

The Path To *Selfless* Restoration: Interconnectedness Between Bhikkhu Buddhadasa And
Ecological Restoration

by

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B.A, (Hons.), Queen's University, 2000

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Ecological restoration projects provide the opportunity for individuals to reconnect with the natural environment. However, the actions and approaches of some ecological restorationists should be brought into question. The concern is that while restoration projects often feature a great deal of public input, hard engineering and site manipulation, they are still based on human-centered priorities. Several scholars in the emerging field of Buddhism and Ecology have applied Buddhist teachings to studies in ecology to advocate a selfless, interconnected approach between humans and ecosystems. However, there has been no work devoted to interconnectedness between Buddhism and the practice and promise of ecological restoration. In this thesis we follow the path of the Buddha, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and the practitioners and philosophers of ecological restoration to discover if Buddhadasas' teachings and interpretations of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination) and *anattā* (no-self) will be able to help restorationists approach ecological restoration in a more interconnected and *selfless* way.

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Take the Dhamma meant to be learned in the forest and study it in the university: you'll end up with a piece of prestigious paper.¹

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

The following is a fictional conversation between Pannaānvesa (my-self) and words taken from Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's poetry, lectures, papers and books...

Pannaānvesa: Ajahn Buddhadasa, thank you for taking the time to share some of the *Dhamma*. I will never forget the first time I heard the *Dhamma*. I was sitting in a Buddhism class at Queen's, working on my Religious Studies degree, when it hit me, like an arrow through my mind. I realized that there was a different way of seeing, a way that I needed to pursue and understand. Eight years later my quest has led me here to you, and your teachings.

Buddhadasa: To begin, I would like to express my joy that you have come here to study *Dhamma* (Natural Truth). The relevant issue, the important thing, is whether you will get anything useful from Buddhism. Now, for you to understand what is going to be said, I ask you to forget everything. Please forget all the faiths, creeds, and beliefs, which you have ever held. Put them all aside for the time being. Even if you prefer to believe in scientific principles more than any of the so-called religions, leave them completely alone for now. Make the mind empty, free, and spotless, so that you can hear something new.²

Pannaānvesa: Yes. I will try. But, I have come here because I would like to know what you think about ecological restoration. Where should we begin?

Buddhadasa: You must know that the Buddha spoke of just one thing and nothing else: *dukkha* (pain, dissatisfaction) and the quenching of *dukkha*. The Buddha taught only the disease and the cure of the disease; he didn't talk about anything else. When people asked questions about other matters, the Buddha refused to waste his or their time with such things. Instead of reading lots of books, take what time you have to focus on *dukkha* and the complete, utter quenching of *dukkha*. This is the knowledge to store up; this is the studying to do. Don't bother studying anything else! Study, practice, and work to develop a mind, heart and spirit that is above all problems. By problems, we mean *dukkha*, the thing which, if it arises, we cannot tolerate or endure.³

Pannaānvesa: I am familiar with *dukkha*. I have experienced it in my own life and have witnessed it happen to others. As an ecological restorationist, I want to help ecosystems recover from suffering by seeking cures to assist the process. I agree with you that we should study, practice and work to develop a mind, heart and spirit that is above all problems, but I also believe that books provide us with the opportunity to learn about ways to live that are free from suffering. After all, I would not know any of your *Dhamma* if I did not read your books. Perhaps it is best at this point to introduce you to what I have been focusing on.

Introduction

I am Pannaānvesa, “seeker of wisdom.” For the last ten years I have been on a quest to find out how to heal the *self* and earth. What you are about to read is the path I have taken, one that follows the path of the Buddha, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa⁴ and the practitioners and philosophers of ecological restoration. It is the search to find out if the teachings and interpretations of *buddhadhamma* by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa can assist the process of ecological restoration. It has been a difficult journey; there have been many times where the two paths have seemed so different, and the interconnection unclear. On a personal level, it has been a process of self-transformation, a new self-realization. When you realize that your self is not what you think it is, there is no greater challenge then to put this new self into practice.

When I first heard the *dhamma* (teachings of the Buddha), I was immediately interested and excited to learn more. I enrolled in a Religious Studies degree program at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario to pursue a spiritual quest for the meaning of life. I took courses in Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism, Taoism, “Religions of Native Peoples,” and it was not until I was introduced to Buddhism that I felt that I had some intriguing answers. At first the teachings baffled me, but I decided that I needed to challenge myself to understand a different worldview that confronted dominant ideologies and contemporary consumer society. What I discovered opened up my mind to a new way of seeing and understanding the interconnectedness of every sentient being.

In Northern India in the fifth century B.C.E. there was a man who was fixated on the quest to find out who we are. He realized that suffering existed all around him. He believed that we continually create our own suffering and continue to participate in the cycle of suffering because we really do not know our true self and our place in the world. Motivated by this insight, he decided to spread his message by teaching others that when we look deeply within ourselves we realize that we have the capability both to create and cure suffering. He discovered a path that continues to be followed today. We know him as the Buddha (the awakened one). The Buddha's teaching of interconnectedness (*paṭicca-samuppāda* - dependent origination), indicates that all phenomena is interwoven and linked by a causal relationship. With this new insight I was forced to confront the idea that the self-centred actions of individuals, groups, corporations, and society is the dominant cause of suffering experienced by people and the planet. I knew then, and I know now that my calling is to encourage others to see this problem and realize how we are all participants in the cycle of suffering.

In the fall of 2000 my lovely wife Leah and I moved to Vancouver Island, British Columbia. We were drawn to the natural beauty of Victoria and the island, and wanted to do our part to conserve, preserve and protect its ecological integrity. After some unsuccessful work experiences I stumbled upon a brochure for the Restoration of Natural Systems Program at the University of Victoria. I decided to take the diploma program as the proper way to help heal and protect the ecosystems that I cherish. I believe that by conducting and participating in ecological restoration projects, we have the power to change our relationship with each other and extend our value systems to include all sentient beings' inherent right to exist and flourish. Restoration can be an exchange with

the natural world, a way of giving back. During the field studies, lectures and restoration projects that I completed to meet the diploma requirements, I felt a strong connection between the teachings of interconnectedness and suffering in Buddhism and the practice and promise of ecological restoration. I wondered if anyone had pursued this journey before and when I discovered that this path had not been taken, I knew that this was the next stage of my quest.

I enrolled in a graduate program in Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria to discover the interconnectedness between Buddhadasa and ecological restoration. My research found that in recent years several scholars have contributed work in the area of Buddhism and Ecology. These collections, articles and books feature Buddhist ideas and teachings applied to studies in ecology. However, there has been no work devoted to interconnectedness between Buddhism and ecological restoration. This thesis is an attempt to apply the wisdom of an ancient Indian religious tradition to the practice and promise of ecological restoration. My hope is that the Buddhist ideas of interconnectedness and no-self will assist the process of ecological restoration so that we, as restorationists, can be sure that we are doing what is of greatest benefit to all sentient beings, not just humans.

I wanted to pursue this path because although ecological restoration projects provide the opportunity for individuals to reconnect with the natural environment, the actions and approaches of some ecological restorationists should be brought into question. According to the Society for Ecological Restoration, restoration is “the process of assisting in the recovery of an ecosystem that has been damaged, degraded and destroyed.”⁵ This definition implies that restorationists are helpers in an ongoing adaptive process. For

some, this idea is troublesome because it leaves the gates of interpretation wide open. After all, how do we assist in an appropriate way? The concern is that while sometimes projects have a great deal of input, hard engineering, and site manipulation, projects that feature a restoration design based on human-centred priorities typically fail to consider the importance of the non-human values of an ecosystem. An example of this would be restoring an area for one particular species and not considering the impact on other species or the ecosystem as a whole. Of course, it is easier to gather support (publicly and financially) for projects that feature charismatic megafauna and rare flora than it is for a site that features local native grasses.

The anthropocentric thinking behind the design of ecological restoration projects perpetuates the underlying idea that we as humans are able to fix ecosystems. But while perpetuating this notion of our omnipotent role, how can we encourage people not to destroy them?

As I researched the general topic, the interconnectedness between Buddhism and ecological restoration, it became apparent that encapsulating the central tenets of Buddhism would be a daunting task. There is not one Buddhism, but many Buddhisms. There are many schools and sects found throughout almost every country in the world; to state that there is a Buddhism would be the similar to saying that there is a “Christianity”. For the purposes of this study, then, it was important to find a Buddhist scholar who made an attempt to interpret the original doctrine of the Buddha, but at the same time was open to the interpretations of other traditions. I found that there were several Buddhist teachers who would be suitable for the study, notably His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Sulak Sivaraksa and Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. However, I was most drawn to

the work of Buddhadasa because he had developed radical interpretations of Buddhist *dhamma* within a conservative Theravadan tradition, was an advocate of engaged Buddhism, lived and taught at his forest retreat, and believed in being surrounded by the wonders of nature to learn about one's self and realize our greater interconnectedness to all things. In this thesis we will use Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's interpretations, teachings, translations and works as a hermeneutic tool for examining ecological restoration. His work is particularly valuable to this study because it allows us insight into the limitations inherent in the concept of *self* in our life and work.

Throughout the thesis process I have also had the opportunity to talk with Buddhist teachers about ideas on the interconnectedness of Buddhism and ecological restoration. I encountered Tibetan Lama Tsultrim at Kunzang Dechen Osel Ling on Mt. Tuam, Salt Spring Island, who taught me that nature had the capability to heal itself and that no effort was needed. The experience on Mt. Tuam left me feeling humbled and confused about how to interconnect Buddhism and ecological restoration. I decided to pursue assistance from someone who taught in Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's tradition. I found out that his last translator, Santikaro, was going to be giving a five-day forest retreat in his tradition by teaching *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness with breathing) at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center near Castle Rock, Washington. I entered the world of sitting meditation (five hours a day) and walking meditation (two hours a day) to attempt to find the interconnection between Buddhadasa's teaching and ecological restoration. I had a chance during the retreat to talk to Santikaro and asked him what he thought Buddhadasa would think about ecological restoration. He responded by pointing me in the direction of selfless restoration.

The Buddha, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, and many others teach the importance of *karuna* (compassion). The Buddha taught us to realize suffering and its cure through compassionate understanding. I have met many ecological restorationists who exercise compassion towards ecosystems and act in ways that have probably led to the cessation of much suffering. I am concerned about restorationists who practice restoration clouded by individual self-interest, and do not realize it. As such, the objective of this thesis is to encourage restorationists to ‘look within’ and find the insight that is needed to challenge many of the current assumptions implicit in much restoration work. If we continue to utilize an approach towards restoration based on human needs and individual self-interest, then our restoration projects will be restorations of ego-systems, not ecosystems. Our current practices in ecological restoration design need to accommodate a “selfless” approach based on the Buddhist teachings of interconnectedness and selflessness, to ensure that our projects are assisting ecosystems beyond the confines of self-interest and into the complexity of ecosystem-based interests.

The path of this thesis is as follows. In “Chapter One: The Way of Buddhism and Ecology,” I review the literature on Buddhism and ecology. “Chapter Two: Interconnectedness of Buddha and Buddhadasa” follows the footsteps of the Buddha and the life and teachings of Buddhadasa with a particular focus on *paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā*. In “Chapter Three: The Practice, Process and Promise of Ecological Restoration” we enter the world of ecological restoration and discover this environmental movement. “Chapter Four: The Path of Selfless Restoration” examines environmental philosopher Arne Naess’s concept of “self-realization” and Aldo Leopold’s “land ethic” to help us

understand a connection with nature that is similar to the Buddhist idea of interconnectedness. Both Naess and Leopold point to the need to approach the natural world with a wider lens that sees beyond the narrow confines of a human-centred universe. Later in the chapter I provide a synthesis of the interconnectedness of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and ecological restoration. Here I promote a *selfless* interconnected approach towards ecological restoration as a challenge for restorationists. As restorationists, we play a pivotal role in the future success of the world's ecosystems. In the end I argue that a compassionate, interconnected, and selfless approach is needed for the restoration of ecosystems.

Pannaānvesa: So you see, Ajahn Buddhadasa, that is where I am coming from. I hope that this gives you an idea of what I am trying to achieve. I am concerned that ecological restoration could become another source of “greenwashing”. And like you I am skeptical about the current educational system’s capability of providing us with the knowledge we need to see within ourselves. I think this is what you were getting at in your poem...

Buddhadasa: The More Learning, the More Stupid...
 The world today is encyclopedically foolish, because of texts heaped upon us to death's door, all these books, papers, journals, and the rest as we outdo each other in overflowing the libraries.
 With scriptures flooding their heads till they waddle, knowledge flooding their hearts most pitifully, weary scholars washed out by their studies, a world staggering without the light of *Dhamma*.
 The more learning the more stupid, it's hard to believe, but the simple matter is ridiculously thus, learning only what pulls the mind into more *kamma*, fondling sensuality, raving mad about status & fame.
 Lots of play, eating too much, excessive money, babbling speech, indulgent veterans in obscenity, whoever upsets is joyfully cursed all day long — yet they think this gravely malignant ignorance is good.⁶

Pannaānvesa: Yes, that is the poem I am thinking of. In that particular poem and in later collections you are very critical about universities and scholars in general. I think that is very interesting, especially since you are a Pali scholar and since many scholars have translated a great deal of your work. I know you are an advocate of experimental learning and believe that we need to go beyond a text-based approach.

Buddhadasa: Time and time again I have noticed that regardless of how the subject is explained, there are a great many aspects of profound teaching that most people do not understand. People hear things explained many times over and still do not understand.⁷

Pannaānvesa: I guess what you’re saying is that in order to really get to the heart of Buddhism you have to experience it yourself. And that scholarly work has a kind of outwardly approach that can be interpreted in any way to suit the scholar and has the potential to miss the original objective. Correct me if I’m wrong, but did the Buddha not say that before we can fix the outside world we need to realize what our inside world is, or something of that nature?

Buddhadasa: When he spoke of the origin of the world, the complete extinction of the world, and the way of practice leading to the complete extinction of the world, he meant that the whole *Dhamma* is to be found within the body and the mind. Learn here. Don't learn in a school, in a cave, in a forest, on a mountain, or in a monastery; those places are outside. Build a school inside, build a university within the body. Then examine, study, investigate, research, scout around, find out the truth; how the world arises; how it comes to be a source of suffering; how there may be complete extinction of the world, that is, extinction of suffering; and how to work towards attaining that complete extinction-that is, rediscover the Four Noble Truths yourself.⁸

Pannaānvesa: I have been trying to do that. It is very difficult to do. I have found that reading as many articles, papers, and books as I could find in the area of Buddhism and Ecology has helped me get to a place where I can learn to understand and interpret the inside world. I know you have concerns about scholarly work in Buddhism and in general at university, but humour me while I review the literature and illustrate the need for the *dhamma* to be applied to the practice and promise of ecological restoration.

