

Buddhist reflections, wisdom and insights for compassionate action to save life on Earth.

The following material taken, and in some cases adapted, from 'Buddha-Nature, Human Nature' by Ajahn Sucitto, Amaravati Publications, 2019. This book can be downloaded via forestsangha.org, or obtained from Amaravati or Cittaviveka monasteries.

When we attend to our values, we might begin by reflecting on the Buddha's exhortation: 'Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child, so with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings' (Sutta-Nipāta (Snp). 149). This is not just because kindness is universal and simple, but because it focuses us directly on the quality of heart that has enabled us to survive and grow. We are born as empathic beings – we're hard-wired for it with mirror-neurons in our brains – and our success as a species has come from being able to operate as a collective. So a focus on goodwill brings us out of the divisions of nationality, social status, and political systems to connect more directly with a value that can include others. Development of that empathic sense is an aspect of Buddhist 'mind-cultivation', and its aim is to develop that sense in a widening field to include all other living beings. The more inclusive the cosmos, the greater its validity. And the awakening fact is that this cultivation is also deeply enjoyable. And so lies the choice: empathy or ignorance?

Another aspect of our environment is our mind. This mind gets organized around a 'self', a central reference that is experienced as an immaterial entity. It is associated with the body, but is directed by feelings, notions and influenced by immaterial qualities such as greed and love, fear and generosity. It seeks meaning, and towards this end refers to experiences other than those that are happening to the senses right now; in other words, using imagination. This imagining capacity allows us to anticipate, plan, speculate and create wonderful and terrifying ideas. Above all, the self is most deeply involved with its creations: its future, its territory, its status with regard to others and its value with regard to itself. In this respect, its creations are 'mythic', i.e. carrying meaning. Through this it projects qualities such as beauty onto its body, even though this often conflicts with the reality of bodily life. It is rarely still, frequently anxious and needing assurance, and is motivated by mental states such as knowledge, prestige, superiority and being attractive to others. It is definitely not independent, though at times it claims to be.

The mental ability to produce and calculate abstractions weaves the fourth domain of our environment. This gift produces symbols and concepts, language and numbers, and creates systems like writing and software that connect us to other humans. Call this domain 'collective mentality'. It is immaterial, yet it organizes our existence through abstractions that the selves of the collective agree upon.

When we talk of caring for the environment, we generally mean looking after the habitat that other creatures occupy, but, as is the case with every other creature, the welfare of others would seem to be secondary to our own. One fundamental difference between us and other self-interested animals is that our mind and our herd have virtual realities that can massively extend – and require hardware to back them up. A wildebeest may have a built-in self-preservation program, it may form part of a herd for breeding and safety, but it has no interest in acquiring land, conquering another nation or getting employees to support its enterprise and guarantee it a plump bank balance. Humans, however, can stake claims on areas of the cosmos beyond those that are directly sensed in the here and now. We also can place another's welfare (normally that of our children) above our own, and give our time, energy and even our lives for their welfare. We widen out of narrow self-interest because with this act and what lies behind it, our own lives are enriched.

This potential also means that we establish values that shift us out of selfish behaviour; and we can educate others in these values. Education is in the domain of the collective mentality – which by and large uses it to induct us into the current socio-cultural perspective on our world: human history, religious beliefs, the melting point of ice and how to manage a business. This domain has to be the one to cultivate, because its basic function is to impart value. Although we can value art or gold or literacy, the most essential kind of valuing widens our perspectives beyond narrow self-interest to include the entirety of what we're born out of and what sustains us. There can't be anything more valuable than what gives us life, health, meaning and friendship. To value this cosmos of body, Earth, individual and collective mind is a 'religious' act: one that recognizes that it's something that none of us alone can create. The fourfold cosmos extends beyond us, we're part of it; and whether we like or even know every aspect of it – it's valid. And to reverse the argument: the more of the cosmos that a value system includes, the more valid that value system (religion, philosophy, ideology) is.

The material world is only one part of our environment – although it becomes an accessory to the other domains that we operate within. These other domains include our bodies, our minds and our collective mind-set. Obviously our own bodies, although a part of the biosphere, compete with other creatures for food and shelter; so we are inclined to its welfare above the lives of other creatures. 'Man killed by shark' is headline news; '100 million sharks killed every year' (through fishing, sport, having their fins cut off for soup), or 'Sharks face extinction' merits only an article in an environmental magazine. (Yet it is sharks, not humans, who reckoned as bloodthirsty.*) Yet in our case, concern for our bodies far exceeds that which would grant survival: cosmetics, fashion and adornments draw resources from the planet, and the marketing of fallacious remedies such as the horn hacked off rhinos, bile siphoned from the gall bladder of bears, or scales from pangolins (the pangolin has currently been awarded 'most hunted animal' status and constitutes 20% of the illegal wildlife market) needlessly and brutally ravage the biosphere. And still, although the average person lives a few years longer, we are physically weaker than our hunter-gatherer predecessors. Needless to say, this aspect of our world is also still bound to sickness, degeneration and death.

Indeed, as this gives us self-respect, and clarity, why not? 'Why not' is because the systems are powerful and they give rise to the carelessness of 'this doesn't matter' or the impotence of 'everyone else does this' – a blur and a fobbing off of responsibility. This logic rests on the notion of being a self that is disconnected from the rest of the cosmos. This notion is actually a dysfunction, as well as being a source of loneliness, competition, prejudice, and the domination-exploitation view. It ignores the natural truth that we can only physically exist dependent on the Earth's resources, and that we depend on other human beings for birth, weaning, moral and intellectual education and friendship.

Because it is associated with separation, this ignorance is accompanied by a sense that something is missing. We may well feel bored, lonely, or that life is meaningless; and probably try to fill that sense of vacuity with sights, sounds, tastes, etc., or assume, 'I'm not doing enough, get busy.' However, the experience of lack isn't eliminated like that. Having interesting things and being successful only fills us for a while: people with plenty of these still get depressed, whereas people with careful attention can live happily without sensory stimulation. Ignorance doesn't know this. Instead it supports the gratification instinct (taṇhā = 'thirst' or 'craving'). Thirst searches for more, or to hold onto what it imagines provides satisfaction. And because this thirst operates through careless attention, ignorance doesn't notice that thirst breeds more thirst rather than satisfaction. Consequently, taṇhā conditions 'clinging' (upadāna) – the instinct to accumulate things and be in control of life.

To bring this theoretical map down to earth: as none of us can live long or meaningfully without contributions from other people – and even more fundamentally, we can't survive long without

water or air – a primary value has to be one of living with a sense of mutuality, and with respect for the environment. This intention if acted upon has its effects: just as tweaking one current in a river will alter the flow, and that will affect the valley that the river shapes, along with its vegetation and micro-fauna (and so on up the line), you can't act on a part of the cosmos without affecting the whole. So if we use water, soil, and biota extensively in our lives, and yet don't consider them intrinsically valuable in themselves, then we experience a broken cosmos. If they're just stuff that we use and dispose of, then other people get to appear that way; and the effects of that attitude bounce back on us to devalue our own lives.

The rest of the biosphere has built-in checks and balances: it has no capacity for abstract reasoning, it is subject to predation, and it doesn't cultivate and store resources to the extent that we do. But in our case, self-interest offers domination; and if we ignore, or don't see beyond that, our greed, hatred and delusion suffuse the cosmos.

This wrong-seeing sets in when we fixate on one aspect as being the only one that counts: for example, if we hold our thoughts, our norms, our physical needs, or our social group as the best, the supreme. This 'supremacist view' thus reduces our respect and concern for others. We might say that we are superior to earthworms and bees – who can't read, write, or design computer software. So their lives don't count for much. Actually, in terms of the cosmos, worms and bees are at least as important as us: one helps to generate and aerate soil and keep it fertile; the other pollinates flowers and thereby triggers the production of fruit. Without them, we're finished. But without humans ... the biosphere would heave a corporate sigh of relief and thrive. When we're narrow-minded, all that makes us superior is the ability to dominate.

This view hits the ground through materialism, an attitude and approach that places the material domain in a paradoxical relationship to the others. In this view, some materials are worth fighting over, while others are deemed to be worthless stuff. These contradictory attitudes set up consumerism and disposability: one encourages consumption in order to feel happy, whereas the other encourages pollution by assuming that the Earth is a bottomless trash can. Self-contradiction is a mark of the domination-exploitation mind-set. The ongoing extinction of fauna and poisoning of air and water are good signs of the damage that careless attention could bring about: and still for us in our materialist trance, it can feel like things are improving.

In this schizoid view, Ajahn Sucitto recounts how he was reminded of seeing a caricature pig outside a restaurant when he was a child. The smiling pig was a placard bearing a menu that advertised the bacon, sausages and other pork dishes available inside. Even at the age of ten, he did a double take on the logic of something happily offering its body to be eaten. Maybe he looked too hard. The image is a fiction, but it has an effect: the meat is psychologically distanced from a real animal who is reduced to the status of a commodity. Now it has a new name. It isn't part of a pig's body, but 'pork'.

It's a mental conjuring trick, supported by a fascination with superficial appearance that the Buddha called 'careless attention' (*ayoniso manasikāra*). It means we can 'see' a world of objects that conform to our fantasies, wishes, and phobias: supermodels and suspicious immigrants, idols and witch-hunts. We can also receive information and not make the underlying connections; like, poison insects = poison bees; poison water = poison yourself; traffic fumes and factory chimneys = the death of 1.7 million children per year. It also means that we can skip over other awkward equations, like livestock = habitat destruction and greenhouse gas.

