

Buddhism and the Crisis of Nature: Problems and Solution

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ABSTRACT

In this era mankind is facing all that cumber which is very complicated and unprecedented. Environmental pollution, climate change, unexpected incident, shortage of food and water, natural disaster, epidemic -each of these problems is challenging our existence. The main purpose of this article is to highlight how the teaching of Gautama Buddha and the policies of Buddha's contemporary kings can be effective to solve these crises. Here we will discuss how Buddha's teachings; mindfulness, four noble truths, the noble eight-fold path can be helpful in preventing environmental pollution. How the nature - loving Buddha's various events in life and his sermon (loving- kindness, non-violence) inspire tree planting and advice on controlling fossil fuel use that will contribute to reduce climate change. The way to avoid the unexpected events will also be discussed here in the light of Buddhism. How the common people were spared from the shortage of food and water because of the establishment of equality and peace by Gautama Buddha and the action taken by the kings to deal with the natural disaster and with the epidemic will also be mentioned here. It will be shown through the various events and principles of Buddhist philosophy that how a conscious lifestyle and ethical behavior can make this world more sustainable and peaceful.

Keywords: Buddhism, Four noble truths, *Tripitaka*, Vaishali, the emperor Ashoka

INTRODUCTION

We are facing different types of crises in today's world. It often seems like there is no solution for those crises. But if we turn back, we can find that Gautama Buddha and his philosophy figured out the solution of those crises nearly 2500 years ago. The principles of Buddha taught so many years ago that it not only showed us the path to spiritual liberation but also related to every aspect of our worldly lives. For example, the fundamental principles of Buddhism -loving kindness, non- violence, the four noble truths, the eight-fold path etc. are able to address the main causes of problems such as environmental pollution, climate change, epidemic, natural disaster and so on. These Buddhist philosophies teach us the result of the actions that a man carries out do not only suffer mankind but also on the entire world. Through this article, we will try to understand the realistic perspective of Buddhism philosophy in making up nature's most complicated crises these days.

Literature Review: Dealing with natural various crises several pieces of data are available from *Tripitak*, the sacred religious book of Buddhism and the other books of pali literature. For example, in *Cullavagga* (Prajnabangsha Mahathero and Indragupta Bhikkhu: 2017), we can learn about the various instructions given by the Buddha to the Monks to prevent water pollution and to keep surroundings environmentally clean. In *Mahavagga's Vessajjaskandha* (Pragyananda Sthabir, Prajnabangsha Mahathero and Karuna Bangsha Bhikkhu: 2017) we can see how buddha inspired everyone for planting trees by describing the medicinal properties of plants. It is known from the Vamsa literature (Shantu Barua: 2009), Emperor Ashoka was more conscious about the environmental conservation. Buddhist Economy (Jitendra Lal Barua: 2016) and *Dirghanikay* (Rajguru Dharmaratna Mahasthabir: 1962), provide information on how the kings of Buddha's period dealt with famine and natural disasters etc. On Buddhism and natural crises there has been several studies conducted at home and abroad. However, based on the featured article no single or institutional studies have been found. So, this is basic article and the proposed topic for research has sufficient justification.

Methodology: To test its analytical Hypothesis, this study employs a qualitative, exegetical research design, supplemented by historical-critical textual analysis. This methodology enables a deeper interpretation and

synthesis of the core philosophical insights found within Buddhist traditions. The data collection strategy is purely textual, divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary data is excerpted from the *Tripitaka* (*Vinaya*, *Sutta*, and *Abhidhamma Pitakas*), representing the foundational canonical texts. Secondary data includes post-canonical commentaries, contemporary research papers, websites and authoritative books on Buddhism. By applying a qualitative thematic exploration, the study illuminates and scrutinizes these textual resources to synthesize a unified framework.

Objective: Every research has specific goals and objectives, and the purpose of this article is as follows: 1) To gain knowledge about the environment and nature of ancient India during the time of the Buddha and the subsequent Buddhist kings. 2). To gain a clear understanding of the actions taken by the Buddha and his disciples in addressing environmental issues that arose during that time.

Environmental pollution: The living and nonliving things and surroundings that affect the lives and life-cycles of the living beings are called the environment. Plants, Fungus, Animals, Micro-beings and these types of living beings and also Water, Soil, Temperature, Weather, Rainfall, Sunshine and the other non-living elements consists of the entire environment. According to Buddhism, The environment is made from four fundamental elements and these are Earth Element, Air Element, Water Element and Fire Element. In the ancient Buddhist scriptures these are called "The Four Great Elements" that are believed to be the pillars of the Environment upon whose sanctity the existence of life depends (Bhikkhu Priyabangsa, 2024). In the present world, the environment and the ecology have been brutally endangered and inflicted because of the inconsequential, nonsensical and disarrayed nature of humans.

