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BUDDHIST APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Editors:
Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu, D.Phil.,
Most Ven. Thich Duc Thien, Ph.D.,
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FOREWORD

In 1999, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the resolution to recognize the Vesak Day as an International Day of Recognition of Buddhists and the contribution of the Buddha to the world. Since then, the people and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, in general, and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, in particular, were very honored to have successively and successfully held for twelve years the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations in Thailand.

From 2004 to date, we have come a long way in the celebrations, and we are happy to be the host and organizer, but it is time for the celebrations to grow and evolve. The United Nations Day of Vesak is coming to maturity, with twelve celebrations under our belt, much experience gained, and it is time now to share this with others. There will always be room for growth and development, and we are elated to see it grow.

In 2006-2007, having joined the International Organizing Committee for the UN Day of Vesak as Deputy Secretary General, Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu has played a crucial role in building strong relationships between the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and the International Council for Day of Vesak in particular and the Global Buddhist communities in general.

We have supported and congratulated Vietnam on organizing successful UNDV celebrations and conference in 2008 and 2014, respectively. We have full trust in Vietnam being the host of UNDV 2019 for the third time. We like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of previous celebrations and wish all future celebrations be successful.

The teachings of the Buddha see no boundaries; the minds of all are alike; the sufferings of all are similar and truly; and the liberation
of all is the same. We are happy to initiate the process, develop the scope, and now it is time for others to follow in similar footsteps, evolve the celebrations into a truly international event that can be shared with Buddhists and Non-Buddhists alike.

Let the Dhamma of the Buddha be the beacon to the world, shredding away the ignorance within our hearts, bringing development into sustainable capacity for humanity and more importantly, peace and harmony to the world.

Most Ven. Prof. Brahmapundit
- President, International Council for Day of Vesak (ICDV)
- President, International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)
PREFACE

The history of mankind records how the Buddha achieved enlightenment and showed a path which not only leads but also guides the world till date. That is solely to emanate wisdom and offer insights which help us to overcome numerous challenges and foster wellbeing for all of humanity.

Recognizing the Buddha's pragmatic approach, as well as the values and contributions of Buddhism to society, the United Nations in a resolution in 1999 decided to celebrate the Triply Blessed Day of Vesak (Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of Buddha Gautama), falling mostly in a lunar calendar in the month of May. The first celebration was held way back in the year 2000 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and subsequently the day has been celebrated remarkably in different countries.

Today our planet is confronted with a number of crises and unprecedented natural disasters. The paramountcy of mitigating imminent threats of terrorism and ethnic violence, tackling poverty, providing education, and ensuring sustainable development leads us to strive for social justice. There is an urgent need for concerted and constant planning and right effort at an international level to foster permanent peace in societies and in the lives of individuals.

Against the backdrop of such widespread misery and strife leading to complex issues and crises, Buddhism with its rich heritage of tolerance and non-violence can contribute immensely and inspire people with the Buddha's message of loving-kindness, peace and harmony in today's world. The United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) 2019 is a testimony to this fact.

Vietnam got the opportunity and responsibility to host this international Buddhist event in 2008 and 2014, respectively. The event proved to be an amazing spectacle of religious and
spiritual festivity, with thousands of Buddhists from around the world converging in Vietnam, to spread the Buddha’s message of peace, love, and harmony.

This is the third time that Vietnam is hosting this important international event which is viewed by Buddhists as an opportunity to spread the Buddha’s message and values of love, peace, non-violence, tolerance, and compassion across the world.

It is a great honor for Vietnam, the Vietnamese people, the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and Buddhists all around the world to participate in the UNDV celebrations and spread the rich Buddhist heritage, especially its teachings of equality, social justice, respect, and understanding for the benefit of all humanity. Buddhists around the world and Vietnamese people in particular are thrilled about their country hosting this auspicious and important event for the third time. This international religious, cultural, and academic event would also certainly promote interactions and exchanges of Buddhist cultural and intellectual values among diverse countries.

The international Buddhist conference with the main theme of “Buddhist Approach to Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Sustainable Societies” during the celebrations could not have been more befitting and timelier. The present book contains conference papers pertaining to the first sub-theme of the conference, that is, “Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development.” Other sub-themes of the conference include: (i) Mindful Leadership for Sustainable Peace, (ii) Buddhist Approach to Harmonious Families, Healthcare and Sustainable Societies, (iii) Buddhist Approach to Global Education in Ethics, and (iv) Buddhism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This international conference aims to foster co-operation among Buddhist communities and institutions, and to develop Buddhist solutions to the global crisis.

Papers selected for this volume are those that combine thematic relevance, familiarity with the main theme or sub-themes, significant research in primary and secondary sources, innovative theoretical perspectives, clarity of organization, and accessible prose. Accepted
articles in this volume are determined by the Academic Peer-Review Committee.

UNDV 2019 certainly is an opportunity for Buddhists around the world, the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and all the members of the international community to benefit from the rich traditions, values, and spiritual ideals of Buddhism. The pragmatic path shown by Buddha can make the world a better, safer, and more peaceful and harmonious place to be cherished and enjoyed by all sentient beings.

As the Chairman of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam, on behalf of the Vietnamese people and the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, I extend my warmest welcome to all respected Sangharajas, Sangha Leaders, Buddhist Leaders, Sangha members and Buddhist Scholars from 115 countries and regions, participating in this international celebration and conference. Let me thank all of you for your contributions to this celebration and conference.

I take this opportunity to express here my profound gratitude to Most Ven. Prof. Brahmapundit for his continuous support of Vietnam to host this international event. I also profusely thank all members of the International Council for Day of Vesak (ICDV), the Conference Committee, and the Editorial Board for their devotion.

I am grateful to Mr. Xuan Truong for his generosity and other donors, sponsors, volunteers and agencies from the public sector and the private sector for their excellent contributions.

This publication could not have been possible without the persistence, hard work, and dedication of Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu. Special words of appreciation are due to him for his experience and continuous assistance in ensuring the successful coordination of the conference and celebration.

I extend my warmest and best wishes to all the delegates and participating countries on this special occasion which strengthens our resolve to improve the world by walking the path shown by the Lord Buddha.

Whatever merit there is in publishing this book may be dedicated
to the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. May all sentient beings be happy and released from suffering.

We wish the celebration of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam every success.

Most Ven. Thich Thien Nhon
President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
Chairman of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam
EDITORS’ INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This is a great academic solace to see the Volume on Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development which covers Sub-Theme Five of UNDV 2019 Academic Conference.

REVIEW OF CONTENTS

The World of Today is suffering from the crisis of consumerism. The first paper on a Buddhist Perspective on Overconsumption and Its Negative Effects towards Society and Environment deals with it specifically in the reference of consumption beyond requirements which is generally termed as overconsumption. Such human tendency leads to negative impact on the entire force of nature and the environment. How the Buddhist principles guide us to live a better life where there is least effect on the environment and society is well explained in this paper.

The second paper in this volume, entitled Attaining a Sustainable Society through the Teachings of the Khandhaka of the Theravāda Vinaya Piṭaka is a vivid example of the benefits which one can derive from our ancient Pali literature. While studying the Theravada Vinaya Pitaka, the author explores the specific words of the Buddha in the Khandhaka which hint at the possibility of sustainability and development going together without harming other societal components. Though the Vinaya being a Pitaka for monastics, it still is highly useful for the laity as well.

The paper, Buddhist Ethics in the Establishments of Green Tourism is a unique academic contribution. Here, the writer states that the Buddha’s life and principles make us learn a lot as how green methods must be applied in our day-to-day life. The damage being caused by the genre called DEVELOPMENT needs to be controlled and for
this, the words of Master exhibits his proximity to protect nature, humanity and the world order.

The same tone of serving the Mother Earth through Buddhist way is explained in the paper on *A Holistic Buddhist Approach to Restoration of Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development: An Analytical Exposition*. Quoting extensively from Buddhist literature, the writer states that material development is not the real development if we do not give importance to our traditional values of morality, togetherness, mutual peacefulness etc.

*Buddhist Approach to Responsible Production and Consumption of Wealth for a Peaceful and Sustainable Society* echoes the ever growing worriedness of those who are watching the massive destruction around us in many ways. Quoting from the Sutta literature, the paper explores that non-sustainability does not mean to be poor and to suffer from poverty. But on the contrary, poverty eradication is the first step to create an ever-loving society.

The paper on *The Framework of Right Consumption* traces the history of consumption which accelerated in the middle of the 20th century. Our planet has been subjected to the population explosion and relative intensive usage of chemicals, energy consumption, and new greed. To minimise its impact on humanity, Buddhist economics is a great source of sustainability which can boost the concept of giving (*dāna*), sharing and caring for each other.

Next participation in this volume is of the scholar dealing with the alarming health situation in the world with the level of air pollution reaching to precarious condition, be it Delhi or Bangkok or California. The paper entitled *On Consumption as Necessity and Nemesis: Buddhist Considerations for a Climate Of Change* discusses this global situation where climate change has led to several other problems such as unsafe food, air and contamination of all types. The paper suggests how Buddhism and its principles can underpin them and thus intervene. The paper considers the above questions in the light of Buddhist philosophy.

Though it is true that the concept of Greens was not specifically mentioned in Buddhism, it is equally true that the Buddhist philosophy, ideas, and actions put strong emphasis on the
protection of physical surroundings along with mental environment of the people. This has been illustrated in the next paper, *The Green Buddhist View Solve the Modern Day Problem*.

The next paper is a case study of the side-effects of over consumption in Sri Lanka which has badly marred sustainable development, *A Study on Buddhist Cultural Values of Consumption and Their Impact on Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka*. Looking into this issue with the prism of anthropological perspective on religion and consumption, the writer bases his study on a randomly picked up sample of 92 Buddhist families of a small village to understand the patterns of consumption and sustainable development at a micro level. It was found that Buddhist cultural values happily influence the behaviour of consumption resulting in a balanced sustainability of family-economy and its development. Thus, it has been argued that the sustainability of household economy is decisive in the assurance of sustainability of national development. Therefore, an organized reinforcement is required to transmit the Buddhist cultural values of responsible consumption to secure sustainable development.

Echoing the same emphasis on right consumption of the gifts of nature and Mother Earth, the next paper entitled, *Buddhist Perspective of Right Consumption of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development*, deals with how this fast environmental degradation caused by the greed economy must take lessons from the Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination. The paper further highlights how the application of the Noble Eightfold Path would change the human psyche and will pave ways towards achieving the goal of sustainable development as desired by the United Nations to achieve by 2030.

The next paper, *Need and Want - The Buddhist Perspective on Moderation of One's Consumption for a Sustainable Development*, while presenting the alarming scenario of global warming, environmental pollution, and the depletion of non-renewable energy resources, it emphasizes that the Sutta literature along with the Vinaya texts can help us in solving this danger and give people new vision for the environment and available resources. While quoting the amazement of E. F. Schumacher (the author of ‘Small is Beautiful’),
while reading the Buddhist explanations of the superiority of the economy and the concept of maximising wellbeing while minimising consumption, the author says that modern economists must include this aspect which may be a great changer.

*Utilization of Earnings in Consumption and Its Impact on the Social Imbalance: A Critical Observation on the Buddhist Point of View* is another paper in this volume which lashes out the socio-economic imbalance and stresses that it can be overcome only through Buddhist theories. While quoting the Buddhist financial concept of “ekena bhoge buñjeyya” (Sigālovada Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya), the paper dwells upon the concept and advice in Buddhist teachings drawing from Rāsiya, Kāmabhōgi, Pattakamma and ādiya Suttas on Consumption and Utilization of one’s earnings. The emphasis on the importance of the “fivefold obligations” (pañcabalī) and their values for a contented society and how they are helpful for the well-being of everyone is further discussed in this paper.

The close interdependence between the natural environment and the living creatures which is a core subject in Buddhist teachings is discussed in the next paper, *Buddhist Approach Ecological and Sustainable Development*. As Buddha himself grew out of the nature Mother’s lap (Sāla tree for Birth and the Bodhi tree on the bank of Nirañjanā of Gayā for enlightenment, Mrgadāva for Dhammaccakkapavattana), it is but natural that the ecological and sustainable approach would be embedded in Buddhism. The paper also evaluates these concepts of the ecological aspect and sustainable development with Buddhist theories of Pratītyasamutpāda and Pañcasīla

Continuing our concern on consumption and the environment, the book further continues this discussion in the next article, *A Mindful Responsible Consumption and Production and Production Leads to Sustainable Development*. While providing the data of global warming since 19th century, it highlights the work of the Tzu Chi Foundation, a grassroot movement, which believes that the responsibility to solve this is not a duty of the State only but also we the individuals. The Tzu Chi model of recycling, psychological support and spiritual healing is in fact the Buddhist model to develop a sustainable livelihood.
Buddhist Environmentalism: An Approach to Sustainable Development is our next contribution in this volume which discusses Buddhist Environmentalism as a form of “religious environmentalism,” which involves the conscious application of religious ideas to modern concerns about the global environment. Religion being a primary source of values in any culture in general and in Asian cultures in particular has direct implications in the decisions human make regarding the environment. Therefore, it deals with environmental perspectives in early Buddhism and relates it to “religious environmentalism” in order to show that it is the correct approach for sustainable development.

The volume has an interesting article on the care and concern of our future generations. To delimit materialism, reckless growth of consumerism, carelessness and environmental challenges, the paper entitled Passing Inheritance of Better World to our Younger Generations emphasizes the need to take an initiative to tackle it through Buddhist approach.

The paper, “Monastery without Boundary: An Emerging Paradigm in Sumatra, Indonesia” makes an attempt to describe the paradigm of the universality of the Buddhist concepts, monasticism. This paper offers a survey of relevant doctrinal background from which one could see its alignment with Buddhist teachings.

Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development extensively quotes from the data of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which has been mandated to oversee the mobilization, facilitation, and coordination within the UN system of its expertise to deal with the building blocks of sustainable development. This paper is a remarkable attempt to examine the Buddhist perspective on sustainable development in the light of the Rio+20 document as well as Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Next paper Buddhist Approach to Economic Sustainable Development refers to the many problems which have arisen as the consequence of the one-sided economic concentration where the development models mean only economic development, and not social development. Buddhist realization of responsible
consumption, assistance to balance the production and consumption in society, and offering of the opportunity to maintain the sustainable economy is the core subject of this paper.

A Comprehensive Buddhist Approach to Restoration of Sustainable Society through Economic Stability is another paper which raises the concern of global challenges of the 21st century which are battle against poverty and economic instability. As these conditions are nothing but the outcome of human selfish nature of abhijjhā, byāpāda, and adhi moha, its solution is to be found in the Suttas like Aggañña and Kūtadanta. Though wealth is not denounced and poverty is not welcome in Buddhism, the lessons from Pali texts such as Kūtadanta Sutta are the best approach to restore a sustainable society.

The paper entitled Sustainable Development and Responsible Consumption: A Buddhist Introspection offers means to sustainable development which is a process that requires use of existing resources without compromising it for future generations. The writer states that the Buddhist teaching of pratityasamutpāda or interdependent co-arising as its solution. As Buddhism is against the lustful attachment towards insatiable things, Buddhist texts show us the ways to earn and share wealth virtuously and trail the path of spirituality to establish sustainable development, peace, and harmony in the society.

Our next paper on The Buddhist Eco-Friendly Construction Technology and Solutions for the Problems of Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development in Post-Modern Construction gives guideline for ordinary people to utilize their life comfort through Buddhist teachings. On the basis of the Pali texts, it explains about the eco-friendly nature that should be maintained in the monastic tradition as well as in management and construction field. The concept of responsible consumption is also discussed therein.

Our concern for the humanity is not only confined to the interpretation of Buddhist philosophical values for a better world order. As we, as individuals, have significant role to play, our next entry in the volume entitled Sustainable Religious Tourism: Is the Buddhist Approach Able to Make It Happen? warns us that
there should be a balance between tourism, money income, and protection of cultural heritage. Giving examples from various religious sites of attraction, the paper included research at the Borobudur Buddhist complex in Java, Indonesia. The application of the new 3S’s (serenity, spirituality, and sustainability) tourism concept can change the mindset of tourists who have explored tourism resources. It will help in constructing a new tourism concept with the Buddhist approach.

Education is also key to the success to train young minds to go for sustainable consumption. This is explained well in the next article, *Buddhist Approach to Education and Sustainable Consumption*. The education based on the three Buddhist principles of learning: Sila, Samadhi and Panna would lead to a good moral conduct in any person which would help in cultivating responsive sustainable living practices.

The paper on *Buddhist Approach to Happiness as a Proper Measure of Social Development* delineates the idea of economic progress not only as a tool to be understood by GDP growth but also by societal growth on all indexes. The paper further identifies the Buddhist perspective on happiness in relation to the sustainable development and its applicability in formulating indicators for judging real happiness.

*Responsible Use of Religious Properties and Sustainable Development: A Buddhist Perspective from Sri Lanka* is our next paper based upon a sociological case study of Sri Lanka. The Buddhist religious properties contribute to the sustainable development, and as the sources and resources both are drying out, there is a struggle within. With references to 25 Buddhist complexes in the Western part of Sri Lanka, which has been transformed as a place of mutual benefits for both Mahasangha and the laity. The land and its use therein has led to the establishment of educational institutions, welfare, social service, health, medical, community development, sports etc. for various purposes of society that help them to survive. The principle of responsible consumption for sustainable development is the role model suggested by this paper.

Our next contributor deals with *Buddhist Economics: The Road Not Taken for Right Living of Sustainability* as Buddhist discourses
point out the satisfaction of the self in all aspects of life. The controlling of the insatiable mind is a great destroyer. Hence, the Buddhist approach to responsible consumption must be identified. In the wake of irresponsible consumption, the research was undertaken on the basis of a structured questionnaire on 400 youth representing all the segments in the Sri Lankan society irrespective of their religious affiliation. It was identified that a productive way could be suggested to maintain a harmony among production, consumption, and preservation of different capitals that introduces a social and ecological friendly consumption pattern.

Our next paper is on *Quagmires of Postmodern Civic Society and Buddhist Anticipations and Prescriptions* which discusses the postmodern phenomenon in civic society which is too human-centric. It has been the main cause responsible for degenerating moral values and ethical system. On the basis of extensive references made in the Buddhist literature, preventive measures must be taken up. The Buddhist doctrines and practices may serve as a spring board for framing policies and action plans with a focus on inter and intra generational equity and earth-centric development.

No less important is to go through the next article entitled *Buddhist Approach to Human Society Development: Economic Ethics for a Ruler*. How a sovereign can learn from the Buddhist ideas on statecraft and human welfare is discussed in this paper. The Dharmic jurisprudence makes a ruler not only perform righteousness but also caring towards its subject. This wealth of good governance is found in plenty in the Cakkavatthi Sihanadasutta, Kutadantasutta and Aggannasutta.

Our next author is talking about a very highly unknown aspect of the Buddhist history, *Prema Mart: Learning from Kakkarapatta (A Market Town of Koliyans) for Building the Sustainable Economy*. Referring to a market town of Koliyans (Kakkarapatta) which was visited by Buddha perhaps lead to His understanding of the welfare of the people through Buddhism based economic principles. In the Vyagghapajja Sutta, the Buddha gave useful teachings for economic welfare as well as for spiritual welfare. With a deeper delving into it, the author mentored a Buddhist community running a Buddhist Shop called Prema Mart (Loving Kindness Mart). Running in
cooperative format, this Mart and its all members adopted the teaching of the economic values as stated in the Vyagghapajja Sutta.

Our next entry is of *Re-orienting Leaders in Business for Sustainable Globalisation: A Consideration of Perspectives from Buddhist Applied Ethics*. In a very deep way, the author attempts beautifully to see the balance required in this modern world of fast globalisation and cope with it. The expansion of businesses that undermines our social values and pollutes our environment has contributed to adverse trends in climate change. The core of the selfish theory of “*purpose of business is to do business*” (Friedmann) needs to be challenged and discredited if we want a better world to live. The paper also argues for an increase in corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a means to reconfigure business ethics. Therefore, *Buddha –vacana* needs to be applied to business magnates to create a sustainable globalisation.

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Thien
Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu
Prof. Amarjiva Lochan
I. CONSUMPTION AND ENVIRONMENT
ABSTRACT

In the light of modern advancement of science, technology, mass production of goods, consumerism emerged as a major trend and driving force of human behavior. It is based on the following two premises. First, the prosperity of mankind hinges on the subjugation of nature. Second, the well-being of human depends on an abundance of material goods. The first premise took its validity from Christianity based philosophy as God created the world and animals for mankind. Mankind is the master. Man is there to manipulate and control everything at his discretion even at the destruction of earth and whole other species. “And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them. And God blessed them, and he said, “Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” Genesis 1, 27-28. It is obvious that this promotes lack of respect and less concern for other species and environment. The most recent addition to the environmental degradation is the climate change.

*LLB, Attorney at Law, MA, PGD. Resident Monk, West End Buddhist Vihara.
This article will attempt to discuss issues connected with overconsumption in the world and what Buddha has told the world about understanding it and resolving it as a human social problem.

1. OVERCONSUMPTION

The overconsumption is defined as the action or fact of consuming something to an excess. It has been made a great issue in the arena of consumerist society. It has created social inequality, social injustice and social gap as some groups of people do not have access to proper consumption, let alone overconsumption. This term could cover a variety of things including excessive consumption of food, energy, electronic appliances, clothes, and cosmetics. Overconsumption has shown a negative impact on humanity, today.

The consumption is an indispensable part of life for survival. The Oxford dictionary\(^2\) defines consumption as follows “The action of using up a resource, the action of eating or drinking something, an amount of something which is used up or ingested. The purchase of goods and services by the public”. As it is defined the usage of resources is a very important aspect of consumption. It is commonly accepted that in order to meet basic human needs for survival, humans consume resources in moderation.

It is important to examine how consumption is distributed among developed, advance economies and undeveloped countries. A person born in Europe or North America will consume thirty times more of the earth resources and energies and also emit thirty time as much pollution compared to a person born in a developing country.\(^3\) Another Salient feature of developed countries is that the Americans are guilty of consuming the most resources per capita, as well as using the most inefficient technologies causing more environments damages. The US population only accounts for about five percent of the world’s population and this five percentage tend to release almost quarter of global emissions. Presently, the average

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American uses 11 kilowatts of energy in a single year.⁴

We will examine the problem of energy now and how it pollutes the environment through over consumption. The industrialization created greatest energy hunger that was not experienced ever before in the human history. To power this insatiable hunger, new energy sources were discovered such as coal, fossil fuel, nuclear power. But very solution of creating new energies resulted in a number of unsolvable problems such as global warming, melting of ice due to global warming, industrial wastes, water pollution, and air pollution. Another new aspect appears to be the frequency pollution. This is caused by numerous communication systems. It is scientifically proven that micro waves are very harmful for women’s reproductive system and could cause cancer. The electronic waves come from the modern communication equipment such as wireless routers, mobile phone signals, satellite and various types of signals. etc, The depletion of ozone layers in the sky, degradation of farming land due to insecticide and pesticide, desertification, draught in some part of the world, constant flooding are some noteworthy negative impacts. Sea pollution is another recent development through release of harmful chemical substances and over 1 trillion tons of plastic. The apparent loss of species has been identified as the result of sea pollution.

In certain parts of the world, overpopulation has added to human disasters for not having sufficient resources to address their needs.

Human Psyche

We shall now turn towards the human psyche to understand how human beings respond to overconsumption. A well-know Buddhist sutra -Ratnapala Sutta in Majjima Nikaya describes how human psyche works. A very wealthy young man having heard Buddha’s teachings left worldly life and became monk. When he was asked by the king of his homeland why he became a monk leaving all comforts in his secular life, he spelled out four factors. His first point was that ‘the world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave

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to craving’.”5 This factor appears to be true and extremely relevant even after 2600 years, today. All human beings in the world do not seem to be satisfied with what they receive. The majority of human beings in the world are looking for something new and something better something more exciting. The multinational corporations have taken the advantage of the weakness of the human psyche and human beings are bombarded with luring advertisements for acquiring new things which are not necessarily required for day-to-day living.

Another weakness in the human psyche is that we could very easily get addicted to pleasures that we have already experienced. We need the same happiness again and again or even more. The advertising industry takes the advantage of this weakness and get ready to sell more and more goods to people. This in turns increases demands, supply for the good and services more and more in the market. These demands create more unsustainable production of goods harming and destroying natural resources and environment. Those who benefit from consumerism, always highlights individualism. Multifaceted methods are used to promote individualism, self centeredness, selfishness and egoism. More customers live in isolation in the Western worlds and therefore, these new messages appeal to them tremendously.

Buddha’s Teachings

This is where we could enter into a discussion of Buddha’s teachings as relevant to consumerism as well as to unsatisfied needs of human beings.

It is stated that people who are not farsighted tend to comprehend the world as a “one-life-only” existence. This kind of beliefs give opportunities for human beings to enjoy more and more as there is no post-mortem retribution. Buddha considered a person of this nature as a person with one eye.

All human beings feel that they are lacking something or that they

are missing something even though their basic needs are already met. It is again true that in this modern world. A person is valued based on what they have in their pockets, what type of house, and car they use. A person is valued based on his/her possession rather than on his/her personal qualities.

As Buddha expounded in the Dhamma, we need to understand the interconnectedness of everything in the world. Everything is based on causes and conditions. Therefore, we need to respect life. Having a caring attitude for all beings including the natural world is essential. As mentioned in Karaniya Metta Sutta\(^6\) leading a very simple life style in harmony with nature and other creatures and learning to appreciate interconnectedness of all lives and nature become a matter of paramount importance.

The very life of Buddha is a classic example of his own teachings. He had very simple life with very little possession. He was born under a tree in a very beautiful garden. He gained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Buddhagaya in India. He set the example by paying gratitude to the Bo Tree for the protection and shade provided to attain Buddhahood. Most of his life time was spent in the open air like forests, gardens, grows and caves. He was a great traveler who travelled thousands of miles by foot to propagate the Dhamma among the masses. In his final journey to Kusinara for final passing away of the Buddha addressed the monks as follows “Ananda Vesali is delightful, the Udena shrine is delightful, Gotamaka shrine is delightful, Sttambaka shrine is delightful, Bahuputta shrine is delightful, Capala shrine is delightful”\(^7\).

He was an admirer of nature in its true sense of beauty without any attachment to it. Most of his enlightened disciples also took the same stand “there are beautiful forests which do to attract ordinary men. The passionless Arahants are attracted by such forests, because they are not seekers of sensual pleasures”\(^8\) In Maha Mangala Sutta

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he recommended to live in proper environments as a great blessing “Patisrupadesavaso ca”.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHISM THAT CAN BE USED TO UNDERSTAND OVERCONSUMPTION AND ITS EFFECTS TO ENVIRONMENT

The Buddhism teaches the doctrine of dependent origination. It is a doctrine based on cause and effect. The Buddha explains in Mahatanhasankaya Sutta that the Samsaric life (the cycle of birth and death) arises due to ignorance. How a being is formed due to many causes and conditions.

“With formation as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as a condition, mentality-materiality; with mentality-materiality; as a condition, the six fold sense base; with the six fold sense base as a condition, contact; with contact as a condition, feeling; feeling with as a condition as a craving…,”

It is clear from the above quotation that ignorance is the prime cause for this existence. The same ignorance leads beings to pollute the environment and consumed overly. Craving is the second major cause for the pollution of the environment. The manufacturer of this century encourage the consumers by creating unnecessary wants.

An eminent Buddhist scholar Bhikku Bodhi presents the case very well. He pointed out that recent developments of the World Bank and IMF and the opening of markets to international trade and capital have been deleterious. He writes “the corporate economy is not only driven by its own inherent greed but it’s very success depend on arousing greed in others” emphasized by the advertising industry where “there is hardly a human weakness it hesitates to play upon to promote sales: sexual attractions and status, pride and cupidity, fear and worry, arrogance and vanity—all fair game in the drive to boost profits.”

11. Bhikku Bodhi The Buddha’s message for the next century in Sunday Island News
The global power struggle is also an important factor. The world leaders constantly raise arms such as nuclear weapons, which are deadliest to human existence in this little planet and inventing more disastrous weapons and upgrading conventional weapons to more lethal spending incalculable amount of money and resources for these in vain effort.

The Buddha’s teachings and values have entirely different set of manifestations. The Buddhist values emphasize simplicity instead of complexity, moderation instead of over indulgence generosity instead of greed, loving-kindness instead of hatred and peace instead of war. In Karaniyametta Sutta\textsuperscript{12} It is stated in Pali, that a person who wishes to attain that state of calm (nibbana) he must be gentle (mudu) We must be gentle for the environment and things we use. Contended (santussako), (enoughness), (Santrindiyo) controlled in senses (eye ear nose tongue touch and mind) because people try to satisfy these senses overly they fall into the consumerism trap. He should not do any slight wrongs that wise men will condemn. If a person has will power to follow these important qualities and principles he shall develop very healthy and sustainable consumer habits making himself environment friendly person.

Buddhism provides a wider basis on which man can sustain the environment and other creatures. Contentment is a major virtue in Buddhism. “Contentment is the greatest wealth”.\textsuperscript{13} When we explore this utterance from the Buddha there is very meaningful story which is relevant to our tropic behind this verse. King Pasenadi in India was an over eater. He came to hear teachings of Buddha after eating and he was feeling uncomfortable. When Buddha inquired the reason, he revealed that he has been an overeater. Then the Buddha advised him “O king one ought to observe moderation in eating. For in moderate eating there is comfort.” He instructed reduce food intake day by day until he reaches moderate level. The

\footnotesize{Paper Sri Lanka 10 May 1998.}
king did as he was told and found that by eating less he became slimmer and felt better and enjoyed better health. “Mattannuta ca Bhattacharimpanthan ca sayanasanam” “Moderation in food, abode and intent on higher thoughts” Buddha also emphasized the moderation (right dosage) food, shelter, clothing, in everything in general.

The Buddhist concept of recycling is found in story where Buddha’s attendant Ananda went to preach to Udena King’s 500 concubines in the palace. These women offered five hundred valuable clothes to Ananda. He accepted all of the five hundred clothes. Subsequently, king heard about this and was upset. Ananda therò told the king the robes are stored in robes stores. When a monk needs a robe it is given. He will use and repair it for the maximum usage. When it is no longer possible to use, it will be used as an under robe. When it is no longer possible to use as an under robe, it is used as a bed sheet. When it is no longer possible to use as bed sheet, it is used as a doormat. When it is no longer possible to use as a doormat the clothe is used as cloth to hold hot pots in the kitchen. When it is no longer possible to use any more used to repair walls mix with mud. Buddhist monks used discarded clothes in the cemetery and other places to make robes. This is very good example of concept of recycling.

The idea in Buddhism is to use the resources without wasting and throwing away. To have a self imposed limitation for one’s consumption appears to be a great solution for most of modern problems. Due to fast food and highly luxurious life styles, nearly one quarter of world population is facing obesity and related problems. Obesity also causes mental sickness due over thinking about appearance. Craving for big buildings and bigger houses and not using them will increase carbon foot print causing environmental damages. China alone has over 1.5 million second

14. Ven. W Sarada Maha Thera 1993, Treasury of Truth Illustrated Dhammapada, Taipe Taiwan, The Corporate Body of Buddha Educational Foundation, Verse 185 p396 Anupavadoanupaghato Pathimokke ca Sanvaro Mattannutabhattacharimpanthan ca sayanasanam... ... ....

or third condominium houses bought as investment and never occupied people while many millions of living without houses.

According to a famous meditation master, Thich NhatHanh “much of our suffering comes from not eating mindfully... we need to look deeply at how we grow, gain, and consume our food, so we can eat in ways that preserve our collective well-being, minimize our suffering and the suffering of other species, and allow the earth to continue to be a source of life for all of us... while we eat, we destroy living beings and the environment”.

The basic Buddhist code of conduct is five precepts. “Abandoning the taking life, he dwells refraining from taking life, without stick or sword, scrupulous, compassionate, trembling for the welfare of all living beings” The first precept is simply “I vow to refrain from taking life.” According to master Nhat Hanh, who reformulated and recomposed the precept says that what is involved in the first precept is aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I vow to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.

The main theme of this precept is that life is valuable and should be protected. As Nhat Hanh comments further, “it [life] is everywhere, inside us and all around us; it has so many forms” and that “we humans are made entirely of non-human elements, such as plants, minerals, earth, clouds, and sunshine.” The heart of this precept stems from the realization that living creatures are being killed all over the world all of the time. From this realization, most

18. This translation is taken from The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture ed. Heinz Bechert & Richard Gombrich p. 54.
20. ibid.
21. ibid.
people are naturally drawn “to cultivate compassion and use it as a source of energy for the protection of people, animals, plants, and even minerals.” Nhat Hanh claims that this practice of cultivating compassion and protecting life includes the ecosystem because the destruction of the environment is linked to human destruction. He puts it, “protecting human life is not possible without also protecting the lives of animals, plants, and minerals.” He concludes that anyone who adheres to this precept should be a protector of the environment because it entails the practice of protecting all lives, which includes the lives of our fellow human beings as well as other animals, plants, and minerals.

Clearly, this precept warns against overpopulation, overconsumption and the resulting environmental degradation because none promotes the cultivation of compassion. The compassion of the first precept is not the only way people should respond to the world’s suffering. The second precept provides another way. Traditionally, the second precept is translated as “I vow to refrain from stealing.” Nhat Hanh, though, reinterpreted the second precept as, Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing and oppression, I vow to cultivate loving kindness and learn ways to work for the well being of people, animals, plants and minerals. I vow to practice generosity by sharing my time, energy and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth. This precept is in many ways an extension of the first. As the first emphasized compassion, this precept emphasizes loving kindness,

Both of which are two ethical precepts that come out of the

22. ibid.
24. ibid.
25. This classical translation is taken from The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture, ed. Heinz Bechert & Richard Gombrich p. 54.
26. Thich Nhat Hanh’s, For a Future to Be Possible: Commentaries on the Five Wonderful Precepts, p. 56.
historical Buddha’s teachings on the features of love. Exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression are all causes of much suffering all over the planet. The cultivation of loving kindness requires that “we make every effort to stop exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression... to promote the well-being of people, animals, plants and minerals.” This is done through individuals coming together as a community, looking deeply at the situation, exercising intelligence, and developing appropriate ways to address the most pressing problems in today’s society. Exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression are all driving forces within overpopulation and overconsumption. This association is all the more apparent as we examine more of Nhat Hanh’s works.

Of all the precepts, the fifth precept is the most specifically related to the issues of overpopulation and overconsumption. The fifth precept is traditionally translated as “I vow to refrain from taking intoxicants.” Nhat Hanh reimagines the fifth precept as, Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming. I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the

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transformation of society.\textsuperscript{30}

**State Responsibility towards sustainable consumption**

The modern democracy and political ideology emerged in the west with deep influence of Christianity and science. While Christianity emphasizes that God create the world and animals for human consumption, science always wanted to conquer nature in various ways. Both these institutional attitudes to nature are not healthy. These attitudes led human beings to exploit and consume the resources at a rapid rate. But Buddhism goes beyond this point. It extends its protection to the animal and even plants. In Chakkavatthisihanada sutta\textsuperscript{31} there was a wheel turning monarch. He keeps Dhamma (justice, righteousness) as his guide. He rules his kingdom righteously. He accorded guard to ward and protect for his own household, his troops, nobles, Bhrahmins and householders, town and country folks, ascetic, for beasts and birds. The most important fact in this Sutta, is the correlation between the king’s righteousness and people righteousness. When the king becomes righteousness ministers, officers, the people and nature become righteousness. When the king becomes unrighteousness ministers, officers, the people and nature also become hostile and uncooperative.

A similar view is expressed in Adammika Sutta.\textsuperscript{32} If the head of the state is corrupt it automatically spreads to the lowest strata in the society. When poverty strikes, it leads to degradation of morals, (stealing, using weapons, killing) again this leads to exploitation and pollution of natural resources in a more aggressive manner. It is the duty of the state to provide protection and look after welfare and best interest of the people. In Aganna Sutta\textsuperscript{33} the Buddha gives an account of the origins and evolution of the human species. Self luminous and floating beings came to the world from Abassara

\textsuperscript{30} ibid.


Brahma world, Gradually, self luminous beings became greedy. They took what is not given. They fought each other. They selected a king Earth was self-luminous beings become very greedy. They selected a king called “Mahasammata”. His duty was to protect the people and property. It is this level of trust is placed on state to protect best interest of its citizen. In Kutadanta Sutta\textsuperscript{34} a Brahmin wanted to perform a sacrifice. In an answer to a question of this Brahmin, the Buddha explained to him how ancient king Maha Vijitha performed his sacrifice. His chaplain advised him to have bloodless sacrifice. His chaplain advised him to eradicate that poverty which was widely spread. His chaplain advised not to tax the citizen and also to distribute grain and fodder to those cultivate and rear animals to those who works in the trade give capital, and to those in the government services he assigned proper living wages.” With these incentives, once the country was prosperous the postponed sacrifice was performed. But in this sacrifice no animals were slain. No trees were cut for the sacrificial posts. The sacrifice was conducted in friendly atmosphere. The above discussion lights on the fact that Buddha really did not appreciate any form of violence to animals or plants. The State has a greater role to play in controlling consumerism. New incentives should be introduced for green consumers those who consume less and dispose their garbage properly. The governments must initiate tax incentives to moderate and green consumers.

The Buddhism emphasizes the power of mind over everything. The mind is the forerunner of everything. The mind has two streams of thought. Thought based on greed hatred and delusion are negative unwholesome and harmful. The thoughts based on generosity loving-kindness and wisdom is positive and wholesome. The Buddha taught that respect for life and the natural world is essential. The resources must not be exploited or over consumed. By living simply one can be in harmony with other creatures and learn to appreciate the interconnectedness of all lives. The simplicity of life involves developing openness to our environment and relating to the world with awareness and responsive perception. It also

enables us to enjoy without possessing, and mutually benefit each without manipulation.”

There are very clear solution to the overconsumption. That is eight noble path come under four noble truths Right Understanding, Right Intent, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. Whole noble eight fold path is directly relevant to human life style. We can shape up our life and consumption habits based on understanding and practice of Eight Noble path. The solution is readily available.

The first noble truth, the Right Understanding can be used to understand the nature of overconsumption. It can be reinterpreted in the light of this discussion. Basically, Right Understanding means clear knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, The four noble truth are Suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and path leading to cessation of suffering. encompassing the “Three Basic Facts of Existence”: Anicca (Impermanence), Anatta (Pali for “non self” or “insubstantiality”; in Sankrit Anatman) and Dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness). If we understand unsatisfactoriness of the consumption. Then we do not need to run after too much consumption no matter how much you consumed you will be unsatisfied. Without understanding the Four Noble Truths (the “diseases”) of what use is the “cure” (The Eightfold Path) cannot be used meaningfully. I will deal with few facts of the noble eight fold path.

Right thoughts is another important factor in the noble eight fold path to shape the overconsumption behavior. With clear knowledge, clear thinking follows suit. This is known as initial application (of knowledge).

Thoughts mould a person’s nature and direct their course and direction of action. Unwholesome thoughts will debase and erode a person’s character over time, while wholesome thoughts will lift him/her higher and higher up.

In particular, Right Thoughts are: Renunciation (Nekkhamma Sankappa) of worldly pleasures, and selflessness (altruism). This

is opposed to insatiable desires and selfishness. Loving-kindness (Metta) or good will towards people, including yourself; which is opposed to hatred, ill-will, aversion, dislike, detest and spite. Harmlessness (Avihimsa) or compassion, as opposed to cruelty and callousness. When these type of wholesome thoughts are maintained, it is very hard to harm the environment and resources.

Right Livelihood is another important pillar of sustainable consumption. As long as your livelihood does not harm no one and that would include animal and the environment, since that impacts all beings then it’s right livelihood. Buddha wouldn’t put things in a negative context, but it should be obvious that any attempt at purifying thoughts, words and actions would be severely hindered by five kinds of trade/business/job that clearly are NOT right livelihood: Weapons (arms) production, Human slavery, Breeding of animals for slaughter / slaughtering animals per se, Illegal drugs (narcotics), alcohol, cigarettes and the like: producing anything known to be bad for sentient beings and Poisons: producing poisons, pollution and other harmful substances.

Right Effort is very good tool to cope with overconsumption. To do anything in life requires determination, persistence and energy. The sustained, lifelong practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, to lead a pure and spiritual life, is the very definition of Right Effort. Right effort includes developing good habits, such as practicing right mindfulness, right meditation and other positive moral acts in your daily life not just occasionally. The same effort should be taken to minimized negative effects of overconsumption.\(^\text{36}\)

Right Mindfulness is practice of Right Mindfulness, in particular, requires Right Effort. It is the constant watching/observation of your own body and actions, feelings, thoughts and mental objects (your imagination/images in your mind).

This self-observation is useful in two major ways. It complements Vipassana (Insight) Meditation. Satipattana Sutta\(^\text{37}\) As a subset to insight, it helps you gain better understanding of yourself, the ever-
changing (impermanent) nature of your own mind and body. It enables you to check any subconscious or careless mental / verbal / physical actions that are negative or bad. Anapanasati, mindfulness of breath, helps cultivate the seven factors of awakening as defined in the Anapanasati Sutta: sati (mindfulness), dhammavicaya (analysis), viriya (persistence), piti (rapture), passadhi (serenity), samadhi (concentration), and upekkha (equanimity).

When you develop a peaceful mind, you can judge what you really want to consume for sustenance of life without getting into consumerism trap.

It is clear that we have remedies at hand to tackle overconsumption. It is a matter of how genuine our effort to combat overconsumption and make our planet sustainable and continue for future generations. We can cope with these burning issues at several levels: Individual level, societal level, corporative level, government level and international level.

At individual level, the person can reduce his/her personal consumption moderately. The person can grow more trees. If no space is available, at least more plants can be grown to absorb carbon dioxide.

We can win the fight for sustainability for future generations. Sustainability is the ability to hold or endure the nature without degradation or destruction. We can see an ideal environmentally friendly nation is Kingdom of Bhutan. Bhutan is not only carbon neutral it is carbon negative. They sell clean Green hydro powered electricity to neighbouring countries. They give free electricity to villagers to prevent burning of firewood for cooking or heating. Their country’s 72 percent of entire land is covered with forest. It is compulsory to have minimum 60 percent forest coverage of the entire land by Bhutanese constitution. Recently the government built forest biological corridor to connect all the national forest so that animal can freely move around the forests. The government takes action to prevent poaching, hunting, mining and pollution in their parks. Recently, Bhutan government has planned to make all government offices to operate paperless. The Bhutanese government gives subsidies to buy hybrid or electric cars and LED lights in order to reduce the environment damage.
“The Buddha’s teaching is to utilize nature in the same way as a bee collects pollen from a flower, neither polluting its beauty nor depleting its fragrance. Just as the bee manufactures honey out of pollen, so man should be able to find happiness without harming the natural world in which he lives.” (In Singalovada sutta38 “Ekenabhogebhunjeyya, dvhikamarppayojaye, catutthmcanidhapeyya, apadasubhavissati” The income of the householder should be divided the income into four portions. Out of the four, one portion should be used for his daily expenses. Two portions should be used for the progression of his business. One portion should be deposited carefully for the use in future in the case of emergency. If income of householder is used properly as advised by the Buddha. There is no room for overconsumption.

The Buddhist ethics and right mindfulness are very important in this regard. Ethics and values must be part of our daily life. Then we can be accounted of our actions. Ethics will help us to be responsible for our actions. All aspect of life should be guided by ethics. Material prosperity should not be achieved at the expense of moral values. Thus economics should be subordinated to ethics. If right mindfulness is developed by the consumer the overconsumption can be moderated by the consumer himself. In Ambalatthika Rahulovada Sutta the Buddha advised his own son as follows. “Rahula, when you wish to do an action with body, you should reflect upon that same bodily action thus: ‘would this action that, I wish to do with the body lead to my own affliction or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results? When you reflect, if you know: This action I wish to do with the body would lead to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to affliction of both; it is unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results,’ then you should not do such action with body.”39. This quotation represents self correcting test.


Where a person can determine for himself, Whether his actions are beneficial or harmful to himself and the society at large?. Whether his consumption are beneficial or harmful to himself and the society at large?. The world is driven by supply and demand but if this can be changed from supply and demand to necessity to supply The world would be a better place to live. “Bahuno janassa attaya hitaya sukaya” The Buddhist attitude is to concern for the good, happiness and benefit of the vast majority of people. One is called upon to ask the question whether such action has good results on oneself or on others? One has to probe into this aspect very carefully: paccavekkhitva paccavekkhitva kammam kattabbam.

CONCLUSION

As explained in Rattapala Sutta “The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind’.” Since there cannot be a true ownership. Why are we trying to possess many things during our short life span at the cost of harming many living beings and damaging others but we have to leave everything behind at our death. We are leading towards self-destruction, precipice by trying to pursuing or chasing limitless wealth from through infinite growth in finite world. In this process we have destroyed and destabilized very life supporting ecosystems and other supporting conditions. I prefer to end this discussion with quotation of Dalai Lama: “The world grows smaller and smaller, more and more inter-dependent...... today more than ever before life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life” (H.H. the Dalai Lama).

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ATTAINING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY THROUGH THE TEACHINGS OF THE KHANDHAKA OF THE THERAVĀDA VINAYA PIṬAKA

by Li Wai Sum

ABSTRACT

This paper stems from my readings into the Theravāda Vinaya Piṭaka and my initial finding that many key principles discussed in this ancient book of the 5th century BC have practical relevance for addressing the concept of attaining a sustainable development of a modern society. Through the understanding of the Theravāda Vinaya Piṭaka and the teachings of the Khandhaka, my aim is to explore how do Vinaya texts facilitate and contribute to the attainment of a sustainable society, through the practices of non-harming, responsible consumption, and simplification of desires, with the effort and purpose of highlighting the practicality of this ancient wisdom for personal and social growth of contemporary issues.

The Vinaya Piṭaka is one of the world’s oldest rulebooks that provides specific instructions on how a monastic community should exist and how its members should coexist harmoniously. Still used today, it is a comprehensive law code, there is evidence of extensive discussion about the nature of the acts involved, and the reasoning that leads to decisions of those acts. The Khandhaka is one important section of the Vinaya Piṭaka and it offers a vision of living that counters the unwholesome

* M.Phil. Student, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.
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and unskilful ways to approaching life and interacting with the world and human communities. Following the rules implemented accordingly, it provides injunctions for further enactment of that unwholesomeness. Indeed, the teachings of the Khandhaka for exploring contemporary questions on a sustainable development of a society seems in tune with the Buddha’s ancient purpose of formulating the precepts: “to better develop the entire Buddhist functionality, to make Buddhism as a whole more harmonious, happy, and tranquil, so that is more conducive to spreading the Buddhist faith, so that Buddhists may improve their lives, and so that, ultimately, Buddhists achieve the perfect life, that is, realization of the great ideal of ‘perpetuating the Dharma and liberating sentient beings’” (Kai, 2015, p.150).

This paper proposes to undertake a study into the teachings of the Khandhaka, seeing it as, far from being simply an item of historical text for monastics, it also offers a vision of living for laymen with the proper attitudes of being careful about the whole range of products we acquire for our lifestyle and by consciously be responsible for the consumption of the things we do choose to exploit, and without harming to others. Therefore, this paper intends to provide directions for reflection on important issues facing in a community through the teachings of the Khandhaka, and to discuss with the main focus on the practice of non-harming, responsible consumption, and simplification of desires. The discussion will also be expanded on in the respective sections of the Khandhaka as the rules pertaining to the simplicity of food, lodging, and dressing. In addition, discussions will include the implications on how the teachings can meet with the relevance for today’s materialism and consumerism, for the purposes of attaining a sustainable society that will help enrich the understanding of anyone who wishes to see why the Vinaya is worth studying and learning in our world today.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Buddhism, disputes and suffering emerge out of desires, hatred, and ignorance. To develop compromise, congruity, and harmony, it is fundamental to develop virtues and morality which are valuable and insightful, in both social and religious aspects would lead to sustainable improvement, as well as the development of the world. In any society, people make choices in
different aspects every day, the factors of whether the choices we make are correct or not are determined by whether they will lead into happiness or suffering (Sraman, 2014, p.248). The teaching of the Buddha in the Middle Way is one of the primary teachings in Buddhism. The Middle Way comprises of eight righteousness, as seen in the Noble Eightfold Path. In tune with the Noble Eightfold Path, the understanding of the Theravāda Vinaya leads to a better understanding of social, political and economic issues. The teachings of the Khandhaka in the Vinaya Piṭaka is of imperative core values which provide guiding principles toward figuring out how to settle on appropriate decisions that will deliver outcomes which are beneficial to both the monastics, as well as the lay people, to live a full and meaningful life which is, perhaps, in both the ancient and present days.

This paper aims to examine and discuss the concept of sustainability from a context of specific teachings in the Khandhaka. It will discuss how the Khandhaka texts and the concepts of the sustainable development of society are inter-related, and how do the teachings of the Khandhaka be reflected and applied to the modern society in achieving sustainable development. In this paper, the discussion is confined to the particular areas relating to food, lodging, and dressing which are shown in the Khandhaka, these areas will be discussed in three subsequent sections for a more in-depth examination of its contemporary application as the practice of non-harming, responsible consumption, and simplification of desires.

2. INTERPRETATION OF THE BUDDHIST APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

In Buddhism, there are three fundamental teachings relating to each phenomenon: suffering, impermanence, and non-self. Since each phenomenon is subject to dependent co-arising, they are also subject to ceasing. Therefore, Buddhism does not encourage clinging to any of these phenomena. As claimed by Kovács Gábor (2011, p.21), sustainable development for a Buddhist implies rather an inner spiritual quality which has to be realized by ongoing practice of virtues, wisdom and concentration. The
three teachings above are so significant in the Buddhist teachings that they appear in the Pāli Canon repeatedly. The first factor, impermanence, is characterized in the discourses by the three stages of transitoriness: arising, existing and ceasing. As such, all phenomena are impermanent. This means that clinging to any phenomena which are impermanent lead to unhappiness. Because individual seeks happiness from the impermanent things he or she always meets with suffering. The second factor, suffering, refers to unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, and pain. Since every phenomenon is impermanent, it cannot be made as a basis for obtaining true happiness and satisfactory experience. As the discourses point out, whatever is impermanent that is unsatisfactory. Therefore, for those who misconceive these basic teachings are likely to end up in greed, brutal competition, and conflicts, in the pursuit of their social and economic goals. The third factor, non-self, arises from the suffering of every phenomenon, there is nothing which can be recognized as permanent or self as an I in nature, since this an I is always subject to change, to decay, and to cease.

Since the modern idea of sustainable development of a society requires an ongoing procedure of achieving economic and societal improvement, and it assumes and believes the development should be constantly in progress. Therefore, it is argued that the modern worldview of implementing ‘sustainable development’, solely based on the Buddhist worldview which rejects the notion of permanency, can’t be accomplished.

3. THE TEACHINGS OF THE KHANDHAKA AND THEIR CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

The Vinaya, which consists of three parts: the Suttavibhaṅga, the Khandhaka, and the Parivāra, which governs and regulates the conducts of the Bhikkhus (Akira, 1990, p.71). The name Khandhaka, means “mass, multitude” and is used in the names for the 22 chapters of part of the Vinaya. The Khandhaka is divided into two parts: Mahāvagga “great division” and the Cullavagga, “small division” (Hinüber 1996, p.16).

In order to achieve a sustainable society, the wellbeing of the present generation and the future generation are key components
for great consideration (Yamamoto, 2010, p.136). Due to the vast content of the text, the following discussion will be confined to the aspects of food, lodging, and dressing. This paper aims at demonstrating a clear approach, as reflected in the Khandhaka chapters, towards good moral quality, happiness, and positive procurement, where each individual is recognized himself the personal and social responsibility, for the sake of himself and for others.

3.1. Practice of non-harming

In the Khandhaka, there are some implications for the ways to achieving sustainable development through the practice of non-harming. On the consumption of food, in the Mahāvagga, there is a rule that explicitly states, “Monks, there should be no inciting (anyone) to onslaught on creatures. Whoever should (so) incite, should be dealt with according to the rule” (Mv.V.10.10, p.259). Moreover, since killing with intent is prohibited, the Buddha encouraged the consumption of meat shall meet with three respects as: not seen, heard or suspected (Mv.VI.31.14, p.325).

Moreover, there are specific rules regarding the prohibition of consuming certain kinds of meat. In the Mahāvagga, it states, “Monks, you should not make use of human flesh. Whoever should make use of it, there is a grave offence. Nor, monks, should you make use of flesh without inquiring about it. Whoever should (so) make use of it, there is an offence of wrong-doing (Mv.VI.23.9, p.298). Furthermore, it states that “One should not consume elephant flesh...horse flesh...dog flesh...snake flesh...lion flesh...tiger flesh...leopard flesh...bear flesh...hyena flesh. Whoever should do so: an offense of wrong doing” (Mv.VI.23.10-15, p.299).

Not only consuming meat killed on purpose is an offense of wrong doing but also hurting the animals is also prohibited. In the Mahāvagga, it states, “Monks, you should not catch hold of cows by their horns, nor should you catch hold of them by their ears, nor should you catch hold of them by their dewlaps, nor should you catch hold of them by their tails, nor should you mount on their backs. Whoever should (so) mount, there is an offence of wrong-doing. Nor should you touch their privy parts with lustful thoughts. Whoever should (so) touch them, there is a grave offence. Nor
should you kill young calves. Whoever should kill them should be dealt with according to the rule” (Mv.V.9.3, pp.254-255).

Furthermore, the practice of non-harming is extended to the protection of small living creatures. In the Cullavagga, the Buddha allows the use of a water strainer which is one of the primary requisites for Bhikkhus (Cv.V.13.1, p.162). As states in the Pacittiya 20 and 62, the main functions of using a water strainer are not only to provide clean water but also to protect small living beings in the water from being harmed. Moreover, in the Cullavagga, there is another rule implying the protection of living creatures: “...Whoever returns last from alms-going in the village, if there is left-over food and he wants it, he may eat it. If he does not want it, he should throw it away where there are no crops to speak of or drop it in water where there are no living creatures to speak of” (Cv.VIII.5.2-3, pp.302-303).

The Khandhaka concerning the practice of non-harming is also reflected in the utilization of materials for lodging purpose. In the Mahāvagga, there are prohibitions against the use of extensive creature skins and cow-hide: “Monks, large hides should not be used: a lion’s hide, a tiger’s hide, a panther’s hide. Whoever should use (any of these), there is an offence of wrong-doing” (Mv.V.10.6, p.257); “Nor, monks, should a cow-hide be used. Whoever should use one, there is an offence of wrong-doing. Nor, monks, should any hide be used. Whoever should use one,

In the aspects of dressing and personal hygiene, the spirit of the practice of non-harming for the protection of the environment can also be seen in the rules pertaining to the use of natural resources encouraged by the Buddha. Instead of using soap for washing the body, Bhikkhus are encouraged to use an unscented natural powder called chunam. In the Mahāvagga, it states, “I allow, monks, for one who has itch or a small boil or a running sore or an affliction of thick scabs or for one whose body smells nasty, chunams as medicines; for one who is not ill dung clay, boiled colouring matter. I allow you, monks, a pestle and mortar” (Mv. VI.9.2, p.274). According to the Commentary, Bhikkhus are allowed to use chunam or other natural resources such as dung, and clay for personal hygiene.

Although the use of natural resources is encouraged during the
time of the Buddha, a leather footwear embellished with lion skin, tiger skin, panther skin, otter skin, cat skin, squirrel skin, or flying fox skin is not allowed (Mv.V.2.4, p.247). For the purpose of fully utilized an item, the Commentary states that if one removes the offensive part of the footwear, one is allowed to wear what remains.

The concept of the practice of non-harming is extended to the settlement of Community transaction issues, in the manner of trust, unity, and harmony. At the times of the Buddha, when a Community adheres to the correct forms in its transactions, it shows that it deserves the trust of its fellow Communities. Thus, adherence to the correct forms is not a mere formality, it is a way in which Communities earn trust from one another. In the Cullavagga, it states that a duty-issue or a Community transaction is settled by means of one principle: face-to-face (Cv.IV.14.34, p.140)\(^1\), of what constitutes a valid transaction divides this principle into two broad factors: 1) the transaction must be in accordance with the Dhamma, which means the Community follows the proper procedure in issuing a statement, and it must be united, which means the Community issuing the statement is qualified to do so.

In the modern sense, we can learn from the rule of making transactions legally, acting under the law, and without depriving any interest of other parties, that means the relationship among different parties is based on genuine and mutual trust. Modern people can also learn from the Cullavagga in settling issues, since the Community issues and transactions are settled through the direct face-to-face means, and the justification of the settlements are in accordance with the dhamma and morality, it shows that people are intended to seek solution genuinely and sincerely during the process. In contrast to the modern society, people tend to settle disputes through advanced technology, for instance, conversations

\(^1\) The term “face-to face” refers to a way of dealing with issues with: the Community, the Dhamma, the Vinaya, and the individuals: with the Community: the full number of bhikkhus competent for the transaction has come, if the consent of those who should send consent has been conveyed, if those who are present do not protest---Mv.IX.3.6; with the Dhamma, the Vinaya: when the issue is settled by means of the Dhamma, the Vinaya, the Teacher’s instruction; with the individuals: both whoever quarrels and whoever he quarrels with, opposed on the issue, are present (Cv.IV.14.16, p.125).
over the internet or putting the issues to the courts; it implies that those people often tend to seek absolute victory over the other party, based on legal and administrative techniques. Therefore, in this sense, disputes and conflicts over a range from small companies to different countries are unlikely to be diminished, and perhaps neither a sustainable society nor an everlasting world peace can be achieved.

Since the development of compassion and loving-kindness are fundamental teachings in Buddhism, it can be achieved through the practice of non-harming to others. Being compassionate to others in actions of body, speech and mind help to create harmony among societies. Since the upmost aim of Buddhism is the eradication of suffering, numerous authors affirmed the importance of fulfilling non-harming business activities, for instance, law enforcement against child labour, therefore the next generations from the developing countries can be able to receive education, and not profit-maximization in order to create a healthier atmosphere among societies (Sree, 2014, p. 248). In tune with the statement of P.A. Payutto (1992), he emphasizes that decent wellbeing is indispensable for spiritual perfection, it means that the basic needs of human beings must be met, and they must be satisfied exclusively by proper and non-harming labour. Therefore, appropriate wellbeing ensured honest work is not just for the necessary basis, but also a necessity for sustainable inner development which is an ongoing spiritual perfection towards the eradication of suffering.

In order to achieve a sustainable society, to live in harmony with animals and the environment should also be well considered. In the Mahāvagga, not only killing with intent is prohibited but also consuming meat in a moderate approach of not seen, heard or suspected is always encouraged by the Buddha (Mv.VI.31.14, p.325). Throughout the Khandhaka texts, we can find that the implementation of the rules by the Buddha is associated with friendliness to the environment, he encouraged his disciples to utilize natural materials instead of using those which may be harmful to the environment. Furthermore, protection and respect of living beings, from the small living creatures in the water to the huge animals in the forest, are also emphasized. The rules pertaining
to the protection and respect of the animals from being deprived of extinction which helps to sustain a healthy ecosystem which is also important and beneficial to the human world. In addition, the protection of living beings is a way for the practice of compassion and loving-kindness, which is crucial to our spiritual development.

3.2. Responsible consumption

In the *Khandhaka*, there are rules pertaining to the consumption of food, of lodging material, and of dressing which are of contemporary relevance and modern application through responsible consumption.

Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu states the attitude and reasons for the consumption of food taken by Bhikkhus are for rational purposes which is satisfy their basic human needs: that is a Bhikkhu takes his almsfood simply for the survival of the body, for the support of his holy life rather than for beautification nor any sensual pleasure. Therefore, a Bhikkhu contemplating: “Thus will I destroy my old feelings (of hunger) and not create new feelings (from overeating). I will maintain myself, be blameless, and live in comfort” (Ṭhānissaro, 2013). In the *Khandhaka*, this concept was further developed and extended to the allowance of eating and picking up the food while it has been falling during the course of being presented (Cv.V.26, p.184). This allowance is granted because it represents the way of the relinquishment made by the benefactors and it implies that the receiver should have a responsibility to fully consume and to utilize anything given by the benefactors.

In the *Cullavagga*, the Buddha allows five lodgings simply on dwelling and protection purposes, they are a dwelling, a barrel-vaulted building, a multi-storied building, a gabled building, and a cell (Cv.VI.1.2, p.205). In the *Khandhaka*, there are rules concerning the effective use of lodging materials which were originally prohibited by the Buddha. There are exception to the use of a dais, a throne, or anything covered with cotton batting which are originally prohibited if the legs of the furniture are cut down to the proper length; fierce animal decoration have been removed in a throne and if a cotton-batting blanket has combed out into cotton down and has made into pillows respectively (Cv.VI.2.6, p.210). In
addition, according to the *Mahāvagga*, if the unallowable remaining of furnishings are made into floor coverings may also be allowed (Mv.V.10.5, p.257). In other words, these prohibited luxury items should be used only after they have been converted into something more practical and appropriate. In the Cullavagga, it also allows that if for those items which cannot be converted into a more appropriate way, they can be exchanged for other objects which are profitable and useful (Cv.VI.19, p.245). Another application shows that the hut should be dismantled due to inappropriate construction, in a way that the building materials should be used again, and the offender of the inappropriate construction is responsible to take back the materials belong to him (Ṭhānissaro, 2013). Therefore, as seen in the above rules, the Buddha did not make a sharp prohibition as a whole, rather he was lenient by granting allowances on those parts which can be reused, as much as they can be.

This concept can also be found in the aspect of dressing in the Khandhaka. There are rules concerning self- responsibility of keeping one’s robe in good condition and in good repair. In the *Mahāvagga*, it states that a candidate for ordination must have a set of robes before admitting to the Community, once the candidate is ordained, he is expected to keep his robes in good condition and to take certain measures to repair them, and to replace them if they get worn after use (Mv.I.70.2, p.115). The functions of using a robe cloth are simply to counteract cold, heat, touches of flies, wind, sun, and retiles, and is simply to cover the bodily parts that cause shame, again, rather than for the purposes of beautification nor sensual pleasure (Ṭhānissaro, 2013).

To repair and to utilize fully a robe is highlighted in the *Khandhaka*. In the *Mahāvagga*, one is encouraged to get as much as patching materials as needed from a cast-off cloth. In the *Mahāvagga*, it lists out five means of repairing cloth, they are, patching, stitching, folding, sealing and strengthening (Mv.VIII.14.2, pp.412-413). It reflects that full utilization of robes is encouraged and emphasized. A new robe would be used for replacement only when it is no longer repaired.

The rules set for responsible consumption of robe materials through sharing and giving are also implemented. In the *Mahāvagga*, it states that if a group of Bhikkhus enters a charnel ground to
gather cast-off cloth from the corpses, for those who are able to obtain cloth should share and give portions to those who do not (Mv.VIII.4, p.399). Therefore, in this way, robe materials can likely be distributed equally, for those who obtain excessively of cloth than what they actually need would not lead to waste through the practice of sharing and giving, and also for those who do not get it originally from the charnel ground can also benefit from it.

In the modern sense, Buddhism teaches us the manner of how to consume different materials. To a monk who has newly been initiated into the sangha, this knowledge is fundamental to practise Buddhist precepts. It teaches him to use his intellect to examine carefully the objects consumed and their end results (Sree, 2014, p.248-249). The Khandhaka suggests how one can perform a better and fulfilling life by taking his own responsibility on making consumption decisions which provide guidance for the modern people, for instances, when one received requisites from others, one is more likely to be responsible to utilize fully and wisely of the requisites given. In this sense, we can find that the concept of recycling has already been brought up during the Buddha’s time. Another teaching from the text which is of modern relevance is that there is an implication that one is expected to be responsible for his own disposal of materials due to inappropriate construction of lodging, in which the dismantled building materials are required to be used again. In the modern sense, for instance, governments may promote this idea through education, as well as to conduct the law and rules by charging an appropriate rate of fees for handling disposal under self-responsibility.

Furthermore, one can learn from the text which teaches us the way of how to value material things. In the consumerism society nowadays, people tend to stop utilizing or to dispose of material things simply because those items are no longer up to the modern trend and fashion, even though they are still under good conditions. Those modern people tend to dispose of the items, for instance, free gifts from the sellers due to excess shopping or the items which are getting worn out, they act as such with less thoughtfulness of considering whether they can be reused in other productive ways. On the contrary, the Khandhaka suggests us on the conversion
of goods with others, into something more useful, appropriate or profitable. In this sense, the applications of reuse and recycling own a large extent of positive deliberation, modern people should have to understand that something which is not suitable or appropriate for one may be suitable and good for one another, and consequently, waste could likely be reduced drastically.

The Buddha encouraged his followers to practice the Four Boundless states of loving-kindness, of compassion, of sympathetic joy, and of equanimity. This practice starts by suffusing one’s own mind with universal love and extended it to its family, neighbour, as well as the whole universe. We should take careful consideration when we make a consumption decision, not only we should carefully and mindfully consider about its practical purposes but also how can the consumption be made responsibly, for example, is there any ways which can make our consumption becoming more self-responsible, and also be responsible for ourselves, for our families, and extend it to the whole universe? We should consume both the human and natural resources responsibly without overexploiting them in order to sustain them for our future generations (Sree 2014, p.248).

3.3. Simplification of desires

In the Khandhaka, there are rules pertaining to the use of luxurious items which provide guidance on how to simplify desires through daily lives. In the Cullavagga, there are rules which are set for the use of luxurious materials of almbowls and bowl rests, it states, “A bowl made of/with gold should not be used. A bowl made of/with silver...gems...lapis lazuli...crystals...bronze...glass...tin...lead...copper should not be used. Whoever should use one: an offense of wrong doing. I allow two kinds of bowl: an iron bowl, a clay bowl” (Cv.V.9.1, p.152). Besides, there is a restriction on the decoration of a bowl rest which promotes the practice of simplification of desires towards material items, for instance, Materials of tin and lead or others which are of less value such as bamboo and wood, are allowed for the making of a bowl rest. Moreover, certain decorations with ornamentation or figures are also prohibited, it states, “I allow you, monks, two (kinds of) circular bowl-rests; made of tin, made of lead...Monks, carved circular bowl-rests should not be used. Whoever should use one,
there is an offence of wrong-doing. I allow you, monks, ordinary circular rests” (Cv.V.9.2, p.153). These rules are set with implications that an item itself serves only the most pragmatic functions and that any unnecessary decoration is prohibited.

Furthermore, the consumption of alcoholic beverage which may lead to the increment of sensual desires is also prohibited in the Khandhaka. There is a prohibition against alcoholic consumption. From the second council, a set of questions over alcoholic consumption was raised, in the Cullavagga, it states, “Honoured sir, is it allowable to drink unfermented toddy? ‘What, your reverence, is this toddy?’ ‘Honoured sir, is it allowable to drink whatever is fermented liquor (but) which has not fermented and has not arrived at the stage of being strong drink?’ ‘Your reverence, it is not allowable’ ” (Cv.XII.1.10, p.418).

In the aspect of lodging, certain decorations of the human and animal body in a lodging place in which they may possibly lead to temptation over sexual desires are prohibited. The Canon forbids drawings of human forms and the Commentary further extends this injunction to any animal forms, it states, “Monks, you should not have a bold design made with figures of women, figures of men. Whoever should have one made, there is an offence of wrong-doing. I allow, monks, wreath-work, creeper-work, swordfish teeth, the five strips (of cloth design)” (Cv.VI.3.2, p.213). However, those drawings may be allowed if the illustration facilitate in the teaching of the dhamma.

In the aspect of dressing, there are rules concerning simplification of desires. There is a prohibition on the use of a mirror for the reflection of one’s face. It states, “Monks, a mark on the face should not be examined in a mirror or in a water-bowl. Whoever should (so) examine it, there is an offence of wrong-doing” (Cv. V.2.4, p.144). The Commentary offers another allowance to check for any indications of ageing which is to be used for meditating on impermanence. (Thanissaro, 2013) In addition, there is a prohibition of applying creams, glues to the face, unless for therapeutic reasons, it states, “Monks, the face should not be anointed, the face should not be rubbed (with paste), the face should not be rubbed (with paste), the face should not be powdered with chunam, the face
should not be smeared with red arsenic, the limbs should not be painted and faces should not be painted. Whoever should do (any of these things), there is an offence of wrong-doing” (Cv.V.2.5, p.145). Another similar rule is applied to the context of the instruments for ears, instruments for practical purposes such as cleaning are allowed, provided that the instrument itself isn’t made of luxurious or fancy materials; also ear ornaments are not allowed unless for health and meditative purposes, it states, “Monks, ear ornaments should not be worn, chains ornamental strings of beads for the throat ... ornaments at the waist ... bangles ... armlets ... bracelets ... finger rings should not be worn. Whoever should wear (any of these things), there is an offence of wrong-doing” (Cv.V.2.1, p.144).

In addition, it is worth to note that there is a consideration of simplifying others’ desire as shown in the Khandhaka, a Bhikkhu can only put on robes in which the cloth and robe borders are cut. In the Mahāvagga, it states, “Monks, robes that are not cut up are not to be worn. Whoever should wear one, there is an offence of wrong-doing (Mv.VIII.11.2, p.407). From this text, it notes that Venerable Ananda sewed the pieces of cloth together with a rough stitch, so that the robes would be appropriate for contemplatives and not provoke thieves (Mv.VIII.12.2, p.409). The consideration of this act is to reduce the monetary value and therefore it is less likely to be stolen by thieves.

In the modern sense, when a monk who is firstly entered into the sangha, he is trained to be mindful over the five sensual organs therefore he will not mislead himself to the desired path. In the Khandhaka, we can find the guidance of how to simplify desires, even in a modern and commercial society which are led by consumerism and materialism. The Buddha set the pragmatic rules on how to simplify desires through simple lifestyle, for instances, the rules in different living aspects which refrain from the use of luxurious materials and ornaments. In a modern society, some people tend to purchase luxurious items because those items represent fame and reputation for themselves. However, what are the justifications of using luxurious items in a modern society? It is argued that it is also important for a modern society to sustain through the diversity of consumption patterns and settings as they are often relating to the development of enterprises, employment, as well as distribution of
wealth. Nevertheless, it could be a practical suggestion to postpone the present consumption on those unnecessary items and to save up the capital for the better use at the latter time, perhaps for the next generations or on the purposes for helping to those in need.

It is generally agreed that simplification of desires helps one to develop tranquility in mind and it is crucial for one’s spiritual growth. Since morality is one of the key components in developing a healthy society, there are modern implications in the Khandhaka indicating how one should be aware of oneself over temptation, for instance, sexual temptation, indulgence in alcohol and drugs, in which they may interfere with not only his own spiritual growth in the present generation, but also for the sake of the wellbeing of the next generations. The author states, in order to be successful in life, one is based upon the ‘maturation of the heart and spirit’ rather than accumulations of material goods (Yamamoto, 2010, p.141). Kovács Gábor (2011, p.31) agrees with this idea and he states that the Buddhist strategy is the opposite of the cultivation of desires as profit motive as it requires ever-increasing demands while Buddhism recommends moderation in consumption, in order to achieve a higher level of satisfaction and real wellbeing.

It is worth to note that, the practice of simplification of desires implies that an individual is willing to put it with entire devotion and happiness. The Canon provides guidance of right attitudes of contentment that a Bhikkhu should develop with whatever he receives from others. According to the Aṅguttara Nikāya, it states that “This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a Bhikkhu is content with any old robe-cloth at all, any old almsfood, any old lodging, any old medicinal requisites for curing illness at all. ‘This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent’ (AN IV, pp.228-229). Furthermore, a Bhikkhu should also make sure that his contentment does not lead to pride, that means he will not use the requisites given with attachment; even if he is not receiving any requisites, he will not be agitated (AN II, p.27). In this way, the requisites fulfil their intended purposes as tools to the training of the mind.
4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, for a healthy and sustainable society, the practices of virtues are found in different aspects in the *Khandhaka*, in the contexts of non-harming, responsible consumption, and simplification of desires. In any society, these virtues should be developed for the sake of not only the present generation but also the future generations. In addition, under the concept of dependent co-arising, any economic and human problems will, therefore, in turn to be more serious if proper actions are not taken (Yamamoto, 2010 pp.138-141). Furthermore, according to the teachings of the Middle Way, it is crucial to fulfill the requirements of balancing between different viewpoints and entities and to avoid getting into extremes. All of these concepts raise the importance of controlling desires and limiting consumption, one shall also put careful consideration the importance and connection of harmony, among people and societies, into their decision making.

Though sustainability in a Buddhist sense is not equivalent to that of a modern sense. Since the necessary material requisites are very important for spiritual attainment and development, in monastics, the purposes of having appropriate wellbeing of a Bhikkhu only serve as a tool for inner and spiritual perfection and their requisites are mostly given by lay-followers and donors. Therefore, we should note that the concept of sustainable development of a modern society can’t be interpreted and applied solely based on a Buddhist viewpoint however it provides a tool for modern people when they are engaging in economic activities and making social and personal decision, which the virtues and the teaching of the Buddha can serve as a ground (Kovács, 2011, p.22). Furthermore, achievement throughout everyday life depends on the development of the heart and soul instead of gathering and collections of material merchandise. Even though it is certainly true that the entities which have been discussing are difficult to quantify scientifically, there is no loss for us in holding high expectation and in doing good, rather it is ensuring of the accomplishment of non-harming, responsible consumption, and simplification of desires, in order to achieve the realization of inner freedom from suffering.
ABBREVIATIONS

AN     - Aṅguttara Nikāya
PTS    - Pāli Text Society
Mv     - Mahāvagga
Cv     - Cullavagga
Kh     - Khandhaka
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In today’s globalizing profit-oriented and consumerist system all the living beings in their natural diversity are perceived as resources, useful for humans but not in and of themselves. This anthropocentric view believes that sustaining our way of life and our individual habits of mind are basic elements of a democratic society that should be tolerated and sustained, even if it entails our being cruel, our polluting the biosphere, our driving to extinction other life forms, and our declining quality of life. It is taken as a matter of fact to pay little or no attention to the nonhuman domain of flora and fauna. Such an attitude has led to atrocities perpetrated by humans against ecology and the tremendous loss of natural beauty and diversity. The destruction and debasement of the ecology has been constantly occurring through cruel methods of hunting, fishing, butchering, deforesting, over-mining, excessive use of pesticides, and pollution in various forms. Buddhist attitude towards ecology, which is the opposite of such an anthropocentric view, is similar to what Arne Naess of Norway calls deep ecology. Deep ecology believes that faulting cruelty, respecting other life forms for their intrinsic worth irrespective of their potential usefulness to humans, and arguing that through such respect and nurturance, our own lives will be greatly enriched, made more meaningful, and assured of a better chance at survival. Such a thinking that expects that people recognize not only that they are an important part of nature, but also that they have unique responsibilities to nature as moral agents. The profit-
oriented, globalizing consumerist world promotes environmental crisis which needs to be rationalistically addressed.

Our current social order that promotes competition rather than cooperation has resulted in the concentration of resources in the hands of a few. From a Buddhist perspective any policy governing social and economic development, the primary criterion should be the well-being of the members of the society as a whole and the social system would be viewed as an integral part of the total ecosystem. Thus, from Buddhist perspective societal development would be guided along lines that promote the health and well-being of the social order without harming the natural systems within which human society is lodged. Buddhist idea of “One’ world that is the home to all known life” and its virtue ethics and positive values of compassion, equanimity, and humility are important contribution towards building an ecologically wholesome society.

Buddhism has always been steeped in the sacredness of nature and scholars like Lynn White Jr (1967) have claimed that Buddhism is more explicitly positive in its concern for the natural world unlike the Judaic-Christian faiths which place humans and their artifices over and against the natural world of animals, plants and the physical environment. Buddhologists such as Venturini strongly emphasize the necessity of ‘harmony with nature,’ but do so in the context of an ‘ecology of the mind’ which aims at a ‘purified’ world with man. The Buddhist texts speak of harmlessness to the plant and vegetable kingdom (bījagāmabhūtagāma). As a matter of fact, the Buddhist custom of Rainy Retreat (vassāvāsa) owes its origins to such a concern. Incurring such damage is an offence which requires expiation on the part of the monk. This may be interpreted as an extension of the principle of noninjury (ahimsā) to the vegetable kingdom. A consequence of this insistence is that animals and plants are to be respected and such respect arises naturally from the insight, provided by Buddhist cosmology, that all sentient beings are intimately interrelated. One can find a good example of this in the Thai monks who, amongst themselves and with laypeople, work to protect remaining areas of virgin forest and to reforest other areas whose previous felling had led to disruption of water supply or flooding.
In Chan/ Zen school the traditional ideal has been one of harmony with nature, particularly emphasized through such actions as blending meditation huts into the landscape, not wasting any food in monasteries, landscape painting, landscape gardening, and nature poetry. In paintings, human beings are just one part of a natural scene, not the focus. Great attention is paid to seemingly insignificant aspects of nature, for insight into them can give an intuitive insignificant appreciation of the inexpressible and cryptic suchness which runs through the whole fabric of existence. Such a harmony with natural phenomenon is also visible in the different poems of the Theragāthā. They admire the delightful rocks, cool with water, having pure streams, covered with Indagopaka insects (verse 1063), resonant with elephants and peacocks, covered with flax flowers as the sky is covered with clouds (verse 1068), with clear water and wide crags, haunted by monkeys and deer, covered with oozing moss, those rocks delight me (verse 1070), forests are delightful (verse 992). The Buddha is also said to have had a positive effect on his environment. Accounts of the Buddha’s life are richly embellished with allusions to nature. He was born under a tree and as he took his first steps, lotus flowers sprang up. During childhood he often meditated under a jambo tree. His gave his first sermon in an animal park and his Enlightenment took place under a peepal tree. When he lay down between two sāl trees to die and pass into Nibbāna, these are said to have burst into a mass of unseasoned blossom, which fell on him in homage. It goes without saying that the Buddhist ideal for humanity relationship with animals, plants and the landscape is one of complimentary and harmonious co-operation.

A society founded upon the Dhamma recognizes that one should aim to promote the goal of the greater unit to which one belongs, and as a minimum should never seek private fulfillment in ways that inflict harm on others. The ideal is nicely pointed out in the “six principles of harmony and respect” which the Buddha taught to the Saṃgha: loving kindness in thinking, speech, and deeds; sharing gains made righteously; and following a common code of ethics and morality. Thus, in a Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion that would govern policy formulation should be the well-being of the members of the society as a whole. The economy would be assigned to the place where it
belongs and, in turn, the social system would be viewed as an integral part of the total ecosystem. Thus, economic development would be guided along lines that promote the health and well-being of the social order without harming the natural systems within which human society is lodged. By pointing out that the vulgar chase of luxury and abundance is the root-cause of suffering, Buddhism encourages restraint, simplicity, and contentment. By extolling generosity as a basic virtue and the mark of a superior person, it promotes a wide distribution of basic necessities so that no one has to suffer deprivation. Buddhist idea of “One’ world that is the home to all known life” and its virtue ethics and positive values of compassion, equanimity, and humility are important contribution towards building an ecologically wholesome society.

Forest represents the ideal place for meditation for monks. The ideal of forest dwelling has an important place in Buddhist thinking and the forest was employed as a meditational device. A number of prominent Buddhist writers recommend mindfulness of the forest as a means of gaining insight into impermanence. In fact, Theravāda monks specializing in meditation are known as forest monks, whether or not they actually reside in the forest. The forest-dwelling monk, the hermit, is no longer afraid of the wild animals because he on his part does not threaten them but offers them safety and friendship; is happy in the solitude of the wilderness because he has abandoned worldly desires and is content with little. Buddhism appreciates the spiritual benefits of wilderness. The solitude and silence of the wilderness is perceived as most favorable to meditation. On the whole, Buddhist attitude towards wild nature is quite positive and on account of this positive evaluation it ought to be preserved as well as restored in case it has been destroyed for some reason. From this point of view, the “hermit attitude” towards nature deserves, nowadays, to become, as a supplement to the traditional Buddhist ethics of not killing any living being and of compassion and benevolence, the attitude of all Buddhists. Indeed, it appears that this attitude is, in fact, an important element in the rise of ecological movements in some Buddhist countries. In the case of a renouncer and ascetic living in the wilderness (aranya) one may say that it is primarily the wild animals (and plants) that constitute his society, so to speak. For lay people, forests may not be
so inviting, but there is karmic fruitfulness in planting groves and fruit-trees for human use. The famous Indian Buddhist king, Asoka, is known to have prohibited the burning of forests without reason.

Buddhism does not see humans as having either dominion or stewardship over the animal kingdom and on the contrary, human higher status implies an attitude of kindness to lesser beings, an ideal of noblesse oblige. This is backed up by the reflection that one’s present fortunate position as a human is only a temporary state of affairs conditioned by past good karma. One cannot detach oneself from the plight of animals, as one has oneself gone through it (S.II.186), just as animals have had past rebirths as humans. Moreover, in the cycle of births, every being one comes across, down to an insect, will at some time have been a close friend or relative, and had been very good to one. Keeping this in mind, one should return the kindness in the present. Since human beings are social creatures who naturally come together for common ends, this means that a social order guided by Buddhist principles would consist primarily of small-scale communities in which each member can make an effective contribution. Only small-scale social arrangements can rescue people from the portending future disaster. Considered from a Buddhist point of view, the huge polluted megacities and uncaring bureaucrats and politicians typical of our age are unsuitable for a proper welfare of sentient beings. The most suitable and compatible economy would be small-scale and localized. Such an economy would use simple technology which would not drain natural resources and in it production would be aimed principally at local consumption, so that there would be direct face-to-face contact between producers and consumers. The driving force of such an economy would be the promotion of well-being both material and social, not commercial profit and unrestrained expansion.

As the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh says, “We classify other animals and living beings as ‘Nature’, a thing apart from us, and act as if we’re somehow separate from it. Then we ask, “How should we deal with Nature?” We should deal with Nature the same way we should deal with ourselves: nonviolently. Human beings and Nature are inseparable. Just as we should not harm ourselves, we should not harm Nature”. As part of Conditioned
Arising (paṭiccasamuppāda), humans are seen as having an effect on their environment not only through the purely physical aspects of their actions, but also through the moral/immoral qualities of these. That is, karmic effects sometimes catch up with people via their environment. It is thus said that, if a king and his people act unrighteously, this has a bad effect on the environment and its gods, leading to little rain, poor crops and weak, short-lived people. Right actions have the opposite effect. The environment is held by Buddhism to respond to the state of human morality; it is not a neutral stage on which humans merely flounce or a sterile container unaffected by human actions.

This clearly has ecological ramifications: humans cannot ignore the effect of their actions on their environment. This message is also strongly implied by the Aggañña Suttanta, which gives an account of the initial stages of the development of sentient life on earth. This occurs when previously divine beings fall from their prior state, and through consuming a savory crust floating on the oceans, develops physical bodies, and later sexual differentiation. At first their environment is bountiful, but it becomes less so the more they greedily take from it. They feed off sweet-tasting fungus, and then creepers, but these in turn disappear as the beings differentiate in appearance the more beautiful ones become conceited and arrogant. Then they feed off quick-growing rice, gathering it each day as they need it. But through laziness, they start to gather a week’s supply at a time, so that it then ceases to grow quickly, which necessitates cultivation. Consequently, the land is divided up into fields, so that property is invented, followed by theft. Here, then, is a vision of sentient beings and their environment co-evolving (co-devolving). The beings are affected by what they take from their environment, and the environment becomes less refined and fruitful as the beings morally decline. All this takes place according to the principle of Conditioned Arising in which nothing exists on its own, as each thing depends on others to condition it’s arising and existence. Thus, the relationship of all things, which includes humans and their environment, is inter-dependent. In other words, nothing can exist by itself, but makes its own contribution to the whole. The Buddhist principle of interdependence also means that humans and the world are inextricably linked a relationship that needs to be sustained through love. The ecological interdependence between
animals and their habitat is clearly perceived in the *Jātakas* where the emigration of tigers from a forest enables the forest beings felled by wood-cutters, but also deprives the tigers of their former habitat.

The Buddhist values mean that environment should not be over-exploited. As the Tibetans say very wisely that not too much of anything that is precious should be taken from the earth, as then its quality fades and the earth is destroyed. The Buddhist ideal, in fact, is co-operation with nature, not domination. The interdependence of human and all other forms of life in a finely balanced chain of being has always been a fundamental Buddhist belief. True development will arrange for the rhythm of life and movement to be in accordance with the facts, while maintaining awareness that man is but part of the universe, and that ways must be found to integrate mankind with the laws of nature. The economist E.F. Schumacher points out that Buddhism is not so anthropocentric as the so-called Middle Eastern religions, and that its attitudes do not therefore allow for the possibility that mankind has the right to take from nature, to see nature as simply for humanity; particular use, or to exploit, dominate and oppress it. As he puts it, “Man is a child of nature and not the master of nature.” He describes Buddhist attitude with reference to ecology as follows:

“The teaching of the Buddha... enjoins a reverent and non-violent attitude not only to all sentient beings but also, with great emphasis, to trees. Every follower of the Buddha ought to plant a tree every few years and look after it until it is safely established. He does not seem to realize that he is part of an ecosystem of many different forms of life. As the world is ruled from towns where men are cut off from any form of life other than the human, the feeling of belonging to an ecosystem is not realised. This results in a harsh and improvident treatment of things upon which we ultimately depend, such as water and trees”.

Thus, as pointed out by Schumacher in the Buddhist concept of economic development, we should avoid gigantism, especially of machines, which tend to control rather than serve human beings. With gigantism, we are driven by an excessive greed in violating and raping nature. If bigness and greed can be avoided, the Middle Path of Buddhist development can be achieved, i.e., both the world of industry and agriculture can be converted into a meaningful habitat.
The earliest monastic rules as enshrined in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* contain numerous injunctions against environmental irresponsibility. Some are basically sound advice governing personal and communal hygiene, but others are designed to avoid harm to sentient beings. Thus a monk may not cut down a tree or dig the earth because that would destroy small life forms and he must not empty a vessel of water containing, say, fish, onto the ground. In Buddhism, killing or injuring living beings is regarded as both unwholesome and fundamentally immoral; for, on the one hand, killing or injuring them is bad karma entailing evil consequences for the perpetrator after his death, and on the other all living, sentient beings are afraid of death and recoil from pain just like oneself. Monks and nuns are even prohibited from injuring plants and seeds. Time and again, Buddhism declares spiritual attitudes like benevolence as well as actual abstention from killing or injuring animate beings to be the right attitude or behavior for monks as well as lay people. Buddhism also accepted the popular belief that trees are inhabited by sprites or divinities protecting them. Trees deserve gratitude for the service they render people, especially offering shade and fruits, and should not be injured or felled by a person who has benefitted by them. This idea may not imply that the tree is actually regarded as a sentient being, but at least it is treated as if it were one, i.e., like a friend or partner. Of course, protecting a useful tree from injury is, at least *de facto*, also in the interest of its long-term utilization.

Buddhism sees egoism and greed as the main cause of misery and harm. There is no doubt that environmental disaster is to a great extent due to the insatiable greed of humans. Buddhism on the whole, though does not mind wealth and prosperity, but they have to be acquired and used in full accord with the ethical norms, among which not to kill or injure living beings, and- so one may add- not to destroy their habitat, is the first. The ideals are rather, contentment (*saṃtuṭṭhi*) and- in the case of rich lay people- liberality (*cāga*). Being content with little and avoiding wastefulness are, of course, attitudes favoring a moderate and careful utilization of nature. The *udumbara-khādikā* method blamed by the Buddha, the method of shaking down an indiscriminate amount of fruit from a *ficusglomerata* in order to eat a few, is precisely the same as
the one employed in drift-net fishing, where many more animals are killed than utilized. The only reasonable attitude is to regard all fellow-creatures with compassion and sympathy, and cautiously help them in case of emergency, without damaging others. This is in fact a fundamental attitude in Buddhist culture, and as long as the environment is intact, leaving nature alone is probably the best thing one can do. For instance, by gifts to animals, even such as throwing dish-water or remnants of food into a pool or river in order to feed tiny water animals or fishes, or by freeing, out of compassion, an animal from a rope or trap.

Buddhist attitudes *ahimsā* (non-violence), *mettā* (benevolence), and *karuṇā* (compassion) entail an ecological behavior as these attitudes are not limited to human beings alone but also include other living beings. Since the rise of technology and science, nature has been commoditized and manipulated. Our comforts have been gained at great expense to all life forms: countless peoples have been displaced by its advances; countless species become extinct each year; the earth itself is burning and groaning. To use up non-renewable goods, a possibility in the near future unless something definite is done can be the ultimate form of violence. Thus, utter caution must be exercised in the consumption process. Thus, in a Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion that would govern policy formulation should be the well-being of the members of the society as a whole. The economy would be assigned to the place where it belongs and, in turn, the social system would be viewed as an integral part of the total ecosystem. Thus, economic development would be guided along lines that promote the health and well-being of the social order without harming the natural systems within which human society is lodged. By pointing out that the vulgar chase of luxury and abundance is the root-cause of suffering, Buddhism encourages restraint, simplicity, and contentment. By extolling generosity as a basic virtue and the mark of a superior person, it promotes a wide distribution of basic necessities so that no one has to suffer deprivation. Buddhist idea of ‘One’ world that is the home to all known life” and its virtue ethics and positive values of compassion, equanimity, and humility are important contribution towards building an ecologically wholesome society.
Bibliography


Buddhist Ethics in the Establishment of Green Tourism

by Ida Bagus Putu Suamba

ABSTRACT

Green tourism comes into existence as a response to increasingly damage of nature caused by uncontrolled desires of human. Converting fertile land, forest, or beaches into tourism infra-structures or facilities under the name of development; this is far from being green tourism. The development has been accelerated with the involvement of science and technology. Now each country in the world are worried about its existence, nature, and culture under threat of extinction; in fact, economic benefits have been gained; and each looks back at its tradition or customs to find out its essential values or wisdoms to be utilized to cope with the ongoing problem. Buddhism even though since its beginning does not explicitly talk about green tourism, however, course of life of the Buddha was very closed to nature and no harm to it. This paper aims at discussing some principles of ethics as revealed in Buddhist cannons which may be contributed to the establishment of green tourism, especially the concept of dependent origination (Pratitya-samutpada) and Brahmaviharas, like maitri, karuna, mudita, and upeksa. Data are gathered, categorised, analysed, and interpreted using qualitative approach from Buddhist ethical principles, especially of Yogacara of Mahayana tradition. It is found that components which compose nature either tangible or intangible are interdependent and connected to each other of which Conscious-only principle as the basis on which nature are understood and utilized. There is a spiritual connection between human and nature, and the disturbance of each, will trigger imbalance amongst elements of nature and

*. Ph.D., Politeknik Negeri Bali University
human beings. This consciousness especially universal consciousness (alaya) may be utilized in establishing green tourism both as an activity of travelling and as a business. To bring the conception down to earth, certification of green tourism in which Buddhist ethical values may be incorporated is a strategic effort that can be attempted.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green tourism has been increasingly a popular concept as well as widely adopted practice of tourism in the world today's no matter in Buddhist nominating countries, like Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, etc. As said by Furqan, Mat Som, and Hussin that green tourism is defined as environmentally friendly tourism activities with various focuses and meanings. In a broad term, green tourism is about being an environmentally friendly tourist or providing environmentally friendly tourist services (2010). Its emergence is due to strong needs to develop sustainable tourism both as leisure and business activities without harming or destroying natural environment. Tourists want to enjoy eco-friendly hotel, healthy environment, products, food, and souvenirs. Some of them promotes conservation of nature and avoiding use of product or action associated with chemicals or materials which can harm nature, like plastic products. Furqan, Mat Som, and Hussin further state that green tourism is important to encourage travel that would help support natural and cultural aspects, while encouraging respect for and conservation of urban resources and cultural diversity (2010). After almost fifty years of tourism practices, worries even threats of the continuity of nature or environment have happened increasingly due to the uncontrolled use of nature. What is obvious that behind the enjoyment of tourism there is a threat even extinction of human race from the earth. It is not an exaggeration to state that capacity of nature is getting less and less and imbalance exists from small to larger scale due to unwise use of it. Huge conversation of land for tourism facilities, excessive use of water even ground water, polluted water/sea due to tourism activities, decreasing farming land and forest have been increasing in the last fifty years.

Owing to these facts, there happened a growing awareness all over the world that the natural world has limits that our current
assumptions and activities are quickly exceeding it. Greed-based business wants to take more from nature without giving anything to it. As remarked by Kilipiris and Zardava (2012) that “in real practice, green tourism is used sometimes by the tourism industry as a label, providing information to the tourist such as how to conserve energy, avoid littering in the beach etc., and not actually touching the major impacts of tourism. While strong competition exists between tourist enterprises it seems logical their unwillingness to implement green strategies. There are for instance cases where the economic benefits of tourism very little remain locally and are repatriated to foreign countries”. In other words, natural preservation is the corner stones of green tourism, which for the long run, can provide more jobs. Nevertheless, by the end of 20th century, there has been a severe shift of approaches or orientation of tourism from what the so-called traditional or local tourism to global tourism which involves the moving of huge number of tourists from one country to another leading the world economy. Tourism is really a huge business involving huge numbers of workers, tourists, technologies, and nature. Green tourism as a new type of tourism undergoing severe changes of tourism accordingly.

Unfortunately, in the mid of massive business of tourism, the contribution of Buddhist ideas or values to the development of green tourism worldwide is still meagre, in fact Buddhist canons contain some ideas of ecology in which tourism involved in it. Life of the Buddha was often associated with nature; his spiritual journey was in nature. He even achieved his Buddhahood in his interface with nature; under the Bodhi tree he had achieved the enlightenment (Buddhahood) after doing deep meditation. Hence, the conception of green business or green tourism is available in there even though not in a systematic form. The only thing required is attempt to formulate basic principles or ideas which may support green tourism. When tourism as a business is taken into account which widely spread in the post-World War II, it can be understood the conception of green tourism comes from industrial countries in which Buddhism may not become strong inner power in designing or creating a framework of green tourism. Being a global spirituality, Buddhism is not yet adopted in green tourism. Despite the fact Buddhist values perhaps adopted in local tourism in Buddhist
dominating countries, however, they are mixed up with Western views since it is a business practices. They developed it based on business consideration and nature preservation from Western perspectives.

This paper aims at discussing Buddhist ethical values, especially Brahmanviharas and the conception of Consciousness-only doctrine in establishing green tourism as advocated in Yogacara of Mahayana Buddhism. These values may be utilized in the management of green tourism both as a leisure and business activities. The analysis is done from theoretical frame work from Buddhism perspective in viewing the green tourism as an externalization of inner consciousness of mind.

2. GREEN TOURISM: LEISURE AND BUSINESS

Increasing number of facts showing the damage of nature due to human behaviours especially in developing countries forcing tourism sector to protect/preserve nature; it is so tourism as a business is basically a nature-based business. Green or eco-tourism will mean nothing unless nature is preserved well not only todays but for the future. As quoted by Buckley (1994) that environmental organizations have generally insisted that only tourism that is nature-based, sustainably-managed, conservation-supporting, and environment-mentally-educated should be described as ecotourism (Baez and Rovinski 1992; Boo 1990; Ceballos-Lascurain 1992; Eber 1992; EAIPR 1992; Figgiss 1993; Lee and Snapenger 1992, Richardson 1993a, 1993b; Swanson 1992; Young 1992; Young and Wearing 1993; Ziffer 1989), which should be persistently applied both in theory and practice.

For a long term business, it should not only think of profit but also the preservation of nature. In other words, it should not only profitable but also be moral; and hence it has ethical dimension which is more important for sustainability of business. Tourism will not be sustained unless nature as a holistic unit is preserve well. There is an interrelationship between nature and the continuity of business whatever is the form. Owing to this fact, a sharp difference happened between environment activity and tour operator or stake holder as the latter only thinks of their return of capital investments.
As remarked by Hudson and Miller that like in many other parts of the developed world, a fierce battle is taking place between conservationists and the tourism industry. Conservationists are arguing for more environmental protection and a restriction on tourism growth, and tourism operators are seeking to upgrade and develop tourism facilities, arguing that it is wrong to restrict access and deny their businesses profits and locals and tourists the opportunity to enjoy some of the most beautiful and accessible outdoor recreation terrain in the world (Theobald, 2005, p. 248). However, when business ethics are taken into account a balance approach will suffice to run green tourism. According to Dodds and Joppe (2001) as quoted by Furqan, Mat Som, and Hussin (2010) that the green tourism concept can be broken down into four components.

i. Environmental responsibility—protecting, conserving, and enhancing nature and the physical environment to ensure the long-term health of the life-sustaining eco-system.

ii. Local economic vitality—supporting local economies, businesses and communities to ensure economic vitality and sustainability.

iii. Cultural diversity—respecting and appreciating cultures and cultural diversity so as to ensure the continued well-being of local or host cultures.

iv. Experiential richness—providing enriching and satisfying experiences through active, personal and meaningful participation in, and involvement with, nature, people, places and cultures.

Economic activity is expected for the wellness of the entire universe no matter in tourism since it involves huge number of people. As stated by Jayasaro that by including the “right live hood” in the Eightfold Path, the Buddha recognizes the role of economic activity both in promoting individual wellbeing and in developing a society in harmony with the principles of Dhamma. He taught that Buddhists should take moral and spiritual criteria into account when considering a live hood, in particular by abstaining from live hoods harming other people, animals, or the environment (2013, p.138).
The conception of non-violence (ahimsa) both toward living and non-living entity is corner stone for other moral values. He further states that he (the Buddha) emphasized the importance of making one’s living honestly and with a healthy motivation. Honesty leads to self-respect and helps to create an atmosphere of mutual trust in the workplace. When desire is focused on the rewards of work rather than on the pleasure of job well done, short term thinking and corruption are always likely to appear. When people’s minds are focused on the quality of work itself rather than the material rewards it provides, they become more content, experience less stress, and do better work (Jayasaro, 2013, p. 138). Concentration, dedication, and respect to works itself can create happiness since mind as the site of consciousness develops to its maximum capacities. He further states that in Buddhism terms, the measures of an economy are not to be found in the number of millionaires it can produce, but in the degrees to which it can ensure access to the four requisites for all” (Jayasaro, 2013, p.139). Welfare in the right sense should cover prosperity of all and it should be possible through the implementation of economic system of a country.

