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Tolerance

RECENTLY A GROUP of Buddhists complained about a huge cross placed on the wall of a Primary School in Tai Hang Road, Hong Kong.

The Buddhists said that the cross looked like a dagger, while the school claimed it was only a symbol of their religion. The cross reminds Catholics of the death of Jesus Christ by the old Roman method of crucifixion, and that is important to them. The Buddhists, on the other hand, abhor killing, and some would not kill even a mosquito.

Both the Catholics and the Buddhists strongly believe in their own religions. Since the school would not remove the cross, the Buddhists, unfortunately, had to readjust their homes to hide the symbol of killing overlooking their windows.

I wonder if our young Hong Kong readers have noticed the growing intolerance between different religions, especially those which originated in the Middle East: the Jewish, Christian and Moslem religions? Although all three claim to worship the same God, and have the same forefather, Abraham, they have different beliefs concerning Jesus Christ and the Moslem prophet Mohammed. Serious trouble began after World War Two, when Britain and the United States divided Palestine between the Jews and Arabs. In 1967, the Jews seized more land and drove

out many Arabs.

The Arabs claim that Palestine is the land of their forefathers. The Jews in that country claim that God told Moses to lead the Jews (Israelis) to Palestine thousands of years ago, and many of them now want to drive all the Arabs out, because they believe God gave it to them. In fact, Jews and Arabs have blood relationships, and for many years appear to have lived fairly peacefully together, until the western countries divided the land between them, and brought in many new Jewish settlers who had escaped from Europe during World War Two.

Asian people appear to be more tolerant in their main religions: Buddhism and Hinduism. There may be some different beliefs among Buddhists, but they seem to be more peaceful than other religious believers. However, even in Asia, Hindus and Moslems struggle to gain land and often resort to killing. The whole world seems to be adopting a more dangerous warlike attitude now.

Surely if we want peace in the world, we in this 21st century should learn to tolerate other people's religious beliefs. After all, no one knows the whole truth about God, and no religion can claim to be right and all others wrong.