

SCIENCE, RELIGION & CULTURE

Buddhist response to Universal Solution for Environmental protection : A case study

Journal	Science, Religion and Culture
Manuscript ID	SANDF20140309050354
Manuscript Type	Original Research Article
Date Submitted by the Author	Wed, 31 Dec 1969, 06:00 PM
Complete List of Authors	■ Dr Ven. Sumedh

Buddhist response to Universal Solution for Environmental protection : A case study

Ven. Dr. Sumedh (Dr. B. L. Suman) Foundation I Baudhraj Compaund, 702 Masihaganj, Sipri Bazar, Jhansi 284 003 India Phone cell 919415945895, banwarisuman50@gmail.com, vensumedh12@gmail.com, <http://www.facebook.com/banwarilal.suman>, <https://www.facebook.com/ven.sumedh>

Natural resources has enough for human needs, but meager for human greed.

Four events in the life of Buddha were associated with the flora i.e. birth in Lumbini forest under the *Shorea robusta* and associated trees, enlightened under the *Ficus religiosa* in Uruvila (Bodhgaya) and further rested at the foot of other trees (Lal, 1997). Buddha spent seven days under banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*) is a haven of rest for all the birds (Angutta Nikaya, 42). The Buddha spent 3rd week at the foot of a mucalind (*Barringtonia acutangula*) while there a great rainstorm began and the naga Mucalind sheltered him with the objective Let not cold or heat, flies or mosquitoes, wind or heat or creeping things disturb the Lord (Udan-10). It was while he was sitting in the shade of rajyantana (*Buchanania latifolia*) tree with rough bark and which bears dance pyramid-shaped cluster of white flowers. Needless to mention here merchant Tappassu and Bhallik offered him barley gruel and honey balls in the shade of rajayatana (Vinay Pitak, I 3). Discourse of Dhamma caka pavattan sutta in Ispattan (Deer park, Sarnath) in mango (*Mangifera indica*) forest, a large evergreen tree could get states as national fruits of India and chose to pass away while lying between two sal trees (*Shorea robusta*) Sanyutta Nikaya-I,33).

Thus forest had been considered to be place to meditate in "As a tree makes no distinction in the shade it gives, like this, the meditator should make no distinction between any beings, but develop love equally to thieves, murderers, enemies and to himself or herself (Milindapaha, 410, Jatka, V 302). Besides trees number of herbs i.e grasses assoiciated with the life of Buddha and Buddhism in that *Sachharum munja*(*Munj*), and *Eulaliopsis binnata*(*daba*) were among the popular. To spread the dhamma sasana (Buddhism education) for the mankind monks play major role by bearing the Kasaya and following 227 percepts (Suman and Suman 2003). As many religious people view it, **Buddhist** reality is profoundly ecological, and Buddhism itself is an ecological religion. It powerfully expresses human identification with nature. Buddhists believe that all things, including humans, exist by their interrelationship with all other parts of nature To think of one's self as isolated from the rest of nature is be unrealist. "The Buddha taught that respect for life and the natural world is essential. 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 other without manipulation" Robert A White (1995). Buddhist teachers and masters constantly remind us of the importance of living in tune with nature and respecting life.

Buddhist precepts direct the faithful to seek a right livelihood, an essential dimension of which is concern for the life of all creatures. This puts emphasis on "ahimsa" (**avoiding injury to any**

sentient creature) . This is the first of the five precepts of Buddhist life and a major principle of [Jainism](#). In practice, Buddhists believe that it is the act of killing or hurting an animal which is harmful, but not the eating of meat that someone else has provided. Note that the Buddhist king Asoka the Great established hospitals for both human and animals. He insisted on kindness to animals, and forbade their killing even for food.

Buddhism teaches that if we wish to save the environment, we must first analyze our lives to determine how our self-deification is destroying the world by depleting, overpopulating, and polluting the environment.

The Buddhist approach to solving the global ecological crisis then includes :

Compassion is the basis for a balanced view of the whole world and of the environment.

The use of the "*save and not waste*" approach means that nothing in nature is spoiled or wasted. Wanton destruction upsets the vital balance of life.

Ecology is rebuilt through the philosophy of Sarvodaya (uplift of all), which is based on loving kindness, compassionate action, and altruistic joy José Kalapura.

Suval Sivaraksa and Aubrey Meyer have suggested the following modifications of the Buddhist *Four Noble Truths* to make them relate to ecology:

Climate change is a reality. It is the source of flooding and drought, desertification and loss of land.

Climate change is caused by over-consumption of fossil fuels, loss of soil, and excessive herds of livestock. Individual over-consumption in the global North is an expression of greed and a fear of loss. Fear and greed are root causes of all suffering. Capitalism thrives on individual fear and greed.

The climate we have to change is the climate of greed and fear, in which consumerism and profiteering can thrive.

To overcome suffering, start at home, with yourself. Ask yourself: Where can I cut down my consumption? How can I repay my carbon debt to my children's children? Plant trees. Don't fly. Eat local and organic foods.

In terms of its origin and monks manpower India is the capital of Buddhism and largest original as well as organized trainer in mankind in the world. It is the monks who constitute the backbone of Dhamma. The increasing interest of mankind seeking higher ordination makes an understanding of this distinct group within the society a subject of substantial importance. These monks with their multiple role obligations are a special group much different in their needs, desires, aspiration and way of working than other in the Bhikkhu Sangha.