Chapter 1

The Way of Buddhism and Ecology

We cannot help but encounter some various forms of religion during the course of our lives. Perhaps you have your own unique religious view or maybe you prefer to conform and adhere to a traditional view. Many either consciously or unconsciously view the natural environment in a way that is based on their belief system. The interconnection between religion and ecology is an emerging study with scholars examining how we understand ecology through world religions. There are studies in Christianity and ecology, Islam and ecology, Hinduism and ecology, Judaism and ecology, Taoism and ecology and Buddhism and ecology. This chapter will focus on the ways in which scholars and Buddhist practitioners have contributed to the literature of Buddhism and ecology. Scholarly work in the area of Buddhism and ecology can be separated into four broad categories: The Life of the Buddha, Buddhist Environmental Ethics, Critics of Buddhist Environmental Ethics, and Engaged Buddhism. In reviewing the literature it is apparent that in it there is a foundational basis for ecological action and the opportunity to include ecological restoration in the discussion.

Eighteen years ago Allan Hunt Badiner collected a series of writings to celebrate Earth Day in 1990. The compilation was called *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*.⁹ His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Joanna Macy, Gary Snyder and many others contributed to this collection. The essays and poems feature Buddhist practitioners' views on the environment and suggest the necessity for the application of Buddhist environmental ethics. With the launch of this book a new

scholarly interdisciplinary subfield was born in religion and ecology, the academic study of Buddhism and Ecology. Two years later, the World Wide Fund for Nature sponsored a series of books that dealt with five world religions and their approaches to ecology, including a volume titled *Buddhism and Ecology*.¹⁰ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown separated their collection into sections that focused on teachings, practice, and meeting the global crisis. In 1997 *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* was released as part of Harvard University's Religions of the World and Ecology series. This book featured scholarly work in the area of Buddhism and Ecology. It separated the essays into seven chapters including the different schools of Buddhism¹¹, "Buddhism and Animals", "Applications of Buddhist Ecological Worldviews" and "Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Buddhism and Ecology". Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, who were both contributors to *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, released their own collection in 2000, *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*.¹² Similar to *Dharma Gaia*, this collection features a series of essays and poems by practitioners of Buddhism. A different collection of Buddhist essays by scholars emerged in 2004 in S.K. Pathak's *Buddhism and Ecology*. Unlike much of the scholarship in the area, all of these essays were from Indian Buddhists instead of being based on a predominantly American Buddhist perspective. Together *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*, *Buddhism and Ecology* (1992), *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnectedness of Dharma and Deeds*, *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, *Buddhism and Ecology* (2004) and uncollected works by Lambert Schmithausen make up the foundational literature in the academic study of Buddhism and Ecology. For the purposes of this study, I focus on a

few examples of the overarching ideas that are common in the subject area, beginning with the Life of the Buddha.

THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Unlike Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna, Moses, and Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama was born under a tree. Like many famous religious births the real story has been clouded by discrepancies in oral tradition and the addition of folklore, fantasy and politics. You may choose to believe or not believe that the Buddha's mother gave birth to the Buddha painlessly from her side while she held the branch of a Sal tree. But one thing that is agreed upon across the various schools and traditions in Buddhism is that the Buddha was born under a tree. There are many times in the Buddha's life where trees are present at pivotal moments. According to legend, apart from being born under a tree and achieving enlightenment under another tree, the Buddha taught his first sermon in a park, lived for decades in the forest, and died under a tree.

Every year thousands of Buddhist pilgrims make their way to the place where it is believed that the Buddha was enlightened. Under the canopy of perhaps a seedling of the famous tree, they hope to find what the Buddha found when he sat there for three days under this *ficus religiosa*, the Bodhi¹³ tree. The connection between Buddhism and nature has its roots in this event and branches out from this experience.

In the literature of Buddhism and Ecology the life of the Buddha receives little mention. Although the *dhamma* that the Buddha realized under the Bodhi tree is expanded on in developing a Buddhist environmental ethic, the Buddha's life is not explored to the same extent. However, Thai Buddhist nun Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, in an

essay called “Early Buddhist Views on Nature”, does indicate that in his lifetime the Buddha did have a direct connection with nature beyond his enlightenment experience. In her short essay, she notes that “the early Buddhist community lived in the forest under large trees, in caves, and in mountainous areas. Directly dependent on nature, they cultivated great respect for the beauty and diversity of their natural surroundings.”¹⁴ It is difficult to confirm Kabilsingh’s assertion that early Buddhists respected nature since we are dealing with events that would have happened 2500 years ago. But it makes sense that if they were dependent on nature to survive, then they would have chosen a “middle way” approach that featured a respectful relationship with the natural world and would have conserved the resources they would need for the future.

BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

The legend of the Buddha’s enlightenment and teachings has been translated into many languages and passed down through generations. One wonders how close contemporary teachings are to the original *suttas*¹⁵ that were written on palm leaves.¹⁶ Western scholars in the area of Buddhism and Ecology utilize the Buddha’s *dhamma* to develop what is often called “Buddhist Environmental Ethics”. The main idea behind such ethics is the formation of an approach that reconnects us to and helps us interpret the natural world from a Buddhist perspective.

Scholars in the area of Buddhism and Ecology are not only pursuing a topic that interests them and promotes their career; they are offering the Buddhist viewpoint as an alternative to an ethical approach rooted in capitalism. Consider what Kenneth Kraft writes in his introduction to *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*:

If Buddhist ideas continue to gain favor in Western culture, they have the potential to influence decision-makers of diverse persuasions. Informed by a Buddhist perspective, academics, public-policy analysts, and poets may bring fresh insights to once-intractable problems. There are many roles for those who speak for the earth with compassion and wisdom.¹⁷

Kraft celebrates Buddhist Environmentalism as the best way for us to approach our changing climate of understanding. Another Buddhist Scholar, Ken Jones, also believes that a Buddhist environmental approach is needed so that society can transform into a collective that sees beyond individual gratification in his essay “Getting out of Our Own Light”.¹⁸ Like any approach that is based on a philosophical or religious structure, it is a source of debate and competing opinions.

Buddhism in general is based on the original ethics that the Buddha promoted in his teachings and cultural interpretations of the *dhamma* he taught. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to pursue studies in the area of Buddhist ethics. Instead we need to focus our vision and follow the trail of two important Buddhist teachings: interconnectedness (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) and the idea of an impermanent ‘no-self’ (*anattā*). The Buddhist teachings of interconnectedness and no-self are central to Buddhist philosophy. The teachings offer a worldview that challenges our idea of our place in the world and our idea of the *self*.

Who are you? What are you made up of? What do you mean by self? The Buddha was enlightened because it is said that he found answers to these questions. We will explore in greater detail his doctrine of *anattā* (no-self) and the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination) in the next chapter. For now let us consider the idea that according to Buddhist *dhamma* we have a false sense of what the self is and as a result proceed to act in ways that are detrimental to ourselves and other sentient beings.

Padmasiri De Silva in his “Buddhist Environmental Ethics” states that “A critique of ecosystems involves, from the Buddhist standpoint a critique of our sense of self. The environmental ethic that can support the urgently needed shift in our world view is a Buddhist critique of self”.¹⁹ A Buddhist critique of self would feature careful examination of our attitudes, belief system and actions. In Buddhism we discover ourselves through the process of meditation. Joanna Macy, a student of Thich Nhat Hanh’s and practiced in meditation writes in “The Greening of the Self” that

the crisis that threatens our planet, whether seen from its military, ecological, or social aspect, derives from a dysfunctional and pathological notion of the self. It derives from a mistake about our place in the order of things. It is a delusion that the self is so separate and fragile that we must delineate and defend its boundaries, that it is so small and needy that we must endlessly acquire and endlessly consume, and that it is so aloof that as individuals, corporations, nation-states, or species, we can be immune to what we do to other beings.²⁰

Macy has contributed extensively in the area of Buddhism and Ecology, particularly with her book *World as Self, World as Lover*. She believes that the problems that we encounter in society are fundamentally based on how we view our place in the world based on our belief in a separate and distinct self. If, according to Macy, we are able to see that we are part of the interconnected world that the Buddha was talking about, then we can reposition ourselves and react in a more ecologically compassionate way.

But what is this interconnectedness, where we realize that we are not a separate entity but a part of the whole system of beings? Thich Nhat Hanh, in his *Peace is Every Step*, illustrates the idea of interconnectedness through his idea of ‘interbeing.’ He writes that,

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper *inter-are*. “Interbeing” is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix “inter-” with the verb “to be,” we have a new verb, inter-be... Looking even more deeply, we can see ourselves in this sheet of paper too. This is not difficult to see, because when we look at a sheet of paper, it is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. We cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word inter-be should be in the dictionary. “To be” is to inter-be. We cannot just be by ourselves alone. We have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is.²¹

Once we realize that there is no separate self, that we are utterly dependent on everything else, we can “inter-be”. Buddhist scholar Jeremy Hayward, in his essay “Ecology and the Experience of Sacredness,” believes that the lesson of interdependence is vital in reconnecting with the environment in a positive way. He writes,

a mistaken metaphysics has led to alienation between our thoughts and our bodies, between our bodies and the Earth, and between us and other species. It is vitally important that we restore the natural, heartfelt perception of our interdependence. Until this fundamental alienation and division is healed, there may be no lasting solutions to the environmental problems affecting the Earth.²²

The idea of alienation and disconnection between the natural world and ourselves is a common theme found in the literature of Buddhism and Ecology. The idea of reestablishing the interconnectedness with the ecological world in combination with a selfless approach is the main theme at the heart of a Buddhist environmental ethic.

CRITICS OF BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY

In all healthy academic discussions there are always dissenting voices that help scholars affirm their positions or alter their views. An essay by Ian Harris in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dhamma and Deeds*, offers a perspective that is not found in other collections in *Buddhism and Ecology*. In his “Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern: Some Methodological Problems Considered”, Harris rightly points out that what Buddhism is can be lost or manipulated in translation, and scholarship in the area needs to “take account of the historical, doctrinal, and cultural diversity of the tradition.”²³ Harris also indicates that ecological concerns would have been very different when the Buddha was alive, and that scholars are using Buddhist philosophy to solve the contemporary ecological crisis without fully understanding the actual historical basis of the tradition. They are applying ancient teachings (which have been altered for generations) to contemporary ecological problems in hopes of providing an example of a way of life that is harmonious with nature. While this goal may be achieved, we are losing a necessary contextual understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

One scholar who has devoted a great deal of work to investigating the history of Buddhism and applying it to the current ecological situation is Lambert Schmithausen. Although he is not essentially a critic of Buddhism but a scholar who is very critical and thorough in his study of Buddhism and Ecology, it is important to include his work in this section because of its rigorous nature. Schmithausen delivered a lecture in 1990 titled “Buddhism and Nature”. In this lecture he focuses on the early Buddhist communities’ approach to the natural world. He examines the influence of the Jain and Hindu teaching of *ahiṃsā* and what he believes it meant to early Buddhists. The principle of *ahiṃsā* (no-

harm) has many implications in the current ecological movement because it brings into question the consumption of animals and the removal of invasive species. Schmithausen conducts research into the principle of *ahimsā* to determine if he can find a historical basis that could be appropriated for the contemporary crisis. In his lecture he states,

a new awareness of the old Buddhist teaching that animals, as sentient beings, should not be killed or injured, would certainly be helpful, though perhaps emphasis should nowadays be laid not so much on killing as such but rather on needless and cruel killing, and on destruction of ecosystems. And we should also be aware of the fact that not only the fisherman, butcher, peasant or industrialist but also and perhaps primarily the consumer is responsible for what actually happens.²⁴

Schmithausen, like other scholars in the area of Buddhism and Ecology promotes Buddhist teachings as an alternative to dominant viewpoints and reflects on current social roles. Similar to Harris, Schmithausen in his lecture does not indicate any evidence of early Buddhists performing acts to conserve nature; however, he does take his conclusion one step further when he states, “the ultimate analysis of existence in early monastic Buddhism does not, to be sure, strongly motivate conservation of nature. But it does not encourage destruction or remodeling of nature in the name of so-called progress either.”²⁵

Through the discourse between Buddhism and Ecology, a symbiosis of religion and ecology has developed. These writers encourage action based on Buddhist philosophy and ask us to question our decisions before we act. Perhaps Schmithausen provides the safest answer to accommodate all of those who are concerned about the environment when he states,

to leave things and creatures in peace, and to regard all fellow-creatures with compassion and sympathy, and cautiously help them in case of emergency, without damaging others. This is in fact a fundamental attitude in Buddhist

culture, and as long as the environment is intact, leaving nature alone is probably the best thing one can do.²⁶

ENGAGED BUDDHISM

Engaged Buddhists are Buddhist scholars, teachers and practitioners who are interested in spreading the *dhamma* by taking action in the areas of social justice, peace and conflict resolution, human rights and ecology. The term “engaged Buddhism” developed out of what was once referred to as “socially engaged Buddhism”. Thich Nhat Hanh is credited for the creation of the term:

The term “socially engaged Buddhism” derives from the French words “*engage*” and “*l’engagement*,” but Nhat Hanh was actually using this phrase as a cover-term for three Vietnamese ideas emphasizing 1) awareness in daily life, 2) social service, and 3) social activism. This acknowledgement of the three Vietnamese bases for socially engaged Buddhism is important because it captures not only the association of the term with social, political, economic, and ecological issues, but also a general sense of involving the ordinary lives of families, communities, and their interrelationship²⁷.

Scholars who write about, and promote engaged Buddhist ecological action record current actions. Two examples are tree ordination in Thailand, and ecological restoration at two California Zen Centers. In Thailand engaged Buddhist monks perform tree ordination ceremonies to prevent the assault of rampant deforestation. Susan M. Darlington, in her essay “Tree Ordination in Thailand”, describes the process. “Tree ordination ceremonies (*buat ton mai*) are performed by many participants in the Buddhist ecology movement in order to raise awareness of the rate of environmental destruction in Thailand and to build a spiritual commitment among local people to conserving the forests and watersheds.”²⁸ During the ceremony a monk will place a scarf around the tree, recite some verses and attach some verses to the tree. After this ceremony the tree and surrounding forest are believed to be sacred and protected because the tree has been

ordained in a way similar to a monk's ordination. Buddhism is the main religion in Thailand and Buddhist monks and nuns still have influence in the greater community. In Northern Thailand, there are still tracts of forested land where aggressive logging tactics are used and plantations of exotic tree species are grown. In an attempt to stop the logging, monks in the area have been risking their lives by establishing monasteries and ordaining trees. In this example we see how monks who hold strong Buddhist beliefs disagree with the actions of the foresters because they are failing to realize their interconnectedness with the forest and, as a result, are acting based on narrow self-interest.

