

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MODERN CONTEXT

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### Abstract

Climate change is one of the most critical crises in modern society, which has created detrimental effects on all aspects of human society and ecosystems. It is not only a natural phenomenon, but also a people-centric problem amplified by human activities. Buddhism offers a pivotal guidance and ethical framework for understanding and addressing the socio-ecological impacts of climate change. Thus, the main objective of this study was to explore the relevance of Buddhist teachings in addressing climate change in modern society. The specific objectives were to identify Buddhist aspects of the relationship between human activities and climate change, to review the importance of Buddhist practices on successful climate change mitigation at the individual, community, and national levels, and to analyze the importance of Buddhist concepts in the modern era with climate challenges. This study has used the functional method to explore research objectives. Secondary data were collected from relevant *sutta* and Buddhist texts in the *Tripitaka*, journal articles, and research reports based on the purposive sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using the descriptive analytical method. According to findings, Buddhist teachings provide a comprehensive understanding of the reciprocal relationship among morals, human activities and changing climate characteristics, including rainfall, temperature, and humidity that cause adverse climate-induced natural disasters and socio-economic disruptions. Buddhist guidance has emphasized the role of rulers, government, and authorities in ensuring ecological and societal well-being. Buddhist concepts of ethical conduct (*sīla*), compassion (*karuṇā*) and non-harm (*ahiṃsā*) can be applied at the individual, community, and national level climate actions to combat the impacts and foster a sustainable and prosperous society in harmony with nature.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Climate Change, Climate Change Mitigation, Sustainability, Ethical Framework.

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## Introduction

Climate change is one of the most critical challenges we are confronting in modern society, and it has interrelated impacts on the natural ecosystems and every aspect of human society, including human health, food and water security, education, infrastructure and economic sectors. As Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon mentioned in 2009, it (Climate change) is about the water in our wells and taps. It is about the food on the table and at the core of nearly all the major challenges we face today (World Health Organization, 2014:04). Climate can be simply defined as the average weather of variabilities such as temperature, humidity, and precipitation (IPCC, 2018). Hence, Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity (IPCC, 2007). Thus, climate change has both natural and social aspects. On one hand, it is an effect of natural factors such as variation in solar radiation, natural climate fluctuation such as El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and volcanic eruptions. On the other hand, anthropogenic causes have intensified the adverse effects of Climate change on human society and ecosystems. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change means a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods (UN, 1992, Article 01). Human activities, including burning fossil fuels, deforestation, industries, and agricultural activities have amplified the concentration of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) and caused an enhanced greenhouse effect, global warming, and ultimately rapid climate change. It can be identified as anthropogenic climate change or human-induced climate change. Addressing the social dimensions of climate change is crucial in two ways. On one hand, human contributors to climate change are in society, and on the other hand, the impact of climate change directly influences the survival and well-being of human beings.

Buddhism is a nontheistic religious movement that follows the teachings of Siddhārtha Gautama, and it is a philosophy of life that focuses on spiritual development, liberation from suffering, and realization of a deep insight regarding the true nature of life (De Rooij and Zsoka, 2015). Buddhism is a non-aggressive, moral and philosophical system based on Lord Buddha's teachings (*Dhamma*) and guiding a disciple through pure thinking and pure living to gain supreme vision and attain *Nirvāṇa* (Ambedkar, 1957). When considering Buddhist core values and perspectives, it is clear that Buddhism provides comprehensive and in-depth teachings for understanding, building awareness and addressing this socioecological crisis. Understanding Lord Buddha's analysis of climate change and its ecological and societal impacts is significant to enhance public awareness and rethink about community-based sustainable climate change adaptation and mitigation process. Buddhism provides an ethical framework for individuals to think critically about the environment and social values, and for communities to take collective climate actions towards environmental stewardship.

## Methodology

This study was based on qualitative methodology, and the functional method was used for the study. According to the research objectives, secondary data were collected from relevant *Sutta* and Buddhist canons in the *Tripitaka*, journal articles, research reports, textbooks, and other academic works based on the purposive sampling method. The relevant literature was used according to the purposes of the study. The data was analyzed by using the descriptive-analytical method.