The effects of this ignorance infiltrate the cosmos. Once the values-view of 'to others as to myself' has faded, it affects our human relationships. Devaluation is the basis of slavery, racism, gender and

economic inequality. Whereas trading can bring around fair exchange and foster relationship, an economy based on the accumulation of material goods (or rather, tokens) supports greed and manipulation. A system of exchange becomes a system of hoarding. In this, some people obtain large amounts of 'wealth' while others are born wealthy through inheritance, and the wealthy can buy other people's service and therefore increase their influence in the society and on the political structures that guide that society. Other people go out of business, don't get tax breaks, or have to accept the pay deals forged by those with influence.

Undoubtedly, supremacy and power can feel very good. That feeling then enhances their meaning and infiltrates the value system. And we want it to last. So, materialism valorizes hoarding over exchange, and acquires authority. It's a myth, a quasi-religion. Its Word is the economy, and its Church is that of global institutions; it exercises power through laws such as liquidity, inflation, and exchange rates; and it has a sacrament – money – pieces of which we are offered on paydays. The glowing power of the economy obscures a significant feature of our cosmos – namely that most of it wasn't created by humans – and yet it exerts enormous influence over our lives. Wages and taxes determined by the state of a local economy determine how and where people live. But the local economy isn't even governed by the people they trade with, but by international trading agreements. These are forged by economic adepts, through number-crunching, predictions, interest and debt. In the blur of that electronically-powered sorcery, it's no wonder that the agreements fail to qualify economic growth with measures to protect the biosphere.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

In terms of the distinctively Buddhist contribution to addressing these fundamental issues and seeking a pathway forward the FNT and the EFP as would be expected from the core, both of analysis of where we are and why we are where we are and the detailed outline of the way forward. Both of these have been the very heart of the Buddhist tradition, both in terms of philosophical and psychological analysis, as well as the consequences in terms of lifestyle. They fuse together what the FLTPs call wisdom, lifestyle and education in a dynamic relationship which then leads to the practical outcome of the Ten Perfections.



The Four Noble Truths

- That there is suffering, that there is dissatisfaction, or a sense of loss, in life. This manifests as the separation and consequent struggle that occurs with birth; separation from the loved and agreeable, deterioration through age and sickness, one's death and that of others; and the inability to achieve an enduring state of happiness and ease.
- That suffering is of a causal nature, that our dis-ease occurs, wells up and is not an absolute eternal state of affairs. It can be seen as an experience triggered by wanting to have, wanting to become something or be in some state, and wanting to avoid the facts of existence.
- That suffering can cease, that through calmly and clearly giving up these forms of wanting, the heart's suffering can cease.
- That there is a Path of practice that leads to the cessation of suffering, that through our own experiencing of clarity and integrity we can bring around the cessation of suffering; that this practice forms a Path in life, the Eightfold Noble Path.



The Noble Eightfold Path

Sammā-ditthi: right view. To be aware of living in the realm of cause and effect and accepting the responsibility of that.

Sammā-sankappa: right attitude. To cultivate attitudes and motivations that check sense-indulgence and cruelty and promote values-based simplicity.

Sammā-vācā: right communication (speech, writing). To avoid speech and writing that is: a) false; b) divisive and tale-bearing; c) harsh and abusive; d) mindless and lacking in usefulness.

Sammā-kammanto: right physical action. To avoid actions that destroy or harm sentient creatures; that appropriate what is not one's own; that sexually misuse others; that spread bad communication; that cause intoxication and loss of mental clarity.

Sammā-ajjivo: right livelihood. To avoid a lifestyle that entails the taking of life, theft, deceit, sexual abuse, trafficking of people, drugs or alcohol; also to distribute one's wealth to one's dependents, those in need and worthy causes.

Sammā-vāyāmo: right effort. To persist with all of the above; to maintain these standards and repair them with understanding when they are broken; to cultivate inner clarity and calm.

Sammā-sati: right mindfulness. To bear in mind any aspect of the Dhamma, especially the factors in this list; to sustain a clear awareness of bodily sensations and mental states with the aim of understanding how unskillful states and hindrances occur and cease.

Sammā-samādhi: right concentration of heart, right unification. To bring around stillness and ease to the extent that mental hindrances (such as restlessness, anxiety, passion and aversion) cease and consequently body and mind are suffused with a pleasant and replenishing energy. To use this as a resource in its own right and as a basis for refining one's aims, understanding and lifestyle.

RIGHT VIEW, MUTUALITY AND ITS INTEGRATION

An effective summary of the impact of Buddhist thinking on contemporary issues was delivered by Ven. Bhikkhu Payutto, the most eminent scholar-monk in Thailand today, in his address to the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. Talking on 'A Buddhist Solution for the 21st Century',

he outlined three perceptions that he saw as the source of the social and environmental problems that face humanity. These are:

The perception that humankind is separate from nature, and that it must control, conquer or manipulate nature according to human desires.

The perception that fellow humans are not our fellows; the tendency to focus on the differences between us rather than the common ground.

The perception that happiness is dependent on gaining and keeping an abundance of material possessions.

In this review, the crux of the problem isn't in technology or science. It's a matter of wrong perception. And what is needed is right perception or 'right view' (sammā diṭṭhi). Right view is the foundation of the Buddhist Path. It is frequently described like this:

There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed; the fruit or result of good or bad actions; there is this world, and another world; there is mother, father, beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in this world who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world. (Majjhīma Nikāya (M.) 117)

This view is a direct alignment: to acknowledge that we are born and raised thanks to the bodies and living intelligence of others; that our actions are made meaningful by participating in the environment of self and others. And that there is a world beyond that built out of sense-input – a world of values is the most obvious expression of this. So our lived-in world isn't just a bunch of commodities and rivals. Right view sees that we're involved in the world in a way that encourages responsibility rather than entitlement. We receive a gift, therefore we give back in terms of skilful action. Right view is to be acted upon. Hence right attitude (or right motivation) and actions of body and speech, and consequently right livelihood, arise. To sustain and act on that right view is wisdom.

Here, bhikkhu, a wise person of great wisdom does not intend for his own affliction, for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. Rather when he thinks, he thinks only of his own welfare, the welfare of others, the welfare of both, and the welfare of the whole world. It is in this that one is a wise person of great wisdom. (A.4: 187)

Dhamma-practice is then about integrating right view into a way of life that is based on mutuality: 'to others as to myself'. The Buddha encouraged this through the cultivation of generosity and sharing (dāna), of moral integrity (sīla), and of renunciation or moderating the pull of the senses (nekkhamma).

Generosity is the easiest and happiest way to enter the experience of mutuality. It defies the logic of greed by accessing the happiness of the heart when it is bringing forth rather than holding on. Morality is the principle of acknowledging that others count as much as we do. It grants respect for self and others, and the qualities of a mind that has no deceit, vindictiveness or remorse show us that something valuable arises when we value others.

Renunciation is the process of separating wants from needs. Wants will always increase, but as you give careful attention to the destructive influence of craving and clinging, and the calm of letting go, your material needs come down to food, shelter, clothes and health care; if your ethical standards are such that you live in a trusting and sharing relationship with others, those needs can be met. For one who meditates as well, the process of clearing the internal environment will result in ease, joy

and friendliness: enough to make life rich. As we can all produce ethics, kindness and wisdom at no cost, without pollution and with happiness as a result, this is of significance to the environment as a whole.

THE COMMONS: INTEGRAL LIVING

The collective aspect of this Path is the commons; that is, a group of people who are in a values-based relationship, and who pool their resources. For such a lifestyle to come around, there has to be a sense of sharing and moral integrity that supports trust and respect. Then as we trust and feel secure, we can let go of owning and holding so much on an individual basis. Apart from the consequent reduction of economic stress, there is an increase in terms of ease and fellowship; more time for creativity, exploration, meditation – or whatever strengthens your access to and enjoyment of subjective experience. It's the stuff that we all want, but which money can't guarantee.

This model has been a constant theme in human societies. In the pre-industrial era, people belonged to collectives in which a visitor had to be offered food and shelter. The commons centred around a rightly practising Buddhist monastic community (sangha) still exemplifies this. In a monastery, food, accommodation and teaching are all offered free of charge to those who abide by the moral and communal standards. Even without verbal instruction, the atmosphere in itself discharges stress. It allows people to come out of the 'this costs that; compete/earn/deserve' view, and a natural opening of the heart occurs. As such, the monastery generates freewill support. In the experience of Ajahn Sucitto, a significant number of people relate to the monastery not as a meditation centre, but through offering food, or coming to help out with the work. And although people may visit and meet in the monastery, the community extends beyond its boundaries to other. There are no wages. This is the economy of a spiritual commons: sharing, integrity and gratitude replace gain and debt; hearts and minds are uplifted; everyone wins.

Yet it's not the case that money isn't involved: monasteries pay bills. They have investments. It's just that it's not clung to; no one owns anything of significance and no one gains money through holding its land. Ajahn Sucitto explains: "So I don't have a house, a car, or a bank account, but I am granted access to communal resources that meet my needs. And I share what comes my way. Doing what my fellow monks and nuns do, I share my understanding willingly and free of charge. I wouldn't want to charge a fee, because it would define an act of love by a monetary sum. Instead there is the enjoyment of being of service to others; thus mutuality is sensed and community is developed. And although the monastic life places an emphasis on renunciation, this is more than compensated for by the strengthening and fulfilment of the heart. Then renunciation is no more ascetic than taking a weight off your back; it means there's less to manage, worry about and get attached to."