Engaged Buddhist environmentalists take action to raise awareness and prevent destruction from happening. They also try to lead by example by conducting restoration. Stephanie Kaza in her essay "American Buddhist Response to the Land: Ecological Practice at Two West Coast Retreat Centers" writes about the practical acts of restoration that the residents of two Californian Zen centers participate in. One of the centers she writes about is the Green Gulch Zen Center, north of San Francisco. In her essay, she discusses how these monks act as stewards of the land:

To protect and restore the land, they planted windbreaks of Monterey cypress and Monterey pine between the agricultural fields. Since 1975 tree plantings have been carried out yearly and non-native invasive plants (acacia, broom, ivy) have been culled back.²⁹

In addition to a greenhouse that features native plants, organic gardens, solar power, and these acts of restoration, Kaza believes that American Buddhist centres need to incorporate the knowledge of ecologically appropriate actions and lifestyle choices.

Over time, the incorporation of ecological culture into the everyday life of these centers may inspire visitors to transfer these practices to other institutions and

households. Thus, seeds of ecological culture based in spiritual practice can support the beginnings of reinhabitation, drawing on the energy flow that sustains all life.³⁰

What has motivated these residents to conduct ecological restoration? Is it the same factor that contributes to the development of a Buddhist environmental ethic, the idea that we need to look beyond ourselves to discover the interconnected world around us and get closer to the *dhamma*? Kaza's essay is unique in the canon of Buddhism and ecology because it deals directly with the connection between Buddhism and ecological restoration. Her work is an insightful case study of two Zen centres but it does not deal with the question of "why?"

Throughout the literature we find scholars who are concerned about and interested in exploring the connection between the Buddha's ecological ethics, particularly the teachings of interdependence and no-self. Critics in the academic study of Buddhism and ecology are important because they challenge us to think about how we use ancient Buddhist ideas to assist the contemporary environmental movement. Currently there are Buddhists around the world participating in actions that help others and the environment, and some are even performing acts of ecological restoration. However, it is instructive to discover which specific Buddhist philosophical teachings can motivate ecological restorationist practitioners. Restorationists need to approach projects in new ways that will lead to practical solutions. The next chapter in the literature of Buddhism and Ecology should include a critical assessment of the potential of Buddhist motivated ecological restoration.

Pannaānvesa: I have come to you to ask your help. I need to find out how Buddhadasa would approach ecological restoration?

Buddhadasa: Everyone can be a Buddhadasa and has everything needed to be one, lacking only *sammādiṭṭhi*, right understanding or correct view. If we look carefully, we will discover that there are more than a few around, only they don't reveal themselves because when thoroughly committed it isn't necessary to show off. This invitation doesn't require anyone to make declarations or displays. Just do it genuinely by being a good example of the cool, peaceful life; by trying to point it out to others so they better understand this system of life; and by striving to help fellow humans understand *Dhamma*. Further, don't consider any of these a favor to anyone or expect anything in return. Everyone can participate more or less; there doesn't seem to be anyone who can't do anything at all.³¹

Pannaānvesa: Yes, I agree. Although I must admit I do not believe that many restorationists will see themselves as Buddhadasas, however they may be able to apply some of the *dhamma* to their practice regardless of their religious affiliation.

Buddhadasa: Meeting with you on this occasion I feel there is something that prevents us from understanding each other. That is none other than the problem of language itself... The ordinary, ignorant worldling is under the impression that there are many religions and that they are all different to the extent of being hostile and opposed. Thus one considers Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism as incompatible and even bitter enemies. Such is the conception of the common person who speaks accordingly to the impressions held by common people. Precisely because of this speech like this there exist different religions *hostilely* opposed to one another. If, however, a person has penetrated to the fundamental nature (*dhamma*) of religion, he will regard all religions as similar. Although he may say there is a Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on, he will also say that essentially they are all the same. If he should go on to a deeper understanding of *dhamma* until finally he realizes the absolute truth, he would discover that there is no such thing called religion – that there is no Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam.³²

Pannaānvesa: I remember reading that in your article “No Religion”.

Buddhadasa: This idea that Buddhism is a philosophy, put it aside, lock it up in a drawer, in order to practice by studying directly in the mind, as they happen, *dukkha*, the cause of *dukkha*, the end of *dukkha*, and the way that leads to the end of *dukkha*. Study these until you experience the quenching of some *dukkha*. As soon as you experience this, you'll know that Buddhism is no philosophy. You will know instantly that Buddhism is a

science. It has the structure, principles, and spirit of science, not of philosophy.³³

Pannaānvesa: Yes, I think I understand that. What I am having trouble with is trying to figure out how if we as restorationists are to see the world in an interconnected and selfless way, then what do we need to learn from the Buddha's teachings? We need an approach that helps us achieve that desired goal. What do you suggest?

Buddhadasa: Now let us bring together these various ways of answering this one question. If asked just what the Buddha taught, answer like this: he taught us to walk the Middle Way; he taught self-help; he taught us to be familiar with the law of causality, and that we have to adjust the causes appropriately so that the desired results may follow; he taught as the principle of practice: "Avoid evil, do good, purify the mind"; and he reminded us that all compounded things are impermanent, perpetually flowing, and that we must be well equipped with heedfulness.³⁴

Pannaānvesa: Yes all of the teachings you mentioned that the Buddha has left us with would definitely make restorationists think about their approach to restoration. I believe that I have some understanding of Buddhism, but I need to make sure that I know what I am talking about, and that I have interpreted your teachings and work correctly...

Chapter 2

Interconnectedness of Buddha and Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

In the study of Buddhism we encounter many teachers who are open to the ideas of seeing Buddhist ways of life in other traditions and who also encourage us to adhere to whatever philosophy we believe in, as long as we follow a path that leads to love and compassionate understanding.³⁵ If we investigate the heart of the Buddha's understanding, then we may even find something that can help us find our own pathway in this world. However, we need to realize that his teachings were directed to members of society in his native India in the fifth century B.C.E. Twenty-five hundred years later they are still being applied. But how do we apply them? We need to find an individual who adheres to the Buddha's wisdom and makes it relevant to the problems of today's world. In particular, we need to find someone who is concerned about the ecological crisis and is not afraid of being bold and controversial, even within his own tradition. Thai Theravadan monk Bhikkhu Buddhadasa is one such individual. He died in 1993, but the legacy of his work lives on. This chapter provides background on the Buddha's path and the work of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. When we let the Buddha's teachings penetrate our minds, we can see that there is a different way of looking at things and with the help of Buddhadasa, we can see that if we use the insights of Buddha, we can help prevent ecosystems from being damaged, degraded and destroyed.

THE BUDDHA

The Buddha taught individuals to follow a path to the liberation from suffering. He did this by focusing on Four Noble Truths: “(1) Life is suffering (2) suffering is caused by craving (3) suffering can have an end (4) there is a path which leads to the end of suffering.”³⁶ When we realize the significance of each these truths we can proceed on to what is referred to as a “Middle Way”³⁷ approach, which is the essence of the Buddha’s teachings. This can be further clarified through the concept of the “three jewels” that are essential for monks and nuns who follow the Buddha. The three jewels are the three vows that a Buddhist makes: I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the *dhamma*, and I take refuge in the *sangha*.

One can find one common story of the Buddha’s life that emerges from the folklore and the legend.³⁸ It is believed that Siddhartha Gautama was a prince who lived in a palace. At the very least he was a member of the Kshatria (warrior) caste in India, which was second only to the highest caste, Brahman. As a member of this privileged group in society, he had all the luxuries that he could want in ancient India (490-410 B.C.E. or 480-400 B.C.E.).³⁹ Some stories of the Buddha’s life also put him in the company of a harem while others say that he was married with children. The main story that emerges is that Siddhartha’s father did not want his son to experience suffering, so he did everything in his power to shelter him from *dukkha* and keep him safely behind the walls of the palace. Siddhartha, although he had everything that he could want, decided that he needed to find out what lay beyond the walls of the palace. Outside, Siddhartha experienced the reality of suffering, and this transformational experience propelled him to embark on a quest to discover the cause of and cure for suffering. According to legend,

he tried a number of techniques but ultimately it was his meditative experience under the banyan tree that led to his enlightenment. There he realized the Four Noble Truths, and was motivated to share his newfound knowledge with others. The experience under the Bodhi tree was Siddhartha's awakening. He was able to "know and see the world 'as it is'",⁴⁰ and that is why he is referred to as the Buddha, the "one who has woken up."⁴¹

Buddhist practitioners vow to follow the Buddha's meditative insights by adhering to the three jewels. The first jewel ("I take refuge in the Buddha") is the knowledge of the Buddha's experience and his foundational teachings – what he realized under the Bodhi tree. This concept leads us to the second jewel ("I take refuge in the *Dhamma*").⁴² The *Dhamma* is a collection of the Buddha's original teachings, the way of life in Buddhism and ongoing Buddhist scholarship. In Rupert Gethin's *The Foundations of Buddhism* (1998) another view of *Dhamma* (*Dharma*) is offered.

Dharma is that which is the basis of things, the underlying nature of things, the way things are; in short, it is the truth about things, the truth about the world. More than this, *Dharma* is the way we should act, for if we are to avoid bringing harm to both ourselves and others we should strive to act in a way that is true to the way things are, that accords with the underlying truth of things. Ultimately the only true way to act is in conformity with *Dharma*.⁴³

What is the *Dhamma*? Let us look at a few of the main teachings to understand the Buddha's way and to learn how these principles can be applied.

During his transformative experience, the Buddha recognized the cause and cure for *dukkha*. Rupert Gethin states that "according to context, it can be translated as "suffering," "pain," "ill," "unsatisfactoriness," "anguish," "stress," "unease," and a range of other synonyms."⁴⁴ The Buddha believed that preventing *dukkha* from occurring was the key to life and that his teachings were the cure for *dukkha*. The Eightfold Path is a

way of life one follows that leads to the cessation of suffering. It consists of eight steps or teachings: right action, right livelihood, right thought, right intention, right view, right speech, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The study of this path is complex and fascinating and could be expounded at great length. Future work in Buddhism and ecological restoration could be done to pursue this journey, particularly with reference to ideas of ‘Right Action’ and ‘Right Livelihood’. Also, it should be mentioned that the Buddhist concepts of *kamma*⁴⁵ (action), *upāya* (skillful means) and *bodhisattvas* (enlightened beings) would also make very interesting topics of study in the area of Buddhism and ecological restoration. For the purposes of the present study, I will concentrate on two interrelated essential teachings that the Buddha realized during his enlightenment and that were pivotal in establishing the Eightfold Path. We will turn our attention to the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination), and the doctrine of *anattā* (no-self).

Perhaps the most important teaching in all of the Buddha’s *dhamma* is the idea of *paṭicca-samuppāda*.⁴⁶ In English this teaching is often translated and referred to as dependent origination, dependent arising, conditioned genesis or the law of causality. In order to understand this teaching it helps to clear one’s mind of all thoughts. The Buddha referred to the teaching of dependent origination in the *Samyutta Nikaya sutta*⁴⁷:

And what, monks, is dependent origination? With ignorance as a condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. This, monks, is called dependent origination.⁴⁸

The Buddha has described the process in which the unenlightened being continues to participate in a cycle of suffering. From the Buddha's perspective, we falsely cling to ideas of a permanent unchanging self, when in fact what we experience are merely the conditions of cause and effect that are impermanent and constantly shifting. If we can recognize that we are participating in the cycle of suffering in this way, then we can prevent *dukkha* from happening. To do this we need to prevent the conditions from arising and therefore break the cycle of cause and effect.

There are many beliefs behind this teaching. Some Buddhists believe that the Buddha is referring to the experience of one lifetime. What a person believes the Buddha was trying to convey in the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* will depend on his or her school and tradition within Buddhism. It may refer to one lifetime or many lifetimes, or it may be, as Bhikkhu Buddhadasa believes, the process of every thought.

Next it is useful to look at the contrary of this cycle in reverse to discover how to escape suffering. If we do not have ignorance (*avijjā*) of the Four Noble Truths, then we are motivated by a correct idea of self and have eliminated the three poisons (greed, delusion and hatred) from arising. As a result, we will not form negative compositional factors (*saṅkharā*) in our mind. There will be no consciousness (*viññāna*) that we attach a name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) to, that develops and is interpreted through our six sense spheres (*saḷāyatana*). There will be no contact (*phassa*) with these ideas so no feelings (*vedanā*) will be created. If there are no feelings of desire, then we will not be craving (*tanhā*) for them to stay or return. Thus, we will not be grasping (*upādāna*) at a need to have them occur again. As a result, we will not be participating in a process that

contributes to our becoming (*bhava*) and we will have escaped birth (*jāti*) and old age and death (*jarāmaraṇa*) in the cycle of suffering. *Paṭicca-samuppāda* is the teaching of interconnectedness in Buddhism, the idea that many interconnected conditions lead to suffering and to its cessation.

When we escape from *samsara* (the interdependent/interconnected cycle of suffering) we will experience *nibbana*⁴⁹ (beyond). In the Mahayanist tradition this idea of *nibbana* is often equated with *suññatā*⁵⁰ (emptiness/voidness). The idea of emptiness/voidness (*suññatā*) is based on the idea of no-self (*anattā*) and what remains when there is no-self: emptiness. The idea of *anattā* does not mean that we do not exist, only that we do not exist as we think we exist. Charles S. Prebish and Damien Keown offer the following explanation of the teaching of *anattā*. They ask:

in the doctrine of “no self” is the Buddha denying that individuals exist or have any unique personality or identity? No, the ego is not denied by this teaching. As explained above, the particular traits and characteristics which go to make up an individual (as when we say “that was typical of him”) are explained as belonging to the fourth *skandha*, the *saṃskārā-skandha*. Here are found the various tendencies and patterns of behavior which collectively give shape to an individual character. The doctrine of *anātman* is not taking away anything that was not there in the first place: it is simply recognizing that the concept of an eternal and unchanging soul is redundant, and is not required to explain how human beings function.⁵¹

The fourth *khandha* (*skandha*) that Prebish and Keown refer to is known as Mental Formations. The concept or sense of *self* is no more than a product of these mental formations based on impermanent conditions of cause and effect.

Together the teaching of dependent origination and the doctrine of no self provide us with two of the essential points of *dhamma* that the Buddha taught his followers. According to legend, the Buddha traveled around India with disciples who wanted to

learn from his teachings. As a group, these monks and later nuns were known as a *sangha* (community). Our third and last jewel is “I take refuge in the *saṅgha*”. Although many consider the *saṅgha* to be a quasi-permanent group who reside together at a monastery or temple, there are others who believe that a *saṅgha* is the community of all beings, since we are all interconnected and there is no permanent self. If we take the idea of *saṅgha* and apply it to all sentient beings, then we must vow to be a part of the greater community and through this membership we may find an end to suffering.

