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ENVIRONMENTALISM: A PROVISIONAL
TYPOLOGY**

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**GETTING TO GRIPS WITH BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTALISM: A
PROVISIONAL TYPOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a survey of current writing and practice within the area of Buddhist environmental ethics. Consideration of the manner in which sections of contemporary Buddhism have embraced a range of environmental concerns suggests that four fairly distinct types of discourse are in the process of formation, i.e., eco-spirituality, eco-justice, eco-traditionalism and eco-apologetics. This fourfold typology is described and examples of each type are discussed. The question of the "authenticity", from the Buddhist perspective, is addressed to each type in turn.

TEXT

The emergence of eco-religiosity, a specifically religious concern for the environment, has manifested itself as a significant theme in the major religions of the late twentieth century. The factors at work here are undoubtedly complex and, to date, little attempt has been made to delineate the component features of the movement. It is clearly too soon to evaluate the long term prospects

or future direction of eco-religiosity. Nevertheless, its historical source may be identified with rather more certainty. The first explicit formulation of a discourse of environmental concern can be located within the elites of 1960s liberal Christianity. As time has moved on we begin to witness a widening of the debate into other more traditional forms of Christianity, and ultimately beyond the confines

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of that faith into the other major religious traditions. It has been argued that a decisive point, a sort of critical mass, is reached in the 1980s with a "burgeoning of theo-ecological literature". [1]

Not unsurprisingly, the first significant manifestation of environmental concerns within organised Buddhism may be placed towards the end of this decade, although several retrospectively influential writings [2] may be identified before that period. The push by influential Christians for dialogue with other faiths, an enterprise mainly determined by the socio-political agenda of its liberal arm, may be seen as a contributory factor in the development of indigenous eco-religiosities amongst dialogue partners. A particularly striking example of this process in action is the series of declarations published at the end of the 25th anniversary meeting of the World Wildlife Fund in Assisi in 1986. [3] Perusal of the declarations by representatives of the major faiths shows a remarkable uniformity of attitude towards the environment given the significant differences that clearly exist in other areas of doctrine and practice.

When one seeks to explain this high level of congruence between culturally and historically distinct traditions the special significance of the environment as a global issue presents itself as a potentially decisive factor. As Beyer points out:

...environmental issues concretize the problematic effects of the global societal system more clearly than others. [4]

Under the conditions of modernity, then, a certain uniformity of outlook, an erosion of culture-specific boundaries, is likely to occur especially when the point at issue has a global character. Indeed, it is claimed that the phenomenon of globalization promotes a transformation of the traditional conceptions of location in time and space, Giddens [5], for instance, arguing that modernity effects an uprooting of localisable referents in such a way that the customary dimensions of social and cultural life are transformed into global or "empty" space. Could it not be that it is this implicit appreciation of our contemporary geographical "emptiness" that both encourages, and is the source of, the concord that has come to characterise the arena

of inter-religious eco-dialogue? In other words, it is the impact of modernity, and of globalization in particular, that has tended to encourage traditional religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, to move into a closer intellectual and emotional harmony the more they move away from the geographical locations that have given them their specific cultural and historical forms.

In a sense, analysis along such lines represents a modest reformulation and updating of the old "perennial philosophy" thesis which holds that, if we strip away the peculiarities of culture and history, all religions are revealed as pointing to the same half-dozen eternal verities. However, another quite different reading of the situation is possible. It is possible to disregard the particularities of tradition entirely and focus instead on the specifically "religious character" of environmentalism itself. It is, of course, commonplace to state that religions serve to articulate the problematic character

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of human existence while at the same time offering a decisive route to its resolution. The contemporary discourse of environmental concern, despite the shades of meaning that differentiate its various formulations, shares in this endeavour by relating our present difficulties to discontinuities in the structure of the natural world. The aim is to re-establish an original purity of nature. This goal can be achieved for we possess, either as a species or, from the perspective of deep ecology as part of a greater biospheric community, the power to rectify the man-made dangers presently oppressing the planet. Looked at in this light environmentalism shares many important features in common with other more traditionally religious insights. Conversion experience and missionary zeal are well-attested as casual scrutiny of newspaper headlines or television news reports will reveal. It is also clear that strongly soteriological currents may be reflected in the this-worldly activism that develops as an expression of much eco-commitment. In other words, eco-religiosity need not be subsumed under some presently existing tradition but could be regarded as a virtual religion in its own right. It is, perhaps, more accurate to refer to it as a potential religion-in-the-making.

As I have already noted, attempts to discriminate between differing manifestations of the religio-environmentalist spirit are still in their infancy. Kearns [6], working within the field of North American Christian studies for instance, has sketched out a tripartite typology which, with some adaption is presented by Beyer in his discussion of environmentalism and globalisation. The first type is said to reflect an intuition that the whole of creation represents a vast spiritually satisfying system of inter-related entities, in

which the continuity of sentience is not disrupted by the arbitrary distinctions currently operating in mainstream western thought, such as that is supposed to hold between human and non-human life forms. This emphasis on radical holism is found in the writings of the Passionist priest Thomas Berry [7] and in the creation spirituality movement of Matthew Fox [8], amongst others. We shall characterise this type by the term eco-spirituality. A second or eco-justice type occurs in its most fully articulated form within the context of the World Council of Churches [9] where environmental concerns are now seen as part of an integrated package of measures in which social, political and spiritual needs each play an harmonious part. The incorporation of ecological concerns within this agenda that has its roots in the earlier liberation theology movement and is claimed to represent a further elaboration and extension of the concept of justice in the life of the church. A third and final type appears to be connected with the Old Testament notion of stewardship. Self-appointed "stewards" of creation are typically found in the more theologically conservative ranks of Christian believers. [10] As such, they argue that the answer to the present environmental crisis is to be found in a return to the ways of the past--ways that are most effectively articulated by the biblical tradition itself. Christians are urged to avoid the pitfalls of modernism for salvation in its environmentalist form may only be achieved by a return to tradition. The term eco-traditionalism therefore seems appropriate for this type.