Positive Buddhist views on nature can be seen from the life story of the Buddha who is often associated with tree: his birth at Lumbini as his mother grasped the branch of a sal tree, his early experience of states of meditation absorption beneath the tree apple tree, his Enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree, and his Parinirvana (death) between twin dal trees”. (Singh, 2011, p.1). Taking the Buddha was wandering around nature, meeting and teaching values to many people during his course of life, Buddhism supports the operation of green-tourism for wellbeing or well fare for the whole society without harming nature. The wandering of the Buddha exploring nature and community all around India was basically a form of eco-tourism in real sense despite the fact tourism at that period was not yet a form of business rather wandering or travelling from one place to another was for seeking Buddhahood. In other words, whatever kinds of tourism developed, it should not neglect happiness of all and wellbeing. Of this view, it requires values rooted in ethics. Reading from the cannons, Buddhism is rich in ethical values which can be utilized for developing green tourism. It can be in complementary with modernity in which Buddhism can contribute
its values for balancing of those various elements may involve in practice. Since interconnectedness between man and nature is very much emphasized by the Buddhist values as rooted in principles of Pratitya Samutpada, Brahmaviharas like maitri (lovingkindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (joy), and upekṣa (equanimity), they can be used to control imbalance of profit oriented tourism with balance of nature. The ethical teaching may be considered in designing, implementing, and evaluating any green-oriented tourism without losing financial benefit. With the involvement of ethical values, tourism is not only directed to its goodness as an agent which serve goodness to customers/tourists but also respects nature in the real sense. Sometimes jargon of Buddhist ethical value is pronounced by business agencies but it is for attracting public interest only without genuine application of the principles in the field.

Amongst ethical values, maitri (lovingkindness) presupposes the sustenance not only the relationship of nature to nature but also relationship of men to men, and man to nature in multiple ways. Love should be the basis on which any efforts attempted to create business including tourism. With regards to greedy economic entrepreneurship, is there any conception of love incorporated in designing and implementing green-tourism? What is obvious for a long run of business, its goal should not spoil the loving attitude to nature; seeking earnings should not spoil sense of love to others. In a reverse direction, lovingkindness should overshadow not only in designing, implementing, and controlling but also the products offered. One will be difficult to respect and love nature without practice loving himself, others and nature. Education training on loving others since childhood in family and school plays an important role since modern education tends to put emphasis more on cognitive rather than on affective domain. Millennium generations who use to spend much time in his/her gadgets will have a little chance to understand, interact, and appreciate nature even for a small scale. When lovingkindness develops in oneself, feeling of sympathy and concern (karuna) to environment will appear. Taking man connected in some ways with nature, ultimately human being is part and parcel of nature, feeling of sympathy, concern, etc. should be directed to design as well as in implementing tourism program. From top management officer till the tour guide
or tour operators will do the same vision to protect nature. When, for instance, visitors throw away plastic bag to a wrong place, tour guide/driver can tell the right place since his/her action can harm nature. Thus, feeling of sympathy and concern should not only happen in top management but also all people involve in the business. Having a feeling of sympathy, concern, or pity to other and nature will give us inner joy (mudita), which is required in life. The key here is feeling being a part of the other; it touches the feeling and satisfies the mind for loving others. Developing joy will be futile without considering the fate of others and nature. Egoistic joy may be reached for some degrees, but it is usually for a short period of time, in fact Buddhism teaches us to reach unlimited happiness through expanding flow of consciousness. When this joy is experienced, one will feel in different with others, upaksa (equanimity) can be experienced. Peaceful mind comes out from success in implementing values of maitri, karuna, and upaksa to nature. As stated by Joyadip that in one of the Buddhist sources, the relationship of a tree to human is explained as follows: “the tree indeed is the bearer of the flower and the fruit... the tree gives the shade to all people who come near... the tree does not give shade differently (MilindaPañhã, VI, 409 –“rukkho nãma pupphaphaladharo... rukkho upagatãnamanuppavitthãnam janãnam chãyam deti...” rukkho chãyãvemattam na karoti”)” (2013). When nature gives everything to human beings, we should sustain it and take as minimal need as required for the sustainability of nature. We often treat nature unfair and try to give superficial reason behind action taken to nature.

When positive relation between human being and nature is understood, there should be moral responsibilities for all to protect nature from selfish, uncontrolled desire to harm nature. The task for human is to find the best mode of relationship with nature. From this view, as stated by Jayasaro that education in the domain of conduct, emotion, and intellect may work well provided that there arises positive attitude to nature and having scope both individual and society. Education conduct requires us to put the well-being of the planet above short-term needs. It means cultivating the will refrain from certain kinds of harmful activities, to adopt a simpler, less wasteful way of life. The changes needed on the level of conduct
cannot be made by an educated elite, to be successful they need to be adopted by all. For this reason, they need to be backed by laws, customs, and cultural norms (2013, pp. 148-149). Thing common is awareness does not happen in decision maker level since they always think of profit reward. Jayasaro further said that the education in emotion requires us to instill within our cultures, and within each individual heart, a love and respect for the natural world which makes the destruction of the environment repugnant to us (2013, p. 149). Sense of affection to love our mother earth is getting less since human does not enough time to understand and respect the earth. He further states that the education in intellect requires us to investigate the causes and conditions that underline a sustainable future for the human race. It involves understanding the consequences of our smallest acts of consumption on planet as a whole. It means seeing the drawbacks of our current path (2013, p. 149). Moral responsibilities one have will find the possible mode to keep the relationship run in harmonious way.

Even though these efforts are hardly successful, creating awareness of the importance of education for those elements amongst people involves in tourism should be attempted profiting various medias or channels. What is pertinent that environment is the center of tourism activity; and clean and friendly environment is a guarantee and a key factor of tourism attraction.

3. INTER-RELATEDNESS

Buddhist cosmology views that every existence is related to the other; nothing is free from its connectedness; and each works forming a holistic system of nature. “Bringing this insight down to earth it becomes clear that by harming nature we are in fact harming ourselves” (Singh, 2011, p. 2), however not all can perceive this fact. Joyadip states that the ecosystem in Buddhism implies a deeper understanding of the conditioned co-production, seeing things not as beings but as patterns of relatedness. In other words, the modern theory of the relatedness of man with its surrounding ecosystem totally concurs with the fundamental Buddhist teaching of Dependent co-arising (pratitya samupada) (2013). The existence of an entity is due to the existence of the other and they are related in multifarious relationship. So no point to view that man can do
whatever he likes towards nature; it should be some controls to use nature. Taking this view into consideration, nature and man are connected and they are parts and parcel of nature. Joyadip further states everything on earth had served one way or other for living and survival. We humans are related to or made entirely of non-human elements like natural greeneries, earth, water, clouds, sunshine etc. which make us a part of the nature. For the long lasting survival of mankind, the ecosystem needs to be respected highly and preserved. Protecting human life is not possible without also protecting the lives of animals, plants, and minerals. All living sentient beings in one way or another are totally interdependent towards each other for their own survival (2013). With this view, no reason to treat environment just for the sake of fulfilling desires.

Each elements of nature have its own meaning, role, and function to perform even though they are flow of consciousness. This universe can function as it is due to each of its components performs its own function having mutual relationship with other either being or not being, or nature or non-nature. It is complex and multi layers components of universe ranging from small unit to the highest one. Of this view, each serves the other in mutual way for the existence. A plant can grow, develop and give us leaves, flower, wood, etc. due to other entities like soil, water, sun rights, wind, etc. which all give conducive environment to grow. When human lives in nature, they take natural resources like water from nature for living. Joyadip states that natural environment, like forests and plant life, serves men and wildlife with numerous benefits, social, economic, and environmental. (2013). In other words, human has too much debts from nature. Unfortunately, sometimes no sufficient return is given to it. The result of this action causes overuse or exploitation of nature since it generates profit; in fact, it has limited capacities. This action will be dangerous not only for nature itself but for man and the whole system of universe. Owing this fact, nature has a pivotal role in keeping it still natural. It also plays a critical role in the management of global climate. Global warming, is a clear example of harmful action produced by human which causes the damage of atmosphere. Now everyone worries about this global warming which may cause a big problem of man, nature, biology, ecology, geography, etc. When each is isolated or disconnected from the
other relationships, imbalance will occur which further may affect
the human life.

Bringing this view down to earth, each and every component
that involves in green tourism is related in a mutual manner. People,
nature, and culture in a broad sense are always related which require
a good system to handle them. Rich culture may be grown up or
developed due to the existence of human being who lives in nature.
Their relationship should be balanced and mutually profitable
without harming any of them. Tourism will mutually depend on
nature since visitors like to enjoy something external including
nature; it will give them a new or different nuance. Consciousness
of universe can be developed through travelling to cultivate inner
potential of self. Culture as a product of human arts is dependent on
man and nature in keeping sustainable and developed. Components
like men powers, accommodation, food and drinks, transportation,
business ethics, attraction, etc. they are dependent on either
directly or indirectly. Human resources work in this sector is not in
small number, rather they work in different job, like hotelier, waiter,
waitress, tour guide/operator, translator, driver, local people they
meet, government, etc.

4. MIND, CONSCIOUS-ONLY DOCTRINE AND ENVIRONMENT

Whatever kind of tourism is to be developed is basically about
the role of mind. How mind views itself and the external world?
Mind has a strong and strategic role in this regards provided that
one has some basic knowledge and positive attitude in it. However,
to control mind is really difficult, and here it the problems require a
deeper effort. Joyadip states that according to Buddhism, mind plays
the most important role in everything we decide. Thus, one should
think of a mental solution before finding a physical solution for
problems. From the Buddhist moral point of view, all these things
happen due to fundamental insecurity and fear generated by the
delusory notion of ‘Ego-ness’ or so called ‘self’. Man deluded with
the egoistic misconception of ‘self’ tend to think all impermanent
objects as permanent (2013).

For a better comprehension of the relationship of man and
nature in designing green tourism, the doctrine of Conscious-
only of Mahayana Buddhism is worth to look at and to find out its contribution for Buddhahood in operating green tourism both as a leisure and business activities. When mind is taken to play an important role in activities of green tourism, it implies the role of its essential nature of Conscious-only doctrine for which the connection between mind and consciousness is indispensable. In this regards, to see in a comprehensive manner the relationship of humanity, society, and natural environment, it is worth to consider views proposed by Yamamoto (1998a) as quoted by Singh (2011); it is expected to be used to solve problems arises from unfair treatment of environment by human beings, as follows. These are (1) Principle of Symbiosis. Concept of nature and environment which are seen in the doctrine of dependent origination in Buddhism are similar to concepts of ecology. Everything is somehow connected... (2) Principle of Circulation. The concept of cycle or cycling that birth and death is repeating in the universe is important for considering the system of cycling in society..., (3) Perspective of Recognition of the World. In Buddhism all phenomenon are understood basically in terms of dependent origination, the idea of the interdependence and interaction among all existences covering three areas: the area of mind vs body, the area of the self vs others, the area of human race vs natural ecosystem; (4) Relationship of Subject and the Environment. The environmental view of Buddhism is a life-centric one, and is life-independent or anthropo-independent too. Both subject and its environment have a mutually interdependent and an interconnected relationship; (5) Intrinsic value of nature: The doctrine of dependent origination shows that everything in the ecosystem is equal in value. Because all living things and non-living things have the Buddha nature, they are regarded as having an equal dignity and an intrinsic value; and (6) The Right of Nature: Though environmental ethics will be expanding the concept of rights from human rights into the rights of nature, the doctrine of dependent origination in Buddhism argues that human right are based upon the rights of nature (Singh, 2011, pp. 20-21).

When we try to understand the case, deep consciousness is much required for comprehending subtle thought than superficial consciousness. Deep consciousness only doctrine proposed by Yogacara school of Buddhism shows underneath consciousness is
a vast realm that can produce deeper thought which is required for understanding complex interdependent of entity or things in this world. It shows that surface consciousness always affects the deep consciousness on the basis of dependent origination doctrine. The surface consciousness and the subsurface consciousness are always changing fluidly. The same way happened between the subject and its environments have a close relation as well as relation which appears as phenomenon at the surface. Owing to this fact, surface consciousness is only tip of iceberg floating on water. It means that there is a vast world that extends under the depths of the consciousness and the phenomenon (Singh, 2011, p. 21). Complex components and interactions of tourism have its centrality in consciousness as the faculty of mind. They are dependent internally as well as externally forming the world of flux.

What is the view of Consciousness-only doctrine to environmental problems? Buddhism view environments as a symbiosis of various component—living and non-living each interacting in a mutual even complex relation that the world is governed by the principles of dependent origination (pratitya samutpada) and creating a feedback loop of merciful, good common karma. Human being has fashioned environment on the basis of his single minded directed toward the fulfilment of human desires (Singh, 2011, p. 25). Problem becomes serious when the fulfillments is uncontrolled under the name of economic developments. Many environmental problems caused by unwell design of tourism can be taken as the manifestations of uncontrolled human desires enhanced by technology. Since tourism is a promising sector that can earn profit, every country, region or even village wants to developed eco-friendly tourism without deep consideration on the human and natural resources involve in it. It is often people concern only on capital return rather than natural conservation or protection leaving aside negative impact of it. “The Conscious-only doctrine holds that whatever is manifested in the environment and what kind of environment is created reflect the common karma” (Singh, 2011, p.26). There is externalization of inner urges and desires which are unlimited. Human being response through senses and mind to the external object of enjoyments; and sometimes bad idea/action can be done to fulfil desires despite the
fact mind may perform double functions: as entity enjoys as well as controls itself.

Observing a close look at the issue, the Consciousness-only doctrine thus sheds light on how humans have formed the environment and how the environment has effected humans. Particular here is the environment depends of common *karma* of the people who make up the particular society. Hence between human and environment are indispensable parts as flow of consciousness.

When people with full understanding that nature is enlarged projection of themselves, they must work hard to protect healthy and balanced environment (Singh, 2011, p. 26) --- be it living or non-living entity. In this regards the role of *alaya* as universal consciousness is very strategic as the home all latent ideas. It can be viewed as the potential mind, which through culture and control can stop the illusion of external objects and attachment to them" (Bhattacharyya, 1990, p. 14). “*Alaya vijnana* is the store house of consciousness acting as repository of all mental ideas. It is pure in nature. Due to unconscious tendency of individual consciousness it appears to be divided into innumerable separate consciousness. The apparent distinction of subject and object are due to ignorance. Vasubandhu views *alaya vijnana* evolves in a continuous stream-like water of river”. (Acarya, 2004, pp. 524-525). It continuously changing as a flow of flux. Likewise, green tourism as externalization of internal consciousness stored as *alaya* consciousness, undergoes changing at every time due to efforts put by human being in developing it. This conception may be applied in establishment of green tourism commenced from ideas came to happen to create green tourism till its evaluation and development, the Consciousness-only doctrine can be used as the inner spirit for everyone especially decision maker in establishing green tourism.

As theoretical analysis does have any power to force both business sector and government to take action, a certification may be helpful to preserve nature from bad treatment of business provided that both parties are in agreement to do so. In this regards, every country may have some criteria or standards to be implemented in certification. The use of green tourism certification issued by respected body is usually intended (Sasidaharan, *et. al.*, 2002)
(1) to control tourism’s negative environmental impacts on the natural resources base of destination areas by encouraging tourism enterprises to achieve high environmental standards, (ii) to educate tourists regarding the impacts of their actions and decisions, and (iii) to develop standards for environmentally friendly tourism products and services, as quoted by Furqan, Mat Som, and Hussin (2010). This certification is possible only after there has been natural awareness amongst the people, otherwise it is difficult when business only concerns for profitable action only.

The utilization of green tourism certification in developing countries would slot in with policies relating to natural resource management, environmental conservation and protection, and pollution control while conforming to the concept of environmentally friendly tourism development (Hashimoto, 1999; Erdogan and Tosun, 2009) as quoted by Furqan, Mat Som, and Hussin (2010). Taking Buddhist values as part of attempt to preserve nature and business, its values may be included in the standards or criteria in certification especially in dominating Buddhist countries. This is a real contribution of Buddhist ethics provided that the stockholders, business enterprises, and governments are in agreement to regulate and minimizes negative impacts of tourism to environment.

5. TO SUM-UP

Green tourism cannot develop without the involvement of human and nature. Environment is the backbone of green tourism the preservation of it is the task of all especially people or agencies involve including government. Buddhist moral values as expounded in the concepts of Brahmaviharas, like lovingkindness, are relevant to be utilized in the establishment of green tourism. As human part and parcel of nature, nothing exists in isolation as per the doctrine of dependent origination. Buddhist ethics offer some ethical insights to look at the establishment of green tourism in which everything involves in tourism is connected either internally or externally in mutual or complex relation. The doctrine of Consciousness-only may be used to understand the core in a more comprehensive manner that green tourism is not only emphasizing profit but also respect and protect nature as none can life even doing business unless nature is protected for the well-being. When Consciousness-
only principle is utilized to handle the case, one should have some knowledge of Buddhist ethics that the doctrine origination supports green tourism on the basis of mutual relation. The damage of nature is basically the threat even extinction of human race. Since external object or creation is the externalization of inner urges, ideas, then, no reason people escape from the conservation of nature. Green tourism should ideally consider both aspects: leisure and business activities. When this is on agreement amongst business sector, investors, and government to do so, certification is a possible way to control bad impacts of tourism on nature in which Buddhist ethics may be utilized especially in Buddhist dominating countries.
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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world indulges in disproportionate (visamappamāṇayutta) material development at the expense of morality, equality, justice, peace and harmony. The prevalent social system based on such a detrimental ‘development’ has formulated its educational, professional, social, economic, political strata which propels the achievement of this kind of wanton materialistic development and unwholesome and insatiable consumption of all types of living and non-living resources. This predicament has undeniably caused confusions and tribulations in every echelon of the modern society threatening sustainable development that is beneficial and wholesome to the entire living and non-living world. Therefore, the paramount objective of this paper is to analytically expose how to restore responsible consumption and sustainable development through universally adoptable Buddhist approach. In this regard, the universal Buddhist tenets should be adopted to define and identify the root causes of the impediments and destructions for the establishment of responsible consumption leading to sustainable development which is multi-causative and multidimensional. Individual and social ethics, reciprocal obligations, moderation in use of materials, wealth and natural resources, wholesome education, wholesome trading

* Dr., Senior Lecturer / Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Ph.D. Bud., Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies Manelwatta, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
and occupations, economic stability, good governance, etc. restore
responsible, sensible, moderate and mindful consumption leading to
sustainable development (dhāretabba abhivuddhi) that conduces
to establishment of sustainable equality, justice, peace and harmony.
Hence, a multi-dimensional Buddhist approach based on universally
applicable principles is to be adopted for the restoration of responsible
consumption and sustainable development in educational, professional,
social, ethical, economic, political contexts in the modern society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Responsible consumption in its sense of entirety should refer
to mindful and sensible consumption that strengthens wholesome
and bearable sustenance of physical and mental qualities without
harming physical and mental balance and health. Sustainable
development in its overall sense should refer to bearable, sensible,
wholesome and righteous development in every aspect that is
not detrimental and destructive to mankind, flora and fauna, all
types of resources and natural resources directly or indirectly, on
short-term, mid-term and long-term scale. As a whole, responsible
consumption and sustainable development should be beneficial to
physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, social wellbeing and spiritual
wellbeing of a country.

2. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

Responsible consumption on one hand leads to healthy living and
on the other is beneficial to sustainable development. For instance,
over-eating, eating at improper hours and eating unhealthy food,
continuous practice of irregular and harmful food habits, unclean
or polluted water etc. make one devoid of good health and often
spend what is earned on medicine and treatments disturbing one’s
own mental health and peace in the family directly or indirectly. In
Sri Lanka, a large amount of money is spent by the government on
ailments like diabetes, blood pressure, atherosclerosis caused by high
concentrations of cholesterol, cancers, renal disorders and others
types of health problems caused due to irresponsible consumption.
Healthy existence, according to Buddhism, is mainly of twofold
aspect as mental health and physical health. According to the
Sukhavagga of the Dhammapada, health is the most precious gain;
contentment is the greatest wealth \( (\text{ārogyaparamā lābhā} - \text{santuṭṭhi paramam dhanam}) \) (Dhp. Ch.15. V. 204. P.177). Physical health is achieved through behavioural wellbeing and social wellbeing of a person in the absence of the problems mentioned above and mental health is gained through spiritual wellbeing. This Buddhist concept that conduces to sensible and moderate consumption is mandatory for sustainable development of a nation anywhere on earth.

3. NUTRIMENTS FOR ALL

As Mahāpañha sutta reveals, “All beings exist through nutriment” \( (\text{Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā}) \) (AN. 10.27 WPB. P. 1373). The Buddha also points out that hunger is the most serious sickness in the world \( (\text{Jigacca parama roga}) \). According to the Suttas like Āhāra (SN. 12.11. WPB. P.540), Puttamañsa (SN. 12.63. WPB. P. 597), Moliyaphagguna (SN. 12.12. WPB. P.541), Atthi Rāga (SN. 12.64. WPB. P.599ff), four nutriments – physical nutriment – edible food (gross or subtle), second, contact; third, mental volition; and fourth, consciousness are required for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. In other words, birth and survival of a person is based on four types of physical and mental nutriments.

4. MINDFUL CONSUMPTION

Puttamañsa Sutta implies that one is not to eat food playfully or for intoxication or for putting on bulk or for beautification but to eat food simply for the sake of survival. The sutta further emphasizes that when physical food is comprehended, passion for the five strings of sensuality is comprehended. When passion for the five strings of sensuality is comprehended, there is no fetter bound by which a disciple of the noble ones would come back again to this world (SN. 12.63. WPB. P.597ff.). Mindful food consumption in proper quantity \( (\text{bhojane mattaññutā}) \) as emphasized in Buddha’s teachings is to be followed to restore responsible consumption. One who wishes to live hundred years as exposed in Araka Sutta (AN.7.74. WPB. P. 1096.) Should consume only seventy two thousand food portions consisting of neglected portions in certain circumstances such as sickness, babyhood, anger, feeling sad, retreat days and paucity of food. Eleven techniques that should be practised
in consuming food with mindful consumption are mentioned in Sekhiya rules. Donapaka Sutta (SN. 3.13. WPB. P. 176.) shows that the Buddha’s gave instructions to King Pasenadi Kosala who ate a whole bucketful of food and suffered from being engorged and panting to control eating mindfully. Then, King Kosala who gradually settled down to eating no more than a cup-full of rice became quite slim and comfortable, and he came to realize that when a person is constantly mindful and knows when enough food has been taken, all the afflictions become more slender and he ages more gradually protecting his life. This sutta emphasizes that overeating is the root of obesity, which accelerates the aging process and impends one’s life, and that this only occurs when mindfulness is weak or absent and that wisdom will provide what is needed to refrain from greedy, senseless and immoderate consumption.

5. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION FOR MAINTENANCE OF SUSTAINABLE HEALTH

Food for the nourishment of bodily health is of utmost importance as all beings subsist on food (sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā). Healthy food taken timely and in moderation is a support for mental health. For instance, a good breakfast, a moderate lunch and a slight supper will make one feel comfortable. Nevertheless, junk food, food containing harmful preservatives and artificial flavourings causing abdominal problems and indigestion, heavy food which makes digestion difficult, food in excessive amount and food taken inopportune are unsuitable as they make body uncomfortable and sick. Acceptance of a water-strainer, a water-strainer cylinder (a regulation water pot) (Vin. Cv. V.13.1.PTS. P.162), a filter cloth (Vin. V.13.3.PTS. P. 163), a water jar by the Buddha means the use of fresh water for healthy drinking. The sekhiyas of the Suttavibhaṅga mentions that water should not be polluted by passing feces, urine and spit (na udake agilāno uccaram va passavam va khelam va karissamiti sikkhā karaniyatī). Passing feces, urine and spits into the water was promulgated as an offence (Vin. VI. PTS. P.206).

The three main classes food are staple food, non-staple food and juice drink. The Buddhist Monastic Code I Chapter 8.4 classifies food into two groups: bhojaniya (consumables) and khādanīya
A HOLISTIC BUDDHIST APPROACH TO RESTORATION OF RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

(Chewables). All fruit that is non-staple (Vin. Mv. VI.38.1. PTS. P. 347.) and eight types of juice drinks: mango juice drink, rose apple juice drink, seed-banana juice drink, seedless banana juice drink, madhu juice drink, grape juice drink, water-lily root juice drink and juice drink are allowed. Conjey and honey-lumps are allowed to be drunk early in the morning and ten advantages of conjey were introduced by the Buddha, viz. (1) it gives life, (2) beauty, (3) ease, (4) strength, (5) intelligence; conjey, when it is drunk, (6) dispels hunger, (7) keeps off thirst, (8) regulates wind, (9) cleanses the bladder and (10) digests raw remnants of food (Vin. VI.24.5 – 7. PTS. P. 302.). The five products of a cow: milk, curds, buttermilk, butter, ghee can be taken (Vin. VI.34.21. PTS. P. 336.). All vegetables and all non-staple foods made with flour are allowed (Vin. VI.36.8. PTS. P. 344.). Monks or recluses are allowed to make use of fruits in five ways, viz. if it is damaged by fire, damaged by a knife, damaged by one’s nails, if it is seedless or if the seeds are discharged (Vin. Cv. V. 5.2. PTS. P. 147.) These healthy habits can be followed by anybody to prevent from physical illness. Modern health science also advises people to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables to keep the body healthy.

Flesh of human beings (Vin. Mv. VI. 23.9. PTS.P. 298.), elephants, horses, dogs, snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bears, and hyenas should not be consumed (Vin. VI.23.10-15. PTS.P. 298 – 300.). The Commentary adds comments here: These prohibitions cover not only the meat of these animals but also their blood, bones, skin, and hide. The WHO (The World Health Organization) has issued a communiqué advising people to eat less meat but to eat a lot of vegetables and fruits. As revealed in the Kitāgiri Sutta (MN. 70. BPS. P. 577.), the Buddha advised monks to abstain from the night-time meal so that they will sense next-to-no illness, next-to-no affliction, lightness, strength and a comfortable abiding. Having a light meal or no meal is also good for healthy life of a person. Fatty food, salty food, junk food and heavy meals should be avoided to maintain sustainable good health.

6. HEALTHY DWELLING AND ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Healthy houses equipped with basic facilities are essential for
healthy living. According to the UN Human Rights Convention, shelter for people is a basic need and the absence of permanent shelter harms healthy living and it causes family and social problems and disturbs sustainable development. Having dwelling in a peaceful area and keeping the dwellings tidy, clean and neat is mandatory for healthy living. It is very much fortunate for a person to be born, growing, studying, living and working in a good environment. This is the foremost prerequisite for the existence of healthy living. The maintenance of dwellings and environment is mentioned in the Visuddhimagga. A calm and quiet surrounding, peaceful area, place, suitable monastery, forest, grove, good weather etc. are environmental prerequisites for being engaged in meditational practices directing one’s mind to spiritual development through meditation. The Ariyapariyesana Sutta reveals that pleasant environment replete with natural beauty may enhance spiritual development (MN. 26. BPS. P. 259.). Similarly, people should have dwellings in a peaceful environment devoid of four major pollution – land, water, air and sound but replete with vegetation, fresh water, fresh air, fresh food and fruits and good neighborhood. The presence of these factors enhance good standard of living, and in turn contribute to sustainable development which brings about happy, peaceful and harmonious existence.

7. MORAL BEHAVIOUR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When individuals, families, society and all communities in a country are devoid of moral behaviours and corruption prevails in every echelon of the society, sustainable development becomes dream. Hence, moral development for sustainable development is a mandatory factor in every aspect. Moral behavior which is of utmost significance with regard to healthy development of a nation encompasses moral actions – basically skillful bodily actions and skillful verbal actions, abstinence from all forms of malevolent verbal and bodily deportments, refrain from vices and detrimental deeds and the observance of the five moral precepts which safeguards Human Rights.

The Two aspects of Right Conduct – right conduct in body (kāya-sucaritam) and right conduct in speech (vacī-sucaritam) mentioned in the Sangiti Sutta (DN. 33. WPB. P. 483.) are the
wholesome behavioral prerequisites that form the principal basis for healthy behavior. The two grounds based on merit that lead wholesome conduct: that of giving (dānamayaṃ puñña-kiriya – vatthu) and of morality (silamayaṃ puñña-kiriya-vatthu) (DN. 33. WPB. P. 483.), the Ten Meritorious Deeds etc. restore and enhance healthy development. The good practice of body and good practice of speech (Iti. LGC. P.152), the purity of body and purity of speech (Iti. 3.7. (56). LGC. P.157 – 158.) and the two perfections, to wit: perfection of body and perfection of speech (Iti. 3.7. (56). LGC. P.158) can be taken as the highest moral behaviour for sustainable development. The four ways, in which one is made pure by skillful verbal actions elucidated in the Cunda Kammāraputta Sutta (AN. Vol.V.10.176.PTS. P.175) contribute to sustainable development by restoring truthfulness and amiability. (1) By abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech, speaks the truth and holds to the truth. He is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world, (2) by abandoning divisive speech and abstaining from divisive speech, he reconciles those who have broken apart or strengthening those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord and speaks things that create concord, (3) by abandoning abusive speech and abstaining from abusive speech, he speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing and pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter and (4) by speaking in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the truth and morality. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed and connected with the goal. The three kinds of skillful bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma and righteous conduct – (1) abandoning the killing of living beings and becoming one who abstains from killing living beings, (2) abandoning the taking of what is not given and becoming one who abstains from taking what is not given and (3) abandoning misconduct in sexual desires and becoming one who abstains from misconduct in sexual desires introduced in the Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN. 41.WPB. P.380.) bring about peace, harmony, trustworthiness and wholesome rapport in and among individuals establishing healthy and harmonious living which contributes to sustainable development.
Virtue (sīla) which is the right conduct or behavior is the foundation of the entire healthy existence for sustainable development. The observance of the five moral Precepts (pañcasīla) entirely prevents the violation of the five major aspects of human rights advocated in the UN Human Rights Conventions. Namely, (1) every person has the right to protect one's life, (2) every person has the right to safeguard one’s wealth and property, (3) every person has the right to lead a peaceful family life, (4) every person has the right to know true information and (5) every person has the right to maintain peace of mind. These basic rights are well preserved by the observance of the five moral precepts. The violation of moral precepts through bodily and verbal actions is inwardly propelled by the noxious trio – greed, hatred and delusion. Refrain from the violation of the moral discipline reinforces the outward suppression of harmful mental factors and in turn helps one to suppress the inward detrimental mental factors. As a whole, moral restraint and moral purity establish sound outward conditions which help inward progress bringing about healthy living. The practice of virtue by an individual for his own benefit and for that of others elucidated the Sikkhā Sutta shows the importance of morality for sustainable development of a nation (MN.73.WPB.P. 595).

8. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AND RIGHTEOUS WEALTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The sustainable development of the contemporary society is threatened with Right livelihood, balanced livelihood, rightly earned wealth and property restore and maintain healthy living. Right livelihood (sammā ājīva), refrain from wrong livelihood (micchā ājīva) and adoption of the Four Types of Bliss of a man, etc. establish peaceful, meaningful, wholesome existence which conduces to maintain sustainable development. Right livelihood, according to the Maggavibhaṅga Sutta is the abandonment of dishonest livelihood and keeping one’s life going with right livelihood (SN.45.8 WPB. P.1528 – 1529.). The Buddha mentioned in the Vanijjā Sutta five types of occupations or business or trading that one should not be engaged in as they are wrong livelihood; business in weapons, business in human beings, business in meat, business in intoxicants, and business in poison (AN. Vol. III. 5.177
PTS. P.153). These types of occupations cause harm to individuals, family, society and the environment bringing destruction to peace and harmony. The mind of one who is engaged in such wrong business or occupation becomes unkind, ruthless, rough, wicked, cruel and immoral causing unhealthy living. Right livelihood (sammā ājīva) which refers to the engagement in wholesome occupations which helps a man to earn money through righteous means not through detrimental ways is a preliminary requisite to restore sustainable development.

9. BALANCED LIVELIHOOD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to balanced livelihood (sama-jivikatā) revealed in the Vyaghapajja Sutta, a man knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income. Earning or wealth in righteous way is also conducive to healthy development. The four sources for the increase of amassed wealth through right livelihood or right living – (1) abstinence from debauchery, (2) abstinence from drunkenness, (3) non-indulgence in gambling, (4) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good should be developed to lead a simple and balanced life (AN. Vol. IV. 8.54 PTS. P. 189.). The same sutta reveals that a man lives wholesome life in the present life when he is active in doing good, heedful and circumspective, equanimous in livelihood and careful with his savings (utthāta kammadheyyesu, appamatto vidhānavā, Samāṃ kappeti jīvikam sambhatam anurakkhati). The Six Channels of Dissipation of wealth as revealed in the Siṅgāla Sutta - (1) Indulgence in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness, (2) Sauntering in streets at unseemly Hours, (3) Frequenting theatrical shows, (4) Indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness, (5) Association with evil companions and (6) The habit of idleness and the Six Faults that Dissipate Wealth and Property: laziness, heedlessness, lack of action, lack of restraint, sleepiness and sloth as mentioned in the Najīrati Sutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya should be avoided to protect wealth that supports the maintenance of sustainable development. The four types of bliss that a man can enjoy immensely enhance sustainable living and development.
10. LEADING A SIMPLE LIFE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Leading a simple life endowed with contentment (santussaka), having few activities (appakicca), light living (sallahuka) and modesty (appagabbha) as mentioned in the Mettā Sutta is a prerequisite for healthy existence as a simple life has fewer attachments, bonds and ties (Sn. PTS. P. 125.) This does not mean that one is to neglect duties, responsibilities and obligations. Most of the people in the modern society are extremely busy with unnecessarily self-assigned or alienated activities which cause strong attachments and craving. This is directly conducive to harm mental peace and relaxation making the existence unhealthy, stressful and suffering. A simple life with a fewness of wishes, less attachment and less craving restores sustainable development.

11. PRESERVATION OF WEALTH & GENEROSITY

The Buddha, in the Vyagghapajja Sutta, instructs wealthy people how to preserve and increase their prosperity and how to avoid loss of wealth (AN. Vol. IV. 8.54 PTS. P. 187 ff.) Righteous wealth is appreciated and poverty is rejected in Buddhism. Wealth alone, however, does not make a complete man or a harmonious society. Possession of wealth often multiplies man’s desires, and he is ever in the pursuit of amassing more wealth and power. This unrestrained craving, however, leaves him dissatisfied and impedes his inner growth. It creates conflict and disharmony in society through the resentment of the underprivileged who feel themselves exploited by the effects of unrestrained craving. This harms sustainable development of the entire society. Therefore, the Buddha advises men to gain material welfare with four essential conditions for spiritual welfare: confidence in the Buddha’s Enlightenment, virtue, generosity and wisdom. These four will instill in man a sense of higher values. He will then not only pursue his own material concern, but also be aware of his duty towards society. To mention only one of the implications: a wisely and generously employed liberality or generosity will reduce exploitation, poverty, starvation, theft, corruption, tensions and conflicts in the society. Thus, the observing of these conditions of material and spiritual welfare will make healthy and sustainable development in in the modern society.
12. HEALTHY MIND FOR RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The mind overwhelmed by the noxious trio—greed (lobha), ill-will (dosa) and delusion (moha) generally harms mental health. Intense greed (abhijjhā), intense ill-will (vyāpāda) and intense delusion (avijjā or micchāditthi) should be abandoned to maintain mental health. Wholesome mental actions, right view, confidence (saddhā) wholesome knowledge, wholesome attitudes, spiritual qualities, etc. conduce to healthy life. Confidence in the Fully Enlightened One, the Doctrine and the enlightened disciples of the Fully Enlightened One known as the Triple Jewel is of utmost significance. As the flawless doctrine expounded by the Fully Enlightened Buddha perpetuated by the Enlightened Saṅgha shows us the path endowed with right view leading to happiness, peace and mental health that is immensely essential to restore and maintain sustainable development.

The development of Four Sublime Abodes — loving-kindness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), altruistic joy (muditā) and equanimity (upekkhā) and the Five Faculties — confidence (saddhā), energy (viriya) mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā) restores mental health. For instance, Ill-will, cruelty, resentment, irritation, passion, conceit etc. implied in the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta are internal impediments to healthy mind. They should be suppressed at least to a certain extent to make way for the development of mental health (MN.62 WPB. P.530 ff.). Good will is to be developed so as to abandon ill-will. Compassion is to be developed in order to abandon cruelty. When altruistic joy is developed, resentment will be abandoned. When equanimity is developed, irritation will be abandoned. Passion will be abandoned when the unattractive is developed. The perception of inconstancy should be developed to abandon the conceit (MN.62.WPB.P530–531.). Development of the four sublime abodes is mandatory to the restoration and maintenance of sustainable development.

13. SOCIAL HARMONY AND RECIPROCAL OBLIGATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Disharmony among people, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment
etc. cause a multitude of social problems like robbery, bribery, fraud, environmental pollution, drug addiction, alcoholism etc. destroying peaceful existence and wholesome development. Social harmony and peace, absence of poverty, starvation, malnutrition, unequal distribution of wealth, literacy and employment, wholesome family and social life etc. also restore sustainable development. The Sikkhā Sutta elucidates that an individual who practises virtue for his own benefit and for that of others abstains from the taking of life and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from the taking of life. He himself abstains from stealing and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from stealing. He himself abstains from sexual misconduct and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from sexual misconduct. He himself abstains from lying and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from lying. He himself abstains from intoxicants that cause heedlessness and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from intoxicants that cause heedlessness (AN. Vol. II. 4.99. PTS. P. 107.). The individuals endowed with these qualities contribute to social harmony and peace and help restore sustainable development on any land.

14. WHOLESOME RELATIONS FOR RESTORATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A good friend (kalyāṇamitta), good neighbours, good family members, social ethics, wholesome social relations, wholesome family, cultural, economic, educational, religious relations etc. contribute to the development of healthy living in the society. The association of the four types of good-hearted friends introduced in the Sīṅgāla Sutta highly conduces to healthy living in the society (AN. Vol. II. 4.99. PTS. P. 178 ff.). The Six things which are conducive to communal living (sārāṇiyā dhammā) mentioned in the Sangīti Sutta are also wholesome social prerequisites that contribute to peaceful co-existence which, in turn, favours mental development.

The four grounds for the bonds of fellowship discussed in Saṅgaha Sutta are (i) generosity, (ii) kind words, (iii) beneficial help and (iv) reliability (AN. Vol. II 4.32. PTS. P. 36). These great qualities help each other greatly for the development of the moral
and spiritual qualities. A trustworthy person is the best kinsman (visvāsaparamā ṇāti) according to the Sukhavagga (Dhp. Ch.15. V.204. P.177.) The Rāga-Vinaya Sutta also details about four individuals out of one who practises for the subduing of passion within himself and encourages others in the subduing of passion; practises for the subduing of aversion within himself and encourages others in the subduing of aversion; practises for the subduing of delusion within himself and encourages others in the subduing of delusion (AN. Vol. V. 11.12 PTS. P. 209 ff. /Vol. II 4. 96 PTS. P. 105.). The six conditions that are conducive to amiability, that engender feelings of endearment, engender feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony and a state of unity are mentioned in the Saraṇiya Sutta ( AN. Vol. V. 6.12. PTS. P. 208.). A monk is set on bodily acts of good will with regard to his fellows in the holy life, to their faces and behind their backs. The monk is set on verbal acts of good will with regard to his fellows in the holy life, to their faces and behind their backs. The monk is set on mental acts of good will with regard to his fellows in the holy life, to their faces and even behind their backs. Even the people in the society should follow these ethics to make society suitable for sustainable development. The adoption of the sixty one reciprocal obligations exposed in the Siṅgāla Sutta that restore wholesome relations in family, educational, social, economic and religious contexts that establish social harmony and peace is conducive to maintain sustainable development in every stratum in the society.

15. GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The contemporary society overwhelmed by avariciousness, political extremism, despotism, nepotism, detrimental trading and occupations, immoral entertainments and literature, violation of rights, racism, extreme poverty, exploitation, oppression etc. harms peace and harms harmony destroying wholesome development in the current society. It is externally due to bad governance based on unsuitable policies of economic system, education that increase intense greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha) and mismanagement of both human and natural resources. This also causes damages to the world resources as they are exploited to
amass wealth for rulers and their intimates to lead a life in the lap of luxury at the expense of their citizens whose living standards are below the poverty line. As a whole, evil consequence of all these is the destruction of healthy development.

Good governance which restores social equality, justice, reciprocal obligations, law and order etc. and prevents unemployment, unequal distribution of wealth and property, poverty, illiteracy, social vices, riots, conflicts etc. and other detriments should be adopted for making the modern society suitable for sustainable development. The Seven Conditions of a Nation’s Welfare (satta aparihāniya dhamma) revealed in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN.16, WPB. P. 231.), the duties of an Ariyan Wheel-rolling Monarch, according to Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta as revealed in the Kūṭadanta Sutta (DN. 5. WPB. P. 136.), the rightfulness and righteousness of a wheel-turning monarch who had conquered the land in four directions and ensured the security of his realm, possessed the seven treasures, whose kingdom is rich and prosperous discussed in the Mahāsudassana Sutta (DN. 17. WPB. PP.279 – 280.) can bring about law and order, prosperity, justice and equality in a country. Thus, the Four Virtuous Qualities (satara saṅgaha vatthu) – liberality, kind speech, beneficial actions and impartiality, the Ten Obligations of Universal Monarch (dasasakvitivat), the Ten Duties of Good Governance (dasarājadharma), etc. which should be executed by a ruler can be adopted to restore peaceful and sustainable development in the context of virtuous and righteous governance.

16. CONCLUSION

In Buddhist perspective, consumption and development in a country become responsible, sensible, moderate and sustainable only when serious detriments of the noxious trio – greed, hatred and delusion are avoided and wholesome (skillful) bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions for individual and common welfare are developed in every stratum of the society. Moderate consumption, healthy food, good dwellings and environment devoid of pollution, moral Behaviour that safeguards basic human rights, right livelihood and balanced livelihood that preserves righteous wealth and property, healthy mind developed through
Buddhist teachings, social harmony and reciprocal obligations and good governance that restores social equality, justice, prosperity and peace for healthy living are essential factors for restoration and continuity of responsible consumption of material and immaterial resources and sustainable development in the modern pluralistic society.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN: Aṅguttara Nikāya
BPS: Buddhist Publication
Cv: Cullavagga
Dhp: Dhammapada
DN: Dīgha Nikāya
Iti: Itivuttaka
LGC: London Geoffrey Cumberlege
MN: Majjhima Nikāya
Mv: Mahāvagga
PTS: Pali Text Society
SN: Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sp: Suttanipāta / Sutta–Nipāta
Vin: Vine Piṭaka
WPB: Wisdom Publication, Boston
References


BUDDHIST APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WEALTH FOR A PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

by Ven. Yatalamatte Kusalananda Thero

One of the major threats to peace and sustainability in the contemporary society is irresponsible production and undue consumption of wealth. Righteous wealth is welcome and poverty is not accepted in Buddhism. Collecting abundant wealth earned through unrighteous means is rejected. Good utility of wealth earned through right livelihood and straightforward effort and its responsible consumption is highly encouraged. Balance and moderate consumption of wealth earned through right livelihood (samma ajiva) is encouraged. Absence of adequate wealth known as poverty is a suffering in the world for a person (householder) who enjoys sensuality (AN. 6.45 (3). WPB. p.914.). According to the Kutadanta Sutta (DN. 5, WPB. p. 135.), Cakkavattisihanāda moral decline occurs because of poverty and vices and crimes take place destroying peaceful existence in the society. This is a pathetic reality even in modern context. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to expose a Buddhist approach to responsible production (earning) and consumption of wealth for a peaceful and sustainable society.

Kuṭadanta and Cakkavattisihanāda Suttas reveal that social peace and equality are harmed due to moral decline committed through vices provoked by poverty (DN. 26, WPB. p. 403 ff.)

Overcoming of poverty should not be understood as the increase of wealth, more desires and wants which are to be satisfied by more consumables and luxuries. In this context, the significant difference between one’s needs and wants should be recognized. Needs – four requisites (food, clothes, shelter and medicine) should be fulfilled and wants should be limited and reduced as they are insatiable and boundless and the continuous satisfaction of wants or desires will bring intense and destructive sufferings, miseries, etc. to individual, family, society, environment and the world.

According to Buddhism, poverty involves suffering which causes destruction of equality and peace in the society. As a philosophy of living which advocates the elimination of suffering, Buddhism does not appreciate poverty. As the Ina Sutta (AN. 6.45 (3), WPB. p.914) reveals, poverty is suffering in the world for a householder. Getting into debt is suffering in the world for a poor person who partakes of sensuality. The decline of moral qualities propelled by poverty is suffering to the entire society. Buddhism values detachment towards material goods and commends contented life (santussako), few duties (appkicco) light or simple living (sallahukavutti), easy to support (subharo) as mentioned in the Karanīya Metta Sutta, (Sn. 1.8) fewness of wishes, having less wants or fewness of desires (appicchatā) (AN. 114 (8), WPB. p. 987) as a virtue and balanced living (samajivikatā) (AN. 8.54 (4), WPB. p. 1194). Poverty is the non-possession of the basic material requirements for leading a decent life free from hunger, malnutrition, disease, bad health, loss of shelter, absence of other preliminary facilities for standard living, etc. Buddhism recognizes the significance of the fulfillment of the minimum material needs for a decent living even in the context of the aspirants of its higher spiritual goal. For instance, the four requisites for one who has renounced the worldly life are (i) food sufficient to alleviate hunger and maintain good health, (ii) clothing to protect the body and to be socially decent, (iii) shelter for protection from rain, winds, etc. and for the undisturbed engagement with mind development and (iv) medicine sufficient to maintain health care, cure and prevent illnesses. As the Andha Sutta mentions, some persons are like the completely blind (andho) since they do not have the vision to improve their material wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired and also do
not have the vision to lead morally raised life knowing wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities and dark and bright qualities. Some are like the one-eyed (ekacakkhu) since they have the vision to improve their wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired but they do not see the necessity to lead a morally raised life knowing wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities and dark and bright qualities. Those who are two-eyed (dvicakkhu) are likened to have the vision to improve both (AN. 3.29 WPB. p. 224.). Only the increase or improvement of material conditions is not encouraged in Buddhism and a causal relationship exists between material poverty and ethical or social deterioration as the Cakkavattisīhanāda Suttas exposes. Thus, poverty, from this point of view does not involve the absence of an abundance of goods that stimulates the insatiable greed of man.

1. GREATEST WEALTH

According to the teaching of the Buddha, the greatest wealth is contentment (santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanam) (Dhp. Ch.15. V.204. p.177). The Ānaṇya Sutta (AN. 4.62 (2). WPB. p. 452 – 453.) introduces the four kinds of bliss that can be attained by a householder in the proper season and on the proper occasions such as the bliss of having wealth, the bliss of making use of wealth, the bliss of debtlessness and the bliss of blamelessness. Thus, the wealth earned righteously is admired and poverty is not at all encouraged in the four types of bliss. Even the survival of the Buddhist Dispensation and contribution to spiritual life is dependent on good support from the people. Therefore, poverty, according to Buddhist teachings, is the absence of material necessities that obstruct a decent living endowed with light living (sallavukavutti) and balanced living (samajīvikatā) through right livelihood (sammā ājīva).

2. ECONOMIC ORDER OF SOCIETY

Economic order of society is essential for restoration of a sustainable society. Material scarcity is seen as a key source of conflict that harms equality and peace. According to the Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta (DN. 26, WPB. p. 395 ff.) and the Kūṭadanta Sutta (DN. 5.
WPB. p. 133 ff.), the roots of conflicts lie not only in individual consciousness but also exist in the very structure of society that encourages those roots to grow. These Suttas point out that when the economic order of society is of inequality, injustice and vicious economic disparities; a substantial section of the community is reduced to poverty and people rebel against such social order and as a result peaceful existence in the society is harmed. According to the Kūṭadanta Sutta, the failure on the part of the ruler to look after the essential needs of the people drive the people who are deprived of their needs to resort to crime and rebellion against the governance (state). The imposition of penalties to deal with such a situation does not produce the desired results. According to the Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta (DN. 26, WPB. p.395 ff.), any social order that does not address the problem of economic poverty creates conditions for social unrest resulting eventually in the total decline of the moral standards of society causing a lot of social issues, and the end result of it could be disastrous riots or wars. This Sutta points out how successive “wheel turning monarchs” prevented social problems by following the sage maxim “whosoever in your kingdom is poor, wealth should be given.” Ultimately there came a king who disregarded this advice and let poverty continue (DN. 26, WPB p.398.). This illustrates that, though the ruler provides rightful shelter, protection and defense, he fails to give money to the poor and provide a means of right living which creates wealth for the poor. Then, in that society, poverty increases creating a violent context. A poor man intentionally takes from others what has not been given. When the man is brought to the ruler, the ruler gives the man money because he has stolen since he cannot make a living. The ruler hopes that the man will set up a business and lead a stable life without resorting to crime (DN. 26. WPB. p.399.). But this did not happen. Hearing that the ruler (state) gives money to thieves, more and more people resorted to stealing in order to get assistance from the ruler. When the ruler hears that some steal because he gives money to thieves, he revises his policy and begins punishing thieves with death. However, to avoid being reported to the ruler, thieves begin to carry swords, kill people whose property they steal and launched murderous assaults on villages, towns and cities and indulged in highway robbery and violent murder. Once
they got accustomed to this kind of violence resulting in killing, deliberate lying, evil speech, adultery, incest, covetousness and hatred, false opinions, lack of respect for parents, clan elders and the religious causing deterioration in all social norms.

3. CAUSAL RELATIONS BETWEEN WEALTH AND MORALLY SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

The Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta elucidates this factor in causal origination thus. When wealth is not given to the poor or unequally distributed, poverty comes into being; because poverty increases, theft occurs; because theft increases, weaponry increases; because weaponry increases, murder occurs; because murder increases, the beings’ vitality decreases, etc. when violent conditions lead to decrease in life span: When people live for ten years, the ten courses of moral conduct will completely disappear and the ten courses of evil will prevail exceedingly. The idea of 'good' (kusala) will not exist. Men will not recognize women as ‘mother,’ ‘mother’s sister,’ teacher’s wife, etc. (DN. 26, WPB. p. 401.) Thus, the world will become thoroughly promiscuous (immoral) like goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, dogs and jackals. Among them, fierce enmity will prevail one for another, fierce hatred, fierce anger and thoughts of killing, mother against child and child against mother, father against child and child against father, brother against brother, brother against sister, just as the hunter feels hatred for the beast he stalks. There will be a seven-day period of war, when people will see each other as animals; sharp swords will appear in their hands and they will murder each other, each thinking ‘This is an animal’ (DN. 26, WPB. p. 402.). When economic deprivation is eradicated, peace, equality, happiness and coexistence are established and this leads to restore a peaceful sustainable society. According to the above event mentioned in the Sutta, wealth and resources to support trade, agriculture and other occupations should be distributed and proper salaries should be paid to those engaged in occupations adequate to lead good life and this will eradicate material disparities and vices caused by them and bring about social equality, peace and happiness which are qualities for a sustainable society.
4. ETHICAL INFLUENCE ON CONSUMPTION AND PROTECTION OF WEALTH

According to Buddhist teachings, the causes of loss of wealth can basically be cited in the Kuṭadanta Sutta, Cakkavattisihanâda Sutta, Najîrati Sutta, Vyagghapajja Sutta, Siṅgālovâda Sutta, Parābhava Sutta, etc. As revealed in the Vyagghapajja Sutta, the wealth amassed has four sources of destruction – immoral conduct (i) Debauchery, (ii) Drunkenness, (iii) Gambling and (iv) Friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1195.). Among the twelve causes of unsuccessful man exposed in the Parābhava Sutta, certain immoral causes that conduce to decline, loss and destruction of wealth can be taken. For instance, (1) averseness to Dhamma, (2) preference to wicked persons and averseness to virtuous persons, (3) fondness of sleep, fondness of company, being indolent, lazy and irritable, (4) ungrateful to old parents, (5) deception a brahman or ascetic or any other mendicant by falsehood, (6) enjoyment of luxuries alone, (7) being proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and despising of one’s own kinsmen, (8) being a rake, a drunkard, a gambler and squandering all one earns, (9) Not being contented with one’s own wife and being with harlots and the wives of others, (10) Being past one’s youth, taking a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her, (11) placing in authority a woman addicted to drinking and squandering or a man of a like behavior, (12) being of noble birth, with vast ambition and of slender means and craving for rulership (Sn. 1.6. PTS. p.13 ff.). This type of immoral conduct directly or indirectly causes destruction of wealth. The Six Channels of Dissipation of Wealth elaborated in the Siṅgālovâda Sutta (DN. 31. WPB. p. 461.) are (i) Indulgence in intoxicants, (ii) Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours which, (iii) Frequenting theatrical shows, (iv) Indulgence in gambling, (v) Association with evil companions and (vi) Addiction to idleness.

Implications can be drawn from the Ugga Sutta (AN. 7.7 WPB. p. 1001 – 1002.) that loss of one’property to the Five Enemies – water or flood, fire or conflagrations, thieves, tyrants or bad leaders and unloved heirs like bad sons and daughters may cause poverty.
5. STABILITY AND RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION OF WEALTH

As the Vyagghapajja Sutta reveals a householder knowing his income and expenses should lead a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1195). The four sources for the increase of amassed wealth through right livelihood or right living, namely: (1) avoidance of debauchery, (2) avoidance of drunkenness, (3) non-indulgence in gambling, (4) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good should be adopted to lead a simple and balanced life (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1195). According to the above Sutta, a householder lives well in the present life when he is active in doing good, heedful and circumspective, equanimous in livelihood and careful with his savings (AN. . 8.54 (4). WPB. p.1194) (uṭṭhātā kammadheyyesu, appamatto vidhānavā; Samāṁ kappeti jīvikāṁ sambhatāṁ anurakkhati). Earning of wealth righteously and right uses of wealth conduce to balanced living. As the Siṅgālovāda Sutta illustrates, the Buddha gives instructions to the young householder, Sigālaka on how wealth is earned righteously and the four ways to spend one’s wealth by a wise man endowed with virtue in order to lead a fruitful, wholesome and balanced life. They are explicated through similes thus. The wise one who is endowed with virtue will shine like a beacon-fire. He gathers wealth like a bee gathering honey or like ants piling up their hill (paṇḍito silasampanno jalamīaggīvabhasati, Bhoge samharamānassa, bhamarasseva iriyato; Bhogā sannicayaṁ yanti, vammikovupaciyati.) (DN. 31. WPB. p. 466.). The four ways to spend wealth mean that wealth can be divided into four portions (Catudhā vibhaje bhoge, sa ve mittāni ganthati). He enjoys one portion of wealth, with two portions he manages his work or profession or business (investment), the fourth portion is to be deposited to be used in times of misfortune and the last part for fulfilling obligations (Ekena bhoge bhūṇjeyya, dvihi kammaṁ payojaye;Catutthaṁca nidhāpeyya, āpadāsu bhavissati ti) (DN. 31. WPB. p. 466.). The right uses of wealth that has been righteously obtained are also conducive to balanced living according to the Pattakamma Sutta (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449.) Wealth
should be used for dependents, for overcoming misfortunes, for

giving donations and for making the five offerings or ołations –
to kin, guests, the departed, kings and the gods – this has been

recommended by the virtuous who live spiritually (AN. 4.61 (1).
WPB. p. 451.) (Bhuttā bhogā bhatā bhaccā, vitīṇṇā āpadāsu me;
uddhaggā dakkhiṇā dinā, atho pañcabalīkatā; upaṭṭhitā sīlavanto,
saññatā brahamacārayo).

6. POSSESSION OF ABUNDANT WEALTH & DISTRIBUTION OF

WEALTH

As the Aputtaka Sutta (SN. 3 .19. PTS. S i 89) shows that the
Buddha says that when a person of no integrity acquires abundant
wealth, he does not provide for his own pleasure and satisfaction, or
for the pleasure and satisfaction of his parents, his wife and children;
his slaves, servants, and assistants; his friends. He does not offer
priests and contemplatives. When his wealth is not properly put to
use, kings make off with it, or thieves make off with it, or fire burns
it, or water sweeps it away, or hateful heirs make off with it. Thus, his
wealth, not properly put to use, goes to waste and not to any good
use. The Buddha further says that when a person of integrity acquires
lavish wealth, he provides for his own pleasure and satisfaction, for
the pleasure and satisfaction of his parents, his wife and children;
his slaves, servants, and assistants; and his friends. He offers priests
and contemplatives offerings. When his wealth is properly put to
use, kings do not make off with it, thieves do not make off with it,
fire does not burn it, water does not sweep it away, and hateful heirs
do not make off with it. Thus his wealth, properly put to use, goes to
a good use and not to waste. The Appaka Sutta affirms that few are
those people in the world who, when acquiring bountiful wealth,
do not become intoxicated and heedless, do not become greedy for
sensual pleasures, and do not mistreat other beings. Many more are
those who, when acquiring bountiful wealth, become intoxicated
and heedless, become greedy for sensual pleasures, and mistreat
other beings (SN. 6 (6). WPB. p. 169.).

The Buddha, in the Vyagghapajja Sutta, instructs rich
householders how to preserve and increase their prosperity and
how to avoid loss of wealth. Wealth alone, however, does not make
a complete man or a harmonious society. Possession of wealth often
multiplies man’s desires, and he is ever in the pursuit of amassing more wealth and power. This unrestrained craving, however, leaves him dissatisfied and hampers his inner growth. It creates conflict and disharmony in society through the resentment of the underprivileged who feel themselves exploited by the effects of unrestrained craving. Therefore, the Buddha advises householders to gain material welfare with four essential conditions for spiritual welfare: confidence in the Buddha’s enlightenment, virtue, liberality and wisdom. These four will instill in man a sense of higher values. He will then not only pursue his own material concern, but also be aware of his duty toward society. To mention only one of the implications: a wisely and generously employed liberality will reduce tensions and conflicts in society. Thus, the observing of these conditions of material and spiritual welfare will make for an ideal citizen in an ideal society. Some wholesome factors that develop wealth earning through righteous business and trading can be shown according to the Śingālovāda Sutta. For instance, a factory owner, businessman or any entrepreneur who is engaged in wealth earning business should perform certain ethical obligations towards the employees recruited in his business process. Simultaneously, employees and servants of all ranks engaged in work under employers should also perform certain ethical obligations towards their masters. This will lead to increase in production, wealth, wages, stability of production and wealth as well as satisfaction and mutual confidence paving way for no strikes or such disturbances (DN. 31. WPB. p. 468).

7. RIGHTEOUS WEALTH FOR PEACEFUL LIVING

The right uses of wealth that has been righteously obtained are also conducive to balanced living according to the Pattakamma Sutta (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449ff). Wealth should be used for dependents, for overcoming misfortunes, for giving donations and for making the five offerings – to kin, guests, the departed, kings and the gods – this has been recommended by the virtuous who live spiritually (Bhuttā bhogā bhatā bhaccā, vitiṣṇā āpadāsu me, uddhaggā dakkhinā dinā, atho pañcabalikatā, upaṭṭhitā silavanto, saññatā brahamacārayo) (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 450ff). The Vyagghapajja Sutta exposes four conditions that conduce to worldly progress and development of wealth – (i) the accomplishment of persistent
effort (uḍṭhāna-sampadā), (ii) the accomplishment of watchfulness (ārakkha-sampadā), (iii) Good friendship (kalyānamittatā) and (iv) Balanced livelihood (sama-jīvikatā) (AN. 8.54 (4), WPB. p. 1194). The same concept is elucidated in the Pattakamma Sutta (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449ff). According to the accomplishment of persistent effort (uḍṭhāna-sampadā), a householder by whatsoever activity earns his living, whether by farming, by trading, by rearing cattle, by archery, by service under the king, or by any other kind of craft — at that he becomes skillful and is not lazy. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means; he is able to carry out and allocate duties. As per the accomplishment of watchfulness (ārakkha-sampadā), a householder whatsoever wealth is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal it, fire would not burn it, water would not carry it away, nor ill-disposed heirs remove it. According to Balanced livelihood (sama-jīvikatā), a householder knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income. A householder with a large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say this person will die like a starveling.

8. RIGHTEOUS WEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Adiya Sutta deals with benefits to be obtained from wealth. The Buddha talked about five benefits and satisfaction that can be obtained from righteously earned wealth to Anāthapiṇḍika, the householder (AN. 5.41 (1). WPB. p. 665). The wealth should be earned and gained righteously through his efforts and enterprise, amassed through the strength of his arm, and piled up through the sweat of his brow. Such wealth provides him with pleasure and satisfaction. He can maintain that pleasure rightly. He provides his parents with pleasure and satisfaction, and maintains that pleasure rightly. He provides his children, his wife, his slaves, servants and assistants with pleasure and satisfaction, and maintains that pleasure rightly. The Pattakamma Sutta also exposes some significant factors in this regard (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449 – 452). The Ānānya Sutta
introduces the four kinds of bliss that can be attained in the proper season, on the proper occasions, by a householder – (i) the bliss of having wealth (atthisukha), (ii) the bliss of making use of wealth (bhogasukha), (iii) the bliss of debtlessness (ānanyasukha) and (iv) the bliss of blamelessness (anavajjasukha) (AN. 4.62 (2). WPB. p. 452 – 453).

9. CONCLUSION

Irresponsible productions and unrighteous wealth and absence of adequate wealth, wealth earned through wrong livelihood and irresponsible consumption of wealth destroy health, environment, peace and harmony in the society. A Buddhist approach with universally applicable teachings to restore responsible, humanistic, environmental friendly and wholesome production (righteous earning) based on right livelihood and responsible consumption of wealth should be adopted for the restoration of a peaceful and sustainable society.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN:   Aṅguttara Nikāya
Dhp:   Dhammapada
DN:   Dīgha Nikāya
MN:   Majjhima Nikāya
PTS:  Pali Text Society
SN:   Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sp:   Suttanipāta / Sutta–Nipāta
WPB:  Wisdom Publication, Boston
References


ABSTRACT

The planet is now in a new epoch of its history, the Anthropocene, in which humanity exerts enormous impact on planetary processes. Human activities put a huge pressure on the earth system’s structure and functioning with detrimental consequences.

The beginning of the age of the great acceleration is dated back to the 1950s, as earth systems trends and socio-economic trends accelerate since the middle of the last century. According to the patterns of great acceleration, socio-economic trends have been deteriorating that changes the future of the planet and the future of humanity.

A decisive part of the socio-economic system beside production and distribution is consumption. In the last decades not just world population, but primary energy consumption, water usage, fertilizer and paper consumption, and the consumption of various services have been increased exponentially.

In respect to sustainability, the central role of consumption was recognized by the United Nations as “ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns” is included as one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals in the UN Development Programme.

Buddhism should and can reflect on the stressing issue of exponentially increasing consumption patterns in the modern world. According to Buddhism, responsible consumption is right (sammā) consumption that

*. Asst. Prof. PhD., Business Ethics Center of Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.
is understood as local, wise and mindful, which gives an opportunity for practicing the virtues of sharing (dāna), contentment (appicchatā) and moderation (mattaññutā).

According to the teaching of the Buddha and the conceptions of Buddhist economics, right consumption aims at satisfying basic human needs (food, clothing, shelter and medicine) with minimal environmental impact. Furthermore, simplifying desires appears in right consumption as an important factor to alleviate the pressure on earth systems. Thus right consumption contributes to the Buddhist ideal of peace and harmony in the age of the Anthropocene.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper introduces the Buddhist contributions to the subject of responsible consumption. On the one hand, it presents how the Buddhist approach transcends the traditional notion of sustainable consumption. On the other hand, it demonstrates how Buddhism interprets the notion of responsible consumption. The study recommends some necessary changes in consumption to ensure adaptable consumption patterns for the challenges that humanity faces in the epoch of the Anthropocene.

The first part of the paper introduces the new epoch of the planet’s history, the Anthropocene. It investigates the current Earth System trends that drive the planet into a climate catastrophe, and presents the era of the Great Acceleration, in which the magnitude of numerous socio-economic indicators increases exponentially. The second part of the paper introduces the initiative of “Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns”, which is part of the United Nations’ Development Programme, and one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. The third part of the paper investigates the Buddhist approach to consumption and gives a framework of responsible consumption, which is regarded as right consumption from a Buddhist perspective. The discussion includes the comparison of the United Nations’ and the Buddhist approaches of the subject of consumption. The paper ends with short conclusions.

In his paper, Apichai Puntasen (2007) analyzes the implementation of Buddhist teachings in economics. He introduces
the main concepts of Buddhist economics on the three spheres of economics, namely production, distribution and consumption. The frameworks of Buddhist production, Buddhist distribution and Buddhist consumption are integrated in the model of Buddhist economic system that highlights a scenario, which makes the realization of peace and tranquility in economics possible.

Although production and consumption is very closely related in the economic system, this paper investigates in detail only the sphere of consumption, and provides some further insights on how responsible consumption is interpreted from a Buddhist standpoint. Consumption patterns and consumption habits are basically determined by personal decisions. As leading a life in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path is also a personal decision, Buddhism can provide influential contributions to shape the framework of responsible consumption, which can be regarded as right consumption in the Buddhist terminology.

2. FROM CLIMATE CHANGE TO CLIMATE CATASTROPHIC

In our days humanity faces with the ever-growing consequences of human-induced changes on the Earth System. Steffen et al. (2015a) identified nine processes and systems that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth System. These planetary boundaries include climate change, change in biosphere integrity (biodiversity loss and species extinction), stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, biogeochemical flows (phosphorus and nitrogen cycles), land-system change (deforestation), freshwater use, atmospheric aerosol loading, and introduction of novel entities (organic pollutants, radioactive materials, nanomaterials, microplastics, etc.). Four of the nine planetary boundaries, namely climate change, biosphere integrity, land-system change, and biogeochemical flows have been crossed from a safe operating space to a zone of uncertainty or even to a zone of high risks.

Humanity exerts enormous impact on essential planetary processes and planetary boundaries. Human impact has become so profound that it has driven the Earth out from the epoch of Holocene, in which human societies have developed in the last eleven thousand years (Steffen et al. 2015b). Based on the altered
circumstances caused by humanity, the new geological epoch of the planet is called the “Anthropocene” (Crutzen 2002, Steffen et al. 2011), a fundamentally distinct epoch with anthropogenic markers (Waters et al. 2016), in which human activities put a huge pressure on the Earth System’s structure and functioning with detrimental consequences.

Based on the twelve global socio-economic indicators like population, real GDP, foreign direct investments, urban population, primary energy use, fertilizer consumption, number of existing large dams, water use, paper production, number of new motor vehicles per year, sum of fixed and mobile phone subscriptions, and number of international tourist arrivals per year, Steffen et al. (2015b) arrive to the conclusion that the prime driver of change in the Earth System is predominantly the global economic system. The magnitude of the twelve socio-economic indicators increased exponentially from the 1950s, which delineates a phenomenon, called the “Great Acceleration”. Earth System trends and socio-economic trends accelerate since the middle of the last century. Many of these indicators are related directly or indirectly to consumption. According to the patterns of Great Acceleration, socio-economic trends and the prevailing consumption patterns have been deteriorating, which worsens the chances of the future of humanity.

The interactions of land, ocean, atmosphere and life together provide those conditions, upon which the future of our societies depends. The knowledge that human activity now rivals geological forces in influencing the trajectory of the Earth System has important implications for both Earth System science and social decision-making (Steffen et al. 2018). Adaptation options can reduce the risks of climate change, and have a central role in the survival of humanity in the Anthropocene (Moufouma-Okia et al. 2018).

The patterns of the Great Acceleration show that socio-economic trends have enormous impact on the Earth System and contribute to transgressing planetary boundaries. A decisive part of the socio-economic system, beside production and distribution is consumption. In the last decades not just world population, but primary energy consumption, water usage, fertilizer and paper
consumption, and the consumption of various services have been increasing exponentially. Overgrown consumption, beside the operating mechanism of the prevailing business models is a core factor, fueling detrimental changes in the Anthropocene. Mainstream business and consumption patterns are the primary causes of altered climatic conditions. Thus, introducing and applying alternative business models in production and introducing responsible consumption are at the core of adaptation. Responsible consumption presupposes new consumer behaviors, which contribute to establish consumption patterns that allow to survive the climate catastrophe by adapting to the altered climatic conditions.

3. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Although both production and distribution influence the climatic conditions fundamentally, these stressing issues are exceeding the scope of the paper as it investigates in detail only one part of the economic system, namely consumption. In respect to sustainability, the central role of consumption was recognized by the United Nations (UN) as “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” is one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN Development Programme (Goal 12).

Based on global data, the UN warns that currently the consumption of natural resources is increasing. For instance, in case of water, humankind is polluting rivers and lakes faster than nature can recycle and purify, although more than one billion people still do not have access to fresh water. The excessive use of water contributes to the global water stress. Not just the growing use of natural resources, but bad consumption patterns and consumption habits increase general consumption. In case of food, beside substantial environmental impacts in the production phase, households intensify the pressure on the environment through dietary choices and consumption habits. According to global UN data, an estimated one third of all food produced end up rotting in the bins of consumers and retailers, and more than two billion people are overweight globally. The growth of consumption can also be observed by the increase of vehicle ownership, and global air travel. Should the global population reach 9.6 billion by 2050,
the equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles (Goal 12).

The goal of the twelfth SDG is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. In doing so, one of the core objectives is to decouple economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation through improved resource efficiency, while improving people’s well-being (Transforming, 2015). Thus, sustainable consumption and production is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all. Its implementation reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and reduce poverty. In general, sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more and better with less” with the assumption that net welfare gains from economic activities can increase by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle, while increasing the quality of life. Realizing sustainable consumption needs to focus also on final consumers, which includes educating them on consumption and lifestyles, and providing them with adequate information through standards and labels (Goal 12).

The reports about the progress towards the SDGs depict a sad picture about ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. Although the core objective is to decouple economic growth from natural resource use, global figures in 2016 pointed to worsening tendencies (Progress, 2017). According to the 2018 report about the progress, more and more countries are developing policies to promote sustainable consumption and production, and more multinationals and other large companies are reporting on sustainability (The Sustainable..., 2018). Although there are changes that seem positive at first glance, as the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption has increased, but overall data confirm the Jevons paradox (Alcott 2005), that despite technological advances, energy use continuously grows, as the rate of energy consumption rises due to increasing demand (The Sustainable, 2018).

The UN’s goal to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns operates mostly on national and organizational
level. Only two of its eleven targets correspond to the personal level of consumers, namely reducing waste, and providing people the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature (Goal 12). Reducing waste can be done in many ways, from ensuring not to throw away food to reducing the consumption of plastic. Carrying a reusable bag, refusing to use plastic straws, and recycling plastic bottles are also good ways of waste reduction (Responsible... 2018), but raise the question if these measures will be enough to avoid the climate catastrophe or to adapt to the altered climatic conditions.

4. RIGHT (RESPONSIBLE) CONSUMPTION

Buddhism, like any other spiritual tradition, cannot avoid facing the problems of modernity. It has to provide answers to the most pressing questions, if it wants to remain a living tradition (Schmithausen 1997). Thus, Buddhism should reflect – beside others – on the issue of exponentially increasing consumption in the modern world. The following part of the paper discusses the approach and the contributions of Buddhism to the sustainable consumption debate by introducing the corresponding ideas of Buddhist economics, many of which concern the personal behavior in economic life.

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to reach enlightenment and put an end to suffering. It is an inner, spiritual development, which requires only a minimum level of material comfort (Zsolnai – Kovács, forthcoming). Buddhism functions on the personal level, as leading a life according to the Noble Eightfold Path means the perfection of oneself to the highest possible stage of perfection.

Fredrick Pryor (1991) argues that in an economic sense there are fundamental differences between wants and needs. Venerable P. A. Payutto (1994) also draws attention to the teaching of the two kinds of wanting, namely tanhā and chanda, both of which have a fundamental role in consumption. According to Buddhism, tanhā means desire for pleasure objects and chanda means endeavor for well-being. The former could be called wanting, while the latter is the aspiration for right and skillful. Consumption fueled by tanhā or desire-driven consumption leads to obtaining and possessing,
but consumption led by chanda results solely the satisfaction of life's basic needs, which contributes to well-being and forms a solid basis for the further development of human potentialities. Thus, chanda contributes to spiritual development. This point is often overlooked by economists, as modern economic thinking does not make distinction between the two kinds of wanting. Treating them equally leads to a situation in which both of them are to be satisfied by maximizing consumption in the spirit of “the more and the bigger is the better”.

Above life's basic needs, one should minimize his or her consumption, thus making minimization the objective function of consumption patterns and consumption habits in the case of desires and desire-driven consumption. Modern economic thinking encourages maximum consumption in order to satisfy desires, but does not deal with what happens after one’s desires are satisfied (Payutto 1994). According to the teachings of the Buddha, three kinds of tanhā are inherent parts of human life: they cannot be satisfied, they are ever-emerging, and form the root of suffering (SN 56.11).

Based on the distinction of tanhā and chanda, and on the fact that desires lead to suffering, Buddhism suggests not to multiply but to simplify desires above material needs. It is wise to try to reduce one’s desires, as wanting less could bring substantial benefits not only for the person, but also for the community, and for nature (Zsolnai 2007). Thus, the Buddhist approach to desire-driven consumption understands that non-consumption – or the full minimization of consumption – can contribute to well-being. Furthermore, certain demands can be satisfied only through non-consumption, a position which traditional economic thinking would find hard to appreciate (Payutto 1994).

Buddhism offers the methods of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration as parts of the Noble Eightfold Path to change one’s preferences and consumption habits. Leading a Buddhist life encompasses meditation practice, which can be used to tackle with ever-emerging tanhā, which is the root of suffering. In his formal model, Serge-Christophe Kolm (1985) connects consumption and meditation. He argues that consumption requires
labor time, as consumers must work in order to earn the necessary money for that. In general, time can be expended on meditation and work. It is recommended that only as much time should be spent with work that allows satisfying life’s basic needs. The rest of the time should be expended on meditation, or could be expended on work for transforming the consumption patterns and consumption habits of life’s basic needs to reverse the symptoms of the Great Acceleration.

Payutto (1994) asserts that training the mind through meditation contributes to achieve some inner contentment, which is a virtue, related to consumption and satisfaction. Buddhism proposes contentment as a skillful objective. The correct definition of contentment implies the absence of artificial desires. When we are easily satisfied with material things, we save time and energy that might otherwise be wasted on seeking consumer goods. The time and energy we save can be applied to the development of true well-being.

According to Buddhism, pursuing desires leads to suffering, while desires cannot ultimately be satisfied. Therefore, the following part of the paper investigates the Buddhist approach to the consumption of life’s basic needs. From now on, the term consumption in the paper is used only in the context of consuming life’s four basic requisites, namely food, clothing, housing and medicine. In doing so, those ideas of Buddhist economics will be introduced that concern consumption and the personal behavior in economic life.

In his book “Small is beautiful” Ernst Friedrich Schumacher (1973) described the two main characteristics of Buddhist economics as simplicity and non-violence. Both contribute to consume less from the scarce resources of the environment, and lead to realize localization. Schumacher was one of the first, who drew attention to the fundamental difference between renewable and non-renewable resources, and urged the utilization of renewables, which is also an important part of today’s sustainability debate.

Pryor (1991) emphasizes the importance of moderation in economics and in consumption, which is in accordance with
the spirit of the Middle Way. Payutto (1994) formulates it even stronger, when he asserts that at the very heart of Buddhism is the wisdom of moderation, and economic activity must be controlled by moderation that consumption for instance is directed to the attainment of well-being rather than maximum satisfaction. According to Peter Daniels (2006), moderation or the willful reduction of the material and energy flows of economy has become vital. The possibility of a successful adaptation depends on reduction, which is consistent with the ethics of Buddhist moderation.

Frugality means low material consumption, simple lifestyle, and the openness of the mind for spiritual goods. Its synonyms are self-restriction, chosen poverty and voluntary simplicity. The Buddha arrived to the conclusion that frugality is a rational virtue, because desires are insatiable in nature, and their simplification contributes to the alleviation of suffering (Bouckaert – Opdebeeck – Zsolnai 2011).

Based on moderation, with the help of meditation practice, the trap of over-consumption can be avoided. One must be aware of how much is enough in the case of life’s basic needs, because today’s society encourages over-consumption. For instance, a great many people damage their own health by overeating, thus making themselves ill in the long run. Some become deficient in certain vitamins and minerals, despite eating large meals. Apart from harming themselves, their overeating deprives others of food. Thus, the social and environmental costs of over-consumption, such as depletion of natural resources and costs incurred by health care are enormous. On the other hand, Buddhism offers the possibility of realize moderation and contentment by which a balance without over-consumption can be achieved (Payutto 1994).

Richard Welford (2006) asserts that the main characteristics of Buddhist economics are moderation in consumption, and creativity or the positive utilization of human mind. Mindfulness and creativity allows the elimination of simplistic thinking, the most serious problems of modernity that leads to environmental destruction and stems from scientific materialism. As Clair Brown (2017) asserts, applying Buddhist economics at the personal level means applying mindfulness in consumption, working
together with others, and taking the right actions. There are fruitful initiatives of applying mindfulness in consumption in the contemporary world. Ethical consumerism (Boda – Gulyas 2006), for instance is one of the initiatives that are consistent with the Buddhist notion of mindful consumption. Thus, mindfulness is a fundamental part of enjoying life without relying on consumerism, since only disappointment and despair comes from wanting more and cultivating desires (Brown 2017).

Based on the basic teachings of Buddhism, responsible or right consumption has nothing to do with the satisfaction of desires. It focuses rather on the satisfaction of life’s basic needs. According to the ideas of Buddhist economics, right consumption gives an opportunity to realize the Buddhist values of non-violence, moderation, frugality (simplicity), mindfulness and creativity. All of these values are constituent parts of the objective function of right consumption in the case of life’s basic needs. Practicing these values regarding to consumption can contribute to facilitate environmental preservation, and minimize the ultimate environmental impact of consumption.

5. DISCUSSION

The approach of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals to sustainable consumption and production patterns is a scientific-technical one (Mitroff 1998), in which economic growth is assumed as an axiom of achieving sustainability by enhancing efficiency through introducing new technologies.

Its core objective is to decouple economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation. It uses the vocabulary of economics like sustainable infrastructure, access to basic services, green and decent jobs, and economic competitiveness. It monitors the progress of sustainability with economic terms like economic, environmental and social costs, and resource and energy efficiency. On the personal level regarding consumption the importance of education and waste reduction is also emphasized by the terms of the economic paradigm like introducing standards and labels.

The goal to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns is executed in a top-down approach from the level of
nations and organizations. Nevertheless, the question still stands if this initiative will be able to help humanity succeeding in adapting to the altered climatic conditions in the epoch of the Anthropocene.

The Buddhist approach of responsible consumption expands the UN’s scientific-technical analysis of the subject with an existential-spiritual dimension, affecting significantly also the systemic and interpersonal-social dimensions of the problem (Mitroff 1998).

The objective of right consumption is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to radically reducing or totally eliminating the desires-driven consumption, and on the other hand, to apply the values of non-violence, moderation, frugality (simplicity), mindfulness and creativity in the case of the consumption of life’s basic needs, namely food, clothing, housing and medicine. Consumption, driven by Buddhist values contributes to environmental preservation, and minimizes the environmental impact.

The starting point of the arguments regarding right consumption is human nature, and the nature of desires. The Buddhist approach of consumption strives to explain the problem and give a possible solution at the personal level, thus presenting a bottom-up approach of the subject. Right consumption complements and transcends the conventional notion of sustainability, as due to the impermanent nature of phenomena, achieving sustainability is hardly possible according to Buddhism (Kovács 2011).

The conventional approaches of sustainable consumption patterns and consumption habits deal basically with the question of how to achieve sustainability. The Buddhist interpretation includes not simply the methods of right consumption, but presupposes a radical quantitative reduction or the total elimination of desire-driven consumption. The contemporary condition of the Earth System and the climatic conditions do not allow human beings to pursue their desires freely, or hardly allow anymore to practice moderation in the case of desire-driven consumption practices. Thus, not simply moderation or contentment, but the complete minimization should be the objective function of the reduction in the case of desire-driven consumption.

The Buddhist approach of responsible consumption proposes
a radical reduction or the total elimination of desire-driven consumption in the first place, than allows people to practice certain Buddhist values regarding the consumption of life’s basic needs, thus effectuating the notion of right consumption in practice.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The possibility of a coming climate catastrophe in the epoch of the Anthropocene makes it necessary for humanity to adapt to the altered climatic conditions of the near future in every possible way. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations include some promising initiatives to achieve adaptation, although they have their own limitations.

The paper introduced the approach, by which Buddhism contributes to the sustainability consumption debate. The traditional, primarily scientific-technical approach of the subject is complemented by an existential-spiritual point of view. On the first place, Buddhism urges the radical reduction or the total elimination of desire-driven consumption, by which relieving personal, social and environmental suffering becomes possible. Furthermore, right consumption gives an opportunity to implement the Buddhist values of non-violence, moderation, frugality (simplicity), mindfulness and creativity in the consumption of life’s basic needs. Thus, right consumption does not entail desire-driven consumption, but focuses only on life’s basic needs, thus it can be a significant part of the adaptation model in the altered climatic conditions.
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ON CONSUMPTION AS NECESSITY AND NEMESIS: BUDDHIST CONSIDERATIONS FOR A CLIMATE OF CHANGE

by Maya Joshi*

I can’t breathe. Writing from India’s capital city, Delhi, that has seen in the past month air that is 100-200% times more polluted than what the WHO guidelines deem safe for human consumption, where every new born consumes 7-40 cigarettes a day, where consumers are flocking to shops for face masks and air purifiers, one finally senses a palpable sense of dread. As those who can are fleeing the city, a new vocabulary is available for our horrified consumption-- “climate refugee”, “AQI”, “PM2.5,” “PM10”….

This crisis is global. This winter, friends sitting in Bangkok have been posting daily about the alarming air quality. Even distant, pristine California, with its spate of wild fires, produced dangerous levels of air pollution. Meanwhile, extreme temperatures continue to alarm the world over. As some states in the Mid-western states of the United States were colder than Antartica in February, 2019, Australia saw wildlife destroyed in extreme heat waves. Climate change is here. The earth as we know is poised at the edge of a dangerous precipice. The times are out of joint, as the Bard said. Nothing seems safe. Air. Water. Food. All consumables are contaminated, and the world is consuming them, and itself, to death.

It is, of course, a global problem. And a deep one. There is a world of climate change deniers, newly elected heads of state bent upon selling the earth’s natural resources to the highest bidders, and

* Dr., Associate Professor, Lady Shri Ram College University of Delhi, India.
irresponsible corporations putting profit above all public good. But there is also a global response to this irresponsible tango between the profit makers and those in power. These very forces are challenged by those who see the cycle of needless, destructive, and unsustainable production and consumption and call it by its right name. In enlightened corners everywhere, organisations, individuals, and even governments are saying “No”. Mindfully, they are trying to develop alternative and appropriate technologies, changing lifestyles, embracing public transport, sharing resources, going organic, recycling.

What might the Buddhist underpinnings of these interventions be? How might self-declared Buddhists turn more towards praxis and translate these Buddhist concepts — The Eightfold Path, The Four Noble Truths, Sunyata (Emptiness) and Pratityasamutpada (Dependent Origination)—into crucial and urgent action to help save the planet and its delicate balance? How might the Buddhist insight into human psychology help us here? What aspects of the diverse Buddhist heritage would we need to highlight and emphasize in order to meet this urgent, immediate crisis? Or, should we as Buddhists, recognizing suffering’s inevitability, even care?

The paper considers the above questions in the light of Buddhist philosophy, and a felt response to some efforts on the ground that the author has personally witnessed, as well as global thinking on ecology and sustainability, to generate a dialogue that bridges the gap between theory and practice, between hopelessness and hope.

1. WHEN BREATH BECOMES A BURDEN

Because the only alternative to responsible consumption in the 21st century is surrender to the meaning of consumption in its 19th century sense. The latter is the name of a fatal disease. A quick search for the meaning of the word consumption yields the following ironic and telling juxtaposition:

/kənˈsʌm(p)ʃən/  
noun
the action of using up a resource.
“industrialized countries should reduce their energy consumption”
2. TWO VOICES FOR MOTHER EARTH

Even as I write, a very young woman from Sweden, Greta Thunberg, has made headlines with her powerful and hard-hitting address to a group of very powerful adults, at the UN Climate Change COP24 Conference, chiding them on their collective inaction. It is a ringing indictment of a criminal neglect and wilful blindness, a robbery of the future. Her words, prophetic and powerful, are worth quoting:

“You only speak of green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell it like is. Even that burden you leave to us children. But I don’t care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet. Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money. Our biosphere is being sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few. The year 2078, I will celebrate my 75th birthday. If I have children maybe they will spend that day with me. Maybe they will ask me about you. Maybe they will ask why you didn’t do anything while there still was time to act. You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes. Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather
than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis. We need to keep the fossil fuels in the ground, and we need to focus on equity. And if solutions within the system are so impossible to find, maybe we should change the system itself. We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again. We have run out of excuses and we are running out of time. We have come here to let you know that change is coming, whether you like it or not. The real power belongs to the people.”

Fifteen-year-old Greta Thunberg—clear headed and plain-speaking— is not Buddhist. She comes from Sweden, a country with its own legacy of living close to nature, to ideals such as lagom, (‘not too much, not too little’, denoting balance, harmony, beauty and sufficiency. As with other Scandinavian cultures (Danish gives us the word hygge, denoting contentment), Sweden has a history of social justice, and welfare politics are part of its DNA. However, in her astounding speech, the Buddhist echoes from a land very far away from where Buddhism holds sway are inescapable. Might she be an example of what a good Buddhist education achieves, leading its recipients to engage in Right Speech and Right Effort, components of the Eight-fold Path that Buddhists boast of? Are not the ideals of balance and harmony central to Buddhism? Is she not, in this speech, an example of mindfulness, of compassion, and of wisdom, all values held dear by Buddhists everywhere, despite stark and sometimes divisive differences in doctrinal focus and social practices? We will return to that.

But what do Buddhists contribute to this discourse? A very inspiring example would be the contemporary Buddhist teacher engaged earnestly with earthly problems, Thich Nhat Hanh who turns to lyrical prose to inspire a eco-friendly perspective based on profound Buddhist principles. Mindful walking in the Zen meditative tradition provides a template for living in a sustainable way. I quote from a particularly poignant one, ‘Walking Tenderly on Mother Earth’:

“Dear Mother Earth,

Every time I step upon the Earth, I will train myself to see that
I am walking on you, my Mother. Every time I place my feet on the Earth I have a chance to be in touch with you and with all your wonders.

With every step I can touch the fact that you aren’t just beneath me, dear Mother, but you are also within me. Each mindful and gentle step can nourish me, heal me, and bring me into contact with myself and with you in the present moment.

Walking in mindfulness I can express my love, respect, and care for you, our precious Earth. I will touch the truth that mind and body are not two separate entities. I will train myself to look deeply to see your true nature: you are my loving mother, a living being, a great being—an immense, beautiful, and precious wonder.

You are not only matter, you are also mind, you are also consciousness. Just as the beautiful pine or tender grain of corn possess an innate sense of knowing, so, too, do you. Within you, dear Mother Earth, there are the elements of Earth, water, air and fire; and there is also time, space, and consciousness. Our nature is your nature, which is also the nature of the cosmos.

I want to walk gently, with steps of love and with great respect. I shall walk with my own body and mind united in oneness. I know I can walk in such a way that every step is a pleasure, every step is nourishing, and every step is healing—not only for my body and mind, but also for you, dear Mother Earth.

You are the most beautiful planet in our entire solar system. I do not want to run away from you, dear Mother, nor to hurry. I know I can find happiness right here with you. I do not need to rush to find more conditions for happiness in the future. At every step I can take refuge in you. At every step I can enjoy your beauties, your delicate veil of atmosphere and the miracle of gravity. I can stop my thinking.

I can walk relaxingly and effortlessly. Walking in this spirit I can experience awakening. I can awaken to the fact that I am alive, and that life is a precious miracle. I can awaken to the fact that I am never alone and can never die. You are always there within me and around me at every step, nourishing me, embracing me, and carrying me far into the future.
Dear Mother, you wish that we live with more awareness and gratitude, and we can do this by generating the energies of mindfulness, peace, stability, and compassion in our daily lives. Therefore I make the promise today to return your love and fulfill this wish by investing every step I take on you with love and tenderness. I am walking not merely on matter, but on spirit.”

There are obvious differences in the two speech acts quoted above. Thunberg speaks with measured anger, even contempt, representing a generation losing their patience. She speaks truth to the very powerful. She is clearly “doing politics: public, confrontational, compelling. She commands attention. Unlike Greta Thunberg, Thich Nhat Hahn is speaking in a different register, of a quieter, personal practice. The addressee is the self, the practitioner, who must internalize the message of love of all earth, embody it in daily practice. His voice is gentle, poetic. It animates that which appears inanimate. It waxes eloquent in ways that seem transcendental. But he does not escape reality, despite the poetic and the mystical registers. For he also engages; he, to literalize the metaphor, WALKS THE TALK. There is a different power at work here. A directness of perception, a bare honesty marks it. He is, of course, speaking as teacher, speaking from within a tradition well recognized a Buddhist, taking inspiration from such fundamental Buddhist truisms as the fact that Siddhartha Gautama, upon attaining enlightenment, made his first significant gesture the touching of the earth, a gesture of gratitude, an acknowledgement of his groundedness. The Earth-Touching Pose (bhumisparsha mudra) of the newly enlightened Buddha thus carries tremendous symbolic significance.

3. ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND CONSUMERISM

Spiritualism is too often visualized in terms of a trope of ascent. The aspirant “rises” above the mundane, evolves in to a more ethereal dimension, and sheds earthly attachments. There is a hierarchical relationship established between earth and sky via these images and metaphors. However, the Buddha touched the ground, upon becoming Buddha. Significantly, he also sat on the ground, under a tree, while his quest lasted. Indeed trees hold tremendous significance in the life of the Buddha, from his mother
giving birth under a *sal* tree, to his attainment of Bodhi under the tree so named, to the first sermon at Sarnath. He did not fly into the sky in denial of the earth, or of his earthly being. Wisdom consisted precisely in acknowledging the ground, the basis of existence, in expressing gratitude for the state of body and mind that made it possible to pursue the wisdom path. Significantly, in Buddhist lore, those in the god (*deva*) realm are seen to be more removed from the quest for enlightenment than those born on earth, as humans. One can overemphasize this point, of course. There is enough in Buddhist lore and scripture to also suggest a hierarchy of being between human and animal to make us reconsider this proposition. But it is still significant to recall that The Jataka Tales, an essential component of Buddhist literature in India at least, underscore the crucial significance of the non-human world. All beings are precious, because as per the theory of rebirth, we have been and will be (unless we purify our karma enough in this life) born as animals. In the Jataka Tales, animals are not only sentient; they are profoundly moral beings. The non-human world thus acquires moral stature and psychological depth and richness in the Buddhist imagination.

This is not unique to Buddhists, of course. Another inspirational example from the contemporary times is the Native American wisdom and righteous effort evident at the spirited and sustained resistance at Standing Rock. As keepers of the earth, the First Peoples are unparalleled. Their very world-view enjoins an unalienated continuity of being with all nature, apparently animate and that which appears inanimate. They tread softly on the earth, since the earth is home, not a resource to be exploited, not real estate to be carved up and quartered. The world of non-human beings is extended family, and economy and respect in the way humans live off and with earth is givens. In this they are one with tribal communities in India who have, in their native wisdom, been fighting rapacious mining corporations and their cronies in governments to retain the sanctity of holy mountains and rivers. They do not speak the language of scientific ecology, but their folk wisdom has provided ecological movements the world over with a vocabulary and perspective that offers an alternative to self-destructive unchecked capitalism which thrives on a divide between
Man and Nature and reward greed and ambition, obliterating the existential facts of shared habitat, human impermanence and eventual death.

This non-anthropocentric focus, which Buddhist traditions also share to some extent, disseminates respect for the earth and all its beings. Human hubris—built into philosophical traditions that view humans as innately superior to all forms of life, either due to Reason or Divine Origin—is thus curtailed in favour of a profound ecological wisdom. Contemporary ecological discourses, such as work by Amitav Ghosh, have pointed to the root of the current crisis at least partly in a philosophical commitment to anthropocentrism. Modern science has developed along those lines, technological hubris has fed off it, and a cavalier approach to other species has been justified, seriously disrupting a fragile ecosystem. This anthropocentrism has been compounded by capitalism and industrial modernity, both of which combine to give us slogans to the effect that “Greed is Good.” The human capacity to exploit nature, seen as inanimate resource, is seen as a proof of the species’ superiority, and the motor of History. Thus “growth” as an end in itself, measured in a short-sighted economistic paradigm of increased GDP rather than qualitative markers or ethical concerns, has led to a cancerous proliferation of products, which then must be sold to gullible buyers, in the interest of which end, round-the-clock advertising generates false consciousness. It is significant to note that Buddhist Bhutan serves as a pioneering example of an alternative discourse on GDP; it has made a name for itself for the invention and implementation of the Gross National Happiness index rather than one defined by mindless “productivity.” It is not accidental that it boasts of 80% forest cover, fully organic agriculture, and strict controls on media and advertising. An enlightened and benevolent Buddhist monarchy (now segueing into democracy) sets an example that calls to mind the enlightened kingship of the Indian Buddhist Emperor Ashok.

4. BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES REVISITED

Buddhism as a project of education into the true nature of reality can play a real role in turning awareness towards the delusions that consumer society thrives on. The doctrine of Pratityasamutpada
(Dependent Origination) systematically unpacks the connections between wrong views, wrong aspirations, wrong livelihood and wrong effort. Ignorance of the true workings of the money machine, which sucks vitality and eats into the lifeblood of humans, is one way one can think of avidya. For this, it is vital that the Buddhist technique of mindfulness not get appropriated by the very productivity-machine that thrives on promoting mindless consumption. In other words, Buddhist teachers must exercise restraint and caution in making sure that techniques such as mindfulness or vipassana do not become tools for corporate executives to take a break, a mindfulness holiday, only to return refreshed to their often destructive roles in an exploitative system with renewed vigor. Right Livelihood must be a keystone of the larger concern with churning out mindful denizens of the planet.

The other very significant Buddhist ideal/concept that needs to be mobilized is the idea of the sangha. For individual effort, though valuable in cultivating right mental attitudes and curbing Desire and Delusion, is not enough when facing the challenge of climate change. The scale of the tragedy is so large, that concerted effort is needed across all boundaries to form supportive communities that work together, given each other emotional/spiritual encouragement and material support. The traditional notion of the sangha thus needs to be expanded to include not just those who have been ordained or initiated into a particular sect or school of the large and varied Buddhist tradition, but to all humanity with like-minded aspirations.

One of the ways the sangha thus reconceptualised can contribute is via the injunction that the Buddha gave to his disciples: to go forth and preach. So while the sangha works internally to strengthen itself, to sustain itself against very powerful forces, it also works outwardly in spreading the urgent wisdom, which alone can save the house from burning.

One question that obviously arises here is: is Buddhism unique in offering such resources for combating the menace of climate change or offering a perspective on sustainable development? Does offer a special or exclusive entry point? I think there is no reason to think it does or to insist on such exclusivity. It should suffice to note
that it offers a world-view that encourages a clear-eyed method of analyzing phenomena in terms of cause and effect. It offers little solace in terms of metaphysics, though theistic elements as well as ritualistic traditions do often seem to downplay the hardheaded philosophical core that many take to be the greatest contributions of the tradition. Wisdom (prajña) urges one towards seeing things as they are, seeing through false promises of happiness in blind consumption to see that unchecked consumptions is indeed consumptive disease, teachings on compassion (karuna) – for self and others—mandate that we not sink into indifference or hopelessness and instead work ceaselessly using skillful means (upaya kausalya) and perfection of energy/diligence (viryaparamita) for changing the world as we see it.

Thus a double effort is called for: the psychological and psychical work, the practice of mindfulness which requires a constant check on one’s thoughts, speech, and action to see how one might be contributing to ecological violence. This would include a rigorous check on one’s language use, one’s consumption patterns, as well as the more ineffable and gentler practice of “loving the earth” a la Thich Nhat Hanh, practices which let the message seep into the body and mind in a myriad little ways such as a daily walk, a breathing exercise, or a sweep of the floor. However, the profoundest need to it cultivate what Thich Nhat Hahn calls Interbeing, a felt sense of the interconnectedness of all life.

Individual effort and little communities can only go that far. As Amitav Ghosh points out appositely in his unsparing survey of the challenges that climate change poses, a state of the planet he calls ‘the great derangement’: “Climate change is often described as a ‘wicked problem’. One of its wickedest aspects is that it may require us to abandon some of our most treasured ideas about political virtue: for example, ‘be the change you want to see’. What we need is to find a way out of the individualizing imaginary in which we are trapped.”

The need to speak and act collectively on behalf of the planet and its more vulnerable life forms (and humans are included in that list!) requires a different kind of Buddhism, a more engaged kind. The sangha as concept is crucial here. This sangha must expand its...
range of vision forging alliances. As Bhikkhu Buddharaikkhita from Uganda reminds us, the African concept of *Ubuntu* (I am because you are; you are because I am) is close to the Buddhist notion of Dependent Origination. This must be adopted to a capacious, even cosmic perspective, but always with one eye on the immediacy of each breath, the specificity of each step.

5. BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION

Buddhists would need to come out of their silos and face the crisis head-on. It would need going beyond labels, sects, and rivalries. Ultimately, it would need going beyond anything ideologically moribund. The planet recognizes no doctrines, and nature disregards national boundaries, and rewards no claimed superiority. Instead, it asks for a collective human humility in the face of an unprecedented crisis as well as confidence that together we can overcome. Buddhists can take a lead in this by relying on a superb set of cognitive, psychological, and institutional tools developed thousands of years ago but needed more than ever now

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THE GREEN BUDDHIST VIEW TO SOLVE THE MODERN DAY’S PROBLEM

by Basudha Bose

ABSTRACT

Environment is the aggregate of surrounding things. The surrounding things like air, water, minerals, organism etc.; includes social and cultural forces that shape a life of person or entire population. Good environment is essential for a balanced life. Lack of environmental protection due to different types of pollution threatens the life of the people. Environmental protection generally relates to the protection of physical surroundings i.e. forest, trees, plants, wetlands, animals etc. But overall environmental protection also needs to include the social, psychological and the moral values. Buddha a great teacher can be said as the pioneer in protection of the physical as well as mental environment. According to Buddha actual up grading the life of people is possible only by protecting physical and mental environment of the people. Buddha has given importance of proper environment to get success in physical as well as spiritual development. According to him the overall development of a people start from the environment he is living in. According to Buddha good environment include less polluted place, with protection of nature, having necessary opportunity of good education, medical cure, employment facilities and opportunity of spiritual practice. It is obvious that one can live and get success easily physically as well as spiritually, if he is an inhabitant of good environment. Generally accumulated kamma is the decisive force in shaping the life style of a person. But good environment also plays vital role in making good or bad life. This is the main motto of this paper, “The Green Buddhist view to solve the modern

* Ph.D., West Bengal, India.
day’s problem”. Purpose of this paper is to show how Green Buddhist view in Pali & Sanskrit literature from the perspectives of green applied Buddhism may be viewed as the new horizon of knowledge which has unveiled recent unprecedented developments in bio – medical, scientific and technological researches. Findings of this paper are the peripheral atmosphere is gravely polluted because the interior atmosphere in the mind is seriously damaged. The bottomless gluttony has pushed mankind to satisfy too much and unnecessary demands, and take them into never-ending competitions, leading to self-destruction and environmental damage. Contrasting to the distasteful and voracious mind is the spirit of simple living and contentment by those who practice the Buddha’s teaching & the effects of the Green Buddhist teachings on the environment. In conclusion we can say that the environment has become a prominent issue times. Though environmental issues were not as major in Buddha’s time as they have become today, Buddhism has an understandable ethic when it comes to the environment. Living in harmony with the environment is a key part of Buddhism. And how the green philosophical view is changing the people’s mind from gluttony to the purified mind & we all know that mental health is the main key for good physical health. If people’s mind will remain satisfied then definitely their families & society will live in peaceful atmosphere.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Buddhist account is filled with examples of the substance of the environment. The most noteworthy events occur in the landscape and are related with trees: Buddha’s delivery at Lumbini as his mother grasped the branch of an sāla tree, his early knowledge of states of meditative absorption under the rose apple tree, his enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree, and his Parinivvāna or death between twin sāla trees.

The connection between the environment and enlightenment is not special to Buddhist cultures. Today, we recognize the environment as a resource of motivation. Many artists and scientists alike have portrayed how in the environment they had a sense of lucidity or inspiration. These experiences are usually linked with the wildest and most secluded places on earth. It is therefore not hard to realize the Buddhist view that the environment can be valuable in the search of enlightenment.
The gigantic blue firmament and the great oceans, or the grand mountains and valleys, help a human understand their position in the world. A human can understand their part in the world as a whole and the importance of all living things in a shared planet.

In recent decades Buddhists have been turning their attention to environmental problems. This nascent “Green Buddhism” has found expression in activism and several edited volumes and monographs. To date, however, no one has formulated a systematic Buddhist environmental ethic, but we can find a vast number of Buddhist suttas and ethics where we can notice the Buddha’s love for cleanliness of environment or nature (Ives, 2013, p.541).

2. THE FIVE PRECEPTS

According to the Buddha’s knowledge, all life is valuable. All living beings have Buddha nature within them and all may reach enlightenment in this one lifetime. That does not mean that vegetation necessarily have the capability to become enlightened, but none the less we should take care of all forms of life with due regard and high opinion.

The First Precept states that we should refrain from damaging living things. Many Buddhist are vegetarians for the reason that of this First Precept as to eat meat contributes to the obliteration of a living being. It also takes more vigour to produce meat than to produce grain, fruit and vegetables. Grazing cattle also take up major land and often lead to the demolition of forests to make available farmers these lands. Cattle are also a source of methane, one of the greenhouse gases.

The hurting of other living things can be done straight or not directly. A direct instance is the killing of animals, whether in crop growing or hunting situations. An indirect example would be the demolition of habitats which eventually lead to the death of living creatures. For example the cutting down of a rainforest for farming, demolishes a natural habitat for a number of animals and plant life. This leads to soil erosions and then floods and then food crisis. So to put this rule into practice people also require a high degree of consciousness of the consequences of our activities.
Often, the behaviour that we execute in relative to the environment also disregards the second precept, which states that we should only obtain what we need. People in general take more from the environment than they need. Not only in taking food but in energy wealth like oil, coal etc or for ornamentation like gold and diamonds.

Greediness is a very large crisis in contemporary society. Every person wants to be capable to live, to earn an income and to be able to afford for their family. But most human beings think that they have to persist amassing material things, whether money, general material objects, or food for a massive amount of reasons. We habitually live to eat, instead of eating to live, as evident in the obesity crisis we now face. Advertising and product merchandising endorses and encourages this activities.

If we ask ourselves; how many of us have, while itinerant through a field of flowers or past a neighbour’s yard, plucked some up, as if they belonged to us and without a thinking that others will be destitute of the pleasure of appreciating them.

But do we actually, utterly and totally truly have to mine all the gold, platinum, sapphires, pearls, titanium, or all diamonds and rubies, and emeralds have to be surfaced in order for the human to show their affluence or fondness.

Buddhism doesn’t say that we can’t use the capital of the environment but it does advocate a conscious and conventional approach. We must use the wealth accessible to free ourselves from the authority of nature’s destructiveness: storms, floods, and famines. As Saṅgharakkhita has said, ‘Right use of nature is part of the spiritual life.’ However if we pursue the first two precepts we would be aware of not damaging living things and only using from the surroundings what was completely essential instead of being lenient. (Buddhism and Environmental Ethics).

3. THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Buddha described the sort of life that he wanted his followers to lead by listing eight categories cooperatively known as the “Noble Eightfold Path.” These categories are: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.
The first two endorse astuteness in the Buddhist sense—an ability to see honestly into the nature of things. The next three are moral, and the last three aim at attentiveness—that is, the improvement of meditative skillfulness. The Eightfold Path is also called the Middle Way, because it is intended to give confidence a life of moderation.

By just looking at the feature of right livelihood we can see that some professions are measured improper or ‘not right’. These professions usually rotate around the trade of flesh, chemicals, and weapons, all or which contribute to the corrosion of our living or natural environment. (Buddhism and Environmental Ethics).

4. KAMMA AND REINCARNATION

As Buddhist considers in the cycle of rebirth they have a superior relationship to other beings than people from other religions. The concept of kamma and reincarnation make Buddhist conscious that a living creature may have been somebody they cared for in a previous life and are therefore reverential of all living creatures. While they don’t consider they will be penalized by a God for their misconducts. They do trust that they will be penalizing by kamma in the next life. Therefore any work in this life which results in the damaging of another living thing will be punished in the next life. (Buddhism and Environmental Ethics).

5. DEFINITION OF GREEN BUDDHISM

In this global, trans-religious trend, Buddhist philosophy appears predominantly acquiescent to environmental ethics. Many remarkable Buddhist leaders articulate ecological concerns with decent accountability and a centre idea that can be translated from Sanskrit as “inter-dependent arising.” This notion is an elemental in Buddhist philosophy. Collective crosswise all schools of Buddhism, it states that phenomena come up jointly in a reciprocally inter-reliant network of cause and effect. This concept underlies Buddhist thinking about mutual relationships of cause and effect, and the vital interdependence of all life. Apparently it pre-disposes some Buddhists to recognizing the importance of ecological restraint, or non-harming. It has had a great influence on ‘Deep ecology’. Green Buddhism presents a representation of holism, eco-kamma and co-
dependent arising that provides a different to the disintegration of the replica of western free enterprise that is based on uniqueness, eco-exploitation, homo-centrism, dualism and linear causality (Sherwood, 2004).

_Buddhadhamma_ is not only a way of eventual emancipation. It is also a way to create agreement between ordinary human people and any beings pervading the surroundings. All life is interconnected and inter-reliant. Environment, or we could say our natural surroundings, is alive and at least partially cognizant. It neither is holy and ideal nor sin and to be occupied. The deep reality of nature is not dividing from our fully liberal nature (Buddha-nature). (Sherwood, 2004).

6. APPLIED BUDDHISM

Buddhism which is based on Buddha's living and wisdom obtainable in the _Pali_ text represents two aspects, i.e., 'Theoretical' and 'Applied', and shines like only dazzling star in the holy firmament. But in the circumstance of the current thought it has been brighter owing to its applied and practical aspect for the betterment of humankind. Applied Buddhism is not anything but the appliance of Buddha's utterances as collected in the _Pali_ literature for the wellbeing of the human being. Therefore the application of the _Pali_ literature from the perspectives of applied or practical Buddhism may be viewed as the new prospect of acquaintance which has unveiled recent unparalleled developments in bio–medical, scientific and technological researches (Barua, D.K, 2005, pp. 1-12).

"Applied Buddhism" is the appliance of Buddhist tradition in our everyday life. It is a wide umbrella, beneath which all the necessary aspects of life such as corporal, cerebral, communal and religious comfort as well as truth-seeking, bioethical, economic and contemporary scientific aspects could be included. This includes the Buddhist ideas proficient by the three main schools of Buddhist belief in recent age, i.e. the _Theravāda_, _Mahāyāna_ and _Tantrayāna_ customs (Barua A, Barua D and Basilio, 2009, pp. 4-7).

7. GREEN BUDDHISM AND ITS RELATION WITH APPLIED BUDDHISM

At the very setting up the well-known term 'Buddhism' should
be clarified. ‘Buddhism’, as such, signifies the ‘ism’ that is based on Buddha’s life and teachings or that is anxious with the gospel of Buddha as recorded in the literature available in Pali, Sanskrit, Buddhist Sanskrit and Prākṛt, wherein has been described a very obscure, compound, erudite and towering philosophy of life or that preserves a kind of rites and rituals founded on the tenets of Buddha and the way of life preached by him (Guruge. 1978, pp.76-77).

The word ‘Applied’, though it appears to be inquisitive at the first case in point in relation to ‘Buddhism’ is not quite unfortunate since with the rapidly developing educational, financial, political and social environment during the second half of the twentieth century and at the origination of the twenty-first century human life has totally been changed. Under these conditions, the Buddhist scholars of all over the world are being compelled to reinterpret Buddhism, without delimiting its mandatory monastic and scriptural implication, in the light of the recent researches in the disciplines of stem cell and cloning, ecology, and environment, peace and non-violence, human rights and moral values, welfare economics and the like. Hence Buddhism with its pristine purity is to be searched out and interpreted, though not easily in some cases, with references to all such modern topics in sacred sayings of Buddha according to needs of the present day. These new interpretations of as well as searches in Buddha’s gospel may simply be termed as Applied Buddhism’, i.e. the applications of Buddhism in the modern way of life or the practical aspects of Buddhism. Ever since there are subjects like Applied Physics, Applied Chemistry and Applied Mathematics in relation respectively to (pure) Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, by using the term ‘Applied Buddhism’ as some Buddhist scholars have already used the terms ‘Engaged Buddhism’. ‘Green Buddhism’ to signify one or more modern aspects of Buddhism which, on several occasions, has been defined as ‘a way of life’ that may transform retaining the higher qualities or essence of life due to the changed circumstances, places and time (Barua, D.K, 2005, pp. 1-12).

8. BUDDHISM AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Buddhism is a religion that places great importance on ecological protection. The Buddha told us in the suttas and precepts that we
should take affectionate care of animals, and that we should not
damage the grass and trees, but consider them as the home where
sentient beings lead their lives

Regrettably, the flattering improvement and the too much use
of chemicals in the world have led to the speedy consumption of
natural assets, the speedy corrosion of the natural environment,
and the extermination of a variety of species. The combined result
speeds the earth towards doomsday.

In the modern world, everybody knows that we should protect
our living environment, reduce the amount of garbage we produce,
classify our refuse, and recycle as much as possible. Nevertheless,
we are still consuming extensive amounts of energy resources every
day, and producing incredible amounts of refuse and pollution. In
the former agricultural and pastoral ages, garbage could become
the fertilizer and soil, returning to nature; in contrast, the natural
assets consumed by the modern industrial and commercial sector
are non-renewable. Contemporary civilization produces a huge
amount of pollution, and this act is as horrible as generating an
incredible quantity of cancer cells in the body of Nature.

The extravagant expenditure of natural resources and obliteration
of ecosystem are caused by humankind’s psychological craving for
convenience and wealth. If we can practice the Buddha’s teaching of
“leading a contented life with few desires” and “being satisfied and
therefore always happy”, and if we are willing to use our astuteness
to deal with problems and engage diligently in industrious work, then,
without having to contend with one another or fight with nature, we
can lead very happy lives. Therefore, we should follow these sentences
to encourage one another: Our needs are little; our wants are great.
Pursue only what we really need; what we want is unimportant.

If, for the sake of fulfilling our requirements, humankind
consumes natural resources and devastates the green ecological
environment, then we continually borrow to pay off what we
already owe. By borrowing to cover old debts, one’s debts will
grow increasingly heavy; by cutting out one’s flesh to mollify one’s
hunger, one is slowly committing suicide.

The environmental protection movement should be all-
encompassing. In addition to cherishing natural resources, protecting the ecological environment, and way of life choices such as plummeting the amount of garbage, recycling, living a pure, simple, and, thrifty life, and minimizing the pollution we produce, we should further learn to value lives and others, always reminding ourselves of this thought: apart from ourselves, there are innumerable other people; apart from our one generation, there are our innumerable genealogy in future generations.

For that reason, we should promote four major principles of environmental protection:

i. The cherishing of natural resources and the protection of the ecological environment;

ii. Maintaining cleanliness in family life and using daily necessities simply and frugally;

iii. Improving interpersonal politeness and social etiquette; and,

iv. Instead of considering everything from the standpoint of one person, one race, one time-period, and one place, we should consider it from the standpoint that all humankind of all time and space should be protected in their existence, possess the right to live, and feel the dignity of life.

In short, the above-mentioned four kinds of environmentalism can be restated as natural environmentalism, lifestyle environmentalism, social etiquette environmentalism, and spiritual environmentalism. The environmental tasks of general people are mainly limited to the material aspects, namely, the first and second items. The environmental tasks we carry out have to go deeper from the material level to the spiritual level of society and thinking. Environmental protection necessity is combined with our particular religious beliefs and philosophical thinking into a serious mission, so that environmentalism will not become mere slogans. So, strictly speaking, the distillation of humankind’s mind and heart is more important than the purification of the environment. If our mind is free from evil intentions and is not polluted by the surroundings, our living environment will also not be spoilt and polluted by us. However, for ordinary people, it is advisable to set out by cultivating
the habit of protecting the material environment, and go deeper step by step until at last they can cultivate environmentalism on the spiritual level (Singh, 2019).

9. PRINCIPLE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Significant expression would also reveal that the material benefits of exploiting the environment accumulate mainly to small commercial and financial elite: the corporate executives and stockholders that run the corporations, and the bankers and financiers who finance their enterprises. The great majority of people are treated as dispensable, mere consumers whose role is to buy the products turned out by the production plants, or labourers to be paid as little as possible, deprived of work benefits, and discarded when opportunities open up elsewhere. A Buddhist social order would be one in which all people recognize their interdependence and the need for each to care for all. But corporate capitalism has created a brutal individualism where each is devoted exclusively to their private interests or the benefit of their tiny clique.

The consumption of these fuels releases vast amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and water, causing global warming. A hotter climate is already triggering freakish weather events as well as prolonged droughts, heat waves, more severe storms, and rising sea levels. Such a climate will reduce the yield of crops, thus creating food shortages, driving up food prices, and causing hunger and even starvation for people around the world, particularly in the underdeveloped world. Hunger and destructive weather patterns will precipitate social chaos, destabilizing states and leading to mass migrations and regional wars.

The other toxic substances released by the burning of fossil fuels and overuse of synthetic chemicals are causing a multitude of illnesses on a scale we never witnessed in the past. Cancers, blood poisoning, asthma and other lung conditions, and autism are devastating people all around the world, especially those living close to power plants, chemical dumps, coal mines, and gas fields. The exploitation of the natural environment turns beautiful forests, fields, rivers, and lakes into industrial nightmares, dead zones full of
machines and extraction plants. They dispel toxic waste into the air and water, harming people around the world as well as other species, also causing the extinction of countless species. It may be true that we all enjoy the benefits that an abundance of carbon-based energy makes available, but at present we have at our disposal methods of generating clean energy that will not make the extreme demands on the natural environment that fossil fuels make. It would be in accord with wisdom to turn rapidly away from fossil fuels toward clean energy.

This type of principled indication is assisted by two intrinsic worth strongly emphasized in Buddhist contemplation: mindfulness and comprehensible intellectual capacity i.e. *sati-sampajañña* (Sumedho, 2005). Mindfulness enables us to concentrate closely to the workings of our own minds, thus giving us insight into our motives. Clear comprehension extends our reflection beyond our immediate experience, providing insight into the long-term consequences of our actions both for ourselves and others. Since the ultimate aim of Buddhism is the eradication of ravenousness, detestation, and mirage, we can use this ideal as a gauge for evaluating our motives and actions relative to the environment. We would then see that many of the policies and practices that underlie the corporate exploitation of the natural world are driven by short-sighted ravenousness. Applying Buddhist principles to this situation, through caution—or “enlightened self-interest”—we should stay away from exploitation of the environment because such activity is harmful to ourselves. Out of loving-kindness and compassion i.e. *mettā and karunā* (O’Brien), we avoid actions that conduce to harm and suffering for others.

At an even deeper level, such activities are rooted in the delusion that acquiring control over the environment and converting its natural opulence into commercial commodities will somehow confer on us deep satisfaction and freedom from suffering. In the light of wisdom, however, we would recognize that technological mastery, however powerful, does not bring us the advantages we aspire to. To the contrary, it endangers human beings and other species around the world and also undermines the prospects for a safe world viable for future generations.
In several of the guiding principle the Buddha laid down for the monks we can detect the seeds of an environmental ethics. From the point of view of corporate culture, this seems the height of folly; for the corporate world sees profusion of material goods, quick expenditure, and hedonism as the key to happiness. Buddhism sees happiness to follow from the restraint of craving and inner cultivation.

According to Buddhism, the environment has become so much polluted because of extreme hallucination, greed and hatred of humans. During the Second World War atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Killing thousands and thousands of people this bombing destroyed the whole environment not only of Japan but also of the whole world. When these bombs were tested in Mexican deserts the atmosphere experienced pollution of nuclear hazards as at that time of bombing the whole of Japan and neighbouring countries experienced about the dangerous effects of nuclear hazards causing unimaginable sufferings to the human and all living beings. Very recently nuclear power plant disaster has caused ruthless effects in environment. Ultimately in some ways or other this will affect on the species of the world and ecological balance will be lost.

Environment crisis is manmade crisis. So man’s mind must be free from pollution. As a result the earth has become sick. If a person is sick he is to be given proper treatment to be free from his sickness. As such environment and ecology are to be given proper treatment to be free from pollution. What are those treatments? The very first treatment is make men free from mind pollution. According to Buddhism because of unawareness everything arises out of ignorance or delusion or moha. If anybody is to be freed from ignorance he must have spiritual development through meditation. (Barua, B. P).

10. BUDDHISM’S CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVE THE ‘GLOBAL WARMING’ PROBLEM

Buddhism has design ethic regarding environmental protection in order to protect our lives and individual contentment. Everyone has to tradition the beyond measure empathy toward all sentient beings, protect and love them as our only child.
The Buddha preached the arising situation as a reality which means it applied to everything, anyone, anywhere, any religion has to follow this tenet in order to increase joy and happiness.

According the fourteenth Dalai Lama, in his preaching about kindness and human being, human beings living on earth have duty to build up happy lives. Then, happiness will come.

Humans are self-possessed of psychological and physical body. There is no dilemma of growing physical body. However, our psyche records all issues, even from the unimportant to the vital issues.

The eventual pleasure is to nurture our empathy so we can endow with gladness to others while we also fully enjoy the happiness. Growing empathy naturally enhances our state of mind in peace. The calm state of mind has the aptitude to deal with complicatedness in life.

For that reason, when we thwart with any problems, it is an atypical occasion to enhance developing our own mentality. Our kindness can be shown through our love. Love is very essential to human survival, and it is an interrelationship of humans in any epoch of life.

On the other hand, not only the human interrelationship, even insects, or any beings such as bacteria have to depend on each other to exist. The existences on earth such as oceans, forests, flowers, leaves are inter-dependently constructed, if not they will be ruined.

Our compassion cannot be increase in one day; we should keep in mind that we always store our “ego” in our mind. Our compassion can only be exposed when our ego is not raised.

Next, we must give up our detestation. It covers our sensible part of our brain. It allows destroying and regretful behaviour. When annoyance arises, we become out of control. Dealing with these circumstances, we have to be patiently sociable and flexible, and that is measured compassion. When countering with unnecessary situations, at first, we have to be cool, being true and without any thoughts of getting even in order to succeed, we have to view the opponent person as our brilliant teacher who is giving us a few stiff tests in our lives. This allows us to practice of being broad-minded by our kindness.
According to the Buddha’s teachings, there is no grounds to divide us from each other, even we have diverse religion or nationality, we all co-integrate in the earth, and each one of us is a small universe. Our kindness spreads all over. It’s just like a tree that is living in a healthy land being bloom.

In close, on the matter of nurturing our environment and preventing increasing temperature of the Earth, Buddhism shows us a view of inter-dependent conditions. This means there is an interrelation between human beings, and between human and the environment. The co-existence of one tiling and the other, the cause and effect, and the ‘Noble Eightfold Path’ lead to ceasing of sufferings. In other words, being a real Buddhist is being a good citizen of the world, because we will face the same circumstances as other beings. Therefore, humans have to search for a resolution of reducing population. (Bao and Tieng, 2009).

11. BUDDHIST VIEW ON ‘GREEN ENVIRONMENT’

The abolition of the three basic evils - gluttony - is vital in Buddhism. For continued existence, man must live in and use the natural world. To guarantee a productive long term co-existence with nature, man complicated relationships of nature and utilize restraint. An over utilization of nature will otherwise lead to suffering.

Man must thus discover a way of livelihood in symbiosis indicated in the Sigàlovada Sutta, a householder wealth, as a bee collects pollen from the flowers. The bee does neither adversely change the beauty of the flower, nor worsen its fragrance, while collecting the pollen which it turns into sweet honey.

In other words, man has to be taught to gratify his greed - he must learn to live in a harmonious symbiosis with environment. (Buddhist view on Environment, 2010).

12. ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLLUTION

Pollution may take a lot of forms. The physical pollution in forms of chemicals, pesticides, waste dumps and open sores in environment have taken on such proportions, which were to no avail of during the time of the Buddha. Nevertheless, there is enough evidence in the Pali Canon to give us an insight into the
Buddhist outlook towards the pollution problem. Several *Vinaya* rules disallow monks from polluting in various respects.

Noise is too one of the nuisances of recent society. In Buddhism silence is regarded as serene and noble, as it is favourable to the spiritual progress of those who are pure at heart. Silence invigorates those who are pure at heart and raises their effectiveness for meditation. And on the divergent, silence overawes those who are impure with shameful impulses of ravenousness, abhorrence and hallucination. The Buddha and his disciples revelled in the silent solitary natural habitats tangential by human activity. Buddhism is aware about; the evil of pollution in it’s a variety of forms. (Buddhist view on Environment. 2010).

13. EFFECTS OF THE GREEN BUDDHIST TEACHINGS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The five Buddhist teachings of *mettā*, *kamma*, *anatta* and *aniccā* have a blow on the atmosphere.

*Mettā* teaches Buddhists to increase love and compassion around the world. This means that this love and compassion should also be extensive towards the environment. Therefore Buddhists will try to help to keep the environment in good physical shape, i.e. unpolluted and safe. (The Effect of the Buddhist Teachings on the Environment)

The law of *kamma* states that deeds have penalty. This means that if a Buddhist treats the environment roughly, then they will achieve negative *kamma*. If they maintain to treat the environment in this way then they will gather a lot of negative *kamma*. This may cause them to enter a lower sphere on the cycle of *sāṁsāra*, once they are reborn. Therefore the teaching of karma prevents Buddhists from harming the environment.

*Anatta* is also one of the three marks of survival. It teaches Buddhists that there is no eternal self identity. Nothing about you stays the same. This means that if someone else harms the environment, their actions will ultimately affect you.

*Aniccā* is one of the three marks of survival. It states that everything is changing. Nothing lasts eternally, i.e. the world is
transient. This means that the environment is constantly changing and will never last forever. Ultimately it will be destroyed. (The Effect of the Buddhist Teachings on the Environment)

14. CONCLUSION

The environment has become a prominent issue times. Though environmental issues were not as major in Buddha’s time as they have become today, Buddhism has an understandable ethic when it comes to the environment. Living in harmony with the environment is a key part of Buddhism. It has clear that by harming environment we are in fact harming ourselves. There are lots of examples to demonstrate this in the current medium like global warming, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole, radioactive contamination, to name but a few. The world we live in is money-orientated and profit driven. We approach the environment from the point of view of resource management. The commercialisation of our society means that enormous amounts of toxic substances are pumped into our skies, rivers, and oceans, and spread across the land where they become someone else's trouble. We view the green environment as ours to use, or abuse, and separate ourselves from it in a dominant way.

The Buddhist position, on the other hand, emphasises a harmonious communication between us and nature, neither passive nor attempting to rule, and quite naturally leads Buddhists to consider the possibility of vegetarianism. (Buddhism and Environmental Ethics)

In conclusion I will say that five precepts or paññāsilā Buddhist knowledge all have a helpful effect on the environment. They help to prevent the world from harming the environment and therefore, making it both better and safer for us, humans, to live in. (The Effect of the Buddhist Teachings on the Environment)
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ABSTRACT

This empirical research study is concerned with Buddhist cultural values of consumption and the social impacts of those values on the sustainable development of the country. Seen from a cultural anthropological perspective on religion and consumption, a research problem was articulated to understand any relationship between patterns of consumption and sustainable development at a micro level of family and consumption practices in a Buddhist cultural context of a selected rural society and as to how such culturally driven consumption patterns sustain economic wellbeing of those families. A random sample of 92 Buddhist families of a small village was closely studied by means of observation and focus group interviews with the primary objective of learning about Buddhist cultural values influencing the behavior of consumption and resulting impacts on the sustainability of family-economy and its development. It is on the assumption that sustainability of household economy is decisive in the assurance of sustainability of national development that this research study was designed.

Findings revealed number of social values which were active as general guidelines of responsible behavior of consuming goods and
services. Some of them are the social values of co-operative consumption, maximum and multiple use of goods, frugal consumption, sharing with neighbors, generosity, care of all dependents, saving for the sustainability of future economic wellbeing of children, attachment to the domestic environment and cultivations and taking care of refugees. The social value of co-operative consumption impels all family members to share the available quantity of resources with each other and thereby sustain the wellbeing of all at the same time. It brings about stability of the family and community. The social value of multiple and maximum use of goods prolong the period of consumption of goods while increasing the number of consumers in the same community that results in less disposal of waste in the community. It goes against the modern social value of individual and minimum use of goods that produce irresponsible consumption and increasing disposal of waste. Multiple and maximum use helps consumers to manage with available resources. This social value provides a sustainable answer to the current issues of waste management and disposal that seriously hamper the sustainable development. The social value of being highly conscious of children’s future has assured responsible consumption of family resources, environmental resources. Respondents’ perception of these cultural values of responsible consumption clearly evinced that they had gained meanings of them from Buddhist teachings, practices, beliefs and traditions which have well institutionalized in the rural culture and society. They had confronted with a conflict of sustaining those social values of consumption as the second and third generations of their families are highly exposed to the modern social values of conspicuous consumerism that produce irresponsible consumption of resources. Accordingly, it is concluded that an organized reinforcement is required to transmit the Buddhist cultural values of responsible consumption and assure the sustainable development of nations.

INTRODUCTION

Achievement of the goals of sustainable development depends on number of socio-cultural factors and some of them refers to cultural factors of consumption of resource in a particular responsible manner in developing countries. Sri Lanka also aspires to lead the nation towards the standards of sustainable development addressing all the goals of sustainable development set
by the United Nations and this national endeavor requires a sound knowledge base that make the scientific knowledge available for all projects of development. Knowledge on responsible consumption of resources lies at the center of this requirement and scientific research studies are required to adopt proper policies of resource management. Recent history of development in Sri Lanka clearly reveals number of social and environmental issues that seemed to have stemmed from irresponsible consumption of resources in the name of development. As a country struggling with the limited resources for the development of living standards of the nation, Sri Lanka needs to gather indigenous cultural knowledge and values of consumption and use that knowledge and values for achieving the goals of sustainable development. The Theravada Buddhism which has evolved for over twenty-three centuries since third century B.C, giving rise to a Buddhist culture that encompasses almost all aspect of the society and social life of people, still functions as a live belief and practice in all the Buddhist communities. The institutionalization of Buddhist teachings, values, norms and practices in the Sri Lankan society seems to have historically developed a triangle of Buddhist culture, development and consumption as is evident from Buddhist communities in the country. This study is concerned with the interaction among the three components of that triangle with special reference to the consumption based on cultural values that originally derive their meaning from the Buddhist doctrine and its historical adaptation in terms of needs of people.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Seen from a cultural anthropological perspective on religion and consumption, a research problem was articulated to understand any relationship between patterns of consumption and sustainable development at a micro level of family and consumption practices in a Buddhist cultural context of a selected rural society in Sri Lanka and as to how such culturally driven consumption patterns sustain economic wellbeing of those families. Being the basic unit of Sri Lankan society, family still plays a vital role in the management of consumption of resources that ultimately influences the sustainable development of the country. Whereas patterns of consumption in urban communities have been incessantly influenced by the
modern values of conspicuous consumerism, rural communities still maintain the traditional values of responsible consumption that help them to manage with limited resources and access to resources available for them to reach the goals of sustainable development. As rural people account for over 80% of the total population and majority of them predominantly shares the Buddhist cultural values, any development effort may be successful in assuring the sustainability of development to the extent it may accommodate the dominant cultural values of responsible consumption and it is on this rational assumption this research explores the phenomenon of consumption from a cultural anthropological perspective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The central objectives of the research were to explore major social values that guide and govern the consumer behavior of the selected Buddhist community and to understand as to how those values contribute to sustainability of economic development and social well-being of people in a predominantly Buddhist cultural context.

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out in a rural society located in the District of Badulla. A random sample of 92 Buddhist families were selected out of 510 families living in the period of the research in 2017. All the families were Buddhist and shared a traditional culture inherited from their former generations. Field observation in the village helped to gather data about real behavior of people and all questionable factors of their behavior were raised in the focus group interviews conducted in several rounds with family members. Participants were highly enthusiastic in contributing information on their patterns of responsible consumption of resources and the technique of focus group provided them with opportunities share their knowledge and experience with the researcher in a collective discussion with each other. Elderly members of families were much more active in the interviews on traditional cultural values still they manage to maintain and benefits of those social values for living in the rural communities finding collective solutions to issues of resources.
Research findings

1. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF CO-OPERATIVE CONSUMPTION

One important aspect of the responsible consumption of resources was revealed by the social value of co-operation among members of the community. Almost all family members, neighbors, members of kinship systems were genuinely co-operative in achieving goals of life. The social value of co-operative consumption impels all family members to share the available quantity of resources with each other and thereby sustain the wellbeing of all at the same time. It brings about stability of the family and community that ultimately leads to political stability of the society. The co-operative value has been so deeply inculcated in the minds of family and community members that they are always concerned with offering and sharing whatever they consume with others. Because of this social value a considerable portion of the community resources is subjected to voluntary sharing with those who willingly accept and enjoy the resources for various purposes while responding in a reciprocal manner. Significance of this factor should be understood in comparison to the impacts of exclusive individual consumption and disposal of goods as unnecessary things. The co-operative social value produces a pattern of collective consumption of a considerable portion of community resources suppressing social values of individual consumption of things belong to individuals and families. It is interesting to understand a cultural factor of undeclared collective ownership of resources belong to the individuals, families and the neighbors. For example, family members are not worried about the individual possession of family resources as they are well aware of the fact that a considerable portion of benefits of such resources is offered to them irrespective of individual ownership and such an ownership driven right to exclusive individual consumption. In this social context ownership is important as a source of motivation for the development and production of resources, conflict-free inheritance and protection of them, and means of assuring social security. Being controlled by the co-operative social value, the ownership of resources is not allowed to confine consumption of them to the owners alone. For example, jack trees in the village belong to individuals and families but jack
fruit are available for all neighbors as the owners willingly offer them to others. Consumption of rice is not exclusively confined to the cultivators or owners alone but a considerable portion of rice production is consumed by others due to the co-operative consumption based on the cultural value of co-operation which always accompanies a set of cultural values including generosity and philanthropy.

The co-operative social value shows an important contribution to the assurance of responsible consumption that can be further elaborated according to the research findings. Seasonal offering of lands for cultivation of vegetable and other crops including rice and maize seemed to have multiple positive impacts on sustainable development. Some land owners who find it difficult to cultivate their lands continually offer seasonal opportunities of cultivation to those who express their willingness to cultivate without any commercial agreement but a mutual understanding of offering something in return in terms of co-operative social life. Those land owners are happy to see their lands in cultivation that avoids the invasion of natural forestation and being fallow lands. On the other hand, temporary cultivators are also happy to assure their means of sustenance of families as well as the performance of other social functions as members of the community. As this practice turns unproductive lands into productive lands, unproductive seasons into productive seasons, unproductive labor into productive labor and generate income for the nation, such social values cannot be taken for granted.

Sharing of family resource with family members and other relatives in the kinship system to which families belong seemed to have ease the economic and social burden of families struggling with limited income. Kinship attachment and social responsibility of looking after kin and kith in difficult times has been further enriched by the co-operative social values of the community. Among the kin and kith, the “we feeling” remains strong enough to offer any thing in goods or service at any time for the day-to-day-well-being of them and thereby the family members enjoy a sense of social security and protection that cannot be replaced ed with modern insurance policies. The co-operative social value seemed
to have developed a perception of resources that they are available “for our use” and not for “my use alone” as was well evinced it from the behavior of the sample population. Preceding of this perception in the decision to make use of personal properties always motivate users to think of others in need of similar resource and allocate at least the minimum quantity for offering to them and have a spiritual happiness. When decide to gift something to others the people always utter a folk statement “Things gifted to others bring about fragrance whereas things eaten bring about stench ultimately”. This particular folk ideology of consumption develops a sense of others’ happiness in the use of resources for individual or family well-being.

2. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF MULTIPLE AND MAXIMUM USE OF GOODS

It is interesting to find another important social value of multiple and maximum use of resources in the community studied for this research, as it further enriches the beneficial factors of the social value of co-operation that undermines adverse social impacts of individualism and selfish competition for the appropriation and accumulation of resources at the cost of others’ development as it happens in modern capitalist societies. Any sort of accumulation or appropriation of resource seemed to have not been harmful because of the philanthropist social values of the community that always motivate them to abide by the cultural norms of co-operative and collective consumption and utilization of resources. The social value of multiple and maximum use of resource refers to various use of the same material resource at different stages. It always delays any decision to dispose resources as waste and encourage the owners and users to consider various needs for which the same resource can be used when it is not serving the prescribed needs at the beginning. For example, the rural people never dispose their cloths when they are not suitable for further wearing. There is a particular sequence of multiple and maximum utilization of cloths among the villages. New cloths are used for important opportunities and tours just after buying them and when those cloths become old and not suitable for such purposes, they tend to use for daily wearing and there after the same clothes are used for wearing in the field work. The were so many other domestic uses of old clothes that increased
the period of their use and purposes of utility. The significance of this cultural value of multiple and maximum use needs to be comprehended in comparison to the modern social values of single use and immediate disposal of goods which cannot be justified in any terms of responsible consumption of resources with the suitability for and capacity of multiple and maximum use.

The rural community members showed a particular discipline of consumption of resources with the capacity of multiple use that assures the prolonged use avoiding any careless and destructive use. A sense of secondary use, tertiary use of things by oneself or others seemed to have restrained the behavior of consumption and utilization of resources. According to the villagers “there are enough people who need the things that we need no more and things must be used in a manner that further assures the secondary use of them”. As a traditional practice the householders maintain a separate hut like place for the storage of used materials of various kinds including clothes, equipment, timber, building materials, domestic items, etc. Disposal of goods as waste is never felt with reference to things perceived of multiple use and the norm is to keep the unnecessary things in the store house. As a practice of responsible consumption this behavior prevents the immediate disposal of unnecessary materials and makes used-materials available for future use of family and community members. One can observe materials belong to several generations in such store house and they are usually open to the community to find any used item required for a particular purpose on a mutual understanding of sharing goods. It is the cultural value of multiple, multistage and maximum use of resources that produces this type of responsible consumption and there are two major social functions deriving from it. The first function is the facilitation of meeting needs of families with used materials at zero cost and the second is the sustainable management of waste as this practice produces less waste.

Responsible consumption in the selected community has a direct contribution to the management of waste as they produce less and less waste disposed to create problems. Prolonged use of resources could be observed with reference to almost all practices of consumption of variety of domestic and other goods. Even the
modern electronic devices and equipment are rarely disposed by the villages on the assumption that certain parts of them may be useful for repairs of similar items in the future. Strong consciousness of possible future use of various materials prevent immediate disposal of things as wastes and it always impel users to delay any decision to dispose as waste and consider offering unnecessary things to required members of the community. They never hesitate to communicate with others and inform them of the things available for giving for further use as required by the receivers. Irrespective of the fact whether the goods are new or old they try their best to offer the unnecessary things to another member of the community if family members need no such things. Cloths, books, magazines, costumes, kitchen wares, table wares, other domestic durables, equipment, electronic devices, food items, timber, furniture, and variety of usable things are found among the goods offered to others. The receivers are also happy to receive required things on the mutual understanding that things must be given to others then they are no more required for one’s use.

Multiple and maximum use of resources helps consumers to manage with available resources and even to save funds for developing their economic conditions. This social value provides a sustainable answer to the current issues of waste management and disposal that seriously hamper the sustainable development.

3. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF ASSURING FUTURE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

Another aspect of responsible consumption was apparent from the research with reference to a social value of assuring future well-being of younger generations. In particular, parents and grandparents in the research area have an extraordinary commitment earn and save resources for the children’s future. Even though economic co-operation is one of the universal functions of family and almost all families perform it depending on the economic capacity of family, the families in the reach area seemed to have made it the dominant role while making the other functions subordinate. In this regarding they are highly concerned with two important tasks of providing the children with higher education and accumulating financial and material wealth in the name of children. They carry
out these tasks at the cost of their own well-being as their economic capacity is not strong enough to assure consumption of sufficient amount of resources while saving for children. The economic capacity always compels them to live at a minimum cost of living and save the wealth for the education of children and their future well-being. As revealed by parents, all the families strive to provide higher education to their children sending them to good colleges in urban areas. They also purchase valuable lands, buildings for the future use of children. Even the trees grown in home gardens and other lands are preserved for the future of children and rarely consider felling a tree for timber requirement or earning some money for important purposes such a medical treatment.

An important sociological observation is that families have to be highly conscious about responsible consumption of resources and saving and preserving assets for the future well-being of children in a social environment where they are not fully confident in the government’s responsibly of assuring a good future for the younger generation in the country. As the national development is not progressive at a sufficient rate of economic growth (less than 4% in 2018) and it does not assure sufficient distribution of income among people so that they can live a good life, parents have to take the responsibility of the economic prosperity of their children. Instead of depending on the state to solve economic problem of future generations the families in the research area follow a strong norm of restraining their daily consumption and saving resources for children’s future. According to the respondents in the focus group interviews “No matter we suffer enough from economic and health problems at today, we are not worried about all repercussions as we have earned and saved something for the future benefit of children”. Such statements clearly indicate the magnitude of the parents’ commitments to the future well-being of children.

This particular social value of being highly economic in consumption in the name children’s future stands against the modern social values of irresponsible consumption of resources under conspicuous consumerism that rapidly invading the traditional culture of Sri Lanka. An interesting social reaction could be observed in the research with reference to the value conflict
between the traditional Buddhist values of consumption and that of modern consumerist cultures. The people who still respect the traditional social values of consumption and save and preserve resources for future generations are critical about the behavior of people influenced by consumerist values as they tend to be indebted after spending all and saving nothing for the children’s future. On the other hand, those influenced by modern consumerist culture tend to laugh at traditional consumers for not enjoying the life spending what they earn and inherited from former generations. They value the material success of modern life style and their importance as sources of happiness. Most of such people dream about children’s out migration to green pastures in developed countries as solution to the problem of children’s future and try to prepare them for that purpose. The researched community had no such dreams of out migration of children but shared a common dream of successful future of children through highly restrained and frugal consumption of locally available resources, they have real experience of realizing that dream.

4. DISCUSSION

Even though the research has identified number of Buddhist cultural values that lead the individual and collective behavior of people in the community under consideration, this research paper is concerned with only three values such as the social value of co-operative consumption, social value of multiple and maximum use of resources and the social value of assuring future well-being of children. All the tree social values are Buddhist religious values in their origin and evolution in the history of the traditional societies in Sri Lanka as they are universally found in all Buddhist communities in the country. Buddhism has made them meaningful to the Buddhist devotees as is well evident from the way the people justify their actions. They are highly conscious about the Buddhist religious interpretation of sin and merit and retribution of their deeds in this world and the other and also about the Buddhist cultural interpretations of them and their ultimate goal of life, the Nirvana.

Accumulation of merits dominates in their decision-making processes making all the factors of secular life subordinate on the assumption that whatever they have to incur or sacrifice in social
transactions, negotiations, commitments, offering of gifts and donations, working for the benefit of others, bearing of any material loss, is spiritually compensated with enormous merits (Pin and Kusal) which is indispensable for the attainment of Nirvana ending the circle of sammasa, the birth and death. In all the three major social values identified in this research, this sense of the accumulation of merit while avoiding sinful deeds dominate and the family and community members volunteer to be co-operative in the consumption, storing and sharing of things as a part of multiple and maximum use of resources and for saving and preserving resources for the future of younger generations. Saving and preserving resources for the future is always interpreted as a fountain of merits which is usually cited as “Growing and multiplying merits’ as such savings and preservations save number of needs of number of generations in the future.

According to peoples’ perception even any omission of a family role and community functions also amounts to an act of sin and brings about harmful impacts in this or other world and accordingly, the people strive to do their best to perform their social roles and fulfill needs of community and family life. Even the self-esteem and dignity lie in the level of commitment to meritorious deeds in terms of the above mentioned major social values and others which were not considered in this paper. Any omission of a social duty or active participation in good deeds directly affects the self-esteem and dignity of people and it is always shameful to them to deviate from the social values of collective and co-operative social relations and transactions, multiple and maximum use of resources and saving and working for the future prosperity of younger generations. Accordingly, shame, as a social control mechanism, is also established in terms of those major social values and to the extent they fail to abide by them without socially acceptable justification. The Buddhist religious meaning of the major social values reinforced by the Buddhist monks residing in the village temple through their religious sermons delivered at religious functions. Even the Mass media make valuable contribution to the reinforcement of those values in the minds of people through variety of religious program.
5. CONCLUSION

Sustainable development in Sri Lanka could be assured by means of productive Buddhist cultural values still dominating in traditional communities. The research study brought to light three major such cultural values such as co-operative consumption of resources, multiple and maximum use of available resources and saving and preserving of resources and working for the future well-being of younger generations at all cost to the parents’ generation. Strong commitment to these social values assures a responsible consumption of available resources making an immense contribution to the achievement of goals of sustainable development in the country. In dealing with the issues stemming from the scarcity of resources in developing countries those Buddhist cultural values have a great capacity of leading people toward responsible consumption of resources. Such a pattern of consumption of resources on a cultural basis is long lasting compared to formal, legal and bureaucratic means of assuring responsible consumption. Therefor it is concluded the social value base of the sustainable development and responsible consumption in Sri Lanka need to be enriched with the Buddhist cultural values found in this research. Respondents’ perception of these cultural values of responsible consumption clearly evinced that they had gained meanings of them from Buddhist teachings, practices, beliefs and traditions which have well institutionalized in the rural culture and society. They had confronted with a conflict of sustaining those social values of consumption as the second and third generations of their families are highly exposed to the modern social values of conspicuous consumerism that produce irresponsible consumption of resources. Accordingly, it is concluded that an organized reinforcement is required to transmit the Buddhist cultural values of responsible consumption and assure the sustainable development of nations.
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BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE OF ‘RIGHT CONSUMPTION’ OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by Rahul K. Kamble

ABSTRACT

Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and globalization, on one hand, achieved economic growth whereas on the other led to environmental degradation. This economic growth which is highly influenced by greed, hatred, and delusion resulted in indiscriminate exploitation of limited natural resources. This indiscriminate use of natural resources is ‘wrong consumption’. Based upon the Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination every cause has an effect(s). This ‘wrong consumption’ of natural resources—which is a cause—has resulted in effects such as natural resources depletion, environmental degradation, pollution, threat to species, climate change etc. The purpose of this paper is to correlate the ‘wrong consumption’ of natural resources to lust, hate, and delusion—the three basic cause of sorrow and furthermore ‘right consumption’ with the Noble Eightfold Path based upon wisdom, morality and mental culture which will lead to sustainable development. The findings of the study highlight the ‘wrong consumption’ of natural resources are based on lust, hate, and delusion and resulted in the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. To overcome these sufferings caused due to ‘wrong consumption’, ‘right consumption’ of natural resources virtue has to be developed in an individual. This virtue is based on wisdom, morality and mental culture—the aspects of the

* Assistant Professor, Centre for Higher Learning and Research in Environmental Science Sardar Patel College, Ganj Ward, Chandrapur 442 402, India.
Noble Eightfold Path. It is concluded, to have sustainable development ‘right consumption’ of natural resources are required. It is recommended to achieve the objective of sustainable development through ‘right consumption’ of natural resources, Buddhist aspects of renunciation, generosity, moral responsibility, calm and stillness, kindness and compassion, non-grasping and non-attachment, sharing, non-violence, awareness of the impermanence of the things and pleasure need to be developed. Furthermore, transforming consumption pattern first at an individual level and then extending it towards society will change the human psyche and will pave towards achieving the goal of sustainable development which United Nations has also identified for achieving better and more sustainable future for all by 2030 by incorporating 17 goals of which “Responsible Production and Consumption” is one of them.

1. INTRODUCTION

All means of satisfying human needs, at a given time and place, are resources. The “resources” are means for attaining individual and social welfare. Natural compounds like land, water, minerals, forests, wildlife, energy—or even man himself—are considered as resources as well as resource-creating factors (Santra, 2014). The way in which societies use and care for natural resources fundamentally shapes the well-being of humanity, the environment, and the economy. Natural resources—that is, plants and plant-based materials, metals, minerals, fossil fuels, land, and water—are the basic inputs for the goods, services, and infrastructure of socio-economic systems from the local to the global scale. Research shows that, either directly or indirectly, natural resources and the environment are linked to all of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Restoring and maintaining the health of the natural resource base is a necessary condition for achieving the ambitious level of well-being for current and future generations set out in these goals (IRP, 2017).

If the global population reaches 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost three planets will be required to sustain current lifestyles. More people globally are expected to join the middle class over the next two decades. This is good for individual prosperity but it will increase demand for already constrained natural resources. If we don’t act to change our consumption and production patterns, we will cause irreversible damage to our environment. Each year
about one-third of all food produced—equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes worth around US$ 1 trillion—ends up rotting in the beans of consumers and retailers or spoiling due to poor transportation and harvesting practices. Households consume 29 percent of global energy and contribute to 21 percent of resultant carbon dioxide emissions (Why it Matters, 2018).

Approximately 19 million premature deaths are estimated to occur each year globally due to environmental and infrastructure-related risk factors that arise from the way societies extract and use natural resources in production and consumption systems, including essential infrastructure and food provision. About 6.5 million premature deaths (the vast majority in cities) are caused by air pollution related to energy supply and use in homes and industries, as well as transportation and construction sectors within cities (IRP, 2017).

Material demand has continued to shift from biomass and renewable materials to non-renewable materials, creating new waste flows and contributing to higher emissions and pollution. The global trend of moving from traditional to modern technologies, and from agriculture-based economies to urban and industrial economies (along with their fast-growing new material requirements), further accelerates global material use and creates significant challenges for sustainability policy (Steinberger et al., 2010).

Strong growth in natural resource extraction of biomass, fossil fuels, metal ores, and non-metallic minerals continues to support the global economy, and also adds to global environmental pressures and impacts. During the period 1970 to 2010, the annual global use of materials grew from 26.7 billion tonnes to 75.6 billion tonnes. In other words, the last three decades of the 20th century saw a yearly average growth in global material use of 2.3 percent. Annual growth accelerated to 3.5 percent in the first decade of the 21st century—from 2000 to 2010—and the 2008–2009 global financial crises had a negligible impact on global material use. From 2010 to 2014, global material use grew again by an additional 7.3 billion tonnes, or an average of 2.3 percent per year, to 82.9 billion tonnes. This is significant because, all else being equal, growing material extraction indicates growing environmental pressures and impacts across the globe (IRP, 2017).
We consume the products of the environment and human transformations of natural resources—and in doing this, are increasingly threaten the world’s biosphere (Harvey, 2013). Ven. Payutto holds that consumption should be seen only as “a means to an end, which is the development of human potential” or “well being within the individual, within society, and within the environment (Payutto, 1994).”

2. UNEQUAL CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Over the past four decades, a large shift has occurred in material extraction from Europe and North America to Asia and the Pacific and West Asia. This shift has ratcheted up environmental pressures of primary industries as well as resource flows in Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean and Africa (Schandl and West, 2010; West and Schandl, 2013). While increased material extraction in the South has underpinned poverty alleviation and growing material standards of living in some countries, it is also associated with considerable environmental (Mudd, 2010) and social (Reeson et al., 2012) problems.

Global material resource use may more than double from 2015 to 2050, with high-income countries currently consuming 10 times more per person than low-income countries (IRP, 2017). There are now more than 1.7 billion members of “the consumer class”—nearly half of them in the developing world. While the consumer class thrives, great disparities remain. The 12 percent of the world’s population that lives in North America and Western Europe accounts for 60 percent of private consumption spending, while the one-third living in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 3.2 percent. As many as 2.8 billion people on the planet struggle to survive on less than US $2 a day, and more than one billion people lack reasonable access to safe drinking water. The UN reports 825 million people are still undernourished (State of Consumption Today, 2018).

Despite rising consumption in the developing world, industrial countries remain responsible for the bulk of the world’s resource consumption—as well as the associated global environmental degradation. The United States, with less than 5% of the global
population, uses about a quarter of the world’s fossil fuel resources—burning up nearly 25% of the coal, 26% of the oil, and 27% of the world’s natural gas. As of 2003, the US had more private cars than licensed drivers, and gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles were among the best-selling vehicles. New houses in the US were 38% bigger in 2002 than in 1975, despite having fewer people per household on average (State of Consumption Today, 2018).

WWF’s Living Planet Index, which measures the health of forests, oceans, freshwater, and other natural systems, shows a 35 percent decline in Earth’s ecological health since 1970. Calculations show that the planet has available 1.9 hectares of biologically productive land per person to supply resources and absorb wastes—yet the average person on Earth already uses 2.3 hectares worth. These “ecological footprints” range from 9.7 hectares claimed by the average American to 0.47 hectares used by the average Mozambican. Individuals often face personal costs associated with heavy levels of consumption: the financial debt; the time and stress associated with working to support high consumption; the time required to clean, upgrade, store, or otherwise maintain possessions; and the ways in which consumption replaces time with family and friends (State of Consumption Today, 2018).

The United Nations Human Development Index report 2018 (UNDP, 2018) divided the Human Development Index of the countries into five categories (Table 1). The Very High Human Development category countries comprise of 31.21% (n=59) followed by High Human Development (28%, n=53), Medium Human Development (20.63%, n=39) and Low Human Development (20%, n=38). Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in these category countries indicated a clear demarcation with highest GNI (40041) in Very High Human Development category and least (2521) in Low Development category countries. Natural resources utilization in the form of fossil fuels among these categories counties was in the order of High Human Development>Very High Human Development>Medium Human Development; whereas in the case of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per capita in tonnes was in the order of Very High Human Development>High Human Development>Medium Human Development>Low Human Development. The United Nations Human Development Index report 2018 (UNDP, 2018) divided the Human Development Index of the countries into five categories (Table 1). The Very High Human Development category countries comprise of 31.21% (n=59) followed by High Human Development (28%, n=53), Medium Human Development (20.63%, n=39) and Low Human Development (20%, n=38). Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in these category countries indicated a clear demarcation with highest GNI (40041) in Very High Human Development category and least (2521) in Low Development category countries. Natural resources utilization in the form of fossil fuels among these categories counties was in the order of High Human Development>Very High Human Development>Medium Human Development; whereas in the case of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per capita in tonnes was in the order of Very High Human Development>High Human Development>Medium Human Development>Low Human Development.
Development. Freshwater withdrawal rate was highest in the Very High Human Development category countries (6.1) followed by High Human Development of 4.8. From the data presented in Table 1, it can be pointed out that Very High Human Development and High Human Development categories countries ecological footprint with respect to fossil fuel consumption, freshwater withdrawal and CO₂ emissions per capita was higher as compared with Medium and Low Human Development category countries. On the contrary, use of renewable energy consumption which is the environment and natural resource-friendly had seen the reverse trend and was in the order of Low Human Development > Medium Human Development > High Human Development > Very High Human Development. Forest cover of these category countries was comparable as of 2018.

Table 2 presents the Human Development Index as classified by the UNDP Human Development Index report 2018 into six regions of the world. Arab States is dominated by Islam religion, East-Asia and Pacific with Buddhist and Christianity; Europe and Central Asia; Latin America and Caribbean dominated by Christianity; Sub-Saharan Africa by Christianity and Islam whereas South Asia with mix religions (Buddhist, Christianity, Hindu, and Islam). Gross National Income per capita in Arab States, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and Caribbean was comparable; whereas, in Sub-Saharan Africa it was least (3399). Fossil fuel energy consumption was in the order of Arab States > Europe and Central Asia > South Asia > Latin America and Caribbean > Sub-Saharan Africa. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita was in the order of East Asia and Pacific > Europe and Central Asia > Arab States > Latin America and Caribbean > South Asia > Sub-Saharan Africa. Freshwater withdrawal rate was in the order of South Asia > Europe and Central Asia > Latin America and Caribbean. The ecological footprint of the world religions can be placed in the order of Arab States > Europe and Central Asia > South Asia > Latin America and Caribbean > East Asia and Pacific > Sub-Saharan Africa. Use of renewable sources of energy which conserves natural resources had a reverse trend as that of use of fossil fuel energy consumption and it was Sub-Saharan Africa > South Asia > Latin America and Caribbean > East Asia and
Pacific>Europe and Central Asia>Arab States. Thus it is pointed out, these regions of the world which has a higher gross national income per capita are utilizing more natural resources in form of fossil fuels and emitting higher CO$_2$ emissions into the atmosphere whereas use of renewable sources of energy is minimum.

Environmental impacts are due to rapidly increasing population numbers, increasing efficient technologies, and consumption rates beyond the planet’s capacity. These three have been linked with the equation I=PAT, or environmental impact=population size multiplied by affluence (or degree of consumption) multiplied by technology. Reduce any one of these and the impact drops, increase one or all three, and the impact rises, in some situations dramatically (Kaza, 2000).

The nature of the global consumption of natural resources today is classified as ‘wrong consumption’ or ‘unskilful consumption’. This activity has dire consequences on our environment. In this paper, an attempt has been carried out to ascertain the Buddhist ‘position’ on the consumption of natural resources on the basis of ‘skilful’ versus ‘unskilful’ activity and on Four Noble Truths. The appropriate Buddhist ‘response’ measures is developed with the emphasis on the Noble Eightfold Path and constructive alternatives of Buddhist virtues emphasizing upon renunciation, generosity etc. that can assist in liberation from environmentally and socially oppressive nature of wrong consumption. The transformation of wrong consumption to right consumption and further from the individual level to community level (Society) will lead to their collective actions which result in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Table 1. Natural resources consumption and Human Development Index groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>Very high human development (59 countries)</th>
<th>High human development (53 countries)</th>
<th>Medium human development (39 countries)</th>
<th>Low human development (38 countries)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population (Million) 2017</td>
<td>1439.3</td>
<td>2378.9</td>
<td>2732.9</td>
<td>926.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>1503.3</td>
<td>2497.0</td>
<td>1291.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross National Income per capita</td>
<td>40041</td>
<td>14999</td>
<td>6849</td>
<td>2521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Gross National Income per capita</td>
<td>Female 30276</td>
<td>10945</td>
<td>3673</td>
<td>1915</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male 50033</td>
<td>18948</td>
<td>9906</td>
<td>3126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
<td>2011 total 57964.1</td>
<td>35766.3</td>
<td>18684.2</td>
<td>2346.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011 per capita 40078</td>
<td>15280</td>
<td>6836</td>
<td>2609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of living (% satisfaction)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>Fossil fuel energy consumption</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>71.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14.6</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CO₂ emission per capita (T)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freshwater withdrawal (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mortality</strong></td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>152.2</td>
<td>200.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household and ambient air pollution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest cover</strong></td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of total land)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change %, 1990/2015</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
<td>-14.5</td>
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</table>
3. CAUSES OF WRONG CONSUMPTION

Figure 1 depicts the causes of wrong consumption of natural resources. The anthropogenic activities are responsible for wrong consumption. The three root causes of all the evil anthropogenic activities are lust (lobha), hate (dosha) and delusion/ignorance (moha) from which emerge their numerous offshoots and variants: anger and cruelty, avarice and envy, conceit and arrogance, hypocrisy and vanity, the multitude of erroneous views. These three root causes of all evil lead to the development of Wrong Understanding, Wrong Thought, Wrong Speech, Wrong Action, Wrong Livelihood, Wrong Effort, Wrong Mindfulness, and Wrong Concentration. These eight aspects lead to the development of wrong consumption of natural resources which results in environmental degradation based on the principle of cause and effect of Dependent Origination. These three root causes of all evils are primarily responsible causative agents for wrong consumption and further environmental degradation which is a kind of suffering (Dukkha, First Noble Truth). The reasons for this suffering of wrong consumption and environmental degradation are lust, hate, and delusion which lead to the development of Wrong Understanding, Wrong Thought, Wrong Speech, Wrong Action, Wrong Livelihood, Wrong Effort, Wrong Mindfulness and Wrong Concentration (Samudaya Dukkha, Second Noble Truth). As environmental degradation due to wrong consumption (Dukkha, Suffering) is due to anthropogenic aspects of lust, hate, and delusion (Samudaya Dukkha, Reasons for suffering) and it is possible to overcome this wrong consumption and environmental degradation condition (Dukkha Samudaya Nirodha, Cessation of suffering, Third Noble Truth) and to overcome these sufferings there is a way (Marga, Way, Fourth Noble Truth). For achieving right consumption maximum environmental conservation the Middle Way put forth by the Buddha has potential to overcome these three root causes of all evils so as to achieve the goal of right consumption of natural resources for environmental conservation (Marga, Way for the cessation of suffering, Fourth Noble Truth).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>97.2</th>
<th>..</th>
<th>87.2</th>
<th>74.5</th>
<th>76.7</th>
<th>39.2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fossil fuel energy consumption</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable energy consumption</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>70.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ emission per capita (T)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshwater withdrawal (%)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality</td>
<td>101.2</td>
<td>114.4</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>173.7</td>
<td>186.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>47.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest cover</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of total land)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change %, 1990/2015</td>
<td>-23.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-9.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
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</table>
4. WRONG CONSUMPTION AND DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

A number of studies on the causes and effects of environmental degradation have been carried out. A number of evidence from the recent environmental crisis are claimed to be caused by the consequences of environmental degradation. The Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppada) provides us the way to look at a problem by the way of cause and effect and further, it suggests the way to end the problem from its origin. The doctrine of Paticca Samuppada emphasized that:

“When this is, that comes to be;  
With the arising of this, that arises,  
When this is not, that does not come to be;  
With the cessation of this, that ceases.”

This conditionality goes on forever, uninterrupted and uncontrolled by any external agency or power of any sort. The Buddha discovered this eternal truth, solved the riddle of life, unraveled the mystery of being by comprehending, in all its fullness, the Paticca Samuppada with its twelve factors, and expounded it, without keeping back anything essential, to those who yet have sufficient intelligence to wish for light. The root cause of wrong consumption can be understood by the teaching of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppada). The twelve factors of it
includes Ignorance (Avijja), Volitional Formations (Sankhara), Consciousness (Vinnana), Mentality-Materiality (Nama-Rupa), The Sixfold Base (Salayatana), Contact (Phassa), Feeling (Vedana), Craving (Tanha), Clinging (Upadana), Becoming (Bhava), Birth (Jati) and Aging and Death (Jaramarana) (Piyadassi Thera, 1959). The Paticca Samuppada, with its twelve links starting with ignorance and ending in aging and death, shows how man, being fettered, wanders in samsara birth after birth. But by getting rid of twelve factors man can liberate himself from suffering and rebirth. The Buddha has thought us the way to put an end to this repeated wandering. It is by endeavoring to halt this Wheel of Existence that we find the way out of this tangle. The Buddha word which speaks of this cessation of suffering is stated thus:

“Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations;
Through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness ceases;
Through the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality ceases;
Through the cessation of mentality-materiality, the sixfold base ceases;
Through the cessation of sixfold base, contact ceases;
Through the cessation of contact, feeling ceases;
Through the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;
Through the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;
Through the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases;
Through the cessation of becoming, birth ceases;
Through the cessation of birth, ceases aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.
Thus does this whole mass of suffering ceases.”

(Piyadassi Thera, 1959)

5. SKILLFUL AND UNSKILLFUL ACTIONS

Wrong consumption of natural resources is an unskillful action which results in environmental degradation. This unskillful
action can be replaced with skillful action which will lead to the right consumption of these limited natural resources. This right consumption will pave the way for environmental conservation based upon the principle of Dependent Origination.

The Buddha has stated “Abandon what is unskillful, monks. It is possible to abandon what is unskillful. If it were not possible to abandon what is unskillful, I would not say to you, ‘Abandon what is unskillful.’ But because it is possible to abandon what is unskillful, I say to you, ‘Abandon what is unskillful.’ If this abandoning of what is unskillful were conducive to harm & pain, I would not say to you, ‘Abandon what is unskillful’. But because this abandoning of what is unskillful is conducive to benefits & happiness, I say to you, ‘Abandon what is unskillful.’

“Develop what is skillful, monks. It is possible to develop what is skillful. If it were not possible to develop what is skillful, I would not say to you, ‘Develop what is skillful.’ But because it is possible to develop what is skillful, I say to you, ‘Develop what is skillful.’ If this development of what is skillful were conducive to harm & pain, I would not say to you, ‘Develop what is skillful.’ But because this development of what is skillful is conducive to benefit & happiness, I say to you, ‘Develop what is skillful.”—AN2:19

“And which is unskillful? Taking life is unskillful, taking what is not given... sexual misconduct... lying... abusive speech... divisive tale-bearing... ideal chatter is unskillful. Covetousness... ill will... wrong views are unskillful? These things are called unskillful.

“And which are the roots of what is unskillful? Greed is a root of what is unskillful, aversion is a root of unskillful, delusion is a root of what is unskillful. These are called the roots of what is unskillful.

“And what is skillful? Abstaining from taking life is skillful, abstaining from taking what is not given... from sexual misconduct... from lying... from abusive speech... from divisive tale-bearing... abstaining from idle chatter is skillful. Lack of covetousness... lack of ill will... right views are skillful. These things are called skillful.

“And which are the roots of what is skillful? Lack of greed is a root of what is skillful, lack of aversion... lack of delusion is a root of
what is skillful. These are called the roots of what is skillful.”—MN9 (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2010)

6. RIGHT CONSUMPTION OR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Right consumption or Sustainable consumption can be defined as: the use of natural services and related products that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or products (so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations). Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns has become an explicit goal of the Sustainable Development Goal (Goal number 12), with the specific target of achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources by 2030.

![Figure 2. Aspects of Right Consumption/Sustainable Consumption](image)

Right consumption is not exclusive term however it is an inclusive term and includes: Right extraction of natural resources, renewable
and non-renewable; Right manufacturing, Right packaging, Right transportation, Right buying, Right use, Right waste management and Recycle, reuse and reduce (Figure 2).

Right consumption is to use goods and services “to satisfy the desire for true well-being”, and wrong consumption is to use them “to satisfy the desire for pleasing sensations or ego-gratification” (Payutto, 1994). Schumacher (1973) stated that although modern economics “tries to maximize consumption by the optimum pattern of productive effort,” Buddhist economics “tries to maximize human satisfactions by the optimal pattern of consumption.”

7. THE MIDDLE WAY FOR RIGHT CONSUMPTION

The measure that needs to be adopted for Right Consumption of natural resources under the Noble Eightfold Path is depicted in Figure 3. One needs to incorporate various changes in one’s lifestyles on the basis of the Buddhist principle of the Noble Eightfold Path. Some of the measures that can be incorporated which lead us to the Right Consumption goal includes:

7.1. Right Understanding (View)—Rethinking Your Perception of Green

Right Understanding (View), which is the keystone of Buddhism, is explained as the knowledge of Four Noble Truths. To understand rightly means to understand things as they really are and not as they appear to be. In the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Understanding stands at the beginning as well as its end. A minimum degree of Right Understanding is necessary at the very beginning because it gives the right motivation to the other seven factors of the Path and gives them the correct direction (Narada Thera, 1996). The roots of unwholesome \textit{kamma} are greed (\textit{lobha}), hatred (\textit{dosa}) and delusion (\textit{moha}). Whereas, the roots of wholesome \textit{kamma} include the absence of greed (a-\textit{lobha}=unselfishness), the absence of hatred (a-\textit{dosa}=kindness) and the absence of delusion (a-\textit{moha}=wisdom).

The foundation for the change towards “Sustainable consumption” is to have accurate information. Environmental and sustainability policy requires a solid evidence base that makes it possible to monitor the scale of the physical economy, that is the
amount of material, energy, water and land used and emissions generated in making, using and providing goods, services and infrastructure systems. Data drawn from up-to-date information on the state, trends, and drivers of the physical economy can help to identify leverage points for targeted and effective policy intervention across sectors and geographical scales. This kind of regularly reported data, such as those drawn from a global assessment of natural resources, can inform the setting of long-term orientation goals, incentive frameworks, and systems of engagement and mutual learning that will pave the way for a transformational change. One can develop and articulate visions and models of what life could be like living without degrading the environment. Furthermore, the right understanding the causes of wrong consumption will give an insight into the problem its consequences and will lead to the path for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

7.2. Right Thought—Green is a Choice

Clear understanding leads to clear thinking. Right Thoughts serve the dual purpose of eliminating evil thoughts and developing pure thoughts. Right Though, in this particular connection is threefold. It consists of Nekkhamma (selflessness), Avyapada (loving-kindness) and Avihimsa (harmlessness) (Narada Thera, 1996). Right Thought includes thought free from lust (Nekkhamma-sankappa), thought free from ill-will (Avyapada-sankappa) and thought free from cruelty (Avihimsa-sankappa). Thoughts free from lust, from ill-will, and from cruelty are called “Mundane Right Thought” (Lokia samma-sankappa) which yields worldly fruits and brings good results (Nyanatiloka, 1967).

“Once one ‘knows’ something you can’t ‘un-know’ it” and “When you know better, you do better.” Both speak right volumes about Right Thought and one’s commitment to better choices. One can’t ignore what one has learned about the environment so far, or ignore further the rapid fire of new information from a focused community? With Right Thought, change becomes possible (Roberts, 2010). One can motivate ourselves and others to take action and to turn “I ought to act” into “I can do no other” (Heine, 2014). Right Thoughts will give “ideas” for environmental innovative methods for Right Consumption. Right Thought from
different individuals will lead towards the development of more comprehensive environmental conservation measures. Right Thoughts will eliminate wrong thoughts and this environmental degradation will be controlled at the source itself.

7.3. Right Speech—Voicing the Spirit of Green

Right Thought leads to Right Speech (Advocacy). This includes abstinence from falsehood, slandering, harsh words and frivolous talks (Narada Thera, 1996). This is called ‘Mundane Right Speech’ (*Lokiya-samma-vaca*), which yields worldly fruits and brings good results. But the avoidance of the practice of this fourfold—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being perused—this is called the ‘Supermundane Right Speech’ (*Lokuttara-samma-vaca*), which is not of the world, but is supermundane, and conjoined with the path (Nyanatiloka, 1967).

Speaking out about the need for Right Consumption is the Right Speech. One can spread the word and inspire others to start changing their consumption patterns and choosing to live more sustainably (Heine, 2014). Awareness about Right Consumption needs a base of Right Speech. Through advocacy, awareness in the society about various simple methods of Right Consumption can be achieved.

7.4. Right Action—First Do No Harm

Right Speech must be followed by Right Action which comprises abstinence from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct (Narada Thera, 1996). Abstaining from killing, from stealing, and from unlawful sexual intercourse—this is called the Mundane Right Action (*Lokiya-samma-kammanta*). But the avoidance of the practice of this threefold wrong action is called the ‘Supermundane Right Action’ (*Lokuttara-samma-kammanta*), which is not of the world, but is supermundane, and conjoined with the path (Nyanatiloka, 1967).

Right Action refers to upholding the Five Percepts: not killing, not stealing, not abusing sexuality, not lying, and not using or selling intoxicants. The percepts represent practices of restraint, calling for personal and institutional responsibility for reducing
environmental suffering (Kaza, 2000). Better and more efficient production and use of natural resources can be one of the most cost-efficient and effective ways to reduce impacts on the environment and advance human well-being. Identifying efficiencies across the life cycle of natural resources for improving extraction processes and disposal to achieve the same or greater economic and social gains while minimizing negative environmental impacts (including pollution).

7.5. Right Livelihood—Seeing the Big, Green Picture

The Right Livelihood can be developed by refraining from the five kinds of trade which are forbidden to a lay-disciple by the Buddha. They are trading in arms, human beings, animals for slaughter, intoxicating drinks and drugs, and poisons (Narada Thera, 1996). Avoiding wrong living gets a livelihood by the right way of living-this is called ‘Mundane Right Livelihood’ (Lokiya-samma-ajiva). However, avoidance of wrong livelihood is called the ‘Supermundane Right Livelihood’ (Lokuttara samma-ajiva), which is not of the world, but is super-mundane, and conjoined with the path (Nyanatiloka, 1967).

Livelihood is ones “expressions” of life, the spirit from which one draws and expands upon each and every day. Expressing ones ecological footprint in ways that benefit and support all aspects of one’s life (home, work, and play) is Right Livelihood (Roberts, 2010). This element could be about living sustainably as a way of life rather than just actions you do, or it could be about making changes in the workplace (Heine, 2014). Sustainable livelihood is the need of the hour. The natural resources are limited and their use should be in a judicious manner through our right livelihood. At the same time, the use of renewable sources of energy should be encouraged. By reducing the quantity of natural resource use by an individual, the related emissions and impacts can also be reduced. The Buddha advice to share the products of one’s work with others, and to use it for generous, karmically fruitful action (Harvey, 2013).

7.6. Right Effort—Going Green One Step at a Time

There are Four Great Efforts; the effort to avoid, the effort to overcome, the effort to develop, and the effort to maintain (Nyanatiloka, 1967). Right Effort is about doing what one can when
one can, and because one can. When one applies effort to thinking about the changes one can make toward green transformation (Right Thinking), then take action to make those changes (Right Action), that’s Right Effort. Right Effort is not qualified by the size of the action, but the action itself (Roberts, 2010). This could be about continuing to make changes to your lifestyle even when you have done some of the things that are easier for you (Heine, 2014).

**Figure 3.** Right Consumption based upon The Noble Eightfold Path for environmental conservation

Right Efforts include that one which will always take towards sustainability. Environmentally conscious efforts by an individual will lead to the conservation of nature and natural resources and ultimately the achievement of the goal of environmental conservation. A systematic approach for linking the way natural resources are used in the economy to the impacts on the environment and people connects the flow of resources—from extraction through the final waste disposal—with their use and impact on the environment, economies, and societies at each stage of the life cycle. The approach can be used to identify key leverage points; develop resource targets; design multi-beneficial policies that take into account trade-offs and synergies; and steer a transition towards sustainable consumption and production and infrastructure systems.
7.7. Right Mindfulness - Green Intention

Right Mindfulness is constant mindfulness with regards to the body, feeling, thoughts, and mind-objects (Narada Thera, 1996). Right Mindfulness is one of the most important factors of the Noble Eightfold Path as the activities carried out by right mind will judge which one will lead to environmental conservation. The activities carried out by the right mind are simple and easy to adopt and has a comprehensive potential for environmental conservation.

One needs to develop Right Mindfulness of how could do better and will be more inclined to “do better” next time. Right Mindfulness isn’t about recognizing when you’re right, but recognizing what one is doing—right or wrong—and allowing for change where necessary (Roberts, 2010). There are many opportunities for mindfulness such as remembering to turn off heaters when you leave a room or only filling a kettle with as much water as you need and so on (Heine, 2014). Transition to a process of transformation of current systems of unsustainable production and consumption to sustainable ones. Being thoughtful about what one is buying and choosing a sustainable option wherever possible. Carrying a reusable bag, refusing to use plastic straws, and recycling plastic bottles are right initiatives. Making informed purchases about what one is buying also helps.

7.8. Right Concentration - How Big is Your Footprint?

Right Effort and Right Mindfulness leads to Right Concentration. It is the one-pointedness of mind, culminating in the meditative absorptions (Narada Thera, 1996). While most people can take a few minutes and find ways in which they could easily change a few habits to produce a better, greener result, commitment to joining the world community and truly doing your part requires greater effort and planning. It means applying sincere effort to green education, a dedication to change both in the home and workplace, and a compelling honestly about your responsibility as a world participant. Right Concentration may result in the degree of that commitment through learning, doing, and teaching, but it begins in the heart and moves through one’s spirit to all that connects you to the world (Roberts, 2010). Meditating on environmental
degradation can be a powerful way to change our views of how we want to apply ourselves in relation to the other seven elements.

8. INTERLINKING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION-SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In Figure 4, an interlinking between environmental conservation-sustainable future-sustainable development is presented. From this figure, it can be observed that the Middle Path which comprises of Wisdom, Morality and Mental Culture if developed in all individuals of the society, the effect of it will (based on the principle of Dependent Origination) lead towards environmental conservation. The right consumption of natural resources measure carried out at an individual level will result in a global level change of sustainable future and sustainable development. In nutshell, changes in the human mindset by incorporating the Noble Eightfold Path will lead to environmental conservation, sustainable future, and sustainable development which will ultimately lead to Nibbana. All these things depend on the Noble Eightfold Path.

![Figure 4](image.png)

Figure 4. Interlinking between Environmental Conservation-Sustainable Future-Sustainable Development (Kamble, 2015)

9. ENLIGHTENED WAY FOR RIGHT CONSUMPTION

The Noble Eightfold Path will contribute to Right Consumption or Sustainable Consumption of natural resources which will help in environmental conservation and ultimately lead to sustainable
development. To make this path more effective/impactful additional Buddhist virtues needs to be developed in an individual so as to achieve the objective of sustainable development. Figure 5 depicts the enlightened way for Right Consumption or Sustainable Consumption from the Noble Eightfold Path by incorporating virtues such as renunciation, generosity, frugality, loving-kindness, contentment, non-attachment, compassion and equanimity.

10. ECONOMIC SECURITY AND HAPPINESS

Buddha stated that there are four kinds of happiness. The first happiness is to enjoy economic security or sufficient wealth acquired by just and righteous means; the second is spending that wealth liberally on himself, his family, his friends and relatives, and on meritorious deeds; the third to be free from debts; the fourth happiness is to live a faultless, and a pure life without committing evil in thought, word or deed. The Buddha further stated, economic and material happiness is ‘not worth one-sixteenth part’ of the spiritual happiness arising out of a faultless and good life (Walpol Rahula, 1978). It could be seen that the Buddha consider economic welfare as requisite for human happiness, but that he did not recognize progress as real and true if it was only material, devoid of a spiritual and moral foundation. While encouraging material progress, Buddhism always lays great stress on the development of the moral and spiritual character for a happy, peaceful and content society.

Renunciation: Renunciation means to transcend all antipodal situations, like gain-loss, praise-blame, happiness-misery, to enjoy the peace born of equanimity and detachment. It is also a means to escape from worldly bondage and thus into freedom. A holy life, based on celibacy, voluntary poverty and dispassion, gives concrete shape to renunciation (Buddharakkhita, 2002). Renunciation is accepting that the things will go away. To see and accept that everything goes away—including ourselves—is necessary in order to live serenely (Harvey, 2013). The sign of renunciation is generosity. True generosity demonstrates not only moral development but insight (Harvey, 2013).

Generosity: What land is to a farmer, dana is to Buddhist life. It is the foundation of spiritual practice, the sole purpose of which
is to destroy craving and build inner freedom born of selflessness. Therefore in the Buddhist context, giving means giving up i.e. giving up selfishness, attachment, sensuality, acquisitiveness, egotism, anger, delusion, ignorance and such mind-defiling negative *kamma* producing factors. The Buddha said, “For human beings, *dana* is the path to release” (Buddharakkhita, 2002).

The Bodhisattva practices the perfections of giving in order to remove desires and greed. He gives not for the sake of acquiring merit and without the thought of gaining a reward for his act of generosity. With this attitude of mind, the Bodhisattva is able to give up his wealth, possessions and even his life without clinging to them in the least (Buddhism for Beginners, 2017). Moreover, bringing pleasure to others can bring real happiness. Generosity and sharing are certainly a source of happiness, and a challenge to a society that prioritizes personal consumption (Harvey, 2013).

**Frugality:** Buddhist monks and lay mediators are encouraged every day to reflect on why they use the four requisites of life: food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. The purpose of this reflection is to see if they’ve been using these things to excess or in ways that will develop unskilful states of mind. They’re also advised to reflect on the fact that each of the requisites has come about through the sacrifices of many people and other living beings. This reflection encouraged them to live simply and to aim ultimately at a truly noble form of happiness that places no burdens on anyone at all. One should aim for wise eating i.e. moderation in eating: having a sense of just right, of exactly how much is needed to keep one healthy and strong enough to stick with the training of the mind. The same principle holds true for the other requisites. Don’t take more from the world than you’re willing to give back. And learn to undo the perceptions—so heavily promoted by the media—that shopping is a form of therapy and that purchase is nothing but a victory or a gain. Every purchase also entails losses such as of money and freedom. Hence, learn to restrict one’s purchases to things that are useful, and use the money one save to help advance the higher qualities of life, both for yourself and for those around you. Look frugality as a gift to yourself and to the world (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2012).

**Contentment:** The Buddha has stated that “This *Dhamma* is for
one who is content, not for one who is discontent.” The virtues of contentment and fewness of wishes are praised, and it is said: “contentment is the greatest wealth” (Dhammapada, 204) (Harvey, 2013). The Buddhist teaching of contentment further states that “not taking more than one’s fair share–using only what is necessary so that the rest is available for other’s use.” It is living according to nature, taking what we really need (Swearer, Me and Mine, 1989).

Non-attachment: To be non-attached is to possess and use material things but not to be possessed or used by them (Harvey, 2013). Non-attachment is a state in which a person overcomes his or her attachment to desire for things, people or concepts of the world and thus attains a heightened perspective. Non-attachment doesn’t mean we don’t own things. It means we don’t allow things to own us.” As the Dalai Lama was once quoted to have said, “Attachment is the origin, the root of suffering; hence it is the cause of suffering.”

Compassion: In Buddhist psychology, compassion is a form of empathy. We sense others’ suffering as like our own and naturally wish them deep freedom from it. A compassionate mind, as opposed to a cruel and angry one, is understood to be much more closely attuned to our actual condition. Thus, compassion is informed by the wisdom that understands our basic situation: the inner causes of our suffering and our potential for freedom and goodness. From a Buddhist perspective, compassion with wisdom is the foundation of emotional healing. Compassion is also characterized as a mental capacity that, when cultivated and strengthened, empowers all positive states of mind as we awaken to our fullest human potential (Makransky, 2012).

Loving-kindness: The perfection of loving-kindness is the wish to provide for the welfare and happiness of the world, accompanied by compassion and skillful means benevolence. The noble virtue of loving-kindness should reflect upon as: One resolved only upon his or her own welfare cannot achieve success in this world or a happy rebirth in the life to come–there must be some concern for the welfare of others.

Equanimity: The function of the equanimity is to see things impartially; its manifestation is the subsiding of attraction and
repulsion. Its proximate cause is a reflection on the fact that beings inherit the results of their own kamma. Equanimity perfects the power of renunciation, for by its means one overcomes discontent and delight. Equanimity is accompanied by compassion and compassion by equanimity.

Agenda for Right Consumption

Individual play a crucial role in structural changes by setting an example by doing pioneering groundwork, by teaching others new approaches, by advocating for consumerist accountability. The sum of these individual efforts, however, will not add up to system-level changes, to accomplish this, structural agents must change their operational procedures and expectations (Kaza, 2000). This concluding section of the paper shed light on the few aspects of sustainability engaged by a human being will lead to structural change and includes:

Righteous reduction: Righteous reduction of consumption of natural resources can be carried out by incorporating the activities such as i) Make a list and check it twice: whenever one is going to shop for domestic needs adhering with a list will avoid unnecessary or impulsive purchase ii) Avoid the just-in-case purchase: If at time one is not sure what one needs then assume that one doesn’t need anything. An organised person at home will help to know what one has in stock iii) Think about the replacement of new purchase: On purchase of new goods, what it will replace at back home? can old one be donated or recycled? iv) Evaluate want versus need: It is important to give an extra thought to consider it for something one need or want v) Beware of bargainers: Bargains are designed to move merchandise, not necessarily to save one’s money (Roberts, 2010).

Active reuse: Numbers of ways are there for reuse of materials by initiating small steps that can be incorporated in daily life, some of them include reuse of totes and bags; waste as a raw material; charitable donation and be creative (Roberts, 2010).
Figure 5. An enlightened way for Right Consumption/ Sustainable Consumption

Reincarnated recyclables: Recycling of waste and discarded material have now become an integral part of the processing stream, replacing virgin materials in manufacturing. Use of recycled materials during manufacturing conserves raw materials and reduces energy consumption. Recycling of plastics, metals, paper and other waste and discarded materials can conserve natural resources to a greater extent (Roberts, 2010).

An alternate path: An alternative to conventional sources of energy needs to be explored. Energy obtained from coal, oil, gas etc. contributes to a greater extent to natural resource depletion and environmental degradation. An alternative path to these energy options needs to be explored and incorporated in our daily life. Use of renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydal needs to be explored. In addition, biodiesel, electric cars, battery operated vehicles, solar energy driven vehicles/boats, carpool, rapid public transport system, hybrids, use of bicycles or walking needs to be encouraged (Roberts, 2010).

Reduce attachment, reduce packaging: The packaging of goods consumes to a greater extent natural resources such as paper and contribute to a larger extend waste generated from it. Hence, by adopting some common ways to reduce office waste includes: go paperless; selecting proper printer toners and inks (emphasis should be upon recyclable tonner and biodegradable ink prepared from plant origin) (Roberts, 2010). Furthermore, packaging materials such as paper, cardboard, and plastics can be recycled again which will reduce the pressure on the limited natural resources.
11. CONCLUSION

Natural resources are exhaustible and indispensable for the overall development of human being. Unequal consumption of these resources among different regions, religions and consumer classes of the world is recorded. Indiscriminate exploitation of these resources has dire non-reversible consequences on the environment. Overexploitation of natural resources is ‘wrong consumption’ and root causes for this is lust, hate, and delusion in an individual. This leads to environmental degradation which is suffering and can be explained on the basis of the first noble truth. Of the various measures suggested for environmental conservation, Buddhist philosophy can play a vital role which needs to be explored furthermore. Transformation to right consumption behaviour from the wrong one is the Buddhist ‘response’ to this issue. It is required to reshape consumption and production patterns by transforming resource use in a way that reduces pressure on the environment while promoting human and economic development. Buddhism suggested though material satisfaction is important, the real needs of humans are spiritual. The three aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path i.e. wisdom, morality, and mental culture will lead to the development of ‘right consumption’ of natural resources virtue in an individual. For an effective ‘right consumption’ in addition to the aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, Buddhist precepts such as renunciation, generosity etc. need to be engaged upon. This will pave the way for environmental conservation and eventually sustainable development and sustainable society.

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NEED AND WANT – THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON MODERATION OF ONE’S CONSUMPTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by Ven. Kirama Wimalathissa

ABSTRACT

Modern society devotes much attention to certain global issues as global warming, environmental pollution, and the depletion of non-renewable energy resources. The United Nation’s annual databases show how much energy each country consumes per year. China, for example, is adding the equivalent of 1,000-megawatt coal-fired power plants every week and the amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere also continues to rise accordingly. The UN has sponsored international treaties, conventions, and protocols that address the Sustainable Development. One of major problems regarding this matter is not clearly defining the Needs and the Wants of person. The main aim of this research is to remind one’s need and want and moderation one’s consumption for the sustainable development on the basis of Buddhist teachings. A number of Suttas and Bhikku Vinaya in the Tipitaka have been taken into special consideration in this regard. It is proposed that paying attention to Buddhist view on consuming theories may be helpful in opening people’s eyes to new visions for the environment and available resources.

A need is generally referred to, in economics, as something that is extremely necessary for a person to survive such as food, water, shelter,
Buddhism always instructs to be satisfied with one’s basic needs and also emphasizes to the maximum usage of what one’s has. Wasting of material needs is firmly prohibited for the monks by formulating training rules. A want is connected with one’s desire, craving, greedy etc. Moreover, wants always differ from one person to another. One may want a car, a luxurious house, political power and so forth. E. F. Schumacher, the author of ‘Small is Beautiful’, was amazed to read the Buddhist explanations of the superiority of the economy that is based on being satisfied with what one has (yatālāba santutṭi). He noted that the concept of maximizing well-being while minimizing consumption is essentially alien to modern economists.

The drafting of rules and regulations and scientific studies are not sufficient to protect the environment and resources available on the earth. The mind of every individual also needs to be sensitized to the environment through the practice of “virtual behaviour”. Buddhism maintains that close links exist between a person’s moral state and the natural resources that are available to him/her. Buddhism may even be the foremost religion that introduces the environmental ethics into the individual’s virtue.

1. INTRODUCTION

Presently, the world is facing unforeseen global crises. On the one hand, the global climate is changing rapidly due to deforestation, emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and other chemical substances besides. Desertification, melting glaciers, raising sea level rise, droughts etc. have become matters of increasing concern. On the other, natural resources are being depleted due to unrestrained consumption patterns. If the consumption of natural resources is not managed responsibly, it will not be possible to contain many problems that lie in wait in the future, and the strains are emerging already in the forms of poverty, malnutrition, diseases and wars. As a way forward in response to these multiple challenges, the United Nations is backing the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is one of the main concepts to have emerged in the late twentieth century in the West. The roots of this concept go back several decades. The modern concept of sustainable
development was proposed in 1987 by the Brundtland Committee and the modern concepts of sustainable forest management and the various environmental problems also emerged during the last century. The Brundtland Committee, formerly known as the World Commission for the Environment and Development (WCED), was established by the United Nations in 1983 to find solutions to environmental problems and to introduce eco-friendly development.

When the commission was established, it initially focused on the following key points:

i. The proposal of long-term environmental strategies to achieve sustainable development from 2000.

ii. Recommendations for transforming environmental concerns into development cooperation between developing countries at different stages of economic and social development, concerning relationships between people, resources, the environment, and development

iii. The consideration of ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental issues, in light of the other recommendations of the report.

iv. The consideration of long-term environmental problems, ways to protect and strengthen the environment, long-term action challenges in the coming decades, and resolutions of the Board’s special person meeting of 1982, World society (United Nations, 1983).

In 1987, the commission issued the “Our Common Future” report which defined sustainable development as “the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (source, year) Through the lens of sustainable development, two concepts have been focused on in particular; that of the essential “needs” of the world’s poorest people, which should be given overriding priority; and the idea of limitations imposed by technological capabilities and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet both present and future needs (Environment Magazine, 2017).
The concept was further developed in 1992 at the UN conference on Environment and Development and published as the Earth Charter, which discussed the sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century. There was also Agenda 21, which paid more attention to environmental and social concerns during the development process. The Millennium Declaration published at the Millennium Summit held at the UN Headquarters in 2000 clearly defined sustainable development as a systems approach to growth and development and to managing natural, produced, and social capital for the welfare of their own and future generations. The UN Global Assembly in 2015 targeted 17 global goals to be achieved by 2030 under the common theme of “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

2. A BUDDHIST VIEW ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Although the concept of sustainable development has come down in the West as a response to global problems such as global warming, environmental pollution, and the depletion of non-renewable energy resources, these considerations are all primarily questions of material development and, as such, tend to pass over the spiritual development of individuals. Here, the Buddhist view on development has much to contribute because it suggests a holistic approach to the concept of sustainable development presented by the United Nations. While Buddhism is entirely committed to spiritual development in the community, at the same time, it does pay active regard to the material development of individuals and communities as well.

Some critics have said that the teachings of Buddhism are inadequate in this regard because such doctrines as the four
noble truths and three characteristics of existence, including impermanence and suffering, do not place sufficient emphasis on the material growth of individuals. On the contrary, Buddhist teachings do in fact emphasise the importance of righteous means of earning wealth through farming, trading and other wholesome means of earning an income. A Buddhist is expected to understand that material gains are subject to decline and loss over the course of time but, importantly, being rich does not make one less of a Buddhist at all. Further, Buddhism instructs people to be content with their income while consuming and investing what they earn for future benefits and sharing with others.

Here, we need to distinguish between “wants” and “needs”. Need implies human ‘necessities needed for survival, including food, clothing, and shelter. These are essential for survival of the human being. However, if a person goes beyond his needs, to satisfy his desire or greed, problems may arise. This other aspect is simply what a person would like to possess as well, in other words, that person’s “wants”. It is necessary to understand what we really need in order to survive; simply talking about sustainable development without that sort of understanding would be useless. Everyone seeks a comfortable life which meets his or her needs, but we have to recognise where greed begins. Overconsumption is one of the major problems today, and it is driven “wants”, not “needs”. Buddhism instructs us to be satisfied with what we have (yatālāba santutthi), minimise waste and maximise the use of resources. The famous Buddhist “robe consumption” theory illustrates this point. Buddhism praises thrift as a virtue in itself. The venerable Ananda once explained the economical use of robes by monks to King Udena as follows: If a monk receives a new robe, he should use the old robe as a coverlet, the old coverlet as a mattress cover, the old mattress cover as a rug, and the old rug, with clay, to repair the crack in the floor (Vin, II, 291). This mentality clearly demonstrates the Buddhist approach, and it is an approach which underpins sustainable development through the moderation of personal consumption.

3. OVER CONSUMPTION AND GLOBAL CRISIS

As stated by Laurie Michaelis (2000), humans, like all animals,
must consume food to stay alive. Humans have always been consumers. There is also a long history of using material artefacts as a means of displaying our identity and status to each other. There is nothing new in the superfluous consumption by the rich. The burials in the ancient Egyptian pyramids testify to that; as does the custom of the Romans to use emetics to induce vomiting at banquets to be able to continue to eat. Nevertheless, the consumerism of modern society represents a new cultural form. It consists of several important features that have been described and criticized in various ways.

i. Human well-being has been largely identified with the growing consumption of material things, which is emphasized as the dominant objective of the consumer society. More consumption is usually taken as a good in itself, and consumer-oriented companies are committed to the continual increase of consumption levels both the personal and global levels.

ii. Material consumption is an important way of belonging to a community and achieving status within this community.

iii. Culture is essentially competitive rather than cooperative - members of the community all strive to be materially better off than the others.

iv. Culture places more emphasis on individual rights (and deserts) than on responsibility for the other. Individual freedom to own and consume property is considered a fundamental right of human beings: the only legitimate argument for limiting anyone’s consumption is that it causes direct harm to someone else.

Human consumption, however, does irreparable damage to the environment. For instance, every 42 seconds, gold mining produces the weight of the Eiffel Tower in waste. In less than 5 days, it could cover the city of Paris with Waste Towers. The gold used to make a single gold ring produces 26 tons of mine waste - the weight of more than 7 African elephants. Gold is extracted by using cyanide - a very toxic chemical. A dose the size of a single rice grain can kill a person. Some mines use several tons of cyanide every day,
destroying vast amounts of land. Gold mining also produces large amounts of mercury pollution (Environmental Effect of Mining).

In addition, large volumes of other natural resources such as iron, steel, coal, fuel etc. are being produced and consumed every minute of every day, worldwide. These natural resources are decreasing rapidly, while emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and pollutants increases, and the processes of global warming due to human activity intensify daily. Further, people are also struggling with poverty, health hazards and diverse other challenges. Affluent countries are overexploiting the earth’s limited resources.

According to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), approximately 18 million acres of forest are being lost each year. According to National Geographic, the world’s rainforests may completely disappear within 100 years. GRID-Arendal mentions that under the cooperation center of the United Nations Environment Program, countries that saw serious deforestation in 2016 included Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, Democratic Republic of the Congo, other African countries, and parts of Eastern Europe. Indonesia has the most deforestation. According to research done by the University of Maryland and the World Resources Institute, since last century, Indonesia has lost at least 39 million acres of forestland. There are many causes of deforestation. World Welfare Funds reports that half of the trees felled illegally are used as fuel. Other common reasons for felling trees include:

i. Clearing for housing and urbanization

ii. Collecting wood to make goods such as paper, furniture, and houses

iii. Obtaining valuable consumer goods, such as the oil from palm trees

iv. Clearing land for cattle ranches

v. Slash and burn farming

These controversial practices leave the land completely barren. Their root causes are greed, desire and ignorance.
Forest loss is considered one of the important factors contributing to global climate change. According to Michael Daley, an associate professor of environmental science at Lasell College, Newton, Massachusetts, the first problem caused by deforestation is the global carbon cycle impact. The greenhouse gases are the gas molecules that absorb the thermal, infrared rays. If the amount of greenhouse gases is sufficiently high, there is the possibility of triggering climate change. Oxygen ($O_2$) is the second most abundant gas in our atmosphere, but it does not absorb infrared the way greenhouse gases do. Carbon dioxide (CO2) is the most common greenhouse gas. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), CO\textsubscript{2} accounts for approximately 82.2% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. According to Greenpeace, about 300 billion tons of carbon, which is 40 times the annual greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, is stored in trees. (Live science, 2018) With the recent report by the Global Carbon Project published during COP 23 - the informal name of the 23\textsuperscript{rd} Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - the authors said China’s carbon emissions increased by 3.5%. This was the main cause of 2% increase in global emissions in 2017 (China’s coal consumption has peaked in 2018). The scientific consensus is that we have to limit the release of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and deforestation has to be reduced for the wellbeing of all creatures through the moderation of consumption.

The Earth’s Annual Resources Budget for 2017 shows that we consumed the estimated resource budget for the year in only seven months. The Global Footprint Network calculates that people are consuming nature’s resources 1.7 times faster than our planet’s ecosystems can regenerate them (Earth’s Annual Resources Budget Consumed in Just 7 Months - 2018). Nevertheless, majority of people in the world still are living without meeting their basic needs. For the first time in more than a decade, around 38 million more people worldwide are hungry, the figure rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. According to the report, conflict is now one of the main reasons for food insecurity in 18 countries. In 2017, the world experienced the most costly hurricane season ever recorded in the North Atlantic. The global economic damage
caused by the catastrophes amounted to more than $300 billion. On the positive side, the mortality rate of children under the age of five fell by almost 50 percent and, in the least developed countries, the share of people with access to electricity more than doubled between 2000 and 2016. However, 2.3 billion people did not have the basic level of sanitation and 892 million people continued to practice open bowel movements. In 2016, there were 216 million cases of malaria compared with 210 million in 2013, and almost 4 billion were without social protection in 2016 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2018).

According to the UN’s report, the distribution, availability and use of natural resources, as well as the risks posed by environmental risk factors, are very different in all regions of the world, as well as in countries and cities. For example, the 1.2 billion poorest people account for only 1 percent of the world’s consumption, while the billion richest consume 72 percent of the world’s resources. In many cities, more than 30 to 40 percent of the population lives without access to basic services (United Nations Environment Program, and water and sanitation infrastructures and food and transport infrastructures have an impact on Poor and especially on women (IRP, 2017). These records show that the necessity to moderate the consumption of resources in a fully planned and conscious manner, not only for future generation but for the present generation as well.

4. BUDDHIST VIEWS ON EARNING AND CONSUMPTION

In Buddhism, consumption is defined as simply the acquisition, use and disposition of goods and services to satisfy demands or desires. The basic concept of consumer behaviour consists of the needs, choices, consumption, and satisfaction that underpin the basic processes of people’s lives. Buddhism also invites consumers, however, to observe whether their physical and mental well-being is being adversely affected by their consumption. Consumption is one of the foremost marketing priorities, but this Buddhist aspect of considering the wellbeing of the consumers is overlooked by producers and marketers. The main purpose of Buddhist consumption is to lay the foundation for the further development of human capabilities. The main characteristic of Buddhist consumption is that desire should be controlled by moderation and
happiness. Therefore, Buddhist consumption follows the middle path. Too little intake of food leads to deficiencies that can be detrimental to physical and mental well-being. The accumulation of too much material wealth will bring more pain than any gain. Today’s society encourages delusions, poisoning, and consumption that can lead to health and mental problems. Buddhists are aware that certain needs can be met through careful consumption. In addition, refraining from consumption can play a role in meeting spiritual needs. (Siwarit Pongsakornrungsilp and Theeranuch Pusaksrikit, 2011).