(Following extracted form discussion with Ajahn Amaro)

Ideas surrounding wealth stem from the concept of Right Livelihood within the eightfold path. Right Livelihood includes non-violence and honesty, but it certainly does not preclude investment; not only are Buddhist farmers and teachers, but also bankers and business owners. This teaching also includes generosity, which is seen as the primal way in which we seek to align our minds and hearts with what is noble, harmonious, and fulfilling. Sharing possessions, monetary or otherwise, to care for others and Nature is fundamental.

What does this mean for investment and money management? An important guiding principle of Buddhist economics is a focus on the wellbeing of humans and nature, something that was recently

echoed in the UN report 'Making peace with nature', which shows how measures like GDP don't account for environmental destruction. This is not to say that Buddhist organisations should not invest in, say, stock markets and banks. The important principle is to find such investment opportunities that align with Buddhist values and offer a low-level risk as well as good returns.

On an individual level, Buddhists often give their money to local projects that are of importance to them. Monastic communities often rely on donations with donors specifying how the money is to be used. This may be supporting the nuns, providing vegetables, or building shrines. As environmental awareness continues to increase, many monasteries are supporting projects that encourage compassionate action to save life on earth. Monasteries in Thailand are supporting forestry projects, for example by reforesting paddy fields. Thailand has been massively deforested within the last hundred years and a lot of tree planting is needed.

As we move towards a more pragmatic and connected global culture, many people now realise that some essential elements of our economic system are missing. The beginnings of a movement towards what is missing is evident; there must be a stronger emphasis on values such as generosity and unselfishness, and greater realisation of our rational existence.

The Buddha also advocated using wealth, the potentially sticky centre of worldliness, in a transformative way:

Householder, there are these four conditions which are desirable, dear, delightful, hard to come by in the world. What four?

'May I acquire wealth by legal means ... having done so, may I along with my family and teachers obtain a good reputation ... having obtained a good reputation, may I have a long life ... and when the body breaks up, may I go to heaven.'

... Now four conditions are conducive to the attainment of these four conditions. What four?

Perfection of faith, of virtue, of generosity and of wisdom.

... Now, householder, that same noble disciple, with the wealth acquired by hard work, amassed through strength of arm, won by sweat, obtained by fair and just means, is one who can act in four ways. What are the four?

... he makes himself happy and cheerful, he is enriched with well-being; he makes his mother and father, his children and wife, his servants and employees, his friends and associates cheerful and happy, he enriches them with well-being. This, householder, is the first opportunity that he seizes, turns towards merit and makes proper use of.

Then again ... he makes himself secure against any misfortune – such as may occur through fire, water, the king, a robber, an enemy or an expectant heir. He takes steps for his defence, he makes himself secure. This is the second opportunity ...

Again ... he makes the fivefold offering – that is to relatives, to guests, to unhappy spirits, to the king and to celestial beings. This is the third opportunity ...

Then again ... he offers a gift to all samanās and brahmins who are zealous and have integrity and who are bent on kindness and patience, who tame, calm and cool themselves. To these he offers a gift which has the highest results, a heavenly gift which results in happiness and leads to heaven. This is the fourth opportunity ...

... If anyone's wealth be spent without these four meritorious deeds, such wealth is called 'wealth that has failed to seize the opportunity, failed to acquire merit, improperly used.' (Anguttara Nikāya (A).4: 61)

The ecological crisis is a wider manifestation of the notion of Dukkha (suffering) as stipulated in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths (see page 4). Buddhist philosophy seeks to address environmental issues by striving to reach the core of human ethical crisis by focusing on the mind, by effecting a change in human thinking that is the root of all our action, by correcting our misplaced reasoning of right and wrong, by analysing methods that help humans to change their moral values and practical lifestyle on environmental ethics. Buddhism thus can be a strong guiding force and an effective source of knowledge for environmental solutions, including those including investment.

Sustainable, responsible and impact investing (SRI) is an investment discipline that considers environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria to generate long-term competitive financial returns and positive societal impact. See ESG criteria below.

Focus on businesses that promote and deliver:

- a deeper understanding of the environmental realities of the world, leading to changes in how people relate to the planet and one another, and how they define successful and desirable lifestyles;
- customer's participation in understanding what influences and drives certain behavior changes in different segments of society into the design of products and policy;
- policies, infrastructure, corporate leadership as well as products and services that make sustainability easier and address the needs of all segments of society as well as understand local environments, conditions, culture and aspirations; and
- awareness of different people, cultures and age groups in fostering greater social cohesion and understanding of what it means to be interdependent and responsible for one's own actions, for each other, for the planet and for future generations;
- long-term stability and progress over short-term success;
- sustainable and competitive solutions so that consumers can choose products not only because they are sustainable but because they deliver better value; and
- innovative products and services that translate aspirations and values into sustainable lifestyles and behaviors.

The following criteria for selecting projects to invest in are taken from the Buddhist Guidelines for Sustainable Finance & Investment presented in Zug, Switzerland, 2018 (Appendix B).

- Entities that are investment targets will need capacity to analyze and evaluate policy options based on environmental as well as economic and social criteria, and to monitor policy impacts and progress against targets.
- Give priority to the entities' capacity to measure and monitor environmental sustainability progress, which is the weakest among the sustainable development pillars (economic development, social development, and environmental protection), because failure in this aspect would impede the entity's ability to determine baseline conditions and set targets.

- Focus on companies or projects that are committed to the conservation of natural resources, the production and discovery of alternative energy sources, the implementation of clean air and water projects, and/or other environmentally conscious business practices.



The Ten Perfections

1. **Generosity/Sharing (dāna).** Recognizing the joy of sharing, and acknowledging that we all come into this world subject to pain, sorrow, sickness and death, I aspire to offer what I can in terms of resources, hospitality, healing and wise advice.
2. **Morality/Integrity (sīla).** Recognizing the trust that develops from conscientiousness and fellow-feeling, I aspire to cultivate actions of body, speech and mind that turn away from hostility and harshness, and that cut off greed and manipulative behaviour.
3. **Renunciation/Values-based Simplicity (nekkhamma).** Recognizing the ease that arises with modesty and contentment, I aspire to relinquish needless acquisition and an imbalanced use of material resources.
4. **Clarity/Wisdom (paññā).** Recognizing the skill of clarity, I aspire to handle my perspectives with awareness and careful reflection, and thereby arrive at an unbiased understanding.
5. **Energy (viriya).** Recognizing my capacity for vigour, or for distraction and laziness, I aspire to use my energy for my long-term benefit and for the welfare of others.
6. **Patience/Tolerance (khanti).** Recognizing the value of tolerance and perseverance, I aspire to let go of getting my own way, cutting corners and being narrow-minded.
7. **Truthfulness (sacca).** Recognizing the wise relationships that can be established through my own veracity and through the honesty of others, I aspire to free my mind from biased perspectives and devious behaviour.
8. **Resolution (adhiṭṭhāna).** Recognizing the potency of a firm heart, I aspire to hold intentions that are enriching, and to ward off vacillation on one hand and forceful goalseeking on the other.
9. **Goodwill (mettā).** Recognizing the happiness of a warm heart, I aspire to cultivate empathy and compassion. Resisting mind-states based on fault-finding of myself or others, I will encourage goodwill rather than foster ideals of perfection.
10. **Equanimity/Stability of Heart (upekkhā).** Recognizing the peace of even-minded acceptance, I aspire to let sickness and health, blame and praise, failure and accomplishment flow through my awareness without getting distracted by them.

INTRODUCING THE FAITH LONG-TERM PLANS

Building upon the success and experience of the original Faith Commitments initiated in 2008 by the United Nations and the Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC) the Faith Long-term Plans (FLTPs) are commitments by the major faiths of the world to develop a set of measurable, real world initiatives driving action on key issues including climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. They involve each religious group planning how they will manage their assets and resources over the next seven to ten years – from their investments, schools, hospitals and youth organisations to their land, purchasing power, influence and advocacy.

The seven key areas of focus within the plans will enable faith groups to draw upon values and beliefs central to life on earth in order to cultivate compassionate practices that inspire environmental change. It is not necessary for all key areas to be worked into the plan; focussing on the areas that allow existing values and practices to be expanded is the best course of action.

1. Faith-consistent use of assets	4. Lifestyles
1.1. Construction and existing buildings	4.1. Green audits
1.2. Land and forests	4.2. Traditions of simple living
1.3. Water	4.3. Pilgrimage and Tourism
1.4. Healthcare, including medical facilities	4.4. Purchasing Power
1.5. Financial investments and microfinance	
1.6. Purchasing and consumption behaviour (supply & recycling/recovery management)	
	5. Media and advocacy
2. Education and young people	5.1. Subject matter
2.1. School curricula	5.2. Influence
2.2. Informal education	5.3. Advocacy
2.3. Vocational training and entrepreneurship??	5.4. Guides and Handbooks
2.4. School buildings and grounds	5.5. Materials
2.5. Conservations and recycling policy	
2.6. Youth organisations and camps	6. Partnerships, eco-twinning, and creating and funding own environment departments
2.7. School eco-twinning	
2.8. Environmental monitoring	6.1. Dedicated staff and dedicated funding
3. Wisdom	6.2. Lay people
3.1. Theological and philosophical education and training	6.3. Eco-twinning
3.2. Crisis and Adaptation	6.4. Other Partnerships
3.3. Liturgies, quotations and orders of prayer	
3.4. Sacred places	7. Celebration
3.5. Theology and philosophy of Nature, Land, Forests, Water	7.1. Traditional Festivals
3.6. Stories and Practices	7.2. New Festivals
3.7. Prayer and meditation	7.3. New Traditions
	7.4. New beautiful places and developments

Embedding the Ten Perfections within the Faith Long-term Plan

Perfection	Key Area(s)
1. Generosity/Sharing (dāna)	Wisdom
2. Morality/Integrity (sīla)	Education, Advocacy
3. Renunciation/Values-based Simplicity (nekkhamma)	Assets, Lifestyle, Wisdom
4. Clarity/Wisdom (paññā)	Wisdom
5. Energy (virīya)	Lifestyle
6. Patience/Tolerance (khanti)	Lifestyle, Wisdom
7. Truthfulness (sacca)	Media and Advocacy
8. Resolution (adhiṭṭhāna)	Celebration
9. Goodwill (mettā)	Education, Lifestyle, Wisdom
10. Equanimity/Stability of Heart (upekkhā)	Wisdom

COMPASSION AND NATURE

From the Lotus Sutra:

*“Every evil state of existence,
Hells and ghosts and animals,
Sorrows of birth, age, disease, death,
All will thus be ended.
True Regard, serene Regard,
Far reaching, wise Regard,
Regard of pity, Regard compassionate,
Ever longed for, ever looked for,
In radiance ever pure and serene!
Wisdom’s sun, destroying darkness,
Subduer of woes, of storm, of fire,
Illuminator of the world!
Law of pity, thunder quivering,
Compassion wonderful as a great cloud,
Pouring spiritual rain like nectar,
Quenching all the flames of distress!”*

THE BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS: A selection focussing on the role of compassion within the sphere of Nature.

