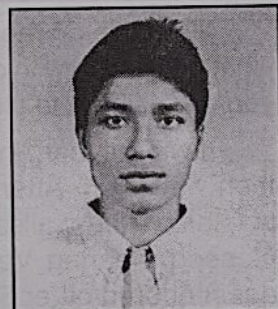


## BUDDHISM AND ITS RELATION WITH NATURE



▲ BASHU DEV DESHAR

Buddhism and nature, each one is related with other. There is a tendency to believe that Buddhism is directed only towards lofty ideas, philosophical thoughts and the retirement from ordinary life and that it ignores the nature, other beings except human beings. Buddhist scriptures, however, reveal many examples concerned with nature and other beings.

In the Buddhist scriptures one finds many references of nature, respect for wildlife and nature resources. It is narrated that the Buddha was born in a grove of Sal (tall straight growing) trees with large leaves. According to the Buddhavamsa-commentary, the newborn child took seven steps towards north direction, and lotus flowers sprang up as he walked. When the Buddha was still a child, he meditated under the cool shade of a rose-apple tree during the ploughing festival and developed the first Jhana. Later the Buddha mediated in the company of a Banyan tree and became enlightened under the mighty branches of the Bodhi-tree.

In this way, Buddha was born in a Lumbini garden under a tree, he attained Buddhahood and passed away from this world under the tree: he preached his first sermon in a deer-park (Migadavana) and from then on nearly always taught out side in the shade of trees.

At the time of the Buddha and his disciples, who chose forests and caves for

living; the great respect and care for their natural environment is recorded.

In the Mangala Sutta, the Buddha speaks of the happiness of living in an appropriate environment', (Patirupa desa vasa cha) the environment, whether it the village, forest, valley or hill is beautified when the good people live there. There should be a perfect balance between the people who live in a place and the place itself. This is achieved when people live with nature without disturbing any other beings, without breaking and injuring the rhythm of life.

During the time of the Buddha, there was one capital city of Vastra=(vattha) Kosambi. One day after hearing the Venerable Ananda's Dhamma talk, Queen Samavati was pleased much and offered 500 robes to him. It takes 500 Kahapana (\* the unit of price) for one robe, which was offered by Queen Samavati. Knowing this matter King Udena was surprised and asked " Ven. Ananda-Venerable Sir ! What will you do, by accepting all these robes ? Is it not too much ?" Ven. Ananda-answered-"O King" I will offer to those monks who have no robes except the old ones keeping some robes which I need for myself. The king again asked to Ven. Ananda- 'Reverend Sir! And, what will you do with other 500 old robes?"

'I will use them as a blanket of mattress'.

'And, what will you do with old blankets?'



"I will use on the floor to decorate". "And what will you do with old clothes (robes) which you are using a to clean up legs?"

'I will cut them into small pieces and mix then with mud. After thes, I will use then to plaster on the walls.' King Udena was very pleased, hearing Ven. Ananda's reply and again offered other 500 robes.

By this example, we can see during the life-time of the Buddha, the monks applied re-usins method to use old things and preserved the nature. They were always respectful to the nature and always conscious of preserving the nature.

Human beings are a part of nature. We belong to it as other living beings, plants, earth, sky, water he long to us. Harming nature means harming ourselves. On the other hand, treating nature in respectful, non-harming manner will lead to a balanced environment in which humanity can live in peace and harmony.

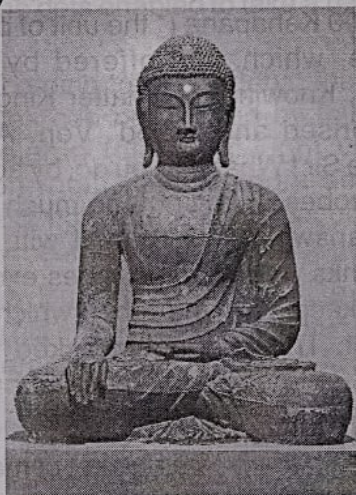
But nowadays we are destroying the nature to fulfil unlimited human satisfactions by cutting trees, disturbing creatures and

killing beings. That's why we are facing many kinds of problems and effects. As physical resources are everywhere limited, people are satisfying their needs by means of a modest use of resources are obviously less likely to be at each other's throats that people depending upon a high rate of use equally, People who live in highly self-sufficient local communities are less likely to set involved in large scale violence than the people whose existence depend on worldwide systems of trade.

The teaching of the Buddha on reverent and non-violent attitude is concerned not only with all sentient beings but also with great emphasis on the trees. If the understanding and the use of the material world is taking place without giving any effort for the exploration and the cultivation of the mind there can be no ecological balance. So, only if we understand the true nature lying within we can live harmoniously with the rest the world.

\*Kahapana=Coin=dollar

Shyamavati (it is Sanskrit)



Korean Buddha (935-1392)

**May all sentient being attain the  
highest state of competeness being  
on the foot steps of Buddha Happy  
Baisakh Festival 2547 B.E. to  
Every Buddhists World**

**Most Ven. Won-Myong Sunim**  
(Chief Director)

**Lotus Lantern Int'l Buddhist Center**

Seoul, Korea

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