Methodology

Since the documentation in terms of information to the sangha members as well as lay Buddhists is always essential for generations. Although the tripitaka information was passed from one generation to other by way of personnel remembered by individuals until the 1st century AD. Since the number of publications have been found to be essential and major component for measurement of monks productivity after initiated in Sri Lanka. In order to ensure the objectivity the publication were adjusted as most essential and significant in terms of monks productivity.

The status (Mahathero, Thero, Monks and Sramner) qualifications (graduate/ Non graduate), number of monks and sramners produced (None, 1-5, 5-10, 1-50 and above 50), total experience (upto 10 years, 10-20 years, 20-40 years, and above 40 years), amount of time involved in monkhood productivity (None, 1/3, 1/2, 2/3, all the time) were considered for the adjustment.

Results and Discussion

Buddha's last days, the doctrine of the seven factors of enlightenment: mindfulness (*sati*), discrimination of principles (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy in pursuit of the good (*virya*), rapture (*piiti*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samaadhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhaa*). Here we are clearly dealing with the successive cultivation of a set of areteic virtues, specific qualities requisite to the mode of existence no longer constrained by an overly self-referential notion of personal identity.

Table 1 present a vivid distribution of the number of publications different categories of monks had to their credit. The majority of all categories of monks had 1-10 publications. Obviously a large majority of monks could not contribute any publication in all the categories of sramner, monks, thero and mahathero. In fact, a comparison with the publications of thero and mahthero reveals that some monks had greater number of publications to their credit than their seniors, meaning there by that the seniority of the monks does not necessarily mean having an upper hand over the juniors in terms of publication counts. One reason why some of the monks had better publication score than their seniors was that they had foregone shifting from one monastery to other or in other terms they could get settled their life for the particular monastery (Table-1, and Fig-1).

Table 2 further gives detailed picture as to the type of publication the monk had to their credit. It is notified that presentation of papers in seminar/symposium were the most common among the publications the monks had to their credit. This conforms to the general expectation because the very nature of programmes and invitation from Govt as well as private organizations in the several programmes and nature of their life/job. In terms of number of publications seminar/symposium papers were followed, in descending order by popular articles, booklets, reports of the programme and books. The percentage of monks having books to their credit was expectedly the lowest. It was however, not a mean achievement that as many as 5% of monks had written books numbering 1 to 10.

In addition to published work, many monks reported having prepared a number of unpublished report like the life history of their teacher/superiors monks. The study showed that 20% monks had 1 to 3 number of unpublished and some 5% had 4 to 7 unpublished reports/documents they could get prepared. But unable to published them due to lack of funds/support of publishers. However, due to gaining importance in past half century on Buddhism and Environment the monks are our central point as guiding source of life. Thus their publications should get published on priority (Lal 1997).

The study further reveal that junior monks did not guide any post graduate student and obviously so. It id because of lack of experience on their part that they are usually not assigned the

responsibility on one hand or they are not aware about their potential. In general discussion as well as reported in their bio-data Thero and Mahathero have guided/supervised a significant number of post graduate and Ph. D. students.

It was found that more than 15% of the monks were recipients of one or the other awards, the number of such awards ranging from one to five. It is also note worthy that monks are the most respected community on the earth surface for their living, thinking and crediting to the mankind. Thus the monks must get regular training from their seniors as well as in the dhamma practicing countries for their upliftment. How these practices monks can adopt live and let live.

Reference:

- Angutta Nikaya, 42
 Jatka, V 302
 José Kalapura , "*Science-Religion Dialogue & Ecology: An Asian perspective.*"
 Lal, B. (1997). *Ficus religiosa* and Buddhism in relation to ecological significance *The Maha Bodhi* 105 (2): 33-38
 Michael Schut & Tanya Marcovna Barnett, "*The Cry of Creation*," Earth Ministry, (2003).
 Milindapaha, 410,
 Robert A White, "*Spiritual Foundations of an Ecologically Sustainable Society*," The Journal of Bahá'í Studies 7.2 (1995), Pages 47-74.
 Sanyutta Nikaya-I,33
 Sean McDonagh, "*To Care for the Earth*," Geoffrey Chapman, (1989).
 Suman, B. L. and Suman, M. 2003. *Krishi, Van Vrakha, Paryavaran avam Buddhism*, Samyak Prakashan New Delhi 110 063-08 ISBN 81-88794-03-1
 Udan-10
 Vinay Pitak, I 3

Table-1 Monks distribution by number as per their seniority in Monkhood

Number of Publications	Mahathero	Thero	Monks	Sramner	Total

None	2	5	7	5	19
1-10	5	12	15	8	40
10-20	3	2	4	2	11
20-50	1	1	2	2	6
50-100	2	1	-	-	3
>100	1	-	-	-	1
Total	14	21	28	17	70

Table-2 Monks distribution by number and type of publications

Number of Publications	Books	papers in seminar /symposium	Monographs Bulletins	Articles
None	65	20	45	15
1-10	3	40	15	35
10-20	2	8	6	7
20-50	-	1	3	2
>50	-	1	1	1