Lifestyle: A disciple of the Buddha must not deliberately eat meat. He should not eat the flesh of any sentient being. The meat-eater forfeits the seed of Great Compassion, severs the seed of the Buddha-Nature and causes [animals and transcendental] beings to avoid him. Those who do so are guilty of countless offenses. Therefore, Bodhisattvas should not eat the flesh of any sentient beings whatsoever. If instead, he deliberately eats meat, he commits a secondary offense.

Assets – Nature: A disciple of the Buddha shall not, out of evil intentions, start wildfires to clear forests and burn vegetation on mountains and plains, during the fourth to the ninth months of the lunar year. Such fires [are particularly injurious to animals during that period and may spread] to people's homes, towns and villages, temples and monasteries, fields and groves, as well as the [unseen] dwellings and possessions of deities and ghosts. He must not intentionally set fire to any place where there is life. If he deliberately does so, he commits a secondary offense.

Assets – Nature: A disciple of the Buddha should have a mind of compassion and cultivate the practice of liberating sentient beings ... If a Bodhisattva sees an animal on the verge of being killed, he must devise a way to rescue and protect it, helping it to escape suffering and death. The disciple should always teach the Bodhisattva precepts to rescue and deliver sentient beings.

Bodhisattva Precepts: from The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sutra, trans. Bhikshuni Heng Tao (Talmage, California: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1981).

Embedding the precepts within Buddhist practice is not new. In 1983, Ajahn Pongsak founded Dhammanaat Foundation for Conservation and Rural Development in northern Thailand, in order to support ecological education and community action in the Mae Soi Valley. Here the problem was the slash-and-burn practices of the Hmong hill people who cultivated opium on the higher land and, by removing trees, caused the topsoil to wash away. The government policy of encouraging cultivation of cabbages and potatoes to replace the opium actually worsened the biological aspect of the problem, as along with these vegetables came pesticides banned in Europe. Another benevolent gesture, led by the World Bank, was to level areas of hilly land for cultivation, but that also devastated the soil. Understandably perhaps, Ajahn Pongsak has been sceptical of government support, and saw that such support could, through disempowering it, weaken the collective sense:

... our villagers have no initiative in self-help, in cooperating physically as a group for the sake of the common good or for their own communities ... and a factor is ... the government financial subsidies¹.

From 1988 onwards, other Thai monks have started to take an active role in protecting the environment. These 'ecology monks' have adapted traditional rituals and ceremonies to focus on environmental problems and the value of nature, and inspire people to take part in conservation efforts. Some of these ceremonies are aligned to the nature-mysticism of Salvation Buddhism: these include tree consecration rituals, in which trees are blessed and wrapped in saffron robes to signify their sacred status, and therefore be safe from logging. Ecology monks tap into that understanding and align it to Buddhist principles in order to foster a conservation ethic, and have taken stands against deforestation, shrimp-farming, dam and pipeline construction. Although they've been

¹ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown (eds) 'In the Waters There were Fish and the Fields were Full of Rice: Reawakening the Lost harmony of Thailand' in Buddhism and Ecology Motilal Barnarsidass, Delhi, 1994).

attacked by illegal logging concerns, these monks have initiated the creation of wildlife reserves, and fostered sustainable community development through the cultivation of cash-crops. Phrakhrū Pitak, one of the most active ecology monks, has formed an umbrella non-governmental organization called Hag Muang Nan Group (Love Nan Group) to coordinate the environmental activities of local village groups, government agencies, and other NGOs in his home province of Nan. In Cambodia, Mlup Baitong, a non-governmental organization, is involved with conserving natural resources and fostering sustainable development. Mlup Baitong promotes environmental awareness and community-based natural resource management through education. The organization has established a network of several hundred monks and fifteen temples in the Cambodian provinces of Kompong Speu and Kompong Thom, providing monks with training in Buddhism and ecology, and thereby supporting conservation and sustainability initiatives at the grass-roots level.

TELE-REALITY: THE VIRTUAL WORLD

As materialism segued into mechanism, the multi-layered, material-immaterial cosmos flattened to occupy only the sensory plane, where it could be observed and tinkered with. Devices helped it to disintegrate: we are separate from what we see through our devices, and have no responsible relationship with it. The consequence of this shift of world-view is that our social domain is bonded to a reality that is independent from us and not responsible for our welfare, while yet dominating us. Invisible essences called 'debt' and 'credit' loom over us and have to be mediated by economic initiatives. Words stand around us, guide, command and lure us as we move through the world. They leap unbidden from a host of devices that now offer us images of the rest of the world and voices from others who we cannot see or touch. This is tele- (literally 'far-off') reality. It adds an amazing outreach to communication, but it dislocates us from our own living and locatable body. And what do we communicate anyway? News about an 'out there' we barely touch? Or comments about an 'in here' that is in need of contact? Estrangement is a feature of tele-reality. Consider again: what is presented via our televisions? The common shared medium is a representation of the living world selected and tailored, or even manufactured, through the television industry. Comic or tragic, this is not the here and now that we're actually alive in. Sitting in our 'living' (but isolated) rooms we see men shooting each other and cities going up in flames, and we can't tell if this is a movie or reality. In tele-reality, it doesn't matter that much. We can push a button and watch sport or a cartoon instead. In another tele-scenario, we make a phone call for a booking and a mechanized voice responds with set instructions. There's no negotiation because there's no one there. We inhabit a notional and dislocated cosmos.

So the mainstream is left with tele-, rather than human, development and the extinction of nature. It is indeed a cruel irony that the technological advance initiated by Galileo scanning the heavens should have resulted in a scenario whereby, although we can receive photographic images of the surface of Pluto, when we look up, atmospheric and light pollution prevents us from seeing all but the brightest stars.

NATURE, IDEAL AND REAL

The drawback with the Romantic and Transcendental movements is that, like the Western tradition in general, they referred to the Ideal, and neither nature nor humans are ideal. They interpreted a principle, rather than establishing a way of life from living in the natural world. The principle of equality doesn't fit with unbridled individuality; relational balance is required. And even wonderful abstract principles don't fit into how experience happens. Nineteenth-century Evangelical Christianity had some great principles, and campaigned to make slavery illegal; but, although it supported a kinder version of the Supreme God, it also held the notion that theirs was the only way

to access Him. Indigenous people were heathens and savages. Then even though terms like 'God', 'freedom', 'equality' and 'justice' could be coined, any one of the native peoples who were displaced and/or decimated might very well ask 'what freedom?' and 'whose justice?'; and the entire biosphere could rightly insist: 'If we're part of God's creation, when do we get equal rights?' What people find difficult to accept is the fact that ideals prove to be either partial or impotent, because they issued from the minds of humans.

Setting an example: Gaia House

The efforts (and the name) of Gaia House, a contemporary Insight (= Buddhist) meditation centre in the UK, illustrate the concerns shared by the Dhamma community. The following is from their website: gaiahouse.co.uk.

'Gaia House endeavours to act as an environmentally responsible organisation. For many years, we have been making efforts to embody teachings of interdependence and compassion by living in harmony with the earth and all our systems of support. While we are aware there will always be more we can do to operate in as harmless a manner as possible, there are many practical steps we have taken already.

- **Electricity:** In addition to encouraging frugal use of electricity, we have alternated between two electricity suppliers over the past decade – Green Energy and Good Energy. Both companies offer electricity from 100% renewable sources i.e. wind, solar & water.
- **Heating:** We have a 200kw biomass boiler run on sustainable woodchip, sourced just 7 miles away, which generates our heat and hot water with virtually zero carbon contribution. It is highly efficient and provides huge financial and carbon savings compared to our old oil burning system...
- **Hot water:** This is supplied by our biomass boiler but when the sun is out the solar panels on the Hermitage Wing roof automatically switch on to generate hot water for the house.
- **Showers:** These are currently mostly electric to ensure everyone has constant hot water at peak times. However, future building plans will develop our plumbing systems so we can run those showers off the biomass system, further reducing our electricity consumption.
- **Water:** We are on mains water supply but the daily usage here is very low thanks to the conscientious approach to resources by all those that stay here. We did sink a borehole to try and find a source to supply us, but being on the edge of a limestone belt, this did not produce enough for our needs. Increased rain water harvesting is on our agenda within our future building plans.
- **Wind energy:** We have investigated this as a possible energy source but results showed insufficient wind to generate a constant supply.
- **Windows:** Where possible, removable secondary glazing has been installed around the house. There are areas, such as the main house (Denbury) which has limitations because of the listed building status (Grade II) and the size and functionality of the old wooden sash windows.
- **Insulation:** The newer wings (Hermitage, Garden & Meditation Hall) have cavity wall insulation filling. Loft insulation is present wherever there is space to put it. We have had a Thermal Imaging Survey carried out on the house to highlight areas where energy is being lost and where we can make improvements...
- **Walled garden and grounds:** Everything is grown and tended to organically here at Gaia House. With over 60 raised beds in the walled garden, two polytunnels and an effective

composting system, we are able to provide a significant contribution to the delicious wholesome food served to our retreatants.

