ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN JOURNALISM

Mindful Journalism and News Ethics in the Digital Era

A Buddhist Approach

Edited by
Shelton A. Gunaratne, Mark Pearson,
and Sugath Senarath

Mindful Journalism and News Ethics in the Digital Era

This book aims to be the first comprehensive exposition of "mindful journalism"—drawn from core Buddhist ethical principles—as a fresh approach to journalism ethics. It suggests that Buddhist mindfulness strategies can be applied purposively in journalism to add clarity, fairness, and equity to news decision making and to offer a moral compass to journalists facing ethical dilemmas in their work. It comes at a time when ethical values in the news media are in crisis from a range of technological, commercial, and social factors, and when both Buddhism and mindfulness have gained considerable acceptance in Western societies. Further, it aims to set out foundational principles to assist journalists dealing with vulnerable sources and recovering from traumatic assignments.

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To
Yoke-Sim Gunaratne née Chia
(wife of Shelton)

Julie Pearson née Hazell
(wife of Mark)

their children
and all their grandchildren

plus
J. Senarath and S. Ratnayake
(parents of Sugath)

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Introduction

Shelton A. Gunaratne

GENESIS OF MINDFUL JOURNALISM

We thought that in today's informatized world, engendered by digitization and global mediatization, a need exists for a different breed of journalists who could bring about amity and sanity in the world community. Their task would be to foster a new genre of journalism, which we identify as *mindful* journalism, devoid of the profit motive that makes and shapes news as a commodity rather than a social good—a distinction that Juan Somavia (1976) and some other scholars made during the height of the call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

Like everything else in the world, we conceptualized mindful journalism as a dynamic process conditioned, but not determined, by a combination of causal laws that operate in nature, whether they be physical laws (*utti-niyama*), biological laws (*bīja-niyama*), or psychological laws (*citta-niyama*).

Buddhist Background

We derived the elements of mindful journalism by delving into Buddha's Four Noble Truths, the crux of Buddhist phenomenology found in the teachings and sermons of the Buddha (*Sutta Pitaka*), the rules and regulations that governed monastic life (*Vinaya Pitaka*) for the past 2,600 years, and the ancient (third century BCE and later) *Abidhamma Pitaka* commentaries on the *suttas*. These three together are called the *Tripitaka*.

Because the Four Noble Truths have nothing to do with divine origin or inspiration and are only a set of verifiable statements discovered by an enlightened human being to alleviate human suffering/dissatisfaction, they are worthy of empirical testing by journalists living in a world of global mediatization. Although not all journalists could aspire to be Buddha, a few could become enlightened journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers)—a term that Buddhist scholar Asanga Tilakaratne suggested to supersede my original euphemism "journalistic *arhants*"—who could help others alleviate

the suffering that invariably accompanies the continuous process of becoming (*bhava*) from birth (*jati*) to old age and death (*jaramarana*). However, successful personal experience with a course of action is essential before one could venture to recommend that course to others. Ethical conduct would not permit an alcoholic journalist to disseminate stories preaching the ills of alcoholism.

Although eventually Buddhism broke down into two main schools—*Hinayana* (Lesser Vehicle), which took root in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia; and *Mahayana* (Great Vehicle), which spread into East Asia—the foundational basis of these two schools and their outgrowths remain the same. However, Tilakaratne (2012) asserts that *Theravada* was the form of Buddhism that spread to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia; and that *Hinayana* was the derogatory name that Mahayanists gave to the extinct *Sautrantika* and *Vaibhashika* sects in India.

The Four Noble Truths

All schools of Buddhism are based on the core belief in the Four Noble Truths that Siddhartha Gautama discovered to attain Buddhahood: (1) that cyclic existence (*samsara*) is suffering (*dukkha*); (2) that desire (*tanha*), clinging (*upadana*), and related fetters—identity with a self/soul; doubt, especially about the *Dhamma*; attachment to rites and rituals; sensual desire; ill will; lust for rebirth; conceit; and restlessness—all result from ignorance (*avijja*) and are the causes (*samudaya*) of suffering; (3) that a path (*magga*) exists for the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering; and (4) that path is the Noble Eightfold Path, also called the Middle Path or *magga*.

Therefore, the Four Noble Truths constitute a phenomenology that Buddha discovered through his personal experience in the context of the Buddhist theory of truth. These truths have nothing to do with philosophy as known in the Western world. Anyone can attest to the veracity of these four assertions through personal experience. In *Kalama Sutta*, Buddha appears to say that people should decide on what is true through subjecting it to personal experience and not because of hearsay or authority.[1] This interpretation, however, gives only a partial rendition of the Buddhist concept of truth.

Inasmuch as truth-seeking is a major concern of modern journalism, we asked Buddhist scholar Tilakaratne to clarify the Buddhist theory of truth in the excursus to Chapter 6 in this book.

Buddhist Concept of Truth

Here, we will very briefly refer to the Jayatilleke (1974: 40–52) definition of truth in Buddhism. He says that truth has the following characteristics:

- *Pragmatism*: *Dhamma*, the truth, "is pragmatic although it does not subscribe to a pragmatic theory of truth" (p. 46).

- *Correspondence and coherence*: "A theory or statement is true when it is in accordance with fact" (p. 43), and has "consistency or the lack of contradiction" (p. 44).
- *Verifiability*: "It is the duty of each Buddhist to try and verify their truth in practice" (p. 47).
- *Middle Path*: "The truth lies in the mean between two extreme views" (p. 47).
- *Partial truths*: "Aspects of truth [in religious and philosophical theories] based on the misdescribed experiences of the individuals who propounded them" (p. 48) belong to this category. Trying to generalize from a part to the whole is another example.
- *The catuskoti*: This refers to Buddhism's two-value logic of four alternatives, only one of which can be true (p. 49).
- *Conventional and absolute truth*: The absolute truth (*paramattha*) is that in the absence of a self "I" do not exist as an independent individual because "I am" merely a composite of ever-changing Five Aggregates. This is because "language employs static concepts to describe dynamic processes" (p. 51). Therefore, it becomes necessary to use terms related to conventional truth (*sammutti*) like "I" and "me" to skip this problem.

Pure Buddhism, as summarized in the Four Noble Truths, is neither a philosophy requiring belief in the authority of Buddha nor a religion that treats Buddha as God. Buddhist phenomenology and religionized Buddhism are two different but overlapping entities. Religionized Buddhism as practiced in Sri Lanka shows the influence of Hinduism and Sinhala cultural rituals and traits. Religionized Buddhism as practiced in China and Japan has absorbed the cultural traits of the Sinic region and several philosophical principles of Confucianism and Daoism. That is why Li (1999) says that a Chinese is a Buddhist, a Daoist, and a Confucian at the same time.

We thought that alleviation of suffering, which means both physical and mental distress, was a concern of the majority of humanity irrespective of religion, race, or any other imaginary or manifest division. The prescription to alleviate suffering, the *magga*, contains *methods* a person could practice and promote that all religions—Abrahamic or not—could endorse even though the Buddhist path has very different assumptions, worldview, and vision.

Magga and the Decalogue

On the surface, the ethical conduct dimension of the *magga* resembles part of the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue sans reference to God and idolatry. In his Queensland lecture on March 7, 2006, that introduced the concept of Buddhist journalism, the precursor of mindful journalism Gunaratne (2007) pointed out that although the concepts related to ethical

conduct looked very similar, the values they engendered were wide apart, like the *yin* and the *yang*.[2]

> Judeo-Christian values are Occidental or Western values, which go well beyond the Decalogue (or Ten Commandments) in the Torah and the Bible. The Jews believe that the Decalogue provides the ideological background for the remainder of the 613 commandments (*mitzvoth*) that God gave to Moses. Jewish tradition holds that every human being is obligated to observe the seven Noachide commandments (i.e., the prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, sexual immorality, stealing, eating from a living animal, and the injunction to establish a legal system), considered to be a subset of the Decalogue (Putnam, 2005). Christian values are derived from the Bible (Ten Commandments) and the traditions of the institutional church. Additionally, Christians employ three other sources: practical reason, experience (including emotions and desires), and human learning (in both science and humanities) (Outka, 2005). Note that the moral values specified in the Decalogue—respect for parents; refraining from murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and killing of sentient beings—appear in the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism, as well as in Hinduism, Jainism, and most other religions. However, with the separation of church and state and the onset of colonialism and industrialization, the Judeo-Christian values became increasingly secularized, with a heavy emphasis on individualism (self) reflected in Weber's concept of Protestant ethics. Individualism takes a mutual-causality relationship with freedom/independence, rights, competition, capitalism, profit maximization, and so forth. Weber (1930) hypothesized a deep connection between Judeo-Christian (especially Calvinistic) values and the rise of capitalism. He defined the spirit of capitalism as the ideas and habits that favor the rational pursuit of economic gain.
>
> (pp. 18–19)

Getting back to the *magga*, its mental cultivation dimension receives the endorsement of modern science. No other path exists that brings out the need for mental development as a matter of prime importance.

Its wisdom dimension enables the journalist to get transformative insights into the real nature of the world we inhabit.

MINDFUL REVOLUTION

A recent *Time* magazine cover story (Pickert 2014) drew our attention to the widespread adoption of doing things mindfully based on the mental cultivation dimension of the *magga*. The Mindful Revolution is currently sweeping the West because "many devotees see mindfulness [*samma sati*] as an indispensable tool for coping—both emotionally and practically—with

the daily onslaught" (p. 42). In Chapter 9, Pearson explains how the mindful journalist could reap the benefits of all three paths of meditation, including Right Effort (*vayama*) and Right Concentration (*samadhi*). In short, the time is ripe for the emergence of the genre of mindful journalism based primarily on Buddhist principles as proposed in this book.

We believe that the several genres of journalism that emerged in the second half of the last century—development journalism, peace journalism, public journalism, and other varieties—contributed much to change the lopsided news structure of the world dominated by the "imperial" West. The Internet (supplemented by the World Wide Web and social media) allowed the developing countries a voice in the world or at least in their own region. However, despite these gains, the ignorance of the West about the cultures and happenings of the East remains comparatively high because of the intentional blackout of news by the "free" media. For instance, the December 2013 meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Sri Lanka was virtually blacked out by the U.S. media (Gunaratne 2013). Part of the reason for this condescension is the news value system built into the Western news paradigm still used by the majority of journalists in the world. The adoption of a *mindful* journalism would necessitate a revision of the West-centric news values.

The printed newspaper in the United States is fighting a losing battle to survive beyond the middle of this century by returning to sensationalism and oligopolistic publishing. The aim of *mindful* journalism is not profit making but truthful reporting without institutional restraints that might defile the clarity of the trained journalist's mind. By its very nature, its intention is not competition with commodity-oriented news, which appears to have entered its sickness-and-death (*jaramarana*) phase.

Magga-Guided Journalism

Guided by the *magga*, mindful journalism could establish a set of *norms* that perceptive human beings could use to compare and contrast with the *traits* of commodity-oriented news served in a hurry with all its warts or defilements (Appendix). *Mindful* journalism requires no written code of ethics but only a set of guidelines acceptable to most people in the world (Gunaratne 2009).

In Western symbolic terms, the attitude of mindful journalism is similar to that of Winnie-the-Pooh (Chapter 5). Its purpose is to coexist with all other genres of journalism by setting a formidable example of enlightened journalism. However, the "Pooh Way" and the mindful way are not one and the same because Pooh follows the Daoist *ziran-wuwei* (spontaneity-action in nonaction) path whereas the mindful journalist follows the middle path conditioned by his/her environment.

While many would agree that that *mindful* journalism is unlikely to be compatible with celebrity and gossip journalism, they could still be optimistic that mainstream commercially driven journalists could apply the *mindful*

approach to 21st-century journalism for a range of reasons, some of which Pearson (2013) has pinpointed in Chapter 8:

- The demonstration, in the light of the *News of the World* / Leveson episode, that mainstream journalism had lost its "moral compass" and existing ethical codes and laws are inadequate without the tools for individual journalists and bloggers to assess their decisions using a functional schema tried and tested over 2,500 years.
- The loss of relevance of the traditional journalism codes of ethics at a time when journalism is so broadly defined, and so many citizens have become publishers. Mindful journalism offers a logical moral framework to fill this gap.
- The potential that the mindful journalism approach offers as a mechanism to appraise critically the ethical dimensions of new media situations—not just journalistic ones—such as the dynamics of the publisher-whistleblower-government relationships in the Assange and Snowden episodes.
- The potential of the mindful journalism approach to fill the need for a universal code of ethics in the contemporary globalized, cosmopolitan, and multicultural world, taking into consideration the lessons learned from the resentment of Eastern journalists against the attempt to impose West-centric ethics and philosophy worldwide.
- The benefits that mindful journalism stands to give both journalists and sources—and society more broadly—through ethical and reflective truth-seeking and truth-telling.

Importantly, the adoption of this approach would reduce the likelihood of journalists being traumatized in their news reportage. An understanding and acceptance of impermanence and death is the key to coping with such situations, as mindfulness psychiatric therapy is demonstrating.

Buddha advocated the Middle Path because he knew that the total elimination of defilements lured by the five aggregates (*skandhas*) that constitute each human being was impossible inasmuch as cyclic existence (*samsara*) by definition was suffering (*dukkha*).

However, some exceptional and "enlightened" journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers), who have mastered the Middle Path of journalism outlined in this book, could help others in their professional fraternity to alleviate *dukkha* by controlling their defilements—the third-person plural pronoun standing for journalists themselves, as well as their audiences—to a high degree. We hope that the exemplary work of mindful journalism would reach the public through the multistep flow of information dissemination.

Mindful Journalism: Brief History

Mindful journalism as presented in this book has a very short history. Perhaps the groundwork for it was laid by R. G. H. Siu (1957), whose book

Tao of Science advocated the need to supplement Western knowledge with Eastern wisdom. Thereafter, physicist Fritjof Capra (1975) and his followers (Zukav 1979; Goswami 1993, 2000) showed the similarities between quantum physics and Eastern religions.

These studies stirred interest in Eastern thought that colonial Orientalism had suppressed as mere metaphysics since the rise of the Occident, although a few European and American scholars like Leibniz, Voltaire, Hume, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Thoreau, Nietzsche, Jung, and Buber had found it of some value. But the projection of Western "science" as an objective method of separating fact from myth gave a boost to globalize Western thought until about the mid-20th century, when the limitations of "science" became apparent to the world (Wallerstein 2004).

The Cartesian-Newtonian scientific method came under heavy fire by the likes of chemist/physicist Ilya Prigogine (1984) and world systems analyst Immanuel Wallerstein (1974). Political economist Andre Gunder Frank (1998) pointed out that West-centric history superseded the "horizontally integrative macrohistory approach," thereby creating a distorted view of the world. Critical theorist Edward Said (1978) exposed the false cultural assumptions of "the Western world." The communication studies field could not remain isolated from the impact of these developments in the intellectual ferment.

Kincaid (1987) edited the path-breaking book that examined communication from the perspectives of the classical philosophies that influenced China, Korea, Japan, and India.

However, Johan Galtung (1985, 1996), the Norwegian social scientist, was the pioneer in applying Eastern philosophy—Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, and Hindu—to the journalistic and mass communication field beginning with his widely known study on the structure of foreign news in the mid-1960s (Galtung & Ruge 1965). His peace research eventually resulted in his advocacy of a new approach to journalism called *peace journalism*, in contrast to war journalism or the current form of West-centric journalism.

Galtung's concept of structural violence resonated with the subsequent clamor for a New World Information and Communication Order.

In the early 2000s, an American journalist named Doug McGill (2010) also started to propagate and practice the virtues of Buddhist Journalism from his hometown sanctuary in Rochester, Minnesota. "[T]he overall worldview of the journalist and the Buddhist, both being aimed at gaining transformative insight through skeptical investigation into the present, are inherently compatible. Yet between the two, Buddhist ethics are more profoundly rooted in human experience and extensive into the world," McGill (2007) observed.

That statement clearly helps us understand the difference between the concept of *mindful* journalism developed in this book and the related genres such as peace, development, and public/civic—the special emphasis on mental cultivation and ethical conduct of the journalist, who can help alleviate

dukkha in the world. Without understanding the cause of suffering, the world as it really is, journalism could hardly help diminish the degree of mental suffering in particular.

Around the turn of this century, three scholars of Sri Lankan origin who started their careers as journalists—Dissanayake (1983), Gunaratne (2007), and Seneviratne (2012)—did pioneering work in relating Buddhist ideas to journalism and mass communication. Pearson (2013) coined the term *mindful journalism* to describe the principles relating to journalism extracted from a secular interpretation of the Four Noble Truths. The Buddhist principles that Galtung (1985) outlined noticeably neglected the mental cultivation dimension.

Galtung (1985) concludes that Buddhism has tremendous potential as a source for active peace politics, to a large extent untapped. A unique characteristic of Buddhism, he says, is that no one can use it to justify direct and structural violence, war and exploitation. However, he claims that one weakness of Buddhism is its tendency to become too tolerant of highly violent systems of militarism or systems practicing structural violence. Although Galtung recognizes the focus of Buddhism on self-improvement (presuming the existence of an illusory self that we conventionally identify with the personal pronouns "I" and "me"), he misses the supreme importance it places on the mental cultivation function.

Whereas Gunaratne (2007, 2009) developed the original concept of *Buddhist journalism* using 15 principles extracted directly from Buddha's phenomenology, Galtung derived the principles he used for *peace journalism* from religionized Buddhism, as well as other religions. Initially, Gunaratne presented the principles of *Buddhist journalism* in March 2006 at a seminar organized by Jan Servaes, then head of the journalism school at the University of Queensland.

Seneviratne (2012) was instrumental in organizing the Lotus Communication Network,[3] initially called the Asian Buddhist Communication Network, to promote mindful journalism in the Asian region. He drew heavily from Gunaratne's theoretical work published in 12 installments in the *Lankaweb*.[4] In 2014, Seneviratne was one of the early scholars to teach mindful journalism in Southeast Asia.

Dissanayake (1983) was one of the early theorists to see the relevance of Buddhist concepts to communication theory. Dissanayake was a multifaceted scholar who dabbled in literary criticism, Asian cinema, journalism, communication theory, and Eastern philosophy.

Principles of Mindful Journalism

At the beginning of this introduction, we made it clear that mindful journalism constituted 15 principles that Gunaratne (2007, 2009) extracted from the Four Noble Truths, the crux of Buddhism. We have outlined these principles in the synopses of chapters provided in the next section.

The first truth says that existence is *dukkha* (sorrow/unsatisfactoriness). Existence has two other characteristics: *anicca* (inconstancy/change) and *anatta* (no selfness/asoulity). Chapters 1, 2, and 3 translate these three factors in terms of journalistic relevance to reporting suffering/unhappiness, individualism/no selfness, and change/status quo. Buddha explained *anatta* in an analytical form (in the Five Aggregates theory) and in a dynamical synthesized form (in the doctrine of Conditioned Genesis or *paticca samuppada*).

Chapter 4 on mutual causality is supremely important to understand that no journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise adviser) could emerge without developing his/her mind to analyze complex issues to see how the interdependent and interactive variables engender ever-changing outcomes called news events.

Chapters 5 and 6 carry the *paticca samuppada* model's system thinking to show how journalists could focus on the close connection between Nature and human beings to enable problem solving easier without much stress and unhappiness. Chapter 5 tries to explore the merits of applying the Daoist view of Nature to Buddhist thinking, and to evaluate the concept of *wuwei* (action in nonaction). Chapter 6 applies the Buddhist theory of truth to journalism and demonstrates how conspicuous consumption violates the second truth and the ethical conduct dimension of the fourth truth.

Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 focus on the fourth truth, the Noble Eightfold Path. We look at each of the paths as a journalistic principle. Chapter 7 provides a general assessment of how the Middle Path can produce a nonextremist mindful journalism that promotes amity and sanity.

Chapter 8 shows how the ethical conduct dimension of the *magga* can provide the solution to the ineffectiveness of the many codes of ethics based on Occidental values. Chapter 9 demonstrates that the mental development dimension of the *magga* could help redress the stress of many journalists thereby enabling the emergence of a star class of journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers).

Finally, Chapter 10 will explore the relevance of the wisdom dimension of the *magga* to engender a superior mindful journalism. We end the book with the assessment that the Digital Revolution has throttled traditional journalism into its *jaramarana* stage.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Systems thinking created the building blocks of this book. Galtung (1985) praises Buddhism for its holism that enables thinking and acting in terms of all four spaces. It accepts "the great unity of sentient life," and it is strongest in human space and its relation with nature. Buddhism views the universe as a whole comprising numerous hierarchical systems that are interconnected, interdependent, and interactive with one another. The 12 links (*nidanas*) in

the dependent co-origination doctrine exemplify the dynamics of mutual causality that produce nonlinear outcomes (Macy 1991) in contrast to the presumptions of the classical Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm, which attempts to infer the results obtained from sampling parts to the whole without recognizing that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This part-whole gap is called the system's *emergence*. Therefore, the attempt to derive universal covering laws through atomism without knowing the size of the system's emergence can only result in scientism, not science.

The holistic approach, adumbrated above, guided the organization of this book. We decided on each chapter strictly on the basis of the 15 principles or goals that Gunaratne (2007, 2009, 2014) extracted from the crux of Buddhist phenomenology and informed by Daoism, Confucianism, and Hinduism to some degree (as summarized below). The chapters hold together as a complete interconnected, interdependent, and interactive whole subject to ongoing dynamic change.

Ours is an imperfect attempt to capture the whole set of interdependent factors that *condition* the concept of mindful journalism. Because none of the factors is independent, and each can act as both cause and effect, our mindful journalism model is both nonlinear and dynamic. Because we used the approach of phenomenology, rather than epistemology or science, to select and organize the content of this book, we offer it to the journalistic community only as a guide to personal experimentation.

Below we give a synopsis of each chapter based on the 15 principles, which we passed on to each chapter author to focus on for explication.

1. "Journalism and Happiness" (by Shelton A. Gunaratne) illustrates Principle No. 1, which requires the journalist to *understand the reasons for sorrow/unhappiness, and to desist from using his/her craft to increase desire (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*)*. We extracted this principle from the first and second truths. The mindful journalist must distinguish between pleasure and happiness to understand the reality that cyclic existence (*samsara*) means suffering (*dukkha*) that one can avoid only by attaining *Nibbana* or enlightenment. Pleasure is physical and short-lived whereas happiness is mental and long lasting. The mindful journalist should not mislead the people that lasting happiness is attainable without purifying their minds from defilements. Enlightenment means eradication of all fetters—the mental state of supreme bliss or *Nibbana*. S/he should understand the reasons for the existence of unhappiness (*dukkha*), and desist from using journalism to knowingly promote attachment (*upadana*) and desire (*tanha*).
2. "The Journalist as No Self" (by Shelton A. Gunaratne) illustrates Principle No. 2: *Concede that no selfness (*anatta*) is the reality of existence, and refrain from overemphasizing individualism that fosters egoism*. This principle of "no selfness" unfolds itself through the interactive processes of the Five Aggregates and the 12 *nidanas*

associated with the second truth of *samudaya* (the arising of *dukkha*). The mindful journalist must understand the reality of existence—that neither s/he nor any other human being is the possessor of a self or soul that implies permanence. From birth through death, one is in a constant state of becoming (*bhava*) that makes the concept of individualism somewhat misleading. Some believe that Buddhism recognizes an empirical self only as a matter of convenience to use the terms "I" and "me." But this empirical self is a mere illusion. Life becomes sorrow when one fails to see his/her insubstantiality or asoulity (*anatta*) and tries to cling to things or feelings. Understanding this situation enables the mindful journalist to minimize the emphasis on individualism, which has a causal link with egocentrism (e.g., celebrity pitfalls). Focus more on cooperative efforts highlighting mutual interdependence at different levels—international or global, national, or local. The *anatta* concept requires a revision of the Western news paradigm, which emphasizes individualism.

3. "The Journalist as Change Agent" (by Patchanee Malikhao and Jan Servaes) illustrates Principle No. 3: *Concede that everything—conditioned or not—is subject to ongoing change/inconstancy* (anicca). Assume the role of constructive change agent (more like Winnie-the-Pooh) instead of defender of the status quo. The journalist must recognize that it is the continuing clash of the forces of inconstancy or change (*anicca*) with those of asoulity or no self (*anatta*) that conditions the state of suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) at a given moment in our cyclic existence (*samsara*). The principle of *anicca* is extracted from the first two Noble Truths.

   At the level of society at large, the mindful journalist could facilitate change to reduce the state of *dukkha* in society by exposing corruption among those entrenched in power and by helping people to purify their minds when attachment (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*), and other related defilements create conditions that could propel them to commit violence. Mindful journalism might also focus on bringing about institutional changes to remove unsatisfactory conditions wrought by environmental destruction, resource depletion, and global warming. It might try to bring about middle-path solutions to lopsided income and wealth distribution, and also call for raising the standard of living of the masses through the cooperative movement and through *shramadana/sarvodaya* movement aimed at promoting self-governance and supply of voluntary labor. [Journalism can also change people's attitudes from aggression and conflict to compassion and harmony by reporting on ethno-religious similarities rather than differences.]
4. "Significance of Mutual Causality" (by Shelton A. Gunaratne) illustrates Principle No. 4, and demonstrates the operational interconnection of the first three truths—the existence, causation, and cessation of

dukkha: *Apply the* paticca samuppada *model to interpret and analyze problems at all levels—macro, meso and micro; and understand the significance of mutual causality*. The *paticca samuppada* exemplifies the operational dynamics of the 12 interdependent links (*nidanas*) that interactively condition the level of each sentient being's suffering as its *bhavacakra* (wheel of becoming) goes through repeated rotations trapped in the *samsara*. Two of these links—*sankhara* (mental formations) and *bhava* (becoming), one at the conception and the other at the mid-level of a being's life cycle—show the net effect of one's intentional actions (*karma*). These factors are abstracted into four simple lines as cited by Kalupahana (1976):

> This being, that becomes;
> From the arising of this, that arises;
> This not being, that becomes not;
> From the ceasing of this, that ceases. (p. 38)

This is a formidable theory that can revolutionize the method of reporting, thereby improving the state of journalism, for it denies the existence of independent variables. Each variable arises conditioned by another. Thus early on, *sankhara* (*kamma*/mental formations) arise conditioned by *avijja* (ignorance); and later on, *vedana* (feeling) arises conditioned by *phassa* (contact); *tanha* (desire) arises conditioned by *vedana* (feeling); *upadana* (clinging) arises conditioned by *tanha*; *bhava* (becoming) arises conditioned by *upadana*; and so on, as elaborated in the first two chapters. The cessation of suffering (*nirodha*) occurs when the co-originating *nidanas* work in the opposite direction.

The mindful journalist must avoid the use of linear cause–effect reasoning. Keep in mind that feedback loops condition both "causes" and "effects" and blur the conventional distinction between the two. Therefore analyze problems and solutions within "articulated integration" (Macy 1991: 185)—the middle path between atomism and holism. In other words, use the systems approach.

5. "Harmony With Nature" (by Shelton A. Gunaratne) illustrates Principle No. 5, *derived from the interrelated interpretation of all four truths*, including the operational dynamics of the *paticca samuppada*, the Five Aggregates, and the *magga*: Advocate the need for humanity to work in harmony with nature, including all its flora and fauna, because everything is functionally interrelated and nothing is entirely independent. "There is no aspect of 'I' . . . that is not conditioned or not interconnected with at least something else" (Kasulis 2005: 398–400). Therefore, the mindful journalist should adhere to the principles of naturalness or spontaneity (*ziran*) and action through inaction (*wuwei*), which Gunaratne (2004) describes as the "Pooh Way" that resembles the middle path. [This chapter also shows the positive influence of the interaction of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.]

6. "No Conspicuous Consumption" (by Asanga Tilakaratne) illustrates Principle No. 6: *Discourage conspicuous consumption by all beings because it encourages the causes of suffering—tanha (desire) and upadana (clinging) pinpointed in the second truth—and violates the ethical conduct dimension of the fourth truth*. This chapter also clarifies the Buddhist concept of truth and relates it to the concept of mindful journalism as reflected in this book. "Since consumption is merely a means to human well-being," and our "aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher 1973: 47–48), the promotion of this idea should be a major goal of mindful journalism. The mindful economics approach of Joel Magnuson (2007), who advocates institutional reform based on the core values of environmental sustainability, social justice, and stability, might become fertile grounds for journalistic exploration.
7. "The Journalist and the Middle Path" (by Sugath Senarath) is a topic that runs through all four truths, and is especially related to the *magga*, the fourth truth. Principle No. 7 says: *Follow the middle way and avoid taking the extremes—yin and yang—on any issue*. Journalism should convey the idea that people mattered—the approach that Schumacher (1973) proposed for economics more than four decades ago. This chapter will compare the Buddhist Middle Path with Aristotle's Golden Mean and the Confucian Doctrine of the Middle. This chapter attempts to derive a secular concept of the middle path specifically pertinent to promote the practice of mindful journalism.
8. "Journalism and Ethical Conduct" (by Mark Pearson and Sugath Senarath). This chapter covers the *sila* (ethical conduct) dimension of the *magga* encompassing Principles 8, 9, and 10:

   a. Follow the Path of Right Speech (*Samma Vaca*)
      Abstinence from lying, divisive speech (e.g., biased opinion writing), abusive speech (e.g., defamatory writing), and idle chatter (e.g., gossip writing). (However, Asanga, the fifth-century author of several Mahayana texts, maintained that a Bodhisattva will lie to protect others from death or mutilation (Harvey 2000: 139.)
   b. Follow the Path of Right Action (*Samma Kammanta*)
      This involves abstinence from taking life (e.g., harming sentient beings intentionally), stealing (including robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty), and sensual misconduct. (Some Mahayana texts, e.g., *Upāya-kausalya Sūtra*, justify killing a human being on the grounds of compassion in dire circumstances (Harvey 2000: 135). Similarly, a Bodhisattva may break the precepts of stealing and celibacy on compassionate grounds.)
   c. Follow the Path of Right Livelihood (*Samma Ajiva*)
      This means personally avoiding and discouraging others from activities that may harm others (e.g., trade in deadly weapons, trade

in animals for slaughter, trade in slavery, and trade in intoxicants and poisons). Some may also include public relations and advertising as harmful to the extent that they are seen "as encouraging greed, hatred and delusion, or perverting the truth" (Harvey 2000: 188).

9. "Journalism and Mental Cultivation" (by Mark Pearson). This chapter covers the mental cultivation dimension of the *magga* encompassing Principles 11, 12, and 13:

   a. Follow the Path of Right Effort (*Samma Vayama*), which has four steps: the effort to

      - Discard evil that has already arisen
      - Prevent the arising of unrisen evil
      - Develop the good that has already arisen
      - Promote the good that has not already arisen

   b. Follow the Path of Right Mindfulness (*Samma Sati*), which has four foundations:

      - Reflection relating to the body (*kaya*)
      - Feeling (vedana)—repulsive, attractive or neutral
      - Thought
      - Ideas (*dhamma*) pertaining to the experienced phenomena (such reflection enables one to overcome covetousness and discontent)

   c. Follow the Path of Right Concentration (*Samma Samadhi*), which consists of the attainment of the four preliminary stages of contemplation (*jhanas*) that culminate in the development of unprejudiced perception or equanimity with regard to what is perceived. (This is also considered a middle standpoint in the way in which we perceive ourselves in the world.)

10. "Wisdom in Journalism" (by Kalinga Seneviratne). This chapter covers the *wisdom dimension of the magga* encompassing Principles 14 and 15:

    a. Follow the Path of Right Understanding/View (*Samma Ditthi*): This requires the journalist to have a convincing knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (that is, the understanding of oneself as one really is) through personal experience. Right understanding is possible only by purifying one's mind through mental cultivation. It is the wisdom of mastering the existence, causation, cessation, and path to the cessation of suffering. The Buddhist's

"intimacy orientation says I am moral when I am most truly myself" (Kasulis 2005: 301).

b. Follow the Path of Right Thoughts/Conceptions (*Samma Sankappa*) in its threefold form:

- Thoughts of renunciation as opposed to thoughts of sense pleasures
- Kind thoughts as opposed to thoughts of ill will
- Thoughts of harmlessness as opposed to thoughts of cruelty

This path signifies the achievement of a very high degree of ethical and mental self-improvement. Buddhists identify this as the state of mind called Enlightenment or *Nibbana*. Mindful journalists of this caliber could transform news from a commodity to a social good.

Thus, the broad definition of mindful journalism comprises the sum total of the application of these 15 principles + X (the factor of *emergence*). The application of a few of these principles does not produce mindful journalism, which has to be treated as a package with each of the principles interconnected and interactive with one another. No principle is independent.

We distributed the above synopses to each of our chapter authors to enable them to focus on their topics without excessive duplication. However, in a book dealing with interdependent (nonexclusive) subjects, some degree of overlap is inevitable. We will evaluate our successes and failures of our foray into mindful journalism in the concluding chapter.

NOTES

1. Asanga Tilakaratne (2012), an authority on Buddhism, wanted us to clarify our statement on *Kalama Sutta* with the following rider:

   In the *Kalama Sutta,* the whole issue is not truth or falsehood, but what is *kusala* (skillful/wholesome) and *akusala*. The truth discourse is very strong in Buddhism, but this truth has a close connection with *kusala*. People like Kalupahana (1995) think that there is a very strong pragmatic element in the Buddhist theory of truth.

   In modern Western philosophy and post-modernist thinking [finding out] what is truth is a very difficult problem. Because we are presenting the current work to an audience informed by modern thinking, we need to clarify the Buddhist theory of truth in greater detail.