Modern economics, by contrast, measures living standards according to annual consumption, assuming that the consumers who consume more are superior to those who consume less. This leads to the maximization of consumption, which in turn encourages optimal productive efforts. The need to pamper human satisfaction places the focus on maximizing production and consumption. Such beliefs are then exacerbated by the corporate culture that seeks to produce the greatest profit with minimal cost. In the process of making this effort, these companies stimulate the emotions of desire to the maximum and so stimulate consumer culture to reach far beyond normal human needs. To make matters worse, sophisticated intensive marketing, advertising campaigns, are only pamper the desire to acquire infinite wealth and luxury. The Buddhist view, conversely, is rooted in the general idea that there is nothing (Bodhi, 2000).

In effect, a person who indulges in desire increases both ignorance and suffering. Such a process has been briefly described by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000) in terms of Buddhist principles. It issues a series of “distortions” (vipallāsa) that infects one’s perception (saññā), thought (citta), and view (diṭṭhi). The Buddha refers to four such distortions. Buddhist views on consumption may be considered the most moderate, frugal, and economical teaching ever in human history. The Buddha imposed strict rules and regulations for the monks to practice using the four requisites (catupaccaya) received from the lay people: robes (cīvara), foods (pinḍapāta), residences (senāsana), and medicines (gilānappaccaya). More generally, these requisites can be regarded as the basic needs for all human beings
in the world. Countless industries across the world have been established to provide these needs in various scales. The world’s resources are being used up every minute to fulfil human needs as defined by necessity and demand.

Nevertheless, people are consuming the world’s resources, both natural and manmade. If individuals do not limit or control their consumption, it will be impossible to stop prevent these resources from perishing. The environment enables human beings to meet their necessities for life. However, humankind must also act as a guardian protecting nature, with humility and not as a self-proclaimed master of the universe. This is the right attitude a Buddhist should maintain in his life. According to the Buddhist understanding of nature, everything is relative, interdependent and interconnected, and there is nothing that is not included in nature or independent of it. Tragically, this interconnected chain of nature is being destroyed in various ways due to human desires. Humankind is fanatical about power and self-reliance. If only humans were to follow the Middle Way, we do have the capacity to learn how to use everything correctly. Similarly, if humans were to solve the environmental problems, that would mean learning to care for nature through our understanding of the principles of interdependency, that we ourselves are a part of it. That brings us to the root of why Buddhism has incorporated the good and ethics as actions to be practiced by people.

Aggañña Sutta of Dighanikāya (D. III, 80-98) instructs us in how natural recourses become exhausted due to greed (tanhā), miserliness (maccariya), and the loss of moral conduct (sīla). The Sutta showed the beginning of the cycle of the world. The world passes through alternating cycles of evolution and dissolution during a long course of time. Changes and transformations are depicted as the natural state of things, but the processes of nature are influenced by the moral aspects of human life. This is the main point of this story. At first, existence was bright, weightless, and filled with joy until greed grew. This produced desire, the loss of glow and continuing moral degradation. This series of events affected the natural environment in turn. Sweet colours, scents and tastes drifted like a honeycomb on the earth. But when people ate
this substance with desire, their bodies became visible to the naked eye, and the edible material disappeared. When they contrasted their appearance with those of others, pride and vanity emerged. As grapes and rice replaced mushrooms, they began to buy rice. With the advent of private property rights, conflicts and disputes occurred. People divided the land and set boundaries to secure their own food, but then greedy people took rice from neighbouring lands. In this way, theft increased and the richness of the earth was lost. The social dynamics embodied in this story provide a framework for understanding the effects of moral degradation on the natural environment.

Buddhism demands a calm and non-offensive attitude towards nature. According to Sigālovāda Sutta, household heads should accumulate wealth as bees collect pollen from flowers (D, III, 188). The bees do not impair the fragrance or the beauty of the flowers, but convert the pollen into sweet honey. Likewise, humans are expected to use nature legally and morally, to find their foothold within nature and strive to comprehend their natural spiritual possibilities. It is said that we should not even break a single branch of a tree that gives us shelter (Petavatthu, II, 9, 3). Plants are essential to us in providing everything we need in order to sustain life. The more rigid monastic rules require monks to refrain in every way possible from hurting plant life (Vin. IV, 34).

Modern economic activity is all too often fundamentally self-centred and seems even to ignore the role of economic development in producing economic growth. Gandhi remarked that the world has enough to satisfy human needs but not enough for human greed. Anyone who wishes to change his way of life to be in harmony with nature must first reduce greed. The Buddha recommends the adoption of the path of moderation in eating. In an oft recurring passage in the discourses, it is said: a noble disciple is a knower of moderation in eating (bhojanemattaññu); he eats food after reflecting according to genesis (yoniso masasiṅgā), not for fun or pleasure or adornment or beautification, but just enough for this body’s maintenance and upkeep, for keeping it from harm, for furthering the moral life (brahmacariya) (M, 1.273, 355; 3.2, 134). According to Padmasiri de Silva (2009), Buddhism pays sincere attention to
the limited physical capacity of the earth. The limits to economic growth, especially the limits to excessive consumption patterns in the universe, are underscored. This also means by extension that there are critical limits to the uses of technology, that gigantism is essentially problematic, as exemplified by the development Buddhist philosophy outlined in Schumacher’s book, “Small is Beautiful – A Study of Economics as if People Matter. Schumacher (1974) observed the huge disparities between wealthy people and poor people all over the world and criticised the development concepts that hid those disparities behind the placard of economic growth. He also criticized this “growth fetish” for the tremendous damage it caused to the environment. Looking for an alternative, he was deeply fascinated by the ideas of Buddhism and the Gandhian viewpoint. It can be said that Buddhism possesses environmental philosophy, a thesis of sustainability, and environmental ethics covering the whole of nature, humans, animals, and habitats as interrelated systems. He says that industries and agriculture, too, can be transformed into meaningful habitats if only we can resist the allure of gigantism and desist from raping the environment.

The Buddha’s advice to householders emphasized the importance of an ethical outlook that accorded with their modes of livelihood (sammāājīva). The Buddha refers to four types of bliss enjoyed by the householder: the bliss of having wealth; the bliss of the enjoyment of wealth; the bliss of debtless; and the bliss of blamelessness. The bliss of wealth is that it is acquired by energetic striving, gathered by the strength of the arm, earned by the seat of the brow, it is lawful and acquired righteously (A. II, 67). The Buddha’s advice on economic activity for the householders had four facets: first and second, the production of wealth acquired by skills, hard work and enthusiasm (uṭṭhāna sampadā); protection of wealth from robbers, fire and water, refraining from the wasting of wealth which comes from loose association with women, from drinking, and gambling and intimacy with evildoers; these come under ārakkha sampadā. The third is associating with good friends (kallyāna mittatā) and the fourth, living within one’s means (samajivikatā) (A, iv, 322), all of which have been connected to the maintenance of balance between income and expenditure.
In Aṅguttara Nikāya, when famous parables are explained by the Buddha, such as that of the one-eyed person who knows how to acquire and increase his wealth but does not have an eye for good and evil. People with only one eye in this ethical sense acquire wealth in both good and evil ways. On the other hand, people with both eyes are able to acquire wealth justly and with appropriately, and also balance economic prosperity and wisdom. Instead of creating distrust and fear, Buddhism emphasizes respect and consideration for each other when engaging in economic activity. Sigālovada Sutta describes working environments based on mutual understanding, respect, and consideration. For example, an employer “by giving them food and wages according to their strengths, taking care when they get sick, sharing special food with them and right time terminating the job” (D. III, 191; Bodhi, 2005). In return, employees should work properly, support and respect the employer’s reputation.

Mattaññutā is the defining feature of the Buddhist economy. The person who knows the right amount of consumption is aware of the optimal point at which the increase in true well-being coincides with the experience of satisfaction. The doctrines that define how monks and nuns should use the requisites emphasize the point that individuals should consider the purpose of their consumption, as in the traditional formula: Paṭisaṅkhāyoniso piṇḍapātāṁ ...; thinking wisely, I take alms. “What is consumed first has to be reflected wisely.” This principle is not limited to monks; it applies to all Buddhists. Individuals should think intelligently about food; that the true purpose of food is not fun, enjoyment or the fascination of taste. One should keep in mind that eating is inappropriate when performed only because the foods are expensive or fashionable. One should not eat extravagantly or wastefully. One should eat to preserve life, for the health of the body, to eradicate the pain of hunger and prevent disease. The individual eats to continue his life in peace and so that the energy derived from food can support a noble and happy life. Whomsoever consumes anything should understand the meaning of what he does in this way, and consume in ways that produce results that are fit for that purpose. “Just the right amount” or the “middle way” is right here (Payutto, 2016).
Buddhism does not simply criticize consumption and neither does it discourage it. Instead, it shows individuals and communities how their decisions and actions are meaningful in a context dominated by the logic of production and consumption. Buddhist behaviour is relevant to economics and ecology precisely because of its minimalism. This minimalism provides a strong answer to key problems facing us today.

Judith Brown shows that the original understanding of the Buddha concerning desire and suffering exactly addresses the conundrum we need to consider today: “We want, therefore we consume; we want, therefore we suffer”. The will cannot be satisfied if it is not fulfilled and it cannot be fulfilled if more and more is desired. Because desire knows no end, the pursuit of desire can lead not only to individual adversity, but also to the destruction of our world. Buddhism in general and Western Buddhism in particular, because of the social context, must more than ever be called upon to serve the world because of this destructive cycle. It can do this precisely by developing its insights and applying them to the nature of the desire and patterns of consumption which dominate modern life. According to Brown, this Buddhist analysis must also be applied to Buddhism itself, because Buddhism can and must become a commodity and object of ever more subtle psychological and spiritual forms of materialism. The implication is that Buddhism in this sense intrinsically deconstructs itself, challenges its own repression and questions its own practices, that that we have to put ourselves at risk through the practice of compassion and generosity (Eric Sean Nelson, 2003).

5. CONCLUSION

‘All suffering springs from one cause, that is greed.’ As a consequence of this basic insight, it is only by learning contentment and having few wants that we can really hope to solve these problems of the depletion of natural resources and environmental crisis in favour of sustainable development. Everyone must strive to ease the greed in their minds. This is what Buddhism expects from Buddhists, namely, to make a common effort to solve each and every crisis. In this world full of temptation of living comforts,
people often equate happiness in life with material wealth. Those who obtain money tend to seek more money. They wish for a bigger, more luxurious house when all they have is an apartment. They will want a limo when they only have a car. And, if possible, what they really want is a private jet or a private ocean liner! No matter how much material wealth they have, such people will never be satisfied. Greed never does find fulfilment. Even if they owned the whole world, that would not bring them happiness.

Hence, happiness never does depend on how much wealth a person has, but neither does Buddhism deny the importance of material living. The ownership of material necessities is important for human life. This truth has been revealed in the most positive ways in Buddhist teachings. The reliance on material comforts should, however, be moderate. Individuals should understand their needs and know what they need and what to discard. A mind released from excessive desires for external material comforts can place its main energy into what is really important in that person’s life, whoever he may be. Since greed cannot bring happiness to people, Buddhism advocates a happy life of satisfaction with less or even no desire. Satisfaction and lack of desire are the starting point and foundation for a happy life. When the whole world is facing a global environmental crisis, this is also the responsible attitude and lifestyle. It not only helps us find happiness in our own lives but is also an important approach for saving our world from the crises it faces.
References


ABSTRACT

As the world experiences a massive economic transformation, there has emerged immanent self-greediness and so many egoistic tendencies. As a result of this, there have emerged social and economic imbalances among people which have remarkably led to many problems including poverty, corruption, theft, robbery and many other criminalities. In the world of limited resources, people seem to have forgotten the fact that to fully enjoy this life, they have to share with and care for others. Moreover, it is so absurd to note that modern consumption is individually centralized, just like “my car and my petrol”. With individual centralized-consumption, economic imbalance and the gap between them can never be overcome. And instead, it multiplies social problems. It can be overcome only through a social-centralized consumption of which Buddhist theories are always emphasized.

This paper attempts to bring forward the Buddhist financial concept of “ekena bhoge buñjeyya” explained in Sigālovada Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya. And what is actually meant by Consumption and Utilization
of one’s earnings in Consumption in Buddhist teaching drawing from Rāsiya, Kāmabhogī, Pattakamma and ādiya Suttas.

The second part of this paper discusses the “fivefold uses of one’s earnings in consumption” explained in Pattakamma and Ādiyā Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya. They are namely; (i). For the use of personal and family; (ii). For the use of friends; (iii). For the use of investments in security and insurance; (iv). For the use of fivefold obligations; (v). For the use of spiritual leaders.

Finally this paper emphasizes the importance of the “fivefold obligations” (pañcabali) and their values for a contented society and how they are helpful for the well-being of everyone and further how one can gain the Bhogasukha (the joy of enjoyment) as admonished in Anāna Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya. Buddhist social-centralized consumption always encourages and creates characters who are wealthier with their spiritual advancements rather than mere material progress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism being a teaching of renunciation always advocates its followers to lead a life benefited to everyone. When it comes to the Buddhist concept of happiness, many discourses, suttas preached by the Buddha are found, which directly look at happiness of the laity. There are many suttas in the Nikāyas addressed to householders, gahapati, merchants, setṭhi and kings, rājā on economic matters. Many of such suttas contains insights regarding the economic aspects related to the life of the laity. A Buddhist lay person has to work to maintain daily living as well as to support his/her own immediate families and contribute to society. However, one has to do so within the confines of Buddhist ethics to make spiritual progress.

Though the Buddhist teaching advocates detachment for the ending of Dukkha, it encourages material development with spiritual advancement. According to the teachings of the Buddha, lay people are expected to maintain livelihood for their own, their families’ and society’s welfare. Basic needs must be met before one can concentrate on spiritual development. It would be difficult to develop calmness if one is not physically well or one is worrying about financial concerns. Even hunger is enough to disturb the mind to the extent that it becomes difficult to concentrate. In
one *sutta*, the Buddha came to a village to teach a man whom he saw as capable of attaining insight. However, when he got there the man was so hungry and tired that the Buddha asked for him to be fed before delivering the discourse which helped him gain insight. Elsewhere in the Scriptures the Buddha said,

‘Hunger is the greatest illness’.\^1 Similarly, one cannot have peace of mind when one is excessively worried about financial affairs, such as debts and therefore, ‘for householders in the world, poverty is suffering’.\^2

Not only poverty does not provide people with basic needs, it also does not give them as much opportunity to practice generosity and thus accumulate merit. More importantly though, poverty is also seen as one of the causes of social problems, such as crime and violence. In the *Dīghanikāya*, the Buddha described how poverty led to social problems such as stealing, killing, lying and shortened lives.\^3

‘For lay people therefore, poverty creates suffering both on a personal and social level; and hence for them, ‘woeful in the world is poverty and debt’.\^4

2. WEALTH

It is understood and even has been taught in the teachings that poverty and debt for Buddhism is suffering for a lay person. When it comes to the Buddhist teaching on amassing wealth, the *Sigālovā dasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* addressed to a young householder, advocates a lay person to collect wealth as a bee that collects nectar from a flower.

The wise endowed with virtue, shine forth like a burning fire, gathering wealth as bees do honey, and heaping it up like an anthill once, wealth is accumulated, family and household life may follow.

*Paṇḍito silasampanno, jalam aggiva bhāsati.*

*Bhoge samharamānassa, bhamarasveva iriyato; Bhogā sannicayam yanti, vammikovupaciyyati.*

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2. A.III.352 as cited in Harvey, 2000: 196.
Besides, the very sutta goes on advising the prince about the four ways managing a layperson’s wealth by dividing into four portions. The *sutta* says thus;

One portion should be enjoyed, consumed, two portions should be invested in business and the fourth portion should be set aside against future misfortunes.

In fact, in Buddhism wealth itself is neither praised nor reproved, only how it is accumulated and used. Wealth is blameless if it is rightfully obtained, without hurting others, without violence, stealing, lying and deception. The *Dvīcakkhūsutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* introduced the notion of being ‘two eyed’ when it comes to making a living. One has to keep one eye on profit and the other on ethics. According to this *sutta* advocates, there are three kinds of people in the world: they are the blind, the one-eyed and the two-eyed.

The blind person does not know how to generate wealth, does not know what is right and wrong, and does not know what is good and bad. This person has no wealth and cannot perform good works (such as giving gifts, making donations, etc).

The one-eyed person knows how to generate wealth but does not know what is blameworthy or not, and what is good or evil. This person may thus obtain wealth through whatever means including violence, theft and deception. Though he/she enjoys sense pleasures from the wealth generated, when he/she dies is reborn in hell.

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7. Andhasutta AN iii PTS, p-129.
8. Andhasutta AN iii PTS, p-129.
The two-eyed person knows how to generate wealth, but also knows what is right and wrong, blameworthy or not, and whether it is good or evil. This person enjoys his/her wealth in this life but also after death is reborn to a good destination.\(^9\)

3. HOW TO ACCUMULATE WEALTH

The ādiyasutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya advocates on how one should collect and increase the wealth. The sutta goes on thus;

A householder earns his wealth righteously, through energetic striving, amassed through the strength of his arm, won by sweat, and lawful and lawfully got.

\[uṭṭhānaviriyādhigatehi bhoge hi bāḥabalaparicitehi sedāvakkhittehi dhammikehi dhammaladdhehi.\]^10

The Vyaggapajjasutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya addressed to householder Dīghajānu, provides instructions to preserve and increase wealth. According to this sutta conditions of worldly progress that leads to householder’s welfare and in this life is four-fold.

i. Industriousness - energetic striving in one’s job. (Uṭṭhānasampadā)\(^11\)

ii. Watchfulness - taking care of one’s property to prevent lost due to robberies and natural disasters such as flood. (ārakkhasampadā)\(^12\)

iii. Having good friends - so one can emulate their actions. (kalyāṇasampadā)\(^13\)

iv. Leading a balanced life - one does not spend excessively nor hoards wealth. Also, one should remain equanimous in the vicissitudes of life. (samajīvikatā)\(^14\).

4. HOW TO USE WEALTH

In Buddhism, wealth is a means to an end. It can either be a

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9. Andhasutta AN iii PTS, p-129.
11. Andhasutta AN vi PTS, p-282.
benefit or a burden depending on one’s attitude to wealth and how one uses it. It helps to provide basic needs and offers the opportunity to develop generosity from giving. But if one is obsessed with wealth, one goes through much hardship attaining it, one creates bad karma from unethical practices, and spending it unwisely creates suffering. Once wealth is obtained, according to the Sigalovada Sutta, one should invest half of it into business, use a quarter of it for enjoyment and save the rest.\footnote{D.III.189; Walshe, 1987:466.}

In the Pathama-aputtakasutta of the Sānyuttanikāya given at Sāvatti to king Kosala advocates on how one should consume or utilise one’s earnings. The Sutta goes on explaining that earnings should be utilised in the following way. I. Enjoy it themselves, \((\text{attānam} \text{ sukheti pīneti})\), II. Please mother and father \((\text{mātāpitārō} \text{ sukheti pīneti})\), III. Wife and children, \((\text{Puttadārām} \text{ sukheti pīneti})\), IV. Slaves and workmen, \((\text{dāsakammakaraporise sukheti pīneti})\), V. Friends and associates, \((\text{mittāmacce sukheti pīneti})\), VI. To give to recluses and brahmans, for heavenly bliss \((\text{samañabrāhmanesu uddhaggikam} \text{ dakkhinam patiṭṭhāpeti sovaggikam sukhavipākam saggasam})\)

Another broad perspective of utilisation of one’s earning has been descriptively given the Pattakammasutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya. The sutta continues explaining thus; (i) “Here, householder, with wealth acquired makes himself happy and pleased and properly maintains himself in happiness; he makes his parents happy and pleased and properly maintains them in happiness; he makes his wife and children, his slaves, workers, and servants happy and pleased and properly maintains them in happiness; he makes his friends and companions happy and pleased and properly maintains them in happiness.

This is the first case of wealth that has gone to good use, that has been properly utilized and used for a worthy cause.

(ii) “Again, with wealth acquired he makes provisions against the losses that might arise from fire, floods, kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs; he makes himself secure against them. This is the second case of wealth that has gone to good use … for a worthy cause.
(iii) “Again, with wealth acquired he makes the five oblations: to relatives, guests, ancestors, the king, and the deities. This is the third case of wealth that has gone to good use … for a worthy cause.

(iv) “Again, with wealth acquired he establishes an uplifting offering of alms—an offering that is heavenly, resulting in happiness, conducive to heaven—to those ascetics and brahmans who refrain from intoxication and heedlessness, who are settled in patience and mildness, who tame themselves, calm themselves, and train themselves for Nibbāna. This is the fourth case of wealth that has gone to good use that has been properly employed and used for a worthy cause.

What sutta includes can be summarised as follows:

i. To bring happiness to oneself, families, friends and employees.

ii. Protect one’s wealth against loss.

iii. Give offerings to relations, guests, dead relatives and gods.

iv. Give gifts to virtuous people, such as monks and nuns.

Here the third fact which explains about five-fold obligations Pañcabali, draws our attention on a possible coexistence of the society if these practises are understood properly and practised efficiently. The concept of Five-fold Obligations explained in the sutta is far better and sublime teaching which can be utilized in the ethical consumption or utilisation of one’s earning. Paññā or wisdom refers to the knowledge and awareness of three universal characteristics of phenomena. A person, being aware of them and leading a righteous life, knowing life is subject to impermanence anicca, changing dukkha, and not-self anatta, without harming others is also a sound aspect which should be there in a sustainable society.

When people get the realization of the universal characteristics of phenomena in terms of life, they cultivate wholesome states in their mind. Having tried to satisfy their sensations expecting happiness which doesn’t work, which is ultimately understood impossible, if one practices the teaching of the Buddha that suggests, “not to do any evil, Sabbapāpassaakaranāṃ, “to cultivate what is wholesome”, kusalassaupasampadā, and “to purify one’s mind”, sacittapariyodapanāṃ”, it itself leads people towards the
upturn of the society where Righteousness, Morality, Generosity, Sharing, universal Loving-kindness, Compassion, Appreciative-joy, Equanimity, are considered the wealth of people. The society is full of developed characters whose spiritual advancements are far stronger than their material possessions. As the Buddha says, ones whose spirituality is developed know the value of sharing and they never even have a handful of rice without sharing with others. A society where sharing and such spiritual qualities are considered the building blocks of the society, would never allow people to fight for their needs. They would never exploit people, labour etc.

When it comes to the consumption and utilisation of one’s earning, happiness associated with has a lot to do with. In this regard a sufficient account is found in the Anaṇasutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya where four-foul happiness is prescribed. They are (i). the bliss of ownership, (atthisukam), (ii). Making use of earnings/wealth, (bhogasukham), (iii). Debtlessness, (anasaṇukham), (iv). Blamelessness, (anavajjasukham).

The bliss of ownership is the thought and happiness that comes to him that the earnings or wealth he amassed is earnings or wealth earned through his efforts and enterprise, through the strength of his arm, piled up through the sweat of his brow, righteously gain.

The bliss of making use of one’s earnings or wealth is to enjoy his earnings and do meritorious deeds.

The bliss of debtlessness is to owe no debt which either small or big to anyone at all.

The bliss of blamelessness is to be blameless of action of body, action of speech an action of mind.

However, if wealth is not properly used it does not bring happiness and enjoyment. For example, gambling can make one more miserable and drinking can lead to quarrels and fights. On the other extreme, if one is miserly one does not enjoy wealth nor let others enjoy it, such a person is described as being like ‘a forest pool in a haunted forest - the water cannot be drunk and nobody dares to use it’¹⁶. Wealth should not be enjoyed alone, and the Buddha’s advice is,

‘...if people knew, as I know, the fruits of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it if there was someone else to share it with’\(^{17}\).

Relevance to the use of wealth is the concept of ‘right consumption’ brought up by Ven. Payutto. According to him right consumption is the use of goods and services for well-being whilst wrong consumption, arises from craving, is the use of goods and services to satisfy pleasing sensations and ego-gratification.

When it comes to the consumption of one’s earnings, the Dhaniyasutta of Suttanipāta where Dhaniya, the farmer says ‘I support myself on my earnings, my sons live in the harmony, free from disease. I hear no evil about them at all. Therefore, it you want, rain-god, go ahead and rain.’\(^{18}\)

In the Raṭṭhapālasutta, the Buddha elucidated thus; “I see men wealthy in the world, who yet from ignorance give not their gathered wealth. Greedily they hoard away their riches longing still for further sensual pleasures.”\(^{19}\) And as explained in Anaṇasutta, dhammikehidhammaladdehi paribhuñjanti puññānikaroti, using the wealth earned righteously without harming others life is maintained and meritorious deeds are performed. For Buddhism, consumption is two-fold as consumption and non-consumption. Non-consumption is dāna or sharing what one has with others by which one is able to have the most important happiness in the mind Samtuththi that is appreciated as the highest profit in Dhammapada as Samtuṭṭhiparamamdhanaṃ.

Buddhism always shows the path for the spiritual advancement rather than the material development. Spiritual development means persons’ respect for social norms, ethics and good values. For that, one should establish himself or herself on morality, Sīla. When the social beings are established on the morality, they also focus their

\(^{17}\) It.\(^{18}\)as cited in Payutto, 1984.
\(^{18}\) N.A. Jayawickrama,. Trans., “Dhaniyasutta (Snp 1.2 – PTS v-24),” in the suttanipāta (Homagama: Karunaratne and Sons Ltd, 2001), 9.
\(^{19}\) Raṭṭhapālasutta MN.
lives on spiritual advancement rather than material progress. Ven. Walpola Rahula in his book “What the Buddha Taught” asserts that

“If encouraging material progress, Buddhism always lays great stress on moral and spiritual characters for a happy peaceful and contented society.”

In a society where spiritual advancement is given much priority, the cart of spirituality goes after spiritual advancement. When the spirituality runs after its development, there arise social economic equalities, compassion, peace, happiness, harmony, mutual respect and understanding because of being morally fit. In this regard Bhikkhu Payatto says that,

“it is the view of Buddhism that economic activity and its results must provide the basis of support for a good and noble life that of individual and social development.”

These qualities are expected to be developed in individuals in the society, as a result, there is a balance between society and economy because spirituality is the charioteer who leads the way of individuals. For instance, if the society is based on four sublimes status, Mettā, Karunā, Muditā, and Upekkhā, these qualities of people can lead them towards a sustainable society. For Buddhism, if people understand that the basic needs such as clothes, Cīvara, food, Piṇḍapāta, shelter, Senāsana, medicine, Gilānapacca which are known as the basic need for everyone, are for the survival of this life and not for competing with each other in the society, the society is balanced and more corporative than what it is today. Why actually many problems arise in the society is because people always run after satisfying their unlimited wants which have no an end at all. Wants of people always get increased day by day.

When the modern trends toward wants of people are concerned, there is no an end to wants of people at all. Buddhism always encourages the importance of understanding the reality of life. Having understood it, one is expected to enjoy life without harming others. In terms of that one can understand and lead the life with the understanding of Assāda, adinava and nissaraṇa. For example, life is to enjoy. What one should be aware of while enjoying (assāḍa) life is that the life is subject to impermanence, and the consequences
(ādinava) of life. The awareness of life and the consequences of life opens an eye of the person to seek an escape (Nissaraṇa) of everything.

5. CONCLUSION

The Buddhist teaching on wealth is an important issue for the lay person as he/she needs to practice Right Livelihood as part of the Buddhist Path. Buddhism recognises that wealth can bring comfort and enjoyment or misery to householders both in this and future lives. Happiness is procured by recognising a balance between economics and ethics, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ consumption, and achieving the ‘Middle-way’ between materialism and contentment. The role of wealth is to provide adequate basic needs for oneself and society but not to the extent that it encourages greed and indulgence. Hence, Buddhist value is in tension with the materialistic consumerism. As de Silva puts it, ‘it [Buddhism] advocates that we feed our needs and not our greeds’ In Buddhism, wealth is not evil but avarice is, therefore, ‘Wealth destroys the foolish, but not those who search for the Goal Nibbāna. The function of wealth is to provide contentment, which serves as a solid foundation for spiritual development. Hence, being contented with little is a quality much emphasized in Buddhism, ‘Contentment is the greatest wealth’.

Especially Buddhist teachings on utilisation of one’s earning in terms of ethical consumption suggest practical solutions which are applicable in many ways. It’s clearly perceptible that modern socioeconomic policies worsen the problems in the world even though they were introduced with the purpose of solving them. That is mainly because all the criteria by which the status of a person is measured are based on materialism. For example for western economic policies, consumption means final purchase of goods and services by individual. Modern trends are to satisfy the wants of people. In other words it is impossible because the sensations of human beings with their enormous tanhā, specially Kāmataṇha, can never be satisfied. For Buddhism, it is totally because of ignorance avijjā, unawareness of the Four Noble Truths, people make ice-breaking efforts to satisfy their wants. If there is not satisfaction, there is no consumption. For mundane people,
material possessions are the wealth. However much material possession one owns, ultimately he or she is never satisfied. That is the nature of human mind.

Buddhism is understood and introduced as a vast philosophy which consists of all the solutions to problems in the world because it was delivered by a human-being who realized everything that ought to be realized. Living accordingly Dhamma, practising Middleway and four sublime states and adhering to social norms, ethics and specially sharing can bring about a peaceful friendly society.
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ABSTRACT

Buddhist always believes in developing compassion and establishing friendly behavior with all creatures of the world. Buddhist perceptions of the world are ecological and based on the theory of sustainable development. Buddhist believes that Eco is essential to solving global problems, not Ego and a compassionate person think for a common future. He develops that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs, not their own greed.

According to Buddhist teachings, there is a close interdependence between the natural environment and the living creatures. Buddha has also considered every creature connected through Pratītyasamutpāda (Dependent Origination). Siddhārtha becomes Buddha under the Bodhi tree which was situated on the bank of Nirañjanā. Different aspects of Buddha’s life, such as his birth, attaining knowledge, Dhammacakkapavattana, Mahāparinibbāna etc. were completed in the lap of Mother Nature. On the basis of its ecological and sustainable approach, Buddhist are very generous, compassionate and believer of peace in the world.
The important thing of this paper will be based on the relationship of the ecological aspect and Sustainable development with Buddhist theories like Pratītyasamutpāda (Dependent Origination) and Pañcasīla (five percepts); this paper will also highlighted Buddhist perspective in the present scenario on the issue. This research intends to use analytical, empirical and historical methods. The paper is based on Pāli canonical and non-canonical literature and some other Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dham’maṁ care sucaritaṁ na nam duccaritaṁ care.

Dham’maṁ ca sukham seti asmi lōkaṁ paramhi ca.¹

Practice a righteous life and do not practice in a faulty manner. One, who observes this practice lives happily both in this world and in the next. Man is a social and environmental animal. He is not isolated from the environment, but like biological and physical environment he is also a symbiotic. The environment and activities of a human being is interconnected.

The mind with dependent origination can wish for the people of the whole world, that no one creature in this world should be sad, neither sinner, nor sick, nor inferior, nor despised, nor poor.² The welfare of everyone and the development of everyone is the goal of human life. At every level of the society, whether it is a family, a nation, or a world or a whole universe, human beings combined with ideas of ecological and sustainable development increasing compassion.

To introduce Buddhist way and method for sustainable development, there are hundreds of discourses in the Buddhist canon. From them, the Karanīyamettasutta of the Khuddakanikāya introduces human to the non human as able, attentive, simple, non arrogant, contended, unbiased etc. and was able to convince them that Buddhist is not a threat to the world apart from this, the teaching of the first percept, Brahma Vihāra, Pratītyasamutpāda, Madhyama

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Mārga etc. are highly effective teachings of the Buddha if practiced for a sustainable development. On the basis of its ecological and sustainable approach, Buddhist are very generous, compassionate and believer of peace in the world.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Buddhist always believes in developing compassion and establishing friendly behavior with all creatures of the world. This research paper focused on the Buddhist perceptions of the world which is ecological and based on the theory of sustainable development. How a Buddhist believes in Eco and why he does not believes in Ego? How compassionate people think for a common future? How a person develops the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs, not their own greed?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The important thing of this paper will be based on the relationship of the ecological aspect and Sustainable development with Buddhist theories like first percept, Brahma Vihāra, Pratityasamutpāda, Madhyama Mārga etc. This paper will also highlight the Buddhist perspective in the present scenario on the issue. This research intends to use analytical, empirical, scientific and historical methods. The paper is based on Pāli canonical and non-canonical literature and some other Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts.

4. DISCUSSION

The aim of human life is to search for wholeness. David Bohm told that the man has always been seeking wholeness - mental, physical, social and individual.³ Human has sensed always that wholeness or integrity is an absolute necessity to make life worth living.⁴ Quantum Physics has proved that no element is free in the whole universe, but each element is interconnected with each other. The movement of a single particle is connected with the entire universe. The interconnection of atoms is the basis of the

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whole world. The Biologists also concluded to analyse the theory of Quantum Physics that the relation of human being and nature is interconnected and mutually interdependent. To study the interconnections of humans and the environment at the scientific level, although ‘ecology’ was born before Quantum Physics, also called ‘Environmental Biology’. Ecology is a science that studies the interrelationship between biotic and abiotic components of a natural ecosystem on one hand and among organisms on the other hand. In simple words, Ecology is a study of nature or study of the environment. In Ecology, we study about living communities and their interactions. The study of Ecology also helps us to understand the basic laws of nature. Due to the increase of human population there are large numbers of negative effects on living communities.

Our ancestors were basically the hunter-gathers. Later we were converted into the agrarian societies and the human footprint. The environment was rapidly increased over the period of time from agrarian to industrial and industrial to organize society. At present we are in the era of post urbanisation. Due to that rapid increase in ecological footprint, we harassed the natural eco-system and living creation. Due to that over exploration of eco-system and earth resources there are drastic consequences are faced by the human itself in the form of climate change, global warming, species extinction, pollution, desertification etc. and after it the human societies trying to find out the solution of those drastic consequences from mid 19th century and in 1972 the United Nations (UN) organised Stockholm conference. It is also known as United Nations Conference on The Human Environment (UNCHE). With that we are trying to find out the Eco friendly alternatives of development and people started to talk about the concept of sustainable development.

In 1983, World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was established by the UN which is also known as Brundtland commission. The Brundtland Commission released his report entitled *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland Report, in October 1987. The commission used the term sustainable

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development first time and defines it as “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It contains two key concepts: the concept of “needs” in particular, the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.6"

Sustainable development deals with the development that promotes the sustainable use of natural resources and also conserving them for our future generation. The planet was a large world in which human activities and their effects were neatly compartmentalized within nations, within sectors (energy, agriculture, trade), and within broad areas of concern (environment, economics, social). These compartments have begun to dissolve. This applies in particular to the various global ‘crises’ that have seized public concern, particularly over the past decade. These are not separate crises: an environmental crisis, a development crisis, an energy crisis. They are all one.7

Current concerns for ecological imbalance, global warming and associated environmental problems are the outcome of the disasters at various levels faced by humanity. The innate spirituality in the human society which manifests in the religious life needs to be given due importance in implementing the long term measures and solutions to these ecological problems. All most all the religions have accorded sanctity to the symbiotic relationship between nature, plant kingdom, animal kingdom and human life.

The famous saying of Albert Einstein “science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind”8 shows us the need of

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religion or some kind of philosophy for a balanced life as well as a successful development program. Current economic policies which promote material development have made the world imbalanced and short existing. Buddhism is a religion that has always presented us with tools for paying attention to our surrounding, showing us how we can take responsibility without becoming disillusioned. C. Jotin Khisty believes that spiritually and psychologically we live inside a bubble of the “self,” as though we are “in here” and the rest of the world is “out there.” According to Buddhist thought, this sense of separation manifests itself in the form of the Three Poisons—greed, ill will, and delusion. Examples of these poisons can be seen everywhere in the current ecological crisis. Greed rooted in untrammeled economic growth and consumerism is the secular religion of advanced industrial societies. Similarly, the military-industrial complex promotes ill will, fear, and terror, while propaganda and advertising systems are well known for deluding the public about everything under the sun. A fundamental question of our time is whether we can counter these forces by developing attitudes of respect, responsibility, and care for the natural world and so create a sustainable future.9

Buddhism always believes in developing compassion and establishing friendly behavior with all creatures of the world. Buddhist perceptions of the world are ecological and based on the theory of sustainable development. Buddhist believes that Eco is essential to solving global problems, not Ego and a compassionate person think for a common future. He develops that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs, not their own greed.

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In this figure, the two states ‘Ego’ and ‘Eco’ are shown. Both tell two different aspects of the environment. The ego is shown at the top of the man and the woman and other creatures below it. Ego means that the condition of the ego is not only for the environment but also for the entire human community. Because it starts to exploit human nature, which not only affects the ecosystem, but it also suffers from problems like pollution and temperature itself. The other picture is related ‘Eco.’ All organisms, humans and trees are shown in the form of a circle. This theory corroborates cosmology. This is the basis of intense ecological thought. According to Buddhist teachings, there is a close interdependence between the natural environment and the living creatures. Buddha has also considered every creature connected through Pratītyasamutpāda (Dependent Origination). According to the theory of Dependent Origination, everything in the universe is subject to conditioned arising, the natural process of law governed arising according to conditions.

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which means that an entity does not exist and generate independently. Instead, it is characterised by its fundamental interdependence and interconnections to all phenomenons.\(^{12}\)

Siddhārtha becomes Buddha under the Bodhi tree which was situated on the bank of Nirañjanā. Different aspects of Buddha’s life, such as his birth, attaining knowledge, Dhammacakkapavattana, Mahāparinibbāna etc. were completed in the lap of Mother Nature. Buddhism takes us from conceiving ourselves as isolated individuals to believing ourselves as associated beings in the universe along with the acquisition of feeling of kindness or goodwill (Mettā), compassion (Karunā), Sympathetic joy (Muditā) and equanimity (Upekkhā). The four Brahma vihāra will help a great deal to boost the harmonious interpersonal relations among human beings and nature.

Buddhist people believe in cyclic positions of karma and rebirth. Responds to the deep ecology interest in trying to show to others how the human species arose out of other life forms and hence an argument for our responsibility to ensuring the continuity of all life forms and their habitats, not just human life. The first Buddhist percept (Sīla) tells about protection of every human and sentient being. It is committed to human beings not to kill any smallest creature or human. Let him not destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any life at all, or allow the acts of those who do so. Let him refrain even from hurting any creature, both those that are strong and those that tremble in the world.\(^{13}\)

Dalai Lama says in his book ‘My Tibet’ that the tendency of humans is non-violent. As to the question of human survival, human beings are social animals. In order to survive we need companions. Without other human beings, there is simply no possibility of surviving; that is a law of nature.\(^{14}\) This is why human beings contemplate on their environment, not only in humans but also in

\(^{12}\) Ibid, p. 152.


their environment. The true nature of reality transforms one’s being in such a way that compassionate action comes naturally.

Buddhism is a highly ethical religion. Buddhism is not a “dominion” religion towards Nature but, as has been noted, state incorporation can bring this about. Buddhism, it seems, can help the religious activist find the inner strength or moral courage to go out and help change this world.

Buddhist believes that the environment is very important not only for this generation but also for future generations. Dalai Lama says, “If we exploit the environment in extreme ways, even though we may get some money or other benefits from it now, in the long run, we ourselves will suffer and future generations will suffer. When the environment will change, climatic conditions also change. When they change dramatically, the economy and many other things change as well. Even our physical health will be greatly affected. So this is not merely a moral question but also a question of our own survival. Therefore, in order to succeed in the protection and conservation of the natural environment, I think it is important first of all to bring about an internal balance within human beings themselves. The abuse of the environment, which has resulted in such harm to the human community, arose out of ignorance of the importance of the environment. I think it is essential to help people to understand this. We need to teach people that the environment has a direct bearing on our own benefit.  

Buddha says that in a man who is unmindful craving grows like a creeper. He runs from birth to birth, like a monkey seeking fruits in the forest. Due to the craving for material things and the abundance of wealth, hearted worldly desires, one cannot be abandoned.

The acceleration of human craving attracted to physical things has continued to increase environmental pollution. ‘One to two’, ‘Two to four’, ‘Four to eight’ have turned the human glutton in the wrong direction. We have begun to compile the collection of material things. The economic progress of any country has started

16. Manujassa pamattacārino tānha vaḍḍhati mālūvā viya.
   So phalavatī hurāhurāṁ phalamiccāṁ va vanasmi vānaro. Dhammapada, 334.
to depend on its production and distribution. Not only this kind of development and pollution from it, not only the many species of ecological organisms and flora have been extinct, but many human breeds have also been eliminated. Jārbā tribe of Andaman from India is an example.

Individual and collective spiritual transformation is important to bring about major social change and to break with industrial society. We need inward transformation so that the interests of all species override the short-term self-interest of the individual, the family, the community, and the nation. To avoid “extremes”, or to follow the Middle Way in all matters, is seen as essential to Buddhist practice. Human being should concentrate on right livelihood. There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This is called right livelihood.\textsuperscript{17} Deep ecology and sustainable development supporters should be sympathetic to Buddhism. It can contribute to the humbling of human arrogance, necessary for fundamental ecological change.

5. CONCLUSION

On the basis of its ecological and sustainable approach, Buddhist are very generous, compassionate and believer of peace in the world. If minds of living beings are at peace, then the world will be at peace. We \textit{can't have peace without development but development without peace will not be possible either}. We as Buddhist, this is our duty to share this great knowledge tradition with the rest of the world communities. In this regard, before sharing with others, we have to cultivate these value within ourselves the characteristics of sustainable development have to be displayed from our life and carrier. By cultivating Buddhist ethics and Principle one uplifts one's quality of life and enjoys wonderful happiness. The impact can be done on the lives of other as living examples, will not be possible to do by preaching or writings hundreds of books.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammājīvo? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako micchāājīvaṃ pahāya sammājīvena jīvitaṃ kappeti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammājīvo. Ibid, p. 234.

Buddhist compassion and feelings of non-violence are accepted worldwide. Hatred is never destroyed hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is the eternal religion. There are those who do not realize that one day we all must die but those who do realize this settle their quarrels.19

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Bibliography


BUDDHIST SCRIPTURAL STUDIES
ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

by Phra Rajapariyatkavi

1. BUDDHISM AND THE VALUE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

There has been a close connection between Buddhism and the natural environment for example:

i. Prince Siddhartha was born under the blossoming Sāla tree in Lumbini Park.

ii. Prince Siddhartha sat under a rose-apple tree and while concentrating on his breath attained the first meditative absorption (jhāna).

iii. Prince Siddhartha abandoned the palace and became a wandering ascetic at the banks of the River Anomā.

iv. He practiced austerities and meditation in the Uruvelā locality by the river Nerañjarā.

v. He taught the Dhamma to the group of five disciples at the Deer Park in Isipatana, near Banaras.

vi. He passed away in the Sāla-tree grove, a park in the kingdom of the Mallians, Kusinara.

Natural environment contains valuable resources and animals. Once upon a time when the bodhisattva as a tree-deva asks the brahman who is sweeping at the trunk of a tree: ‘Brahman, you know that this tree possesses no mind; it cannot hear and has no

* Prof. Dr., Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University MCU, Pahonyothin Road, Wang Nio Ayutthaya, Thailand.
feelings. Why then do you make the effort and continually ask it about sleeping happily?'

The Brahman replied: ‘Large trees are the dwelling places of devas. Because of the valuable natural resources I pay respects to this tree and its incumbent devas.’ The tree-deva confirmed these words by saying: ‘There is a hidden treasure that belongs to no-one. Go and dig this treasure up.’

The natural environment is also a location providing medicinal plants. The Buddha allowed the monks to use of medicinal roots—turmeric, ginger, sweet flag, arum, galangal, vetiver, nut grass, and other medicinal roots.

At one time the physician Jivaka-Komārabhacca studied medicine-subjects at Takkasilā for seven years. He was able to remember all that he learned but the studies never came to an end so he went to his teacher and asked: ‘When will my studies come to an end?’

His teacher replied: ‘Jivaka, you walked around the city of Takkasilā at a radius of ten miles and bring back anything which is not medicine.’

Jivaka did as his teacher suggested, but he could not find anything that can’t be used as medicine. He returned to his teacher and said: ‘I could not find anything that cannot be used as medicine.’

His teacher answered: ‘Jivaka, your studies are over. With this much knowledge you can make a living.’

2. GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

The description of Vessantara’s hermitage by Mount Gadhamādana. This hermitage was surrounded by abundant natural resources, both animate and inanimate. The environment as described here can be divided into different categories:

2.1. Fruits: Surrounding the hermitage were many fruit trees - mango, wood apple, jackfruit, bodhi trees, red meranti, rose apple, myrobalan, Indian gooseberry, jujube, persimmon, banyan, and fig...

2.2. Flowers: In the hermitage there were many flowering trees: Wrightia, kutaja, nutmeg, mangrove trumpet tree, ironwood,
Albizia, golden-shower tree, ebony, eagle wood, crown flower, banyan, looking-glass mangrove, padauk, pine, kadamba, sky-flower, crape myrtle, mimosa, and red meranti, …

2.3. The Lotus Pond with Aquatic Plants and Animals: Near the hermitage in a delightful area was a lotus pond full of lotuses, resembling the lotus pond in the heavenly garden of Nandavana. The pond contained three kinds of beautiful lotuses: green, white and red.

2.4. Birds: Many multi-colored birds lived near the hermitage. They played with their mates, singing and vying with one another with their cries. Four flocks of birds lived near the lotus pond: nandikā birds, jivaputtā birds, puttāpiyācano birds, and piyaputtāpiyānandā birds. The songs of the flitting birds in the trees was like divine music, …

2.5. Four-legged Creatures: Many animals lived in the forest including lions, tigers, donkey-faced yakkhas, elephants, hog-deer, muntjak, brow-antlered deer, palm civet, fox, wild dog, flying lemur, squirrel, yak, gibbons, slow loris, langur, and monkeys. By the lake there lived many sambar, gaur, bear, buffalo, rhinoceros, boar, mongoose and cobra.

3. MONASTERY ENVIRONMENT

One day King Bimbisāra of Magadha thought: ‘Where should the Buddha reside? Having had this thought, King Bimbisāra offered the Veluvana Grove to the Buddha to use as a monastery residence. It was located at the base of Mount Vebhāra. An important attribute of Veluvana was its adjacency to the River Sarasvati. Originally it was a royal park belonging to King Bimbisāra and it was a delightful place full of natural beauty.

Here is a description of Veluvana Monastery:

‘Whoever has not seen the delightful and magnificent Veluvana, the residence of the Well-Farer and the community of noble disciples, is one who has never seen the Grove of Bliss. Someone who has seen the magnificent Veluvana, considered to be a grove of bliss—a place of rejoicing for human beings, has seen the Grove of Bliss belonging to Sakka king of the gods. The gods abandon the Grove of Bliss and come
to the world of humans to admire the magnificent Veluvana, finding uninterrupted delight.

From the time of the Buddha till the present day, names of monasteries usually end with the word ārāma, e.g.: Veluvanārāma, Jetavanārāma, Ghosītārāma, Nigrodhārāma, and Wat Beñjamaborpitradusitavanārāma. The word ārāma originally meant ‘pleasure park.’ Usually these parks already possessed a rich natural environment, with trees, streams, and numerous flowers. When the land was designated as a monastery, it was further developed as a place of peace and therefore the term ārāma was preserved.

4. THE SURROUNDINGS OF PLACES FOR DHAMMA PRACTICE

There is ample evidence for the connection between Dhamma practice and the natural environment. When people seek a quiet place to practice meditation they usually think of forests, trees, mountains and rivers. An example of the connection between practice and the environment is found in the Buddha’s teaching on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness: mindfulness of the body, sensations, the states of mind, and mindobjects.

In the context of mindfulness of the body, the Buddha advised: ‘Here a monk, having gone into the forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down crosslegged, holding his body erect, having established mindfulness before him.’ There are many other examples of this connection, for example the subject of ascetic practices (dhutanga), which are undertaken to subdue the defilements. The Buddha established ways of practice for monks to subdue the mental defilements, which include direct references to the natural environment:

The eighth dhutanga is called the ‘observance of living in the forest’ (āraññikanga), which means that a monk vows to not stay in a residence (‘a building for sitting or sleeping’) near a house or village, but remains at least 600 meters away. The reason for stipulating that someone who wishes to subdue the defilements live in the forest is that the forest is conducive to this task: this natural environment promotes well-established concentration, helps to prevent the disturbances from sensual impingement, dispels fear, reduces the attachment to life, and offers a taste of seclusion. The
ninth dhutanga is called the ‘observance of living at the root of a tree’ (rukkhamulikanga), which means a monk lives under a tree and does not live in a place covered with a roof.

The eleventh dhutanga is called the ‘observance of staying in a cemetery’ (sosānikanga), which means a monk determines to constantly stay in a cemetery overnight.

There are criteria in the Buddhist texts specifying which places are suitable and unsuitable for Dhamma practice. The most suitable place to develop concentration is the place where one’s teacher resides. But if this place is inconvenient for some reason, then one should choose a place that is suitable for practice and avoid the following eighteen ‘disadvantageous’ places: (i) a congested place; (ii) a new place; (iii) an old place; (iv) a place next to a road; (v) a quarry; (vi) a recreational park; (vii) a flower farm; (viii) a fruit farm; (ix) a place with much traffic; (x) a place next to a town; (xi) a place next to a commercial forest; (xii) a place next to rice paddies; (xiii) a place where people of conflicting interests live; (xiv) a place next to a pier; (xv) an overly remote place; (xvi) a border area; (xvii) a place ‘not conducive to well-being’; (xviii) a place without ‘good friends.’ One can see that in most of these disadvantageous places there is potentially a destruction of the natural environment, for example populated places near a town or in developed agricultural areas.

A meditator should choose a place with the following five characteristics: (i) neither not to far nor not too near inhabited areas; a place that can be reached without too much difficulty; (ii) a place not busy during the day and not noisy at night; (iii) a place without too many insects and bothersome animals and without too much wind or sun; (iv) a place where it is not too difficult to acquire the ‘four requisites’; (v) a place where learned elders live of whom one can ask questions in time of doubt.

5. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Although trees do not possess consciousness (as this term is understood by human beings), they possess a principle of maintaining life similar to human beings. This principle is called the ‘nature (or truth) of a tree’ (rukkha-dhamma), as mentioned by the bodhisattva when he conversed with the devas: ‘The more
relatives a person has, the better. Even for trees in the forest: the more trees the better. A lone tree, although standing tall, can be snapped by the wind.’ The nature of a tree is similar to the life of all sentient creatures: a tree is born, it grows, and it dies, and it returns to the earth to resume this cycle of life and death.

For this reason the Buddhist texts encourage people to be considerate of all plant life. The Buddha laid down a training rule for the bhikkhus, requiring that they stop traveling for the three months of the rainy season and stay in one place. This training rule contains an important issue in relation to nature conservation: the rainy season is the time when plants begin to sprout and grow, and small animals propagate. If the bhikkhus were to wander through the woods and mountains during this time, they might step on and destroy the young saplings and unintentionally kill the small animals, as confirmed by the people’s criticism at the time of the Buddha: ‘Why is it that the ascetics, the sons of the Sakyans, wander about during the cold season, the hot season, and the rainy season, trampling on the green grass, injuring single-faculty life forms, and destroying many small creatures?’ As a consequence, the Buddha instructed the bhikkhus to stay in one place for the three months of the rainy season. In the monks’ book of discipline (Vinaya Pitaka), there are at least two sections addressing concern for the natural environment. For example, in the section on plants (Bhūtagāma-vagga) it states:

It is forbidden for a monk to damage (cut or sever) plant life. If a monk disobeys this rule he must confess a transgression of this training rule. The first rule in this section states: ‘A bhikkhu commits an offense of expiation as a consequence of destroying plant life.’

It is forbidden for a monk to pour water that contains living creatures onto plants or the ground. A monk who disobeys this rule transgresses the tenth training rule (‘containing animate beings’): ‘A bhikkhu who knows that water contains living creatures and pours or asks another to pour onto plants or earth commits an offense of expiation.’

In the section on minor training rules (sekhiya-vatta), there is a rule that takes into consideration the natural environment by
forbidding a monk to urinate, defecate or spit on green plants or into water. A monk who disobeys this rule commits an offense of wrongdoing: ‘One should observe the training rule that unless one is ill one should not defecate, urinate or spit on green plants; and ‘one should observe the training rule that unless one is ill one should not defecate, urinate, or spit into water.’

In another text there is a Buddhist saying expressing concern for the natural environment: ‘A person sitting or lying under the shade of a tree should not break off the branches from this tree, because a person who harms a friend is a bad person.’

Although people might think that trees and other plants have no consciousness, they should still be grateful to such plants, like the red-breasted parakeet who felt gratitude towards the tree that had provided it with nourishing fruits and flowers. Sakka, the king of the gods, asked the parakeet: ‘These other trees have fresh, verdant leaves and abundant fruit. Why does the parakeet’s delight in this dry, hollow tree not diminish?’

The parakeet replied: ‘The fruits of this tree sustained me for many years. Although I know it now bears no fruit, I still maintain the friendship as before. A bird who seeks fruit and abandons the tree because it is barren, is selfish and foolish, destroying his companions.’

6. CONCLUSION

There are numerous passages in the Buddhist texts referring to the natural environment, demonstrating the connection between human beings and nature, and conforming to the framework of Dependent Origination.

There are numerous references in the texts to the natural environment and to the relationship between human beings and other living creature.

When we speak of a modern, developed and technologically advanced city, we tend to think of skyscrapers, modern office buildings, superhighways, automobiles, and bustling people. Modern cities in the Buddhist texts, however, are described in a very different fashion. For an example let us look at the description
of Vesāli, which is described as a model modern city: ‘The city of Vesāli is bountiful, covering a wide territory, with many residents, highly populated, in which it is easy to find food, containing 7,707 palaces, 7,707 high-roofed houses, 7,707 pleasure gardens, and 7,707 lotus ponds’.
A MINDFUL RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION LEADS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by Po-Wen Yen

ABSTRACT

Since the 19th century, the world has seen four consecutive years of highest global temperature in records. Extreme weather events which have considerably impacted our environment and socio-economic were ranked top risks in the 2019 Global Risk Report by World Economic Forum (WEF). Whilst there had been plenty of global platforms gathering world leaders on climate change issue, the continuous rise in temperature demonstrate that just policy implementation is insufficient. It is not only the responsibility of the government to take action, but also the collective efforts of all people to combat climate change.

Beginning from grassroots movements, the Tzu Chi Foundation has involved individuals, civil society, enterprises, and decision-makers to influence on a local, regional and international level. Tzu Chi’s recycling model comply with the circular economy, transforming PET bottles into eco-products, and the income generated is used to fund the global charity mission and humanistic cultural mission which brings a positive spiritual circulation impact. As natural disasters increase yearly, Tzu Chi engages in disaster risk reduction and disaster recovery based on people’s psychosocial needs and develop a sustainable livelihood. In short, Buddhist

*. Chief Executive Officer of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, No.1, Ln. 88, Jingshe St., Xincheng Township, Hualien, China.
Tzu Chi Foundation founder Venerable Dharma Master’s three resolutions: to purify minds of human beings, the harmonious societies, and the free the world from disasters is aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, and promoting a mindful responsible consumption and production that leads to sustainable development.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE: AN UNDENIABLE THREAT PLUNDERING THE PLANET

Since 2013, there has been a startling rise in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, normal safe level of CO2 is 250-350 parts per million (ppm), now living in a world with carbon dioxide above 400 ppm has become the norm. In January 2019, the Mauna Loa Observatory documented its highest level readings of carbon dioxide an excess of 410.5 ppm (NASA, 2019). Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as Methane, Nitrous Oxide and Ozone act as an insulating blanket of the atmosphere that keeps the earth warm. About 97% of the climate scientists’ consensus human activity increased the emission of GHGs into the atmosphere is responsible for global warming (Cook, et al., 2016).

Since the 19th century, the world has seen four consecutive years of highest global temperature in records. Extreme weather events which have considerably impacted our environment and socio-economic were ranked top risks in the 2019 Global Risk Report (World Economic Forum, 2019). It is expected to have a negative impact on the planet including rising sea levels, pressure on water and food, human health risks and disruption of biodiversity and ecosystem. (Henderson, et al., 2017)

World Health Organization (2018) published a fact sheet clearly describing the side effects of climate change on human health including:

- Basic living conditions: social and environmental elements of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter can be affected by climate change.

- Diseases: it is expected that climate change can cause approximately an additional 250,000 deaths between the years 2030 and 2050.
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- Financial effect: disregarding the expenses in health determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation, by 2030 the main expense to health is expected to be between US$ 2-4 billion/year.

- The weak will suffer: without assistance to prepare and respond, most developing countries with poor health foundation will battle to survive.

2. THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH IN COMBATING THE CLIMATE CHANGE

Mitigation and adaptation to climate change can be much more effective if activities by governmental and intergovernmental bodies go hand in hand with a lasting change of attitudes by the broader civil society. Non-Governmental Organizations such as Tzu Chi Foundation can play a key role by facilitating and enhancing this process.

This becomes clear by looking at the agreements on climate change that have been achieved so far. Up to now, governmental agreements to rein in climate change have unfortunately been limited to rather decentralized arrangements which are but loosely connected to each other. The Paris Agreement seems to have mitigated this difficulty but is still far from being the strong frame for action which would be necessary to tackle climate change.

The reasons why governments are relatively slow to take up to the challenge of climate change have been investigated multiple times: a consensus seems to have formed around the idea of the governments being trapped in a ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ (Sterescu, 2018). For every individual government, it is rational to abandon or limit climate action and reap economic benefits. No enforcement mechanisms exist to avoid such defection. On the contrary, governments must cater to various interests, not all of whom may see climate policy as a priority.

As the threat of climate change threatens the livelihood of Earth’s inhabitants, it is not only the responsibility of governments to take action but also the obligation of individuals, civil society, private sectors, and decision-makers to combat climate change. To support
and complement governments where government action alone may be insufficient, we need a broad-based movement rooted at the very basis of society. But the problem is this: Even if concern about climate change is widespread, the issue currently has little potential to mobilize large parts of society. This is because the process of climate change itself is amorphous, as are consequences. People fail to relate the abstract process to their daily lives and do not see weather-related natural catastrophes as results of climate change.

Climate change is unrelated to the individual identity of most people. While nationality, class and political affiliation have a powerful influence on individual self-conception and actions, climate change hardly does.

To overcome these hurdles, it is necessary to be active at the very basis of society. The aim should be to build up institutions for a sustained social effort to counter climate change. Just to have a common understanding is insufficient. To make a significant change in tackling the planet’s climate change problem, there is a pressing need for consensus and decisive action.

For over half a century, Tzu Chi starts from grassroots movements by encouraging civil society to live in harmony with nature. Since 1990, Tzu Chi has been conducting programs in environmental protection in response to global climate change (Lee & Han, 2015). These have enabled it to build up an ideal recycling system. This system aims to enhance environmental protection and offer possibilities and facilities for civil communities to practice and implement a sustainable lifestyle.

With environmental protection at the heart of its operations, Tzu Chi relentlessly seeks new ways to reduce its carbon footprint. Although government action for mitigation and adaptation is crucial for our future, as a non-governmental entity, Tzu Chi’s approach to climate change mitigation targets the individual, helping countries reach the Nationally Determined Contributions from the bottom-up. Through thorough education on carbon-reducing lifestyle changes and demonstrating the impact of individual action on the environment, Tzu Chi catalyzes collective climate action in the communities it serves, inspiring and empowering individuals to move from apathy to action.
3. RECYCLING VOLUNTEERS COMMITTED TO THE RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

Actions speak louder than words, in 1990, Dharma Master Cheng Yen gave a speech calling the public “to do recycling with our clapping hands”. Since then, recycling volunteers have committed in 17 countries with 561 Eco-Awareness Recycling Centers and 10,267 community recycling points that managed by more than 106,299 volunteers daily regardless of age and educational level (Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, 2017). The recycling volunteers face the dirty trash with humbleness and bend down to care for our earth.

Tzu Chi’s Eco-Awareness Recycling Centers and Recycling Points are an ideal model to link up any community of residents with environmental protection. Located within easily reachable distance, the platform provides direct interactive relationships to influence locals and making behavior change. By engaging in recycling activities, everyone learns to separate recycling materials to help conserve resources. Additionally, it raises the awareness of participants about the importance of changing their own lifestyles with the aim of reducing and avoiding waste. Just imagine: each community is like a tree, every family is a branch and every individual is a leaf. Tzu Chi Eco-Awareness Recycling Centers are the tree trunks which transmit environmental awareness to mobilize people.

The production of plastics made from petroleum by-products reaching 8,300 million Metric tons (Mt) produced to date and in year 2015, only approximately 6,300 metric tons of plastic waste had been generated and only 9% had been recycled, 12% was incinerated causes air pollution and mostly 79% of plastics waste was found mismanaged which causes pollution to the landfills (Geyer, et al., 2017). Tzu Chi recognizes the often overlooked impact of plastics on climate change. The production of plastics, made from petroleum by-products, uses roughly 4 percent of global oil production and emits roughly 5 ounces of CO$_2$ for every 1 ounce produced. Each year, 46 billion tons of carbon dioxide are emitted from the production, transportation, and consumption of plastic water bottles alone. More than half a billion bottles are recycled through this program, reducing 34,000 tons of GHGs.
The goal 12 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Tzu Chi not merely collecting trash and recycling, but align with the SDGs goal 12, which the processed bottles are transformed into textiles, woven into high-quality usable products for humanitarian aid and daily use, such as blankets, clothing, luggage, and office supplies. Since 2006, over 100 million blankets made from these textiles have been used in Tzu Chi’s humanitarian response operations.

Recently, The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recognises and affirms Tzu Chi’s 30-year efforts in protecting the environment and accredited Tzu Chi with observer status on 9th January 2019 to allow the organisation to speak out on the topic of environmental protection at the general assembly. Currently, Tzu Chi is one of the 514 NGOs that have been accredited the status (UNEP, 2018). As a UNEP meeting observer, Tzu Chi’s responsibilities and scope of work include the followings:

- Provide effective environmental protection plans and strategies from the perspective of an NGO and invite governments and NGOs to jointly work with the Foundation to implement environmental protection programmes.
- Bring up the implications of policies related to environmental protection and call on the United Nations to take effective actions that benefit the environment during the general assembly.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SPIRITUAL CIRCULATION

The motto of recycling volunteer in environmental protection is “Turn trash into gold, gold into love, and love into pure streams and flowing throughout the world.” This concept encourages a mindful sustainable model which the infinite loop embrace the first circle of Circular Economy and the second circle of Spiritual Circulation as shown in Figure 1.
One of the most daunting challenges the world faces today is the global waste problem, responsible for a plethora of negative impacts on all life and the environment. To bring awareness, as well as to empower and shift the consumption habits of individuals towards a more climate-friendly alternative, Tzu Chi reutilize trash disposed by the consumer and transformed into Eco-products such as blankets, garments, and stationeries using the collected recycled plastic bottles, which in turn becomes utilized during humanitarian aid assistance missions. With the Circular Economy cycle, Tzu Chi ensures that the natural resources exploited by human can be in use for as long as possible.

Through the Trash into eco-friendly products initiative, Tzu Chi has, in addition to addressing environmental and waste issues plaguing communities, empowered those left behind to stand at the forefront of the fight for a sustainable living, providing education, space, and resources to change makers of all ages to learn through action.

4.2. Spiritual Circulation

Through community-building initiatives, Tzu Chi inspires global citizens to achieve a sustainable and responsible waste reduction.

By selling Eco-products from recycled goods, Tzu Chi utilizes the revenue gained from selling recycled materials to fund and
support DaAi Television, a non-profit television station focused on spreading virtuous humanistic culture through broadcasting programs that highlight the positive work being done around the world by Tzu Chi volunteers. Through the power of broadcasting, Tzu Chi raises individual awareness on restoring the planet’s health and continuously establishes community-based recycling programs focusing on Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle (5R), promoting a lifestyle of sustainable and responsible consumption.

Tzu Chi’s Eco-Awareness Recycling Centers and Recycling Points around the world serve as platforms for citizen engagement and participation in recycling work, with a particular focus on engaging those typically left behind, such as elderly volunteers, strengthening community environmental awareness, fostering social capital, and initiating individual behavior change.

5. FORGING AHEAD TOWARDS MUTUAL ACTIONS

Tzu Chi is focusing on the following three major directions and encourages everyone to implement into daily life by:

- Environmental protection
- Ethical Eating
- Support 5R (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle)

Starting from grassroots movements to support the Post-Paris Agenda in mitigation and adaptation, Tzu Chi involves civil society, enterprises and decision makers to effect on a local, regional, national and international level.

Why can Tzu Chi’s recycling model especially help in improving mitigation practices? The main asset of Tzu Chi is that individuals can personally get involved in recycling work. In a further step, they may often even become grassroots environmental teachers. Many of the volunteers are able to transform profound environmental knowledge into their daily lives. Hence, they are able to share knowledge on environmental protection with others. In support of the ‘Advancing towards Zero Waste’ declaration, as well as the ‘Ocean-Climate Action’ agenda, Tzu Chi commits to bringing its recycling program expertise and ‘know-how’ to those most impacted by ocean plastic pollution, small island nations.
Tzu Chi grassroots movement and community-based solutions not only offers mitigation action on a personal level but also, and more importantly, raises awareness of the issue through collective involvement. It is human behavior which determines the market trends, and the demands of the people which sway the governments to take action. It is people which form governments, and people who build businesses. As a non-profit non-governmental organization based on faith, Tzu Chi believes that by shifting the human perception of value, society as a whole can be transformed.

In short, the Tzu Chi’s complete recycling system can be applied globally and the host countries and communities who implement this system can benefit in many ways. The system allows for more direct investment, technology transfer, higher rates of employment, improved health care and increased tax revenues which is aligned with the “Responsible Consumption and Production” of SDGs’ Goal 12. For the sustainable development of our planet, Tzu Chi is ready to help other stakeholders to leverage off our experience and make it happen.

6. THE FOUR MISSIONS AND EIGHT FOOTPRINTS OF BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION

The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is an international humanitarian NGO with Special Consultative Status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is operated by a worldwide network of volunteers and employees, with over 10 million members in 58 countries. Up to the present day, Tzu Chi has delivered relief to those in need in 98 countries. Tzu Chi Foundation’s “Four Missions” consist of Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Cultural. Furthermore, considering ongoing efforts in Bone Marrow Donation, Environmental Protection, Community Volunteerism, and International Relief, these eight concurrent campaigns are collectively known as “Tzu Chi’s Eight footprints”. Tzu Chi’s four missions contribute to the 17 SDGs.
Figure 2: Tzu Chi Four Missions contribute to all 17 SDGs

Crucially, Tzu Chi faces the global issue to question individual lifestyle and ethics. Thus, it aims to overcome policy dilemmas as well as individual unwillingness to become engaged in the movement against climate change. If we lead a simpler life, we will help reduce the amount of garbage and protect our environment, thus improving the quality of life on earth. We should have a grateful heart toward our planet which provides for us and sustains us. It is a simple concept, but if we all put it into practice, the impact can be profound and far-reaching. The following diagram gives a broad overview of Tzu Chi’s environmental protection campaigns.

The Tzu Chi Foundation Founder Dharma Master Cheng Yen has three resolutions: may all minds be purified, may there be peace in the community, and may there be no disasters in this world. Let us inspire more people to join in the environmental effort by protecting our environment, and making the planet a safer and better place to live.

Always remember: We have only one earth, let us coexist with Mother Earth.
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BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTALISM: AN APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by Sangmu Thendup*

ABSTRACT

Buddhist Environmentalism is a form of “religious environmentalism”, which involves the conscious application of religious ideas to modern concerns about the global environment. Religious environmentalism is a post-materialist environmental philosophy that emerged from the West and has its roots in the eighteenth century European “Romantic Movement” (Tomalin 2004, p. 265-295). Religious environmentalism in Buddhism finds support in the belief that it is intrinsically environment friendly and by relating religious environmentalism with Buddhist environmentalism, we can strive towards sustainable development and human flourishing.

Environmental research is a relatively new area of study that became popular with the awareness of environmental degradation and the fact that natural resources were rapidly diminishing due to unsustainable overuse by human beings. Religion being a primary source of values in any culture; has direct implications in the decisions human make regarding the environment. Thus, religion can be used in seeking a comprehensive solution to environmental problems. This is true in the case of Buddhism; one of the earliest eastern religious traditions in the world. This paper deals with environmental perspectives in early Buddhism and relates it to ‘religious environmentalism’ in order to show that it is the correct approach for sustainable development.

* Dr., Assistant Professor Department of History Sikkim University, India.
One of the greatest threats that we as human beings face in the present world is the threat of environmental degradation and dwindling of natural resources such as forests, water resources, mineral resources etc. In order to come up with sustainable practices so as to save the planet and its resources for the future generations’ one definite recourse is to depend on the environmental teachings of the Buddha.

This paper deals with environmental perspectives in early Buddhism and relates it to ‘religious environmentalism’ as a response to environmental degradation so as to secure a sustainable approach for development. This study is based on the canonical texts of early Buddhism like the Vinaya Pitaka and Sutta Pitaka. Religious environmentalism involves the conscious application of religious ideas to modern concerns about the global environment. It is a post-materialist environmental philosophy that emerged from the West and has its roots in the eighteenth century European “Romantic Movement” (Tomalin 2004). Religious environmentalism in Buddhism finds support in the belief that it is intrinsically environment friendly.

Early Buddhist literature is replete with aesthetic descriptions of nature-based metaphors, similes and analogies. The importance of nature can be understood from the elaborate descriptions and allusions of plants, animals, forests, sacred groves, pleasure groves, hermitage, hunting grounds, meditative enclosure and agricultural spaces.

Buddhism believes in the reciprocal relationship between human morality and the natural environment. There are references suggesting that when lust, greed and wrong values grip the heart of humanity, immorality becomes widespread in the society, timely rain does not fall and the crops fall victim to pests and plant diseases [AN. I, 147].

The references to nature in the early Buddhist texts suggest that nature was the most important entity in the lives of the people when these texts were being composed. We find aesthetic description of nature and nature-based metaphors and analogies in the texts. They include evocative scenes of sermons and meditations under trees, in groves, deep forests, caves and on rocks. Most of the scenes
described in the stories have nature as the background the stories are always narrated by the Buddha amid natural surroundings like the bamboo groves or pleasure groves, surrounded by plants and trees. Numerous references in the early Buddhist texts suggest that plants and animals were to be treated with respect and kindness.

The attitude of early Buddhism towards animals and plants can be understood from the well known Five Precepts (Panca Sila) of Buddhism, which forms the minimum code of ethics in Buddhism and proves that the traditional ideal was one of harmony with nature and a friendly attitude towards the environment.

The first precept was “not taking life” or “not killing or harming” or “non-injury to life” and was explained as the casting aside of all forms of weapons and being careful not to deprive a living thing of life. Buddhism holds fundamental the precept of not taking life, hence the treatment of animals is included in the first Buddhist precept – not to harm or injure living things (pranatipatatadviratih). The Buddhist monks and nuns had to abstain from practices which would even unintentionally harm living creatures. There is a reference in the Vinaya Piṭaka where the Buddha made a rule against travelling during the rainy season because of possible injury to worms and insects that come to the surface in wet weather (VP I. 137).

The second precept: refrain from taking what is not given/ “not stealing,” engages global trade ethics and corporate exploitation of resources. The third precept is refrain from sexual misconduct. The fourth precept of “not lying,” may be connected with the issues in false advertising that promote consumerism. The fifth precept of refrain from carelessness and “not engaging in abusive relations,” can be interpreted through an environmental lens and can cover many examples of cruelty and disrespect for nonhuman beings.

According to Kaza (2006, p.191) non-harming extends to all beings and this central teaching of non-harming is congruent with many schools of eco-philosophy which respect the intrinsic value and capacity for experience of each being.

Buddhist ideal of non-harming extended to all sentient beings. The Buddha is also described as having avoided harm to seeds and
plants. It was an offence requiring expiation for a monk to fell a tree or to ask someone else to do so (VP. IV.34—5). Here, the occasion for making the rule was that a god who had lived in a felled tree complained to the Buddha. In addition, lay people complained that Buddhist monks, in felling trees, were ‘harming life that is one-facultied’ (ekindriyajiva): i.e. only possessing the sense of touch. The Buddha thus banned the destruction of ‘vegetable growths’ by monks. Indeed, the rule against monks wandering during the rainy season was made to avoid people’s accusations that Buddhist monks were ‘injuring life that is one-facultied and bringing many small creatures to destruction’ by trampling growing crops and grasses (VP. I.137).

According to Chapple (1993, p.10) early Buddhism was strongly influenced by the Upanishadic principle of ahimsa or non-harming—a core foundation for environmental concern. In its broadest sense non-harming means “the absence of the desire to kill or harm”. Acts of injury or violence are to be avoided because they are thought to result in future injury to oneself.

In Buddhism the fourth Noble Truth describes the path to end suffering of attachment and desire through the practice of the Eightfold path. One of the eight practice spokes is Right Conduct, which is based on the principle of non-harming. The Four Noble Truths explains the nature of human suffering as generated by desire and attachment. The medicine for such suffering is the practice of compassion (karuna) and loving kindness (metta).

The early Indian Jataka Tales recount the many former lives of the Buddha as an animal or tree when he showed compassion to others who were suffering. In each of the tales the Buddha-to-be sets a strong moral example of compassion for plants and animals.

The first guidelines for monks in the Vinaya contained a number of admonitions related to caring for the environment. Monks were not to dig in the ground or drink unstrained water. Wild animals were to be treated with kindness. Plants too were not to be injured carelessly but respected for all that they give to people.

There were instructions to monks to recycle old robes (VP. II. 291). Cleanliness, both in the person and environment, was highly
commended. Several rules prohibited monks from polluting green grass and water with saliva, urine and faeces (VP. IV, 205-206) and there was the ideal of having a quiet environment (AN. V.15).

The Eightfold path of Buddhism also includes the practice of Right View, or understanding the laws of causality (karma) and interdependence.

The Buddhist worldview in early India understood there to be six rebirth realms: devas, asuras (both god realms), humans, ghosts, animals and hell beings. To be reborn as an animal would mean one had declined in moral virtue. By not causing harm to others, one would enhance one’s future rebirths into higher realms. In this sense, the law of karma was used as a motivating force for good behaviour, including paying respect to all life.

In the Vinaya Pitaka, the Buddha asks monks not to intentionally destroy life of any living being down to a worm or an ant (VP. I.78.4) so the indicator of the Buddhist commitment to the ethic of not injuring life forms is found in the abundant references to animals in the teachings of the Buddha.

There is a Buddhist belief that humans have a unique opportunity to realize enlightenment which other creatures do not, although they do not believe that humanity is superior to the rest of the world. Unlike the Vedic texts which regard animals as tools for human sustenance or sacrifice, the early Buddhist literature accords them an important place in the hierarchy of life. The importance of animals can be seen in the Jataka stories of the Buddha’s former lives. The Buddha is said to have had several births as animals before he was born as human being. Buddhism considers animals as potential humans and as beings that can teach humans some moral lessons. From the 550 Jataka stories, a full half of them 225 have animals as central characters. Seventy different types of animals are mentioned and 319 animals or groups of animals appear in these 225 stories.

In the monastic code of discipline, it was an offence requiring expiation if an animal was intentionally killed (VP. IV.124—5). An offence requiring expiation was committed if a monk used water while knowing that it contained breathing creatures (VP. IV.I
to avoid this, a water-strainer was part of the traditional kit of a monk (VP. II.18); it was an offence to sprinkle water on the ground if there were living creatures there that would be harmed by this action (VP. IV. 48—9).

The Buddha was critical of the practice of animal sacrifice, both because of the cruelty involved and because it did not bring about the objectives that the Brahmins hoped for. In the *Kutadanta Sutta* (DN.I.127—49), the Buddha describes a sacrifice which he had himself conducted for a king in a past life where no animals were killed, no trees were felled and the only offerings were items such as butter and honey (DN. I.141).

Besides sacrifices, the main reason for killing animals was to provide food. Although the Buddha discouraged killings, he did not propagate vegetarianism. The position on meat eating in early Buddhism was that a monk could eat meat provided it is ‘pure in three respects’: if the monk has not seen, heard or suspected that the animal has been killed specifically for him (VP. I. 237—8). Elsewhere, the Buddha explains that a monk receives food as a gift from a donor, and his loving kindness for donors and other creatures is not compromised by such eating, if it is ‘blameless’ by being ‘pure in three respects’ (MN. I. 386—71). If they were given flesh-food, and it was ‘pure’ as described above, to refuse it would deprive the donor of the karmic fruitfulness engendered by giving alms-food. Moreover, it would encourage the monks to pick and choose what food they would eat.

A lay Buddhist was not to kill an animal for food, or tell someone else to do so. One passage (AN. II.253) states that a person would be reborn in hell if he kills and encourages others to do so. Hence, to make one’s living as a butcher, hunter or fisherman came under the category of ‘wrong livelihood’ (AN. II.208), to be avoided by all sincere Buddhists. A third element of the Eightfold path, ‘Right Livelihood’, concerns how one makes a living or supports oneself. The early canonical teachings indicate that the Buddha prohibited five livelihoods: trading in slaves, trading in weapons, selling alcohol, selling poisons and slaughtering animals.

A king, besides being the protector of his subjects, was also
expected to protect animals so one of the duties of a compassionate Cakkavatti (King) was to protect animals and birds (DN. III.61). There are stories wherein if a king and his people acted unrighteously, it had a bad effect on the environment and its gods, leading to little rain, poor crops and weak, short-lived people (AN. II.74—6). The Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta states that when humanity is deteriorated or demoralized through greed, famine is the natural outcome; when moral degeneration is due to ignorance, epidemic is the inevitable result; when hatred is the demoralizing force, widespread violence is the ultimate outcome and so on [DN. III, 71]. The point of the sutta is to show that environmental health is bound up with human morality.

In the earliest Buddhist suttas there are many references to nature as refuge, especially trees and caves. Peter Harvey (2000, p.156) writes that ‘the Buddha’s own association with and appreciation of such surroundings can be seen from the location of key events during his life. He was born under one tree, was enlightened under another, gave his first sermon in an animal park, and died between two trees. After the Buddha achieved enlightenment at the foot of a bodhi tree, for the remainder of his life, he taught large gatherings of monks and laypeople in protected groves of trees that served as rainy-season retreat centres for his followers. The Buddha urged his followers to choose natural places for meditation, free from the influence of everyday human activity. Early Buddhists developed a reverential attitude toward large trees, carrying on the Indian tradition regarding vanaspati or “lords of the forests.” Protecting trees and preserving open lands were considered meritorious deeds. While communal monastic life was always important in Buddhism, time alone in the forests and mountains was also very important. It was an opportunity for developing certain qualities. It is believed that time in the company of animals and nature could aid spiritual development. Forests were ideal spaces for meditation, and we find references like ‘these are roots of trees, these are empty places. Meditate, monks.’ (MN. I.118). “For lay people forests may not be so inviting, but there is karmic fruitfulness in planting groves and fruit-trees for human use” (SN. I.33).

Besides the early Buddhist canonical text, we can also observe
Buddhist tradition considers him as an exemplary king and a devout upasaka (lay follower) who redistributed the relics of the Buddha and enshrined them in 84,000 stupas. Buddhist texts present Ashoka as a vile and evil man until he came under the influence of Buddhism. Ashoka has been credited with the introduction of his policy of dhamma and most of his inscriptions are about dhamma (the Prakrit form of dharma). Dhamma was in essence an attempt on the part of the king to suggest a way of life which was both practical and convenient, as well as being highly moral. The theme of ahimsa (non-injury) is an important aspect of Ashoka’s dhamma and is frequently mentioned. Ashoka’s rock edict 1 announces bans on animal sacrifices on certain kinds of festive gatherings and also reports a reduction in the killing of animals for food in the royal kitchens. This may have been no more than a desire on his part to make his own belief in non-violence wide-spread. The hints against useless practices in other edicts, and the prohibition of festive gatherings would suggest that he did not approve of the type of ritual that led finally to the sacrificing of animals. The ceremony of dhamma is described as consisting in proper courtesy to slaves and servants, respectful behaviour towards elders, restraint in one’s dealings with all living beings, gentleness to animals and liberality to shramanas and Brahmans. Another important aspect of Ashoka’s dhamma was that he refers to having made provisions for medical treatment, planting beneficial medicinal herbs, and digging wells: all these things were done for the benefit of people as well as animals. One of the most remarkable and innovative aspects of Ashoka’s idea of his own dhamma and the dhamma of a king was his renunciation of warfare and his re-definition of righteous conquest. Ashoka’s policy of dhamma can thus be interpreted as a reflection of his Buddhist beliefs and the environmental ethics in Buddhism. This example of how a king of early India got influenced by the environmental ethics in Buddhism and tried to propagate it as a way of life to his subjects can be used to incorporate Buddhist environmental teachings in the present day discourse about environmental protection and conservation.

The research and writings on environmental issues basically
arose because of the stark realization of the environmental crisis that we as human beings face, and the conflicts which they have led to.

Scholars have resorted to theories of religious environmentalism to research on these issues. Religious Environmentalism is a worldwide movement of political, social, ecological and cultural action. It is a global phenomenon, involving members of virtually every religious group, race, and culture on the planet. Religious environmentalism is both rooted in tradition and a creative transformation called forth to meet the demands of the environmental crisis. Religion has a particularly important role to play in environmentalism because of its distinct capacity to motivate (Gottlieb 2006, pp. 467—509).

Religion can be used in seeking a comprehensive solution to both global and local environmental problems, thus religious environmentalists have connected religious ideal and practices with environmental concerns. Once focused on the environmental crisis, the resources of religion have a distinct and enormously valuable role to play in trying to turn things around. According to the theories of religious environmentalism, the attitudes and values that shape people’s concepts of nature come primarily from religious worldviews and ethical practices, hence, the moral imperative and value systems of religions are indispensable in mobilizing the sensibilities of people toward preserving the environment for future generations.

From the mid 1970’s onwards a curiosity to understand environmental issues in Buddhism began to develop and thereafter a considerable quantity of research dedicated to the subject has been undertaken and literary works supporting or disputing Buddhist environmentalism have appeared. This research area has grown at a pace coinciding with dawning awareness of the negative impact of large scale environmental devastation and the need to address it (Sahni, 2008, pp. 8—9). As a major world religion, Buddhism has a long and rich history of responding to human needs. With the rise of the religion and ecology movement, Buddhist scholars, teachers, and practitioners have investigated the various traditions to see what teachings are relevant and helpful for cultivating environmental
awareness. The development of green Buddhism is a relatively new phenomenon, reflecting the scale of the environmental crisis around the world.

Buddhists taking up environmental concerns are motivated by many fields of environmental suffering—from loss of species and habitat to the consequences of industrial agriculture. As interest has developed in Buddhism and ecology, the fields of thought have expanded through various writers as well as popular and academic discourses. Scholars like Peter Harvey, Pragati Sahni, Donald K Swearer, Lily De Silva, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Stephanie Kaza and many others have written on issues of nature, ecology, environment and Buddhism. Informed by different streams of Buddhist thought and practice, they draw on a range of themes in Buddhist texts and traditions.

Many of the central Buddhist teachings seem consistent with concern for the environment, and a number of modern Buddhist teachers advocate clearly for environmental stewardship.

According to Lily de Silva (1994, p 24), several suttas from the Pali canon show that early Buddhism believes there is a close relationship between human morality and natural environment. She writes that humans depend on nature for survival, be it for food, clothes, shelter, medicine or other needs. For maximum benefit, humans have to understand nature so that they can use natural resources while living harmoniously with nature. Thus, kindness to animals was the source of merit in Buddhism— and could be used by human beings to improve their lot in the cycle of rebirths and approach the goal of Nirvana.

Harvey (2000) writes that it was the law of karma which backed up compassion as a motive for following the precepts and further determined the attitude and treatment of the natural world in Buddhism. It meant that one cannot intentionally harm beings without this bringing harm to oneself at some time.

According to Swearer (2001, p. 232) the natural world was central to the Indic Buddhist conception of human flourishing— perhaps, in part, because of the urbanizing environment in which it was born. While nature as a value in and of itself may not have
played a major role in the development of early Buddhist thought and practice, it was always one key component of the tradition's account of the preconditions for human flourishing. The textual record, furthermore, testifies to the importance of forests, not only as an environment preferred for spiritual practices such as meditation but also as a place where the laity sought instruction. But forests, rivers, and mountains remain an important factor in Buddhist accounts of human flourishing.

Sahni (2008) writes that nature in early Buddhism has been treated with a conservationist approach. She gives credit to the attainment of nirvana, respect towards nature and animals and aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of nature as the reasons behind the conservationist approach in Buddhism.

Coming to grips with the environmental crisis has meant that religious people had to become political and ecological activists. It is clear to most religious environmentalists that pious words about “caring for God's creation” or “having compassion on all sentient beings” will not come to much unless there are dramatic changes in the way we produce and consume, grow food and get from place to place, build houses and use energy. Yet when environmentalists try to help create the needed changes, they frequently come up against the dominant social structures of industrialized society: profit-oriented corporations and a political elite more interested in preserving power than the environment. Consequently religious environmentalists are mounting a widespread challenge to the prerogatives of private property and the complicity of do-nothing (or do-too-little) governments (Gottlied, 2006, p. 7).

What a particular religion says and what that religion's followers actually do are two different things. Therefore it would be imperative for Buddhist practitioners as well as preachers and scholars to propagate the discourse on environmentalism in Buddhism to bring about a change and try to reverse the process of environmental degradation. To begin with, we should remember that for millions of people religion remains the arbiter and repository of life's deepest moral values. In this context, religion provides a rich resource to mobilize people for political action. Religion prompts us to pursue the most long-lasting and authentic values. “Thus if religious leaders
start to preach a green gospel, condemning human treatment of nature for its effects on the nonhuman as well as the human—it is likely to have more of an effect than statements by say, a comparable number of college professors” (Gottlied, 2006, pp. 12—13).

Religion can thus enable us to take at least the first step towards collective change. Buddhism does offer rich resources for immediate application in resource usage and consumerism—areas which are now developing some solid academic and popular literature. The numerous references to nature in Buddhist literature certainly justify the importance of nature in the early Buddhist tradition. The reasons may be many. Kindness and compassion towards all living beings could have been a result of the first precept of non-injury to all beings in Buddhism. The Buddhist precept of non-injury to all living beings could also have resulted because of the Buddhist concepts of *ahimsa*/nonviolence, *karma* and rebirth. The importance of nature as the only resource base of humans during those times, when they had not yet discovered the methods of producing artificial and synthetic materials could have been yet another reason for the veneration of nature. In the absence of modernisation and industry, nature was everything for the humans of those times, nature was the only resource base for their security, sustainability and flourishing. Humans fulfilled all their needs from nature, adored nature and also took solace in nature. Hence the expression of love and understanding of nature and the presence of environmental ethics in early Buddhism can be adequately understood through the early Buddhist literature. The texts suggest that natural resources were free to be enjoyed by humans and animals alike. The references to few warnings voiced by the Buddha about consequences of misusing nature may have meant a careful use of resources so as to ensure their sustainability being the main objective of the Buddha’s warnings. This aspect of environmentalism in early Buddhism may thus be considered as a case of Religious Environmentalism so as to seek a comprehensive solution to present global environmental crisis. The elements which support an ecological ethic may be stressed and the realization that what we have been doing is wrong and that it is time to change our ways, is very important. If we are to make the necessary but extraordinary difficult changes in the way
we live, we will certainly benefit from every voice which can help motivate us. If early Buddhist environmental ethics are stressed and propagated in a full-fledged manner, it will definitely help curb the global environmental crisis that we face today, and then we can strive for security, sustainability and human flourishing.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN: Anguttara Nikaya
DN: Digha Nikaya
MN: Majjhima Nikaya
SN: Saṃyutta Nikaya
VP: Vinaya Pțaka

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PASSING INHERITANCE OF BETTER WORLD TO OUR YOUNGER GENERATIONS

by Tin Tin Lay*

ABSTRACT

Man is depended upon the nature for his food, clothing, shelter and other requisites. These are the basic necessity for man. Later he demoralized the world not for his survival to live but for pleasure and material comfort. Hence, people of nowadays are using many materials that are far away from their essential needs for living. Use, use and yet use as they are persuaded by stimulating their desire largely driven by consumption led growth. Over consumption senselessly exploit resources without sustaining them for the younger generations.

As a result, we are confronting with environmental deterioration leading to natural disasters because of the limited resources upon which man relies. That’s why we should utilize these natural resources with understanding of difference between need and greed because the world can provide enough to man’s need but not to man’s greed. Man must learn to satisfy his needs and not feed his greed. The depletion of natural resources resulted from over exploitation which in turn is arising out of over consumption which is stimulated by believing wrongly that man’s happiness and well-being lie in the material needs and sensual desires. So we can say that the root cause of the present day suffering worldwide is the man’s unquenchable greed. Again this greed is enhanced by hatred and delusion.

* Dr., Senior Lecturer, The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar.
As the current environmental deterioration through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystem and the extinction of wildlife continue to be worse at an alarming rate then the world will eventually no longer be able to sustain all its inhabitants to accommodate. If so happen we, people of present day not to feel quite embarrassed when we pass the empty or let me say the chaos world as an inheritance to our younger since we have obtained the pleasant world full of natural resources from our ancestors.

It needs urgent response to combat this situation. So we have to launch an initiative to tackle it through Buddhist approach. Buddhists believe that man and nature are interdependent. Man’s morality impacts on the deterioration and flourishing of the world. Moreover, man’s true happiness is not solely depending on the material things.

In this paper a humble attempt is made to contribute a possible way towards the pleasant and resourceful world through the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhism encourages simplicity, a balanced lifestyle with moderation in consuming, responsible consumption and sustainable development with modesty. So let’s pass the inheritance of better world to our younger generation with moderation of consumption in all aspects, not to be greedy for other’s possessions, contented with what we have, sharing what we possess and there will be love and affection, peace and prosperity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world we all living in is now suffering loads of various diseases. Actually it is facing a lot of crises such as environmental crisis, financial crisis, social crisis, political crisis, moral crisis, educational crisis and etc. As the current environmental crisis, deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife continues to be worse at an alarming rate, then the world will eventually no longer be able to sustain all its inhabitants to accommodate. It needs urgent response to fight against this situation.

The world we are living at present age, indeed, is an inheritance obtained from our former generations such as our parents, grandparents, and elder ancestors. When we got it from our ancestors the
world was full of resources like clean water and air, trees and forest, and fauna and flora in full bloom. Our former generations handed over the resourceful world as the inheritance in due time and they fulfilled one of their duties well as they deserved to be respected by present day people.  

Now we are in the place of our former generations it is not sooner to handing over the inheritance to our younger generations. How do we give them the world suffering from several diseases as an inheritance to our younger generations? They have their right to get a healthy and productive world which is pleasant and safe to live in. Moreover, we do not want to be blame worthy ancestors passing the inheritance of diseased or in other words empty and chaos world to them.

It is necessary try to find out the possible, effective, and pragmatic solution for the diseased world to get recovery through the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhism encourages simplicity, a balanced lifestyle with moderation in consuming, responsible consumption and sustainable development with modesty.

I would like to highlight what diseases that our world is suffering from, examine their manifestations and investigate the etiology and try to give medication to cure through Buddhist effective treatment to overcome.

2. DISEASES OF THE WORLD AND THEIR MANIFESTATIONS

First it is needed to know what the manifestations of the disease that the world, the inhabiting place for all beings animate as well as inanimate is suffering from. Diseases of the world can be sketched out as global warming and climate change, desertification and deforestation, population growth, water and food scarcity and, acid rain, ozone layer depletion and increasing the size of the hole in ozone layer and biodiversity degradation.

Alarming reports about contaminated waterways, polluted air and depletion of natural resources reach us with increasing frequency. Today, it is becoming customary to talk in terms of a

crisis, an “excocrises,” in matters concerning society and its relation to the natural environment.  

Environmental problems were occurred, are occurring and will occur not only in developing countries but also in developed countries, though in different forms. In the developing countries population growth and natural resources are out of balance and resulting in unsanitary living conditions, deforestation, desertification, erosion and declining ground water supplies, etc. Moreover, poverty and ignorance are the pivotal roles for these problems in the developing countries. In industrialized countries, however, the air, water and soil are polluted as a result of the existing system based on mass production.  

3. ETIOLOGY OF THE WORLD’S DISEASES

Man is depended upon the nature for his food, clothing, shelter and other requisites. So man has to learn how to get better quality and larger quantity of natural resources to reach his need of requisites for survival. This learning must be accompanied by moral restraint if he is to enjoy the benefits of natural resources for a long time. But later he demoralized the world not for his survival to live but for pleasure and material comfort. It is said that modern man in his search for pleasure and affluence has exploited nature without any moral restraint to such an extent that nature has been rendered almost incapable of sustaining healthy life by Lily de Silva in her article entitled “The Buddhist Attitude towards Nature.” The natural resources upon which man relies are not unlimited hence he should utilize these natural resources with understanding of difference between need and greed. Man must learn to satisfy his needs and not feed his greed. The resources of the world are not unlimited whereas man’s greed knows neither limit nor satiation. It is augmented by the words of Mahatma Ghandi as follows: “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need; but not for every

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3. Ibid.
5. Ibid. 9.
6. Lily de Silva, op.cit.11.
man’s greed.”

The environmental crises resulted from over exploitation of the natural resources. If we take from nature only to the extent that nature can recover from it, then none of our valuable resources shall get depleted. However, dedicated to wasteful luxuries we exploit the order of nature by cultivation of excessive desire. The over exploitation in turn is arising out of over consumption which is stimulated by believing wrongly that man’s happiness and well-being lie in the material needs and sensual desires. So it is found out that human choices are an integral part of the ecological balance, and their excessive greed destroys the order of nature. Consequently, it can be said that the root cause of the world’s suffering is the man’s unquenchable greed. Again this greed is enhanced by ignorance and lastly by hatred.

4. BUDDHIST APPROACH TO THE WORLD’S RECOVERY

Buddhism as we all know is the teachings of Gotama Buddha who lived more than 2500 years ago. As such a kind of crisis has not been heard then the sermons concerning directly with this issue cannot be found in the Pāli scriptures. However, as Buddhism is a full-fledged philosophy of life reflecting all aspects of experience, it is possible to find enough material for managing the disease that our world is suffering from.

Buddhism is not as anthropocentric as the other so-called religious traditions and that its attitude does not therefore allow for the possibility that mankind has the right to take from nature, to see nature as simply a store house of necessities for humanity. Though Buddhists see the human rebirth as precious, fortunate and one of the five rare occasions (Manussatabhāvo dullabho), it does not place the human being in the first place having right to govern his environment including animate and inanimate things.

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8. Ibid. 84.
The world is home not only for human beings but for the entire flora and fauna, the totality of nature. Man, indeed, is a part and parcel of nature. Besides people of present days have to understand what is sustainable development, “a kind of development meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”\(^\text{10}\) However, this modern definition of responsible consumption and sustainable development are not strange for Buddhists since the Buddha taught it how the human’s greedy nature and laziness impact on the natural processes of the world affected by the morals of man.\(^\text{11}\) Thus the morality of mankind and the natural environmental condition are closely related. Moreover, deterioration in man’s morality affects the nature well being and it will reciprocate by adverse effect on mankind. So we can safely state that spiritual health and material well being are natural allies but not enemies.

The mutual interaction between mankind and the nature is found in the commentary on the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*.\(^\text{12}\) When mankind is demoralized through greed, famine (*dubbhikkhantara kappa*) is the natural outcome; when human beings are overwhelmed by ignorance there appear epidemic (*rogantara kappa*) and when hatred is the demoralizing cause, prevalent of violence (*satthantara kappa*) is the result.\(^\text{13}\)

All these symptoms of environmental crisis as aforesaid are needed to treat as soon as possible. If not they will fuel one another and become irreversible.

Scientists and ecologists are studying and seeking in search of ways and means to manage the crisis now threatening the world which is suffering from the grave consequences of man’s three unwholesome deeds. On the other hands, different religious traditions are responding with their own ways to combat


environmental degradation as they have particular incentive characters with regard to the behaviors and views of the people.

Buddhism suggests that each man has to uplift his moral degradation as we believe that morality of mankind is directly proportionate to the natural process of the world. Moreover, he should lead a simple moderate life by being satisfaction with basic needs.

People of present day have to reduce, reuse, and recycle the consuming things through taking the example of monastic community of those days. We found this event of reuse and recycle by monastic community in the Vinaya Piṭaka as follows.

When King Udena of Kosambhī’s saw his concubines offered five hundred costly robes to Venerable Ānanda, he was so disappointed thinking that monks are greedy. And he asked Venerable Ānanda. Venerable Ānanda explained to him that nothing given to members of the Order was wasted. Moreover, Venerable made the king to satisfy by answering his serial questions regarding the usage of robes. The robes offered would be divided among those of the monks whose robes were worn out. The worn out robes would be made to use as counterpanes. The worn out counterpanes would be made to use as bolster cases. The worn out bolster cases would be made to use as carpets. The worn out carpets would be made use as towels for the washing feet. The worn out towels would be made use as dusters. Finally the worn out duster would tear in shreds, beat up with mud, and use them for making flooring of clay. King Udena delighted with the answer of Venerable Ānanda concerning of reducing the amount of waste, reuse and recycling means of the Order and he offered another five hundred costly robes to Venerable Ānanda.14

Buddhism suggests that each man of nowadays has to uplift his moral degradation as we believe that morality of mankind is directly proportionate to the natural process of the world. Moreover, he should lead a simple moderate life by being satisfied with basic needs. He has to reduce his over consumption to the minimum in order not to become a slave to his insatiable passions since Buddhism offers a modest concept of living, simplicity, frugality, and emphasis on

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essential goods, cutting down wastage and a basic ethic.\textsuperscript{15}

It is said that over consumption generates an unending cycle of desires and satisfactions. According to the vista of Buddhism, unless man controls his insatiable passions and allow them continue to grow there will be no hope for him to escape from his insatiable passions of prison. In fact, Buddhism believes that there is a deep satisfaction without need for superabundance of material goods. And it was evident by the asking and explanation of Buddha to Niganṭhas in the Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya\textsuperscript{16} whether King Seniya Binbisāra of Magadaha or the Buddha who abides in greater pleasure.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

We, humanity of present generation now recognize that the natural resources of the world we are depending upon are not unlimited. It is not difficult to forgive destruction in the past which resulted from ignorance as our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable.\textsuperscript{17} However, in order not to be embarrassed for giving empty world with no natural resources to our future generation we must aware whether it is necessary or accessory and with great concerning about our consumption. We must start to control the root causes of the world crises, the greed before it is too late.