- Food purchasing: We prioritise local suppliers for all the fresh food we buy in, and actively support local producers and tradespeople. Dried food and household supplies all come from the Essential Trading Co-operative in Bristol. They deliver all our requirements once a fortnight, when they are in the south Devon area.
- Recycling and waste management: We have always been proactive in dealing with the waste generated here at Gaia House. A re-use & re-cycle system helps us reduce our carbon footprint. We try to encourage our suppliers to minimise the packaging that goods are sent in.
- Building maintenance: All paints (emulsion & gloss) used inside the house are water based. The Meditation Hall was recently painted using Earthborn eco paints.
- Travel: Use of land-based public transport, car and taxi sharing, as well as arriving by bike are all encouraged to help reduce the carbon footprint of Gaia House's activities.

SATOYAMA: WORKING IN HARMONY AS PART OF LAND AND NATURE

'Satoyama' – the term is derived from the Japanese words for village (sato) and mountain (yama) – is a place where nature and people exist in harmony. In Japan, the resulting mosaic-like land-use system often includes: growing rice in paddies and crops in fields; regular logging of woodlands to obtain firewood and make charcoal; and the gathering of animal feed, fertilizers and thatch from grasslands.

It is an example of an agricultural model that has sustained millions of people for thousands of years. However, over the last century Japan has industrialised and urbanised, and the changes that these developments have brought with them have undermined and sometimes led to the abandonment of more traditional ecosystem management systems through which people could sustainably derive their food, water and shelter. As a response to this, the satoyama system has received attention and revival. As of 2001, there are more than 500 environmental groups in Japan that work for the conservation of satoyama and its method has become more prevalent in Japanese landscapes.

In recognition of the potential of this socio-ecological production system, the Satoyama Initiative was established at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2009 as a global effort to realize 'societies in harmony with nature' through the recognition and promotion of satoyama landscapes and similar landscapes around the world. In 2010, the Satoyama Initiative was recognized in Decision X/32 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP CBD) as a 'potentially useful tool to better understand and support human-influenced natural environments for the benefit of biodiversity and human wellbeing'. The International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative was also launched at the same CBD meeting. Key components of the Initiative will be the synthesising of wisdom on the sustainable use, reuse and recycling of natural resources; the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with modern science; and the creation of a new commons, i.e. introducing or stabilising cooperative management of land and natural resources.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), known informally as the Biodiversity Convention, is a multilateral treaty. The Convention has three main goals including: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. As of 2016, the Convention has 196 parties, which includes 195 states and the European Union. All UN member states – with the exception of the United States – have ratified the treaty. Non-UN member states that have ratified are the Cook Islands, Niue, and the State of Palestine.

REWILDING OUR LIVES

Let's look again into the biosphere. Or be seen by it; get a change of perspective. Maybe it could show us something about ourselves.

Something like that happened to Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), and it transformed him. Leopold was working for the US Forest Service, managing the land from the human perspective – which included hunting bears, wolves and mountain lions on whose account livestock were lost. Then one day, he shot a wolf, and looking into the eyes of the dying creature, experienced a shift in awareness:

.... I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view²

A consequence of that shift was Leopold's development of a modern environmental ethic, an understanding based on considering the ecosystem as a whole. It began with the wilderness, which he no longer saw as a place set aside just for hunting and recreation, but as a reserve for the biotic community – wolves, elk, bears, trees and rivers – that would include humans, but not be directed exclusively from their perspectives. This was the beginning of what is called the 'wilderness movement'. It has led to 'rewilding' – the conscious removal of human influence from an area of land large enough to accommodate diverse forms of life, and the measured introduction of creatures to manage it according to natural laws. Currently this movement has resulted in the re-introduction of beavers into Britain; the survival of the European bison (down to 54 members in the 1950s, now roaming in Poland); the conservation of the Danube and the Oder deltas to the benefit of otter, beaver, salmon, sea trout, deer, wolves, wild boar, seals, and porpoises; and such projects as the Oostvaardersplassen, a 6,000 hectare polder about 20 miles/32 kms from Amsterdam that, having been set aside for forty years, has seen wildlife return that had disappeared in the Netherlands in the Middle Ages. Now the largest herd of wild horses in Europe thunders across these wetlands while huge white-tailed eagles soar overhead.

So how does that affect humans? Some of us might be more interested in rewilding than others, but what is of broad significance is that humans are putting effort into setting things straight in one area of their cosmos by granting it independence; by allowing it to be as it is and govern itself; by valuing it not as something that we can make use of, but just because it is alive. In the terms I'm using this means valuing collective subjectivity. So, rather than placing me and my interests at the centre of a world of others, this 'intersubjectivity' is a whole view that has ethical implications. As in Leopold's 'land ethic':

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise³.

On the other hand, when any individual member of the community or aspect of the cosmos becomes the sole focus and centre, then the effect is one of abuse:

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect⁴.

² Aldo Leopold: *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p.130.

³ Aldo Leopold: *ibid.*, p.262.

⁴ Aldo Leopold: *ibid.*, pp.xviii-xix.

Leopold also recognized that the custodianship of the land is best undertaken, not by the central government, but by the people living on it. So his recommendation was that the biotic community should include participating humans. This view is the heart of what right ethics, interdependence and 'life-world' are about. That is, if relationships with the land can inform interpersonal relationships, and relationships within society as a whole, this participatory and inclusive theme can steadily reduce actions based on exploitation, domination and self-view. It was a theme out of which Arne Naess developed 'deep ecology', an understanding that rejects the 'man-in-environment image' in favour of viewing 'organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations'⁵.

DHAMMA: UPHOLDING THE NATURAL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE

How can Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha) support liberation and healing in the wider world? Samaṇas, dwelling in the margin of the social domain, may not seem to be living in the real world. As a colleague, Ajahn Sona, commented: 'People ask me why we don't go on Peace demonstrations. But every day our lives are a peace demonstration.' And not just us: the peace demonstration has been going on for over 2,500 years – along with our steady advice to quit drinking, harmful speech and sexual misconduct. These simple standards haven't been adopted on a global scale. But sure, we get out there with talks, retreats, advice – as well as with environmental action. What chance is there that this line of action will take hold? Meanwhile, Ajahn Sona himself has done a remarkable job in his monastery, Sitavana in British Columbia, converting the old buildings with insulation and solar panels so that the entire monastery is energy self-sufficient. Ajahn Sucitto recounts that "every forest monastery that I know of is bonded to its local environment and ethically and ecologically attuned. Tree-planting, solar and hydro-power projects; accommodation and refuge free of charge to those who can attune to the norms – all these are standard, with frugality as a norm. My living space in Cittaviveka, England is a wooden hut similar in size to this, but more carefully built. I spend the hours of darkness in meditation with just a candle or an LED lamp for illumination; there are no appliances whirring away. It does have underfloor heating, powered by electricity, but most of the monastery is heated by our own renewable heat-source. And when things feel too comfortable, I can resort to a simpler hut in the woods."

Maybe the principle teaching that a samaṇa offers, other than morality, is the happiness of renunciation: that 'less' is the new 'more'. But as we travel and see the amount of energy being used in shop displays, in background music, and in activities that merely pass the time, just this is teaching enough. At a time when consumerism is devouring the planet, and when there is so much needless waste, the environmental mantra – 'Reduce, Repair, Recycle' – must transcend all national and religious boundaries. As with any degree of renunciation, this does require passing through some disorientation and even discomfort, but the benefits are enormous. It brings us into harmony with each other and the Earth; it gives us a perspective and meaning that make us sufficient to ourselves; it frees us from the rat race and its compulsions. Lastly, if we seek our global as well as individual welfare, it is a necessary passage.

The passage is uncomfortable, but people are losing patience with the status quo. Public demonstrations against perceived injustice are leading to confrontation with the powers of State. No more so than in South America, where the descendants of the less than ten percent of the indigenous population that survived the conquistadors are gathering, and unifying to protest against the business interests that took over their land. The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests sent a representative group to the Bonn climate conference in 2017 to seek support. Their stewardship of the land makes sound environmental and economic sense – it costs nothing and is

⁵ Arne Naess: 'The Shallow and the Deep: Long Range Ecology Movements' (*Inquiry* 16, 1973) p.95 ff.

estimated to be worth \$25-\$34 billion in carbon benefits over the next twenty years. In Brazil, after public outcry, the government cancelled plans to open up the Renca reserve to mining corporations.