If we now turn to consider the contemporary Buddhist discourse of

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environmental concern we shall discover how helpful our threefold typology will be in determining the shape and nature of the Buddhist debate. Naturally, it must be pointed out that the amount of published material within the genre is not vast and any conclusions drawn from its consideration should be regarded as highly provisional. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a natural division into five reasonably distinct categories, i.e.:

1. Straightforward endorsement of Buddhist environmental ethics by traditional guardians of doxic truth, of whom H.H. Dalai Lama [11] is perhaps the most important representative. The material in this first group tends to avoid discussion of those areas of Buddhist doctrine that may be used as support for the ethical claims made.
2. Equally upbeat treatments by mainly Japanese and North American scholars and Buddhist activists, such as Noritoshi Aramaki [12], Joanna Macy [13], and Brian Brown [14] premised on the same assumptions as in category 1. The point that distinguishes the two is

that in this group authors seek to identify the most appropriate Buddhist doctrinal bases from which an environmental ethic may proceed, e.g. the Hua-Yen doctrine of interpenetration, *tathaagatagarbha*, etc.

3. Accounts of environmentally engaged activity in Asian Buddhist heartlands, most notably in Thailand. Although this material focuses primarily on the work of Buddhist monks [so-called "development monks" (*phra phattaanaa*)], nuns and lay persons, the specifically Buddhist character of their actions are left unexamined or at best are accorded "authenticity" merely by virtue of the fact that they are performed by high profile Buddhists. In this connection, I am thinking principally of writings connected with the reformist circles of Sulak Sivaraksa [15] and Bhikkhu Buddhadasa [16].

4. Critical treatments which, while fully acknowledging the difficulties involved in reconciling traditional Asian modes of thought with those employed by scientific ecology, are optimistic about the possibility of establishing an authentic Buddhist response to environmental problems. The work of Lambert Schmithausen [17] is particularly relevant in this respect.

5. Forthright denial of the possibility of Buddhist environmental ethics on the grounds that the doctrinal standpoint of "canonical" Buddhism implies a negation of the natural realm for all practical purposes. Noriaki Hakamaya [18] is the most significant and vigorous exponent of this final position.

The remainder of this paper will address the question of how well, if at all, these materials can be accommodated within the threefold typology mentioned above. On initial scrutiny the first, or eco-spiritualist type, appears to offer particularly fruitful ground for comparison. In the first place, Christian and Buddhist approaches to ecological issues, more often than not, can be traced to the geographical environment of the west coast of North America, or at any rate to those parts of the intellectual thought universe that exhibit strong lines of filiation to the counter-culture. Here, under the most

extreme post-modern conditions, the boundaries between world historical religious traditions may be said to undergo their most radical transformation and interpenetration. In this context nominal• representatives of both traditions regularly work together, speak from the same platform and sit on the editorial boards of the same journals [19]. Thomas Berry, for example, is a Catholic priest, old China hand, and the author of a number of works on Buddhism. [20] Now,

it would be a mistake to regard this essentially American form of cooperation as an example of the Christianisation of Buddhism (the term "Protestant Buddhism" springs to mind here) any more than it is credible to talk of a Buddhist subversion of Christianity. On the contrary, with eco-spirituality we seem to be witnessing one of the first blooms of environmentalism as a developing global "virtual religion", drawing as it does on the doctrinal and motivational resources available in the two traditions, yet fully independent of any of their institutional structures.

Not surprisingly, the philosophical, and specifically ontological, orientation of eco-spirituality shows considerable uniformity across the old religious boundaries. We have already had cause to note the tendency in Christian circles to visualise existence in a thorough-going holistic fashion. The same holds good for the Buddhist writers of our second category, as I hope that I have already demonstrated in an earlier publication. [21] To give a flavour of the extreme holism demonstrated by the material, Brown, in an essay on the *aalayavij~naana/tathaagatagarbha* doctrine as a sufficient basis for a Buddhist environmental ethic, argues that:

... an adequate environmental ethic must be grounded upon a cosmology capable of rendering the universe as a coherent whole in which human consciousness is an intrinsic self-expression of that larger reality... Such a cosmology and attendant ethic is indicated by the *Ratnagotravibhaaga's* general analysis of *Tathataa*--the inherent tendency of *Tathataa* to know itself as the perfectly pure essence, the Suchness of all things, embryonically moves toward perfect self-realization as the one universal reality, or *Dharmakaaya*. [22]

Similar arguments have been offered by those who aim to use the Hua-Yen doctrine of the mutual interpenetration of all things for a similar purpose. The intention here is to show that since all things are inter-related we should act in a spirit of reverence towards them all. However, the category of "all things" includes insecticides, totalitarian regimes and nuclear weapons and the argument therefore possesses some rather obvious problems. In short, it suffers from a certain vacuity from the moral perspective.

