworks are founded in the Buddhist Dharma which are founded in the doctrines of the Four Noble Truths, the Five Precepts, and the Eightfold Path. Keeping in mind the work of Richo (2002) and Burgoon and Langer (1995) on mindfulness and habitual processes, this concluding section both critiques the religious tenets outlined previously as well as highlights the surface messages of benevolence that foster mindfulness in thought, speech, and action.

The numerous examples of compassion, lovingkindness, joy and equanimity found in Buddhist doctrine all suggest a larger religious structuring of peace. Moreover, the teachings illustrated in the Dharma of learning to free the self from the mental, spiritual, and physical restraints of suffering suppose an individual strength or force needed to relinquish these negative energies that, at times, can consume a person and communities. While these frameworks demonstrate a longing for peace, what is not so clear are the difficulties associated with bringing these peaceful pursuits to life and the contradiction in these religious frameworks that seemingly supports a passiveness but suggests more dominant attributes.

As an enlightened concept, mindfulness supposes a personal consciousness and deliberativeness while engaging in speech, thought, and action. The steps prescribed in the Eightfold Path suggest that individuals are being conscious in their decision making as Buddhist practitioners. This concept is contradictory however because, as Burgoon and

Langer (1995) argue, mindfulness requires thoughtful inquiry and not habitual responses to situations. Because the Dharma and other Buddhist practices are so precisely structured and require a discipline of the self, individuals' challenges of the system, and the freedom to think and choose what is right or wrong for themselves is not a realistic option. In fact, within the Buddhist doctrine examined herein, the structures of what is right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, already exists indicating a dichotomization in language and thought processes. This necessarily dictates a presupposed action—if something is bad, then X is inevitable. Right action, as the Eightfold Path advises, is just that, a right action deemed right by the moral authority figures that have deemed it so. In this regard, Buddhism, at times, acts as a dominating and limiting ideology wherein freedom is lacking. As such, practitioners fall prey to habitual processes due to audiences' acritical submission to such limiting religious frameworks. In sum, Buddhism short-circuits critical thinking.

On the other hand, the religious tenets of Buddhist discourse also incorporate mindfulness in several areas. These areas includes the very discourses/practices that create self-realization including self-control and a dampening of the senses. While the Buddhist self-control and dampening of the senses has the potential to kill the individual, creating a person bred in habituated processes, free from pleasure, anger, and all other emotional states that make-up human beings, self-control helps individuals to be more mindful of their actions through a reduction of negative impulses that can harm the self and others. For example, it is my experience that in times of conflict, it easier to be angry and respond out of emotional frustration than it is to be centered, calm, and rational. Buddhism teaches practitioners to control these negative, emotionally cultivated states so

that a higher self can rule, and furthermore, foster inner and external peace. A specific example of Buddhist mindfulness through self-control can be seen in the act of meditation in times of personal conflict or external hostility. This act of meditations helps clear the mind, making way for lovingkindness. The mantra associated with this meditation (as noted in Ferguson, 1978) suggests an internal calming before response. Asking the self to be free from enmity, ill-will, and distress only to seek happiness warrants a sort of calm presence as opposed to a hostile one. There are times, however, in all persons' lives that animosity, stress, and anger will afflict them—this is part of the human experience, but the point here is not so say that people will never be afflicted by negative emotional states but how these feelings can be diminished when they do arise so that people may be the higher version of themselves.

In my analysis of these anti-war religious frameworks, I found Buddhist doctrine to be both invitational and prescriptive as it carries characteristics of a feminist and dictatorial discourse. The rhetorics that demonstrated more of a feminist discourse are those I deem to be mindful, bearing with them compassionate and peaceful undertones, serving as a productive, alternative means to war prevention. While these discourses may seem unrealistic to some, I argue that notions of peace, whether, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, or Islamic, are necessary if societies are to live in harmony. If we are to coexist, there must be a measure of goodwill toward others so that suffering and the negative emotions that cultivate violence can be lessened. That is not to say that violence and war will not exist. This, too, is unfortunately the nature of humans. In this next section I examine the religious frameworks built on Buddhist pro-war discourses, analyzing the tenets that have historically and currently supported such violent ends.

Buddhist Frameworks that Structure War as Necessary

The uplifted sword has no will of its own, it is all of emptiness. It is like a flash of lightening. The man who is about to be struck down is also of emptiness, as is the one who wields the sword . . . Do not regret your mind stopped with the sword you raise, forget about what you are doing, and strike the enemy. -Zen Master Takuan Soho Zenji (Keown, 2005, p. 71)

For many, Buddhism is a religion that represents peace. However, in light of Buddhist history, I found there to be a clear contradiction between the peaceful teachings of the Dharma and the history of war in Buddhist nations. What has been overlooked in much of Buddhism's pacifist literature are the natural human tendencies toward tribalism, territoriality, and violence (Queen, 2007). Such tendencies have been the root cause of Buddhist warfare. Throughout Asian history, countries such as Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, China and Tibet have been privy to mass violence and war. For centuries, meditative and monastic disciplines have been training armies to defend national interests and preserve Buddhist doctrine (Keown, 2005; Queen, 2007). Some scholars argue that the difference in canonic texts and understandings of the Dharma is one cause for multiple interpretations of scripture either advocating for or against violence. For example, in the Theravada Buddhist tradition, the Pali canon implies two assessments of violence as either context independent and non-negotiable or context dependent and negotiable. In explaining a classic narrative on violence, Keown (2005) writes, "When the warmongering king Ajatasttu sent his chief minister to the Buddha to seek advice on his plan to attack the Vajji . . . The Buddha simply commented on seven positive features of Vajjian society" (p. 72). The Buddha's lack of outright condemnation of war led the king to interpret the Buddha's message in such a way that made war acceptable.

Similarly, the Mahayana tradition retells a story of the Buddha (in one of his former lives) assassinating some Brahmin heretics (McTernan, 2003). As described in the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, a Mahayana canon, Buddha killed the Brahmin in order to protect the teachings of the Four Noble Truths. Some Buddhists argue that when the Dharma or Buddhist community is at risk, the Five Precepts that govern Buddhist conduct may be disregarded. In this regard, Mahayana tradition maintains an understanding that peace paradoxically requires violence (McTernan, 2003).

Another example of a common misconception of Buddhism is the idea that monks are inherent pacifists who do not engage in harmful acts. In several classic narratives of war, Buddhist monks offered their blessings to battling soldiers in their violent endeavors. One Buddhist monk, according to Juergensmeyer (2000), claimed that in the age of *dukkha* (suffering), there is no way to avoid violence: “violence naturally begets violence” (p. 113). In the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka and King Dutthagamani, Buddhist monks offer their blessings in times of war and slaughter (Keown, 2005; Queen, 2007). After a long and bloody battle with the Hindu Tamils, the Sinhalese king felt great remorse. In retelling the narrative, Queen (2007) writes:

[Later] the Sinhalese King was comforted by eight Buddhist monks who assured him that, in spite of the thousands slain in battle, only one and half humans had perished—one who had pledged allegiance to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha (the three refuges of Buddhism), and another who had vowed to follow the Buddhist precepts. All other Hindu Tamils were ‘unbelievers and men of evil life’—subhuman and deserving of death. (p. 25)

Today, Buddhist monks who support Sinhalese nationalism believe that peace can only be gained from a military defeat of the Tamils (Keown, 2005).

In 16th-century China, Shaolin monks were called out to fight Japanese pirates who had been raiding the Chinese shores for decades (Szczepanski, 2014). In a second

battle in July of 1553, 120 monks met an equal number of pirates on the Huangpu River. The monks were victorious in their fight, killing every Japanese enemy. This battle later became known as the *Battle of Wengjiagang* (Szczepanski, 2014). In both nations where wars were waged, ties between spirituality and warrior hood were made. Juergensmeyer (2000) explains, “For those who rule by the sword as kings [need] first to experience the discipline of Buddhist monastic training. They had to be ‘world renouncers’ before they could be ‘world conquerors’” (p.112). While there are histories of traditionally peaceful Buddhists pursuing war and violent action, the cause behind such acts has been a source of interest for many Buddhist scholars. One main point of interest is whether or not there can be a just war in a religion that preaches compassion, peace, and restraint.

The Use of Just-War Theory and its Applicability to Buddhism’s Validation of War

While the notion of *just* and *unjust* wars derives from the great Christian thinkers of the 5th-century, and, as such, is traditionally viewed as a Christian concept related to the moral ethics of war, Buddhism too predicates some of its pro-war arguments using similar just-war statutes (Jayasuriya, 2009; Keown, 2005). Most religions condemn acts of violence and aggression; thus, the just-war theory serves as a means to identify a *prima facie*, or a wrong-doing that requires justification (Jayasuriya, 2009). This concept seeks to answer two questions: when is it right to fight, and how is it right to fight (Popovski, 2009)? The decision to wage war (*jus ad bellum*) and the conduct carried out in war (*jus in bello*) are moral wartime guidelines. The criteria for *jus ad bellum* include “right authority, just cause, proportionality, right intention, action of last resort, and reasonable prospect of success” (Jayasuriya, 2009, p. 425). *Jus in bello* claims two criteria for war

conduct: (1) the violence must be proportional to the injury suffered; and (2) the weapons used must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants—“civilians are never permissible targets of war” (Keown, 2005, p. 80). In discussing war ethics, Aho (1981) notes that a complete military ethic consists of a vocabulary of acceptable motives for engaging in war and a series of statutes that regulate the goals toward which violence is to be directed; the preferred attitude or response to war; and approved ways of fighting. In light of this description, the criterion for discerning which wars are just and which are unjust is a fine line.

While some Buddhists argue for war using some of the criteria as outlined in *jus ad bellum*, other more passive Buddhists argue that regardless of historic narratives where *jus ad bellum* was claimed, there has been no firm evidence supporting such a defensive war in any canonic text (McTernan, 2003). These beliefs are partly founded in the teachings of Buddha—that all people are psychologically incapable of forming opinions about what is “just” or “unjust” while immersed in their own suffering (Premasiri, 2003). Individuals may have strong convictions but when these beliefs are objectively analyzed, these convictions can be seen as the rationalizations of preconceived desires, cravings, and likes and dislikes (Premasiri, 2003). Regardless of canonic support or outlined pro-war teachings in the Dharma, armed defense still continues to be justified on the grounds that violence in response to hostile situations is not a battle of intended violence, making the karmic repercussions null and void.

For some Buddhist sects, war is deemed just on the following five bases: The first is when the Dharma is in need of defense—when the Doctrine is in danger, the Five Percepts may be ignored. The second instance of justification allows for killing if the

death of one saves two. The third is illusory in nature—individuals may pretend to kill another but will not succeed if there is in fact “no soul, no self, nothing to kill” (Ferguson, 1978, p. 56). The fourth justification claims that it is better to kill another than allow him or her to kill. The fifth and final justification is for the sake of compassion or for charity so that an individual’s inner peace is not disturbed (Ferguson, 1978). Equally, individuals may be absolved from the accusation of killing if the following criteria are met: “something living must have been killed; the killer must have known that it was alive; the killer must have intended to kill it; an actual act of killing must have taken place; and the person or animal attacked must, in fact, have died” (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p. 113). These religious tenets of war as just can be seen under three larger religious frameworks: (1) the spiritual cleansing of practitioners and laity in order to restore social purity and establish spiritual superiority; (2) the maintenance of social order in communities; and (3) the promise of spiritual salvation in the face of Armageddon. The following pages will outline the basis for those religious frameworks as well as offer examples of when such claims have been made in Buddhist war history.