After the Buddha passed away (*parinibbanā*)⁵², the Buddhist tradition did not stay within the borders of India. Leaders of many *saṅghas* took the Buddha’s teachings eastward and they spread throughout Asia. Eventually the legend of the Buddha and his teachings penetrated the Southeastern Asian country of Thailand. There the *dhamma* had a great impact on Thai society, one so strong that the presence of Buddhism still flows throughout the forests, cities, rivers and minds of the Thai people. The oldest school or tradition in Buddhism, Theravada (teaching of the elders), encountered traditional Thai culture, rituals and practices and eventually established and integrated itself into what became known as Thai Buddhism. In 1902, the Buddhist Order Act made Buddhism the official religion of Thailand. Throughout the years, although guided by a religion that refers to greed as one of the three poisons that leads to widespread suffering, Thailand has experienced the effects of an emerging capitalist economy as well as a major shift in the consumption of natural resources as the country attempts to be a player in the global economy. Thai Buddhist nun Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, in her “Buddhist Monks and Forest Conservation,” writes that, “Siam, the earlier name of Thailand, was an appropriate one; it means dark green. Twenty years ago Thailand had plentiful resources and was truly

dark green with 80% of the land covered with rich forest. Within these past 24 years 77.86% of the forest was destroyed.”⁵³ The statistics that Kabilsingh provides us with indicate that members of Thai society cannot help but feel the effects of this rapid change. Like a vibration from a gong, the voices and concerns of the Thai people resonated with the Buddhist clergy and other Buddhist teachers in the country. One Buddhist in particular, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa⁵⁴, listened to this forest cry, and engaged with others to take action.

BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA

Ngeum Panich was born into a small merchant family in Pum Riang, in 1906. He lived in Thailand all of his eighty-seven years and passed on from this world on July 8, 1993. He was known as the “slave of the Buddha” – Buddhadasa. During the early part of his life the young Buddhadasa helped out at his father’s store, until he found his calling. He left his work and family to follow his own path to the Buddha. Buddhadasa headed to Bangkok to learn the *dhamma* and at the age of twenty he became a *Bhikkhu* (monk). The narrative accounts of his life story indicate that in these next few years Buddhadasa became dissatisfied and disenchanted with the corruption he encountered in the Bangkok monastery. Santikaro⁵⁵ notes in his essay “Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society Through the Natural Eyes of Voidness” that, “dissatisfied and suspicious of the rote translations expected in the Pali schools, he deliberately failed the next year’s examination by giving answers he believed in but that were not what the examiners wanted. For now, he had something better to do than climbing the ecclesiastical ladder.”⁵⁶ Buddhadasa decided that ultimately he still wanted to pursue the *dhamma*, just not in the way that others wanted him to pursue it. During his studies he became concerned that the

real essence of the Buddha's teachings was not being translated from Pāli to the Thai clergy or people. He decided to leave Bangkok and to follow the trail of the Buddha that led to the forest. Buddhadasa "was inspired to live close with nature in order to investigate the *Buddha-Dhamma*. Thus, he established Suan Mokkhabalarama (The Grove of the Power of Liberation) in 1932, near his hometown of Pum Rieng (now in Chaiya District).⁵⁷ Buddhadasa's Suan Mokkh was the forest monastery where Buddhadasa was able to establish his own interpretations of what the Buddha taught. He desired to learn and teach a "pristine Buddhism"; that is, "the original realization of the Lord Buddha before it was buried under commentaries, ritualism, clerical politics, and the like. His work was based on extensive research of the Pāli texts (Canon and commentary), especially of the Buddha's Discourses (*Sutta Piṭaka*), followed by personal experiment and practice with these teachings."⁵⁸

During his time at Suan Mokkh, Buddhadasa was constantly studying, writing and giving talks. His interpretations of *dhamma* were quite a challenge for many in the Thai clergy. He became famous for his radicalness and was branded a heretic⁵⁹ for his new interpretations of the ancient Pāli suttas. Buddhadasa was interested in translating and conveying *dhamma* that the Buddhist clergy did not think was teachable to laypeople. He produced a great deal of literature aimed at influencing Thai society to reform their understanding of Buddhism in a way that would lead to positive social change. Santikaro writes that,

progressive elements in Thai society, especially the young, were inspired by his teaching and selfless example. Since the 1960s, activists and thinkers in areas such as education, ecology, social welfare, and rural development have drawn upon his teaching and advice. He provided the link between the scriptural tradition and engaged Buddhist practice today.⁶⁰

Throughout his work he encourages people to act and discover the *dhamma* within. If we can do this, we must live in a way that follows the footsteps of the Buddha through action.

Buddhadasa challenged proponents of the Theravadan tradition to reevaluate their understanding of the Pali canon. The Theravadan tradition (teaching of the elders) is also referred to as Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) by followers of the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) tradition who believe that the Theravadan interpretations of *dhamma* do not allow for individual liberation in this earthly realm. Buddhadasa walked a fine line between the two traditions, holding true to interpreting the Pali canon, but at the same time being open to Mahayanist ideas of personal transformation in this world and spreading the *dhamma* to all members of society.⁶¹ Peter Jackson points out that “in reinterpreting the totality of Theravada doctrine, Buddhadasa is fundamentally concerned to shift the focus of Thai Buddhism from the transcendent to this world, and to incorporate the hopes and aspirations of contemporary Thai laymen and laywomen into Buddhism by conferring religious value on action in the social world.”⁶² For many Theravadans the highest attainment possible for a Buddhist is the realization of *nibbanā*. Buddhadasa believed this to be true. However, he decided that this interpretation did not go far enough and was influenced by the Mahayana teaching of *suññatā* (emptiness). David Gosling notes that,

the cornerstone of Buddhadasa’s beliefs is that only emptiness or the void (*sūnyatā*) truly exists; everything else has a qualified reality – a view with strong similarities to the Madhyamika philosophy from which the Mahayana stream of Buddhism developed. All existence is composed of transitory, impermanent events, but *sūnyatā* never changes; it is absolute being, absolute truth, *nirvaṇā* and the body of essence of the Buddha.⁶³

With his openness to Mahayana teaching of *suññatā*, *anattā* and his desire to engage members of Thai society, Buddhadasa clearly deviates from the Thai Theravada Buddhism of his time. His work could be criticized for departing from the Theravada tradition and his inclusion of Mahayanist ideas. However, Buddhadasa believed that the Buddha's way was too important to be exclusively available to certain members of society for interpretation and engagement.⁶⁴ He saw the potential for encouraging individuals to question their own actions, thoughts and idea of self. In order to be taken seriously, Buddhadasa studied the original Pali canon of the Buddha before adding his interpretations to the discussion.

During his lifetime Buddhadasa wrote a great number of books and his legacy as an important Thai reformer and scholar continue to have an important impact on society. Many of his writings have been translated from his native Thai into French, German, Spanish and English. Fifteen years after his death they continue to be sold in bookshops throughout the world. Santikaro, the main English translator for the last part of Buddhadasa's life notes that

although his formal education only went as far as ninth grade and beginning Pali studies, he was given five Honorary Doctorates by Thai universities. His books, both written and transcribed from talks, fill a room at the National Library and influence all serious Thai Buddhists in Siam. Doctoral dissertations are still being written about him and his legacy. His books can be found in bookstores around the country and are favorites as gifts at cremations.⁶⁵

Buddhadasa's audience ranges from Thai Buddhists to Westerners who do not believe in Buddhism. His main works, *Buddha Dhamma for Students* (1966), *Handbook for Mankind* (1958), *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (1962), *The Doctrine of Anatta* (1939) and *Mindfulness of Breathing* (1987) encourage personal responsibility for eliminating

suffering and praise the Buddha's teachings. In addition to these longer works a great deal of Buddhadasa's talks and short essays have been translated. In our study we will focus on his interpretations of *paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā* because these teachings have the potential to help us look more deeply inside ourselves and realize the external effects of our actions.

It is well documented that Buddhadasa had an intimate connection with land and animals. He often spent time with the chickens and dogs at Suan Mokkh. The forests at his monastery provided a quiet setting away from the bustle of Bangkok, a place where he was more able to hear what his mind and heart had to say. Buddhadasa encouraged his followers to focus on and listen to their inner nature. He believed that this inner nature is shared by all beings, but we must work on it and develop it in order for it to be fully realized. He refers to the term *dhammadhatu* in "Conserving the Inner Ecology" as the essence of Dhamma, the inner nature. Buddhadasa states:

The Buddhist strives to penetrate deeply into this inner nature, this mental or spiritual nature that is within each of us, the nature which is the law of nature, the source of everything. Specifically, the Buddhist tries to realize the *dhammadhatu* that is inherent within all of us, within all of nature. Another name for this is "the law of *idappaccayata*," the fact that everything depends upon and is interconnected with other things. If we realize this nature, selfishness is impossible. If the law of *idappaccayata* is clear in the mind there is no way that it can produce selfishness, there is no chance of feeling "self" and "selfish." When we have preserved this inner nature, we can easily preserve the outer nature.⁶⁶

The law of *idappaccayata* that Buddhadasa refers to is imbedded in the teaching of dependent origination, in the words used to connect the links of *paṭicca-samuppāda*.

Buddhadasa believed that it was essential for Buddhists to understand the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. As an important part of *dhamma*, learning this teaching was pivotal to one's understanding of Buddhism. In his essay "Conditioned Genesis" he explains that,

Paṭicca means to relate or to depend; *samuppāda* means whole or complete occurrence. Compounded they form the most significant word in the teaching of the Buddha. It reveals the hidden truth of citta, namely that reality is empty; there is no supernatural being or god, no soul, no I, no you, no object—only *paṭicca samuppāda*. Empty but not empty! There is the arising and ceasing of suffering (*dukkha*); this is *paṭicca samuppāda*, eleven systematic, regularly occurring, scientifically observable stages.⁶⁷

Paṭicca-samuppāda provides a person with the ability to recognize he or she is participating in the cycle of suffering and that it is possible to break free. Buddhadasa saw this teaching as the key to understanding human nature.

Earlier, I mentioned that Buddhadasa believed that the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* referred to the active process of thought that is constantly occurring. “For Buddhadasa the concepts of birth and death in the cycle did not refer to a physical birth and death as commonly believed, but instead the coming into being and passing away of sensory reactions brought about by contact (*phassa*) between the senses and sense objects”.⁶⁸ Buddhadasa believed that we need to see *paṭicca-samuppāda* in a “this world” perspective. He thinks that Buddhist scholars who promote the teaching in terms of lifetimes are misled. He believes that they are wrong for three reasons:

it contradicts the suttas; it contradicts the principle of not-self (*ānatta*) which is what makes Buddhism unique; and, finally, it is essentially useless. What can anyone do about one’s past life? What good does it do simply to accept our present existence fatalistically—what will be will be? Why enjoy the fruits of my actions only in some future life? Where is the utility of this interpretation of *paṭicca samuppāda*?⁶⁹

Buddhadasa is concerned with the practical application of the teaching. After all, as he mentions, what can we do about actions and suffering we have caused in past lives? For Buddhadasa, *paṭicca-samuppāda* is a process that we can prevent so that we can experience the benefits of the cessation of suffering in this lifetime.

When we understand the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* clearly, the insight of *anattā* can be realized. *Paṭicca-samuppāda* and the doctrine of *anattā* are interdependent. When we study the Buddha's *dhamma*, we find that many of the teachings in Buddhism are necessarily related. *Paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā* must be understood together, or else we will not experience the fullness of either of the Buddha's teachings. When we see ourselves as individual entities with permanent selves, we automatically participate in the cycle of suffering. He points out that after the Buddha discovered dependent origination, he realized that there was no permanent self or *atman*, but a complex system that experiences a multitude of interconnected causes and conditions.

Buddhadasa interprets the Buddha's teaching of *anattā* by offering terms that he believes will help us understand the idea of no self by indicating that we are clinging and grasping to ideas of "me" and "mine". In "Me and Mine", he suggests that

The Buddha's enlightenment was the discovery that, in truth, there is no such thing as a person or self; that there is simply the arising in the mind of ignorance and attachment which leads to the false assumption that there is a self; and that birth and death pertain to this "self" alone. This assumption creates enormous problems and leads only to suffering. To spread the Buddha's teachings, is to spread the truth that there is no such thing as "me" or "mine." When this truth is entered into, the problems of birth, age, illness, death, and saṃsāra will immediately end⁷⁰.

What is "me" and what is "mine"? Buddhadasa thinks that the best way to explain what is not there (a self) is by providing us with what we believe to be there, a sense of "I", "me" and "mine". Often we use these pronouns to describe and offer our values, opinions, beliefs and possessions. Many of us will be familiar with young children who use the word "mine" to identify the ownership of objects. As we grow older we are encouraged to promote our ideas with phrases such as, "I think that" or "I want you to..." When

someone hurts us we may say, “How can you do that to me?” Whatever your connection is to the terms, you have an idea of what Buddhadasa is referring to. He challenges us to discover and eliminate self-centered ideas that lead directly to suffering. When we do not recognize the interconnectedness of all things, we elevate our own status above others and that path leads to *dukkha*.

The process of clinging to ideas of self develops within our mind. As Buddhadasa notes,

Me-and-mine might be characterized as a feeling or state of mind conjured up by the mind’s surroundings. Some people might call it the mind itself, but in Buddhism we do not, for me-and-mine is a form of defilement which has overcome the mind. The Pali term for this feeling is *cetasika*, which does not mean the mind itself or the mind as agent but conditioned mental state. Whenever the mind is overpowered by any form of *cetasika* it changes its form to follow that of the *cetasika*... The words *me* and *mine*, therefore, simply refer to a mind that has been overcome with *ahaṅkāra*, *mamaṅkāra* or egoism, and not to the mind in itself. In other words, “me and mine” mean a mind darkened by *ahaṅkāra* and *mamaṅkāra*, feelings of selfishness devoid of altruistic or other-regarding feelings.⁷¹

“Me” and “mine” are the words Buddhadasa uses in place of what could be termed selfish interests or attachment. Often in his work he uses examples of individuals who were so attached to their own advancement that they did not realize the suffering they were creating for others. But if we realize, for example, that when we dam a river, the survival of species that rely on that water source will be in jeopardy, then we have the opportunity to step back, reflect and change our direction. We need to be able to see beyond our own mind’s wall, to see where we have designed and placed our bricks.

In his work, Buddhadasa uses his interpretations of *paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā* to provide an essential understanding of Buddhism; the *self* is merely a product of a causative interconnected process and as a result there is nothing there that can be

identified as a “self”. The reason suffering continues to flourish is because we cling to the idea of a permanent self and as a result act in a way that is selfish. However, there is another teaching that Buddhadasa was greatly interested in, and that he focuses on particularly in his *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree*: the teaching of *suññatā* (voidness). When we understand the teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* and ultimately that we have no separate and distinct self, then we can experience *suññatā*, and no thoughts arise to cause suffering. As Buddhadasa puts it, “when the feeling of me-and-mine has ceased, it is replaced by the appearance of something unborn—a mind in its original, essential state, a state free from confusion, a luminous state of truth and pure intelligence.”⁷² Any explanation of *suññatā* or voidness requires a great deal of understanding of Buddhist *dhamma*, and patience. Buddhadasa devoted an entire book to explaining this state of mind. Buddhist teachers often recommend serious devotion to a meditative practice to fully understand the complexity of *suññatā*. On this journey we are not interested in looking deeply into the “void”, but instead will explore how we contribute to the cure for suffering and, more importantly, how our ideas of *self* get in the way of this process.