Ethics has traditionally sought to arrive at judgements about those states of affairs that are valuable and those that are not. Generally accepted criteria are required in order to arrive at such judgements and without such criteria there will be a tendency to regard everything as equally valuable. This is clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs. J.S.Mill makes much the same point in his attempt to undermine the classical doctrine of natural law. If the *ius*

naturale implies a conception of nature as "the sum of all phenomena, together with the causes which produce them", which it does in our Buddhist case, then "there is no mode of acting that is not conformable to nature in this sense of the term..." [23] As such there is no essential difference between the proposition "all things are equally valuable" and the view that "everything is devoid of value".

Now, returning to eco-spirituality and to its central intuition, it should be noted that holism is invoked by Buddhists, as well as by Christians, in order to underscore the inherent value of all beings. In the light of what has been said, it is clear that much thought still needs to be given to the derivation of a fully satisfactory environmental ethic from the ontological ground of radical interpenetration. Of course, this is just a recapitulation of the old problem of deriving an "ought" from an "is". By way of an aside, it is worth noting that both Buddhist and Christian eco-spiritualities owe a considerable debt to the deep ecology movement, which also, incidentally, flourishes on the western seaboard of North America. Critical appraisal of the axioms of deep ecology also reveal a major difficulty associated with the concept of radical holism. [24]

Before leaving the subject of eco-spirituality we should note another potential problem, this time arising from within the Buddhist context itself. Brown and others come dangerously close to overturning the radically pluralist ontology on which early Buddhism seems to have been based. By dissolving the apparent distinctiveness of entities within a realm of over-arching and total inter-relatedness signified by Mahaayaanist terms like *tathataa* these scholars move close to a rejection of the basic Buddhist insight into *anattaa*. This is, in fact, the reason that Hakamaya [25] (category 5, above) cannot admit the possibility of a purely Buddhist environmental ethic derived in this manner. In his view, any attempt to posit an hypostatized and unified reality as the source from which all particularities emerge is ultimately non-Buddhist for it is in fundamental conflict with the doctrine of non-self (*anattaa*). He terms this error *dhaatuvada*. It must be admitted that Hakamaya places very high levels of restriction on those manifestations of the tradition that can be regarded as authentic. [26] However, this insistence does at least ensure that causation along the flow of time, the Abhidhammic understanding of dependent origination (*pratiityasamutpaada*), another cardinal Buddhist doctrine, is conserved as a workable concept. In fact, the deconstruction of causation understood in this way, one of the tendencies inherent in extreme holism, holds very considerable and negative consequences from the ethical perspective. [27]

Considerations of eco-justice have, quite recently, manifested themselves in South-East Asian Theravaada modernist circles as part of a general broadening of social-activist concerns. That questions of social justice have been an issue for Buddhists in the modern period, most notably in the writings of Thai reformists, goes without saying. However, since the late 80s both Bhikkhu Buddhadasa [28] (shortly before his death) and Sulak Sivaraksa [29] have written about and encouraged environmental activism as a means of building a more

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sustainable and just society founded on fundamental Buddhist principles. The reformers' perception is that contemporary Thai culture, with the connivance of international capital, has become less egalitarian and more positively inclined to exploit the natural world for resources to fuel the demand for unlimited consumption of consumer products. The call, then, is for a Buddhist ethic of wealth creation [30] on the theoretical plane alongside the emergence of practical programmes aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of industrialisation, with particular emphasis on the protection of forests and forest ecosystems. [31] In this connection, the practice of ordaining trees [32] as a means to ensure their protection has recently been employed by some Thai monks. A specifically Buddhist precedent for tree-ordination is difficult to obtain. Perhaps the closest one can come to a Theravaada canonical discussion of the topic is to be found in the Buddha's prohibition on the ordination of animals. [33] Analogical treatment of this story suggests that the ordination of trees may be equally problematic. It is certainly difficult to see how such an "ordination" could be regarded as valid on strict vinaya grounds. This may partly explain the difficulties that some conservation monks [34] have found themselves in with other, more conservative, members of the sangha. [35]

Environmental activism of the eco-justice kind is not restricted to Thailand. In Sri Lanka the rural development work of the Sarvodaya Sramadana movement has also moved towards an articulation of environmental concerns as the logical corollary of its initial insight into the twin poles of liberation, i.e., liberation of the individual and liberation of society. As its founder, A.T. Ariyaratna observes with regard to the second half of the liberation dyad:

As far as possible the relationship between human beings and the environment should be mutually supportive and enriching. [36]

Although the charge is rejected by Ariyaratna himself, a number of influential observers of the modern Sri Lanka Buddhist scene, most notably Gananath Obeyesekere [37], have characterised the this-worldly

asceticism of the Sarvodaya movement as a typical example of "Protestant Buddhism", i.e., a form of Buddhism either consciously or unconsciously modelled on the lay-oriented, social-activist attitudes of liberal Christianity. Examination of the value of such characterisations are beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the existence of a newly emergent South Korean People's Buddhism [38] engaged in tackling problems of urbanisation, water pollution and the promotion of organic gardening is perhaps relevant in this context, particularly since the movement appears to be based on an earlier Christian People's Theology organisation. Not surprisingly given Korea's status as the most Christianized state in East Asia, People's Theology has its origins in the broader currents of liberation theology. One could, therefore, argue that People's Buddhism indicates lines of filiation to liberal Christianity and is, as such, another obvious candidate for the category of "Protestant Buddhism". I must confess that my knowledge of the Korean background is insufficient for me to reach any definite conclusion in this matter. Nevertheless, of all the types of environmental activism within the Buddhist context,

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it is the eco-justice type that demonstrates the closest family resemblance to its Christian counterpart even when our three examples represent a spectrum of responses to the agenda of liberal Christianity ranging from the negligible in the case of Thailand through to something far more explicit in the Korean context.