The Spiritual Cleansing of Practitioners and Laity, the Restoration of Purity, and the Establishment of Spiritual Superiority as a Pro-War Framework

Several Buddhist scholars note the importance of a link among violence, killing, and war and that of spiritual purity or authority (Aho, 1981; Juergensmeyer, 2000; Keown, 2005; Premasiri, 2003; Reader, 2009). Instances of such violent acts serve as a means of purging the unclean from the clean, creating a more holy and sacred space for those self-proclaimed Buddhists exalting themselves on a higher spiritual plane. Commenting on a history of violence in Zen Buddhism, Reader (2009) explains that

violence may be interpreted as morally beneficial to the greater spiritual good. Reader further clarifies that violence to the body, including death, illustrates an importance on the focus of individuals' spirituality rather than their physical being. This concept can also be understood in terms of a spiritual warfare, as those few persons with privileged knowledge relating to a so-called higher plane of consciousness, assume an arrogant understanding of a social and spiritual cleansing from greater subjective evils (Aho, 1981). These discourses assume a spiritual authority or superiority of some over others, permitting those with a higher spiritual and social standing a sense of spiritual rightness, encouraging followers to submit to practices that are perceived as more spiritually enlightened. In Buddhism, particularly Zen Buddhism, scholars have recounted instances of physical violence as a means of discipline meant to assist practitioners in realizing this higher level of spiritual enlightenment.

In "Bodily Punishment and the Spiritually Transcendent Dimensions of Violence: A Zen Buddhist Example," Reader (2009) outlines an understanding of discipline as a means to enlightenment. In his travels to several Zen monasteries in Japan, Reader analyzes his experience of spiritual violence. Multiple times a day, practitioners sitting in meditation would be hit with a *kyosaku*, or walking stick, as a means of "awakening" mentally lazy practitioners. Reader reflects on his memory of these violent disciplines and the confusion he felt as his understanding of Buddhism as a non-violent religion felt misguided. Reader explains, "Violence, in such contexts, appears to be accepted and valorized as a worthy act intended to facilitate the attainment of spiritual goals . . . [and] attain a spiritual awakening Violence, in other words, can be a noble act that is intrinsic to the path of enlightenment" (pp. 140-41). Therefore, Reader argues, instilling

spiritual discipline is designed for the betterment of the collective; “violence [then] can be committed in the name of the sacred” (p. 148).

Citing Victoria on 20th-century military systems in Japan, Reader (2009) examines the bond between the military and Zen. For many Imperial Army figures, violence was a means of infusing “spirit” into soldiers. Morale was bolstered by regimented discipline. These violent actions typified a culture of brutality in Japan’s military system in the 1930s (Reader, 2009). In addition, O’Brien (2014) suggests that the connections between Samurai warrior culture and Zen Buddhism were partly liable for the infusion of Zen in Japanese militarism in this era. The samurai began as feudal Japanese warriors before coming to power in the 12th century (“Samurai and Bushido,” 2014). At this time, the government implemented the country’s first military dictatorship, in which the samurai served as authority figures, providing power to the emperor. As a result, the samurai governed Japanese society and government until 1868, when the Meiji Restoration led to the eradication of the feudal system. While the samurai were deprived of many of their traditional freedoms, many acquired elite positions within the government and industry systems in modern Japan, allowing for an infusion of the traditional samurai code of honor. Discipline and moral behavior known as *bushido*, or “the way of the warrior,” were reinstated, making this historic code of conduct the way of Japanese culture (“Samurai and Bushido,” 2014).

Like contemporary ideals of violence in Japanese history, spiritual discipline was introduced into meditative practice. Aho (1981) recounts an ancient Japanese legend of a Buddhist monk bringing the art of *kung fu* to the monastery. In his travels, the monk noticed the inability of Chinese practitioners to meditate for long periods of time. In

response, the monk introduced a combination of combat-like calisthenics in conjunction with some breathing exercises to aid practitioners in attaining a higher state of bliss during meditation. Similarly, horsemanship, fencing and archery were disciplined practices taught at a means of military defense (Aho, 1981). These forms of physical discipline cultivated ways of combining spiritual practice and violence at many levels. In this regard, violence and physical discipline were a means of restoring social order.

The Maintenance of Social Order as a Pro-War Framework

For scholars like Aho (1981), the concept of social order supposes a psychological ordering in which peoples' minds and bodies are structured so that communities are protected from harm. Aho (1981) argues that "social order is a shield against terror" (p. 9). In classic and contemporary societies, people are prodded to fit particular molds that societal powers support in maintenance of this social order. A classic example of Buddhist social order can be seen in the *Agganna Suttanta* narratives (Queen, 2007). These stories recount the necessity of preparedness of warring kings to exert force and discipline when a state of social chaos exists. This is the ideal of the *Dhammaraja's* "righteous ruler" (Queen, 2007, p. 24). Historically, Aho (1981) attests, violence has been used as means to restore order. The destruction of civilizations and life has always had the potential to devastate a culture. Aho asserts:

When killing and death are done well, when done courageously in the name of ethical principle, [these] are among man's most convincing witnesses to the facticity and solidity of social order. In the sacrifice of the warrior, the reality of society is symbolically cleansed of any taint of chaos and its members are persuaded of its mortality. (p. 10)

Citing Buddhist scholar Victoria (1998) on the history of war in Zen Buddhism, Keown (2005) recounts the violent philosophy of infamous Zen master Harada Daiun Sogaku:

“Of course one should kill, killing as many as possible. One should, fighting hard, kill everyone in the enemy army. The reason for this is that in order to carry compassion and filial obedience through to perfection it is necessary to assist good and punish evil” (p. 75). Turning to more current events, after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, political, private and public spheres have argued that “true” religions do not promote violence, and those spiritual practices that do are vilified as evil ideologies that are in need of punishment (Reader, 2009). This example illustrates the futility in both religious structures of discipline and social order.

For many practitioners and laity alike, a person clinging to his or her identity in a society that is encouraging social order through homogeneity can cause significant internal and external turmoil. Queen (2007) explains that clinging to an identity leads to disappointment and frustration. This suggests a necessity to conform to other larger social structures. If everyone is conditioned to share in like-minded value systems and codes of conduct, disturbance would be minimal in communities. People would work altruistically as their goals would be similar if not the same, and civil unrest would be a thing of the past. But this, however, is not the case. Individuals need a sense of identity and for all those who do not conform to Buddhist doctrine, identity is pertinent in understanding the inner self and their place in the world. This creation of identity is what constitutes difference among individuals, groups, governments, families, nations, and the like. The trouble lies in unquestionable convictions and certainty in an individual or a group’s beliefs and behaviors (Burgoon & Langer, 1995). When an individual’s moral, ethical, spiritual, political, cultural, etc. convictions are so strong that all other alternatives are not

questioned or deliberated critically, a state of habitual processes sets in, creating that dichotomization of what is right and wrong, good and bad.

The Promise of Spiritual Salvation in the Face of Armageddon as a Pro-War Framework

A classic example of spiritual salvation comes from the incidents surrounding the 1995 bombing of the Tokyo subway. On March 20, 1995, several members of the eccentric Aum Shinrikyo, an offshoot of Japanese Buddhism, released several vials of sarin gas on the Tokyo subway, killing a number of commuters and injuring roughly 5,500 others (Juergensmeyer, 2000). The perpetrators were well-educated young men trained in physics, engineering, and medicine. Under the order of Master Shoko Asahara, these young men, blinded by faith, committed one of Japan's worst tragedies of the 20th-century (Juergensmeyer, 2000).

For many followers, Aum Shinrikyo offered a socially transformative discourse as a means of restoring justice, fairness, and freedom in the Japanese social system (Juergensmeyer, 2000). Furthermore, many practitioners took solace in the charismatic teachings of Asahara. In months prior, Asahara predicted that Armageddon was in the works. Asahara explained that, in cases of cosmic war, ordinary rules of conduct do not apply. The Aum Master further elaborated, saying, "The world economy will have come to a dead stop . . . the ground will tremble violently, and immense walls of water will wash away everything on earth . . . in addition to natural disasters, there will be the horror of nuclear weapons" (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p. 115). With regard to the massacre in Tokyo, Asahara followers claimed they felt "saved" by their Master's spiritual teachings and omniscient abilities (Juergensmeyer, 2000).

Collective violence like the case of Aum Shinrikyo uses apocalyptic discourses in order to instill fear and a sense of necessary transformation in its practitioners. Aho (1981) claims that chaos is a disruption of social and cosmological order. Consequently, holy war is seen as a mechanism of reunification, bringing together human beings and the divine. This kind of other-worldly logic allows followers to see themselves as spiritual guardians destined to save the world. Through his vision of an apocalyptic end, Asahara aimed to convince lost souls of the path to salvation by joining Aum Shinrikyo (McTernan, 2003; Reader, 2009). The use of spiritual prophecies, such as Ashara's, are intended to offer believers and non-believers alike a "lesson in mortality" (Juergensmeyer, 2000). As Asahara explained prior to the Tokyo subway attacks, those with good karmic debt would survive Armageddon in order to build a new transcendent world. While discourses of spiritual salvation offer what may seem to some a valid means of pursuing violent action, these religious frameworks exemplify the danger in dominating discourses as they limit an individual's ability to search-out new information and assess war-time situations critically.

Buddhist Pro-War Frameworks as Discourses that Foster Habitual Processes

Using my earlier assessment of religious frameworks and their links to habitual processes and mindfulness, the religious tenets of spiritual purity and superiority, maintenance of social order, and salvation illustrate a dominant and limiting ideology. Buddhist practitioners who are subjected to and chose to participate in such frameworks are submitting to discourses that limit the progress of peace. Individuals engaged in discourses of spiritual superiority are unable to see the inherent value in every individual,

the long-term effects of such calculated violence, and remain fixed in their dominant belief systems. Examples of these effects are exemplified in the ongoing battles between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. As referenced earlier, the narrative outlined in the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka and King Dutthagamani exemplifies the danger in followers' acritical submission to figures of authority with higher spiritual stature. In this tale, several Buddhist monks comforted the Sinhalese king who was feeling remorse for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Tamils. Reasoning this loss, the monks insisted that only "1 1/2" persons" had been killed as those individuals who had had been murdered in battle represented all persons who had pledged allegiance to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha (Queen, 2007), illustrating the futility in acritical thought via habituated processes that only perpetuate systems of the sort. Furthermore, long-term insight is distorted when such immediate acts of violence are at play.

In all of the examples reviewed in this section, what is evident is that peace cannot be obtained from violence. Contemporary examples of this include Buddhist nations lost to civil war like Burma, which had the longest standing civil war since 1948 (DVB Debate, 2014); and Sri Lanka whose government, between 1983 and 2009, has been locked in a state of civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Marlow, 2014). Moreover, protestors in China, Tibet, and India are self-immolating in response to China's rule in Tibet ("Jampa Yeshe," 2012). The belief that peace can be an end result of war and violence seems inherently contradictory. In armed conflict, both parties are engaged in a battle of violent force until individuals admittedly submits or loses. War is then a dominant crushing of one party until the other is compliant. This is not peace; this is violent undertaking in the name of peace. As was noted in the earlier paragraph, civil

war between the Sinhalese and Tamils still exists. War did not achieve peace several centuries ago in ancient Sri Lanka, and war has not gained peace today.