2. See the peer-reviewed journal article version of my Queensland lecture in the Appendix.
3. See www.lotuscomm.net.
4. These 12 installments appeared in mid-2011 under the label "Notes on Buddhist journalism": 1. Aim is to reduce suffering through Middle-Path norms (June 19); 2. It exemplifies interdependence, avoids religious propaganda (June 22); 3. It's another genre of journalism, not a replacement of the

current (June 24); 4. News paradigm seen as Trojan horse that carries false façade of objectivity (June 28); 5. Buddhism bridges gap between Hindu and Sinic philosophies (July 5); 6. Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism intermingle to produce basic elements of a non-Western news paradigm (July 10); 7. Buddhist model will slash sleaze, use news to promote social good, and cut dependence on advertising (July 14); 8. Five elements of Western news paradigm clash with goals of Buddhist Journalism (July 18); 9. Examples of BJ picked from current paradigm shows its feasibility to take off as new genre (July 20); 10. Comparing BJ news paradigm with alternative journalism forms that challenged the mainstream (July 24); 11. Starting BJ as worldwide project: Sri Lanka Buddhist organizations can be catalyst of new genre (July 28); and 12. An example of BJ at the global level (July 31).

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1 Journalism and Happiness

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Synopsis: Mindful journalism requires the journalist to *understand the reasons for sorrow/unhappiness, and to desist from using his/her craft to increase desire (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*)*. We extracted this principle from the first and second truths. The mindful journalist must distinguish between pleasure and happiness to understand the reality that cyclic existence (*samsara*) means suffering (*dukkha*) that one can avoid only by attaining *Nibbana* or enlightenment. Pleasure is physical and short-lived whereas happiness is mental and long lasting. The mindful journalist should not mislead the people that lasting happiness is attainable without purifying their minds from defilements. Enlightenment means eradication of all fetters—the mental state of supreme bliss or *Nibbana.* S/he should understand the reasons for the existence of unhappiness (*dukkha*), and desist from using journalism to knowingly promote attachment (*upadana*) and desire (*tanha*).

—Excerpt from the Introduction

This chapter focuses on *dukkha* (suffering/unsatisfactoriness) that is synonymous with *samsara* (cyclic existence) by initially looking at it from the positive aspect of its opposite, happiness (*sukha*). *Dukkha*, the first of the Four Noble Truths, is the central theme of Buddhist phenomenology. *Dukkha* is inevitable in *samsara* where every phenomenon is conditioned by *anatta* (no self/insubstantiality), elaborated in Chapter 2; and *anicca* (impermanence), elaborated in Chapter 3. *Samudaya*, the second truth, says that desire (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*) resulting from *avijja* (ignorance of things as they really are) explain the source of *dukkha*.

We chose to include "happiness" in the title of this chapter because the journalistic *kalyana-mitta*[1] (wise advisers) could be more inspired by the positive approach to cultivate happiness than by the negative approach to eliminate *dukkha*.

HAPPINESS AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Let us examine a typical American newspaper feature on happiness, which reveals the state of commoditized news prevalent in contemporary mainstream journalism.

> *Source*: The *Forum* of Fargo-Moorhead (Sunday, January 12, 2014)
> *Banner headline* (Section B front page): The pursuit of happiness?
> *Strapline*: How chasing the American dream can become a nightmare
> *Delayed lead*:
>
> There was a time not long ago when Danie Remmick couldn't even bring herself to shower more than once a week.
>
> "It was just one more thing to do on top of everything else," said the 30-year-old Fargo woman who works in the nonprofit sector.
>
> From the outside, she says it seemed she had it all—a fantastic husband, a beautiful daughter, a dream home, and a successful career.
>
> But she wasn't happy.
>
> "I had everything everybody ever wants, the American dream. I had it," she said. "But still, inside I was so empty and so lost."
>
> And she felt guilty, selfish and greedy for not being satisfied with what she had. She compared herself to others, focused on what she didn't have and expected everything to be perfect.
>
> For Remmick, chasing the American dream had become a nightmare.
>
> "I just wasn't happy and I didn't know why," she said.
>
> *Story beginning*: "Remmick's experience is something that's become increasingly common. An article in *Psychology Today* says that Americans have grown continuously more depressed over the past half-century and behavioral researchers say it has to do with unrealistic expectations of the American dream—the perfect house, spouse, kids and career."

Reporter Tracy Frank's story (partly excerpted above to give its tone and flavor) drew the attention of this chapter's author because it touched on the topic of this very chapter he was preparing at the time. Immediately after the story appeared, the author sent the following critique of Frank's story to the editor of the *Forum*:

Critique of Dream Story

After I read [Frank's] story, I failed to extract a satisfactory answer to the question, either implicit or explicit, on why chasing the American dream has failed to create happiness among the large majority of Americans. The

sidebar to Frank's story says: "Americans have grown continuously more depressed over the past half-century and behavioral researchers say it has to do with unrealistic expectations of the American dream—the perfect house, spouse, kids and career." But Frank's secular journalistic approach in the forthcoming articles on the components of the American dream is unlikely to help solve the problem of widespread unhappiness.

Frank's articles are probably not intended to find the root causes of unhappiness in our society. And without knowing the causes, it's impossible to control or remove them.

This is where Buddhist phenomenology can help us. It asserts that the path to happiness starts from an understanding of the root causes of suffering, which includes both physical and mental states. Buddha discovered that desire and attachment engendered by ignorance (of the world as it really is) and defilements such as greed, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and doubt were the reasons for unhappiness.

Then, the Buddha prescribed an eightfold proactive course of treatment called the Middle Path to achieve supreme bliss or happiness better known as enlightenment or *nibbana*.

The Buddha's Four Noble Truths explain the existence, causation, cessation and the path leading to the cessation of unhappiness.

The prescribed path has three dimensions: ethical conduct (right speech, action, and livelihood), mental cultivation (right effort, mindfulness, and concentration), and wisdom (right understanding, and intention). Mental cultivation, today known as psychotherapy, specifies three steps of meditation, which are vital to liberate the mind from defilements. According to the Buddha, compassion and wisdom must be developed jointly for the individual to gain liberation.

The Venerable K. Sri Dhammananda points out that happiness is in the journey, not in the destination. He says that modern life is a struggle to acquire monetary gains, comfort and luxury. This lifestyle produces anxieties and stress, instead of happiness.

Almost anticipating the American dream of the perfect house, spouse, kids and career, Dhammananda says that some think that a "good and congenial life partner" [spouse] is a source of happiness. Others think that children [kids] are another source of happiness. But none of these provide stable conditions. All are subject to *anicca* (the law of impermanence), *anatta* (insubstantiality) and *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness)—the three marks of existence. They can bring in short-term pleasure, but not happiness.

Happiness "cannot be found in the material things about us, such as wealth, power or fame." Pleasure is a passing show and does not offer lasting happiness. Pleasure can be bought, but not happiness.

The Forum articles are not aimed at helping its readers to clean their minds of the defilements that have caused so much unhappiness. These articles could serve the readers better by projecting happiness as a state of consciousness that does not depend on their physical appetites and passions.

Dhammananda clarifies: "Happiness is a mental state which can be attained through the culture of mind. External sources such as wealth, fame, social position and popularity are but temporary sources of happiness. The real source is the mind. The mind [that] is controlled and cultured is the real source of happiness. The opinion that mental tranquility is unattainable is not true. Everyone can cultivate inner peace and tranquility through the purification of the mind"[2] (Gunaratne 2014).

Lesson for Journalism

The preceding critique of the superficial approach of the dominant genre of journalism to improve the material aspects of existence with little attention to the damage it might inflict on the mental/psychological dimension of existence is something that mindful journalism should mull over. The new breed of journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers), who are rigorously trained in *mindful* meditation, would have a good understanding of how each of the Five Aggregates (*panca-khandha*)—matter (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), mental formations (*sankhara*), and consciousness (*vinnana*)[3]—that make up the illusionary "individual" contribute to the totality of *dukkha*, which is engendered by the interaction of the Five Hindrances (Brahmavamso 2014)—sense desire (*kamacchanda*), ill will/aversion (*vyapada*), sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*), restlessness and anxiety (*uddaccam-kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikiccha*)—which the mind consciousness component of the "individual" could only partially control.

If Frank had a reasonable understanding of Buddhist phenomenology, she would have correctly identified the source of the increasing unhappiness as the "individual's" desire (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*) fostered by ignorance (*avijja*).

Americans in general are not familiar with the phenomenological truth of *anicca*, *anatta*, and *dukkha*. Boosted up by capitalist ideology, many still hang on to the American dream of a bygone era. The American news paradigm and codes of conduct are similarly based on an outdated West-centric worldview that presumes the supremacy of Occidental values over the rest.

The aim of every Buddhist, no matter whether s/he is an adherent of the religion or the phenomenology, is to attain supreme bliss or happiness, also called enlightenment or *Nibbana*, "a state to be attained here and now in this very life" (De Silva 2005). Many religionized Buddhists incorrectly think of *Nibbana* as a state attainable only after death. They confuse it with an external heaven where its denizens could "live" happily ever after.

The mindful journalist who has a good grasp of Right Understanding could use the Daoist action in nonaction (*wuwei* or the "Pooh Way" as explained in Chapter 5) to educate the religionized Buddhists on the accurate meaning of happiness (a lasting state of mental bliss) in relation to pleasure (a temporary corporeal state of excitement).

MEANING OF *DUKKHA*

Rahula (1959/1974) says that the denotative translation of the Pali/Sanskrit term *dukkha* as suffering/pain, thereby ignoring the term's connotative implications, is one of the reasons why some people consider Buddhist phenomenology to be a pessimistic approach to life. He asserts:

- Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It takes a realistic view of life and examines all phenomena objectively thereby not lulling you into living in a fool's paradise (e.g., the American Dream) or instilling all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. Buddha is the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world (p. 17).
- It is true that the denotative meaning of *dukkha* is suffering, pain, sorrow, or misery in contrast to *sukha*, the Pali/Sanskrit term for happiness, comfort, or ease. But *dukkha* has a deeper philosophical meaning because it also includes deeper ideas such as imperfection, impermanence, emptiness, and insubstantiality (pp. 17).
- Buddha does not deny happiness inasmuch as in *Anguttara Nikaya* of *Sutta Pitaka*, he mentions several kinds of happiness—those relating to family, reclusion, sense pleasures, renunciation, attachment, and detachment, physical and mental. However, all these come under the umbrella concept of *dukkha*.
- *Dukkha* subsumes "whatever is impermanent," including very pure spiritual states of *recueillement*[4] (*jhana*) experienced through advanced meditation at the mental cultivation phase of the *magga* (p. 18).
- We can look at *dukkha* in three ways: as ordinary suffering, as suffering engendered by change, or suffering as conditioned states. The most important philosophical aspect of the First Noble Truth is *dukkha* as conditioned states. The Buddhist view is that a "being" or "individual" or "I" is only a combination of ever-changing physical and mental energy forces—the Five Aggregates (*panca-khandha*) of attachment. Therefore, *dukkha* is all "beings."[5]

Happiness and *Vedana*

Henepola Gunaratana (2013) says that the Buddhist analysis of feeling (*vedana*), one component of the Five Aggregates, helps to clarify the nature of happiness. Feeling is born of contact (*phassa*)—the coming together of a sense object, a sense faculty, and the appropriate type of consciousness (*vinnana*)—as demonstrated in the Dependent Genesis formulation. Because *phassa* is of six types corresponding to the six sense faculties, *vedana* is also of six types, which can be placed under one of three divisions—pleasant, painful, or neutral. The pleasant feelings fall under either bodily "pleasure" (*sukha*) or mental "joy" (*somanassa*). The neutral feelings come under "equanimity" (*upekkha*).

As pointed out in the preceding section, Buddha enumerated several contrasting types of mental happiness—joy resulting from household life, monastic life, or renunciation, and so forth. But Buddhists disagree with those who say that happiness is "a satisfaction of the will."

Gunaratana says, "When you try to obtain happiness by pleasing unlimited and insatiable desire by means limited by time and space, you end up in frustration and losing whatever little relative happiness you have."

De Silva (1986/1994) says that stress is similar to what Buddhism refers to as "tangles within and tangles without, people are enmeshed in tangles." The Buddhist view is that stress occurs because of five psychological states or hindrances (*nivaranas*): the desire for sensual pleasure, anger, indolence, worry, and doubt. However, by observing the ethical (*sila*) dimension and the mental cultivation (*samadhi*) dimension of the *magga*, one would be able to control stress. Wallace (2005) offers ample evidence in support of this view.

The theoretical masterpiece of Buddhist phenomenology, the Conditioned Genesis (*paticca-samuppada*) formulation, also known as the Dependent Co-origination doctrine, dynamically demonstrates how a cluster of 12 *nidanas* (causal links) co-arise in pairs to jointly condition the life cycle (*bhavacakra*) of each "being" through its miserable journey in cyclic existence (*samsara*). We implore the mindful journalism aspirants to read our elaboration of it in Chapter 2, where we show how the three most important theoretical concepts in Buddhism—no self (*anatta*), Five Aggregates (*panca-khandha*), and Conditioned Genesis (*paticca-samuppada*)—are interconnected.

Causal Process of Unhappiness

The principal *paticca-samuppada* formulation demonstrates how the Five Aggregates, which the Buddha equated with *dukkha* itself, conditioned every "being's" life cycle at each re-becoming (*punarbhava*). However, scholars appear to skip a subset of the principal formulation that deals with the arising of 10 additional factors of suffering sparked off by the Feeling (*vedana*) aggregate/*nidana* in association with Craving/Desire (*tanha*). Some believe that this subset of co-arising links, "an important variant sequence of dependent arising," addresses "unwholesome conditions leading to social disorder." This subset elaborates on the effects of *tanha* to show how dependent arising could be applied to explain the origin of social problems as well.

Pointing out how unhappiness or suffering is currently conditioned, the Buddha said in the *Mahānidāna-sutta*:

"Thus, Ananda,

- in dependence upon feeling (*vedana*) there is craving/desire;
- in dependence upon craving (*tanha*) there is *pursuit*;
- in dependence upon pursuit (*pariyesana*) there is *gain*;

- in dependence in upon gain (*labha*) there is *decision-making*;
- in dependence upon decision-making (*vinicchaya*) there is *desire and lust*;
- in dependence upon desire and lust (*chanda, raga*) there is *attachment*;
- in dependence upon attachment (*ajjhosana*) there is *possessiveness*;
- in dependence upon possessiveness (*pariggaha*) there is *stinginess*;
- in dependence upon stinginess (*macchariya*) there is *safeguarding*;

and because of safeguarding (*arakkha*), various evil unwholesome phenomena originate—the taking up of clubs and weapons, conflicts, quarrels, and disputes, insulting speech, slander, and falsehoods."

(Bodhi 1984: 55–56)

To attain happiness, this sequence needs to be reversed. Buddha's blueprint of happiness was the Noble Eightfold Path. Chapter 2 will elaborate on the standard Dependent Genesis formulation while Chapter 4 will take up the importance of mutual causality in mindful journalism. After becoming familiar with the *paticca-samuppada* process in the first two chapters, the reader will be better prepared to study the meaning and application of the 10-factor subset of the PS Model constituting the causal process of unhappiness.

- Mindful journalism, led by its *kalyana-mitta*, can contribute much to eliminate war and conflict, production of weaponry, selfish individualism, disregard for Nature, and so forth, by studying their causal process and applying the same principle of mutual causality when reporting social problems.

REPORTING ON HAPPINESS AND SUFFERING

Buddhist phenomenology asserts that the world (*samsara*) is by definition *dukkha* because every "being" is a composite of the Five Aggregates of attachment that engender *dukkha*, whichever of the three ways we think about it—ordinary suffering (*dukkha-hukkha*), change-induced suffering (*veparinama-dukkha*), or suffering as conditioned states (*samkhara-dukkha*). The mass media are, therefore, a reflection of *dukkha* that existence entails. That's why the media appear to be engrossed in reporting accidents, disasters, crime and punishment, sex, and other scandals. They understand that the spurts of mental happiness or physical pleasure that the "beings" experience are of short duration.

Mass communication researchers who have analyzed the content of news that mainstream journalism disseminates globally through a handful of international news agencies generally support this conclusion. Galtung and Vincent (1992) claimed that the four most important criteria that determined what is being reported were elite countries, elite people, personalization, and negativity. Their research confirmed that news from the "Center" countries, as well as from "Periphery" countries,[6] were mostly negative for different reasons: Occidental cosmology perceived the Periphery as the source of Evil. The same cosmology saw progress as normal in the Center, and thus emphasized the negative as more newsworthy.

The news selection criteria of the West clearly violate the *anatta* (no self) principle of Buddhism because of their emphasis on elite people and personalization. But the emphasis on negativity tends to recognize the Buddhist notion of *dukkha* as the dominant phenomenon in the world.

West-Centric News Values

Hoyer (2005) analyzed the mainstream news paradigm in terms of five elements: the event, news value factors, the news interview, the inverted pyramid, and journalistic objectivity. For analytical convenience, we will sequentially examine each of these elements in relation to Buddhist goals.

The Event

The mainstream paradigm thrives on "newsworthy" events, which must fit the 24-hour news cycle (gradually adopted by the wire services). News is ephemeral because an event is not a fixed entity. Hoyer (2005) states that "an event comprises actors, a situation, linkages and a time frame" (p. 11), and that journalists must have an understanding of how society in general works before they can establish an event as news.

- The news paradigm and the Buddhist perspective both recognize that news is *anicca* because the elements of a "newsworthy" event change every moment. The two approaches differ to the extent that the news paradigm treats the event as a fixed entity whereas the Buddhist approach sees it as a continuing *process*, which becomes increasingly complex as it reciprocally interacts with other factors.

News Value Factors

These are the criteria that journalists apply to determine newsworthiness of events and processes. In his widely used textbook in the United States, Mencher (2006) lists eight news values: impact or importance (the predominant factor), timeliness, prominence (of the people involved), proximity (to the audience), conflict, the unusual, currency (or the sudden interest people

have on an ongoing situation), and necessity (a situation the journalist feels compelled to reveal).[7]

(One should also note the set of 12 news values that Galtung and Ruge (1965) unraveled in an earlier study of foreign news: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite persons, personalization, and negativity.)

Mencher's first value, *impact*, relates to events that are likely to affect many people. (Galtung and Rouge call it *threshold* whereas Masterton (2005) calls it *consequence*.) Mencher (2006) says, "The more people that are affected by the event, the bigger the story" (p. 59). Although this criterion per se does not contradict Buddhist goals, the doctrine of dependent co-arising requires placing it in context with the other co-arising factors. An event by itself is a news "atom" that does not explain the ongoing interaction and interdependence of relevant factors behind the event. For example, the reporting of violence and killings in Iraq as daily events attributable to the Sunni–Shiite rift failed to analyze the mutual causality of many co-arising factors: U.S. invasion of the country on false pretenses, resentment against Judeo-Christian domination, religious and ethnic rivalry triggered by "democratic" elections, the social and economic disparity between the invaders and the invaded, psychological trauma of a war-weary people, and so on.

The second value, *timeliness*, relates to events that are immediate or recent. (This is similar to Galtung and Ruge's *frequency*.) Mencher (2006) says that timeliness is important in a democracy because the public has to react quickly to the activities of their officials. Mencher adds that timeliness is also important because "media are commercial enterprises that sell space and time on the basis of their ability to reach people quickly with a perishable commodity" (p. 58). The Buddhist perspective sees news as a social good, not as a commodity serving the profit-maximizing desire of businesses. Although both perspectives agree on the impermanence or perishability of news "atoms," Buddhism views time as infinite whereas the news paradigm views time as bounded (Galtung 1996). Thus the Buddhist approach, which is more concerned with process, does not see the need for immediacy at the expense of accuracy and analysis of the functional interaction of co-arising factors. The notion of bounded time (derived from the Judeo-Christian belief in the genesis-apocalypse-catharsis sequence) calls for the fastest possible reporting of news "atoms" lest they become ephemeral.

The third value, *prominence*, pertains to events involving well-known people or institutions. (Galtung and Ruge see this as a two-pronged factor: *reference to elite persons* and *elite nations*.) Mencher (2006) says, "Names make news, goes the old adage, even when the event is of little significance" (p. 59). Thus, mainstream journalism is a journalism of personalities. This news value is antithetical to Buddhist values, which see "no self"/asoulity (*anatta*), impermanence (*anicca*), and sorrow (*dukkha*) as the three characteristics of existence. Personality journalism signifies individualism or

atomism, which breeds egocentrism and sorrow. (Note that Islam, an Abrahamic religion, also has always considered individualism as subordinate to the collective community (Denny 2005: 269).)

The fourth value, *proximity*, relates to events that are geographically or emotionally close to people. (Galtung and Ruge call this *meaningfulness*.) Emotional closeness may arise from ties to religion, ethnicity, or race. Buddhadasa Bhikku's view (cited in Sivaraksa 2002: 58) that the entire cosmos is a cooperative is clearly antithetical to proximity as a news value.

The fifth value, *conflict*, pertains to stories about "ordinary people confronting the challenges of daily lives," "conflicts that divide people and groups," or strife, antagonisms, and warfare (Mencher 2006: 60–61). (Galtung and Ruge's *negativity* partly reflects this value.) Journalists have applied this news value to write narrative-style features incorporating the three elements of drama: man versus man, man versus self, and man versus nature. The Buddhist view on applying this criterion depends on the purpose of the story. Event-oriented stories on violence, war, and crime—news "atoms" based on conflict—are not an essential part of Buddhist-oriented journalism. Buddhism holds that an interdependent society should bear equal responsibility for the social deviance of an individual whose existence has no self (*anatta*). Therefore, reporting conflict-based stories highlighting individuals is inappropriate. However, process stories analyzing the co-arising factors for increase or decrease in crime and violence may be appropriate for society to take steps to rehabilitate wrongdoers. In the *Mahānidāna-sutta*, Buddha himself analyzed the causal process culminating in war and conflict.

The sixth value, *the unusual*, concerns events "that deviate sharply from the expected" or "that depart considerably from the experiences of everyday life" (Mencher 2006: 61). (Galtung and Ruge call it *unexpectedness* whereas Masterton calls it *novelty*.) These include the bizarre, strange, and wondrous. Journalists have applied this news value to write brights, sidebars, and features. The Buddhist perspective does not approve the use of this value to project any person, group, nation, or race in a negative light by deviating from the path of right speech and resorting to idle chatter. Too much emphasis on the unusual may mean a higher priority for event reporting (news as a commodity) than for process reporting (news as a social good).

The last two values, *currency* and *necessity*, are more recent additions to the repertoire of news values. When long-simmering situations will "suddenly emerge as the subject of discussion" (Mencher 2006: 61), the journalist applies the *currency* news value to report that situation. (Galtung and Ruge refer to it as *continuity*.) The *necessity* news value is applied when "the journalist feels it is necessary to disclose something that s/he has discovered," which is essentially a "journalism of conscience" (Mencher 2006: 62–63). (Galtung and Ruge's *consonance* factor, media's readiness to report an item, may be stretched out to resemble *necessity*.) These two factors are compatible with the Buddhist perspective when journalists write process-oriented news as a social good without the intention (*cetana*) of deviating

from the eight paths subsumed under *sila* (virtue), *samādhi* (mental development), and *paññña* (wisdom).

Mencher (2006) asserts: "These eight news values do not exist in a vacuum. Their application depends on those who are deciding what is news, where the event and the news medium are located, the tradition of the newspaper or station, its audience and a host of other factors" (p. 65). However, the preceding analysis leads us to the conclusion that:

- Buddhist goals and mainstream news values/traits do not see eye to eye in relation to three factors (prominence, proximity, and the unusual); are ambiguous in relation to three other factors (timeliness, impact, and conflict); and are potentially compatible with the last two factors (currency and necessity).

The News Interview

This is the third element of the news paradigm. Schudson (2005) contends that the journalistic interview was all but unknown in 1865, had become a common reportorial activity in the 1870s and 1880s, was widely practiced by 1900, and had turned into a mainstay of American journalism by World War I. Other scholars claim that the interview was introduced into tabloids by the 1830s along with police reports. Today, the interview is used to update news, as well as to provide multiple views on issues. However, what Galtung and Ruge (1965) call *personalization* occurs because of the reliance of mainstream journalism to interview individuals to create human-interest stories and to give the hard copy a sense of timeliness.

- Buddhist goals do not encourage the interviews that promote excessive individualism at the expense of the collective good. Building up personalities through journalistic interviews violates the truth of "no self" linked with impermanence and sorrow. Interviews that elicit group thinking are preferred. Follow the middle path by not favoring specific sources for regular attribution.

The Inverted Pyramid

Galtung and Ruge's (1965) *unambiguity* and *composition* factors are more or less associated with this structure of news presentation, an invention to sell news as a more profitable commodity. Some believe that its invention was inadvertent. During the American Civil War, journalists were forced to file the essential facts first because of the unreliability of the telegraph facilities at the time. This practice became formalized as the structure of straight news writing from then on until readership surveys revealed almost a century later that many readers preferred the suspense of the narrative style. Interpreting this element of the news paradigm, we can conclude that:

- Buddhist goals emphasize process reporting to explain the mutual interaction of multiple factors. By revealing the essence of the story first, the inverted pyramid structure encourages people to consume news very superficially and not read any further, thereby nullifying the purpose of process reporting.

Journalistic Objectivity

Stensaas (2005) says that the notion of *objectivity* is at the core of the mainstream news paradigm. The American press discarded partisan journalism toward the late 19th century as it became politically independent through higher circulation and advertising revenue. Objectivity became the shared professional norm in the 1920s (Schudson 2005). As empirical science became widely accepted, journalism used objectivity, just as science did, to present a "truthful" account of events to the public. American journalism tried to achieve objectivity, inter alia, by using the interview to present all sides of an issue; by conducting scientific opinion polls on significant issues; by discouraging reporters from injecting their opinion into their stories; and by using computer-assisted reporting to analyze and interpret data related to numerous matters of public interest. How does objectivity fit into a journalism based on Buddhist values?

- Because Buddhist epistemology asserts that the knower (observer) and the known (observed) are interdependent, "this causal interplay renders it impossible to claim or prove an ultimate truth . . . Data gathering and interpretation are not value free, but freighted with emotional predispositions and cognitive preconceptions" (Macy 1991: 196).

This perspective of Buddhism is compatible with that of quantum physics: "that a straightforward description of the world in terms of objects, independent of how they are being observed, is untenable. The observing subject . . . plays an essential role in defining even how an object can appear" (Hut 2003: 413). Contemporary science has no criteria for objective truth.

Jayatilleke (1963) points out that in Buddhism "verifiability is a test of truth but does not itself constitute the truth." Many truths in Buddhism "are considered to lie midway between two extreme points of view" (p. 359). The Buddhist theory of truth, as Jayatilleke explains, makes it clear that truth and therefore knowledge is "objective," as telling us the nature of "things as they are," which consists of knowing "what exists as 'existing' and what does not exist as 'not existing'" (p. 428). This is the highest knowledge. Claiming that beliefs based on authority and reason may turn out to be true or false, Buddha said that one should accept a proposition as true only when one has

"personal knowledge" of it, taking into account the views of the wise (p. 416). Thus, Buddha claimed himself to be neither a traditionalist nor a rationalist, but an experientialist. What the Buddha meant by objective knowledge was experiential knowledge that one could acquire through concentration and mental development (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññña*). This interpretation is far different from the notions of objectivity and truth in the news paradigm.

Dukkha Afflicts the U.S. Press

Below is a Buddhist analysis of the plight of the American press that the author published in 2009. He uses the *paticca-samuppada* framework to write this article, which he believes is an example of mindful journalism:

> The newspaper industry in the United States is bracing itself for its eventual demise by 2043 (Sri Lanka Guardian, 24 Feb; 2009). The fate of the newspaper is doomed in all leading capitalist countries, where print newspaper circulation and readership have nosedived because of inexpensive access to all types of news and information through the Internet. The newspaper might linger longer in countries that lack the capital to provide universal access to the Internet.
>
> In the United States, circulation has been falling in absolute numbers since roughly 1990, and as a percentage of households since the 1920s. The World Association of Newspapers, however, attributes much of that history to the waning popularity and ultimate closing of evening papers. The share of revenue from circulation is about 20 percent.
>
> Thus capitalist journalism depends heavily on advertising, which from a Buddhist perspective could involve many pitfalls that could delay the realization of the Four Noble Truths and prolong the wheel of re-becoming or *samsara*. Buddha asserted that existence is *dukkha* (suffering), which co-arises with *anicca* (impermanence or ongoing change), and *anatta* (no self or interdependence). Although nothing in the universe is permanent, a characteristic of existence is the tendency to crave for and hang on to things. Moreover, although living beings had no self because each was a compound of the ever-changing and interdependent five skandhas (aggregates), another characteristic of existence was the tendency to move toward fostering a distinct *nāmarupa* (individualism and egotism). Both tendencies, which advertising tended to promote, invariably enhanced and prolonged suffering.
>
> The panacea to end *dukkha* was to follow the Noble Eightfold Path, also known as Middle Path, comprising the three strands of *sila* (good conduct), *panna* (wisdom), and *samãdhi* (mental training or meditation). A newspaper dependent on advertising for its existence undermines the Buddhist objective of attaining enlightenment. Advertising, which sustains capitalism, obstructs the entry into the Middle Path by its adverse impact on the *ti-lakkhana* (three signs of existence).

While advertising tends to prolong *dukkha* from the Buddhist perspective, the diminishing revenue from advertising has placed the newspaper, as we know it, in the endangered list. Adapting to the digital age has diminished the watchdog role of the newspaper thereby raising doubts about the connection between democracy and the Fourth Estate. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is based on a strong belief in such a connection. The annual report of the World Editors Forum admits that this connection has become shaky following the 2008 international financial crisis and fears of an unprecedented worldwide recession, which forced many newsrooms, particularly in North America and Europe, to cut costs and resort to layoffs. The result: Celebrity or soft news—stories focusing on what journalist Stanley Walker described as the three Ws [*women* (sex), *wampum* (money), and *wrongdoing* (crime)]—has risen while well-researched hard news or investigative journalism has dwindled.

News organizations and a journalism founded on profit making (*tanhã*) within the capitalist framework are unlikely to think of their product as a public good. For them, news is a commodity—a truth that became clear during the classic debate on the New World Information and Communication Order in the 1980s. This lure of money was the reason that the Associated Press increased its celebrity and entertainment coverage in 2008 and hired an additional 21 employees to be spread across Los Angeles, New York, and London. The AP insisted that the reinforced coverage simply made good business sense due to the high demand for that *type* of content—a euphemism for commodity.

This trend, in turn is reflected in America's 1,410 dailies,[8] which are heavily dependent on the three oligopolistic wire services—AP, AFP and Reuters—to fill their news hole. AP dominates as the cooperative enterprise of its member newspapers. The *avijjã* (ignorance or lack of foreign affairs expertise) in the newsroom has by default allowed AP to dictate the agenda setting for the majority of American newspapers.

It is now becoming increasingly clear that the democracy-watchdog press nexus cannot exist under capitalism, which appears to be in the throes of death. With newspapers facing capital(ist) punishment, some wonder whether a non-profit (Middle Path) model is the best solution for journalism—especially for expensive investigative journalism, e.g., the online non-profit Web sites MinnPost.com, ProPublica.org, and VoiceofSanDiego.org. Meanwhile, to allay criticism, the Associated Press (June 15) announced a program to promote nonprofit investigative journalism, including articles from ProPublica.org, to its members for republication. All AP members—including essentially all of the nation's leading newspapers—would receive the material.

The axial Buddhist doctrine of *paticca samuppada* (dependent coarising) can explain the adverse effects of capitalism and the (capitalist) newspaper better than a putative scientific study. Buddhist philosophy

asserts that the universe is a giant network of networks. Each network bears the *ti-lakkhana* characteristics of *samsara* (the wheel of re-becoming)—*anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and *anatta* (no self).

One can hypothesize the *dynamic* interaction of the 12 *nidãnas* (dependent co-arising factors) prolonging an individual or a society's entrapment in *samsara* through a long series of re-becoming cycles featuring the entity's unique *jarãmarana* (decay and death), *bhava* (becoming) and *jãti* (birth). The duration of each cycle depends on the impact and extent of its constituent elements' obsession with *nãmarupa* (psychophysical individuality, which advertising promotes), proclivity toward *tanhã* (desire), *upãdãna* (grasping on to material possessions), *phassa* (sense impressions), *sankhara* (volitional acts like relentless accumulation of capital through exploitation of labor), *vedanã* (false perception or feeling of wellbeing), and *avijjã* (ignorance of and lack of interest in other peoples and civilizations). These tendencies affect *viññaña* (consciousness or the dynamic stream of life) that carries forth one's karmic force over the ever-changing five aggregates constituting each sentient being giving the false impression of permanence. Finally, capitalism and advertising may exert deleterious effects on *salãyatana* (six senses: vision, hearing, olfaction, taste, touch, and thought), which co-arises with *nãmarupa*.

If one believes that the longer the entrapment in *samsara*, the more the *dukkha* one has to endure, one should be pleased with the crash of capitalism and capitalist advertising, and the possible emergence of a system that balances the *yin* (socialism) and the *yang* (capitalism). This would be a hybrid retaining the positive aspects of both systems.