Eco-traditionalism is the final type to be considered. We noted before that this is a type generally associated with Biblically-based forms of Christianity. I do not wish to suggest that Schmithausen and others [39] inhabit the same thought universe as conservative Christians [40] although it is certainly the case that Schmithausen's attempt to authenticate a genuine Buddhist environmental ethic proceeds from a re-evaluation of textual resources. This was clearly a feature of the eco-spiritualist type, although in this connection textual study tends to be undertaken after intuitions about the Buddhist conception of the natural world have already crystallized--textual evidence may then be assembled to give confirmation to the original insight! Schmithausen proceeds in a more cautious manner and is naturally anxious to avoid the charge that he is imposing any extraneous motivation on to the results of his historical investigations. [41] As such, his method involves the separating out of the various strands of the earliest Buddhist tradition, analysis of the specific didactic context of those strands, and a final application of these results to the contemporary context. Thus, in a discussion of the possibility of attributing sentience to plants, he concludes that the earliest strata of Buddhism, "where the borderline

status of plants (i.e., between sentience and insentience) served to reduce inhibitions against injuring them ... should now be introduced to re-establish them..." [42] In other words, an ancient monastic prohibition against harming vegetation on the grounds that it could adversely effect spiritual development is reworked in such a way that it may be universally applied in the contemporary situation. At another point, this time focusing on the rather negative portrayal of the status of animals in canonical sources, Schmithausen suggests "that in an age where establishing ecological ethics has become imperative [such teachings]...ought to be de-dogmatized by being relegated to their specific didactic contexts". [43] In this manner he is prepared to face up to the difficulties presented by the textual tradition. However, by engaging in the proper contextualization of primary materials, he is able to rediscover and magnify neglected facets of the overall tradition. This seems to me to be the hallmark of a properly conservative method that avoids the temptations associated with the modernising tendencies present in eco-spirituality. There is no obvious invention of tradition here.

In this connection it will be as well to mention the inclination in some quarters to idealise the ecological credentials of pre-modern Buddhist cultures. Both western scholars and Buddhist spokesmen from the Asian heartlands of the tradition [44] have engaged in this process from time to time. I have already noted [45] that, in general, such arguments remain to be supported by hard historical evidence and, in any case the claim that pre-modern societies were ecologically aware in the modern sense is a clear example of anachronism. [46] Nevertheless, it must be recognised that arguments of this kind are regarded as a perfectly valid exposition of the ecological merits of

Buddhism in the eyes of its proponents even if, as Huber observes in his clear-headed treatment of the Tibetan evidence, "we should, as scholars, be careful not to distort the historical and ethnographic record of those societies in order to strengthen our case". [47] Given the evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that both textual re-examination and the more romantic quest for cultural examples of ecological rectitude may be admitted to the portals of eco-traditionalism.

Having worked through this threefold typology it seems that four out of our original five categories of contemporary Buddhist writing may be accommodated, admittedly in a rather messy fashion. Only the first group has failed to gain entry to the schema. Works of this kind often adopt an inspirational tone that proceeds from an assumption, generally unsupported by any textual [48], historical or cultural

evidence, that the compatibility of Buddhism and environmental ethics is a self-evident fact. As such, no further justification is needed. In fact, such an attitude may be observed as a sub-theme in much of the material already covered, with the exception of Schmithausen and Hakamaya. In so far as any argument is employed to support this view, it goes something like this--a positive orientation towards environmental matters is a good thing; Buddhism itself is a good thing; therefore Buddhism supports and is compatible with ecological activism. I shall term this fourth type of response eco-apologetics. The motivation underlying Buddhist eco-apologetics is not easy to characterise. In my view three ingredients may be at work in the thinking of its proponents, though not necessarily all at the same time.

In the first place, we should be aware of the influential, and still largely unchallenged, assumption of Lynn White Jnr [49] that the present eco-crisis is primarily the result of factors that have their roots in the Judaeo-Christian worldview, most notably in the idea of man's dominion over nature. White concludes that the correct course for future generations is to turn away from the European religious heritage towards those traditions that are deemed to offer a more positive view on our inter-relations with the natural world, i.e., to the religions of the East. [50] This is intriguing, not least because White offers very little evidence to support the claim that Eastern modes of religiosity are more eco-friendly. Analysis reveals that the thesis rests on the same romantically uncritical attitudes that we have already discussed with regard to the eco-traditionalist type. True, Asia has in modern times sustained a far lower level of economic activity than the West, but should we conclude that this is the natural consequence of ancient religious ideologies? There are clearly other factors in the equation, and it may be worth noting that the reports of early European travellers, even the most romantic admirers of Asia, often dwell on the very obvious levels of pollution and dirt in the Asian cities to which they otherwise were devoted. Hardly ideal credentials from the ecological perspective!