More recently, a so-far non-violent confrontation has been reported in Ecuador, where the local people of an Amazonian area are checking and resisting illegal gold mining that discharges mercury into their drinking water and source of fish. The local president of the region is reported as stating: 'For many years we have witnessed invaders exploiting the resources in our ancestral territory without our consent. Today we are saying, "No more."'⁶ In neighbouring Colombia, the Nasa Indians – the biggest, most organized and most militant of the local indigenous groups – are moving into direct action to reclaim their ancestral territory. On a regular basis and wielding machetes, hundreds (at times thousands) of activists burn and hack down plantations of sugar cane, occupy the land and plant traditional crops that they can eat, such as maize and cassava. Naturally, the government looking at the legal agreements, rights of ownership, and the need to sustain marketing presence in the global economy, opposes this. Confrontation and fatalities occur.

The question is: from where can the common ground arise? How much does it take before the long-standing grievances and worldview of indigenous people can be given careful attention? After over 500 years, isn't a land settlement due?

If this is the prologue for change, what can Buddhist practice contribute? Careful attention, non-violence and empathy: this may be the piece that *samaṇas* can offer and embody – just because they are not engaged. As Ajahn Sona commented at a Buddhist-Christian gathering on environmental issues:

... Buddhism creates a context around environmentalism – an attitude that lightens the self-polluting emotions of frustration, anger, and despair which so often fuel well-meaning environmentalists in the West ... The critical leadership that these people offer ... needs to be supplemented by a healthier, non-self-destructive attitude that Buddhist meditative techniques and philosophical attitudes can provide⁷.

This is a moderating note that might otherwise get missed among the calls for justice and the soft 'crump!' of tear-gas canisters.

Further practical actions:

Suggestions if having read this, you'd like to take some action, there are a number of ways in which you can. You need to decide and apply some careful attention to what is within your range. It is recommended that you approach the topic from where you sense your concern meets your living situation, and accessing a sense of empathy, follow through with resolve. Use it as an exercise in extending your boundaries, of developing *pāramī*, and of taking on a course of action that asks you to give up something, or to make an effort – even when the results aren't certain. This sets up a tone of practice that will feel more grounded and integrated than if you concern yourself too much with saving the world (although you will of course save a bit of it).

1. Meditate more If you develop meditation, your calm, contentment and ability to focus will grow. These resources help to reduce your needs, strengthen your attention, and keep you in touch with your values: so you are likely to buy less and consume less, and be more responsible with what you do use.

⁶ As reported in the Guardian Newspaper, March 23, 2018.

⁷ Various Authors: *Green Monasticism*, eds. Donal W Mitchell and William Skudlarek (Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books, 2010) pp.151-2.

2. What do I consume? Food: Cut down on, or give up, using animal produce – for your own welfare, the animals', and that of the planet. Meat and fish in particular will contain chemicals to enhance flavour, or make the creature grow, or to preserve the flesh post-slaughter. Fish is liable to also contain micro-plastic particles.

Favour locally-produced produce over imported fruit and veg. – there's less transportation required. If you purchase vegetables from an outdoor market, you can use the ones that aren't perfectly shaped.

Plastic: Work on reducing the use of nonrecyclable plastic. You can use a flask to carry water around. Carry a bag for shopping; refuse plastic ones. Buy paper-wrapped soap, etc. rather than the plastic bottles of gel, etc. If you can, mention that you're doing this to the management of the store.

Fossil fuel: In terms of transport, arrange a car-share, or use public transportation. Try some walking! Give up flying for a year. Use LED bulbs for lighting. Insulate your home to preserve heat, wear more clothes, etc.

3. What can I support? Any way in which you can connect to and participate with environmentally-concerned groups and bodies will strengthen them. Organised environmental groups have successfully triggered government action; an individual is unlikely to do so.

There may be a clean-up project or a movement to restore a piece of local land – such as a dump or an abandoned pasture that you can actively participate in. This should be enjoyable and create some human connections.

This guide for reflection on creating Buddhist Long-term Plans has been created by FaithInvest in partnership with Ajahn Amaro, drawing upon 'Buddha-Nature, Human Nature' by Ajahn Sucitto (UK: Amaravati Publications, 2019). The expectation is that each tradition within Buddhism will bring their own profound insights, experiences, and practice to bear upon the creation of particular Buddhist tradition Faith Long-term Plans.

Plans from the first round of Faith Long-term Plans in 2009 are available on the FaithInvest website: <https://www.faithinvest.org/2009-buddist-commitments>.

Asset specific guidelines are also available on the FaithInvest website: <https://www.faithinvest.org/resources>.

Many thanks to Ajahn Sucitto for providing, through moving and thought-provoking words, such beautiful and reflective insights to Buddhist values and practices in Nature. 'Buddha-Nature, Human Nature' is an inspiration.

Pāramī texts credited to Ajahn Sucitto © Amaravati Publications.

Appendix

Appendix A

In 1995 at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, four Buddhist leaders created the core Buddhist statement on the environment which has helped guide practical projects around the world ever since.

This statement was prepared by Kevin Fossey, Buddhist educator and representative of Engaged Buddhism in Europe; Somdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, Patriarch of Cambodian Buddhism; His Excellency Sri Kushok Bakula, 20th Reincarnation of the Buddha's Disciple Bakula, head of Ladakhi Buddhism, and initial rebuilder of Mongolian Buddhism; and Venerable Nhem Kim Teng, Patriarch of Vietnamese Buddhism.

Dharma

All Buddhist teachings and practice come under the heading of Dharma, which means Truth and the path to Truth. The word Dharma also means “phenomena,” and in this way we can consider everything to be within the sphere of the teachings. All outer and inner phenomena, the mind and its surrounding environment, are understood to be inseparable and interdependent. In his own lifetime the Buddha came to understand that the notion that one exists as an isolated entity is an illusion. All things are interrelated; we are interconnected and do not have autonomous existence. Buddha said, “This is because that is; this is not because that is not; this is born because that is born; this dies because that dies.” The health of the whole is inseparably linked with the health of the parts, and the health of the parts is inseparably linked with the whole. Everything in life arises through causes and conditions.

Ecology and Buddhism

Many Buddhist monks such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, Venerable Kim Teng, and Venerable Phra Phrachak emphasize the natural relationship between deep ecology and Buddhism. According to the Vietnamese monk Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh:

“Buddhists believe that the reality of the interconnectedness of human beings, society and Nature will reveal itself more and more to us as we gradually recover—as we gradually cease to be possessed by anxiety, fear, and the dispersion of the mind. Among the three—human beings, society, and Nature—it is us who begin to effect change. But in order to effect change we must recover ourselves, one must be whole. Since this requires the kind of environment favorable to one’s healing, one must seek the kind of lifestyle that is free from the destruction of one’s humanness. Efforts to change the environment and to change oneself are both necessary. But we know how difficult it is to change the environment if individuals themselves are not in a state of equilibrium.”

In order to protect the environment we must protect ourselves. We protect ourselves by opposing selfishness with generosity, ignorance with wisdom, and hatred with loving kindness. Selflessness, mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom are the essence of Buddhism. We train in Buddhist meditation which enables us to be aware of the effects of our actions, including those destructive to our environment. Mindfulness and clear comprehension are at the heart of Buddhist meditation. Peace is realized when we are mindful of each and every step.

In the words of Maha Ghosananda:

“When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us. The trees are like our mother and father, they feed us, nourish us, and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk. They give us food and satisfy many of our needs. So we spread the Dharma (truth) of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the Dharma of the Buddha. When we accept that we are part of a great human family—that every being has the nature of Buddha—then we will sit, talk, make peace. I pray that this realization will spread throughout our troubled world and bring humankind and the earth to its fullest flowering. I pray that all of us will realize peace in this lifetime and save all beings from suffering.

“The suffering of the world has been deep. From this suffering comes great compassion. Great compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world. May all beings live in happiness and peace.”

Buddhism as an Ecological Religion or a Religious Ecology?

The relationship between Buddhist ideals and the natural world can be explored within three contexts:

1. Nature as teacher
2. Nature as a spiritual force
3. Nature as a way of life.

Nature as Teacher

“Like the Buddha, we too should look around us and be observant, because everything in the world is ready to teach us. With even a little intuitive wisdom we will be able to see clearly through the ways of the world. We will come to understand that everything in the world is a teacher. Trees and vines, for example, can all reveal the true nature of reality. With wisdom there is no need to question anyone, no need to study. We can learn from Nature enough to be enlightened, because everything follows the way of Truth. It does not diverge from Truth”. (Ajahn Chah, Forest Sangha Newsletter)

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 that lives. This simplicity of life involves developing openness to our environment and relating to the world with awareness and responsive perception. It enables us to enjoy without possessing, and mutually benefit each other without manipulation.

However, the Buddha was no romantic idealist. He also saw and realized that every living thing is suffering. He saw creatures struggling for survival in a precarious world. He saw death and fear, the strong preying on the weak and the devastation of thousands of beings as one lonely figure plowed the earth to reap the harvest. He also saw impermanence. As Ajahn Chah has written:

“Take trees for example ... first they come into being, then they grow and mature, constantly changing, until they finally die as every tree must. In the same way, people and animals are born, grow and change during their lifetimes until they eventually die. The multitudinous changes which occur during this transition from birth to death show the Way of Dharma. That is to say, all things are impermanent, having decay and dissolution as their natural condition”. (Buddha-Nature)

Nature is not independent and unchanging and neither are we. Change is the very essence of nature. In the words of Stephen Batchelor:

"We each believe we are a solid and lasting self rather than a short-term bundle of thoughts, feelings and impulses". (The Sands of the Ganges)

We do not exist independently, separate from everything else—all things in the universe come into existence, "arise" as a result of particular conditions. It is surely a mistake to see fulfillment in terms of external or personal development alone.

Buddha taught us to live simply, to cherish tranquility, to appreciate the natural cycle of life. In this universe of energies, everything affects everything else. Nature is an ecosystem in which trees affect climate, the soil, and the animals, just as the climate affects the trees, the soil, the animals and so on. The ocean, the sky, the air are all interrelated, and interdependent—water is life and air is life.