In light of these assessments, I maintain my earlier claim made at the end of the first section that religious frameworks embedded in the traditional teaching of the Dharma act as mindful discourses that foster peace. What had been demonstrated in this last section are examples of those religious structures that benefit particular individuals or groups through the use of dominating discourses and ideologies. Through religious frameworks of love, compassion, joy and equanimity, individuals can begin to speak, think and act more compassionately. I propose that if these benevolent frameworks are properly utilized, that peace will eventually spread, infiltrating the minds and hearts of others, reminding people of their interconnected core thus diminishing the negative states that drive violence and war.

CHAPTER III

BUDDHIST RESPONSES TO 9/11

The rhetorical frameworks and Buddhist messages found in the following section argue for a way of perceiving society that empowers audiences to understand the chaos of September 11th as something other than a complete state of disarray. Instead, Buddhists implore audiences to see the world from a place of compassion and enlightened thinking, viewing this tragedy as an opportunity for spiritual growth and a rewriting of the violent and retaliative cultural norm. In addition, these messages of peace act as an exchange of information, explaining to the lay person Buddhist ways of righteous living, thus offering spaces for spiritual, moral, and ethical agency. Audience members in this sense are encouraged to be mindful of their own actions, offer compassion to others who are suffering post-9/11 trauma, be an example of lovingkindness and patience within their community, be kind and compassionate with themselves, and share messages of mindful Buddhist practices with others. Ultimately, these moral discourses serve as spaces of power at the individual level. While Chapter 2 outlined broad Buddhist religious frameworks, this chapter addresses specific examples of mindfulness and habitual processes as they relate to the War on Terror. As such, the following artifacts are all texts written by Buddhists or Buddhist scholars in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001. This chapter will be broken up into four sections focusing on post-9/11 Buddhist responses of pacifism, compassion, blame, and altruism, followed by a concluding section summarizing my findings.

Pacifism as a Response to 9/11 and an Alternative to War

After the attacks of September 11th, many Buddhists encouraged messages of self-restraint, patience, prayer, and non-violence to the wider world. Tibetan Lama Rimpoche Nawang Gehlek (2001a) offers guidance on the process of transforming angered thinking to patience, writing that “Anger is the mind that wishes to harm and hurt. Patience is the mind that holds back from harming or hurting. Anger is most difficult to deal with; patience is most difficult to develop” (para. 1). While patience may come more easily to some than to others, Gehlek warns readers not to feel disappointed if they cannot accomplish patience at first because this type of transformation takes time. Gehlek suggests that the first step to overcoming negative and angry ways of thinking is to take time and space to judge whether or not an individual’s anger is valid. When violent thoughts emerge, diverting an individual’s attention to a space of neutrality is key, Gehlek argues. This diffuses those negative thoughts, ultimately causing an individual’s intense anger to subside, releasing the urge for reactive actions to rule (Gehlek, 2001a). While assessing whether or not an individual’s anger is reasonable in particular contexts, I suggest that the argument of whether or not anger is valid minimizes the emotions of an individual, regardless of how “valid” or “invalid” they may seem to another. With regards to the attacks of September 11th, many Americans believed their anger to be an appropriate response. Their home had been attacked, lives had been lost, and the nation was preparing for war. I think a more mindful assessment, then, is not based in measuring whether and individual’s anger is valid or invalid, but instead in examining the consequences that anger produces and the practices that could be employed to diffuse such anger.

As previously stated in Chapter 2, Buddhism recognizes the ability for individuals to cultivate productive emotional states like happiness and mindfulness, as well as those unproductive states like anger and greed, thus implying the impermanence of psychological states and situations and the vulnerable nature of human beings. In recognizing these states of vulnerability and impermanence, Hanh (2001) warns audiences not to lose sight of both the internal and external factors that create mental, emotional, and physical states as this lack of awareness is a recipe for absent-minded thinking that can lead to violence. Hanh (2001) writes, “We have within us the seeds of despair, of anger, but we also have [within us] the seeds of compassion, awakening, Buddha-nature, and mindfulness If we live in forgetfulness . . . we are creating violence without being aware of it” (para. 1-2). Hanh’s assessment of the human condition as one of impermanence and contradiction reminds audiences of the complexity of emotion, thought, language and action. As such, the previous passage implies that a mentality rooted in remembering (as opposed to forgetting), awareness, and thoughtful/non-violent action, serves as a tool of empowerment at the individual level. Similarly, Conley (2010) suggests that “The cycle of fear and forgetting is what helps ordinary citizens to support, with clear consciousness and full hearts, wildly disproportionate national missions like the Bush administration’s ‘whatever it takes’ War on Terror” (p. 353). Both Hanh (2001) and Conley (2010) argue that the act of forgetting and the rhetorics that support forgetting or “amnesia” (as Conley calls it), serve as an escalating instrument in times of war. To offer a counter example, in the following paragraph I outline several instances of Buddhists engaged in acts of community prayer and ceremony that compel citizens to remember the pain and suffering surrounding 9/11

so that a cycle of forgetting and unawareness is not perpetuated. Furthermore, while many people world-wide joined in similar commemorating events, the specific acts of Buddhist pacifism in response to war offer examples of the fundamental Buddhist belief that violence should not be met with more violence but with lovingkindness, compassion, and awareness.

On September 23, 2001, nearly 2,000 Buddhist monks chanted in prayer for the victims of the September 11th attacks in front of the U.S. embassy in Thailand (Wire Reports, 2001). That same day in Singapore, a crowd of 15,000 Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians sang “Amazing Grace,” honoring America and its 9/11 victims (Wire Reports, 2001). On September 22, 2001, members of the Lao Buddhist Temple in Elgin, Illinois, held a memorial service honoring 9/11 victims and their families, bearing with them small candles, bouquets, and wreaths as offerings (O’Konowitz, 2001). In the summer of 2002, T. K. Nakagi, a Japanese monk and abbot of the New York Buddhist Church, held a 9/11 commemoration ceremony where 108 paper lanterns with the names of the dead were lighted and released on the Hudson River (Paumgarten, 2011; Weiner & Breyer, 2010). In April, 2005, several Tibetan monks created mandalas in New York and Washington D.C. as a symbol of healing and growth for the nation (Taylor, 2005). In September, 2007, over 40 students gathered in front of Bradford College Chapel in Yale, New York, to attend a candlelit vigil honoring the lives lost. Buddhist members of Indigo Blue (a center for Buddhist life) gathered to chant alongside the students (Wang, 2007). In December, 2007, award-winning music artist Kitaro was nominated for the Grammys as his album “Sacred Journey of Ku-Kia,” a series of peace-inspired albums stemming from the attacks of September 11th, infuses the

sounds of world-wide cultures. The title of the album was named after the classic Buddhist pilgrimage to the 88 temples on Shikoku Island in Japan (December, 2007). In February, 2009, the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order organized a 55-day Walk for a New Spring, encouraging a moving-forward from the fear that resonated in Americans' hearts after the 9/11 attacks (Fair, 2009). Similarly, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, a group of 20 Buddhist monks and peace advocates set out on a 500-mile peace walk from Massachusetts to Washington, D.C. (Burgeson, 2009). In September, 2011, in South Lake Tahoe, California, a Buddhist Tsok (a ritual typically reserved for honoring certain Buddhist deities) took place, offering food, prayer, meditation, and song in memory of the lives lost and those Americans affected by the events of September 11th (Silver, 2011). These acts of pacifism as an alternative to violence offer Buddhists and others an opportunity to channel their negative energies into something positive. While acts of pacifism do not alleviate chaos in times of devastation, pacifism does, however, empower the self by generating a sense of self-control at the individual level when circulating chaos and sorrow feels unmanageable. Pacifism, then, is a tool for coping.

Compassion as a Response to 9/11 and an Alternative to War

In times of war and times of peace, every day, the committed meditator dwells in love and compassion, radiated outward to all, to those who are alive, or who once were, or who will be; to those who are human or to other living beings; to those who intend good and to those who intend harm, not agreement but lovingkindness is sent. (Fleischman, 2002, p. 9)

Commenting on the growing "lust for vengeance" in the United States following 9/11, the Dalai Lama (n.d.c) acknowledges the importance of compassion in a time of anger (Baggett, 2001). For the Dalai Lama, such acts of tragedy are induced by hatred. In an address on fighting violence with peace, the Dalai Lama cautioned, "Your sadness,

your anger will not solve the problem. More sadness, more frustration only brings more suffering for yourself” (Miller, 2005, para. 6). If people allow their emotions to be controlled by negative emotions such as hatred, the consequences will be devastating. Dhammananda (2007) echoes the Dalai Lama’s admonition in writing: “If we [are] to fight hatred with anger, there would be no end to this vicious cycle” (para. 4). In way of solution, Das (2002) asserts that September 11th should be a time of prayer and self-reflection. By taking the time to reflect and be still, individuals can “respond to crisis in a way that is ethical, helpful, and unafraid” (Lief, 2001, para. 5). Moreover, if people make use of sound reasoning, the Dalai Lama argues (n.d.c), violence is unnecessary.

While I agree that sadness, anger, and violence only perpetuate those types of emotions, and furthermore, breed actions based in those emotions, I believe that not all human conflicts can be resolved with compassion. When a person has broken into your home, or a stranger is threatening your life or that of your family, a person does not always have the luxury of being able to talk things out and be compassionate. Defense of your life, your home, and your family are necessary. While humans have the ability to transcend primitive means of communicating during conflict, survival and a sense of territoriality are encoded into our DNA as biological extensions of the animal kingdom (Queen, 2007). In fact, as shown in Chapter 2, violence in order to survive is, at times, necessary. However, my concern and the concern of Buddhists like Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama is with the negative emotional states like anger, hate, delusion, and greed that drive violence.

Explaining the cultivation of such negative emotional states after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, Gehlek (2001b) suggests that anger breeds hatred, and when

individuals focus on hatred, people are not reacting to the person or situation but to hatred itself. Gehlek argues that the perpetrators of 9/11 were so blinded by their hatred for America that they became slaves of their own disdain. The peace activist writes, “Their hatred hurts the whole world: physically, financially, emotionally, and mentally. . . . The real enemy is their anger, our anger, their hatred, our hatred, their violence, our violence. Our hatred is our own Osama bin Laden, hiding in the mountains of our hearts” (Gehlek, 2001b, para. 5-6). Based on Gehlek’s assessment of anger, compassion is found when an individual first examines his or her own hatred and anger. Furthermore, this examination of an individual’s emotional states offers a sense of agency and self-empowerment in that once hatred and anger are recognized, people have the power to either embrace those negative emotional states or turn to more productive ends like compassion and mindfulness.

In response to the 9/11 attacks, Batchelor (2001) quotes the Buddha on hatred: “Hatred will not cease by hatred, but by love alone. This is the ancient law” (para. 3). This message, however, is difficult to conceptualize when a person’s home or sacred space is being burned to the ground. As such, Batchelor (2001) ponders the tension in Buddhist pursuits of peace and non-violent courses of action when defense is in order: “It [the Dharma] may reinforce an individual’s faith that human beings can relinquish hatred and inspire one to seek to love others unconditionally, but it doesn’t answer the question of how to respond to an act of violence that threatens an individual’s way of life here and now” (para. 4). In response to this inquiry, many Buddhists believe that understanding the conditions that caused the September 11th attacks is necessary in reducing suffering both for the terrorists and their victims. For the Dalai Lama, the necessary course of action is

one of non-violence but as illustrated in Chapter 2, violence is heavily engrained in Buddhist history regardless of the religious tenets founded in peace and love.