A second ingredient that undoubtedly plays a role in the crystallisation of eco-apologetics is the growing and increasingly complex nature of intercourse between Christianity and its client

faiths, particularly those beyond the boundaries of Europe and North America. I refer to the phenomenon of inter-faith dialogue--a process, interestingly enough, that parallels eco-religiosity itself in terms of its historical starting point and subsequent lines of development. This is not really unexpected, for both major traditions reflect, in

slightly differing ways, the impact of globalizing forces. As we have already noted, eco-religiosity has its roots amongst the liberal Christian elites of the 1960s, i.e., precisely the same group that was in the vanguard of the dialogic enterprise. Having admitted this, there can be little surprise in the fact that the eco-crisis figured as a major agenda item in meetings between Christians and representatives of other faiths, particularly when the situation demanded that theologians, in part as a reaction to the challenge of White and his supporters, should work out their own specific responses to the problem. Faced with the task of responding to an agenda item of this kind, representatives of all traditions will inevitably speak with one voice. To break ranks on an issue that appears so crucial to the survival of the planet is inconceivable. No religious tradition, indeed no system of thought or culture, is likely to react favourably to an impending global environmental catastrophe. To indicate otherwise would be an act of the grossest folly. Nevertheless, it must be appreciated that predictions of eco-catastrophe have their origins elsewhere. In essence they represent a modern scientific [51] reworking of a perennial Judeo-Christian apocalyptic theme. On the conceptual and symbolic levels at least, the problem of the environment is scientific, not religious, although an interface between these two competing interpretations of the world is currently taking place, perhaps because of the deep historical roots of our romantic attachment to the natural world. In one sense, then, the reason that unanimity in the sphere of environmental ethics exists between religious dialogue partners is that the matter under discussion is predominantly secular, even if it is, from time to time, dressed up in a religious garb. As such, the divisions that may be revealed in a discussion of matters of greater centrality to the respective traditions are masked. Of course, this is not the only mechanism at work on such occasions. Simple courtesy, the lack of time to consider the implications of some of the declarations made at such events, and even occasionally, a straightforward desire to curry favour in influential circles may also contribute to agreement, particularly when the point at issue does not pose any obvious threat to the doctrinal integrity of specific traditions. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that factors of this kind have and continue to influence the views expounded by Buddhist representatives in inter-faith dialogue.

Use of phrases like "curry favour" may suggest a certain cynicism in the mind of this writer. I hope to show that this need not be the case. In order to do so, let us turn to our third and final ingredient--*realpolitik*. Buddhism, in its ancient heartlands, has been under threat from a variety of forces including modernisation, totalitarianism of right and left, tourism, etc. Responsible leaders of such communities may be required to look beyond their traditional sources of support in order to protect the way of life of the people they represent. Tibetan Buddhism is an obvious example. It is

difficult to imagine that Tibetan communities in exile in India could flourish successfully without support from the government of India, other foreign donor countries, and a variety of charitable non-government organisations. In particular, the inevitable under-employment in refugee communities is a well documented fact. Now, significant financial and moral support is available to create employment in areas considered worthwhile by international donors and, not unsurprisingly given the global dimension of environmentalism, ecologically beneficial projects of rural development occupy a high priority in the minds of aid administrators and their political masters. In the last few years the Tibetan government-in-exile has become involved in the Buddhist Perception of Nature Project [52], a programme of environmental awareness with a specific emphasis placed on education. To this end teaching resources for school children are being prepared and a number of practical projects have been sponsored. The programme has the blessing of H.H. the Dalai Lama who now regularly takes the opportunity to publicise his environmental credentials on the international stage. [53] At the time of writing I only have anecdotal evidence that the programme is supported by international aid funds, [54] though the case of the Sarvodaya movement of A.T. Ariyaratna in Sri Lanka [55] indicates that this would not be the first time a Buddhist-inspired environmental initiative has been sponsored in such a way. Indeed, it appears that Sarvodaya has suffered so much from recent efforts by donor organisations to steer it away from its strict adherence to Buddhist values in the direction of "efficient development work" that its leaders are contemplating a severing of ties. [56]

Under the special circumstances of exile, leaders like H.H. the Dalai Lama will be required to raise funds, often from within that same international aid sector, to ensure viable levels of economic and cultural activity for their people. Employment, and cultural and environmental enrichment are likely to follow from the injection of significant sums of money and one could argue that any change brought about by such investment is unlikely to be in fundamental conflict with the best interests of Buddhism. However, there is a fine distinction to be maintained between activities that fall into this category and those that clearly flow from the central insights of Buddhism itself. In the present case we can speak of a general mutuality of interests between donor and recipient with each benefiting, in their own way, from the arrangement. The ecological development work funded in this manner ought, therefore, to be distinguished from activities that represent a genuine expression of authentically Buddhist traditions and this is the reason that I am

inclined to employ the term *realpolitik* in the context of Buddhist eco-apologetics. It is not because anything sinister or underhand is involved but merely that there may be a very subtle incentive to confuse the two categories, i.e., to make the claim that donor-supported activities are central to the Buddhist scheme of things when they are, in fact, peripheral, though clearly important for a whole range of tangential reasons.

It is now in order for us to draw together the various strands of the foregoing discussion. Buddhist ecological ethics, even at this

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relatively early point in its development, is far from monolithic. Four reasonably clear-cut forms may be identified, i.e., an eco-spiritualist type, an eco-justice type, an eco-traditionalist type and an eco-apologist type, although there is considerable overlap between the four in practice. In the view of the present author all present some difficulties, particularly with regard to their degree of philosophical coherence or their dependence, to a greater or lesser extent, on non-Buddhist factors. Bearing this fact in mind, as the global discourse of environmental concern intensifies in volume, as it undoubtedly must, the Buddhist strand is likely to follow suit. As this aspect of ethical discourse proliferates and deepens in complexity so the provisional typology offered above may come to seem rather less satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this modest contribution to the debate may aid in the eventual construction of an authentic Buddhist environmental ethic.

