

Eastern Philosophy as a Solution to Modern Socio-Political Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This Study explores how the principles of Right Livelihood and other aspects of Buddhist philosophy can apply to the present socioeconomic issues of corruption, exploitation, and inequality. Historical Buddhist texts such as The Dhammapada and Anguttara Nikaya, professorial and novelist opinions in conversation, and current scholarly literature are interwoven throughout this presentation. It focuses on how relationship, virtue-based leadership, and mindfulness transform one. A good study illustrates that Right Livelihood promotes social justice, human concern, and well-being above all ethical livelihoods. The implication would be that publicity campaigns, counseling, and schooling can likewise mitigate the practices that are in fact driven by institutional corruption and greed. These policies, supported by programs such as the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), go in line with the principles of Buddhism to make moral leadership in social change more possible. It is in such a context that the study highlights timeless Buddhist ideas for bringing harmony, sustainability, and justice into contemporary institutions.

Keywords: Right Livelihood, Eastern Philosophy, Buddhist Ethics, Social Justice, Ethical Leadership, Socio-Political Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

This research considers the applicability of Buddhist philosophy in the context of Right Livelihood for the solution of modern social problems such as inequality, exploitation, and corruption. Referring to some of the traditional texts of Buddhism, like the *Dhammapada* and the *Anguttara Nikaya*, and to current scholarly writing and the opinions of a professor and a novelist, this research exemplifies how some essential lessons learned serve good answers to the problems in question such as interconnectedness, compassion, and mindfulness. Buddhist philosophy provides ageless insight focused on establishing harmony and well-being for all. Its lessons on compassion, mindfulness, and moral conduct offer workable answers to problems in society and individuals. A road to balanced living is offered by Buddhism, which is based on the Four Noble Truths, which alleviate suffering. As a guide for negotiating intricate social, political, and institutional difficulties in contemporary society, these ideas are still applicable today. This study interprets how Buddhist philosophy can help address modern issues like injustice, environmental harm, and mental health. Teachings by the Buddha focused on suffering (*dukkha*), its end, and existence, through the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, karma, and interdependence. W. Xinyue notes that Eastern philosophy uses meditation to promote inner awakening and deeper self-understanding.¹ I am interested in this topic because of experiences that reveal significant mental and social disturbances and highlight societal issues that can be addressed through Eastern philosophy, particularly Buddhism. W. Xinyue states that Buddhist

¹ Wo Xinyue, "Research on the Development of Eastern Social Thought and Philosophy", 160

² Ibid, 2023, p.162

³ MA. Le Anh Dung, "The Human Issues in Eastern Philosophy"

political philosophy encourages rulers to govern with compassion and justice.² A *Dhamma* raja is a ruler who governs by the *Dhamma*, promoting justice, compassion, and wisdom, prioritizing citizens' well-being over personal or elite interests. This topic is important to the field as it connects Eastern philosophies to contemporary societal challenges. MA. Le Anh Dung points out that withdrawing from the world in search of nothingness can lead to negative thoughts and cynicism.³ Examining how Buddhist principles address issues like mental health and social inequality highlights the relevance of diverse traditions in modern contexts. Equanimity is a balanced state of mind that promotes unbiased and fair decision-making in socio-political contexts. The *Sangha* exemplifies harmony in socio-political Buddhism, promoting cooperation and shared responsibility. This research promotes cross-cultural dialogue and informs solutions that enhance social well-being and sustainability.

Investigating the impact of Buddhist philosophy on people and groups in various social circumstances within contemporary society is the aim of this qualitative study. This study focuses on how compassion, mindfulness, and interconnectedness three fundamental Buddhist teachings provide useful answers to current social problems. Understanding how these ideas can support individual development, fortify ties within the community, and advance general well-being is its goal. It also looks at how Buddhist philosophy offers solutions for overcoming contemporary issues like mental health issues, social injustice, and moral conundrums. S. Kumar states that People should think about their ideas, feelings, and behaviours because, according to Buddhism, these can entirely transform a person.² This highlights how self-awareness and intentional behavior are central to personal transformation within Buddhist philosophy. It will specifically look at how Buddhist teachings respond to the societal annoyance brought on by problems like corruption and poor management, providing guidance on how to respond to these difficulties by developing patience, moral leadership, and inner calm. S. Kumar states that "Buddhism recognizes the importance of personal growth in the human life cycle of reincarnation and how it can result in ongoing improvements to a person's day-to-day functioning."³ Through this investigation, the study hopes to demonstrate how applicable Buddhist ideas are in assisting people and communities in facing and overcoming the challenges of the contemporary world. Only the study of Buddhist philosophy and teachings will be covered. The study will pay particular attention to how important ideas like connection, mindfulness, and compassion solve today's problems.

Buddhism teaches that a leader should focus on creating people who do not need to be supervised, who have personal missions and know organizational goals, who can take care of themselves, and who are bent on being their own masters in order to enable the development of others.⁴ This study focuses on Buddhist thinking in order to preserve depth and focus, even though other Eastern philosophical traditions might also provide pertinent insights. The study interprets how Buddhist principles might offer socio-political solutions, specifically for problems like ethical leadership, corruption, and the general well-being of contemporary society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

People take on human forms, integrate into society, and provide an example of the ideal gentleman one who must know how to take care of himself, have a family, run the country, and promote world peace.⁵ Eastern philosophy promotes meditation and quiet as ways for people to awaken to their inner knowledge and insight, allowing them to transcend surface-level distractions and better understand their own thoughts

² Sumit Kumar, "[Relevance of Buddhist philosophy in modern management theory](#)", 2109