Reinforcing the habituated Buddhist discourses of love and compassion, in a proposal for peace and security following the attacks of September 11th, Thich Nhat Hanh (2002) argues that compassion starts with understanding those in suffering. Being believers in karma, both Lief (2001) and Das (2002) trust that there are no accidents; the task, then, is for people to open their minds and hearts so that people may begin to understand the roots of the attack. Hanh (2002) suggests that attempting to understand an individual's suffering may lessen the suffering of those in pain. According to Hanh, using loving speech, individuals can begin to correct wrong perceptions, and correcting wrong perceptions will lead to a reduction in anger, hatred and fear, minimizing the need for punishment or retribution. Hanh writes,

We have never asked Mr. Osama bin Laden about his suffering. We have never asked Mr. Saddam Hussein about his suffering and frustration. We cannot say that we have understood completely these people. They must have suffered a lot. They must have a lot of wrong perceptions on themselves and on us, on America. Imagine President Bush and others speaking like this: Dear people out there, we know that you must have suffered a great deal in order to have done such a thing to us in New York. You may have thought that we want to destroy you as a people, as a nation, as a culture, as a religion. But really we don't have that intention. We may have done something or said something that has given you that impression, that has created so much hatred and fear and violence in you so you could have done such a thing to us. We want to listen to you. Please tell us what is in your heart. (para. 24-28)

While some may perceive Hanh's message as unrealistic and illogical for political discourse, I believe that what Hanh is trying to illustrate here is a necessary examination of cause and consequence. People do not commit murder or plan suicidal terrorist missions for no apparent reason; there is at the heart of every action reason, whether logical or not. In this regard, I, too, believe that attempting to understand why such

violent acts were taken is of great value in not only alleviating the suffering of others, but also as a means of preventing future suffering, misunderstanding, and conflict. In this regard, individuals need not only be mindful in language, thought, and action, but also be knowledgeable of the histories that have helped shape the conditions of today's world. This knowledge rooted in history can provide individuals with insight to the social, political, cultural, economic, and communicative patterns and occurrences that have both positively and negatively transformed communities. Therefore, a basis of knowledge in historic affairs can serve as a platform for understanding current socio-political states.

Blame as a Response to 9/11 and an Alternative to War

After 9/11, several Buddhists have suggested that previous actions of wrongdoing on behalf of the U.S. made America complicit in the events that led to September 11th. As such, many Buddhists encouraged an examination of the conditions that caused the events of that day. While some sought tools of understanding and deep listening as a means of comprehension and forgiveness, other Buddhists questioned the complicity of the U.S. in the events that prompted the attacks. Assessing the innocence of the United States, David Loy, according to Baggett (2001), surveys U.S. motives in the Middle East, asking whether or not the War on Terror was a war of defense, protecting institutions of freedom and democracy, or if it was a war based in securing a need/greed vested in oil, resulting in a Middle Eastern resentment for the West. Loy writes, "If our main priority has been securing oil supplies, does it mean that our petroleum-based economy is one of the causes of the September attack? If the most fundamental and pervasive delusion is our sense of separation from the world we are "in," including other people, have we awakened hatred through our own ignorance" (Baggett, 2001, p. 506)?

Like Loy, Das (2002) questions the role America played in the fruition of September 11th, contemplating how particular U.S. actions in the last several decades contributed to many of the global problems that are seen today. Das (2002) writes:

Over the course of this year I've become increasingly uncomfortable with the knowledge that some of our aggressive, alternately imperialist and isolationist karma has come home to roost. What responsibility do we have in shaping our country's policies and how do we go about creating change? I think we need to learn a little about why some people hate us so much in order to learn how to heal the deep divisions and widening separations occurring across the globe. (para. 4)

Both Loy and Das's inquiries illustrate a necessary grappling with the U.S.'s lack of accountability for past actions abroad. In this regard, the authors request some reflection on behalf of audience members so that the causes and conditions that have and will continue to perpetuate such international conflicts can be brought to light, allowing space for positive social and political growth.

Further referencing some of the potential conditions that led to the attacks, the Dalai Lama (n.d.c) suggests that the events of September 11th were bred from generations of suffering abroad. The root of this suffering may be a combination of recent events or linked to grievances that are centuries old, the Dalai Lama argues. Colonialism, exploitation of land, resources, people, and discrimination are all examples of the suffering that some nations have endured. The Dalai Lama suggests that the years of neglect and indifference perpetuated by Western ideals may be the culprit in today's rise in terrorism; moreover, that the events of September 11th were a result of these many factors. Similarly, Lief (2001) assesses America's 1st world privilege as it relates to the largely underprivileged world. Lief proposes that Americans have taken for granted a certain level of prosperity and security with which most other nations are unfamiliar. Americans' fixation on material desires distracts people from the realities of ethnic

violence, genocide, incurable illnesses, starvation and malnutrition, lack of clean water, and other sources of suffering. Lief asserts, “Can you blame people for feeling it’s about time we joined the real world” (Lief, 2001, para. 1)? In this remark, Lief’s insinuation that Americans are existing in a material state of unawareness and selfishness assumes that the U.S. in some way deserved the pain and fear of September 11th, as if this tragedy served as some sort of wake-up call, encouraging Americans to bear in mind the suffering of others. This bold statement lacks compassion for the Americans who lost loved ones as a result of that day. Furthermore, I argue that states of realities vary from person to person, from culture to culture; people cannot assume that any world is more “real” to one person than it is to another.

On a similar note, former Chief Monk of Malaysia and Singapore, K Sri Dhammananda (2007) condemns the perpetrators of September 11th, calling them “heartless and mindless” individuals (para. 1). Dhammananda goes on to say that such individuals of this cruel caliber have no sense of compassion, no virtues, and use religion as a means to carry out their murderous acts. Dhammananda’s claims, like Lief (2001), demonstrate a lack of empathy which is not consistent with the fundamental tenets of Buddhism as a religion of compassion and peace. The unwillingness to contemplate the amount of suffering some of these people may have endured is compassionless, thus completely abandons a Buddhist stance that acknowledges that all life is suffering. What Dhammananda does is remind laity and Buddhists alike of the human conditions of anger, hatred, blame, and misunderstanding. In addition, these Buddhist claims of complicity and blame lack clarity in detail as to the specific events or histories that supposedly resulted in the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Consequently, I believe

that the voices of Buddhists who have advocated for peace in the political sphere have greatly been unheard as a result of these elusive implications as to the conditions that caused 9/11 as well as the suggested courses of action that are, too, lacking in a defined method of resolution. In this regard, blame and discourses implicating the U.S. as a complicit agent in the events that led to September 11th, provide some Buddhists and laity with a means of making sense of the fear and anger that individuals were experiencing as a result of the terrorist attacks.

Altruism as a Response to 9/11 and an Alternative to War

While the events of September 11th caused a great divide among some people (like Christians and Muslims for example), these attacks also seemingly reinforced a sense of unity and care among Americans and other religious practitioners. Speaking on interconnectedness, long-time Buddhist nun the Venerable Yifa, comments of the attacks of September 11th as a tragedy that not only affected the Muslim and Christian populous but also others around the world (Esparza, 2006). Yifa reflects, “My first reaction to this incident was that America would need healing . . . and when I saw the towers collapse, I felt my heart collapse with them” (Esparza, 2006, para. 10-11). In understanding this sense of deep human connection, Hanh (2002) writes, “We are connected to each other. If you suffer deeply there is no way we over here can be truly happy. That is the language of truth, the language of insight, the language of inter-being” (para. 33). For Labenek and Hrdina (2012), the act of terrorism completely contradicts the Buddhist discourses of altruistic behavior and minimizes the understanding of human beings as interconnected creatures. The authors believe that opportunity to understand the self and thus the interconnection human beings share can be found daily in various situations and contexts.

Making this transformation from single-minded and independent thought to that of a collective consciousness is what Buddhists call *human revolution* a process by which the heart, mind, and attitude of individuals are shifted from a framework of suffering into one of joy (Labenek & Hrdina, 2012). This potential for positive change offers human beings a chance to learn from their mistakes and appreciate the value in everyday experiences for themselves as well as others.

Acknowledging the value in altruism, Hanh (2001) and Palden (2001) argue for an examination of the self in order to awaken the inner collective conscious that recognizes human interconnectivity. Hanh (2001) writes, “When you suffer, you understand yourself. What happened in New York caused great suffering, but if we can learn from it, the suffering can become a bell of mindfulness in waking up the whole nation” (para. 3). Similarly, Palden (2001) asserts, “The gateway to compassion and lovingkindness is to be able to feel our own pain, and the pain of others. If we are able to open in this way, our hearts can melt, and the healing salve of compassion can anoint all our wounds” (para. 1). While Hanh and Palden’s sentiments on altruism are poetic and truly lovely, these particular excerpts indicate another level of contradiction in Buddhist thought and action. While these passages embody overtones of altruism and collective thought, the root of these claims are grounded in focusing on the individual as the first order of concern. Altruism and human revolution, then, are actionable alternatives that shift the focus from the suffering of the other, a suffering that an individual cannot control, back to the self, the self that seeks joy, as an inner refuge free from external and uncontrollable suffering and pain.

Summarizing Buddhist Post-9/11 Responses to War

While the Buddhist responses presented here specifically relate to the attacks of September 11th, these religiously grounded alternatives to war are founded in larger Buddhist narratives of morality meant for the individual in times of conflict. These Buddhist discourses provide individuals with a sense of power as these alternative frameworks constitute knowledge, ways of understanding social practices, and relationships between subjects, institutions, place and space (Foucault, 1978). In examining the religious structures that undergird Buddhist discourse, I have come to find three separate spheres of discursive power exist, these include: (1) the political sphere, which encompasses those discourses pertaining to the president and his power over the army; (2) the religious sphere, which encompasses those discourses pertaining to spiritual figures of authority and their power over individuals; (3) and the individual sphere, which encompasses those discourses pertaining to the power that an individual has over the self. In examining these Buddhist alternatives to the War on Terror, I have found that these three levels of discourse have a difficult time transcending one another. As such, these Buddhist alternatives to war are designed to offer the individual some sense of power and authority in his or her own life as the individual does not have power in these two other spheres. Therefore, within these Buddhist messages of peace are endless possibilities for Buddhist figures of authority to impose power through discourse, and for the audience members themselves to be figures of power in their own lives.

Causality, consensus, mutuality, and usage are all central to understanding the rhetorical frameworks of morality in Buddhist communicative spheres (Dissanayake, 2008). In this way, rhetorical models of pacifism, compassion, blame, and altruism can be

a comforting stronghold in the face of adversity. However, the more mindful frameworks like those of compassion and altruism provides people with a sense of hope via self-control and morally productive alternatives. In the previous four sections, messages of peace and moral fortitude encourage a centering of the self with the hopes that this centering and moral grounding will one day affect the communities and the world at large. The moral and ethical teachings of mindful discourses, then, serve as a space of agency, for every individual can find the power to be compassionate, loving, and peaceful within themselves.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine classic and contemporary Buddhist religious frameworks of war in an attempt to discover messages of mindfulness that could be applied to prevent war. Using Burgoon and Langer's (1995) and Richo's (2002) assessments of mindfulness in language, thought, and action, I categorized and analyzed Buddhist anti-and pro-war discourses in order to illustrate how these discourses are mindful while also sometimes succumb to habituated processes. While foundational Buddhist practices are grounded in principles of non-violence and peace as prescribed in the Dharma, justifications for Buddhist violence on the basis of just-war theory have and continue to be made. While just-war theory is a Christian concept, just-war philosophy is applicable to Buddhist wars, as my review of both classic and contemporary literature revealed. In Chapter 2, I concluded that three religious frameworks undergird pro-war and just-war arguments in both classic and contemporary Buddhist history. These frameworks included: (1) the spiritual cleansing of practitioners and laity in order to restore social purity and establish spiritual superiority; (2) the maintenance of social order in communities; and (3) the promise of spiritual salvation in the face of Armageddon. Combined, these discourses provided Buddhist practitioners with both a validated means of participating in violence and war, and discourses that offered a spiritual refuge when individuals' internal and external environments were in conflict. Often, the habituated processes found in Buddhist pro-war frameworks have subjected entire communities to environmental, social, and cultural catastrophe; thus indicating that practitioners'

submission to such habituated processes is a recipe for acritical thought, language, and action.

