

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,

*. Senior Lecturer, Department of Buddhist Studies and Pali, Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Bhikṣu University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

air etc. 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 santuttī). He noted that the concept of maximising well-being while minimising 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.” (About Sustainable Development Goals) In particular, three domains have been highlighted in sustainable development: the environment, economy, and society. The quality of life of each individual in society has to be improved without harming, or polluting the environment, or overusing natural resources, which have to be conserved for future generations. Further, the concept of sustainable development suggests that meeting the needs of the future depends on how well we balance social, economic, and environmental objectives and needs, especially when making decisions today.

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 santutṭhi*), 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 (O₂) 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), CO₂ 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 23rd 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 Pongsakornrunsilp 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 (*pindapāta*), 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 Dīghanikāya (D. III, 80-98) instructs us in how natural resources become exhausted due to greed (*taṇhā*), 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 (*bhojanemattaññū*); he eats food after reflecting according to genesis (*yoniso masasikāra*), 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 saṃpadā*); 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 saṃpadā*. The third is associating with good friends (*kallyāna mittatā*) and the fourth, living within one’s means (*samaṃvikatā*) (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 piṇḍapātariṃ ...*; 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

- Anguttaranikāya*. (1888, 1976, 1995). Vol. II, ed. R. Morris; London: PTS.
- Anguttaranikāya*. (1899, 1979). Vol. IV ed. E. Hardy. London: PTS.
- Dīghanikāya*. (1890-1911). Vol. III. ed., T. W. Rhys Davids & J. E. Carpenter. London: PTS.
- Majjhimanikāya*. Vol. I (1888, 1993). ed. V. Trenckner; London: PTS.
- Petavatthu*. (1977, 1999). Vol. II. ed. by N.A. Jayawickrama. London: PTS.
- Vinaya-piṭaka*, (1882-1993). Vol. IV. ed. H. Oldenberg. London: PTS.
- Bardiner, Allan Hunt. (2002). *Mindfulness in the Market Place: Compassionate Responses to Consumerism*. Berkley: Parallax Press.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2005). *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*. 1st. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2000). *Facing the Future, Four Essays*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
- De Silva, Padmasiri. (1998). *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in Buddhism*. New York: Macmillan London and St. Martins.
- Michaelis, Laurie. (2000). *Ethics of Consumption*. the Oxford Centre for the Environment. Ethics & Society.
- Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto). (2016). *Buddhist Economics*. Translated by J.B. Dhammavijaya. Wat Nyanavesakavan. Bangkok: Nakhonpathom: Samphan. 73210.
- Schumacher, E.F. (1974). *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Matter*. London: ABACUS Sphere Books.
- DeSilva, Padmasiri. (2009). BUDDHISM, ENVIRONMENT AND THE HUMAN FUTURE. *Buddhist Approach to Environmental Crisis*. UNDV Conference Volume. The International Buddhist

Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations. 4 - 6 May 2552/2009. Thailand. P. 11-38.

Environment Magazine. (2017). *What Is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice*.”(online) January 2017. Available from: environmentmagazine.org. (Accessed 18th January 2019)

Irp. (2017). *Assessing Global Resource Use: A Systems Approach to Resource Efficiency and Pollution Reduction*. Bringezu, S., Ramaswami, A., Schandl, H., O’Brien, M., Pelton, R., Acquatella, J., Ayuk, E., Chiu, A., Flanegin, R., Fry, J., Giljum, S., Hashimoto, S., Hellweg, S., Hosking, K., Hu, Y., Lenzen, M., Lieber, M., Lutter, S., Miatto, A., Singh Nagpure, A., Obersteiner, M., van Oers, L., Pfister, S., Pichler, P., Russell, A., Spini, L., Tanikawa, H., van der Voet, E., Weisz, H., West, J., Wijkman, A., Zhu, B., Zivy, R. A Report of the International Resource Panel. United Nations Environment Programme. Nairobi, Kenya.

Siwarit Pongsakornrungrungsilp and Theeranuch Pusaksrikit (2011), *Consuming Buddhism: The Pursuit of Happiness*, in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 39, eds. Rohini Ahluwalia, Tanya L. Chartrand, and Rebecca K. Ratner, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 374-378.

United Nations.(1983). *“Process of preparation of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond.”* (Online) Archived 2017-07-12 at the Wayback Machine. General Assembly Resolution 38/161, 19 December 1983. Retrieved: 2007-04-11).

about sustainable-development-goals(online)Available From: <https://www.un.org/> (Accessed 18th January 2019).

Environmental Effect of Mining, Environmental Effects of Gold Mining. (Online) Available From: <http://www.theworldcounts.com>. (Accessed 19th January 2019)

Live science. (2018). *Deforestation: Facts, Causes & Effects*. (online) Available From: <https://www.livescience.com/27692-deforestation.html>. (Accessed 19th January 2019)

United Nations. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018*.

(online) Available. from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/the-sustainable-development-goals-report-2018.html>. (Accessed 18th January 2019).

United Nations. *Earth's Annual Resources Budget Consumed in Just 7 Months*. (online) Available. from: <https://unfccc.int/news/earth-s-annual-resources-budget-consumed-in-just-7-months>. (Accessed 18th January 2019).

Brookings. *China's coal consumption has peaked*. (online) Available. from: <https://www.brookings.edu/2018/01/22/chinas-coal-consumption-has-peaked/>. (Accessed 18th January 2019).