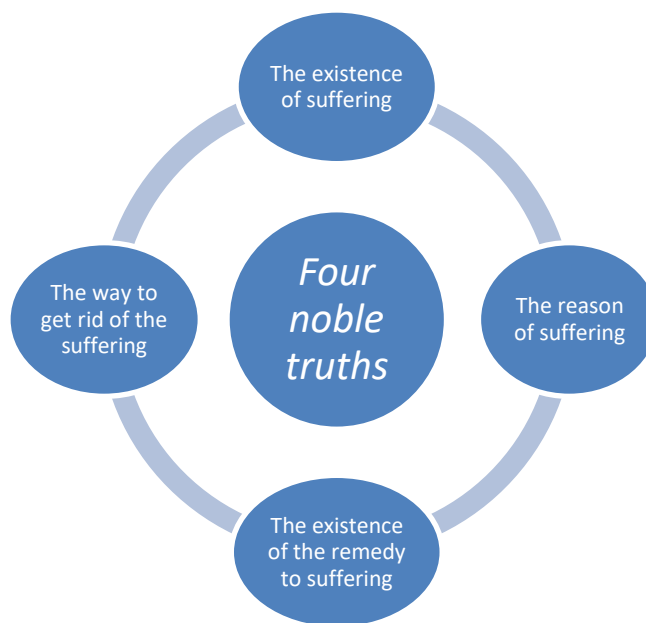
Water is also deemed as "Life". Alongside humankind, it is equally inevitable for the other living being's existence. But the saddest thing is this very important element is getting polluted day by day which is very alarming. In the present time almost every human waste is being dumped into the water. According to the United Nations Environmental Report, Every year almost 10 million Plastics pollute the oceans which kill at least 1 million ocean birds and 1 lac ocean animals. According to the agency, every year almost 8-10 metric ton of plastics are dumped into the ocean whereas there are already floating 15-51 trillion plastics on the ocean (<http://bn.wikipedia.org>). Lord Buddha, The harbinger of Buddhism had always preached and talked about keeping the water clean and preserving the source of it. In the *Vinay Pittaka's Cullavagga's Brath-Skandha* Lord Buddha says, the habitats should not be situated near the source of water because ultimately all waste would go to the water ending up polluting it (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta, 2017). Also, in the *Sekhia Vagga's* 73, 74, 75 verses, Buddha says, "Without an emergency, No one should defecate under a tree (Sthabir Pragyananda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna bangsha, 2017). In The *Cullavagga* we saw that in order to keep the water clean, Lord Buddha advised to make the water pot from bricks and cover it so that no falling leaves would get into the pot water or anyhow the inside does not get polluted (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta, 2017). These direct teachings from Lord Buddha can also be used to prevent water pollution in this era.

Because plastics not only the water is getting polluted but also the soil. According to the environmental scientists the fertility of the soil is getting numb day by day because of plastics. The food made from the polluted soil is creating various diseases among the human consumers. But if we recycle those non-degradable elements like plastics we would not only get benefits from that but also would be able to reduce the amount of Carbon-Di-Oxide in the Atmosphere. As of today we are considering and emphasizing on the concept of recycling that actually had been talked about almost two and half thousand years ago by Lord Buddha. In the *Mahavagga's Chiraskandha*, Buddha says, "If the Cibar (special cloth for monks) gets torn then it can't be dumped rather it should be stitched and reused. Once unusable as clothes then should be used as a curtain, If not possible then should be used as a bed sheet if that also not possible then should be used as a door mat even if that becomes undoable then the thing should be set to fire and burned and the ashes should be used for tooth cleaning but should never be dumped (Bhikkhu Priyabangsa, 2024). Lord Buddha's this particular teaching clearly suggests recycling. If we cherish this fundamental teaching of Lord Buddha It will be easier for us to prevent and reduce soil pollution to a significant extent. Lord Buddha in his Mahaparinirvana Sutra scripture's Sapta Aparihania (Seven Inevitable) lesson stated that those of who preserve the belongings of their predecessors and never extort