On the other hand, several Buddhist frameworks also illustrated the potential for mindfulness in the discourses that encouraged self-realization through acts of self-control and a dampening of the senses. While self-control and a dampening of the senses has the potential to create a person bred in habituated processes through suppressing the natural human states of pleasure, anger, frustration, fear, and more, this use of self-control can help individuals to be more mindful of their actions via a reduction of the negative impulses that can harm the self and others. As an example, I suggested that the act of meditation in times of personal conflict or external hostility could help an individual to clear his or her mind, making way for productive emotional states like rationality and tranquility. In short, this chapter outlined the histories and complexities of Buddhist anti- and pro-war discourses.

Chapter 3 analyzed the discourses of many prominent Buddhists and Buddhist scholars and their responses to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In my analysis, I found five main Buddhist responses to war which are rooted in notions of pacifism, compassion, blame, and altruism. Collectively, these Buddhist responses showed that many practitioners held to non-violent and compassionate solutions in response to the attacks of September 11th. This evidence is yet another example of the contradiction of peacefulness in words as opposed to violent action found in Buddhist history. Chapter 2 clearly illustrated that Buddhism, while perceived by many as a religion of peace, has and continues to be privy to violence and war. Thus, for all of the Buddhist discourses outlined in Chapter 3, I have concluded that while peace may be the

ultimate goal, the means to achieving this peace may not be in-line with the mindful and compassionate teachings prescribed in foundational Buddhist doctrine. Furthermore, I have found that discourses of love and compassion perpetuated by prominent Buddhists like Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama also illustrate a habituated process wherein the realities of war are ignored and loving and compassionate solutions are the only alternatives provided. This assessment demonstrates the discursive disconnect in individual, spiritual, and political arenas as each holds its own rhetorical frameworks and habituated processes that necessitate a way of understanding the world and existing in it.

Interpretation and Implication of Findings

For many, Buddhism is a religion that signifies peace. I, too, thought this to be the case before examining the histories of war and today's violence in predominantly Buddhist countries like Tibet, Burma, and Sri Lanka. I found, that like any other religion, Buddhism has seen centuries of carnage as a result of religious frameworks that offer a limiting lens to understanding the world. These limiting and acritical perceptions of social and spiritual order, continues to cause violence throughout the world, affecting not only those directly associated with the violence but also people world-wide.

Globalization, free markets, the health of economies, and health of societies (both physically and mentally) depends so much upon what is happening from country to country, from community to community. Therefore, the limiting scope of Buddhist pro-war frameworks, abandon foundational Buddhist tenets that deem all life as interconnected, illustrating an oversight of care for the self and for others.

The question, then, of whether or not mindfulness can serve as plausible and productive alternative to war appears grim. While many Buddhists advocate for pacifism,

compassion, and altruism (as seen in Chapter 3), these discourses imploring practitioners and laity to embody peace does not match its histories in action. What appears to be happening is that the concept of mindfulness is digested and practiced only to a certain extent among particular practitioners. This limited digestion is exemplified in Chapter 3 as many Buddhist encourage audiences to be mindful and to not participate in the inevitable War on Terror. Yet, at this very moment, Buddhists in Tibet, China, and Sri Lanka are, and have been, in a state of civil war, indicating a complete dissolution of foundational Buddhist tenets predicated on the embodiment of peace, the reduction of human suffering, and the abstention from taking life. From this assessment I can conclude that while mindfulness may be an effective tool at empowering the self on an individual level, the ability of mindfulness to be an instrument of power at the collective and political level is an unrealistic hope in an era of war. However, as a person who deeply believes that human beings have the ability to transcend violence and habituated processes, I still advocate for mindfulness as this way of speaking, thinking, and acting critically and compassionately is important to the betterment of the self and communities.

As the data shows in Chapters 2 and 3, compassion, lovingkindness, care, and self-control all embody this greater structure of mindfulness that ultimately serves as the basis for anti-war discourses. These particular practices are what I argue will offer, if not more productive alternatives to war prevention, then to the discourses that encourage individuals to be the higher versions of themselves. Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) writes, “The mind of love brings peace, joy, and happiness to ourselves and others. Mindful observation is the element which nourishes the tree of understanding, and compassion and love are the most beautiful flowers . . . If love is in our heart, every thought, word

and deed can bring about a miracle” (p. 84-85). For me, Hanh’s words exemplify an understanding of the components that foster mindfulness within the self and the effects this practice has on the wider world. As it relates to political discourse and the War on Terror, messages of understanding and empathy are hard to embody when an individual’s home has been attacked and lives have been lost. However, as noted time and time again, mindfulness is called a *practice* for that very reason; rational and morally grounded thought, speech, and action do not come easily when pain and anger are at the forefront of a person’s being—practice, then, cultivates these mindful abilities. In this regard, I advocate for a transformative shift at the individual level, encouraging individuals to move from a state of habituated processes to one of mindful practice, especially in times of adversity. While compassion, understanding, patience, and lovingkindness may not always be collectively achieved, I argue that once the individual masters this compassionate practice that strides toward collective mindfulness can be made.

Limitations

While the discourses I analyzed from great Buddhist philosophers and peaceful practitioners like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh were insightful and certainly allowed for a mindful and compassionate lens, the scope of my study was limited. There are hundreds if not thousands of prominent eastern philosophers and Buddhist leaders who preach similar ways of living, so while I employed several whose work functioned to my advantage, I did not include as many voices as I would have liked. Another limitation of this study is my seemingly glass-half-full approach with regards to the nature of war and conflict. For centuries, politicians, diplomats, activists, and the like have been imploring citizens to see the value of peaceful and humane ways to address

conflict. Unfortunately, most of the time, their pleas for benevolent and kind citizenry go unnoticed. Some people may see my research as simplistic and unrealistic, but there is a real practical need for this kind of loving and compassionate mentality. We live in a world where there is much violence, fear, and hate. To share in a goal that, in the end, benefits all, is critical for the continuation of community and globally vested interests. Although my work may not be taken seriously because many before me have tried to encourage compassion and peace, I believe that each person's efforts contributes to the development of mindful approaches and brings us one step closer to new options for preventing war and lessening conflict.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study have two implications for future research. The first need for future research is founded in a more psychological approach to understanding the human condition as one that is complex and contradictory. As my research showed, many Buddhist discourses implore practitioners and laity to participate in rhetorics of peace, compassion, and lovingkindness and yet war is pervasive in many Buddhist nations. This example of a want for peace and contrary violent action in the name of peace, can be seen in other religions and philosophical teachings as well. Therefore, I argue that a psychoanalytic investigation of human need, human emotion, and human drive is crucial to understanding this incongruous state of human affairs as it relates to language, thought, and action.

The second need for future research is founded in my assessment of similar discourses of peace during the Civil Rights era in the southern half of the U.S. Discourses of spiritual purity and authority, salvation, discipline, and salvation are apparent in many

speeches and letters by activists like Martin Luther King, Jr., Diane Nash Bevel, Daisy Bates and others. These discourses rhetorically structure arguments on the basis of right and wrong, just and unjust, prescribing a way of living similar to those outlined in the Buddhist Dharma. At this time, Buddhism was a religion largely unknown to Westerners, and in the South, Baptist ideologies monopolized religious practice. I believe future research examining the overlap of such messages is needed in order to demonstrate the transcendence of benevolence and peace in time, space, and place.

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APPENDIX A

THE MINDFUL AND HABITUAL PRESERVATION OF HOME:

A NON-BUDDHISTS'S ACCOUNT OF COMMUNAL ZEN PRACTICES

Running from the main house, to the north side of the Zen Center's property, I feel a sense of child-like giddiness—*traditional Japanese style tea with the center's abbot—how cool is this?!* A flood of thoughts and questions rush through my head as I carefully mind the jagged rocks of the unpaved path beneath my hurried feet, I wonder, *will the abbot be fully robed in traditional Japanese-Buddhist attire? How low do I bow when I enter the hut? Do I call him by his English name or his given Japanese title? Oh man, I totally feel like Tom Cruise in "The Last Samurai" waiting to receive life altering wisdoms from the great Katsumoto—this is awesome!* At the front porch now, I carefully step backwards out of my dirtied "outside" shoes, turn to the front of the wood and stucco structure, clear a few unruly, windblown hairs from face, and reach for the tea hut's door handle, but before my fingers can feel the cold of the brass metal knob, the door opens. . .

Home and Mindfulness

The concepts of home and mindfulness are two key concepts in understanding how thoughtful practice demonstrates a connection individuals create with places and spaces called *home*. For most, home is a place of "dwelling, nurturing, privacy, community, peace, stewardship, growing, intimacy, creating and giving birth, hospitality, re-founding or adopting homes, and personal integrity" (Dobel, 2010, p. 497). Linking these various cultural foundations are associations with values making this place not only a physical or geographic location but also a place of meaning and relationships (Dobel, 2010). The development of home bears with it norms of preservation, socialization, citizenry, and security, necessitating a certain level of protection and care in its maintenance. In this regard, specific and individualized practices of mindfulness illustrate how these sacred spaces called *home* may be preserved.

In reflecting on the various sociocultural and geopolitical implications of the practice of mindfulness as it relates to the spaces and places deemed home, I set out on a spiritual journey to a nearby Buddhist Zen Center in the hopes of both experiencing and witnessing Buddhist mindfulness and its application in a communal living space. The following essay is an autoethnographic account of my two days at the Zen Center as well as an analysis of how these mindful Zen practices contribute to the preservation of home. This chapter unfolds in six sections. The first section is an explanation of autoethnography as a methodological practice and how this form of analysis is pertinent to my exploration of myself and mindfulness during my two-day stay at the Zen Center. The following four sections discuss my experiences and perceptions of mindfulness in day-to-day activities performed at the Zen Center. In addition, these sections also make ties to the world of academe, contributing to new ways of understanding discipline, awareness, participation, safety and security, and mindful behaviors. The final section is my critical analysis of the development and preservation of home and its relationship to citizenship and the normalized world of suffering.