We mankind of present day as our unique position in relation to other physical and biological elements\textsuperscript{18} has to utilize nature in the same way as a bee collects nectar and flies away without damaging the flower or its color or its scent.\textsuperscript{19} Just as the bee manufactures honey

\textsuperscript{15} Padmasiri de Silva, \textit{In Search of a Buddhist Environmental Ethics}. (Buddhist Publication Society, 1987), 25.


\textsuperscript{17} His Holiness the Dalai Lama, \textit{An Ethical Approach to Environmental Protection}. (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society 1987), 8.

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\textsuperscript{19} Daw Mya Tin, trans., \textit{The Dhammapada Verses & Stories}. (Yangon: Myanmar Pitaka Association, 1995), 20.
out of nectar, so man should be able to find happiness and fulfillment in life without harming the natural world in which he lives.

So let’s passing the inheritance of the world filled with natural resources in variety to our younger generations if we want to be praise worthy ancestors for them by Buddhist approach of simplicity, knowing the measure in taking or consuming things, and balanced lifestyle.

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Dhammapada Verse 49: Yathāpi bhamaro pupphaṁ, vaṇṇagandhamahethayaṁ, paleti rasamādāya, evaṁ gāme muni care.
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MONASTERY WITHOUT BOUNDARY

by Hudaya Kandahjaya

ABSTRACT

Not long after taking full ordination under the Chinese Mijiao lineage in 1995, an Indonesian monk - Venerable Nyanaprathama - began his social and ecological engagements in Sumatra, Indonesia. He started with establishing the usual social welfare institutions within the compounds belonging to his monastery, for instance, schools, scholarships, and health-care facilities for the underprivileged members of the society. Afterward he launched and oversaw projects totally unrelated to his monastery but connected to overall environmental aspects, e.g., in conservation of natural resources and in assisting indigenous people make the most of their resources against the pressure from global economy. He maintains that those projects represent efforts in helping all sentient beings as advocated by Buddha Dharma. These ecological activities raise an alternative paradigm whereby the monk and his sangha take advantages of all resources available to them while working collaboratively with private as well as public (government) agencies for the benefit of preserving nature, educating, training, and developing the society in general regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious affiliations. His approach to exchanges with the sangha at large has not only generated a number of thriving undertakings including but not limited to Barumun eco-tourism, rainforest conservation, organic agriculture (coffee, mushroom, etc), goldmine protection, and holistic healing, but also has developed a community within as well as beyond

*. Dr., Assistant to the Editor for BDK English Tripitaka published by BDK America (Aka Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research at Berkeley), Currently in Moraga, California, USA.
the conventional monastery wall as if the monastery has no boundary at all.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern day Buddhism of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) to 21\(^{\text{st}}\) centuries, Buddhist social activism has been popularly known as ‘engaged Buddhism’. The term was originally coined by Thich Nhat Hanh in his seminal book titled *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* (Thich 1967:42). As noted by Queen and King (1996:34) there was a claim that the term was already used earlier in 1963, though there seems to be no clear information to support this claim.\(^{(1)}\) The monograph that Queen and King published in 1996 gave an overall survey of the state of nine engaged Buddhist movements in seven Asian countries up to early 1990s. Lately more and more leading Buddhist scholars have become involved and published portions of engaged Buddhism.\(^{(2)}\) In recent publication on the commemoration of the 2550\(^{\text{th}}\) anniversary of the Mahāparinirvāṇa of Lord Buddha two special sections comprising almost half of the volume size have been devoted to various aspects of engaged Buddhism (Mungekar 2009:231-440).

By the time Thich Nhat Hanh’s started his action, there had already been some who did similar activism. For example, in China, there was Taixu who started Buddhist activism commonly called ‘humanistic Buddhism (renjian fojiao 人間佛教)’ around 1910s (Welch 1968:55ff; Pittman 2001; Goodell 2008). In India, such action is usually associated with Dr. Ambedkar who began his Buddhist Liberation movement in 1956. Although, scholarship on Ambedkar movement does not seem to recognize earlier attempt by Rahul Sankrityayan who performed a number of socio-politico-religious actions starting around 1916 and who also appealed to restore Maha Bodhi Temple in 1922.\(^{(3)}\) This latter piece of

\(^{(1)}\) See further Queen and King 1996:321-364. Doyle (2003:253) mentions the year 1963 as well, but does not show the source.

\(^{(2)}\) The OCLC WorldCat lists 24 more books published with subject on engaged Buddhism in between 1997 to 2018, and 5 of them are dissertations. If, however, the type of publications is expanded to include articles, chapters, etc., the number of publications exceeds 700 pieces.

\(^{(3)}\) For example, Queen and King (1996:45-72) says Ambedkar started in 1956, while at the same time there seems no record at all about Rahul here. Doyle (2016) too while discussing
information is important due to the fact that Rahul inherited such activism not only from Bhadanta Bodhananda but also from Anagārika Dharmapāla, who is on the other hand considered being the first carrying the spirit of engaged Buddhism.⁴

Reference to Dharmapāla and reading numerous discourses on engaged Buddhism provide clues about the types of activity as well as problematics inherent in the field. The range of activities includes various movements from establishing social institutions like schools to hospitals to political movements and actions to preserve environment. But, as already insinuated by a number of scholars, there has been quite a struggle within the Buddhist community for justifying and finding authoritative bases for doing engaged Buddhism.⁵ Variety of responses have already been suggested.⁶ And yet the struggle seems to continue. For instance, King (2009:13-27) offers a number of concepts—such as karma, the four noble truths, and compassion to serve as key Buddhist concepts for engaged Buddhism. However, we may wonder if this list answers the problem, or are we actually running in place?

As is traditionally held, being Buddhist means not merely taking refuge to the Triple Jewels, but also being observant to Buddhist doctrines and practices. In general, a lay person shall keep five precepts while maintaining a good understanding of Buddhist concepts listed above, go to temple where members of the Buddhist sangha hold services, and whenever possible shall also practice meditation, charities, including lend a support to the sangha. The lay person may hope that all these shall lead the person at least to attaining a happy life. On the other hand, while leading the Buddhist community, Sangha members shall do similar routines but perhaps in a more committed way and in a stronger intensity while striving

the liberation of the Maha Bodhi Temple does not seem to recognize Rahul's action. See Chudal (2016:142-145) for the context within which Rahul became involved in activism and specifically with the appeal to restore the Maha Bodhi Temple.

4. Queen and King (1996:20) consider Dharmapāla being the first who carried the spirit of engaged Buddhism.

5. For example: Queen and King (1996:1-44); Winston (2001); Heine and Prebish, eds. (2003:3-6); King (2005:231-249)

to achieve enlightenment, the highest Buddhist goal. Their activities too are mainly monastery-centric. This pattern has been proven to be able to survive for more than two millennia. It has been virtually based on key Buddhist concepts suggested by King as listed earlier. Thus, if that has been the case, then we could say that the same list of key concepts ironically are also the foundation upon which Buddhists have all along been being justified to be disengaged from worldly affairs.

Regardless, as it becomes more and more apparent, the whole spectrum of challenges that people including Buddhists must face in today’s environment are increasingly more complex and intrude into the day to day life at a greater speed. In other words, we can no longer assume that the slow pace of changes occurring in the past two millennia is going to happen as we move into the future. There are many instances showing the tough road lying ahead. But here let us consider two contrasting situations.

At one end, for instance, the plundering of rain forest\(^7\) is just one example of how actors of global and local economy today endeavor to achieve quick economic gains.\(^8\) Such rush into instant economic gratification may ravage human and natural resources at a rate which may speedily harm not only the ecological systems but also some defenseless population. While Buddhists may claim having no involvement in such activities, and thereby not being responsible for the resulting damages, at some point Buddhists too eventually might not be able to avoid the impact of unsustainable ecology (Jones 2003:27) or simply cannot afford doing nothing while being surrounded by vulnerable societies.

At a different end, even though the society at large has sometime ago experienced cashless transaction, a cashless society which now steadily becomes a new reality has a totally distinct underpinning due to a rapid and progressive use of digital methods while making monetary exchanges. This cashless systems presents us with a

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7. Myers (1992: xviii) says “the annual destruction rate seems set to accelerate yet further, and could well double in another decade.”

8. Jones (2003:159-172) devotes one chapter discussing this issue of profit making and describes the whole thing being like “A World in Flames.”
fresh problem (Sivabalan 2017). Those who are reluctant to digital methods may be shunned away from using cashless systems and might thereby be at risk or at least marginalized. Though seems to be farfetched, Buddhists are not exempted from this situation. Ready or not they too are one day forced to be part of the digital and cashless society with all its ramifications.

Hence, in the face of such ever rapid changing society and environment, the more or less stable conditions which have presumably sustained the traditional way of being Buddhist will evaporate steadily. Consequently, there is a greater probability that the Buddhist traditional premise in the past two millennia may no longer be appropriate nor be able to tackle the quickly approaching adversities.

This paper attempts to showcase an alternative paradigm by which Buddhists around the world may be prepared to engage in new challenges and move forward with full confidence while overcoming all kinds of hardships due to the shifting milieu. This paper is a preliminary attempt to describe the paradigm and thereby might have contained incomplete information and unnecessary shortcomings. In case one wonders whether or not this alternative paradigm is justified, this paper offers a survey of relevant doctrinal background from which one could see its alignment with Buddhist teachings.

2. ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM

An Indonesian monk—Venerable Nyanaprathama—was born by given name Kuslan in Bagansiapi-api on 7 April 1974. In his teenage years he was active at the Tri Ratna temple in Tanjung.

9. I first met Venerable Nyanaprathama on 23 June 2015 while attending the 14th International Conference on Buddhist Women, organized by Sakyadhita in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was at this coincidental encounter I perceived an unprecedented paradigm by which Buddhists might have a better chance moving forward. I compile the following concise description based on his oral description at the time, my subsequent meeting and visit to Padangsidempuan, North Sumatra on 20 to 25 August 2016, and a number of articles (Yang 2011, Harian Andalas 2016, Yang 2018, and Tanwijaya 2018a) as well as additional personal correspondences with Tanwijaya in December 2018. I would hereby extend my gratitude to Venerable Nyanaprathama and Tanwijaya who have generously given me their invaluable time and information regarding the activities set forth by Nyanaprathama.
Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development

Nyanaprathama started his engagements with the usual social welfare activities in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 1997. One day he met several Chinese girls and asked them why they did not go to school during school hours. The girls answered that because they were just girls, they do not have to read books. Their answer surprised him and wondered why they had such kind of opinion. He thought that behind a successful man there is usually a mother and a wife, and if women are not educated the society would have problems. This encounter has ever since motivated him to address education and other related social issues.

Nyanaprathama first established a scholarship program called Metta Jaya in 1997. It was followed by a free health-care clinic in 1999 and much later a dental clinic in 2007. In the meantime he was eventually able to establish a general education school named Bodhicitta in 1999. All of these have assisted many children and underprivileged families.

A major change in his activism began around the year 1998. While undergoing monk training in Taiwan, Nyanaprathama witnessed passionate activities by a number of environmental protection agencies. Back to Indonesia in 1998, Nyanaprathama involved in preventing the scooping of topsoil out of the area of Mount Sinabung in Tanah Karo, North Sumatra. In the same year, an Indonesian environmental protection organization invited five religious representatives to participate in an environmental
conference. Nyanapratama was a Buddhist representative and attended the meeting. The conference started with a suggestion that Chinese people were the enemy of environmental protection because they logged down Indonesian forests and therefore were to be driven away. Nyanapratama stood up and said that the idea that the Chinese were destroying the forest was debatable. In 1970s to 1980s the government asked businessmen to develop forests. The businessmen who were not all Chinese took the opportunity to gain profit. This situation indicated that both sides—the government and the businessmen—benefited each other. Nyanapratama continued that the actual participants in the deforestation were actually local residents, who were mostly indigenous people, who did not even understand environmental protection nor the consequence of deforestation. Therefore, instead of simply blaming the Chinese, the problem should be solved comprehensively. Meanwhile, in the ensuing years after attending an international conference on global water crises in Taiwan in 2003, Nyanapratama did a vigorous effort to make Indonesia be the host for a pilot project for research on water crises. The effort was successful as Indonesia was nominated to be the country for such pilot project in 2006. The regency of Humbang Hasundutan in the Toba Lake region in North Sumatra was selected to be the area for research. The regent being the official government officer from the regency welcomed the designation and was invited to Taiwan to sign off the international collaborative work agreement.

All of these triggered and kept his enthusiasm in the field of environmental protection. All the while, Nyanapratama was able to found the Indonesian Bodhicitta Mandala Assembly (Pesamuhan Bodhicitta Mandala Indonesia) in 2004. The assembly is to promote Buddha Dharma in all aspects of life, as he believes that helping living beings means helping all beings regardless of their attributes, status, or categories. The assembly gathers members of the Buddhist sangha and laypeople. It also strives to include activities in conservation of natural resources and in assisting indigenous people make the most of their resources against the pressure from global economy.

In the years 2005-2006 while being a sangha member assigned
to serve the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darusallam in the northern end of Sumatra, Nyanaprathama observed how coffee farmers in the village Bener Meriah, at the foothill of Mount Burni Telong lacking the know-how on cultivating coffee plants as well as on processing coffee beans. This deficiency forced them to sell their beans at a very low price and thereby were not economically supportive to their own family. Nyanaprathama then studied not just coffee cultivation and processing but also other agroindustrial and forest products, including but not limited to patchouli and agarwood (nilam and gaharu). He imparted the skill to local farmers or entrepreneurs and let the government take over after the recipients ready to grow their business. Entrepreneurs, like Tabo and Tonggi Sipirok, are among those who received Nyanaprathama’s assistance in their early stage of business.

Further change in his activism happened when Nyanaprathama started a conservation program to protect the rain forest in North Sumatra. Being a home to the third largest rain forest in the world, Indonesia is losing acres of rain forest each year due to extensive logging and global warming. After establishing Bodhicitta Mandala Conservation program in 2007, Nyanaprathama has been on a campaign to save a 6,000 hectare rainforest in Sandean, North Sumatra. Along with this program, Nyanaprathama initiated a tree bank which he called the “Movement of 1,111,111 Trees” (Gerakan 1.111.111 Pohon). Various parties donated trees to this bank from which trees were then distributed all over the region of North Sumatra.

Nyanaprathama believes that the country is losing 30 to 40 Sumatran tigers annually. Thus, these tigers may be extinct within 10 years. In this context, he started in 2012 the Barumun Nagari Wildlife Sanctuary covering an area around 40,000 hectares at North Padang Lawas, in South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra. The sanctuary is now a home to six endangered species animals known in Sumatra (Sumatran tigers, elephants, orangutans, hornbills, siamangs, and tapirs). This sanctuary also serves as an area for developing ecotourism and conserving the rainforest.

As such, the assembly that Nyanaprathama brought into being has generated an alternative paradigm. The ecological activities allow the monk and his sangha takes advantages of all resources
available to them while working collaboratively with private as well as public (government) agencies for the benefit of preserving nature, educating, training, and developing the society at large regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious affiliations. His approach to exchanges with the sangha at large has not only produced a number of thriving undertakings briefly described above, but also has developed a community within as well as beyond the monastery wall as if it has no wall at all.

3. RELEVANT BUDDHIST BACKGROUND

In support of the alternative paradigm presented above, this section will first examine some causes for the struggle in justifying engaged Buddhism, and proceed with a presentation of a collection of Buddhist concepts or teachings supportive of social action. As it will become clear below, these teachings are coherent with the emerging paradigm.

Rahul Sankrityayan published an article titled “Buddhist Dialectics” in January 1956 issue of the *New Age*, a political monthly of communist party of India (Sankrityayan 1956:42-48). This publication was written when Rahul reached his culminating years after his life-long participation in social action in India from which he was also imprisoned a number of times. It was also written after Rahul accomplished retrieving Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts and studying their essential tenets and philosophy. Thus, though short, this essay is one additional proposition which deserves attention from Buddhist social activists. Not only does it contain a summary of Rahul’s fundamental idea in social action movement, but it also an example of an early struggle in Buddhist activism.

Rahul’s article was later published posthumously in a collection of essays of similar thought in 1970 titled *Buddhism: The Marxist Approach*. It was from this publication that most readers usually

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10. In my ongoing study on engaged Buddhism I have written and presented fragmented results sporadically in a number of papers, such as Kandahjaya 2014, 2015, 2016, 2016, 2017a, 2017b, and 2018. This is my initial attempt to integrate them here.

11. In Sankrityayan *et al.* 1970:1-8. In this collection, there are four other essays written by Debiprosad Chattopadhyaya, Y. Balaramamoorty, Ram Bilas Sharma, and Raj Anand showing different aspects of Marxist approach.
know about Rahul’s essay. Though, perhaps unknown to Rahul himself\(^{(12)}\) it is interesting to note that Rahul’s 1956 publication received a particular attention from the Chinese communist party who published its Chinese translation in 1957.\(^{(13)}\) Then it was from this Chinese translation that a Chinese monk, Jinhui 晉惠, in 1960 cited Rahul’s opinion to support the idea that Buddhism was atheistic and thereby did not contradict the Chinese Communist party policy nor the establishment of Chinese government’s official religions.\(^{(14)}\)

Rahul’s Buddhist Dialectics offers us a number of important observations critical for understanding the background of Buddhism and Buddhist praxis of our era. First, Rahul observes that Buddhist commune economic communism could not continue for long (Sankrityayan et al 1970:2). Perhaps, seeing this Buddhist socio-economic failure, Rahul was looking for a new basis to support Buddhism into the future. Hence, Rahul evokes another observation. As cited by Jinhui, Rahul starts with an assertion that Buddhism is atheistic and likely scientific,\(^{(15)}\) and from there on the basis of his reading of Dharmakīrti’s\(^{(16)}\) comes to Hegelian as opposed to Marxist dialectical materialism as a way to tackle Buddhist social economic issues. Probably it was from this line of thinking that he titled his essay Buddhist dialectics.

While Rahul’s observation on Buddhist commune economic communism is justifiable, his assertion on atheistic and scientific attributes of Buddhism are debatable. In the early period of Buddhist studies—within which Rahul was in—such attributes including being rational and not dogmatic were prevailing.\(^{(17)}\)

\(^{12.}\) I got this perception from a personal conversation with daughter of Rahul, Jaya Sankrityayan, on 16 March 2018, during a conference commemorating Rahul’s life accomplishment.

\(^{13.}\) The Chinese translation was in the journal Xuexi yicong 學習譯叢 3 (1957):11-15.


\(^{15.}\) The essay starts with “In Buddhism there is no place for god (creator of the universe) or for a revealed book” (Sankrityayan et al 1970:1). On page 6-7, Rahul defines reality according to Buddhist thinkers being: “that which is capable of objective action.” And then “...only the objective action or experiment is the touchstone of reality...The entire progress of science is based on this principle—that we accept object as our guide.”

\(^{16.}\) Sankrityayan quotes Dharmakīrti at least three times (Sankrityayan et al 1970:6-8).

\(^{17.}\) During the period, reason is often considered the utmost excellent property as opposed to faith or particularly dogmatic faith. Along this line, we had, for instance, the first edition of
Sir Edwin Arnold was among the early proponents of such view (Wright 1957:171). Anagārika Dharmapāla met with Arnold in London in August 1893 before attending and delivering his address at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, on 18 September 1893. In this address Dharmapāla mentioned the Kalama Sutta (Guruge 1965:9) and was likely the first to popularize it. The Kalama Sutta has ever since become the most quoted teaching of Buddha to demonstrate the scientific property of Buddhism. It was an open possibility that Rahul being the inheritor of Dharmapāla’s spirit of engaged Buddhism was also initiated into that attributive property of Buddhism. Although, today, as demonstrated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998), such a view especially when the Kalama Sutta is taken as the support is actually unjustifiable.

On atheistic Buddhism, Heinz Bechert (1981:13) reveals that this atheistic attribute became problematic for Indonesian Buddhists who in the period right after the failed communist coup in 1965 had to prove to the government of Indonesia that Buddhism is theistic and in agreement with the Indonesian state principle of Divinity. In contrast to many Buddhist scholars’ opinion and as has already been shown by Helmuth von Glasenapp (1966:89), an 8th century Sanskrit-Old Javanese Buddhist text titled the Sañ Hyañ Kamahāyānikan (hereafter SHK) records a Buddhist doctrine which has pronouncedly monistic trend. It has also been made evident that this text is validly related to early cycle of the Guhyasamāja family of texts as well as to the lineage of Dignāga. (18)

George Grimm’s book written in German titled Die Lehre des Buddha: die Religion der Vernunft published in 1915 (later translated into English titled The Doctrine of the Buddha: The Religion of Reason published in 1920), which from its title strongly shows rationalistic leaning and—as we read inside—atheistic inclination. Related to this trend, McManan (2008:3-14) shows how the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, European Enlightenment, and Romanticism all influenced Buddhism when it initially emerged and spread throughout the world. See also Lopez Jr., ed. (1995). And, prior to these, Gananath Obeyesekere coined the term ‘Protestant Buddhism’ to denote the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka which had already been influenced by Western culture and Christianity. The term was published initially in his article (1970:43-63), then republished in Smith, ed. (1972:58-78), and discussed furthermore in Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988:202-240). See also Prothero (Summer 1995:281-302). On page 296, Prothero described Olcott as ‘The most Protestant of all early Protestant Buddhists.’

18. For the examination of the SHK, see Kandahjaya 2016.
The SHK is likely the earliest scripture which records the term Ādi Buddha and its connotation here is in line with the concept of Ādi Buddha in the Kālacakra system. Then, it was from this breed of Buddhism that Javanese Buddhists built Borobudur, the most magnificent Buddhist temple in the world, and in the 14th century a Javanese Buddhist scholar, Mpu Tantular, composed a kāvya work titled the *Kakawin Sutasoma*. An old Javanese phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* (meaning: distinct yet one) in a verse from this work becomes the Indonesian state motto. Thus, from this inspection it is clear that the assertion of Buddhism being atheistic is also not fully defensible.

In the SHK, besides being theistic, the doctrine shows a set of procedures for attaining the perfect enlightenment which is quite unlike the one commonly ascribed to the Mahāyāna or Theravāda traditions known today. For instance, when the SHK calls ten pāramitās (*daśa pāramitā*)—being the perfection path (*paramārga*)—it comprises the six pāramitās (*ṣaṭ pāramitā*) and the four brahmavihāras or pāramitās (*catur pāramitā*). Although, while the SHK procedure differs to those commonly recognized today, it is on the other hand consistent with the procedure prescribed in older authoritative Buddhist scriptures, some of which are less known today or even are no longer in use, such as the *Akṣayamatisūtra*, the *Ratnameghasūtra*, or the *The Brahmā’s Net Sutra* (*T. 1484 Fanwang jing 梵網經*).\(^{(19)}\) In other words, the inclusion of the four brahmavihāras into the SHK procedure for attaining the enlightenment is an ancient procedure clearly advocated by older Buddhist texts but which is hardly known in today’s received traditions.

By contrast, we know that by around the 5th century Bhadantācariya Buddhagosha devoted one whole chapter on the brahmavihāras while compiling his *Visuddhimagga*. In this commentary, Buddhagosha explains that practicing the brahmavihāras could only lead one to the brahma-worlds, although

\(^{(19)}\) For the *Akṣayamatinirdèśasūtra*, see Braarvig 1993. I met Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā Tseng during the Buddhist Studies Workshop, LMU (Ludwig Maximilian Universität), München, on June 15th – 16th, 2018. She said that she is in possession and in the process of editing a Sanskrit copy of the *Ratnameghasūtra*. The procedure is in the first fascicle of *The Brahmā’s Net Sutra*, see Muller and Tanaka 2017, which prior to this publication is hardly known.
at his final paragraph of this chapter he seems to suggest otherwise that the practice could lead one to perfection. Reading it this way, it is a controversial proposition. Richard Gombrich has taken the task to clarify the cause for such discrepancy (Gombrich 2009:75-91), but unfortunately most in the Theravāda tradition has usually taken the first part of Buddhagosha’s commentary and ignored the final paragraph and thereby dismissing the controversial proposition.\(^{(20)}\)

The practice on brahmavihāras as suggested by Buddhagosha and as generally uphold in the Theravāda tradition is likely the reason why to some extent the four brahmavihāras have been construed merely as the subjects of meditation (kammaṭṭhāna). While quite the reverse, if we follow the instructions written in the older Buddhist texts, the practice on brahmavihāras could actually be the source for one’s actions toward other beings. For example, here is the meaning of loving kindness (P. mettā, Skt. maitrī, OJ. metri or metrī) in the SHK which parallels to the same in the Akṣayamatisūtra.

The so-called metri is: the nature of performing meritorious action for the welfare of others (parahitakārkṛta), the state (ākāra) of jñāna of Saṅ Satva Viśeṣa. The so-called Saṅ Satva Viśeṣa: diligently does one’s best in sat pāramitā and catur pāramitā, he is the so-called Satva Viśeṣa. The state of his jñāna is working for the well-being of others. The so-called others (para) is: all beings (sarvā satva), low, middle, or high (kaniṣṭamadhyamottama), this loving kindness (sih) towards others without expectation of reward (tan phalāpekṣa) is the so-called metrī.\(^{(21)}\)

This kind of interpretation - we may exceptionally note here - in

\[^{(20)}\] For instance, Nyanaponika (2008:7) concludes that: “The meditations on love, compassion, and sympathetic joy can each produce the attainment of the first three absorptions, while the meditation on equanimity will lead to the fourth only, in which equanimity is the most significant factor.”

\[^{(21)}\] The commentary in the SHK in Old Javanese is as follows: “Metri nāranya: parahitakārkṛta, ākāra niṅ jñāna saṅ Satva Viśeṣa. Saṅ Satva Viśeṣa nāranya: tumakitaki sat pāramitā mvaṅ catur pāramitā, sira ta Satva Viśeṣa naran ira. Ākāra niṅ jñāna nira gumave hayva niṅ para. Para nāranya: sarvā satva, kaniṣṭamadhyamottama, ikaṅ sih riṅ para tan phalāpekṣa, ya metri nāranya.”
fact occurs in the Sarvodaya movement where the *brahmavihāras* have been taken contrarily as guidelines for social action.\(^{(22)}\)

It is also in the course of one's actions toward other beings that other beings mean all living beings regardless of all categories which may be attached to them. Those beings are not solely Buddhists, and are not even solely human beings. To this end, this concept is in compliance with Buddha's exhortation to his first 60 disciples to disseminate his teachings for the good of the many, which clearly implicates not merely Buddhists (per historical narrative there were no other Buddhists besides those 61) nor human beings. This exhortation too points to the fact that the teachings carried by the first 60 disciples could not be exactly the same as those codified in the commonly acknowledged Tripiṭaka today. And, even codified teachings during the first council cannot be considered complete because there was at least one incidence right after the first council suggesting that the compilation was not accepted by Purāṇa, the leader of a group of at least five hundred monks, who would only bear in his mind and practice the teaching that he heard directly from the Buddha Śākyamuni himself.\(^{(23)}\)

Further implication of this fact directs us to acknowledge that Buddha's teachings cannot really be limited to just the received canonized Tripiṭaka. This understanding is corresponding to

\(^{22}\) Queen and King 1996:126-127. Sulak Sivaraksa echoes similar view, see Queen and King 1996:219-221. Jones (2003:105) suggests that the *brahmavihāra* meditation is a practice directly related to social activism. However, here it is clear that the suggestion is merely related to meditation practice and not to physical action. Thus far, I have not been able to find references from the Theravāda tradition which point the notion of *brahmavihāra* to physical action.

a phrase we have constantly heard from within the Buddhist tradition that there are 84,000 kinds of teachings (dharmaskandha) or 84,000 dharma doors (dharmamukha, dharmadvāra, or dharmaparyāya), or even universal door to teachings of Buddha (samantamukha). The universality of the teachings of Buddha is indeed maintained and exposed in the chapter of the Samantamukha (samantamukhaparivarta) of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra.

Similar in essence to the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra is the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra. While extolling the protagonist Sudhana who studies all knowledge and practices in order to attain the highest Buddhahood, the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra advocates a variety of sources for achieving enlightenment. Teachers of Sudhana, called the kalyāṇamitrās, are fifty two in number and come from all walks of life. This group of kalyāṇamitrās consists of members of different spiritual schools known at that time, and includes boys and girls, merchants, ascetics, monks, bodhisattvas, up to brāhmaṇas (Jayoṣmāyatana and Śivarāgra), a bhāgavatī (Vasumitrā), and a deva (Mahādeva). At Borobudur, Mahādeva is depicted as Śiva Mahādeva. Then, in this group, about forty percent of these kalyāṇamitrās can be identified as female. The diversity of kalyāṇamitrās in the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra emphasizes the idea that perfect enlightenment can be attained by all via many paths and that this kind of enlightenment does not belong exclusively to just one spiritual school.

The Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra also reminds us about Sudhana’s meeting with one of his teachers, Indriyeśvara, whose teaching confirms that secular sciences—as we call them now—were not considered a separate domain outside the boundaries of religious or spiritual path. Instead, secular sciences were considered part of religious practice and doors to the highest spiritual enlightenment. As such, the meeting of Sudhana with Indriyeśvara, the samantamukhaparivarta, the pāramitās as well as Buddha’s exhortation to the first 60 monks are probably the most relevant discourses which expound Buddhist teaching in support of all kinds of social Buddhist engagement activities in all sorts of fields beyond the customary monastic boundaries.
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II. ECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
ABSTRACT

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has been mandated to oversee the mobilization, facilitation, and coordination within the UN system of its expertise, programs, and resources toward supporting global, regional, and national strategies to deal with the building blocks of sustainable development. The outcome document of Rio+20 (Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 2012) - The Future We Want- is a major policy blue-print of ECOSOC that proposes different strategies for the implementation and advancement of sustainable development goals. In this paper, an attempt shall be made to discuss and examine the Buddhist perspective on sustainable development in the light of the Rio+20 document as well as Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We shall try to show that there are many common grounds between the goals and ideals of ECOSOC and the teachings of the Buddha (Buddhavacana). Hence, it will be proposed that the Buddhavacana has much to offer in terms of sustainable development and can make important contribution toward the efforts of ECOSOC in this regard. Buddhist doctrines relating to respectful attitude toward nature, gender equality, social and economic egalitarianism, non-violence, compassion towards all, simplicity, satisfaction with minimum, non-wastage, tolerance and plurality- are

* Prof. Dr., Head and Professor of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University, New Delhi, India.
all not only fully compatible with the ideals and goals of ECOSOC but are actually contributory toward such an effort. Further, an attempt shall also be made to show that the current globalizing system promotes competition rather than cooperation. Such an attitude has generated conflict and resentment. Thus, we need to seriously examine not only our attitudes and lifestyles but also our policies that govern the use of renewable and non-renewable resources, science and technology, and the scale and direction of industrialization and globalization. An attempt shall be made to show that a society founded upon the Buddhist Dharma recognizes that one should aim at promoting the good of the greater unit to which one belongs, and as a minimum one must not look for one’s own satisfaction in ways that may cause harm to others. Thus, in Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion governing policy formulation must be the well-being of members of the society as a whole. By pointing out that the vulgar chase of luxury and abundance is the root-cause of suffering, Buddhism encourages restraint, voluntary simplicity, and contentment. The Buddhist ideal, in fact, is co-operation with nature, not domination. Thus, a new relation must be established between people and nature, one of cooperation not of exploitation. Production must serve the real needs of the people, not the demands of the economic system. An effort shall also be made to show that as compared to globalizing consumer system that causes wastage and greed, Buddhism promotes just the opposite.

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Sustainable development, as defined in The Brundtland Report (1987), is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on the Environment and Development: Chapter 2). This report also talked for the first time of the need for the integration of economic development, natural resources management and protection, social equity and inclusion with the purpose of meeting human needs without undermining the “integrity, stability and beauty” of natural biotic systems. Before The Brundtland Report such an apprehension was well expressed in the influential book Limits to Growth (1972) which examined five variables (world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion) on the computer modelling of
exponential economic and population growth with finite resource supplies. The findings were that even if new resources are discovered over a period of time and the current reserves therefore change, still resources are finite and will eventually be exhausted. The book predicts that changes in industrial production, food production, and pollution are all in line with the economic and societal collapse that will take place within the twenty-first century itself (see Meadows and Meadows 2004; Hecht 2008). To put it simply, “the laws of thermodynamics are absolute and inviolate. Unless phytomass stores stabilize, human civilization is unsustainable.... There is simply no reserve tank of biomass for planet Earth. The laws of thermodynamics have no mercy. Equilibrium is inhospitable, sterile, and final” (Schramskia, Gattiea and Brown 2015). How do we come to grips with the problem spelt out above and attain sustainable growth? From Buddhist perspective, humankind has chosen a wrong path (agatigamana) to development and there is the urgent need for two corrective measures. Firstly, there is the need to put a system in place which not only can design and develop non-pollutive alternative technologies needing minimal specialist skills and which use only renewable resources such as wind and solar power but can also minimize the social misuse of such technologies. Secondly and more importantly, there is the need to sensitize humanity to the practical understanding of the issue whereby human weltanschauung can be changed and the revival of spirituality can take place that treats nature with respect.

The present day profit-oriented global economic system in which moral sentiments are viewed as irrelevant is overwhelmingly controlled and run by consumerism and salespersons. In a system such as this, the corporate sector plunders and pollutes on the back of rampant consumerism with the acknowledged goal of profit maximization which in turn almost always degenerates into expropriation of wealth. Organizations of enormous size monopolize production and distribution of goods. Through the use of clever means these organizations create an insatiable craving among the masses to possess more and more. High-consumption lifestyle is aggressively promoted through advertisements and psychological pressure in various forms is employed to intensify the craving
for maximum consumption. One is lured into buying as much as possible irrespective of the fact whether one needs it or whether one has saved enough to pay for it. Thus, goods are bought not because people need them but because they want them. In fact, a consumer society is characterized by the belief that owning things is the primary means to happiness and thus, consumption is accepted “as a way to self-development, self-realization, and self-fulfillment” (Benton 1997: 51-52). As a matter of fact, consumerism has become so ingrained in modern life that it is viewed by some as a new world religion whose power rests in its extremely effective conversion techniques (Loy 1997: 283). This religion, it has been pointed out, works on the principle that not only growth and enhanced world trade will be beneficial to all, but growth will also not be constrained by the inherent limits of a finite planet. Its basic flaw is that it depletes rather than builds “moral capital” (Loy 1997: 283). Fritjof Capra has pointed out that “the health hazards created by the economic system are caused not only by the production process but by the consumption of many of the goods that are produced and heavily advertised to sustain economic expansion” (Capra 1983: 248). Similarly, Erich Schumacher, the author of Small is Beautiful, has warned that materialistic attitude, which lacks ethical inhibitions, carries within itself the seeds of destruction (Schumacher 1973: 17-18, 56, 119). As pointed out by Erich Fromm, the profit-oriented economic system is no longer determined by the question: What is good for Man? But by the question: What is good for the growth of the system? Moreover, consuming has ambiguous qualities: It relieves anxiety, because what one has cannot be taken away; but it also requires one to consume ever more, because previous consumption soon loses its satisfactory character. Actually, this globalizing profit-oriented system works on the principle that egotism, selfishness, and greed are fundamental prerequisites for the functioning of the system and that they will ultimately lead to harmony and peace. However, egotism, selfishness, and greed are neither innate in human nature nor are they fostered by it. They are rather the products of social circumstances. Moreover, greed and peace preclude each other (Fromm 2008: 5-8, 23). From Buddhist perspective, more production of material goods, their increased consumption, and craving (tanha) for them does not necessarily
lead to increase in happiness. Buddhism teaches that in order to arrive at the highest stage of human development, one must not crave possessions.

One major flaw of the current globalizing consumer system is that it promotes competition rather than cooperation. Competitive and adversarial attitude or the continuous feeling that one has to work against something not only generates conflict and resentment but also invariably results in unhealthy side effects. At the international level, mutual antagonisms among nations have resulted not only in billions of dollars being wasted each year in the production of armaments but also a major chunk of the scientific manpower and technology has been directed at the war industry. For instance, military activities in the world engage approximately 25 per cent of all scientific talent and use 40 per cent of all public and private expenditure for research and development (see Pavitt and Worboys 1977). Sadly, not only that economists look with some apprehension to the time when we stop producing armaments, but also “the idea that the state should produce houses and other useful and needed things instead of weapons, easily provokes accusations of endangering freedom and individual initiative” (Fromm 1955: 5). However, as Bertrand Russell once pointed out, “The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation, and the first step towards cooperation lies in the hearts of individuals” (1954: 204). It has been seen that individuals with cooperative skills are more creative and psychologically better adjusted. With its emphasis on cooperation and interdependence, Buddhist practice can inspire the building of partnership societies with need-based and sustainable economies.

Political leaders and business executives often take self-serving decisions. Moreover, “the general public is also so selfishly concerned with their private affairs that they pay little attention to all that transcends the personal realm…. Necessarily, those who are stronger, more clever, or more favored by other circumstances… try to take advantage of those who are less powerful, either by force and violence or by suggestion… (Conflict in the society) cannot disappear as long as greed dominates the human heart” (Fromm 2008: 10-11, 114). A society driven by greed loses the power of
seeing things in their wholesomeness and we do not know when enough is enough. “The hope... that by the single-minded pursuit of wealth, without bothering our heads about spiritual and moral questions, we could establish peace on earth, is an unrealistic, unscientific, and irrational hope... the foundations of peace cannot be laid by... making inordinately large demands on limited world resources and... (putting rich people) on an unavoidable collision course- not primarily with the poor (who are weak and defenceless) but with other rich people” (Schumacher 1973: 18-19). In the present economic system, points out Schumacher, anything that is not economic is sought to be obliterated out of existence. “Call a thing immoral or ugly, soul-destroying or a degradation of man, a peril to the peace of the world or to the well-being of future generations; as long as you have not shown it to be “uneconomic” you have not really questioned its right to exist, grow, and prosper” (Schumacher 1973: 27). In this regard, it may be said that Buddhism looks at greed (lobha: Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iv.96) and egotism (avaññattikāma: Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.240; iv.1. asmimāna: Oldenberg 1879-1883: i.3; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.273; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.139, 425; Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iii.85) as leading to suffering. Real problem lies in the human tendency to have-to possess- which the Buddha called craving (taṇhā). It may be pointed out that Buddhism does not mind wealth and prosperity as long as they are acquired and used in accord with the ethical norms. Moreover, from Buddhist perspective, apart from taking into account the profitability of a given activity, its effect upon people and environment, including the resource base, is equally important.

Another flaw of the current globalizing consumer system is that it is widening the division between the rich and the poor. According to the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, the richest 1 per cent people in the world now own half of the planet’s wealth and at the other extreme, the poorest 50 per cent of the world’s population owns just 2.7 per cent of global wealth (Kentish 2017). This type of stark poverty and inequality leading to the marginalization and exclusion of the majority of the world population has implications for social and political stability among and within states. It will be unrealistic to expect spiritual, psychological, and social harmony
in the world till it remains materially divided. As a member of a common human family, each individual must have access to a reasonable share of the resources of the world so that s/he is able to fulfil his/her basic needs to realize his/her potential as a productive and respected member of the global family. This means that there is an urgent need for equitable access to resources not only between nations, but also between humans irrespective of gender and nationality. As desperate poverty of the poor has been responsible to some extent for the overuse of the limited resources, economic justice and social equity are important. However, affluent societies are the real problem children of today’s world. For instance, it has been estimated that the birth of an American baby represents more than fifty times as great a threat to the environment as the birth of an Indian baby (Jones 1993: 14). Well-documented research has shown that world hunger caused by scarcity of food is a myth because the amount of food produced in the world at present is sufficient to provide about eight billion people with an adequate diet. The main culprit is the agribusiness in a world marred by inequalities (see Capra 1983: 257-258). “Without a revolution in fairness, the world will find itself in chronic conflict over dwindling resources, and this in turn will make it impossible to achieve the level of cooperation necessary to solve problems such as pollution and overpopulation” (Elgin 1993: 42). In this regard, it may be said that Buddhism promotes a wide distribution of basic necessities so that no one has to suffer deprivation as deprivation is the root cause of social conflict. Thus, talking about the cause of social conflict, the Buddha pointed out that, “goods not being bestowed on the destitute poverty grew rife; from poverty growing rife stealing increased, from the spread of stealing violence grew apace, from the growth of violence, the destruction of life became common” (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.67). From a Buddhist perspective, an ideal society would follow the motto of happiness and welfare of maximum number of people (bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya: Oldenberg 1879-1883: i.21). In such a society one would not look for one’s own satisfaction in ways that may become a source of pain/suffering (agabhūta) for others (Feer 1884-1898: iii.189). Hoarding wealth in any form is looked down upon in Buddhism (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iii.222) and if a wealthy person
were to enjoy his wealth all by himself only, it would be a source of failure for him (Fausböll 1985: 102). In fact, someone working for the sake of wealth (*dhanahetu*, Fausböll 1985: 122), craving wealth (*dhanathiko*, Fausböll 1985: 987; *bhogatañhā*, Sarao 2009: 355), or taking pride in wealth i.e., displaying economic snobbery (*dhanatthaddho*, Fausböll 1985: 104) is considered as a fallen human being and an ignoramus who hurts himself as well as the others. Thus, in Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion governing policy formulation must be the well-being of members of the society as a whole i.e., production should oriented towards serving the real needs of the people instead of the serving the demands of the economic system. As emphasized by Fromm, Buddhism supports every human being’s right to be fed without qualification in a way as nourishing mother who feeds her children, who do not have to achieve anything in order to establish their right to be fed and it opposes the mentality of hoarding, greed, and possessiveness. In such a perception, people’s “income is not differentiated to a point that creates different experiences of life for different groups” (Fromm 2008: 69).

The present system believes that fulfilment of the material needs of humankind will lead to peace and happiness. But this is a mistaken view. As Erich Fromm points out, an animal is content if its physiological needs- hunger, thirst and sexual needs- are satisfied because being rooted in the inner chemistry of the body, they can become overwhelming if not satisfied. Inasmuch as man is also animal, these needs must be satisfied. But inasmuch as one is human, the satisfaction of these instinctual needs is not sufficient to make one happy because human happiness depends on the satisfaction of those needs and passions which are specifically human. These essential needs which modern civilization fails to satisfy are “the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion” (Fromm 1955: 25, 28, 65, 67, 134). From the Buddhist perspective, economic and moral issues cannot be separated from each other because the mere satisfaction of economic needs without spiritual development can never lead to contentedness among people. By pointing out that the vulgar chase of luxury and abundance is the root-cause of suffering, Buddhism encourages restraint,
simplicity, and contentment. This way of life embraces frugality of consumption, a strong sense of environmental urgency, a desire to return to human-sized living and working environments, and an intention to realize our higher human potential—both psychological and spiritual (Elgin and Mitchell 1977: 5). This type of enlightened simplicity would integrate “both inner and outer aspects of life into an organic and purposeful whole…. outwardly more simple and inwardly more rich…. and living with balance in order to find a life of greater purpose, fulfillment, and satisfaction” (Elgin 1993: 25). Enlightened simplicity is essential to attain sustainable development and to solve global problems of environmental pollution, resource scarcity, socioeconomic inequities, and existential/spiritual problems of alienation, anxiety, and lack of meaningful lifestyles. Thus, need of the hour for the developed nations is to follow what Arnold Toynbee called Law of Progressive Simplification i.e., by progressively simplifying the material side of their lives and enriching the nonmaterial side (Toynbee 1947: 198). Taking a position akin to Buddhism, Elgin (1993: 32-35) has suggested that one choosing to live a life of simplicity would not only lower the overall level but also modify the patterns of one’s consumption by buying products that are long-lasting, easy to repair, serviceable, energy efficient, and non-polluting in their use as well as manufacture. Besides believing in deep ecology, one would show an ardent concern for the poor and the needy. One would prefer a smaller-scaled and human-sized living and working environment that fosters a sense of community and mutual-caring. One would shift one’s diet in favour of one that is more natural, healthy, simple, and suitable for sustaining the inhabitants of the planet Earth. One would not only recycle but also downsize by owning only those possessions that are absolutely required. One would develop personal skills to handle life’s ordinary demands for enhancing self-reliance, minimizing dependence upon others, and developing the full range of one’s potentials. One would also spare time on a regular basis to volunteer to help in improving the quality of life of the community. Enlightened simplicity requires having contentment (saṃtuṭṭhi: Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: i.71; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.13; Fausböll 1985: 265; Sarao 2009: 204; Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.27, 31, ii.219)
with little, avoiding wastefulness i.e., fewness of desires (appicchatā: Oldenberg 1879-1883: iii.21; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.115; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.13; Feer 1884-1898: ii.202). Contentment, which is viewed in Buddhism as the best wealth (saṃtuṭṭhiparamam dhanam, Sarao 2009: 204), is the mental condition of a person who is satisfied with what he has or the position in which he finds himself (saṃtussamāno itarītarena: Fausböll 1985: 42).

“Private property” as once pointed out by Karl Marx, “has made us so stupid and partial that an object is only ours when we have it, when it exists for us as capital... Thus all the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by... the sense of having” (Bottomore, 1963: 159). Thus, as pointed out by Erich Fromm, people acquire things, including useless possessions, because they “confer status on the owner” (Fromm 1955: 133). In the Having Mode of Existence relationship to the world is one of possessing and owning, to treat everybody and everything as property. The fundamental elements in the relation between individuals in this mode of existence are competition, antagonism, and fear. In such a mode, one’s happiness lies in one’s superiority over others, in one’s power and capacity to conquer, rob, and kill. The peril of the having mode is that even if a state of absolute abundance could be reached; those who have less in physical health and in attractiveness, in gifts, in talents bitterly envy those who have more (Fromm 2008: 66-67, 91-92). In the Being Mode of Existence one’s happiness lies in aliveness and authentic relatedness to the world, loving, sharing, sacrificing, and giving. The difference between these two modes of existence is that whereas the having mode is centered around persons, the being mode is centered around things (Fromm 2008: 15, 21, 66).

There is an urgent need to sensitize people to the fact of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings, including humans, and resources. The earth is not only teeming with life but seems to be a living being in its own right. A wide-ranging, objective, well-documented, and value free scientific research shows that each living creature has its place in the biosphere whereby it plays its unique role as part of the collective balance. As pointed out by Capra, all the living matter on earth, together with
the atmosphere, oceans, and soil, forms a complex system that has all the characteristic patterns of self-organization. Thus, “the earth is a living system and it functions not just like an organism but actually seems to be an organism—Gaia, a living planetary being” (Capra 1983: 284-285). From a Buddhist perspective, not only that life is inherently valuable but human and other forms of life are also interdependent and reciprocal. Thus, nature and humanity on the one hand and humans amongst themselves on the other are seen as mutually obligated to each other. A living entity can neither isolate itself from this causal nexus nor have an essence of its own. In other words, as part of the Dependent Origination (paṭiccasamuppāda), humans are seen as affecting their environment not only through the purely physical aspects of their actions, but also through the moral and immoral qualities of such actions. It is thus said that, if a king and his people act unrighteously, this has a bad effect on the environment and its gods, leading to little rain, poor crops and weak, short-lived people (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.74-76). This message is also strongly implied by the Aggañña Suttanta of the Dīgha Nikāya (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.80-98) which shows how in the beginning nature was bountiful but it became less so when humans began to take greedily from it. When they began to harvest more rice than they needed, it was not naturally able to grow quickly enough. This necessitated cultivation which in turn caused division of land into private fields, so that property was invented. Origin of private property became the root cause of different social and economic ills. Thus, one is not surprised that from Buddhist point of view, consumer-oriented modernity “is rejected because it is seen as a form of life that has in a short period of time despoiled the landscape and done irreparable damage to the environment” (Lancaster 2002: 1-2).

Just as poverty is the cause of much crime, wealth too is responsible for various human ills. Buddhism views material wealth as being required only for meeting the bare necessities and must only be earned through are righteous and moral means. Generosity (dāna) and liberality (cāga) are always linked in Buddhism with virtue (Sarao 2009: 177). Moreover, by giving one gets rid of greediness/selfishness (macchariya) and becomes more unacceptable to others because “one who gives makes many friends” (Fausböll 1985: 187;
Avoidance of wastage, which is one of the most serious stumbling blocks in the path to sustainable development, is an important aspect of Buddhist enlightened simplicity. The fig-tree glutton (udumbarakhādika) method blamed by the Buddha (Feer 1884-1898: iv.283), the method of shaking down an indiscriminate amount of fruit from a fig-tree in order to eat a few, is exactly the same as the one employed in drift-net fishing, where much more aquatic life is destroyed than utilized. Humanity cannot continue to consume the planet’s limited resources at the rate to which it has become accustomed. Through unbridled expansion, the economy is not only absorbing into itself more and more of the resource base of the extremely fragile and finite ecosystem but is also burdening the ecosystem with its waste. As human population grows further; the stress on the environment is bound to rise to even more perilous levels. Exploding population levels wipe out what little is accomplished in raising living standards. As pointed out by Paul and Anne Ehrlich, considering present technology and patterns of behavior our planet is grossly overpopulated now and the limits of human capability to produce food by conventional means have also very nearly been reached. Attempts to increase food production further will tend to accelerate the deterioration of
our environment, which in turn will eventually reduce the capacity of the earth to produce food. The Green Revolution “is proving ecologically unsustainable, dependent as it is on an economically and socially vulnerable, high cost, petrochemical agriculture” (Jones, 1993: 13). Its dark side is reflected in crops’ vulnerability to pest problems, loss of genetic diversity through mono-cropping and neglect of local varieties, fertilizer-induced increase of weeds, the threat of fertilizer pollution in fragile soils, toxicity through pesticides leading to cancer and adverse effects on body’s natural immune system, erosion accelerated by multiple cropping, and the mindless squandering of water resources. “Yet these alarming results have barely affected the sale and use of fertilizers and pesticides” (Capra 1983: 257). Through the degradation of the environment, the future is clearly being undermined by the rich in emulation of the developed world and by the poor to stay alive by salvaging the present by savaging the future. In fact, we are faced with “the prospect that before we run out of resources on any absolute basis we may poison ourselves to death with environmental contaminants” (Elgin and Mitchell 1970: 5). Global warming is now irreversible, and nothing can prevent large parts of the planet becoming too hot to inhabit, or sinking underwater, resulting in mass migration, famine, and epidemics. “Signs of potential collapse, environmental and political, seem to be growing…. while politicians and elites fail to recognize the basic situation and focus on expanding their own wealth and power” (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 2009: 68).

As suggested by Stephanie Kaza, the environmental impact is accelerated by the rapidly rising population numbers, increasingly efficient technologies, and consumption rates beyond the planet’s capacity. These three have been linked by the equation I=PAT, or environmental Impact= Population size multiplied by Affluence (or degree of consumption) multiplied by Technology. Reduce any one of these and the impact drops; increase one or all three, and the impact rises, in some cases dramatically (Kaza 2000: 23).

Since human beings are social creatures who naturally come together for common ends, this means that a social order guided by Buddhist principles would consist primarily of small-scale communities with localized economies in which each member can
make an effective contribution. From the perspective of Buddhist economics, “production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life” (Schumacher 1973: 42). To attain sustainable development, what we need most of all is streamlining and downsizing. Only small-scale and simple technology would not drain natural resources as it production would be aimed principally at local consumption, so that there is direct face-to-face contact between producers and consumers. Large-scale technologies are dehumanizing and morally wrong as they become impersonal and unresponsive making individuals functionally futile, dispossessed, voiceless, powerless, excluded, and alienated. “Wisdom demands a new orientation of science and technology towards the organic, the gentle, the nonviolent, the elegant and beautiful” (Schumacher 1973: 20). The Buddhist values mean that environment should not be over exploited and “non-renewable goods must be used only if they are indispensable, and then only with the greatest care and the most meticulous concern for conservation.... The Buddhist economist would insist that a population basing its economic life on non-renewable fuels is living parasitically” (Schumacher 1973: 43-44). Thus, from a Buddhist perspective, a new relation must be established between people and nature, one of cooperation not of exploitation or domination. The driving force of such an economy would be to make a distinction between a state of utmost misery (daḷiddatā) (Feer 1884-1898: v.100, 384, 404), being sufficient (yāpanīya) (Oldenberg, 1879-1883: i.59, 212, 253), and glut (accogāḷha) (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iv.282). There would be a balance between material excess and deprivation i.e., avoidance of both mindless materialism and needless poverty leading to a balanced approach to living that harmonizes both inner and outer development. It would be un buddhistic to consider goods as more important than people and consumption as more important than creative activity. For building a sustainable future affluent members of the society will need to make dramatic changes in the overall levels and patterns of consumption. We must choose levels and patterns of consumption that are globally sustainable, i.e., use the world’s resources wisely and do not over stress the world’s ecology, i.e., consuming in ways that respect the rest of life on this planet. Such an aim was made explicit in the Green Buddhist Declaration,
prepared by members of the international Buddhist community for discussion at the World Fellowship of Buddhism in Colombo (1980): “We believe that since world resources and the ecosystem cannot support all peoples at the level of the consumption of the advantaged nations, efforts towards global equity must be coupled with efforts towards voluntary simplicity, in one’s individual life-style and through democratically-determined policies. The economic structures which encourage consumerist greed and alienation must be transformed.”

From Buddhist perspective, it is also important that policies must be grounded on moral and ethical values that seek welfare of humankind as a whole. As suggested by Alan Durning (1992), the linked fates of humanity and the natural realm depend on us, the consumers. We can curtail our use of ecologically destructive things and cultivate the deeper, non-material sources of fulfillment that bring happiness: family and social relationships, meaningful work, and leisure. Implementation and realization of the spirit underlying the Buddhist Eight-fold Path (aṭṭhaṅgika-magga) encompassing wisdom (paññā), morality (sīla), and meditation (samādhi) in eight parts can truly offer a path leading to sustainable development. Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) and Right Thought (sammā-saṃkappa) constitute wisdom; Right Speech (sammā-vācā), Right Conduct (sammā-kammanta), and Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva) constitute morality; and Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma), Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi) form the practice of meditation (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: ii.311-315). By following this path of wisdom, morality, and meditation one can grow inwardly and follow a life of enlightened simplicity. By following this path humans can aim at harmonious living (dhammacariya, samacariya) (Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.289; Feer 1884-1898: i.101) and compassion (karuṇā) with “the desire to remove what is detrimental to others and their unhappiness” (Fausböll 1985: 73). This would form the basis of the weltanschauung of the well-adjusted and balanced person, who would seek inner peace (ajjhattasanti, Fausböll 1985: 837), and inward joy (ajjhattarata, Sarao 2009: 362; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: ii.107; Feer 1884-1898: i.289; Feer 1884-1898: i.101).
by exercising a degree of restraint, limiting his/her needs, and avoiding being greedy (ussuka) (Sarao 2009: 199) because one can never become worthy of respect if one is envious, selfish, and fraudulent (issukī maccharī saṭho) (Sarao 2009: 262).

It is time that each of us chooses a way of life that is materially simple, inner directed, and ecology friendly. The fundamental issue is of the Earth’s finite capacity to sustain human civilization. “Lifeboat ethic” must be replaced by “spaceship earth ethic.” Mindful living opens our perception to the interdependence and fragility of all life, and our indebtedness to countless beings, living and dead from the past and the present. Finally, it may be befitting to conclude in the words of Elgin:

“To live sustainably, we must live efficiently— not misdirecting or squandering the earth’s precious resources. To live efficiently, we must live peacefully, for military expenditure represents an enormous diversion of resources from meeting basic human needs. To live peacefully, we must live with a reasonable degree of equity, or fairness, for it is unrealistic to think that, in a communications-rich world, a billion or more persons will accept living in absolute poverty while another billion live in conspicuous excess. Only with greater fairness in the consumption of the world’s resources can we live peacefully, and thereby live sustainably, as a human family” (Elgin, 1993: 41-42).
Bibliography


BUDDHIST APPROACH TO ECONOMIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by Nguyen Ngoc Duy Khanh

ABSTRACT

Production and consumption are two decisive economic activities. But the fact that production with limited resources cannot fulfill the insatiable consumptive wants has led the current economic system into imbalance. To solve this contradiction, economics tries to obtain maximum outputs from available resources. It means that a management of the efficient use of resources is an important issue but it also means that economists accept that human’s demand is unlimited. In phenomenon, this attempt can only maintain the balance of production and consumption for a short period but it doesn’t have any change in essential. In addition, many problems have arisen as the consequences of one-sided economic concentration, such as an uneven harmony between economic development and social development; benefits from the economic growth not reaching the majority of people; increasing disparity in income and living standards between social groups; serious environmental destruction due to over-exploiting natural resources; threatening to the sustainable living of the next generations.

The paper begins with an examination on the issue of unlimited human demand on consumption from Buddhist point of view. The Buddhist realization on this issue, which can be considered as the uniqueness of Buddhist economic philosophy, can apply to economic decisions making, responsible consumption, help to balance the

* Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.
production and consumption in society and offer the opportunity to maintain the sustainable economy. Then, the concept of development will be analyzed from the Buddhist view and the Buddhist teachings in relation with economic contribution will be discussed, to argue that the sustainable economic development is the one in which both material aspect and spiritual aspect must be taken into account with equal emphasize. Finally, Buddhist approaches on economic activities will be given as advices to contribute a sustainable economic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, when the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (UN, 1987) was submitted to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, n.d.), sustainable development has become a new buzzword which has been mentioned in many aspects as social policies, environment, economy, etc. Up to now, both of national and international levels, many attempts in different aspects have struggled to come to terms with the demands placed upon them by the concept of sustainable development. In fact, the sustainable development goals cannot be achieved without economic development. However, economics often focuses almost exclusively on the interactive growths of income and consumption. And its policy persists in focusing on these two and to exclude many pressing problems that we are facing with. Nowadays, we seem to be driven by a culture which is so-called consumerism that encourages people to purchase goods in ever-greater amounts. These consumption habits have also led to serious environmental destruction due to over-exploiting natural resources which threatens to the sustainable living of the next generations, etc. The recent global economic crisis, combined with recent scientific studies about global climate change, have risen fundamental questions about the practices in which they are so deeply embedded.

Under Buddhist perspective, this paper starts by critically evaluating the consumption aspect of economics, in which desire plays an important role. The examination on desire will provide a new approach to contemporary economic that distinguish the Buddhist economics with the mainstream economics. This examination will offer an interesting perspective of the proper
practice in managing the consumer society. Then, based on the Buddhist view, the concept of development will be analyzed in both material and moral aspects to argue that the popular view on the notion of development of mainstream economics which only emphasize on material aspect needs to be rethought. Buddhist economics advocates that in order to attain the goal of sustainable economic development, both material and moral aspects must be taken into account with equal emphasis. Finally, to be inspired by Buddha's instructions to Dīghajāṇu the Koliyan how a layperson is able to achieve happiness and well-being (in this life and the life to come) which was narrated in Dīghajāṇu Sutta (AN 8.54) of Aṅguttara Nikāya together with some others Pāli discourses, three fundamental wealth managing activities: acquisition, conservation and consumption will be discussed and analyzed so that the Buddha’s ancient teachings can be applied to modern economy to attain the goal of happiness and well-being as well as fulfill the demands of the two key concepts of sustainable development mentioned in Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

2. THE UNIQUENESS OF BUDDHIST ECONOMICS PHILOSOPHY

Generally, the original aim of economy, is the realization of happiness and well-being for people in both individual and social aspects. However, as Brown considered, mainstream economics is based on hedonic happiness, or personal pleasure with avoidance of pain, which focuses on pursuing money and buying goods that make a sense of happiness, at least in the moment. This short-lived happiness fits in well with materialistic, goal-oriented economy (Brown, C. 2017). From this approach, consumers seem driven to make more, buy more and be more. By this economics base, consumers are intentionally cultivated desires, encouraged to develop new desires for things to acquire and for activities to do. Admittedly, desire plays an important role in consumption activities. However, since the distortion of real/natural human needs along with the creation and daily growing of “false desires”, the hegemony of consumerism takes place as the result. Ruled by desire, our consumer society is stuck in the endless cycle of desire and being continuously driven to our want more while never finding enough satisfaction. According to psychology, the mechanism through
which people seek to satisfy their desires is called “auto-projection”. It is a looser strategy whether or not people achieve their desired goals. When they are not able to reach the goals they envision, they attribute their continuing dissatisfaction to their failure to reach the alleged corrective measures. When they succeed in attaining their goals, this usually does not bring what they hoped for and their feeling of discomfort is not relieved. So, striving for satisfying desires never bring people the fulfillment they expect from it (Grof, S. 1998). It can be concluded that this type of economics, which ruled by desire, does not bring happiness and causes unsustainable consequences for human beings and all other living things.

The Four Noble Truths is the most important doctrine of Buddhism, which Buddha presented in his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. It is the propositions of: (1) suffering (dukkha), (2) cause of suffering, (3) Nibbāna – the state of cessation of suffering through the removal of cause of suffering and (4) the way leading to the removal causes of suffering that results in the cessation of suffering. To the extent that it is presented in the first two of the Four Noble Truths, the first proposition states that all of life is suffering. As Buddha enumerated, the stuff of human existence is trauma, pain, and grief associated with birth, aging, sickness, and death intermingled throughout the life course with the despair of being tied to what we despise or separated from what we love. The second proposition identifies the cause of our suffering is desire. We suffer because we endlessly, but futilely, strive to fulfill our own self-interests. Nibbānam paramam sukhām – Nibbāna is the ultimate happiness (Dhp. 203) is another definition of the third proposition founded in Dhammapada sutta, while the content of the fourth proposition is the way to attain this ultimate happiness. Thus, the ultimate aim of Buddhism is the attainment of happiness (which is called “sukha” in Pāli language). According to Buddhism, to achieve happiness the suffering and its causes must be understood and after that reduced and eradicated\(^1\). It needs to

\(^1\) In Buddhism, there are different levels of “sukha” or happiness for human development that each individual can be trained to achieve higher and neater happiness; therefore, happiness is not viewed as a static, but it is a dynamic process in human development. The development of happiness or sukha from a basic to higher levels can
note that, in Buddhism, there are different kinds of classifications or levels of “sukha”. No matter how many levels are classified, its range starts from the lowest level – *kāmasukha* – which is happiness from acquisition or meeting sensual pleasures, to the highest level – *nirodha samāpattisukha* – with total extinction of suffering (Kittiprapas, S. 2015). Here, the Buddhist concept “*kāmasukha*” is synonym with “hedonic happiness” mentioned above, and in spite of being considered as a kind of happiness, it can also cause and increase suffering. Therefore, it is not recognized as real happiness. Besides, according to Buddhism, *kāmasukha* concerning with physical or material level is required for basic needs to relief person's physical sufferings. After the basic needs are fulfilled, Buddhism encourages that people should develop further to gain higher levels of happiness. Excessive material accumulation driven by desire does not lead to the increase of happiness and never keep happiness sustainable. Instead, it increases problems, bringing suffering and reducing happiness.

Obviously, in both economics and Buddhism, desire plays a role as the foundation on which the analytical structure is built. In addition, problems related to economic such as over exploiting the natural resources, the imbalance between production and consumption or the emerging hegemony of consumerism etc., can’t be explained without considering seriously the dimensions of desire and happiness. In foundational aspect, Buddhism and economics share the same key assumption regarding human nature and assign the primary agency to the individual. However, radically different from mainstream economic, which focus on “maximization of profit or utility to satisfy the desire” as its underlying philosophy; Buddhist economic philosophy promotes “reduction or negation of desire” to achieve happiness and well-being. This is the uniqueness of Buddhist economic philosophy.

Buddhist economics suggests not to multiply but to simplify human desires. One of the remarkable characters of Buddhist doctrine is the realization about moderation. According to the Buddhist approach, economic activity must be controlled and be seen as a process of reducing dukkha or suffering until it is completely gone at the highest level of *sukha*, which is *nibbānasukha.*
qualified that it is directed to achieve well-being rather than the "maximum satisfaction." In the mainstream of economic model, unlimited desires are controlled by economic scarcity, but in Buddhist model, they are controlled with an appreciation on moderation and the objective of happiness and well-being. A recommendation for moderate consumption found in Santuttthi Sutta (AN 4.27) of Anguttara Nikāya, mentioned four things: enough food, clothing, shelter and medicine, which can be considered as basic needs. This can help us think of what we really need and what we want, even sometimes what we want beyond what we really need. Reflection by this way can be seen as a method of identifying and reducing one’s desires. For example, whenever we consume food, water, electricity, etc., we should take time to think about their true purpose, rather than consuming them freely, without caring about resources waste. By that way, we can avoid heedless consumption and so understand “the right amount” that we need. Wanting less will naturally eliminate the harmful effects of uncontrolled economic activity as well as could bring substantial benefits for oneself, for community, and for nature as a whole.

Both mainstream and Buddhist economics assume that consumption is a necessary activity. However, according to mainstream economics, consumption is an activity to satisfy sensual desires and is a goal in itself. While Buddhist economics asserts that consumption is only a means to an end; its true purpose is to provide well-being serving only as a means to higher goal. Any activity of consumption is not simply for achieving the pleasure it affords, but to obtain the physical and mental energy necessary for intellectual and spiritual growth toward a nobler life. To Buddhism, economic activity must be controlled and directed to the achievement of well-being rather than maximum satisfaction.

The seminal contribution of Buddhist insight to economics can be found from the research on the psychology of desire. According to Buddhist teachings, there are two different kinds of desire: (1) taṇhā, the desire for pleasure objects, which is insatiable; and (2) chanda, the desire for well-being. Taṇhā is based on ignorance and it does not automatically direct to well-being since it based on ignorance. While chanda is based on wisdom. For instance, people
driven by *tanhā* will seek to fulfill the blind craving for sensual pleasure, which, in this case, is the desire for pleasant taste. But when guided by *chanda*, desires are directed to realize well-being. In economic context, as described by Payutto, “*when desire (tanhā) is driving economic decisions, behavior tends to be morally unskillful, but when desire for well-being (chanda) is guiding them, economic behavior will be morally skillful*” (Payutto, A. 1998). The consumption on *chanda* base is the utilization of goods and services to achieve true well-being, while the *tanhā* consumption is supposedly satisfied sensations or self-gratification. The product value from *chanda* is determined by its ability to meet the need for well-being, while one from *tanhā* only plays a role of satisfying the craving for pleasure. It can be concluded that, according to Buddhist economics, the consumption activity driven by *chanda* is right consumption. Conversely, the consumption activity driven by *tanhā* is wrong consumption.

As mentioned, our sufferings come from our own mental states, with feelings of discontent coming from desire more and more. In fact, the feeling of not having enough and wanting more does not arise from the inherent desirability of the objects we are seeking but from our own mental illusions. With two types of desire above, to eradicate the suffering arising from the desires that related to consumption, its reason – *tanhā* is the mental state that needs to be transformed. Instead of *tanhā* is the desire of satisfying one’s craving, it should be transformed into *chanda* – the desire is directed to realize the happiness and well-being of himself and the others.

The Buddhist approach suggests people transform their desires so that through the utilization of goods and services then they can achieve happiness. When one becomes detached from *tanhā*, his levels of happiness will increase. This may result in proper appreciation as well as reduction of the demand for consumer goods. The Buddhist cognition on two kinds of desire provides an idea to businesses to focus less on providing non-essential consumer goods and more on providing essential goods and services to developing countries, introducing technologies that will remediate environmental damage and serve the poor and needy. As the result, business will then become less exploiting and damaging and more worthwhile and productive.
In summary, both mainstream and Buddhist economics accept that the insatiable desire is human's nature. However, the Buddhist cognition on the two kinds of desire: \textit{chanda} and \textit{tanhā}, can lead to a self-awareness that can dissolve the confusion between what is truly beneficial and what is truly harmful in consumption. Even though insatiable want is human's innate, they can be transformed and controlled by wisdom. To assign the primary agency to the individual, Buddhist economic philosophy promotes self-management as well as develops one's abilities. This is a very positive orientation toward human nature as a mastery of one's own destiny.

3. THE BUDDHIST ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT

The popular view on the notion of development is the achievement of economic prosperity. Accordingly, world development has been guided by economics and economic policy that focuses almost on material gain. At the time being, the achievements of science and technology in the material aspect have led to an unwarranted trust in their omnipotence and resulted in the widespread belief that they are the only vehicles for the achievement of development in society. The sole criterion of development seems to be the quantity of material goods produced and consumed, and the calculation of \textit{Gross Domestic Product (GDP)} is viewed as a measure of development. Although the economic achievement has revolutionized the material conditions of modern living cannot be denied, it has failed to tackle the challenge of sustainable development in a meaningful way. As stated by Brown, it is time to recognize that economics has led us to focus on the wrong values and measurements. GDP gives us a snapshot of the total output for the nation, with no concern for how it is distributed or used, or where it may take us in the future (Brown, C. 2015). According to Welford, in the last two decades, mainstream economic with its material emphasized models which were indiscriminately applied in inappropriate ways causing the poor to suffer, leading to the breakdown of community values and doing little to reverse the continued environmental destruction (Welford, R. 2013). It is noticed that, to achieve development, current economic system has paid little attention to right and wrong means of production, the right and wrong limits to what is produced and consumed. Their detachment to the moral aspect in
development seems to be speedily leading mankind towards self-defeating and self-destructive consequences as well as facing with social and environmental destruction.

Having different look on this phenomenon, Buddhist analysis of development involves an equal emphasis on twofold development, material or mundane and moral or spiritual. According to Buddhism, the development which focuses only on material is detrimental to the existence of the human society, since it is one-sided, imbalanced and disastrous (Abeynayake, O. 2016). In economic aspect, Buddhist approach would involve an emphasis on a much more sustainable development that consists of a dual process involving the development of the material conditions of living on the one hand, and the ethical quality of living on the other. An important Buddhist explanation in this regard is found in *Andha Sutta* (AN 3.29). In this sutta, Buddha mentioned about the *dvicakku* (two-eyed person) among ordinary people, this person uses the first eye to acquire wealth, the second for moral development. The one who neither engages in the pursuit of material wealth nor in the pursuit of moral development, are comparable to people who are totally blind. Buddha showed that a two eyed person is superior to one having either the first eye or the second eye only. In other words, development cannot be achieved either by moral uplift or material advancement alone but both these aspects have to be equally developed to acquire a meaningful and happy life.

Besides, similar with mainstream economic which considered the reduction of poverty is the most important objective of economic development process, Buddha proclaimed in *Iṭṭa Sutta* (AN.6.45) that poverty is part and parcel of suffering (*dāliddiyāṁ bhikkhave dukkhaṁ lokasimīḥ*) and ought to be overcome. In *Cakkavattisihanāda sutta*, the Buddha indicated that poverty is the most socially destabilizing factor and the division of the world into rich and poor paves the way for the collapse of the moral foundation in the society. According to this sutta, stealing, telling lies and adultery arise accordingly and correspondingly due to poverty. This vividly shows the detrimental effects of poverty in individuals and society. A moral development which brings peace and harmony cannot be expected from the poor society as this sutta clearly
The report *Our Common Future* released by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 introduced a definition of sustainable development which is now considered as one of the most widely recognized definitions of sustainable development.

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- The concept of ‘needs’, in particular, the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.” (UN, 1987)

Thus, the Buddhist view on the problem of poverty which mentioned above is very much concern to the overriding priority of the first key concept of sustainable development. Associating poverty with suffering that needs to be overcome, Buddhism appreciates the necessity of wealth as well as encourages people to earn wealth through righteous means. Buddhism views that taking advantage of others economically, in whatever form, is indicated as unethical acquisition of wealth. The emphatic advice in Buddhism is in whatever means of earning wealth the principle of righteousness must be applied. “Dhammikehi dhammaladdhehi” which means using rightful means and acquired through harmless means, was the Pāli phrase that Buddha always uses to signify the way of earning wealth. That righteous way is shown by the Buddha in *Dīghajānu sutta* (AN 8.54) as proficient, diligent, prudent, competent and expertise in management. According to Buddhist teaching, Buddhists should accumulate wealth without violating any of the five precepts: refrain from killing, stealing, adultery,
lying and taking intoxicants. Moreover, they are prohibited from engaging in five types of trades including trading arms, animals or human beings, flesh, liquor and poison. These five prohibited forms of trade are identified as right livelihood (sammājīva) – the fifth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism. In social aspect, Buddhism also draws attention to the importance of proper distribution of wealth in society to ensure the absence of poverty. Buddhist views that government takes the responsibly to find a proper policy to provide equal opportunity for their citizen to achieve economic stability and arrange fair distribution of wealth in such a way that a wide gap between the rich and poor is prevented from emerging. In this regard, dāna pāramī – the perfection of giving is considered as one of the appropriate tools as it is a genuine way of wealth distribution. In Buddhism, dāna is an action comes from the motivation of alleviating suffering among the society which is realized by the one having opportunities to give and share. Peter Harvey emphasize that: “The primary ethical activity which a Buddhist learns to develop is giving, dāna, which forms a basis for further moral and spiritual development. Generosity is not only practiced towards the Sasāgha, but it is a pervading value of Buddhist Societies.” (Harvey, P. 2013). Accordingly, this practice can be applied both in individual and social aspects, not only in the Buddha’s time by the kings, government, merchants, and householders as mentioned in many sutta but also by every member of the society including rich people, companies, trading groups, governments, etc.

Mentioned in his book, Abeynayake thinks that both poverty alleviation and economic development depends on the human’s will to live in harmony with nature (Abeynayake, O. 2016). Under the guise of material development, to fulfill and satisfy the unlimited want of consumer society, economics tries to obtain maximum outputs from the natural resources. Unfortunately, in reality, that unlimited want can never be fulfilled while the natural resources are facing the situation of gradual scarcity. As the result, mainstream economic practices are resulting in a downward environmental spiral, a vicious circle in which environmental degradation is growing in ever-greater extent (Kovács, G. 2014). If these trends continue, neither can poverty be eliminated nor can
economic development be achieved. Buddhism disapprove the over-exploitation of the natural resources without concern for the resulting deterioration of the natural environment and depletion of non-renewable resources which is being carried out by the policies of mainstream economic at the present. Buddhism views that everything in the world is interconnected and human beings are not independent unconnected entities. Buddhism emphasizes the interconnection between the three spheres of human existence (individual, society and environment or nature) basing on the theory of Dependence Arising and Causality. Accordingly, Buddhism highlights the importance of careful reflection upon the full, long-term consequences and intent of production, consumption and other human actions for both current generation and future generation. As every action affects the whole universe and the self only exists in relation to others, actions that exploit the natural resources or environment are self-injuring. The unified and interconnected nature of the universe suggests paying attentions to care for the environment as well as to find for proper manners on the exploitation and utilization of natural resources. Because any of these activities will have adverse repercussions in direct proportion to the extent of intervention. Environmental awareness and sustainability are inherently embedded in the Buddha’s teaching as an emerging consequence of Buddhist lifestyle. Buddhism aims at a livelihood harmonizing with virtuous changes and leading to positive consequences on environmental harmonized, happy and meaningful life in this very life as well as preserve the environment’s ability and natural resources of the future generation in parallel.

The ethical instructions of the pañcasīla or the Five Precepts also refer to environmental preservation and it can be also justified as one of the

3. According to Aggañña sutta (DN 27), the fall in ethical standards is considered to harmfully effect upon the natural order affecting even the movement of the sun, moon and the planets, regularities in weather and climate and patterns of rainfall. The Buddha’s concern for environment, trees and forest is highlighted in the Varanapa sutta (SN 1.47) wherein it is stated that the planting of gardens and forests are meritorious acts. Monks are prohibited in the Vinaya Pitaka to cut down trees, citing the popular belief that trees are living organism. In the Cakkavattisihanāda sutta (DN 26), the Buddha has stated that public policy should contain provisions for environment protection. The Kūṭadanta sutta (DN 5) states that government plans must cover the protection of plant and animal species protection as well. Environment is considered as one of the for factor that facilitate economic welfare according to Cakka sutta (AN 4.31).
ways to keep natural capital fully intact for distant future generations of humanity. The Five Precepts are considered as the foundation of Buddhist environmental ethics (Harris, I. 1994; Harvey, P. 2000).

Many decades ago, in his book “Small is beautiful”, Schumacher gave a prediction which has become more and more obviously true today that an attitude to life which seeks fulfillment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth – in short, materialism – does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. Already, the environment is trying to tell us that certain stresses are becoming excessive (Schumacher, E.F. 1973). According to Buddhism, another important virtue needs to be connected with the economic life of a person is a sense of balance with regard to one’s patterns of consumption. At the present time, globalization and the free-market economy have the tendency to proliferate the wants, attracting people to the acquisition of an abundance of fancy and luxury goods. As analyzed by Premasiri, media plays an active role through a propaganda machinery to inculcate excessively materialist values among the youth. It becomes difficult, especially for persons of the youth and adolescent age group to resist the temptation to acquire for themselves as many fancy goods as possible imagining that what could make them happy are those possessions. Such a frenzy of desire ultimately results in frustration and disappointment when they find that they do not have the financial means to achieve what they crave for (Premasiri, P. 2011). In this regard, the Buddhist cognition of desire and the simplification of it as interpreted above is the key point, because of its greatest opposition with the mainstream economic system. Buddhist psychology recognizes the fact that there is no ultimate point of satisfaction in the gratification of sense desires, hence it proposes that the greatest wealth is contentment (santuṭṭhi paramāṃ dhanam)⁴. It encourages human beings to satisfy their basic needs and to abandon any other worldly cravings, which can contribute to social well-being by the avoidance of the craving-driven wealth accumulation and overconsumption. Besides, as stated by Welford, the thought of contentment provides the opportunity for businesses to concentrate less on providing

⁴. According to Dhammapada sutta, verse 204.
non-essential consumer goods and more on providing essential goods and services... that will remediate environmental damage and serve the poor and needy (Welford, R. 2006).

In summary, Buddhism advocates the twofold development. In other words, development is the progress that both material and moral aspects must be equally included as a rule. The sake of the individual’s happiness, social stability and security is the goal that economic development aim to achieve. But in fact, mainstream economic system seems to exhaust itself on the path leading to its goal. At the time being, the ecological imbalance created by the pursuit of material wealth without ethical controls is becoming the greatest threat to the world. It is the concrete evidence of the harmful effects of ignoring the importance of moral aspects in adopting effective measures in economic development. According to Buddhism, in order to escape the impending disaster that humanity has to encounter in the meantime to achieve the sustainable economic development which serves the whole of society and protect the environment and its diversity, moral aspect is the indispensable need for this progress.

4. THE IMPLICATIVE BUDDHIST APPROACHES FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned, the original purpose of economics is the realization of happiness and well-being for human beings in both individual and social aspects. Associated with the aforementioned definition of sustainable development, hence economic aims to the development that not only attains the goal of happiness but also meets the two demands including in the definition. Similarly, in Buddhist economic perspective, any economic activities should be a means to alleviate suffering and attain happiness and well-being. It is denoted the alleviation of suffering and attainment of happiness cannot be achieved without economic activities associated with wealth. In various discourses, the Buddha has given many advices and guidance relating to three fundamental wealth managing activities: acquisition, conservation and consumption of wealth. And how to attain the goal of happiness and well-being in this life through these three activities which ensure the human economic adequateness as well as the balance among the interconnectedness
and independence of individual, society and environment or nature. The Buddha’s teachings relating to these three can be considered as the approaches for sustainable economic development.

- **Acquisition of wealth**

  Acquisition of wealth comprises all the economic activities of economic agents related to earning for living. In other words, it is the process of producing goods and service and obtaining profit or wealth from it. Buddhism focuses on ethical restraints on what to produce and how to acquire wealth according to righteousness. In *Dīghajānu sutta* (AN 8.54) of Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha mentioned four factors leading to happiness and well-being in this very life. Among them, the first factor – *uṭṭhānasampadā* (accomplishment of persistent diligence) focuses on how to acquire wealth. Accordingly, having the skill and knowledge to fulfill or manage one’s duties at work or profession are the conditions of creating wealth. It also refers to the patience needed for people to work together as a team and knowledge to recognize the work left undone as well as to be understood as the ability of an inquiring thinking and performing, organizing and administering one’s work as required systematically and efficiently. Skills can be acquired through education, training and experience. In *Pāpanīka sutta* (AN 3.20), Buddha suggested three qualities to succeed in business. They are: (1) to be shrewd by knowing products or one’s own work so well that he/she can set an adequate price and estimate the right profit, (2) to be capable of administering business, knowing the buying and selling markets well, capable of purchasing, marketing, and understand customers, and (3) to establish a good credit rating and to earn trust of financial sources.

  Moreover, the Buddha emphasizes in factor “*uṭṭhānasampadā*” that prosperity and financial security must be obtained legally and morally by diligent effort, hardworking and non-violence. Not harming (oneself, any other living beings and environment), honesty and ethics must be taken into consideration in any business. Buddhism denotes that there is nothing inherently wrong associated with any product, indeed the problem lies on one’s intention as Harvey says (Harvey, P. 2013) “… a focus on amassing wealth is problematic, but wealth itself is not evil; the important
thing is how it is made and used” (Bhar, S. 2018). In this regard, to revisit the notion of “self-standard” mentioned in Veludavāreyya Sutta (SN 55.7) which is considered as the criterion in deciding good and bad is a lucid explanation regarding means of earning wealth. Herein the Buddha explains how one should consider that just as one abhors death, but desires to live, abhors suffering but yearns for happiness, dislikes if another tries to harm one’s life, similarly others too, dislike and abhor unhappiness, or physical harm. Understanding that just as one wants happiness safety of life and so on, or he should refrain from doing anything to others what one does not want others to do oneself. Based on “self-standard”, one should find means of acquiring wealth which not to engage in any kind of evil occupation that direct and indirect harm others.

Besides the aspect of how to acquire wealth righteously, in production aspect, Buddhism provides three to decide what should apply in our current situation based on the discernment of our interdependence with the future generations, the earth and its ecosystems. They are (1) utilize limited resources and energy cost-effectively, (2) create the least amount of waste as is possible, and (3) primarily focus on supplying basic necessities to all members in society. These three suggestions, as analyzed by Priyanut, impose the minimum cost possible to produce the quantity needed for basic human survival in the community, subject to waste absorption and the renewability of the resource within the biosphere. That is, the choice of method or technology of production must have the least social cost among all choices; the production of goods should be operated with the least amount of factor inputs among all feasible choices. Society should primarily aim at producing things that are necessary to fulfil the basic needs of its members – the sufficient level of basic necessities (Priyanut, P. 1997).

- **Conservation of wealth**

After earning wealth through diligent effort and hardworking, the next issue is how to protect one’s wealth to prolong the enjoyment and benefit arising from it. From Buddhist perspective, every phenomenon is impermanent, hence living within constantly changing conditional factors, there are many reasons to prepare for unexpected situations. Also mentioned in Dīghajāṇu sutta (AN
Buddha enumerated the external conditional factors that may affect personal wealth. They are: natural disasters, fire, theft, unintended and displeasing inheritors who may destroy wealth, wrongful seizure by the state. In this connection, the Buddha’s teaching in *Pathamaaputtaka Sutta* (SN 3.19) stressed that properly utilizing wealth can be considered as a way of conserving it.\(^5\)

The *Kula Sutta* (AN 4.258) too informs four approaches to conserve wealth by not engaging in unnecessary life-patterns leading to its waste, namely: (1) searching for what is lost, (2) repairing what is dilapidated, (3) consuming moderate amount of food and drink and (4) placing a virtuous, principled woman or man in the position of authority. These four are equally valid for the individual, family, society and the state in maintaining an economic stability. Practically, these four approaches are consistent with sustainable wealth management. Specifically, the first two suggests us to take responsibility to maintain the availability of natural and material resources both in quantitatively and qualitatively within the technology and knowledge constraints, to protect it from becoming exhausted and lost. Practically, it is necessary to search methods to renew the renewable resources that we have used, to search for the new locations of non-renewable resources and efficiently exploit and use them, to seek out what is lost, recycle product materials, and repair things to prolong their use. In summary, it is the utilization of all possible tools and methods to conserve wealth in the long run. The third advices to form the mindset of sustainable wealth utilization which based on needs, not on desire. The last is indeed very important for handling wealth for performing responsibility to the right person. There is an interesting point that the role of women in saving and conservation of wealth is also emphasized in Buddhism.\(^6\) In oriental country, this teaching is very important.

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5. “When wealth is properly put to use, kings don’t make off with it, thieves don’t make off with it, fire doesn’t burn it, water doesn’t sweep it away, and hateful heirs don’t make off with it. Thus, the wealth to be properly put to use goes to a good use and not to waste.” (*Pathamaaputtaka Sutta* (SN 3.19))

6. According to *Lokavijaya 1 Sutta* (AN 8.49) Buddha states that: “Here, a woman guards and protects whatever income her husband brings home whether money or grain, silver or gold and she is not a spendthrift, thief, wastrel, or squanderer of his earnings. It is in this way that a woman safeguards his earnings.”
in household economic since wife conserves and manages wealth while husband is usually the bread winner. If a wife were not skillful in conserving and managing, wealth would be lost by wrong use, ill-spending, squandering, etc. Moreover, conserving or saving wealth is one of the three aspects of wealth management which was emphasized by the Buddha in Sigālovāda Sutta (DN 31): “In four portions his wealth is shared, one portion for his wants he uses, two portions on his business spends, the fourth for times of need he keeps.” These are the principle used in wealth management even today. Here, the last portion of wealth needs to be paid attention. In fact, there are possibilities of immeasurable risks, losses, bankruptcy, etc., in economic activities. Therefore, a portion of wealth which is kept for times of need is important. In some cases, it would be used like capital to reinvest. Supposed a person suddenly faces with accident or illness, without money or wealth it would be very hard for him to resolve or overcome these problems.

For Buddhist economics, the conditional factors directly related to the conservation of wealth are the principles of justice. Moreover, economic activities related to the sustainable economic development are directly linked to the structure of the justice system in society. Because the principles of justice are critical not only for conserving wealth but also providing the foundation for the principle of fairness, which is used to allocate and distribute resources in society. It is indicated that the main objective of justice in Buddhist economic system is to control, minimize and prevent crime, offence, or any other harm which has arisen from desires in any economic actions. In this regard, the Buddha pointed out the cause of one of the social problems, which is still insolvable at the time being, in Aggañña sutta (DN 27) that to be driven by desire, human being privatizes the common goods as well as unlawfully, un-righteously accumulates and conserves the extreme proportions of private wealth. The consequence of it is the poverty, crime, imbalance of society, and the maldistribution of resources. The first and foremost responsibility for this social problem is assigned to the state. Hence, apart from promulgating proper policies to alleviate poverty as well as develop industries, agriculture and trade to achieve the generation national wealth, from Buddhist economic
perspective, the state has a duty to maintain stability and order in society by providing lawful protection and safety, and by not allowing wrongdoing and crimes to prevail in society. The role of state is based on the principles of justice.

- **Consumption of wealth**

  Consumption is the last wealth management activity after righteously acquiring and properly conserving it. The aforementioned general framework of wealth utilization given to the young man named Sigāla by the Buddha in *Sigālovāda sutta* (DN 31) seems to have a relevance for all individuals, families, societies and states irrespective of time and geographical boundaries. Three aspects of using wealth: consumption, investment and conservation, are emphasized. Specifically, only one fourth of the earnings is used to consume, while the next two fourths are used to invested and the last one fourth as mentioned above is used to conserve. Here, from Buddhist economic perspective, one has the complete right to enjoy or make life easier with the help of the wealth generated through one’s own hard work, provided the use of it, is directed toward karmically fruitful action to help oneself as well as family, friends, relatives, society and other beings (Harvey, P.2013). On the other hand, he can also use personal wealth to invest in order to generate more wealth within the certain restrained budget. The consumption of wealth consistent with Buddhist principles called “balanced living” (samajīvita) which is also highlighted in *Dīghajāṇu sutta* (AN 8.54) as skillful in utilization of wealth. Accordingly, awareness of income and expenditure are indicated as the essential for leading a balanced life. One should not be too extravagant nor too frugal. It is recommended that one’s expenses or consumption and investment must be less than or equal to income within a specified period of time. Consumption according to Buddhist

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7. In *Pañcabhoga Ādiya sutta* (AN 5.41) of Anguttara Nikāya the Buddha mentioned that the family budget should be divided into five, namely: (1) Properly making oneself as well as his parents, wife, children, slaves, workers happy and pleased, (2) Properly making his friends and companions happy and pleased, (3) Making provisions against the losses of wealth that might arise from fire, floods, kings, thieves or displeasing relatives, (4) Making the five obligations to relatives, guest, ancestor, king and deities, (5) Establishing an uplifting offering of alms to virtue and respectable ascetics and brahmins who are seeking for ultimate liberation. He did not say that each part should be 20% of one’s earnings, but he taught that one should budget for each of these sorts of expenditure.
economic philosophy also contributes toward an ethical attitude about owning wealth, that is to be content with one’s best effort to acquire and conserve righteously. The one who enjoys his wealth in this manner will lead a dynamic, balanced life without extravagance or misery.

Besides, balanced living also implies an attitude of generosity towards others in society. According to Buddhism, generosity should be realized through intentional actions to alleviate the suffering arise from empathy and the understanding of our interconnectedness and dependence with others. In this regard, dāna pārami – the perfection of giving is considered as one of the appropriate tools as it is a genuine way of wealth generous sharing. From the Buddhist perspective, in individual level, voluntary giving based on generosity creates positive karmic forces within oneself, realized as pleasant feelings now and wealth in the future. Experiencing good results from giving and sharing naturally encourages one to give more, and subsequently leads to an attitude of non-clinging on material wealth, which is considered as one of the causes leading to suffering. In social level, based on the theory of the law of karma, Buddhism views that the external conditional factors in society are set up in the way we think, act and live. Thus, the more exposed to the generosity model we are, the more likely we are to engage in generosity behavior and act as well as living in a society that promotes generosity, we become more generous. This living way will lead to a positive impact on oneself and lay the foundation for building a more sustainable society.

Harvey stated that even if wealth is produced in the appropriate manner and used for benefiting oneself and other beings, it may still become immoral if one approaches that wealth for satisfying his or her desire or longing and in the process gets attached to that wealth (Harvey, P.2013). In spite of acknowledging the need of consumption or rather, basic consumption, Buddhism strongly critiques heedless indulgence in consumption in order to fulfill various unlimited wants of human beings. Accordingly, Buddhism indicated it as the primary foundation of the consumer culture or consumerism at the time being. From Buddhist perspective, through a propagandist system to inculcate material values as well as impacts into the innate desire (tānha) of the consumer with the
help of social media, consumerism produces false identity, deludes consumer on defining what they really need and what they want. Due to this fact, consumerism fosters human self-centeredness which only focuses on satisfying self-interest regardless of harm to other living beings. This fact indicates why consumerism is considered as an equally harmful activity toward oneself, other living beings and the environment as a whole. Moreover, in the moral aspect, consumerism promotes clinging and attachment and distracts one from the right path of spiritual or moral development. The analysis on the psychology of desire mentioned above paves the way for rethinking about our current consumption trends. The Buddhist insights on the cognition of the two kinds of desire: chanda and tanhā, can lead to a liberating self-awareness that can dissolve the confusion between what is truly beneficial and what is truly harmful in consumption as well as distinguish goods and services are consumed to satisfy the desire for true happiness and well-being or to satisfy the desire for pleasing sensations or ego-gratification. Based on the cognition of chanda and tanhā, right and wrong, harmful and unharmful in consumption, Buddhist economics advises a very practical application that follows primarily from the Buddhist tradition, that is mindfulness; which in this regard is called mindful consumption. Evidences throughout the Buddhist practice history and current researches show that mindfulness increases the likelihood of engaging in ethical behavior, upholding ethical standards, and employing a deliberate and thorough approach to ethical decision making (Ruedy and Schweitzer, 2010). Indeed, according to Buddhist philosophy, the foundation of any moral behavior in Buddhism is “to be right mindful” (samma sati) of one’s action. Mindfulness can be concisely defined as being aware of one’s own thoughts. If this principle is extended in the present world of consumerism, one needs to be consciously aware of each and every thought. Based on this awareness, the consumer can control those thoughts that give rise to desires in his/her mind to buy new stuffs and indulge in various consumption practices. Through mindful consumption, consumers are able to realize the effects of their consumption and also be aware of the futility of indulging in desires.

It is quite clear that Buddhist approach not only pays a lot of
attention to morally right and wrong underlying motives behind consumption psychology and attitudes, emphasizes the responsibility of consumers but also applies the technique of mindfulness to restrain the act of consumption to ensure the righteous,unharmful, non-violent consequence of the whose consumptive process. Therefore, mindful consumption will help us to follow a path of spiritual and moral development for ensuring sustainable development, happiness and wellbeing for individual, society, environment and nature as the whole, guaranteeing the natural resources and environment’s ability for the future generations, as well.

5. CONCLUSION

The Buddhist approach on human desire, the primary psychology factor of economic activities in general and consumption activities in particular, is the uniqueness of Buddhist economic philosophy which distinguishes it with the mainstream economics. Based on the analysis of two kinds of desire: 

1. **Chanda**: This refers to the desire for true happiness and well-being. Buddhists believe that consumption should be guided by this desire to promote spiritual and moral well-being.
2. **Tanhā**: This refers to the desire for pleasing sensations or ego-gratification. This desire is discouraged as it leads to suffering and dissatisfaction.

Buddhism asserts that consumption must be guided by chanda (true happiness and well-being), not by tanhā (pleasing sensations or ego-gratification). This approach provides a model to manage consumer society as well as a way to find proper solutions to reduce and prevent current harmful effects of consumerism, such as over-exploitation of natural resources, serious environmental destructions, imbalance in society, and threats to the sustainable living of future generations.

Buddhism recognizes that the sustainable development goals cannot be achieved in the absence of economic development. Nowadays, the achievements of science and technology have revolutionized the material conditions of modern living; however, focusing mainly on material gain and not concerning moral aspect has made the current economics fail to tackle the challenge of sustainable development in a meaningful way as well as face with many problems relating to economic development itself, the environment, society, and even the security of the next generation. In parallel with material development, moral development permeates in Buddhist economic philosophy.
It is an essential complement to current economic system which is considered as inadequate and lopsided. For Buddhism, (any) development is the progress that both material and moral aspect must be equally included as a rule. Commenting in this regard, Peter L. Daniels considered that the true scope of economics must be highly relevant to religious and ethical systems which structure the manner of livelihood, the morality of all aspects of behavior and its implications, and the means, measures and ideal aspirations and goals of human endeavor. In this sense, there is a very legitimate basis for developing logical connections between Buddhism and the study of economic systems (Peter L. D, 2003).

Focusing on legal, moral, non-harmful and non-violent means of acquisition, conservation and consumption of wealth, the Buddha’s teaching on wealth management provides an implicative economic model due to its attitude of achieving the prosperity and economic development in a sustainable world with minimal suffering as its goal. Additionally, as stressed by Kovács, not just because it helps to recover the imbalance in the distribution scheme, but because it has stabilizing social effects and more importantly it could restore trust amongst the actors of the economy (Kovács, G. 2011). Hence, it is quite clear that Buddhist philosophy decides morally right and wrong actions, not by directly judging a wealth or an object, but rather by evaluating the process of production, usage of the product, and the underlying motives behind its consumption. In other words, instead of just deliberating upon wealth or its production process, for determining its moral status, Buddhism accentuates the need to understand one’s relationship with that wealth by reflecting on the process of acquisition, conservation and consumption of wealth.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<tr>
<td>AN</td>
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A COMPREHENSIVE BUDDHIST APPROACH TO RESTORATION OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY THROUGH ECONOMIC STABILITY

by Ven. Ridegama Wanarathana

ABSTRACT

The formidable global challenges of the 21st century are the battle against alleviation of poverty and economic instability. Peaceful sustainability in the contemporary society in the new millennium is appallingly overwhelmed by corrupt governance, avariciousness, selfishness, detrimental trading, violation of human rights, racism, unequal distribution of resources, poverty, etc. and these conditions have become worse with intense covetousness (abhijjhā), intense hatred (byāpāda), intense delusion (adhi moha), wrong views (micchādiṭṭhi). Consequently, all this has given rise to various social conflicts which jeopardize peaceful and harmonious sustainability in the society. As elaborated in the suttas like Aggañña and Kūtadanta, poverty and unequal distribution of wealth are considered the main reasons for various social conflicts. Obviously, wealth is not denounced and poverty is not welcome in Buddhism. According to Kūtadanta Sutta, vices and moral decline caused due to poverty proliferates suffering in diverse aspects destroying social, peace, equality and economic stability. The Suttās like Kūtadanta, Cakkavattisihanāda, Singālaka, Vyagghapajja, Adiya, Anana, etc. reveal a comprehensive approach to restoration of sustainability and economic stability in a society. According to the Appaka Sutta, many persons, when acquiring lavish wealth through unrighteous
means, become intoxicated, heedless and greedy for sensual pleasures and mistreat other persons. This causes conflicts in even in individual, family, professional and economic life. In this context, the significant distinction between one’s needs and wants should be recognized. Needs should be fulfilled and wants should be limited and reduced as they are insatiable and boundless and the continuous appeasement of wants or desires will bring intense and destructive sufferings, miseries, stress, etc. to society, environment and the world. Hence, the principal purpose of this paper is to expose a comprehensive approach based on the utility of Buddhist economic policies and strategies through governance to restore a sustainable society.

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The Buddhist teachings on economics are scattered throughout the Scriptures among teachings on other subjects. A teaching on mental training, for example, may include guidelines for economic activity, because in real life these things are all interconnected. Thus, if we want to find the Buddhist teachings on economics, we must extract them from teachings on other subjects.

Although the Buddha never specifically taught about the subject of economics, teachings about the four requisites – food, clothing, shelter and medicine -- occur throughout the Pali Canon. In essence, all of the teachings concerning the four requisites are teachings on economics.