³ Ibid, 2014, p.2109

⁴ Ibid, 2014, p.2109

⁵ Dung, MA Le Anh. "THE HUMAN ISSUES IN EASTERN PHILOSOPHY." *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*. 2582-0745, Vol. 5, No. 05; 2022, p.18

and feelings.⁶ This awakening ties directly to the Buddhist focus on spiritual emancipation by overcoming suffering and desires.⁷ Suffering is brought on by egotism, the illusion of identity, and the urge for mind-body-complexity (*nāma-rūpa*). The elimination of deception, pain, aversion, and attachment results from the destruction of egoism and will-to-live.⁸ In Pali, *lobha* (desire or greed) is one of the main causes of all problems. It's fascinating to observe how a way of life is presented to oneself in such a way that, by following it step by step, It erases several human flaws and traits that lead to tension and boredom, which are problems that most people face today.⁹ Getting over attachment or avarice, wrath, and delusion, all of which are viewed as the main causes of suffering and the origins of unwholesome behavior, is the foundation of Buddhist ideals.¹⁰ The widespread occurrence of anger and greed in contemporary society at all social interaction levels is well documented.¹¹ Supporting this, practices like Zen and yoga foster inner peace, teaching individuals to maintain calm despite external fluctuations.¹² This highlights the essential Buddhist teaching that liberation begins with self-awareness and inward focus. Individualism, equality, and concern for the well-being of the planet and all sentient beings are characteristics of Buddhism, a religion that is practiced worldwide. Kindness, gentleness, consideration, and respect toward oneself and others are all part of cultivating a non-harming attitude toward oneself, other people, and all living things.¹³ Such personal transformation has broader societal implications, as Buddhism emphasizes a connection between individual inner peace and the harmony of society, asserting that individual tranquility fosters social order.¹⁴ Building on this, Buddhist political theory encourages leaders to lead with fairness and compassion, laying the groundwork for societal well-being (W. Xinyue, 2023, p.162).¹⁵ At the same time, the concept of "wu-wei" critiques excessive focus on fame and gain, enabling individuals to perceive sociopolitical issues with clarity (MA. Le Anh Dung, 2022, p.18).¹⁶ Buddhism holds that by putting aside one's underlying wants, one can conquer one's issues.¹⁷ Buddhism's adaptation to modern challenges reflects its resilience and relevance; the introduction of modern concepts such as liberal democracy, socialism, and capitalist structures influenced both Buddhist and non-Buddhist thought throughout Asia.¹⁸ A strong connection to worldly possessions, such as riches, property, territory, pleasures, political superiority, or economic domination, frequently leads to conflict.¹⁹ Among the most significant characteristics that set human life apart from that of brutes is the human desire to live well in addition to simply existing, and moral deterioration is a two-edged sword that has a negative impact on both nature and human psycho-physical well-being. They regard nature with hostility and violence as a result of their thirst for ever-increasing objects.²⁰ The Buddha observed how greed, rage, and illusion overpower people.²¹ Buddhism navigated new opportunities and difficulties in the 19th and 20th centuries, breaking away from premodern traditions

⁶ Xinyue, Wo. "Research on the Development of Eastern Social Thought and Philosophy." In *2023 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2023)*, pp. 155-166. Atlantis Press, 2023.

⁷ Ibid, 2023, p.161

⁸ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021).

⁹ Ibid, 2021, p.37

¹⁰ Ibid, 2021, p.54

¹¹ Ibid, 2021, p.75

¹² Xinyue, Wo. "Research on the Development of Eastern Social Thought and Philosophy." In *2023 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2023)*, pp. 155-166. Atlantis Press, 2023, p.161

¹³ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021), p.71

¹⁴ Xinyue, Wo. "Research on the Development of Eastern Social Thought and Philosophy." In *2023 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2023)*, pp. 155-166. Atlantis Press, 2023, p.162

¹⁵ Ibid, 2023, p.162

¹⁶ Dung, MA Le Anh. "THE HUMAN ISSUES IN EASTERN PHILOSOPHY." *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*. 2582-0745, Vol. 5, No. 05; 2022, p.18

¹⁷ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021), p.25

¹⁸ DL Snellgrove and JM Kitagawa, Accessed on December 8, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism/Buddhism-in-the-contemporary-world>

¹⁹ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021), p.62

²⁰ Ibid, 2021, p.91

²¹ Ibid, 2021, p.36

and embracing broader global changes.²² To achieve harmony, Buddhism advocates ethical practices like proper livelihood, or "Right Livelihood," which emphasizes making deliberate decisions that uphold empathy, non-harm, and moral rectitude to promote both individual and societal welfare.²³ This concept particularly refers to earning a living without harming other beings, avoiding professions like trading in weapons, slaves, or intoxicants.²⁴ Any form of subsistence that is founded on deceit or greed that is, that involves violating the second precept that is, stealing, either directly or indirectly is likewise considered to be wrong.²⁵ As a part of Buddhism's ethical teachings (*sīla*), it complements right behavior and appropriate speech.²⁶ This fundamental idea connects to transforming one's energies into wisdom and compassion, fostering societal harmony.²⁷ To achieve this harmony, Buddhism advocates ethical practices like proper livelihood, which serves as a reminder to act responsibly as consumers and citizens.²⁸ Livelihood connects with the Buddhist ideal of transforming one's own energies into wisdom and compassion, fostering not only personal growth but also societal harmony.²⁹ For instance, Right Livelihood initiatives, such as those by the FWBO, aim to alter the current social structure while ensuring economic efficiency and financial independence.³⁰ *Subhadra Mati* highlights this as a wholehearted effort, which may appear idealistic but represents a profound stance against capitalistic excesses.³¹ In addition to education, the community can participate in a range of extracurricular activities, development initiatives, or other pursuits that surpass the necessary commercial services that could help the community achieve its "Right Livelihood."³² Jones suggests that the implementation of "Right Livelihood" allows communities to become microcosms of a more equitable and compassionate society.³³ This transformation aligns with dependent origination, emphasizing how interconnectedness shapes our actions and their broader impact. It also reminds individuals that ethical decisions and self-awareness can facilitate a virtuous cycle of development.³⁴ It also reminds individuals that ethical decisions and self-awareness can facilitate a virtuous cycle of development.³⁵

The *Dhamma* of Buddha underscores the necessity of eliminating ignorance, which is at the root of suffering, while fostering hope and purposeful living.³⁶ In doing so, Buddhist teachings stress that personal liberation from greed, hatred, and delusion not only alleviates individual suffering but also addresses social problems, creating a foundation for a just society.³⁷ Supporting this idea, Buddhist ethics, expressed through the Five Precepts (*Panchasila*), provide a moral framework to guide behavior, reinforcing mutual respect and harmony in interpersonal relationships.³⁸ The concept of retribution, as Kenyo explains, underscores

²² Ibid, Accessed on December 8, 2024

²³ Ibid, Accessed on December 8, 2024

²⁴ Ibid, Accessed on December 8, 2024

²⁵ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021), p.60

²⁶ Ibid, Accessed on December 8, 2024

²⁷ Khetjoi, Sitthiporn, and Phra Worachat Thasa. "The Buddhist Principles of Social Justice: An Application in Social Work Practice." *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* 8, no. 1 (2017), p.176

²⁸ Somers, Brian D. "Mindfulness in the Context of Engaged Buddhism: A Case for Engaged Mindfulness." *Religions* 13, no. 8 (2022): 746. p.8

²⁹ Ibid, 2017, p.176

³⁰ Baumann, Martin. "Working in the right spirit: the application of Buddhist right livelihood in the friends of the western Buddhist order." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5 (1998). P. 132-133

³¹ Ibid, 1998, p.132

³² Jones, Ken. "Buddhism and social action." *The Wheel Publication* 285/286 (1981), p.23

³³ Ibid, 1981, p.22

³⁴ Kumar, Sumit. "Relevance of Buddhist philosophy in modern management theory." *Psychology and Education* 58, no. 2 (2020): 2104-2111. p.2109

³⁵ Ibid, Accessed on December 8, 2024

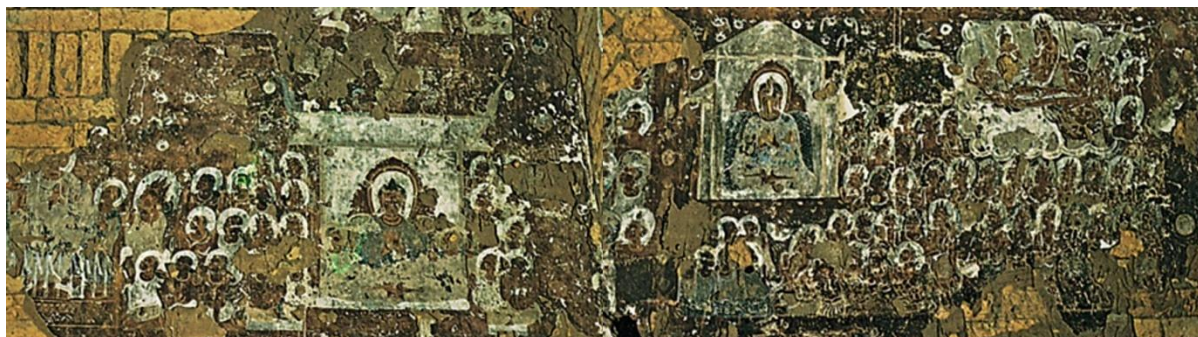
³⁶ Bagde, Uttamkumars. "Essential elements of human rights in Buddhism." *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 6, no. 2 (2014): 32-38. p.37

³⁷ Jones, Ken. "Buddhism and social action." *The Wheel Publication* 285/286 (1981), p.3

³⁸ Ibid, 2014, p.37

the importance of accountability in fostering justice and reducing corruption, which are critical for creating a stable society.³⁹

Figure 1: Fresco Painting



Fresco of the Preaching Buddha and Livelihood at the Wet-kyi-in, Gu-byauk-gyi, Pagan, c. 1113.

Buddhism also highlights that unfairness and extreme income disparity lead to jealousy, animosity, and societal suffering, advocating for equality and dignity for all.⁴⁰ It posits that understanding one another's viewpoints and practicing mutual acceptance foster trust and peaceful coexistence.⁴¹ Persistent problems with unfairness and corruption not only undermine moral principles but are also recognized as major causes of poverty and political instability, especially in Asia's developing countries.⁴² It is essential to spread the idea of retribution broadly in order to foster moral character and address these structural societal issues.⁴³

The Eightfold Path's moral guidelines serve that function: one cannot expect to obtain insight through meditation until they have achieved excellence in their own speech, deeds, and living.⁴⁴ Buddhism does not overlook the realm of lay interpersonal and social interactions, even while it places a strong emphasis on a more complex monastic discipline, moral restraint and appropriate living, and a personal lay ethic of giving.⁴⁵ The importance of ethical teaching is reiterated in the context of alleviating societal ills, emphasizing qualities like generosity, moral discipline, and compassion, as well as the importance of refraining from harm.⁴⁶ The *Dharma* offers a novel perspective on social ethics, illustrating how societal transformation can arise through the realization of our true selves.⁴⁷ For instance, Macy highlights how principles of economic sharing and proper livelihood provide practical guidance for constructing sustainable and peaceful societies.⁴⁸ The Buddha's direct addresses to social ethics throughout the Pali texts, as well as the implicit social ramifications of his teachings, further underscore this focus.⁴⁹

Sarvodaya exemplifies how spiritual teachings can inspire and guide individuals, both Buddhists and non-

³⁹ 三友健容. "Present-day social problem and its solution by Buddhism." *法華文化研究* 35 (2009):1-12. p.7

⁴⁰ Ibid, 2009, p.10

⁴¹ Ibid, 2009, p.10

⁴² Ibid, 2009, p.2

⁴³ Ibid, 2009, p.8

⁴⁴ Baumann, Martin. "Working in the right spirit: the application of Buddhist right livelihood in the friends of the western Buddhist order." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5 (1998). P. 135

⁴⁵ Tonni, Shaikh Tajmoon Nahar. "Buddhist Ethics And Its Impacts On Modern Time." (2021), p.51

⁴⁶ Somers, Brian D. "Mindfulness in the Context of Engaged Buddhism: A Case for Engaged Mindfulness." *Religions* 13, no. 8 (2022): 746. p.6

⁴⁷ Macy, Joanna. "Buddhist approaches to social action." *Journal of humanistic psychology* 24, no. 3 (1984): 117-129. p.118

⁴⁸ Ibid, 1984, p.126

⁴⁹ Ibid, 1984, p.120

Buddhists in taking up social causes. It highlights that the Dharma not only empowers individuals to strive for societal change but also offers direction for the transformative process itself.⁵⁰ By fostering an openness to suffering, as interconnected beings within open systems, Buddhism cultivates the capacity to respond creatively and skillfully to societal challenges.⁵¹ This interconnectedness ensures that each action becomes a reaffirmation and understanding of the principles shaping reality.⁵² A critical aspect of Buddhist social ethics is transcending political boundaries. It reveals the fabricated nature of such constructs and emphasizes a deeper, universal human dimension at odds with political fiction.⁵³ Ethical practices like these reflect the Buddhist principle of non-violence, advocating for actions that do not harm people, cultures, or the environment.⁵⁴ By encouraging practices aligned with Right Livelihood, individuals can contribute to creating a more peaceful world and enable forms of justice to flourish.⁵⁵ For those unable to adopt Right Livelihood immediately, practitioners can extend support through their social practices without compromising their own financial stability.⁵⁶ This interconnected support fosters societal transformation, particularly if resources are directed toward enhancing equity in housing, education, and health care, thereby increasing opportunities for Right Livelihood and advancing a fairer society.⁵⁷ Through compassion and non-violence, whether practiced within Right Livelihood or through other means, individuals naturally become educators, spreading ethical principles and learning in the process.⁵⁸ Buddhist approach to mindfulness and ethical living integrates personal growth with broader systemic changes. By cultivating awareness, managing emotions, and adhering to ethical principles, individuals and societies can create environments where dignity, harmony, and respect prevail.⁵⁹ This approach reflects the instrumental nature of Buddhist teachings, which are seen as practical tools for achieving societal and spiritual goals.⁶⁰ The ultimate goal of such practices is the liberation of all beings from the root causes of suffering.⁶¹

⁵⁰ Ibid, 1984, p.126

⁵¹ Ibid, 1984, p.125

⁵² Ibid, 1984, p.118

⁵³ Ibid, 1984, p.117

⁵⁴ King, Jean Sadako. "Exploration of Right Livelihood As one Path to Peace and Justice." *Asian Review* 6, no. 1 (1992): 17-26. P.25

⁵⁵ Ibid, 1992, p.21

⁵⁶ Ibid, 1992, p.22

⁵⁷ Ibid, 1992, p.24

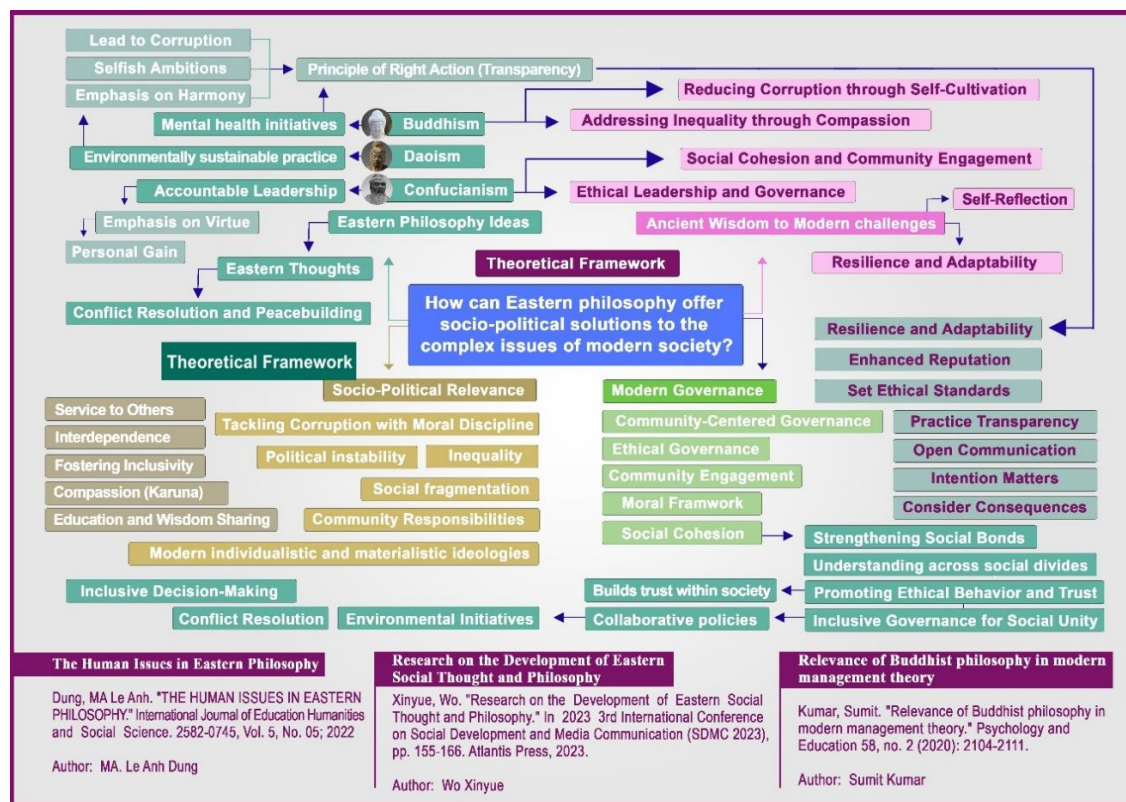
⁵⁸ Ibid, 1992, p.26

⁵⁹ Khetjoi, Sitthiporn, and Phra Worachat Thasa. "The Buddhist Principles of Social Justice: An Application in Social Work Practice." *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* 8, no. 1 (2017), p.176

⁶⁰ Baumann, Martin. "Working in the right spirit: the application of Buddhist right livelihood in the friends of the western Buddhist order." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5 (1998). P. 135

⁶¹ Somers, Brian D. "Mindfulness in the Context of Engaged Buddhism: A Case for Engaged Mindfulness." *Religions* 13, no. 8 (2022): 746. p.14

Figure 2: Theoretical framework



METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative methodology with a focus on interpretive and documentation-based analysis. The study primarily investigates Buddhist teachings, particularly the concept of Right Livelihood, by analyzing classical Buddhist texts such as The Dhammapada and Anguttara Nikaya, alongside contemporary scholarly literature. These sources provide insight into how Right Livelihood promotes ethical behavior and addresses societal challenges like corruption, exploitation, and inequality. Supporting data was also collected through interviews with a professor and a novelist, offering diverse perspectives on the applicability of Buddhist principles to modern professional and societal contexts. This approach seeks to understand how traditional Buddhist teachings can inspire ethical governance and sustainable societal reform, fostering justice and mindfulness in contemporary systems. Document analysis will revolve around interpreting Buddhist scriptures from the past. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.⁶² Specifically, following concepts:

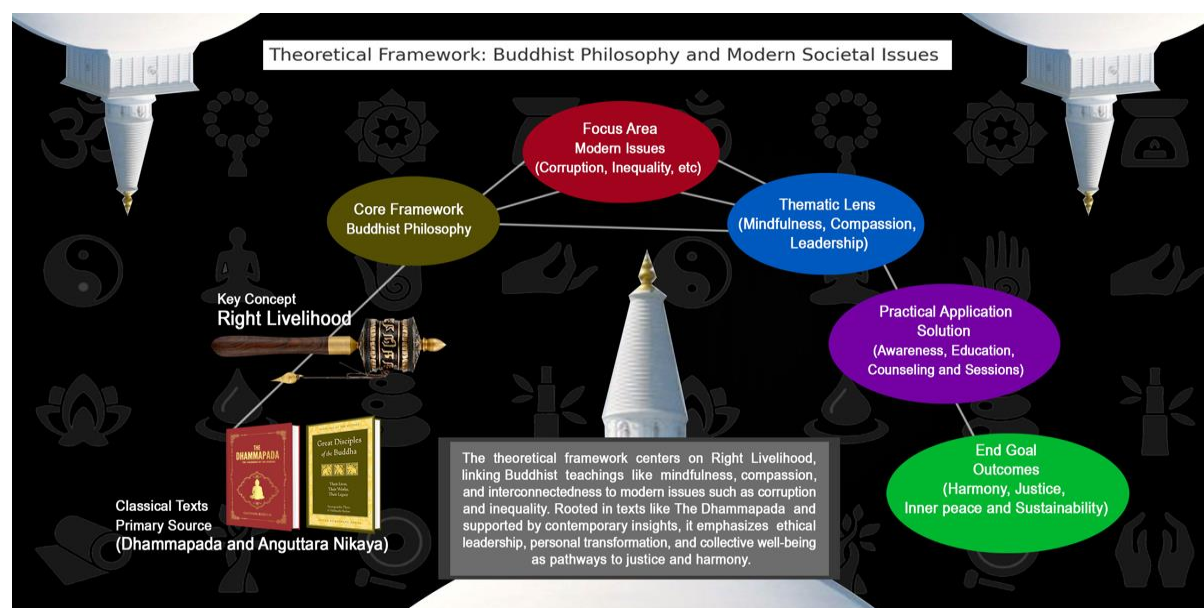
Right livelihood, And what is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This is called right livelihood.⁶³ This concept can be applied to promote honest living, and urging people to follow the right path. Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*), explains that all phenomena arise due to interconnected causes and conditions, emphasizing that nothing exists independently. It addresses human suffering (*Dukkha*), ethical

⁶² Merriam, Sharan B., 187

⁶³ "Right Livelihood: *samma ajiṃ*", edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-ajivo/index.html>

and moral issues, social and political corruption, environmental challenges, and personal and spiritual growth by highlighting the interdependence of actions and consequences. This concept promotes mindful living and ethical behavior by showing how actions lead to consequences. It helps individuals and societies avoid harm, reduce ignorance, and break cycles of suffering. Mindfulness (*Sati*) is the practice of maintaining present-moment awareness with clarity and non-judgment, observing thoughts, feelings, and actions to understand their nature and impact. By integrating Buddhist concepts into modern systems, societies can address ethical, environmental, and mental health challenges effectively. Most documents and artifacts exist prior to commencing the research study at hand.⁶⁴ Right Livelihood ensures fairness and sustainability in work, Dependent Origination fosters a deeper understanding of interconnectedness, and Mindfulness enhances awareness and compassion. Documents and artifacts are, in fact, a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator. These types of data sources can exist in both a physical setting and an online setting.⁶⁵ These teachings can help address modern societal issues like corruption and inequality. This research may serve as a proposal for governments to adopt these principles for more ethical and sustainable solutions. The basis for interpreting how Buddhist teachings could function as frameworks for tackling the issues facing contemporary society is laid by these documents.

Figure 3: Theoretical framework



Research Approach

This research applied qualitative methodology., combining document analysis of *The Dhammapada* and *Anguttara Nikaya* with interviews of Buddhist scholars, including professors and authors. This design helped explore the texts and their relevance to modern issues, focusing on Right Livelihood.

⁶⁴ Merriam, Sharan B., and Elizabeth J. Tisdell. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. (John Wiley & Sons, 2015),162

⁶⁵ Merriam, Sharan B., 160

Data Collection

For this study, data was collected from primary and secondary sources to thoroughly understand Buddhist teachings and their application in modern times. A thorough analysis of the texts *The Dhammapada* and *Anguttara Nikaya* was part of the main data, which concentrated on Right Livelihood, the fifth component of the Buddhist Eightfold Path. Data collecting also included sending surveys to elicit a range of viewpoints and conducting Zoom interviews with experts. To guarantee that the interview responses effectively contributed to the study, they were transcribed. This method offered a thorough grasp of Right Livelihood and its applicability to current concerns by fusing scriptural analysis with professional insights.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this research was carefully prepared with help from experts and authors. Before they were involved, their consent was obtained. Topics including exploitation, greed, harm, social and economic difficulties, and solutions to these concerns were the main focus of the questions. Buddhist teachings were also incorporated, particularly the idea of Right Livelihood. To make sure that the research is more accurate and robust, experts were questioned and a questionnaire was completed. Their answers were then combined with document analysis. This method aids in offering trustworthy and useful answers to contemporary issues.

Document analysis

Table 1 - Insights on Right Livelihood from *The Dhammapada*

	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Teaching from The Dhammapada</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Verse</i>
1	Dishonesty and Deceit	"The liar goes to hell; also he who, having done wrong, says, 'I did not do it.' Both after death become equal, men of base deeds in the other world." ⁶⁶	The quoted statement thus underlines the damage incurred by untruthfulness. In this day and age, the problem of dishonesty and corrupt practices of corruption originates mainly from workplaces and in governmental institutions. The Right Livelihood approach makes it evident that living truly and righteously saves one from facing the backlash of dishonesty in present and future contexts.	306
2	Ethical Conduct	"By oneself is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself; no one can purify another." ⁶⁷	This verse emphasizes personal accountability for one's actions. It concurs with the fact that every individual has control over their actions and choices, including their livelihood. In contemporary society, it emphasizes that ethical decisions must be made, especially avoiding corruption because one is accountable for one's actions and	165

⁶⁶ *The Dhammapada*, Verse 306, 1999-2024 <https://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php>

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 1999-2024, Verse 165

			its consequences.	
3	Greed and Materialism Greed and Desire	"Not by a shower of gold coins does contentment arise in sensual pleasures. Sorrowful is he who clings to them, while he who sees through their illusion is free of sorrow." ⁶⁸ "From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear. For one wholly free from craving, there is no grief so whence fear." ⁶⁹	In today's world, wealth and material pleasures usually go hand in hand with greed and corruption. True satisfaction cannot be derived from such things as wealth or power, which usually is central to corrupt practices. Living a life based on Right Livelihood, free of greed, brings peace and true freedom from sorrow. These desires give birth to anxiety, fear, and corruption. The present problems of power misuse and bad business practices arise from such desires. The Right Livelihood path leads away from such desires and makes way for a peaceful, moral way of life that has no grief and fear because of unchecked craving.	186–187 216
4	Self-Control in Professions	"He who harms living beings is not noble. He who is harmless towards all living beings is called noble."	As an extension of Right Livelihood, this quote condemns harming others for personal benefit. Today, corruption includes exploitation and harm of people for personal gain in finance or political fields. It is vital in modern society to battle corruption and injustice as a result of integrity and ethical conduct in a noble livelihood, free from causing harm.	270
5	Unrighteous Gains	"Better than living a hundred years without seeing the Deathless is living a single day, virtuous and meditative." ⁷⁰	This verse represents the importance of living ethically as opposed to achieving material success. In contemporary society, individuals often compromise ethics for success and money, which results in corruption. This teaching teaches that a life lived virtuously for a short period is worth more than a long life spent immersed in unethical	114

⁶⁸ Ibid, 1999-2024, Verse 186-187

⁶⁹ Ibid,1999-2024, Verse 216

⁷⁰ Ibid,1999-2024, Verse 214

			behavior.	
6	Harmful Actions for Gain	"By giving up evil, one is purified. By cultivating good, one is purified. By cleansing one's mind, one is purified. This is the teaching of the awakened ones." ⁷¹	This quote puts forth purity of personal character through morally upright behavior and mental culture as the most important thing. Through Right Livelihood, by sowing good intentions in life and through mental purification, evil deeds and corrupt ways within this world may be well wiped out	183
7	Power of Wrong Intention	"The mind is the forerunner of all states. The mind is chief; the mind makes the world." ⁷²	It's only through the mind that the actions and experiences in ethical living are shaped. This happens in modern society. A wrong mindset is one aspect that creates corruption, as is the case with greed and selfishness. With mindfulness and ethical thinking comes the approach, leading to a peaceful society free from corruption.	21
8	Avoiding Harmful Associations	"Avoid association with the foolish, for they will lead you astray. Associate with the wise, for they will help you find peace." ⁷³	This teaching tells one to surround himself or herself with people who share a principle of morality. The present day may be compared to not working in poisonous offices or under corrupt regimes, but rather associating oneself with those who maintain high ethical standards. With smart associations comes better judgment and a more ethical living.	165

Finding-1 shows how The *Dhammapada* teaches the importance of ethical conduct, honesty, and self-control in Right Livelihood. These teachings are highly applicable to contemporary social concerns with respect to greed, corruption, and unethical business development, such as lack of integrity and the abuse of power in politics and commercial scenarios, of how the *Dhammapada* discusses the perils of dishonesty and greed in the contemporary world. These teachings support an integrity-based way of living by urging the social community to abstain from negative behaviors and desires. concepts provide a solution for the widespread corruption in governments and workplaces in today's society. By emphasizing Right Livelihood, people are inspired to conduct themselves ethically at work, which can help them in the fight against corruption and greed. In addition to finding tranquility, the folks who adhere to these principles can contribute to the development of a more justice and moral society.

Table 2 - Insights on Right Livelihood from the Anguttara Nikaya

	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Teaching from Anguttara Nikaya</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>AN</i>
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⁷¹ Ibid,1999-2024, Verse 183

⁷² Ibid,1999-2024, Verse 21

⁷³ Ibid,1999-2024, Verse 265

1	Wrong Livelihood	Monks, there are five incorrect ways to make a living. Which five? It is improper for a lay follower to barter in weapons, people, meat, alcohol, or poison. ⁷⁴	This verse points out some harmful professions, such as trading in weapons or humans. In the modern world, such unethical means of livelihood breed corruption and exploitation.	AN 5.41
2	Living with Integrity and Right Livelihood	Since they live in accordance with the Dhamma, people who exhibit self-control in their speech, deeds, and livelihood are said to have reached true prosperity. ⁷⁵	Practicing self-control in livelihood encourages ethical work and personal integrity. In today's corrupt settings, this self-control can fight unethical conduct and result in a meaningful life.	AN 6.48
3	Consequences of Wrong Livelihood	Monks and people who earn a career by lying, hurting, or taking advantage of other people suffer now and in the afterlife. ⁷⁶	This quote condemns earning through deceit or exploitation, which is one of the main causes of corruption in the modern world. Those who are benefited by unethical practices face both personal suffering and also cause harm to society.	AN 2.14
4	Corruption in Livelihood	In the same way that a seed can be planted in fertile soil and grow into a useful tree, monks believe that a proper livelihood founded on good intentions can result in a meaningful and successful life. ⁷⁷	While good intentions make the life fruitful, honest and decent work leads to better society. While Right Livelihood is something that could put an end to corruption, social injustices in recent times would be eradicated by modern man.	AN 3.39
5	Importance of Integrity in Livelihood	If an honest individual avoids lying, theft, and other forms of dishonesty and makes their living through honest methods, they will be happy at work. ⁷⁸	Being honest, with integrity of character will help in gaining contentment, stability, but working with honesty can give the society a chance by undoing the corruption within the current world.	AN 4.55

⁷⁴ *Anguttara Nikaya*, 2005, AN 5.41 <https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/an/index.html>

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 2005, AN 6.48

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 2005, AN 2.14

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 2005, AN 3.39

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 2005, AN 4.55

Finding-2 shows how the *Aguttara Nikaya's* teachings might highlight contemporary issues such as, unethical labor concerns and corruption. The teachings address issues like avarice, misuse of power, and toxicity in the workplace, betterment that emphasise the value of self-control and the right livelihood, where ethical standards dire need for ethical standards is highlighted by the dearth of action against corruption, even in the face of legislation (NACS). The table shows that the focus of Buddhism has always been on living an honest life that might provide a grounded foundation to tackle contemporary sociopolitical issues and development of a healthy society.

Table-3: Responses from interviewees on Right Livelihood and modern Challenges

	Questions	Novelist's Response	Professor's Response	Analysis
1	What is the principle of Right Livelihood, and how does it help lead one toward an ethical way of life?	The novelist emphasized the importance of self-knowledge and mastery of appetite, as depicted in Buddhism. Right Livelihood leads to professions that are morally upright, contribute to society, and bring justness. It also gives compassion and mindfulness at work, a factor that will help individuals check their greed and materialism. This principle, therefore, will solve these ills in modernization such as corruption and unfairness, and will rather advocate for moral action in practice and sustainability in performing.	As depicted from the professor's answers, Right Livelihood promotes ethics in professions that do no harm and do not grasp. It rejects harmful industries and promotes those that profit society, such as the health and education sectors. Happiness and mindfulness help a person control his or her wants. For a greater responsible society in the world today, it addresses ills like inequality and corruption while endorsing justice, sustainability, and reasonable working conditions.	Right Livelihood Both the professor and novelist assert the need for ethical work to avoid causing harm and being greedy. In his view, the professor emphasizes social effects and observes that honest professions like medicine and teaching eradicate corruption and inequality with respect to nature. The professor also speaks about mindfulness, which controls lust.
2	How does Right Livelihood discourage professions based on greed, harm, or exploitation?			
3	What are desires and greed, as role violators of Right Livelihood principles, and what can help to control them?			
4	How can the principle of Right Livelihood be applied in modern professions, especially in a world driven by materialism and profit?			He also points out self-awareness and mastery of desire as a part of Right Livelihood. He connects it with compassion, justice, and mindfulness in work and helps resist materialism. Both opinions share the aim of right action and mindfulness but while the professor emphasizes societal change, the novelist emphasizes personal growth. In total, they show how Right Livelihood can tackle both personal and societal issues.
5	What's the relation between workplace compassion, mindfulness, and Right Livelihood?			
6	Is Right Livelihood a cure for socio-economic problems like corruption, inequality, or harm to the environment? How?			
7	Could you give your opinion or any additional information regarding Buddhism's concept of Right Livelihood and how it applies to solving today's problems?		Detailed responses are	

		Detailed responses are provided in Appendix A.	provided in Appendix A.	
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Finding 3 shows the summarized answers from the professor and novelist on the subject of Right Livelihood, especially how it can apply to current issues. From the table, it was found that both experts consider ethics in work practices: avoidance of harm, non-greed, and not taking advantage of others. The professor believes that he should revolutionize society and inspire youngsters to take up careers in the medical field, arts, and education- careers which benefit society. About Right Livelihood, the author underlines the importance of self-reflection, human development, and control over desires. These perspectives also reflect similarities in the conclusion, showing both solutions that aim to solve problems on a social and personal level through compassion, awareness, and ethical lifestyles.

The *Dhammapada*, *Anguttara Nikaya* (Scriptures), and other important Buddhist texts have been analyzed and found to offer great ideas to cope with the prevailing problems of society; contemporary interviews have emerged with the idea that principles of right livelihood offer valuable insights into resolving modern-day issues like exploitation, corruption, and unethical labor practices. The oldest scripts signify ethical conduct, self-control, integrity, and equity, which are the sole solutions to the current issues humanity has been facing. Professors and Novelist emphasize the right livelihood in the 21st century, specifically, professors emphasize that the right choice of career can be the best option which will not only keep one satisfied but will contribute to the well-being of others too, while Novelists value the awareness, mindfulness, and self-evolution as very vital approaches toward defeating consumerism and greed, and professor advocates a change in society by occupations in the fields of healthcare, education, and all such moral ones. To ensure the social well-being of society the world will have to be free from the egoistic school of thought and promote charity. The people are inspired to lead ethical lives free from doing harm and with desires of ego, which both arguments follow. These findings show how putting the Right Livelihood ideas into practice can contribute to the development of a more moral and compassionate society. By promoting sustainability, justice, and ethical business practices, we can address issues like exploitation, injustice, and corruption and create a more just and accountable society. Buddhism and the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) strongly believe in social mobilization and awareness sessions as major tools to overcome emerging societal issues, especially corruption. And to accelerate progress and prosperity for everyone, fostering a moral, and compassionate that lessens disillusionment is very important. The promotion of such activities can greatly help societal annoyances to be mitigated through both Buddhism and governmental programs, helping to make life more fulfilling and morally conscious.

DISCUSSION

The study shows that proper livelihood is so closely related to larger societal problems and goes above honest earning, as it raises social issues including corruption, exploitation, and injustice, which do not only ask for personal ethics but are more about the ideas coming from studying books like *The Dhammapada* and *Anguttara Nikaya* and talking to a professor and a novelist.

“Buddhist political philosophy encourages rulers to govern the country through compassion and justice”.⁷⁹ Counseling and campaigns create awareness of why unethical acts cause harm. Most importantly, such a society ought to be counselled that unbridled corrupt practices are taking the nation before courts with

⁷⁹ Xinyue, Wo. "Research on the Development of Eastern Social Thought and Philosophy." In *2023 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2023)*, pp. 155-166. Atlantis Press, 2023. p.162

significant legal consequences, apart from social embarrassment. “Earn an honest and sustainable living and avoid harmful activities”.⁸⁰ Similarly, this paper shows that unethical behavior prevails because corruption cuts across all grades of people due to the societal fear of people being held to account for their actions. Proper understanding of the consequences of breaking the law and holding educational workshops to promote ethical awareness and mindfulness could bring about significant progress. This is because the principles of Buddhism, Right Livelihood in particular, can mold ethical standards to adopt sustainable ways of living and hence relevant in tackling contemporary issues within society. As seen through classic works like The Dhammapada and Anguttara Nikaya, it is quite evident that the Buddhist teachings stress moral principles as well as professionalism going hand-in-hand. These old values question the pervasiveness of self-serving actions in modern society, putting emphasis on honesty, equity, and compassion both in professional and social positions.

“For Buddhism, the ultimate freedom is to achieve full release from the root causes of all suffering: greed, hatred and delusion, which clearly are also the root causes of all social evils”.⁸¹ Among the important findings that this study has provided, there is practicality in using Right Livelihood as a framework for moral decision-making. This can be said by the emphasis placed on making a living without endangering others or the environment. A general demand for occupations that strike a balance between the demands of individuals and the welfare of society can be reflected here. This perspective, instead of the highly competitive and exploitative nature of modern workplaces, is an excellent example of what inclusive and ethical behavior is like.

Both the novelist and the professor elaborated on what Buddhism teaches using complex explanations. The novelist told the audience the value of being mindful and knowledgeable about oneself, and the change people undergo professionally and socially. “Eastern philosophy emphasizes the development of self and spirituality, which encompasses individual awareness of oneself, inner exploration and spiritual improvement”.⁸² He discussed the importance of developing moral leadership in any organization. In the two interviews, it is clear how personal ethics can form a foundation for something more profound when there is the dynamic interplay between transformation at the level of society and the individual. The Buddhist philosophy of interdependence, as understood in Dependent Origination (Paṭicca-samuppāda), is a holistic perspective for understanding issues in society. It points to the fact that decisions affect the environment and a greater community in addition to those immediately and individually affected. The concept encourages people to think of how immoral deeds, such as exploitation or corruption, can serve to perpetuate cycles of injustice and misery. Interdependence is a key framework for cooperative reform initiatives since the problems identified above call for shared responsibility. Societies can increase awareness of moral obligations by bringing old lessons within a new framework. Programmes like the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) teach and counsel as tools for doing societal causes, but in line with Buddhist philosophies. However, Buddhist philosophy is ahead in advocating mindfulness to prevent people from acting on their unethical impulses in the first place. The discussion emphasizes the fact that Buddhist philosophy has revolutionary alternatives while critiquing modern social mores and conventions. Right Livelihood and interconnectedness can guide the construction of laws and processes that may be most responsible to positive practice, sustainability, and fair play. “Eastern philosophy encourages individuals to awaken to their inner wisdom and insight through meditation, meditation, and stillness”.⁸³ In this, ancient wisdom is shown to be timely and evolving with the ability to act as a bridge to solve modern-day issues.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 2023, p.160

⁸¹ Jones, Ken. "Buddhism and social action." *The Wheel Publication* 285/286 (1981). p.3

⁸² Ibid, 2023, p.160

⁸³ Ibid, 2023, p.160

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Buddhist philosophy as reflected in Dhammapada and Anguttara Nikaya presents workable answers to today's social issues. In particular, while going beyond moral income, Right Livelihood deals with broader issues, such as inequalities, exploitation, and corruption. A professor and a novelist become an interlocutor in this conversation, helping once again to underpin the changing potential of good leadership and awareness in the pursuit of a reasonable society. Educating people in the consequences of unethical practice and how the practice can prevent the issue using mindfulness can also be well focused on if this study were placed in the context of the overall strategies that would encourage moral leadership by reducing corruption as a path to a fair and sustainable future society. In conclusion, these concepts are reinforced not only by Buddhist teachings but also by NACS, where the importance of education and awareness will help create morality.

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