## Results and Discussion

### Buddhist Aspects of the Relationship between Human Activities and Climate Change

The environment can be divided into two basic types, namely, the natural and social environment. The natural environment refers to all naturally occurring elements like air, water, land, flora, fauna, animals, and soil, while the social environment includes the built surroundings related to people, culture, social institutions, social stratification and relationships (Tominaga, 2001). From a Sociological point of view, "Society is a system of interdependent parts, where each institution fulfils specific functions to maintain the stability and continuity of the whole" (Parsons, 1951, p. 113). According to Talcott Parsons, society comprises six main social institutions, including family, economy, politics, education, religion, and law and order. This integrated system has specific functions to perform for the stability and well-being of the social organization. Since these institutions are interdependent, a failure or dysfunction in one can create drastic negative impacts on the whole system. From the history of human civilization, human societies were built upon nature. Human or Social ecology focuses on the human adjustments to their environments, including geographical conditions, plants, animals and holistic nature. Interconnectedness and interdependency are prominent characteristics in every natural and social system. Thus, there is an indisputable interrelationship between the natural and social environment. As an integral part of the universal system, Human beings have great responsibilities and functions to perform in ensuring the sustainability of eco-social systems. Human thinking and behaviour have potential effects on the integrated natural environment and all the organisms living on this earth.

The doctrine of *Kamma* is a major concept that encompasses a deep analysis of the cause-and-effect relationship in Buddhist teachings. *Kamma* represents a specific analysis of the principle of cause and effect, where every action including *kāya-kamma* (actions of body), *vacīkamma* (actions of speech) and *mano-kamma* (actions of the mind) are causes to decide the distinct mental tendencies, physical characteristics, and life experiences of individuals (Phuntsho, 2023). Actions can be either positive or negative, and they lead to corresponding positive or negative outcomes (Bruce, 1990). This concept of cause and effect is a core component in Buddhism that signifies how individuals influence nature and, conversely, how nature impacts individuals. When considering *Sutta piṭaka*, the reciprocal relationship between human society and nature implies rationally. *Aggañña sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* indicates how kammic volitions (*kamma cetanā*) and actions (*kāya-kamma*) influence the natural physical environment and its changes.

*Rasapaṭhaviṭṭubhāva* in *Aggañña sutta* clearly describes the process of deterioration of the earth's natural conditions (*Rasa*) and the harmonious relationship between beings and nature due to greed and selfish desire. *Candimasūriyādipātubhāva* indicates the manifestation of the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies. *Bhūmipappaṭakapātubhāva* (manifestation of ground sprouts), *Padālatāpātubhāva* (vanish of ground sprouts and appearance of Bursting Pods) and *Akaṭṭhapākasālīpātubhāva* (vanish of Bursting Pods and Ripe Untilled Rice) signify the how activities based on greed, superiority and inferiority mentality influence to vanish the natural foods and quality of the physical environment (*Dīgha Nikāya, Aggaññasutta*, 1408-1419). The above-mentioned parts in *Aggañña sutta* highlight the depletion of natural resources in parallel with the activities based on the rising greed and desires of human beings. It implies the collapse of equilibrium between the natural environment and society, with the decline of the spiritual and moral conditions of human beings.

*Sālivibhāga* in *Aggañña sutta* describes the division of lands and the beginning of private properties and agricultural activities (*Dīgha Nikāya, Aggañña sutta*, 1419). It illustrates how demarcating lands and boundaries based on private ownership and, exploitation of natural resources causes the emergence of social stratification, unequal exchange of resources and socioeconomic inequalities. They finally amplify the deviant behaviours in society and disrupt social organization. It emphasizes that the irresponsible extraction and exploitation of natural resources leads to societal and moral decline. It refers to how environmental mismanagement and unsustainable human practices drive ecological and social destruction. According to the *Aggañña Sutta*, imbalance of the natural order of the environment due to human activities causes a series of natural disasters such as fire, flood, and wind. These ancient teachings have revealed the core realities of the natural and social environment and how violations of fundamentals lead to ecological imbalances and societal problems. It echoes the contemporary concerns of climate change and its impacts on human development and survival.