The Buddha and Buddhadasa have provided us with *dhamma*, which should challenge our understanding of the way things are. We live in a society that celebrates individuals and their achievements, when in fact we know that it takes the work of many people to succeed in anything. We celebrate the works of William Shakespeare, but we know that someone taught him how to write, that he watched many plays in order to understand the theatre and that he depended on the merchants, farmers and people of Stratford to provide him with an audience and with food for him to survive; the list is endless. Buddhadasa was also an individual, and clearly he would not be known if he had not offered a

contemporary and challenging interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. However, he and the Buddha have provided us with the knowledge that we do not exist independently of other people or things, but instead depend utterly on a total web of life in order to survive. Consider what one's life would be like if it stopped raining, the sun never shone, the soil were no longer fertile, rivers and lakes dried up and seeds failed to reproduce. We depend on nature and we depend on each other. We have all seen what the effects of greed are. We all know the beauty that can grow from a selfless act. When we realize what our self is by studying the Buddha's *dhamma* through meditation and daily practice, we begin to understand what it is not. When we discover our inner nature, we begin to understand both the interior and exterior world. Then we can act in ways that lessen the suffering of both worlds, as well as the suffering of all sentient beings.

Pannaānvesa: So that is my understanding of some of the *dhamma* and your interpretations. I hope I have understood properly.

Buddhadasa: The external kind of study and learning, such as reading books, discussion, and listening to talks as you are doing now, can do no more than explain the method and means of inner study. This external study only learns how to go about the inner study. Then, you must go and do that inner study in order to understand *Dhamma*.⁷³

Pannaānvesa: I guess that means that if we are going to relate your interpretations of Buddhist *dhamma* to the process of ecological restoration, we need look inside our selves and realize that we do not have a separate self, but are part of a much larger cooperative and interconnected system of beings.

Buddhadasa: Take a good look. The entire cosmos is a cooperative system. The sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars are a giant cooperative. They are all inter-connected and inter-related in order to exist. In the same world, everything co-exists as a cooperative. Humans and animals and trees and the earth are integrated as a cooperative. The organs of our own bodies – feet, legs, hands, arms, eyes, nose, lungs, kidneys, function as a cooperative in order to survive.⁷⁴

Pannaānvesa: So I guess I was right...

Buddhadasa: These birds and trees all around us form a cooperative. I watch each day as the birds eat the caterpillars that feed off the leaves of the trees: hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of caterpillars. Without the birds the trees wouldn't last. This is an example of the mutual help in a cooperative system. Please ponder the essence and meaning of "cooperative," for we must live cooperatively. Without cooperatives, we would all die.⁷⁵

Pannaānvesa: I'm not sure if I understand why if cooperatives are so beneficial, we as a species do not realize their importance and do our best to live cooperatively with nature.

Buddhadasa: The main enemy of cooperatives is selfishness. In Thailand, there have been many attempts to develop cooperatives, and most of them have failed due to the selfishness of the members themselves. The same is true around the world.⁷⁶

Pannaānvesa: You really believe that is the problem, selfishness?

Buddhadasa: Our world is one of selfishness, and selfishness has taken over the world. All its problems are caused by selfishness, not just ecological problems.⁷⁷

Pannañvesa: How do we get away from selfishness?

Buddhadasa: It may be too much to expect selflessness. We would all be Arahant, perfected, awakened beings. Unselfishness is good enough for now. So hurry up with it. Don't be selfish and you will create associations, communities, neighborhoods, and a society of friends in birth, aging, illness, and death. Then solving ecological problems will be a trivial matter.⁷⁸

Pannañvesa: I admire your optimism. I wish a solution could be that simple. Who knows, maybe it is. I hope you can help me incorporate a type of selflessness into the practice and promise of ecological restoration. I know the potential is there. Let me explain.

Chapter 3

The Practice, Process and Promise of Ecological Restoration

We live in a world of constant flux. Ocean tides are constantly shifting, moving between gentle caresses and powerful swells that leave their memory on the shore. All around us things are changing, growing beneath our feet, above our heads, in front of our eyes and in places we cannot see. But, what are our roles as humans in this process of change? Our actions have results, but what are their causes and conditions? We can study and research any country on earth and find instances of environmental change caused by humans. In many cases, we also learn that the impact of human ideas, attitudes, perspectives, and values has negatively altered environments. As a species on this planet we share the valleys, meadows, forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, wetlands, deserts, and tundra with every other species. But how do we do this “sharing”? What do we take? What do we exchange? What do we give back?

Humans depend on ecosystems for food, water, shelter, medicine – for survival itself. Although we are ultimately dependent on the persistence of these ecosystems for the survival of future generations, many North Americans seem to lack a sense of understanding, compassion and awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and the non-human world. Perhaps it is because many of us live in societies with overreaching capitalist structures that celebrate individualism and the commodification of nature. Or maybe it is because the more technologically advanced we become as a species, the more we distance ourselves from nature by way of creating built

environments. Whatever the answer or answers may be, we, as a species, have a duty to recognize our connection as well as our disconnection from nature.

We cannot avoid hearing about the climate crisis and the loss of habitat and species. It is easy as a concerned individual to get depressed about the world that future generations will inherit. But why are species and habitats disappearing? We have many in our society who do not hesitate to pursue greedy options at the expense of the environment. Should we assume that they think that material objects are more desirable and diversity of nature less so? What we do know is that our current rate of consumption is unsustainable. There are some of our own species who do not have enough to eat, who have no access to clean drinking water, and no place to live and who cannot afford medicine or medical assistance. Maybe it is an exercise in futility to assume that humans can coexist with the natural world in a sustainable way, when we cannot even seem to share our resources with other humans who need them just to survive. However, there is hope. Ecological restoration offers promise. I have chosen to examine ecological restoration rather than other environmental practices because I believe that restoration has the potential to alleviate suffering in ecosystems, reconnect humans with nature and encourage us to realize our greater interconnected *self*.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Biologists, ecologists and scientists are those who commonly conduct restoration projects, under the watchful eyes of sociologists, philosophers and politicians. The current Society for Ecological Restoration's definition of restoration⁷⁹ provides an opening for the inclusion of social issues, aboriginal rights, and non-scientific inquiry.

Where do the boundaries of the “process” of ecological restoration begin and end? It seems as if it is up to the restorationist to decide on what and who to include in the process.

Before we get too involved in the “process,” it is useful to explore the overarching goal of all restoration projects. According to the Society for Ecological Restoration, ecosystem recovery is the key to an ecological restoration project’s success.

An ecosystem has recovered - and is restored – when it contains sufficient biotic and abiotic resources to continue its development without further assistance or subsidy. It will sustain itself structurally and functionally. It will demonstrate resilience to normal ranges of environmental stress and disturbance. It will interact with contiguous ecosystems in terms of biotic and abiotic flows and cultural interactions.⁸⁰

In this description, it seems as if a successful restoration is based on environmental characteristics, such as the maintenance of ecological integrity. However, restoration is much more than that. Some like to divide ecological restoration into two distinct disciplines that coincidentally have academic journals with almost the same names, “restoration ecology” and “ecological restoration.” We are familiar with the definition of ecological restoration but we should note that restoration ecology has a different meaning. Consider what SER offers as the difference between the two:

Ecological restoration is the practice of restoring ecosystems as performed by practitioners at specific project sites, whereas restoration ecology is the science upon which the practice is based. Restoration ecology ideally provides clear concepts, models, methodologies and tools for practitioners in support of their practice.⁸¹

Ecological restoration, therefore, is the practice, which is supported by the science of restoration ecology. For the purpose of this study I will be focusing on ecological restoration rather than restoration ecology.

THE PRACTICE

Ecological restoration projects are performed in a variety of ways. Ecological restorationists Richard Hobbs and Edward Norton were among the first to press for a conceptual framework for the “practice” of ecological restoration. For them the

key processes in restoration include identifying and dealing with the processes leading to degradation in the first place, determining realistic goals and measures of success, developing methods for implementing the goals and incorporating them into land-management and planning strategies, and monitoring the restoration and assessing its success.⁸²

If we take Hobbs and Norton’s approach, we can simplify the practical act of restoration into the following steps: Site Identification, Goals and Objectives, Methods, Implementation, and Monitoring.

The restorationist’s first step is to identify the site that he or she plans to restore. Typically this assessment includes a study of the biotic and abiotic features of the site as well as any historical references available. After researching the physical components of a site, one can determine if restoration is necessary, what the predisturbance state of the ecosystem was like, and what is causing or has caused the disturbance. The second step is to determine achievable goals and objectives for that site. What is possible for the site? The goal in a restoration project is the desired end target. The objectives of a restoration are essentially the main actions that a restorationist performs in order to meet his or her goals. An objective could be something like planting native species on the site, whereas the goal would be something larger – the reestablishment of ecological integrity. The third step is to determine what type of methods would best suit a restoration project. Typically, these methods are derived from current research in restoration ecology. The

methods that are decided on are put into action in the fourth stage, implementation. This stage is the “getting your hands dirty” stage, the physical act of ecological restoration. For many restorationists this is the most rewarding stage of the process. Finally, we have the fifth stage, monitoring: after all the work is completed, follow-ups are conducted through various assessment strategies to determine if the restoration project was successful in meeting its targets or if it failed. Any knowledge that can be gained from the restoration experience will be recorded in this stage and will help assist the future of the practice.

SOUTHEAST WOODS

The Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project in Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, British Columbia, provides us with a useable example of the practice of ecological restoration. This 2.7 hectare Coastal Douglas fir forest had survived in a heavily used park in the city. The Southeast Woods are classified as a “natural landscape” in a park dominated with manicured and cultural landscapes. Upon my first visit I immediately felt a connection to this forest: a deep sense of appreciation and concern. Looking around I noticed that although the ecosystem was fairly healthy, it was also in great danger. Invading species surrounded native species and throughout the forest there was a myriad of compacted paths and fragmented habitats. Ecological restoration was needed in the Southeast Woods.

Before I devised an ecological restoration design plan for the Southeast Woods, I completed a comprehensive ecological restoration field study. I assessed the coverage of vegetation in a 20m x 20m sample plot by using various field study methods currently employed in the restoration field, including Gestalt Estimates, Line Intercept, Point

Centered, tree height measurement, Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) measurement and soil samples. The study indicated that although there were small populations of native species, invasive species such as *Daphne laureola*, *Hedera helix*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Poa pratensis*, *Ranunculus repens*, and *Taraxacum officinale* were starting to dominate the forest floor. These invasive species were occupying valuable space for native vegetation and the longer they remained, the greater chance of seed dispersal and subsequent spread.

People in the Southeast Woods are also an invasive species. Native plant populations have to compete with the adverse effects off-trails: habitat fragmentation and soil compaction. The Southeast Woods has a history of being a public sex environment (PSE) where men have sex with men.

typically a PSE will consist of three zones, defined by the people within them. These zones are (1) the waiting zone, (2) the meeting zone, and (3) the playing or sex zone. In a PSE such as a park, the waiting zone might be the parking lot. Here the park users are able to assess who is present for what purpose and to look for potential partners. The meeting zones might include some of the more open and public spaces of the park such as picnicking areas or larger pathways. Here the park user can contact other men and offer, accept or refuse offers to engage in sexual acts.⁸³

The playing or sex zone in the Southeast Woods can be found on the off-trails, usually occurring near a tree or clearing. Often the ground is littered with condoms, wrappers, tissues and lube packages. There are also alcohol containers and used needles. Although sexual activity reaches its height in the woods at night, activity in the Southeast Woods occurs at all times of the day. Human use, particularly men having sex with men in the area, is still a highly contentious issue. The sexual activity in the woods is responsible for most of the litter found, and the compaction of soil. The various off-trails created for

“play areas” are fragmenting the landscape. The Southeast Woods as a PSE makes any restoration attempt a complex one.

The following are the goals and objectives that were utilized in the design process:

1. Restore the ecological integrity of the Southeast Woods.
2. Eliminate off-trails compaction, degradation and loss of species.
3. Educate and create awareness about restoration and ecological diversity.
4. Implement a monitoring program

Objectives

- a. Remove invasive species from area
- b. Revegetate area with native vegetation
- c. Stop off-trail use through educational signs, marked closing of trails and plantings of native vegetation.
- d. Preserve and monitor the restored area.

In order to meet the expectations of the goals and objectives of the project, the design was separated into three practical stages. The first stage featured the removal of invasive species. The second stage of the development design dealt with the revegetation of native plants to areas where invasive/exotic species removal has occurred. The third stage of the design was developed to limit off-trails by use of signage that informs the public of the need for restoration activities in the area. Trails designated for closure are to be flagged off, until native growth can re-establish. This stage of the design is the most

flexible and adaptive, particularly because the success of closing off-trails in a PSE is not certain. Native plants planted in closed off-trails could be deliberately destroyed. Careful monitoring would have to be completed in this stage to ascertain the best actions and methods to meet SWERP goals and objectives.

The Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project was and is an attempt to raise awareness about the importance of ecological restoration and biodiversity in an urban public environment. A primary purpose of this restoration project is to reconnect people with place; thus the project was designed to encourage activities that educate and raise awareness about the value of ecological restoration.

THE PROCESS

There are several motivating factors behind the practice of ecological restoration. Some people feel a kind of connection with the natural world and want to help or heal this world by using ecological restoration methods. Others realize that damaged, degraded and destroyed ecosystems are the result of human interference and are prompted to take action to make things right. Ecological restoration is more than the process of returning an ecosystem to some previous form by reestablishing interconnectivity within the natural system. Eric Higgs, in *Nature By Design* (2003), sees ecological restoration as an opportunity to take an ecological approach that encompasses a wide vision not exclusive to science-based methods. He writes that “ecological restoration is the total set of ideas and practices (social, scientific, economic, political, and so on) involved in the restoration of ecosystems.”⁸⁴ Higgs’s ecological restoration is the process of reestablishing the ecological integrity of an ecosystem by including the far reaching effects of our role as humans in restoration. By including his perspective in

ecological restoration, Higgs has challenged us as restorationists to create ecological projects that see into the depths of societal change too.

Restorationists act as ecosystem designers when they conduct restoration projects. Higgs titled his book *Nature by Design* to encourage restorationists to question what they are doing and be cautious of their actions. He believes that

Acknowledging our role as designers of ecological and social processes lends humility to the already-daunting challenge of restoration. In the end it would be a failure if we did not recognize that the reality of nature and society are greater than our capacity to understand and manipulate them. In advocating design I am proposing wild design, the kind that operates in sympathy with the vitality of life.⁸⁵

Although humans will conduct the design, this does not mean that it should have human interests at its heart. We need to think about how our own values and habits are incorporated into our projects. Higgs believes that “design is a practice that emphasizes intention, and good designs nurture individual and community engagement.”⁸⁶ If we, as restorationists, want to create meaningful and appropriate projects, then we need to consider how we design projects and for whom they are designed.