them would never peril (Shilvadra Bhikkhu, 2008). In the perspective of environmental issues and management this particular teaching is very cohesive and important. When Mankind starts acting upon those teachings then the environment will be safer. Lord Buddha was always vigilant about not polluting the environment. He even issued religious diktats in the *Mahavagga* and *Cullavagga* in order to keep the environment safe from pollution. In the *Cullavagga's* Bratha-Skandha, There are clear instructions on cleaning the waste around the Bihar, Keeping the water pot always clean, If the wind from the East is bringing dust then the window facing the East should be closed, If it's from the west then the westward window should be closed, During winter the windows should be kept open in the daytime and closed at night, But during Summer the windows should be kept closed in the daytime and opened at night (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta, 2017). The ancient Indian kings who also used to be the followers of Lord Buddha were too environmentalists. In this regard The Great King Bimbisara's kingdom Magadha's capital Rajagriha's story can be discussed where there was a man called Sunit whose daily job was to clean the highways of the City of Rajagriha and dump the waste out of the city (Bhikkhu Bidhur, 2019). In 600 BCE, in another word during the contemporary time of Lord Buddha, The kingdoms were very much aware about environment and cleanliness as most of their sewage and drainage systems were relatively well functional and modern. In the 19th century, a great Archeologist Alexander Cunningham dug under the soil of the prehistoric city Koushambi in which King Udayan ruled and discovered 4 spectacular findings. He very wholeheartedly admired the drainage and the waste management system of that time.

The equation of Chari Arya Satta (Four Fundamental Truths), (Barua Lal Jitendra, 2001):

The four fundamental truths dictated by Lord Buddha cannot only enlighten people spiritually but also can set up a roadmap and structure for preventing environmental pollution. These Four Fundamentals are :



By getting inspired from this we can also said:

- Environmental pollution is a suffering of some sort.
- This particular suffering has various reasons as to why it happens.
- The remedy to this suffering very much exists.
- The ways as to how to get rid of this suffering.

Mainly the only way is to inculcate ethics, morality and love for environment and taking necessary and pragmatic steps to reduce environmental pollution. In this matter we can utilize the concept of The Arya Astangik Marga of Buddhism. These are:

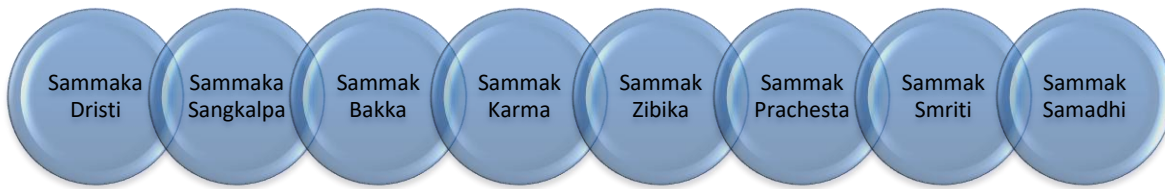


Diagram: The Arya Astangik Marga

- Sammaka Dristi (Appropriate Looking): To look at the problem of environmental pollution and to perceive the matter well.
- Sammaka Sangkalpa (True Promise): Promising to preserve the environment and to be merciful to it.
- Sammak Bakka (Appropriate Statement): The utterances and statements that harm the environment should be refrained from being made. And always making statements that inspire to save the environment.
- Sammak Karma (Appropriate Work): Refraining from the activities that harm the environment.
- Sammak Zibika (Appropriate way of Life): Not practicing the way of life that harms the environment.
- Sammak Prachesta (Appropriate Endeavour): One must do what it takes to safeguard the environment.
- Sammak Smriti (Awareness): To generate awareness among people about environmental pollution, the reasons and the consequences.
- Sammak Samadhi (Alignment): To align with the environment and to synchronize with it.

These are the eight principles written above that will reduce the greed among people and increase awareness about the environment if followed thoroughly.

Climate change: The change of environment means basically the gradual and substantial change of it for as long as 30 years. The prime reason for the change of environment is global warming. Global warming is happening on large scale because of several human activities. For example: Due to deforestation the amount of Carbon-Di-Oxide is dangerously increasing in the atmosphere which ultimately leads to the confinement of the green -house gases and thus global warming. In this regard planting trees is a natural means to deal with the negative change of environment. It not only takes out the carbon from the atmosphere but also contributes to balancing the ecosystem and makes the enviromnent habitable for humans and other animals.

The root of Buddhism is nature and environment. One must conclude that Lord Buddha was a nature-lover after studying his 80 years -time span. He had a deep relation with nature as he himself was born in the lap of today's Nepal's famous spiritual place "Lumbini Kanon". He got the enlightenment in the bank of a river called "Niranjana" in "Bodh Gaya". After the enlightenment, Lord Buddha spent the later 7 weeks with nature (Sthabir Pragyananda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017). The places were:

Time	Place
1st week	At the foot of the Bodhi Tree on the banks of Nairanjana
2nd week	Gazing at the tree with unwinking eyes
3rd	While circumambulations

week	
4th week	At the Ratnagarha Shrine
5th week	At the foot of the Ajpala Nigrodha tree
6th week	On the bank of the Mucalinda lake
7th week	At the foot of the Rajayatana tree

Lord Buddha celebrated 36 out of his 45 Rain-Retreats (Vassa or Barshabash) with nature (Barua Sukomal, 2024). The name and timeframe of some of those places are given below:

Number	Place	B.C
1st Rainy retreat	At the Ishipatna of Varanasi	528
2nd - 4th rainy retreat	Benuban of Rajgir	527-525
5th rainy retreat	Vaisali	524
6th rainy retreat	Makul mountain (Bihar)	523
7th rainy retreat	Kayatingsa Devloka	522
8th rainy retreat	Susumargiri (chunar)	521
9th rainy retreat	Kosambi (Allahabad)	520
10th rainy retreat	Parileyya (Mirzapur)	519
11th rainy retreat	Nala (Bihar)	518
12th rainy retreat	Bairanja (between kaunauj and Mathura)	517
13th rainy retreat	Dhaliya Mountain (Bihar)	516
14th rainy retreat	Sravasti (Gonda)	515
15th rainy retreat	Kapilavastu	514
16th rainy retreat	Salabhi (Arwal)	513
17th rainy retreat	Rajgir	512

18th rainy retreat	Caliya Mountain	512-510
20th rainy retreat	Rajgir	508-484
21st-45th rainy retreat	Sravasti	583

Lord Buddha used to give such an importance to trees that he would exemplify trees while giving religious speeches very often.

Just like if a plant's root is not uprooted and stays stable a tree regenerates even from that, similarly if In Dhammapada's Tanha/Trishna Vagga he said (Barua Sukomal & Barua Rebatapriya, 1997), The root of the greed is not uprooted then the emergence of suffering will happen again. In the similar scripture, Lord Buddha also said: The thirst of a greedy person expands like a branch of a tree. Like a wild monkey in a jungle that wanders around in the woods in search of fruit.

In *Sutra-Pitaka's Anguttarnikaya*, Lord Buddha says (Bhikkhu Pragyadarshi, 2017),

Just as a palm tree grows well it finds fertile land, similarly, an evil person becomes good when he is surrounded by a good person. It was Lord Buddha who had said it first that, trees are also living being with an organ. In Dhammapada he says: The Common people do not get happy in nature. Those of whom who are not promiscuous get the happiness. Considering Anger, Grudge, Illusion as garbage, Lord Buddha said: Like tree branches are detrimental to the harvesting lands. Therefore helping those that have no greed brings about good rewards.

Lord Buddha was very aware in preserving the nature and environment which can be concluded by going through his teachings and provisions. For example, During Rain-Retreat (Barshabash) he would order the monks who would generally wander around in the jungles to get back to the monasteries. During monsoon new plants emerge. In order to prevent them from getting treaded on by the monks, Lord Buddha had issued that order (Sthabir Pragyanda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017). In *Dirghanikay's Bramhajal Sutra* it is said that one should refrain from destroying trees, plants and seeds (Mahasthabir Rajguru Dharmaratna, 1962). In *Vinaypittaka's Pachittiya*, Lord Buddha says, if any monk cuts a tree then it would be considered a pachittiya-crime for him (Sthabir Pragyanda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017). In *Petbutta*, It's said that it is a betrayal to cut the tree that gives shelter (Barua Sukomal, 2024). Moreover in *Mahavagga's Vesajja Skandha*, Lord Buddha spoke of the merits of Amloki (Indian Gooseberry), Bohera (Terminalia Bellirica) and Horitoki (Myrobalan) etc. to prevent deforestation and making people plant more trees for their own good. A renowned Buddhist scholar Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua says, The quality of life is very much affected by any imbalance in nature or in ecosystem of the human society -Gautam Buddha considerer humanity as a part of nature which is also represented by Forests. Further he told that if forests are destroyed, humanity cannot survive. Hence it is the responsibility of the human beings to preserve and renew forests, protecting endangered species. On the whole, forests and environment are inseparable and interconnected (Barua Kumar Dipak, 2005).

These teachings of Lord Buddha are a reflection of his love for nature. It is well observed in the literature of *Jataka* that he was a tree lover. For example Lord Buddha had re-incarnated approximately 30 times as The God of Trees in his previous lives. The name of various types trees are mentioned in *Jataka*, These are:

1. Kushanali Jataka (No. 121)- Ruci Tree
2. Vessantara Jataka (No. 547) -Kandura Tree, Karanja Tree,Kacchika tree, Asvakarna and Arjuna.
3. Chaddha-va Jataka (No.322) - Tala tree, Bilva tree/Bael tree.
4. Bhadrasala Jataka (No. 465) - Mangala tree.
5. Kokalika Jataka (No. 331) - Asva tree.