NOTES

[1]. Beyer, Peter *Religion and Globalization* (London, Sage Publications: 1994): 206.

[2]. I am thinking particularly of Gary Snyder in this context. On Snyder's impact on the development of eco-Buddhism, cf. my "Buddhist Environmental Ethics and Detraditionalisation: The Case of Eco-Buddhism" *Religion* 25: 199-211.

[3]. The earliest example that I have found of dialogue in this area is a WCC conference of 1979 cf. Shinn (ed.) *Faith and Science in an Unjust World* Vol.1, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press: 1980)-- particularly the article by M. Palihawadana entitled "Buddhism and the Scientific Enterprise": 138.

[4]. op cit: 208.

[5]. Giddens, Anthony *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford CA, Stanford University Press: 1990): 17ff.

[6]. Kearns, Laurel "Redeeming the Earth: Eco-Theological Ethics for Saving the Earth" Paper presented at the Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 1990. Also "Saving the Creation: Stewardship Theology and Creation Spirituality" Paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Kansas City MO, 1991. Both are quoted by Beyer op cit: 217f.

[7]. e.g. Berry, Thomas *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco, Sierra Club Books: 1988).

[8]. e.g. Fox, Matthew *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco, Harper and Row: 1988).

[9]. cf., for example, World Council of Churches *Signs of the Spirit. Official Report of the Seventh Assembly*, Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February 1991, Kinnamon (ed.) (Geneva and Grand Rapids MI, World

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Council of Churches Publications/Eerdmans: 1991): 55.

[10]. e.g. Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley *Ecology and Life: Accepting our Environmental Responsibility* (Waco TX, Word Books: 1992).

[11]. Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama "A Tibetan Buddhist Perspective on Spirit in Nature" in Rochefeller and Elder (eds.) *Spirit and Nature: Why the Environment is a Religious Issue* (Boston, Beacon Press: 1992): 109-123. Also "*Bstan-dzin rgya-mtsho*", Dalai Lama XIV, *On the Environment* (Dharamsala, Dept of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration of H.H. XIVth Dalai Lama: 1994).

[12]. Aramaki, Noritoshi *Shizen-hakai kara Shizen-sasei e--Rekishino Tenkai ni tsuite (From destruction of Nature to Revival of Nature: On a Historical Conversion)*, *Deai* 11/1 (1992): 3-22.

[13]. Macy, Joanna "The Greening of the Self" in Hunt-Badiner, Alan (ed.) *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Eddays in Buddhism and Ecology*, (Berkeley, Parallax: 1990): 53-63. Also *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems*, (Albany NJ, State University of New York Press: 1991).

[14]. Brown, Brian, "Toward a Buddhist Ecological Cosmology", *Bucknell Review* 37/2 (1993): 124-137.

[15]. cf. Darlington, Susan M. "Monks and Environmental Conservation: A Case Study in Nan Province", *Seeds of Peace* 9/1: 7-10. *Seeds of Peace* is the newsletter of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists [INEB], an organisation closely associated with the work of Sulak Sivaraksa. For further information on INEB consult Kraft, Kenneth "Prospects of a Socially Engaged Buddhism" in Kraft (ed.) *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Non-Violence* (Albany NJ, State University of New York Press: 1992): 26ff.

[16]. Swearer, Donald K "Two Perspectives on Buddhist Ecology", a Paper presented at the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Cultural Institute and the Dept of Philosophy, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, June 1995.

[17]. Schmithausen, Lambert "Buddhism and Nature. The Lecture Delivered on the Occasion of the EXPO 1990" (An Enlarged Version with Notes) (Tokyo, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies: 1991) (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series VII). Also "The Problem of the Sentience of Plants", (Tokyo, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies: 1991) (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series VI); "Buddhismus und Natur" in Panikkar and Stolz (eds) *Die Verantwortung des Menschen für eine bewohnbare Welt in Christentum, Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, (Freiburg, Herder: 1985) and "How can Ecological Ethics be established in Early Buddhism" *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (forthcoming).

[18]. Hakamaya, Noriaki "Shizen-hihan to-shite no Bukkyoo (Buddhism

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as a Criticism of Physis/Natura)", *Komazawa-daigaku Bukkyoogakubu Ronshuu* 21 (1990): 380-403. Also "Nihon-jin to animizmu", *Komazawa-daigaku Bukkyoogakubu Ronshuu* 23 (1992): 351-78.

[19]. For example, Matthew Fox, an ex-Dominican, officially silenced by the Vatican in 1991, and now an episcopalian canon of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco has co-organised seminars oriented around eco-spiritual themes with Joanna Macy, professor of Philosophy and Religion at the California Institute of Integral Studies, and writer with a longstanding interest and involvement in the Sri Lankan, Buddhist-inspired, rural-development, Sarvodaya Sramadana movement.

[20]. Cf. Berry, Thomas M *Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga and*

Buddhism, (Chambersburg PA, Anima Publications: 1992), *Buddhism* (Chambersburg PA, Anima Publications: 1989).

[21]. Harris, Ian "Causation and Telos: The Problem of Buddhist Environmental Ethics", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994): 46-59.