As this *sutta* mentioned, the degradation of human actions leads to ecological imbalances. Today, we are facing similar catastrophic consequences, and environmental challenges are amplified by human activities. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, unequal historical and current contributions emerging from unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, between and within countries, and among individuals have caused the continued rise of Greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2023). Global temperature has directly influenced to amplify the intensity and frequency of natural disasters such as drought, heavy rainfall and flooding, landslides, heatwaves, and storms (IPCC, 2021). These Climate-induced Natural Disasters (CINDs) cause negative consequences on human society such as displacement, property loss, increasing mortality levels, increasing non-communicable diseases, infrastructural damages, economic disruptions due to agricultural, industrial, and service sector interruptions, mental disorders, and finally for the deterioration sustainable development efforts in the modern society. Thus, *Aggañña Sutta* offers a valuable framework to get a deep understanding and awareness of the reciprocal relationship between moral degradation and climate change based on global warming. It underlines the crucial need for individuals and collective actions towards ethical and sustainable practices to secure the equilibrium of nature, reduce the repercussions, and strengthen mitigation actions of climate change.

*Satta Sūriya Sutta* in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* describes the end of the universe as a consequence of human actions. There, Lord Buddha describes the eventual dissolution of Mount *Sineru* due to the inadequate rainfall for a vast period of time and how it affects the disappearance of plants and vegetation with the increasing temperature. It gradually explains the stages of multiple suns arising as a result of the deviant behaviours of people based on greed and hatred, and their consequences on the environment and human society. When the second sun appears, it causes drying up streams and smaller pools, when the third sun appears, it affects to drying up of great rivers, the fourth sun appears, it influences to disappearance of great lakes, the fifth sun appears, great oceans gradually sink till man's height, the sixth sun appears, the mount *Sineru* begin to burn up, and finally the seventh sun appears, the whole earth burns up and vanish (*Aṅguttara Nikāya, Satta Sūriya Sutta*). This *sutta* illustrates the increase in temperature and global warming and how it will create drastic negative impacts on the natural environment and human society in the future. When considering climate change, the concentration of Greenhouse Gases

significantly amplifies the climate change. Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere, and clouds. This property causes the greenhouse effect. Water vapor (H<sub>2</sub>O), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere (IPCC, 2012). The naturally occurring greenhouse effect is a significant process to maintain the warmth of the planet. Anthropogenic Greenhouse gas emissions due to human activities related to burning fossil fuels, deforestation, industries, and agricultural activities have a crucial effect on exacerbation of the natural greenhouse effect. This is called as enhanced greenhouse effect, and it has influenced global warming. Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, due to the increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level can be observed clearly (IPCC, 2007). Human activities mainly including Greenhouse gas emissions have obviously caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900 in 2011-2020. As mentioned in the *Satta Sūriya Sutta*, the earth cannot sustain the warming due to multiple suns, and the ecosystem and human society cannot sustain intensified temperatures due to anthropogenic activities. According to scientists global warming driven by enhanced greenhouse gas effect has amplified the intensity and frequency of climate-induced natural disasters and has influenced to the depletion of vital natural resources needed for the quality of life of all living organisms such as air quality, water quality, bio-diversity and vegetation.

*Addhammika Sutta* in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* is a Buddhist discourse that addresses the interrelationship between human activities and climate change. It describes how increase of wrong deeds due to erosion of moral integrity, short-sighted decisions and actions of leaders and authorities leads to the deterioration of moral principles and actions of the subordinates and finally changes the ecological conditions and social order. 'When the people of the town and country are engaged in immoral or unprincipled behaviour, the natural cycles of the moon and sun become disrupted. The movements of stars and constellations, and also the days, nights, months, and years, become erratic. Likewise, wind patterns grow unpredictable and chaotic. The deities are angered, leading to inadequate rainfall. the crops ripen erratically. Consuming such erratically ripened crops causes harm to human health, shortened life expectancy, weak physical strength and appearance, and increased vulnerability to illnesses' (*Aṅguttara Nikāya, Addhammika Sutta: 141*). This infers that immoral principles and behaviours of people cause to erratic natural conditions such as changing and unpredictable weather patterns, seasons, natural disasters, disruption of agricultural activities, reducing the quantity and quality of harvest, treats to food security and finally affect negatively to the human health. In the modern context, due to unsustainable socio-economic development initiatives, carrying capacity is continuously depleting. Short-sighted decisions, policies, and unsustainable human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and overconsumption have amplified extreme weather events, climate-induced natural disasters, and erratic changes in the ecosystem. Disruption of the equilibrium of the natural ecosystem due to human activities has directly affected the severe negative consequences to society and human well-being, such as widespread non-communicable diseases, decreasing human life expectancy, human displacements, and diminishing the quality of life and socioeconomic infrastructures.