A result of Buddhist practice is that one does not feel that one's existence is so much more important than anyone else's. The notions of ego clinging, the importance of the individual and emphasis on self is, in the West, a dominant outlook which is moving to the East as "development" and consumerism spread. Instead of looking at things as a seamless undivided whole we tend to categorize and compartmentalize. Instead of seeing nature as our great teacher we waste and do not replenish and forget that Buddha learned his "wisdom from nature."

Once we treat nature as our friend, to cherish it, then we can see the need to change from the attitude of dominating nature to an attitude of working with nature—we are an intrinsic part of all existence rather than seeing ourselves as in control of it.

Nature as a Spiritual Force

For Shantiveda in eighth-century India, dwelling in nature was obviously preferable to living in a monastery or town:

*"When shall I come to dwell in forests
Amongst the deer, the birds and the trees,
That say nothing unpleasant
And are delightful to associate with."
(A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life)*

Patrul Rinpoche, one of the greatest Tibetan Buddhist teachers of the nineteenth century, writes:

*"Base your mind on the Dharma,
Base your Dharma on a humble life,
Base your humble life on the thought of death,
Base your death on a lonely cave."
(The Words of My Perfect Teacher)*

The Buddha taught that the balance of nature is achieved by the functions of the forest. Survival of the forest is vital to the survival of natural harmony, balance, morality, and environment.

Buddhist teachers and masters have constantly reminded us of the importance of living in tune with nature, to respect all life, to make time for meditation practice, to live simply and use nature as a spiritual force. Buddha stressed the four boundless qualities: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy (delight in the well-being of others), and equanimity (impartiality).

Retreats

Venerable Asabho has spoken of the value of living in retreat in Hammer Woods, Chithurst in England. The forest has its own rhythms and after a few days the metabolism and sleeping patterns adjust and the senses begin to sharpen to this new and unfamiliar setting. Ear and nose play a more important role when not having any comforts of life—gas, electricity, artificial light and the like.

Living in the fast and furious pace of the twentieth century our true nature is often dulled by the massive sensory impact unavoidable in modern urbanized living. Living close to nature is a very healing experience—to have few activities, few distractions. Learning to trust yourself and being more of a friend than a judge one develops a lightness of being, a light confidence. One realizes the truth of the notion of impermanence—the sound of animals, the texture of trees, the subtle changes in the forest and land, the subtle changes in your own mind. A retreat, or simply living in the forest with nature,

“helps people get back to earth, to calm you down—just living with the unhurried rhythms of nature. With nature, everything—birth, growth, degeneration and decay is just as it is, and in that holistic sense everything is all right. Touching lightly is the right touch, the natural touch in which blame, praise, crises, retreats, progress, delays are just as it is and so all right”. (Talks given at Chithurst Buddhist Monastery)

Living in this way we can appreciate the fragility of all we love, the fickleness of security. Retreat and solitude complement our religious practice and give the opportunity of deepening, refining, and strengthening the mind. By being mindful about the daily routine one pays attention to the flow of life—to see nature as a positive, joyful, spiritual force.

Nature as a Way of Life

The Buddha commended frugality as a virtue in its own right. Skillful living avoids waste and we should try to recycle as much as we can. Buddhism advocates a simple, gentle, nonaggressive attitude toward nature—reverence for all forms of nature must be cultivated.

Buddha used examples from nature to teach. In his stories the plant and animal worlds are treated as part of our inheritance, even as part of ourselves. As Krishnamurti said, “We are the world, the world is us.” By starting to look at ourselves and the lives we are living we may come to appreciate that the real solution to the environmental crisis begins with us. Craving and greed only bring unhappiness—simplicity, moderation, and the middle way bring liberation and hence equanimity and happiness. Our demands for material possessions can never be satisfied—we will always need to acquire more, there is not enough in the universe to truly satisfy us and give us complete satisfaction and contentment, and no government can fulfil all our desires for security.

Buddhism, however, takes us away from the ethos of the individual and its bondage to materialism and consumerism. When we try to conquer greed and desire we can start to have inner peace and be at peace with those around us. The teaching of the Buddha, the reflections on Dharma, relate to life as it actually is. Namely to be mindful—receptive, open, sensitive, and not fixed to any one thing, but able to fix on things according to what is needed in that time and at that place.

The Right Actions

By developing the right actions of not killing, stealing, or committing misconduct in sexual desires perhaps we can begin to live with nature, without breaking it or injuring the rhythm of life. In our livelihoods, by seeking work that does not harm other beings and refraining from trading in weapons, breathing things, meat, alcohol, and poisons, we can feel more at one with nature.

Our minds can be so full, so hyperactive, we never allow ourselves a chance to slow down to be aware of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions, to live fully in the present moment. We need to live as the Buddha taught us to live, in peace and harmony with nature, but this must start with ourselves. If we are going to save this planet we need to seek a new ecological order, to look at the life we lead and then work together for the benefit of all; unless we work together no solution can be found. By moving away from self-centeredness, sharing wealth more, being more responsible for ourselves, and agreeing to live more simply, we can help decrease much of the suffering in the world. As the Indian philosopher Nagarjuna said, "Things derive their being and nature by mutual dependence and are nothing in themselves."

*Breathing in, I know I'm breathing in.
Breathing out, I know
as the in-breath grows deep,
the out-breath grows slow.
Breathing in makes me calm.
Breathing out makes me ease.
With the in-breath, I smile.
With the out-breath, I release.
Breathing in, there is only the present moment
Breathing out is a wonderful moment.*
(From a poem by the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh)

This was printed, along with Statements from ten other faiths, in Faith in Conservation by Martin Palmer with Victoria Finlay, published by the World Bank in 2003.

Appendix B

BUDDHIST GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE & INVESTMENT

Draft for discussion at Zug, Switzerland Meeting, October 2018

(Second draft dated September 4, 2018)

	BUDDHIST CRITERIA	GUIDELINES
<p>1. What current guiding principles do you have for investments?</p>	<p>1a. Buddhist philosophy seeks to address environmental issues by striving to reach the core of human ethical crisis by focusing on the mind, by effecting a change in human thinking that is the root of all our action, by correcting our misplaced reasoning of right and wrong, by analyzing methods that help humans to change their moral values and practical lifestyle on environmental ethics. Buddhism thus can be a strong guiding force and an effective source of knowledge for environmental solutions.</p> <p>The ecological crisis is a wider manifestation of the notion of Dukkha (suffering) as stipulated in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The first Noble Truth states that “Suffering” applies to the fundamental reality that the present environmental crisis has caused humanity’s suffering as a result of deliberate acts that have damaged the environment and upset the delicate ecological balance. (ii) The second Noble Truth identifies the root cause of “suffering” as greed (lobha), hatred/anger (dosa) and the cognitive root of delusion (moha). Greed provides a strong base for the insatiable desire to acquire and accumulate material pleasures, business 	<p>A. GENERAL POLICIES</p> <p>1. Sustainable, responsible and impact investing (SRI) is an investment discipline that considers environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria to generate long-term competitive financial returns and positive societal impact. See ESG criteria below.</p> <p>Focus on businesses that promote and deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a deeper understanding of the environmental realities of the world, leading to changes in how people relate to the planet and one another, and how they define successful and desirable lifestyles; • customer’s participation in understanding what influences and drives certain behaviour changes in different segments of society into the design of products and policy; • policies, infrastructure, corporate leadership as well as products and services that make sustainability easier and address the needs of all segments of society as well as understand local environments, conditions, culture and aspirations; and • awareness of different people, cultures and age groups in fostering greater social cohesion and understanding of what it means to be