Autoethnography as Methodology

As a person who is moved by the experiences of others in literature, I chose to utilize autoethnography as my methodological approach in order to help audiences better understand, and possibly identify with, my experiences through this 1st person narrative, as well as to better understand the practice of mindfulness and how it is performed, or can be performed, by myself and others. Norman Denzin, a prominent communication scholar whose main methodologies consist of performative and autoethnographic approaches, invites audiences to understand ethnography as a lens for touching matters of

the heart. Denzin (2006) writes, “I seek a writing form that enacts a methodology of the heart, a form that listens to the heart, knowing that ‘stories are the truths that won’t stand still.’ In writing from the heart, we learn how to love, to forgive, to heal and to move forward” (p. 334). In his essay, “Autoethnography as an Approach to Intercultural Training,” Engstrom (2008) posits, “Autoethnography seeks to recover estheticism and emotion through evocative analysis, evocative writing, and evocative politics” (p. 20). Furthermore, referencing Denzin (1997) on autoethnography, Engstrom (2008) notes that this methodological approach aims to infuse life into the everyday telling of stories, experiences, and emotions. Autoethnography removes a level of scholarly authority while representing the self and instead encourages authors to allow a level of vulnerability while exploring their journey in a new setting. It is a process of orientation that promotes openness and self-reflexivity in both oral and written forms of storytelling and discourages “Grand Theorizing” or endorsing one singular truth (p. 20). Most important, however, autoethnography permits individuals to utilize personal experiences, narratives, their bodies, and memories as sources of legitimate knowledge. This approach invites researchers to reflect on their own lived encounters, using their pasts as historic-temporal spaces (Engstrom, 2008).

Similarly, Welker and Goodall (1997) recognize the act of interpretive research as a “deeply personal experience” (p. 110). This approach offers new ways of experiencing symbolic communities different from an individual’s own and allows for enlightened options during social interactions. The accrual of these new experiences, insights, symbols, and interactions, makes for a transformative understanding of the self and others (Welker & Goodall, 1997). Ultimately, these lived experiences and interactive ways of

communicating and understanding position writers and readers engaged in autoethnographic research to co-construct meaning. Bochner (2012) writes, “If our research is to mean something to our readers—to be acts of meaning—our writing needs to attract, awaken, and arouse them, inviting readers into conversation with the incidents, feelings, contingencies, contradictions, memories, and desires that our research stories depict” (p. 158). In this regard, autoethnography will serve as means of analysis as I critique and explore my thought processes around mindfulness and other Buddhist concepts. Furthermore, this form of inquiry will be deeply personal as I will be calling upon memories and feelings as I engage with people, tastes, smells, emotions, practices, speech, sounds, silence, and visuals that were all part of my incredibly affective experience at the Zen Center.

Oryoki

Communication is the material manifestation of consciousness—the outward performance of a cultural and spiritual nexus. (Corman et al., 2008, p. 7)

On my first day at the Zen Center, I arrived slightly before noon, just in time to experience my first Oryoki-style meal. Prior to eating, I asked the guest services liaison if it would be possible for me to take notes during lunch. Quite assuredly, she answered “no” and instead politely suggested that I participate and then take notes during the community scheduled break. Concerned that the lack of my trusty notebook would leave me without an accurate account of events to come, in preemptive preparedness, I then asked how mindfulness could be seen in this ritualistic lunch. Faintly smiling, she replied that everything that is done at the Zen Center is mindful; it is all a disciplined practice. Somewhat surprised by this response, I felt a sudden sense of urgency to acutely study everything that was taking place around me. For the next several minutes before lunch, I

quietly observed as other center members prepared our oryoki meal and the community table where we were to eat.

The tradition of oryoki (with the exception of chanting) is a meditative meal practice. Developed during the time of Buddha, oryoki is a ritual designed to remind its practitioner of the fruits of appreciation, sacrifice, awareness, and the inseparable connection between the body and the mind (Kain, 2003). In recounting the words of one Buddhist abbot, John Kain (2003), a *Tricycle* writer and poet, elaborates,

Oryoki is not just a prescribed form of ritual. It is a state of mind. It's not [just] about chanting and bowing and bells. It's a state of consciousness. Because food is life, it is of utmost importance that we receive it with deepest gratitude. When we eat we consume life. (p. 1, para. 7)

Thus, I witnessed a careful and deliberative awareness during the preparation of meals, the receiving of food, and the general ritualistic practice associated with eating times.

Both lunch and breakfast began with everyone being called into the main dining hall via the ringing of a Japanese style bell. The leader of that particular meal (or Zen practitioner designated to initiate the sutras and meditative chants) would gently strike the bell in a series of selective sequences, indicating that meal-time had begun. When entering the hall, each person removed their shoes and took their personalized oryoki bowl sets and stood in front of their seats at the table. Holding up their neatly wrapped oryoki packages or *zuhatsu*—a set containing three smaller bowls, a cloth pouch baring a wooden spoon, pair of chopsticks, and *setsu*, a small spatula type utensil used for the ritual of the cleaning of the bowls at the end of the meal; an outer cloth, a napkin, and cleaning cloth—the collective group would wait until the person giving the Buddha offering (a smaller version of the meal) had returned to his or her seat (Kain, 2003). Once we were all standing, in unison, we bowed and took our seats at the community

table. The table itself was long, wooden, somewhat narrow, and no higher than 1 ½ feet off the floor. The cushions were circular and sturdy, giving each person just enough height to keep their knees comfortable as we sat for the next half hour or so. As we waited for everyone to comfortably position their bodies on the floor, we all sat for a brief moment in silence.

I remember being struck by the quiet. Not a sound was made until the leader would signal with what I call *clackers* (two small, rectangular wooden blocks used as a signifying tool between chants and ritualistic gestures) that the first sutra would begin. Abruptly breaking the silence, the group, in a dull and monotone pitch, began chanting:

Buddha was born at Lumbini
Enlightened at Boghgaya
Taught at Varnasi
Entered Nirvana at Kusinagara
Now we open Buddha Tathagata's eating bowls
That all be free from self-clinging . . .

As the last three words of the sutra were sung, the volume and tone of every person's voice sort of drowned out, as if people were too exhausted to give the last three words the energy they deserved. This made me want to laugh—I thought to myself, *wow, these people are serious about this whole Buddhist bit. Do they chant like this at every meal?* The monotone pitch of their voices felt unauthentic at first, like robots in an automated choir—my inner giggles subsided quickly, though, as the passing of the food began and more group chanting ensued. Paying close attention now to the precise and thoughtful hand gestures during the passing of dishes and condiments and the mild yet tempered expressions on the faces of those surrounding me, I realized this was not just a daily customary meal to these people; it was a way of life. This was the first time during my stay at the Zen Center that I felt a sense of what it meant to be truly disciplined—every

move, gesture, sound, and expression were so precise. This wasn't just a meal; this was a form of disciplined art.

The rest of the meal continued in a structured way. People were offered seconds via a shortened version of the first ritualistic serving of the food. As others finished their meals, I curiously looked up from my intended, respectful downward gaze to observe. No scraps were left, not even the juices from our fresh carrot and orange-juice salad; the remnants were politely drunk. But even with as much care to consume every morsel of eatable fibers that were left lingering, one could not feasibly consume every bit of food without external assistance. Thus, the cleaning of the bowls began. A hot pot of water was poured and passed to every person's first largest bowl. As the tea pot reached me, I attempted to mimic the gestures of those that had gone before and so held up my bowl to receive the hot water. I was politely told *no* with a slight shaking of the head and directed stare from the meal leader seated adjacent to me. So I watched as they used their *setsus* and hot water to scrub away any food that was left. This ritual was done for all three bowls until it was time to re-wrap their *oryoki* set into a lotus-like package. As they delicately refolded their napkins, I, too, wanted to participate. So I attempted to neatly wrap my used utensils in my dirtied Brawny paper cloth but was thoughtfully disciplined when it was not done just so. My napkin was refolded for me and placed back on top of my bowl set by a member who had gently guided me through the meal. Occasionally she had whispered to me what I should and should not do as our mindful meal practice progressed. After fixing my careless newbie mistake, the helpful practitioner smiled, and in return, I nodded my head and averted my eyes to the floor as to say *thanks*.

The practice of Oryoki gave me my first insights into the practice of mindfulness and habitual processes as it related to maintenance in this sacred space called home. Every gesture, sound, and movement all served some larger purpose. These mostly non-verbal practices communicated not only a discipline of the mind and body, but also demonstrated systems of patience and forbearance. In making these connections, I began to see the contradiction of both mindfulness and habitual processes as a practice in the Center. For example, practitioners were mindful in the sense that they had learned what it was to eat sparingly, acknowledging that food is meant to nourish the body. Eating then was not a gluttonous act or even an act of enjoyment but a means to fuel the body and practice an awareness of others living in less fortunate circumstances. Habitual processes, on the other hand, were exemplified in this same act of sparse eating. While the recognition of food as fuel rather than food as pleasure is important in light of our overpopulated world, I also argue that the automated and habitual practices formed completely dismantle the individual. A system of habituated thinking had led individuals to abandon their identities and instead partake in discourses and practices of a repetitious nature. “Right” speech, thoughts, and actions were not questioned, but incorrect speech, thoughts, and actions were politely disciplined. The mindfulness of these habitual processes constituted one characteristic of this place these practitioners called *home*.

Work Periods and Functional Talking

The childhood experience of repetition functions as a ‘safe haven:’ a complicated form of protection while facing a loss of ethos, a shelter for protection against the blows of an uncertain world. (Braith, 2006, p. 505)

Between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., all Zen Center live-in members and guests were expected to participate in daily work

periods. Prior to starting our working sessions, we attended a 15-minute meeting in the atrium. The atrium was a small and cozy living room-like space, located in the main house, equipped with a wood-burning furnace, an assortment of teas and tea mugs, a couch, several director-style chairs lining the inside wall, a coffee table, and a modest shrine dedicated to the bodhisattva of compassion. I remember the room smelling like camp fire and Nag Champa incense, bringing back comforting memories of my teenage, hippie summers spent under the stars in the woodsy backyard of my Colorado home. The walls were white and the carpet a deer colored tan. Everything about this space was tranquil. All the mild smells, colors, and objects were instruments designed to offer sensations of peace and to minimize opportunities for distraction.

Once we had all gathered and the chatting subsided, a simple ceremony honoring the bodhisattva took place. The person in charge of leading the work-period meetings stood directly in front of the bodhisattva, while another Zen Center member stood to his right and aided him in the process. One stick of incense was lighted and held by the practitioner until the work period leader was ready to receive the incense, at which point it was placed in a small section of ash at the bodhisattva's feet. All the people in the room then bowed three times in the direction of the bodhisattva, then turned and bowed once to each other and the room, honoring not only the bodhisattva but also each other. After these ritualistic tributes were paid to ourselves and each other, the meeting began.

The work period leader was one of the resident monks; a really funny and down-to-earth man. He and his wife had lived at the center on and off for years, both earning their right to have authoritative positions. The leader began the meeting by asking if anyone had any announcements—typically there were none, but the question was still

asked twice daily. This simple question alone was but another measure of consistency I witnessed during my stay. Using a clipboard containing an excel spreadsheet with residents' names and associated duties as a guide, the leader then asked for status updates on how residents' jobs were coming and assigned new tasks to those who had completed their chores. Everyone was a contributing member to the life at the Center. My assigned duty for the first work period was "a bit of gardening," as the leader phrased it. In actuality, it was a lot of gardening—fertilizing the entire front lawn. This made me smile. As it turned out, all the compost used was from the non-edible organic waste leftover from meals, making this act of sustaining life at the Zen Center cyclical. Food could be grown without chemicals or too much help from the outside world. Furthermore, the labor was one more way that practitioners could feel the importance of their role in the co-creation of this home. I was excited to be a part of something larger than myself, to also contribute to the home these people had built. So fertilize I did.