### **Importance of Buddhist practices on successful climate change mitigation at the individual, community, and national levels**

Climate change is a multidimensional concept and a reality. Though climate change is a natural phenomenon, addressing the social dimensions of climate change is crucial in two ways. On one hand, human contributors to climate change are in society, and on the other hand, the impact of climate change directly influences survival and the well-being of human beings. Adaptation and mitigation are vital responses to reduce vulnerable impacts and strengthen coping mechanisms related to climate change. Mitigation refers to anthropogenic intervention to reduce the anthropogenic forcing of the climate system; it includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions and enhance greenhouse gas sinks (IPCC, 2007). Thus, mitigation mainly emphasizes human actions and measures to reduce contributors to climate change. Reforestation and afforestation are land-based mitigation strategies to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels, and forests play a crucial role as great carbon sinks to mitigate climate change and global warming. Reforestation refers to replanting forests on land that was once forested but has since been cleared or degraded (World Bank, 2020). Afforestation is the process of planting new forests that were not previously forested (FAO, 2020). *Vanaropa sutta* in *Samyutta Nikāya* mentions that merits accumulate consistently for people who engage in activities such as planting groves and orchards, building bridges, creating wells and drinking sources, and providing shelters for other people (*Samyutta Nikāya, Vanaropa sutta: 60*). Forest covers are crucial for the preservation of biodiversity, prevention of soil erosion, enriching the soil fertility, existence of microbial species, protection of water sources, and reduction of air pollution in particularly Greenhouse gases. Equilibrium and well-functioning of the ecosystem directly influence the effective functioning of the social institutions in the social structure, including family, economy, education and political institutions due to their interrelated and interdependent nature. The Buddhist teachings on the importance of afforestation and reforestation, and ethical conduct of behaviour reflect paths for building resilience, enhancing coping mechanisms and mitigation actions

in the era that deforestation, desertification, and climate change have become greater challenges for the existence of ecological and human systems.

The *Sigālovāda sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* offers learning on the importance of moral conduct in maintaining social relationships and wealth accumulation. According to the sutta, ‘a householder who accumulates wealth like a bee when it gathers nectar from a flower without harming its color or fragrance, in the same way that he/she does not harm the environment and other living beings, will prosper wealth and attain happiness’ (*Dīgha Nikāya, Sigālovāda sutta*: 303). This implies the Buddhist approach to the accumulation of wealth (material) and happiness (nonmaterial). It reflects the modern aspects of sustainable development that encourage sustainable practices for the utilization of natural resources without harming the natural conditions of the environment, while ensuring access to the natural resources of future generations to meet their needs. It provides Buddhist guidance on how to protect ecological balance, natural resources, and the existence of other living beings while satisfying human needs and enhancing economic prosperity. Development models that prioritize the accumulation of wealth and profits with maximum use of raw materials based on industrial process have significantly endangered the ecosystems and lives of the planet. These unsustainable models have caused Greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, changing climate systems, and increasing respiratory and communicable diseases due to air and water pollution. This sutta has emphasized sustainable practices such as reducing waste, protecting the carrying capacity of natural resources, reducing ecological and carbon footprints, and enhancing mindful consumption and ethical use of resources to generate wealth without compromising nature and human society. It has shown practical guidance related to the climate change mitigation actions in the modern epoch, that experiencing drastic negative consequences of climate challenges on human society.

Harming forests and vegetation has been strictly prohibited in Buddhism for Buddhist monks who attain the higher ordination (*Upasampadā*). This is referred to as *Bhūtagama Sikkhā* in the Buddhist contexts, and it infers the disciplines and guidance on how to interact with nature, and protect natural elements and species. According to the *Mahāvagga* in *Vinaya Piṭaka*, ‘Buddhist monks should stay in one place during the rainy season and obtain *Vas* for three months’ (*Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga*, 347). Those guidelines imply a vast ethical framework on behaviours enriched with environmental stewardship. Rain seasons are vital for regenerating grasses and vegetation, and for soil fertilization. Regeneration of vegetation is significant in reducing greenhouse gases as they act as carbon sinks, and soil fertilization is essential for the functioning of microbial and soil species. Hence, dwelling in one place and obtaining *Vas* contributes to protecting and nurturing the regenerative cycles of nature.

