

## THE INTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND ENVIRONMENT IN BUDDHIST THOUGHT

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### Introduction:

The object of this study is to examine the inter-relationship between man and environment as discussed in the Buddhist literature. It intends to investigate the way of man should practically relate to the environment. The Buddhism has strongly influenced the life style of people throughout many centuries. Some of these Buddhist thoughts have not yet completely investigated. The endeavour of this paper is to disclose what are the Buddhist thoughts that have effected peoples' lives in relation to the environment. Buddhism has points out that at the beginning of human society mankind reacted to the natural resources with greed. By this process human beings have caused much damage the environment. Thus emerged endless struggles between the man and the nature creating an artificial environment on the earth. The current condition of human behavior seems to be moving away from environmental ethics and eco-philosophy which were derived from the early Buddhist tradition. This paper discusses the ways of the Buddhist environmental ethic and eco-philosophy have enriched the human life style. It is remarkable that these two aspects are based on the love and sympathy towards the plants and animals. According to the Buddhist literature there is an essential link between the man and the nature. For instance the first precept, not to kill beings, saves the bio - structure on the earth.

The research problem which concerns this study is that the man is moving from sympathy and love towards the natural environment under the current life styles. Growing human population resorts to using environment searching for natural resources for their survival. The process of searching for natural resources and enhanced productivity as well as consumption directly damages the resources and breaks the interrelationship between the

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man and the environment. To solve this problem Buddhist moral teaching can be applied as a life style for protecting the environment.

**Methods:**

The research methodology of this study is based on a Buddhist literature survey. The collected data from the discourses are analyzed. The interpretation in the Pali commentaries are studied comparatively for exposing that the way of Buddhist teaching build up inter relationship between the man and the environment. Data taken from the relevant publications on environmental studies have been tracing some Buddhist teachings.

**Results:**

The frugal life styles discussed in the Buddhist discourses helps develop inter relationship between the man and the environment. There is a need to practice moral values and eco-philosophy towards the nature. The moderate life style saves the condition and balance in nature. When the condition is abruptly changed the balance of nature is also in danger. The guidance presented by Buddhism in this regard could be applied to conserve the bio structure, flora and fauna, soil, water etc. For example, for keeping some beings from extinction from the earth the first precept, restrain from killing animal can be applied as an environmental policy, at least in Buddhist countries.

**Discussion:**

As Buddhism guides us for a beneficial life we learn how to relate to the natural environment by consuming resources with restraint. Buddhism points out that the human behavior and desire should be managed prior to the natural resource management. In this study we were able to reveal such guidance towards the natural resource management with the point of view in Buddhism. Buddhism instructs us how to use the earth, water, plant and animal for our survival. This guidance derived for this study can be discussed

on three areas: the relationship between the man and natural environment, the relationship between the man and psychological environment and the relationship between man and social environment. What is crucial for the survival of the man and the environment is the relating of these three areas by keeping good conduct as human beings.

**Conclusion:**

Buddhist precepts present a path for solving our internal and external problems. There are three psychological factors, craving, hate, delusion that cause the origin of problems. Seed of all pollution is lust mind. The growing desire and unlimited consumption of wealth should be managed first before managing the environment.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, environment, resource, ethics, life styles

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