The leader helped situate me, providing me with a bucket, shovel, gardening gloves, a wheel barrel, and a pile of fertilizer produced from the community's compost. The sun was making its way down the western side of the sky when I began my work. Everything was beautiful: the garden, the view, the people. While I worked for the next couple of hours, all I could think of was how lucky I felt to have this opportunity. Being a master's student; working three jobs; and being a girlfriend, daughter, sister, and friend all can make me feel pulled at times. But being here in this place, carefully tending to the lawn and the pieces of earth that would give it new life in the spring, transported me to a meditative state. I was no longer a separate being with multiple roles and obligations, I was one with the work, with the people of the center, and with the earth I was nourishing.

It made me wonder if the others who had come to stay also felt this sense of inner connectedness.

At around 5:00 p.m. the work period leader relieved me of my duties and graciously suggested that I finish up the following day during the first work period. As it turned out, I would be responsible for “cleaning the temple,” or the main house, leaving my fertilizing duties to a later date. The next morning, I scrubbed the latrines in the main house and vacuumed the floors of the main eating hall and atrium. I remember being pleased by the level of cleanliness and organization in this communal space. Being a “neat-freak” myself, cleaning the bathroom, vacuuming, and tidying up gave me some sense of satisfaction—a strange powerful release. When I feel that I am not in control of anything in my life, cleaning is the one thing I feel like I can control and do well.

Once I had finished vacuuming, Windexing, and Cloroxing the main living areas, I proceeded to help that week’s designated chef in preparing lunch. When I entered the kitchen, everything was quiet with the exception of bubbling coming from the white bean and tomato soup thickening on the stove. The quiet triggered a flashback to my first day at the Center, when I had asked the guest services liaison about how mindfulness could be witnessed in daily practices. In addition to explaining that everything was a disciplined practice, she also expressed the importance of focus and care given to the tasks at hand. Thus, practitioners spoke only functionally during work periods, meaning there were no informal conversations on meaningless topics (as is frequently done in normative social settings), only meaningful exchanges related to the work at hand. The kitchen practitioner and I only spoke functionally for the first 10 minutes of our interaction until I selfishly felt I needed more. I wanted to know her story, why she was there, never mind the fact

that I truly couldn't stand the quiet nor idle conversation, there was something more to this young woman who was only a couple of years my junior. So I dove right in, asking her about her family and the life journey that brought her to the center. She shared with me what she could in the time we had while still tending to the delicious pot of soup that was brewing on the iron-top stove. She was kind and collected. She added to the tranquility that I felt during my stay.

As we talked, I heard the voice of one of the new live-in members down the hall. While I had only spoken briefly with this person, something rubbed me the wrong way about him. This made me wonder if this young, female practitioner ever felt unsafe in her home where so many new people came and went throughout the year. Asking her this question, she explained that the only time she felt unsafe is when she traveled back to the university where she had matriculated. For her, being away from the Zen Center was like leaving her home. Even though she had been indoctrinated into the normative behaviors of college life and its overwhelmingly non-Buddhist ways of living, something about the life that had been created at the Zen Center was safety to her. This spiritual space that differed so drastically from the day-to day life that she had experienced, for the majority of her life, felt like home. The Zen Center was her safe haven.

Zazen

Prudence teaches that contingencies are unavoidable, which turns the dream of total security into a most unwise desire to avoid the unavoidable. Thus, the animal is secure only as long as he remains insecure. It is the burrow's lack of complete protection that ensures the inhabitant's capacity for self-defense. His mortality saves his life. (Hamilton, 2013, p. 28)

While unwinding during our scheduled break in my cozy, down-feather bed, my senses were piqued by what sounded like the gentle drumming on a hollowed-out

wooden bell. I sat up to check the time on the alarm clock—7:20 p.m.—I had 10 minutes until I was to meet one of the head monks for my zazen training. So I stood up, gathering myself from my calm and relaxed state, walked to the front of main dormitory exit, and headed for the zendo. The zendo was a beautiful wooden building, located in the middle of the Center's property. When entering the meditation hall, the familiar and welcoming scent of Nag Champa met my nostrils with delightful ease. The lighting was dim, and few objects were present. At the south-side entrance, practitioners were greeted by a large shrine comprised of a candle-lit table with several bodhisattva statues; some simple bamboo plants; a photo of a man who I do not recognize but whom I assume is a Buddhist Roshi, or teacher, for one or more members of the congregation; and a few other symbolic and ritualistic trinkets. The *tan*, or raised seated sections of the zendo, wrapped snugly around the inside walls of the hall, created a unified room for meditative practice.

Joining me a few minutes late, my instructor for zazen 101 had arrived. The monk greeted me in a pleasantly yet rushed state as he knew the evening service was to begin in the next few minutes, so my tutorial was brief. He walked me through the entrance, explaining that I was to bow whenever entering the zendo. I then followed him to the left side of the entrance and I was taught to take two steps to the left, bow to the bodhisattva of compassion, take another two steps to my left and walk to my seat in the zendo. I removed my inside sandals, placed them under the *tan*, and pulled my *zafu* and *zabuton* (round meditation cushion and mat) toward me so that I would have an easier time reaching them once I had hoisted myself up onto the flat meditative ledge. The monk then instructed me on the proper way to reach my seat. This act was not so graceful as I

clumsily got my legs tangled in my arms and touched the ledge with the bottom of my feet—a zendo taboo as practitioners eat their meals on this ledge during various annual retreats. But the monk was kind and suggested that I try again. The second go-around was easier. I managed to find my legs without too much of a fuss.

After situating my body in a comfortable yet disciplined position, the monk enlightened me on the physical and mental focuses of zazen meditation. My hands were to rest in my lap, with my right hand lightly cupping my left hand and thumb tips softly touching. This created an egg-like shape in my hands. My shoulders were to be relaxed with my back straight and my gaze downward at a 45 degree angle. But my main focus was on my breath. I counted to 10 using my exhales as markers, thinking of nothing other than the sensation of air entering my nostrils, filling my lungs, passing through my body, and the de-oxygenated air making its way out through my mouth. If my thoughts were interrupted by other outside factors, I was to start over. The monk then left me to practice while the others were being summoned by the slow dong of the hollowed-out wooden bell.

I listened as people entered the building, their coats rustling as their arms positioned their bodies on their seats. There were deep breaths and thoughtful sighs. But after 10 minutes or so, the room was silent, and again I attempted to focus on my breath. This may have been one of the most difficult mental exercises of my life. My oxygenated thoughts were constantly interrupted by day dreams of the upcoming holiday and worries around my thesis and term papers. And if I were not distracted enough by my 90-mile-an-hour thoughts, I was focused on the chill in the night air that was now caressing the tops of my thighs. All I wanted was a blanket and a cup of hot chocolate. A TV playing the

latest episode of *Pretty Little Liars* wouldn't have been so bad either. These thoughts frustrated me as I knew that this experience was meaningful on so many levels and that I needed to be present, so I started again—one. . .two. . .three. . .four. . .—then *dong, dong* . . . a large symbol, possibly a gong, was struck twice, indicating to all that our first 30-minute session of *zazen* was complete and the next portion of our evening service would begin.

Once everyone had risen and their feet were firmly planted on the waxed floor, the lead monk, who had also instructed me on the art of *zazen*, led us in a meditative walk called *kinhin*. Lined up single file, our steps progressed slowly with our bodies no more than an arm's length away from one another. The focus of this exercise was to feel the energy passing through our bodies—up one leg and down the other. I watched as the monk's worn left heel would slowly rise off the floor, arching, until a small step was taken. The same process would repeat for the right foot until, several steps in, our pace quickened, and we were moving full speed ahead. We exited the *zendo* and walked around the hall, circling three times. Upon entering the *zendo* after our final loop, we proceeded to make another several laps around the inside of the *zendo*, and like our starting place, our steps slowed until we had been circulated back to our seats. We sat *zazen* for another half hour. My thoughts were still a non-centered mess. I was so bad at this mediation thing. I sat there wondering how long it took some of my fellow *zazen* mates to master the art of quieting the mind or if they ever really had.

Surprising me again, the gong was struck twice, ending our evening service and our second 30-minute *zazen* session. Nearly 9:00 p.m. now, we all gracefully dismounted the tan and acknowledged our counterparts opposite the room with two bows. Heading to

my dormitory, I collected my outside shoes and swapped them for my inside sandals. After I reached my room, I made myself a cup of tea and lay in bed. I was beat and I knew that a good night's rest would be in my favor as morning *zazen* began at 4:30 a.m. and lasted significantly longer. So I closed my eyes and let the night take me.

Summoning my astuteness, a loud set of jingling bells moved me from nighttime slumber. The red on the alarm clock glared 4:27 a.m.—right on time. I rolled out of bed, made a fresh cup Chamomile tea, and brushed my teeth. As I moved down the hall heading from my dormitory to the *zendo*, I could see people gathering in the dimly lit temple. The stars were still out, and I watched as steam formed around my lips as the cold air met the heat of my breath. Anticipating the chill I had felt last night in my meditative state, I came prepared with four coats, a snug beanie, and wool socks.

Morning *zazen* began the same but lasted much longer. Each two-period meditative session drudged on for 50 minutes, something for which I was not prepared. I was so anxious. I did not want to sit there. Matching my ornery mind, my body grew restless, so I kept readjusting, disturbing the silence with the rustling of my synthetically made jacket shell. I was going out of my mind until finally I was saved by the sweet sound of that humming gong; salvation at last. I watched as a couple people stepped out before moving on to *kinhin*. I thought to myself, would it be rude of me to leave? But these thoughts lasted momentarily. I endured and sat another 50 minutes; after all, I was there to experience mindfulness in its fullest, even if I went insane in the process. Maybe that was the point—to be uncomfortable and overcome, to step away from the distractions of everyday American material and habitual inundation and to experience the beauty in self-awareness and simplicity. Rejuvenation was in order, but all I felt was

angst. So I allowed myself to sit with the discomfort, giving myself permission to let my thoughts wander where they may. I felt as though I were cleansing my soul from all of the meaningless distractions that had so regularly consumed my being. As I did this, my mother's soothing voice washed over me, "*It is in our moments of discomfort that we have the opportunity to grow and learn who we are.*" And so I sat, using that rare moment of silence as an epistemic gateway, welcoming my self-discovery, returning to me.

In these moments of silence, I felt my mindfulness returning. Once I released the anxiety intensified by the stillness of my body and the quiet in the room, I was able to focus on who I was. Letting my mind be open to whatever thoughts came in and out was the first sense of freedom I had felt since my arrival at the Center. However, this practice, too, was a contradiction in itself. Sitting *zazen* was a requirement as a guest of the Center; moreover, your thoughts were to be focused on your breath, emptying your mind from all of the material desires and manifestations that cloud the mind daily. This was not an easy task for me or one that I was particularly interested in following. In my own mind, I was a rebel, letting my thoughts take me where they may.

Tea with the Abbot

There is a paradoxical relation between death and knowledge. On the one hand, death is the ultimate defeat of reason, on the other hand, it is the source of desire for knowledge. Knowledge thrives on a desire to know the unknown. This desire is constituted by the void of the undetermined, that is death; it is brought into being because of and through the void, which can never be reached. This is what keeps the production of knowledge going. (Huysmans, 1998, p. 237)

Running from the main house to the north side of the Zen Center's property, I felt a sense of child-like giddiness—*traditional Japanese style tea with the center's abbot*—*how cool is this?!* A flood of thoughts and questions rushed through my head as I

carefully minded the jagged rocks of the unpaved path beneath my hurried feet, I wondered, *will the abbot be fully robed in traditional Japanese-Buddhist attire? How low do I bow when I enter the hut? Do I call him by his English name or his given Japanese title? Oh man, I totally feel like Tom Cruise in The Last Samurai waiting to receive life-altering wisdom from the great Katsumoto—this is awesome!* At the front porch now, I carefully stepped backwards out of my dirtied “outside” shoes, turned to the front of the wood and stucco structure, cleared a few unruly, windblown hairs from face, and reached for the tea hut’s door handle, but before my fingers could feel the cold of the brass metal knob, the door opened. . . . It was as if the abbot had sensed my presence.