[22]. op cit: 131-2.

[23]. Mill, John Stuart *Three Essays on Religion: Nature, the Utility of Religion and Theism* (Third Edition), (London, Longmans, Green and Co: 1885): 15.

[24]. cf. Sylvan, Richard "A Critique of Deep Ecology Part I" *Radical Philosophy* 40 (1984): 2-12; Part II *Radical Philosophy* 41 (1985): 10-22. In particular, cf. Part II: 10f.

[25]. For a survey of Hakamaya's writings relating to this matter cf. Swanson, Paul "Zen is not Buddhism, Recent Japanese Critiques of Buddha-Nature", *Numen* XL/2 (1993): 115-49.

[26]. This point is made by Schmithausen, *Nature* (1991): 56--in fact the rejection of *dhaatuvaada* rules out most forms of East Asian Buddhism.

[27]. Cf. Harris, op cit, (1994).

[28]. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu *Buddhasasanik Kap Kan Anurak Thamachat (Buddhists and the Conservation of Nature)* (Bangkok, Kamol Kimthong Foundation: 1990) and "A Notion of Buddhist Ecology" *Seeds of Peace* 3/2 (1987): 22-27.

[29]. Sivaraksa's "True Development" in Hunt-Badiner (ed.) op cit, 169-77 (adapted from a Paper delivered to the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Melbourne Australia, 1989) merely notes the existence of a growing emphasis on ecology within Buddhism but fails to develop any significant connections with social justice.

[30]. Chaiwat Satha-Anand and Suwanna Wongwaisayawan, "Buddhist Economics Revisited" *Asian Culture Quarterly* VII/4 (1979): 37-45, and Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Ethics of Wealth: Buddhist Economics for Peace" Paper submitted for the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae

"Buddhism and Contemporary International Trends" in Kraft (ed.) op cit, and *Siamese Resurgence: A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and World Change*, (Bangkok, Asian Cultural Forum on Development: 1985).

[31]. Ecological considerations are beginning to manifest themselves within the practice of Buddhist monks, particularly in the north-east of the country, cf. Taylor, J.L. *Forest Monks and the Nation State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in North Eastern Thailand* (Singapore, ISEAS: 1993). Also Sponsel Leslie E. and Poranee Natadecha "Buddhism, Ecology and Forests in Thailand" in Dargavel, Dixon and Semple (eds.), *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Asia, Australasia and Oceania*, (Canberra, ANU/CRES: 1988): 305-25; Sponsel, Leslie E. and Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel, *The Role of Buddhism in Creating a More Sustainable Society in Thailand* (London, School of Oriental and African Studies: 1994); and Phra Thepvedi *Phra Kap Pa (Monks and the Forest)*, (Bangkok, Khrongkan Vanaphitdak: 1992).

[32]. Cf. Swearer op cit. The practice may well have its origin in a wide-spread revival of tree-planting in Thailand in the wake of the Bangkok Bicentennial of 1982, cf. Kasetsart University *Invitation to Tree Planting at Buddhamonthon*, (Bangkok, Public Relations Office: 1987).

[33]. Vin.i.87, which concerns a snake that, through the exercise of supernatural powers, takes the form of a human and improperly gains ordination as a monk. The full circumstances only become clear at night when, asleep, the snake reveals its true form thus terrifying its fellow (human) monks. Cf. my "How Environmentalist is Buddhism?" *Religion* 21 (1991): 105.

[34]. Well-known examples of the tendency include, or have included, Pongsak Tejadhammo--Abbot of Wat Palad and Wat Tam Tu Poo, Chiang Mai Province (cf. Sponsel and Natadecha op cit (1988), 315) and a number of monks in the line of the charismatic teacher Ajaan Man, most notably Ajaan In (Wat Paa Kham Noi, Udornthaanii) and Ajaan Thui (Wat Paa Daan Wiwek, Norngkhaai), cf. Taylor op cit: 239f.

[35]. I understand that a number of prominent tree-ordainers have disrobed of late. I am unable to determine whether this was a positive decision on their part or the result of pressure from the sangha authorities.

[36]. Ariyaratna, A.T. "Buddhist Thought in Sarvodaya Practice" Paper delivered at the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Cultural Institute and the Dept of Philosophy, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, June 1995. My own conversations with Dr. Ariyaratna tend to confirm

the eco-justice type credentials of the modern Sarvodaya movement. Joanna Macy (op cit (1991): 198ff), an early American supporter of Sarvodaya and a leading contemporary eco-activist, also touches on the

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topic of environmentalism and social justice in the later chapters of her book.

[37]. Gombrich, Richard F and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*, (Delhi, Motilal • • Banarsidass: 1990): 245.

[38]. I owe my knowledge of this movement to conversations with Dr. Shim Jae-Ryong of Seoul National University.

[39]. Other writers engaged in the textually oriented defence of environmentalist Buddhism include Lily de Silva, e.g.. "Man and Nature in Mutual Causal Relationship" in Samartha and de Silva (eds.), *Man in Nature: Guest or Engineer*, (Colombo, Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue: 1979). Also "Environmental Crisis and Survival" Paper submitted to the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Cultural Institute and the Dept of Philosophy, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, June 1995.

[40]. It should be noted here that Beyer (op cit: 218) admits that eco-traditionalism in the Christian context reflects an "attempt to liberalize [Christian] groups that are generally more theologically conservative".

[41]. cf. *Sentience* (1991): 1 [n.1].

