

**HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES ARE CAUSED BY
UNETHICAL HUMAN COMPORANCES AND THE
UTILIZATION OF BUDDHIST VINAYA RULES AS A MEANS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

D. M. S. Lakmali¹, L. G. S. S. Bandara²

Introduction

It has been long known and believed that Buddhism and the Buddha's teaching can be identified as a science of human living. Lord Buddha's teachings are more pertinent today than they were about 2500 years back as the environmental developments all the word over barring exception of few Buddhist countries are increasingly dictating the direction of development at the cost of rampant environmental depletion and loss of biological diversity. The teaching of the Buddha on leading life along the middle path which is known as 'noble eightfold path' is a teaching on making choices in life for sufficiency and moderate living, choices which will produce sustainable use of our natural resources which are depleting at an alarming rate. The environmental problems at global or local level are caused by the over-exploitation of resources and excessive purgation of deleterious gases and effluents. They are the outcomes of people making choices which are based on desire and greed for maximization of return of benefits and excessiveness in one way or another. However, the understanding of Buddhist teaching can help to redirect these trends towards environmental conservation for the benefit of the humanity as a whole.

¹ Probationary Instructor, Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Pallekele, Kundasale, hashikaladissanayake92@gmail.com

² Probationary Instructor, Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Pallekele, Kundasale, subasithasaumya@gmail.com

Objective

The major objective of this paper is to discuss and to primarily define the term eco-system and to emphasize how nature is affected by human interaction being based on the western perspective and scientific view point having given instances which have been invented through the most up dated researches meanwhile emphasizing the utilization of Buddhist Vinaya rules as a means of environmental conservation.

Research Methodology

The data for the study has been collected from the both primary and secondary resources and the relevant monographs and in fields of both religious and non-religious texts. Lexical sources are also analyzed critically in examining the derivation and general meaning of the terms “Eco-system” and “human interaction”.

Discussion

An ecosystem is a natural system consisting of all plants, animals and microorganisms (biotic factors) in an area functioning together with all the non-living physical (abiotic) factors of the environment. Even though eco systems can be diversified being based on its consistency it is difficult to reserve where one ecosystem ends and another begins. Simply the term ecology (environment) has been derived from Greek terms “oikos” (house hold / Environment) and “logos” (study of). There are thousands of definitions which were given by the various kinds of scholars and ecologists on eco-systems. Pertaining to the Roy Clapham’s connotation an ecosystem means to denote the physical and biological components of an environment considered in relation to each other as a unit. An eco-system was elucidated by the British ecologist Arthur Tansley as the interactive system established between Biocoenosis (a group of living creatures) and their biotope (the environment in which they live).

Environmental protection is one of the urgent problems facing mankind today. All scientists, economists, philosophers, researchers

through newspapers, television, radio, etc. analyzed and were alarmed on the serious adverse impacts of toxic substances on the living environment of human, animals, and vegetation.

It is sarcastic that man is the one who pollutes his own health, and kill the life of all beings in this Earth. The risk threatening our ecology is not minor. It leads to many measures to prevent or minimize the pollution, of world-wide scale, including the ten important International Conventions to protect the environment.

The awareness of protecting life and living environment has been generated in recent time. However, in Buddhism, it is one of the main basic laws which was set out by the Buddha some 25 centuries ago for his disciples to follow.

In fact, Buddhism represents the way of compassion. The Buddha manifested a complete compassion and is respectfully seen as the compassionate protector of all beings. The supreme one taught that for those who wish to follow his Path should practice loving-kindness, not to harm the life of all beings - not only to protect mankind, but also to protect animals and vegetation. With his perfect wisdom, He saw all beings in the universe were equal in nature, and in this phenomenal world, lives of all human and animals were inter-related, mutually developing, and inseparable.

However, men have seen themselves as the smartest species of all beings. They have misused and abused their power and selfishly destroyed these species of animals, those forests and mountains, natural resources, and finally reaping the results of destroyed living environment of their own. All those damages and destructions to the ecology up to an alarming level are originated from the unwholesome and greedy mind of mankind. While the animals are seen as low-level beings, however fearsome as tigers and wolves may be, they never destroy the nature as badly as done by human. Only human are the responsible category who cause the most devastating destruction in the Earth.

Especially the Buddha is the one who cared a lot about the environment and having considered the situations when he promulgated rules and regulations the Buddha promulgated some specific rules to protect the environment.