*Bhuripaṇṇa Jātaka* in *Jātaka* tales mentions that individuals who receive the benefits from trees should refrain from causing harm to even a single branch of the tree (Hettiarachchi, 2001). This reflects the deep sense of gratitude, individual and collective responsibility towards the environment, and these ethical principles are crucial for climate change mitigation and ecosystem protection. It reminds us that the survival of every living being mainly depends on nature as we are interrelated parts of this nature.

In the *Cullavagga* in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the disciplinary rules for Buddhist monks are mentioned, including instructions on how they should interact with the environment with respect for the surroundings. It includes behavioural guidance for waste disposal and bodily excretions such as urine, faeces and spitting (*Cullavagga, Vattupabandhā*: 315-319). Accordingly, it has emphasized the importance of avoiding water and land pollution, creating and maintaining eco-friendly lifestyles in harmony with nature, because they promote the reduction of carbon footprints and waste. Improper waste disposal and unsustainable waste management lead to the emission of Methane, and landfills are greater sources of global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2021). These ancient Buddhist principles can be used as valuable guidance for creating an environmental stewardship mindset when interacting with the environment in daily life, enhancing public awareness on the relationship between human behaviour and climate change and the importance of protecting nature, and strengthening individual and community actions for reducing climate change impacts.

Many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe are occurring due to anthropogenic climate change, and it has a substantial adverse impact and losses and damages to nature and people in particularly vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected (IPCC, 2023). Vulnerability in the field of climate change refers to the extent to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse consequences of climate change, including climate-related stimuli (climate variability and extremes). Vulnerability depends on the nature, intensity, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity (IPCC, 2001). *Kūṭadanta sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* has mentioned that protecting species, vegetation and ecosystems is a crucial responsibility of the ruler and the government (*Dīgha Nikāya, Kūṭadanta sutta*: 275). It has emphasized the national level responsibilities on policy making, enacting laws, and implementing programme initiatives regarding the protection and preservation of nature and resources, and ensuring the well-being of all living beings in the country.

In governing, it is significant to identify the available natural resources in land and marine in the country and prioritizing the preservation and sustainable utilizing of resources that contribute to the economic, social and environmental development of a society. Thus, if the social systems of a community or country are prone to harm or are incapable of coping with the negative effects of climate change, they become vulnerable. Therefore, governments have crucial responsibilities for policy and decision making and initiating programs to reduce pollution, preserve natural resources, combat climate change and finally, ensuring the well-being of all living beings.

### **Importance of Buddhist concepts in the modern era with climate challenges**

The Buddhist concepts of ethical conduct (*sīla*) compassion (*karuṇā*) and non-harm (*Ahimsā*) are significant in addressing climate change challenges in the modern context. They provide moral guidance for empathy, mindfulness and shared responsibility in relation to protecting the environment and all living beings. Biodiversity is rapidly diminishing as a result of climate change and deforestation. Climate change has influenced critical negative consequences for biodiversity in nature. According to the Convention of Biodiversity there are variety of living organisms in all environments, such as land, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. It includes diversity within different species, between species and in ecosystems (United Nations, 1992). The first precept of the *Pañca Sīla* (Five Precepts) in Buddhism includes refraining from killing living beings, and it emphasizes the importance of non-harm and ensuring the right to life of others. According to Douglas Burns, Buddhists have the dignity of respect towards the environment when interacting with it (Burns, 2011). This can be applied to the sustainable agricultural practices that minimize harm to species and ecosystems. Sri Lanka has over 2500 years of history, and it is a well-known state related to traditional agriculture, both paddy and “chena” cultivation (Shifting Cultivation) from the ancient history. When reviewing the traditional agricultural strategies and methods in Sri Lanka, it can be identified that the livelihood of people of traditional societies had formulated with the better understanding of universal powers and conditions related to nature. Most traditional knowledge systems have been developed with the better understanding that people are part of the environment. This philosophy was more helpful to preserve ecological balance and sustainability of socio-economic activities of ancient people. Also, this information indicates that traditional agriculture is based on more realistic principles, and they have derived from experiences, observation of traditional people on natural phenomena such as rainfall patterns, temperature, humidity and soil behaviours, etc. Also, those farming practices had done the least disturbances to soil and organic biomass. Traditional people integrated natural power and resources into their livelihood in a sustainable manner (Panampitiya, 2018).