Heavily dependent on the wire service recommendation of what's newsworthy, the average American daily newspaper looks the same, except for its own quota of backyard news, from coast to coast. My hometown newspaper, *The* (Fargo-Moorhead) *Forum,* with an average weekday circulation of 51,106, is no exception. Serving a circulation area covering 305,209 residents, who are 93.7 percent white, *The Forum* ranks 198th of all American dailies. The newspaper's editor is Matthew von Pinnon, a former journalism student of mine, who took over the position in December 2006 after serving two years as its managing editor. Soon after his graduation from college, he joined *The Forum* in 1994.

Last week, I sent von Pinnon a copy of my article "China Diagnoses *Ti-Lakkhana: Anicca*, *Dukkha*, and *Anatta*" (*Sunday Island*, 5–14–09) with a covering letter that criticized the lackluster performance of "American newspapers, which supposedly have so much freedom, [yet] deprive their readers alternative interpretations of international affairs like the attached feature on China. In my view, they are doing the greatest disservice to the American public by feeding them cheap, one-sided stories from pro-Western mouthpieces."

I continued: "I am still subscribing to *The Forum* out of habit although I find its commodified journalism boring and disappointing.

I was waiting to see an enlightened analysis when Sri Lanka defeated the ferocious Tiger terrorists. But such an analysis never appeared in spite of the appetite for such news in a community served by three colleges. Your newshounds ignored the presence of a well-educated Sri Lankan community in the Red River Valley that you could have interviewed to give a very in-depth analysis of Sri Lanka.

"On the contrary, you headlined the misadventures of Roxana Saberi [the Iranian-American journalist who was charged with spying for America] elevating her to a celebrity—a commercial product. After all that space devoted to Saberi, I doubt that *The Forum* readers got any inkling about the people of Iran except strengthening their negative views on Islam. The biased reporting of the Western press was also well off the mark on predicting the results of the Iranian presidential election.

"The amount of space you devote to *women* (sex), *wampum* (money) and *wrongdoing* (crime) is unbelievable. Some days, the Metro section carries no other stories but those on rapes, police entrapments, child abuse, and other deviances. You do so on the presumption that publicity would discourage their incidence. Compare this with the Buddhist view that places equal responsibility for such deviance on the society/community of which the individual is a part. Pornography, sex-related advertising, loose talk and celebrity gossip in the mass media, *inter alia*, have become part and parcel of American society. The panacea for individual deviance is rehabilitation more than humiliation or punishment. Individuals and society are interdependent. Newspapers must not promote the idea that the individual is a sovereign entity and that he/she alone is responsible for his/her action.

"I did not want this informal harangue to offend you. But I hope you will mull over the unpalatable but impartial advice addressed to you."

(Gunaratne 2009)

These sentiments encapsulate my *dukkha* engendered by the American newspaper. Entrapped in the capitalist newsroom, von Pinnon has to grin and bear the orders of his publisher: commodify the news, make profits, and worry about public good later.

Points to Ponder

- No genre of journalism could aspire to eliminate suffering in the world (*loka*). All mindful journalism could hope to do is to restrain "beings" from committing excesses and lure them to follow the Middle Path and reach ultimate happiness on attaining enlightenment or *Nibbana*.
- Nibbana is beyond logic and reasoning. It is the ultimate truth or reality. *Nibbana* is to "be realized by the wise within themselves" (Rahula 1959/1974: 44) if they follow the *magga* patiently and with diligence. This is a mental state that one can never experience in *samsara*, which is *dukkha* by definition.

- The mass media thrive on the defilements of the Five Aggregates of attachment. Mass media—print and broadcast, Internet, and other related devices—are a creation of the Five Aggregates, run by the Five Aggregates for the Five Aggregates. Therefore, no one should show umbrage about the proliferation of "sleaze" and trivia on radio, television, online media, newspapers and magazines.
- Mindful journalism is an attempt of the mental component of the Consciousness aggregate to exert a degree of control over the conditioned genesis of all five—*rupa* (form/matter), *vedana* (feeling/sensation), *sanna* (perception), *sankhara* (formations), and *vinnana* (consciousness)—realizing "that happiness is in the journey, not in the destination" (Dhammananda 1989: 134).

NOTES

1. We mentioned the rationale for the use of the Pali term *kalyana-mitta* (in both the singular and the plural) in the Introduction.
2. The newspaper's editor thanked the chapter author for the critique, and said, "It will prompt some consideration about how we continue reporting for this series. The first installment was meant to 'set the table,' so to speak." Although he suspended publishing the series on happiness for two months, he did not publish the critique per se. However, an online newspaper in Sri Lanka published it as an evergreen over several weeks. The *Forum* returned to Frank's series on March 9, 2014, with the same style of reporting, paying no attention to happiness in the Buddhist sense.
3. Chapter 2 explains the components of the Five Aggregates in detail. Some repetition of concepts in chapters is inevitable because we have artificially separated overlapping concepts into discrete chapters.
4. Rahula, who studied Mahayana at Sorbonne in the late 1950s, chose the French term *recueillement* to describe introversion, a state of *jhana* in advanced meditation.
5. Knowledge of the Five Aggregate analysis and the Conditioned Genesis formulation (*paticca-samuppada*) is necessary to understand this point. Chapter 2 provides the details on the components of these concepts and their relationship.
6. Galtung and Vincent (1992) explain, "There is a Western inclination to see the world as divided into three parts: Center, Periphery, and outer periphery of Evil, with the West, of course, in the Center" (p. 13).
7. In the early 1930s, American journalist Stanley Walker said news was based on the three Ws: "women, wampum, and wrongdoing" (Mencher 2006: 56), by which he meant news related to sex, money, and crime. These three factors, which are antithetical to Buddhist goals, can easily fit into the eight news values that Mencher lists. Tabloid journalism thrives on the three Ws.
8. Calculations by the Newspaper Association of America put the number of daily U.S. newspapers at 1,382 in 2011.

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2 The Journalist as No Self

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Synopsis: The principle of *anatta* (no self/asoulity) as the reality of existence requires mindful journalism to refrain from overemphasizing individualism that fosters egoism. *Anatta* unfolds itself through the interactive processes of the Five Aggregates and the other *nidanas* (conditional factors) associated with the doctrine of Conditioned Genesis, the focus of which is the second truth of *samudaya* (the arising of *dukkha*). That life is *dukkha* is the first truth. The reality of existence is that no sentient being is the possessor of a self or soul that implies permanence. From birth through death, one is in a constant state of becoming (*bhava*) that makes the concept of individualism misleading. However, Buddhism does not deny an empirical self in the conventional sense because of the limitations of language, "which uses static concepts to describe dynamic processes." Thus, we use conventional pronouns such as "I" and "s/he" although this empirical self is a mere illusion.

Life becomes sorrow when one fails to see his/her insubstantiality or asoulity (*anatta*) and tries to cling on to things or feelings. Understanding this situation enables the mindful journalist to minimize the emphasis on individualism, which has a causal link with egocentrism (e.g., celebrity pitfalls). Focus more on cooperative efforts highlighting mutual interdependence at different levels—international or global, national, or local. The *anatta* concept requires a revision of the Western news paradigm, which emphasizes individualism.

—Excerpt from Introduction

This chapter attempts to show why *mindful journalism* stands out as a unique genre unmatched by any other genre of journalism, whether it be peace, development, public/civic, or any other. Mindful journalism stands out because it embraces the unique concept of *anatta*, the Pali word translated as no self/soul or asoulity.[1]

"I HAVE NO SELF"?

For contemporary journalists, the statement "I have no self" may sound absurd. The problem lies in the limitations of language (Jayatilleke 1963,

1974) that does not have a conventionally used term to refer to a continuing process of becoming through its life cycle (*bhavacakra*). Buddha knew the difficulties the ordinary layman would have in understanding the notion of "no self." Yet, he decided to tell the *middle-path* truth that a "being" possessed no lasting self or soul (*atta*) and that "individuality" was only an illusion.

The Two-Truths Doctrine

All contemporary sects of Buddhism accept the two-truths (Absolute and Conventional) doctrine, which Karunadasa (2014) says can be traced to the distinction Buddha made in the *Anguttara Nikaya* between definitive meaning (*nītārtha*) and interpretable meaning (*neyārtha*). In the *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta* (*Samyutta Nikaya* 12.15), Buddha says:

> "By and large, *Kaccayana*, this world (*loka*) is supported by a polarity, that of existence and definitive meaning (*nītārtha*) and interpretable meaning (*neyārtha*) on existence. But when one reads the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one reads the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.
>
> "By and large, *Kaccayana*, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings (sustenances), and biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on 'my self.' He has no uncertainty or doubt that just stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It's to this extent, *Kaccayana*, that there is right view." Buddha points out that both the existentialist view that "everything exists" and the nihilist view that "everything doesn't exist" are extremes. Buddha asserts, "Avoiding these two extremes, the *Tathagata* teaches the Dhamma via the middle," which he demonstrates by citing the doctrine of Dependent Genesis.
>
> (Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1997a)

Applying this middle-path view, Buddha conceded that the actual truth could well be somewhere between the absolute and the conventional. The inability of the *hoi polloi* to comprehend esoteric concepts such as *anatta* was likely one of the dependent reasons for the emergence of religionized Buddhism in most of Asia and a good reason for its near disappearance in the land of its birth. They left Buddhist phenomenology to be the province of intellectuals.

One such intellectual was Nāgārjuna (150–250 CE), the cofounder of *Madhyamaka*, a subsect of Mahayana Buddhism. One of the greatest logicians

of all time, he used logic to show that nothing in the phenomenal world had full being, and all was ultimately unreal. Therefore, every rational theory about the world would be unreal evolved by an unreal thinker with unreal thoughts (Gunaratne 2006).

Nāgārjuna agreed with the early Buddhist texts, that all phenomena, not just sentient beings, are "selfless" or nonsubstantial; and thus without any underlying essence, they are *empty* of being independently existent. This is so because all things arise always dependently: not by their own power, but by depending on conditions leading to their coming into existence, as opposed to being. Thereby, he succeeded in showing the connection between the concepts of *anatta* (no self) and *paticca samuppada* (conditioned genesis). The point of Nāgārjuna's dialectic on *sunyata* (emptiness) was that truth must conform to human practice.

Rahula (1959/1974) also points out that both the annihilationist view "I have no self" and the eternalist view "I have self" are wrong because both are fetters arising out of the false idea "I am" (just as Descartes claimed). What we conventionally call a "being" (or "I") is only a combination of physical and mental aggregates, "which are working together independently in flux of momentary change within the law of cause and effect" (p. 47). Rahula adduces another argument to prove that "no self" applied to all things, not only the Five Aggregates (p. 41).

Verses 277 and 278 of the *Dhammapada* say: *Sabbe sankhara anicca* (All conditioned things are impermanent) and *Sabbe sankhara dukkha* (All conditioned things are unsatisfactory). But verse 279 says: *Sabbe Dhamma anatta* (All Dhamma are without self). Because *sankhara* relates to the Five Aggregates and *dhamma* is a much wider term that includes the absolute, Buddha asserted that nothing had self.

- This discussion enables us to conclude that the mindful journalist could adopt the Middle Path between the extremes of existentialism and nihilism and perform his journalistic duties by conforming to human practice. The journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) could continue to use conventional terms while recognizing and promoting the "no self" (*anatta*) characteristic of existence that will help to curtail the defilements of human beings.

Two Corollaries

Rahula (1959/1974) points out that the concept of *anatta* is the natural corollary to Buddhism's Five Aggregates (*panca-khandha*) Analysis and the Conditioned Genesis (*paticca samuppāda*) doctrine.

Panca-Khandha Analysis

The Five Aggregates analysis claims that what we consider as a "being" or "individual" or "I" (also called *namarupa* in Pali) is a mere composite

of five ever-changing physical and mental forces of energy—matter (*rupa*), sensation (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), mental formation (*sankhara*), and consciousness (*vinnana*) (Buddhist Door 2014).

- The *rupa* aggregate corresponds to material or physical factors. Specifically, it includes the five *physical organs* (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), and the corresponding physical objects of the *sense organs* (sight, sound, smell, taste, and tangible objects).
- The *vedana* aggregate of sensation or feeling is of three kinds: pleasant, unpleasant, and indifferent. When an object is experienced, that experience takes on one of these emotional tones: the tone of pleasure, the tone of displeasure, or the tone of indifference.
- The *sanna* or perception aggregate turns an indefinite experience into a definite, recognized, and identified experience. It is the formulation of a conception of an idea about a particular object of experience.
- The aggregate of *sankhara* (mental formation) may be described as a conditioned response to the object of experience. It is not just the impression created by previous actions (the habitual energy stored up from countless former lives), but also the responses here and now motivated and directed in a particular way. (In short, mental formation or volition has a moral dimension; perception has a conceptual dimension; feeling has an emotional dimension.)
- The *vinnana* or consciousness aggregate signifies the coordination of the awareness related to the five sense organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body—by mind consciousness, which has the ability to recognize and discriminate in three ways: physical cognition, comparative cognition, and noncognition. Mind consciousness can also instruct, without thinking, the other five kinds of consciousness to initiate all kinds of wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral activities to keep the *samsara* going.

Buddha identified these five forces as the *dukkha* because they engendered desire (*tanha*) and attachment (*upadana*). Those who follow the three paths of mental development—right effort, mindfulness, and concentration (see Chapter 9)—get to understand the middle-path truth that there is no unchanging abiding substance, like a self or soul, behind any of the five forces. The practitioner of mindful journalism will find the Buddha's Middle Path approach to complex problems (as Nāgārjuna exemplified in his dialectic on conventional vs. absolute truth) most useful in his/her daily routine.

Now, one might ask: "If there is no self (or doer), who gets the results of *karma* (actions)?"

Buddha's answer (Rahula 1959/1974): "I have taught you, [O *Kalyanamitta*], to see conditionality everywhere in all things" (p. 47).

The "being" manifestation of the interaction of the five aggregates at a given space-time is the conditionality. There is no "individual" or "self" behind this process of conditioning called *bhava* (becoming).

However, within the aggregate of consciousness (*vinnana*), the mind consciousness has a degree of control over the five kinds of consciousness. Thus, mind can help to limit the *dukkha* engendered by the other senses.

- This discussion leads us to the conclusion that the journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) should have a clear understanding of *anatta* (no self) as a corollary to the Five Aggregates Analysis and its extended dynamic nonlinear formulation of Dependent Genesis. They could use this knowledge in deciding the newsworthiness of the topics appropriate for reporting and dissemination.

***Paticca Samuppada* Formulation**

The Conditioned Genesis formulation[2]—also known as "dependent co-arising"—backs up the "no self" (*anatta*) conclusion in a dynamic form. We will examine the implications of this doctrine fully in Chapter 4. Here, we will merely outline the dynamic causal process involving 12 *nidanas* (conditional factors) that condition a "being's" *bhavacakra* (wheel of becoming) as "s/he" circles through *samsara* (cyclic existence).

1. With *ignorance* (*avijja*) as condition, mental formations (*sankhara*)[3] arise.
2. With *mental formations* as condition, consciousness (*vinnana*) arises.
3. With *consciousness* as condition, mind and matter (*namarupa*) arise.
4. With *mind and matter* as condition, sense gates (*salayatana*) arise.
5. With *sense gates* as condition, contact (*phassa*) arises.
6. With *contact* as condition, feeling (*vedana*) arises.
7. With *feeling* as condition, craving (*tanha*) arises.
8. With *craving* as condition, clinging (*upadana*) arises.
9. With *clinging* as condition, becoming (*bhava*) arises.
10. With *becoming* as condition, birth (*jati*) arises.
11. With *birth* as condition, aging and death (*jaramarana*) arises.

In *Paticca-samuppada-vibhanga Sutta* in *Samyutta Nikaya*, Buddha analyzed the origination of suffering/despair (*dukkha*) in the preceding sequence of co-arising *nidanas*, and then explicated the cessation of *dukkha* in the reverse sequence as follows:

- Aging and death (*jaramarana*): "Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death."

- Birth (*jati*): "Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of [sense] media of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth."
- Becoming (*bhava*). Buddha mentioned three forms of becoming: sensual becoming, form becoming, and formless becoming.
- Clinging/sustenance (*upadana*). Buddha mentioned four forms of clinging: sensuality clinging, view clinging, precept and practice clinging, and doctrine of self-clinging.
- Craving/desire (*tanha*). These six are classes of craving: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for tactile sensations, and craving for ideas.
- Feeling (*vedana*). These six are classes of feeling: feeling born from eye-contact, feeling born from ear-contact, feeling born from nose-contact, feeling born from tongue-contact, feeling born from body-contact, and feeling born from intellect-contact.
- Contact (*phassa*). These six are classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and intellect-contact.
- The six sense media (*salayatana*). These six are sense media: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, and the intellect-medium.
- Name-and-form (*namarupa*). Feeling, perception, intention, contact, and attention are called *name*. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements are called *form*.
- Consciousness (*vinnana*). These six are classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind- or intellect-consciousness.
- Fabrications (*sankhara*). These three are fabrications: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, and mental fabrications.
- Ignorance (*avijja*). Not knowing stress, not knowing the origination of stress, not knowing the cessation of stress, not knowing the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.

Buddha explained:

> Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of

> becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.
>
> (Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1997b)

Aggregates and Conditional Factors

Note that the Five Aggregates appear in the Conditioned Genesis formulation, as well, inasmuch as both are explanations of the inevitability of *dukkha* as long as sentient "beings" are trapped into repeating their life cycles (*bhavacakra*) through the six planes of the perpetual *samsara* (cyclic existence).

Three of the aggregates—*sankhara* (fabrications/formations), *vinnana* (consciousness) and *vedana* (feeling)—appear as *nidanas* (conditional factors) with the identical terms in Conditioned Genesis. The *rupa* aggregate is part of the *namarupa* nidana; and the *sanna* (perception) aggregate captures the *salayatana* (six sense gates) and *phassa* (contact) nidanas. Thus, the *salayatana* (sense gates) *nidana* is a redundancy (because it is already included in the *nama* component of the *namarupa nidana*) that could be excluded from the Conditioned Genesis formulation.[4]

Despite this redundancy, perhaps introduced by the later *abidhamma* commentators, Conditioned Genesis is an ingenious more dynamic phenomenological formulation that journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) could deploy with modifications to assess the conditioning of a selected pair of co-arising variables by a larger cluster of interacting variables—hereditary, biological, physical, mental, and so forth. Dependent Genesis shows how the Five Aggregates engender the two interrelated psychological *nidanas—tanha* (desire) and *upadana* (clinging), the primary generators of intentional/volitional action (*kamma*) that condition the level of *dukkha* a "person" has to experience from the co-arising point of his becoming (*bhava*) conditioned by clinging (*upadana*) or birth (*jati*), depending on the direction of the wheel. It uses phenomenological/processual analysis to derive the relative truth lying somewhere between the existentialist conventional truth and the nonexistentialist absolute truth.

- On the basis of the preceding discussion, the mindful journalist should have a thorough understanding of *anatta* as a corollary to the Five Aggregates Analysis and the Dependent Genesis formulation. This knowledge should enable the journalist to eliminate the illusion of self or soul in his/her mind and analyze issues using the Dependent Genesis methodology (also known as *paticca-samuppada* or the PS Model) whenever he finds the dominant scientific method inadequate or unsatisfactory.

ANATTA AND THE JOURNALIST

Although the ingenious logic of Nāgārjuna permits mindful journalists to continue to use conventional language in reference to sentient beings, they must apply their mental training to evaluate the negative impact of stories on the readers/listeners depending on the approach and style of the presentation. This is what mindfulness is about.

Concern with *metta* (compassion) and *karuna* (kindness) for all members of the world community—embedded in the right thoughts principle of the wisdom dimension of the *magga*—should be the guideline the journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) must follow.

They must not be tempted by the delusions of bylines and deadlines dictated by *tanha* (desire) and *avijja* (ignorance).

To understand that there is no self or soul, an aspiring journalist must cultivate mindfulness or awareness of the body, sensations, mind, and mind objects (identified as the *Satipatthana*) to personally experience the folly of hanging on to notions implying permanence, independence, freedom, or individualism. Buddhist phenomenology asserts that all these notions are relative because everything in the universe or the *samsara* is interdependent, interconnected, and interactive. Within such a system, only conditionality is possible, and permanence is an illusionary construct. In Buddha's view, there is no thinker behind the thought, and no actor behind the action.

In the Buddhist sense, the 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes's assertion "Cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) indicates his ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Descartes was similar to wanderer Vocchagotta, who failed to comprehend the notion of no self but attempted to debate the Buddha on this issue.

Like Vocchagotta and Descartes, no journalist can expect to understand the world of cyclic existence (*samsara*) until s/he comprehends his/her insubstantiality or state of no self (*anatta*). All Abrahamic religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) believe in a permanent self or soul that, according to a common eschatology, will be judged by God to spend an eternity in heaven or in hell.

Hinduism, a term created by the British to refer to Brahmanism, emerged from Vedanta philosophy, distinctly differs from Buddhist phenomenology in that Hindus too believe in a permanent soul that will merge with the Brahman on attaining *moksha* (liberation) after a cycle of reincarnations as determined by their *karma*.

Neither Buddhist phenomenology nor religionized Buddhism accepts the notion of self or soul (*atta*), which contradicts the related concept of impermanence (*anicca*) explicated in this book. The Buddhist concept of *Nibbana* (Pali) or *nirvana* (Sanskrit) is a state of supreme bliss. It signifies the cessation of existence. There is no heavenly abode beyond it. The Buddhist has no self: "s/he" is merely a conditioned composite of ever-changing

aggregates. Therefore, "s/he" cannot be reincarnated or reborn but can only re-become (go through *punabbhava*).

The first three chapters of this book focus on the three marks (*ti-lakkhana*) of cyclic existence (*samsara*): unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), insubstantiality (*anatta*), and impermanence (*anicca*). *Samsara* refers to the process of cycling through one re-becoming (*punabbhava*) after another within the six realms of existence where each realm can be understood as either a physical realm or a psychological state characterized by a particular type of suffering.

- The mindful journalist should know that the terms rebirth and reincarnation fail to convey the more accurate Buddhist meaning connoted by the Pali term *punabbhava*. Buddhists should be aware that the Hindu concept of *reincarnation* presumes the passing of a "permanent" or unchanged soul to the next cycle of existence whereas the concept of no self (*anatta*) recognizes that within each birth cycle (*bhavacakra*), a sentient "being" goes through a continuous process of becoming (*bhava*) such that in reality there is nothing called self.

In the Buddhist sense, understanding this crucial distinction between self/soul (*atta*) and no self (*anatta*) is vital for the practice of mindful journalism.

The journalist might ask: "If I have no self, how can I exist or think?" The answer is: "You have no self because you're the illusion of the aggregates of your mind and body (*namarupa*). Your consciousness (*vinnana*) has changed every moment from your conception as an embryo and will continue to change until your death. If you have no self, you can avoid much of your *dukkha* by detaching yourself from your illusory ego."

But the adherents of religionized Buddhism do not generally understand this concept, which is unique to Buddhism. In a world where millions of people believe in a creator God and an everlasting soul, the doctrine of *anatta* remains undigested by the many.

Buddha's Dependent Genesis (*paticca samuppada*) doctrine illustrates how a set of 12 hereditary, biological, psychological, and physical factors (*nidanas*) interact to *condition* the degree of suffering (*dukkha*) that a sentient being accrues to itself through its intentional actions (*karma*) as its wheel of becoming (*bhavacakra*) cycles through the six planes of the never-ending *samsara*. The only way possible to eliminate *dukkha* is by following the Eightfold Path (*magga*) to attain enlightenment or *Nibbana*: a state of supreme bliss that signifies the end of existence.

The preceding discussion summarizes the essence of Buddha's Four Noble Truths, a thorough understanding of which is essential to determine the nature of mindful journalism.

In the Introduction, we pointed out the prescient observation of Galtung (1985) that Buddhism has tremendous potential as a source for active peace

politics, to a large extent untapped. Our analysis of Buddhist phenomenology in this chapter alone should make it clear that it has the potential of revolutionizing the approach to journalism currently practiced worldwide on the basis of dubious West-centric presumptions.

- First, the entire concept of journalism nurtured in the West and exported to the East is based on the supremacy of self or soul. As a result, the values adopted to determine what is newsworthy are determined heavily by individualism.
- Second, mainstream journalism, including most of its variations, reflect the conventional truth, now severely under challenge by modern quantum physics, which is trying hard to discard notions such as being and nonbeing as Buddhist phenomenology does.
- Third, the Buddhist *magga* (Middle Path) provides a turning towards the reality of things as they are right now and understanding reality directly. Mindful journalism will follow the *magga* to reveal the reality of the world as it really is by situating itself between conventional truth and absolute truth.
- Fourth, mindful journalism may continue to use the conventional terms such as "individual," "person," and so forth because of limitations of language, but severely desist from writing or presenting stories focusing on individualism and selfness—the province of West-centric journalism. Follow the truth, and do not be tempted by bylines, headlines, and deadlines.
- Fifth, the era of mindful journalism could usher in a period of noncombative, nonaggressive journalism devoid of excessive concentration on sensationalism and sleaze. However, keep in mind that because *samsara* is *dukkha*, mindful journalism cannot replace commoditized journalism. The good and the bad would coexist.
- Sixth, mindful journalism will combine the eight basic Confucian moral principles (loyalty, filial piety, compassion, love, trustworthiness, responsibility, peace, and equality (Chin Kung 1997)) with the three dimensions of the Buddhist *magga* (wisdom/compassion, ethical conduct, and mental development) and absorb the Daoist love for Nature, as well, to prevent the continued domination of the *yang* (mainstream journalism) over the *yin* (mindful journalism and its siblings—peace, development, etc.).

EXAMPLES OF COMMODITIZED NEWS

Mainstream journalism habitually uses personalization to attract attention and "sell" the "news" to the audience. The underlying presumption behind this technique is that a self or soul exists. It follows the

Western model of external integrity, which conceptualizes moral agency as a measure of external relations between the autonomous self and others. In contrast, the Buddhist model is closer to the "intimacy" model on internal relations (Kasulis 1985). The Five Aggregates Analysis clearly demonstrates that no single aggregate has control over the actions conditioned by all five. This is why Buddhism says there is no actor behind the action. However, the mind component of the consciousness (*vinnana*) aggregate has a limited degree of control over the action-outcomes of all five. Thus, one can argue that Buddhism recognizes "Self" to a very limited degree that permits journalists to identify "individuals" as participants in news.

The above clarification should enable the *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) to avoid news that highlights individualism, and to develop mindful journalism as a creative approach to present news focusing more on cooperative efforts highlighting mutual interdependence at different levels—international or global, national, or local.

Critique of Personalization 1

Front Page banner headline: FIRST LOOK AT A NEW LIFE
Strapline: For area Bhutanese, arranged marriages still common practice, but with a modern twist
Lead:

In a steamy apartment rich with the smell of curry, a pair of newlyweds sat on a loveseat Monday afternoon, accepting gifts and blessings in the Hindu tradition.

Well-wishers stuck tika—a mix of red powder, rice and yogurt—to the couple's foreheads and sprinkled dried flower petals onto their laps.

The groom, Ram Thapaliya, and his bride, Madhavi Regmi, both Bhutanese refugees, sat quietly and smiled as their friends and family looked on.

Story beginning:

This reception took place in the three-bedroom apartment of Thapaliya's family in south Fargo. The actual wedding, as tradition dictates, happened at the home of Regmi's family in Denver on Sunday.

Their parents had arranged the marriage, a common practice among Bhutanese who have made their homes in North Dakota and many other states.

Background: "Bhutanese refugees, who are of Nepali descent, were forced out of Bhutan, a Buddhist kingdom in Southeast Asia that

adopted a 'One Nation, One People' policy in the early 1990s. For close to 20 years, the refugees lived in the thatched-roof-and-bamboo shelters of Nepali camps."

Source: The *Forum* of Fargo-Moorhead (a U.S. daily), February 11, 2014.

Comments: This story and the next reflect The *Forum*'s conscious attempt to reach out to the Asian minority groups who have settled down in the Red River Valley of the Midwest. Reporter Archie Ingersoll, however, shows his cultural arrogance by adopting the anthropological approach to judging primitive behavior from the superior pedestal of Western culture. Thus, he unintentionally offends the entire Asian community by focusing on the "smell of curry" in the "steamy apartment." The story structure is designed to convey the idea that the Asian refugees have attained freedom and happiness in America from the misery (*dukkha*) of their ill-governed homelands. The reporter also shows his geographical illiteracy by locating Bhutan in Southeast Asia, not in South Asia.

The mindful journalism approach would have looked at the marriage customs of a wider group of Asians settled down in the Red River Valley without reifying the cult of self or soul. When dramatization takes precedence over ethical conduct, the result would be greater ignorance (*avijja*) and misunderstanding.

Critique of Personalization 2

Front Page banner headline: DRAGON ON WALL STREET

Strapline: 2,000 emails, hard work lead to dream finance job for MSUM student

Lead: "Dan Pham flew to New York City last fall as one of 14 finalists for a position at a global investment bank."

Story beginning:

For the Minnesota State University senior, it was the closest he'd been to his dream of working in the high finance world after an intense months-long job search. He landed his only interview at UBS Investment Bank, a Switzerland-based financial firm.

"Here, not too many people talk about investment banking. It sounds really dorky or nerdy but I was so happy."

When he returned to Moorhead, Pham anxiously waited to hear from UBS.

"I didn't leave my phone for the next 24 hours," he said.

When he didn't receive a call by 5 p.m. Eastern time, he assumed he didn't make the cut.

He was on the bus when he received a phone call from one of the directors who interviewed him in New York.

"I knew right away that I got the job," he said.

"That moment was like . . . 11 months of hard working and putting myself out there, doing everything I could, finally paid off."

Background: "He needed something to do, so he started calling banks in his home country of Vietnam—more than 40 calls in 11 days, he said. It was a tough sell because summer internships aren't very common in Vietnam."

Source: The *Forum* of Fargo-Moorhead (a U.S. daily), Feb. 12, 2014.

Comments: Reporter Cali Owings personalized this story to dramatize the struggle of man against man (the long-term period of *dukkha*) to achieve an illusionary vision of success and bliss (a short-term feeling of happiness). This story fails to convey the truth that existence is *anicca*, *anatta*, and *dukkha*. American journalism schools are the breeding grounds of this type of feature writing that deploys the elements of drama centered on the concept of self or soul. Mindful journalism should avoid this genre of journalism.

NOTES

1. In a critique of this chapter, coeditor Sugath Senarath says that although mindful journalism "seems quite unpractical in the modern industrial society," journalists should change their "thinking pattern" to accommodate the reality of the *anatta* concept. He adds: "The examples given at the end of the chapter shows how biased reporting can distort the reality and mislead the masses . . . The whole chapter seems to originate new ideas and create a turning point in new thinking."
2. Buddhist scholar Asanga Tilakaratne says this chapter presents the related concepts—*anatta*, *panca-khandha*, and *paticca samuppada*—in simple language. "The longer analysis of 12 aspects [in *paticca samuppada*] strictly follows the text. But I wonder whether that may be too much for the non-Buddhist western readers. But on the other hand, to put these things in more simple language will take many more pages," he adds.
3. Jayatilleke (1974) translates *sankhara* as volitional activities (p. 218). He also refers to the *Visuddhimagga* explanation of *sankhara* as "acts of will" (p. 219). Thus, it is easier to understand *sankhara* as the residue of one's volitional actions or *kamma*—mental, physical and verbal—including those from the past and the present and carried to the future.
4. Asanga Tilakaratne, however, points out that the Five Aggregates analysis (*panca-khandha*) and the Conditioned Genesis formulation (*paticca samuppada*) "are two different analyses: one is the constitution of human beings and the other is the process of arising of suffering."

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3 The Journalist as Change Agent

Patchanee Malikhao and Jan Servaes

Synopsis: This chapter elucidates on the third principle of mindful journalism: *Concede that everything—conditioned or not—is subject to ongoing change/inconstancy* (anicca). Assume the role of constructive change agent instead of defender of the status quo. The journalist must recognize that it is the continuing clash of the forces of inconstancy or change (*anicca*) with those of asoulity or no self (*anatta*) that conditions the state of suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) at a given moment in our cyclic existence (*samsara*). The principle of *anicca* is extracted from the first two Noble Truths.

At the level of society at large, the mindful journalist could facilitate change to reduce the state of *dukkha* in society by exposing corruption among those entrenched in power and by helping people to purify their minds when attachment (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*), and other related defilements create conditions that could propel them to commit violence. Mindful journalism might also focus on bringing about institutional changes to remove destructive conditions wrought by environmental destruction, resource depletion, and global warming. It might try to bring about middle-path solutions to lopsided income and wealth distribution, and also call for raising the standard of living of the masses through the cooperative movement and through *shramadana/sarvodaya* movement aimed at promoting self-governance and supply of voluntary labor.