I decided to utilize what I thought of as a “mindful” approach towards ecological restoration to restore biodiversity to the Southeast Woods. I wanted to create a restoration design that considered the educational, sociological, political, cultural, spiritual and community issues surrounding the development, planning, actions and activities associated with the restoration project. Furthermore, I hoped to create a restoration design that was based on the interests of the ecosystem, not humans.

THE PROMISE

Scholars in the field of ecological restoration also like to point out some of the challenges in restoration design by examining the motivation and actions of restoration. For instance, why is it acceptable to kill some organisms in favor of others? How do you decide? What gives you the right to decide? As restorationists, we need to make these decisions. Often our decisions are based on the principles of trying to preserve, protect or re-establish a species or several species in an ecosystem where there has been a disturbance. We also have to understand that there will always be those who have problems with the ideas of ecological restoration and who use terms like “glorified gardeners” or “nature fakers.”⁸⁷ Eric Higgs offers us “wild design” which features an approach that “goes beyond the conventional ideas of ecological design, which are based typically on ecological services for human use. There is always some measure, even it very small, of human-centered interest in restoration.”⁸⁸ The concept of “wild design” may offer restorationists an approach to restoration that expands the boundaries of restoration to include a design based on ecosystem needs, not human needs alone.

The design of the Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project was based on ecosystem needs and was an ongoing reflective process. The design is open to change and is constantly being re-evaluated. The end goal of the project design is to restore the Southeast Woods to as natural a state as possible. Since the original composition of the woods is not fully known, the design uses sites with similar ecological composition as reference ecosystems. Clearly the task of designing a restoration project is not simple. That is why, as restorationists, we need to think carefully about how and why we are doing ecological restoration and how we design our projects. The promise of ecological

restoration lies within how we approach our projects and for whom we are designing them.

HOLISTIC RESTORATION

Restorationists who approach restoration in a “whole-system” way practice what is called holistic restoration. It is a process that combines evaluation of the ecological and the social components of the restoration project. The practitioner is required to view the integrity of the ecosystem’s health instead of species-specific assessment. In the Society for Ecological Restoration International publication, *Ecological Restoration: Principles, Values and Structure of an Emerging Profession*, Andre F. Clewell and James Aronson include a chapter on holistic restoration. They separate holistic restoration into four value groups: ecological values, personal values, socioeconomic values, and cultural values. In the section on personal values they focus on three forms: reconnection, response to the environmental crisis and personal transcendence or spiritual renewal. These values are based on how a restorationist approaches a project. Is she or he trying to reconnect? Is it possible for ecological restoration work to lead to personal transcendence and spiritual renewal? Does this restoration effort provide the restorationist an opportunity to interact with an ecosystem and re-connect with nature? Clewell and Aronson write that, “the question of reconnection addresses the reentry value, a term we borrow from Bill Jordan, who called restoration a vehicle for establishing a meaningful way to reconnect with—or reenter—nature.”⁸⁹ What a restorationist is able to experience will depend on if he or she is open to novel ideas in restoration practice. Sometimes when restorationists are performing a restoration they “may suddenly realize that they are intimately meshed with,

and ultimately indistinguishable from, the ecosystem on which they are working.”⁹⁰ My own experience in ecological restoration projects has provided me with the opportunity to reconnect with the interconnectedness of the ecosystems. In addition, volunteers in the Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project often relay transformative experiences and spiritual connections with nature that resulted from participating in an ecological restoration project.

Anyone can be an ecological restorationist. It may take some education and training, but if one has the desire, one can easily get a basic understanding and at least be part of the physical aspects of a project. Ecological restoration provides us with the opportunity to reconnect with nature. How we interpret what ecological restoration is and is not is vitally important. What we incorporate into our restoration designs is pivotal not only for the ecosystems we are restoring but for the larger interconnected world. Luckily, in the field of ecological restoration we have ongoing scholarship and analysis that encourages change. As restorationists, we need to know who we are because we are the designers of restorations and the ecosystems are at our mercy. Our personal philosophies and associations affect our designs. From the Buddhist perspective, in order to really “assist the process,” we need to realize that our true selves are intertwined with the beings there. Only then we can transform our projects from the confines of narrow self-interest and be able to “step aside” so as to be of better assistance to the larger systems of which we are an integral part.

Pannaānvesa: Ajahn Buddhadasa, so far in our conversation we have talked about *dukkha*, your concerns with academia and how we function in a cooperative system. And you have advocated an “inner study” to realize interconnectedness and no-self. Furthermore, you have promoted the idea that we need to have a selfless approach in order to prevent suffering. Since our time is limited, I will not be able to ask you the questions I have about voidness, dhammic socialism, engaged Buddhism and many other topics...perhaps another time... If I understand your teachings correctly, you are challenging everyone to look inside to see their true self. Once this “self” or the “no-self” of “self” is realized we need to put this inner knowledge into practice in the outside world. Is this what the Buddha taught, and what Buddhism is about?

Buddhadasa: The real Buddhism is the practice, by way of body, speech and mind that will destroy the defilements, in part or completely. One need not have anything to do with books or manuals. One ought not to rely on rites and rituals, or anything else external, including spirits and celestial beings. Rather one must be directly concerned with bodily action, speech and thought. That is, one must persevere in one's efforts to control and eliminate the defilements so that clear insight can arise. One will then be automatically capable of acting appropriately, and will be free of suffering from that moment right up to the end.⁹¹

Pannaānvesa: You believe that anyone can gain the knowledge from this type of introspection and that it will encourage people to act in a selfless, interconnected way?

Buddhadasa: Examine yourself and see whether or not you know what is what. Even if you know what you are yourself, what life is, what work, duty, livelihood, money, possessions, honor and fame are, would you dare to claim that you know everything? If we really knew what is what, we would never act inappropriately; and if we always acted appropriately, it is a certainty that we would never be subject to suffering. As it is, we are ignorant of the true nature of things, so we behave more or less inappropriately, and suffering results accordingly. Buddhist practice is designed to teach us how things really are. We don't yet realize that life, all the things that we become infatuated with, like, desire and rejoice over, is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not self. It is for this reason that we become infatuated with those things, liking them, desiring them, rejoicing over them, grasping at them and clinging to them. When, by following the Buddhist method, we come to know things alright, to see clearly that they are all impermanent, unsatisfactory and not selves, that there is really nothing about things that might make it worth attaching our selves to them, then there will immediately come about a slipping free from the controlling power of those things.⁹²

Pannaānvesa: Well, Buddhadasa, what can I say? I mean, this is quite a challenge and I expect many restorationists will not be interested. However, I think if a restorationists carefully consider the Buddha's teachings and your interpretations of *dhamma*, then they will not only learn about themselves, but perhaps will change their approach so that restoration has an opportunity to live up to its promise.

Chapter 4 The Path of Selfless Restoration

The nature of a path depends on its creator. You must plan where a path begins, what you will need to create a path and why you are creating a path. Then you can select the tools you need to create the path. The Buddha has offered us a path or way that we can follow, as have Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna and others. Whatever we believe in will help us to understand the world. However, if we open our mind, perhaps some of the *paññā* (wisdom) of the Buddha's teachings will help us think about our own paths and where we may be headed. As restorationists, we need to be sure that the path of future ecosystem restoration is headed in the right direction. Is it reasonable to assume that we are capable of designing appropriate models of ecosystems when we live in a world of *anicca* (impermanence)? How can we advocate a desired reference ecosystem⁹³ in a design when things are constantly shifting; how can we use a static analysis for a dynamic world?

As the climate changes, so will our ecosystems, and that will affect our restoration designs. Maybe we are trying to save and protect species whose time on this planet is over. There are many questions that can challenge the very core of ecological restoration. Our answers will depend on our ability to think carefully about the far-reaching effects of our restoration designs, who we are as restorationists, and why we are doing what we do. Ideally, we will exercise humility in our restoration projects. With a Buddhist approach, we need to follow a path that allows us to see not only the ecosystems that surround us, but our place within these ecosystems and our place deep inside our selves. Bhikkhu

Buddhadasa encouraged everyone to take the time to study and realize their interconnected no-self, so that they could participate in this world in a selfless way. If we as restorationists want to live up to the promise of ecological restoration, to act as healers and assistants, then we need to put a selfless approach into practice. As we travel into the endless possibilities of the future, we cannot be sure what the effects of our actions will be. We can only be aware of what is happening now and what we are doing in the present. It is time for restorationists to pursue a path beyond the creation of ecosystems by humans for humans. We need to follow a path that reconnects us with our greater interconnected self.

When we exercise compassionate understanding towards ecosystems and their myriad beings, we are able to witness inter-relatedness, interconnectedness and interdependency. Our eyes open to the suffering that exists, and to the suffering we have caused. This knowledge should encourage us to act to prevent more suffering. As restorationists we need to realize that we must make sure that we are living in a way that is beyond greed, delusion and hatred, because very often these actions lead to suffering not only in humans, but to other beings in the ecosystems we are restoring. Stephen Batchelor captures this idea in “The Practice of Generosity” published in the collection of compassionate essays on consumerism *Mindfulness in the Marketplace* (2002). He writes,

Buddhism emphasizes the need to relate all human activity, including labor, to a daily practice which can enable individuals to understand their interrelatedness with every manifestation of the conditions around them and hence to find contentment at a truer level of experience. This practice is an ongoing challenge to greed, hatred, and delusion, since such traits of mind preclude recognition of the interconnectedness of all life by reinforcing the individual’s sense of isolation. The resultant view of life leads to a diminution of personal wants and to a higher valuation of simplicity for its own sake.⁹⁴

If as restorationists we open our minds to ideas of self-examination, realization and transformation, then we will probably be better able to understand our motivation in doing ecological restoration. We need to discover how our assumptions and values influence our actions towards ecosystems and restoration projects.

ARNE NAESS

Every ecological restorationist has a concept and sense of self. All of the cultural, educational, political, religious, social and familial experiences that we encounter contribute to our idea of self. One of the meanings of the word *self* in the Oxford dictionary is “ a person’s or thing’s individuality or essence at a particular time or in a particular aspect or relation; a person’s nature, character, or physical constitution or appearance, considered as different at different times.”⁹⁵ According to this definition, the self is who the person is. However, since this self is different at different times, the idea of a permanent self is problematic. We have a self that is always changing and is always capable of change itself. How do we know when it is time to change? How do we realize what our self is? Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess examines how this realization will assist our ecological approach. Whether or not we are born into this world with a self is up for debate. If you believe in rebirth you might even say that we have elements of a self from a former life. We do know that whatever this self is ages and matures.

Naess describes the maturity of self as developing through three stages, “from ego to social self, and from social self to the metaphysical self.”⁹⁶ He believes that we need to expand our understanding of the three stages of the self in order to accommodate a sense of self that has been missing, an ecological *self*. Naess writes:

Our home, our immediate environment, where we belong as children, and the identification with human living beings are largely ignored. I therefore tentatively introduce, perhaps for the first time ever, a concept of ecological self. We may be said to be in, of and for Nature from our very beginning. Society and human relations are important, but our self is richer in its constitutive relations. These relations are not only relations we have to other humans and the human community, but with the larger community of all living beings.⁹⁷

An “ecological self” is a broader self, a more encompassing sense of self identification that feels connected to other sentient beings. Naess believes in the power of self-realization as a means of finding “joy and meaning of life”⁹⁸ and as the appropriate process to bridge the “differences between beings, increased self-realization implies broadening and deepening of self”.⁹⁹ Naess connects our realization of more inclusive *Self* to ecological thinking. It may be helpful to think like Naess when he says,

if reality is experienced by the ecological Self, our behavior naturally and beautifully follows norms of strict environmental ethics. We certainly need to hear about our ethical shortcomings from time to time, but we change more easily through encouragement and a deepened perception of reality and our own self, that is, through a deepened realism. How that is to be brought about is too large a question for me to deal with here. But it will clearly be more a question of community therapy than community science: we must find and develop therapies which heal our relations with the widest community, that of all living beings.¹⁰⁰

Naess challenges us to explore the question of self for the benefit of all. He encourages us to see beyond our traditional concepts of what the self is and open to a larger sense of ecological *self* that we feel is interconnected with other living beings. In this way, Naess’ ecological *self* can be interpreted as *selfless*, because like the Buddha he wants us to focus on what the self is and ultimately realize our interconnected *ecological self*.

ALDO LEOPOLD

Naess encourages us to think deeply about our individual perspectives and with what we identify. In turn, when we study ecological restoration, we cannot help but think of

one man who gazed deeply into the eyes of an old wolf and recognized a workable nature ethic. Aldo Leopold, a native of Burlington, Iowa, promoted a land ethic to help us “think like a mountain.” Leopold’s ethical realization came when he was culling wolf packs in order to increase the number of deer for hunters in Arizona. He recounts that he

reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.¹⁰¹

Leopold was transformed when he saw the interconnectedness of the deer, wolf, mountain and surrounding landscape in the wolf’s eyes. He realized that not only he and the human community were interconnected with the landscape, but that they were dependent on it for their very existence. Leopold discovered that to be a good conservationist, you need to realize the interconnectedness of all nature.

Leopold’s land ethic states: “ a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”¹⁰² Clearly this ethic is up for interpretation; after all, how does one assess “beauty”? There may also be cases where it is impossible to preserve the integrity of a system because the resources it contains are needed for human survival. But it is clear that the aim of the ethic is to “[enlarge] the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively, the land.”¹⁰³ It is my view that such a land ethic provides ecological restorationists with three important lessons: self-realization, self-transformation, and interconnectedness. Students of Buddhism are required to focus on the key teachings of *anattā* and *paṭicca-samuppāda*. Both the teaching of no-self and

dependent origination are relevant to Leopold's land ethic. A Buddhist practitioner is urged to meditate on self and dissolve the walls of a fixed, individual self. The Buddha believed, like Leopold, that our true self, is inseparable from the land that surrounds us. In Naess's concept of ecological *self* and Leopold's land ethic we can apply the Buddhist teachings of no-self and interconnectedness. If we expand the discussion to include the practice, process and promise of ecological restoration, we have the formative steps on the path to a Buddhist approach to ecological restoration.