Especially when considering about the Environment Conservation and Buddhist *Vinaya* rules, there are a number of instructions and rules can be seen in the Buddhist canon to prevent the monks from environmental degradation. There are many records in;

01. *Senāsanakkhandhaka*,

02. *Vattakkhandhaka*,

03. *Khuddhakavatthukkhandaka* especially in *Cullavaggapāli*,

04. *Kammakkhandhaka* in *Mahāvaggapāli* and some places of the *Pācittiya* where the Buddha has recommended limited usage of water, preservation of forest and vegetation, maintenance of the purity of the earth and the monastery, abstinence from activities that may cause air pollution etc. All these factors have been related with environmental conservation.

In *Vattakkhandhaka* of *CullavaggaPāli* there are several *Vinaya* rules which prohibit monks from polluting green grass and water with saliva, urine and feces. Noise pollution is a big problem in present society and at the period of lord Buddha's also there were happening some noise pollution. Once he ordered a group of monks to leave the monastery because of noisy behaviors. In the same way *Cullavaggapāli* mentions a *bhikkhu* who is not ill should not blowing down excreta, spittle, garbage, impure food into water, faddy fields, or on the premises of the *Ārāma* "Na udukeagilānouccāraṃvāpassāvaṃvā Khelaṃvākarissmītisikkhākaranāyāti" "Na hariteagilānouccāraṃvāpassāvaṃvā Khelaṃvākarisāmī-tisikkhākaranāyāti"

Also the Buddhist monk has to abide by an even stricter code of ethics than the layman. He has to abstain from practices which would involve even unintentional injury to living creatures. For instance, the Buddha promulgated the rule against going on a journey during the rainy season because of possible injury to worms and insects that come to the

surface in wet weather. The same concern for non-violence prevents a monk from digging the ground. Once a monk who was a potter prior to ordination built for himself a clay hut and set it on fire to give it a fine finish. The Buddha strongly objected to this as so many living creatures would have been burnt in the process. The hut was broken down on the Buddha's instructions to prevent it from creating a bad precedent for later generations. The scrupulous nonviolent attitude towards even the smallest living creatures prevents the monks from drinking unstrained water. It is no doubt a sound hygienic habit, but what is noteworthy is the reason which prompts the practice, namely sympathy for living creatures.

When considering about the *Pācittiya*pāli, according to the *nidāna* of *Bhūtagāma* rule of the *Pācittiya*pāli, the Buddha has established that rule because a monk who was lived in *Alaw* city, has cut a tree at once. The Buddha has not allowed accepting fresh (uncooked) grains because partaking serials is a one kind of supports for destruction of seeds.

Khuddakavatthukkhanda mentions that the *bhikkhus* should not inflame forests and if bushfire has occurred, they should be taken actions to stop the bushfires

In the *Kammakkhandhaka* of the *Mahāvaggapāli*, the Buddha has established rules to prevent making sleepers by shells of trees, splinters of bamboos, palm leaves and grass. Likewise the Buddha had promulgated lot of *Vinaya* rules for the betterment of the environment and in order to preserve the environment.

Conclusion

Rather than the *Vinaya* rules Lot of *suttas*, *Thera* and *TheriGāthās*, even the *Dhammapada* highlight the importance of the environment and how it should be preserved. Lord Buddha understood the reality of the world and he preached this beautiful truth on behalf of entire beings which are in this world. Actually our master is an eco-friendly person and there can't be any other religious leaders who have preached about environment this much like Lord Buddha. The Buddha has given five precepts to follow

to us and as the person who want to be an eco-friendly man should follow five precepts. Its first precept is “involves abstention from injury to life” which expresses I don’t do any harm to living beings. If we want to build an eco-friendly environment we have to follow Buddha’s path and it’s first step is five precepts. Our master rejected trading in meat too and he express about the value of the loving kindness. As an example lord Buddha promulgated a rule against going on a journey during the rainy season because the beings which like rainy conditions like worms and insects can be effected by it. Not only that one day a monk created a clay hut and set it on fire to give it a fine finish. Our load Buddha objected it because most of the beings would have been burnt in this process. And Buddha prevented the monks from drinking unfiltered water because there are some small beings in the water as well.

Keywords : Environment, Unethical human behavior, Vinaya Rules, Conservation

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