A Study on Attitude Changing with Buddhist Teachings to Ensure the Security of Environment

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Protecting the environment is a global need indeed today. In the modern society, there is an over competitiveness among people and the desire to have higher progress of life with material gain have affected the existence of the environment. People with poor attitudes towards the environment tend to destroy the environment seeking money, lands or other advantages. Industrial development worldwide makes this issue a bigger one. Poisonous smokes, unrecyclable products, harmful excretions are some of the major treatments produced by industries. Environmental pollution comes from various ways such as water misuse, energy wasting, air pollution, sound pollution, clearing forests etc. All those activities are being conducted by human beings unfortunately. As a result of those activities a lot of disasters happen frequently like floods, soil erosion and droughts.

To overcome these environmental issues there should be an attitude change of people. Buddhist perspective on environment helps to protect all environmental segments of the earth like animals, trees, water, and air and so on. A lot of suttas in Pāli Canon like Kutadantasutta, Wanarōpanasutta, teachings in VinayaPitaka and some stanzas in Dhammapada emphasize the importance of protecting environment. Furthermore, concepts in Buddhism like metta, karuna ensure the security of environment. Usually, on one hand, people do not care about the environment due to their lack of knowledge on environmental pollution. On the other hand people think to pass their responsibility on protection the environment to others. In addition, they do not have any familiarity with that. Therefore, to make a change upon thinking patterns of people, attitude changing with Buddhist teachings is very important. Educational institutes, industries, organizations, religious centers and other volunteers should be encouraged to have a sound knowledge about Buddhist teachings on environment and then they may take actions to change attitudes of people. Children based interventions are very useful here. Furthermore, political leaders should support that process taking immediate actions and facilitating. These steps should be implemented to change attitudes of people with Buddhist teachings on the environment as soon as possible to ensure the security of the environment and also the wellbeing of next generation.

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Ethics for Building and promoting Environmental Responsibility: a Buddhist perspective

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Environmental responsibility compatibly deals with ethical norms or behaviors that are suitable to control human interactions with the natural environment. In society today, there has been no good relationship between man and environment even after knowing that man cannot survive without the environment. The Buddhist perspective on this interrelationship is best summed up in three angles: "(i) physical environment (ii) social environment, and (iii) spiritual environment." These aspects will be discussed in the first section of this paper. While the second part, will focus on Buddhist perspective on the causal forces of environmental degradation in the modern society.

Drawing from the Buddhist Pāli canon, the third section of the paper explores and promotes ecological ethics and responsibility in light of the Buddhist teaching. Central to the Buddhist teaching is the provision and encouragement of partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring all people to improve their quality of life without distracting that of other beings and the future generations.

Most significantly, the paper emphasizes the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path (Buddha’s central teachings) is very important in promotion of environmental ethics. This path is defined in the Saccavibhanga Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya as: Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. This path offers an indispensable framework for both understanding and putting into practice Buddhist environmental ethics. Though the Path is aimed at attaining final liberation, its value in promoting a healthy physical, social and spiritual atmosphere cannot be magnified. The Buddha admonished his followers from behaviors such as wrong action, wrong livelihood and so on. He clearly spelled out what constitutes the right, wholesome, and skillful as opposed to wrong, unwholesome, and unskillful path. This framework not only helps us to understand the field of Buddhist environmental ethics and preservation but also realize inner peace, true happiness, and final liberation.

Keywords: Ethics, Environment, Biodiversity, Ecology, Understanding, Thought, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness, Concentration

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