The basic model of economic activity often represents in economic textbooks thus: unlimited wants are controlled by scarcity; scarcity requires choice; choice involves an opportunity cost and the final goal is maximum satisfaction. The fundamental concepts occurring in this model: want, choice, consumption and satisfaction – describe the basic activities of our lives from an economic perspective. These concepts are based on certain assumptions about human nature. Unfortunately, the assumptions modern economists make about human nature are somewhat confused.

Buddhism accepts that accumulation of wealth should be through righteous and non-violent means. The two terms used to describe how it should be done namely. ‘dhammena’ (righteously) ‘asahasena’ (nonviolently) could be co-terminus. As pointed out in
the Pattakamma Sutta first among the four pleasant and desirable factors in the world is accumulation of wealth righteously, and in this context, too, the importance of engaging in production in a righteous manner is thus emphasized. The Dhammapada says that a righteous person is he who does no wrong either for his own sake or for the sake of another or does no wrong through the desire for one’s wealth or even a kingdom. It has already been shown above that righteous livelihood is to make one’s livelihood in a virtuous manner. Hence, it is seen becoming virtuous is one way of being righteous in accumulating wealth.

1. WEALTH AND POVERTY IN BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Wealth is not condemned and poverty is not welcomed in Buddhism. Amassing plentiful wealth and the wealth collected through unrighteous means are rejected. Wholesome use of wealth earned through right livelihood and forthright effort is encouraged. The Buddha says that poverty (dāliddiya) is miserable in the world for a person who enjoys sensuality (AN. 6.45 (3). WPB. p.914). This means that poverty is not acceptable as it is associated with dukkha. The term ‘dukkha’ has been translated into English as suffering, misery, dissatisfaction, frustration, etc. ‘Dukkha’ in the context of poverty does not imply any significant distinction between mundane suffering (lokika) and some other transcendental sort (lokuttara). Hence, ‘ill-being’ is sometimes the best term to be used in this context. According to the Kuṭadanta Sutta (DN. 5. WPB. p. 135), vices and moral decline caused due to poverty proliferates suffering in diverse aspects jeopardizing social peace and equality.

The suttas like Kuṭadanta and Cakkavattisīhanāda reveal that social peace, equality, justice, harmony are harmed and violence and crimes increase due to moral degradation committed through vices impelled by poverty (absence of adequate wealth and resources) (DN. 26. WPB. p. 403). According to Buddhist teachings, eradication of poverty should not be understood as the amassing of bountiful wealth, more desires and wants which are to be satisfied by more consumables and luxuries. In this context, the significant distinction between one’s needs and wants should be recognized. Needs – four requisites (food, clothes, shelter and medicine) should be fulfilled and wants should be limited and reduced as
they are insatiable and boundless and the continuous appeasement of wants or desires will bring intense and destructive sufferings, miseries, stress, etc. to individual, family, society, environment and the world.

2. BUDDHIST ATTITUDE ON POVERTY

Over 3 billion people worldwide live in what is termed as absolute poverty, and this means that they have no adequate money, food or shelter. On average, 25,000 children die daily of effects from poverty. Of the estimated 2.2 billion children worldwide, 1 billion live in poverty. According to Buddhism, poverty involves suffering which causes destruction of equality and peace in the society. As a philosophy of living which advocates the elimination of suffering, Buddhism does not appreciate poverty. Buddhism values detachment towards material goods and commends contented life (santussako), few duties (appikicco) light or simple living (sallahukavutti), easy to support (subharo) as mentioned in the Karaniya Metta Sutta (Sn. 1.8 WPB. p. 179), fewness of wishes, having less wants or fewness of desires (appicchatā) (AN. 114 (8). WPB. p. 987) as a virtue and balanced living (samajivikatā) (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1194). Poverty is the non-possession of the basic material requirements for leading a decent life free from hunger, malnutrition, disease, bad health, loss of shelter, absence of other preliminary facilities for standard living, etc. Buddhism recognizes the significance of the fulfillment of the minimum material needs for a decent living even in the context of the aspirants of its higher spiritual goal. For instance, the four requisites for one who has renounced the worldly life are (i) food sufficient to alleviate hunger and maintain good health, (ii) clothing to protect the body and to be socially decent, (iii) shelter for protection from rain, winds, etc. and for the undisturbed engagement with mind development and (iv) medicine sufficient to maintain health care, cure and prevent illnesses. As the Andha Sutta mentions, some persons are like the completely blind (andho) since they do not have the vision to improve their material wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired and also do not have the vision to lead morally raised life knowing wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities and dark
and bright qualities. Some are like the one-eyed (*ekacakkhu*) since they have the vision to improve their wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired but they do not see the necessity to lead a morally raised life knowing wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities and dark and bright qualities. Those who are two-eyed (*dvicakkhu*) are likened to have the vision to improve both (AN. 3.29 (9). WPB. p. 224). Only the increase or improvement of material conditions is not encouraged in Buddhism and a causal relationship exists between material poverty and ethical or social deterioration as the Cakkavattisaṁhanā Suttas exposes.

Thus, poverty, from this point of view does not involve the absence of an abundance of goods that stimulates the insatiable greed of man. The Buddha in the Dhana Sutta (AN. 7.5 (5). WPB. p. 1000 – 1001) appreciates the seven kinds of ‘wealth’ – (1) the wealth of confidence – *saddhā* (placing confidence in the Enlightenment of the Buddha), (2) the wealth of moral conduct (developing one’s character through the establishment of the five precepts), (3) the wealth of moral shame (being ashamed of bodily, verbal and mental misconduct and acquiring bad and unwholesome qualities), (4) the wealth of moral dread (dreading of bodily, verbal and mental misconduct and acquiring bad and unwholesome qualities), (5) the wealth of learning (the teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with right meaning and phrasing that proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life), (6) the wealth of generosity (sacrificing one’s possessions for the benefit of others devoid of miserliness and delighting in giving and sharing) and the (7) wealth of wisdom (insight into three characteristics of existence – *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*) (AN. 7.6 (6). WPB. p. 1000 – 1001). According to the Ugga Sutta, only the material types of wealth can be taken away by fire, water, kings, thieves and unpleasing heirs. However, the above seven types of wealth cannot be taken away by fire, water, kings, thieves and unpleasing heirs (AN. 7.7 (7). WPB. p. 1001 – 1002). Thus, the absence of the seven types of ‘noble wealth’ is reckoned to be ‘true poverty’ that is even more miserable than that resulting from the lack of material resources.
Therefore, from the Buddhist perspective poverty cannot be measured purely on the basis of the material criterion of the quantity of goods people consume. While insisting on the importance of the fulfillment of the basic material needs Buddhism places a high value on the cultivation of the psychological attitude called *santuṭṭhi* (contentment). According to the teaching of the Buddha, the greatest wealth is contentment (*santuṭṭhiparamam dhanam*) (Dhp. Ch.15. V.204. p.177). Therefore, in a nutshell, poverty, according to Buddhist teachings, is the absence of material necessities that obstruct a decent living endowed with light living (*sallavukavutti*) and balanced living (*samajīvikatā*) through right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*).

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

The roots of all the unwholesome actions that cause social issues such as poverty, inequality, injustice are defilements which are the noxious psychological causes. The Buddhist analysis of the deep-rooted psychological causes of a social issue like poverty has so far been discussed on the basis of the noxious trio – passion, aversion and delusion. For instance, one of the most detrimental psychological causes is the overindulgence in sensual pleasures that leads to overconsumption of material wealth and resources by rulers and minority class in a society making the majority of people stricken with poverty related suffering. Many rulers, their supporting elite class and officials exploit the people and lead a life of extreme gratification of sensual desires in the lap of luxury at the expense of common masses. The other psychological reason is that these rulers and officials bear no genuine attitudes to solve basic problems confronted by the countrymen. Instead, out of avariciousness and covetousness (*abhijjhā*) – two psychological reasons, great wealth and abundance of resources are collected, unimaginable amount of money is amassed through evil means and deposited in banks, palatial mansions furnished with extravagant facilities are built, vehicles of immensely expensive values are used, lands and property of great value even on foreign lands are bought and various illegal means of amassing wealth are manipulated while responsibilities to the society are neglected and various forms of oppression and deprivation in the life of people such as unequal distribution of wealth, exploitation of wealth by a minority plunging
the entire country into poverty are committed. The Raṭṭhapāla Sutta points out how heads of state engage in destructive and aggressive wars due to their insatiable greed for power and wealth and bring destruction upon themselves as well as many others: A king wins territories through aggression as far as the surrounding ocean. Yet not being contented with that, he desires territories even beyond the shores (MN. 82. WPB. p. 689). This Sutta mentions of wars that originate from aggressive intentions of greedy heads of state, a phenomenon that must have been frequently experienced in all parts of the ancient world.

The other psychological causes for individual, family or people to fall into poverty are their lack of enthusiasm, laziness, mental languor, sluggishness, lethargy, narrow-mindedness, lack of intellectual potentials, etc. Due to one or more of these reasons, individual or family does not strive hard in their work, business or any activities of livelihood as revealed in the Siṅgālovāda Sutta (DN. 31. WPB. p. 463), and this leads to a stagnant nature of life that brings about no progress of economic stability or loss of wealth. According to the Najīrati Sutta (SN. 76.6. WPB.p.136), six faults in the world where wealth and property do not persist are (i) laziness, (ii) heedlessness, (iii) lack of action, (iv) lack of restraint, (v) sleepiness and (vi) sloth. A householder should avoid these six faults that dissipate wealth and goods.

Among the twelve causes of unsuccessful man exposed in the Parābhava Sutta, certain psychological causes that conduce to decline, loss and destruction of wealth and balanced living can be taken.

i. Averseness to Dhamma

ii. Preference to wicked persons and averseness to virtuous persons

iii. Fondness of sleep, fondness of company, being indolent, lazy and irritable

iv. Ungrateful to old parents

v. Deception a brahman or ascetic or any other mendicant by falsehood
vi. Enjoyment of luxuries alone
vii. Being proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and despising of one’s own kinsmen
viii. Being a rake, a drunkard, a gambler and squandering all one earns
ix. Not being contented with one’s own wife and being with harlots and the wives of others
x. Being past one’s youth, taking a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her
xi. Placing in authority a woman addicted to drinking and squandering or a man of a like behavior
xii. Being of noble birth, with vast ambition and of slender means and craving for rulership (Sn. 1.6. PTS. p.13).

In order to eradicate poverty that harms equality and peace and to develop economic stability, these unwholesome psychological frailties should be eliminated.

4. SOCIAL CAUSES OF POVERTY AND MORAL DETERIORATION

The Buddhist teaching has been realistic enough to recognize certain proximate causes associated with the material conditions of life – external causes that lead to poverty and its related issues. Material deprivation is seen as a key source of conflict that jeopardizes equality and peace. In other words, poverty is considered a root cause of crime in the society. According to the Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta (DN. 26. WPB. p. 395) and the Kūṭadanta Sutta (DN. 5. WPB. p. 133), the roots of conflicts lie not only in individual consciousness but also exist in the very structure of society that encourages those roots to grow. These Suttas point out that when the economic order of society is of inequality, injustice and vicious economic disparities; a substantial section of the community is reduced to poverty and people rebel against such social order. According to the Kūṭadanta Sutta, the failure on the part of the ruler (state) to look after the essential needs of the people drive the people who are deprived of their needs to resort to crime and rebellion against the governance (state). The imposition of penalties to deal with such
a situation does not produce the desired results. According to the Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta (DN. 26, WPB. p.395), any social order that does not address the problem of economic poverty creates conditions for social unrest resulting eventually in the total decline of the moral standards of society causing a lot of social issues, and the end result of it could be disastrous riots or wars.

When poverty or economic deprivation is eradicated, peace, equality, happiness and coexistence are established. According to the above event mentioned in the Sutta, wealth and resources to support trade, agriculture and other occupations should be distributed and proper salaries should be paid to those engaged in occupations adequate to lead good life and this will eradicate material disparities and vices caused by them and bring about social equality, peace and happiness in the country.

5. ACQUISITION OF BOUNTIFUL WEALTH

As the Aputtaka Sutta discusses (SN. 3.19 (9). WPB. p. 182), King Kosola, having conveyed an heirless fortune to the royal palace, talks to the Buddha about a wealthy money-lending householder who died in Sāvatthi: Even though he was a money-lending householder, his enjoyment of food was like this: he ate broken rice and pickle brine. His enjoyment of clothing was like this: he wore three lengths of hempen cloth. His enjoyment of a vehicle was like this: he rode in a dilapidated little cart with a canopy of leaves.

The Buddha further says that when a person of integrity acquires lavish wealth, he provides for his own pleasure and satisfaction, for the pleasure and satisfaction of his parents, the pleasure and satisfaction of his wife and children; the pleasure and satisfaction of his slaves, servants, and assistants; and the pleasure and satisfaction of his friends. He institutes for priests and contemplatives offerings of supreme aim, heavenly, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven. When his wealth is properly put to use, kings do not make off with it, thieves do not make off with it, fire does not burn it, water does not sweep it away, and hateful heirs do not make off with it. Thus his wealth, properly put to use, goes to a good use and not to waste.
6. BALANCED LIVELIHOOD

As the Dīghajānu (Vyagghapajja) Sutta reveals a householder knowing his income and expenses should lead a balanced life, neither wasteful nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1195). The four sources for the increase of collected wealth through right livelihood or right living, namely: (1) avoidance of debauchery, (2) avoidance of drunkenness, (3) non-indulgence in gambling, (4) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good should be adopted to lead a simple and balanced life (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1195). According to the above Sutta, a householder lives well in the present life when he is active in doing good, heedful and circumspective, equanimous in livelihood and careful with his savings (uposṭhā kammadheyyesu, appamatto vidhānavā; Samaṁ kappeti jīvikaṁ sambhatarī anurakkhati) (AN. 8.54 (4). WPB. p. 1194).

Earning of wealth righteously and right uses of wealth conduce to balanced living. As the Siṅgālovāda Sutta illustrates, the Buddha gives instructions to the young householder, Sigālaka on how wealth is earned righteously and the four ways to spend one’s wealth by a wise man endowed with virtue in order to lead a fruitful, wholesome and balanced life. They are explicated through similes thus. The wise one who is endowed with virtue will shine like a beacon-fire. He gathers wealth like a bee gathering honey or like ants piling up their hill (pañđito sīlasampanno jalaṁ aggīva bhāsatī, Bhoge samharamānassa, bhamarasseva irīyato; Bhogā sannicayam yanti, vammikovupacīyati.) (DN. 31. WPB. p. 466). The four ways to spend wealth mean that wealth can be divided into four portions (Catudhā vibhaje bhoge, sa ve mittāni ganthati). He enjoys one portion of wealth, with two portions he manages his work or profession or business (investment), the fourth portion is to be deposited to be used in times of misfortune and the last part for fulfilling obligations (Ekena bhoge bhuñjeyya, dvīhi kammaṁ payojaye; Catuttahaṅca nidhāpeyya, āpadāsu bhavissati ti) (DN. 31. WPB. p. 466). The right uses of wealth that has been righteously obtained are also conducive to balanced living according to the Pattakamma Sutta (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449). Wealth should
be used for dependents, for overcoming misfortunes, for giving donations and for making the five offerings — to kin, guests, the departed, kings and the gods — this has been recommended by the virtuous who live spiritually (Bhuttā bhogā bhatā bhaccā, vitīṇṇā āpadāsu me, uddhaggā dakkhiṇā dinā, atho pañcabalīkatā, upaṭṭhitā silavanto, saññatā brahamacārayo) (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449).

According to the Najirati Sutta, six faults in the world where wealth and property do not persist are (i) laziness, (ii) heedlessness, (iii) lack of action, (iv) lack of restraint, (v) sleepiness and (vi) sloth. A householder should avoid these six faults that dissipate wealth and goods (SN. 76.6. WPB. p. 136).

All the above factors that conduce to healthy, wealthy and balanced existence are prerequisites to meditation as the mind of a person who leads such a balanced and righteous life is not rigid, unkind, ruthless, rough, wicked, cruel and immoral but happy, content, less agitated, pliable and supple. The Vyagghapajja Sutta exposes the conditions of worldly progress (AN. 8.54 (4), WPB. p. 1194). The same concept is elucidated in the Pattakamma Sutta (AN. 4.61 (1). WPB. p. 449).

The four conditions conduce to a householder’s weal and happiness in this very life.

i. The accomplishment of persistent effort (uṭṭhāna-sampadā)

ii. The accomplishment of watchfulness (ārakkha-sampadā)

iii. Good friendship (kalyāṇamittatā)

iv. Balanced livelihood (sama-jīvikatā)

According to the accomplishment of persistent effort (uṭṭhāna-sampadā) as revealed in the Vyagghapajja Sutta (AN. 8.54 (4), WPB. p. 1194), householder by whatsoever activity earns his living, whether by farming, by trading, by rearing cattle, by archery, by service under the king, or by any other kind of craft — at that he becomes skillful and is not lazy. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means; he is able to carry out and allocate duties. As per the accomplishment of watchfulness (ārakkha-sampadā), a householder whatsoever wealth is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of
arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means — such husbands well by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal it, fire would not burn it, water would not carry it away, nor ill-disposed heirs remove it.

7. ABOLITION OF POVERTY AND RESTORATION OF ECONOMIC STABILITY

A householder with a large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say this person will die like a starveling. Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and outlets, if a man should close the inlets and open the outlets and there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease of water is to be expected in that tank, and not an increase. The four sources for the increase of amassed wealth are Abstinence from debauchery, Abstinence from drunkenness, Non-indulgence in gambling and Friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a person were to open the inlets and close the outlets, and there should also be adequate rainfall, an increase in water is certainly to be expected in that tank and not a decrease, even so these four conditions are the sources of increase of amassed wealth.

Therefore, poverty or absence of adequate wealth, property and resources should be eliminated through the eradication of psychological, ethical, social and kammic factors that conduce to non-possession of wealth and resources as explicated in the above suttas. Dissipation, destruction and loss of wealth already acquired should be eliminated through the elimination of the Six Channels of Dissipation of Wealth (cha bhogānaṃ apāyamukhāni) as explicated in the Sīṅgālovāda Sutta, immoral behaviour that wastes wealth as discussed in the Suttas like Pattakamma, Parābhava, Vyagghapajja, etc. and refrain from the association of evil friends or foes in friendly guise (amittā mittapatirūpakā) and association of good friends (suhadamitto) revealed in the Sīṅgālovāda Sutta (DN. 31. WPB. p.464 – 466).

Buddhism which neither appreciates poverty nor appreciates attachment towards material wealth commends contented life (santussako), few duties (appkicco) light or simple living
(sallahukavutti), easy to support (subharo), fewness of wishes or having less wants or fewness of desires (appicchatā) (AN. 114 (8). WPB. p. 987) as a virtue and balanced living (samajivikatā) endowed with wholesome moral deportment. In Buddhism, poverty is termed as suffering for people who enjoy sensual pleasures as it disturbs individual, social and spiritual peaceful existence.

8. CONCLUSION

The major part of our lives is taken up with economic activities. If economics is to have any real part to play in the resolution of the problems confronted by mankind, then all economic activities, whether production, working, spending or consuming is to help create true well-being and develop the potential for a good and meaningful life that is something that we are capable of doing. The essence of Buddhist economics lies here, in ensuring that economic activity simultaneously enhances the quality of our lives. All the psychological and social factors that are directly or indirectly conducive to poverty and dissipation of wealth should be eradicated to establish stability of wholesome wealth and wholesome economy in Buddhist perspective. Therefore, the applicability of above mentioned teachings in Buddhism is extremely significant for the sustainable development in the society. It is through the righteous economic stability that morally civilized society is developed and sustainable peace and equality that establish justice, harmony, human rights, etc. are restored.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN : Aṅguttara Nikāya
CDB : The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Saṃyutta Nikāya)
Dhp : Dhammapada
DN : Dīgha Nikāya
GD : The Group of Discourses (Suttanipāta)
Khp : Khuddakapāṭa
KN : Khuddaka Nikāya
LDB : The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)
MLDB : The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikāya)
NDB : The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Aṅguttara Nikāya)
PTS : Pāli Text Society, London
SN : Samyutta Nikāya
WPB : Wisdom Publications. Boston

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Bibliography


ABSTRACT

Human covered all space to conquer, rule and change the whole environment for their suitable and comfortable adaptation. With such intervention in natural mechanism, man was unknown to the fact that some invisible demonic consequences are following him when he is crossing all the natural barriers to demolish hills, destroy forests and diminishing water sources and demonstrating his powers to create or finish anything anywhere. Such disastrous way of consumption came to be known in form of acid rain, floods, rise of sea level, drought and famine. The people started introspecting their conduct and think to refrain their activities to sustain the resources for future. Sustainable development is a process that requires use of existing resources without compromising it for future generation. It requires to visualize the world as a system that connects space and time. One of the key principles of Buddhist teachings, pratityasamutpāda or inter-dependent co-arising or dependent origination which sees all things and phenomena as interdependent and arising from multiple cause and conditions is clearly consistent with the Sustainable development. The pillars of establishing socio-economic development and equalities are elucidated in the various Buddhist sutras. It shows that because of craving all sufferings and struggle originate. The Buddha explained the ways to earn and share the wealth virtuously and trail the path of spirituality to establish sustainable development, peace, and harmony in the society.

*. Dr., Assistant Professor, School of Buddhist Philosophy, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Academic campus Barla, Raisen, M.P., India.
Buddhism is against the lustful attachment towards insatiable things. Consumption according to Buddhism is not the final goal of a society. In the above perspective the paper will examine the various approaches of sustainable development and responsible consumption.

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The concept of growth was evolved in the sphere of social sciences for the guidance of new nation who won their independence after the Second World War (1939-45). Indeed, the idea of development itself was not new. Early indications of this idea are found in the social thought of nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It was largely expressed in the theory of social change. This change could be conceived as the transition from simple to complex forms, from less efficient to more efficient forms, or ordinary to better forms. Development may be identified as a process in which a system or institution is transformed into stronger, more organized, more efficient and more effective form and proves to be more satisfying in term of human wants and aspirations. J.H. Mittelman (1988) has tried to defined development as ‘the increasing capacity to make rational use of natural and human resources for social end’, whereas under-development denotes ‘the blockage which forestalls a rational transformation of the social structure’. Other important definitions of development also tend to convey this idea in more or less elaborate form. Thus Paul Baran (Baran, 1957) described development as ‘a far-reaching transformation of society’s economic, social and political structure, of the dominant organization of production, distribution and consumption’. He pointed out that it has never been a smooth, harmonious process unfolding placidly over time and space. In short, people wish to make best use of their natural and human resources in orderto achieve their social end. The process which fructifies their effort in this direction is called ‘development’; the factor which fructifies their effort is called ‘underdevelopment’. Since the concept of development was specifically addressed to the ‘developing countries’ or ‘developing nations. it would be essential to understand the status of this set of countries.

Development is primarily a positive phenomenon. It stands for improvement of human life in all spheres. But when it comes
to economic sphere, some of its negative effects have also been noted. Economic development demands higher production which involves exploitation of natural resources. In the modern age of gigantic machines operated by huge energy resources to meet ever-growing demand for consumption, the process of exploitation of natural resources has become very fast. Can this process continue indefinitely? Do we have unlimited stock of natural resources? Does their mindless exploitation as well as the pattern of our consumption have an ill effect on our environment? If so, what can we do to stop an imminent disaster? These are the questions which have stirred the minds of the champions of sustainable development.

Sustainable development has been a matter of discussion in development practices and theories for a long time. Since the industrial revolution, development has mainly focused on economic progress in consumption, production, and industrial growth together with technological advancement. Human and social development as well as the environment has not much received careful consideration, and all three have deteriorated. As human beings have experienced social, environmental, economic, political and psychological problems from development driven mainly by economic growth, there have been increased discussions on development directions and new prototype for development. Among major milestones in the sustainable development movement, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in June 1972, may be considered as the start of global concern towards the international environment (Payutto, 2006:56-60). This stream of consciousness has promoted international attention to environment-friendly development. Over the last thirty years, there have been many active movements towards sustainable development. The UN General Assembly and related agencies have approved the Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. Although many UN and other development organizations have declared high priority to work towards Sustainable Development Goals, they are likely to focus on the old framework of green growth or quality growth with environmental friendliness. In this regard, Buddhist theories and practices, focusing on inner cheerfulness, well support holistic sustainable development. The inner happiness focused sustainable
development may be called “Buddhist Sustainable Development”, driven by the “Buddhist sustainable happiness” path or happiness at high (mind and wisdom) levels.

In 1983, the UN established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) or called “Brundtland Commission” as an independent agency and published an important report - *Our Common Future* (1987), providing the definition of sustainable development (WCED, 1987:43) as:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concept: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.” Bruntland Report endorsed these observations and sought to give a new direction to the process of development.

The prominence given to ‘needs’ of the present as well as the future in Bruntland Report reflects a concern to eradicate poverty and meet basic needs of the vast humanity. the concept of sustainable development focused attention on finding strategies to promote economic and social development without causing environmental degradation, over-exploitation or pollution. The emphasis on development was particularly welcomed by the developing countries and the groups who were primarily concerned about poverty and social deprivation.

Sustainability concepts were further discussed in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 when *Agenda 21*— a programme of action for sustainable development worldwide was adopted. As a major result of the Earth Summit, the Earth Charter listed guiding principles of sustainable development. It contains a broad array of economics, social, political, and environmental / ecological policies and acknowledges the interdependence between these elements in addressing the peoples’ wellbeing. Both approaches are consistent with the importance satisfying present needs without compromising the ability of future generations
to meet their own needs, they differ in “how” this sustainable development mandate can be achieved.

As ecology-based concept emphasizes the ecological imperatives of carrying capacity, bio-diversity, and biotic resilience, human capital cannot effectively substitute for the vital contributions provided by ecological systems. All living things are related naturally and support each other in using and re-using natural resources. If one living species increases in population, this imbalance would affect the entire ecological system. Therefore, the increase in human population growth and consumption growth would affect the system balance. This imbalance is also enhanced by technology. Since the industrial revolution, human beings have utilized massive amounts of resources for the sharp increases in production and consumption.

The heart of the Buddha’s teachings is the *tilakkhanaṇa*, the Three Signs of Being, which describes that every phenomenon is conditioned and shares three fundamental characteristics: (i) *anicca* or impermanence, (ii) *dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness, and (iii) *anattā* or the lack of permanent self. Its most important occurrences in the Pāli Canon are collected by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (2008). The *tilakkhanaṇa* is the foundation of Buddhist theory and practice. The most important of them from the thread of this paper is the first one, *anicca*: impermanence or transience.

According to *anicca*, there is nothing in the phenomenal world, which is not subjected to ongoing change. The human world and its environment stands or falls with the type of moral force at work. If immorality grips society humankind and nature declines. If morality exists the quality of human life and nature improve (*Atthasalini*, 854). Buddha says that if change is universal; neither man nor any other being, animate or inanimate are being absolved of it. Every thing is framed in constant process of change (*Anguttar Nikaya*, IV.108). In his doctrine of impermanence (*ksanikavada*) he explains transitory nature of things and says ‘whatever exist arises from causes and conditions and in every respect impermanent’ (*Mahaparinirvana Sutta*, 9). The human kind is also a part of nature and no sharp distinction can be drawn between them and their surrounding, as everything is impermanent and subject to same natural laws. It
must be seen as an important basis for proper understanding the role of humankind of human kind in nature. Nothing is everlasting, unchanging, permanent or stable. Impermanence is the very core of the Buddha’s teachings.

The concept of suffering suggests that all humans are suffering. They are wanting to have what they do not have or they are wanting to remove what they have. They want to change their condition. Status maintenance is suffering. The desire for change, the definition of suffering, is itself suffering. This is true in all socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. In absence of industrialization and economic development we “suffer” from poverty; in presence of them we “suffer” from environmental consequences of them. It appears that the concept of happiness is vacuous. The Buddha proposes that happiness comes from wisdom and from avoiding the extremes, i.e. it comes from a middle position. We may also look for ways through which we can have development without environmental problems. Yet, this option has to be exercised carefully and reflectively. It requires a vivid recognition of the environmental problems, along with analysis of the problems, and search for solutions emerging from this analysis and not from old political and philosophical discourses.

The concepts of sustainability refer to a process in which a certain state of being is sustained: the preservation of a particular state of existence. It is motivated by longing for constancy. From the point of impermanence, the aim of sustainability cannot be accomplished, as the Buddhist worldview does not admit permanence, which is implied in its notion. As every phenomenon is subjected to decay and cessation, sustainability cannot be achieved directly. Therefore clinging to its realization cannot be interpreted as anything other than a striving, which results in suffering.

The teaching of Lord Buddha on leading life along the middle path is therefore a teaching on making a choice in life. The Dhammacakkapavattna Sutta (S.V., 241) presents the Noble Eightfold path which is described as the Noble Truth of the practice leading to the cessation of suffering. The practice of the middle path consists of eight deeds of righteousness. The following eight factors i. Right View, ii. Right Thought, iii. Right Speech,
iv. Right Action, v. Right Livelihood, vi. Right Effort, vii. Right Mindfulness and viii. Right Concentration. In the *Culavedalla Sutta* (M.III, p.248) Bhikkhuni Dhamadinna explains to Visakha, that the Noble Eightfold Path is included in the threefold training-namely, morality (*śīla*) concentration (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*pañña*). Buddhist lifestyle aims to improve these three synergistic abilities to perfection by ongoing practice, which is a development process. Nevertheless in this case development is just a by-product of Buddhist practice, not a direct aim which must be attained. The development process is an inner spiritual advancement, which is emerging by ongoing practice, and leads to liberation.

The conception of development is included in the Dhamma, but with three main differences as it is interpreted in the mainstream approach: (1) the development process is an inner, spiritual progress (exclusive material development is not praised and not important above a necessary level for one’s inner advancement); (2) the development process is not a direct goal in itself, but a direct consequence of the purification of the human character; (3) the development is not sustainable, rather is emerging as a by-product of ongoing practice.

As it is also articulated, ensuring necessary material background is essential for spiritual development. The four basic needs must be met before spiritual development can be achieved or even started. That is why applying appropriate social activities is crucial to ensure them, as it is emphasized in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals.

It could be argued that sustainable development is strongly associated with a moral imperative that apparently no one can ignore or reject, without having to provide a very good reason for dissent, content, interpretation and the implementation of this. Buddhism propounds same undertaking between human and development. Teachings in the *paticcasaṃuppada* are the guiding principles toward learning how to make a choice that will produce the outcome beneficial to life, to last and to sustain for they will constantly keep the people far away from the unbounded desires. One of the key principles of Buddhist teachings, *paticcasaṃuppada* or inter-dependent co-arising or dependent origination which
sees all things and phenomena as interdependent and arising from multiple cause and conditions is clearly consistent with the Sustainable development. The Buddhist virtues, precepts and principles are the foundations which develop peace, happiness, harmony, compassion, wisdom, care, sharing and socio-economic equality in the society. The inter-relation between man and nature influence social institution and also creates numerous social problems. When these problems go beyond the control of man, governments are forced to intervene, and this is well illustrated in the Agganna Sutta. The Cakkavattisihanad Sutta (DighaNikaya, III, 61) and the KutadantaSutta also insist on the necessity of a state policy regarding sustainable approach towards life.

The Dhammapada (V.183) says that men driven by fear seek refuge in forest groves, trees and mountains. Man got frightened of nature because he failed to understand nature. The Agganna Sutta explains how things manifest clearly when their origins are known. It (Digha Nikaya III, 80) very vividly brings out the essential relations among human nature, environment, ethics, politics and economy. The message that the canon offers is that sustainable approaches could be solved only by understanding the doctrine of Dependent origination. The Dhammapada (V.80) which says irrigators lead the waters, carpenters bend the wood, the wise control themselves.

Both the Sigalovada Sutta and the Dhammapada employ the simile of a bee that collects honey from flowers without harming it, to explain how a person, who properly understands the workings of nature, taps it for his benefit. Not only does the bees not harm the flower, but helps the process of pollination. The Buddhist admonition is to utilize resources in the same way as a bee collects pollen from flowered, neither polluting its beauty nor depleting its fragrance. Just as the bee manufactures honey out of pollen, so man should be able to find happiness and fulfilment in life without harming the natural world in which he lives (Silva, 1972:9). The natural resources is not a divine creation effected for the use of man and, hence one should not consider that nature is meant solely for one's benefit. Instead, men should accept the right of all other beings to live on earth. Man gets the opportunity of living on earth only if there is harmony among humans, animals and plant life. The Metta
Sutta conveys this message and the Bhuripanna Jataka. Describes the breaking of a branch that provides shade as an unfriendly act. It is popularly accepted that the Buddha, too, showed gratitude to the Bodhi tree under which he attained Enlightenment. It can be said (Douglas, 2011:17) that the Buddhists take pride in their sensitivity and atonement to nature.

It is essential that man should realize that he is merely a part of nature. The danger of being ignorant of this fact is well explained. Man has been so much enchanted by scientific and technological progress that he is misled into believing that he has almost completely conquered nature and has control over it. He also believes that with his conquest of nature, all problems will be solved and heaven will be established on earth. But he is not aware that nature that he thinks he has conquered is not the whole of it, but only a part of it, possibly a half of it, that is the external material world. The other half is within himself, the nature of man or the man as a part of nature. In the process of struggle to conquer the material world of nature man even often neglects his responsibility to master the inner nature within himself and tends to lose control over it. Conversely this inner nature has grown stronger and has taken much control over him (Rajavaramuni, 1987:31). Due to this misconception about his superiority over nature man unwittingly gets self-alienated. It is only man who can realize the relation between man and nature. This is the very reason why he should act in an enlightened manner.

The Vanaropa Sutta also focuses the attention on the importance of protection, conservation and development. This Sutta says people who are engaged in such activities will prosper both in this world as well as in the next (SamyuttaNikayaI. 33). It draws attention to such aspects as planting of trees, forests orchards, construction of bridges and houses, supply of water etc (Wimalaratana, 1989:32) all of which are, at present, projects undertaken at national and even global level. Environmental problems were not so rampant during the Buddha` s time, hence, this shows how futuristic is the Buddha`s approach regarding sustainability.

Deforestation, water-pollution, lack of a proper system of irrigation are causing severe problems at present. The Buddha`s foresight with regard to this is seen from the Kimdada Sutta of Samyuttanikaya(I.
32) which describes the giver of a house as the giver of everything. The stress and irritation caused by pollution of sound is also a major cause of worry in the present world, and the Buddha has focussed his attention on this aspect of environmental pollution (Arvi, 1978: 118). Many Suttas clearly say that the contemporaries of the Buddha were much surprised by the quietitude adopted by the Buddha and his disciples. The Samannaphala Sutta (Digha Nikaya: I.50.) of the Digha Nikaya says that King Ajatassattu was somewhat apprehensive about the dead sojourning with a large following of disciples. In fact, he suspected whether this arranged visit of his to the Buddha was a plot to hand him over to his enemies. When selecting places of residence for monks solitude and noiselessness of the place were given special consideration (Vinaya Pitaka: I, 39). The Buddha often advised monks that they should either engage in righteous talk or maintain golden silence. (Majjhima Nikaya: P.II) The Bhayabherava Sutta points out that even the slightest sound could disturb an uncontrolled mind (Majjhima Nikaya: P.II) Professor Lily de Silva very eloquently brings out the chaotic consequences of sound pollution that takes place at present. (Silva, 1987:22) The solution for this suffering lies in the practice of spirituality. Buddhist Middle Path balances both spirituality and materialism to lead the contended life on the principles of sharing and caring. Buddhist virtues, precepts and principles focus on establishing peace and harmony through spiritual and socio-economic development in the society. The virtue regulates the behaviour, strengthens the meditation in turn develops wisdom. The virtue tends to elevate the man which all can cultivate irrespective of creed, colour, race, or sex, the earth can be transformed into a paradise where all can live in perfect peace and harmony as ideal citizens of one world. The Buddha, with great compassion for the world, required his followers to practice the four boundless states (appamanna) of loving kindness (metta), of compassion (karuna), of sympathetic joy (mudita), and of equanimity (upekkha). This practice of ‘metta’ or universal love, begins by suffusing one’s own mind with universal love (metta) and then pervading it to one’s family, then to the neighbours, then to the village, country and the four corners of the Universe. It is time that one will take the middle path in using our natural resources. We could no longer senselessly overexploit our
resources and use up our natural energy without sustaining them for the future generations.

The practice of *pancaśīla* as advocated by the Buddha—(i) To abstain from killing and harming any living being: The first *sīla* tells protection of every human and animals. It means the abstinence from destruction of life. We should not kill any living being. Buddha taught never to destroy the hate any being. We should develop kindness and love towards all creatures. Non-violence is a fundamental tenet in Buddhism. Ahimsa promotes non-harming attitudes to fellow human beings and eco system. Reverence for all forms of life is a crucial practical virtue in this tenet. Gentleness in all actions of body, speech and mind creates a healthy cultural and religious value that celebrates sustainable environment. (ii) To abstain from frivolous speech or falsity: Buddha teaches abstention from lying through fourth *sīla*. Everyone should avoid all kind of lies. *Suttanipata* states when one comes to an assembly or gathering, he should not tell lies to any one, or causes any to tell lies, or consent to the acts of those who tell lies; he should avoid every kind of untruth. Humans should stay away from the lie. He should not sacrifice the truth in any situation. (iii) To abstain from stealing or taking which is not given—It means to accept anything without provided any kind of a person is theft. The Buddha says that a disciple knowing the *Dhamma* should refrain from stealing anything at any place, should not cause another to steal anything, and should not consent to the acts of those who steal anything, should avoid every kind of theft. (iv) To abstain from any evil lustful conduct in lapse of *Brahmacārīya* practice by body, by speech and by mind—The fourth *sīla* educates to abstain from sexual immorality. The world’s most violent excitement is sexuality. Therefore, people should always stay away from sexuality. (v) To abstain from intoxicating drinks and narcotic drugs—Buddha educates all the human staying away from all types alcohol and drugs through the last modesty. A good householder who is interested in virtues, he should not take any drugs. Who are drinkers it should not support them? The alcohol makes a man frantic or mad. Ignorant people do evil actions by taking alcohol. You should refrain from it. This produces sin. This creates madness and it is the home of ignorance. Intoxication destroys glory of a person before the society. This gives
rise to conflict and disease. Individual do not care his garments. Person does not care self-pride and become incapable of learning. It is concluded that these Pancasila which revealed by Buddha are socially strong and human beneficial. Societies accept any theories according its time and country. It is the influence of Buddhism that society does not respect such kind any person who is violent, theft, lies, and adulterer in the modern era of 21st century. When the Pancasila should make a part of human life then they (Pancasila) will be relevant.

Buddhism teaches us the manner in which to consume these elements. To a monk who has newly been initiated into the sangha, the knowledge of such matter is fundamental to the learning to the learning and practicing of the Buddhist precepts. It teaches him to use his intellect to examine carefully the objects being consumed and their end results. He is trained to be vigilant over the five sensual organs. Once fully understood how these senses interact on the mind, he is made to learn have command over them so they do not veer from the desired path.

The ethical teachings of Buddhism ask us to purify the mind to control our desire. It observes that being greedy, human beings want to take as much as they can from the earth and from others to satisfy their immediate wants without consideration for the future. Any kind of devaluation of other creatures and rating them in lower levels than human beings empathetically disconnect us from the harmonious principle of nature and lead us to harm to others as well as to ourselves. It is this moral dimension of ecological problems which may be addressed from the ethical perspective of Indian religious and philosophical tradition. Vinaya also contains an instruction to Bhikkhu to ‘recycle old robes’ (II) and ‘not to pollute water or green grass with urine or excrement’ (IV). In Aśoka’s inscriptions, we find instruction for preservation of medicinal plants with special care because both human and animal species require these for getting rid of ailments. All these show that the Buddhist way of living used to honour with gratefulness the inner rhythm of nature. This is very close to a modern use of preserving bio diversity. (Sharma and Labh, 2016: 279)

It is possible to conclude that Buddhist point of view it is only
an intelligent person who can properly understand this relation, man should not be frightened of nature, but should understand it, through this understanding he should make the best use of nature, even changing and adjusting it when necessary. This changes and adjustment should be effected without harming nature, instead should enhance and foster nature, man should, through the use of these nature resources, produce things, while conserving nature man should also appreciate it, man should never consider himself to be superior to nature, but instead should consider himself to be a part and parcel of it, the man should consider that destruction of nature amounts to his own destruction and man should develop his personality in a way that enables him to love it.

Sahni claims that early Buddhism may be seen as virtue ethics and the Jatak stories particularly show the concern about environment. Stephanie Kaza has produced several books which provides a framework of Buddhist thought on sustainable development and foreconomic, ecological, ethical sustainability for the long term. She shows how mindfulness and relational thinking can help in dealing with inequalities and environmental crisis. One of the most known books on sustainable development in academics is E.F. Schumacher’s *Small Is Beautiful* (Schumacher, 1973). He is one of the first generation of economists conceptualizing sustainable development as the result of value based economics. Interestingly, he called his economic thought by the name of Buddhist economics. Schumacher is inspired by the eightfold path of Buddha that one needs to follow to attain the ultimate goal of life. This includes right livelihood among the eight paths. According to the Buddha a man has to earn a livelihood but it should be done legally and peacefully. Dealing in weapons, dealing in living beings, working in meat production and butchery, and selling intoxicants and poisons should be avoided. To quote form *Small Is Beautiful* again (1973) “From the point of view of Buddhist economics, therefore, production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life, while dependence on imports from afar and the consequent need to produce for export to unknown and distant peoples is highly uneconomic and justifiable only in exceptional cases and on a small scale. Just as the modern economist would admit that a high rate of consumption of transport services between
a man’s home and his place of work signifies a misfortune and not a high standard of life, so the Buddhist economist would hold that to satisfy human wants from faraway sources rather than from sources nearby signifies failure rather than success. The former tends to take statistics showing an increase in the number of ton/miles per head of the population carried by a country’s transport system as proof of economic progress, while to the latter—the Buddhist economist—the same statistics would indicate a highly undesirable deterioration in the pattern of consumption.

In recent times in India Dr Ambedkar has produced some important works on Buddha: Buddhaand his Dhamma; Buddha and Karl Marx; and Revolution and Counter-Revolution (incomplete treatise). Ambedkar also pondered on development and environment. Ambedkar’s ideas on environment are based on two concepts: “nature for all” and “all for nature”. The ideas of Ambedkar prompt us that environmental governance should be crafted based upon the principle of equity and bio-ethical spirit to cater to the needs of all sections of human society. In a way, Ambedkar’s ideas enable us to focus on ecological democracy and inclusive environmentalism, meaning environment for all. Particularly his engagement with Buddhism proposes a bio-centric approach to look at social process. This means all species including human beings have equal rights over nature and at the same time all human beings has responsibility to participate in conservation of environment. (Ravi,2014: 24-34).

Buddhism has the potential to link sustainable development at all levels – individual, national and global. A beginning can be made from anywhere. It also provides the reasons why doing so will not only make a world better but also a man happier. Natural resources are finite. The environment gives us all the basic services free of charge, without which our species cannot survive. Therefore, we should think for sustainable development. It is our fundamental duty to preserve it so that we can hand over our generation a green and clean earth. Our duty to request everyone that come forward to save this planet earth and to develop the society and mankind in a sustainable way.
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THE BUDDHIST ECO- FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POST- MODERN CONSTRUCTION

by A.G.R. H.S. Senarathne*

ABSTRACT

Buddhism is a religion which explained about the super mundane path “nibbana” to the living beings as well as it teaches ordinary people to utilize their life comfort through Buddhist teachings. Buddhism is a religion which highly appreciates eco-friendliness. The birth, enlightenment, passing away and all the special incidents in the life of the Buddha took place in association with nature. In “Wanaropama sutta”, “wattak khandaka, senasanak khandaka” in “Vinaya pitaka” and the Pali canonical text explains about the eco-friendly nature that should be maintain in the monastic tradition as well as in management and construction field. It also explained about the responsible consumption of the natural raw materials, how to utilize the raw materials for the maximum advantage. The Buddhist eco friendly construction is a concept which provides lot of solutions for the responsible consumption as well sustainable development in the post modern period. This concept is theoretically developed as a conceptual theory for the post modern responsible consumption and especially for the sustainable development process. Post modern construction is the latest construction technique of the modern century for the process of development in global context. But

* Department of Pali and Buddhist studies University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.
it is not a sustainable development as well as the responsible consumption is minimum. My research problem is, challenges for the responsible consumption and sustainable development in post-modern construction and why we should apply the Buddhist eco- friendly techniques even for the modern day constructions for achieving the goal of sustainable development. The main objective of the Buddhist sustainable development is, how we comfort our mundane life while attaining to super mundane objectives through the materialized world. The eco –friendly concept is the key element for the responsible consumption sustainability process. Sustainable consumption and development is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services. At the current time, material consumption of natural resources is increasing, particularly within Asia. Countries are also continuing to address challenges regarding air, water and soil pollution. Sustainable or responsible consumption and development aims at “doing more and better with less”. Net welfare gains from economic activities can increase by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle, while increasing quality of the production. The use of natural raw materials, the ventilation process, wastage management, make use of the natural light, use of enough insulation etc. are some of the major challenges in the Post modern constructions. But a Buddhist eco-friendly concept provides lot of solutions for it. It is a sustainable process based with environmental friendly nature. So in this research paper I tried to prove the productivity of the Buddhist eco- friend construction technology and how it provide solutions for the problems of responsible consumption and sustainable development in post- modern constructions. Main conclusion is Buddhist eco- friendly construction is the ideal solution for the present matter in sustainable development. This concept of the Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology is theoretically developed in university of Sri Jayewardenepura in Sri Lanka and looking forward to present in global Buddhist platform in UN conference.

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Buddhism is a religion which explained about the super mundane path “nibbana” to the living beings as well as it teaches ordinary people to utilize their life comfort through Buddhist teachings. Buddhism is religion which highly appreciates eco-friendliness.
The birth, enlightenment, passing away and all the special incidents in the life of the Buddha took place in association with nature. In the verses of senior monks the Buddha had appreciated the natural beauty of the nature.

“The trees are now crimson, venerable sir,
They have shed their foliage and are ready to fruit.
They are splendid, as if on fire;
Great hero, this period is full of flavor”.

(Sujatho, Walton, 2014, p.121)

In “Wanaropama sutta”, the Buddha had explained the importance of the being eco friendly and protecting mother nature.

“Aramaropa wanaroapa yejana sethukaraka
Papancha udapanancha – ye dadanthi upassayan
Thesan diwacha ratthhocha sada punnan pawaddathi”.

(Sanyutta nikaya1, 2006, p. 60)

“Wattak khandaka, senasanak khandaka” in “Vinaya pitaka” and the Pali canonical text explains about the eco-friendly nature that should be maintain in the monastic tradition as well as in management and construction field.

Post modern construction is the latest construction technique of the modern century for the process of development in global context. With the fourth industrial revolution development of the construction field and the concept of the sustainable development and the problems of the post modern sustainability came to existence in the present period of time. Eco-friendly, nature-friendly, and green are sustainability and marketing terms referring to goods and services, laws, guidelines and policies that claim reduced, minimum, or no harm upon ecosystems or to the environment. This term most commonly refers to products that contribute to green living or practices that help conserve resources like water and energy. Eco-friendly products also prevent contributions to air, water and land pollution. Eco-friendly, or ecological, construction is building a structure that is beneficial or non-harmful to the environment, and resource efficient. Eco-friendly construction has developed
in response to the knowledge that buildings have an often negative impact upon our environment and our natural resources.

“Buddhist monarchism of India had much in common with the monastic establishments of Europe, a condition due to the similarity of their aims. For instance the Buddhist monks, as did their Cistercian brethren, planted the houses of their order in wild and desolate places for apparently the same reasons that they might conduct their observances undisturbed by the distractions of any human environment. In a like manner their habitations had a similar beginning, for just as the cloister with its simple lean-to roof on stone pillars was the first step in the construction of the Benedictine monastery, so the early Buddhist vihara consisted of an open court, corresponding to the cloister-garth, enclosed also by a lean-to roof propped up by wooden posts”. (Brown 1956, p. 27)

At the very beginning the concept of the Buddhist monasteries in India maintained a very simple structure according to the vinaya precepts in the pali canonical texts. The Jainese influence on the rainy retreat season. The Buddha had put sanctions on the continuous travelling during the rainy season as it made harmful effects for the environment.

“Anujanan bhikkawe araman…” (Mahavaggapali, mahabhandaka) had given approval for the construction of the monasteries for the monks. But the Buddha had explained the rightful way for the construction as well as had clearly explained what the basic necessities of constructing the monasteries were.

“Sithan unha patihanthi – thatho wala miganicha
Sirinsapecha makase – sisire wapi wutathiyo
Thatho wathathapo soro – sanjatho patinnathi
Lenaththancha sukaththancha – yaithucha vipassithu”.

(Chullawagga Pali, senasanakkhandaka, 2006, p. 184)

To protect from the cold and hot climate, to protect from the animals and insects and also to protect from the cold and hot wind the monasteries were made. Also mention it helps for the purpose of meditation as well as for the rightful protection of self
from the harmful environment effects. It explained the basic or the fundamental needs of the human beings.

So at the very beginning Buddhism explained a basic concept for the construction of the monasteries and hermitages. But with the period of time it becomes too complex level. Especially in the Sri Lankan context, it developed in unique way based with architectural landscaping designs of their own way.

1. THE BUDDHIST ECO FRIENDLY CONCEPT

The concept of eco friendliness is already established in the Buddhism. The fundamental teachings of Buddhism are always to protect the eco-system. It always appreciates the environmental beauty. Especially through this concept, it explained the sustainable development process without damaging the nature. The basic idea about the environment and eco-friendliness can be examined through following sketch.

The context and background of the Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology

The Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology is a concept that existed longer period of time and still a great solution for the problems in the modern sustainable development process. It explains
about the fundamental idea about the environmental friendly idea towards the construction and sustainable development. Also how the Buddhist principals can be applied to the construction process.

When consider about the background of the research, social background explained about the sociological importance of this research work. At the present context material development is one and only considerable factor in the post-modern period. So as a social group always focus on the sociological needs only. Development needed for the material perspective not for the achieving the sustainability. So the modern sustainable needs these types of concepts to uplift their productivity. Political background of the third world development country is always competitive with the environmental friendliness. As they focused less on that point, they work hard for the achieving only the development goals in their political arena. Sustainability is a minimum factor consider in their perspective while their main aim is only to achieve the material development. The political background of the developed country also to develop further more and more. So it also considers lesser attention for the sustainability. But in this Buddhist eco-friendly concept provides political solutions for the developing, under developing countries how to achieve the goal sustainable development through a minimum to the environment. And also it provide solutions to the developed counties in the post-modern period to the maximize their environmental friendly index in percentage for the minimize their sustainable development problems. Economic background always explains the productivity of the research. For the post-modern developed and developing countries the sustainability and its objects depends on the economy. But in this project it explained how to utilize their economy to achieve their sustainable goals. Always environment friendliness is challenged with economic stability. Economy is the key factor for the sustainability. Even though Buddhism provides lot of solutions for the Green Economy and sustainability. Green economy and its solutions for the sustainable development provide basic economical needed for the Buddhist eco friendly construction technology and the sustainable development problem in highly acceptable manner.
So the socio, cultural, political, economic background of this research provides lot of solutions for the sustainable development problems in the post-modern constructions. The Green technology concept is one of the fundamental concept in future world, this research explains about the Buddhist approaches in post-modern world with sustainable goals.

2. THE CONCEPT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The term “sustainable” according to the oxford dictionary, “Conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources”.

“Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend…” (UN defines)

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

Sustainable development has emerged as the guiding principle for long term global development, without damaging the natural sources. So it has become the key element in post modern period of time.

The problems of the sustainable development in post modern constructions

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<tr>
<th>Main issues of the sustainable development</th>
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<td>The scarcity of pure land, air and water</td>
<td>Reputation management</td>
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<td>The limitation of the energy sources</td>
<td>Risk management</td>
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<td>Global warming and climate change</td>
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<td>Material wastage management</td>
<td>Innovation and learning</td>
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<td>Increase of population density</td>
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3. THE POST- MODERN CONSTRUCTIONS

Postmodern architecture emerged in the 1960s as a reaction against the perceived shortcomings of modern architecture, particularly its rigid doctrines, its uniformity, its lack of ornament, and its habit of ignoring the history and culture of the cities where it appeared. In 1966, Venturi formalized the movement in his book, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. He summarized the kind of architecture he wanted to see replace modernism. In place of the functional doctrines of modernism, he proposed giving primary emphasis to the façade, incorporating historical elements, a subtle use of unusual materials and historical allusions, and the use of fragmentation and modulations to make the building interesting. He urged architects take into consideration and to celebrate the existing architecture in a place, rather than to try to impose a visionary utopia from their own fantasies. This was in line with Scott Brown’s belief that buildings should be built for people, and that architecture should listen to them. Starting from that point the post modern construction had rapid development in the construction field. At the present with the post structuralism, it hasn’t any type of boundaries. It is existing as a free style of art in the modern period of time.

4. POST MODERN CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The fourth industrial revolution had took place with vast development of the technological field and later spread it in to all the other fields of the post modern society in quick time. The possibilities of billions of people connected by mobile devices, with unprecedented processing power, storage capacity, and access to knowledge, are unlimited. And these possibilities will be multiplied by emerging technology breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy
storage, and quantum computing. Already, artificial intelligence is all around us, from self-driving cars and drones to virtual assistants and software that translate or invest. Impressive progress has been made in AI in recent years, driven by exponential increases in computing power and by the availability of vast amounts of data, from software used to discover new drugs to algorithms used to predict our cultural interests. Digital fabrication technologies, meanwhile, are interacting with the biological world on a daily basis. Engineers, designers, and architects are combining computational design, additive manufacturing, materials engineering, and synthetic biology to pioneer a symbiosis between microorganisms, our bodies, the products we consume, and even the buildings we inhabit.

With the digitalization of all the things in the new modern era, BIM building information modeling, building lifecycle management, construction supply chains, The use of prefabrication or offsite, modular construction, with components being produced in automated factories, shows signs of revolutionizing the housing market, enabling relatively rapid construction of low cost but high quality housing to meet social demand.

5. THE THEORY OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION FOR THE ECO-FRIENDLINESS

i. When this is, that is - (existed in the eco-system)

ii. This arising, that arises - (origin within the environment)

iii. When this is not, that is not - (if it is not in environment)

iv. This ceasing, that ceases - (vanished through the environment)

Through the theory of dependent origination, the theory of Buddhist eco-friendly technology can be revealed. It can be use as a fundamental concept. As well as a universal application for the post modern period for the problems of sustainable development.

5.1. Characteristics of the Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology

i. Aim – “Do more by less”, get maximum efficiency from the products.

ii. Optimization of renewable resources without harming environment.
iii. Environmental protection.
iv. Environmental friendliness.
v. Obtain energy from natural resources. (sun, wind, water,), energy efficiency
vi. Ecological sustainable development
vii. Reducing harmful waste
viii. Reducing environmental effect
ix. To provide safe and pollution free environment.

5.2. Basic features of the Buddhist eco-friendly concept

Specific objective
The construction has a specific objective. For e.g.- stupa had constructed for the worshiping and to place the holy relics., “panchawasa” were established as a system of monasteries complex. The specific need of the construction always varies with the aim of the construction.

Weather and Climate
They always focused on the weather and climatein “senasankkhandaka” in chullawaggapali explained it very well. The construction technology always paid much more attention to the weather and climate factor. The all the development and the sustainability of the construction depends on the weather and climate resistance of the construction. But in Buddhism it explained as a basic need and to protect the climate and whether the construction had been used.

“Sithan unahan patigahani thatho walamiganicha
Siringape cha makase sisire chapi utathiyo.”
(Chullawaggapali, senasanakkhandaka, 2006, p. 186)

Necessity
The necessity of the construction is depended with the different varieties of needs. The “panchawasa” system includes, “pasada” type of construction with some stories for the usage of the monks, “hammiyan” also type of a building construction that was also
used in the monastic construction in the early period of time. “Panchawasa” includes with “saba”, “prathimalaya’ image house, “bodhi, pasada, and stupa”. It was divided into two parts according to the necessity major and minor.

**Land space**

The land was used in very useful manner for the all the constructions of the monasteries. Especially the park system that existed in the Anuradhapura region has higher eco – friendly value. Eg, Mahamewna park, ranmasu park, ritigala, rajagala also can be seen some of the greatest landscaping techniques of the Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology.

6. **THE BUDDHIST ECO-FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND ITS SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEMS**

The Buddhist eco friendly construction technology used in, The ancient parks included with archeological and landscaping techniques, e.g. Mahamewna park, Ranmasu park, Nandana, Ritigla parks for the usage of landscaping techniques only based with the natural raw materials.

Ancient irrigation system used the Buddhist eco friendly construction technology. Monasteries such as Mihintale, Madirigiriya and Alahana Parivena, which performed as the teaching centers were acquainted with hygienic precautions. Hospitals & Soakage pits were designed with residential treatment facilities & separate sewerage systems were constructed with Manholes. The urine passed through urinals was cleaned by using local mechanical & chemical system to avoid the contamination and preserving the environment. Drinking water was supplied through advance irrigation system & brick wells. The advanced medical baths or stone canoes were built onsite for residential treatment. To improve the mental health indoor and outdoor religious structures were constructed.protect the environment by reducing the toxic emission of gases and liquids from the wastage out –put. The slavery is not used for any these constructions.

The concept explained in the “vinaya pitaka” was practically used with the Buddhist eco – friendly technology. , e.g.
(Vinaya pitakaya, wattak Kandaya, chantagarawata) Reduce fat; warm the body, Prevent from skin diseases. The importance of technology was still at the present use the steam bath system in post modern constructions. But it cost much money as well as the energy. But this is eco friendly construction in the Buddhist monasteries.

7. CONCLUSION

The Buddhist eco- friendly techniques can be applied for the sustainable development process in practical manner. The main objective of the Buddhist sustainable development is, *how we comfort our mundane life while attaining to super mundane objectives through the materialized world*. Buddhist eco- friendly construction technology is the ideal solution for the post modern constructions to achieve the goal of sustainability. Get the maximum advantage of the natural raw material and natural eco-system, without harming the natural source by saving it to future generation. *Man always tries to against nature, but its fail in process*. The eco –friendly construction technology is the key element for the sustainability process. Sustainable consumption and development is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services. At the current time, material consumption of natural resources is increasing, particularly within Asia. Countries are also continuing to address challenges regarding air, water and soil pollution. Sustainable or responsible consumption and development aims at “doing more and better with less”. Net welfare gains from economic activities can increase by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle, while increasing quality of the production. The use of natural raw materials, the ventilation process, wastage management, make use of the natural light, use of enough insulation etc. are some of the major challenges in the Post modern development. But Buddhist eco-friendly construction technology provides lot of solutions for the problems of the sustainable development in post modern period. So, It is a sustainable process based with environmental friendly nature. In this research paper I tried to prove the productivity of the Buddhist eco- friendly construction technology and how it provide solutions for the problems of responsible consumption
and sustainable development in post-modern period. So the Buddhist eco-friendly concept is the ideal solution for the present matter in sustainable development.
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SUSTAINABLE RELIGIOUS TOURISM: IS THE BUDDHIST APPROACH ABLE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

by Budi Hermawan* & Ubud Salim, Fatchur Rohman, Mintarti Rahayu**

ABSTRACT

Temples and places related to religion have become one of the tourist attractions to visit a country. On the other hand, it also threatens the sustainability of this tourist destination. Buddhist tourist destinations such as Borobudur Temple have unique characteristics, where everyone can visit as an ordinary tourist destination. This study uses a mixed method research approach. This significant Buddhist heritage is seen as one of the objects of respect (Pujaniya Vatthu-Uddesikacetiya) for Buddhists. Re-positioning Borobudur Temple as a religious tourist destination is very helpful to maintain its sustainability. The results of this study highlight the construction of a new tourism concept with the Buddhist approach. This concept harmonizes the needs of tourists for serenity, spirituality, and sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Holy places such as temples, stupas, churches and other places related to religion are now tourist destinations that attract tourists. Tourist destinations related to religion are usually historical relics that are thousands of years old. Of course, this tourist destination is very vulnerable if not treated properly. Mostly, the holy sites of religion are tourist destinations that are open to tourists. Buddhist

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* Dr., Director, Metric Research Institute and Statistics Consulting Bunda Mulia University, Indonesia.
** Brawijaya University, Veteran Street Malang 65145, East Java, Indonesia.
sites such as Bodhgaya, Lumbini, Boudhanath, and others, are now tourist destinations that are open to all tourists. However, there are also sacred sites that can only be visited by tourists from certain religions such as the Kaaba in Mecca.

Indonesia has an extraordinary religious site, Borobudur Temple. The temple, which is recorded as the largest Buddhist temple in the World, is currently managed like a historical heritage destination. The number of visitors is certainly one of the target tourist destinations. Therefore, the manager only focuses activities on ways to increase visitors to Borobudur Temple. The number of tourists, especially foreign tourists, is assumed directly proportional to the country’s foreign exchange earnings. On the side of the number of tourists who exceed the boundary will be able to threaten the sustainability of this tourist destination. The concept of mass tourism management like that is unfortunately still maintained today.

There has been a lot of research on sustainable tourism that addresses various aspects of tourism (Gupta, 1999, Shunnaq et al., 2008, Lim and Cooper, 2009, Font et al., 2016). The study of sustainable tourism for religious tourism destinations is still very limited. This study aims to provide an alternative management of Buddhist religious sites by considering the sustainability of the site.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism is one of the alternatives offered, so the tourism sector runs by taking into account the sustainability of tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes into account the impact of various aspects such as the economy, social and environment now and in the future, which also pay attention to the interests of stakeholders such as visitors, industry, and host communities (UNEP and WTO, 2005). United Nation Environment Programme and World Tourist Organization set up a measurable framework by referring to the concept. Tourism is expected to be an activity that must be able to: (1) optimizing environmental resources by taking into account the preservation of nature and biodiversity; (2) maintaining and respecting the socio-cultural aspects of the host community including contributing to preserving cultural heritage, traditional values,
and contributing to intercultural understanding and tolerance; and (3) ensure that economic activities can take place in the long term and provide benefits to stakeholders fairly (UNEP and WTO, 2005).

Each type of tourist destination has a different and unique way and approach to preserve it. Religious sites that are religious tourist destinations are grouped into cultural tourism categories (Swarbrooke, 1999). However, Swarbrooke (1999) explained that cultural tourism itself has many forms. This shows that the efforts to preserve it will also be very diverse.

3. METHOD

This research was conducted using a mixed approach between quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach is used to find out how respondents perceive items from spirituality of tourist destinations. The items of the statement for the Spirituality of tourist destinations that will be tested, taken from our previous research (Hermawan et al., 2016). The qualitative approach is done by interviewing several tourists as key informants with in-depth interviewing techniques. The results of in-depth interviews will be used as a basis in analyzing the findings in this study.

Respondents in this study were domestic tourists who had visited Borobudur Temple between July 2017 and June 2018. Questionnaires were distributed to 30 respondents selected by purposive sampling with a response rate of 80.33%. Processing data in this study using Winstep version 3.73.

4. RESULT

The first step taken in this study was to explore respondents’ perceptions of Borobudur Temple. This perception will be expressed by the level of respondents’ agreement on the item being asked. Tourist perception about the spirituality of Borobudur Temple was measured using a questionnaire. Eight items measure spirituality of tourist destinations, namely: peacefulness, spiritual comfort, holy atmosphere, inner happiness, escape from the “civilized” world, close to God/religious figure, respect to God/religious figure, and religious fulfillment.
Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire is proven first. The average logit of each item in the questionnaire about spirituality of tourist destinations is 0.00 with a standard deviation of 0.77. All items are between -1.54 logit to 1.54 logit with a standard error of 0.33 and raw variance explain by measure of 43.6%. These results indicate that all goods can be used to measure the spirituality of tourist destinations with a good level of precision.

The average logit person is 1.6 with a standard deviation of 1.15 logit. The distribution of people is between -0.7 logit to 3.9 logit with a standard error of 0.58. These results indicate that no respondent gave an extreme assessment (outlier).

Cronbach Alpha (KR-20) of 0.7 with person reliability of 0.68 and reliability items of 0.80. These results indicate the measurement items for spirituality of tourist destinations are measuring instruments that have high reliability. The results also showed that respondents were quite consistent in giving responses.

Tourist Perception of the Spirituality of Borobudur Temple Tourism Destinations

The item-person map reflects responses to items for spirituality of tourist destinations. Respondents’ responses were spread among those who easily agreed, with those who had difficulty agreeing. From the Person-Item Map distribution, it can be seen that the response distribution of respondents is balanced.

Based on item-person maps, spirituality of tourist destinations for Borobudur Temple can be sorted as follows: holy atmosphere, peacefulness, respect to God/religious figure, inner happiness, escape from the “civilized” world, religious fulfillment, spiritual comfort, and close to God/religious figure. The results of the mapping show that the most easily felt by visitors to Borobudur Temple is a holy atmosphere and peacefulness. Respondents agreed that Borobudur Temple has spiritual value.

The sacredness of the Borobudur Temple is indeed undeniable. The temple, which is the largest royal mandala, was once used to carry out Buddhist worship. That is the sacred source that tourists feel when they are there. The sacredness of the temple is sometimes
only related to what is felt by Buddhist travelers. In fact, for tourists who are not Buddhists, they often see it more towards spiritual values. Some tourists who still consider Borobudur Temple only as a monument or cultural heritage, although the level of respondents’ approval of the spirituality of the Borobudur Temple is high.

Lack of knowledge about Borobudur Temple is a threat to the preservation of the site. For example the action of parkour athletes who step on and jump over stupas at Borobudur Temple, for “Red Bull” advertisements (Fitriana, 2016a, Fitriana, 2016b, Fitriana, 2016c, Fizriyani, 2016). Other cases, such as tourists who try to reach Buddha images in stupas, are a sad sight. The behavior of tourists to reach the statue is related to the mythical wish-fulfilling “Kunto Bimo” statue. Unfortunately, a local tour guide who told the myth to tourists. Myth is one of many factors that threaten the sustainability of Borobudur Temple.

Figure 1. Spirituality of Tourists Destination Person-Item Map
Preservation of Borobudur Temple

In-depth interviews produced three main themes that could be done as an effort to preserve Borobudur Temple. Three themes of conservation efforts are spirituality, education, and governance. In terms of spiritual themes, Borobudur Temple is one of the pilgrimage sites for Buddhists. As a place of pilgrimage, Borobudur Temple needs to be preserved and kept sacred.

Efforts to maintain the sanctity of Borobudur Temple had been offered by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia through the Coordinating Minister for the Marine Affair Rizal Ramli (Junida, 2015, Riyandi, 2015). Until now, the offer did not seem to have received a good response from Buddhists in Indonesia due to various obstacles. Rizal Ramli at that time offered to use the Borobudur Temple not only as a tourist destination but also as a place of worship for Buddhists. Even Rizal Ramli wants the Borobudur Temple to become its Mecca for Buddhists (Junida, 2015, Riyandi, 2015). Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo even admitted that he was very serious in encouraging the use of Borobudur Temple as the center of Buddhist religious activities (Ais, 2014, Jawa Tengah, 2014, Wibisono, 2015, Fitriana, 2015).

Borobudur Temple has been used for National Vesak puja since 1953. The activity should be used as a benchmark that the Borobudur Temple is a place of worship and center of Buddhist activities. Conservation and management efforts have so far remained as cultural heritage objects, and have not experienced significant changes. Permission to use Buddhist activities is easier and increases in number, very encouraging.

Rizal Ramli and Ganjar Pranowo’s proposal also gives wider freedom for Buddhists to worship at Borobudur Temple, while preserving Buddhist temple that are more than 1,000 years old. Its use as a place of worship will instantly change the image of a tourist destination. The positioning of the Borobudur Temple will change as a tourist place and place of Buddhism. Thus, tourists who visit will be more adaptable like in a place of worship.
Regarding the rules when in places of worship, Buddhists have their own characteristics and rules. Buddha has a basis for respecting objects that deserve respect. This is stated in the Maṅgala Sutta (Sn. 261) पुजा का पुजानीयानां एतां माँगलामुत्तामां. The object of respect in Buddhism can be grouped into two, namely respect for people and objects. Temple and stupa is an honorable thing because it can be a symbol of Buddha itself. Respect for objects that are worthy of respect is carried out by means of āñjali, namakkāra, padakkhiṇa and several other rituals such as meditation, reading parittas, sutras, sadhana, and recite mantra.

The debate about the sanctity of a place that can be considered as a Buddhist spiritual destination continues to this day. Most have argued that the only Buddhist spiritual destinations listed in Mahaparinibbana Sutta. There are four (4) where it can be visited at least once in life, that is the place where the Tathagata was born, where Tathagata attained enlightenment, in which the first Tathagata turning the wheel of dharma, and the Tathagata realizes Mahaparinirvanā. However, Mahaparinibbana Sutta not designate where it is specifically and in detail. In the process, other destinations that have sarira of Buddha-dhatu can be regarded as a Buddhist spiritual destination.
Hall (2006) creates a hierarchy of spiritual tourism destinations associated with Buddhism. Hierarchy provides an overview of some of the Buddhist tourist destination today, related to the potential tourist visits and/or pilgrims. Different elements in the hierarchy have significance and will be relatively different in different Buddhist traditions (Hall, 2006). Referring to the hierarchy, Borobudur Temple can be included as one of the Buddhist spiritual destinations.

Borobudur Temple has been declared as one of the spiritual tourist destinations for Buddhists. This declaration was published by online media from outside Indonesia (Wisman, 2017, Bernama, 2017, Zhang, 2017). The Victoria and Albert Museum (2016) even included the Borobudur Temple into the criteria of a Buddhist pilgrimage place. This great opportunity should be used to preserve Borobudur.

However, concerns about the sustainability and existence of Borobudur Temple is still going on. This concern arises because the knowledge of some tourists is still very limited regarding Borobudur Temple. Information that can educate tourists directly and easily accessible is needed. This information can be provided by installing a Quick Response (QR) Code in several places that are easily accessible to tourists. The information presented in the QR Code can be started from the historical development of Borobudur, meaning expressed and implied by sculptures, reliefs, or symbols, to guide behavior in the temple area.

As a spiritual tourist destination, Borobudur Temple can also be an educational tourist destination that provides knowledge for its visitors. A study conducted by Choe, Blazey and Mitas (2013) showed that people who visit Buddhist places will get the opportunity to learn about various cultures and lifestyles of Buddhism. Tourists can immediately see various things about Buddhism to the procedures of worship, while at Borobudur Temple. Especially for worship, now only be seen when there is a celebration of Buddha there. Some Buddhist celebrations are currently on the annual agenda at Borobudur Temple such as Vesak Nasional, Asadha Puja and Kagyud Monlan Indonesia.

The paradigm shift from the old to the new tourism must be able to reposition the temple’s governance. Borobudur temple is
supposed to be managed as a Buddhist spiritual destination, not just a tourist park. The old tourism paradigm only emphasizes the number of tourist visits (mass tourism). Mass tourism exploring tourism resources and sometimes ignoring the sustainability of tourist destinations. The paradigm of the new tourism, offer quality tourism based serenity, spirituality, and sustainability in line with the Buddhist concept. The old tourism paradigm gives tourists the beauty of the temple, the beauty of the reliefs, the sunrise panorama, and other things related to physical conditions. The new tourism paradigm will give travelers more personal and special sensations such as the experience of inner happiness. Tourists will be more in tune with nature and help maintain the sustainability of tourist destinations. It is not limited to Buddhist practitioners, but for tourists in general.

Spiritual and religious tourism destinations have characteristics that are different from other tourist destinations. Spiritual tourism has a broader meaning of pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism or other religious activities. It is related to enhance exchange and socio-economic development. The activities of spiritual tourism have contributed to heritage tourism sustainability such as to protect religion and promote beautiful places (Azahari, 2015).

The consequences of repositioning the image of tourist destinations are indeed not easy, especially those related to governance. Managing temples that are a heritage of the past requires special expertise. However, as a religious site, the temple should be treated as a religious object as well. The Indonesian government must involve Buddhist organizations including monks to participate in the management of Borobudur. Participation is not only limited to religious activities or seminars conducted in the temple area, but more than that.

To involve the Buddhist community in managing cultural heritage such as the Borobudur Temple, it may take a long process. However, the Buddhist community can begin for example by arranging the code of conduct while in the Borobudur Temple. The Buddhist community can also be involved as a source of information related to the express and implied meaning of the Borobudur Temple.
5. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

This study only focuses on Borobudur temple in Indonesia. The majority of people in Indonesia who are not Buddhists are unique characteristics of this research. Results of this research may be in line with other Buddhist sites with similar characteristics. Further studies should be conducted at other locations that have different characteristics with different methods.
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SUSTAINABLE RELIGIOUS TOURISM: IS THE BUDDHIST APPROACH ABLE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

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BUDDHIST APPROACH TO EDUCATION
AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

by Bharti*

ABSTRACT

Minerals natural resources and food are very important global issues, here try an attempt to closely like with few areas of global learning: minerals water bodies natural resources and food production have a major impact on climate change, wastage of the resources have further environmental impacts and access to them is a major development issue. Presently population is increasing continuously and the challenge of how to fulfill the need of this increased population in an unpredictable climate becomes ever more critical. Nobody wants to understand the demand of nature we are continuously consuming the resources and wasting too. There is a need to educate everyone. And it can be done through Buddhist approach. This kind of education is based on the three Buddhist principles of learning: Sila, Samadhi and Panna. Sila signifies moral conduct in any person and after this stage second is mind training with the practice of it awakened mind acts better and after this wisdom arise. With wisdom nobody can harm anyone. In this holistic approach the principles are practiced simultaneously and can be applied to any dimensions, including personal, family, society and communal levels, to-cultivate responsive sustainable living practices for the learners.

*. Assistant Professor., University of Delhi, India.
Sustainable consumption has been raised and discussed since last two decades, but still it did not reach on its maturity. Sustainable consumption is an integral part of sustainable development and was incepted in Oslo symposium in 1994. This symposium terms justifiable consumption as the use of gods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a good quality of life, whereas minimizing the usage of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so it could be save for upcoming group. This definition emphasizes on the quality of life rather than materialistic outlook. There is another aspect of sustainable consumption is that it enhances the quality of life by offering practical approaches to gain a resources efficient and it minimizes the use of natural resources toxic materials and pollutants over the life cycle.¹ Many scholars has explain in very well manner such as sustainable consumption can be referred as the rationalization of lifestyle practices, which helps the consumption more efficient shapes it based on the logic of instrumental rationality.² “Sustainable consumption is the act that focuses on proper utilization of resources in order to meet the need of individuals while taking care of the natural resources in order to avoiding jeopardizing the need of the future generation.”³ “Sustainable consumption takes into consideration of the impact of consumption on environment. It requires environmentally friendly consumer choices that are both widely available and affordable.”⁴ All these definition advocates for careful consumption pattern and efficient use of goods and services.

In short, it can be said that the sustainable consumption practice cannot be possible only by its behavioral aspect, it also requires positive intension and commitment of individuals. In present time Buddha’s teaching are much more relevant when impacts of

humankind on earth as well as for their personal lives. The reason of all is the unsustainable development and due to unclear mind. There is need to clear the vision of everyone so they consume things is right way. This right way can comes through the teaching of Buddha in leading the life along with the Noble Eightfold Path and with the awakened mind through Buddhist mindfulness. “The Buddhist vision towards the ‘true reality’ of the self as something deeply conditioned, interdependent and embedded within the social lives and natural surroundings. This view has gained currency in science and also regarded as converging with the perceptual theories wherein perception is clearly understood—not only as a cerebral event but as directly and reciprocally interchange between organism and its world.”

This is define by developments in neuroscience in which understandings of human thinking, derived from research at the activity level of mind and are found to be similar to Buddhist theory of cause and effect. The unsustainable consumption become the cause of unstainable development and result comes out with unhealthy lifestyles and environmental degradation. “The biodiversity loss has got an accelerated momentum in – post globalization era in developing countries where we can see ‘use and throw’ kind of culture of consumerism, brand-wars etc is mindlessly spreading in the world.” With the awaken mind one can lead the simple life through Buddhist teachings. Mindfulness make them alert and compassionate. All these things will bring sustainable outlook in all spheres of our lives. This is also emphasized according Buddhist perspective that there is nothing wrong with economic progress or wealth ethically and lawfully earned by following Buddhist teachings unless it stimulates attachment and insatiable greed. Greed is the cause of all problems. So, the practice of Buddhist teaching helps to eradicate suffering, ill mind and also awaken our mind. The survival of future generation is required all over the world. Buddhism has offer a lot with awaken though to sustainable development in the context of its place of origin as

7. Ibid.
well as all over the world. The great example of this is Thailand, in Thailand sustainable practice in educational and architectural fields appear to be in their infancy. This is great example that shows the possibility of responding to sustainability concept via culturally sensitive education. This practice is based on the three Buddhist principles of Sikkha:

- Sila (Moral conduct)
- Samadhi (Mind training)
- Panna (Wisdom development)

The Buddhist school approach is an entirely localized approach towards national culture and religion. This holistic approach has characteristics that tie humanity to nurturing their environs, it can be considered more ecologically friendly by way of comparison. Ideas of education in the Buddhist approach Sikkha meaning education, is the Buddhist principle of learning. In Buddhism, education conveys the practice of a way of living, so the principle of Buddhist teaching is to practice self-development through living well. Sila – The moral conduct that promotes peaceful existence, this the practice of self-regulation that controls our speech and behavior; Samadhi Sikkha – the study of the mind and subsequent training that promotes self-awareness and self-evolution to activate goal-setting and Panna Sikkha – It is an analysis and study of the interconnection and law of cause and effect.

Buddhist provides a logic to resolve the tension between ingrained economic system iteratives and the changes actually required for achieving environmental sustainability. “The Four Noble Truths (Buddhist teachings) helps to understand the right vision of problem and also suggest the way to resolve it. The First Noble Truth (Dukka) and Second Noble Truth (Rise of Dukka)

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8. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
provides the basis for understanding the root causes that have shot mankind into a trajectory that is not just unsustainable, but is providing ineffective in improving welfare beyond basic materialistic things. The Third Noble Truth and Fourth Noble Truth establish the ‘response’ in the form of individual psychological, behavioral and institutional changes that could direct personal and socio-economic change towards sustainability.”

Sustainability is all about ensuring the conditions for acceptable welfare levels of all people. All these conditions demands maintenance of various forms of capital. Capital is define in the sense of the resources ready to provide the materials and services for human welfare. There are some forms of capital need to be maintained for sustainable development. These are:-

- Economic sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Social sustainability

Economic sustainability – Manufactured capital used to provide transformed natural material means of satisfying needs.

Environmental sustainability – Natural capital for direct services from nature.

Social sustainability – Social capital, social networks and institutions to support the other forms of sustainability.

“The notion of social capital considers that faith, trust, social relations, community and belonging are all vital for well-being. However, in the “three pillars” approach, social capital’s supporting role for economic and environmental sustainability tends to be stressed rather than an objective in its own right with its intrinsic notions of socio-psychological states and subjective well-being. In the First Noble Truth ‘Suffering’ or Dukkha is seen to be a reality of human. Rather than bodily pain, Dukkha is rightly conceived as “Pervasive dissatisfaction.” It does not reject that

13. Ibid.
there are many positive experiences in life involving pleasure and happiness. Thus, it can be posits that the totality of life is imperfect with dissatisfaction and suffering due to the impermanent nature of all and the subsequent inevitable loss of the sources of those conditions from which we tend to draw happiness. The suffering we experience derived from the craving for worldly phenomena that we cling to in the belief that they are our reliable sources of happiness. We experience suffering because these phenomena change and we constantly crave and seek to attach to some other foundations of happiness. In Buddhism, the first form of desire is the happiness from the senses (Kama Tanha). This covers a wide range of consumption such as food, sexual activity and mostly joy from material accumulation. All these sensual pleasures experience leads to the craving for more. Another form of desire feeling of wanting (Bhava Tanha). All this typical depends upon raising one’s perceived importance or apparent career and other worldly success in the eyes of others, but it also include a longing for control and influence upon others. This form of desire is connected with Kama Tanha and Sense-based talents are key determinants of status, respect and control. The Third Noble Truth explains the premise that clinging and attachment will not provide long term satisfaction, in fact they are posited as the major cause of our suffering. Our desire itself is not considered as the root cause of suffering, the cause of suffering is the grasping onto desire. With the reflective life experience, People can learn the futility of this habit and have a real impetus for reprogramming their dominant but incorrect theory of happiness. There is way out of suffering, which is cease attachment and clinging. The Fourth Noble Truth explains that how the Eight Fold Path or Middle Path can remove our sufferings. This is the practice of right understanding, right aspirations, right

speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The eight features have a natural flow from wisdom to moral obligation to mental regulation but they are presented as mutually reinforcing goals rather than a necessary linear order. When panna derives from Buddhist cosmology or clarification about the nature of universe and also from knowledge and observe outcome. The result came in the form of self-realization and intelligence which offers the transformative sympathetic and will for release from suffering. The systematic behavioral aspects that make up the Sila (Morality) set within the Middle Path (Eight Fold Path) relate more to external activity while concentration (Samadhi) are the internal activity.

We discussed briefly that how Buddhist teachings can change our external behave with the discipline on our internal activities. Buddhist Inspire Sustainable Economy (BISE) is oriented towards producing high levels of well-being for its vast society. Here, the main point of concerning consumption is that the existing nature and levels of consumption are not maximizing long term welfare for societies. In it selections about what we seek and pursue from life and the environment should accurately imitates the impact of these choices on our long term well-being. This is not purely clear but, from the Buddhist fundamental problem is that people with lack information about the appropriate to a sustained stage of fulfilment. People frequent experience that needs based on external phenomena does not bring lasting fulfilment but they usually do not learn the lesson that suffering cannot be overcome from acquisitive or clinging to the substances of actuality. If the preferences are targeted at long term satisfaction about this condition, which can be described in the economic vernacular as a divergence between right and true preferences. These true preferences are the set of ranked choices that represent those that really lead to satisfaction.

In short, the inherent unsustainability of existing economics, Buddhism can be seen as a way to provide a series of necessary

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changes in consumption patterns. These proposals draw upon essential notions of interpretation of effect and Karma, the Karmic law and a prevailing theme is the need to minimize intervention and a prevailing theme is the need to minimize intervention and disruption upon the widen social, ethical and natural realms.²²

Some features of Buddhist-inspired sustainable economy (BISE):

• Modify the level and nature of consumption.
• Qualitative changes in consumptions.
• Is to identify accurate measures of human well-being.

“One major change in production aspects for BISE would be the consumer sovereignty effect of an automatic shift towards the production of minimum intervention goods and services as a response to changes in the nature and level of demand as outlined in the previous section.”²³ The no-harm philosophy of Buddhism is consistent with technology change that reduces the societal metabolism and underpins ecological modernization towards greater eco-efficiency and sustainable production and consumption.²⁴

Buddhist inspired sustainable economy (BISE) expanded role of socially productive organizations that produce “compassion goods”, economic output that minimizes environmental disturbance and is pervaded by the positive spillover effects in the society.²⁵ In the support of the informational needs of many of the production and consumption changes, sustainable expansion towards appropriate education and human capital development would be compulsory for the skills and knowledge to understand and minimize economic disturbance through three realms such as economic, psychological and spiritual knowledge. Few crucial areas of change would involve the humanistic transformation of work, the understanding and reallocation of time so as to enphase life satisfaction and the profound

²² J.F. Tomer, Beyond the Rationality of Economic Man towards the True Rationality of Man, 2002.
²³ Ibid.
²⁵ Ibid.
incorporation of Buddhist principle of compassion and practice of tolerance in international trade and relations.\textsuperscript{26}

In short Buddhism can help to provide a logical and ethical base which required for creating sustainable economics. There can still be vital economics that consume minimum intervention output based on Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Karuna (Compassion), in accordance with the Four Noble Truths and Middle Path.\textsuperscript{27}

Concluding it can be seen that Buddhism can helped to overcome the theory – practice divide and promote change towards sustainable economics. The institutional example of the Buddhist teachings, example from the laity, education and contact with society highlighting the relevance of Buddhist teaching in mitigating the conflict and adversity of a host global perspective such as environmental, social and economic problems. Now it is clear that Buddhist perspective can change the vision of every one in each sector of life. Buddhism can increase related ethical base by which sustainable behavior and balance social system, continue and beneficial for future.

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\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

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ABSTRACT

The idea of economic progress became commonly discussed with the advent of the work of Adam Smith and thereafter even while economists were starting to measure national income, the sustainability of growth was still questioned. A lot of recent debate on the search for proper indicators for “development” goes beyond limitations of GDP as a sole measure for societal progress. In this context, measuring and understanding of subjective social development has become one of the major challenges in terms of formulating appropriate indices. It is seen that, happiness being promoted as an unconventional indicator of measuring sustainability of both man and environment in the present development discourse through several attempts such as World Happiness Summit, World Happiness Report, Gross National Happiness Index (GNHI) and Better Life Index (BLI) etc. However, those attempts still have failed to explain many of the factors that impact most on people’s material, social and spiritual lives. In order to fill this vacuum, it is assumed that Buddhist teachings on happiness can be effectively applied with the concept of compassion (Metta). Based on this assumption, the present study aims to identify the Buddhist perspective on happiness in relation to the sustainable development and to find out its applicability in formulating indicators for judging the real happiness. Methodology of the research has set up focusing the literature survey and content interpretation based
on the primary and secondary sources. Findings of the paper highlights three important Buddhist approaches for using happiness as a social development indicator; interdependency, favourable relationship and total satisfaction. It is revealed that the social development is motivated by Buddhism with emphasis on happiness where material, social and spiritual life overlap. It is recommended that four-fold happiness should be taken into consideration in measuring social development; physical, mental, social and spiritual.

1. INTRODUCTION

Using economic and social indicators to measure the “whole development” has failed to address many of the factors that impact on sustainability of man and environment. A lot of recent debate on the search for suitable indicators for “development” goes beyond limitations of GDP as a sole measure for societal progress. Today, it has been realized that, in order to measure the whole development, attention should focus on the total wellbeing of both man and environment in the context of sustainability. The idea of economic progress became commonly discussed with the advent of the work of Adam Smith and thereafter even while economists were starting to measure national income, the sustainability of growth was still questioned. The common argument is that Gross National Production (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) cannot be the benchmark for achieving community satisfaction. An increase in GNP or NDP that just arises from inflation does not represent an improvement in wellbeing. Ian Castles (1997) has pointed out that the human Development Index (HDI) had failed in measuring wealth and welfare while emphasizing the idea of Roland Wilson (1946), that wellbeing is somewhat wider than economic welfare. Robert Kennedy has pointed that the GNP measures neither people’s wit nor their courage; neither people’s wisdom nor their learning; neither people’s compassion nor their devotion to the country; it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010). In order to fill this vacuum, many attempts have been made particularly for converting GDP into sophisticated measures of genuine progress. Tobin (1972) introduced ‘measure of economic welfare’ for modifying GDP to derive a better measure of true progress.
and Daly and Cobb (1989) formulated an Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare too. The United Nations’ Human Development Index (HDI), which combines education and life expectancy with per capita GDP has become a widely used development indicator which also give weight to other aspects of wellbeing. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing is another such index, giving equal weight to eight aspects: living standards, healthy populations, community vitality, democratic engagement, leisure and culture, time use, education, and the environment (Hawkins 2014). Several additional measurements of welfare have been explored for some time now linking with happiness and satisfaction; for example, Kingdom of Bhutan has introduced ‘Gross National Happiness Index’ (GNHI) which has its root within a Buddhist philosophy of meaning in life and which encompasses four pillars of sustainable development, cultural values, the natural environment and good governance. However, such indices have still failed to explain many of the factors that impact most on people’s material, social and spiritual lives (Singh 2014). Still a question is there- how to reduce the gap between material and social development? Are the people satisfied with existing system and how do people become happy? In the light of foregoing, it is clear that there is a research gap which needs to be addressed in order to find many possibilities to strengthen all aspects of happiness in the development discourse. Hence the main objective of this study is to seek the possibilities to apply Buddhist principles for promoting happiness as a development indicator by addressing the gap between economic wealth and social satisfaction.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over the time, it can be seen that GDP fails to take into account the social and environmental costs of so-called progress. Therefore we can see a gradual transition of development indicators from economic to holistic perspective. It is clear that the attention should be focused to the wellbeing of both human and natural environment in the context of sustainable development. By considering the different aspect of development, the United Nations introduced eight MDGs which range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education. In 2016 again, The UN introduced Sustainable
development goals (SDGs) which consist 17 targets will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years. Most of these goals directly or indirectly have focused both human and environmental wellbeing.

An economic aspect, social development has also been focused by the world from only objective lenses. The subjective well-being of the communities has totally neglected by the traditional development paradigms. Based on this aspect, social development has widely been defined from employment, production and welfare perspectives. Therefore, the subjective reality of the social sustainability which is very important to human happiness and social quality have not been touched. In social development aspect, happiness or the satisfaction mainly depend on three fundamentals; capability, equity and sustainability. As kittiprapas et.al. (2009) mentioned the objective well-being may not correlate with happiness or subjective well-being with the emphasis of the applicability of subjective well-being together with objective well-being measurement, which will be useful for policies aiming to increase happiness of the people. In the popular development context, it is now believed that the whole outcome of the development process more or less should be sustainable. Though, there are many meanings and interpretations of sustainability, widely three categories have become orthodox; economic, social and environmental sustainability. Present holistic ideologies promote the use of sustainability which is directed to establishing appropriate material wellbeing, non-harming in economic movement, and realizing the inner freedom from suffering. According to Chambers and Conway (1991) social sustainability depends on coping with stress and shocks, dynamic livelihood capabilities and intergenerational sustainability which are interdependent in social development. Social sustainability happens when the formal and informal processes; systems; structures; and relationships actively support the capacity of present and future generations to create healthy and livable communities. A sustainable society is one that could satisfy its needs without diminishing the chance of the present and future generations. In the light of foregoing, it is clear that there is a research gap which needs to be addressed in order to find many possibilities to strengthen all aspects of social sustainability in the development discourse.
Therefore, this research focuses that whether the Buddhist principles can play a vital role for promoting happiness as a key indicator of social development in the present development discourse, and if so, which and how Buddhist concepts can be used to measure the happiness aiming to the sustainable social development.

3. METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework of the study has been formulated by considering the contradiction between objective and subjective realities of development discourse. First the tangible factors for measuring happiness in the development context were identified as income, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, biodiversity, environmental rules and regulations etc. and then the intangible factors such as equality, freedom, satisfaction, happiness, ecological richness and sustainability that directly affect the happiness and satisfaction of people have been identified through primary and secondary literature sources. Following the above framework used to assess the applicability of Buddhist concepts on promoting happiness for development purposes, the method of textual analysis was used for data analysis. The synonyms used in different teachings were merged and formulated as a common indicator in order to achieve the main objective of the study.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i. How to reduce the gap between material and social development?

ii. Are the people satisfied with existing system and how do people become happy?

iii. What are the best paths to stimulate a holistic approach to development?

iv. How to advance methodological approaches to systematize good practices, explore results, and develop suitable measurements of wellbeing?

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework has been formulated with two dimensions of happiness such as; measurement aspect and
interpretation aspect. First it was identified that the sustainable social development depends of both subjective and objective factors. Then an attempt has been made to create the possible relationships which support to the social sustainability through the concept of happiness (Fig. 01).

6. OBJECTIVE

Seeking possibilities to apply Buddhist concepts for promoting happiness as a development indicator for addressing the gap between subjective and objective happiness in the context of Social Development.

![Fig.01: Conceptual Framework](image)

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term ‘eudemonia’ had used by Aristotle to explain the nature of happiness highlighting three aspects such as; happiness as a mood; happiness as satisfaction with one’s life; happiness as a flourishing and fulfilling life that leaves an impact on society. The latter aspect should be much deepen in promoting it as a social development measure. The significance of using happiness as a development measure has been widely discussed since late 19th
century. In 1920 Arthur Pigou emphasized that it would be a great challenge to think about the development indicators in addition to the economic progress. In 1980s happiness became the key concern of development literature particularly for the purpose of measuring social development. Kasma and Stones in 1980 introduced 22 indicators that can be used to constitution of a happiness scale combining Life Satisfaction Index and Philadelphia Geriatric Center Scale. Happiness should not only be a state of mind and a trait, but also be a skill. Unless human beings practice the happiness it wouldn’t be experienced. Happiness is an art of living and can be taught, learned and transmitted. Continuous attempt to sustain the happiness by using different techniques such as anger control methods like meditation is a skill need to be developed. On the other way happiness can be treated as a kind of mental disorder of humans that leads to their satisfaction. Buddhism stressed that ‘Santutthi paramam dhanam’; the most important wealth is the happiness (Dhammapada Verse 209). The word happiness in Buddhist chronicles uses as ‘santutthi’ or ‘santutthatha’ and its antonym ‘asanthutthi’ or ‘asantutthatha’. Lokamitra (2004) explains the importance of Buddhist view on happiness in the context of development citing the examples with core teachings of the Blessed One: Lord Buddha. He states; ‘The happiness that is dependent on sense and ego gratification is not, according to Buddhist understanding happiness at all. While there may be some occasional enjoyment, there is much more suffering involved. A truer happiness arises from living an increasingly skilful and pure life, having a clear conscience, from generosity and helping others, from friendship, and from creative endeavour. There is the spiritual joy that comes from meditation and finally Enlightenment, the highest happiness man can achieve. The Buddhist life progresses from the realization that conditioned existence is by its very nature unsatisfactory (dukkha) to the realization of Nirvana, the state of being permanently free of dukkha. That state of realization, Enlightenment, is spoken of as the supreme bliss, the state of peace, a state of unrestricted freedom from all bonds. This state remains unshaken no matter how unfavorable external conditions may be. The further one goes in this direction the less dependent one’s mind and happiness becomes on external conditions (Enlightenment
itself is said to be unconditioned) and the stronger and more positive one’s attitudes become. The less likely one is to be drawn into that vortex that the forces of greed in the modern world would like to stimulate and the more one is enabled to take what is useful from developments in the modern world and to leave aside what is not. Based on the analysis of these all views, this paper has formulated a framework based on the concept of ‘total satisfaction’ characterized by the happiness. Hence, the main argument of this paper is framed by the concept of total satisfaction where material, social and spiritual wealth overlap. Interdependency and favourable relationship among these three-fold wealth make sustainability of the happiness. If someone satisfied with the availability of the wealth, the happiness would be the result. The question is whether this status can be measured? This paper revealed that wellbeing of the human beings promotes the happiness followed by the total satisfaction.

The Buddhist view on social development focuses the both physical and mental satisfaction and security of the society members. The essence of common practice of five precepts in Buddhist virtue, four sublimes for Brahmavihara, four means of sustaining a favorable relationship for Sanghavattu, Noble eightfold path along with the concepts of compassion and loving kindness are some of guiding principles for total satisfaction at individual, community and global levels. Having considered the key focus of these teachings in relation to the sustainable society, it is revealed that all aspects of happiness depend on the wellbeing. As Bracho (2004) stated Happiness can be defined as “a state of wellbeing and contentment”. The “wellbeing” component would carry a more external dimension whereas the “contentment” component a more internal one.

As discussed in the introduction of this paper, there has been a prolonged debate about the limitations of the GDP in measuring the social development. Robert Kennedy (2010) had stated that the gross national product does not allow for the health of children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of poetry or the strength of marriages; the intelligence of public debate or the integrity of public officials. It measures neither
people’s wit nor their courage; neither wisdom nor learning; neither compassion nor devotion to their country; it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. By introducing the new approach for measuring social development in the field of modern welfare economics, Arthur Pigou (1920) stated that it must be highly skeptical of the view that long term changes in the rate of growth of welfare can be gauged even roughly from changes in the rate of growth of output. Hawkins (2010) suggests four types of wellbeing for measuring the development in present context such as; adjusting GDP to make it more suitable, replacing it with a ‘dashboard’ of alternative indicators, weighting these alternative indicators to form a composite indicator, and using people’s own reported assessments of their wellbeing. In the light of foregoing, this paper attempts to fill the vacuum that can be noticed among these approaches when wellbeing practically measured.

The Buddhist view of the wellbeing is more powerful than any other definitions which emphasizes four interdependent aspects; material, social, mental and spiritual. This can be nicely explained with the Dhammapada verse 204;

Arōgyā paramā lābhā (The Material wellbeing), santutthi paramam dhanam (Mental wellbeing), vissāsa paramā nāthi (Social wellbeing) and Nibbānan paramam sukhan (Spiritual wellbeing).