Lord Buddha has presented deep insights into love and kindness in the *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta*. According to it, ‘regardless of the nature of living beings, whether strong or weak, short or long, large or small, visible or unseen, distant or nearby, and whether present or seeking to exist, we should spread loving and kindness. Just as a mother loves and protects her children, individuals should cultivate boundless love for all living beings throughout the entire universe’ (*Suttanipāta, Karaṇīya Metta Sutta*: 44). This emphasizes the unconditional and boundless love and kindness towards all living beings in the world and shared responsibility for the well-being of one another. Because of the conditions of interrelationship and interdependency between nature and culture, the survival of living beings and human societies and cultures depends on the preservation of natural ecosystems. They are undisputedly bound together. Fostering universal compassion, love, and kindness plays a crucial role in minimizing natural and human-made crises and enhancing the well-being of the natural and social environment through ensuring ecosystems for future generations.

When considering deeply, both government and citizens have a vital responsibility towards environmental stewardship and to take mitigation actions at individual, community and national levels. Human behaviour plays a key role in the process of Climate change mitigation. There is a close interlink between human behaviour and perception because human behaviour is shaped by how people look, understand, and interpret sensory information around them. Thus, inputs of the perception process are stimuli/sensory information, and outputs are actions. It influences decision-making, social interactions, and relationships of individuals. Perception of the environment leads to forming the attitudes and behaviours of individuals towards the preservation of the environment and sustainability. Research studies have indicated that people’s perception of environmental hazards, benefits, and the effectiveness of actions impact their participation in eco-friendly activities, including recycling, energy saving, and supporting environmental policies and regulations (Stern, 2000). Cultivating attitudes regarding compassion, non-harm and love to all living beings among individuals is important to foster Eco-friendly behaviours and practices that promote climate change mitigation actions. As well as individual and collective actions based on compassion, non-harm and love lead to support conservation, protection and ethical use of natural resources. Enhancing awareness of the reciprocal relationship between ecosystems and human society can promote the importance of individual and community actions for the well-being of all living creatures. Buddhist teachings provide a holistic and ethical framework for understanding the interrelation between ecosystems and human society and combating the contributors to climate change at the individual, community and national levels.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Buddhist teachings provide deep and rational insights into the interrelation among human actions and environmental changes and climate challenges. They illustrate how short-sighted decisions, governing and unsustainable socio-economic practices cause to disruptions of natural ecological patterns such as rainfalls, seasons, and temperature, and finally lead to livelihood challenges and social degradation. These Buddhist teachings are strongly related to the contemporary human-induced climate change, natural disasters due to exploitation and unsustainable consumption of natural resources and environmental challenges.

Buddhist ethical practices on afforestation, reforestation, and ethical utilization of natural resources emphasize sustainable and environmental protection practices, mitigation strategies for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental stewardship in addressing drastic climate challenges. Moral disciplines related to Buddhism highlight the importance of regeneration of natural ecosystems, mindful consumption of natural resources with great awareness of the carrying capacity of nature, the importance of vegetation and forest ecosystems to regulate climate characteristics and conditions that help to protect ecological and social equilibrium. Buddhist guidance on waste disposal supports reducing the environmental impacts of human activities, reduction of greenhouse gases in the context of the modern climate crisis.

The Buddhist principles of ethical conduct (*sīla*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and non-harm (*ahimsā*) offer ethical guidance for shared responsibilities to protect nature and all living beings. They are not only spiritual but also practical lessons for mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. Buddhist guidance has emphasized the government's role in ensuring the rights and well-being of social organizations and ecosystems. They infer the importance of policy decisions, actions and initiatives to build the resilience of communities to minimize the impacts of socio-environmental challenges, enhancing adaptive capacities, and mitigating climate impacts on vulnerable populations. In the modern context, with severe environmental crises such as climate change, Buddhist teachings provide valuable and applied guidance for fostering a sustainable society in harmony with nature. These principles can be applied at individual, community, and national levels, and they have the potential for reducing the impacts of climate change and protecting the equilibrium between the natural environment and society.

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