6. Tinduko Jataka (No. 177) - Tinduka tree
7. Vidhura Jataka (No. 545) - Daddalaka tree etc.

Not only Lord Buddha but also his follower kings were tree lovers. In ancient India, the policymakers would reflect and act on the Buddhist provisions on the environment and nature. Amongst them, Emperor Ashoka was the best in this regard. It's believed that he was the first ever king to gift a branch of The Bodhibrikha to the king of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) while establishing a diplomatic relation between the states (Barua Shantu, 2009). He would also import rare trees from abroad and plant them that could be used for making medicines. Emperor Ashoka's awareness about trees can be even further ensured by analyzing the 14 some provisions discovered engraved on a rock in present day Gujarat, Junagar issuing orders of planting trees and preserving nature.

This biggest man-made reason of the global warming is the heavy consumption of fossil fuels. Natural Gas, Coal, Oil are the prime resources of the green -house gases. These substances heavily generate Carbon-Di-Oxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄) and other gases that contribute to the increment of global warming. Especially the excessive consumption of fossil fuels in the military industrial complexes is contributing a lot to the rise of global warming. If we consider this sector as a nation that it can be said that the hypothetical nation is the 4th largest carbon producing nation. A significant portion of the military industry works on making explosives and incendiary weapons.

The main basis of the teachings of Lord Buddha is nonviolence. Lord Buddha was- always against war, weapons and violence. In *Vinayapittaka's Cullavagga's Khudraskandha*, Lord Buddha permits the use of metals but weapons (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta, 2017). Metals cannot be used for making weapons. In the lesson of Sammak Baniijya (Appropriate Businesses) Buddha forbids five types of Business. The weapon business is one of them. Lord Buddha would always say that the victory achieved thru muscle power is a not an actual victory rather being restraint is the ultimate victory. Lord Buddha says: *Victory cannot be achieved through animosity rather can be thru friendship.*

If the people in this world adhere to the teachings of Lord Buddha, then there would be peace and harmony in this world where deadly weapons would not be made by burning fossil fuels to dominate over each other.

Unexpected Incident: Unexpected incidents mean that type of incidents that are not foreseen and happen abruptly, generally causing disastrous implications. Similarly, unexpected incidents do take place in the nature and environment too that are hard to predict and prevent for humans. For example earthquakes happen out of nowhere. But things that go wrong because of wrong decisions, irresponsibility unawareness of humans can be thwarted by adopting the teachings of Lord Buddha. At present we see the cities are made unplanned, A corrupt construction system at play, unnecessary rush to build a construction project overnight just to make profits ridden with serious carelessness and irresponsibility. This kind of irresponsibility leads to a disastrous consequence leading to not only financial loss but also loss of human lives.

One can say by understanding Lord Buddha's teachings that Buddhism does suggest making solid and healthy habitats. Lord Buddha advised to meticulously choose one's habitat in *Mahavagga's, Sutra-Bivanga's* Sanghadises (Bhikkhu Buddhahangsha, 2017). In *Milinda-Panha*, When Vikkhu Nagsen was trying to brief King Milinda on the signs of Shil (self-control) said, Lord Buddha has advised to choose a habitat meticulously. Acharya Nagsen gave some examples of that like the hygiene of the particular area should be the first priority to the Architect before making it a city, The obstacles in the area should be removed, the fluctuating surface should be made plain and a proper roadmap should be made before proceeding (Mahasthabir Dharmadhar, 1977). By this statement one can understand that even during the time of Lord Buddha architects existed and were assigned the task of building a city means people were aware about making planned cities.

Furthermore due to random and indiscriminate digging, the base of the surface gets weakened and ultimately leads to an avalanche. If one goes thru the teachings of Lord Buddha, He will come to realize that Lord Buddha has actually discouraged this sort of digging. In *Vinay Pittaka's Mahavagga's Pachittia's* Musabada vagga Lord Buddha has said that no monk can do digging neither he can order anyone to do that (Sthabir Pragyananda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017).

Saving lives from fire : During Lord Buddha's time The Sharavaggia monks used to set forests on fire leading to deaths of numerous wild animals and destruction of wild life altogether. Many Bihars and public habitats sometimes would also be affected by that. When the monks reached out to Lord Buddha, He advised them to not fire the forest as he prohibited that as a sin also told them to be cautious about incidents like this (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta, 2017). Earlier they did not keep their water pots full. Lord Buddha advised them to keep the pots full to deal with a sudden fire incident. Since fire incidents are generally massive in nature, Lord Buddha told the monks to stay and live together as they could fight the fire together when it erupts (Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Indragupta 2017).