	<p>competitiveness, and all the fuel necessary for a society dominated by excessive consumerism. This leads to lack of concern for other humans, future generations and other living creatures.</p> <p>(iii) The message of the third Noble Truth is: people should understand that the essence of ecology is not only the physical cleaning of the polluted environment but something deeper – restoration of the balance between humans and Nature. We are the ultimate cause of our difficulties, but we are also the solution.</p> <p>(iv) The fourth Noble Truth points out the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Compassion (<i>karuṇā</i>) and loving-kindness (<i>mettā</i>) are the basis for a balanced view of the whole world, including environment. The <i>Karaṇīyamettā Sutta</i> enjoins the cultivation of loving-kindness towards all creatures. Therefore, a reverential attitude must be cultivated towards all forms of life.</p> <p>1b. Samsara is the Buddhist cycle of repeated birth, and considered to be <i>dukkha</i>, unsatisfactory and painful, perpetuated by greed and ignorance and the resulting karma. Samsara is kept going by Karma which is an intentional physical or mental act that causes a future consequence. Rebirths occur in six realms of existence, namely three good realms (heavenly, demi-god, human) and three evil realms (animal, ghosts, hellish). In the Buddhist view, the type of birth one has in this life is determined by actions or <i>karma</i> from the previous lives; and the circumstances of the future rebirth are determined by the actions in the current and previous lives. Samsara ends if a person attains nirvana, the</p>	<p>interdependent and responsible for one’s own actions, for each other, for the planet and for future generations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term stability and progress over short-term success; • sustainable and competitive solutions so that consumers can choose products not only because they are sustainable but because they deliver better value; and • innovative products and services that translate aspirations and values into sustainable lifestyles and behaviours. <p>In order to promote the transition to green growth, and address the causes and consequences of climate change, three mutually supportive environment operational directions have been identified:</p> <p>(i) Promoting a shift to sustainable infrastructure. Target those entities that build infrastructure to contribute to environmentally sustainable and low-carbon development, as well as to increased resilience to climate change and other threats.</p> <p>(ii) Investing in natural capital. Help reverse the ongoing decline of natural capital to ensure that environmental goods and services can sustain future economic growth and well-being, build climate resilience, and contribute to carbon sequestration.</p> <p>(iii) Strengthening environmental governance and management capacity. Focus on companies that build sound environmental governance and management capacity for improved environmental and natural resource management, including the strengthening of systems and capacities for environmental safeguards.</p>
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	<p>"blowing out" of the desires and the gaining of true insight into impermanence and non-self reality.</p> <p>The concept of Samsara in Buddhism teaches that human beings have the ultimate control over themselves. Those people who practice the teachings of Buddhism in daily living, including those related to environmental protection, will begin the journey to accepting others and to eventual enlightenment. Only then will the cycle of Samsara be broken. This constitutes an incentive for Buddhist believers to embrace sustainable investments.</p>	
<p>2. What criteria are you currently using to select your investments that would create a more sustainable environmental world?</p>	<p>B. PROJECT SELECTION</p> <p>POSITIVE</p> <p>2a. Buddhism emphasizes four main qualities that impart on environment: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy (delight in the well-being of others), and equanimity (impartiality). By avoiding lying, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct indulging in addiction, and doing work that does not harm other beings and refraining from trading in weapons, alcohol, and addictive substances, we live in harmony with nature.</p>	<p>CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTION</p> <p>POSITIVE</p> <p>2a (i). The following criteria could be used in project selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entities that are investment targets will need capacity to analyze and evaluate policy options based on environmental as well as economic and social criteria, and to monitor policy impacts and progress against targets. • Give priority to the entities' capacity to measure and monitor environmental sustainability progress, which is the weakest among the sustainable development pillars (economic development, social development, and environmental protection), because failure in this aspect would impede the entity's ability to determine baseline conditions and set targets. • Focus on companies or projects that are committed to the conservation of natural resources, the production and discovery of alternative energy sources, the implementation of clean air and

		<p>water projects, and/or other environmentally conscious business practices</p> <p>2a (ii). Examples of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria used by investors include determining a company's impact on climate change or carbon emissions, water use or conservation efforts, anti-corruption policies, board diversity, human rights efforts and community development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental criteria look at a company's energy use, waste, pollution, natural resource conservation and animal treatment. They also evaluate which environmental risks might affect a company's income and how the company is managing those risks. For example, a company might face environmental risks related to its ownership of contaminated land, its disposal of hazardous waste, its management of toxic emissions or its compliance with the government's environmental regulations. • Social criteria look at the company's business relationships. Does it work with suppliers that hold the same values that the company claims to hold? Does the company donate a percentage of its profits to the community or perform volunteer work? Do the company's working conditions show a high regard for its employees' health and safety? Are stakeholders' interests taken into consideration? • With regard to governance, investors want to know that a company uses accurate and transparent accounting methods, and they want to see that common stockholders are allowed to vote on important issues. They also want companies to avoid conflicts of interest in their choice of board members. Finally, they prefer not to invest in companies that engage in illegal behaviour or use political contributions to obtain favourable treatment.
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	<p>2b. The Buddhist Lotus Sutra teaches that men and women are equal both in enlightenment and in practice. This amounts to a declaration that men and women are equally qualified to expound the Law in the Buddha's stead. The Buddha did not allow his action to be coloured by distinction of class, gender and birth.</p> <p>In Buddhism, human beings are grasped as a part of all sentient beings or even as a part of all beings, sentient and nonsentient, because both human and nonhuman beings are equally subject to transiency or impermanency. Buddhism sees all human beings as equal in dignity and rights irrespective of considerations such as caste, race, colour, creed, and gender.</p>	<p>2b. Select businesses with good representation of gender, economic, ethnic related equality. For example, businesses designed to reduce the economic divide in society, with microfinance specifically targeting women; or with strategic focus on gender diversity.</p> <p>Moreover, targets for Buddhist finance should integrate respect of <i>human rights</i> into their corporate responsibility and build this into their management and operating systems, and thus, enabling it to be aware of and show their performance in this respect.</p> <p>These include:</p>

	<p>As pointed out by the Dalai Lama, <i>“The human heart and the environment are inseparably linked together. In this sense, environmental education helps to generate both the understanding and the love we need to create the best opportunity there has ever been for peace and lasting coexistence”</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public commitment to respect human rights that is embedded in a company’s institutional culture; • An ongoing process of human rights due diligence through which the company • assesses its risks to human rights, prioritizing the most acute; • integrates the findings into its decision-making and actions in order to mitigate such risks; • tracks the effectiveness of these measures; • communicates its efforts and results internally and externally; • Processes for enabling or contributing to remedy for those harmed by the company’s conduct. <p>These elements can be assessed using the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework.</p>
	<p>NEGATIVE</p> <p>2c. Buddhist texts stipulate that certain trades should be avoided: dealing in armaments, living beings (as slaves or for slaughter), poisons, and intoxicants, as well as ban on taking any life (animal or human).</p> <p>With regards to sustainable agriculture, forestry and food production, Buddhism advocates frugality as a virtue in its own right, i.e. moderation in consumption and non-aggressive conduct towards nature.</p>	<p>C. NEGATIVE</p> <p>2c. Restrict investment in entities involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing or distribution of alcohol • Medical or non-medical animal testing • Retailing products or entertainment, or any cruelty to animals in general • Arms supply or manufacture of weapons

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any involvement in genetic modification • Companies with poor environmental records or which harm the environment, including the production of fossil fuels • Companies at risk of human rights abuse • Gambling operations • Production or distribution of “adult” materials
<p>3. What screening process do you currently have?</p>	<p>C. INVESTMENT MODALITIES</p> <p>3. A distinguished feature of Buddhism is that religion lies not in the books and teachings, but in the <i>observance</i> of the tenets of religion.</p>	<p>C. INVESTMENT MODALITIES</p> <p>3. A key strategy of sustainable investing is incorporating environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria into investment analysis and portfolio construction across a range of asset classes. An important segment of ESG incorporation, community investing, seeks explicitly to finance projects or institutions that will serve poor and underserved communities.</p> <p>In ESG incorporation, institutions complement traditional, quantitative techniques of analysing financial risk and return with systematic and explicit qualitative and quantitative analyses of ESG policies, performance, practices and impacts.</p> <p>Asset managers and asset owners can incorporate ESG issues into the investment process in a variety of ways. Some may actively seek to include companies that have stronger ESG policies and practices in their portfolios, or to exclude or avoid companies with poor ESG track records. Others may incorporate ESG factors to benchmark corporations to peers or to identify</p>

		<p>“best-in-class” investment opportunities based on ESG issues. Still other responsible investors integrate ESG factors into the investment process as part of a wider evaluation of risk and return.</p> <p>Other modalities of ESG incorporation strategies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive/best-in-class screening: Investment in sectors, companies or projects selected for positive ESG performance relative to industry peers. This also includes avoiding companies that do not meet certain ESG performance thresholds. • Negative/exclusionary screening: The exclusion from a fund or plan of certain sectors or companies involved in activities deemed unacceptable or controversial. • Impact investing: Targeted investments aimed at solving social or environmental problems. • Sustainability themed investing: The selection of assets specifically related to sustainability in single- or multi-themed funds. <p>It is important to ensure that prospective investment targets have adopted transparent disclosure of material ESG information, in line with sector standards designed to provide the public with comparable financial and other data.</p> <p>During the course of holding the investment, ensure that the subject institutions have a program that performs periodical verification or audit of the effectiveness of ESG measures.</p>
<p>4. THE FUTURE</p>	<p>4. The Diamond Sutra described how nothing exists as an isolated self, because it is dependent upon and connected to everything else. This Sutra also teaches us to view ourselves as descendants from not only our human ancestors but from animal and plant</p>	<p>4. In the future, there are two areas that need further strengthening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite recent growth in faith investing, investors are by and large still reticent in putting their capital in ecology stocks. Investment

<p>ancestors, and that mineral materials from the Earth are intrinsically in our own body. To quote Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk: <i>“The beautiful flower does not become empty when it fades and dies. It is already empty, in its essence. Looking deeply, we see that the flower is made of non-flower elements — light, space, clouds, earth, and consciousness. It is empty of a separate, independent self... so to protect humans, we have to protect the non-human species. If we pollute the water and air, the vegetables and minerals, we destroy ourselves.”</i></p> <p>Buddhists also need to apply the Five Precepts (<i>Pancasila</i>) to sustainable development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compassion means respect and protect the life of every species on earth; the extent of the offense is proportionate to the intensity of the wish to kill; 2. Be aware of suffering caused by theft and oppression, practice the generosity of giving, sharing with the needy, and disapproving social injustice; 3. Live with responsibility with those one loves and practice contentment; 4. Avoid deception, practice truthfulness; 5. Consume with mindfulness: know what we should consume to protect the earth and avoid causing suffering to oneself and others. <p><i>“The one who violates these five rules digs up his own roots even in this very world”.</i> (Dhammapada – 246)</p>	<p>advisors need to be more pro-active in educating prospective investors to avail of: (i) efficient data gathering tools to help them making investment selection on sustainable undertakings; (ii) innovative tools to help them systematically align and prioritize their objectives, so that they could establish a fundamental decision-making framework and a long-term strategy that shifts toward impactful environmental investments over time, while carefully striking a balance between return and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the need for religious institutions to be more pro-active in promoting a collective awakening by emphasizing to the followers those aspects of the Buddhist teachings that relate to the environment and sustainable development.
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