

Ecological Crisis: A Buddhist Approach

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Abstract : The ecological crisis has become a threat to earth's well-being. Man's ambitious desire of wealth, pleasure, fame, longevity and happiness has extracted natural resources so vastly that it is unable to sustain a healthy life. Man's greed for wealth and power has caused the setting up of vast factories which further created the problem of air, water and noise pollution, which have adversely affected both fauna and flora. It is no secret that man uses his inherent powers of reason, intelligence and creativity to change his environment for his advantage. But man is not aware that the moral force he himself creates brings about corresponding changes in his environment to his weal or woe whether he likes it or not. As we are facing the global warming and the nature's gift such as air and water has been so drastically polluted with disastrous consequences that man seek for a ways and means to overcome all this pollution problem as his health and life sustainability has been threaten and that is where man try to question about the moral ethics and value. It is where Buddhist philosophy has been emphasized deeply which gives us hope for overcoming this entire problem as Buddha himself emphasized in eradicating human suffering and Buddhism is the strongest form of humanism we have. It helps us to learn to live with responsibility, compassion, and loving kindness. It teaches us to be mindful in our action and thought as the environment unites every human being. If we fail to save it we will perish. If we can rise to meet the need to all which ecology binds us - humans, other species, other everything will survive together. My paper will look into the theory of Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpāda), Buddhist understanding of suffering (collective suffering), and Non-violence (Ahimsa) and an effort will be made to provide a new vision to Buddhist ecological perspective. The above Buddhist philosophy will be applied to ethical values and belief systems of modern society. The challenge will be substantially to transform the modern individualistic and consumeristic values. The stress will be made on the interconnectedness of the nature and the relation between human and planetary sustainability. In a way environmental crisis will be referred to "spiritual crisis" as A. Gore (1992) has pointed out. The paper will also give important to global consciousness, as well as to self-actualization and self-fulfillment. In the words of Melvin McLeod "Only when we combine environmentalism with spiritual practice, will we find the tools to make the profound personal transformations needed to address the planetary crisis?"

Keywords : dependent arising, collective ecological suffering, remediation, Buddhist approach

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