Material Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the available resources
Mental Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the freedom
Social Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the relationships
Spiritual Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the spiritual practices

Material wellbeing can simply be divide into two parts; human wellbeing and environmental wellbeing. Availability of basic needs and the accessibility to the services provide the satisfactory stage for the people who seek the freedom, good relationships and spiritual practices. To be more precise, total satisfaction depends on how they are able to acquire the physical, human, social, natural and financial assets. According to the current literature on happiness, many primary indicators have been formulated but most of them are only on material wellbeing. As such some of the happiness
indicators are; having foods (quality and quantity), evacuating three times a day or as many times as one eats (the capacity of elimination of body waste as a simple indicator of bodily health), participating in food production or preparation for oneself or others, being able to produce as much as possible of what one consumes, having access to information, instruction and training in ways to live better, having work to do and with pleasure, being able to obtain a comfortable, spacious and adequate place to live in near one’s place of work, getting care, and the possibility of cure and compassion in case of illness or death, being able to feel protected and secure in the society in which one lives, being able to enjoy Nature without damaging it, as well as caring for it, enjoying air (including proper breathing), water, light and space in sufficient natural quality and quantity; and sleeping well and waking up rested etc. (Frank Bracho 2004). The satisfaction with the freedom may include some primary contentment such as; being able to express creativity, being respected and respecting others, being able to express one’s feelings and thoughts freely, having a personal ethical code and being able to cooperate and share with others (Keshawa Bhat 2012). Unless a community get rid of vulnerable situations, they are unable to feel freedom. Without the freedom, sustaining the good relationships and practicing spiritual beliefs wouldn’t become a reality. According to Ambetkar (1982), Buddhism teaches social freedom, intellectual freedom, economic freedom and political freedom. It teaches equality, equality not between man and man only but between man and woman. It would be difficult to find a religious teacher to compare with the Buddha whose teaching embraced so many aspects of the social life of a people and whose doctrines are so modern and whose main concern was to give salvation to man in his life and not to promise it to him in heaven after he is dead. Therefore, it is evident that the happiness is the result of Integration of all these four wellbeing which lead to the total satisfaction of a society. Figure 02 shows one of the key findings of this research; total satisfaction framework.
The satisfaction with favourable relationships and spiritual practices are the missing part of the present development context. As above discussed, the wellbeing component much relates to the health. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines “health” as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. This definition actually highlights the importance of the affirmative or preventive aspects of health—something neglected in defining wellbeing. It is neglected as well in the prevailing yardstick of spiritual wellbeing and progress of modern societies. Hence the propose framework of this paper has touched the gap by introducing new other aspect of wellbeing; spiritual wellbeing. Mindfulness, virtue practices, tolerance, contentedness, loving kindness, uprightness, prudent etc. can be used as measures of satisfaction with spiritual practices. The main expected outcome of the spiritual practices is to fulfill the desire for happiness. There are two components of happiness; physical and mental, with the mental experience or the inner force playing a more powerful role. Mahayana Buddhism happiness springs from an altruistic or compassionate mind. Since human minds are often agitated by afflicting emotions, the results frequently are negative actions, which in turn cause suffering. The essence of Buddhism therefore is to tame, transform, and conquer the human mind, for it is the root of everything – it is the creator of happiness and suffering (Wangmo and Valk 2014).

All the aspects of happiness discussed by different scholars and institutions in relation to the social development can be explained by this framework. Sustainability of the system depends on good
practices at individual, community and global levels such as *dana*, *seela*, *samadhi*, *utthana viriya*, *appamada*, *allenatha*, *kalyanamittatha*, *samajeewakatha*, *subaratha* and refraining causes of downfall as mentioned in Parabhawa sutta (*samyutta nikāya* 1.6) and four sources of destruction as mentioned in Vyagghapajja Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* 8.54).

One of the other findings of this research paper is that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addressed only on two aspects according to the above framework. As the figure 03 illustrates, there is a big gap with mental and spiritual wellbeing in SDGs. Compare to the other aspects of wellbeing, 11 development goals out of 17 have been formulated only focusing human and environmental wellbeing while the rest has been directed to social wellbeing. Therefore, this paper forward a considerable finding of lacking other two aspect of wellbeing in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

8. CONCLUSION

Since the existing development approaches have not addressed much about the total satisfaction of life, still there is a big gap between theory and practice in the context of sustainable society. Even though there are many indices have been formulated for the purpose of measuring happiness, the actual measure of relevant subjective wellbeing has not taken into consideration. Thus, in order to overcome the issue, this paper has introduced a new framework to define happiness through the concept of total satisfaction. Having
reviewed the Buddhist concepts on satisfactory life, it can be argued that, the total satisfaction based on the interdependent four-fold wellbeing; material, mental, social and spiritual. The framework proposed by this article can be applied into different context in order to overcome the limitations of prevailing applications. New development indicators on subjective and objective satisfaction towards sustainable society can be formulated by analyzing every possible relations with the four-fold wellbeing and interdependent parameters.

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RESPONSIBLE USE OF RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE FROM SRI LANKA

by Dr. Praneeth Abayasundara & Prof. Dhanapala Wijesinghe

ABSTRACT

This research is concerned with diverse use of Buddhist religious properties in Sri Lanka and the impact of such uses on the sustainable development of the country. As a sociological study it was designed to answer the research question as to how the multiple use of Buddhist religious properties contribute to the sustainable development which is struggling with scares resources. Accordingly, the central objective of the research was to identify the manifest and latent ways and means of multiple use of religious properties for meeting needs of resources for activities that ultimately contribute to the sustainable development. Significance and relevance of this research could be justified in terms of the role of religious institutions in the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. As is well apparent from world religious institutions, a considerable portion of various resources with a potentiality of making a decisive contribution to the sustainable development within the ideological framework of those religions, remains in the possession of them and it is also evident that those resources are used for developmental purposes at various levels. However, research studies are required to build a scientific knowledge base of the use of religious properties for sustainable development in the modern society.

* Department of Sociology and Anthropology University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.
Such a knowledge base would facilitate further development of the role of religious institutions in the sustainable development in any country.

Present research study was carried out with reference to twenty-five Buddhist temples and related institutions located in the western province of Sri Lanka. And this purposive sample was selected considering the diversified used of religious properties for making a significant contribution to the development and wellbeing of people. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventy respondents in addition to the observations made in those institutions for the purpose of gathering data for this research.

The findings revealed interesting ways and means of transforming sacred religious properties which have been offered by people for the exclusive use of Mahasangha as Sangika properties, into co-operative use for the benefit of both the Mahasangha and lay people with and without limitations. Offering of temple lands for developmental purposes such as establishment of educational institutions, welfare, social service, health, medical, community development, cultural, sports, vocational training, industrial and commercial centers, construction of building structures making spaces available for various purposes of society, operation of educational and social welfare institutions, provisions of scholarships and financial grants, facilitation of pilgrimages and housing programs were evident at different level. In addition to the religious properties and funds offered for the exclusive use of Mahasangha, an interest in finding sponsorships for such welfare and developmental purposes was also evident from the research.

As the principle of responsible consumption for the sustainable development is concerned, this research study scientifically corroborates the fact that even religious properties offered for the exclusive use of Buddhist monks can be transformed into properties of public use through the active involvement of Buddhist institutions in the social welfare and development activities. Sri Lankan Buddhist institutions are having a great potentiality of contributing to the sustainable development of the country.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is concerned with diverse use of Buddhist religious properties in Sri Lanka and the impact of such uses on the sustainable development of the country. Sri Lankan as a member of
the United Nations has been working for the fulfillment of the goals of sustainable development exploring different ways and means of accomplishment of them within the prescribed period of time. As a developing country it is struggling with limited resources in the implementation of projects of sustainable development. Even though Sri Lanka always seek foreign resources as development investment and consultancy, it has little concern about the development capacity of apparently non-economic social institutions, their economic capacities and capabilities of development consultancy. And even their active participation in and valuable contribution to the sustainable development seem to have not been fully recognized and assessed from a developmental perspective. Lack of scientific knowledge on such social institutions including the religious institutions deprives the nation of developmental potentialities of those social institutions. Leaving the other social institutions for future research studies, present research focuses attention to the Buddhist religious institution contributing to the sustainable development of the country. Significance and relevance of this research could be justified in terms of the role of religious institutions in the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. As is well apparent from world religious institutions, a considerable portion of various resources with a potentiality of making a decisive contribution to the sustainable development within the ideological framework of those religions, remains in the possession of them and it is also evident that those resources are used for developmental purposes at various levels. However, research studies are required to build a scientific knowledge base of the use of religious properties for sustainable development in the modern society. Such a knowledge base would facilitate further development of the role of religious institutions in the sustainable development in any country.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

As their counterparts in other countries, Buddhist religious institutions in Sri Lanka also perform number of social functions other than pure religious functions for the benefit of people. As a result, most of institutional properties and belongings which were originally destined and committed to the exclusive use of Maha Sangha, the Buddhist monks, have been transformed into resources
of multiple use intermingling with worldly affairs of people. This sociological study was designed to answer the research problem as to how the multiple use of Buddhist religious properties contribute to the sustainable development which is struggling with scarce resources available for developmental purposes.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, the central objective of the research was to identify the manifest and latent ways and means of multiple use of religious properties for meeting needs of resources for activities that ultimately contribute to the sustainable development.

4. METHODOLOGY

temples and related institutions and some other similar institutions have been conducting hundreds of developmental programs while providing spaces for the operation of such tasks. As the magnitude of the services offered by these institutions is concerned this research paper is not capable of reporting all the services in detail by the name of each institution and only a summary of the institutional contributions to the sustainable development is taken into account for making the important aspects evident.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings revealed interesting ways and means of transforming sacred religious properties which have been offered by people for the exclusive use of Mahasangha as Sangika properties, into co-operative use for the benefit of both the Mahasangha and lay people with and without limitations. Offering of temple lands for developmental purposes such as establishment of educational institutions, welfare, social service, health, medical, community development, cultural, sports, vocational training, industrial and commercial centers, construction of building structures making spaces available for various purposes of society, operation of educational and social welfare institutions, provisions of scholarships and financial grants, facilitation of pilgrimages and housing programs were evident at different level. In addition to the religious properties and funds offered for the exclusive use of Mahasangha, an interest in finding sponsorships for such welfare and developmental purposes was also evident from the research.

6. EDUCATIONAL CENTERS IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Use of Buddhist institutional facilities for the education of monks and lay people remains a historical practice in Sri Lanka. Before the introduction of western system of education in the colonial period, Buddhist schools known as pirivena were the only institutions of education in the country. Buddhist monks and lay people learned not only Buddhism and Buddhist cultural practices at temple schools but other subjects which were useful for various functions of the society. This historical heritage of educating people at temple premises has evolved in different directions
with the institutionalization of western educational system in Sri Lanka making some levels of education compulsory for the proper socialization of children. By today free education from grade one to university education is provided by the government at nearly ten thousand public schools and fifteen national universities respectively. This modern educational system not only educates the nation but also provides technically qualified people with a means of social mobility from lower poor classes to middle and upper social classes. At the same time, educational qualifications function as sources of prestige and social statuses in the Sri Lankan social context. This particular social change has given rise to a great competition for school education as well as higher education in the contemporary society. As a result, there developed a lucrative market for fee levying private sector tuition classes in the urban centers including the cities in the Western province. Lack of private sector infrastructure facilities and higher rent of available facilities turned private tuition teachers to hire buildings of temples at reasonable prices in Colombo and other urban centers. Soon considerable number of temples came to function as centers of fee levying education conducted by qualified teachers generating a new and lucrative source of income for the temples for raising funds for the development and maintenance of temples and other social welfare services conducted by those temples. This particular transformation of Buddhist educational service makes a great contribution to the responsible use of religious properties for the well-being of younger generations by facilitating their competition for educational qualifications in a society where poor people have no other option than higher education for climbing the social ladder. This expansion of educational infrastructure to Buddhist institutional infrastructures has solved the problem of space for meeting the increasing demand for enhancing the educational level of maximum number of people in the country. It is in this way secular use of Buddhist religious properties contribute to the sustainable development of the nation.

7. VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Vocational training has been identified as an indispensable need
of Sri Lankan youth in all the examinations of causal factors that had been conducive to the youth unrest and consequent Sinhalese youth revolts in 1971, in 1988 and 1989, and Tamil youth military conflicts protracted for nearly three decades since 1978. According to the recommendations of those inquiries vocational training must be available for all the young people in the country in order to facilitate their early employment and becoming productive citizens. Even though vocational training for youth is an important component of sustainable development the state sector has not been able to address it in full scale. It is in response to this national issue of youth unemployment that some Buddhist temples have come forward to give their hands to the youth for a vocational training. Those Buddhist temples seemed to have embarked another step further to the mere knowledge-oriented education by opening centers of various vocational training for the youth of all communities irrespective of their race and creed. Addressing such a national need using religious institutional properties stands for another means of responsible consumption of resources belong to the Buddhist temples. This research study clearly reveals the magnitude of the Buddhist institutional contribution to the enhancement of employability of youth in Sri Lanka corroborating a fact that the Buddhist temples are capable of assuring the sustainable development of the country.

According to the research findings the vocational training courses offered in Buddhist institutional premises range from carpentry to development of soft wares for various purposes of modern information society. The most popular Buddhist institution of vocational training is located in the center of Colombo offers fifty training courses in all the fields of employment in Sri Lanka and abroad. More than 50 principle trainers work as instructors for over three thousand trainees hailing from different parts of the country. This institution alone has been functioning for nearly four decades since 1979. Originally it offered only two training courses in 1979 with the objective of developing employability skills of young people and in the course of the period of four decades it has trained thousands of youth and employed them in various capacities. As was revealed in the research, this Buddhist institution has expanded its service to the other regions of the country by opening 30 vocational
training centers in areas such as Pannipitaya, Katharagama, Mathara, Kandy, Tangalla, Ibbagamuwa, Maduwanwala and some other locations. Learning from this prominent institution of vocational training, other temples also have made various successful attempts of providing vocational training to the employable generations. It is interesting to note that all the initial efforts of providing the youth with employability skills have been made transforming the religious properties traditionally perceived as sacred properties allocated for the exclusive use of Maha Sangha as Sangika properties into resources available for the use of lay people of Buddhist and other communities. It is in this way the responsible consumption of Buddhist religious properties has been established addressing a national need of sustainable development and peaceful social order of society.

Success of such developmental efforts of Buddhist temples seemed to have brought about by the traditional religious authority of Buddhist monks, wide spread social capital of the incumbent monks of temples, patronage of Buddhist and other secular societies, organizations, companies, state sector institution, local and international donations, legal and bureaucratic assistance, community recognition and the assistance of former trainees who are in good capacities and rich in wealth.

8. HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICE CENTERS IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka have a historical reputation for rendering variety of health and medical services for the well-being of people of all the races in loving kindness to all. There are Buddhist monks well known for traditional folk medical practices and Ayurvedic medical practices in different parts of the country. This particular health and healing services have transformed some immovable properties of temples into health and medical centers. Accordingly, it is a well-recognized practice of Sri Lankan Buddhist temples to utilize religious premises for conducting health and medical services by both monks and lay physicians. As was evident from the research, temple based health and medical centers serve a large number of patients hailing from poor classes. Even though health and medical services are provided free of charge as a national
policy, the capacity of health centers and medical hospitals and treatment center is yet to be enhanced and the temple base health and medical centers cater to the needs of patients who find it difficult to wait for a long period of time for enjoying the services of formal medical institutions. As a responsible use of religious properties for the benefit of patients and their poor families this practice seemed to have made an immense contribution to the sustainable development. Various regular and periodical health and medical services such as eye clinics, dental clinics, some medical checkups for poor people, health clinics for pregnant mothers, immunization programs for infants and children, health care awareness programs, distribution of food, medical aid and health information are carried out at temple premises. Infrastructure facilities of Buddhist religious institutes solve the problem of finding good and accessible locations for delivering public health and some important medical treatments and counseling programs. Even health and medical donations are also distributed at the centers established in temple premises. Some temples have established health care centers for elderly and differently able people taking the responsibility of looking after them. A center for elderly Buddhist monks was also observed in Horana in kalutara district where Buddhist monks and lay people take care of very old monks hailing from different regions in the country.

9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE CENTERS IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Community development centers are found in almost all the Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka and the temples observed for this research are not different. They had allocated buildings for office facilities of various community development societies and also for regular meetings of those societies without any formal charge. The chief incumbent or one of leading monks also work as advisers of some of those societies. As the significance of community development in the sustainable development of the country is considered, the role played by the Buddhist temples providing infrastructure facilities for them need to be appreciated with real understanding of the poor infrastructure of communities. Apart from the lack of such facilities, temple premises are specially
selected as centers where people can gather irrespective of personal disparities. Provision of Buddhist institutional infrastructure facilities for community development societies can be considered an important means of responsible use and consumption of Buddhist religious properties that enable the nation to achieve sustainable development goals.

One important aspect of sustainable development is the empowerment of women who have been historically marginalized and subordinated to the male dominance. In the case of Sri Lanka, Buddhist temples have played a vital role providing women with a forum to gather and discuss their issues and solutions. A number of women's societies operate from temple centers and enjoy the blessing of monks in empowering members. Compared to the men, women showed enthusiastic participation in all the religious functions conducted in the temples and that commitment of women seemed to be a visible sign of their empowerment. Organization of religious functions and other temple-based secular functions, active participation in fund raising tasks of their societies, taking leadership in common activities, organization of social welfare activities, and active involvement in assisting people affected by natural disasters were clearly evident from the women empowered by the temple-based centers of community development. Empowerment of women in a male dominant society remains a big challenge of women's societies and the seemed to have overcome that challenge owing to the patronage of the temple. As the communities fully recognize the traditional authority of the Buddhist monks, men have to support the empowerment programs conducted at the temple premises.

The Buddhist temples under consideration make an immense contribution to sustainable development of the country by rendering variety of social welfare services for the refugees of disasters, refugees displaced by conflicts, differently able people, elderly people, orphans, drug addicts, patients of chronic illnesses, children displaced by broken families and victims of serious crimes against person and properties. Those categories of clients were found in hundreds in the Buddhist temples based social welfare centers enjoying the services regularly offered for the well-being of them while supporting the institutions in different capacities
depending on their personalities. Provision of the lands and physical structures for such welfare services and organization and operation of those centers at a huge cost seemed to have amounted to a great national contribution in a social environment where the similar services of the state sector institutions are not sufficient in catering to the such needs of people. Even in quality wise the welfare services offered by the temple-based welfare centers remain better than that of public facilities as revealed by the service recipients who have the experience of enjoying the services of both the state and the Buddhist temple. All the children in the welfare center in the age of having school education were observed schooling in public schools in the vicinity of those welfare centers and this facilitation of school education and the vocational education and university education after completion of it can be appreciated as a great contribution to the achievement of the educational goal of sustainable development by the Buddhist temples that commit their resources for the well-being of helpless children in the country.

In the case of able-bodied members of the community who regularly visit their temples the welfare and developmental centers conduct programs for the physical and spiritual development of people which seemed much more attractive to the participants specially in the management of psychological stress and tension of them. In particular, the Buddhist meditation which has been traditionally directed towards spiritual well-being of devotees seemed to have been extended beyond that spiritual boundaries to address current issues of physical health and medication of illnesses and psychological well-being of participants in meditation programs. This positive change of the horizons of Buddhist meditation and the new perception of the significance of it for the mental and physical well-being of all generations from children to elderly people has increased the frequency of the use of Buddhist institutional premises for the benefit of the lay devotees in adjacent communities as was observed in the research study. In some temples under consideration in this research, there are Yoga centers and Yoga programs conducted by trained yoga teachers under the patronage of chief incumbents of those Buddhist temples. Even though Yoga is familiar to Hindu community and some others in Sri Lanka, Buddhist people had taken it for granted as a practice
for the enhancement of mental and physical well-being until recent decades when leading Buddhist temples recognized it and offered temple facilities for leaning and training of Yoga without and adverse impact on the Buddhist identity based on meditation with its Buddhist interpretation and perception intact.

10. INDUSTRIAL VENTURES AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Use of lands and infrastructure facilities of temple premises for various industrial purposes was also found in some of the temples observed in the research study. In urban areas in Colombo and other cities special facilities remain expensive due to scarcity of lands with commercial and industrial value in the current market economy. According to the research findings some parts of temple premises are used for the construction of cement blocks as building material, repairs of vehicles, bicycles, industrial machines, computers, watches, electronic and other domestic equipment, production of shoes, hand bags, table and kitchen wares, furniture and small scale production of various goods and these industries are predominantly carried out by people hailing from low-income families having close relationships with the residing monks of those temples. Even though some of such producers have kinship relationships with incumbent monks of the temple they make periodical payment to the temple for hiring the temple lands and structures for their industrial purposes. While creating sources of income for the temples and their various social welfare and developmental activities, Buddhist temples facilitate the productive economic functioning of low-income families in the urban social contexts where there is a market for such industries.

Making less productive community members productive citizens through the supply of temple lands and structure, which were originally destined for the exclusive use of the order of Buddhist monks, the Maha Sangha, can be identified as an important contribution to the sustainable development and responsible use of productive temple properties. The economic significance of this contribution of Buddhist temples should be comprehended in terms of the expensive market value of the geographical locations of properties belong to the Buddhist temples. In case the Buddhist
temples have a rigid adherence to the religious norms of using Sangika properties, that is offered for the exclusive use of Buddhist Maha Sangha, those conducting industrial production of goods may have no access to the urban market. But the positive change of such rigid religious norms of consuming and using temple properties has made the temples much more productive institutions that facilitate the productive participation of low-income families in the modern urban market system while preserving the traditional religious identity of Buddhist temples. As was evident in the research there are social criticisms against the secular industrial and commercial use of temple properties but the economic benefits of such use of temple properties for both of temples and low-income families seemed to have undermined them.

Related to the use of temple properties for industrial production is the commercial ventures found in temples lands and buildings located in urban areas. According to the research findings not only the people of low-income stratum of society but also middle class and upper-class members make use of temple properties for conducting businesses of various types such as branches of banks and financial institutions, companies, printing industries, press, mass media, sales centers, stores, parking facilities, pharmacies, private clinics and channeling centers. They have hired those properties with and without legal deeds of lease for a particular period of time. Such commercial uses of temple properties seemed to have made them much productive for the country while having special benefits for both the temples and the entrepreneurs. This transformation of less-productive lands and infrastructures of Buddhist temples into productive at various levels assure the availability of productive resources required for the sustainable development.

11. ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES

Buddhist temples perform a historical social function of providing accommodation facilities for travelers, pilgrims, tourists, temporary visitors, students, employees, patients, venders, beggars and clergies travelling from place to place. By Buddhist tradition the temples are offered for the exclusive use of all present and future order of monks and they are open for monks to have
accommodation on their tours. However, lay people also have developed a cultural tradition of finding accommodation facilities free of charge in temple premises with the patronage of residing chief incumbent monks of the temple and it has become a common practice to spend the nights when ever such a requirement arises for those on religious or secular tours. Even today, some urban temples abide by this tradition under strict rules and conations that prevent the abuse of temple accommodation service for committing crimes and indulging in vice. This traditional practice apart, as was observed in the research, temples makes a considerable contribution to the responsible consumption of resources and assurance of sustainable development thereby, by catering to the low-cost accommodation facilities temporary and regular users in the urban social context. This contribution is having multiple positive social impacts as various categories of above-mentioned people find low-cost or free accommodation for various purposes. Temple based accommodation seemed facilitating school and higher education of hundreds of poor students coming from remote areas to urban schools and colleges. Accordingly, it is a great social function that facilitates the education of children affected by the drastic inequality of the distribution of income and the consequent marginalization and alienation from the access to development opportunities in the modern capitalist social system. Addressing the issues of marginalized and socially alienated people remains a great challenge of sustainable development and proper recognition of this social function of Buddhist temples may help the nation to face it successfully.

12. CONCLUSION

As the principle of responsible consumption for the sustainable development is concerned, this research study scientifically corroborates the fact that even religious properties offered for the exclusive use of Buddhist monks can be transformed into properties of public use through the active involvement of Buddhist institutions in the social welfare and development activities. Sri Lankan Buddhist institutions are having a great potentiality of contributing to the sustainable development of the country. As is well evident from the use of temple properties facilitate number
of social functions such as the education. Vocational training, industrial production and commercial activities, community development, social welfare, accommodation that all together enhances the quality of life and well-being of the people. Therefore, it is concluded that the temples in Sri Lanka make an immense contribution to the sustainable development of the country filling various gaps left by the main process of development and addressing issues from a Buddhist perspective and making use of properties offered for the use of Monks. The national benefits of the use of Buddhist temple properties are enjoyed by the members of various categories of people suffering from myriads of problems and want of resources and access to them.
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ABSTRACT

Industrialization changed the self-sufficient economies in the world to profit-maximizing modes of production. The people who have got used to satisfy their day-to-day needs got attracted to the classy and costly brands the manufacturers have produced and advertised. Irrespective of the religion all are expected to follow unwritten codes in their consumption patterns. But the times have changed so much that by 1899 even Thorstein Veblen had to discuss the conspicuous consumption the people were practicing. The Buddhist discourses point out the satisfaction of the self in all aspects of life. The insatiable nature drives man’s sentiments to craving, greed, desire and finally to diverse selfish motives destroying himself and others.

The main research issue in this context was what would be the ultimate outcome of the insatiable nature of man’s consumption patterns and what kind of ill-effects it could bring in future disrupting the life on earth. Therefore, the study aimed at identifying the Buddhist approach to responsible consumption. Then it tried to analyse the effects of irresponsible consumption and discussed how responsible consumption could foster sustainable development. Finally, the research wanted to suggest the need to control irresponsible consumption patterns prevalent in the contemporary society.

* Dr., Senior Secondary and Tertiary levels, Ministry of Education and Higher Education Institutes, Sri Lanka.
The methodology used was a structured questionnaire on four hundred youth representing all the segments in the Sri Lankan society irrespective of their religious affiliation. A systematic sampling method was designed assuming that the sample would provide a better insight into the understanding of respondents’ views. The Youths were selected mainly that there is a generally held notion that they are the most vulnerable and the group that over consume in the society due to the influence of media.

The Buddhist approach to consumerism points out that there is no end to desire if it is not controlled. So Buddhist economics always propagate responsible consumption since it reduces all the conflicts one has with oneself and the outside world. It was found out that the effects of irresponsible consumption increase physical and mental illnesses, environmental degradation and rights-based living. Further it was identified that how responsible consumption could pave the way for sustainability through equality, justice and proper resource utilization. Finally, it was identified that a productive way could be suggested to maintain a harmony among production, consumption and preservation of different capitals that introduces a social and ecological friendly consumption pattern.

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic behaviour has been one of the integral aspects of human history. All the social groups in the world, irrespective of their geographical area, have been practicing some form of economic activities. In general, the traditional, self-sufficient economic activities got changed in to market-based, industrial economies. At present, the globe has been mainly experiencing the open economic system in which many of the countries have got networked. The early communities were highly satisfied with their day-to-day simple needs fulfilled and remained on minor scale, cottage industries and unsophisticated agricultural activities. With the passage of time, those have been replaced by mass scale producers, marketers and advertisers who introduced social stratification to even among the goods produced. As we pass from modern to postmodern or global era, no one is able to stop irresponsible production in a profit motivated, free trade economy and no one can expect all the producers to be responsible towards humanity.
Like the society has got stratified in to social classes the goods produced too have been made to cater to different classes since the level of affordability is unequal. The rich could afford costly goods whereas the poor are unable to behave so. From the pin to the aeroplane there are branded goods which are classy and costly. With this there emerged ‘the culture ideology of consumerism’ (Sklair, 2002) which came in to the existence due to two main factors. First, the electronic revolution changed the type of the good; its shape, quality of raw materials, design and finish to attract a wide range of customers. Second, the advertising with the help of transnational corporations propagated the image of such products and made symbols of affluence. So the people developed different types of ideologies in relation to western cultural values even for consumption.

Robinson and Harris (2000) who introduced the concept of ‘transnational capitalist class’ claimed that it has such enormous power in all the spheres in society, whether economic, political, social or cultural shaping consumption patterns. According to Sklair (2001) in transnational capitalist class there are four major players; corporate, state, technical and consumerist who are represented respectively by state officials, professionals, merchants and media. In 1899 Thorstein Veblen introduced the idea of ‘conspicuous consumption’ in which consumers tend to buy things even if they do not want those but just to show their wealth and social status. So the real needs and wants of the people have been replaced by their egoistical satisfaction. The Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse (1964) wrote on the ill-effects of modern industrial capitalism. In his text ‘One-dimensional Man’ he spoke of how advertising enslaves man and overpowers his critical thinking capacity. So his real needs are forgotten and he becomes a slave of the false needs propagated by media.

Social scientists in the modern era were interested in studying man’s economic behaviour in society and another concept they identified was the ‘pleasure’ created by consumer capitalism. Consumption was to make people happy in many respects. One of the ways is to do this is ‘brand romance’. Certain people develop a kind of sentimental attachment towards certain brands since they
assist them to attain and maintain their social position. Campbell (1992) explains this psychological state in another perspective; ‘romantic ethic’, not the exact use of goods but longing to have those. The production firms always tend to retain consumers and customers on this and the consumer is never happy with what he has. In many cases the economic activities have got camouflaged. Hudson (2013) says that many economic activities have artificial attractiveness or even of invisibility of the ill effects.

2. RESEARCH ISSUE

Based on the background information mentioned above the researcher is interested in analysing what would be the outcome of irresponsible consumption the human kind practices by now. It is inevitable that the irresponsible consumption could affect human society from micro to macro scales bringing a series of damages to man, society and nature. Since sustainability tries to preserve the depleting resources for the future generations through responsible consumption it is advisable to begin practicing what the Buddhist philosophy indicates; ‘mindful’ or ‘responsible consumption’. Even though there are goods available in the market, the person should have ‘samma sati’ – the Right mindfulness. Anything done in a proper manner lead to sustainability. So there would be no question of sustainability in future through mindful consumption.

Research questions

In trying to investigate the selected context of this study the researcher decided to answer the following questions such as, what is sustainability, the features of sustainability, what is responsible consumption, what are the effects of irresponsible consumption, what is Buddhist Economics, how Buddhist economics promote responsible consumption and how Buddhist approaches to economics could be used to enrich responsible consumption.

Objectives

The objectives to be achieved in this study were as follows. First, the researcher wished to discuss the Buddhist approach to responsible consumption. Second, to analyse the effects of irresponsible consumption on human society. Third, to examine the
ways to control irresponsible consumption and finally, to explain how responsible consumption could foster sustainability in society.

Literature review

Throughout history religion had a direct relationship with economic activities. Whatever the activity the people engaged in that was conditioned by their culture; norms, values, attitudes, practices, rituals and beliefs. So economic activities too got thoroughly influenced by each culture. One of the leading historical research in religion and economy was ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’ by Max Weber (1904). For him the development of European capitalism was mainly based on the Protestant work ethic; ‘the ascetic way of life’. Even though he studied Eastern religions those were criticized based on his lack of empirical knowledge on economies such as in India and China (1958, 1968). At the initial stage of European thinking it was believed that the Eastern religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism could not have an influence on economic activities thus those economies were comparatively backward compared to the capitalist economies of Europe and USA. Since recently there is a resurgence of Buddhist ethics on economic activities.

In economics the mode of production rests on the raw materials, labour, land, machinery and finances. The market actors were investors, producers, distributors, suppliers, and consumers. In the globalized world there is a complex network binding all these in different degrees as the importance of each segment. Buddhism as a non-European religion has developed recently extremely influential in literature related to human behaviour [Loy, 1997: Essen 2010: Harvey, 2013]. It has been able to provide a new insight in to the existing consumption patterns through its philosophy. Currently the economic activities have become so inhuman that the raw materials have been over used. The quality of the goods has been overlooked against the profits. The health hazards due to the poor, unhealthy working conditions and the diseases caused by those low quality goods produced have been ignored. In this context the Lord Buddha’s explanation of Right livelihood provides an alarming insight to the world in general.
Many aspects of the eight-fold path are important in when discussing the sustainability driven economic culture. For example, Right understanding (Samma ditthi), Right thought (Samma sankappa), Right action (Samma kammanta), Right livelihood (Samma ajiva), Right effort (Samma vayama), Right mindfulness (Samma sati) and Right concentration (Samma samadhi) could be related to any of the economic actors in the society. Some are specifically related to the producers while some are for consumers, and some are there for both. Therefore, it could be noticed that the Buddhist philosophy on economy is based on these. If someone does anything correct, according to the conscience, having a proper conviction that would be a wholesome act. But the present economic activities do not show any of these aspects promoted by Buddhist philosophy. In summary, Buddhist economics try to preserve nature while fulfilling the needs of the people in an ethical manner.

Buddhist economic philosophy lays a solid foundation for all the good qualities of human beings. Accountability and transparency are key terms in this kind of life style. It enhances group cohesion and solidarity. Earlier the economic development was measured based on gross national income (GNI), gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita income (PCI). By now the world has understood the quantitative revolution has not paid rich dividends to humankind. Therefore, now the scholars are thinking of new strategies to regain the lost characteristics to make human lives better. In 1972 Bhutanese king introduced gross national happiness (GNH) and now most of the countries are interested in ‘happiness index’. It is ironical that people first destroy what they have and then pursue what they have destroyed. Many countries could incorporate the spiritual values in to their economic activities to make the production process, work cultures and the consumption a productive, mindful and responsible one for society. This contrasts with the material wealth of industrial society to a more spiritual wealth of a traditional society.

The concept ‘Buddhist Economics’ was coined and introduced by E. F. Schumacher (1955) with his experiences in Burma. Later a large number of scholars of related disciplines became interested
in and by now many non-Buddhist societies too are interested in incorporating the value system in to economic activities. Buddhism never discourages economic activities but guide the people rely on ethical practices. The Sigalováda Sutta of Digha Nikáya informs the reader how to avoid evil ways of life and how a person could get himself in to trouble by squandering his wealth. Lord Buddha explained in Vánijja Sutta in Anguttara Nikáya (AN) the five businesses the lay people should not engaged in; those are wrong, unethical and immoral livelihoods.

“Monks, a lay follower should not engage in five types of business. Which five? Business in weapons, business in human beings, business in meat, business in intoxicants, and business in poison” (AN 5.177).

As the religious principles get incorporated into day-to-day lives many are interested in finding out how to live a comfortable life refrain from suffering. In Buddhism there are various ways to live happily. In Anguttara Nikaya (A. II. (69-70) Lord Buddha explains the four kinds of happiness one could enjoy in life. Happiness - ‘Sukha’ is to be achieved in many ways but it should come from the right action; Samma kammanta. ‘Atthi sukha’ is the happiness one derives when he or she owns wealth. Assets should not be obtained at the expense of the other peoples’ suffering. Even though one could live a comfortable life by doing so it is temporary. This is explained as ‘Anavajja sukha’. So any wealth should be obtained through right livelihood. Any one free from debt is called as ‘Anana sukha’. When we look at the present day world the capitalist economy has produced so many equipments the majority cannot buy. But to get the capitalist system continuing, the system itself has introduced various easy payment schemes. So people are always in debt to many financial institutions thus making their lives miserable in many ways. ‘Bhoga sukha’ convinces that one has to share what he or she has with the others around in the immediate environment. That may be among family, relatives, friends, the people at work place and in close proximity. In this way so many people can be happy in their day-to-day lives.

Ratthapala Sutta in Majjhima Nikaya and Verses 186 and 187 of Dhammapada mention the insatiable nature of man and how he or she becomes slavish to money or wealth.
“Householder, if you’d do as I say, you would have this heap of gold and silver loaded on carts and hauled away to be dumped midstream in the river Ganges. Why is that? This [wealth] will be the cause of your sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress and despair” (MN 82, PTS: M ii 54)

‘Not by a shower of coins can sensual desires be satiated; sensual desires give little pleasure and are fraught with evil consequences (dukkha)’. (Verse 186)

‘Knowing this, the wise man, who is the disciple of the Buddha, does not find delight even in the pleasures of the devas, but rejoices in the cessation of craving (i.e., Nibbana)’. (Verse 187)

The Buddhist philosophy not only discusses how one should earn but how to spend also. As you earn money in a mindful and responsible manner one should know how to manage his money in spending sensibly. In Sigalovada Sutta of Digha Nikaya (III 180) Lord Buddha advises how to spend money in a responsible manner. The wealth accumulated in the correct manner should be divided into four portions. The first part is for one’s own needs and wants. The second and third parts are to invest on businesses and the final one for the times he needs. All these examples and many others in several places of Buddhist literature prove that Buddhist philosophy had been insisting that money should be earned in an ethical way and the consumption too should be done in a responsible way.

Methodology

The collection of data for the study was done using a structured questionnaire due to cost-effective nature. Within a short period of time the researcher could collect a large number of responses. The responses are high in validity, reliability, generalizability and objectivity. Classification, analysis and the presentation of results are easy. Further the structured questionnaires could provide invaluable information about personal ideas, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and experiences (Turner, 2006, p. 509). Four hundred youths from state and private tertiary educational institutes were selected using a systematic sampling method because there are a lot of students in the tertiary educational institutes in both sectors.
A systematic sampling method was designed assuming that the sample would provide a better insight into the understanding of respondents’ views. The Youths were selected mainly that there is a generally held notion that they are the most vulnerable and the group that over consume in the society due to the influence of media. In the structured questionnaire there were five questions to identify the basic demographic factors. After that to find out the responses for the objectives of the study there were twenty questions. Nagypál et al (2015) too has conducted a similar study using a sample of Hungarian University undergraduates to study how they interpret and select products based on sustainable consumption. Youth are the ones who are normally driven by the influence of advertising and product differentiation. The responses would explain their level of awareness and the behaviour in relation to such awareness.

3. DISCUSSION

The term sustainable development appeared in the scholarly discussions and literature since 1992. The Agenda 21 published in the Rio Summit (UNEP, 2010) took a clear view in sustainable consumption and production at the global level. Wang et al (2014) describe sustainable consumption as ‘meeting needs, enhancing the quality of life, improving resource efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy sources, minimizing waste, taking a life cycle perspective and taking into account the equity dimension’ (p. 154). Valkó (2003) mentions that sustainable consumption should be studied under two main objectives. The first is to minimize the consumption of goods only to when and where necessary, alter the habits of the consumers and introduce positive changes to consumption patterns. The second objective should be to establish a permanent value system that would strengthen sustainability. Both these objectives unequivocally bear a testimony to the Buddhist practices advocated.

Akenji (2014) proposes a framework that constitute; attitude, facilitator and infrastructure, in explaining how sustainable consumption is to be mainstreamed. This highlights three elements – stakeholders having the right attitude, facilitators enabling the actions to reflect those attitudes and the development of suitable
infrastructure. Whatever the strategy adopted the most important aspect is the behavior of the consumer. Different scholars have used different concepts to explain the factors that influence the consumer’s behavior. In Kotler’s Model of Consumer Behaviour (Kotler and Dubois, 2003, p. 761) the main elements of consumer behavior are ‘marketing stimuli’, ‘buyer’s decision making process’ and ‘buyer’s responses’. Further the characteristics pertaining to the buyer could be classified and identified under the elements of ‘Cultural’, ‘Social’, ‘Personal’ and ‘Psychological’ (ibid).

Even though the international organizations have taken a keen interest on sustainable consumption it is tragic that majority of the general public do not have a concrete idea of what is happening. Without their knowledge they contribute to irresponsible consumption patterns. O’Rourke (2005) states that consumers are “more environmentally and socially aware today”, although, “they still do not generally consume with concern” (p. 116). Since the advent of globalization the consumption patterns have changed in an unprecedented manner. Jonkutė and Jugris (2014) are in the opinion that the consumer patterns are based on demography, access to global trade, technological sophistication and innovations. Gilg et al. (2005) also conclude that the causes for the patterns of consumption are ‘environmental and social values, socio-demographic variables and psychological factors’ (p. 482).

The twelfth goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims at ensuring sustainable and responsible consumption and production patterns. Oslo Symposium (1994) defined sustainable consumption and production as:

‘The use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardise the needs of further generations’. (UNEP 2010, p. 12)

Based on this, there are numerous targets to achieve. Managing the natural resources efficiently and responsible disposal of toxic waste and pollutants are prime targets. Simultaneously it was decided to encourage all the parties to reuse, recycle and reproduce
to minimize the damages done to the environment and the expenses in all processes of production and consumption. It has been noted that the developing countries in the world have been contributing for these ill-effects knowingly or unknowingly. While the amount of global food waste is significant, there are a large number of people who do not even meet the basic food requirements daily. While taking necessary steps to reduce global food waste the authorities have to think of ways to channel to reduce hunger and malnutrition by distributing food to the regions that need most. Food scarcity as a contemporary global issue could be countered by improving food security. So it has been understood that to promote the quality of life at the global level, the entire system of production and consumption should be changed.

Since the times of Western imperialism, the West had a great impact of the production and the consumption of the non-Western regions too. Globalization has been an extension of the same social, economic and political process. Leslie Sklair (2002, 2009, 2010) extensively portrayed the relationship between economy and culture in relation to consumption in the globalized era. As Sklair (2009) mentions there is a significant difference between the ‘basic [true] and false needs (p. 528). Consumers have not been able to identify what are the actual needs that satisfy their life. Chernus (1993) mentions how irrational and illogical man is when pursuing these false needs. According to him, ‘False needs are unnecessary needs.... To meet false needs we repress our genuine needs and the real needs of others. We perform unneeded labour, miss opportunities to enjoy life, and deprive others of their basic needs’ (p.1). The role of the transnational corporations has been to control and manipulate global production and consumption. Skalir (2010) explained his concept the culture-ideology of consumerism as ‘a set of beliefs and values, integral but not exclusive to the system of capitalist globalization, intended to make people believe that human worth is best ensured and happiness is best achieved in terms of our consumption and possessions’ (p. 136). As the term itself denotes the idea is that there is a culture or subculture gets developed in relation to consumption patterns. The dominance of the global capitalist economy could be seen in many ways and this is only one such instance.
Throughout the world, irrespective of the geographical region, people suffer due to many reasons. The lop-sided development in all fields have introduced a lot of ill-effects to the individuals, society and nature. One of the paths the people could practice to move out of these ill-effects is the practice of Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist philosophy advocates how to utilize all the resources in a sensible (responsible) way without getting into extremes. For that people need to control their desires, in other words, senses. But what has happened is, Man has become blind to the long-term ill-effects when enjoying the short-term benefits. As experienced in life the most important thing is the making of choices or decisions. When making choices or decisions people have to act responsibly. The Thai government’s ‘Sufficiency Economy Philosophy’ (SEP) is a very good example how a country could achieve prosperity in successive stages. It is based on the middle path advocated by Buddhism to achieve sustainable development by integrating the three dimensions; physical, social and spiritual. Rather than blindly following the Western theories the Thai government wanted its people to start in a simple but practical way to achieve self-sufficiency first before moving in to more advanced stages.

Anyone who delves too deep in to the SEP could understand how much it is related to Buddhism. The three principles are as follows. The first principle asserts the importance of moderation in protecting the planning and implementation from internal and external threats. Secondly, knowledge should be applied reasonably through wisdom and prudence. Finally, the community should develop self-immunity against the negative external impacts. All the three key words, ‘moderation’, ‘reasonableness’ and ‘self-immunity’ are explained extensively in Buddhist philosophy. Daniels (2007) mentions that this type of economic activities and behaviours are beneficial to all the segments of society from micro to macro level.

4. FINDINGS

The Sample consists of 126 (31.5 per cent) males and 274 (68.5 per cent) females. Normally in Sri Lanka, the tertiary education system comprises of more females. The age group was between 20
to 27 years of age. The researcher wanted to target this age group because they are the ones who would bring this knowledge to the next generation. While 248 students (62 per cent) represented the public sector, 152 (38 per cent) represented the private sector. This is due to the fact that there are more students in public sector tertiary educational institutes. There were 252 respondents (63 per cent) represented Buddhism and 103 (25.75 per cent), 11 (2.75 per cent) and 34 (8.5 per cent) represented Christianity/Catholicism, Hinduism and Islam respectively. The ethnic categories Sinhalese and Tamil Christians or Roman Catholics have contributed largely to the sample in this respect. There were 212 (53 per cent) students who represented the Arts stream subjects while 108 (27 per cent) and 80 (20 per cent) respectively represented the commerce and science streams. In Sri Lankan tertiary educational institutes there are more students studying in Arts stream and respectively lesser in Commerce and Science streams.

As the first objective of the research study the researcher wished to find out the knowledge of the respondents on the Buddhist approach to responsible consumption. Most of them were unaware (67 per cent) that there is a term or concept called ‘Buddhist Economics’. Still a significant number (58 per cent) knew that the Lord Buddha had explained the proper way to earn and spend but a poor percentage (22) knew in which discourse those were explained. Another remarkable percentage (77) did not know that Buddhism has advocated the mindful or responsible consumption in many places of its discourses. Further the sample knew that four noble truths (81 per cent), the middle path (80 per cent) and the eight-fold path (76 per cent) discuss the importance of responsible consumption but how it should be practiced was unclear.

In analyzing the second objective, the effects of irresponsible consumption on human society, the following findings were received. The sample in this research responded that they are aware of the concepts and terms ‘green’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘eco-friendly’ (78 per cent) but only 22 per cent knew or heard about ‘responsible consumption’. Most of them (83 per cent) expressed that they should protect the environment and the same percentage admitted that they did not know how to contribute as an individual. Ninety-one
per cent acknowledged that each individual is responsible for what one consumes and 74 per cent said that they think of sustainability when buying goods. Another great majority (94 per cent) claimed that individuals are responsible for careful use of products and disposal of waste material. Another remarkable percentage (88) agreed that they should reuse, recycle and reproduce but the same category expressed that their knowledge to do those is very poor.

Another significant aspect of the responses was that 48 per cent did not know the negative impacts the use of goods has on environment. Ninety-five per cent admitted that they buy products without knowing the impacts those have on environment. The need (89 per cent) and the price or affordability (87 per cent) are the two main determinants in making a decision to purchase a product. Product quality (74 per cent) and durability (61 per cent) were subsequent determinants. Advertising is the main and most influential medium (98 per cent) that shapes the decision making process of purchasing. Other than advertisements they believe in leaflets (72 per cent), user manuals (67 per cent) without questioning the authenticity. Further 48 per cent replied that there is no way of verifying the specifications given in the product description.

In answering how to control the irresponsible consumption in society the respondents had mentioned the following ideas. All the respondents agreed that the society should be educated fully. The first preference was to start this awareness programmes at school level, then the secondary educational institutes, tertiary educational institutes, work places and finally, the community organisations. The sources they mentioned were the television, newspapers, radio, social media campaigns and street drama. Further, all the respondents in the sample mentioned that it is important to educate the producers. But when they were answering the question in relation to the producers most of them (69 per cent) said that they are unable to think any strategy of educating them on responsible production. In answering how to improve sustainable consumption the respondents were of the view that the consumers should be educated on product quality (89 per cent), its environmental impact (76 per cent) and the actual need to use it (67 per cent). The relationship between the producer and the consumer too was
identified as important (87 per cent). Most of them believed that the harm of the products is limited to its chemicals (83 per cent), lack of durability (79 per cent) and health effects (77 per cent).

In trying to find answers for the fourth objective the respondents were of the opinion that sustainability is the most discussed topic in this century. All of them agreed that responsible consumption would foster sustainability. The majority considered it is the responsibility of the government (94 per cent) to promote responsible consumption rather than individual (83 per cent). The most preferred solution the respondents marked was to use natural resources in a traditional way (93 per cent) in production process rather than getting in to the modern technology (81 per cent) to reduce harm on nature, man and society. Further they wanted the society to develop a normative framework for responsible consumption. Individuals adapting a rational behaviour (96 per cent), being sensitive to harmful effects of the products (91 per cent) and being sensible in selecting products in relation to actual needs (89 per cent) were the three main response selections in promoting responsible consumption.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the researcher has found out that there is an enormous gap between the knowledge and practice of the respondents. The sample is the next generation who would be responsible in making decisions in all the spheres. But the lack of knowledge of what they do and having low alternatives to counter the problems they are going to face would be a serious concern. Even though there is a willingness to act, the lack of knowledge or awareness has become critical. The relevant authorities should take an action to promote responsible consumption by reducing this ‘knowledge – action gap’ which will be pivotal in changing the behaviour of the people. In practicing Buddhist philosophy also, we identify the similar issue. People need to be ethical and moral but in their practice (action) that desire is absent.

Even though the governments are responsible it would be difficult to take actions regarding production processes of their own country and limit the in-flow of foreign goods for consumption. If they
restrict their own firms, lack of employment, quality goods and the technology would restrict competing with the rest of the world. The urban-rural disparity and the level of education may be two other factors which could not have been addressed in this study. According to the findings of the Consumer Awareness Survey on Sustainable Consumption done in Sri Lanka (2018) also there is a desire to act but the lack of knowledge has been the critical issue. Kopnina (2011) too found out that there is a positive relationship between the social class and the awareness of responsible consumption among Hungarian University students. Even though people are conscious about the ill-effects of irresponsible consumption they have not been environmentally conscious, responsible consumers.

Yamamoto (2003) proposes a solution for this – ‘Buddhist-inspired sustainable economies’ (p. 157). He says the greatest weakness of the individual is ‘káma tanhá’ (p. 159), his craving to satisfy the sensual pleasures. It relates to ‘bhava tanhá’ (p. 160), his desire to satisfy his ego and social status. It is understood that all should live happily but how that happiness is achieved has not been realized. Yamamoto (2003) proposes the three spheres that should work together to bring this happiness; individual level, social level and the level of natural world.

The author wishes to suggest a tri-partite structure through which the happiness of consumption could be achieved fully in relation to the Buddhist Philosophy. The sustainability through ‘responsible consumption’ would rest on the proper combination of the three ‘capitals’; natural, human and moral capital. Natural capital refers to the resources we utilize in the production process. The human capital is the labour we use in producing goods. The producers have to be responsible in using natural and human capital in this stage. The moral or ethical capital is the normative framework of the consumers. If all the stages are worked out in relation to Buddhist Philosophy the physical structures, human structures and the institutional structures of the society would be establishing a responsible behaviour for consumption which lead to sustainability.

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References


QUAGMIRES OF POST MODERN CIVIC SOCIETY AND BUDDHIST ANTICIPATIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

by Neelima Dahiya

ABSTRACT

The postmodern civic society across the globe is in the grip of formidable multidimensional quandaries. The social order, based on human-centric and anthropocentric conduct, is responsible for degenerating moral values and ethical system; socio-economic inequalities and disparities; and a social order laden with contradictions and conflicts on the one hand and irrational excessive use of resources- renewable and non-renewable- on the other.

In the absence of rational solutions to these contradictions and conflicts the postmodern civil society is encountering numerous manifestations of irrationalities such as terrorism, communalism, rampant consumerism, environmental pollution and ecological degradation, insensitivity towards animal kingdom and aqua cultures and contamination of natural flow of water, having serious implications for peace, harmony, and sustainable development.

If such degenerating shifts are allowed to continue unabated, sooner or later, there would be a big question mark even on the very survival of life on the planet earth, what to talk of much cherished dream of sustainable development. In order to save the planet earth from its dooms day, it is imperative that scientists, philosophers, policy makers

* Dr., Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture (Rtd), M.D. University, Rohtak, India.
and people at large earnestly appreciate the need for urgent effective corrective measures and actions to put an immediate check on the process of degeneration.

As we know that various groups of scientists, philosophers, policy makers and social activists world over are engaged in spreading awareness and in suggesting possible ways and means to stem the rot and salvage the damages. Likewise, religion with its moral authority can also act as a catalyst in restoring and maintaining environmental purity, ecological balance, peace and harmony on the globe.

An in depth study of the Buddhist literature brings to light the Buddhist concerns for an array of issues pertaining to society, environment, ecosystem and their mutual interdependence (Paticcasamuppadda). It shows that Buddha, as far as 2600 years ago, could anticipate that the degeneration initiated by deluded human behaviour, if not corrected, would ultimately put mankind in a serious quandary: the existential dilemma.

In the Buddhist literature there are frequent references to various preventive measures to keep environment clean. We also find suggestions for and illustrations of corrective actions to ensure safe and secure abode as well as food and water for all living beings including the micro-organisms. If we put together the Buddhist tenets, principles, ethical system, practices and concerns, we could clearly perceive that the Buddhist philosophy has been earth-centric and eco-centric as against human-centric and anthropocentric nature of post modern civic social structure.

The need of the hour is to establish a biosphere friendly social order facilitating sustainable global peace, harmony and progress and in this endeavour the Buddhist doctrines and practices may serve as a spring board for framing policies and action plans with a focus on inter and intra generational equity and earth-centric development.

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The Post-modern civic society across the globe is in the grip of formidable multidimensional quagmires. The discomfort is being felt almost at all fronts - social, economic, cultural, environmental and ecological. The social order, based on human-centric and anthropocentric conduct, is responsible for the continuous degeneration in moral values and ethical system on the one hand and irrational and excessive use of resources-renewable and non-
renewable - on the other.

The civic society today is under great stress and strain. The fear of the crash of civilization is the hot concern of the contemporary society. Owing to the moral degeneration, the society is infested with a multi-pronged crisis. Warfare is being justified in the name of justice and democracy. Terrorism is perpetuated to meet ulterior motives. Both the developed and the developing societies are facing erosion of humanistic, ethical and moral values. The continued presence of the global terrorism, violence, corruption, racism, communalism, religious fundamentalism, crimes against women and children, nuclearization, militarization, food chain security crisis, social marginalization and deprivation, etc. are rendering the planet earth a miserable place to live in. We find that a big chunk of the budget of a nation is being allocated for militarization at the cost of social development. An alternative use of such an allocation may work as a magic wand to eliminate illiteracy, to improve health care and to provide basic social security. The post-modern society has been submerged into gross inequality. Just the top 20% of the population is utilizing more than 85% of the resources. The crime is all pervasive-crime at public place, crime at a workplace, a crime on road side, and crime at a domestic front. A recent research shows that in a large number of families the environment at home is more stressed than at the workplace. The ‘Honour killing’, a soul searing crime, found in more than 40 countries, is being committed by the members of the family. In most of the rape cases, the relatives or close family friends have been found involved.

The modern economics is based on unbridled consumerism and ruthless exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources. Limitless growth and consumption are unsustainable and potentially self-destructive. A large number of experiments conducted in South-Asia have revealed that the soil fertility vis-à-vis nutrient supply capacity of most of the soils has either already depleted or is in the process due to the overuse of farm land. If such a situation is allowed to persist the world may soon face a serious food crisis. In developing economies food crisis has some other

1. SAARC Workshop on nutrients use held at CSSRI, Karnal, Tribune, dated 10-09-09.
more challenging dimensions: overuse of insecticides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers and use of untreated sewerage water and/or river and canal water mixed with harmful industrial effluent and other kinds of pollutant material have laden the cereals, vegetables and fruits with harmful chemicals much above the safety level assessed for human consumption. Some recent researches on cow milk reveal that even the cow milk, produced under standardised hygienic conditions, has some contamination on account of the fodder used. The harmful chemicals in the fodder reach the body of the cow and ultimately go into the milk. Thus, modern economics is totally based on the profit-driven principle without caring for its effects upon people and the environment.

The excessive use of environmentally abhorrent material and wanton exploitation of natural resources have resulted in serious environmental disruption and the ecological devastation. These adverse effects might have been initially slow and even imperceptible but with the passage of time, have assumed serious dimensions. We all could see that its impact on ecology is already getting pandemic in nature and ruinous in effects. For instance at the end of the first world war, the pandemic influenza initially broke out on the western front and thence buried its venomous fangs around the world. A more recent instance is that of the pandemic swine flu which broke out in Mexico first and then rolled down to various other parts of the world via USA. C. S. Elton, in order to highlight the gravity of the threats of the ecological devastation, terms it the ‘Ecological Explosion’. The insatiable lust, greed and craving for more and more material gains and the maniac industrialisation have resulted into holes in the ozone layer of the atmosphere causing global warming, melting of snow, receding glaciers, floods, frequent eruptions of volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and progressively increasing sound, air and water pollution. The global warming and the greenhouse gas emissions have become the bane of humanity. The living beings are destined to consume poisonous substances and inhale health hazardous gases like the carbon dioxide and the

3. ibid.
carbon monoxide. One-quarter of Humanity has no access to clean drinking water. Millions of people die every year by the water borne diseases. The world commission on water for 21st century reports that 50% of the world’s major rivers are going either dry or polluted. Australia’s Murray-Darling river basin is stressed by draught owing to over allocation of water and the climatic change. In India, the river Sarasvati has already disappeared. The Yamuna has been reduced from perennial to seasonal stream and the Ganga has been contaminated beyond repair. Ever since the evolution of man on the earth, the animals have been his great support system, earlier as his prey and later as a great source of economy and entertainment. Animals have contributed in a significant way in the development of practically every aspect of the human civilization, yet they met and still continue to meet the treatment they never deserved. Carol Adams, a renowned scholar, observes, ‘we have institutionalized the oppression of animals at least on two levels: 1) in the formal structures such as the slaughter houses, the meat markets, zoos, laboratories and circuses. 2) Through our language.’ As Colman McCarthy has pointed out that the language shapes the attitude and the attitude shapes the behaviour. We call each other by animal names in a derogatory sense such as a dog, pig, donkey, monkey, fox, so on and so forth and accuse each other by using animal similes such as snake in the sleeve (aastiin ka saap), as Stubborn as a mule (adial Ghoda). It reflects our callous behaviour towards animals. The animals have just become the objects of human use, a medium of commodity production and surplus generation. The millions of animals every year are used in schools, colleges, universities and in research institutes for teaching and research purposes. All the medicines at testing stages are used on animals before declaring them safe or otherwise for human beings. Millions of animals suffer and die in the laboratories because of vivisection. The indiscriminate and unplanned deforestation and denuding of the upper crust of

4. Eccles, B, Towards understanding of the primary ecological challenges of 21 century; The Activist, vol. 16,No 2 (on line)available at www.the activist.org
6. Ibid.
the earth, hilly or otherwise, urbanization and industrialization at an alarming rate have endangered the survival of wild life. The surveys conducted by the conservation biologists make it amply clear that 10-40% of all known species on the planet are on the verge of extinction. The exotic species such as parrots and coral reef fish are captured in millions for the pet trade. Most of them die before they reach the place where to be sold. The African elephants and the various kinds of Rhinoceros are closer to extinction as they are being killed for their ivory and horns respectively. Even the ocean fishing is so intensive that their population is fast dwindling. Eighty percent of the primary forests have been harvested compelling the wild animals to come out of their natural habitations and move towards the cultivated areas and the human habitats in search of food and water. In India, every third day there is a news of the wild animals such as tiger, elephant entering into village/town that falls near their natural habitation. The continuous squeezing of their habitats has exposed them to starvation, unlawful killing and challenges to procreation.

The man has transformed himself in a ruthless predator. He has become species which is no longer in co-evolved balance with its environment. The ecology is like an enormous jigsaw puzzle, each organism of the biotic community has requirements of life which interlock with those of many others in the area. They, therefore, develop interrelationship and interdependence. Let me cite two illustrations in support of the contention: a) the yucca plant supplies food for the moth but is dependent on the moth for fertilization and perpetuation. b) the green plants capture solar energy and combine it with chemical raw materials from soil, water and air. The food these plants produce support all the animal lives including decay organisms which in turn enriches the soil for plants to use once more. Likewise, the man is also a part of the biosphere and depends on its continued functioning for his very

11. Ibid.
existence and survival. One should not forget that a break down in any of the biosphere systems would imperil the human survival. The conservation of the ecology is not only for the sake of other organisms but is the part of the global need to preserve the biosphere as a habitable system for us and for our progeny too.

According to a report,\textsuperscript{12} if the world continues to remain in the grip of these quagmires, soon, owing to combined climate- carbon crisis alone more than 100 million people will die by 2030 and the global economic growth will be cut by 3.2% of GDP. 05 million deaths occur each year from air pollution, hunger and disease. If the climate change and the carbon- intensive economies not monitored, the toll is likely to rise to 06 million a year by 2030\textsuperscript{13}. As a result, as Meadows et al, in their report (1972) say, “doomsday is not far off.” A similar warning issued by a Union of environmental scientists in 1992 to humanity, ‘Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices ... may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know.”\textsuperscript{14} The message is very clear; humanity cannot afford to sweep these messages under the carpet any longer. Plate nos.1 to 11 (annexed) highlight the intensity and gravity of the crisis the humanity is shackled with.

Since such a hazardous situation is the creation of our own short sightedness, unbridled greed, and the anthropocentric conduct, the onus lies on us alone - individually and collectively – to restore and sustain the planet earth as a safe, secure and clean place to live in and to ensure a congenial environment for the survival, procreation and the growth of all the organisms on the earth. As we know that world over a minuscule section of scientists, social scientists philosophers, academicians, policymakers and social activists are already engaged in sensitizing the people by spreading awareness and suggesting possible ways and means to stem the rot and salvage the damages. But the objective cannot be achieved without the active involvement of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} A report commissioned by 20 countries, \textit{Hindustan Times reporting}, New Delhi, September 27, 2012, p. 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} The report conducted by humanitarian organization DARA, \textit{Ibid}.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Eccles, B, \textit{op. cit.}
\end{itemize}
each and every section of society. Religion as an institution with its moral authority could act as a catalyst in restoring and maintaining the environmental purity, ecological balance, peace and harmony on the globe. One cannot ignore the fact that millions and billions of people all over the world draw their inspiration and guidance from their respective faith and religions. Even the politicians, media persons and people at large cite instances from the province of their faith in support of their contention. What is required is a revisit to the principles and canons of different religions in the context of the requirements of the post Modern civic society.

Some scholars are against such efforts and argue that “Delving into cultural heritage with the objective to find inspiration for the present may result into a wealth of beautiful imagery but its merit can hardly be claimed to be congruent with historical facts and reality”\(^{15}\). It may be true in case of those religions that are just meditative vehicles. However, a close scrutiny of the Buddhist teachings and practices would show that it is not true in the case of Buddhism. Buddhism, as hammalawa Saddhatissa\(^{16}\) asserts, “does not recognise a conflict between religion and science as it is a practical spiritual application of the principles of science. He further says that since practical realization rather than abstruse disputation is expected of a bhikkhu that is why probably theology did not develop in Buddhism. Thakur also of the same view “… it needs to be asserted that it was its (Buddhism) articulation of the worldly problems that was possibly the crucial factor for its immediate success and impressive reception”.\(^{17}\) To quote Rhys Davids, “Had the Buddha merely taught philosophy, he might have had a small following as Comte.”\(^{18}\) No doubt, the issues of the modern world are very different from that of Buddha’s time, yet the basic teachings, principles, and tenets of Buddhism are still as

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18. Ibid.
relevant and applicable as were during Buddha’s time. Buddhism is widely respected for its benevolent and humane moral values. It has all the ingredients of handling the dilemmas of the modern world squarely. The in-depth study of the Buddhist literature brings to light the Buddhist concerns for an array of issues pertaining to the society, environment, ecosystem and their mutual interdependency (Patticcasamuppadd). It shows that Buddha as far back as 2600 years could anticipate the degeneration initiated by deluded human behaviour and could also perceive that such behaviour, if not corrected, would ultimately put mankind into a serious quandary: The Existential Dilemma.

In the Buddhist literature, there are numerous references and stories that highlight the Buddha’s ecological ethics that make relations between the man and the flora and fauna congenial, smooth and loving so that human and non-human beings could coexist happily without any fear and foe. Out of the total 550 stories of Jatakas, at least half of them (around 225) is having animals as their main characters and 70 species of animals have found a place in these stories. Through these animal characters, the wisdom, compassion and moral behaviour expected of mankind towards all living beings have been emphasised.

According to Buddha like humans, all the other sentient beings to feel and do appreciate happiness and feel and dislike pain, though the level of intensity and sensitivity may vary. The Karniya Mata Sutta\(^{19}\) speaks of radiating loving kindness to all types of beings. Both the human beings and the animals respond warmly to those who they feel are friendly to them. This is shown in the following stories. The NandiVisala Jataka\(^{20}\) which concerns a Bull who, only when the master stopped using harsh words to get him going, would pull 100 loaded carts to win his owners bet. Once when the Buddha was away from monks, a wild elephant and a monkey attended on him\(^{21}\). Even the mad Nalagiri\(^{22}\), an elephant, was tamed by Buddha by his kind words and compassion. On another occasion, Buddha

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21. Dhamma Padda, 158.
told that the reason a monk was bitten by a snake and had died was that he failed to radiate loving kindness to the snake. Through such stories, Buddha has tried to preach that man and animals can live together in harmony if the man shows compassion and loving kindness towards them.

The Angutra Nikaya and the Vinya Pitak are full of compassion and kindness to animals and add a new dimension to the relationship between human beings and animals by highlighting the theory of mutual dependency for their mutual survival and growth of which, the scientists and environmentalists of today are talking. The numerous stories in the Jatakas help us to appreciate and analyse the mutual interdependency in a wider and broader context of the relationship. In Sasa Jataka, a rabbit offers his body to a hungry Brahama for food, jumping into fire piled up by the rabbit himself. The Avadanakalpalata talks of an elephant who throws himself off a rock in the desert to rescue starving travellers. A lion and an elephant rescue some people from a dragon, sacrificing their lives. Likewise, there are numerous stories which tell of human sacrificing their flesh to keep animals alive. In the Jataka Mala, the suvarna prabhas and the Avadana Kalplata there is a story of a Buddhist who throws himself before a hungry tigress so that she may feed her cubs. During draught, Bodhisattva would ensure that no wild animals go without water. In another story: once the Bodhisattva threw his leftover to feed fish and for that act of compassion, he was saved from a disaster.

Into Buddhist cosmology, the animal occupies an important place in the categories of human, Gods and other forms of life. According to the doctrine of kamma and rebirth, an animal may take the same form, form of different animals or advance to human or Godly status in the next birth. In the Buddhist tradition Humans may reborn as animals and vice-a-versa depending on one's kamma. In one of the Jatakas there is a story of a Brahama who once

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27. Jataka Tale XVIII, trans., Francis, H.T and Thomas, E,J, Cambridge University Press,
sacrificed a Goat as an offering to his deity. For this act of violence and disregard to life, he was condemned to 500 rebirths as a Goat. In another story: once the Bodhisattva threw his leftover to feed fish and for that act of compassion, he was saved from a disaster.

The tremendous emphasis on Ahimsa (non-violence) is yet another manifestation of the Buddhist attempt to have a humanistic attitude towards animals. Non-violence or ahimsa is the central theme of the Buddhist philosophy which means not to cause any discomfort or injury to other living beings in thoughts, words, and deeds. Various Jataka stories contain explicit preaching on the theme of Ahimsa. Not to injure or harm living beings is the first precept in the Buddhism (panatipata). In Vinya Pitak, the Buddha proclaims,” Monk who has received ordination ought not intended to destroy the life of any living being down to a worm or an ant”.

The Buddhist ethical conduct (Sila) is structured in vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings and Buddha’s concept of Ahimsa is the key component of the Sila (Sil). According to Buddhism the destruction of or injury to man, animal, and plant involves sin. The Buddha puts the profession of butcher, hunter, fowler, and fisherman in the category of violent occupations liable to get heavy punishment. A Buddhist must not hate any being and should not kill a living creature even in thought.

However, the Buddhist principle of Ahimsa is not without contradictions. Buddha himself died of meat eating as claimed by some scholars though refuted by others. It is a matter of debate and without going into the controversy it might certainly be deduced that the Buddhist text and actions of the Buddhist monks have sought to discourage the tendency of meat eating. The Mahayana Sutras unmistakably condemn meat eating. The Surangama Sutta tells us that if we eat meat (flesh) of living creatures we are destroying the seeds of compassion. The Buddha was very critical of animal sacrifice too. The sacrifice of animals in order to earn

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merit had posed a serious threat to the existing balance between the human and the non-human beings. The Buddhist response in the form of nonviolence emerged as a major saviour of all kinds of life. The Jataka stories are full of instances where the sacrifice of living creatures is forbidden. In the Kutadanta Sutta there is a reference of a sacrifice that Buddha himself performed for a king in the past life. In this ceremony no animal was killed, no tree was felled to be used as a sacrificial post, no forced labour was used as help and the offering items were products like butter and honey. The Buddha, it shows, did not just condemn the animal sacrifice but also presented an alternate model of performing the sacrifice.

The Buddha has shown his concern over disappearing species. A verse in the Khuddakapatha runs as: ‘come back o tiger to the wood; let it not be levelled with plain. For without you the axe will lay it low, you without it forever homeless go.’ It suggests that the Buddha, even as back as 2600 years, could anticipate the danger of gradual disappearance of various species. He, therefore, advises to protect the animals and their habitats and not to resort to deforestation.

The Buddha's concern not to destroy life was not limited to men and animals rather it goes up to the plant life. In the Vinaya Pitak there is a reference that the monks stopped travelling in vass (rainy season) because it is felt that by doing so they crush the green herbs, they hurt vegetable life and destroy the lives of many small living beings. Buddha's love for flora is evident from the fact that nature has been a witness to every important event of his life, right from birth to the mahaparinibbana. He was born in the forest of Lumbini under Sal tree; left royal house and changed his robe on the bank of Rohini river saying goodbye to his horse, Kantak, and sarthi, Chena; meditated under banyan tree and ate milk rice (Khshir) offered by Sujata and took bath in Naranjarariver; attained Buddhahood under bodhi tree; delivered first sermon at Sarnath in deer park; and attained Mahaparinibbana at Kushinara in sal grove. For Buddha, the perfect man is one who, ‘abstains from causing

injury to seed life and plant life.\(^{32}\)

The Buddha was fully aware of the need for conserving ecology. That is the reason that the constructions of parks and pleasure groves for public use have been identified in the Buddhist traditions as an important source for gaining merit.\(^{33}\) The Buddha also laid down certain rules for conservation of water and told to his disciples to refrain themselves to contaminate the resources of water. Not only that he also laid down instructions for the construction of toilets and water wells.

In short, in the Buddhist literature there are frequent references to various preventive measures to keep the environment clean by avoiding the contamination of water; denuding the earth's surface by indiscriminate felling of trees; and open disposal of leftovers; other wastes; etc. We also find suggestions for and illustrations of corrective actions to ensure safe and secure abode as well as to ensure enough food and water for all living beings including the micro-organisms. The Buddha repeatedly emphasizes that ecological balance should be preserved and man should follow the principle of live and let live. The flora and fauna have as much right to live as human beings. If we put together the Buddhist tenets, principles, ethical system, practices and concerns, we could clearly perceive that the Buddhist philosophy has been earth-centric and eco-centric as against human-centric and anthropocentric nature of the postmodern civic social order. In nutshell, the planet earth and its bounties are to be shared by all living beings rather than monopolized by human beings alone.

As opposed to modern economics, the Buddhist economics is based on renewable resources. According to Buddhism, limitless growth and consumption are unsustainable and potentially disastrous. The Buddha's approach to economics was that growth is good only to the point of sufficiency. For a Buddhist material satisfaction merely provides a starting point for the pursuit of higher goals. In Buddhism spiritual growth and material, wellbeing is not enemies but natural allies. A Buddhist concept of economic

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development avoids gigantism. The Buddhist economy, as sarao says, is based on the happiness and welfare of the maximum number of people and the Buddhist approach to economics makes a meaningful distinction between misery, sufficiency, and glut.

The Buddhist doctrines aim at eliminating sorrow (dukha) from the life of the individuals as well as from the society as a whole. Like a seasoned physician, the Buddha begins with the identification and diagnosis of the ailment – the Dukha. Once the factors causing Dukha are identified, Buddha proceeds to provide the prescription. He identifies greed (lobh), hatred (dwesh) and illusion (moha) as the root causes of all the ills and miseries of the society and its constituents. All immoral actions spring up from greed, hatred, and craving. According to a verse of the Dhammapada, ‘there is no fire like lust, no grip like hate, there is no net like delusion, no river like craving.’ In Digha Nikaya, a detailed description is found about how happy the human being has been prior to his behaviour becoming greed, hatred, and illusion oriented. If the greed, hatred, and illusion are controlled and monitored, the life on the planet earth would be safe, secure, peaceful, harmonious and progressive. Universal love (Metta), Compassion (Karuna), Sympathetic Joy (Mudita), and Equanimity (Upekkha), the four sentiments of Buddhism, are beyond the bounds of time, space or class. The application of these could break all the barriers of caste, colour, and creed responsible for the unnatural division of society. These cardinal tenets of Buddhism could serve as an antidote to human greed, hatred, and illusion. The application of the Buddhist ethical system would enable us in the endeavour to build up healthy, compassionate and biosphere friendly society.

So it is fairly clear from the above discussion that Buddhism carries all the insights and applicable solutions to the quagmires of the post-modern civic society. The socially engaged Buddhist individuals and groups are doing commendable work in their respective areas of operation by addressing the area specific as well as some global issues related to world peace, global environment,

35. Dhammapada, Verse 251.
and terrorism. For instance, a group of Buddhist monks in Thailand, known as ‘the ecology monks’, are engaged in ecology conservation project. They teach ecologically friendly practices to Thai farmers. Likewise, Tibetan Buddhist monasteries are doing a commendable job in the conservation of snow leopard. However, the quantum of their efforts is not in proportion to the size and strength of the lurking demon confronting humanity. The need of the day is that all the sensitized forces -Scientists, Artists, Philosophers, Government Agencies, NGOs, Religious Preachers and Individuals or Group of individuals –should act quickly and unitedly in a coordinated manner to free the post-modern civic society from the agonizing quagmires. C.Kabil Singh\(^\text{36}\) rightly observes “If we cannot hand over a better world to a future generation, it is only fair that they have at least as green a world to live in as we do.” And Thich Nhat Hanhh has rightly said that these mindfulness based practices are the right medicine for our time. Thus, the Buddhist doctrines and practices could serve as a spring board for framing policies and action plans focussing on inter and intragenerational equity and earth centric development.

The Buddhist tenets, directions, and practices not only provide the basic prescriptions to treat the agonizing quagmires of the post-modern civic society but also serve as a guide for promoting a humane, just, healthy and harmonious globe culture and social order.

In the end, I would like to conclude my discussion with the Master’s teaching; “Victory creates hatred, defeat creates suffering, the wise one never desires victory or defeat. Anger creates anger. He who kills would be killed... revenge can be overcome by abandoning revenge.” Buddhism means: all pervasive universal Compassion, tolerance, nonviolence, humanism, and enlightenment. An honest commitment to these guiding principles would ensure the meaningful solution to the quagmires of post-modern society.

Fig 1: Impacts of malnutrition

Fig 2: Impacts of overgrazing and agriculture
Fig 3: Economic vs Environmental value of forests

Fig 4: Impacts of mining activities
Fig 5: Relationship of population, consumerism, waste production and environmental impacts

Fig 6: Air, water, land, living organisations and materials surrounding us and their interactions together constitute Environment
Fig 7: Greenhouse effect

Fig 8
Fig 9: Some important extinct and endangered Indian species of animals

Fig 10: Pyramid of numbers a) grassland b) forest c) Parasitic food chain
Fig 11: Food web in Antarctic ecosystem

SOCIAL COHESION AND THE ARIYAPARYESANĀ SUTTA

by Jeff Wilson*  

ABSTRACT

The eight goals for world development in the new millennium, adopted by the UN in 2000, have one theme in common. That is the theme of social cohesion (on a global scale). An economic system that can allow people of all backgrounds and nationalities to live a relatively prosperous and happy life is clearly essential. Unfortunately, the economic system that prevails today is founded on the notion of competition, the idea that a competitive attitude-between individuals, groups and nations-is basic to the success of an economy. Adam Smith developed the notion of the ‘free market economy’ in 1776 when he argued that the individuals that constitute a society manage to produce the goods and services they require simply by acting in their own self interest. An economy functions better, in other words, if everyone is selfish. The belief behind adherents of this economic philosophy is that people will work harder if they are working simply to satisfy their own needs and that a true communal spirit is impossible to achieve. It is clear that such an attitude encourages people to make their lives into a quest for the acquisition of wealth and power. This is an attitude that the Buddha Sakyamuni firmly rejected.

In the Pariyesanā Sutta there are two kinds of quest; the noble quest and the ignoble quest (ariyā ca pariyesanā, anariyā ca pariyesanā). The Pali term pariyesanā can be translated as a ‘search’, a ‘quest’ or an ‘inquiry’. The Buddha realized while he was still young that he was not interested in a quest that generates only power and wealth. He saw

* Ph.D. in Cultural and Religious Studies from Southern Cross University, Australia
the endless circle of birth, decay and death, connected empathically with
the suffering of others, and dedicated his life to relieving that suffering.
His quest was to discover the right kind of education that could lead
to happiness and a sustainable lifestyle for everyone. That is why, in
the SigalakaSutta, the Buddha teaches the Sangaha-vatthus, the ‘four
foundations of social unity’. These are: generosity and donation (dāna),
sympathetic communication (peyyavajja), acts that produce benefit
(atthacariyā) and social equality (samānattatā). It is clear that a spirit
of generosity could tackle the global problem of hunger. It should also be
clear that clear and honest communication (peyyavajja), particularly
by those in power, can create clarity rather than confusion; this is how
‘right speaking’ (sammaditthi) functions in the eight-fold path. A life
of usefulness (atthacariyā) and social equality (samānattatā) complete
the Buddha’s recipe for social unity which is more vital than ever in
today’s troubled global situation.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a shop in the northern beach suburbs of Sydney
called ‘Samsara’. The shop sells luxury goods, particularly goods
that carry fashionable labels. The name of the shop is carefully
chosen; it informs the potential customer that what is on sale
here is a collection of objects considered desirable according to
global society’s present value system. The word Samsara is usually
interpreted as representing entirely negative values in Buddhism; it
signifies all that should be avoided in order to achieve equanimity
and tranquillity. From the perspective of modern global economics
however the sale and acquisition of luxury items has a thoroughly
positive connotation. Luxury goods carry social status and are
thus highly desirable in the global market place. A mythology has
grown up around certain objects, bestowing upon them a surplus
semantic value. Each object carries references to the value system
that constructed it, and which it helps to construct in turn. The
foundational ideology behind this urban mythology is that to
consume more than one needs is to strengthen the economy.

Of course there are times when Buddhists do go shopping.
Everyone has to shop for necessities, and alms would not be offered
to monks if Buddhists did not shop. However, the discourses of the
Buddha reveal a social philosophy far removed from this fascination with luxury and status. It appears that the modern global economy, with its emphasis on private ownership, is in opposition to the basic message of Buddhism. Where Buddhism encourages us to be generous and to promote social equality, the modern global economy encourages us to be selfish and to seek greater social status than those around us. Although the Tipitaka reveals that the Buddha had no interest in politics, certain of the discourses—such as the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta—make clear references to social cohesion.

The “eight goals for world development”, adopted by the UN in 2000, have one theme in common and that is this issue of social cohesion. The theme is implicitly implicated in the eight millennium goals. To ease the burdens of poverty, hunger and disease, and the educational, gender and economic inequalities that often support them, it is clearly necessary to improve our means of producing social cohesion and ensuring equality. The Buddha recommended a system of social cohesion based on compassion and equality while certain dominant economic systems depend on competition and inequality. While it would be unrealistic to imagine a world free of consumerism and the pursuit of profit, it is surely reasonable to seek a solution to these global problems through a change of emphasis on the things we seek.

It is clear that a system is necessary that allows all people to live together in harmony. Many such systems have been established, some more successful and equitable than others. The Buddha taught an art of living based on selflessness. The ‘samsara’ of modern economic materialism, on the other hand, emphasises the ‘natural’ inequality between owners and workers. Its philosophy is based on the thoughts of Adam Smith who constructed an economic system based on selfishness. Smith’s system assumes that humans can be no better than they are right now, that they possess a basic human nature that they cannot rise above or go beyond. The Buddha’s teachings, on the other hand, are full of inspirational stories of humans that have risen above their conditioned ‘nature’.

2. THE NOBLE QUEST

In the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta the Buddha talks about two kinds
of search or quest that a person can embark upon for the course of his or her lifetime. There is a noble search and an ignoble search. The ignoble search is for all the things that are subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement. These things are the objects of attachment.\textsuperscript{1} If, on the other hand, the person chooses the noble quest, he or she seeks the “deathless supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna”\textsuperscript{2}. This phrase “the deathless supreme security from bondage” is repeated for each of the objects of attachment, for birth, ageing, sickness, death sorrow and defilement. The phrase is a description of Nibbāna from the point of view of the meditation practitioner. It says that the ultimate experience of meditation is one in which the practitioner feels secure, ‘free from bondage’ and utterly unconcerned with death. It is a way of describing Nibbāna that is useful in terms of the experiential and phenomenological language of contemplative practices. The notion of the ‘deathless’, in particular, is important as a description of the psycho-physical state to be attained during meditation practice. This is demonstrated in the Thai and Khmer meditation manuals unearthed in recent years that employ analogies and metaphors to describe that which cannot be described in less poetic language.\textsuperscript{3}

There are therefore two ‘paths’ between which each individual must choose. One is a path that leads to success in Samsara; to social power, to adopting the symbolic language of the status symbol and to satisfying more than the individual needs. The other is the path taken by the Buddha; to face the deeply rooted needs and desires, to dissolve attachments and to ‘go forth’ into tranquillity. The statues rescued from Gandhāra and the Jataka stories of the Buddha emphasise this point of Ariyapariyesana, the noble quest. The Buddha left a secure and privileged background to pursue a radically different form of security. It was a security based on a realization about the causes of suffering and the quest that must be undertaken to be free of attachment to those causes. It involved a

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p.256: amatam anuttaram yogakkhemam nibbānam pariyesati (amatam = eternal; anuttaram = incomparable; yogakkhemam = security; pariyesati = to seek for).
\textsuperscript{3} See for example François Bizot, 1976, Le Figuier a Cinq Branches: Recherche sur le Bouddhisme Khmer, L’EcoleFrançaised’Extrême Orient.
radical change of perspective and a commitment to certain tactics and strategies for changing the ‘nature’ of the individual. That is, where the nature of the individual is taken as constituting his or her needs and desires.

3. THE QUEST FOR SELF-SATISFACTION

This is in stark contrast to the viewpoint of the modern, global, free-market economy. A major patriarch of this movement was the Scottish philosopher and economist Adam Smith. Margaret Thatcher is said to have kept a copy of his book ‘The Wealth of Nations’ in her handbag. It is implicit in Smith’s arguments that human nature cannot change. If our nature is identified with our needs and desires, then the logical way to create social cohesion is to seek the most efficient means of satisfying those desires. His economic philosophy, therefore, is based on self-interest. The division of labour creates a situation in which workers and stockholders are in competition and thus a system of economic values emerges. That is, each object or phenomenon appearing in the social environment has a certain value placed on it. A signifying system is constructed within which a vast array of economic and mythological values ebb and flow according to the fashionable ideologies of the time.

What are the common wages of labour, depends everywhere upon the contract usually made between those two parties, whose interests are by no means the same. The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little, as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower, the wages of labour.⁴

Each works in his or her own self interest, and each value emerges according to this ‘natural’ balance between competitors. If human nature is unchangeable then the most logical way for people to live together cohesively is by recognising this fact and founding a system of values based on this empirical reality of human desire. The baseness of the human character is acknowledged and a system

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allowed to emerge that reaches a ‘natural’ balance between the competing interests. The Buddhist attitude to social cohesion is quite the opposite. It does recognize the ability of humans to change, and it is founded on the ability of humans to make better choices — to follow paths that lead to more than satisfaction of basic instinct.

Alain de Botton sees the global fascination with wealth and success as ‘status anxiety’.  

It is common to describe people who hold important positions in society as ‘somebodies’ and their inverse as ‘nobodies’ - nonsensical terms, for we are all by necessity individuals with identities and comparable claims on existence... Those without status remain unseen, they are treated brusquely ...

Botton quotes Adam Smith; “to feel that we are taken no notice of necessarily disappoints the most ardent desires of human nature”. Our human nature, according to this view, is to feel important, and this is at the very root of status anxiety. It is a particular notion of human nature that Buddhism reveals to be conditioned, obsessive and deluded. The environment that western children are born into conditions them to believe that they are worthless if they do not become powerful or important. The markers of self-esteem promoted by popular culture create a false sense of identity which is chained to the fashionable objects of attachment constructed in the global media. A vivid image from feminist theory is that of the ‘imaginary body’, the body that (western) women are obliged to convert themselves into. Constructed by socio-political structures, and all the qualities and values received from the signifiers of the global marketplace, it is the completely fashionable body, possessing “particular kinds of needs and desires”. A quest is taking place here but it is not freely chosen. Socio-economic signifiers exert a pressure that draws seekers toward the imaginary body like moths to a flame.

9. Michel Foucault, quoted in Moira Gatens, 1996, Imaginary Bodies, p.52
The Buddha lists the subjects of the ignoble search in the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta:

Wife and children are subject to birth, men and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver are subject to birth. These acquisitions are subject to birth; and one who is tied to these things, infatuated with them, and utterly committed to them, being himself subject to birth, seeks what is also subject to birth.\(^{10}\)

Although wives and children are no longer considered possessions, the rest of the list clearly consists of the objects of attachment and desire that constitute the status of the accomplished citizen. The \textit{sutta} confirms that the Buddha was talking about tangible possessions when he warned of the dangers of attachment. Many other aspects of life can be subjects of over-attachment but the tangible is significant in the construction of identity. As stated above, each subject is applied to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement. That is, each of the possessions is subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement and the individual is constructed in particular ways through attachment to it. The person is subsequently affected intensely through intimate relations with the experience. One who chooses the noble path, however, will achieve unborn, unageing, unailing, deathless, sorrowless and undefiled security from that attachment. Rather than constantly succumbing to the pressures of desire and suffering status anxiety and the fear of loss, the path of Dhamma is followed into the realm of inner tranquillity where the seductive symbols of status and materialism have no dominion.

4. IN SEARCH OF SOCIAL COHESION

The Pali noun \textit{pariyesana}, as was discussed above, involves the notion of a quest or a search. It appears also in this \textit{sutta} in its third-person verbal form as \textit{pariyesati} ‘he/she seeks’ (that which is subject to death etc.). Therefore the quest is an active one-in the present moment-that actively moves toward its goal. The individual is on a

\(^{10}\) BhikkhuÑānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, p.254.
quest to find something, whether it be the ‘noble’ goal of interacting with others through compassion and equality or the ‘ignoble’ goal of acquisition by means of contention and dissention. In this *sutta*, the person has a deep inclination to move toward the goal. One who follows the Dhamma has a deep inclination to stay on the path that leads away from attachment and longing, while one who shops at Samsara follows an equally deep commitment to satisfy desire.

Another *sutta* that discusses the notion of social cohesion is the SigālakaSutta where advice is offered to the laity on interpersonal relations. Instructions are first given to children on how to respect their parents and to husbands and wives on mutual respect within the marriage contract. But then he turns his attention toward the *ariyaka*, the leader, and the discourse takes a markedly socio-economic turn. The basic attitude recommended to the employer is one of compassion and fairness:

There are five ways in which a master should minister to his servants and workpeople as the nadir: by arranging their work according to their strength, by supplying them with food and wages, by looking after them when they are ill, by sharing special delicacies with them, and by letting them off work at the right time.  

Workers are instructed to respond in kind: they should do their work properly, be supportive of the employer’s reputation and be conscientious. A reciprocal approach to management is established, an approach that recognises the reasonable desire-and right-of workers to share in the prosperity of the organisation. It is the doctrine of the *Saṅgaha-vatthu*, which is usually referred to in English as the ‘four foundations of social unity’. The expression is made up of two Pali terms. The first is *Saṅgaha* which invokes the concepts of conjunction, compilation and assemblage. It thus expresses the notion of coexistence and, subsequently, of living together in peace or social cohesion. The second is *Vatthu* which signifies the multiplicity of matters, causes or substances out of

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which such cohesion can emerge.\(^{14}\) The San\(\text{\textgreek{g}a-vatthus}\) form a conjunction, then, of the principal aspects of social cohesion, of the fundamental qualities that must be present for a cultivated society to thrive. The four Sangaha-vatth\(\text{\textu{u}}\)n\(\text{\texta{i}}\)-are:\(^{15}\) Dānā, peyyavajja, atthacariyā and samānattatā, or “liberality, kindly speech, a life of usefulness and equality/impartiality in justice”.

a) Dānasignifies generosity and liberality as well as the spirit of ‘giving’, and the offering of donations.\(^{16}\) With this general semantic foundation it engenders social cohesion as it passes into the socio-economic domain wherein citizens become stakeholders in the society by investing in it. This is still a rather materialistic interpretation however as the notion of dānapasses far beyond issues such as rights and obligations. The Buddha taught that true social cohesion depends on people sincerely embracing the spirit of generosity, emphasising that generosity brings happiness and well-being to the giver as well as the receiver. The generous person benefits by ‘letting go’ of possessions and the objects of attachment. Grasping leads to suffering and can only be alleviated by committing to the noble quest for that which lies beyond attachment to material possessions.

b) The second aspect of social unity is Peyyavajja, the nominal form of piyavādi which means ‘speaking kindly’ or being affable. ‘Piyo’ means to be kind and loving while vādī comes from vadati which means to speak, to say and to declare. It therefore refers to all speech acts, the social activities that we perform by means of the words that we utter in public. The acts that are carried out through our speaking can have a major effect on the people we meet. Kindly and honest speech creates peace and good will. An atmosphere of truth and reality emerges from the discourse rather than one of delusion and frustration. It is closely connected to the doctrine of sammaditthi, ‘right speech’, and generates clarity through compassionate means of communication.

c) The third aspect is Atthacariyā, which signifies the production

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\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.558.


\(^{16}\) R.C.Childers, 2005, A Dictionary of the Pali Language, MunshiramManoharlal, New Delhi, p.111.
of wise acts, acts that produce benefit’ and ‘useful conduct’.\textsuperscript{17} Speech acts are the consequences that our utterances produce in the social environment but these are the physical actions of our daily lives that affect others in a direct and concrete fashion. The noble quest again draws on the doctrine of the Eight-Fold Path by this time referring to (\textit{sammaajjiva}), (right employment) and rejecting those professions that cause harm to others. Again the Buddha’s attitude to social unity is confirmed as founded on compassion as we choose occupations that contribute to the smooth running of our community and to the happiness of those around us. Day after day we construct the world around us, transforming our environment by ‘bringing forth a world’. Modern neuroscience has called into question the notion that the world is “out there”, somehow “independent of our cognition”, and that consciousness is just a “re-presentation of that independent world.\textsuperscript{18} Human cognition is so constituted that it constantly recreates its world. It is not necessary to assume with Adam Smith that human nature is a self-absorbed obsession with self aggrandisement and that we are trapped within this nature. The Dhamma teaches that better potentialities lie within and that we can release those potentialities.

d) A literal translation of the term \textit{Samānattatā}, the fourth ingredient of social cohesion, reveals the interesting concept of ‘being equal in terms of self-hood’. The Pali notion of \textit{attā} is a difficult and often challenged concept in Buddhist scholarship. Particular interpretations of the term and its associated ambiguities spring up from all parts of the Buddhist world. However it is generally agreed that no true ‘self’ exists in any kind of permanent state or as an independent unit. This raises questions of identity, how we might be deluded by false notions of ourselves and how the self recreates itself through aspiration and desire. These socio-political references are seldom addressed directly in the Buddha’s teachings, but they are implicit nevertheless. It is clear that self-interest is that which the Buddha sought to avoid and that social unity is endangered by self- absorption and over-attachment to personal desires.

\textsuperscript{17} Alwis, in Childers, p.66: Rhys Davids and William Stede, p.24.
5. CONCLUSION

We can achieve the UN Millenium goals of eradicating hunger, AIDS and child mortality, and we can bring about environmental sustainability, by adopting the quest for global equality, fairness and the greater good (ariyapariyesanā). They will not be achieved through policies that encourage a form of economics based on corporate hegemony and personal ambition (anariyapariyesanā). True social cohesion can be established by means of a compassionate and altruistic attitude to others and to the environment. The necessary changes, according to the Buddha’s discourses, can be achieved within four main areas of social activity. They are: participation in the construction and maintenance of the economy, clear and honest communication with others, working together with others to produce social benefits and interacting with others in an environment of legal and social equality. We can improve the conditions of the globally disadvantaged by transforming the objects we seek (pariyesanā), by ‘bringing forth’ a different world, one that is founded on generosity (dāna), honest and compassionate speech (peyyavajja), useful conduct (atthacariyā) and social equality (atthacariyā).

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ABSTRACT

Buddhist already contributed for human development and social welfare form over two thousand five hundred years ago to present time. Especially, Buddhist teaching alleviated not only spiritual but also physical well-beings for human societies and all over the world. In Buddhism, material well-being is a necessary condition to support the cultivation of the mind. This implies that insufficient material well-being, or the problems associated with poverty, can cause suffering that may impede the practice of mental development. From the Buddhist perspective, the main objective of economic activities is to alleviate suffering. A righteous ruler rules the state in the name of justice, subordinate only to the dharma. The relationship between the ruler and dharma, or righteousness, is important in order to maintain proper social order, attain personal liberation, and forms a basis for the duties of the state. In Buddhism, the concept of “wealth” is related to ethic. Poverty is regarded as the problem in economic life. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to study Buddhist contribution to human society for economic ethics of a ruler in the Buddha Teachings, specially this study quote from CakkavatthiSihanadasutta, Kutadantasutta, Agganasutta.

*Ph.D. Student, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Univeristy, Thailand
INTRODUCTION

In Buddhism, an enormous amount of ethics can be seen such as ethics for householder, ethics for monks, and ethics for rulers and so on. The five precepts (pancasila)\(^1\) are considered as the Buddhist ethics platform for everyone. Nonetheless, these precepts are not easy to observe. The Buddha admonished five lay-disciples regarding observing the precepts that “You should not consider any individual precepts as being easy or unimportant. The observance of the precepts will lead to your weal and happiness. Do not think lightly of any of the precepts; none of them is easy to observe”\(^2\). The concept of weal is related to ethics in Buddhism, consequently. As far as the ethics for ruler is concerned, the Buddha discussed the importance and the prerequisites of a good government. He showed how the country could become corrupt, degenerate and unhappy when the head of the government becomes corrupt and unjust. He spoke against corruption and how a government should act based on humanitarian principles.

The Buddha once said: “When the ruler of a country is just and good, the ministers become just and good, when the ministers are just and good, the higher officials become just and good, when the higher officials are just and good, the rank and file become just and good, when the rank and file become just and good, the people become just and good”\(^3\).

In the CakkavattiSihanada Sutta, the Buddha said that immorality and crime, such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, could arise from poverty. Kings and governments may try to suppress crime through punishment, but it is futile to eradicate crimes through force\(^4\).

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1. i. panatiparaveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami.
   ii. adinnadanaveramanisiakkhapadmsamadiyami.
   iii. kamesumicchacaraveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami.
   iv. musavadaveramanisikkhapadamdiyami.
   v. suramerayamajapadamadathanaveramainsikkhapadamsamadiyami.
Moreover, in the Kutadanta Sutta, the Buddha suggested economic development instead of force to reduce crime. The government should use the country’s resources to improve the economic conditions of the country. It could embark on agricultural and rural development; provide financial support to those who undertake an enterprise and business provide adequate wages for workers to maintain a decent life with human dignity.\(^5\)

We can note in passing why the Buddha’s Teaching is called the Eternal Dhamma or Truth. From the points mentioned above we can see that the Teachings are universal and can be applied to all human societies no matter how separated they are in time and space. Therefore, the Buddha points out the moral principles for human societies and the moral applications of a ruler to support public power and provide for improvement of the welfare or happiness for the peoples.

**THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY**

In Buddhism, poverty (daliddiyam) is defined as a deficiency of basic commodities needed for maintaining physical well-being. A pauper is a person who is destitute, indigent, and in great need of four basic commodities; food, clothing, shelter, and medicine.\(^6\) A test of sufficiency is the minimum quantity of basic commodities that would provide an endurance and continuance of the physical body and also an end to physical discomfort.\(^7\) Without a sufficient amount of basic commodities, the individual is incapable of undertaking mental development activities—right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation which are necessary in realizing enlightenment.

Food is to be consumed just enough to survive and continue one’s life physically as well as ending bodily afflictions. Sufficient clothing is only that amount which is needed to counteract the weather, heat or cold; protect one from undesirable contact with insects such as flies and mosquitoes; and to cover parts of the

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6. Vin I 58, Avi 45
7. M.53
body that cause shame. Housing is required for protection from
the inclement weather and for seclusion. Medicine is required for
curing sickness, pains, and for maximum freedom from disease.
Consumption of each basic good for purposes beyond these
described is considered in excess of a sufficient amount. Not having
enough basic commodities to avoid poverty causes two primary
problems according to Buddhist teachings. The first problem is
regarded as the root of bodily suffering. It is realized as hunger,
sickness and short-life, which creates an immense obstacle to the
cultivation of the mind. The second problem is that poverty, which
is also a cause for some unwholesome conduct, leads to many
problems in society, such immorality, conflicts and disharmony.

POVERTY AS A CAUSE OF SUFFERING

The Buddha said that “woeful in the world is poverty and
debt"8 and “poverty is suffering in this world.” Here He speaks to
the use of wealth by governments because poverty and want, like
greed (to which they are closely related) contributes to crime and
social discontent.9 Buddhism maintains that it is the duty of the
government or the administrators of a country to see to the needs of
those who are in want and to strive to banish poverty from the land.
At the very least, honest work should be available to all people, trade
and commerce should be encouraged, capital should be organized
and industries monitored to guard against dishonest or exploitive
practices. By this criterion, the absence of poverty is a better gauge
of government’s success than the presence of millionaires. In
Buddhism, poverty can cause suffering for those who enjoy sensual
pleasures in two ways: bodily suffering and indebtedness.10

First, poverty causes bodily suffering primarily as it induces
sickness brought on, for example by hunger, or exposure to
unbearable weather conditions. The Buddha declared that hunger

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8 A.III.352
9 D.III.65,70
10. A. VI.45. This implies that poverty is not mental suffering for those who renounces
sensual pleasures. For example a monk or an ascetic who renounces sensual pleasures and
prefers to live a simple life. Nevertheless, If poverty causes hunger or sickness which obstruct
the practice of mental development. It is then a cause of bodily suffering.
is the most severe of all illnesses because it is a hindrance to mental development and impedes the ability to practice along the Noble eightfold path. In the Dhammapada the Buddha stipulate as follows:

JighacchaParamaroga, sankharaparamadukkha,
Etamnatvayathabhutam, nibbanamparamamamsukham.\(^{11}\)

Hunger is the greatest disease\(^{12}\). Aggregates are the greatest ill. Knowing this as it really is, (the wise realize) Nibbana bliss supreme.

Second, poverty is also suffering for an individual if it induces indebtedness. If a pauper, gets into debt, then this indebtedness may cause other types of suffering as well. For example, the inability and pressure to pay the interest when it is due induces harassment from creditors and possibly imprisonment.

Based on the Buddhist view of human life, the primary objective of economic activities is, therefore, to alleviate suffering that is caused by poverty. Economic activities that create wealth can lead to the elimination of some form of bodily suffering, such as hunger and sickness.\(^{13}\) They can also eliminate indebtedness that is induced by poverty. By contrast, possessing wealth only cannot alleviate suffering caused by indebtedness without reducing the desire for unnecessary goods and or services beyond one’s income. Rather, an understanding of how debt can cause mental suffering and a restraint over desire is critical factors.