Should ecological restorationists follow Naess and realize their larger ecological *selves*? If they are able to know this *self*, will they be transformed like Leopold and follow an interconnected land ethic? The answer depends on how open a restorationist is to self-analysis, as well as on his or her philosophical perspective. Restorationists need to be aware of what they are doing and what has motivated them to do it, whether removing invasive species in a park as a volunteer, or leading a multi-million dollar project as a consultant. You may have witnessed restorationists who are motivated to practice ecological restoration in hopes of acquiring status, fame and wealth. Restoration projects based on self-interest are disconcerting because the individual is motivated by her or his own agenda. As a result they may create a project with a limited vision that fails to realize the interconnectedness of the ecosystem. Others who witness successful restoration projects may decide that restoration is an effective form of mitigation. It may be cost effective to destroy an ecosystem for the purpose of resource extraction under the premise that the ecosystem will be restored to a nearly "original" condition. Also, a restoration project could be used as a good publicity stunt to demonstrate an ethic of care for the environment, while concealing a history of environmental destruction. It is crucial

that, as restorationists, we not only understand the effects of our actions, but also ensure that our approach develops from a place of self-awareness. One should also remember that as a restorationist one is a “plain member and citizen”¹⁰⁴ of the ecosystem.

Restoration should be reconnection. It is a process by which humans have the opportunity to give back to the Earth. In North America we all know how good we are at taking. Just think of all the ecosystems throughout the world that will never return to what they were, and we know that it is most often our species that is responsible. That is why it is vitally important that we realize the effects of our actions, especially when they are motivated by greed and selfishness. This awareness should not be limited to the few who call themselves restorationists, but should include every individual who shares the air, water, and land. If ecosystems could talk and we had the capability to understand, they would probably ask us why we continue to damage, degrade and destroy them when they are a part of us and we need them to survive. It is crucial that we reconnect and realize that it is not only our responsibility to restore, but that we also need to change our relationship to the Earth. We have to respect and value what we did not create. Our society is transfixed by the wonders of technology; we follow a path that connects us with airwaves instead of ocean waves. We are encouraged to consume whatever we can afford, without looking at the greater interconnected implications of our actions. Do you see the sun, rain, soil, tree, lumberjack, society and yourself, in this piece of paper? To understand the true nature of our place in and relationship with the natural world, we must disconnect from what we currently value and reconnect with our true selves and our interconnectedness with the environment.

The Buddha was able to realize his true self and since his time, many others have followed in his footsteps. He realized that we are responsible for our own suffering and that we also possess its cure through introspection. As restorationists we are concerned about suffering ecosystems and we investigate appropriate ways to help them recover. The Buddha was often referred to as a physician because of he could diagnose suffering and provide people with the medicine of his teachings to cure *dukkha*. As restorationists, we need to see ourselves as ecosystem “naturopaths”. Whatever path we decide to create must focus on the prevention of suffering and the cure for *dukkha*.

Once we realize that we are, as Aldo Leopold said, “plain members and citizens” of the world around us, then we have the opportunity to act in way that is harmonious with nature. In areas where our decisions and actions have led to the degradation and destruction of ecosystems, we need to realize the extent to which we are responsible. Buddhist environmental ethicist Padmasiri De Silva notes that “human beings have polluted the natural environment, and human beings, by assuming a new sense of responsibility to one another and to generations to come, can restore our natural environment”¹⁰⁵. In ecological restoration, we realize that we as humans are responsible for causing suffering of myriad beings in ecosystems. Buddha’s teachings help us to find evidence of animals and plants suffering as a result of our greedy actions.

We must also realize that we have a great responsibility in the way we design and conduct restoration projects. Most importantly we need to be aware that we cannot fully fix or manage ecosystems. As Indian Buddhist scholar K. Sankarnarayan writes,

The world cannot be saved just by the technocrats, or by the shallow ecologists. They may say, “We can manage the environment”; but every one knows that

environment cannot be managed. Once again, it is stressed that we can only revere environment; we can only respect environment; and we can only see environment as part of us and us part of environment. This total unity can come only when you have a spiritual base and not just a utilitarian base.¹⁰⁶

In the light of Buddhist principles, we, as restorationists, have a responsibility to find harmonious solutions for the ecological problems in our interconnected world. Our projects should demonstrate great respect towards the world we did not create, while proceeding with a sense that we are not apart from, or above, this world.

SELFLESS RESTORATION

We can choose to follow to a path that ensures that we can keep the promise of ecological restoration. We will need a selfless approach; we need selfless restoration. When we see the interconnectedness between Buddhadasa and the Buddha's *dhamma* we are encouraged to realize the teachings of *paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā*. We need to incorporate these teachings into the promise and practice of ecological restoration to ensure that we are not creating restorations based on a false idea of self that is ignorant, greedy and delusional. We, as restorationists, need to ensure that the restored nature we are designing has nature in mind.

Buddhadasa challenges us to leave behind our fixed notions of self. As restorationists we need to understand how we are putting our ideas of self into our projects and we need to examine the implications. Are we motivated by greed? Are we doing a restoration project to enhance our academic reputation? If we design our restoration project to save one species, what other species do we leave behind? As designers of future ecosystem restorations we need to realize the importance of who the designer is and is not. We need to ensure that the promise of restoration stems from something beyond self-interest by

seeing our role as humble designers. Our designs are not only for our species, but for every species; the ecosystems we are restoring are dependent on us as much as we are dependent on them.

Restorationists will continue to find ways to improve the process of ecological restoration. We need to figure out what assumptions we bring to our ecological restoration projects. Ecological restoration is a practical act and we need to be sure that there is not a disconnect between what we believe and what we are doing. Ecological restoration has the ability to handle change because we are interested in the process of assisting. The ecosystems in which we live and work are constantly changing. As we are subsystems of the larger web of life, we need to follow the lead of larger “extended selves”. Eric Higgs points to this when he says that

a more radical role for restoration designers is pushing beyond human interests to meet the implicit demands, patterns, and character of ecosystems. The language is difficult to come by in describing such practice. We must become especially attuned to what ecosystems want, knowing of course that ecosystems will never express their wants in conventional terms. This implies a heavy, perhaps the heaviest responsibility: we are not designing for ourselves...but for the largely silent interests of ecosystems.¹⁰⁷

Higgs, here, is articulating a vision that Buddhadasa would applaud. We need to move toward selfless restoration in order to give nature back its voice. Our vision should expand to include what we cannot see in an ecosystem and not be limited to what we would like to see.

The Buddha taught his followers to understand how suffering originates and how one causes suffering in one’s own life and in the lives of others. When one realizes that one is part of an interconnected cycle of suffering based on a false sense of self, then one has

the power to prevent actions that lead to dukkha and dissolve it by selflessness. If we apply this practice to the philosophy of ecological restoration, we can begin to understand how a comparison can be made. Ecological restorationists concern themselves with how ecosystems are suffering and ways to alleviate suffering of its many beings. However, not all restorationists consider what their own individual self is and how that sense of self contributes to how they view ecological restoration. A *selfless* restoration design would feature a careful assessment of how one incorporates assumptions, motivations and his or her personal belief system into the design process.

At Windhorse Farm¹⁰⁸ on the east coast of Canada a Buddhist-influenced ecoforestry project has been developed. In this project typical forest techniques of tree selection, canopy cover assessment and harvesting are utilized. However more attention is given on what to leave, not what to take, “we learned the view of *nothing missing* and the practice of stillness from the Buddhist tradition. So in this Windhorse forestry experiment we have moved from a resource management ethic to a Buddhist ethic. Of course, these ethical frameworks are not mutually exclusive.”¹⁰⁹ In their ecoforestry experiment they have practiced meditation on the site and have followed the Buddhist concepts of *metta* (loving kindness), and *karuna* (compassion). The Windhorse Farm is an example of an ecological project where Buddhist concepts have influenced the design.

Compassion (*karuna*) for all living things is an essential Buddhist teaching. In *selfless* restoration the idea of compassion and *ahiṃsā* (no-harm) present problems in the design process and in practical acts of restoration. For example, if one is removing an invasive species, one chooses to kill that species in favor of another. Is this act out of compassion for the native species that are suffering as a result of the success of the

invasive species, or is it an act of violence and harm? If we believe that we are acting compassionately when we remove invasive/exotic species because we help an ecosystem recover, then we are able to transcend the idea of *ahiṃsā* by being preventers of future harm. Clearly, the idea of *ahiṃsā* in ecological restoration is problematic and will continue to challenge *selfless* restorationists to carefully consider the removal of any species from an ecosystem, even if the action stems from compassion.

Ecological restoration is a process that culminates in practical actions. We can choose to design our projects with an ecosystem approach in mind instead of a design that is species specific. We should question our interference with ecosystems and favor an approach that involves the least amount of intervention. On a site that has been overwhelmed with invasive species, we could remove the cause of this suffering, but instead of planting to speed up the process, we might choose to step aside and allow the ecosystem to recover and cure its own suffering.

A *selfless* ecological restoration design would not be species-centred, but instead would focus on the whole ecosystem without giving preference to one species over another, based on equanimity and compassion for all living beings regardless of their prominence or rareness. This idea is contrary to many traditional restoration designs where the focus of the restoration is based on the reestablishment of a particular species.

Selfless restoration will not involve hard engineering and designs based on satisfying human interests, nor will it include doing restoration where nature has naturally changed its course without the interference of humans. Restorationists who participate in selfless restorations will be encouraged to conduct and design projects where the impact of humans has left an ecosystem incapable of restoring itself. We should for example,

celebrate projects that change a parking lot back into a natural ecosystem and celebrate our renewed, reconnected relationship with living beings.

A *SELFLESS* RESTORATION?

An interconnected, compassionate approach was utilized in the Southeast Woods; however, it was not *selfless*. During the design process I did not consider what path of restoration I (my *self*) was following. I never stepped aside and looked within to understand how my own self-interests and preferences were influencing my restoration project. Looking back now I realize that if I had meditated on the potential of the project and attempted to examine my self-full-ness, I would have not included a key objective.

In the project a principle objective was to revegetate “restored” areas with native species. The plan was to utilize native species that were found in similar ecosystems to help speed up the process of restoration. The problem is that when a restorationist chooses to plant a species or many species in a natural ecosystem, s/he is altering the natural composition of that ecosystem. This is when our role as restorationists changes from assistants to creators, or co-creators. We select which native species we will use in our restoration design and decide on suitable locations for planting them in the ecosystem. But the question is, if we chose to plant species in a functioning landscape, how much of our self are we projecting into that ecosystem? A *selfless* approach to restoration design would not include the revegetation of species in a naturally functioning ecosystem unless it was a necessary measure to prevent further suffering in the ecosystem. Instead this approach will allow for ecosystems to recover naturally after the cause of suffering is alleviated.

In the restoration design of the Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project one can find some steps on the path to *selfless* restoration – interconnectedness, equanimity, and compassion. The restoration design is based on the interests of the ecosystem, not the human interests of the park users. However, even with a “mindful” approach to ecological restoration, some of the restoration objectives stemmed from a self-full vision of the future in the Southeast Woods.

THE PATH OF SELFLESS RESTORATION

How do we apply a *selfless* approach to the practice of ecological restoration? Restorationists will need practical actions and a useable framework to design, conduct and practice restoration selflessly. *Selfless* restoration goes beyond a holistic approach to carefully examine the restoration project *and* the restorationist. As restorationists we need to make sure that we continue to question our actions, assumptions and values, or else we risk producing projects that suit our needs instead of the needs of the ecosystem. I propose the following questions for a restorationist to ask, in addition to the values held in holistic restoration projects, if he or she is interested in following a *selfless* approach to ecological restoration.

1. Guiding Questions

- a) Why am I an ecological restorationist?
- b) What is my *self*?
- c) What is *selflessness*?

2. Ecosystem Questions

d) Does the ecosystem require restoration?

e) What is causing suffering in the ecosystem?

3) Restoration Questions

f) What restoration techniques will have the least amount of impact or harm in the ecosystem?

g) Does the ecosystem require planting native species for recovery?

4) Assessment Questions

h) Is the restoration based on equanimity and interconnectedness?

i) Is the restoration based on self-interests or ecosystem interests?

Becoming *selfless* is a continual process, but a restorationist who makes an attempt to answer the preceding questions will be better able to realize their own approach to ecological restoration and hopefully be well on their way down the path of *selfless* restoration.

Selfless restorations will depend on becoming self-less and realizing our interconnectedness with ecosystems and all species that share this earth. It will take a transformation on our part to realize that we are interdependent, interconnected and interrelated. When we, restorationists are able to see within our self, and become more selfless, we will be able to follow a path that leads to the cessation of suffering. Our restoration designs will be interconnected with all species and we will be healers and helpers for ecosystems, not creators and designers of new ones.

Pannaānvesa: Ajahn Buddhadasa it has been a pleasure talking with you on this occasion. I have enjoyed researching your work and have struggled enormously trying to understand your teachings. I think I have some understanding and I will continue to meditate, learn, explore and apply your interpretations of the Buddha's *dhamma*. I would like to thank you for taking the time to share some of your *dhamma* with me and other restorationists. Is there anything else you would like to add? Any final thoughts?

Buddhadasa: Finally, I would like to express my joy and blessing that you have come here to meet for such a commendable purpose as lessening the ecological crises of the world. I am delighted that your time and effort is used in such a meritorious way. Please look carefully to see the source, the real origin of these problems, so that we are able to solve them. Realize that they all come from selfishness. We have come here to discuss and share about how to remove selfishness. In doing so, we will end up with mutual good understanding and love for each other. We will be true comrades in birth, aging, illness, and death.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

The heart of *selfless* ecological restoration design will depend on the intention behind the restoration. Are we restoring ecosystems for humans or for all species? How much of our *self* motivates our restoration design? Is it possible to design and conduct restoration projects that are *selfless*?

It will be difficult to understand the full potential of *selfless* restoration without the analysis of case studies where a *selfless* approach is utilized from the beginning of the project. We have many examples where theory is applied to practice and together the two are a marriage headed for divorce. However, if our intentions are philosophically sound, our restoration projects may resemble the theory or theories we subscribe to. The promise of *selfless* restoration relies on intent of the restorationist. If ecological restorationists are successful in understanding the *dhamma* and are able to design and conduct restorations from a selfless, interconnected, compassionate approach, then they will provide us with the case studies we need in order to fully understand the promise of *selfless* restoration.

I have witnessed compassionate acts of ecological restoration performed by volunteers who have given the generous gift of time to the Southeast Woods Ecological Restoration Project and others a success. I have seen ecosystems heal and I have helped heal the land. I have personally felt an enormous sense of appreciation, awe and bewilderment when I have practiced ecological restoration. Ecological restoration provides us with the opportunity to touch the earth, get our hands dirty, and experience a connection to something greater, something beyond words. However, I have also

witnessed projects where the motivation is suspect and where self-interests have prevailed. I have recently had the experience of giving a presentation at an international conference on the beneficial effects of participation in a restoration project. I was dismayed when my talk was followed by someone who was restoring a river bank with re-bar and concrete instead of natural materials. If we favour approaches to restoration that feature designs that are created by experts who pursue engineering and work done by professionals then we lose the full potential of restoration. The antidote is the pursuit of holistically designed restoration projects that maximize an ecosystem's inherent capability to heal itself and provide the opportunity for humans to participate in and connect with ecosystems. If we are able to go a step further, a Buddhist promise of ecological restoration would encourage us to disconnect from selfishness, greed, and irresponsible consumptive patterns that lead to suffering and reconnect to our greater interconnected self through selfless acts of generosity and compassion on the path to ecological liberation.