—Excerpt from the Introduction

ANICCA IN BUDDHIST CONTEXT

The Buddhist definition of *anicca* is transience, inconstancy, impermanence, or ongoing change of all conditioned physical and mental phenomena. The Buddha emphasized the training of the mind (*citta*) or its psychological factors (*cetaskas*) (Chah 2003). The mind is not still by nature; it keeps moving faster than sunlight. The mind is conditioned by conceit, ignorance plus

craving, misconception, greed, hatred, and delusion (Thipayathasana 2013: 20). Venerable Ajahn Chah, a famous Thai Forest Buddhist monk specializing in insight meditation, says:

> So the Buddha taught us to contemplate these wavering conditions of the mind. Whenever the mind moves, it becomes unstable and impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and cannot be taken as a self (*atta*).
> (Chah 2003: 1)

When Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who passed away 543 years before Christ, discovered how to attain *Nibbana* (supreme bliss), he proclaimed himself the Buddha, which means the "Awakened" or the "Enlightened." Lord Buddha says, "The extinction of desire is *Nibbana*. He who destroys desire overcomes all suffering" (Chanchamnong 2003: 411). *Dukkha*, or suffering, is what every "being" experiences because a "being" is a conditioned body–mind composition. Nun Pairor Thipayathasana (2013: 18–19) equates *dukkha* to a natural problem that arises in the daily life of human beings whenever they are: (1) eating and excreting; (2) having sensual pleasures—desiring to be stimulated by the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; (3) forming selective behavior, such as choosing good food, nice clothes, nice housing, and good medication; (4) being egoistic—desiring to be loved and recognized in the family, in the community, the country, and the world; and (5) struggling to survive or escape sickness, aging, decay, and death (plus avoiding being a criminal). What Thipayathasana states about *dukkha* is a modern explanation of the way Buddhists understand that suffering arises because of one's attachment to the five aggregates or *pancakhandha* (see Chapter 2) that engenders the individual illusion of self (or *atta*): matter (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), mental formation (*sankhara*), and consciousness (*vinnana*). By adhering or clinging (in Pali, *upadana*) to the thirst or craving for existence of self and sense experience (in Pali, *tanha*), suffering (*dukkha*) arises (May 1984: 9).

According to the Buddhist doctrine, the perception of "self" brings us suffering because we are all ignorant (*avijja*) of the true nature of things (May 1984: 95). Inasmuch as there is nothing we can hold on to or keep our command, we all go through phases of change—and eventually we die, either of old age, sickness, or accidents. The world keeps changing and nothing is here to stay. Impermanence or transience (*anicca*) is evident. Thus, the Buddha taught that there is "no self" (*anatta*), so the doctrine of *anatta* has become a dogma and a component of Buddhist identity (May 1984: 93).

Then comes the clinging and attachment to "self." The "self" or ego is being fed by *tanha* (craving): craving for sensuality (*kama tanha*), craving to be (*bhava tanha*) and craving not to be (*vibhava tanha*), and defilements (*kilesa*). The Buddha explains that because of the feeling of "self," we cultivate 10 kinds of unwholesome qualities of the mind or *kilesa*: greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*mana*), speculative views (*ditthi*),

restlessness (*uddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*), lack of moral dread or unconscientiousness (*anottappa*), doubt (*vicikiccha*), and torpor (*thinam*).

To elaborate, because of the feeling of existence of self or delusion of self, one's perception that one is important gives rise to conceit. The perception that one's point of view is very important gives rise to a speculative view. Anything that is not pleasurable for the self or for the self's viewpoint could create annoyance or anger. Not having what one wants creates lust or greed. The mind would go restless and the self may commit any unlawful deed out of shamelessness or lack of moral dread.

A THAI PERSPECTIVE OF *PATICCA SAMUPPADA*

According to the doctrine of causal genesis or dependent origination (*paticca samuppada*), discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the ultimate cause of ego or self can be traced through 12 conditioned factors that we fabricate as our "self." The way to cease the "self" is through seeing the world in its full complexity. There is no linear thinking or direct causality.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906–1993), who is revered as the most influential Buddhist philosopher in Thailand, and Phra Brahmagunabhorn (aka Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto), who is widely regarded as the living expert on Theravada Buddhism in Thailand, studied the *Sutta Pitaka* as the source of doctrinal authority on different occasions. They both refuted the interpretation of the PS Model as the cycle of past, present, and future life or re-becoming (Jackson 2003: 90–91). Buddhadasa Bhikkhu states clearly:

> *Paticcasamuppada* [PS Model] is a matter of the highest ultimate truth; it is not a matter of morality. There is no self travelling from life to life and no need to say that one cycle of PS must cover three lifetimes, as understood in the language of relative truth.
>
> (Buddhadasa 2002: 20)

He affirms that "this life means the cycle of Dependent Origination; the next life means the next cycle of Dependent Origination, and so on" (Buddhadasa 2002: 19). The cessation of self can happen at any moment of practice in our lifetime. From his arduous studies of the Pali canon and interpretation of many ancient books, he came up with a new interpretation of PS as shown in Figure 3.1:

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explains that various *Suttas* discuss different ways of the wheel of PS model:

> (a) The direct order (*anuloma*) from ignorance to suffering; (b) the reverse order (*patiloma*) from suffering to ignorance; (c) the way of cessation which may be done in both the forward and the reverse orders; (d) the way starting with sensation and then giving rise to consciousness,

> contact, and feeling [which is done without mentioning ignorance]; (e) the way starting with feeling and ending with suffering; (f) finally, there is perhaps the strangest way of mixing the way of arising with the way of cessation at the same time.
>
> (Buddhadasa 2002: 13)

For example, the usual sequence of the PS Model in *Maha Nidana Sutta*, translated by Tan (2003: 4, 5), uses only nine factors: consciousness, name and form, contact, feeling, craving, existence, birth, decay, and death. In this *sutta*, Lord Buddha explains to Bhikkhu Ananda a new series or a secondary sequence dealing with the origins of social problems (as pointed out in Chapter 1 and elaborated in Chapter 4). As translated by Kearney, the Buddha tells his disciple Bhikkhu Ananda:

> Thus, Ananda, feeling (*vedana*) conditions craving (*tanha*); craving conditions seeking (*pariyesana*); seeking conditions getting (*labha*); getting conditions decision-making (*vinicchaya*); decision-making conditions desire-&-passion (*chanda-raga*); desire and passion conditions attachment (*ajjhosana*); attachment conditions possessiveness (*pariggaha*); possessiveness conditions stinginess (*macchariya*); stinginess conditions protecting (*arakkha*); and because of protecting, various evil unwholesome phenomena (*papaka akusala dhamma*) arise: taking up clubs and weapons, conflicts, quarrels and disputes, insulting speech, slander, and falsehoods.
>
> (Kearney 2002: 5)

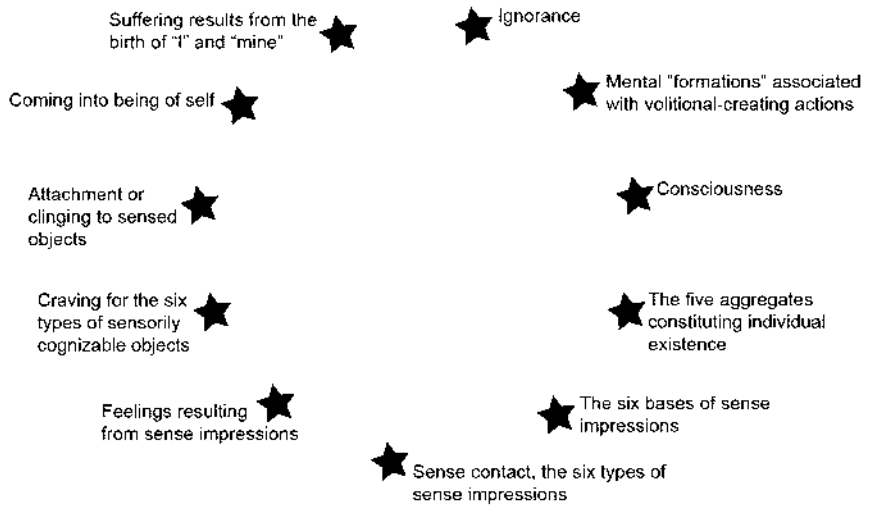

Figure 3.1 The Causal Links in the Buddhadasa PS Model. Diagram constructed by Patchanee Malikhao from Jackson (2003: 111–119).

Jackson (2003: 114–115) analyzes Buddhadasa's interpretation of the PS model and gives a good summary: Buddhadasa critiques the belief in rebirth, as presented in the *Visuddhimagga*, because it contradicts the doctrine of *anatta*, as rebirth would mean conceding an eternal self. He also denies that *vinnana*, the third element in the PS series, means "rebirth-linking consciousness" or *patisandhivinnana*. Rather, he maintains that *vinnana* refers to the six modes of sensory consciousness recognized in Buddhist teachings.

Buddhadasa explains:

> It [PS Model] is a detailed demonstration of how suffering arises and how suffering ceases. It also demonstrated that the arising and ceasing of suffering is a matter of natural interdependence. It is not necessary for angels or holy things, or anything else to help suffering to arise or cease . . . . The other aspect of [PS Model] is that it demonstrates that there are no sentient beings, persons, selves, we or they here or floating around looking for a next life. Everything is just nature: arising, existing, passing away.
>
> (Buddhadasa 2002: 23–24)

This interpretation of Buddhadasa boldly contradicts the traditional interpretation, which has widely mistaken the birth of "I, myself, and mine" (*atta*) with the birth of a human life and the suffering from the birth of "I, myself, and mine" (*atta*) with old age, sickness, and death. Buddhadasa famously stated, "Nirvana [is] here and now," meaning that one can attain *Nibbana* in this lifetime because one can be trained to be a selfless person.

The ways to the cessation of "the subjective sense of self (or *atta*) together with the self-centered attitudes associated with it," as Jackson (2003: 116) states, was explained by Buddha as the Four Noble Truths. *Anatta*, thus, means not only "non-self" or "non-essentiality," but also the ethical notion of "non-self-centeredness" or "unselfishness" (Jackson 2003: 116). *Nirvana* (Sanskrit spelling) or *Nibbana* (Pali spelling) is the existential awakening to *anatta*, egolessness, *sunyata* [emptiness or voidness of self or *chit wang*—in Buddhadasa's term which denotes having a mind or *chit* (in Thai) that is free or *wang* (in Thai), or the nonattachment to the dualistic view of suffering and pleasure (Abe 1989: 205–296; Jackson 2003: 132, 142; Thomas 1951: 96)].

The PS Model shows that the becoming of self and the passing away of self is impermanent as long as the mind moves. This is *anicca* or change that will keep wheeling as long as we have not reached the state of *Nibbana*. Change is the most important notion as we ought to realize that there is nothing fixed, not even the "self" (*atta* in Pali or *atman* in Sanskrit), which eventually will be subject to decay and death.

MAINSTREAM JOURNALISM PERPETUATES SENSE OF SELF

As the world has become globalized, journalists have to be able to cope with changes. Spurred by communication technology as one of many factors, mediatization as a part of globalization characterizes the postmodern culture industry. *Digitization* of the media has shrunk the time and space dimensions and, at the same time, increased the quality of graphic images and message transmission. The image manipulation of the digital images has brought the audience into the realm of a constructed reality. Also, the simulation process of copy and share in the social media networks creates hyperreality (Jackson, Nielsen & Hsu 2011: 19).

Soft Individualism

With the breakthrough of the new media as a consequence of the digitization revolution, new formats of self-expression have become popular as a person gains recognition of his/her private, social, and public achievements (Hjarvard 2013: 150). Hjarvard (2013: 11) explains that the mediatization process affects individual autonomy and social belonging in such a way that the individual gains more autonomy by relying deeply on the external world in the act of connecting to the available large social networks. He calls this phenomenon *soft individualism*.

Elliott and Lemert (2006) already observed a new kind of individualism in 2006. They propose that globalization has a profound impact on the individual level, and, therefore, define this *new individualism* as a highly risk-taking, experimenting, and self-expressing individual underpinned by new forms of apprehension, anguish and anxiety. High levels of individualism can lead to *narcissism*.

Narcissism Epidemic

Twenge and Campbell (2009: 19) state in their book, subtitled *The Narcissism Epidemic*, that the central feature of narcissism is a very positive and inflated view of self and this value is growing rapidly in the American culture fueled by the mass media, including the new media, and changes in parental approaches to upbringing that emphasizes self-expression. Symbolic representations of the new American culture of self-expression or participating audience/amateur journalists are the emphasis on celebrities in the media, the success of Facebook as a social networking site, the uploading of personal videos on YouTube, Twitter (micro-blogging and text-based social networking or SMS on the Internet via its own website) and the uploading of "selfies" on Flickr, Instagram, and others (Malikhao & Servaes 2011).

In many cases, the audience can be a target or commodity when profit-making values are built into the media system as in advertising and marketing

(Jackson, Nielsen & Hsu 2011: 63). The self or ego of the audience in these cases will be coupled with commercial products to increase self-confidence, self-respect, self-esteem, and so forth. It is not wrong to say that mediatization and the Western idea of practicing journalism is to feed the perpetual perception of self.

MINDFUL JOURNALISTS SHOULD EMBRACE CHANGE FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT

With wisdom or right reflection, the mindful journalist should be aware that globalization—via advertisements, communication technology, digitization, and mediatization—brings about streams of change in both contents and formats that increase defilement (*kilesa*), the root cause of suffering. *Kilesa* concerns desires for the five kinds of sense objects: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body sensation (*kamasava*); existence and preservation of the self (*bhavasava*); attachment or clinging to nonpluralistic views, beliefs, and ways of thinking (*ditthasava*); and delusion of ignorance, not clearly knowing the interdependence of mind and matter (*namarupa*) and of every being and everything, which leads to the perception of self (*avijjasava*) (Chanchamnong 2003: 153).

The suffering of many people nowadays lies in the feeling of not being content with the "self." They want to change their physical self via plastic surgery, purchase brand-named products or wish to acquire luxurious items to feel good about the "self" (Phra Visalo 2009: 28–29). The problem is that this new perception of self is not a sustainable one. As one wants to keep pace with the onset of self-image change, the mind becomes restless and unsatisfied with the current status of self (Phra Visalo 2009: 31). Mindful journalism should, thus, avoid promoting self-indulgence, delusion, sensationalism, and consumerism, which feeds *tanha* or desire, and *upadana* or clinging to the perception of self. At the same time, they should develop *chanda* or motivation toward self-development among the audience as a remedy: to love learning, to inculcate positive thinking and to be creative (Payutto 2011: 56) Furthermore, mindful journalists should give more weight to cooperative efforts than promoting individualism (Gunaratne 2006: 9).

Lord Buddha sees that the development of the mind should precede that of behavior and speech. It is through mental action (*manokamma*) that man can gain the highest level of spirituality, but through mental action one can as well commit the most dangerous crime (Chanchamnong 2003: 449). Spiritual training toward a clear, clean and calm mind is the core teaching of Lord Buddha.

Nun Thipayathasana indicates that the Buddhist way is not to pinpoint the other person's mistakes. It is the way that one can see one's own faults and realize one's lack of wisdom. One needs to correct one's worldview and participate in beneficial actions or *kusala kamma* so that the mind is

firm, resolute, stable, and undistracted; pure and clean; clear and free; fit for work, and calm and content (Chanchamnong 2003: 446).

Approaching Change via Middle Path

How to live a meaningful life and have self-contentment depends on mind training to gain the insight to change. By embracing change, journalists should maintain the practice of the middle path or *majjhima patipada*. As a nonextremist, a mindful journalist should promote harmony with nature and promote contemplation over the usefulness of products before consuming them. In a way, journalists should promote mindfulness over consumption.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2004) makes clear the connection between change and the middle way (the Buddhist way):

> Change is the focal point for Buddhist insight—a fact so well known that it has spawned a familiar sound bite: "Isn't change what Buddhism is all about?" What's less well known is that this focus has a frame, that change is neither where insight begins nor where it ends. Insight begins with a question that evaluates change in light of the desire for true happiness. It ends with a happiness that lies beyond change. When this frame is forgotten, people create their own contexts for the teaching and often assume that the Buddha was operating within those same contexts. Two of the contexts commonly attributed to the Buddha at present are these:
>
> *Insight into change teaches us to embrace our experiences without clinging to them—to get the most out of them in the present moment by fully appreciating their intensity, in full knowledge that we will soon have to let them go to embrace whatever comes next.*
>
> *Insight into change teaches us hope. Because change is built into the nature of things, nothing is inherently fixed, not even our own identity. No matter how bad the situation, anything is possible. We can do whatever we want to do, create whatever world we want to live in, and become whatever we want to be.*
>
> (Thanissaro 2004: 1)

Mindful journalists should be able to see through the interrelatedness of things that coincides with the framework of the multiplicity paradigm of communication (Servaes 1999). They should discard linear thinking and look for plurality or mutual conditionality and feedback loops. Marshall Singer states that we experience everything in the world not "as it is" but only as "the world comes to us through our sensory receptors" (Singer 1987: 9). It is not wrong to say that everyone's world is unique and different because of the influence of one's own culture and the meanings of

symbols we interpret. Singer then concludes that perceptions of reality are more important than reality itself because we all only experience a "learned external world" (Singer 1987: 35).

Problem with Objectivity

Singer's view is in line with the Social Interpretive epistemology. Objectivity does not exist in this epistemology because there is no truth out there to grasp. However, subjectivity or interpretation of reality does not mean that journalists have to relinquish the principles of protection of sources, accuracy checking, and writing and constructing of a story (Kumar 2012: 57–59). Donald Gibson (2004: 32) reports that day-to-day journalists should not make any claim to "objectivity," which requires presentation of all relevant facts, asking and answering relevant and significant questions, and comparing and testing competing views. We would like to interpret Gibson's understanding of objectivity as impartiality.

As the notions of the media and journalist are not quite precise because the participating audience can perform the act of journalism as well (Ward 2011: 5), practicing "selfless journalism" could aim to construct a less biased interpretation of reality. By doing so, a selfless journalist should be able to conform to what Rajesh Kumar proposes about journalists as agents of a global public sphere:

> A well-informed, diverse, and tolerant global "infosphere" that provokes citizens to become engaged in issues and provides a counterbalance to the lies of tyrants and the manipulation of information by special interests.
>
> (Kumar 2012: 33)

Kumar (2012: 33, 38) says that journalists should report nonslanting information and avoid fueling conflict or xenophobia (as adumbrated by Gunaratne in the excursus to this chapter), as well as promote a global ethics, serve the citizens of the world, and promote nonparochial understanding of reality.

Following Buddha's Core Teachings

Journalists should use the Buddha's core teaching as their guidelines for news and features reporting as explained by Chanchamnong on the Buddha's Core Teachings (2003: 90–91):

1. In order to report about suffering or assist in eradicating suffering, a journalist must first identify the problem or type of suffering, then its

causes—namely human greed, selfishness, anger, and delusion—and advocate peaceful solutions to these problems.
2. A journalist should realize that we all are subject to impermanence, suffering and not-self. Realization will foster a sense of compassion, tolerance and respect towards other living beings and towards nature as a whole.
3. A journalist should realize the interrelatedness of all matter as well as the interdependence of mind and body, in harmony with nature.
4. A journalist should follow the codes of Buddhist moral conduct, including refraining from exploitation, both of others and of one's self.

Bhikkhu P.A. Payutto (2013: 11–12) integrates the moral life around social interaction with the development of mental awareness and advocates the Four Sublime States of Mind: loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy or rejoicing in one's good fortune (*mudita*), and equanimity (*upekkha*), plus the Four Bases of Social Harmony (charity, beneficial speech, and acts of service and impartiality).

Phra Visalo (2009: 58–61) points out that using *Sila 5* or the Five Precepts as a guide to journalistic ethics may not be sufficient for the materialistic mode of living in a postmodern era as a result of social change. His argument highlights the more complex chains of exploitation than those in Buddha's time. He, then, collects related *dhamma* (truth) and *vinaya* (discipline) so that the new compilation would:

1. Regulate and control the taking advantage of others or the public. This goes beyond the coverage of the Precept Five such as the destroying the environment, the speculation of the stock market shares, weapons production, trading of any harmful things to human and other beings' life, taking advantage of consumers, and promoting consumption that supports exploitation (of child labor or migrant workers or natural environment).
2. Prevent anyone from being taken advantage of any new system or mechanism in the society, such as gambling on the stock market, credit card control, regulate the consumption of electronic devices. . . . Most of the time the taking advantage mechanism occurs under the name of monetary, free trade, and other institutions of which we do not see the relationship directly.

(Phra Visalo 2009: 61–62)

Phra Visalo (2009) also suggests that guidelines for modern living should include eight more issues: gender; power and status; four basic needs; assets; communication; entertainment; relationship and community; and environment as what was stipulated in the discipline and rules of monks.

At a collective level, mindful journalists should aim at supporting ethical civic groups because that will help wall the members from consumerism and authoritarianism. One example of ethical civic organizations is the "network of Tzu Chi Foundation or Buddhist Compassion Relief in Taiwan" where volunteers work with *Bhikkhunis* (female monks) covering social and community services, medical care, education, and humanism with branches in more than 47 countries and 372 offices worldwide. This is a religious organization that takes the path to Buddhahood by practicing various activities with the firm belief that "the world is impermanent, and life dwindles everyday, we shall cherish the life to plant good seeds and enjoy the harvest, thus, we won't be feeling void of our lives" (Tzu Chi 2014).

Another good example of a successful ethical civic organization is Sri Lanka's *Sarvodaya* (Sanskrit for "awakening of all") *Shramadana* (Sanskrit for "donation of labor") organization (Bond, 2003). Winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2014 from the Schwab Foundation, this organization has proved that participatory social transformation can be done by the people for the people successfully. By integrating Gandhian philosophy, which advocates the values of truth, nonviolence, and self-sacrifice, with Buddhist philosophy, which promotes self-awakening for self-reliance, holistic participatory engagement in harmony with the environment, this volunteer people's organization has expanded its scope to cover a variety of activities ranging from micro to macro level. Mindful journalism could assist such organizations by motivating and mobilizing people in their own villages to meet their basic needs relating to communication facilities, energy distribution and management, education, spirituality and culture needs. (Sarvodaya 2014).

Mindful journalism would replace the "women, wampum, and wrongdoing" (sex, money, and crime) formula to "promote volitional actions or wholesome *karma* either at the individual level or at a group level, contentment, and compassion and peace." Mindful journalism aims at reducing suffering (*dukkha*) by not arousing the unwholesome mental formation of the readers. It should embrace change as *idappajayata* (as is) but, at the same time, it should be able to guide the individual to aim at having a clear, clean, and calm mind, and the society for a holistic, participatory engagement in the middle way—Buddha's way—so that there is no affluence or poverty in society.

Joanna Macy (1991) mentions three areas of action—*Sarvodaya*, despair and empowerment work, and deep ecology work—as those that have heavily drawn from Buddhist practice and general systems theory. In the 1970s, Macy studied the operational dynamics of the PS Model as a *Sarvodaya* volunteer. She points out that "the Buddha's distinctive teachings about the relation of mind and body, the relation of past actions to present choices, and the relation of self to society and nature"

(Macy 1991: xii) deserve greater elaboration to inspire people. Mindful journalism is ideally suited to do so.

In the following excursus, lead author Shelton Gunaratne explains a strategy that mindful journalism could explore to bring about positive change and greater amity among people in societies divided by religion, ethnicity, and language.

Excursus
Change from Conflict to Harmony

Shelton A. Gunaratne

In the Introduction to this book, we observed that the ethical conduct dimension of the *magga* resembled part of the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue sans reference to God and idolatry. Commoditized journalism, however, often ignores the opportunities provided by such similarities to frame stories that reflect the commonalities rather than the differences among religious, ethnic, or linguistic groups. Because the Western concept of journalism has clung to a set of concepts, called news values (such as *conflict* as elucidated in Chapter 1), it has failed to reform itself in the Digital Era through the *ziran-wuwei* (spontaneity-nonaction) path to change (see Chapter 5). Its emphasis on the conflict between Islamic and Judeo-Christian beliefs has exacerbated the turmoil in the Middle East.

The *kalyana-mitta* leading the mindful journalism movement could pay particular attention to the possibility of restoring harmony among disgruntled groups of people by sidelining conflict and framing stories highlighting similarities that could bring about greater cohesion in multicultural societies similar to those in South Asia, where ethnic, religious, and linguistic clashes have become endemic. Working within the middle path framework, and guided by Right Understanding (*samma ditthi*) and Right Thought (*samma sankappa*) as explained in Chapter 10, the journalist should avoid adding fuel to the burning embers of ethnic-religio-linguistic ill feelings among the majority Buddhist-Sinhalese and the minority Hindu-Tamils in Sri Lanka. Instead, the journalists could work on defusing the potential fire by framing stories that demonstrate the similarities between the moral and ethical codes of the two interrelated faiths.

In this endeavor, the journalists could explore the works of scholars who have found remarkable similarities between two of the jewels of Buddhism and Hinduism—*the Dhammapada* and *the Bhagavad Gita* respectively.

[I followed the organizational structure of an undated essay written by Thich nu Minh Tam (2014) in producing the rest of this excursus. However, I used different English renditions of the Pali *Dhammapada* and the Sanskrit *Bhagavad Gita* to analyze their content.]

THE *DHAMMAPADA*

Bhikkhu Bodhi identifies the *Dhammapada* (Verses of the Dhamma) as "the most succinct expression of the Buddha's teachings found in the Pali canon and the chief spiritual testament of early Buddhism" (Buddharakkhita 1996). It is a book in the *Khuddaka Nikaya*, the fifth major division of the *Sutta Pitaka* in the Pali canon. It represents a series of 423 verses arranged in 26 chapters. The *Dhammapada* has no plot line or logical sequence of the verses because it is a collection from other sources in the Pali canon, mostly from the *Sutras*, including the *Jataka*.

However, as Minh Tam (2014) points out, many people hold the *Dhammapada* in high esteem because of its simplicity and poetic power of its verses, which relate to the Buddha's teachings as a guide to everyday living. Examples, as translated by Buddharakkhita (1996):

- ***D 14: 183.*** *To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one's mind—this is the teaching of the Buddhas.*
- ***D 6: 80.*** *Irrigators regulate the rivers; fletchers straighten the arrow shaft; carpenters shape the wood; the wise control themselves.*

Many translations of the *Dhammapada* exist that variously render the English meaning of the original Pali terms denotatively or connotatively. The English translations include those by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1950) and Max Muller (1881). Minh Tam (2014) observes that many verses in the *Dhammapada* make comparisons between human beings and animals or nature, or deal with the ethic of *Ahimsa* (nonviolence) that is at the heart of Buddhist practice. Another important set of verses assert that the monks who purify their minds and can control their passions are the true *brahmins* (holy men):

- ***D 21: 294.*** *Having slain mother (craving), father (self-conceit), two warrior-kings (eternalism and nihilism), and destroyed a country (sense organs and sense objects) together with its treasurer (attachment and lust), ungrieving goes the holy man.*
- ***D 21: 295.*** *Having slain mother, father, two* brahman *kings (two extreme views), and a tiger as the fifth (the five mental hindrances), ungrieving goes the holy man.*

Buddharakkhita's (1996) connotative interpretation of the preceding two verses differs from the following denotative translation of the same two verses by Wallis (2004):

- *Destroying mother and father and two* khattiya *kings, destroying the country and the attendant, the* Brahmin *comports himself without trembling* (294).

- *Destroying mother and father and two learned kings, destroying also those hindrances of which the fifth is like a tiger, the* Brahmin *comports himself without trembling* (295).

Minh Tam (2014) says that the *Dhammapada* concentrates on three main goals of propagating the *Dhamma*: taking advantage as a human being in this life; *punabbhava* (re-becoming) in a good realm; and realization of *Nibbana* (absolute freedom of the mind). The *Dhammapada* promotes these three goals through four levels of teaching:

At the first level, it teaches human beings how to live in peace and harmony with their environment, to fulfill their duties toward family and society, to control their sensual desires; and, thus, to observe the five basic Buddhist precepts.

- ***D 23: 332.*** *In this world, good it is to serve one's mother, good it is to serve one's father, good it is to serve the monks, and good it is to serve the holy men.*
- ***D 23: 333.*** *Good is virtue until life's end, good is faith that is steadfast, good is the acquisition of wisdom, and good is the avoidance of evil.*

By developing and mastering his mind with diligence and delight, a human being could live in harmony and in peace with himself and his fellow men:

- ***D 17: 223.*** *Overcome the angry by non-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the miser by generosity; overcome the liar by truth.*

The *Dhammapada* asserts that everyone loves and respects the man of virtue; and the scent of virtue (generosity, patience, honesty, compassion, etc.) is sweeter than the scent of all flowers and perfumes:

- ***D 6:55.*** *Of all the fragrances—sandal, tagara, blue lotus and jasmine—the fragrance of virtue is the sweetest.*
- ***D 6: 56.*** *Faint is the fragrance of tagara and sandal, but excellent is the fragrance of the virtuous, wafting even amongst the gods.*

The second level focuses on morality and the law of *kamma*, which denotes that man's action does not disappear into nothingness but will ripen in consequences: good deed–good effect, bad deed–bad effect; like a body and its shadow:

- ***D 9: 119.*** *It may be well with the evildoer as long as the evil ripens not. But when it does ripen, then the evildoer sees (the painful results of) his evil deeds.*

- ***D 9: 120.*** *It may be ill with the doer of good as long as the good ripens not. But when it does ripen, then the doer of good sees (the pleasant results of) his good deeds.*

At the third level, the *Dhammapada* emphasizes the theoretical framework based on the Four Noble Truths: the existence of *dukkha*, the cause of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, and the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. Life is full of suffering (*dukkha*) due to craving (*tanha*) which causes man to sink deeply in *samsara*, very difficult to release it. Examples from Buddharakkhita (1996):

- ***D 16: 214.*** *From attachment springs grief, from attachment springs fear. For one who is wholly free from attachment there is no grief, whence then fear?*
- ***D 16: 215.*** *From lust springs grief, from lust springs fear. For one who is wholly free from craving there is no grief; whence then fear?*
- ***D 16: 216.*** *From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear. For one who is wholly free from craving there is no grief; whence then fear?*

Verses in Chapter 20 exhort people to practice the Noble Eightfold Path if they wish to destroy craving and release from suffering.

The fourth level commends those who have reached the final goal of practicing to *Nibbana*, the state of the supreme bliss of nonexistence attained through the four stages or fruits of saints: the stream-entry (*sotapatti*), the once-returner (*sakadagami*), the nonreturner (*anagami*), and the perfect one (*arhant*). The *Dhammapada* describes the *arhant* as the *Ultimate Person* or the *Excellent Person.*

- Thus, we can conclude that the main purpose of the *Dhammapada* is to guide people along the path of correct living by practicing its ethical and moral keystones to eliminate suffering and attain the eternal peace of mind. Mindful journalists stand to benefit by consulting it whenever they need guidance.

THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

Minh Tam (2014) says that the *Bhagavad Gita* (the Song of the Bhagavan), the 18-chapter, 700-verse Sanskrit epic, is the most sacred and popular religious scripture of Hinduism, apart from the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. Constituting part of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavad Gita* is the story of Arjuna, a great Pandyan warrior who was suddenly overcome by sorrow in mid-battlefield and stood confused about his duty. Lord Krishna, who served as his charioteer in the battlefield, teaches him, out of extreme compassion and love, the paths of right action, right knowledge, and right

devotion—very similar to the terms that Buddha used to explain the wisdom (*panna*) dimension of the *magga*.

The battle in question actually symbolizes the battle between the two *yin–yang* forces inside everyone: good and evil, Jekyll and Hyde, heaven and hell, and so forth. The *Bhagavad Gita* presents a synthesis of the Brahmanical concept of *Dharma*, theistic *bhakti*, the yogic ideals of liberation through *jnana*, and *Samkhya* philosophy. Minh Tam (2014) explains that it teaches how to live, fulfilling our duties without attachment but with a stability of mind, accepting God as the savior and doer. It asserts that we live in a world of illusion to which we bind ourselves because of our ignorance and egoism—the forces that engender our desires and our actions. Ignorance of our true nature and true purpose of life is the reason for our entanglement in the cycle of birth–death and rebirth.

The *Bhagavad Gita* goes on to assert that salvation is not possible for those who want to escape from life and activity. More qualified for salvation are those who wish to participate in society, unafraid of the burdens of life, and live a life of sacrifice fully surrendering to God. Those who are prepared to go through the battles of life—through self-discipline, stability of mind, detachment, surrendering to God with full devotion, wisdom, right discrimination, and knowledge—are qualified to attain *moksha* (liberation) and union with the Supreme. To quote the *Bhagavad Gita* (Bhaktivedanta Swami 1971):

- ***BG 2: 61.*** *One who restrains his senses (*indriyani*), keeping them under full control, and fixes his consciousness (*prajna*) upon Me, is known as a man of steady intelligence.*
- ***BG 2: 64.*** *But a person free from all attachment (*raga*) and aversion (*dvesa*) and able to control his senses through regulative principles of freedom can obtain the complete mercy of the Lord.*
- ***BG 2: 69.*** *What is night for all beings (*bhutani*) is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.*
- ***BG 2: 71.*** *A person who has given up all desires for sense gratification (*kaman*), who lives free from desires (*nihsprhah*), who has given up all sense of proprietorship (*nirmamah*) and is devoid of false ego (*nirahakara*)—he alone can attain real peace.*

COMPARISON

The preceding extracts from the *Bhagavad Gita* (BG) and the *Dhammapada* (D) show their clear agreement that craving (*trsna/tanha*), sensual desires (*kaman*), and attachment (*mamatah/upadana*) are the main causes that veil a person in ignorance (*avijja*) and prolong his/her state of suffering (*dukkha*) entrapped in the endless process of cyclic existence (*samsara*).