With a kind and welcoming bow to one another, the abbot invited me into his tea hut. The room was small but inviting. Again, only a few objects of spiritual and functional significance remained. There were two sets of meditative cushions placed opposite one another, a few miniature bodhisattva replicas on top of a lean dresser, a lotus flower candle holder with a lighted tea candle, a photograph of the abbot’s late mentor, a cute but out-of-place paper replica of Yoda (which I was later told was given to the abbot as a gift), and several instruments and trinkets for our Japanese tea ceremony. As I looked around the room, the abbot invited me to take my seat and join him in a moment of meditative silence. As we sat, that familiar scent of Nag Champa filled my lungs, relaxing my body. I watched as the abbot meticulously made me a cup of tea from a rock formation bearing boiling water and a jar containing a fine green powder. Using a ladle made from teak, he poured the steaming water from the ladle into a bowl and, ever so precisely, minding the sleeves on his Japanese style robe, set the ladle on top of the water pot. Now mixing the fine green powder, the abbot used a whisk from what looked

like all-natural fibers, perhaps from branches or durable straw. He whisked the substance in several directive motions until the tea powder and water mixture became frothy. It was like watching a magician perform a great show—the gentle wave of a wand, concentrated stare, and *alakazam!* Magic. But this experience was so much cooler than any magic trick I had seen, for everything I was witnessing was real.

As the abbot finished making my cup of tea, he invited me to eat a sweet tea cake that he carefully handed me. The cake was served on a tiny, round, wooden slab accompanied by a miniature paper napkin. The cake itself was no bigger than the length on my thumb and was a clear green color—it looked like a baby bar of soap. The utensil provided was an oversized toothpick with a sharpened edge for cutting. I was surprised by the sweetness of the cake; it was quite delicious. I remember having tasted something similar to this during a presentation given by one of my Korean students on traditional Korean desserts. Together, the graininess and bitter taste of the tea accompanied by the sweetness of the soy-bean cake complimented the various flavors and textures well. What a treat this experience was (pardon the pun).

After the abbot had finished making himself a cup of tea, our meaningful conversation began. Almost instantaneously, our discussion jumped into a historic debate around international affairs. While we chatted about the state of our world and our viewpoints on that subject, the abbot expressed to me his concern around disclosing his opinions on such delicate matters. He feared that if he shared his opinions with me, that I may later publish his thoughts and that the repercussions of his words could jeopardize his safety and potentially the safety of the Zen Center itself. I gave the abbot my word that our conversation on world politics and his personal standing on such matters would

remain between us. I explained that, more than anything, I was interested in understanding mindfulness as a practice and curious as to how it could be seen in daily occurrences at the Zen Center. So he shared with me his thoughts on mindfulness and explained some of the various Buddhist practices that I had witnessed. Before long, our conversation had turned into an ontological discussion revolving around the lived experience and the epistemic understandings developed from those experiences. I was fascinated. We talked about the transcendental worlds that are beyond our physical scope but that can be seen in the darkness of certain states of mind and physical settings. I shared with him some of the heartache that I had experienced in the past few months, and he listened with compassionate ears. We talked of his childhood dreams of having a tea hut like the one in which we now sat. His energy was warm and innocent. He had a light and lightness about him that made my heart smile. I could have talked to him for days, but before I knew it, the clock read 5:30 p.m.—the last 2 ½ hours had flown by.

Before leaving, the abbot and I spent a moment outside on the tea hut's porch admiring the Japanese style garden he had regularly tended. I could feel the chill of winter in the air. The long grasses swayed back and forth in the nighttime breeze as the stars began to brighten in the darkening sky. The abbot pointed to different areas of the shaped land that demonstrated his care in the development of this peaceful space. Again, I bowed and thanked him for his time. As I placed my outside shoes on and walked toward my dormitory, I understood how some of the Zen Center members were able to leave the lives they had built in what now seemed like a world of chaos, carelessness, and danger. Up here, they were safe. This place offered spiritual rejuvenation and

nourishment. It seemed to welcome the suffering of all those who had experienced pain and wrap it up with love and acceptance. I, too, began to feel at home.

The Zen Center as Home

Home provides safety but the safety is a means to repose and peace. The peace enables home to become the place of generating life. (Dobel, 2010, p. 486)

The New Normal

The concept of security encompasses notions of “survival, safety or freedom from danger” (LaMothe, 2012, p. 33). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, American citizens have been living in a state of managed instability and insecurity—a way of life that Bratich (2006) deems the *New Normal*. This term is used to describe the post-9/11 world that has been destabilized by terrorism, economic instabilities, and contagion deterrence. According to Matsumi (as cited in Braitch 2006), this general state of everyday crisis as a result of continual war with an unnamed enemy has created “the politics of everyday fear” (p. 493). In essence, what citizens once understood as stability is no longer associated with normalcy; normalcy now coincides with instability. Mythen (2011) suggests that living in a “risk society” naturally generates fearful ways of understanding the world, consequently indoctrinating individuals to believe that danger is ever present and security compromised, thus creating a culture of fear. To counteract and redirect these everyday risks that are always looming, various preemptive actions designed to ensure safety, security, and stability are taken (Mythen, 2011).

While these definitions of risk society and the New Normal refer more to issues of national security, I argue that, on a lesser scale, equally as real and painful, dangers can be seen in other parts of individuals’ day to day lives. These things include heartache—the loss of a lover, friend, family member, pet, or confidant; the danger of losing an

individual's home, job, or other things that offer both physical and financial security; the loss or uncertainty of an individual's spiritual/religious convictions; agony due to painful memories in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age; struggles due to the grip of addiction; the fear of rejection and longing for acceptance; poor health whether it be an ailment that perpetually plagues a person like cancer, disease, and depression or the lack of physical mobility or natural use of an individual's body; dissatisfaction or hate for themselves: the everyday reality that their surrounding physical setting is truly hell on earth; false promises made by others and the disappointment of expectations that are not met; and the list goes on and on. These fearful emotions and states of being are only exacerbated by the instable post-9/11 environment, subsequently causing an individual's need to self-protect to heighten.

In addition to the need for survival, safety, freedom from danger, protection from worldly factors that cause fearfulness and suffering, individuals also need contentment and joy. Buddha taught four noble truths, the first of which states that life is suffering. This includes physical suffering like pain, illness, aging, and death as well as psychological suffering like loneliness, embarrassment, disappointment, anger and fear (White, 1993). The second truth proposes that suffering is caused by craving and hate. In essence, this truth suggests that craving for things people want and do not have, deprives them of peace and contentment as they will always be searching for external fixtures to create their joy. Ultimately, I believe that these various forms of suffering are part of our daily normalcy that encourages feelings of unsettlement, insecurity, and fearfulness. In this case, then, the preemptive measure would be to find happiness and end suffering—this is the third truth, “that suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained”

(White, 1993, para. 14). Here, solution lies in the letting go of useless cravings and instead inspires individuals to live presently, not dwelling on the past or future. The fourth truth is that the Eightfold Path (which consists of living morally and focusing the mind on actions and thoughts or being mindful) allows people to develop compassion for others, eventually leading to the end of suffering. Herein lies the Zen Center as key to finding happiness in a home.

Home

Dobel (2010) argues, “The oldest meanings of ‘home’ grow from the experience of existing in peace and security in the world” (p. 484). For many, home is an individual’s nest where an escape from suffering and the pains of the outside world can be found. This place can offer protection and solace in times of both internal and external turmoil. Reflecting on my trip to the Zen Center and my interactions with some of the live-in practitioners, it has become evident to me that the Zen Center is a place of solace for those who are suffering. For those who are not, it is home—home in that it offers support and love; fosters growth; develops personal integrity; and nurtures wounds, both new and old.

Taylor (1997) recounts his personal memories of home and the violence that, at times, consumed his past. He argues that history retraces itself in homes and looks to his grandparents’ home as source for some of the normative behaviors that were learned and passed down. As he grew and spent time in new homes, Taylor reflected on past homes and the features of those places. During one of his stays in a new home, Taylor recalls an unpleasant encounter that left him unsettled. As a result of this encounter, Taylor called his home where both his parents resided. Taylor writes, “I instinctively sought out my

parents and my first home for strength in a moment of what felt like spiritual danger” (p. 228). In a state of powerlessness, Taylor turned to a place that gave him strength and offered safety. In light of these experiences, Taylor suggests that new homes can be built and recreated, offering refuge to those who seek asylum from the inundation of daily suffering. However, “home moves with people in their memory and community and becomes incarnated with human action” (Dobel, 2010, p. 485). With this in mind, I believe that the Zen Center represents a new home, a place free from danger, a home that is empowering. In addition, I believe that the opportunity to be part of a new home causes people to abandon memories and formed habits that supported unfulfilling ways of living and adopt new value systems that foster peace and a joyous means of understanding themselves and being present in the world of which they are a part.

Citizenship and Participation in Ritual

During my stay, I witnessed several ritualistic practices that contributed to the understanding of the Zen Center as home. These practices included the three that I outlined above—*oryoki*, work periods and functional talking, and *zazen*. All practitioners were expected to participate in these practices as, I believe, they not only demonstrated discipline, integrity, and mindfulness but also added to the sense of community, giving people ownership in this place they collectively cultivated. Because of this communal binding between fellow practitioner and place, value systems were generating, those of which I found to be in the interest of the whole.

Wolfers (1952) observes that, between matters of global interest and the common good, there are “interests of all of mankind” (p. 482). In discussing this idea of protecting the whole, Wolfers suggests that crises for immediate change develop when a fear of

external dangers arise. Citizens then turn to institutions that represent power, model behavior, and confidence in the hopes of having an end-all-be-all guardian. Security then is not only seen as necessary for global protection but also as an inherent value that societies adopt. Through the preservation and continuation of these value systems and ritualistic practices, practitioners secure the home from outside factors and paradigms that once plagued the non-Zen practitioner. Aliments that afflicted the soul, mind, and body are now be safe from the normalcy of suffering. Through these mindful acts, as a community, suffering is vanquished, and security of the mind, body, soul, and home are maintained. Wolfers (1952) argues, “Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked” (p. 485). As such, Zen Center citizens act altruistically to maintain the safety of this sacred place called *home*, making way for spiritual and civic virtuosity.

Security is exercised daily in order to preserve home and that of the public good (Dahl, 1992; Tewksbury, 2012). In this case, both civic virtue and understandings of the public good are linked as they require citizens to act selflessly, serving the interests of the collective whole (Dahl, 1992). Because Zen Buddhism dictates mindfulness in all things, citizens are not preparing for a breach of the security they have built but instead are interested in working together as an active body in the preservation of home—this is their security. Together, this mindful and collective effort that dictates ways of being in a communal space fosters growth from past insecurities and establishes a home that provides safety. Whatever “home” is, these values that are typically attributed to home can be found in many places, both old and new. For home is what grounds individuals,

offering support and comfort for their interactions in the world outside those protective walls.