Shortage of food and water: Throughout ancient times, the poor population has suffered from the lack of food and water due to various geographical, social, financial, and natural disasters. This situation was firmly established during the time of Buddha as well. At that time, society was mainly divided into four main categories: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishnavas, and Shudras. Due to this system, the lower classes of people did not have access to many water bodies. As a result, they had to struggle to get water. Lord Buddha was opposed to caste discrimination and promoted humanity above the caste system. He said (Das Asha, Bhikkhu Jyotipal & Mahasthabir Shilalankar, 2017), *Nobody becomes Kushal by birth, nobody becomes a Brahmin by birth. A person becomes Kushal by their actions, a person becomes a Brahmin by their actions.* Criticizing caste differences, Lord Buddha further said,

One does not become a Brahmin by having a particular hairstyle or by belonging to a specific lineage. Rather, the one who has established truth in their heart is pure and is the real Brahmin.

Due to Lord Buddha's rebellious voice, the caste distinctions that prevailed during that time were significantly reduced. Frequent wars during that period often led to shortages of food and water. At times, famines turned into pandemics because crops were destroyed during wars. Lord Buddha never supported war; instead, he always preached peace, friendship, and reconciliation. Due to Lord Buddha's intervention, the Shakya and Koliyan communities were able to overcome their water crisis. Between the Shakya and Koliyan kingdoms flew the Rohini River. Once, due to drought, the water levels decreased, leading to a dispute between the two groups over water sharing. At that time, Lord Buddha intervened and advised everyone to pursue peace and mutual understanding. Eventually, this crisis was resolved following his guidance (Barua Belu Rani, 2004).

During that period, natural disasters like droughts, floods, and famines were frequent, which caused widespread destruction in agriculture and famine. There are examples of villages where everyone cultivated crops on the same land (Barua Dipankar Srijnan, 2007). Once, when a severe famine occurred in Shravasti, Lord Buddha himself collected alms to address the crisis (Barua Jitendra Lal, 2016). When a drought caused famine in the capital of the Briji Kingdom, Vaishali, Lord Buddha visited and instructed Ananda Thera to recite the Ratna Sutta to alleviate the famine in the region (Bhikkhu Mettabangsa 2003). Often, when a famine was anticipated, kings would begin to store food for future use. In the *Vinaypittaka's Mahavagga*, it is mentioned that King Bimbisara distributed food among the people during a famine (Sthabir Pragyananda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017). Additionally, King Prasenjit of the Kosala Kingdom was known to distribute food and clothing among the people during times of disaster (Halder Manikuntala, 1996).

Emperor Ashoka was famous for his welfare works. Various inscriptions show that he considered his subjects as his own children. He was extremely generous, and he donated to sixty thousand monks every day (Barua Rabindra Bijoy, 1980). He also visited Lord Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini Kanan, and exempted the people living there from taxes (Barua Jyoti Bikash, 2016). Even during ordinary times, Emperor Ashoka was highly charitable, but during times of famine, his donations increased manyfold. Two famine relief food stores are mentioned in Mauryan-era inscriptions at Tamralipti. Famous archaeologist Raymond Aulchin believes these food storage sites were established during Emperor Ashoka's reign.

In the *Digha Nikaya's* Kutadanta Sutra, Lord Buddha gives three pieces of advice to Kutadanta in order to bring lasting peace and prosperity to his kingdom (Mahasthabir Rajguru Dharmaratna, 1962):

1. Help those who wish to engage in agriculture by providing them with seeds and tools.
2. Help those who wish to engage in business by providing them with capital.
3. Encourage the unemployed by motivating them according to their qualifications.

This shows that the kings always kept a stock of food and grains so that they could use them during times of disaster and restore the kingdom to normalcy.

Natural calamities: Natural calamities are inflicting upon mankind since the primitive era. And their effects on mankind are always long lasting. Back in the days of Lord Buddha, people did not have high technology but still learned to adapt with the environmental changes. Since they lived on the lap of nature, they knew the nature very well. With this knowledge (the surface of the rivers, the horizon of the air, the wandering of the cloud etc. they would always try to predict the upcoming calamities and make a plan to initiate techniques to deal with them.

Drought: One of the main natural calamities is drought. It's basically the lack of proper rain and the destruction of crops as a result of that ultimately causing a famine. Pali literature often mentions famines caused by drought, the concept of droughts was killing a lot of people and starting pandemics have been mentioned multiple times. For example, the sad stories of drought in the state of Brijji's capital vaishali or Sravasti. Since ancient India was agriculture oriented, therefore droughts directly affected ppl. To deal with drought, every state used to preserve water. In *Digha Nikaya's* Mahasudarsan Sutta, It is said that king Mahasudarsan used to make ponds to preserve water to deal with drought (Shilvadra Bhikkhu 2008). A similar incident is also mentioned in *Digha Nikaya's* Sondanda Sutta. In the book named "*Prachin Varoter Itibritto* (the complete encyclopedia of ancient India), A cavern called Pilanga is mentioned where people used to preserve water (Basu Serijankinath, 1929).

