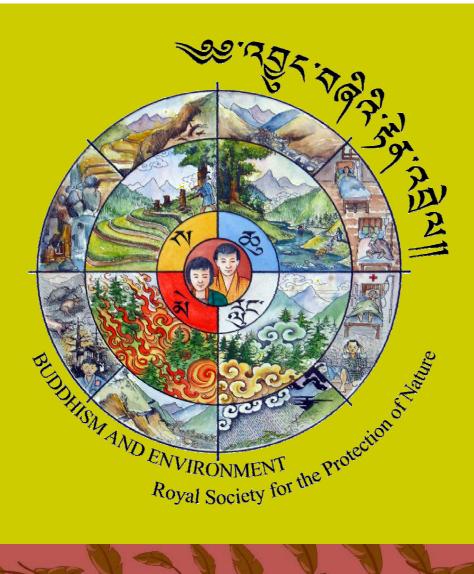
र्रायहेव ग्वरास्ट्र स्ट्रायह क्रिया महिष्णी अहमार होय। Buddhism and the Environment





रट.चबुब.चब्य.केट्य.टे.वट.तपु.क्र्य.चेया



Buddhism and the Environment

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あらって美り

तर्चयाम्भितायनायन् योन्यान्यान्त्रे हैं साथाधीयन भ्रियायाचीयायी वासीयायी क्याया है यो लुषी मिजायनायनु वटाली रटानुष्यावियावियासेट्यास् अव्यवायान्यान्याया मेल्प्रिस लुषी ट्रे.लट. ट.चक्कार.कूँब.बूँब.बूँब.बूँटकार्टर.त्तवार्षे.ग्रुकारट.चलुष.ग्रेषका.केंटका.यट्रे. येवका. श.चर्रिग्रोतरः चर्षग्रापर्यग्रापरः र.मुग्राबरग्रामरःप्रचर्।स्रम्क्रीपावनःग्रीःसरःचर्षेषः योष्याक्षेरकार्यरायवृषायवः सूर्विवायवरात्र्यर्थराविष्यवार्षेयाच्यात्र्येयाव्या क्षरायर नविवाने तु. यर्डे म. विवाय होते दे. लूरे पालवी दे. लू. वर जा लार वर्षे वा की जा प्रया पर्ट. बट.त.क्रून.र्जव.क्री.क्रियायच.दुवा.पचर.च.जनाच्ध्रेष.प्रे.क्रु.क्र्.क्र्याजनाक्क्री.पचनान्द्रव्यात बाक्रनः श्रीरानहराषीःश्वरानायाः तन्तर्रात्यन् स्तरावर्षः स्त्रावर्षः श्ववर्षः दर्भिरायः वर्षः वर्षायायः वर्षाय र्दे खुःग्ला द्राप्त राज्य वार्क् व्यान्य स्वरापित स्वराप्त स्वराप्त स्वराप्त स्वराप्त स्वराप्त स्वराप्त स्वरा शवयः पार्ष्यः योष्यास्त्रेर्यातुः व्यामार्श्वेर्यः याप्यः स्वीत्राम्यः योष्यास्त्री लुष्र-देट. र.मुकाषटकातम. मैकाषयालम.मैकाम्बाषामावरीषानावरीयावर्यन्तरीयावर्यन्तरीया सैनमायर्, जी. श्र. श्र. में नर्मेर जी. यनरे. में ट. श्र. मूं नामर श्रर र र नम् में पर्से जायर हा अर माधु. चर्च्यायायनन् भ्रे. स्यानिव मान्यास्त्रम् यात्रीयायनम् स्यानिक स्थानिक यतै'तर्कैर'सूर'स्नेर'रे'र्पेर्य'श्रेत्रा ट्रे.कुंत्रःभ्रेंरःत्यरा श्रेःसरःयारःयीयःठ्रःयां कुंग्ययः नर्ज्ञें हेर्ः इतःयः तर्ज्वैरःसूरःभ्रेट्रित् स्यायः नज्ञें बे.से. श्रान्त्रे नविवाधीयायम् सिन्तायमा हो न्यानिवाम् में स्यानिवाम् सिन्यायने श्री स्थानिवाम यमुजार्टरायेष्ट्रभाताञ्चराक्षेराक्षेरायन्यर्यम् योरायालयाचाराक्षेत्रयाञ्चयाक्षेत्र। दे.यो. घराखाः र्शेनअन्न न्राधारम्कृषे नर्षेपायने गान्धे पेन्याङ्की बेरामन्ने मानस्थारये बरायये केंश

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Foreword

The rich biological resources of Bhutan and its extensive original forest covers have been the spotlight of the Eastern Himalayan Ecosystem. Over the last few decades, Bhutan has made conscious efforts to conserve its natural resource base through planning, policies and legislation. The country owes much of its largely intact bio diversity to the role of Pre Buddhism, Buddhism and its philosophy practiced throughout the Kingdom. The basic principles of compassion and respect towards all living beings and to give back what has been taken away from nature are embedded in most Bhutanese. Even today, mountains, lakes, rivers, streams and rocky cliffs are respected by communities as abodes of sprits and deities and remain free from human contact and pollution.

However, Bhutan is also a developing country featuring progressive economic development, population rise and industrialization. There is a growing tension between environmental goals and economic targets. As a result, threats to its natural environment mostly observant from anthropogenic stressors are slowly creeping into what was once pristine and protected.

Given the status of Bhutan as an ecological hotspot on the one hand and major threats from human civilization on the other, there is a need for education and awareness among the Bhutanese as individuals to develop a responsibility towards our environment. One such process is through the concept of linking religion to environment conservation based on the Buddhist precepts. In this regard, His Royal Highness, the Trongsa Penlop, Patron of RSPN expressed and demonstrated personal concerns over the deteriorating state of environment occurring in Bhutan. His Royal Highness strongly believes in the difference individuals can make, and therefore the need to involve them to act for the environment that encompasses various aspects of their life. Hence, the Trongsa Penlop's initiation on involving the monastic body as a medium for fostering individual responsibility in conservation and sustainable community development is most befitting.

In the context of environment protection, Buddhism and its tenets towards our immediate environs have been brought into the forefront through this concise guide on 'Religion and the Environment'. It is my belief that the Bhutanese community at large will be acquainted with the importance of conserving our environment for the sake of all living beings on earth.

Dasho Sangay Thinlay Chairman

र्यार क्या

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र्श्वाय्या

INTRODUCTION

रटाचलेव मावरास्ट्रिया प्रताप्त स्थापित स्थापित

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त्तव्रह्मत्रीयाः स्त्रियः स्त

रट.चलेब.चाबरा.केट.बट.चट.चु.चु.चु.चा.चु.चा.चु.चा



Buddhism and the Environment

There is no denying the fact that the environment the world over is fast degrading with the changing times. Since we in Bhutan can still boast of a rich environment, which we should preserve and hand down to our future generations, this book is an attempt to show how Buddhism too emphasizes the importance of preserving nature and environment.

In understanding the relationship between Buddhism and environment it is, however, essential to first understand, how the world came into being and how through the passage of times, the world has degraded. But then again when we talk about the world, there are two separate entities that we should understand. They are the external world and the inner beings or life forms, which are precisely spelt out in the following Buddhist verse:

'On space rests that body we call the air; On air rests the body of water; On water rests the body of Earth And the Earth holds in it all the life forms.'

Thus, according to Buddhism, the formation of the world first started with the formation of Space. Following the formation of space, a cloud arose in the wide open sky bringing down rain, which transformed into the water body. This water body in turn got stirred up by the wind leading to the formation of what we now call the world. This is the external or the physical world.

With the formation of the world complete, there came to develop different life forms including human beings. However, there was nothing like the Sun and Moon in the beginning. Human beings in particular exuded some kind of bodily rays, enabling to see things around them. Their bodies were light and they could fly. They nourished themselves on spiritual food and there was nothing like yours or mine. People lived in complete bliss and equanimity. Then some people out of sheer inquisitiveness ventured out to drink water, eat fruits and all other things that they could lay their eyes upon. In so doing, they discovered the different tastes and began to develop liking and cravings. These led to the loss of their original glory or power. Where once their bodies were light and they could fly, their bodies turned heavy. Their bodily rays also slowly disappeared.



Then somehow by common luck, there appeared in the sky the Sun, Moon and the Stars. This was the beginning of times. People started to count their lives in days, months and years. Even then the people did not have to toil in the fields for their food. Everything grew naturally and was readily available. But human greed started to grow all the more and with that the accumulation of sins. The result - what was available naturally began to disappear and people had to learn how to till the soil for their livelihood.

Not only did such a degradation take place but because people became more craving and sinful, their very life span started to dwindle. Where people in ancient times could live a thousand years, it became shorter by the time so that today not many people can live a hundred years now. All these things are of human beings own making. Therefore, Guru Rimpochhe, who is considered as the second Buddha aptly said:

"It is not the world that is changing but the people who induce the changes."

Seldom do many people realize the intrinsic relationship between the external elements and human beings own well being. The more the people are driven by greed and desire, the more the world is being exploited. Consequently, where there were water bodies in the past, there now stands desert. Where one could not even faintly think of a natural disaster, the nightmares are happening. The medical discoveries are also having a hard time in coping with the emergence of various kinds of incurable diseases in the world today.

Thus, there is a need to understand that what you call the environment is nothing less than your own self and that any human intervention in the nature's balance will only bring havoc to yourself and ultimately the human being's existence. The same could be said about your own spiritual practices. Bringing harm to the environment in Buddhism amounts to committing sin and in committing sin, one will not find solace in this world or the world hereafter.



र्रायें धेते सूर्णे तहेगा हेवा

The External World

त्रुट्य "रा"

THE EARTH ELEMENT

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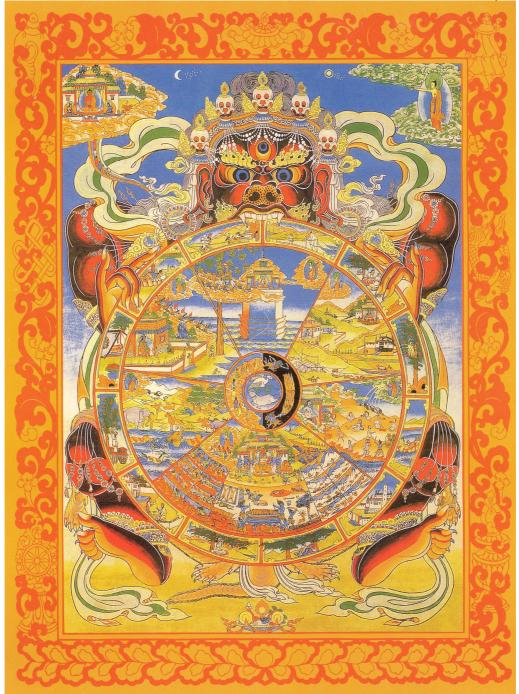
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শ্বীদ্'ঘনি'নের্কিস্টা



स्टार्श्वतः त्रास्ट्रास्ट्रास्ट्रास्ट्रान्तः ने स्ट्रां वटास् क्षेत्रे चाये वया क्षेत्रास्य व्याप्त्रे स्ट्रास्य स्

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र्मू.तश्री शुश्रभः २४. कु.च.मुश्रःचचयः चयुः श्रृंगाः चश्रूणः न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं न्यूं

योषका में असूर हूं तूर्य ताल्लय त्या विषय ताला विषय में असूर निया के स्वाप्त का स्वाप्त

सर्ने वरायश्यमः के के नवे ः

अर्रे अहरशत्तुत्र पशः

कार्यियत्तर्यःश्चर्याच्युःजीं.श्च्यांश्लयंश्चे वश्चिर्याहे सूर्यत्वावाय्यायः वृश्चर्याव्यव्याव्यं जीं.श्च्यांश्लयं में वर्ष्वर्याहे स्वाव्यं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वां वर्ष्वयं वर्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्षयं वर्षयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्ययं वर्ष्वयं वर्ष्वयं वर्षयं वर्ययं वर्ययं वर्षयं वर्ययं वर्ययं वर्षयं वर्षयं वर्षयं वर्ययं वर्षयं वर्षयं वर्ययं वर्यय

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स्यात्र विकास स्थात्र स

स्यायक्ष्यः यन् यतः विवास्य स्यायक्ष्यः यन् । स्यायक्ष्यः यन् यतः विवास्य स्वा

बेर गशुरका हे : विद्याधीवया दर हें **हें ए तह गायका**ः

क्र्यान्य क्रियं क्रिय

दे.ज.श्चीश्वायतः स्यायः प्रशा द्रोतः प्रतः प्रतः प्रतः त्रायः प्रशा स्यार्हे गान्ने प्रयः त्री प्रप्तः प्रशा

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पट्टी होती विकास के स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स इ.स. स्वाति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः प्रति स्वतः स्वीतः स्वीतः



THE EARTH ELEMENT

In talking about the external or the physical world in Buddhism, we are talking about the four basic elements that make up the natural world namely, the Earth element, the Water element, the Fire Element and the Wind or Air element. This chapter discusses the Earth element, which includes the trees, stones and soil and why Buddhism prohibits exploiting them. But before that here is a verse reflecting the beauty of a pristine environment:

'A sight beautiful was never seen, Where in the greenery of the forest, Beautiful birds and animals undisturbed, Roam in freedom, drinking cool fresh water and eating the fruits that by nature provide.'

Buddhists see all things natural as deeply enriching to the soul and spiritual. Preserve them and there is no better offering, one can make to the Buddhas and Boddhisattavas for your own spiritual empowerment. Shantideva, an Indian scholar of the past, in his book 'The Way of the Bodhisattvas' reflected such offerings in these words:

> Every mountain, rich and filled with jewels; All sweet and lonely forest groves; The trees of heaven, garlanded with blossom, And branches heavy, laden with their fruit;

The perfumed fragrance of the realms of gods and men; All incense, wish fulfilling trees, and trees of gems; All crops that grow without the tillier's care And every sumptuous object worthy to be offered;

Lakes and meres adoned with lotuses'
All plaintive with the sweet-voiced cries of water birds
And lovely to the eyes, and all things wild and free,
Stretching to the boundless limits of the sky;
I hold them all before my mind, and to the supreme buddhas
And their heirs will make aperfect gift of them.



र्र्यावित्राग्रस्थान्त्रस्य सूर्यात्रात्रस्य स्थित्रा महित्रा ग्री सहस्य स्थित्र

O, think of me with love, compassionate lords; Sacred objects of my prayers, accept these offerings. For I am empty-handed, destitute of merit, I have no other wealth. But you, protectors, You whose thoughts are for the good of others, In your great power, accept this for my sake.'

Additionally, the Buddhists also believe in the existence of a protective deity in each of these elements - the trees have tree deities, the stones have stone deities and the earth has earth deities. These deities have to be respected and left to themselves. In the event that a tree is cut down for no reason, it amounts to destroying their dwelling and the deity in turn is believed to bring harm to the person responsible for such an act, his family or the whole village. There will be lack of rain, when it is most wanted. The crops will dry up or get destroyed by hailstorms causing famine. There will be widespread diseases, leading to both human and animal deaths.

Such Buddhist beliefs are embedded deeply in the minds of our forefathers and there are certain traditional practices put in place by them that are followed to this day. The closing of the forests for certain number of months in a year is one of them. During these months, nobody is allowed to gather leaves from the floor of the forests or collect firewood. Such traditional practices, if we judge by modern scientific reasoning, is also a means to give nature a breathing space for rejuvenation.

Yet another traditional practice is the enriching of earth by burying a 'treasure vase' in the ground called 'Sachhu Bumter.' It is believed to not only help in increasing the fertility of the soil but in stopping land slides and floods. The other is called 'Luyi Bumter.' This are 'treasure vases' buried in places infested by 'Lu Sadag' or 'Nagas' to deter away any possible harm to human beings by them.

The others include 'Salang' or 'earth requesting ceremony' and 'Shinglang' or 'timber requesting ritual' for construction of houses. Unless these rituals are performed, the deities are believed to continually harm the people.

In appeasing the deities that dwell in trees and stones, one should, however, not think that the deities have the power to help you in attaining enlightenment. They are there to help you in this lifetime only. For that matter, this is what the Buddhist book 'The Way of the Bodhisattvas' has to say on them:

Should the deities be pleased, Will the rain fall in time,





And bountiful shall the crops be.'

That is why, as Buddhists, we must at all costs try to avoid cutting down trees or carrying out any activity that has a wrong bearing on the mother earth for the reasons cited above.

In addition to the immediate effects to human life from the deities or from environmental damages, there is again the law of 'Karma' that governs rebirth from one life to another. By 'Karma' it means 'action' in Sanskrit. It is not unconscious or involuntary action. It is intentional, conscious, deliberate and wilful action.

We know that every action has a reaction or an effect. Therefore, the 'Law of Karma' says that if we do good actions, we will get a good fruits. Conversely, if we do a bad actions, we will get bad and painful results.

The picture on the 'Wheel of Life' or 'Bhavachakra' in Sanskrit explains it all. It talks about the six realms. These are the realms of 'Lha' or 'Gods', of 'Lhamin' or Titans, 'Yidag' or Hungry Ghosts, 'Duedro' or the world of animals, 'Mi' or human world and 'Nyelwa' or Hell. Depending on one's own conduct in this world, one can be born in any of these realms. The sad thing is not any of the realms is short of sufferings.

Description of picture of Wheel (page 15)

- 1. If you take birth in the realm of the gods or the 'Swarga' world, you are in a comparatively good place. But what is very painful is that the gods live a very long and boring life and when they eventually die, their next destination is none other than Hell.
- 2. To be born in the realm of 'Titans' is worse still. They are constantly into warfare with the gods over the fruits of the Wish-fulfilling tree. Peace and harmony is a far cry for them.
- 3. Come next and it is the realm of the Hungry Ghosts. They are a hungry lot in the world of abundance. They have enormous stomach and thin, narrow throat so that much as the stomach is demanding, it is difficult even to send a drop of water down the throat.

र्र्यावित्रःगत्र्यःश्रूर्यः र्र्यः त्र्रायते केंशः गत्रेशः ग्रीः अत्रयः र्य्येषः।

- 4. The suffering in the Animal realm is uncertainty of death and having to live in perpetual fear of being hunted down or killed by a bigger animal.
- 5. Then comes Hell. According to Buddhism, the Hell has eighten chambers- six chambers of cold of varying degrees, six chambers of heat of varying degrees and two other tertiary chambers. There you will be cooked, baked and roasted. At other times, you will be subjected to extreme cold to the extent of turning into rock.
- 6. The last of the six realms is our world. Here too are four basic sufferings. They are the pain of birth, aging, illness and death. However, it is said that the human world is better than any of the other realms because you have a choice of determining your next path. If you pursue a good spiritual life, you can attain Buddhahood which is an escape from all of the sufferings associated with each of the above realms.

Of particular interest is the two tertiary chambers of Hell called the 'Nye Tshewa' and 'Nye Khorwa.' Here are certain lives which have no bodily form as such that are continuously hovering around. To them any object is perceived as their body or shelter. They see the trees, stones, doors, brooms etc. as their body and cling to them. Others are condemned between rocks, water and tree trunks. Knowing the existence of such life forms, it is against Buddhism and a sin to fell trees, cut grasses or dig into ground unnecessarily and should be avoided.

A pristine environment is also necessary, according to Buddhism, for creating a condusive atmosphere in meditation and enlightenment. If many of the past Boddhisattavas like 'Jetsuen Milarepa' have managed to attain enlightenment in a lifetime, one of the important conditions have been the environment, untouched and unexploited by human hands that gave them all of the spiritual energy. Think also of Buddha himself. He was born under the shade of a Sala tree in the beautiful park of Lumbini near Kapilavastu on the day of the full moon of the sixth lunar month (May-June) in the year 563 B.C. It was also under a banyan tree in Bodhgaya that he sat in intense meditation to ultimately attain enlightenment. He was thirty five years old. In the following verse, Khenpo Karma Rangdroel, a Buddhist scholar thus explains:

For the humans and the animals at large, And the trees and flowers alike, The Earth is a place where all do dwell, And one that nourishes all the living souls.'

त्रमुद्दान "कु"

THE WATER ELEMENT

মর্ছুই.দার্ম. _

हेट.यह्रब.जीस.मैस.मैं.चर्धस्। इस.रेट.मध्रेर.रेट.जुमास.मै.चर्षस्।

येत्रः श्र्र्म् त्रमः । विश्व विश्व

यश्यान्द्रत्विमन्द्रायद्द्रत्यहम्। न्द्रम्यत्वत्वेद्ध्ययेगार्वेद्र्यस्त्री। व्यक्ष्यत्वत्वेद्ध्ययेगार्वेद्र्यस्त्री। समीव्यायत्वद्यस्याम्बर्ध्यस्य

बेर-कुतिःमातर्मानक्षेत्रे कुःशिख्निर्केशनबर्धः यम्प्यानक्किर्यः स्टानर्श्वराक्ष्या हेर्-देश्वःश्चनःश्वेषा देशीशकार्यनः कुःगर्यनःश्वेनःश्वेनःश्वेनःस्वानः स्टानर्शनःम्यान्यः बेर-दिश्वाञ्चेन-द्वान्तेश्वे कुःशिख्न-क्ष्यान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्यः स्वान्य



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- १) अर्मु वे लया प्रश्रेय वे मी कु
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- a) स्टिवे अर्हिणा
- इंग्वेदेड्बिसर्श्व्या
- u) श्रुःर्येगोदिस्यरःसी
- ७) यूड्रेवेदेक्य
- a) वेस्ट्रीट्रावण चरार्ने निक्कु न्टाय्य राज्य केपायु मिस क्षेत्र





सर्केन्यते सुर्वे

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बेर ग्रमुद्याने स्प्रिंग्य द्राम्बदायर

च्चेर मुशुर्शित् यात्र्दः में हा स्रोती विषायश्यात्र पत्र दुः

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The Water Element

It is explained in the book, 'The Way of the Boddhisattva' by Shantideva that clean water is essential for one's well being. It is a medicine for developing a healthy body. And according to the Buddhist Sutras, the water that one drinks should have the following eight qualities:

'Cool, tasty, light and soft should the water be, A clean water should have no odour, It should not be disturbing to the bowels, Or for that matter harm the throat.'

What all it means is that the water you drink should be clean and that clean water is a medicine.

Further to it, the water is believed in Buddhism as a very good offering you can make to the Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. Why? It is because water is an abundant resource that even a poor man can afford at all times. There is no feeling of miserliness associated with its offering and in Buddhism an offering made with pure heart is the greatest Buddhist practice. You can accrue merits and wash off your sins. The verse that follows tells the benefit of water offerings:

'Like in the past, where water offerings to the enlightenment beings were made,

Let me make this offering of water to all the Buddhas & Bodhisattvas,

And may by this merit wash away the sins that all the sentient beings and I may have accumulated.'

Normally, the water offering is made in seven bowls. They have each a meaning:

- 1. The first of the bowls is called 'Argam'.

 It is water offered for the Buddhas and
 Bodhisattvas to wash their face or mouth.
- 2. The second bowl is water to wash the feet and is called 'Pangdhen.'
- 3. The third bowl of water called 'Peupey' represents flower offerings.



र्रम्बित्राम्बर्थासूर्यान्मात्रस्य स्टामित्री स्वामित्रस्य मित्रस्य स्टामित्रस्य स्वामित्रस्य स्

- 4. The fourth bowl is 'Dugpoe' representing offering of incense.
- 5. The fifth bowl represents offering of light and is called 'Alokey.'
- 6. The sixth bowl is called 'Gyendhen' or offering of perfume and the last of all is called 'Niuti' or food articles.

Therefore, one could see that they are not just bowls of water but have deeper meanings in them than do appear to the eyes.

That is why, if a person living up stream somehow contaminates the water and if this water is being offered to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas by a person living down stream unknowingly, the person contaminating the water will be committing a sin.

Talking on the significance of clean water, once when an Indian saint, Jowoje Palden Atisha visited Tibet, he saw the clean waters of Tibet and said that the Tibetans needed no other offering than water for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and thereby accrue merits. This signifies the importance of water. This was also a message to the people to keep water clean.

The importance of keeping water clean is also because there are so many aquatic lives that have to be considered. If the water is polluted or dries up due to human activities, these aquatic lives will die and taking life is the greatest sin in Buddhism. The following verse composed by Khenpo Karma Rangdroel tells the need to protect water and keeping them clean:

'In this world of ours, Something that you cannot do away with is water, This gift of Ambroshia is a source of happiness and well being of all living beings. Protect it as you will your own life.'

त्रज्ञून्य "से" ।

THE FIRE ELEMENT

श्चर्तरः द्यस्य स्वीतास्य स्वीत्। अस्य स्वाद्यस्य स्वीतास्य स्वीत्।

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र्श्रेयायार्ड्न मेंन्य वर्षेयाया केना

क्वेन्द्रस्थातन्त्रम् रावस्थामः र्खेषायित्। स्वनःर्खेतायम्पर्येत्माक्षेत्

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THE FIRE ELEMENT

In general, fire is another element that is highly essential for all the beings and in particular human beings. However, there is a saying in Bhutanese -

'If you know not how to eat, it is poison; If you know how to eat, it is medicine.'

Similarly, if we cannot manage fire, it can reduce the world and all the living beings into ashes. Leave aside reducing the world into ashes, a small forest fire for instance can bring great suffering to wild animals. It amounts to burning them alive and is a sin unimaginable. Lord Buddha said:

'A spark of fire, Can reduce to ashes a haystack as large as a mountain.'

If you were to think deeply, a fire that you cannot manage is a source of suffering both for this life and the life after. If you set a forest on fire you are not only killing thousands of life but causing great environmental degradation. As for the life hereafter, killing one animal in this lifetime means many years of suffering in the Hell. Therefore, you can imagine what it will mean if you take a thousand lives. That is why Buddha said:

'There is no greater sin than killing.'

There are people today, who for some small gains deliberately set forests to fire. Others are caused by sheer carelessness on the part of people. Whatever be the motive, the end result is the same. It will good for them to remember the price they have to pay when they die.

Moreover, Buddhism says that taking lives shortens your own life and beating brings illness to yourself. Remembering these negative effects that fire can bring about, you may like to manage fire properly.



रटाचब्रैवाग्वर्यासूटराद्याद्याती केंद्राचित्राची समुकारा होता

There are also good things about fire. Burning butter lamps is a virtuous act in Buddhism. It helps to invoke the blessings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for this life and life after. Buddhism says that there is an interim period between death and rebirth. It is the 'Bardo' world where souls grope in darkness. The good of lighting butter lamps in this life means that you will receive light during this dark period.

The other positive side of fire is its power to drive away evil spirits and wild animals. That is why people in ancient times always carried a torch to protect themselves when they traveled at night.

Then there is the fire ritual in Buddhism called 'Jensek.' It amounts to making an offering to the Fire Deity to bring luck and fortune and for subduing all negativities. Thus, Khenpo Karma Rangdroel writes:

'Fire, which is one of the most wonderful things in life, If unmanaged, can bring suffering to you and others, In both this life and the life after.'

त्रुर्ग "तुर" ।

THE AIR ELEMENT

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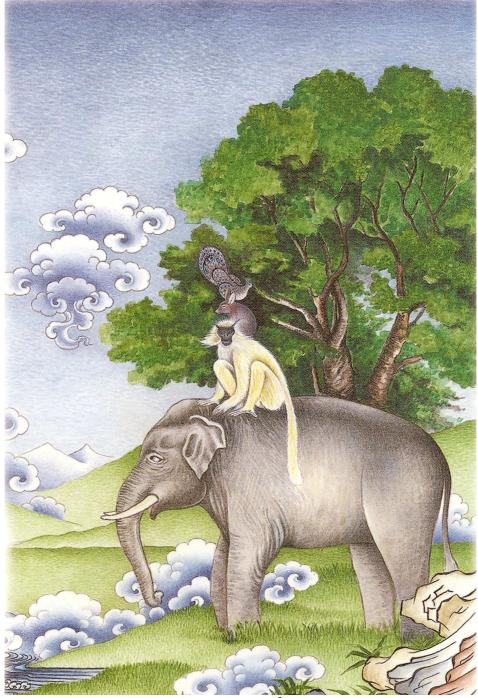


અર્દે પ્યત્ર

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<u> इर्</u>मान्युन ५.क्वें रट.ली. क.ट्नचारा.कुथ. भट.त.ली.क्वट.कुवी.चर्च्चवीयात्रपु.र्वेबी.चर्चला.लट.चर्च्चट. अःर्स्तुमायायसः मानवःश्चित्र्यमायुः वेःर्क्वस्ययेदायसःमार्वेदायाञ्चीयावेःदेः चतुवाददायीः चतुवा अर्थ्र.चम्रमः योष्टरः देशूनः तर्रमा देशयरः दःरेशःद्यः तर्धेरः भ्रेःशुकार्श्वचः यते वृत्यः शुः वर्षः र. या.र.पवर.देर. क्र्यात्राचर्त्रीचातपुःषर. ज्यूया.याड्र्र्रेर.पवर.च.ड्रथ. क्रु.बीटवाल्रुपेश.रेट. ब्रॅग्निचरुर्व, ले.ट्रग्निख्युक्षेर्वेदर्दा बे.र्बर्ग्नेक्षं.जन्मब्र्यम्वरूर्वे प्रस्तान्यस्त योट्टे श्वा वी क्रें जिन क्रिया नक्टर व. र्रेट त क्रिये क्रिके ली

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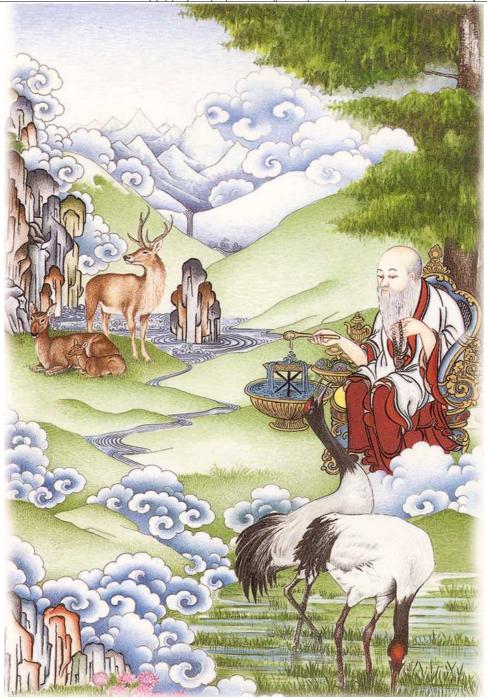
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क्रें-देर-दुगवार्कर

न्डुन र्नेबा

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THE AIR ELEMENT

The wind or air element is a life giving energy in our world. In case the air is polluted the living beings cannot get the oxygen needed thereby causing health hazards. For the same, if the air is polluted, the deities around us too would be offended according to Buddhism and they will bring all kinds of harm upon the human beings. They will disturb the nature's balance so that the rains will not fall in time leading to bad harvest. There will be epidemic and emergence of diseases unknown. Therefore, one of the essential prayers composed by Dubthop Thangtong Gyalpo for the well being of all sentient beings goes as follows:

'Let not the sufferings born of the disturbances in the nature's four elements dawn upon this world.'

In the event that the four elements of nature are disturbed by human intervention, there is no way that living beings can fulfill their lives in this world and the life after this. Therefore, look as one may from both the spiritual point of view or from the material point of view, it is very necessary to maintain nature's health.

The Inner Living Beings

This verse comes from the Buddha's Sutra:

'All the living beings are our parents, And all the parents are grateful beings.'

The Buddhists believe in rebirth and in enlightenment. To attain enlightenment, however, it takes a being to undergo so many life forms until such a time that all the sins are completely washed away. Believing that you have been born many times in this world you must have had a father and mother every time that you were born in this world who might have given you the same love and affection that your parents today. These parents too may be around you in different life forms going through the same processes as you are doing. Therefore, if you hurt or kill any of these living beings, you are but hurting and killing your own parents which is a great pity. And where do all these life forms live? Generally, they all live in forests, meadows, parks, soil, water, rocks and trees. Destroying them or any kind of intervention is nothing less than destroying their homes. On this again, the book on the 'The Way of the Bodhisattvas' has this to say:



र्र्यावित्राग्रस्थान्त्रस्य सूर्यात्रात्रस्य स्थित्रा महित्रा ग्री सहस्य स्थित्र

'Should you harm the living beings in any way, There is no way to please the Buddhas."

Buddha also said:

'Taking your own body as an example, Abstain from harming any other being.'

It is true that the pain of even a thorn in the legs is unbearable and to think of taking somebody's life is something that calls for deep thinking. In killing, one is investing for one's future sufferings. According to Buddhism, if one kills out of greed or craving he or she will be born in the world of hungry ghosts where one goes hungry in the world of abundance because the throat is too narrow to send any food down to the stomach.

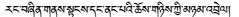
If one kills out of anger, he or she will be born in the Hell and when you talk about Hell there are eighteen chambers of varying punishments. Killing out of total ignorance does not go unpunished as well. One will be born in the animal world where the strong and big feed on the weak and feeble.

In conclusion, we as human beings are not here to live forever. We have to all die one day. If you give vent to your greed and desire and take lives or otherwise destroy the common wealth of all living beings, you are contributing to the degradation and degeneration of this world. If such acts go unabated, a time will come where the future generations have no place to stay. Moreover, when you die you have to pay for your own deeds as the saying goes- 'As you sow; so shall you reap' which finds a similar meaning in this Buddhist saying:

'If you want to know your past, Look at who you are today. If you want to know the future (next life), Look at your mind today.'

All of the above facts are in fact portrayed in pictures like the "Thuenpa Puen Zhi' or







the 'The Four Friends' and the 'Tshering Druk Khor' or 'The Six Symbols of Longivity'.

The 'Thuenpa Puenzhi' shows that if every being respects each other irrespective of size or form there will be peace and happiness in this world.

The 'Tshering Druk Khor' shows that if we can live in harmony not only with other living beings but with mother nature itself, we all will live a long life. Thus, you will see in the picture an old man representing the human world; the bird represents the avian world; the Deer represents the animal world; the tree represents the world of vegetation; the water represents the water body and the rock represents the very earth, all of which have lived a very long life. In bringing these representations to an end, let not anyone forget this verse by Rinchhen Khandu:

'In this cyclic world of ours, Human life is a karmic seed that has no certainty, For the good of both this life and hereafter, Is it not better if we can learn to tame our own wild soul?'

