

# ATTAINING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY THROUGH THE TEACHINGS OF THE KHANDHAKA OF THE THERAVĀDA VINAYA PĪṬAKA

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper stems from my readings into to the Theravāda Vinaya Pīṭaka and my initial finding that many key principles discussed in this ancient book of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC have practical relevance for addressing on the concept of attaining a sustainable development of a modern society. Through the understanding of the Theravāda Vinaya Pīṭaka 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 Pīṭaka 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 Pīṭaka and it offers a vision of living that counters the unwholesome*

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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 righteously, 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 offence 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)<sup>1</sup>, 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

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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 reptiles, 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. (Thānissaro,<sup>2013</sup>) 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 ... armllets . . . 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 tranquillity 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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