

Buddhist Response to Environmental Degradation with Reference to *bījagāmbhūtagāma* in the Buddhist Canon

Ven. Galle Dhamminda¹

The terms *bījagāma* (seeds to be grown) and *bhūtagāma* (grown seeds) are very significant as those fundamentally talk on the environment. They reflect upon a kind of philosophical teaching and are explained from the perspective of environment in the Canon. The places where the term *bījagāmbhūtagāma* occurs in the *Tipiṭaka* include as a single form not separate one. The term altogether also means that it is an interdependent idea. In this study, five of those ‘*bījagāmbhūtagāma*’ references in the Canon are referred to. All those references can be divided into two categories. One, is the reference that is based on environmental ethics attached to the way of life of saints: The *Brahmajāla-sutta* (D I.5) explains one of eminent practices of a recluse to refrain from violating ‘*bījagāmbhūtagāma*’, a practice of the *Tathāgata* that came to be praised in contemporary India, *Pācittiya XI* (Vin IV.35) which emphasizes destruction of vegetable growth as an offence of expiation for the saṅgha, and *Chabbisodhana-sutta* (M III.34) denotes that this is one of the qualities of an of Arahant that is not to harm the Environment on his way to Nibbāna. Two, is the teachings related to the natural environment. The *Bīja-sutta* (S V.46) the success of monkhood is based on morality (*sīla*). The *Bīja-sutta* (S III.54) illustrates a firm connection of the five groups of plants (*pañcabījajātāni*) with *kamma-viññāna* (the growth of consciousness) as they are interdependent on each other. All these references reveal the significance of the environment and provide an answer to the environmental crises with reference to the Canon. The methodology of the study is based on references to the Canon, and some commentaries are used as necessary. The tentative conclusion points to the appreciation of earth-friendly ways of life and solution for modern environmental crises based on ethics found in Buddhist teachings.

Keywords: *Bījagāmbhūtagāma*, Five groups of plants, *Pācittiya XI*, *Kamma-viññāna*, Buddhist Environmental Ethics

¹ Royal Paṇḍit, B.A, M.phil (reading) Lecturer, Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Temporary Lecturer, Dept. of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka