A re-examination of the doctrinal sources and progressive practices of Buddhist ethics supports the argument that the Buddhist ideal of nirvana/enlightenment does not recognise a dualistic separation between the inner and outer worlds, or spatial temporal experiences of the practitioner. Secondly and related to this, it is argued that any really significant and necessary outer socioeconomic change, is only possible through a change in our individual inner worlds that eventually moves to an enabling critical collective mass. This is an attempt to show that such a change is both necessary and theoretically possible, at least initially on a small scale.

What follows, is a brief examination of some of the emerging evidence that demonstrates that a progressive approach that integrates meditation practices with a modern interpretation of applied Buddhist ethics and Buddhist/ecological economics can work, and should work beyond religious and ideological boundaries. It is demonstrated that there is common ground across the Theravada and Mahayana schools for a well grounded Buddhist ecological ethic, and Buddhist economics, despite the often Eurocentric perspective lens of Western academia that has in the past claimed otherwise. In particular it demonstrates the common ground, examines psychological definitions of Nirvana, new translations of what was previously misinterpreted, and the progressive work of Thich Nhat Hanh, who is regarded as the founder of Engaged Humanistic Buddhism and emerging examples of interbeing economics.
BIOGRAPHY

Glenn Manga is undertaking a PhD in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at The University of Queensland. His thesis project is founded on a reciprocal hermeneutical analysis of general systems theory and the Buddhist doctrine of paticca samuppada, or interdependent origination, and its potential in forming an emancipatory model for both the individual and society.
OUTER AND INNER NIRVANA NOW, THROUGH MEDITATION, APPLIED ETHICS, AND BUDDHIST/ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS BEYOND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES

INTRODUCTION

As indicated by the interdisciplinary scope and nature of the title, this article can only be a brief summary of a broader framework of principles and analysis that aims to serve a larger emancipatory project.

The two main arguments are firstly that a true realisation of the Buddhist ideal of nirvana/enlightenment is practical and emancipatory in nature, one that does not recognise a dualistic separation between the inner and the outer. And secondly, any significant and necessary ‘outer’ socio-economic change that recognises, protects and enhances our relationships of interconnectedness with our wider international community, our environment, and its ecosystems, can only be really significant and effective if there is a parallel emancipatory change in our inner worlds. 1 This article is an abridged section of a larger more comprehensive research work in progress, and attempts to show that such a change is both necessary and theoretically possible, at least initially on a small scale. 2

A brief look is taken at some of the evidence demonstrating that a progressive approach that integrates meditation practices with a modern interpretation of applied Buddhist ethics and Buddhist/ecological economics 3 can work, and should work beyond religious and ideological boundaries.

Friedrich Schumacher, a Western economist recognised many of the present day dysfunctionalities of classical economics in his essay, Buddhist Economics. His work 4 is taken as a precedent in an attempt to ask what our socio-economic, cultural and political institutions would look like, if they were modelled on Buddhist interbeing 5 principles, in an attempt to move back from a state of collective disembodiment, to one of a mindful recognition of, and re-embodiment in our natural world.

In the socio-historical-cultural context of an emerging synthesis between both traditional critical theory and progressive Engaged Humanistic Buddhism, my ongoing research may be regarded as an exploratory contribution, ‘to theorising and practicing alternative spiritual and social emancipatory strategies as exercises in the sociological imagination… ’ 6 Such a sociologically imagined interbeing socioeconomic framework is being reflexively imagined and constructed as an emerging model, an Interbeing Manifesto.

Such an Interbeing Manifesto needs to be based on an effective conception of emancipation, one that recognises the importance of both cognitive and non-cognitive conditions as Alvesson and Skolberg state:

Objections to Habermas’s conception of emancipation— and that of critical theorists in general—as an intellectual and rational project have come from several directions. Fay (1987) points out the difficulty of achieving a clear understanding of needs and ideals, and the importance of non-cognitive conditions

1 Such necessary inner world changes may represent various levels, and/or forms of realisation or spiritual insight, and will vary between cultures and spiritual traditions, but will manifest in the form of typically shared and communicated universal values.

2 This article has been revised and updated since its presentation as a paper at the Alternative Expressions of the Numinous Conference at The University of Queensland on 18th August 2006.

3 In this article, ‘Buddhist/ecological economics’ means a synergy of Buddhist Economics and Ecological Economics. (It is not meant to directly refer to Buddhist Ecology, which is however an important element with a long history, evidenced for example by the 53rd B. C. E. Buddhist King, Asoka’s extensive tree planting program).

Ecological economics, unlike classical economics is founded on the principle that the economy is an open subsystem of the larger but finite, nongrowing and materially closed ‘Earthsystem’. (Although it is open to solar energy). Herman E. Daly and Joshua Farley. Ecological Economics. (Washington, Covelo: London Island Press, 2004), 15.


5 The neologism, ‘interbeing’ is written without a hyphen according to its etymological origins as first coined by Thich Nhat Hanh and as used consistently in all his published works.

for emancipation such as external relationships, bodily (physical factors), power conditions contingent upon the control of resources, and the inhibiting affect of tradition.

……we could also question the absence of any systematic or detailed consideration of political-economic realities in the transformation of theoretical ideas into emancipatory praxis.\(^7\)

Alvesson and Skolberg therefore question the effectiveness, (or its lack), of severing cognitive from non-cognitive aspects in an analysis aimed at changing existing paradigms into an emancipatory praxis. Both this abridged paper and the larger research work in progress will address this lack of synthesis between the cognitive and the non-cognitive, based on the Buddhist recognition of the interdependence of all phenomena, causes and conditions.

In particular the Buddhist master and scholar, Thich Nhat Hanh’s progressive reinterpretation of the ‘Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination,’ and his ‘Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings’\(^8\) will be used for this purpose. Hanh’s ‘Mindfulness Trainings’ incorporate various Buddhist principles common to all Buddhist schools, such as the ethical principle of ‘Right Livelihood’ from the ‘Eight Fold Noble Path’ and other Buddhist ethics that have been updated to reflect the fact that in today’s modern world, there are new forms of violence, such as ‘environmental and economic violence’ caused by large exploitative corporations and under-regulated financial market institutions causing a toxification of the environment, global warming and so on, and world financial instability respectively.

Due to a legacy of a Eurocentric academic tradition in the West, coupled with academic works on Buddhism written by non-Buddhist practitioner academics, there is a veil of confusion seen as controversy over how Buddhist Ethics should be employed, and what if anything can be construed as Buddhist Ecology, or Buddhist Economics, and on what the real meaning is of the Buddhist doctrine of \(\text{paticca samuppada}\).\(^9\) To support my two main arguments within the limited space of this article, I will briefly explain the origin of this confusion, followed by a proper interpretation of the original Buddhist teachings as expressed in practice by ‘enlightened’ practitioners of both the Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism.

I) WESTERN ACADEMIC SOURCES OF CONFUSION, VERSES THE REAL ROLE OF ETHICS IN ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING NIRVANA

There have been frequent tendencies in the scholarly study of Buddhist texts and ethics for a degree of misinterpretation, reflecting an overly academic approach that is too far removed from actual Buddhist practice.

Damien Keown has devoted a substantial part of his book, \(\text{The Nature of Buddhist Ethics}\), to rectifying some of these misinterpretations,\(^10\) which are obstacles to the transformative potentials of Buddhist practice.

Keown gives an example of this by King, ‘Indeed \(kamma\) and all that it represents are a bondage and a danger to the life of the saint in the final analysis. He must kick away from under him the laboriously built ladder of \(kammic merit\) by which he has risen towards sainthood, and take the transcendental flight on the wings of super-normal wisdom…’\(^11\)

The mistaken ‘ladder kicking’ theory, or the ‘transcendency thesis’ is in part due to the often misquoted and/or incorrectly paraphrased and misunderstood \(\text{Parable of the Raft}\), where the raft is used to cross from the shore of Samsara to the shore of Nirvana. For example, ‘Morality is to be left behind...like a raft once the crossing over has been safely accomplished. In other words, the Arahat is above good and evil and has transcended both.’\(^12\)

Such misinterpretations mistakenly regard the application of ethics as disposable instrumental methods, as opposed to their intrinsic lasting importance in both attaining and maintaining ‘Nirvana with remainder,’ while a practitioner continues to interact in our conventional post-modern world.

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\(^7\) Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skolberg, \(\text{Reflexive Methodology, New Vistas for Qualitative Research}\). (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 126.

\(^8\) See chapters IV, VI and VII.

\(^9\) \(\text{paticca samuppada}\) is the Pali term for the Buddhist doctrine of causality usually translated as dependent co-arising or dependent origination.


\(^11\) W. L. King, \(\text{In the Hope of Nibbana}\), 1964, cited in Damien Keown, \(\text{The Nature of Buddhist Ethics}\), 89.

\(^12\) I.B. Horne, \(\text{The Basic Position of Sila}\). 1950 cited in Damien Keown, \(\text{The Nature of Buddhist Ethics}\), 93.
The Anguttara-Nikaya verse 232:

‘What Gotama, what is the near shore and what the further shore?
- Wrong view, Brahman, is the near shore, right view the further shore. Wrong resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wrong knowledge and wrong release are the near shore.
Right view and the rest are the further shore.'\(^{13}\)

This verse refers to the other shore and virtuous conduct/ethics in an intrinsic manner, so that it is clear that they are actually part of the further shore, and are not left behind on the near shore after achieving nirvana.

‘…the Buddha’s concluding remark: You should understand, monks, from the Parable of the Raft that good things (dhamma) must be left behind, much more so evil things (adamma).’\(^{14}\)

Often misinterpreted, dhamma in the plural here means ‘good things’ and not dhamma as in the totality of the Buddhist teachings.\(^{15}\) So it actually means going beyond excessive grasping attachment to ‘good things,’ which like anything else may become obscurations to understanding, and the wisdom realising emptiness, and Bodhicitta. Buddhaghosa for example,\(^{16}\) interprets ‘good things’ as a warning about being attached to meditative experiences such as the experience of sensual delight or bliss in calming meditation, which if attached to, can become another subtle obscuration.

Such correct and more subtle interpretations of the texts dealing with the role of ‘virtuous ethics’ and the Raft Parable as proven by Keown, redirect us from the mistaken ladder kicking transcendency thesis to the intrinsic and transformative power of the Buddhist ethical system.

This is very significant, not merely in academic terms, but in terms of the practical potential of the Buddhist ethical system, and its meditation techniques for enabling the transformative potentials of individuals and society in the here and now, as engaged individuals in our ‘real’ world. Hence the solid foundation of the Engaged Humanistic Buddhist movement.

II) THE DEFINITIONS OF NIRVANA

Space constraints restrict the depth of this article. However it is useful to examine briefly some modern definitions having now understood the role of ethics in achieving and maintaining nirvana.

Firstly to simplify, we can see that the Eightfold Noble Path, and the ethical systems and practices that it incorporates, can lead the successful practitioner to a complete dissolving of the three poisons. These are grasping attachment, (greed/clinging), hatred, (aversion), and ignorance/delusion. Even the most extremely subtle aspects of these three poisons must be dissolved before a true and enduring state of nirvana is achieved.

Rune Johansson, is a Pali scholar with a background in psychology. In his work *The Psychology of Nirvana* he provides an interesting insight into this:

‘...although vinnana (or the mind’s stream of activities) is ‘stopped,’ still an act of differentiated understanding can take place, so the ‘stopped’ vinnana refers to a different layer of consciousness than the momentary surface processes’. ... ‘There are ... two layers of consciousness: what we called the momentary surface processes and the background consciousness. The latter is a habitual state, developed through knowledge, through meditation, through the cessation of all emotions and desires. This constant background is always there and can always be reverted to. It may be described as an inner refuge ...’\(^{17}\)

Another interesting psychological definition is by Ken Wilbur, who sums up our bundle of impulses, (our illusory ego), as being an embedded self. He describes nirvana as something that happens after this embedded consciousness is dislodged or de-embedded as a result of meditation practice -- ‘... when this repressing structure is reconstructed (or profoundly relaxed and loosened), two different things begin to happen, sometimes

\(^{13}\) Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, 95.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 101.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
simultaneously: the lower or submergent consciousness (the shadow) comes rushing up, and the higher or emergent consciousness comes rushing down.  

This explains the negative experiences or challenges that Shakyamuni Buddha went through under the bodhi tree, just prior to his enlightenment, such as the attack by Mara’s surrounding army which is widely thought of as being an internal psychological experience. After such negative experiences the emergent (or background) consciousness becomes stable, and nirvana is achieved. Such a process would appear to be eminently achievable.

Perhaps one of the strongest cases for being able to anchor nirvana in the here and now is made by the Buddhist saint and scholar, Nagarjuna, in his work, Mulamadhyamakakarika (The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way) written in approximately the second century C. E. In particular we can go to Chapter XXV verse 19 which reads:

There is not the slightest difference  
Between cyclic existence and nirvana.  
There is not the slightest difference  
Between nirvana and cyclic existence.

In essence Nagarjuna is saying it is only what our minds bring to phenomena, (the conventional world), that determines whether or not we experience it as either nirvana or samsara, as both are essentially empty. If we can completely eliminate the obscurations of the Three Poisons as described earlier, then we can indeed attain liberation from dukkha, (or suffering), and thus experience nirvana in the immediate here and now.

The modern Taiwanese Ch’an master, Ven. Master Sheng-yen made the following comment in regard to the dissolution of the inner and the outer, ‘Ch’an practitioners are clear and systematic in mind. Formlessness and the unity of the inner and outer world do not confuse them or make them fuzzy-minded. They can see the outer world selflessly and deal with it properly.’

The key point is that in attaining a nirvanic mind, a dissolution of the inner and the outer is achieved, and the practitioner can then deal with the world properly.

In a very clear and unambiguous contemporary application of Nagarjuna’s, ‘Samsara is nirvana principle,’ Thich Nhat Hanh’s disciples in a Buddhist conference paper say, ‘Plum Village has introduced the portable Pure Land – just like a portable phone (or instant coffee – instant Pure Land). We can have a Pure Land, instantly, wherever we go!’

III) A FALSE DICHOTOMY

As demonstrated above, Buddhist ethics, like Aristotelian ethics do not separate the means from the end. Virtuous action is not merely a means to achieving Nirvana With Remainder, but is also a natural ongoing and fundamental expression of it. The Buddha’s life in the compassionate giving of his teachings for the sake of others, was one such inspiring expression, yet he was neither a Mahayana nor a Theravada practitioner.

However non-practising Buddhist academics using a Eurocentric perspective have placed a great and misleading emphasis on the supposed differences between the Mahayana and Theravada schools of Buddhism by often focusing on doctrines such as the Bodhisattva vow that the first school has, and the other lacks. This contributes to a false dichotomy undermining a meaningful interpretation and articulation of applied Buddhist ethics, economics and ecology.

20 From an online Dharma talk by Ven. Master Sheng-yen (From a website URL no longer available).  
21 Plum Village. Buddhism Responding to the Needs of the 21st Century. Helping the Buddha to Turn the Dharma Wheel in the West. A copy of this paper presented by Plum Village at the first World Buddhist Forum in China on April 14th 2000, was viewed at http://www.plumvillage.org/ in June 2006. (Page 4 of the paper only available online).
Whether a Mahayana or a Theravada practitioner, ‘A liberated person naturally wants to help the world, because he or she does not feel separate from it.’

While the founder of the Engaged Humanistic Buddhist movement, Thich Nhat Hanh is from the Mahayana tradition, there are also many Engaged Buddhists from the Theravada tradition, these include:

Sulak Sivaraksa a former monk in Thailand, is a scholar, author and the founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

Ajahn Pongsak, the abbot of Wat Palad Temple in northern Thailand has been very active in the reforestation and irrigation of land being lost to desertification. He has shown villagers of the Mae Soi Valley a practical link between Buddhist Ecology and Buddhist Economics.

Dr Ariyaratne founder of a large Engaged Buddhist and Applied Buddhist Economics movement in Sri Lanka and author of ‘Buddhist Economics.’ In this work he refers to various sutras from the Pali Canon of the Theravada tradition such as the Kutadanta Sutta which ‘advocates a decentralised monetary system.’

Similarly Professor Kancha Ilaiah draws on the Pali Canon sutras and portrays Buddha as India’s first socio-economic revolutionary in his book, ‘God as Political Philosopher.’

An example from the Tibetan Mahayana tradition is the Arya Bodhisattvacarya-gocaropaya-visaya-vikurvana-nirdesanama-Mahayana-sutra. ‘The text expounds social economy, leadership, judiciary, eight considerations for the head of government and administrators, war for defense, and allied subjects.’ This sutra also refers to the unequal distribution of wealth as a form of wrong livelihood, and to the cooperation of the state and individuals in wealth protection for vulnerable people through state supervised businesses.

These are just a few examples to demonstrate that the foundations for a Buddhist Economics and a Buddhist Ecology can be found in the Buddhist texts of both the Mahayana and the Theravada schools.

IV) THE ‘INTERBEING PRINCIPLE’ AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR WAY OF BEING IN THE WORLD

While the above examples evidence specific instances of Buddhist Economic principles from both the Mahayana and Theravada schools, one other doctrine that is an essential foundation for Buddhist Economics is the interbeing principle as defined by Thich Nhat Hanh. It is born from both a progressive reinterpretation of the Twelve Links of Interdependent Co-arising, and of a practical non-partisan reaction to war and conflict during the Vietnam war when Hanh founded the order in 1966.

If we look at the diagram of the Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination from Thich Nhat Hanh’s work The Heart of Buddha’s Teaching, we can see that it is different to its traditional depiction. We are directed to imagine arrows drawn from each link to every other link. Each and everyone of the twelve links, influences and is influenced by each and every other link in the chain, unlike traditional linear depictions by Tibetan Buddhist artists of the Wheel of Life, with ignorance as the beginning, and death as the end. Therefore, for example, volitional actions may influence/condition, and be influenced/conditioned by ignorance, consciousness, craving, coming to be and so on. Every cause is an effect, and every effect is a cause. This relationship is also extended to the relationship between all phenomena in the world, and is at the heart of the interbeing construct/paradigm. It is also the foundation of Buddhist Ecological Economics or Interbeing Economics.

24 Ibid., 13.
25 Kancha Ilaiah, God as Political Philosopher. (Kolkata: Samya, 2000).
26 Samdhong Rinpoche, Selected Writings and Speeches. (Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1999), 278-279.
27 Ibid., 279.
Significantly for the practice of ethics or mindfulness training, Hanh applies a transformative principle to each link. He recognises that feelings and contact don’t have to lead to a negative form of craving. Instead he sees that contact can become mindfulness of contact, and feeling can become mindfulness of feeling. These in turn can lead to not craving, but rather to the Four Immeasurables.  

The headings for the original Twelve Links are, Links When Conditioned by Deluded Mind, and the positively identified transformative equivalents are headed Links When Conditioned by True Mind. Stressing this transformative principle, Hanh comments, ‘Many volumes have been written about the Twelve Links of Interdependent Co-arising based on deluded mind. We have to open a new door and teach the practice of the Twelve Links based on true mind in order to bring about a world of peace and joy.’

He concludes that, ‘With two true minds, there is hope that one deluded mind can be gradually transformed. Later, there will be three true minds, and this small paradise will continue to grow.’ This is an emancipatory way of being in the world when applied at the individual or socio-economic level.

V) A SYNTHESIS OF BUDDHIST ECONOMICS AND ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS, AS A MOVE TO AN EMBODIED FORM OF INTERBEING THROUGH INTERBEING ECONOMICS

The economist Schumacher worked in Burma, spending his weekends studying Buddhism in a monastery. He asked himself, ‘What would a Buddhist economics look like?’ The essay, Buddhist Economics was the result. He wrote more essays, and put them together as a book. Rather than calling the book Buddhist Economics, Schumacher went beyond religious boundaries and called the book Small is Beautiful, Economics as if People Mattered.

One of the key differences between Buddhist economics and classical economics pointed out by Schumacher, is that of the pattern of consumption. Classical economics tries to maximise consumption of products and services through an optimisation of production and marketing methodologies. This may entail maintaining a certain level of unemployment to keep downward pressure on wages, and large amounts spent on advertising to fuel desire and demand for the product. Buddhist economics on the other hand tries to maximise human satisfaction, by seeking not a maximised, but an optimal pattern of consumption. The Buddhist ethic is one of the middle way that seeks liberation from dukkha. It recognises that wealth is not an obstacle to attaining nirvana, but rather it is the grasping attachment and craving for wealth and pleasurable things that prevents the cultivation of inner satisfaction and well being, and therefore freedom from dukkha. Buddhist Economics therefore clearly recognises the destructive nature of many forms of advertising.

The interbeing principle is another core element in Buddhist Economics, recognising that every cause is an effect, and every effect is a cause, and that each one is interdependent and interacts with each and every other cause/effect. We can no longer survive with a dysfunctional classical economic system that in part acknowledges the concept of ‘externalities,’ but yet fails to factor them in to its models. All cause/effects and effect/causes must no longer be left as ignored externalities, but instead must be internalised, and factored into any and all economic models. Yet left to the unregulated market, there is no incentive for this to be done. Obvious and pressing examples of this are the externalities and violent economic fallouts caused by large unregulated financial market institutions, and the externalities of greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and Australia’s attachment to coal exports and coal fired power generation.

Another is Australia’s revival of the uranium mining industry, that may well lead to serious externalities, such as irreversible damage to the environment and world ecosystems for hundreds of thousands of years. Such practices as uranium mining tailings dams and their waste, including radon gas emissions, various other forms of nuclear waste including the use of uranium waste in the production of depleted uranium weapons and their deadly contamination of the post-war landscape in other countries.

30 Ibid., 243. (Immeasurable loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity).
31 Ibid., 249.
32 Ibid., 248-249.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., 40-41.
36 Depleted uranium has been linked by some researchers to Gulf War Syndrome.
Informed renewable energy technologists see this as negative contribution by Australia to the world, as they see no need for nuclear power when Schumacher’s principle of appropriate technology use demands the use of renewable energy sources that can provide adequate peak and base-load power. A suppressed Australian government report prepared by C. S. I. R. O. scientists states that all of Australia’s electricity needs could be supplied by solar thermal arrays in an area about 50 kilometres by 50 kilometres in the centre of Australia. The scientists stated that with a coordinated implementation and construction program that this solar thermal array could be in place by the year 2020.\textsuperscript{37}

Schumacher’s Buddhist Economic \textit{appropriate technologies principle}, in a modern application is not to be limited to the developing world, but is a principle that should be adopted in the West. We must incorporate renewable energy technologies such as solar, thermal, wind turbine power, wave and tidal power and so on.

Dr Ariyaratne, the founder of the \textit{Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement} in Sri Lanka based on Buddhist Economics, has addressed these problems of affordable and appropriate technology, and optimal consumption at a practical level. For thousands of villages in rural areas he has sought to eliminate poverty, his goal being a ‘no poverty, no affluence society.’\textsuperscript{38} He recognised that for individuals to achieve a state of well being that is free from excessive deprivation, then ten basic needs must be satisfied first.

\textit{Sarvodaya} means the awakening of all. \textit{Shramadana} literally means donating or sharing (\textit{dana}) of labour (\textit{shrama}).\textsuperscript{39} Thus \textit{Sarvodaya Shramadana} means the awakening of all by the voluntary sharing of labour and other resources.\textsuperscript{41} The movement started as an expression of the Buddhist ethical practice of \textit{dana}, the practice of giving or generosity.

Classical economists have said these forms of applied Buddhist Economics and ethics are only applicable to rural areas and village economies in the developing world. This is not the case, (see the uranium verses solar thermal example cited above). International society at large and the way it engages with the world’s ecosystems must eventually shift to a truly sustainable framework for long term stability and well being.

Schumacher started his investigation of practical alternatives for the West concerning new patterns of ownership with the example of the very successful Scott Bader Company Ltd.\textsuperscript{42} He proposed a new ownership and revenue distribution system for companies above a certain size. A change that avoids a polarisation between traditionally extreme ‘isms’ such as neo-liberalism and communism or socialism. The free market is left to play its role, but in a more responsible fashion. It also relocates the use of capital into the service of our interbeing and humanity, and so reverses the present reductionist model, whereby humanity and the environment are strangely at the service of the enrichment of the distant/remote disembodied owners of capital.

Another emerging interbeing economics example in the West is McDonough and Braungart’s ‘Cradle to Cradle’ concept of product design,\textsuperscript{43} born of a recognition of the need to protect our delicate interdependent relationships with our ecosystems and environment, and based on the interbeing design principle that all products can be designed so that at the end of their first life, they can be disassembled into either or both pure organic or pure technical nutrients for reuse. This is also based on the principles of industrial ecology that seeks to mimic nature’s system of nutrients and metabolisms where waste equals food, as nothing is truly waste as it is consumed by other organisms. Industrial ecology recognises that we produce material waste flows of organic nutrients useful for the biosphere, and technical nutrients that are useful for the \textit{technosphere}, the systems of industrial processes.


\textsuperscript{38} Ariyaratne, \textit{Schumacher Lectures on Buddhist Economics}, 29.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 25.

\textsuperscript{40} Awakening in this sense means an emancipatory nirvana in our inner and outer worlds.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 1.

\textsuperscript{42} Schumacher, \textit{Small is Beautiful}, 232.

\textsuperscript{43} William McDonough, and Michael Braungart, \textit{Cradle to Cradle, Remaking the Way We Make Things}, (New York: North Point Press, 2002), 92-117.
The interbeing relationship between design and economics becomes even more profound in a possible future where for example, a manufacturer of a television becomes a service provider, taking full responsibility for both the first, second and subsequent lives of the upcycled product.\(^4^4\) This interbeing economic approach deliberately seeks to preserve and enhance the system’s integrity of our environmental, biological and social ecosystems by designing out what are still largely accepted, but very harmful externalities from global warming, to everyday products containing various teratogenic, mutagenic and carcinogenic substances, and products that mix technical and organic nutrients and harmful substances in such a way that otherwise valuable and diminishing finite resources can’t be reused.

Interbeing economics, being a synthesis of Buddhist and ecological economics\(^4^5\) and industrial ecology may be one contributing model that ensures our long term well being, (or our long term inter-well being), as noted in the declared objective of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement: ‘To generate a non-violent revolution towards the creation of a Sarvodaya Social Order which will ensure the total awakening of human personalities, human families, village communities, urban communities, national communities and the world community.’\(^4^6\)

**VI) THICH NHAT HANH’S FOURTEEN MINDFULNESS TRAININGS, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO ACHIEVING AN INNER AND AN OUTER WORLD TRANSFORMATION**

Hanh’s *Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing,*\(^4^7\) recognise that the transformation to the Sarvodaya ideal of an awakened world that uses an interbeing economics model as cited above, is a transformation that can’t be achieved without a simultaneous transformation of the inner world of individual human personalities and their collective aggregate, that together forms our socio-economic society.

This is evidenced by the pragmatic re-articulation and modernisation of the traditional precepts and elements of the Eightfold Noble Path to form the new set of mindfulness trainings. The change in title from the *Fourteen Precepts to the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings* signals a much more progressive approach.

Due to space constraints, only two trainings are listed in this article.

The First Mindfulness Training is titled *Openness.* It begins, ‘Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance, we are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist teachings are guiding means to help us learn to look deeply and to develop our understanding and compassion. They are not doctrines to fight, kill, or die for.’\(^4^8\) This mindfulness training reflects the need in today’s world for individuals to have a means to overcome ideological inflexibility, and unnecessary division and conflict between different belief systems.

The eleventh mindfulness training: *Right Livelihood.* ‘Aware of global economic, political and social realities, we will behave responsibly as consumers and as citizens, not investing in companies that deprive others of their chance to live.’\(^4^9\) This training directs individuals to contemplate even the effects of their personal share investments in companies that may harm others.

**VII) SHIFTING FROM TRANSCENDENCY TO TRANSFORMATION, AND LEARNING TO INTERBE AND INTERARE, BEYOND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES**

The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing are a very pragmatic incorporation of Hanh’s philosophy of interbeing. These mindfulness trainings go directly to the causes of an arising of unskilful mind, and promote and encourage a meditative/mindful approach by addressing all aspects of our lives, from the most intimate, to aspects that impact on socioeconomic, political and environmental arenas. These trainings are the

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\(^4^4\) Most recycling of technical nutrients is a delayed process of going to secondary products that eventually break down becoming toxic waste. ‘Upcycling’ is a neologism coined by McDonough and Braungart to distinguish the recovery of pure uncontaminated ‘nutrients’ that can be used in improved products again and again.

\(^4^5\) See endnote iii.

\(^4^6\) Ariyaratne, *Scuhamacher Lectures on Buddhist Economics,* 1.

\(^4^7\) *The Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing* are the most recently revised ones that were presented by Plum Village at the first World Buddhist Forum in China on April 14th 2006. There are some significant changes to the earlier versions, (as previously published in the two books, *Interbeing, Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism* (Delhi: Full Circle, 1997), and *Being Peace* (Delhi: Full Circle, 1997).

\(^4^8\) Ibid.

\(^4^9\) Ibid.
product of the realisation that a true transformation of society can only come after the transformation and liberation of each individual in that society.

An objective analysis will show that there is nothing in particular which makes the Fourteen Trainings exclusively Buddhist in nature, apart from some occasional mention of the words, Sangha and Buddhist community. With minor modification and removal of these words, the mindfulness trainings could theoretically be used by any other educational or religious groups in society, through multi-faith dialogue and exchange to promote a more harmonious and less dysfunctional world.

This type of potential initiative can be seen in the list of Five Mindfulness Trainings written by Hanh’s organisation, Plum Village, in a way that is suitable for today’s international society. Based on the Five Precepts, this modern version was adopted by UNESCO, and they became the six pledges described below. They were promulgated as the Manifesto 2000 for a culture of Peace and Non-violence.

By June 2006 this manifesto had been signed by almost 76 million people. Below are several excerpts and their implications:

In recognising the need for this manifesto it states, ‘Because the year 2000 must be a new beginning, an opportunity to transform - all together - the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence.’

In formulating the reasons for making the pledges, we can see the reference to sustainable development. ‘Because it is recognised that a… culture of peace can underpin sustainable development, environmental protection and the well-being of each person.’

Among the various forms of violence listed, we can see the specific mention of economic violence in the second pledge. ‘I Pledge to practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economical and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents.’

The third pledge: ‘Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression.’

The fifth pledge: ‘Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet.’

It is a positive sign that an organisation such as UNESCO can promulgate such a manifesto, as the wording contains elements that do recognise the principles of Buddhist Economics such as the reference to rejecting economic violence in the second pledge, ending economic oppression in the third, and promoting responsible consumer behaviour in the fifth pledge.

Given the successful acceptance of the adapted mindfulness trainings for the UNESCO manifesto, there is the practical potential for the adoption of such initiatives in our contemporary educational system. Such an educational initiative is a necessary antidote to the enormous power of the televisual, which is the new teacher/conditioner by default, and teaches us endless desiring upon desiring to consume without awareness or care for the consequences.

The philosopher Tony Fry, describes how this designing force of the televisual defutures in two ways, ‘… first in the consequences of what it makes appear, and second in what it acts to conceal. The televisual projects worlds that fuel the desires for all those forms of unsustainability that make ‘unmaking’ culturally and economically normative in almost all economic, technological and socio-cultural contexts.’

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50 Ibid. (As at June 2006, the Manifesto 2000 could also be found on the UNESCO website at, http://www3.unesco.org/manifesto2000/uk/uk_6points.htm).
51 The neologisms, ‘defuturing’ and ‘unmaking’ are written without hyphens according to their etymological origins as first coined by Tony Fry.
52 Tony Fry, A New Design Philosophy: An Introduction to Defuturing, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 229.
such as the production of externalities and the true magnitude and complexities of their consequences are what is concealed by the televisual).

One example of the destructive success of the televisual is indicated by recent statistics which tell us that forty percent of all sales of products to children are made as a result of ‘successful nagging’ to parents, and where research indicates more than seventy percent of parents give in to such nagging. It is now time through an interbeing education to move from such a culture of always craving to have more and more, to a culture that can return to a contented state of more being, and a recognised one of interbeing.

A new interbeing curriculum should include the teaching and appreciation of other belief systems from the many rich cultures of our world. It should also teach mindful breathing meditation techniques, and a simplified interbeing philosophy illustrating our connection to the world as an interdependent spiritual ecological community. These interbeing principles should be reflected and integrated across all disciplines, in a move away from the short termist exploitative ideology of classical economics to an Interbeing Economics.

One other example of going beyond constraining boundaries is that of the well respected Buddhist scholar, translator and writer, Robert Thurman, who in his book *The Jewel Tree of Tibet*, provides a very progressive and innovative approach to meditation which is non-denominational. He encourages loving kindness and mentor visualisation meditations that can be adopted by people of other belief systems.

These examples demonstrate that a progressive and truly multi-faith, multi-cultural approach to teaching an interbeing philosophy, together with mindful breathing techniques, is one that appears to be workable and applicable to modern school curriculums, enabling us to more harmoniously interbe in the world.

**VIII) CONCLUSION**

We have seen how a proper understanding of Buddhist ethics and economics as evidenced in the texts of both the Theravada and Mahayana schools, are used as a foundation for the practice and work of the Engaged Humanistic Buddhist movement by both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist masters and leaders. It was demonstrated that Buddhist ethics are important in both the attaining and maintaining of *nirvana*, and that *nirvana* does not recognise a dualistic separation between the inner and the outer, as embodied in the previously quoted words of the Buddha, ‘Wrong view, Brahman, is the near shore, right view the further shore. Wrong resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wrong knowledge and wrong release are the near shore. Right view and the rest are the further shore.’

An examination of Hanh’s mindfulness trainings and their adaption for the UNESCO Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence, has demonstrated that it is both possible and necessary to cut across religious and cultural divides, and to be able to train and transform our inner mind worlds if we are to have any hope of transforming our outer socioeconomic world from one of environmental and social ecological dysfunction and destruction, to an interbeing world of true sustainability and harmony.

It was also demonstrated how a new form of interbeing economics and education offers us hope in achieving a new way of being in the world, and how already we can see emerging examples of this such as the previously mentioned examples of the very successful Scott Bader Company, the Sarvodaya Shramadana movement, and ‘Cradle to Cradle’ designed products coming into the world, and the ongoing dissemination of the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings meditation and education program.

We can see therefore, positive change in a move to a real actualised state of interbeing for humanity can even begin to evolve in the already developed Western world. However as Hanh commented, it is present day society that is made up of deluded minds that creates multiple hells on earth. We can conclude that significant and necessary outer socioeconomic change is only possible through a change in our inner world. It has also been demonstrated that this is possible at least theoretically, and on a small scale, and is an emerging pragmatic ideal that some of us can practically hope to strive toward, but it is one where the ends are in the means.

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53 These statistics are from the Four Corners Documentary, *How The Kids Took Over* featured on ABC television on 06/03/06. Abstract viewed March 2006 at http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2006/s1577952.htm