The *Dhammapada* illustrates this point with the analogy that the suffering of those who give in to craving "grow like grass after the rains" (Buddharakkhita 1996):

- ***D 24: 334.*** *The craving of one given to heedless living grows like a creeper. Like the monkey seeking fruits in the forest, he leaps from life to life (tasting the fruit of his* kamma*).*
- ***D 24: 335.*** *Whoever is overcome by this wretched and sticky craving, his sorrows grow like grass after the rains.*

To eliminate dangers of craving, desires, attachment, and so forth, a person must concentrate his mind on meditation to sever attachments to the physical world established through wealth and fame, family life, success, and so on, because desire or attachment break into the mind that has not been practicing meditation like the rain breaks into the roof of a dilapidated house (Buddharakkhita 1996):

- ***D 1: 13.*** *Just as rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, so passion penetrates an undeveloped mind.*
- ***D 1: 14.*** *Just as rain does not break through a well-thatched house, so passion never penetrates a well-developed mind.*

The *Bhagavad Gita* says almost the same thing—that desire is the source of attachment to the world and the great impediment to spiritual freedom. When one renounces his/her desires and acts without craving, possessiveness, or individuality, he/she will find peace forever (Bhaktivedanta Swami 1971):

- ***BG 18: 51–53.*** *Being purified by his intelligence and controlling the mind with determination, giving up the objects of sense gratification, being freed from attachment and hatred, one who lives in a secluded place, who eats little, who controls his body, mind and power of speech, who is always in trance and who is detached, free from false ego, false strength, false pride, lust, anger, and acceptance of material things, free from false proprietorship, and peaceful—such a person is certainly elevated to the position of self-realization.*

The *Dhammapada* and the *Bhagavad Gita* also agree that if we attach too much on everything, we will go through repeated re-becoming (*punabbhava*) or reincarnation depending on our volitional actions (*sankhara*). However, if we were to renounce craving, Buddhists believe that we could attain *Nibbana* in our current life cycle. In comparison, Hindus believe that the desire to know Brahman is not a bad desire but the process of the cessation of desire. The Hindus believe that *Atman* (soul) lies above the ego (self) with Brahman at the top. To reach this highest stage of mind, a person must realize that *Atman* is

truly Brahman. This is called self-realization. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna that every being in the universe is part of the Self, who was never born and will never die (Bhaktivedanta Swami 1971; Johnson 2003):

- ***BG 2: 30.*** Bharata, *this embodied self or soul (*ayam*) in the body of everyone is eternally unkillable (*avadhyah*). Therefore, you must not grieve for any beings at all.*
- ***BG 10: 20.*** *I am the Self (*Atma*),* Gudakesha, *situated in the hearts of all creatures, just as I am the beginning (*adhi*), the middle (*madhyam*), and the end (*antha*) of creatures.*
- ***BG 5: 21.*** *He whose self is unaffected by outside contact finds his happiness (*sukham*) in the self united through yogic discipline with Brahman, he reaches inextinguishable happiness.*

The preceding extracts from the *Bhagavad Gita* point out a fundamental difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddha denied the existence of a self or soul (*atman*). Buddhists think that belief in the Self is also a delusion and leads to suffering. Selfish ideas appear in man's mind because of his conception of Self and craving for existence. The Buddha taught that what we conceive as something eternal within us is merely a combination of the Five Aggregates, which are constantly in flux through every moment of life.

We find the Buddha's analysis about the Self in the *Dhammapada* (Buddharakkhita 1996):

- ***D 20: 277.*** *"All conditioned things are impermanent"—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.*
- ***D 20: 278.*** *"All conditioned things are unsatisfactory"—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.*
- ***D 20: 279.*** *"All things are not-self"—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.*

Buddha demonstrated the nonexistence of a higher self through the dynamics of his Dependent Origination or *Paticca Samuppada* Model described in Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of this book. The PS Model emphasizes that all phenomena in this universe are relative and do not arise independently.

CONCLUSION

Mindful journalism can help bring about social change in religiously divided societies by focusing on similarities shared by religions. As this excursus has shown, despite the fundamental difference in their belief in self or soul, both

Buddhism and Hinduism focus on one destination: the way to *Nibbana*, to Self-Realization, to Enlightenment, to the cessation of suffering, free from *Samsara*. They all think that some sort of awakening will occur to those who are disciplined and practice diligently enough to achieve the state of blissfulness. They all believe that this state of awakening transcends reality, and that it cannot be described through the limitations of human words (Minh Tam 2014). To quote the *Dhammapada* (Buddharakkhita 1996):

- ***D 26: 414.*** *He who, having traversed this miry, perilous and delusive round of existence, has crossed over and reached the other shore; who is meditative, calm, free from doubt, and, clinging to nothing, has attained to* Nibbana*—him do I call a holy man.*

Mindful journalists could legitimately look at both the *Dhammapada* and the *Bhagavad Gita* as spiritual works that emphasize the same teachings on the practice of meditation and the cultivation of various ways of thinking, speaking, and acting.

John C. Kimbrough (2004) points out that each covers concepts such as equanimity (*Bhagavad Gita* 2:15, 4:22, 6:32, 12:4, 13:7; *Dhammapada* 6:6, 6:8), contentment (*Bhagavad Gita* 4:20; *Dhammapada* 15:8), self-control (*Bhagavad Gita* 6:10, 6:36, 12:14; *Dhammapada* 2:4, 6:5, 10:17, 12:3), and sense restraint (*Bhagavad Gita* 2:58, 2:61, 2:68, 4:39, 12:4; *Dhammapada* 1:8). Both also cover the practice of meditation (*Bhagavad Gita* 5:27–28, 6:11–13; *Dhammapada* 1:8, 2:3, 7:2, 10:16).

Mindful journalists should make their readers more familiar with the similarities between Yoga and Buddhism thereby further strengthening their intellectual knowledge about what the teachings are built upon. Such an epistemological understanding of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and teaching could create the necessary knowledge base that both Buddhists and Hindus could apply to their day-to-day interactions, observations, and perceptions. This approach requires de-emphasizing the ontological differences between Buddhism and Hinduism, for example, re-becoming versus rebirth/reincarnation; no self versus self/soul; *Nibbana* versus *Moksha*, and so on.

[The Buddhist Publications Society granted us permission to reprint the *Dhammapada* verses translated from Pali by the late Acharya Buddharakkhita. Excerpts from the *Bhagavad-Gita as It Is* by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, copyright Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, www.Krishna.com, used with permission.]

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4 Significance of Mutual Causality

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Synopsis: This chapter demonstrates the operational interconnection of the first three truths—the existence, causation, and cessation of *dukkha: Apply the* paticca samuppada *model to interpret and analyze problems at all levels—macro, meso and micro; and understand the significance of mutual causality*. The *paticca samuppada* exemplifies the operational dynamics of the 12 interdependent causal factors (*nidanas*) that interactively condition the level of each sentient being's suffering as its *bhavacakra* (wheel of becoming) goes through repeated rotations trapped in the *samsara*. Two of these links—*sankhara* (mental formations) and *bhava* (becoming), one at the conception and the other at the mid-level of a being's life cycle—show the net effect of one's intentional actions (*karma*). These factors are abstracted into four simple lines as cited by Kalupahana (1976):

> This being, that becomes;
> From the arising of this, that arises.
> This not being, that becomes not;
> From the ceasing of this, that ceases. (p. 38)

This is a formidable theory that can revolutionize the method of reporting, thereby improving the state of journalism, for it denies the existence of independent variables. Each variable arises conditioned by another. Thus early on, *sankhara* (*kamma*/mental formations) arise conditioned by *avijja* (ignorance); and later on, *vedana* (feeling) arises conditioned by *phassa* (contact); *tanha* (desire) arises conditioned by *vedana* (feeling); *upadana* (clinging) arises conditioned by *tanha*; *bhava* (becoming) arises conditioned by *upadana*; and so on, as elaborated in the first two chapters. The cessation of suffering (*nirodha*) occurs when the co-originating *nidanas* work in the opposite direction.

The mindful journalist must avoid the use of linear cause–effect reasoning. Keep in mind that feedback loops condition both "causes" and "effects" and blur the conventional distinction between the two. Therefore, analyze problems and solutions within "articulated

> integration" (Macy 1991: 185)—the middle path between atomism and holism. In other words, use the systems approach.
>
> —Excerpt from the Introduction

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO JOURNALISM

We already have a fair knowledge of the PS Model, which stands for the *Paticca-samuppada*[1] mutual causality formulation, described also as Conditioned Genesis (Rahula 1959/1974), Conditioned Arising, Dependent Origination, Dependent Co-arising (Macy 1991), Interdependent Co-arising, and so forth.

In Chapter 1, we had a glimpse of the *Mahanidana-sutta* version of the PS Model, which does not include three of the *nidanas—Avijja* (ignorance), *Sankhara* (mental formations), and *Salayatana* (sense gates)—contained in the later *abidhamma*-inspired 12-*nidana* standard version. However, we also noted that the *Mahānidāna-sutta* contained a subset of nine factors designed to analyze the causal process of conflict/unhappiness. In this chapter, we will examine how Buddha contextualized these supplementary *nidanas* and how they work in reverse order for the cessation of unhappiness spurred by social problems.

In Chapter 2, we had a detailed look at the standard 12-*nidana* PS model, the interpretation of each *nidana*, and how they worked both in arising and cessation order. In this chapter, we will elucidate how mindful journalists could adapt the PS model to analyze social problems and offer solutions in their reporting. The *kalyana-mitta* should keep in mind:

- True Buddhists do not believe in the existence of a permanent, separate self because it engenders greed, anxiety, and aggression. The belief in a self or soul is invariably related to the suffering we experience and which we inflict on others (Macy 1991: 184).
- The classical Cartesian-Newtonian model incorrectly presumed the existence of independent variables, which possessed the characteristics of permanence (or self) and debunked the idea of interdependent, interconnected, and interactive nature of all phenomena—the reality of the world as Buddha found. Buddhist phenomenology, unshaken by any scientific claim to the contrary, appears to confirm reality more convincingly than Newtonian epistemology.
- Buddha's phenomenology took into account the middle-path truth that nothing could arise independently, that nothing could be the outcome of a single cause, that everything was a process, that individualism was a myth because there was no doer behind any action except a group of aggregates guided by an ever-changing mind consciousness that passed on from one *punabbhava* (re-becoming) to another, and so on.

[In Chinese parlance, existence entails finding the midway between *yin* and *yang*, neither of which is independent of each other. Daoists believe that unity and diversity can coexist as one. The Dao created diversity within unity. Thus, the non-Abrahamic Orient is more tolerant of contradictions than the Abrahamic Occident.]

- Mindful journalists must not project themselves as belonging to any religion. Their commitment is to keep on verifying the original phenomenology that Buddha found. The journalist's job is to find the truth by personal investigation to help the general public. Thus, Buddhist phenomenology ideally fits into journalism.
- Buddha did not derive the Four Noble Truths by using the scientific method but through the deep insights he gained by mental development. The "scientific method" cannot capture the nonlinear effects of a vast network of interdependent variables constituting the universe.

This chapter could help the journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise-advisers) of the Digital Age to adapt the phenomenology of an ancient sage to control both individual and social problems. They could deploy the PS Model to produce stories far superior to the commoditized news carried by contemporary mass media worldwide. They could create an unassuming genre of journalism that reveals phenomenal truths by deploying the Buddhist theory of truth that Tilakaratne explains in Chapter 6.

Dynamics of the PS Model

> [The PS Model] shows how we are conditioned by the environment, by our heredity (*bīja-niyama*) owing to the fact that our personality is made up of the fusion of the dynamic consciousness coming down from a previous life with what is derived from our parental stock, our psychological past going back to prior lives and the desires and beliefs which motivate our behavior. Yet although we are conditioned, we are not version determined by these factors since we have an element of initiative (*ārabbha-dhātu*) or freedom from constraint which makes it possible for us within limits to control and direct our future course of samsaric evolution and make the future different from what it may otherwise be.
>
> (Jayatilleke 1974: 228)

Now, at the expense of repetition, let us examine the clockwise movement of the 12 *nidanas* in the *Nidana-Samyutta*[2] once again to understand how the Five Aggregates co-arise sequentially to condition the level of *dukkha* in cyclic existence (*samsara*) at a given space-time:

1. With *ignorance* (*avijja*) as condition, mental formations (*sankhara*) arise.
2. With *mental formations* as condition, consciousness (*vinnana*) arises.

3. With *consciousness* as condition, mind and matter (*namarupa*) arise.
4. With *mind and matter* as condition, sense gates (*salayatana*) arise.
5. With *sense gates* as condition, contact (*phassa*) arises.
6. With *contact* as condition, feeling (*vedana*) arises.
7. With *feeling* as condition, craving (*tanha*) arises.
8. With *craving* as condition, clinging (*upadana*) arises.
9. With *clinging* as condition, becoming (*bhava*) arises.
10. With *becoming* as condition, birth (*jati*) arises.
11. With *birth* as condition, aging and death (*jaramarana*) arise.

A careful scrutiny of the 12 *nidanas* reveals that sequences 1 through 7 involve the elements of the Five Aggregates (*panca-khandha*) dynamically interacting with each other, in pairs, to condition the psychological state of each being's/embryo's craving (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*)—the two primary sources of suffering sparked by ignorance (*avijja*). [Chapter 2 showed how the five aggregates constitute the seven related *nidanas*.] The craving and clinging (for existence) are the causes for the embryo's becoming and birth, which invariably would result in *jaramarana*.

The reverse process of cessation is possible along the identical sequence commencing with the cessation of *avijja*, which causes the cessation of *sankhara* and each of the remaining *nidanas* ending with the cessation of *jaramarana*. This illustrates the dynamics of the last two lines in the four-part formula in the synopsis of this chapter.

Because the PS Model refers to the causal process engendered by the Five Aggregates—the constituent elements that make each of us—that condition our continuous becoming in this life and re-becoming after death, journalists could use the same model for analyzing the sorrow/dissatisfaction problems of all living beings and all other conditioned things. Jayatilleke (1974) says that the PS Model "attempts to explain, as in science, in terms of causal correlations without recourse to explanations in terms of first causes or metaphysical substances such as a soul or agent" (p. 199). He clarifies that ignorance (*avijja*) is not a first cause although it is selected as a convenient starting point to explain a series of interconnected phenomena.

Chain of Causation from Craving to Conflict

The *Mahanidana-sutta's* nine-*nidana* version of the PS Model introduces an additional set of causal factors originating from the *Vedana* (Feeling) *nidana* that form the chain of conditions leading from *Tanha* (Craving) to various evils or unskillful phenomena that come into play: "the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies" (Thanissaro 1997).

In Chapter 1, we listed this chain in sequential order from Bodhi's (1984) Pali to English translation. Now, we list them again from Thanissaro's translation to review their interrelationships, and to show how they can explain

stress and suffering both on the individual and on the social level. We give Bodhi's translation in parentheses:

> "Now, craving (*tanha*) is dependent on feeling,
> seeking (pursuit)/*pariyesana* is dependent on craving,
> acquisition (gain)/*labha* is dependent on seeking (pursuit),
> ascertainment (decision-making)/*vinicchaya* is dependent on acquisition (gain),
> desire and passion (desire and lust)/*chanda*, *raga* is dependent on ascertainment (decision-making),
> attachment/*ajjhosana* is dependent on desire and passion (desire and lust),
> possessiveness/*pariggaha* is dependent on attachment,
> stinginess (avarice)/*macchariya* is dependent on possessiveness,
> defensiveness (safeguarding)/*arakkha* is dependent on stinginess (avarice),
> and because of defensiveness [safeguarding] various evil, unskillful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies."

Thus, in this 10-step chain of causation,[3] Buddha asserts that defensiveness is the co-arising cause of conflict, whether that be social or individual; that stinginess (avarice) is the cause of defensiveness; that possessiveness is the cause of stinginess (avarice); that attachment is the cause of possessiveness; that desire and passion is the cause of attachment; that ascertainment is the cause of desire and passion; that acquisition is the cause of ascertainment; that seeking is the cause of acquisition; and that craving is the cause of seeking. Thus, with the cessation of craving (*tanha*), all the factors that interact to condition conflict situations will disappear.

However, the English translation of two of the links in this supplementary chain—desire and lust (for *chanda*, *raga*) and attachment (for *ajjhosana*) may confuse the reader because some translators have used the terms desire (for *tanha*) and attachment (for *upadana*) in the standard PS Model.

Mindful Journalism and PS Model

It should be clear that both the standard PS formulation and its derivative, the 10-step chain of conflict causation, would provide the mindful journalists with the appropriate phenomenological frameworks to analyze all kinds of conflicts at the micro (local), meso (national), and macro (international/global) levels.

For example, the *kalyana-mitta* could systematically trace all the recent conflicts in a number of countries—Ukraine, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and many others—to their origin in the *Vedana nidana* related to the so-called world powers with the United States at the apex. The journalist can see that the immediate cause of all these conflicts is defensiveness or safeguarding, which is caused by stinginess, which is caused by possessiveness, and so on. Such a multilayered analysis would give the story greater depth and context.

Please note the absence of a particular first or last cause for any social or "individual" conflict. It is a continuing process that could trigger off at any point in the chain of *nidanas* with each alternating as both cause and effect such that the nonlinear effects of any of the *nidanas* would be hard to measure. These interdependent and interconnected *nidanas* interact cooperatively to condition the level of conflict at any particular space-time. However, where science is confounded by inability to measure the effects of this complex interaction, the *kalyana-mitta* could apply the methods of mindfulness (*jhanic* meditation) to bring clarity out of complexity.

- The PS Model applies to Nature as well. Buddhism assumes Nature as a causal system that steers clear of rigid determinism or strict indeterminism. For the *kalyana-mitta*, understanding is the key, not blind belief in unverifiable dogmas. To gain knowledge, they must not rely on authority or on pure reasoning alone, or on preconceived opinions. Personal verification and realization is the way to truth (Jayatilleke 1974: 32–33).
- Quantum physics asserts that the entire universe is nothing but energy, including dark energy (68 percent) and dark matter (27 percent). The Buddhist view of the absolute truth asserts the same thing: that everything boils down to nothing or *sunyata*. Science thrives on the measurability of the illusionary world of conventionally identified matter. Thus, science can explain only 5 percent of the universe. Although, astrophysicists believe that we are on the verge of a breakthrough to investigate dark matter with the help of multibillion-dollar supercolliders and telescopes, the *kalyana-mitta* engaged in mindful journalism could clarify these complexities through *jhanic* observation of outer space—something that traditional journalists do not have the mental development to do.

As Jayatilleke (1974) points out Buddha's "conception of the cosmos foreshadowed the modern astronomer's conception of it" (p. 36). The modern view is that the universe comprises about 100 billion galaxies, each with billions of stars, great clouds of gas and dust, and perhaps scads of planets and moons and other little bits of cosmic flotsam. The stars produce an abundance of energy, from radio waves to X-rays, which streak across the universe at the speed of light.

- The standard PS Model can also be used to analyze problems in a single country by treating it as a "being." First, identify the equivalents of the Five Aggregates that constitute a particular country. Then, show how each co-arises and interact with one another to condition that country's level of craving/greed (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*).[4] A story based on a simplified version of the PS Model, using the *ti-lakkhana* framework of the Four Noble Truths, appears at the end of this chapter.

Jayatilleke (1974) elaborates that Buddhism starts with the present and explains specific phenomena in terms of general laws. This is evident in the PS Model, although its different interpretations have caused confusion. He asserts that "the best and the most authentic" interpretation of PS so far is that of Nyanatiloka (1906/1967), a pioneer German Buddhist monk. Nyanatiloka explains the PS Model thus:

> [It] is the doctrine of the conditionality of all physical and mental phenomena. Together with Impersonality (*anatta*), [it] forms the indispensable condition for the real understanding and realization of the Buddha's teaching. It shows that the various physical and mental life-processes, conventionally called personality, man, animal, etc., are not a mere play of blind chance, but the outcome of causes and conditions. Above all, the [PS Model] explains how the arising of rebirth and suffering is dependent upon conditions; and, in its second part, it shows how, through the removal of these conditions, all suffering must disappear. Hence, the [PS Model] serves to elucidate the second and the third Noble Truths, by explaining them from their very foundations upwards, and giving them a fixed philosophical form.
>
> (Nyanatiloka 1906/1967: 44–45)

Table 4.1 shows at a glance how the 12 links of the formula extend over three consecutive existences: past, present, and future:

Table 4.1 How the 12 Links Extend over Three Existences (*Nyanatiloka*)

Past Existence	1. Ignorance (*avijja*)	Karma Process (*Kamma-bhava*)
	2. Karma-Formations (*sankhara*)	Five causes: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10
Present Existence	3. Consciousness (viñnana)	
	4. Mental and Physical Existence (*namarupa*)	Re-becoming Process (*upapatti-bhava*)
	5. Six Sense Organs (*salayatana*)	Five results: 3–7
	6. Sense—Impression (*phassa*)	
	7. Feeling (*vedana*)	
	8. Craving (*tanha*)	Karma Process (*Kamma-bhava*)
	9. Clinging (*upadana*)	
	10. Process of Existence (*bhava*)	Five causes: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10
Future Existence	11. Rebirth (*jati*)	Re-becoming Process (*upapatti-bhava*)
	12. Decay and Death (*jara-marana*)	Five results: 3–7

Source: Nyanatiloka (1906/1967: 44–45).

MACY'S VIEW OF PS MODEL

Joanna Macy (1991), in her classic doctoral dissertation, asserted that "the mutual causality of all phenomena" was the "most distinctive feature" of the *dharma* of living systems (p. xiv). She relied chiefly on the *Sutta* and *Vinaya Pitakas* because their presentation of the PS Model differs from the *Abidhamma* in some subtle and significant ways. She says that the PS doctrine underlies "the Buddhist vision of the interdependence of life" and "colors the Buddhist apprehension of all phenomena" (p. 26). This stood in contrast to the unidirectional Vedic view of causality.

PS and Mutual Causality

Macy points out that the reciprocity of causal process is integral to the PS Model because it is inherent in the concept of *anicca* (impermanence/inconstancy) and the denial of a first cause. Causal reciprocity is evident in the interdependence of the *nidanas* and in the linguistic structure used.

- Thus, the PS Model stands in contrast to the deductive Aristotelian model predicated upon a structured universe where everything is ranked in overlapping abstract categories (p. 46). The *anatta* (no self) and *anicca* concepts desubstantiated reality. Linear causal chains required either a first cause or infinite regress (p. 48).

Early scriptures clearly express the interrelatedness of all causes. In this process no one factor could emerge as the winner. Both the choice of terms and their inflection indicate a departure from linear assumptions and an emphasis on relationship rather than substance (p. 51). The concept of feedback is central to the notion of mutual causality.

Systems are interdeterminative by virtue of feedback and they self-organize to conform to the flows of energy and information (p. 54).

- In the PS Model, the relation ascribed to *vinnana* (consciousness) and *namarupa* (name-and-form) causal links clearly illustrates the dynamics of mutual causality with each giving rise to the other (p. 55). Thus, Buddhaghosa defines PS as the mode of causality wherein "phenomena arise together in reciprocal dependence." The *Agganna-sutta* illustrates how *tanha* (craving) leads to the illusion of ego (p. 57). Therefore, Macy concludes, the *nidana* series "appears not as a linear causal sequence so much as a network of interacting and mutually affecting conditions" (p. 58).

  However, Macy says, the *Abidhamma Pitaka* interpretations of PS "represent a partial shift to a more linear view of causality . . . [because of] (1) the notion of momentariness; (2) the postulation of unconditioned dharmas; (3) the distinction between substance and attribute;

and (4) the presentation of the *nidana* series as a sequence of three lives" (p. 59).

Mutual Causality in General Systems Theory

Macy (1991) then goes on to show the striking similarities between the mutual causality process in the early Buddhist PS Model and the more recent discoveries of similar processes at work in life forms like natural systems and organizations that eventually von Bertalanffy incorporated in his General Systems Theory in the mid-20th century. Research showed a different kind of causality—one that involved interdependence and reciprocity between causes and effects—occurring within these systems. The flow of matter, energy and information has to follow the dynamics of the system's internal structure and recursive behavior. Varela describes a system's autonomy as its autopoiesis. Biologists have found that one could reach the same final state or goal from different initial conditions through different pathways (p. 93).

- Feedback represents the information a system receives about its own performance. It is not possible to isolate cause and effect categorically because they modify each other in a continuous circular and self-referential process. Feedback processes are like loops connecting output with input both within a system and between systems. Negative feedback stabilizes the growth of organizations whereas positive feedback destabilizes.
- In the PS Model, a positive feedback relation exists between the *avijja* (ignorance) and *tanha* (craving) *nidanas*. The delusion of self or soul produces anxiety and greed, which further distort the view of reality, thereby deepening ignorance, which aggravates the ego, and so on. "Through positive feedback, biological, cognitive and social systems complexify their organization in apparent defiance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics—breaking ground for the new and reaching toward greater variety, interaction, and improbability" (p. 98).

In Part III of her book, Macy (1991) discusses the dimensions of mutual causality—self as process, the co-arising of the knower and known, the co-arising of body and mind, the co-arising of doer and deed, the co-arising of self and society, mutual morality, and the dialectic of personal and social transformation.

This book should be must reading for the *kalyana-mitta* engaged in mindful journalism.

DEBATE ON PS MODEL

Some contend that the PS Model is a plagiarized version of an earlier formulation found in the ancient tracts on "conception

> and development of the embryo, as a sequence of stages prior to birth" [Wikipedia]. This revelation came about during a recent debate on PS by three Buddhists. Referring to two articles on PS published in the *Lankaweb* in 2012—one by Suwanda Sugunasiri on May 9, and the other by R. Chandrasoma on May 12—Gunaratne (2012) wrote a response, parts of which we reproduce below.

PS is central to Buddhist phenomenology because Buddha intended it as an aid to understand the operational mechanics of the Four Noble Truths. It is the cardinal doctrine of interdependence or dependent co-arising.

My primary source for learning about the PS doctrine was Joanna Macy's 1991 classic *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems*. Sugunasiri refers to it while Chandrasoma ignores it.

Sugunasiri, who identifies himself as a Buddhist scholar, creates the impression that he has ingeniously found "a novel perspective" in the *abidhamma* inspired *Nidana Samyutta* version of PS, which presents the interaction of 12 *nidanas* in sequential order.

Sugunasiri points out that this 12-*nidana* (links) version[5] includes three additional links *Avijja* (ignorance), *Sankhara* (mental formations) and *Salayatana* (sense gates) absent in the nine-*nidana* version of *Mahanidana-sutta*. The placement of *Jati* (birth) in the 11th sequence had puzzled many people. However, if one were to apply the 12-link PS model as a "heuristic device" to explain the stages of development and growth of the fetus (within the domain of one lifetime), the model serves the purpose with astonishing clarity.

But I sense a whiff of ingenuous self-congratulation on the part of Sugunasiri when he implicitly claims credit for revealing the relationship between the fetus and the 12-*nidana* PS model. In fact, a school of thought exists that claims that the PS model "is unambiguously an ancient tract that was originally written on the subject of the conception and development of the embryo, as a sequence of stages prior to birth" [Wikipedia]. As a Buddhist scholar, Sugunasiri should have acknowledged it in the interest of academic integrity.

Eisel Mazard (2011) is a chief protagonist of this school. In an essay (titled "Unpopular facts about one of Buddhist philosophy's most popular doctrines"), Mazard published in *New Mandala* (Jan. 27, 2011), he asserts:

> "Contrary to the great bulk of English language interpretations, my thesis is simply that the 12-links formula concerns the development of the embryo, i.e., including the arising of consciousness in the womb. Conversely, the text is expressly not about the arising of consciousness is [sic] any other sense of the term(s). The consciousness described in this text indicates a stage of development that transpires inside the womb; this,

> too, may is [sic] stated (blatantly enough) within the *Mahānidāna* and may be affirmed from other contexts presenting the doctrine."

Chandrasoma challenges Ven. Nyanatiloka's claim that PS could explain all physical and psychic phenomena in the universe on the grounds that Buddha intended his Dhamma only for human beings. Although Buddha was only another human being, his enlightenment enabled him to use his psychic powers (*sarwagnana*) to analyze phenomena in universal terms even without help from quantum physics. Therefore, Buddha Dhamma relates to all living beings in the billions of galaxies constituting the universe. The *bhavacakra*/*samsara* (Wheel of Existence) covers the entire (multiple?) universe. The current level of advanced science is unable to test the complex interaction, interdependence and interconnection of all universal elements, both physical and psychic. This shows the limitation of science, not the abstruseness of Buddhist phenomenology. As Karl Popper says, all science-based facts are subject to change (the law of *anicca*).

Samyutta Nikaya's four-part formula [reproduced in the synopsis of this chapter] is the Buddha word untarnished by *abidhamma* (commentaries). Although it sounds simple, its meaning is profound and complex so much so that Chandrasoma is valiantly nonplused to quiz how it is possible to link categorically different *nidanas* such as *Avijja* (ignorance) and *Phassa* (contact) in the elongated more commonly cited 12-*nidana* version of PS.

The profundity of the four-line version of PS lies in its consistency with the other fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy: e.g., the rejection of a First Cause and the acceptance of the *samsara*/*bhavacakra* as a phenomenon with no beginning or end. Sentient beings can escape the trap of *samsara* only through understanding of, and adherence to, the Four Noble Truths.

The *abidhamma* (commentaries) version of PS, which implies *Avijja* (ignorance) as the first condition that co-arises with *Sankhara* (mental formations), which gives rise to *Vinnana* (consciousness) and so on also fails to capture the Buddha word accurately because it violates the rejection of a First Cause. Only a PS model that recognizes the non-linear interactions of plausible *nidanas* (irrespective of the number involved) will be consistent with Buddhist philosophy, which rejects the existence of independent *nidanas* just as how atoms behave in quantum physics. As it stands, the 12-link PS model that Chandrasoma and Sugunasiri refer to is no better than a linear model like the Cartesian-Newtonian model.

Buddha broached the *paticca samuppada* (PS) doctrine to illustrate the operation of the Four Noble Truths: that *dukkha* (suffering/discontent/unhappiness) is coterminous with existence; that the *samudaya* (origin/source) of *dukkha* is *tanha* (desire/attachment); and that *nirodha* (cessation of *dukkha*) is possible by following the *magga* (Noble Eightfold Path).

Buddha was an extraordinary philosopher who was born in the era of other great philosophers like Laozi, Confucius, and Heraclitus. He was not a scientist although his [phenomenology] provided irrefutable truths that science cannot disprove: Nothing in the universe is autonomous; everything is dependent on everything else. This philosophy was the precursor to modern general systems theory.

The soundness of Buddhist [phenomenology] lies in its ability to assay any world problem (e.g., global warming, international economic order, turmoil in the Middle East, the unwinnable economic war between capitalism and socialism) by applying systems thinking embedded in the PS model.

More of our contemporary scholars and journalists could apply Buddha's systems thinking to analyze the problems affecting the contemporary world and find solutions of benefit to all. Qualitative analysis based on the PS model can be more helpful than science-based quantitative analyses.

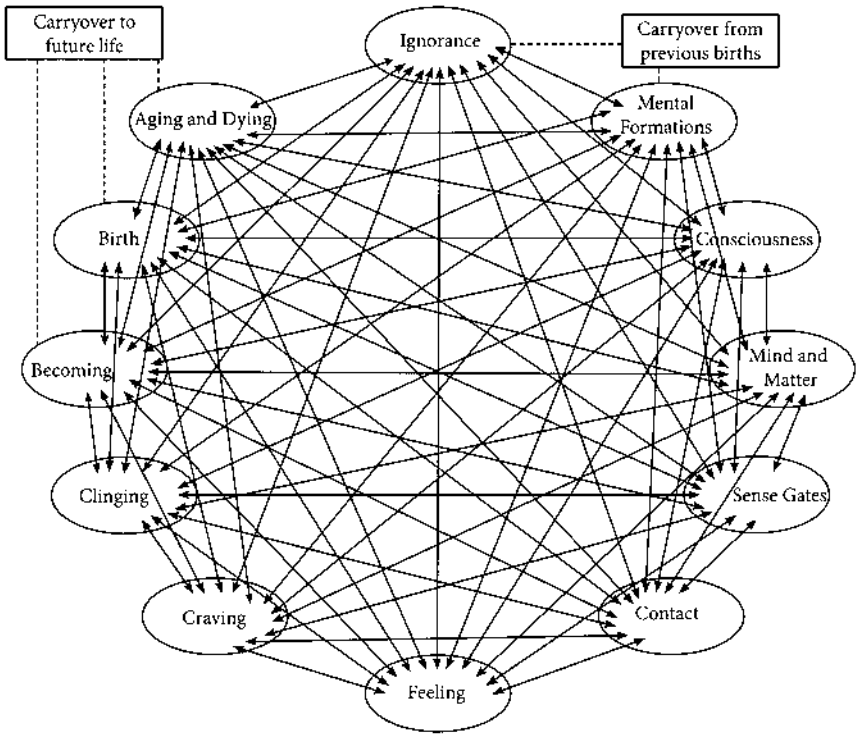

Figure 4.1 The Nonlinear Dependent Co-arising Model: An Explanation of the *Bhavacakra* (Wheel of Becoming). Adapted from Gunaratne (2010: 47).

MINDFUL JOURNALISM EXEMPLARS

Example 1

Source: The *Island* (June 14, 2009)
Headline: China diagnoses Ti-lakkhana: Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta
Writer: Shelton Gunaratne
Feature story:

China, the emerging superpower, has achieved its success through the pragmatic application of its three-pronged cultural inheritance based on a hybrid of Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist principles. Pragmatism, defined so elegantly by the illustrious Deng Xiaoping—"It does not matter whether a cat is black or white; if it catches mice, it's a good cat"—illustrates the crux of Chinese multi-dimensional thinking, which stands in contrast to the one-dimensional thinking of the West that arrogantly identifies Western ideology with universal values.