For this reason I have argued that, as restorationists, we need to find the real *paññā* (wisdom) of restoration. We need a collaborative approach that incorporates a variety of disciplines and involves more than just a scientific viewpoint. We are limited in our studies because there are things we will never be able to collect, analyze or quantify, things we must respect by accepting our lack of knowledge. It is hard to imagine our culture slowing down when we celebrate things that move us along faster, towards 'progress'.

We need to slow down to realize that there is great potential in the promise and practice of ecological restoration. We need to be cautious about where our process and

practice is headed. If we believe that we are trying to “assist the process”, then that is what we should do. In the definition of ecological restoration as “the process of assisting in the recovery of an ecosystem that has been damaged, degraded and destroyed,” we do not find the words manage, control, or create. We can improve the process, promise and practice of ecological restoration by finding solutions in a variety of disciplines. Scholars in Buddhism and ecology, the Buddha and Buddhadasa have provided us with a way of seeing that can help us prevent suffering from occurring – the realization of no-self. However, we as restorationists need to take this understanding further as practical healers of ecosystems. We not only must realize who we are as restorationists, but we must examine why we are doing what we do and how we can approach ecosystems in a selfless, interconnected way. As David Loy says in *The Great Awakening* (2003), “The world begins to heal when we realize that its sufferings are our own.”¹¹ However, before we can really help ecosystems, we need to acknowledge that our whole culture suffers from a pandemic of selfishness and greed. An approach based on selflessness would offer us a radically different perspective. The potential of Buddhist influenced ecological restoration, will depend on the success of case studies that feature Buddhist restoration designs. These studies will provide us with the knowledge and understanding of the possibilities of a selfless approach to ecological restoration.

Looking back on this journey, I realize that the search into the interconnectedness of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and ecological restoration has led me to the path of the restoration of my self. In my own life I have witnessed how my greedy and selfish actions have led to suffering. I also now know how my own ignorance of our interconnectedness with all

things has led to both my own suffering as well as the suffering of others. Even with this knowledge I still act in ways that ultimately will end in suffering. However, I feel that it is important to share the Buddha's awakening and raise awareness of a path to end suffering. I hope that restorationists who read this thesis will be able to realize some of the *paññā* that I have found in the interconnectedness of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and ecological restoration. It is up to us to practice what we preach and what we believe. If we follow the path of the Buddha, we may find that if we allow the teachings of *paṭicca-samuppāda* and *anattā* to penetrate our minds, we can also restore our idea of self to a self that is selfless. Then, our path of ecological restoration will allow us to reconnect fully with nature and each other in a way that leads to the cure of *dukkha*.

Endnotes

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23. Harris, Ian, "Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern: Some Methodological Problems Considered," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds., Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) 381.
24. Schmithausen, Lambert, *Buddhism and Nature*, (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of The International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies, 2003) 11.
25. Ibid, 13.
26. Ibid, 13-14.
27. Prebish, Charles, S. and Damien Keown, eds., *Buddhism the ebook*, rev. 2nd ed., 308.
28. Darlington, Susan M, "Tree Ordination in Thailand," in *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, eds., Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, 198.
29. Kaza, Stephanie, "American Buddhist Response to the Land: Ecological Practice at Two West Coast Retreat Centres," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds., Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 221.
30. Ibid, 245.

Chapter 2

31. Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu, "Let's All Be Buddhadasas," trans. Santikaro. Suan Mokkh Archive, http://www.suanmokkh.org/archive/arts/message/all_dasa.htm
32. Buddhadasa, B., "No Religion," in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, ed. Donald K. Swearer (Albany, NY: State University of New York

Press, 1989) 146.

33. Buddhadasa, B., “The Natural Cure for Spiritual Disease: A Guide into Buddhist Science,” trans. Santikaro. Suan Mokkh Archive,
<http://www.suanmokkh.org/archive/arts/ret/natcure1a.htm>
34. Buddhadasa, B., *Buddha Dhamma for Students*, trans. Ariyananda Bhikkhu (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1996) 5.
35. This idea is based on what H.H. the Dalai Lama said during his talk “Good Heart, Full Life”. (Vancouver, BC: April 18, 2004).
36. Gethin, Rupert, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 77.
37. Buddhism is often referred to as the Middle Way. The Buddha left a privileged life in the palace and also practiced asceticism. He realized that neither extreme was appropriate, and advocated an approach that was somewhere in the middle, thus the “middle way” – not too much, not too little.
38. This section on the Buddha’s life is assemblage of various scholarly works in Buddhist Studies. An attempt was made to give a flavor for the Buddha’s life story based on the following works: *The Foundations of Buddhism*, *A Historical Introduction to Buddhism* and *Buddhism the E-book*.
39. Prebish, Charles, S. and Damien Keown, eds., *Buddhism the ebook*, rev. 2nd ed. <http://www.jbeonlinebooks.org/buddhism/index.html>, 51.
40. Gethin, Rupert, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 8.
41. Ibid.
42. *Dhamma* is the Pali word, *Dharma* in Sanskrit.
43. Gethin, Rupert, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 35.

44. Ibid, 78-79.
45. It should be mentioned that in Buddhism one often finds a different interpretation of Kamma (Kamma in Pali, Karma in Sanskrit), then the popular Hindu and Jain versions of Karma.
46. *Paticcasamupada* in Pali, *Pratityasamutpada* in Sanskrit.
47. *Sutta* in Pali, *Sutra* in Sanskrit.
48. Bodhi, Bhikkhu, ed., *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*, (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005) 353.
49. *Nibbana* in Pali, *Nirvana* in Sanskrit.
50. *Sunnata* is often translated as emptiness and/or voidness. *Sunnata* in Pali, *Sunyata* in Sanskrit.
51. Prebish and Keown, *Buddhism The Ebook*, 99-100.
52. *Parinibbana* in Pali, *Parinirvana* in Sanskrit.
53. Kabilsingh, Chatsumarn, "Buddhist Monks and Forest Conservation," in *Radical Conservatism: Buddhism in the Contemporary World: Articles in Honour of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's 84th Birthday Anniversary*, ed. Sulak Sivaraksa et al, (Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1990) 301.
54. Buddhadasa is referred to as Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and as Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.
55. Santikaro (formerly Santikaro Bhikkhu) was Buddhadasa's last English translator and student. He teaches in Buddhadasa's tradition at Liberation Park in Norwalk, WI.
56. Santikaro, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society Through the Natural Eyes of Voidness," in *Engaged Buddhism*, eds., Christopher Queen and Sallie B. King (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996) 151.

57. Santikaro, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu," Suan Mokkh Archive, <http://www.suanmokkh.org/history/tanaj1.htm>
58. Ibid.
59. Jackson, Peter A., *Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988).
60. Santikaro, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu," Suan Mokkh Archive.
61. In his later years Buddhadasa was also studying the famous works of Zen Buddhism.
62. Jackson, Peter A., *Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand*, 3.
63. Gosling, David L, *Religion and Ecology in India and Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001) 93.
64. This refers to what one often finds in countries where the Theravadan tradition exists. The heads of monasteries and high order monks convey, interpret and teach the dhamma as they see fit.
65. Santikaro, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu," Suan Mokkh Archive.
66. Buddhadasa, B., "Conserving the Inner Ecology." trans., Santikaro, Suan Mokkh Archive.
67. Buddhadasa, B., "Conditioned Genesis," in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, ed., Donald K. Swearer (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989) 115.
68. Ibid, 117.
69. Ibid, 123.
70. Buddhadasa, B., "Me-and-Mine," in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of*

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, ed., Donald K. Swearer, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989) 81.

71. Ibid, 89.

72. Ibid, 98.

Chapter 3

73. Buddhadasa, B., “The Natural Cure for Spiritual Disease: A Guide into Buddhist Science”.

74. Buddhadasa, B., “Conserving the Inner Ecology”, 10.

75. Ibid, 11.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. See Page 5 for SER’s definition of ecological restoration.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid, 12.

82. Hobbs, Richard J., and David, A. Norton, “Towards A Conceptual Framework for Restoration Ecology,” *Restoration Ecology* 4, no. 2, (1996):93.

83. Huber, Jonathan D., and Peggy J. Kleinplatz, “Sexual Orientation Identification of Men Who Have Sex with Men in Public Settings in Canada,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 43, no. 2, (2002):5.

84. Higgs, Eric, *Nature By Design: People, Natural Process, and Ecological*

Restoration (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003) 68.

85. Ibid, 5.

86. Ibid, 284.

87. Katz, Eric, "Faking Nature," in *Environmental Restoration: Ethics, Theory, and Practice*, ed. William Throop (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000).

88. Higgs, Eric S., *Nature by Design*, 283.

89. Clewell, Andre F., and James Aronson. *Ecological Restoration: Principles, Values, and Structure of an Emerging Profession*. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2007) 105.

90. Ibid.

Chapter 4

91. Buddhadasa, B., "Handbook for Mankind," trans. Ariyananada Bhikkhu, BuddhaNet Archive, <http://www.buddhanet.net/budasa2.htm>

92. Ibid.

93. A desired reference ecosystem is an ecosystem that shares a similar biogeoclimatic composition as the ecosystem that is to be restored.

94. Batchelor, Stephen, "The Practice of Generosity," in *Mindfulness and the Marketplace: Compassionate Responses to Consumerism*, ed. Allan Hunt Badiner (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2002) 65.

95. Trumble, William and Lesley Brown, eds., *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 5th ed., vol. 2. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 2743.

96. Naess, Arne, "Self Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World," in *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*, eds. Alan Drengson and Bill Devall (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2008) 82.

97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid, 93.
101. Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1966), 138-139.
102. Ibid, 262.
103. Ibid, 239.
104. Ibid, 240.
105. De Silva, Padmasiri, "Buddhist Environmental Ethics," in *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*, ed. Allan Hunt Badiner (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1990) 14.
106. Sankarnarayan, K., "Buddhist Ecology and Scriptures of Mahayana," in *Buddhism and Ecology*, ed. S.K. Pathak (New Delhi: Om Publications, 2004) 27.
107. Higgs, Eric S., *Nature by Design*, 284.
108. Drescher, Jim., "Enrichment Forestry at Windhorse Farm," in *Wild Forestry: Practicing Nature's Wisdom*, ed. Alan Drengson and Duncan Taylor (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2008) 31-40.
109. Ibid, 39.

Conclusion

110. Buddhadasa, B., "Conserving the Inner Ecology".

111. Loy, David, *The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory*, (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2003) 198.

Glossary

PALI	SANSKRIT	PALI PRONOUNCATION	MEANING
<i>ahaṅkāra</i>	<i>ahaṅkāra</i>	aha-n-kahra	egotism
<i>ahiṃsā</i>	<i>ahiṃsā</i>	a-him-sah	no-harm
<i>ānāpānasati</i>	<i>ānāpāna-smṛti</i>	ah-nah-pah-nah-sah-tee	mindfulness with breathing
<i>ānāpānasati-bhāvanā</i>	<i>ānāpānasṛti-bhāvanā</i>	ah-nah-pah-nah-sah-tee-bha-va-nah	mindfulness with breathing – meditation
<i>anattā</i>	<i>anātman</i>	anat-tah	no-self
<i>anicca</i>	<i>anitya</i>	a-knee-cha	impermanence
<i>avijjā</i>	<i>avidyā</i>	a-vij-jah	ignorance
<i>bhava</i>	<i>bhava</i>	bha-va	becoming
<i>bhikkhu</i>	<i>bhikṣu</i>	bheek-khu	monk
<i>Buddha-dhamma</i>	<i>buddha-dharma</i>	boo-dah-dham-ma	teachings of the Buddha
<i>cetasika</i>	<i>cetasika</i>	set-a-see-ka	mentality
<i>dhamma</i>	<i>dharma</i>	dham-ma	natural truth, teachings
<i>dhammadhatu</i>	<i>dharmadhātu</i>	dham-ma-dha-tu	inner nature
<i>dosa</i>	<i>dveṣa</i>	doh-sa	hatred, aversion, ill-will
<i>dukkha</i>	<i>duḥkha</i>	do-kha	suffering, pain, dissatisfaction
<i>idappaccayata</i>	<i>idampratyayata</i>	i-dap-pac-a-ya-ta	conditionality
<i>jarāmarāṇa</i>	<i>jarāmarāṇa</i>	ja-rah-mar-anna	old age and decay, dying and death
<i>jāti</i>	<i>jāti</i>	jah-tee	birth
<i>kamma</i>	<i>karma</i>	kam-ma	intentional action
<i>karuṇā</i>	<i>karuṇā</i>	ka-run-nah	compassion
<i>khandhas</i>	<i>skandha</i>	khan-dhas	aggregates
<i>lobha</i>	<i>rāga</i>	low-bha	greed
<i>mamaṅkāra</i>	<i>mamaṅkāra</i>	ma-man-nkah-ra	my-ing, mine-making
<i>moha</i>	<i>moha</i>	moe-ha	delusion

PALI	SANSKRIT	PALI PRONOUNCIATION	MEANING
<i>nāma-rūpa</i>	<i>nāma-rūpa</i>	nah-ma-roo-pa	name and form
<i>nibbāna</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i>	nib-bah-na	beyond
<i>paññā</i>	<i>prajñā</i>	paan-nah	wisdom
<i>parinibbāna</i>	<i>parinirvāṇa</i>	par-e-knee-nib-bah-na	final <i>nibbana</i>
<i>paṭicca-samuppāda</i>	<i>pratītyasamutpāda</i>	pa-thich-cha-sa-moo-pah-da	dependent origination
<i>phassa</i>	<i>sparśa</i>	fas-sa	contact
<i>saḷāyatana</i>	<i>śaḍāyatana</i>	sa-lah-ya-tan-a	six sense bases
<i>sammādiṭṭhi</i>	<i>samyagdr̥ṣṭi</i>	sam-mah-deet-tea	right understanding or correct view
<i>saṃsāra</i>	<i>saṃsāra</i>	sam-sah-ra	cycle of rebirth, suffering
<i>saṅgha</i>	<i>saṃgha</i>	san-gha	community
<i>saṅkharā</i>	<i>saṃskarā</i>	san-khar-rah	conditioned thing
<i>suññatā</i>	<i>śūnyatā</i>	sun-naht-tah	voidness, emptiness
<i>sutta</i>	<i>sūtra</i>	sut-ta	“thread”, discourse
<i>taṇhā</i>	<i>tṛṣṇā</i>	tan-nhah	desire, craving, thirst
<i>upādāna</i>	<i>upādāna</i>	u-pah-dah-na	clinging, grasping, attachment
<i>vedanā</i>	<i>vedanā</i>	ve-dan-nah	feeling
<i>viññāṇa</i>	<i>viññāṇa</i>	vin-nah-na	consciousness
<i>vipassanā</i>	<i>vipaśyanā</i>	vuh-pass-sa-nah	insight

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