[42]. *ibid*: 106.

[43]. Schmithausen, Lambert "How can Ecological Ethics be Established in Early Buddhism?" (*Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, forthcoming).

[44]. Some of the statements in the Buddhist declaration at Assisi express this highly Romantic attitude, cf. Ven Lungrig Namgyal Rinpoche "The Buddhist Declaration on Nature" in *The Assisi Declarations: Messages on Man and Nature from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism*, (London, World Wide Fund for Nature: 1986): 3-7. Also cf. Yuthok, K. Gelek "The Tibetan Perception of the Environment" Paper presented to the Sixth Conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Fagernes, Norway, 1992 (quoted in Pedersen, Poul "Nature, Religion and Cultural Identity: The Religious

Environmental Paradigm" in Kalland and Bruun (eds.), *Asian Perceptions of Nature: A Critical Approach*, (London, Curzon Press: 1995): 261. A final example may be found in Sponsel and Natadecha where we hear that "Buddhism has a long history of mutualistic relationships with trees and forests", op cit: 309.

[45]. Harris op cit, (1991): 111.

[46]. cf. Pedersen op cit: 7f. Peter Harvey's statement that "the values of traditional Buddhist societies generally ensured that the environment and the species it contained were not over-exploited" [my italics] is a good example of such anachronism (Harvey, Peter

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"Buddhist Attitudes To and Treatment Of Non-Human Nature" Paper delivered at the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Cultural Institute and the Dept. of Philosophy, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, June 1995). The best one can hope to say about pre-modern Buddhist cultures is that, on the basis of the very flimsy evidence available to us, a sort of *de facto* environmentalism, as opposed to an explicit ecological ethic, may have been at work.

[47]. Huber, Toni, "Traditional Environmental Protectionism in Tibet Reconsidered", *Tibet Journal* 16/3 (1991): 63-77 & 72.

[48]. Prebish makes the more general point, in a discussion of the writings of a varied group of modern engaged Buddhist writers, that "...we must commend them for the depth of their sincerity and commitment, the expanse of the timely issues they confront, and wonder why there is rarely a footnote, hardly a textual reference in their writings which might provide additional and persuasive authority to their arguments", cf. Prebish, Charles S "Text and Tradition in the Study of Buddhist Ethics", *The Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* (New Series) 9 (Fall 1993): 49-68 & 62.

[49]. White, Lynn "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis", *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-7. The major criticism of White's thesis has come from Christian theologians who have been anxious to demonstrate the existence of textual resources within the Christian tradition that support an environmental ethic. Robin Attfield's work springs to mind in this context. Very little criticism has emanated from those quarters that have benefited the most from the thesis, i.e., from Hindus, Buddhists, etc.

[50]. It is perhaps unsurprising that White's implicit "hierarchy" of religious traditions coincides with the outlook of many religiously active people in the West where Buddhism is becoming more and more the religion of choice. This, in turn, helps to explain the ecological currents at work in counter-culturally influenced Western Buddhisms, cf. supra--the discussion of eco-spirituality.

[51]. In this context, we should beware of the naive assumption, an assumption strongly promoted by many scientists themselves, that science somehow describes nature "as it is". Science as a symbolic system of interpretation, in this sense shares many of the characteristics of traditional religious explanations of the world. In this connection cf. Bird, Elizabeth "The Social Construction of Nature: Theoretical Approaches to the History of Environmental Problems", *Environmental Review* 11/4 (1987): 255-64.

[52]. The BPNP was initiated by its international co-ordinator, Nancy Nash, in 1985. cf. Davies, Shann (ed.) *Tree of Life: Buddhism and Protection of Nature* (Hong Kong, Buddhist Protection of Nature Project: 1987). Thai and Tibetan strands now exist and the project aims to disseminate selections of the Buddhist scriptures particularly

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relevant to environmental awareness, etc. In Thailand it is claimed that 50,000 such selections have already been distributed to schools, monasteries and other institutions. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh is a significant Thai scholar associated with the project and has published a number of works under its auspices, e.g. *A Cry from the Forest: Buddhist Perception of Nature, A New Perspective for Conservation Education*, (Bangkok, Wildlife Fund Thailand: 1987).

[53]. I expect to be criticised for this statement. In defence, may I add that the comment is devoid of any personal animosity--the Dalai Lama is clearly a man of the highest integrity. Nevertheless, as an international figure he must face in two directions at once, i.e., to his Buddhist countrymen on the one hand and towards influential international elites on the other. An enthusiastic endorsement of the contemporary agenda of the second group, with its emphasis on the global nature of the world's problems, may be the most effective means of eliciting their support for the Tibetan people's fight to regain their homeland.

[54]. The Thai co-ordinator of BPNP is Sirajit Waramontri, a significant member of Wildlife Fund Thailand. It looks likely that the WWF may, therefore, act in some donor capacity.

[55]. For general details of the movement cf. Macy, Joanna *Dharma and Development: Religion as a Resource in the Sarvodaya Self-Help Movement* (West Hartford Conn, Kumarian Press: 1983). For a more critical treatment cf. Gombrich, Richard F and Gananath Obeyesekere op cit, 1990: 245f.

[56]. The crisis in relations between Sarvodaya and its donors is covered in detail in Bond, George D "The Sarvodaya Movement's Quest for Peace and Social Awakening" Paper presented at the Seventh International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace sponsored by the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Cultural Institute and the Dept of Philosophy, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, June 1995.