Lightning: Lightning is another type of natural calamity. Lightning happens mainly because of the collision between two heavily charged clouds. Lightning carries immense electrical and thermal energy. A single lightning strike can carry several million volts of electricity. Lightning not only causes loss of life but also causes significant damage to infrastructure. The wildfires caused by lightning often destroy forests and disrupt the balance of the environment. If we consider the time of Lord Buddha, it can be seen that the kings of that time were not primarily focused on expanding their kingdoms through war, but rather on dealing with natural disasters. In the Mahasudarsan Sutta of the Digha Nikaya, it is mentioned that King Mahasudarsan used to plant more and more palm trees in his garden. The tops of the palm trees keep the soil moist and cool. Additionally, the palm trees make the surrounding environment more suitable for rest and even protect against lightning. Due to the tall and pointed nature of the palm tree, lightning strikes it and quickly flows to the ground. Also, since there is a higher amount of moisture in the trunk of the palm tree, it can easily channel the lightning to the ground. Furthermore, its deep roots direct the lightning into the earth.

Flood: In ancient times, kings established their kingdoms on the banks of rivers because rivers provided water for drinking, agriculture, and trade. The same scenario existed during Lord Buddha's time, such as in Magadha, where the Ganga was to the south, Shon to the west, and Champa to the east. Similarly, in the Kosala kingdom, there were rivers like Sodanira to the north, Sarpika to the south, and Sumoti to the east. Due to the geographical location and weather, heavy rainfall and floods were common occurrences. The people of ancient India not only had to endure floods but also adopted various strategies to deal with them. The king's contemporary to Buddha placed more importance on natural disasters and safety while constructing cities. At that time, cities were strategically built on higher ground. For example, the capital of Magadha, Rajagriha, was constructed in a very high place. The capital of the Magadha kingdom, Rajgriha, was located between five mountains (Bevar, Pandav, Baipul, Gijjakot, Isigiri). Therefore, Rajgriha was also known as Giribajja (Barua Jyoti Bikash, 2016). Not only did it prevent floods, but it also protected the kingdom from external invasions. During that time, embankments and canals were constructed to prevent floods. In Kautilya's Arthashastra, the construction of embankments and canals for flood prevention is mentioned. Reviewing Pali literature, it can be said that caves were used as guest houses during that time. Caves like Pippolippon, Indrasal, Kapath Kandar, Gautam Kander, Tapath Kander and others were believed to have been used as shelters during floods (Chakma Amar Kanti 2019).

Extreme Cold and Heat: Extreme temperatures, both extreme cold and extreme heat, are also considered natural disasters. Excessive heat can be harmful to human health, leading to various health problems such as heatstroke and dehydration. On the other hand, extremely cold temperatures can cause hypothermia, frostbite, and breathing difficulties. Such weather conditions also affect the animal kingdom, disturbing the overall natural balance. Lord Buddha never supported harsh physical discomfort. Once, when he left home in search of truth, he saw a group of people meditating under the harsh sun and sitting in front of fire, hoping to attain enlightenment. As a result, their skin became darkened. He also saw another group of people meditating in icy cold water in extreme cold conditions (Barua Ranadhir, 1957). Such severe practices did not seem logical or acceptable to him, and he condemned them. In the *Udanvagga*, Lord Buddha observed people bathing in the freezing cold waters of the Himalayan mountain to calm their minds. Lord Buddha commented that such practices did not bring peace of mind; rather, they caused harm to health (Bhikkhu Jyotipal, 1930). He emphasized that such actions do not bring mental peace but cause damage to health. Instead, Lord Buddha advocated for the middle path. From this perspective, it can be said that Lord Buddha's philosophy guides us to survive extreme weather. He did not directly advise keeping oneself separate from heat and cold, but he always advocated for maintaining a healthy and comfortable body, so that illness never becomes an obstacle to spiritual progress. Therefore, following Lord Buddha's philosophy for maintaining health is of utmost importance.

The basic teachings of Buddhism emphasized mental preparation, social solidarity, and respect for the environment during natural disasters. Mental Preparation through Buddha's Teachings: Buddha's core teaching was that the world is impermanent and filled with suffering. Natural disasters are part of this impermanence, bringing suffering into people's lives. By understanding this, individuals could accept the losses from disasters as part of life, which would help reduce mental stress and despair. Meditation and mindfulness practices taught people to stay present in the moment. During natural disasters, when everything is uncertain, this mental stability would help individuals remain calm and face the situation without panic.

Pandemic: Pandemic means a contagious disease that spreads all over the world and affects many people. From the day one of humankind, People are getting affected by pandemics. During Lord Buddha's time several deadly pandemics were there too. The kings of that time used to take advice from Lord Buddha when their states were affected by pandemics. In Buddhism and Buddhist literature several ways to deal with pandemics are instructed.