Most Chinese, especially since the inception of the communist regime, identify themselves as atheists. But many Chinese are Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian at the same time. None of these three "religions" believe in a monotheistic God. Nor do their philosophies endorse the worship of deities. Therefore, the Chinese claim to be atheists is accurate. Hybridity has enabled the Chinese to draw into their culture the pragmatics of all three as a matter of course.

China seems to be thoroughly conscious of the Buddhist explication of the three characteristics of existence (*ti-lakkhana*)—*anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. Over the last 2000 years, the Chinese have examined these three within the yin-yang duality associated with everything in the universe. Laozi, the pre-disciplinary sage who used the balancing tendency of the opposites and complements to assert that diversity arises from unity, founded Daoism by extracting the yin-yang principle from the *Yijing*, the Book of Changes, a semiotic masterpiece interpreting the onto-cosmological 64 hexagrams.

Anicca [Pali] means impermanence or ongoing change. China understands the truth of this characteristic of existence. It knows the world-system is changing after 500 years of European exploitation, colonialism and imperialism. It knows that the Western will to superimpose its political, social and economic ideology on the rest of the world is not pragmatic because it defies the balancing principle of the yin-yang mechanism.

Dukkha [Pali] means suffering or unsatisfactoriness. China understands that the age of corporate capitalism based on relentless profit accumulation—resulting from *tanha* (craving), *upadana* (grasping) and other conditional factors—has irrevocably crashed. Runaway capitalism, which brought suffering to the large majority of the world's

population, rewarded the West with the fruits of surplus labor. China grasps that a solution to the massive economic disarray lies in the Buddhist Middle Path by balancing yang (capitalism) and yin (socialism), as well as Daoist liberalism and Confucian conservatism.

Anatta [Pali] means no-self, which can be extended to mean interdependence. Buddhists believe that a living being is a compound of five ever-changing aggregates (*skandhas*)—*rupa* (form/matter), *vedana* (feeling/ sensation), *sanna* (perception/cognition), sankhara (mental forms/ volition), and *viññaña* (consciousness) with no underlying, permanent soul as such. On death, a being passes on its stream of consciousness to another being, which is not identical to the one who died although the new being inherits a part of the karmic force of the being whom it replaced. This leads to the conclusion that existence is possible only as a facet of interdependence. China is unlikely to give way to the Western bias for individual sovereignty, inalienable human rights with no concomitant responsibilities, and unrestricted freedoms of speech and of the press.

China has just begun the process of reconnecting with its past. Kishore Mahbubani, author of *The New Asian Hemisphere (2008),* says dissolving the myth of Western superiority represents a notable dimension of China's de-Westernization process. Chinese intellectuals like Wu Zengding have denounced the Western colonization of the Chinese mind. The West has branded China "unfree" whereas the Chinese believe they have achieved unprecedented freedoms, e.g., freedom from want; freedom of security; freedom to choose employment; freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention; and freedom to think—as distinct from freedom of expression, which is not absolute either in theory or practice in most Western societies.

China has demonstrated that a country does not have to be at the high-end of the Human Development Index (HDI) and be a full-fledged democracy to wrest world economic power through sound international trade and financial management. W.W. Rostow and other Western scholars had argued that societies have to follow the stages of development sequentially to achieve the level of economic power that China has accrued today. China's trade surplus with the United States alone runs at about US$60 billion per year, according to the World Bank.

China ranked 94th in HDI among 179 countries. China has to race faster to catch up with the West on the four components of the HDI: life expectancy (72.7 years), adult literacy (93%), combined primary-secondary-tertiary education (68.7%), and per capita GDP (US$4,682). However, China is well ahead of its comparable Asian competitor, India, in terms of all four. The relevant figures for India are 64.1 years, 65.2%, 61%, and US$2,489 respectively.

Despite its shortfalls in HDI, China has become the second largest economy in the world after the United States in terms of the purchasing

power parity Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By all accounts, China is regaining its status as a (if not, the) trade center of the world, which it lost to the West following the Industrial Revolution.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted that China would defy the downward trend of world's GDP, which was expected to shrink by as much as 1.3 percent in 2015, and increase its own annual economic growth rate of 6.5 percent to 8.5 percent. During the first quarter of 2009, the world's leading stock markets combined fell by 4.5 percent. In contrast, the Shanghai stock exchange index leapt by a huge 38 percent. In March, car sales in China hit a record 1.1 million, surpassing the United States for the third month in a row.

The Economist says that China enjoys two economic advantages. First, China could become the workshop of the world by undercutting the production costs of all the other members of the World Trade Organization. It has low labor costs, millions of people as cheap labor, and minimal environmental, occupational health and safety regulations. Second, many foreign corporations hope to make a great deal of money from trade with China.

As a typical mouthpiece of Western interests, *The Economist* fails to acknowledge the role of China's pragmatism—shaped by a correct reading of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* reflected in the contemporary world-system—in its emergence as a global economic power. China, which is culturally committed to see everything as interdependent, no longer blindly emulates the West. This is very hard for the West to swallow. China's pragmatism has enabled it to select from the best wisdom of the East and the West thereby maintaining the balance between the yang (the creative) and the yin (the receptive).

Sri Lanka, which ranks 104th in HDI (10 places behind China), has much to learn from China, which has stepped out to help the island to defeat terrorism and the inimical Western dictates. Interdependence is a vital Buddhist perspective for both countries to assess their places in the world economy. This perspective was behind China's enormous contributions to helping ASEAN to overcome the Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998. Altruism and pragmatism both played a part.

Comment: This story shows the potential for mindful journalism to thrive without depending on the West-centric news paradigm and its news values. The framework of the story is the *ti-lakkhana* that highlights the Four Noble Truths. Thus, the story also reflects possibilities other than merely following the chain of the 12 causal factors in the PS Model. The author of this chapter was also the author of this feature. However, some may feel that the story is distorted because it doesn't adequately reflect the negative effects of China's rise. Patchanee Malikhao, who previewed this chapter, says, "I am wondering why there are no *metta* (compassion) and *karuna* (kindness) elements in the diagnosis. I live in Hong Kong and I have been to

China three times recently. I think that the Chinese still need to learn more about self-discipline and compassion to others."

Example 2

Source: The *Sri Lanka Guardian* (April 20, 2014)
Headline: Natural Law Says It All: Because everything is in flux, it's silly to shout for lasting solutions
Writer: Shelton A. Gunaratne
Editorial Essay:

The above headline should not come as a surprise to anyone living in Sri Lanka irrespective of his/her religion or ethnicity. It sums up a natural law that anyone can test through personal experience: Everything in this world is inconstant (*anicca*). Therefore, nothing is permanent; and it's the mistaken belief in a permanent self when the fact is there is no self (*anatta*) that impels us to crave for and cling onto things that cause all the unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) in the world.

Buddhist phenomenology asserts that inconstancy, no self, and unsatisfactoriness are the three marks of existence. This was Buddha's personal discovery, not something passed on to him by a transcendental force.

On the basis of this natural law, existence is coterminous with unsatisfactoriness. Thus, it's silly to clamor for permanent solutions to problems that make everyone happy. Supreme happiness is possible only in a state of non-existence. Whatever pleasure (physical) or happiness (mental) one enjoys in the course of existence cannot last too long.

Existence is a continuous process that will proceed through time and space in a never-ending loop. As quantum physics testifies, everything in existence is a manifestation of energy, matter and information. Buddha identified these as the Five Aggregates: matter, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

All "beings" are a composite of these interconnected and interdependent aggregates, which interact continuously to deny the emergence of a permanent self. "We" are conditioned by these five aggregates of attachment although "we" have some control of them through "our" mind consciousness.

Thus, every "being" is in a state of flux from birth to death. The aggregates continue to function after death to produce a new cycle of re-becoming (*punabbhava*). However, this is not the same as rebirth or reincarnation, which presumes a permanent self. This is a fundamental difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. The reality is that the "being" at death is not identical to the "being" at birth. Nor is it identical to the "being" that will re-become.

The very same natural law applies to ideas, thoughts and theories as well. Let us look at the unsatisfactoriness relating to the ethnic/language/religious problems in Sri Lanka.

The Buddhist Sinhalese, who constitute the large majority of the population, think that unsatisfactoriness is the natural law. Therefore, no amount of concessions is likely to satisfy the Hindu/Christian Tamils, who believe in a permanent self. They see the Tamils' demand for *Eelam* as excessive greed because of failure to comprehend the decimation of their population resulting from war and massive emigration.

If the Hindu/Christian Tamils were to look at the problems from the Buddhist Sinhalese perspective, and if the Buddhist Sinhalese were to look at the same problems from the Tamil perspective, Sri Lanka might be able to derive more satisfactory results in the short run. This is the little leeway they have of using their mind consciousness to control the aggregates of attachment.

Will their unsatisfactoriness cease if the Tamils were to achieve their *Eelam*? I have great doubts. By then, they would face a new set of similar problems: an unfriendly Sinhalese nation trying to undo *Eelam*; coalescing with Tamil Nadu to dislodge Hindi as the dominant language; becoming a vassal state of Tamil Nadu after its separation from India; and so on.

Wisdom, ethical/moral conduct, and mental cultivation constitute the path to happiness. I ask the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Tamils and Moors to enter into a dialogue with no buts and ifs rather than crossing cudgels. Aggressive demands and provocations through external intervention will merely prolong the life cycle of these problems thereby engendering further unsatisfactoriness.

Comments: This essay shows how an opinion writer can use the *ti-lakkhana* framework to analyze ethnic and political conflicts. It exemplifies the power of Buddhist phenomenology to point out the folly of crossing cudgels to achieve permanent solutions to problems arising from a multiplicity of co-arising factors with a long history. Coeditor Mark Pearson commented: "What a superb synopsis for the lay reader like myself. And an excellent example to distinguish 'mindful journalism' from its secular cousin 'peace journalism.'" Although some may consider the editorial to have an anti-Tamil bias, no one can prove its conclusion to be untrue. The *Colombo Telegraph*, a pro-Tamil oppositional newspaper published by a team of anonymous expatriate journalists from a clandestine location, rejected it without giving any reason.

POINTS TO PONDER

- *Paticca Samuppada* is the central doctrine in Buddhist thought. It elaborates the Four Noble Truths on the basis of conditional relativity—*dukkha*

(suffering), *samudaya* (arising) of suffering, *nirodha* (cessation) of suffering, and the *magga* (path) leading to the cessation of suffering. In the same way, it establishes the three characteristics of existence (*ti-lakkhana*) on the causal interdependence of *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (non-substantiality). It also explains the Buddhist teaching of *kamma* and *punabbhava* (re-becoming) in terms of the cause and effect of ethical and moral behavior. Thus, all phenomena, internal or external, are causally conditioned (*samkhata*).

- In the PS Model, dependent co-arising is an objective process. Causal sequence is an independent occurrence of phenomena free from subjective intervention by the mind. Dependent co-arising is nothing other than the working of the Five Aggregates (*Panca-khandha*) constituting each "being." There is no self except the rise and fall of the *khandha*.
- The PS Model shows that (1) nothing arises without a cause; (2) nothing arises from a single cause; (3) nothing can exist independently, unaffected and unrelated to other phenomena; and (4) there is no first cause.
- The function of the PS Model is threefold: (1) to explain the process of *punabbhava* (re-becoming) without a self; (2) to answer the question, "what is life?"; and (3) to understand why there is *dukkha* (suffering) and where *dukkha* comes to an end.

NOTES

1. Macy (1991) says, "T.W. Rhys Davids concluded that of all the 93 *suttas* dealing with *paticca samuppada* in the *Samyutta Nikaya*, only one-sixth have *dukkha* as their subject. A number of others employ it to exhort against craving; but by far the largest proportion, 56, present *paticca samuppada* as the causal relation between all phenomena" (p. 40). Macy adduces this evidence to support the view that the focus of PS was more on conditioned arising (*samudaya*) and ceasing (*nirodha*) but not confined only to *dukkha*.
2. To avoid confusion, I retained the same terms, both Pali and their English translations, as in the list produced in Chapter 2. I thought the repetition of the list in this chapter would be more convenient for the reader than referring back to a previous chapter.
3. In the standard PS Model, translators have defined *tanha* as craving or desire that co-arises with *upadana* (defined as attachment or clinging). The 10-step chain lists several other links that sequentially connect *tanha* with the *arakkha*, the immediate cause for social conflict. Two of these links—*chanda, raga* and *ajjhosana*—are translated as desire-passion/desire-lust and attachment. Do not confuse these two with *tanha* and *upadana* in the standard PS Model.
4. Some may feel that the suggestions I have made in this section are not concrete enough for the *kalyana-mitta* to follow. They may blame me for not exemplifying the way to identify the Five Aggregate components of a country, nation, society, or group. Had I done so, some may still blame me for trying to fit square pegs into round holes. We have to keep in mind that phenomenology, unlike science, accepts overlapping categories as normal; and, like quantum

physics, phenomenology regards objectivity as an unattainable myth (Gunaratne 2005). They can see my attempts to fit the PS Model into the scientific method elsewhere (Gunaratne 2008, 2013). Journalists of the Digital Era need not hang onto a news paradigm that reified the Cartesian-Newtonian model. Any mindful journalist who has reached the higher levels of the *magga* could do his/her job elegantly by following the *ziran-wuwei* method that Cook Ding, in the Zhuangzi parable, followed (see Chapter 5).

5. See explanation in note 1.

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5 Harmony with Nature

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Synopsis: Buddhism, backed by Daoism, emphasizes the need for humanity to work in harmony with nature, including all its flora and fauna, because everything is functionally interrelated and nothing is entirely independent. "There is no aspect of 'I' . . . that is not conditioned or not interconnected with at least something else" (Kasulis 2005: 398–400). Therefore, the mindful journalist should adhere to the principles of naturalness or spontaneity (*ziran*) and action through inaction (*wuwei*), which Gunaratne (2004) describes as the "Pooh Way."

—Excerpt from the Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to the cultural habit of mainstream journalism to disregard Nature on its own right as a continuous newsworthy process thereby treating it as subservient to humanity. Fundamental philosophical differences exist between Western and Eastern thinking on Nature, knowledge/truth, self/individual, time-space, and the transpersonal (Galtung & Vincent 1992: 13–15). In Chapters 2 and 3, we discussed how the Buddhist concepts of *anatta* (no self) and *anicca* (inconstancy) clashed with the Western reification of *atta* (self/individual). The Buddhist *ti-lakkhana* applies to Nature, knowledge-truth, and time-space, as well. We shall take up the conceptual East–West differences on Nature and knowledge-truth in this chapter.

In contrast, a remarkable degree of agreement exists on these aspects among nonreligionized Eastern philosophies like Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Vedanta Hinduism (see Chapter 3—Excursus). The Confucian moral/ethical code appears to be a supplement to the *Sila* dimension of the Buddhist *magga*.

This chapter and its excursus take a detailed look into the similarities between Buddhist phenomenology and Daoist philosophy. Both streams emphasize living in harmony with Nature because every aspect of the illusory "I" (the so-called individual or person) is interdependent/interconnected with at least something else. Eastern philosophy deplores the structural violence on Nature. This chapter argues that there is much in common between

"the Pooh Way" of Daoism and the Middle Way of Buddhism that the *kalyana-mitta* could learn in the practice of mindful journalism.

NEWSWORTHINESS OF NATURE

The *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) of mindful journalism would have a gold mine of stories to work on once they begin to apply Buddhist and Daoist principles that show the relationship of human and other beings to Nature, an aspect that is underreported by journalists trained to promote the supremacy of self or soul over Nature. The wisdom dimension of the *magga*—Right Understanding (*ditthi*) and Right Thought (*sankappa*)—specifically require compassion and structural nonviolence toward all of Nature comprising both flora and fauna (see Chapter 10). The Daoist love of Nature, combined with the Buddhist beliefs in the disastrous results that would occur because of the disregard for living in harmony with Nature (De Silva 2005), would provide the justification for this approach.

Buddhist View of Cosmos (or Nature)

The Buddhist theory of the cosmos is a product of extrasensory perception, not of science. Buddha saw that thousands of clusters of galaxies made up the vast cosmos. The smallest unit in it was the minor world-system, which contained thousands of suns, moons, and planets. This universe went through periods of expansion and contraction thereby subjecting itself to oscillation. The Buddha did not respond to the question whether the universe was the work of a creator because his priority was to explain the path leading from samsaric *dukkha* to the supreme bliss of *Nibbana*.

In contrast, until the end of the medieval period, the Western concept of the universe was geocentric. The Aristotelian view deemed earth as the center of the universe and the moon; the planets and the stars were believed to move with uniform circular velocity. Jayatilleke (1974) says it is remarkable that no conception of the universe other than the Buddhist view came even close to the current astrophysical view of the cosmos.

Incidentally, Perera (2005) points out that the Buddha also knew about the rotating Earth and its time zones long before the geographical discoveries. The *suttas* in *Anguttara Nikaya* mention that

> The sunset in *Aparagoyana* (Europe) is the midnight in *Jambudveepa* (India); and sunrise in *Aparagoyana* is noon in *Jambudveepa*, sunset in *Pubbavideha* (Far East) and midnight in *Uttarakuru* (Americas). These geographical identifications of earth's localities by the Buddha [are] commented upon by the Buddha's disciples.
>
> (cited by Hardy 1863: 63; interpreted by Perera 2005)

It is believed that Buddha had the ability to see the world-systems and the beings that inhabited them through clairvoyance. He saw that the universe was "without a known beginning" (*anamatagga*), and observed "an impenetrable gloom in the darkness of intergalactic space" (Jayatilleke 1974: 101).

De Silva (2005) points out that the Pali word *loka* signifies what we call cosmos, universe, world, or nature. The marks of existence—*anicca* (inconstancy), *anatta* (no self), and *dukkha* (disintegration/suffering)—apply to *loka* (nature/world) as well. Therefore, Buddha defined the world as that which disintegrates (*lujjati ti loko*). It has no static or stable "things." The Buddha recognized Nature as a composite of the elements of solidity (*pathavi*), liquidity (*apo*), heat (*tejo*), and mobility (*vayo*). The word "nature" means everything in the world that has nothing to do with human organization and construction.

Daoist View of Cosmos (or Nature)

The Daoist theory of the universe evolved from the concept of the harmony of the two opposites, *yin* and *yang*. The Daoist model traces the beginning of everything to the transcendental and ineluctable Dao (Supreme Reality), which alternates between *Wuji* (Non-polar) and *Taiji* (Supreme Polarity). The Dao produced the One (space-time reality). The One produced the Two (the *yin–yang* antinomies). The Two produced the Three (energy, matter, and physical laws). The Three gave birth to Ten-Thousand Beings (all things in the universe), who carry *yin* in their backs and embrace *yang* in their front, blending these two vital breaths to attain harmony. Thus everything is interconnected and interdependent (Yong Pil Rhee 1997).

The Daoist parable is an ancient version of the Big Bang Theory, which asserts that the universe sprang into existence from a singularity, an atomic nucleus or zone of intense gravitational pressure thought to exist at the core of black holes. From the Daoist perspective, Dao is the representation of that "singularity."

The Daoists believe that a patterned bifurcation process of *yin* (antiparticle) and *yang* (particle) created everything in the world. The basic *Yijing* model of creation shows how *yin* and *yang* bifurcate into four bigrams, which bifurcate into eight trigrams (*bagua*). At the next bifurcation, each trigram doubles itself to form 64 unique hexagrams, which journalists could use to trace the causal chain of any natural process.

REPORTING NATURE AS A PROCESS

> The Buddhist admonition is to utilize nature in the same way as a bee collects pollen from the flower, neither polluting its beauty nor depleting its fragrance. Just as the bee manufactures honey out of

> pollen, so man should be able to find happiness and fulfillment in life without harming the natural world in which he lives.
>
> (De Silva 2005)

The same care should apply to reporting of nature. A fundamental defect of contemporary mainstream journalism based on West-centric secular values is the tendency to present news as discrete events for commercial gain. It ignores reality by personalizing news to specific individuals as if they had an unchanging self or soul. Mindful journalism is unique because it sees news events as temporary outcomes of a continuous process that does not stop at the point a journalist chooses to report on it. Thus, Nature becomes newsworthy for reporting at any time without waiting for a cluster of news values to make it news.

De Silva (2005) posits that human beings have become alienated from themselves, as they got accustomed to sense pleasures and acquisitive instincts engendered by science and the Industrial Revolution. She draws our attention to Buddhist teachings, which maintain that the moral degeneration of human beings leads to the decrease of their life span and the depletion of natural resources. This degradation has affected the psychophysical well-being of people, as well as their ability to live in harmony with nature.

Buddha's Eightfold Path for the cessation of *dukkha* (suffering) leads to the conclusion that mind pollution—spurred by the co-arising of *tanha* (desire) and *upadana* (clinging)—is the underlying reason behind environmental pollution that has surfaced in the form of the energy crisis, global warming, increasing natural disasters, starvation, crime, and wars. Therefore, mindful journalism can contribute much to combat environmental pollution through a reduction of mental pollution by using the *wuwei* (action in nonaction) technique of reporting explained in the Excursus accompanying this chapter. Mainstream journalism pays little attention to the impact of mind on matter and concentrates primarily on the external manifestations of matter.

Several *suttas* in the *Anguttara Nikaya* provide the Buddhist view that when profligate lust, wanton greed, and wrong values grip the heart of man and immorality becomes widespread in society, timely rain does not fall. When timely rain does not fall crops get adversely affected with various kinds of pests and plant diseases. Through lack of nourishing food the human mortality rate rises (De Silva 2005). Mindful journalism should have the creative ability to "smell" the news inherent in all natural processes.

Journalists who report on nature should have a sound knowledge of the five natural laws (*pañca niyama dhamma*) elucidated in the later commentaries:

- Physical laws: *utu niyama* (lit. "season-law")
- Biological laws: *bīja niyama* (lit. "seed-law")
- Psychological laws: *citta niyama*

- Moral laws: *kamma niyama*
- Causal laws: *dhamma niyama*

Whereas the first four laws operate within their respective spheres, the last-mentioned law of causality operates *within* each of them as well as *among* them (De Silva 2005).

NATURE AND "*TRUTH*" IN DAOISM AND BUDDHISM

Since Kincaid (1987) published his seminal book on Eastern and Western communication theory, many scholars have argued the need for de-Westernizing the theories dominating the social and behavioral sciences on a global scale (e.g., Wang 2011).

In terms of the onto-cosmology of Eastern philosophy, particularly Buddhism and Daoism show a systems approach: the unity of all things, the unity of opposites (*yin–yang*), the illusory nature of space-time, the dynamism of the universe, and so forth. As Capra (1975) points out, this "perennial philosophy" provides a consistent philosophical background to contemporary scientific theories. The critical message that mindful journalism should impart is the immediate need to apply the wisdom of the East to develop humanocentric theories.

This critical idea is not entirely new. Almost half a century ago, R. G. H. Siu (1957) wrote that the respective methodologies of acquiring knowledge differed significantly between the East and the West. The scientific West adopted the positive method that emphasized *rational knowledge* (or rational truth) whereas the Daoist East adopted the negative method that emphasized super-rational *no-knowledge* (or ideational truth) indigenous to all nature. No-knowledge concerned the understanding of nonbeing (*wu*), the undifferentiated whole. No-knowledge differed from *intuitive knowledge* (or sensate truth) in that the latter was limited to the human mind.

> With rational knowledge, one is in tune with the rational man; with intuitive knowledge added, one is in tune with the total man; with no-knowledge added, one is in tune with nature.
>
> (Siu 1957: 79)

Humanocentric theory building involves bringing together the rational man, the total man, and nature.

> The positive and the negative strategies are not contradictory nor even distinctly separable. They are complementary facets of the one access to total knowledge.
>
> (Siu 1957: 83)

Now, compare the preceding analysis with the Buddhist concept of truth in Chapter 6—Excursus. Buddhists differentiate between conventional truth (similar to *rational* truth) and absolute truth (similar to no-knowledge or *ideational* truth). Because mindful journalists must be able to see phenomena as they really are, the *kalyana-mitta* has no option but to follow the middle path and adopt his/her intuitive knowledge (or *sensate* truth) as the basis of reporting or theorizing.

Traditional journalism, relying on spurious objectivity, fails to see beyond the superficial news atom. It fails to dig the deeper but unseen causes behind the objective camouflage.

Points to Ponder

- The Chapter 5—Excursus shows the compatibility of the Daoist and Buddhist approaches to Nature. Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism "grew up" together in China as rival "siblings" since the beginning of the Common Era, with most Chinese people claiming to be adherents of all three "religions" at the same time. The journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) could easily lay the groundwork for the combined genesis of a set of universally applicable norms based on the co-arising moral and ethical principles of these three great philosophies.
- Although the Buddha's conception of the cosmos was based on transcendental (*jhanic*) meditation, personal observation, and experience, his notion was closer to absolute reality than the Aristotelian view that prevailed in the West until science emerged in the 16th century. Because science itself is not an exact reflection of "truth" based on unchanging facts, the journalistic *kalyana-mitta* (who follow the Eightfold Path) could use their findings from deep meditation to buttress their views. Astrophysicists believe that 95 percent of the universe is dark energy (68 percent) and dark matter (27 percent). Thus science is applicable to investigate only 5 percent of the *loka* (world/Nature). The new breed of harmony-oriented *kalyana-mitta* who master the Eightfold Path would be ideally suited to enlighten us on the reality of the universe better than the Winnie The Pooh-style production-oriented Rabbits, connection-oriented Tiggers, and status quo–oriented Eeyores in contemporary journalism.
- It is vital to keep in mind that mindful journalism cannot exist in the absence of other genres of journalism, for *dukkha* is coterminous with *samsara*. The good and the bad must coexist just like *yin* and *yang*. The Dao (Supreme Reality) of the press moves between unity and polarity thereby more or less following the middle way—both Confucian and Buddhist—to some degree. Systems-thinking is the hallmark of mindful journalism. Nothing, not even the "Enlightenment" concept of the Fourth Estate, can be independent.

- The *ziran-wuwei* (naturalness-nonaction) method of journalism is likely to emerge as the strongest approach to reporting nature-related reporting without the intrusion of self and the accompanying mental defilements.

A Gem of Nature Reporting

Occasionally, the mainstream press carries examples of good Nature reporting without trying too hard to personalize and commoditize the story:

> *Source*: The *Forum* of Fargo and Moorhead (February 18, 2014), p. A4
> *Headline*: In praise of Earth's axial tilt
> Blurb: *Today's issue:* First warm weather of season in the valley. *Our position:* We marvel at the celestial mechanics of the cosmos.
> *Editorial*:
>
> Here's how it works:
>
> The Earth revolves in orbit around the sun over the course of a year. Earth's axis is tilted 23.4 degrees from the plane of its orbit. It's called the axial tilt or obliquity. As the planet revolves around the sun, north and south hemispheres change their attitude toward the sun because of the tilt. The result is the change of seasons. In winter, the northern hemisphere tilts away from the sun. In summer, the northern hemisphere tilts toward the sun.
>
> This time of year, the northern hemisphere is well into its tilt toward the sun. On Earth, the sun appears higher in the sky. Days are longer. Weather begins to shift from winter's deep cold to hints of spring warmth. The above-freezing weather of Monday and today (maybe into Wednesday) is the first we-can-feel-it expression this season of the Earth's marvelous axial tilt. And for sure, the warming power of that 93 million mile-distant star could be felt Monday afternoon.
>
> It's been a long time coming this winter. While not a record-setter, the winter of 2013–14 will go down in contemporary memory as one of the coldest. Few winters match not only the intensity of the cold but in particular its duration.
>
> It is coming to an end. It always does. The celestial mechanics of the cosmos never fail to amaze, never fail to deliver spring. So, as denizens of the long-frozen Red River Valley begin to feel a new season's warming rays, we say, hallelujah for the tilt.
> [Reprinted with permission of the *Forum*.]

Comment: This editorial makes a commendable effort to educate the public on a natural phenomenon. The writer [Jack Zaleski] tries to create a sense of happiness among the people of the valley after the winter despair

(*dukkha*). It lulls them into a false sense of happiness without warning them about the dangers of taking Nature for granted. Every phenomenon will go through change over time—a process that the editorial fails to mention. What if the Earth's tilt were to change too soon by the reckless action of human beings!

Excursus
Mindful Journalism = 'Pooh Way'?

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Gunaratne (2000) mentions the several scattered debates on the "Asian" or "Eastern" model of journalism. The humanocentric theory of communication-outlets and free expression, which Gunaratne (2005) presented in the *Dao of the Press*, posits that the political and communication-outlet systems both at the macro (global) and micro (local) levels are operationally coupled. Because of this coupling, the model of journalism pertinent to a system of communication-outlets will depend on the location of the associated political system along the libertarian-authoritarian continuum at a particular juncture.

"POOH WAY" ISN'T THE ONLY WAY

Although Gunaratne's theory is heavily indebted to Asian or Eastern philosophy, it does not asseverate that a genre of journalism congruent with the Daoist *wuwei* (aka the "Pooh Way") or the Buddhist Middle Way is the only way. The model of journalism, whether it is the "Pooh Way" or any other way, emerges from the pattern of autopoiesis and the process of cognition within the dissipative structures we identify as people, nation-states, and the world. Cognition and autopoiesis represent what Daoists call the meeting of the *yin* and the *yang*. The *yin–yang* interactions will engender outcomes that reflect the rational, the sensate, and the ideational "truths." Nature (*ziran*) is the composite of everything in space-time, including Western and Eastern (or Asian) values. One cannot study nature through Western positivism alone. The "perennial philosophy" of the East must play its complementary role.

The *Dao of the Press* is a theoretical explanation of the dynamic process that produces the varying philosophies of communication-outlet systems. It explains why a journalism based on Asian values might emerge in some nation-states. One could discern some virtues in a journalism that reflects the axiological values of Asian philosophies like Daoism and Buddhism none of which approves authoritarianism in government.

"Pooh Way" = *Wuwei*

Benjamin Hoff (1982), the author of *The Dao of Pooh*, says *wuwei* is the "Pooh Way." The literal meaning of *wuwei* is "without doing, causing, or making." Hoff defines its practical meaning as: "without meddlesome, combative, or egotistical effort" or "no going against the nature of things."

The *kalyana-mitta* who will spearhead mindful journalism could apply the *wuwei* concept to journalism by sticking to Hoff's ingenious guideline, which explains that we reach the level of *wuwei* when we learn to work with the natural laws operating around us. Because the natural world follows the principle of minimal effort, it does not make mistakes. Here's the crux:

> Mistakes are made—or imagined—by man, the creature with the overloaded Brain who separates himself from the supporting network of natural laws by interfering and trying too hard.
>
> (Hoff 1982: 69)

Now, substitute the word *journalist* for *man* in the preceding quote, and that would be the most likely advice that the Buddha or Laozi (or whoever was the author of *Daodejing*) would have given to the modern journalist.

Diversity within Unity

Western journalism identifies with "meddlesome, combative, or egotistical effort," the very opposite of *wuwei*. Western journalism regards news as a commodity, not as a social good. It is associated with individualism, Weber's putative Protestant ethic, and ceaseless capital accumulation. Journalism in the non-West need not blindly follow the pitfalls of Western journalism. Diversity is essential for the survival of living systems like the world-system. *Dao* represents the unity of the diversity it engendered through its agents—*yin* and *yang*. In this cosmological sense, an Eastern journalism that identifies with *wuwei* (and the Buddhist *magga*) is a good thing.

THE THREE TYPES OF TRUTH

A *wuwei* or mindful journalism does not mean a passive journalism. It involves a search for *no knowledge* (or absolute truth in the Buddhist sense) and *intuitive knowledge* (the sensate truth found phenomenologically possibly through *vipassana*) rather than merely focusing on *rational knowledge* (conventional truth in the Buddhist sense). The journalist can play a mediating role if s/he operates as a facilitator, not an obstructionist, to the natural flow of things. To quote Hoff again:

> The efficiency of *wuwei* is like that of water following over and around the rocks in its path—not the mechanical straight-line approach that usually ends up short-cutting natural laws, but that evolves from an inner sensitivity to the natural rhythm of things.
>
> (Hoff 1982: 68)

The best of mindful journalism will follow that natural path. Journalism will not have to face massive ethical problems if it follows the "Pooh Way."

DISTINCTION BETWEEN *ZIRAN* AND *WUWEI*

However, one must make a distinction between the two related concepts *ziran* (roughly meaning "spontaneity") and *wuwei* (roughly meaning "nonaction"). Liu (1998) argues that *ziran* is the cardinal and central value of Daoism whereas *wuwei* is the essential method to realize it in social life. In classical Chinese, the philosophical meaning of *ziran* is either natural or naturalness, spontaneous or spontaneity. Chapter 25 of *Daodejing* says, "Dao models itself after *ziran*." Because *wuwei* is the principal method to actualize naturalness, Laozi discusses that concept too at great length. As Liu (1998) puts it: "*Wuwei* . . . designates the way by which people and things can and should realize their own naturalness in the world" (p. 218).

Although the term *wuwei* appears 12 times in *Daodejing*, the meaning of *wuwei* remains vague "because it is not a simple word but a cluster of ideas formulated in the negative that describe the opposite of conventional or common values and methods" (Liu 1998: 221). Traditional governance resorts to *youwei* (action) to control or meddle with the lives of the people. From the perspective of Daoism, *wuwei*, the inverted way of acting, is the best way to fulfill the purpose of *youwei* "for action can never realize its own aims" (Liu 1998: 219) of achieving social harmony and so forth.