POVERTY AS A CAUSE OF INSTABILITY IN SOCIETY

The second part of the problem of poverty is that it can induce unwholesome conduct, which has the potential to cause instability in society. This social aspect of poverty is illustrated at length in one discourse.\(^{14}\) There are four implications that can be drawn from the discourse: (1) favorable characteristics of society; (2) a

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12. Ordinary diseases are usually curable by a suitable remedy, but hunger has to be appeased daily.
13. While the impermanence of the body must be contemplated, it does not prevent one to do the best to cure bodily sickness.
14. D. CakkavattiSihanadasutta 26, PTS: D. III, p.58
link between poverty and immorality; (3) the role of confidence in Karma; and (4) the role of the government in society.

First, the story envisions a prosperous, peaceful, stable and secure society, where people have long life spans, beauty, happiness, wealth, power, and know only three kinds of disease: greed, hunger and old age. These conditions within society are achieved and maintained because everybody strictly observes the ten courses of moral conduct- three right thoughts, four types of right speech and three right actions of the Noble Path.

Second, it provides a profound link between poverty and immorality. First, economic well-being is a prerequisite condition for a peaceful society because poverty is the main cause of immorality and social disorder. In addition, immoral conducts cause a decrease in life-span, beauty, happiness and wealth in the long run. When assistance is not given adequately to the needy, poverty becomes widespread. Because poverty raises improper desires and does not permit one to be generous, it is root of many crimes and unwholesome actions. It causes theft and robbery, then killing- telling deliberate lies-speaking evil of others- committing adultery- harsh speech and idle chatter- covetousness and hatred- false views- incest, homosexuality and deviant sexual practices- lack respect for parents, ascetics and the head of the community- fierce enmity, fierce hatred, fierce anger, thoughts of killing and actual killing among beings.

Third, the story demonstrates that confidence in Karma can bring forth a prosperous and peaceful society, which facilitates the cultivation of the mind. In Buddhism, the practice of moral conduct can give rise to conditions that promote prosperity, health and long life, immediately and eventually. The practice of morality, including these favorable conditions, can be maintained by confidence in the results of good actions. Confidence here can arise through a clear understanding of Karma, or right view. The mechanism of how confidence in Karma can induce a peaceful society can be understood as a co-operative condition in which each individual believes in the same moral set, thus leading to a higher moral society. The peaceful condition is, however, unstable because some individual may deviate from that set of beliefs and action, causing social disorder again.
Finally, the discourse shows that some type of institution is required to enforce the stable condition in the short term (i.e. one life time). In other words, confidence in Karma is a necessary condition to sustain a prosperous and peaceful society whereas the government has a duty to maintain order among individuals with different levels of confidence. In Buddhism, it is considered unwise to eradicate crimes through greater punishment. The appropriate remedy is to improve the economic conditions of the people first. Once everyone is able to make his or her own living, morals can be observed and crime will disappear.

THE SOLUTION OF POVERTY

In a Sutta of AnguttaraNikaya, the Buddha says eliminating the poverty and strengthening the financial state is compulsory to be happy for lay people. It says,

“iti kho bhikkave dāliddiyampidukkham lokasmiṃ kāmabhogi nainadānampi… vaddīpi…codañāpi…anucariyayāpi… bandanampidukkham lokasmimkāmabhogino”

The poverty is a suffering in this world. The person who get debt due to the poverty it also will be a suffering, profit of the debt also will be a suffering, he had to live under other’s blame, the person who gave debt pursuit him, and he had to live under punishments. These statements show us miserable situation of the poverty. The Buddha shows the way to escape from the poverty. The Buddha says suffering should remove through effort. The Buddha mentions very important thing which very useful to eradicate poverty from the society. In the Byagghapajja sutta, the Buddha mentions that accomplishment in initiative, accomplishment in protection, good friendship and balanced living are needed that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in this present life. This explanation shows Buddhist perspective on the earning and outflow. When people practice these four factors which lead people gradual economical development, can eliminate poverty from the world.

15 D.Vi. Kutadanta sutta.26
16 A.III. Ina Sutta.p-351-354, A. Vi.45
17 A.IV.282
Mostly poverty increases due to over exploitation of natural resources and labors. Buddhism introduces it as un-righteous. Buddhism mainly advises leaders of the country to consider about people’s lifestyle. The poverty is the main cause to improve un-righteous behavior among people. In present world people always try to develop within a very short period to overcome the poverty. Mostly they do un-righteous professions and earn wealth. In Buddhism never admire un-righteousness.

In Kutadanta Sutta propose three factors to give solutions for poverty.

In the country who likes to do agriculture the political leader must provide food and seeds to them.

In the country who likes to run business the political leader must provide capital to them.

In the country who likes to do government services the king must give wages to them.

Through these kinds of plans poverty and other social issues can be solved permanently. If the king gives wealth to individual people according to their actions it is not permanent solution. When leaders provide seeds, capital and wages people do their job and live a happy prosperous life with their families. Some scholars interpret this sutta as follows also.

Provide profession to all who can work.

Equally sharing the capital among needy people

Equally share the wealth or profits among people.

If there are disables or helpless people giving aids. According to People’s skills leader should support them to cut down on the poverty and to develop the country.

THE ROLE ON ECONOMY

In Cakkavattisihanada of the Diga Nikaya explains about ten duties of a Cakkavatti king. Among them mainly explain the king should give his more attention to poor to protect peaceful,

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18 Hettiaracchi Dharmasena, Baudhha Arthuka Dharsanaya, 1991, pp- 323-324
moral situation of the country. The king should provide righteous protection and treatment to every living beings and vegetation of the country. Then he should provide wealth or capital to needy people. In this sutta mention the poverty occur in the country due to mishap of the leaders. Economic ethics covers a wide range of issue: types of work or business practices, the approach to work in general and entrepreneurship in particular, the use to which income is put, attitudes to wealth, the distribution of wealth, critiques of politico-economic systems such as capitalism and Communism, and the offering of alternatives to these in both theory and practice. In a Buddhist context, it also entails a consideration of such issues in relation to lay citizens, governments, and the Sangha.19

The Buddha mainly mentioned on economic ethics for the ruler in the Cakkavatthisihanada Sutta that distribution of wealth among poor is a duty include in the set of norms that are to be followed by a university monarch – askkavati-raja as a designated in canonical texts 20. If take in the literal sense “adana” means the poor. Another duty of a cakkacatti-raja is the provision of ‘ward’ care and protection’ (rakkhavaranagutti) 21 for various categories of people in the country.

It can be assumed that ethical economic management for a ruler or governor is determined by the absence of poverty in his domain, rather than by a surplus of wealth in his coffers or in the hands of a select portion of the population. When this basic standard is met, the teachings do not prohibit the accumulation of wealth or stipulate that it should be distributed equally. If Cakkavatti-norms fails to give wealth to those who has no wealth, the poverty will be increased and this lead to numerous deeds of corruption in the society, consequently.

The Kutadanta Sutta suggests the provision of basic capital to people to get self-employed according to their capabilities, inclinations and also in keeping with the needs of the nations’

20. D.III, P 61
21. D. III, P 60
The provision of the infra-structure, primary needs and payment of reasonable wages\textsuperscript{22}. Similarly the Kutadanta Sutta suggested also the provision of food and other basic needs to those who are not in a position to obtain them or do not receive them for some reason or the other\textsuperscript{24}. Similarly important, according to the texts, is the setting up of a viable fiscal policy, an effective system of taxation which while not unduly burdening the taxpayer at times of difficulties\textsuperscript{25} would enrich the state coffers at times of economic boom in the country\textsuperscript{26}.

The AggannaSutta explains the origin as well as the social acceptance of the system of private ownership. The advance effects of this system is minutely analyzed in the Cakkavatisihanada Sutta. These sources clearly demonstrate that it is this system if private ownership that gave rise to series of corruptions and evil practices begging from stealing and ending in ruthless massacre of each other. This, however, does not mean that prior to the origin of the system of private ownership, there did not exist any form of corruption or evil.

CONCLUSION

In Buddhism, they are called the basic requirements of living. Especially the moral issues associated with material wealth. It is apparent that material well-being is one important factor contributing to the development of a Buddhist economic community. The primary objective of economic activities in Buddhism is to alleviate poverty. The proper way to deal with crime, is to first improve the economic condition of the people. When people are thus provided with opportunities to earn an income, they will be content, has no anxiety or fear, and will not cause harm to the society. These conditions will lead to a peaceful and prosperous society. As a result, a type of Protestant asceticism emphasizing the accumulation of wealth which was then invested into one’s secular business and (according to Weber) contributed to the development

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} D.P 135
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibit
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibit
\item \textsuperscript{25} S.I.P 57
\item \textsuperscript{26} D.IP 134
\end{itemize}
of modern capitalism in the West, never was encouraged in the Theravada tradition once the idea of Dana became dominant. Some scholars go even further and argue that this very tradition of dana is an important reason for the slower development of modern capitalism in countries with a strong Theravada tradition.
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ABSTRACT

Kakkarapatta is a name of market town of Koliyans. This town was visited by the Buddha as recorded in the Vyagghapajja or Dīghajānu Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Why did the Buddha ever visit a market town? It might be because incidentally He passed through the market town or it might be because His awareness that one factor for the welfare of the people was the economic factor that usually developed in the market. The second alternative answer might become true as it was evidenced by the fact that the Buddha in this market town gave the useful teaching, the teaching for the economic welfare as well as for the spiritual welfare.

In this sutta, the Buddha taught four conditions for the economic welfare namely the accomplishment of persistent effort (Uṭṭhānasampadā), the accomplishment of watchfulness (Ārakkhasampadā), good friendship (Kalyāṇamittatā), and balanced livelihood (Samajīvitā). These four teachings are called UAKS economic values in this article. The important
thing from this sutta was that the Buddha did not only teach for the economic welfare, but also gave the teaching for the spiritual welfare namely saddhāsampadā, silasampadā, cāgasampadā, and paññasampadā.

The author and team, at the time being is doing a pilot project in mentoring Buddhist community to run a Buddhist Shop called Prema Mart (Loving Kindness Mart). It is a Buddhist shop concept operated in Central Java, Indonesia. This shop is not exclusively available only for Buddhists, but it is available for all people as well. As it is a cooperation shop where the members are the owners, the profit of this shop is for the shop itself and for the members. The important point is that, all members and people who work in running and managing this shop have to adopt the teaching so called UAKS economic values as stated in the Vyagghapajja Sutta. How does this shop attains the goal and how can it improve the economic as well as spiritual welfare of the members mutually, will be explored in this paper.

Bringing down the teaching to really touch up the problem of the society is the main challenge in the modern time. The problems in the society are complex and their solutions are mysteries. The effort that can be done is therefore, applying the teaching to the modern problem contextually. Such effort becomes the main concern in this article, i.e. using the teaching of Vyagghapajja Sutta contextually to solve the modern economic problems in the Buddhist community especially in Central Java, Indonesia.

The moral teaching of the Buddha never expires although it is an old moral teaching. All the societal problems in the modern times have the same root cause as the societal problems during the time of the Buddha. The things are, the problems are taking different model and name from the societal problems during the Buddha’s time. In regard to the economic problems, the teaching of the Buddha still has the values to solve and to relieve them. The problem is not in the teaching itself but, in the people who practice the teaching.

1. LEARNING FROM KAKKARAPATTA (A MARKET TOWN OF KOLIYANS)

Kakkarapatta was the name of market town of Koliyāns. Koliyā was one of the republican clans during the Buddha’s time. As
Republicans, Koliyā had two chief settlements at Rāmagāma and the other at Devadaha. Sakyan and Koliyān people had close relation as they were living nearby the River of Rohini. Even these two clans once had the fight regarding the River Rohini. Both sides claimed to be owner of the water of Rohini. Several other townships of the Koliyans, that had once been visited by the Buddha or by His disciples were Uttara as the residence of the headman Pātaliya; Sajjanela residence of Suppavāsā, Kakkarapatta, and Haliddavasana as the residence of the ascetics Punna Koliyaputta and Seniya.

Kakkarapatta town was visited by the Buddha as recorded in Vyagghapajja or Dīghajānu Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Why did the Buddha ever visit a market town? It might be because incidentally He passed through the market town or it might be because His awareness that one factor for the welfares of the people was the economic factor that usually developed in the market. The second alternative answer might become true as it was documented by the fact that the Buddha in this market town gave a useful teaching, the teaching for the economic welfare as well as for the spiritual welfare.

In order to deepen our study, it will be useful to read the Vyagghapajja Sutta carefully. In the opening of the discourse, a merchant of Koliya named Dīghajānu acknowledged to the Buddha about the reality of a life as householders. Dīghajānu says that:

“We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy worldly pleasure. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of Kasi. We deck ourselves with garlands, perfume and unguents. We use gold and silver.”

From this statement, we should notice that Dīghajānu really aware that the life as lay people is worldly pleasure (gihī kāmabhogino). However, he has hope to get the happiness in this life as well as in the next life. Therefore, he requested the Buddha to teach the Dhamma to get the happiness in this life and in the future life.”

3. J.V.412 ff; DA.II.672 ff
4. S.IV.340
5. A.II.62
6. A.IV.281
7. A. IV.281
Such awareness that is understood by Dīghajāṇu is important to be possessed by the Buddhists who live a life as lay people. They themselves have to be aware that happiness that should be obtained is happiness in this life as well as in the future life. Buddhists are not destined by the past kamma to have unhappy life in this life and to get happiness in the next future life only. Happiness in this life and in the next life is the right of those who struggle for it. Happiness is not a reward as it is a result of serious efforts.

2. ECONOMIC WELFARE AND SOCIAL WELFARE FOR LAY LIFE: INTERCONNECTEDNESS

One of the factors to gain happiness in this very life as lay people is by possessing wealth. By possessing wealth, lay people can fulfil their basic needs and secondary needs. By fulfilling their needs, lay people can feel happy. The Buddha himself was aware that working and earning wealth was important for lay people to run their lives. Therefore, the Buddha taught four teachings for lay people. These four teachings are namely: the accomplishment of persistent effort (Uṭṭhānasampadā), the accomplishment of watchfulness (Ārakkhasampadā), good friendship (Kalyāṇamittatā), and balanced livelihood (Samajīvitā). These four teachings are called UAKS economic values in this article.

After reading the Vyagghapajja Sutta, UAKS economic values can be displayed in the table as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Economic Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uṭṭhānasampadā</td>
<td>1. Being skillful and hard working (yadi sippaṅṅatarena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Applying proper ways and means (vīmaṃsāya samannāgato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Being able to carry out and allocate duties (alaṃ kātum alaṃ samvidhātum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ārakkhasampadā

Protecting the wealth (that is collected through the right way) in terms of:
1. Government or king: through actively paying the tax & obeying government rules
2. Thieves: making good finance and security management
3. Fire and Water: applying insurance for the main wealth. In case of disaster, the wealth will have insurance
4. Heirs: good recruitment system, including the heirs

Kalyāṇamittatā

1. Associating and working with colleagues who possess good faith, morality, charity and wisdom
2. Avoiding business partner who do not possess good faith, morality, charity and wisdom

Samajīvitā

1. Living a balanced life; neither extravagant or miserly
2. Maintaining a condition that the income will stand in excess of the expenses

The AUSK economic values are very useful for running a life as lay people. However, there are still many Buddhists especially in Central Java, Indonesia, who live in scarcity. Seeing this reality, it can be said that there are two different aspects: good teaching of economic values in one hand and living with lack of prosperity in the other hand. There is a gap between the teaching and the reality of life in the society.

3. PREMA MART (A LOVINGKINDNESS MART)

3.1A Pilot Project of Economic & Spiritual Welfare in Central Java, Indonesia

Seeing the gap between the moral of the teaching and the reality in the societal life, therefore the author and team, at the present is doing a pilot project in mentoring Buddhist community to run a Buddhist cooperation shop called Prema Mart. It is developed based on the ideas namely “gaining the economic profit as well as practicing the Buddhist teaching”.
What is the meaning of Prema Mart? Prema is derived from Sanskrit word and its meaning is loving kindness. Prema Mart therefore is a concept of Loving Kindness Mart. Why is this shop called loving kindness mart? It is because the main purpose is not merely to get the profit but, it is mainly intended to empower the people. There are 3 main focuses of empowerment of this shop i.e. empowering the people to improve the productivity, marketing, and cutting off the local capitalism.

3.2 Improving the Productivity

The Buddha as already mentioned in the Maṅgala Sutta gave the teaching that having knowledge and good skills were the great blessings. However, sometimes Buddhist people still do not know how to develop their skill in obtaining a good income in their daily lives. Prema Mart, therefore, is trying to provide some trainings to develop and to improve the skill of Buddhists in many fields. With the help of Theravada Buddhist Women Organization (Wandani) in Central Java, some trainings are able to be held for Buddhists. For the time being, some products of Buddhists as the result of the trainings can be seen below:

In doing the production process, the Prema Mart and Wandani always encourage Buddhist people to continuously maintain the quality. Maintaining the good quality of the product is part of

8 (1) Batik in Buddhist motif; (2) making brown sugar; (3) coconut oil; (4) hand art from bamboo; (5) making bamboo plate
practicing the Dhamma in the daily life. The moral teachings of the Vyagghapajja Sutta that are emphasized in this process is to be skilful and to be hard working (yadi sippaññatarena) as well as applying proper ways and means (vīmaṁsāya samannāgato). The teaching to be skilful and to be hard working is practised by following all the steps in making a product, so that the result is a perfect product. Applying the teaching of proper ways and means is tested when people make foods as their products. They are encouraged to avoid toxic material in making food. The simple example: they are suggested to use the natural essence and colouring material rather than chemical materials.

3.3 Improving the Marketing Skills

After having good and qualified products, the next step is promoting and selling the products. Prema Mart is one of the solutions to help Buddhist people to sell and to promote their products. In Prema Mart shop, Buddhist people can sell their products. The selling system in Prema Mart shop is done by offline and online shoping system. Offline shop is by putting the product in the shops and the shopkeepers will sell it to the people who come to the shop.

Apart from that, Prema Mart is also following the new trend in selling product i.e. through online shop. All Buddhist people can take photographs of their products which then send them to Prema Mart together with the information about the price and the specification of products. After that, Prema Mart’s manager of the online shop is promoting the photograph of the products to the people through facebook, whatsapp and instagram. It is called pre order system in Indonesian online shop. When people are interested to buy, the manager of online shop will contact the producer to make and send it to the buyer. So far, these two kinds of system are helpful although improvements are still needed.

3.4 Cutting the Local Capitalism

In the villages in Central Java, people who have low income are entrapped in an economic system called “ijon”. Ijon is a name for a trading system in which people are taking some money and other necessities from the shops without paying money. People will pay whatever they already take from the shop by giving some harvests
from their field to the shop such as coffee, ginger, turmeric, coconut, avocado, etc. As the result, the shop will buy the harvests from the people with the low price. The people who are getting low price cannot do anything and just accept their situation because they already have a loan to the shop. This practice has happened for long period of time and in this article is called “local capitalism”. This system has to be cut off to make people get their best price during the harvest season.

Seeing this situation, Prema Mart is intended to help people to avoid the “Ijon system” in fulfilling their daily necessities. People are encouraged to produce goods and products to be sold in Prema Mart to fulfil their daily needs. They are educated not to always depend to the loan from the local shop. By doing so, when they have harvest, they can sell it with good price because they do not have any loan to the shops.

3.5 The Working System of Prema Mart

Prema Mart is a cooperation shop in which the members are the owners. It means that the Buddhist who become the members of Prema Mart is also the owners. As the owners, they will have their share of the profit of the shop. Prema Mart is already having a handbook as a guidance to run the shop. In this handbook, it is already decided by all the members and managers that the profit of the shops is divided into 6 sections as follows:

- Prema Mart ..............................................20 %
- Members ................................................... 20 %
- Capital........................................................20 %
- Managers................................................... 30 %
- Social activities .........................................5 %
- Savings........................................................5 %

The meeting of the members is the holders of the highest supremacy in a cooperation. In Prema Mart, the meeting of the members is held once a year, in January. In January, all managers and the members will sit together in a meeting to discuss and decide the share of profit of Prema Mart.
Prema Mart not only works in making profit but also focuses in organizing trainings for the members. So far, trainings that had been done by Prema Mart were business management training, and accounting training. By organizing these two trainings, managers as well as the members can improve their skill and as the result they can manage Prema Mart as well as their business in their houses well. Business management and accounting skill are very important because these two can provide valid finance and accounting report. Moreover, Prema Mart is a cooperation and the owners are many, therefore, the valid report of finance and accounting is very important. Deciding the share of profits, arranging the next business steps and making another policies are depend on this report.

3.6 A Market for Spiritual Welfare

Prema Mart is not merely a place to buy and to sell products. Prema Mart is also having the duty to develop the spiritual welfare of the members and the managers. All people who work and associate in the running and managing this shop have to adopt the teaching so called UAKS economic values as stated in the Vyagghapajja Sutta. When they are doing the business, they have to work based on the principle of uṭṭhasampadā, ārakkhasampadā, kalyāṇamittatā, samajīvitā or UAKS economic values. In addition, in every thought, speech and action have to be used as media to improve the quality of faith (saddha), morality (sīla), charity (cagga) and wisdom (paññā).

In attaining the above mentioned purposes, all people who associate with Prema Mart are encouraged as much as possible to engage with the Buddhist activities of the monasteries. Recently, the members of Prema Mart are encouraged to join to One Day Mindfulness program held by Indonesian Theravada Saṅgha in Kenteng village to develop faith and wisdom. When Prema Mart makes an event such as cooking class, everybody is encouraged to donate for lunch as well as for paying the fee of the tutor. This is done to train the charity of the members of Prema Mart. Morality as the basis in running Prema Mart is always developed in every action.

However, all the dreams in developing Prema Mart as loving kindness mart, as a centre for learning and growing together are not an easy tasks. They will be easy and come true if all managers,
members, and stakeholders work hand in hand seriously. Hopefully
this pilot project can answer the challenge in the modern time, can
bridge up the gap between the ideal of the religious teaching and
the real problems in the society.

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RE-ORIENTING LEADERS IN BUSINESS FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBALISATION-A CONSIDERATION OF PERSPECTIVES FROM BUDDHIST APPLIED ETHICS

by Shyamon Jayasinghe

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of globalisation is growing at exponential speed thereby integrating trade, finance, people, and ideas in individual countries into one global marketplace. While cross-border international flows define it, modern technological advances in communications and information technology, also generated at an unbelievable rate, have expedited the volume, speed and capacity of globalisation.

At bottom, it is corporate business that provides the motivational impetus to drive the forces of globalisation. It is a near economic law that businesses seek to expand in reaching markets outside their traditional domestic boundaries. This urge for extended reach constitutes the spur for globalisation.

Largely inspired by globalised possibilities, corporate businesses have uplifted fivefold the material lives of most people around the world. At the same time, expanding businesses are threatening our very sustenance, undermining our social values, polluting our environment and have contributed to adverse trends in climate change. Clearly, the challenge and dilemma for humanity today is to encourage the productivity that globalisation brings in its wake while restraining and averting its potential threats.

*. M.A., Associate Member of the Australasian Association of Philosophy.
Many levels of global leadership can be recognised but this paper will confine discourse to business or corporate leadership for the valid reason that the latter are prime movers in globalisation.

The traditional view that the purpose of business is to do business, and not be focused on ethical aims (Friedman, 1970) is now being discredited. In today’s context, a company is regarded as an organ of the wider society and thus it is reasonable that companies should approach productivity in ways that foster society’s sustainability.

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an outcome of this changing attitude.

This paper points out that CSR has to flow naturally from a company-wide ethical disposition and that this requires a re-educational and re-orienting program applied accross all levels of management. Deeply entrenched, outmoded and selfish ways of thinking that are destructive must give way to new ways of thinking that make our societies sustainable. Besides, it is argued that such new ways can indeed be channelled into improving businesses’ productivity and profitability. The ethical demands should not be perceived as an external restraint. On the contrary, the incorporation of ethical values can more fully and meaningfully enrich business. In this sense, business leaders at all levels must willingly internalise the new attitudes. If this be done, we could see a new and constructive force for good in globalisation. The need is for a changed spirit in business.

This process of internalisation essentially involves applied ethics.

It is the thesis of this paper that Buddhist ethical philosophy can provide a central insight for any program of business leadership reorientation or re-education. In this context, a brief survey of three main approaches to ethical theory are examined—deontological approach, consequential approach and virtues approach. With reference to classical Buddhist texts and research papers it is argued that the Buddha had emphasised the development of the virtuous man as the ultimate end of ethical effort. He also deals a lot with consequential approaches that relate to karmic effects in a chain of cause and effect. Buddhist texts refer, in a modified manner, to deontological approaches, too, where the five precepts and Noble Eightfold Path stand. However, the latter represents a formal set of rules of behaviour that reflect the outcome of
the other two approaches. This brings us to the view that Buddhist ethics is holistic, namely, aimed at a comprehensive effort in bringing out the virtuous man.

The virtuous man as applied to business leader education would be likened to the new corporate leader with the changed dispositions that reflect the sense of corporate social responsibility which is vital for the new aspirations of sustainable globalisation. It is the “changed spirit,” of corporate behaviour that is desired.

INTRODUCTION

The new globalised order demands a ‘new corporate man’ or business leader to replace the traditional one perceived as being greedy, ruthless, and selfish and concerned only with earning profits for shareholders. The changed expectations of societies and their governments over the last several decades have led to new demands on business leaders. There is evidence already of some manifest attempts toward a change of heart on the part of some big corporate bodies.

The time has come to expand this awareness and build a new, socially concerned, and ethical corporate man who has the inbuilt attitudinal mindset to navigate through the globalisation forces in order to ensure not only the profitability of his undertakings but the sustainability of societies supporting them.

It is the view of this paper that applied Buddhist normative ethics offers an insightful perspective for a reorientation program to transform the mindset of business leaders.

The alternative terms given in italics and placed within parentheses are in the Pali language.

THE PHENOMENON OF GLOBALISATION

The term, ‘globalisation,’ has been given different meanings. However, in a fundamental sense it can be said to describe the alteration of humanity’s experiences of space and time in a period where the importance of global and even national boundaries have been undermined. This is a process that has entered our awareness particularly over the last three decades where technological
development has contributed to make human contact with any party in any distant part of the world so easy, fast, and even instantaneous despite spatial distance; where even physical distances have been virtually shortened by rapid and cheap transportation and communication. In other words, the world of humanity and of human activity has been effectively shortened and constricted in both a temporal and a spatial sense.

As succinctly put by Martin Heidegger (1950), ‘all distances in time and space are shrinking.’ This phenomenon has far reaching implications for virtually every facet of life. Thus we talk of globalisation of ideas; globalisation of cultures and so on.

BUSINESS AS THE DRIVING FORCE

It is arguable that the main dynamic in this globalisation revolution has been business economics. It has been the search for overseas markets by businesses, multi-national companies and body corporates looking to expand in order gain more customers and take advantage of economic opportunities overseas. Domestic businesses can have extended sales in overseas markets. Multinational firms like McDonalds or Starbuck may have brands that appeal a lot to foreign markets. Outsourcing of business functions to countries with cheaper labour or cheaper material access may cut manufacturing costs. The reasons are varied. However, it is happening on a large scale and it is transforming the world.

Global arrangements for the lifting of trade barriers have occurred thus easing further the free flow of men, capital and material. Even the technological innovations referred to have been provoked by business companies. Land, air and sea travel, computers and the internet, digitalisation and so forth are largely the outcome of business initiative.

Karl Marx (1848), socialist theorist, recorded his vision of this oncoming force when he argued that the imperatives of capitalist production inevitably drove the bourgeoisie to ‘nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, and establish connections everywhere.’

The growth of Multinational and transnational companies
(MNCs and TNCs) and the rise in the significance of global brands such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, Sony, and McDonalds, is the visible manifestation of globalisation. The important thing is that domestic governments appear to be having slender control over the operations of these companies.

THE CHALLENGE TO BUSINESS LEADERS

Globalisation has, in overall terms, brought in increased wealth to countries-both in the developed world and the emerging economies. World trade in manufactured goods has increased over 100 times; over the last 50 years since 1955, an increase from $95 billion to $12 trillion has been recorded. Since 1960, increased trade has been made easier by international agreements to lower tariff and non-tariff barriers on the export of manufactured goods especially to rich countries.

While the process has encountered many severe problems like increasing inequality in some sectors, it is believed that those countries that have not been that successful will eventually be compelled to measure up to the levels of their successful counterparts.

Having said all that, we have to point out to the many crisis-causing pitfalls that business expansion without social concern and ethical direction could fall into. The conventional view has been that profit maximisation is the reason for a business to exist. On the other hand, profits should not supersede the needs of people. Michael Moore’s (2007) film Sicko, for example attacks the healthcare industry for its alleged emphasis on profits at the expense of patients. Moore adds:

“We should have no talk of profit when it comes to helping those who are sick... It is not fair for insurance companies because they have a fiduciary responsibility to make as much money as they can for their shareholders. Well, the way they make more money is to deny claims or to kick people off the rolls or to not even let people on the rolls because they have a pre-existing condition. You know, all that is wrong.”

Globalisation creates powerful multinational companies. Power
tends to be abused. One observes some of these big corporate bodies interfering with the democratic politics of countries. This leads to an unhealthy and dangerous threat.

Third, there is the tendency for businesses to acquiesce in bad labour practices. In poor countries where a lot of outsourcing is being done, big businesses turn a blind eye to child labour practices or the exploitation of women labour or to the underpayment of women workers.

Fourth, there is the ever present threat to the environment by big businesses driven by greed. Environmental pollution, global warming, and indiscriminate destruction of forest cover, ocean resources, bird and animal life are some of the growing worldwide concerns.

Fifth, businesses have shown a proclivity toward bad advertising practices that run counter to the ethical mores of the countries in which they operate.

Sixth, there are other business practices like abuse in pricing and in payment for procurement of supplies especially from poorer countries.

Seventh, globalisation has led to a massive shift of refugee labour from poorer countries to rich countries giving rise to a myriad of problems and threats to the living standards of such workers.

BUSINESS ETHICS AND THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

It is no mere coincidence that the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) came into vogue over such negative experiences of rising globalisation. Briefly, CSR is a manifestation of business ethics—the idea that businesses must conduct themselves ethically at all times and with a sense of responsibility and accountability to society. This is a sharp departure from the earlier conservative view that ‘the social responsibility of business is to shareholders,’ Milton Friedman (2006). Societies all over the world have come to look at business differently and many countries have brought in laws to check the overpowering influence of oligopolies and monopolies. The new perception is that any business firm has a responsibility
to the local and external community. A business cannot grow and enrich itself regardless of the welfare of the community and without taking cognisance of community needs and aspirations. A firm belongs to the community and is, in effect, an organ of society.

In fact, the new thinking is that it would benefit a business and probably increase profits if it were to embed within its philosophy the need to be acceptable to the community.

The concept of CSR has taken a further step by even reckoning that a firm must take affirmative steps to assist in community projects and helping to alleviate national and social distress.

**Broader View of Sustainability**

Consistent with the growth of CSR in the collective consciousness of business managers and the community, is the development of a broader view of sustainability. The term, ‘sustainability,’ doesn’t mean sustainability within the internal operations of a business only. The broader interpretation is that this term applies to mean sustainability of the surrounding society—either within domestic boundaries or, in the case of a global entity or multinational company, all stake-holding consumer bases domestic and overseas. For instance, environmental issues like climate change involve global-level commitments. So are issues pertaining to human rights? A business must be sustainable in this broader sense.

**DESIRED MINDSET OF NEW BUSINESS LEADERS OR THE ‘NEW CORPORATE MAN.’**

By ‘business leaders,’ we mean the owners, boards and managers of a firm or business corporate. They constitute, to varying degrees, the key decision makers that move the firm along. With globalisation, the nature and quality of doing business has changed dramatically, requiring a radical shift in the mindset of the business leader of the globalising era. Trading and manufacturing are now increasingly being done across domestic borders spreading into different countries with different cultures. In a different culture, people look at the same thing differently. It is important, therefore, for the new corporate man to possess a strong cross-cultural intelligence. He must be able to attune his product or service offering, to different
societies. His interaction styles will have to change according to the changing cultural environment. While keeping to the basic corporate values in a uniform way, the new manager must adjust its local implementation. This is one of the principal components of the global leadership mindset.

The other component is the integration of CSR into corporate thinking, behaviour and delivery. While one component is cross-cultural intelligence the other is CSR. The two aspects make up the mindset of the new corporate man.

This paper will consider the ethical component of the desired global leadership mindset and would argue that Buddhist normative ethical thinking offers a valuable perspective toward building the new corporate man.

MAJOR FRAMEWORKS IN NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORY

What framework or model shall we use to re-orient the business leader? The whole issue as to what constitutes an ethical conduct has been full of contention. How do we define a good act? What are the norms of ethical conduct?

Three basic approaches to normative ethical theory have been expounded by philosophers over the ages. They are consequentialist, deontological and virtues ethics approaches. Consequentialism is the view that we must assess the rightness or wrongness of our conduct by taking a look at the consequences/potential consequences of the act concerned. An act that would produce a good outcome is a right act and vice versa. Utilitarianism is the classic manifestation of the consequentialist approach to ethical conduct. The term ‘utility,’ is understood to mean whatever leads to happiness, and sometimes happiness itself.

This stand seems intuitively appropriate in assessing conduct. Hence, it is the most popular theory today despite numerous thorny issues that arise in the calculus of measuring happiness.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) are the authors of utilitarianism. The influence of this framework of conduct has extended to contemporary times where we have an Australian philosopher named Peter Singer (2017), advancing
his own variation of consequentialism. Peter Singer extends the application of consequences even to the animal kingdom.

(b) the Deontological Approach argues that the rightness or wrongness of a proposed conduct is something we feel inherent in our consciousness as a kind of inbuilt law or command. For instance, although we often utter lies we are aware that it is not the done thing to do. Likewise, it is not right to kill and so on. The word, 'deon,' means “one must.” It is a feeling of inner compulsion.

Immanuel Kant (1998) the German philosopher expresses the deontological framework in its classic form. Kant argued that we have within us a “Categorical Imperative,” which commands us:

“Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it shall become a universal law.” Kant regarded that the prevalence of this imperative for us to act as being one of nature’s wonders. Kant was impressed by “The starry skies above and the moral law within.”

A maxim to be morally acceptable must pass this universalising test. This test harmonises with the common cry, ‘what if everyone behaved that way?’ Let us give an example: I borrow money from X explicitly promising to pay it back but with no intention of doing so. How if everybody does so? Can I rationally will that a state of affairs exists where nobody honours promises? In such a state of affairs it would be irrational to accept promises. The institution of promising could not exist.

(C) Virtues Ethics. As a formalised doctrine, virtues ethics appears to have originated in Ancient Greece where Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and the Stoics had espoused it. As an influential idea, it seems to have later waned in influence. However, partly due to exasperation over perceived inadequacies in consequentialist and deontology theories, virtues ethics has been revived in contemporary ethical discourse.

Virtues Ethics is a totally different approach to ethics. Both consequentialists and deontologists attribute goodness or rightness to specific actions or conducts. In the case of virtues ethics proponents, they shift the characteristic of morality to the individual character of the person and not to any specific act.
Contemporary ethicists like G.E.M Amscombe and Alasdair MacIntyre* frustrated by the imprecise nature of action-based ethics in the consequentialist and deontological approaches and their attendant problems have found in virtues ethics a more satisfactory and more fundamental framework.

Virtues ethics have been rather superficially defined in many texts. A better definition is given by Rosalind Hursthouse (1997):

“A virtue [Greek, ‘arete,’] such as honesty or generosity is not just a tendency to do what is honest or generous, nor is it to be helpfully specified as a ‘desirable’ or ‘morally valuable’ character trait. It is, indeed a character trait—that is, a disposition which is well entrenched in its possessor, something that, as we say, “Goes all the way down,” unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker—but the disposition in question, far from being a single track disposition to do honest actions, or even honest actions for certain reasons, is multi-track. It is concerned with many other actions as well, with emotions and emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations and sensibilities. To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset. (Hence, the extreme recklessness of attributing a virtue on the basis of a single action.)”

A virtue is, therefore, an outcome of a wholly total character or lifestyle rather than particular episodes or actions. It is a trait that cannot be trained in isolation of the whole. It amounts to the building of a total mindset or the building of a virtuous man. Specifically, a virtue is a positive trait that makes its possessor a good human being. A virtue is thus to be distinguished from single actions or feelings.

The way to build a good society is, thus, to help its members be good people. Thus, an action is right if and only if it is an action that a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances. Right actions essentially flow from virtuous people in a given situation. At this point, virtue ethicists introduce the notion of practical or moral wisdom (Greek ‘phronesis.’)* To assess a moral situation practical wisdom becomes necessarily attached to the virtue.

As regards determining the list of virtues there has been much
disagreement. Getting over a possible controversy here, Alasdair Macintyre (1984) argues that any account of the virtues must indeed be generated out of the community in which those virtues are to be practiced: the very word *ethics* implies ‘ethos.’ That is to say that the virtues are, and necessarily must be, grounded in a particular time and place. What counts as virtue in 4th-century Athens would be a ludicrous guide to proper behaviour in 21st-century Toronto.

**ETHICAL THEORY IN BUDDHISM?**

Buddhism is rich in ethical teachings—sila, the five precepts, the Puranas, the Vinaya, wholesome and unwholesome mental factors in the Abhidamma, Brahma Viharas and so on. Buddhist insights are scattered here and there, prompting different scholars to give emphasis on their chosen concepts. On the other hand, there have been hardly any attempts to tie up the insights in order to build a composite and meaningful body of ethical theory. Professor Damien Keown (1992), has pioneered attempts in a specialist approach toward Buddhist ethics. Over and over again, we come across the problem that the Buddha never put down his teachings in writing thus leaving it open to scholars to attempt at interpretations. In particular, Buddhist ethical theory has become an open field.

This paper will be a humble attempt to join the gathering stream of scholarship in a theory-building effort at Buddhist Ethics.

Damien Keown has taken up the position that the Buddha had really had in mind a kind of virtues ethics. This paper agrees with that position.

**THE BUDDHA GOAL WAS VIRTUES ETHICS**

The common belief is that Buddhist ethics is about the five precepts (*pancaseela*), and the Noble Eightfold Path. This view is akin to the deontological view of ethics as a system of rules or internal commands. There is, no doubt, a deontological aspect in the Buddhist teachings. However, this can be attributed to the Buddha’s goal of making ordinary people grasp the essence of his teachings in the form of rules. The general spirit of the Buddha’s approach as gleaned from the Pali Nikayas can be interpreted as one that goes deeper to the heart of change in behaviour. The
Buddha could not have been a mere rule-layer like the God of Christianity. His teachings can be interpreted as aimed at going to source, by transforming the mindset (santana) of people so that the new mindset could naturally flow with wholesome acts (kusaladhamma). There are several references in the Dhammapada cited below where the Buddha emphasises how skilled performances would naturally flow from a trained horse, carpenter, engineer etc. In like manner, a person whose mindset is geared by training in basic virtuous dispositions will be naturally prone to virtuous or wholesome conduct.

**BRAHMA VIHARAS AS THE MODEL**

There is a pointed reference to loba (greed), dosa (hatred) and moha (delusion) as the basic roots of the unwholesome states of mind. The term, ‘wholesome,’ maybe interchanged with the Western concept of ‘virtue.’ The Buddha pointed out that once these roots are purified into their opposites our mental stream or santana will flow with virtuous behaviour, which alone can take us to the summum bonum that is nirvana. This becomes, therefore, a possible option for a virtues ethics model in Buddhism. In fact, Damien Keown picked loba, dosa and moha as the defining set of virtues for a virtues model.

On the other hand, there are practical difficulties in Keown’s proposal.

We take the view that, while avoiding contradiction with the set of virtues loba, dosa and moha, and acknowledging their value in Buddhist thinking, the Buddha’s inculcation of the four sublime emotional states or mental dispositions of the brahma viharas can be picked as the more concrete and practical approach to changing our mindsets toward good or wholesome conduct in daily life. These four states are metta (goodwill), karuna (compassion), mudita (sympathetic joy) and upekkha (equanimity, even-mindedness).

The reasons for this preference is as follows: (a) to a modern mind, the terms can be subject to disputation due to their open-ended nature. For example, one may ask, “What, really, is greed? What is the precise intensity-measure of an act that should qualify it as greed and not mere, ‘liking,’?” (b) implementation of the
opposites of greed, hate and delusion becomes difficult to ordinary human nature and so would become a hard, though desired, battle. On the other hand, the interrelated states of the brahma viharas can be developed more comfortably while we participate in the pragmatic world. We shall get back to this thesis shortly, after a diversion.

METAPHYSICAL BASIS OF BUDDHIST ETHICS

That diversion is into the subject of metaphysics. In Buddhist thinking ethical propositions are not mere exhortation to behave. Such propositions receive justification by their link with metaphysics. ‘Metaphysics,’ is used here in the Aristotelian sense. The term used was not used by Aristotle himself but it was attributed to what the Greek philosopher called ‘first philosophy.’ For Aristotle (384-322 B.C) first philosophy referred to issues that deal with the fundamental causes and principles that underlie existent things. Thus the metaphysics of Aristotle had nothing to do with something transcending experience as in Plato, Kant, and even Hegel.

Applying the same usage to Buddhism it can be argued that Buddhist ethical exhortations in the five precepts and elsewhere and ethical dispositions are founded on the ‘first principles’ of nature and the universe (dhamma). Buddhists believe that their ethics is, therefore, strongly validated.

All this means is that how one ought to conduct oneself is at least suggested by objective fact. The “ought,” follows from the “is.” In this way, the particular ethical proposition becomes the significant or ‘sensible,’ way to conduct oneself. “Is,” refers to the inherent fundamental nature of things.

Santideva (8th century A.D) Indian Buddhist monk and Madhyamika scholar was one of the first to show how Buddhist ethics follows from metaphysical premises. Amod Lele (2007) has dealt at length on Santideva’s thinking. Santideva has argued on the following lines: According to Buddhism:

(a) actions are determined by their causes, and therefore, anger is not justified. One who knows dependent origination can become more patient with others’ wrongdoing and will avoid blaming others. This was referred to as “dhammic patience.” (b) the body is
reducible to its component parts, and, therefore, we must not lust; (c) the self is an illusion and is unreal; hence, it makes no sense to protect only oneself from the suffering shared by others; we must be altruistic; (d) all phenomena are empty and therefore we should avoid attachment. It is possible to expand on this thesis of Santideva, as follows: (e) “All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death. Likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay,” [Dhammapada] (f) “some do not know that we must all come to an end here; those who know this, their dissensions cease at once by their knowledge.” [Dhammapada]

BRIDGING THE “ought,’ AND “IS,’ IN ETHICS

The school of analytic philosophy that came into vogue in the West during the 20th century denied this possibility of linking an ‘ought,’ to an ‘is.’ It has been pointed out by some Western philosophers that normative ethical rules and obligations are not in the realm of fact; and that they are purely subjective or emotional guidelines that many try to adhere to. Analytic philosophers like AJ Ayer (1958) in fact asserted that, ‘the exhortations to moral virtue are not propositions at all, but ejaculations or commands which are designed to provoke the reader to action of a certain sort.’

On the other hand, as pointed out by Santideva, the Buddhist linkage between the nature of reality and the ethical responses to such a reality appears as a foreshadowed reaction to contemporary analytic philosophy. In Buddhism, we observe a visible bridge between the “is” and the “ought.” At least one can argue that the Buddhist normative ethic gets as close as one could get to bridge that gap. This feature invests Buddhist normative ethical propositions with a compelling character.

CENTRALITY OF VIRTUES ETHICS IN BUDDHISM

Consequentialist and deontological criteria are are not denied by Buddhism. However, the Buddha seems to focus on one central goal as far as ethical development is concerned, namely, to create a virtuous person from whom alone wholesome conduct (kusala) will follow rather effortlessly and unwholesome conduct (akusala) avoided.

“Is there in the world any man so restrained in modesty that
he avoids censure as well as a trained horse avoids the whip?” [Dhammapada]. In other words, the trained horse naturally behaves to avoid a reminder of the whip. “Like a well trained horse when touched by a whip be strenuous and swift, you will, by faith, by virtue, by energy, by meditation, by discernment of the law, put aside this great sorrow [of earthly existence], endowed with knowledge and [good] behaviour and mindfulness.” [Dhammapada] Finally, “Engineers [who build canals and aqueducts] lead the water (where they like); fletchers make the arrow straight; carpenters carve the wood; virtuous people fashion (discipline) themselves” [Dhammapada]

The assumption above that the virtuous person can be trained by cognitive realisation, by meditation and so on. As in the last verse, just as engineers and carpenters are trained to perform their skills. Once trained, the engineer will perform right. So, will the virtuous person.

Virtues ethics go to the heart and mind of the doer. It is tackling at the source.

THE BRAHMA VIHARA MODEL OF THE VIRTUOUS PERSON

The brahma viharas we referred to previously are fundamental character dispositions or virtues, that can turn an individual to act virtuously in dealing with others. One of the earliest records of this concept comes in the Suba Sutta (DN).* The virtues are detailed in the Visuddhimagga (c.5th century BC)

“Brahma,” means divine or noble and ‘vihara,’ means abiding and living. Those who practice the Brahma Viharas are said to be abiding or living in the noble or the divine. They are also described as being apramana (immeasurable in impact) when done to perfection. Buddhism invokes us to develop these four fundamental virtues that can lead us to be naturally virtuous men and women.

These are: loving kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita) equanimity, even-mindedness (upekkha).

There are associated meditation practices set out to train a person toward the perfection of these emotional dispositions. The basic idea is get an individual to open his mind and his awareness
towards a friendly disposition to others; towards recognising and empathising with the suffering of others; towards sharing the joy or success of another; and toward developing a balanced, unruffled and detached state of mind (upon the realisation that all beings will reap the results of their good and bad actions).

We might imagine the brahma viharas works this way: we keep developing metta toward others displaying simple and sincere goodwill; when another is afflicted by disease, injury or other difficulty we extend our metta by actually intervening and going to his aid. This is karuna. Metta could be extended further when another experiences a successful moment. We do so by identifying and sharing that joy with the other person. This is mudita. The first mental states are, therefore, different shades of each other; they can be perfectly integrated in one character.

The state of upekkha stands alone, and it serves to help us develop an even-mindedness over events where we cannot intervene.

The meditator commences by practising the virtue on oneself (which is easy); next, on to his close circles; and from their right up to those may be hostile. In this way, the impact of the emotion of love swells immeasurably to cover everyone who comes our way.

These four sublime ethical dispositions are founded on the nature of reality or metaphysics: Our interconnectedness, the littleness of life on earth, the swift passing away of all phenomena, the emptiness (sunya) of phenomena, the dukkha and anguish that is everyone’s lot to experience as humanity’s existential predicament. In the circumstances of the nature of things, the need to develop metta, karuna, mudita and upekkha appears to be a functional course of action in our dealings with others. The peace that is generated by that development and the improvement of our living ambience is amazing. The meditator has to reflect on such given realities.

SOCIAL CONCERNS IN THE BRAHMA VIHARA MODEL AND RELEVANCE FOR BUSINESS

What has been presented is a brief picture of the Brahma Vihara virtues model that can be garnered and reconstructed from the teachings of the Buddha. The virtues model is meant to apply
commonly to all individuals. The question arises how this model can help develop social concern in the mindset of the new corporate leader. The traditional model of business, as we have noted, was lacking in this dimension. The demand for a business ethic that incorporates broad social concern and social responsibility (CSR) in the business agenda has grown with the new power of companies that globalisation gave birth to.

This is precisely where the brahma viharas can come in on behalf of the CSR goal: The *brahma viharas* are a composite set of mental dispositions that make up our attitude to others and our broader concern for society. They are, fundamentally, relationship-values or stances. Even without formal meditation we can reach adequate levels of these attitudes by developing awareness. We will note below how we humans are born with the potential toward metta and karuna and this serves us well in consciously orienting our lives towards some level of the *brahma viharas*. The practice of the *brahma viharas*, may thus be regarded not merely as useful for the individual’s daily living; it can help build business’s call for social concern, altruism, and accountability.

The business leader faced with the ethical challenges of globalisation represented by the CSR obligation can incorporate into his style of management a strong empathetic awareness and concern for the wider society and community at large. Special Features that make *Brahma Viharas*.

**FUR SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS FOR A BUSINESS LEADER-ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

There are two special features of these virtues that make them further attractive for inclusion in a learning program for corporations. The first, is that there are no sectarian religious linkages in the *brahma viharas*. Rather, they are compatible with any faith since they represent universal values.

The second feature is that this is an ethic that realistically recognises and builds on the human being’s powerful emotional repertoire and tempers that with our reasoning ability.

In his seminal and best selling book entitled, “Emotional
Intelligence,” Daniel Goleman, (1996) explains the power of human emotions based on recent research. “A view of human nature that ignores the power of emotions is sadly shortsighted,” remarks Goleman (p4). It logically follows that that an ethic that ignores this factor is also shortsighted. The ethical orientation for business leaders that this paper proposes stands comfortably with this truth.

Goleman points out how modern brain imaging techniques developed by science have enabled us to gain access to a lot of information today about this non-rational side of man’s nature and the enormous power emotions hold in our thinking and decisions. Says Goleman: “There is evidence to suggest that fundamental ethical stances arise from underlying emotional capacities.” Goleman, further states, that, “Empathy is the ability to read emotions in others...lacking a sense of another’s need or despair means no caring.”

Goleman explains how the neocortex sections of the human brain (thinking brain) arose from the emotion stem centres millions of years later. Until then, for over 500 generations of homo sapiens, our emotional repertoire were our sole guides.

The practice of the brahma viharas both acknowledge the power of our emotional centres and also appeals to our neocortex (reasoning) stems at the same time. Metta is an extension of the natural instinct of friendly emotions that Homo sapiens developed due to their intrinsic social nature. “Metta is a basic goodwill that wishes wellbeing for others. When the suffering of persons we love moves us, karuna is the wish for that suffering to end. When their joy delights us, mudita is the wish for their joy to continue. And in the particular circumstances, when we have no role in the welfare of others, uppekkha is the wish that we ourselves not become agitated while keeping our hearts open and responsive, perhaps available for when we can.”

Our thinking brain is employed both to restrain any excesses of emotions like cruelty and selfishness by making us reckon the reality or the nature of existential life (dhamma) we all face. There are two moral stances that our globalised society call for: Self restraint and
compassion. Emotion and reason have to play this dual role. There is a fine and subtle play between reason and emotion (or head and heart) in the approach of the brahma viharas.

APPLICATION OF THE MODEL AT BUSINESS LEVEL

There is an interesting article by Bhikku P.A. Payutto (1994), appearing in the online blog, urbandharma.org. Bhikku Payutto (1994) is a Thai scholar-monk who has researched and written extensively on Buddhism.

Bhikku Payutto proposes that the brahma viharas, being as it is at mental-disposition level, has to be applied at the practical social level. This can be done, states the Bhikku, in three ways. The classification of these ways is instructive to post-globalisation corporate leadership:

The first is giving generously (Dana). This is based on metta as goodwill; on Karuna as an intervention in times of disaster; or on mudita as a giving to encourage.

The next way, is by kindly speech (piyavaca). In the business context, this can apply to courteous and helpful communication with customers, other stakeholders and the public. Kindly speech based on metta would be a basic attitude of goodwill in everyday situations; based on karuna, in times of difficulty; based on mudita, it would be congratulatory speech. However, when confronted with crisis-laden social situations kindly speech can be expressed as impartial and just speech; this is the upekkha way.

The third Buddhist way of implementation suggested by Bhikku Payutto is by useful conduct (atthacariya). This is the offer of physical effort in the form of helpful conduct. Based on metta, it can be at the level of friendly gesture; in times of tragedy it can be based on karuna or compassion. Based on mudita help can be offered as an encouragement.

The final way of brahma vihara implementation is samanattata (making oneself accessible or equal). It means sharing and living in harmony and cooperation with others on an equal basis. This is an attitude of humility.
CONCLUSION

Globalisation is transforming the world. Businesses have been one of the primary movers in globalisation. This puts leaders in business in a specially influential position in the affairs of men. Globalisation has hugely increased the wealth of many countries and the standard of living of millions of people. At the same time, the juggernaut that is globalisation poses many serious challenges for the future. This has given rise to new social expectations of the role of business. The public and social collective consciousness has come around to believe that, along with the power of corporate bodies and multinationals proliferating all over the world, comes new and hitherto unrecognised social responsibilities. This expectation is a departure from the conventional which believed that the goal of business is to bring profit to shareholders; there prevailed an ethical underpinning of greed and self interest among companies.

It is now being realised that this cannot happen in the new era any more. The growing belief now is that while leaders in business should continue to work to bring profit and efficiency, they have at the same time got to navigate optimally in the new world to address wider social concerns and social welfare issues. Corporate social responsibility or CSR has ethical undertones and assumptions and it entrust the new global leadership mindset with an ethical obligation.

In other words, a new corporate man must be constructed with a mindset that incorporates in balance both the conventional profit motives and the new ethical dimension. Toward this end, we have attempted to bring in as inspiration a model of orientation based on a perspective drawn from applied normative Buddhist ethics. This is a virtues model of Buddhist ethics that aims at total character building of an individual. It is based on four stable mental, emotional or attitudinal dispositions. We pick a model based on the four Brahma Viharas and argue that a business leader who could change his attitudes and mind-states in line with these four stable character dispositions would be sensitised to respond to social concerns.
References


Payutto, Bhikku (1994). Thai scholar monk. Bhikku Payutto was awarded the 1994 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.


Santideva (c. 700AD) *Bodhicaryavatara.*

*Suba Sutta.* Dīgā Nikāya

*Visuddhimagga* (5th century CE) Scholar and commentator, Buddhaghosa.
ABSTRACT

This study investigated the solutions suggested in Buddhism for the contemporary issue of consumerism which can negatively affect sustainable development in Sri Lanka on contrary to the popular belief. As a religion that promotes a simpler, benevolent life and the main goal being attaining Nibbana, the world tends to view Buddhism as a doctrine that focuses more on afterlife than current lay life. Yet, on the contrary I contend that not only through sutras such as Vyaggapajja sutta that focuses on the importance of managing daily affairs by lay people, in majority of sutras preached by the Supreme Buddha to laymen emphasizes on economization. I argue that it also can defeat toxic consumerism to achieve sustainable development. For this purpose, Buddhist teachings need to spring to life rather than dwelling in books by being referred and put to action mainly in the Sri Lankan Buddhist society.

The paper discusses how sustainable development can also be redefined to go beyond materialistic development, which is one of the main focuses in Buddhism, inner peace. I argue that secular development...
is not rejected in Buddhism and that the Supreme Buddha encouraged lay people to acquire success both spiritually and materialistically but in a way that it does not basically violate the five precepts. The study explores Buddhist teachings in curing consumerism through mindful living mainly as preached in suttas such as Parabhawa sutta, Vyaggapajja sutta, Singalowada sutta, Sapthabhariya sutta and Mangala sutta. The discussion also extends with ample examples from the Buddhist concepts.

By integrating the Dhamma, the study endeavours to bring out Buddhist solutions for the rapidly capitalized Sri Lankan society to be healed from harmful consumerism in order to attain sustainable development. Thus, I argue that Buddhism not only promotes spiritual development but economical and social development which leads to a peaceful society as well.

1. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is no stranger to the world as a teaching that is unique among many other religions in the world. The Noble Dhamma advices the Supreme Buddha’s disciples on many terrains in life from being good and happy during day-today activities to afterlife, until attaining enlightenment. However, contrary to the all rounding quality in Buddhism, it is generally viewed as a religion that focuses more on life after death than the present material world. It can be stated that this general notion carries little truth since Buddhism is a teaching that gives advices not only on making afterlife a happy one but also on making the current life successful, materially and spiritually.

Sri Lanka is a country which is renowned around the globe as a land that reveres Theravada Buddhism since over 2500 years. It can be unarguably believed that Theravada Buddhism changed course of the country to the better after it was endowed to our island by King Dharmashoka from India through his son Arahant Mahinda, who is venerated as the second Buddha in Sri Lanka. However, as other countries, Sri Lanka also faced different social, political and economic changes through time and tide and she has not succeeded in saving from getting devoured from consumerism. When connecting Buddhism, consumerism and Sri Lanka, it is important to explore the meaning of the complex idea. Oxford dictionary
defines consumerism as the preoccupation of society with the acquisition of consumer goods and Merriam Webster defines the word as the theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable, a preoccupation with and an inclination toward the buying of consumer goods and the promotion of the consumer’s interests. Sivaraksa (2003) defines consumerism as “the religion of consumption-attributing ultimate meaning to purchasing power” (Sivaraksa, 2003: 287)3 While consumerism is referred by some scholars such as Jean Baudrillard and Danielle Todd as “late capitalism”, Simon Malpas (2005) explains it as:

“The circulation, purchase, sale, appropriation of differentiated goods and signs/objects today constitute our language, our code, the code by which the entire society communicates and converses. Such is the structure of consumption, its language, by comparison with which individual needs and pleasures are merely speech effects” (Malpas, 2005: 122)4.

Thus, consumerism is referred as the consumer culture and also the harmful impact of getting addicted to accumulating too much goods due to the influence of capitalism. The paper evidently refers to the latter. According to Stephanie Kaza, (2000) “consumerism is on a collision course with the limits of the planet, and the disease is spreading rapidly.” (Kaza, 2000)5 The world has changed to the better and worse ever since man came to existence on earth and money or wealth has been a pivotal part in people’s lives making and breaking them. However, as humans evolve, the focus has always been on making life more comfortable and likewise paving way to innovation of different machines and goods to make life easier but complex. In this paper, following the qualitative approach, several suttas and verses of the Dhammapada will be studied to study what

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the Supreme Buddha preached on the terrain. I emphasize the fact that the Noble One not only advised the lay disciples on mindful living, free from over-accumulating goods and wealth, in famous suttas that focused on the above topic, but also in many other places in the teachings of the Enlightened One.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research include studying whether the several specific suttas that are generally defined as the Buddhist teachings on conducting a happy lay life in par with the changing world are the only Buddhist suttas that teach the disciples to do so. The paper also analyzes the meanings of the several Buddhist suttas and the verses of the Dhammapada in which the Supreme Buddha has taught the disciples to live mindfully while enjoying the bliss of lay life.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Buddhism is generally viewed in the world as a ‘religion’ that encourages the followers to make their afterlife comfortable more than the current life. This idea might have derived from the Hindu practices that prevailed during the time of the Gauthama Buddha. The research attempts to explore the falsehood of this general notion. In order to delineate an in-depth and meaningful investigation, the research explores the Buddhist stance on consumerism through a study of the suttas, the Dhamma preaching of the Tathagatha. The questions explored are whether Buddhism rejects consumerism and what are the remedies the Supreme Buddha suggested the lay disciples if consumerism is denounced.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars around the world have explored Buddhism, consumerism and the connection between them. Sauwalak Kittiprapas (2015) in his article “Buddhist Approach and Happiness for Sustainable Development” states quoting Payutto (1992).

“Buddhism considers poverty is suffering and obstacle for higher development. As noted in Payutto (Payutto, 1992: 4)6 once Buddha said “when people are overwhelmed, and in pain through suffering, they are

incapable of understanding Dhamma” and stressed that “hunger is the most sever of all illnesses and that conditioned phenomena provide the basis for the most ingrain suffering”. (Kittiprapas quotes Payutto, 2015)\(^7\)

According to Kittiprapas and Payutto, Buddhism realizes the importance of basic physical needs, and eradication of poverty is ‘the priority’ before human beings can be developed spiritually. Hence, it is clear that Buddhist economics does not object physical well-being and economic development as they are means towards higher life goal of happiness form liberalization. However, it can be argued that Buddhism does not believe in complete eradication of poverty as a possibility since it is a consequence of the \textit{kamma}. Yet, Buddhism through time and tide has shown that being or not being economically prosperous is not an obstacle to being a good Buddhist as from beggars, lower caste people to princes and kings have found solace in Buddhism. In \textit{Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom}, Sivaraksa (2003) quotes David Arnott.

“By participating in the sacrament of purchase, by sacrificing money, you can buy an object that is not so much an object as a focus of images which grants you a place in the system of images you hold sacred. For a while when you buy a car, you also buy the power, prestige, sexuality and success which the advertisements have succeeded with the car, whatever the commodity is. Consumerism works by identifying the sense of unsatisfactoriness or lack (dukkha) we hold at a deep level of mind….. and then [by corporations] producing an object guaranteed to satisfy that “need”. (Sivarksa quotes David Arnott, 2003).\(^8\)

According to Arnott, companies cater to the buyers by identifying their \textit{dukkha} and producing to quench their wants. Kaza (2000) in “Overcoming the Grip of Consumerism” states,

“Several Buddhist teachers in the U.S. have taken up particular

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sub-themes addressing over-consumption. Philip Kapleau has sounded an ethical call for vegetarianism based on the first precept, “no killing” (1982). Robert Aitken has taken a stand for reducing wants and needs to simplify the material life of the Western student (1994). Thich Nhat Hanh is very firm on the fifth precept, “no abuse of delusion-producing substances,” including exposure to junk television, advertisements, magazines and candy (1993). As for Buddhist and analysis of consumption, the field of literature is very small. Rita Gross has written provocative articles developing Buddhist positions on population, consumption and environment. (1997a, 1997b). From Thailand, Sulak Sivaraksa has campaigned tirelessly for economic development linked to spiritual development based in Buddhist principles of compassion and skillful means (1992) (Kaza, 2000: 24).

Kaza, has quoted scholars such as Kapleau, Aitken, Thich Nhat Hanh, Gross and Sivaraksa and she has accumulated the literature on the connections between Buddhism and consumerism. In addition, exploring the teachings of the original teacher the Tathagatha is much important. Thus, the research has been aided with the quotes of the Dhammapada and valuable suttas such as Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, Mangala Sutta, Parabhava Sutta, Aputtaka Sutta, Anana Sutta, Vyaggapajja Sutta, Sigalovada Sutta, Karaniya Metta Sutta as well.

5. METHODOLOGY

The research followed the qualitative method in collecting data and studying the Dhamma preached by the Supreme Tathagatha Buddha. The most cited Buddhist principals are none other than the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path explained in the suttas, Dhammapada stanzas and other Buddhist concepts. The Pali Text Society database was mainly used in referring to the Buddhist suttas and Dhammapada stanzas translated and explained in Pali. The study explored Buddhist teachings in curing consumerism through mindful living mainly as preached in suttas such as Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, Parabhawa Sutta, Vyaggapajja Sutta, Aputtaka Sutta, Anana Sutta, Singalowada Sutta, Karaniya Metta Sutta.

Sutta and Mangala Sutta. The discussion also extended with ample examples from the Buddhist concepts. Journals, books and book chapters were pursued to extend the sources used in the analysis. Jstor digital library and Google Scholar search engine were mainly employed to locate scholarly books, book chapters and journals. The scholarly books, book chapters and journals identified one or several Buddhist principals. Thus, the study was done.

6. ANALYSIS

It would not be wrong to argue that the very base of Theravada Buddhism itself is refraining from succumbing to worldly luxuries in order to get closer to attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana or the Enlightenment.

Monks, these two extremes ought not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the household life. There is addiction to indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, coarse, the way of ordinary people, unworthy, and unprofitable; and there is addiction to self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable.

Avoiding both these extremes, the Tathagata (The Perfect One) has realized the Middle Path; it gives vision, gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment and to Nibbana. And what is that Middle Path realized by the Tathagata? It is the Noble Eightfold path, and nothing else, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. This is the Middle Path realized by the Tathagata which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, and to Nibbana.\(^\text{10}\)

As preached by the Enlightened One in his very first sutra, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Lord Buddha rejected kamasukhallikanu yoga, (self-indulgence) or the state of consuming luxuries and falling deeper into consumerism by chasing lavishes. The Noble One also renounced attakilamathanu yoga (self-mortification) or allowing oneself to suffer. Likewise, by advising his disciples to follow the Majjimapatipada or the Middle

\(^{10}\) Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta (SN 56.11 PTS: S v 420 CDB ii 1843.)
Path, it can be stated that the Tathagatha rejected yielding to consumerism.

The Supreme Buddha also preached the disciples to follow at least the five precepts, which include abstaining from harming living things, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicating substances. These rules are also mentioned in the Dhammapada,

“Yo panamatipateti – musavadanca bhasati
loke adinnamadiyati – paradaranca gacchati.
Surameray pananca – yo naro anuyunjati
idhevameso lokasmim - mulam khanatiattano.”

The holy words of the Enlightened One convey “He who destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given him, commits adultery and takes intoxicating drinks, digs up his own roots even in this very life.” If studied analytically, these basic rules themselves promote abstaining from getting trapped to consumerism as also highlighted in the second, third and fifth precepts, since the words emphasize righteous and simple living.

Another very important teaching in Buddhism is the practice of giving or ‘dana’. Many religions around the world do mention this as a meritorious concept, so that the practice of giving is not an isolated deed defined in Buddhism. ‘Dana’ is one of the three most important steps in marching towards eliminating the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion, with three factors being dana, sila (virtuous conduct) and bavana (meditation), as mentioned in Punnakiriyavathu Sutta of Anguttara Nikaya, Attakatha, Danawaggo. ‘Dana’ is also highlighted in Mangala Sutta, as

“dananca dhammacariyaca – gnathakananca sangaho,
Anavajjani kammani – etham mangala muttamam”

Which carry the meaning that the acts of giving, righteous living according to Dhamma and helping your relatives are truly auspicious and good omens. According to the American Buddhist scholar Bikku Bodhi.

Practice of giving does not by its own nature conduce directly and immediately to the arising of insight and the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Giving functions in the Buddhist discipline in a different capacity. It does not come at the apex of the path, as a factor constituent of the process of awakening, but rather it serves as a basis and preparation which underlies and quietly supports the entire endeavor to free the mind from the defilements.13

Thus, it can be stated that the practice of giving in Buddhism is not only a fancy idea which merely promotes giving by inciting the followers to expect more comfort in the afterlife, but a practice that is expected to free them from worldly goods and thereby free the mind, while acquiring merits by helping others.

Parabhava Sutta of Khuddaka Nikaya, Sutta nipatapali, Uragavaggo, is the Discourse on Downfall which was preached by the Gautama Buddha about the twelve facts which cause the downfall of people. It can be stated that the sixth, eleventh and the twelfth causes of downfall as preached by the Enlightened One can be highlighted for the study.

“Pahutavitto purso, sahiranno sabojano:
Eko bujjati saduni, than parabavato mukhan”

The meaning of this stanza is “the person who is possessed of much wealth, who has gold, and who has an abundance of food, but enjoys his delicacies all by himself, this is the cause of his downfall.”14

“Ittin sondin vikiranam, purisam vapi tadisam:
Issariyasmim tapeti, than parabavato mukhan”

The eleventh stanza carries the meaning as he who places in authority a woman given to drink and squandering, or a man of similar nature, this is the cause of his downfall.15

“Appabhogo mahathanho, khattiye jayate kule
So ca rajjan pattayati, than parabhavato mukhan”

15. Parabhava Sutta (SN 1.6 PTS: SN 91-115).
The eleventh stanza carries the meaning as he who has little possessions but great ambition (greed), is of warrior birth and aspires selfishly to (an unattainable) sovereignty, this is the cause of his downfall.\textsuperscript{16}

When exploring the above stanzas it is clear that the Perfect One renounced greed and over-accumulation of goods. The sixth stanza itself discourages the disciples to have an ‘abundance’ of goods, food and selfishly consume them all by him/herself without any generous thoughts. It can be stated that the eleventh verse particularly focuses on consumerism as it specifies greed as the sumptuously spending money on food (meat and fish) and intoxicants by him/herself or giving the authority to one such extravagant man or woman to manage his/her resources will cause the downfall of the specific person. The twelfth stanza also emphasizes how one should not be greedy towards what he/she does not have, such as the access to money, social status or goods.

In Aputtaka Sutta of the Samyutta Nikaya, a dialog that happened between the Supreme Buddha and the King Pasenadi Kosala is revealed. The King explains how he is on his way after conveying to state a late money-lending householder’s heirless fortune to the royal palace. The Noble One stated that it is the way when a person of no integrity acquires lavish wealth, he lets his wealth go to waste and not to any good use. The Noble One also advised the king how to put the wealth properly to use.

When a person of integrity acquires lavish wealth, he provides for his own pleasure & satisfaction, for the pleasure & satisfaction of his parents, the pleasure & satisfaction of his wife & children; the pleasure & satisfaction of his slaves, servants, & assistants; and the pleasure & satisfaction of his friends. He institutes for Brahmans & contemplatives offerings of supreme aim, heavenly, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven. When his wealth is properly put to use, kings don’t make off with it, thieves don’t make off with it, fire doesn’t burn it, water doesn’t sweep it away, and hateful heirs don’t make off with it. Thus his wealth, properly put to use, goes to a good use and not to waste.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16.} Parabhava Sutta(SN 1.6 PTS: SN 91-115).
\textsuperscript{17.} Aputtaka Sutta(SN 3.19 PTS: S i 89CDB 182).
Thus, according to the Supreme Buddha, spending the wealth “properly” does not mean squandering it. He advised the disciples to serve the family, friends, the employers and the sangha, or one will end up losing all his wealth. This is also highlighted in Adiya Sutta, where the Enlightened One advised Anathapindika the householder about the five benefits that can be obtained from wealth. At another occasion as mentioned in Anana Sutta of Anguttara Nikaya, when inquired by the Chief Lay Disciple of the Gautama Buddha sasana of the types of bliss that can be attained in the proper season, the Perfect One answered ‘debtlessness’ as the third of four types of perfect happiness.

And what is the bliss of debtlessness? There is the case where the son of a good family owes no debt, great or small, to anyone at all. When he thinks, ‘I owe no debt, great or small, to anyone at all,’ he experiences bliss, he experiences joy. This is called the bliss of debtlessness.18

Thus it can be stated that as a great economist, the Blessed One advised the disciples who were bankers, farmers, businessmen and kings to do better at their profession. It can be explored with the stance on Buddhism on debt. The disciples are advised by the Supreme Buddha not to borrow debts from others as much as possible and he names ‘debtlessness’ as one of the four major types of happiness. This is because when borrowed money, it can lead to more shortage of money later on with the interests and it will likely be a burden on the person and the family as well. When looking at today’s Sri Lankans, this can be identified as a fact that is not much paid heed to. For instance, majority of Sri Lankans, just as people of other countries have fallen to mounts of debts in order to buy vehicles, build a house and most importantly to do online shopping. Online shopping can be considered as one of the mini beasts conducted by metaphorically harmful devices such as credit cards, which are literally debt-mountains with a flashy outward appearance. Such tempting methods have made people of the contemporary world slaves to consumerism and Sri Lankans although blessed with Buddhism endowed over 2500 years ago have not been able to survive it with being devoured by capitalism.

Vyaggapajja Sutta is one celebrated sutta in Buddhism which is famous for concerning the lay life. There, Dighajanu, a Koliyan goes to the Blessed One and poses a question many of the lay Buddhists still may ask a Buddhist reverend:

“We are lay people enjoying sensuality; living crowded with spouses & children; using Kasi fabrics & sandalwood; wearing garlands, scents, & creams; handling gold & silver. May the Blessed One teach the Dhamma for those like us, for our happiness & well-being in this life, for our happiness & well-being in lives to come.”\(^{19}\)

At this occasion, the Supreme Buddha kindly answered the question with much concern. He stated that there are four qualities, that lead to a lay person’s happiness and well-being in this life, which are being consummate in initiative, being consummate in vigilance, admirable friendship, and maintaining one’s livelihood in tune. It was also preached that there are these four qualities that lead to a lay person’s happiness and well-being in lives to come, which are being consummate in conviction, being consummate in virtue, being consummate in generosity, being consummate in discernment.

And what does it mean to maintain one’s livelihood in tune? There is the case where a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher. ‘Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.’ Just as when a weigher or his apprentice, when holding the scales, knows, ‘It has tipped down so much or has tipped up so much,’ in the same way, the lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, ‘Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.’ If a lay person has a small income but maintains a grand livelihood, it will be rumored of him, ‘This clansman devours his wealth like a fruit-tree eater. If a lay person has a large income but maintains a miserable livelihood, it will be rumored of him, ‘This clansman will die of starvation.’ But when a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, ‘Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.’

\(^{19}\) Vyaggapajja Sutta (AN 8.54 PTS: A iv 281).
exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income;’ this is called maintaining one’s livelihood in tune.²⁰

The holy words of the Tathagatha clearly reveal that he most definitely denounced falling to the dark pit of consumerism. As mentioned in many places in Buddhist teaching, the Perfect One thus condemned miserliness and extravagance. His advice is to balance the income cleverly that how much money you earn, do not spend over the amount you cannot afford, ‘maintain the livelihood in tune’.

This idea of maintaining the income is also mentioned in Sigalovada Sutta. The setting is Rajagaha and the Blessed One advises a young householder named Sigalaka who arose early and set out from Rajagaha with freshly washed clothes and hair with palms together held up in reverence, he was paying respect towards the six directions. Among many advises, the Tathagatha stated so,

“What six ways of squandering wealth are to be avoided? Young man, heedlessness caused by intoxication, roaming the streets at inappropriate times, habitual partying, compulsive gambling, bad companionship, and laziness are the six ways of squandering wealth.”²¹

As mentioned by Gautama Buddha, the great teacher, intoxication, roaming the streets at inappropriate times, habitual partying and compulsive gambling are the modes of wasting money still in the modern world and are elements of consumerism which were emphasized by the Tathagatha as should be avoided for a better living.

In addition, it can be stated that in sutras such as Saptabhariya Sutta and Karaniya Metta Sutta also contain teachings that promote avoiding consumerism as well. In Saptabhariya Sutta which explains the types of wives highlight that it is the duty of a good wife to protect the wealth her husband possesses. Also, as mentioned in Sigalovada Sutta, the husband must provide her with enough clothing, jewelry and look into her needs and wants, thus providing her enough to keep her happy. This reveals that being a good lay

²⁰. Vyaggapajja Sutta (AN 8.54 PTS: A iv 281).
²¹. Sigalovada Sutta (DN 31 PTS: D iii 180).
Buddhist disciple does not mean that one must completely refrain from consuming worldly comforts on a daily basis. Anyhow, as mentioned in the Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta vibganga, the Patimokkha rules, the Buddhist monks are advised not to come in contact with the vicious world, and get attracted to the worldly comforts, there is no restraint as such to the laymen and laywomen. Buddhist lay disciples are advised by the Enlightened One to follow the five precepts and also observe the ‘uposatha’ at least once a month in order to acquire merit and thereby not to be blinded by the luxuries which are attractions that can sever one away from the Dhamma. The meaning of the Pali lines “Kamesu vineiya gedhan”22 is “being freed from sensual desires” and “Sallahukavutti”23 is “simple in living” as mentioned in Karaniya Metta Sutta which ultimately lead to being free in the world with lesser attachments and be free from the world as well. Thus, it can argued that, Buddhism does not promote consumerism and teaching is a philosophy that helps the follower to be healed from toxic consumerism.

7. CONCLUSION

Development and success is assessed by numbers and material things in the contemporary society. The consumer world is yet another place that promotes the ideology. It is an open secret that Sri Lanka, although is officially a Socialist Democratic Republic, is devoured by capitalism, leading the people to fall prey to consumerism, to over-consumption of goods, including unnecessary goods. Buddhism on the contrary, advocates a simpler life. Just as Kaza (2000) in “Overcoming the Grip of Consumerism”, has provided four alternative arenas in constructing an alternative vision. They are, through education, active resistance, changing structural policies and building community and culture (Kaza, 2000)24. Hence, consumerism can be healed with educating the society, mainly through Buddhist centres and temples, with active resistance by practicing meditation and resisting desire as taught in Buddhism, by changing policies such as by alternative methods

22. Karaniya Metta Sutta (SN 1.8 PTS: SN 143-152).
23. Karaniya Metta Sutta (SN 1.8 PTS: SN 143-152).
of punishments to wrong-doers in the society and by building community and culture such as by promoting non-alcoholism as preached in the Noble Dhamma.

With the basis of the Buddhist philosophy being the Four Noble truths and revering the Triple Gem, Buddhism advises the disciples to follow the Eightfold path. The Supreme Buddha can be unarguably considered as not only the world’s greatest teacher, the world’s best politician, the world’s kindest human being, the world’s best social worker but also the world’s best economist. He gave advices to people to become happier people, bankers, businessmen to become better bankers and better businessmen, farmers to become better farmers and most importantly he gave advices to lay people to become Arahats. Although Anathapindika the householder and Visaka, the Chief Lay Disciples in Gautama Buddha sasana, were praised, the Supreme Buddha never advised us to be as excessively generous as them which might be burdensome. The Perfect One wanted us to be like Chitta the householder and Velukantaki Nanda maha who reached the state of anagami and attained the Nibbana, although they enjoyed lay life as general citizens in the society. Buddhism provides us many alternatives to lead a happier life as well as building the path to a blissful afterlife. Thus, it can be concluded that if followed correctly, the Buddhist Dhamma is a cure that can heal the suffering caused by consumerism and toxic consumerism itself, this unquenchable illness in the society in Sri Lanka and in the world.
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Praneeth Abhayasundere obtained his Ph.D. in Sociology (1997) from the Benares Hindu University, India, and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology Department at University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. He has written many research papers on Sociology and Buddhism and books and articles about various subjects. He was awarded the State Literary Award in 2005 for classical literature (non-fiction) and 2016 for best lyrics, the BUNKA award from the Japanese Embassy, Sri Lanka in 2008, and the KALASHURI title at the national honor award and best lyricist for “Paththini” cinema at the Signis salutation in 2017. He was the President (2015 - 2018 January) of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress. He has been actively engaging in drug prevention projects for the past twenty-five years.

Bharti is a Buddhist Scholar and teaches History in Bhagini Nivedita College at the University of Delhi. She also taught as Assistant Professor in Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. She obtained a Master of Arts, Master of Philosophy from Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. She also submitted her PhD thesis entitled “An Iconographical Study of the Major episodes from the life of the Buddha” from Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. Ms Bharti is the member of Indian Society of Buddhist Studies and Indian Society of Indic Studies. Her research papers have been published in various national and international journals. She also presented more than twenty-four papers in national and international conferences.

Basudha Bose completed both her M.Phil and Ph.D. in Pali from the University of Calcutta. The topic of her M.Phil was “the Major Buddhist Sects in Japan” and the topic of her PhD research was “Green Buddhism: An Aspect of Applied Buddhism.” Dr. Bose also wishes to do further research on the field of Buddhist Studies. As a freelance documentary movie maker, she joins this conference...
to gather more knowledge of studies on the subject of Buddhism throughout the world and to deepen her understanding of modern-day Buddhism from the various speakers who will present their papers in this upcoming conference.

**Neelima Dahiya** was Professor and Head, Department of History; Professor, Sir Chhotu Ram Chair; Dean, Students Welfare; University Provost; and Chairperson, Committee on Sexual Harassment at work place, Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, India. She received her Ph.D. from Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. She has over 38 years of experience in teaching, research, research guidance and has been acting as referee for various research journals. Her areas of interest are: Socio-Economic and cultural history of Ancient India and contemporary issues pertaining to gender, environment, global peace and religion. She has been participating and contributing in national and international conferences and seminars. Inspired by socially engaged Buddhism, she is actively associated with various governmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in addressing the regional and global issues concerning society and environment.

**Jyoti Dwivedi** is an Assistant Professor in Kalindi College University of Delhi where he is teaching Buddhist Cultural History and Heritage and working towards a Ph.D. under the supervision of Professor K.T.S Sarao. His academic achievements include 1st position (Gold medallist) in Masters (M.A in Buddhist studies) from the Department of Buddhist studies, University of Delhi, 1st position (Gold medallist) in Diploma in Pāli language and literature from Department of Buddhist studies, University of Delhi. His areas of interest/specialization include History of Indian Buddhism, Ancient Indian History, Buddhist Cultural History and Heritage, Ancient Indian Archaeology, Socially Engaged Buddhism, Ancient Indian Epigraphy, Ancient Indian Topography, Pilgrimage, History and Civilization, and Indian Culture and Heritage.

**Budi Hermawan** is a Doctor of Education Management from Jakarta State University and Doctor of Management Science from Brawijaya University, currently serving as Director of the Metric Research Institute and Statistics Consulting. Dr. Hermawan is an assessor of the National Higher Education Accreditation Council
starting in 2012. He has served as vice-chancellor of human and
genral resources at Indonesian Institute of Business and Informatics
(2006-2007); Chairperson of the Internal Quality Assurance at the
Kwik Kian Gie Business and Information Institute (2011-2012);
Head of Graduate Study Dharma Achariya Smaratungga Buddhist
College (2011-2015); and became the manager of the School
of Marketing at the Bunda Mulia University (2014-2015). His
research agenda for the next 5 years is in Spiritual and Religious
Tourism, especially those related to Buddhist sites.

Shyamon Jayasinghe is an independent scholar. He had an
illustrious career in the senior echelons of the civil service of his
country of origin, Sri Lanka. An author of two books, Shyamon
is a columnist and feature writer. Picking up from his early
intellectual and academic base in philosophy, he developed a
passion for applying Buddhist philosophical thinking in addressing
contemporary concerns and is a regular contributor to journals
and other publications. He has already presented research papers
on this area of interest at international academic conferences
held in Thailand and Myanmar. Shyamon Jayasinghe has two
Master’s degrees, one from the University of Melbourne. He is an
Associate Member of the prestigious Australasian Association of
Philosophy.

Maya Joshi received her Ph.D. from Delhi University in 2013
and is currently an Associate Professor of English literature at Lady
Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. She has worked with Tibet
House, New Delhi for over 14 years, editing two books: Pramana:
Dharmakirti and the Indian Philosophical Debate (with Lama
Doboom Tulku), and My Life, My Times, an autobiography of
Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. She has published a critical editon of
Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein and has participated in two UNDV
conferences. Dr. Joshi spent 2017-18 as a Fulbright-Nehru Post-
Doctoral Visiting Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. She has
a keen interest in issues of sustainability and ecology and has been
actively involved with initiatives and institutions that work with
ecological issues such as Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani and Navdanya.

Rahul Krishna Kamble is an Assistant Professor of
Environmental Science at Sardar Patel College, Chandrapur, India,
with a Ph.D. in Environmental Science. He has worked as a Scientist at National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources, New Delhi. Over the last ten years in the capacity as an Assistant Professor, he developed courses and focused on Buddhism studies and environment, climate change adaptations, sustainable innovations, and environmental sociology. He has published in numerous international peer-reviewed journals and books on various environmental issues, including *Environmental conservation reflections in Pali literature, Noble Eightfold Path: Buddhist response to environmental degradation, Kamma influence on environmental conservation, Ashoka the engaged ecologist*, etc.

**Hudaya Kandahjaya** received a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies in 2004 from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, with a specialization in Indonesian Buddhism. He has separately issued a number of publications in the form of book, chapter, article, or encyclopedia entries related to his ongoing study of Indonesian Buddhism. Dr. Kandahjaya has been working at the BDK America, currently in Moraga, California, USA, since 1998, as an assistant to the editor in its main publishing project, the BDK English Tripitaka. He has also engaged in practical aspects of Buddhism, gearing his interests towards theoretical as well as practical understanding of Engaged Buddhism.

**Gabor Kovacs** is an Assistant Professor at the Business Ethics Center of the Corvinus University of Budapest. He received his Ph.D. from the Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary. He was participating in the research projects of the Business Ethics Center about the ethical value-orientations and the ecological value-orientations of Hungarian entrepreneurs. Prof. Dr. Kovacs is researching Buddhist economics and the role of spirituality in business. He is the secretary of the Hungarian Bhutan Friendship Society since its foundation in 2011. He is a member of the Pali Translation Group that aims at the translation of Buddhist Scriptures from the Pali Canon to Hungarian language since 2008.

**Ravindra Kumar** is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur (Rajasthan), India.

**Ven. Yatalamatte Kusalananda Thero**, Chief Abbot of Sri
Purwaramaya, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka, is currently working as a Counselor in Kerala Lanka Vaidya Bhavan, Yakkala, Sri Lanka, Counseling in Practical Programmes – Postgraduate Buddhist Āyurvedic Counseling Degree Programme – Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies – University of Kelaniya and Counseling Coordinator at Buddhist Āurvedic Counseling Programme – People’s Bank, Galle. He is a member of Board of Editors – Upadesana, Ministry of Social Services and compiled articles for magazines and journals. Ven. Y. Kusalananda Thero has presented papers at National and International conferences and presented a paper at UNDV Conference in 2015 held in Thailand.

Dr. Kustiani received a Ph.D. from PGIPBS University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka in 2013. She is now a lecturer at Syailendra Buddhist College, Indonesia, and is actively engaged in developing Buddhism in Indonesia by helping and creating some Buddhist programmes. Together with Theravada Buddhist women organization, she is propagating a “sammajivita movement,” especially for Buddhist family in Central Java island, that advises all Buddhist families in Central Java to donate money little by little and keep it in a bottle or bamboo. This bottle or bamboo will be brought to temple once a year (on 1st May every year). The money collected are used to develop Buddhist education. Now she focuses on helping a programme to develop the economic welfare of Buddhists by establishing a Prema Mart or Loving Kindness mart.

Tin Tin Lay is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Pariyatti of the Internataional Thervadāda Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar. She studied Buddhism at the I.T.B.M.U and obtained her Ph.D. She also studied medicine at the Institute of Medicine (1), Yangon, and got M.B., B.S. Her keen interest is applicability and pragmatic values of Buddha Dhamma for the emergence of peaceful society and comparative study between Buddhism and medical science. She has participated in many conferences, workshops, and talks as a commentator, presenter, and moderator. She has published several papers and articles on the Suttanta, Abhidhamma, History, and Theravāda Buddhist meditation practices. She recently retired from governmental services.

Upul Priyankara Lekamge has earned BA [Hons.] from the
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and perused postgraduate studies in Education, Teaching English as a Second Language, Sociology, Linguistics, International Relations and Economics in the Sri Lankan Universities of Kelaniya, Colombo and Sri Jayewardenepura. He has conducted research, published and presented on the sub disciplines of Sociology such as education, religion, sports, youth and culture of Sri Lanka in many local and international conferences. Presently he serves as a Lecturer in Sociology at the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Wai Sum Li is currently a Master of Philosophy student at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong. In 2016, she worked as a research assistant, and served in 2017 served as a teaching assistant in the Common core programme of the Centre of Buddhist Studies, the University of Hong Kong. From 2004 to 2009, Ms Li worked as a primary school music teacher in Hong Kong, and from 2010 to 2016, she was self-employed as a private instrumental tutor, teaching the piano and music theory to children and adults.

Venerable Neminda is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Myanmar Scripture from the University of Distance Education Mandalay, Master of Arts Degree from Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies at the International Buddhist Studies College, Mahchulalongkornrajavidayalaya University, Ayutthaya, Thailand.

Nguyen Ngoc Duy Khanh (Ven. Giac Minh Tuong) received a B.A. in Buddhist Philosophy from the Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City in 2016 and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies – University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. He is pursuing an M.A. in Buddhist Studies, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies – University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Ven. Viharagala Pagngnaloka, a higher ordained Bhikkhu in Sri Lankan Sangha community living in Kandy, Sri Lanka, holds a B.A. First Class Honours degree in Buddhist Studies form Sri
Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA Campus) affiliated to Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand, and a Diploma in Buddhist Counselling Psychology. Currently, he is an M.Phil. Candidate at the University of Peradeniya in Buddhist Studies. He works as a Probationary Lecturer at Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Pallekele, Sri Lanka, and as a visiting lecturer at National Seminary Philosophate-Kandy conducting lectures on Contemporary Social Issues in Sri Lanka. He has presented several research papers in international conferences held in Sri Lanka and overseas, and his research areas include contemporary social issues and Buddhist Thought, Buddhism and Economics, and Buddhist Counselling Psychology, etc.

**Rev. Beragama Piyarathana Thero** studied to become an Attorney at law in Sri Lanka Law College and received his Post Graduate Diploma in Buddhism and Masters in Buddhism from the University of Kelaniya. Rev. Thero has taught English for nearly twenty years in Buddhist Monastic colleges and work as an In-Service Adviser for English Subject for Ministry of Education for more than 7 years on part time basis. He has been Minister of Buddhism in Jethavana Buddhist Vihara Biringham in UK for nearly 3 years. He is currently residing in Canada on a temporary basis and is working for his M.Phil in Sri Lanka.

**Dr. Phra Rajapariyatkavi** is Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU). He has published many books/papers, including Mahayana Buddhism, Buddhist Philosophy, Ethics in Buddhist Scriptures, Buddhadhamma-Essence from Jataka Stories, Buddhism: Philosophy and Society, Buddhadhamma for Administrative Empowerment.

**Rathnasiri Rathnayaka** (former Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies at Nāgānanda International Buddhist University) is a senior lecturer in Buddhist Philosophy at Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies – University of Kelaniya. He is also a visiting lecturer to Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka and several other state institutions. His discipline encompasses Buddhist Philosophy, Fundamental Tenets of Buddhism, Early Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism,
Buddhist Psychology, Buddhist Psychotherapy, Buddhist Psychiatry and Counselling, Buddhist Social & Ethical Philosophy. He has authored eight books, compiled 21 research articles and monographs on Buddhism for national and international journals, and presented papers in 42 national and international conferences.

Ven. Dr. Pinnawala Sangasumana is a senior lecturer in Geography at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka with several publications in indexed and refereed journals, edited volumes and conference proceedings. His research interest in conflict and displacement derives from his longtime experience in teaching and research in Human Geography. Ven. Sangasumana currently focuses on disaster management, regional development, and political geography, and is coordinating relief and charity programs directed at the marginalized populations of the country. Ven. Sangasumana serves as the chief Sanghanayaka of Western Province for Amarapura Kalyaniwamsa Chapter, an executive member of World Buddhist Sangha Council and the National Geographic Association of Sri Lanka.

Karam Teje Singh Sarao is presently Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Delhi. He received Ph.D. (Buddhism) from Delhi University. He was awarded the prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship in 1985 to study at the University of Cambridge from where he received his second Ph.D. in Archaeology in 1989. Professor Sarao has been a visiting fellow/professor at Dongguk University (South Korea), Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (Taiwan), Sorbonne (France), Cambridge University (UK), Visvabharati (India), and PS Royal Buddhist University (Cambodia). To date, he has written sixteen books and published more than 250 research papers and articles. In 2011, the PS Royal Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, conferred the degree of D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) on him.

A.G.R.H.S. Senarathne has a special degree in Buddhist civilization from the Department of Pali and Buddhist studies of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. He also followed a course in History in the University of Colombo and completed a higher national diploma in Buddhism at the Buddhist and Pali University in Sri Lanka, and a national diploma in Criminology and Criminal
justice SLF. He presented a research paper: “Are the ancient Buddhist archeological landscapes techniques used in “Mahamewna uyana” (Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka) a challenge to the modern era?” at the Gautama Buddha University Research conference 2017 in India. He also presented a research paper on “the eco-friendly construction technology of the Mahamewna Park” at the national research conference in Bikshu University Anuradhapura.

Vikas Singh received a Ph.D. from the School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies (SSIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He received four gold and several silver medals. He has received merit scholarships from ‘Ambedkar’s Literary Vision’ USA, Rajasthan Education Board and UGC. He is the Trustee of AMBLINKING Foundation, India; Governing Body Member of Delhi Government funded Delhi Sanskrit Academy. He is currently teaching as Assistant Professor in Department of Sanskrit, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi.

Ida Bagus Putu Suamba received his M.A. (in 2001) from the University of Delhi and Ph.D. (in 2011) from the University of Pune, Maharashtra, India, both in Philosophy. He teaches English in the Politeknik Negeri Bali University and Indian Philosophy in the University of Hindu Indonesia in Bali. He has been since 2012 a part of SFB Project of “Material Culture” of University of Heidelberg, Germany. Dr. Suamba has twenty authored books in Indonesian, a number of research articles and book-reviews in English and Indonesian published in renowned journals, and is currently the editor-in-chief of SOSHUM: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities published by Politeknik Negeri Bali.

Sangmu Thendup teaches Ancient Indian History to Post Graduate Students at Sikkim University. She is currently working on her PhD thesis entitled, “Environmental Perspectives in Early Buddhism: A Study of the Early texts.” Her areas of special interest include religion and ecology, religious environmentalism, Early Buddhism, gender studies, social history and Eastern Himalayas.

Mukesh Kumar Verma holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi on the topic “Bhartiya Darshan ko Bauddha Mat ka Yogdan” under the Supervision of Prof.
Bhikshu Satyapala and Dr. T. R. Sharma in 2006. He is currently working as an Assistant Professor, Head I/C, School of Buddhist Philosophy, in Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies India. Dr. Verma has contributed fifteen research papers in National and International journals. He has been a recipient of prestigious Shrimati Kamla Devi Jain Smriti Award (A.Bh.D.P.) for his research work. His areas of interest are Buddhist ethics and epistemology and he has participated in a number of international and national Buddhist conferences.

Rev Ridegama Wanarathana is a lecturer in the Faculty of Buddhist and Pali Studies at Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka, Anuradapura. He is also a visiting lecturer at Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. His discipline encompasses English language, Buddhist literature, Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhist Psychology, Early Buddhism, Buddhist Social and Ethical Philosophy, Buddhist Epistemology, Buddhist Psychiatry and Counseling, Buddhist Mediation and research related to Buddhist studies. He has authored eight books on Buddhism and co-authored three books on Buddhist Philosophy. Ven. Ridegama Wanarathana has compiled twenty research articles and presented papers at 32 National and International conferences and conclaves.

Thilini Nilanka Weerasooriya is a Lecturer (Probationary) at the English Department of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. She received a B.A. in English and currently is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Linguistics. Before joining BPU, she worked as a journalist and a Visiting Lecturer at several universities. She has presented papers in a couple of international research conferences and has also published three books under the titles, Exploring the Canon, Striking the Centre, and Modernist Writing and Beyond. Her scholarly interests are Buddhism, gender studies, language teaching and English literature.

Dhanapala Wijesinghe is Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. He secured his first degree in sociology and anthropology from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 1986 and M. Phil. in sociology and criminology from the same University in 1995. In 1997 he was awarded the Japanese Monbusho Scholarship for
research and postgraduate studies at the Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Japan and secured a M.A. in social sciences in 2000. He was also awarded a Russian Scholarship in 1986 for Russian language studies. He has written more than seventy books and research articles published nationally and internationally. As an active contributor to international conferences including the UN Vesak Conference, his research papers have been published in Sinhalese, English, Japanese, Russian and Vietnamese languages.

**Jeffrey Wilson** is a research consultant in the academic field of Buddhist Studies. He graduated with a PhD in 2004 for his thesis, “The Relevance of Buddhism to Child-Development Theory.” From 2005 to 2010 he was an associate supervisor in the Department of Religious Studies in Sydney University, and as such, has assisted many graduate students and has been involved with six doctoral dissertations, mainly in the field of Studies in Religion. He has worked as editor for the DIRI Journal and for various editions of the Sermons of Phramongkolthepmuni. He has published articles in the SCU Law Journal and online publications and chapters in books such as Great Spiritual Leaders (Barton Books, 2013). His latest research is a study of Narrative Form in the Writing of Meditation Manuals that involves the meditation techniques of traditional Thai Buddhism prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

**Ven. Kirama Wimalathissa** is a self-motivated Buddhist monk who is capable of accomplishing any undertaking satisfactorily under given circumstances and willing to do team work. He has acquired working experience in different fields to a considerable degree. Having conducted field surveys, researches, he is confident that, they will be a veritable advantage for the performance of various academic tasks in the field of Buddhist Studies and Pāli. His prime objective is to obtain Higher Educational Qualifications (Ph.D.) from a prestigious University in a multi-cultural and multi-religious background and to reach the pinnacle of education becoming a veteran Pāli & Buddhist scholar harnessing acquired skills, knowledge and competencies for the furtherance of Buddhism and related fields.

**Po-Wen Yen** currently serves as the CEO of the Tzu Chi Charity Foundation. Prior to taking this position in 2017, Mr. Yen was
CEO of United Microelectronics Corp. (UMC), a leading global semiconductor manufacturer and the third-largest foundry company in the world. In 2003, Mr. Yen received the National Manager Excellence Award from the Chinese Professional Management Association. In 2016, he received the SEMI Sustainable Manufacturing Leadership Award, highlighting his successful efforts in implementing sustainable and green manufacturing at UMC. He received his bachelor’s degree in Chemical Engineering from National Tsing Hua University and his master’s in chemical Engineering from National Taiwan University.
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Thien obtained his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Delhi University in 2005, currently is Vice President-Secretary General of Executive Council of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS); Vice Chairman of Vietnam – India Friendship Association; Head of the Department of International Buddhist Affairs of VBS; Vice Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University in Hanoi; and Senior Lecturer of Vietnam National University, Hanoi (Tran Nhan Tong Academic Institute).

He served as Secretary General of the 2014 United Nations Day of Vesak in Vietnam and continues to hold a major role in UNDV 2019. He has published, edited, and translated many books in Buddhist studies and history. He has received many prestigious recognitions from the Government of Vietnam (the Third-Class Labor Order), from the Royalty of Cambodia (the General Order), and from the Government of India (the Padma Shri Order).

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu obtained his D.Phil., in Philosophy from Allahabad in 2002, is the Founder of Buddhism Today Foundation since 2000. He made valuable contribution as an editorial member of Hue Quang Encyclopedia of Buddhism (9 volumes, 1992-2007). He is editor-in-chief of the first ever audio Vietnamese Tripitaka, of the ongoing Vietnamese Tripitaka Translation project and Buddhism Today Series (over 250 books), as well as editor of more than two 200 CD albums on Buddhist music. He has authored more than 80 Vietnamese books on applied Buddhism. He has traveled extensively around the world to give public Dharma talks to Vietnamese communities in Vietnam, Canada, America, Australia, and Europe and has produced over 4,000 VCDs on various dharma topics.

Master Thich Nhat Tu now serves as Vice Rector of the Vietnam
Buddhist University and Vice Chairman of the National Department of International Buddhist Affairs. Several universities conferred upon him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa in appreciation of his excellent contributions to Buddhist education, his works on Buddhist academic research and leadership in international Buddhist communities. He has received many recognitions, awards, and titles from the Government of Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia.

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