During Lord Buddha's time Vaishali was a very rich city. It has been mentioned before, once there was a sudden problem of drought that ultimately destroyed their crops. Thus a famine started and people were dying due to starvation. The dead bodies of the deceased were dumped outside of the city and left open without cremation. Therefore the bodies started decomposing and spreading several diseases. Ridden with the precarious situation, the common people reached out to the king for help. The king arranged an urgent meeting in which most of the policy-makers and common people decided to invite Lord Buddha in Vaishali. At the invitation of the then King Licchabiraj, Lord Buddha came to Vaishali and recited "Ratna Sutta". This recitation caused a heavy rain that ultimately drained the dead-bodies away cleaning the entire city (Bhikkhu Mettabangsa, 2003). Speaking of pandemics, one must remember the very recent pandemic of Covid. In the year of 2020, the entire world was affected by Covid-19. According to the WHO, Around 3.4 million people succumbed to this pandemic. It is found that the other name of this virus is Novel Corona Virus. The WHO suspects the origin of that virus in an animal. According to the investigation the root of that pandemic goes back to the retail market of seafood in the Chinese state of Wuhan. Several animals were presented there as food. Bats were also presented there. It is widely believed by most of the scientists that a particular type of bats called "Harshashu" is responsible for this pandemic.

Buddhism is a religion which strictly prohibits the killing of animals and selling them. In the concept of Panchasila, The first thing said is: *'I am learning to refrain from killing animals'*.

In other words, one must refrain from killing animals. Moreover, it is strictly prohibited in Buddhism to do business with dead bodies. In *Anguttara Nikaya*, five types of businesses were prohibited and among them the 2nd and the 3rd ones were the businesses of living animals and their flesh. In Arya-Astangikmagga's Sammak Jibika, it is clearly said to refrain from such businesses that directly harm animals or any living beings. Lord

Buddha has spoken of everything that is important for mankind. He advised to refrain from killing animals and consuming them as food to prevent the disease and the germs from these animals to spread over humans. In *Mahavagga's Vesajjaskandha*, It is said that when Lord Buddha was staying in Baransi's Mrigadava at a monastery, a monk fell ill and wanted to consume uneaten meat for his cure. Then a female monk named Supriya cut a portion of her flesh and gave it to the ill monk to eat. After coming to know about this story Lord Buddha issued a statement prohibiting the eating of the flesh of humans, dogs and other animals (Sthabir Pragyananda, Mahathero Prajnabangsha & Bhikkhu Karuna Bangsha, 2017). This is how a pandemic would be stopped.

In *Tripitakka's Digha Nikaya's Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, It is stated that during those times there would be pandemics and famines in the bank of The Ganges very often. Back in the days of Lord Buddha almost 2500 years ago, there were pandemics like Cholera, Pox, Diarrhoea etc. Especially Cholera was very common at that time. Cholera is kind of a disease that spreads with polluted water. While affected by this, tremendous amounts of water and salt get drained out of the body rapidly causing dehydration. In order to fill that deficit one has to drink saline whose main ingredient is salt. In *Vinaypittaka's Mahavagga's Vessajjaskandha*, Lord Buddha has advised monks to drink solutions of different kinds of salts and water. In *Tripittaka's Vinaypittaka's Chullavagga*, Lord Buddha has advised to use a filter to purify the water.

Furthermore, he advised to use enough water properly to clean after defecating as diseases don't get spread by the flies and insects. Pure water is everyone's right to consume. But during floods, water gets polluted. Then different means are used to decontaminate the water. In the book of *Milinda Panha* Smritilakkhan, (Questions of King Milinda), it is mentioned as an example that the monk Nagasen told King Milinda: when King Milinda traveled with his attendants, the water would become muddy. At that time, alum was used to purify the water. From this, it is understood that even in those times, alum was applied for water purification (Mahasthabir Dharmadhar, 1977).

CONCLUSION

According to the discussion of this article, it is clear that Buddhist teachings are not only a religious belief but also a life philosophy that can give practical solutions to our current crises. Chief Seattle, an ancient chief of the Native American Indians, more than a hundred years ago said — "We know that the Earth does not belong to us, man belongs to the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life — he is only a thread in it. The reasons for the problems like environmental pollution, climate change, pandemics, and natural disasters are human, selfishness, greed, arrogance, and ignorance toward nature. We were taught by Gautama Buddha that the solution to these issues was not found through external forces or technology, but through internal changes within ourselves. Buddhist philosophy shows us how to build a sustainable future based on humanity, empathy, and awareness. If we can realize the Buddha's teaching, we can secure peaceful, beautiful, and sustainable environment, not just for ourselves but for the whole world.

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