Path and Practice

One should also note that it is the individual, the journalist himself or herself, who defines the "natural path" or *ziran* for the practice of *wuwei*, for *ziran* "indicates the condition when a thing is what it is by itself without any external impulse or interruption" (Liu 1998: 221). Naturalness means that the esteem and honor of the Dao and its virtue come from nowhere and nobody.

Laozi saw the sage, not the ruler or the people, as the primary agent of *wuwei*. In contemporary society, the journalist assumes the role of the

sage, alongside the scholar and the pundit. The contemporary journalist lives in what McLuhan describes as the Global Village. When we interpret Daoist philosophy in terms of the theory of living systems, we have to identify the journalist (or any other individual) as an autopoietic system, which is operationally closed but cognitively open to its environment. Autopoiesis or recursive self-making is congruent with the principle of *ziran* or naturalness. This principle can guide the mindful journalist to adopt the appropriate course of inverted action or *wuwei* that minimizes the "meddlesome, combative, or egotistical" behavior so clearly evident in "60 Minutes" and similar news products of Western journalism.

The *ziran-wuwei* mode of journalism or the Pooh Way is indeed going with the flow guided by instinct and conscience related to quantum self:

> The primary focus of the concept of naturalness, its emphasis on inner causes, is still central even today. "Inner causes" means voluntary decision-making, internal impulsion, personal motivation, and a continuous dynamism.

Another important aspect of naturalness also still applies today—the emphasis on smooth transformation (Liu 1998: 223).

"Pooh Way" and Monistic Idealism

We can relate the Pooh Way to Goswami's (2000) philosophy of monistic idealism, which posits consciousness as the ground of being. Whereas Newtonian science, as well as quantum physics, presumes consciousness to be an epiphenomenon of matter, Goswami sees matter (the universe) as an epiphenomenon of consciousness, which he identifies as a transcendent phenomenon (similar to the Dao, the Brahman, or God) that preceded space-time. Goswami distinguishes between *consciousness* (the whole) and *awareness* (associated with each individual's self-reference). He says that consciousness transcends both matter and mind. Goswami draws on transpersonal psychology to explain our two-self nature: the *ego* (which adheres to classical logic and reasoning) and *quantum self* (which adheres to quantum logic and creativity). The *ego* is continuous, determined, linear, local, and personal; whereas *quantum self* is discontinuous, synchronistic, holistic, nonlocal, and transpersonal.

Western journalism emphasizes the ego. The "Pooh Way," on the other hand, emphasizes the quantum self. The ego curtails free will because social shackles—norms, laws, and so forth—bind it. The quantum self promotes free will and creativity because it encompasses the whole.

FRAMING JOURNALISM

Mindful (or *wuwei* journalism) also fits neatly into the concept of framing journalism, which Davis and Kent (2013) have proposed as a rescue operation for the discredited old journalism. Framing means the process by which the media place reality into frames and highlight certain aspects of a story to make them more noticeable. Entman says:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.
>
> (1993: 52)

The journalist who follows the "Pooh Way" will use his or her quantum self's logic and creativity to determine how to frame the profile of someone like the notorious "terrorist"/"freedom fighter" Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tamil Tiger (LTTE) leader shot dead in the battlefield in 2009 by the armed forces of Sri Lanka. No single right or wrong ethical stance exists to make that determination. Zhuangzi mentions the story of Cook Ding who uses his knack, not a formula, to cut up oxen in perfect rhythm by "following things as they are" and therefore never confronting obstacles. From a Daoist standpoint, an experienced journalist (or *kalyana-mitta*), just like Cook Ding or Pooh Bear, will attend to the total situation and respond. A journalist who is well integrated in his/her surroundings will find the perfect fit (*shi*), which requires the ability to adapt and change with the circumstances. The application of ego-based formulaic codes of ethics may produce conflict or friction resulting from trying to jam the square peg into the round hole (Fox 1996).

Confronted with "framing" issues pertaining to terrorism, corruption, crime, and such other facets of human existence in what Buddhists call the *samsaric* cycle, the sage/journalist becomes one with the Dao (in Chinese cosmo-ontology) or the Brahman (in Hindu cosmo-ontology)—the underlying unity that embraces man, nature, and all that is in the universe (Fox 1996). This state of *wuwei* enables the sage/journalist (or Zhuangzi's ideal person) to exercise his or her tolerance and ability to respond appropriately and efficaciously to any set of circumstances. Naturalness or spontaneity (*ziran*), which defies an exact semantic definition, holds the key. *Ziran* is an aspect of Zhuangzi's contextual perspective ontology. It is a concept that Western journalism tied to Aristotle's substance ontology is unwilling and/or unable to accommodate. Li (1999) provides a thorough comparison of these two types of ontology.

APPLYING *WUWEI* IN AUTHORITARIAN STATES

Now, one may ask: How can journalists working in a highly regulated media environment, such as in Singapore or China, operate according to the Dao worldview?

These governments do not follow Laozi's view that "the best rulers are those whose existence is merely known by the people" (Liu 1998: 221). A highly regulated media environment reflects the rulers' excessive reliance on their ego. To quote from Chapter 57 of *Daodejing*:

> The more superstitious restrictions in the land the poorer the people; the more the people are concerned with the administration the more benighted the state and the clans; the more craftiness is displayed the greater the number of novelties which arise. The more legislation there is the more thieves and robbers increase.
>
> (Laozi 1905: 126)

This shows the libertarian streak of Daoism. The *ziran-wuwei* mode implies the independence of each individual's quantum self within the unity of the Dao. Laozi's dislike for legislation (laws and orders) "does not mean that he denies the need for laws in general" because laws "are necessary to maintain the natural order and social harmony of the modern world" (Liu 1998: 224). The unacceptable laws are those that bring oppression to societies and provoke rebellion.

In the above context, a "highly regulated media environment" that benefits the rulers rather than the people impinges upon the principle of *ziran*. *Wuwei*, on the part of the sage or the journalist, does not mean "going with the flow" in the sense of accommodating the artificial barriers imposed by the rulers. It means paving the way to remove those artificial barriers to freedom within the harmony model. This means avoiding the "meddlesome, combative, and egotistical" approach of Western journalism. The *wuwei* practitioner has to move away from ego to quantum self to derive creative ways of dismantling the artificial barriers and return to the natural flow. This is consistent with the Buddhist *magga* too.

Democratically elected leaders of several Buddhist-dominated countries (like Sri Lanka and Thailand) have over time turned toward authoritarianism because of their failure to direct their mind consciousness to exert a degree of control over the Five Aggregates of attachment. They have turned a blind eye to the exemplary Maurya Emperor Asoka who ruled for almost 36 years in the third century BCE as an adherent of the 10 principles of *dasa raja dharma*. Journalists who help maintain obstructionist laws and orders are not following the "Pooh Way." The principal ethical guideline of the *wuwei* practitioner should be: "Would I do unto others (my opponents/my audience, etc.) what I wouldn't like them to do unto me?"

Of course, we learn from quantum physics that the universe is in a constant state of flux because of the ceaseless interaction of the putative particles with their respective antiparticles. Laozi interconnected the Supreme Reality (Dao) with all beings through the harmony of *yin* and *yang*—similar to particle and antiparticle. This is what Zukav (1979) calls "dancing Wu Li masters." If these antinomies cease to exist, the universe will reach thermodynamic equilibrium and come to a standstill. Thus, *wuwei* can never become the universal norm. It cannot exist without its antinomy. The interaction of these two opposites produces various shades in between that no one can compartmentalize into concrete categories because of what Buddhism identifies as *anicca* (inconstancy). The highly complex Dependent Co-origination doctrine (PS Model) of Buddhism confirms the same process.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we have to concede that the "Pooh Way" is not the only way. We have to see the virtues of Pooh in relation to the ways of his buddies Rabbit, Tigger, and Eeyore. Kortman and Eckstein (2004) provide the personality descriptions of these four Disney characters: Winnie-the-Pooh (harmony oriented), the supreme embodiment of *ziran-wuwei* way of life, is sensitive, caring, warm, and giving; Rabbit (production oriented) is logical, systematic, organized, bossy, demanding, and perfectionistic; Tigger (connection oriented) is spontaneous, playful, witty, fun-loving, and energetic, but irresponsible and disruptive; Eeyore (status quo) enjoys being alone, likes independent activities, and shows profundity—a synthesis of learning and insight. These four, in a remarkable way, combine Eastern and Western thought.

Although Pooh is more like the East and Rabbit more like the West, one can see all of the four types in the Global Village. Singapore, for example, has adopted the Rabbit characteristics while not entirely discarding its Pooh legacy. Li (1999) points out that the three major Chinese religious belief and value systems—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—have coexisted and complemented each other for more than 1,500 years. Therefore, Li argues, the Sinic society is able to adapt itself to different value systems more easily than the Occidental society. Because different value systems intermingle in the Global Village, the "Pooh Way" provides just one approach to journalism ethics and practice. The approaches pertinent to Rabbit, Tigger, Eeyore, and their various mutations will continue to complement the "Pooh Way." If Pooh ignores the "baddies," either Rabbit or Eeyore is unlikely to be so nice.

[*Source*: Gunaratne (2004). Revised and condensed with kind permission of *Asia Pacific Media Educator*.]

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6 No Conspicuous Consumption

Asanga Tilakaratne

Synopsis: Principle No. 6 of mindful journalism says: *Discourage conspicuous consumption by all beings because it encourages the causes of suffering*—tanha *(desire) and* upadana *(clinging) pinpointed in the second truth—and violates the ethical conduct dimension of the fourth truth*. This chapter also clarifies the Buddhist theory of truth and relates it to the concept of mindful journalism as reflected in this book. "Since consumption is merely a means to human well-being," and our "aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher 1973: 47–48), the promotion of this idea should be a major goal of mindful journalism. The mindful economics approach of Joel Magnuson (2007), who advocates institutional reform based on the core values of environmental sustainability, social justice, and stability, might become fertile grounds for journalistic exploration.

—Excerpt from the Introduction

This chapter examines the approach that journalists should ideally adopt toward consumption. Mindful journalism signifies a perspective consonant with the teaching of the Buddha. Adapting the adjective "right" (*samma*) used in the Noble Eightfold Path, we introduce the concept of Right (or Mindful) Consumption to explicate a Buddhist "theory" and practice of consumption and related insights. This is an effort at reconstructing a humane, eco-friendly, and just way of consumption that mindful journalism could support and promote.

JOURNALISM AND RIGHT CONSUMPTION

This section substantiates the interaction, interdependence, and interconnection between mainstream (West-centric) journalism and conspicuous consumption. It provides food for thought for the *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) to explore a pathway to escape from the vicious production-advertising loop and create a mindful journalism free of commoditization.

The very need for a mindful journalism indicates that the existing plight of mainstream journalism is unsatisfactory. Scholars have documented the enormous power media have in shaping people's perceptions, attitudes, and behavior, for they tell people what, where and how to buy, eat, and dress: what to drive; and how and where to live. In short, media have become the purveyors of profit-oriented propaganda and advertising encompassing all aspects of human consumption.

Advertising is ingrained in a capitalist market economy, which thrives on buying and selling a multitude of goods and services—a sign of prosperity wrought by advanced technology and know-how. Although we have to gratefully concede all the material benefits we have accrued from the Digital Revolution, we must mull over the psychology behind this proliferation of goods and services. The market mechanism of capitalism, motivated by endless profit making, has relentlessly targeted all human beings to buy commodities well beyond their basic needs through the nonlinear interaction of a set of underlying links (*nidanas*) sparked from the co-arising of what communication scholars call globalization and mediatization. Production, motivated by profits, requires selling, which requires advertising. Globalization and mediatization co-arose to accelerate the process of buying and selling thereby extenuating the state of *dukkha* in the *samsara*. In Buddhist parlance, capitalism, or its concomitant conspicuous consumption, illustrates the undesirable case of the Five Aggregates (capitalists) exploiting the Five Aggregates (consumers) because of *tanha* (desire) and *upadana* (clinging) among other reasons. A "being" has some degree of control over the Five Aggregates through its mind consciousness (*vinnana*). This is where the *kalyana-mitta* could step in to effect a change in commoditized journalism. Their "aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher 1973: 47–48).

Selling needs buyers. The process, which necessitates a constant line of production results in an abundance of things, much more than required for the meaningful consumption of all in the world. Here, we encounter a weak point in the human mind: its inexhaustible desire (*tanha*) for pleasurable things. The literal meaning of *tanha* is thirst, a temporary physical urge that one has to quench repeatedly. The concept of thirst provides the clue: If a system is available to kindle sufficient desire for goods and services, all that is produced could be sold.

This state of the human mind constitutes the cornerstone of classical economics. The limitless desire of people allows limitless opportunities for production and sale. The media all over the world have been put to serve this purpose. The goods produced limitlessly cannot be sold unless an artificial demand for such goods is created. The media in all forms are being used to create this artificial demand by means of advertising, which can often deceive eyes and ears, based on inaccurate and misleading information. An advertisement with a picture of a popular personality is an example of the fallacious argument of misplaced authority. Nevertheless, it works. The

relation between media and things contributes to create a vicious circle, for the media themselves cannot exist without income created through advertising, which in turn cannot reach the world without the media. Thus production of goods, advertising, and media become links of an interconnected chain wherein the stronger victimizes the weaker.

The following is an extract from a study on advertising in the USA:

> The average American spends a total of one year of his/her life watching advertisements, while the regular American child sees 110 TV commercials a day. By the time she is twenty, the average American has been exposed to nearly a million advertising messages. According to the Center for a New American Dream, brand loyalties are established in children as early age as two, and by the time they get to school, they can identify literally hundreds of logos.
>
> Two-thirds of our newspaper space and 40 percent of our mail is unsolicited advertising. In 2002, global spending on advertising reached $446 billion, an almost nine-fold increase since 1950. In 2005, in the United States alone, $227 billion was spent on ads. China, meanwhile, spent $12 billion in 2006 and is projected to reach $18 billion by 2011, which will make it the third-largest advertising market in the world.
>
> (Leonard 2010: 163–164)

Advertising of this magnitude is needed to persuade potential buyers to buy a particular product in preference to many other similar products. Serious issues have surfaced about the manner of production of many of these goods (related to adequate worker compensation, hazard-free working environments, living conditions away from harmful chemicals, etc.). Once produced and sold, the end result is overconsumption in the so-called developed or industrialized countries. In comparison, we see underconsumption and malnutrition in the so-called less developed or less industrialized countries. Both overconsumption and underconsumption exacerbate *dukkha* in *samsara*. Environmental destruction occurs because of the depletion of natural resources caused by overconsumption, which, in turn, creates huge amounts of waste material and garbage. Mindful journalists could become advocates of institutional reform based on the core values of environmental sustainability, social justice, and stability (Magnuson 2007). The root cause of this predicament is our tendency to define a human being in reference to what s/he consumes. It has become the "religious duty" of people to consume continuously because it is a requirement of the economic system. This, undoubtedly, is not a good situation for human society, nor is it good for the environment it shares with hundreds of thousands of species of animals and plants. It is common knowledge that the speed and magnitude of consumption has caused havoc to the environment, forests, and limited natural resources. Perhaps, most problematic of all is the erosion of human values that are basic to

dukkha-reduction in any society. When a person sees meaning in himself or herself as consisting purely of consumption, and other human beings, animals, and nature as mere objects to be exploited in that pursuit (meaning, consumerism), such a society will be very unhealthy for one to live in. This leads us to reflect on an alternative approach to meaning of life not centered on consumption.

We have to recognize that the media have enormous influence on people in contemporary society. The question is whether the media accept this consumerism and overconsumption uncritically. What follows is an effort to articulate an alternative vision of nature, human being, and consumption as the Buddha envisioned and the subsequent practice of his philosophy.

I have appended an excursus on the Buddhist concept of truth at the end of this chapter to facilitate understanding the basis of the following argument on Right Human Action and Right Consumption.

BUDDHIST CRITERIA OF RIGHT HUMAN ACTION

Any effort to determine what is good and bad action, according to Buddhism, has to be based on one's understanding of reality, a salient characteristic, or more correctly, the philosophical basis, of which is the idea of dependent co-arising or conditioned genesis[1] (explained in preceding chapters). The most prominent application of this understanding appears in the Buddha's explanation of how human suffering begins and ends. It is fair to say that Buddhism explains everything in the universe within the framework of this understanding clearly articulated in the following abstract formula (cited in the synopsis of Chapter 4):

> When this is, this is.
> When this is not, this is not.
> With the arising of this, this arises.
> With the cessation of this, this ceases.[2]

Five Universal Phenomena

Buddhism identifies five phenomena that show "[aspects of] universal nature" (*niyama*), namely, seasonal changes, plant life, human action, natural happenings, and functioning of the mind. These five areas cover all the major areas of reality.

In the Noble Eightfold Path, the last of the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha elucidated the right (*samma*) way of life. This path (*magga*) comprises the "threefold training" scheme: virtue in behavior, serenity in mind, and wisdom in vision. The Buddha wanted people to practice Right Action, Right Speech, and Right Living (dealt with in detail in Chapter 8) for the sake of their own life; that of all beings including birds, beasts, insects, and

reptiles; and the environment because all are "dependently co-arisen" and interconnected. The Buddhist dictum "May all beings be happy" (*Sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta*) clearly reflects the very same understanding of reality.

Rightness in action, speech, and living, or the right life in general, is understood in the teaching of the Buddha as fulfilling the following three criteria:

1. Not causing harm to oneself
2. Not causing harm to the other
3. Not causing harm to both oneself and the other (Bodhi 1995/2001: 507–523)[3]

Whatever causes harm to the doer, the recipient, and both is to be avoided for such action is "unwholesome, with painful consequences and with painful results." Put in positive terms, the criteria assert that one should do acts that are conducive for happiness and welfare of oneself, the other, and both.

The third criterion in this analysis is not redundant in the presence of the first two because it illustrates the Buddhist practice of taking both oneself and the other, or both subject and object, on equal terms. Some ethical standpoints may give primacy to oneself or to subject and determine rightness or otherwise of an action from the perspective of oneself. This is only looking at one side of the question and hence incomplete. On the other hand, there can be ethical systems that disregard totally one's own perspective and conceive right action in terms of an altruistic act, in which oneself is sacrificed for the sake of the other. Buddhism considers both these as extreme positions to be avoided.

Discussing this important ethical dilemma, once the Buddha narrated a story of two acrobats, a master and apprentice, who risked their life on a bamboo pole. Immediately before embarking on their display, the teacher told his student: "You protect me and I will protect you—that way guarded by one another and protected by one another both of us will be safe and display our skills." The student responded: "Master, that is not the way to do it. I will protect myself and you protect yourself, and thus each self-guarded and self-protected both of us will be safe and display our skills." Narrating this story to his listeners, the Buddha said that the right approach was that of the apprentice and not of the master. Explaining why it is so, the Buddha added: "Protecting oneself, bhikkhus, one protects others; protecting others, one protects oneself" (Bodhi 2000: 1648). Very often religious actions or religiously sanctioned actions are understood as self-negating and promoting the interests of the other at the expense of one's own welfare and happiness. In this scheme, the first and second lay emphasis on two requirements to be taken into consideration in doing something, and the third lays emphasis on

the need to consider both together. The Buddhist emphasis on oneself should not be understood as taking room away from any altruistic and self-sacrificing actions. What this criterion underscores is the need to maintain balance in one's actions steering clear between self-centeredness of subjectivism and the self-negation and sentimentalism in objectivism.

Another Buddhist criterion, to supplement what we have already said, is to be clear about the motive behind action. As the very first statements of the *Dhammapada* say:

> Mind is the forerunner of (all) states. Mind is chief and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with wicked mind suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.
>
> Mind is the forerunner . . . If one speaks or acts with pure mind happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves.
>
> (Dhammapada 1–2)

Buddhism identifies three unwholesome mental states: desire, anger, and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*), which are at the root of human actions. It is the presence of these states that makes one's actions impure, unwholesome, and bad. The absence of these states or the presence of the opposites of these states, liberality, loving-kindness, and wisdom, make human actions pure, beneficial, and wholesome.

Determining Right Action

Combining these two sets of criteria, one can say that good/right action is:

1. One that does not involve harm to all involved in it
2. One that is done with pure intentions (liberality, loving-kindness, and wisdom)
3. One that positively promotes happiness and well-being of all beings, not merely of human beings
4. One that takes into consideration the fact that we live in a universe in which all beings and all things (nature, environment) are interconnected and interdependent

In this interconnected, causally conditioned, and dependently arisen universe, one cannot do harm to another without harming oneself in some manner or other. One does good to oneself when one does good to others. This also implies that when one does good to oneself with right understanding and right attitudes one in fact does good to others.

This interconnectedness and its impact on oneself and others should serve as guiding principles of the practitioners of mindful journalism. It is

very important for a journalist to reflect on the possible outcome of what one reports. This could mean that one needs to be careful about even telling what is true. It is the Buddhist understanding that one should tell the truth at the appropriate time, and that one should know the amount of truth that one should tell. In an enlightening discussion with Prince Abhaya[4] (Bodhi 1995: 500) on what words one should utter, the Buddha gives the following three criteria on which to judge words:

- True or untrue
- Beneficial or unbeneficial
- Welcome and agreeable or unwelcome and disagreeable

The discourse identifies the following possibilities:

> One should utter at appropriate time a speech with all three positive qualities, and one should not utter at any time a speech with all three negative qualities. A true speech that is unbeneficial and disagreeable and unwelcome, one should not utter. One should utter at appropriate time a speech that is true, beneficial but disagreeable and unwelcome. One should not utter an untrue, unbeneficial but agreeable and welcome speech. True and agreeable and welcome word that is not beneficial, one should not utter.

What is noteworthy is that one should consider appropriate time to utter even a speech with all three positive qualities; and that one should not utter even what is true and agreeable and welcome if it is not beneficial. The mindful journalist must heed this emphasis for benefit in what he reports, and be mindful at the same time, that one should not say what is untrue even if it is beneficial and agreeable.

K.N. Jayatilleke sums up his discussion on the relation between truth and usefulness in the following words:

> [We may conclude from this] that the truths of Buddhism were also considered to be useful (*atthasamhitam*) for each person until one attains salvation. This is confirmed by what is stated in the passage quoted above [discourse to Prince Abhaya] where it was said that the Buddha speaks only what is true and useful, whether pleasant or unpleasant. We may sum up by saying that the truths of Buddhism were considered to be pragmatic in the Buddhist sense of the term, but it does not mean that Early Buddhism believes in a pragmatic theory of truth.
>
> (Jayatilleke 1963: 358)

It is clear that any effort at formulating a work ethics for journalists cannot bypass what the Buddha has said to Prince Abhaya (Jayatilleke 1963: 351).

RIGHT CONSUMPTION

Buddhist Definition of Food

Buddhism does not reject the basic need that all living beings have for consumption. It concedes that all beings depend on food/nutriment (*ahara*) as a factor of foremost importance.[5] However, the Buddhist definition of "food" is not confined to material food. It also includes the following: (1) the food of contact (*phassa*), which, in the context of the PS Model explained in Chapters 2 and 4, signifies the coming together of the internal sensory organ, the external object, and the resultant consciousness; (2) the food of consciousness (*vinnana*), which is conditioned by the six sensory objects, such as form, sound, and so forth; and (3) the food of mental volitions (*sankhara*), without which the mind cannot exist. The inclusion of these three types of food, in addition to edible food, shows that Buddhism acknowledges the need for "food" not merely physically, but also psychologically and emotionally. Thus, in other words, Buddhism concedes that man does not live by bread alone! This broad concept of food also indicates that Buddhism operates with an equally broad concept of human being transcending both materialism and idealism.

The popularly held position is that human beings are made up of two substances or duality of Cartesian type having something called soul (*atta*) over and above the two independent substances. Buddhism analyses human being as a composite of the Five Aggregates (see Chapter 2): material form, feeling, perception, mental constructions, and consciousness, and shows that there is nothing over and above these five constituents. The closest candidate in this analysis for a soul is consciousness; but the Buddha has clearly shown that consciousness is dependently arisen[6] (Nanamoli & Bodhi 1995/2001: 349–361) and changes from moment to moment in that what passes off is not what is arisen.

In denying the existence of an unchanging consciousness, Buddhism avoids the extreme of idealism. In accepting a dependently arisen consciousness that connects beings from this life to the next, Buddhism avoids materialism, which does not allow room for rebirth, efficacy of good and bad actions, cycle of birth and death (*samsara*), and deliverance from this cycle, namely *nibbana*. This line of thinking allows Buddhism to talk about "meaning, well-being and happiness" of this existence and the next. Meaning is spoken of in the teaching of the Buddha as *attha*, the literal meaning of which is the meaning of a word. The term also means wealth,[7] purpose, and meaning in its figurative sense. As we will see in our discussion shortly, the Buddha refers to "meaning" pertaining to this life and the next.

The concept of human being that emerges from these insights is naturalist and broad. It rejects the belief in a permanent substance or *atta*/*atma* in human beings, at the same time without precipitating to the materialist view, which reduces the human being to mere matter. Consequently, the

concept of food finds a broader expression in the teaching of the Buddha. He requires "food" for thought, a sizable chunk of which is supplied by journalists. The mindful journalist informed by the Buddhist concept of food will take extra care to supply not what is merely sellable but what is healthy for his client's comprehensive well-being. The journalist, like any other service provider, operates with a concept of human being at the back of his mind. The Buddhist concept of human being will serve as the basis for the mindful journalist to construct a true and beneficial picture of whom he intends to serve.

Buddhist View of Happiness

As explained in Chapter 1, the concept of *sukha* encompasses happiness in Buddhism, and it is described in such various ways as householder's happiness and renouncer's happiness (*gihi-sukha*, *pabbajita-sukha*), happiness associated with things, and happiness not associated with things (*samisa-sukha*, *niramisa-sukha*), and so forth. Whereas the happiness not associated with things is emphasized in connection with monastic life, the householder's life is characterized by the presence of happiness associated with things, although there are limits to such happiness. The three concepts "meaning, progress, and happiness" (*attha*, *hita*, and *sukha*), occur in the discourses as one combined set and together exemplify the overall positive attitude of Buddhism toward human life.

Despite the generally popularized belief (in the West) that Buddhism is pessimistic, it is important and instructive to note that Buddhism takes happiness as the goal of life. The ordinary human life, in fact not merely human beings but all beings in general, is described as characterized by "desire for living and aversion to dying, desire for happiness and aversion to suffering"[8] (Bodhi 2000: 1237) and Buddhism accepts this as a basic fact in human life. Pursuit of happiness is accepted as a legitimate human function, and it is not wrong to say that Buddhism views human life as an endeavor to achieve this goal.[9] Happiness spoken of here is not merely the happiness derived from consumption, which is pleasure, but happiness as a satisfied, content, serene, and positive state of mind. The ultimate goal of Buddhist religious life, namely *nibbana*, is described as happiness, and it is said that "happiness has *nibbana* as its highest."[10] Happiness in *nibbana* or the *nibbanic* happiness is not described as something to be achieved after this life, although it is the popular view today. *Nibbana* is the goal for this life for those who are ready to follow the path leading to it in complete dedication.

Those who join the monastic order, after renouncing their household life, do so as a quicker route for attaining their ultimate goal, *Nibbana*, the extinction of suffering and its principal causes: craving and attachment. *Vinaya* (disciplinary) guidelines direct them to live a life conducive to achieving that goal. A Buddhist monk or nun is one who has practiced voluntary banishment from society, which is the literal meaning of the term

pabbajita, which refers to the state of being a *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhuni* in the Buddhist tradition. Because the ultimate goal of this life is to gradually reduce and finally eradicate craving for all material and nonmaterial phenomena, it is rational that they live a life of simplicity and community ownership. Contentment with what one has, having recourse to minimum needs, and ability to sustain oneself easily are considered to be virtues of very high standing in monastic life. The *vinaya* (disciplinary) rules require *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* to live on what they gather from their daily alms round, dress with clothing donated or discarded by others, and live in very simple residences. They are not allowed to own anything except their very personal items such as robes, alms bowl, and medicine, if any. Whatever individual members received would go to a common store, and each would receive not according to what one contributes to the common store but according to one's needs. Although this way of life was not strictly meant for an ordinary householder, what the Buddha prescribed for his monastic followers was applicable in principle to his householder followers as well, for ultimately all those who follow the Buddha are those who shared his vision of life, which culminated in attaining *nibbana* by eradicating craving of all forms.

Unlike the monastic community, the ordinary society is viewed as comprising people who are unable to dedicate their entire life to achieve this goal. They have more pressing immediate needs in their life to be fulfilled. If these people cannot hope for *nibbanic* happiness as their immediate goal, what kind of happiness can they achieve? How could such a group of people internalize the path taught by the Buddha? It is precisely this question that embodies the request made by the young householder Dighajanu from the Buddha:

> Sir, we are laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, living at home in a house full of children. We use sandalwood from Kasi; we wear garlands, scents, and unguents; we receive gold and silver. Let the Blessed One teach us the *Dhamma* in a way that will lead to our welfare and happiness in this present life and in future lives.
>
> (Bodhi 2012: 1194)

To this, the Buddha responds by pointing out four things to be achieved for the "happiness in this present life," namely,

1. Accomplishment in initiative energy
2. Accomplishment in protection
3. Good friends
4. Balanced living

The Buddha describes the first as possessing sound judgment to carry out and arrange properly whatever means such as farming, trade, raising cattle, and so forth that one pursues for living. The wealth earned by such means

has to be, in the Buddha's words, "acquired by initiative and energy, amassed by strength of one's arms, earned by the sweat of one's brow, righteous wealth righteously gained." The second is to protect what one has earned from natural disasters and enemies. The third accomplishment, good friends, is described as having friends young or old who are mature in such good qualities as faith, virtue, generosity, and wisdom, and conversing with them, engaging in discussion with them, and "insofar as they are accomplished in those virtues," emulating them. The fourth is described in the following manner:

> Here, one knows one's income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too frugal, [aware]: 'in this way my income will exceed my expenditures rather than the reverse.' Just as an appraiser or his apprentice, holding up a scale, knows: 'by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has gone up,' so one knows one's income and expenditures and leads a balanced life.

In the *Advice to Sigala*, which I will discuss shortly, the Buddha advises the young householder, Sigala, to divide his wealth into four, and spend one portion for consumption and two for industries, and to keep the fourth aside for when a need arises. These ideas found in the Buddhist discourses introduce a rational approach to one's economic life. At the same time, they lay emphasis on increasing one's wealth by investing some share of it in "industries."

Of particular importance here is the idea of protection of wealth referred to above. What is meant in this context is protecting one's wealth without wasting it. Buddhism always emphasizes the idea that one must make maximum use of goods. This is clearly stated in the context of the monastic life in which one depends on the charity of others. In answering King Udena, who was anxious to know as to what the monks do to so many new robes they received, Ananda Thera describes how the monks make the maximum use of the robes given to them by people: new robes are given to those whose robes are old; old robes, no longer fit to be worn, are used as bedcovers; worn out bedcovers are used as pillow cases; worn out pillow cases used as carpets; worn out carpets used as doormats; worn out doormats used as dusters; and when no longer used as dusters, these are mixed with clay and applied as wall plasters.[11]

The commentary to the *Dhammapada* records a story typical of Buddhist thrift: The young physician Jivaka was summoned by the lady of the richest banker of Rajagaha city. In the course of administering medicine, some ghee was spilled on the floor. The lady right away asked her servant to absorb it into a cotton ball. Jivaka was surprised by this act, which he interpreted as an act of miserliness, and started worrying about his fee. At the conclusion of the treatment, however, the lady compensated the physician even more than he expected, and explained the perplexed physician the difference between thrift and miserliness.

Having described these four accomplishments relevant for this life, the Buddha lists another four conditions conducive for the happiness after this life. They are: (1) accomplishment in trust (in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha); (2) accomplishment in virtue; (3) accomplishment in generosity; and (4) accomplishment in wisdom. These four deserve a detailed analysis. Nevertheless, it is sufficient at this juncture just to underscore the broad basis of Buddhist perspective of one's worldly life in which consumption plays a crucial role.

This very same philosophy of consumption is described in detail in the Advice to Sigala (Walshe 2012: 461–470),[12] which is known as the "householders' discipline" (*gihi vinaya*). The Buddha begins his advice with four defiled actions to be avoided by one who aspires to achieve happiness in this life. These actions are killing, stealing, adultery, and lying. Next the Buddha outlines four sources of bias behavior, namely, desire, hatred, fear, and folly. It is due to these psychological conditions that people make wrong and harmful decisions and behave unjustly in the matters of family and public life. Next, the Buddha identifies six ways of wasting one's wealth, namely, addiction to alcoholic drinks, haunting the streets at unfitting times, attending fairs, being addicted to gambling, keeping bad company, and habitual idleness.

Addiction to alcoholic drinks causes waste of money, increased quarrelling, liability to sickness, loss of good name, indecent exposure of one's person, and weakening of the intellect. When haunting streets at unfitting times one is defenseless and without protection, so are one's wife and children, so is one's property, one is suspected of crimes, false reports are pinned on one, and one encounters all sorts of unpleasantness. In frequenting fairs one would not want to miss any opportunity for amusement. In gambling, the winner makes enemies, the loser bewails his loss, one wastes one's wealth, one's word is not trusted in the assembly, one is despised by one's friends and companions, and one is not in demand for marriage, for a gambler cannot afford to maintain a wife. When one keeps bad company, all types of undesirable people in society become one's friends. In habitual idleness one finds all kinds of excuses to postpone one's work.

Friends are a big influence in one's life. Once the Buddha corrected Ananda, who said that half of the progress in the path to *nibbana* is due to good friends, by saying that the entire progress is due to good friends. Displaying a similar line of thinking the Buddha underscores the crucial importance of friends in one's material progress. In this context, he lists four foes in friendly guise and four good friends. In the first category are (1) the man who takes all, (2) the great talker, (3) the flatterer, and (4) the fellow-spendthrift. The Buddha has detailed how to identify these foes in friendly guise:

> The man who is all take has the following characteristics: he takes everything; he wants a lot for very little, what he must do he does out of

> fear, and he seeks his own ends. The great talker talks of favors in the past, and in the future, he mouths empty phrases of goodwill, and when something needs to be done in the present he pleads inability owing to some disaster. The flatterer assents to bad actions, he dissents from good actions, he praises you to your face, and he disparages you behind your back. The fellow-spendthrift is a companion in drinking alcoholic drinks, in haunting streets at unfitting times, in frequenting fairs, and in gambling.
>
> There are true friends, four in number: (1) the friend who is a helper, (2) who is the same in happy and unhappy times, (3) who points out what is good for his friend and (4) who is sympathetic. The helpful friend looks after his friend when he is inattentive, he looks after his possession when his friend is inattentive, he is a refuge to his friend, and when there is a need he gives his friend twice what he asks for. The friend who is the same in happy and unhappy times tells his secrets to his friend, he guards his friend's secrets, he does not let down his friend in a misfortune, and he would even sacrifice his life for the friend. The friend who points out what is good for his friend keeps his friend away from wrongdoing, supports his friend in doing good, he informs his friend what he did know, and points out the path to heaven. The sympathetic friend does not rejoice at his friend's misfortune, rejoices at his fortune, stops others who speak ill of his friend, and commends those who speak well of his friend.

Speaking on mutually rewarding social relations, the Buddha refers to six interconnected groups which are part and parcel of one's social life, namely, parents and children, teachers and pupils, husband and wife, friends and friends, employees and employers, and religious people and lay people, and describes their mutual "duties and obligations" (Walshe 2012: 466–468). The Buddha further says that it is the respect for these "duties" that keeps society going, like a "chariot's axle-pin," without break. He concludes his admonition to the young householder by showing him four ways how to treat others well, namely gifts, pleasant speech, working for the welfare of others, and behaving impartially and equally as each case demands.

Buddha has given advice in this manner (as in the *Advice to Sigala*) on how to earn and how to consume what is earned. The fact that he emphasizes having good friends, avoiding bad friends, refraining from defiled actions, and similar considerations not directly connected to earning illustrates that Buddhism's interest goes well beyond mere growth of wealth toward an all-encompassing philosophy of development.

In this analysis, which encompasses both inner and outer development, there are several important features to be noted. One is the fact Sigala, when coupled with the eight accomplishments, contain a comprehensive guide that not only one's worldly welfare is taken into account but also one's welfare in the "next world" is given equal consideration. What is given as

"next worldly welfare" is what is conducive for one's inner development. This shows that Buddhism does not consider mere economic development of people without their inner qualities being developed. Relevant to this, the Buddha classifies people into three groups: blind, one-eyed, and two-eyed (Bodhi 2012: 224–225). The blind is one who does not see either this world or the next; the one-eyed is one who sees only this world; and the third is the one who sees accomplishment both here and hereafter. Another feature emerging from this analysis is that the economic development has been seen not merely in terms of accumulating wealth but in terms of quality of life with properly managed wealth and enriched by the association of friends with higher human qualities.

The Four Types of Happiness

Earlier we noted that the Buddha refers to happiness as the goal of human life. The Buddha describes four types of happiness to be achieved by the ordinary householders. They are (1) happiness of having; (2) happiness of consumption; (3) happiness of being debtless; and (4) happiness of being morally blameless (Bodhi 2012: 452).[13]

The first in this series is to have wealth as a means of achieving happiness. The Buddha explains how one should acquire wealth. In the list of eight good fortunes, the Buddha refers to energy to initiated wealth-producing activities. He mentions wealth acquisition by physical labor, by shedding sweat, and by righteous means. Thus, the Buddha approves wealth acquired by working for it. However, although physical labor justifies one's earnings without any doubt, mindful journalism could ascertain whether someone acquired his/her wealth without violating the *Dhamma*.

The second is happiness derived from consuming or using what one has earned. Although "happiness of having" indicates that having wealth itself is happiness, in the Buddhist tradition, merely having wealth without using it is meaningless. Buddhists view those who just hoard wealth without making good use of it as unfortunate because they are unhappy in this life itself and bound to woeful states after their death. The *Illisa-jataka* highlights the unfortunate end of Illisa, the rich banker who just amassed a large amount of wealth, and was too miserly even to spend for his own son's illness. The son who died for want of medicine, the story says, was born in a divine world, and seeing his former father's unused wealth, descends to the human world and gives away the wealth without his father's knowledge. Strictly speaking, it may be argued that his deceased son did not have a right to give away his father's wealth. But what is interesting is that the Buddhist tradition preserved this story in its sacred literature and approved this unusual gift. The Buddha very clearly says that one must enjoy and make oneself happy with the wealth one has acquired by righteous means. One must also make one's parents, wife, children, workers, and friends happy with that wealth, and make donations

with that wealth to religious people, relatives, guests, and the like (Bodhi 2012: 450–451).[14] Having wealth and enjoying it are, in this manner, closely linked.

The third type of happiness is that of being debtless. Although one cannot imagine being active in economic enterprise without taking loans, and undoubtedly it was the case during the time of the Buddha, what seems to underscore is the value of paying back one's loans. What is meant in this context may be the mental happiness and sense of relief one acquires from paying back one's loans. The Buddha compares[15] the state of mind without the five hindrances[16] to the sense of relief one gets upon finding that one has paid off one's loans. This comparison, perhaps, gives us a hint of what is meant by this type of happiness.

The last and unusual but betraying definitely the Buddhist perspective on economic activities is the happiness of being morally blameless. As we saw in the above discussion, the wealth has to be accumulated with righteousness and by righteous means. One who gets wealth by morally blameworthy means cannot enjoy the happiness described here. A merchant, for example, who engages in buying and selling of the following five items—weapons, beings (human or animal), meat, alcohol, and poison—will not have this happiness. These five items are listed as violating the requirements of right livelihood (*samma ajiva*) applicable for the householders. In earning money one must make sure that one has not violated the *Dhamma* in the process. In other words, one must not only be eating well but also one must be sleeping well!

The concept of *Dhamma* features prominently in Buddhist social philosophy including its political and economic philosophies. It may even be described as the central Buddhist philosophical insight on society, economy, and polity. The concept with its so many meanings, is perhaps the broadest concept in Indian philosophy in general and Buddhist philosophy in particular. In Buddhist economics *Dhamma* serves as the limit that should not be surpassed. It is not how much one should earn but how well one should earn that matters. One cannot have happiness in solid and meaningful sense without satisfying the need of *Dhamma*. In other words, one cannot have happiness of ownership and consumption of wealth without the happiness of being debtless and happiness of being blameless.

The connection wealth has with happiness is well known. What Buddhism adds to this is the *Dhamma* or being blameless in one's behavior. The mindful journalist will not ignore this specific Buddhist contribution to true human well-being, which has two clear aspects: inner and outer. What is usually emphasized is the outer at the expense of the inner. It is the moral responsibility of the mindful journalist to strive to swim against the current of his trade. To a world that has searched for pleasure as its sole aim, it is the noble duty of the journalist to show what constitutes true happiness, which surpasses the narrow boundaries of material pleasures.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The way of life characterized by simplicity, prescribed by the Buddha to his monastic followers, is understandable and rational given the nature of the ultimate goal they are striving for. Although the householder followers of the Buddha also aim to reach the same goal, it is understood that their way of life is more roundabout. While the goal and the mode of life remain the same for both groups, what makes them different from each other is the speed at which each group follows the path. In one of the discourses the Buddha compares these two modes of life with the movement of the swan, which is simple but fast, and that of the peacock, which is picturesque but slow.[17]

It is a misunderstanding to think that in the teaching of the Buddha the reality of householder's life is understressed or disregarded. The very fact that the concept of food gets a broader interpretation to include psychological and emotional inputs suggests that the Buddha identified the crucial significance of the objects of all sensory faculties as "food" for life. Ordinary human beings are characterized by the desire for the pleasures of senses. Also it is acknowledged that they cannot give up easily these pleasures for the ultimate *nibbanic* happiness. What is needed is to introduce a gradual path with some kind of restraint in pleasures and simplicity. It is in this context that one needs to understand the value of generosity (*dana*) that is the foremost of all social virtues taught in Buddhism. A society characterized by giving (or rather giving up) cannot be selfish or self-centered. In such a society all cooperate with all and none competes with none.

What I outlined above is an alternative or mindful way of approaching consumption, which is a part of the larger process of making money and spending it mindfully. We can call this "Buddhist economics," a term introduced by Schumacher in his best-selling book, *Small Is Beautiful* (1973), which showed the modern world how to achieve great satisfaction by small and simple means. This discussion should clear the misconception that Buddhism is against consumption and happiness in household life. Buddhism is against overconsumption and underconsumption, which, according to the concept of Dependent Co-origination, cannot happen without any adverse impact on the rest of the world, including journalists. The mindful journalist stands above the rest of his own kind with his right understanding of reality as a dependently arisen phenomenon. It is precisely in this context that Magnuson (2007) pushes for environmental protection and preservation of social justice and stability, without which economic development is bound to be meaningless.

The unique feature of the Buddhist approach to consumption, or rather, of the entire social philosophy, is that it centers on the concept of *Dhamma* within the limits of which one has to acquire wealth and consume it. What the *Dhamma* means in this context is to safeguard the criteria of right

conduct mentioned above. The instinctive urge to accumulate, acquire, and consume as much as one can does not require any deep thinking or guidance. Mindful journalism could help and guide people to think beyond what is the received view. Buddhism provides a philosophy of consumption that is conducive for the welfare of all involved, oneself and others including nature, birds, beasts, rivers, oceans, and atmosphere. To be able to guide all those who come within its sway, journalism—as one of the most influential institutions in contemporary social life—needs to be guided by a philosophy that transcends narrowly self-centered human desires and wants.

Excursus

The Buddhist Concept of Truth (*Sacca*)

Asanga Tilakaratne

The fundamental "knowledge and vision" (*nana-dassana*) about existence that the Buddha achieved by becoming the Fully Enlightened One (*samma-sambuddha*) has been described as "the Four Noble Truths" (*cattari ariya saccani*). The *Dhamma-cakka-pavattana-sutta* (*Samyutta-nikaya* [S] V: 433), traditionally believed to be the first sermon of the Buddha, articulates these four truths as the Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha ariya-sacca*), the Noble Truth of arising of suffering (*dukkhasamudaya ariya-sacca*), the Noble Truth of cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha ariya-sacca*), and the Noble Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkhaniroda-gamini-patipada ariya-sacca*).

These four truths have been described in the discourses as real (*tatha*), unerring (*avitatha*) and not otherwise (*anannatha*) (S V: 431–432), terms usually employed to describe the idea of dependent co-origination (*paticca-samuppada*). What is implied by these terms is that the truths are real, not unreal or untrue, and not otherwise or different from what is real.

In discussing the Buddhist concept of truth, it is necessary to make a basic distinction between (verbal) utterance of truth and (psychological) realization of truth. What is meant by "verbal truth" is the aspect of truth associated with language. In the modern use, it is the propositional (aspect of) truth. In Buddhism this aspect has been highlighted mainly for ethical purposes. Telling truth and refraining from falsehood are important aspects of morality (*sila*) to be developed as the first step in the threefold discipline (*tisso sikkha*). The ordinary lay Buddhist followers are advised to observe the five precepts (*panca-sila*), the fourth aspect of which is the precept of refraining from uttering falsehood (*musavada veramani*).

Realization of truth involves a more important aspect of the Buddhist theory of truth. In calling suffering a truth what is meant is that it is really there as an essential aspect of human life. What one needs to do about it is to comprehend it. In fact, the intellectual and practical aspects of this process of realization have been described as involving comprehension, abandonment, realization, and practice (*parinna*, *pahana*, *sacchikarana*, and *bhavana*): the first truth has to be comprehended; the second has to be

abandoned; the third has to be realized; and the fourth has to be cultivated. All these activities and associated behavior are intimately connected with the Buddhist concept of truth; and this practical/experiential aspect of truth may be called "realization of truth."

The Buddha outlines three stages of realization of truth (*Canki-sutta*, *Majjhima Nikaya* 95): preservation of truth (*saccanurakkhana*), discovery of truth (*saccanubodha*), and the attainment of truth (*saccanupatti*). Making known what one believes to be true but not drawing a definite conclusion on it characterizes the first stage. A person serious about preserving truth must not come to a definite conclusion that "Only this is true; anything else is wrong" (*natveva tava nittham gacchati idameva saccam mogham annamti*). What one can properly do at this stage is simply to say that such and such is one's faith, and so forth, and nothing more. In doing so one preserves truth.

The discovery of truth (*saccanubodha*) is a result of a series of ethico-intellectual activities. It begins when a prospective follower visits a religious teacher and starts investigating him whether or not his physical, verbal, and mental behavior is characterized by greed, hatred, and delusion. Once he discovers for himself that his behavior is purified of such states as greed and so forth, he opts to live a religious life, which leads to the discovery of truth, under that teacher.

The third stage of arrival at truth (*saccanupatti*) is described as resulting from "the repetition, development, and cultivation of those same things" (*tesam yeva kho dhammanam asevana bhavana bahulikamma saccanupatti hoti*). The three stages outlined in this discussion show that truth involves a complex cognitive, intellectual, and experiential process.

When truth is spoken of as real, not unreal, and not otherwise what it indicates is that truth has been understood primarily as reality or what exists in reality. Several discourses in the *Sacca-Samyutta* (section containing discourses dealing with truth) lay stress on the idea that these truths are eternal in the sense that they are real not only for the present but they have been real in the past and they will be so in the future (S V: 416–417). This stands sharply contrasted with the modern philosophical understanding of truth as an aspect of propositions or statements/assertions that are understood as either true or false.

In discussing the Buddhist theory of truth, Jayatilleke (1963: 352–353) has argued that early Buddhism accepts correspondence as the criterion of truth. In fact, the characterization of truth as reality supports this position. He also notices instances where coherence has been taken into consideration as a criterion of truth (p. 353). In his discussion, Jayatilleke takes coherence and consistency synonymously and shows how the Buddha was careful to observe the Principle of Non-contradiction.

In addition, scholars have noted how the early discourses take utility as an important aspect of an assertion. It is widely accepted in early discourses that for a statement to be meaningful (*attha-samhita*) it has to

be relevant or useful for the ultimate goal advocated in Buddhism. The Buddha has made it quite clear that he would not teach anything that is not relevant to the goal. In responding to *Malunkya-putta* who demanded that the Buddha answer his ten questions on "unexplained matters" (*abyakata vatthu*), the latter asks the former to hold what has been said by the *Tathagata* (the Buddha) as what has been said and what has not been said by the *Tathagata* as what has not been said. The 10 unanswered issues come under the first category, and the Four Noble Truths under the second. As this explanation reveals, there is a strong pragmatic element in the teaching of the Buddha. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the Buddha took usefulness/relevance as a criterion of truth. Discussing the well-known smile of raft (in *Majjhima Nikaya* 22), Jayatilleke says:

> We cannot interpret this to mean that the *dhamma* is true only by virtue of its utility and that it ceases to be true when it ceases to be useful. What is meant is that unlike the answers to the *avyakata*-questions (which were "not useful" for . . . salvation, the dhamma was useful for salvation and its value (though not its truth-value) lay in its utility. It ceases to have value, though it does not cease to be true, when one has achieved one's purpose with its help by attaining salvation. (Jayatilleke 1963: 357–358).

Discussing the interconnection of ethics, epistemology, and soteriology of truth in Buddhism, Jayatilleke remarks that "there is no direct inquiry into the nature of truth (in the epistemological sense) in them [discourses]" (p. 351). This absence is, perhaps, because truth in Buddhism is fundamentally moral and soteriological. It is to be understood in the following manner: The root cause of the samsaric existence is the lack of understanding of the Four Noble Truths. This is none other than "ignorance" or "*avijja*" featured in the doctrine of dependent co-origination. Accordingly, the ultimate goal cannot be realized without "knowing and seeing" the Four Noble Truths:

> I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and does not see (*janato 'ham bhikhave passato asavanam khayam vadami no ajanato apssato* (S V p. 434). The destruction of the taints comes about for one who knows and sees (the following): "This is suffering"; . . . "This is the origin of suffering"; "This is the cessation of suffering"; "This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering."

The statements of this nature testify to the crucial soteriological role played by the Four Noble Truths in the teaching of the Buddha. In this religious sense, truth is not a mere characteristic of a proposition. Rather it is

the reality or what is real about human existence. The process of "knowing" it is not merely intellectual. It involves comprehension, abandonment, realization, and cultivation. Thus beginning from intellectual understanding it culminates in realization or actualization. This shows that the Buddhist concept of truth involves a much broader sphere of human action than mere intellectual understanding.

The implications of this Buddhist conception of truth for the mindful journalist are many: while this analysis articulates what truth is, it perhaps more importantly reveals that what the Buddhist concept of truth aims at is the real personal change characterized by the realization or actualization of truth in one's self. Although the propositional aspect of truth is not downplayed, the Buddhist concept goes beyond in binding truth with morality for the promotion of which the mindful journalist should strive.

NOTES

1. This teaching is called *paticca samuppada* (Pali) or *pratityasamutpada* (Sanskrit), which explains everything in the universe, including how suffering arises and ceases, as dependently arisen phenomena. "Dependent co-arising" is the literal rendering of this basic Buddhist concept.
2. For those who wish to know the teaching in Pali: *imasmim sati idamhoti, imasmimasatiidamnahoti, imassauppadaidamuppajjati; imassa nirodha idamnirijjhati: Samyutta Nikaya* II, p. 70. For English translation, see *Bodhi (2000*: 579).
3. Buddha explained this to his son in his household life, Rahula. This discourse is in the *Ambalatthika Rahulovada-sutta* (Advice to Rahula at Amabalatthika) *Majjhima-nikaya* 61. For English translation, see Bodhi (1995/2001: 507–523.
4. *Abhayarajakumara-sutta*, *Majjhima-nikaya* 56. For English translation, see Bodhi (1995: 500).
5. The *Khuddaka-patha*, one of the texts belonging to the *Khuddaka-nikaya*, begins with a set of 10 questions and answers given to them. To the first question "What is one?" the answer given is "All beings subsist on food," affirming in this manner the crucial significance of food for the existence of human beings.
6. The view held by a *bhikkhu* named Sati that consciousness runs through without changing is an example of this wrong view, and to him the Buddha asserted that consciousness is not equivalent to alleged unchanging *atma* or *atta*. See *Mahatanhasankhaya-sutta*, *Majjhima-nikaya* in *Bodhi (1995/2001*: 349–361) for details.
7. *Wealth* is the abundance of valuable resources or material possessions (Wikipedia). Its meaning has varied across time. It's a broader concept than *income*. Geoff Riley (2012) asserts, "*Wealth* is a stock of financial and real assets such as property, savings in bank and building society accounts, ownership of land and rights to private pensions, equities, bonds, etc. *Income* is a flow of factor incomes such as wages and earnings from work; rent from the ownership of land and interest & dividends from savings and the ownership of shares."
8. *Jivitu-kama amaritu-kama, sukha-kama dukkha-patikkula. Bodhi (2000*: 1237) (*Samyutta-nikaya* IV, pp. 172, 188).

9. *Hatthavanagalla Viharavamsa*, a Sri Lankan Pali work belonging to *vamsa* (history) category, puts this idea very beautifully:

   vyaapaaraasabbabhuutanam—sukhatthaayavidhiiyare
   sukhancanavinaa dhamma—tasmaadhammaparo bhava

   (All human endeavors are executed for the purpose of happiness. Happiness, however, is not without Dhamma; hence act in accordance with *Dhamma*.)

10. *Nibbanaparamam sukham: Dhammapada*, 204.
11. *Vinaya* II, p. 291.
12. *Sigalovada*-sutta, *Digha-nikaya* 31 (*Walshe 2012*: 461–470).
13. *Atthi-sukha, bhoga-sukha, anana-sukha, anavajja-sukha*. *Bodhi (2012*: 452) (*Anguttara-nikaya* II, 62).
14. *Bodhi (2012*): 450–451 (*Anguttara-nikaya* II, p. 67).
15. See *Samannaphala-sutta*, *Digha-nikaya* (Long Discourses of the Buddha) 1.
16. The following five psychological states—desire for pleasures, anger, inactiveness, confusedness, and doubt—have been described as "hindrances" (*nivarana*) for they obstruct the calmness of mind.
17. *Sutta-nipata* 221.

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7 The Journalist and the Middle Path[1]

Sugath Senarath

Synopsis: This is a topic that runs through all four truths, and is especially related to the *magga,* the fourth truth. Principle No. 7 says: *Follow the middle way and avoid taking the extremes—yin and yang—on any issue.* This chapter will compare the Buddhist Middle Path with Aristotle's Golden Mean and the Confucian Doctrine of the Middle. This chapter attempts to derive a secular concept of the middle path specifically pertinent to promote the practice of mindful journalism.

—Excerpt from the Introduction

In this chapter, I will first define the Buddhist meaning of the Middle Path and compare it with similar concepts advocated by other ancient philosophers in China and Greece. Second, I will point out the most important paths of the *magga* that aspiring mindful journalists must follow in a secular practicing environment. Third, I will use the *Angulimala* parable to illustrate how the Western approach to journalism has vitiated the Buddhist-backed social philosophy in the East. Finally, I will highlight how the *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisors) could apply the techniques implicit in the *magga* to initiate the unique genre of mindful journalism, which we have advocated in this book.

MEANING OF MIDDLE PATH

In the teaching of the Buddha, the Middle Path (*majjhima patipada*) is not a condition between two extremes like the Daoist *yin* (feminine, earth, soft, etc.) and *yang* (masculine, heaven, hard, etc.) opposites or complements. The Middle Path means choosing the correct one when two extremes exist, abandoning both of them. For example, a journalist should see with a free mind without fixing it on one particular end. If the journalist inclines towards one extreme, s/he may not be able to display a correct vision.

The Buddha's Middle Path means the most effective way leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) that lies between the extremes of searching for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, and the other extreme searching for the same through self-mortification in different forms

of asceticism. The Buddha described the first extreme as "low, common, unprofitable and the way of the ordinary people." He described the opposite extreme as "painful, unworthy and unprofitable" (Rahula 1959/1974: 45).

Addressing the group of five ascetics—Kondanna Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama, and Assaji—in his first discourse after Enlightenment, he explained the concept of the Middle Path thus:

> Monks, these two extremes ought not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the household life. (What are the two?) There is addiction to indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, coarse, the way of ordinary people, unworthy, and unprofitable; and there is addiction to self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable.
>
> Avoiding both these extremes, the *Tathagata* (The Perfect One) has realized the Middle Path; it gives vision, gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment and to *Nibbana*. And what is that Middle Path realized by the *Tathagata*? It is the Noble Eightfold path, and nothing else, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. This is the Middle Path realized by the *Tathagata*, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, and to *Nibbana*.
>
> (Piyadassi 1999a)

It would be helpful here to understand the middle path as a way of transcending both extremes. How the journalist presents something objectively is more important than presenting it relatively. This is because it is hard to know whether something presented relatively is true or not. If the things relatively presented are not faulty, then we are not presenting the truth. Buddha presented his philosophy based on knowledge gained from his experience of a long time. Thus, in his first discourse, Buddha tried to present something relatively (subjectively).

In the *Dhamma Cakkappavattna Sutta* (Setting in Motion of the Wheel of *Dhamma*) cited above, he described the two extremes that a recluse should not practice—*Dve me bhikkhave anta pabbajitenea na sevitabba* as stated in *Samyutta Nikaya*[2] (Woodward 1994). This really meant the requirement to listen to the *Dhamma* with a clear mind and cleanse it of all ideologies. One should accept something correct with a free mind. When we accept something extreme, then we tend to believe it as truth.

It is important for a person not to be associated with an ideology when s/he is searching for something with correct understanding. *Suttas* such as the *Sandaka* and the *Sangarava*, both in *Majjhima Nikaya*[3] (Chalmers 1993), as well as the *Chanki* also in the *Majjhima Nikaya* (Horner 1993–1995), make this clear.

Two factors are essential for assuring correctness: *ditthinca anupagamma silava* (being moral and not being over attached to tradition) (Piyadassi

1999b). The *Kalama Sutta* in the *Anguttara Nikaya*[4] (Hare 2008) highlights 10 principles or factors other than freethinking. Those 10 can be divided into two major parts. One is the argument and logic used in the world. The other is *maanussavena-ma paramparaya . . . ma itikiraya . . . ma takka hetu . . . ma naya hetu* mentioned in *Anguttara Nikaya* (Woodward 1932), meaning: not by tradition . . . not by thinking this was done like this before . . . not by argument . . . not by logic.

How will one obtain knowledge if one were to abandon reasoning and logic? The *Kalama Sutta* shows that they are not fully given up because that would result in mere emptiness. At this point, the Middle Path becomes crucial. When a person needs logic in presenting some idea, s/he should use it with the conviction that logic is not always the truth. Logic is only one method of reaching truth. Logic could be true or it could also be untrue. Conclusions made through logic could be related to the external world. Sometimes, it is possible that it could be impossible. (It may be argued well or badly; it could be like that or not like that also.) Furthermore, the *anusrava* too may not be abandoned; it also may be related proportionately.

Aristotle's Golden Mean

Classical Greek contains a number of different words for the Mean such as *kairos*, *meson*, *metron/metrion*, and *ison* (Bosley 1995). Aristotle's theory of the Golden Mean is represented in his work called *Nicomachean Ethics* (Kramer & Kramer 1975), in which Aristotle (384–322 BCE) explained the origin, nature, and development of virtues that are essential for achieving the ultimate goal of happiness (Greek: *eudaimonia*) (Yu 1998). Aristotle uses a Theory of the Mean in giving structure and content not only to ethical but also to psychological inquiries (Bosley 1995). His work *Nicomachean Ethics* says:

> There are then three dispositions, two being vices, namely, excess and deficiency, and one virtue, which is the mean between them; and they are all in a sense mutually opposed. The extremes are opposed both to the mean and to each other, and the mean is opposed to the extremes.
>
> (cited in Kramer & Kramer 1975: 49)

The Golden Mean can then be determined by searching for an intellectual answer that combines the best features of both extreme positions (Kramer & Kramer 1975). But this doesn't mean that we can see an exact arithmetical middle between extremes. There is no universal middle that can apply to every situation.

Raugdur (2007) clarifies that Aristotle did not uphold moral relativism because he listed certain emotions and actions (hate, envy, jealousy, theft, murder) as always wrong, regardless of the situation at hand. The Golden Mean applied only for virtues, not vices.

The goal of Buddha's Middle Path and Aristotle's Golden Mean was to reach the same destination: happiness.

Confucian Doctrine of the Mean

Zisi (483–402 BCE), Chinese philosopher and grandson of Confucius (551–479 BCE), presented the Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhongyong*) as the central theme of Confucian thought (Zhongyong 2014). It expresses a Confucian ideal that encompasses virtually every relationship and every activity of human life.

> In practice, *zhongyong* means countless things: moderation, rectitude, objectivity, sincerity, honesty, truthfulness, propriety, equilibrium, and lack of prejudice. For example, a friend should be neither too close nor too remote. Neither in grief nor in joy should one be excessive, for unregulated happiness can be as harmful as uncontrolled sorrow. Ideally, one must adhere unswervingly to the mean, or center course, at all times and in every situation. Such behavior conforms to the laws of nature, is the distinctive mark of the superior individual, and is the essence of true orthodoxy.
>
> (Zhongyong 2014)

Comparison and Contrast

The Doctrine of the Mean is in part coextensive with Aristotle's Mean, the right mean between two extremes, the principle of propriety or social order (Hamburger 1956).

However, the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean, unlike the Buddhist *magga*, is not a roadmap for ultimate liberation from *dukkha* but strictly a secular guide for people to emulate the marks of a superior individual. Zisi provides a prescription for balancing happiness and unsatisfactoriness whereas Buddha provides a prescription to extricate oneself from the loop of unsatisfactoriness to reach a state of supreme happiness.

Ultimately, the *kalyana-mitta* could consider all three concepts—the Buddhist Middle Path, the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean, and the Aristotelian Golden Mean—as a package that would serve them well to understand the significance of emulating the *ziran-wuwei* (spontaneity-action in nonaction) approach of Winnie-the-Pooh (see Chapter 5).

MAGGA AND MINDFUL JOURNALISM

The Noble Eightfold Path is comparable to a road map. For a traveler, a road map is essential to find the routes to the places s/he wishes to visit. The Noble Eightfold Path serves as a map that shows the path to reach the

final goal in the life of a human being. One must progressively overcome all the roadblocks along the way by adhering to a disciplined set of three-dimensional directions encompassing the virtues of *sila* (Morality), *samadhi* (Concentration) and *paññā* (Wisdom)—to reach the ultimate destination called *Nibbana*, the state of supreme bliss or nonexistence.

Because Chapters 8, 9, and 10 dwell on all relevant aspects of the three dimensions in considerable detail, this chapter will confine itself to discussing only some of the most useful principles of the *magga* that mindful journalists could apply to produce a secular journalism devoid of commercial contamination engendered by *tanha* (craving) and *upadana* (attachment).

Paññā Dimension

First, let us focus on the *paññā* (Wisdom) dimension, which consists of *samma ditthi* (Right Understanding) and *samma sankappa* (Right Thought) described in Chapter 10. The *magga* requires the journalist, as well as everyone else, to understand things as they really are, as expressed in the Four Noble Truths.

Right Understanding (Ditthi)

The *kalyana-mitta* should possess the thorough conviction that all universal phenomena have the marks of *anicca*, *anatta*, and *dukkha*. Those who belittle this understanding of reality cannot function as mindful journalists. Understanding of merit and demerit, as well as how it is expressed through mind, body, and word, also belongs to Right Understanding (Dhammananda 1987). Informing his/her audience the correct, true perspective should be the objective of the journalist. It is also important for the receiver—the audience for journalism in whatever form it is delivered—to act accordingly.

Right Thought (Sankappa)

Rahula (1959/1974) says that Right Thought "denotes the thoughts of selfless renunciation or detachment, thoughts of love and thoughts of non-violence, which are extended to all beings" (p. 49). He points out that it is noteworthy that such thoughts are grouped on the side of wisdom. Rahula adds, "This clearly show that true wisdom is endowed with these noble qualities, and all thought of self desire, ill-will, hatred and violence are the result of a lack of wisdom—in all spheres of life whether individual, social, or political" (p. 49). Good thoughts will appear in the person who possesses the Right View. [*Sankappa* is also translated as Resolutions, Concepts, Aspirations and Ideas (Dhammananda 1987).] Good thoughts help prevent occurrence of evil thoughts and generate pure thoughts.

Right Understanding is a vision of reality, but Right Thoughts are inner yearnings, aspirations, and wishes (Fernando, 1985: 80). The *kalyana-mitta* need a high degree of achievement in the wisdom dimension, which is perhaps the most difficult of the three dimensions of the *magga*, to lead mindful journalists who function at a lower level of training.

Sila Dimension

Next, let us focus briefly on the *sila* dimension of the *magga* described in detail in Chapter 8. This dimension is made up of three paths essential for a good life: *samma vaca* (Right Speech), *samma kammanta* (Right Action/ Effort), and *samma ajiva* (Right Livelihood). Thus, the *Sila* dimension requires the attention of all journalists—including bloggers, citizens and assorted communicators—because it spells out a disciplined set of ethics and morals for them to follow in the Digital Age.

Right Speech (Vaca)

Right Speech originates from right thoughts. It is a path of utmost significance for a journalist. The *Samannaphala Sutta* in the *Digha Nikaya* mentions the kind of speech a person should avoid: *Musavada* (false speech), *Pisunavaca* (slandering), *pharusavaca* (harsh words), and *sammapphalapa* (gossip). In the Digital Age, all mass media could adopt this Right Speech approach elucidated in *Digha Nikaya*[5] (Davids & Carpenter 1903).

Right Action (Kammanta)

Now we come to the second aspect of the *sila* dimension: *samma kammanta* (Right Action). In this, the term *kammanta* is used in a broader sense. Action entails respect for life, respect for property, and respect for personal relationships. It corresponds to the first three of the Five Precepts: abstinence from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.

The journalist should also pay attention to the life of others. As a result of one's message, it is possible to cause massive destruction of life or threats to others' lives. Therefore, the journalist should not allow his messages to cause such danger to others. Similarly, stealing means avoiding attempts to possess things by force or theft. The journalist should respect the intellectual property of others. Further, s/he must act against corruption and bribery in society. Respecting personal relationships means abstaining from sexual misconduct, making attempts to build a society based on love and trust. The media, it seems, have been one of the causes for the increase in misconduct, abuse, and so forth. There are reports of harmful effects on individuals in various societies caused by pornography. It is necessary for the journalist, in this regard, to make use of his/her medium with a sense of responsibility.

Right Livelihood (Ajiva)

The third aspect of the *sila* dimension is *samma ajiva*, which refers to the means whereby one makes a living. Accordingly, *samma ajiva* means correct livelihood geared to conducive living.

At the basic level, one must find the food and clothing not only for himself or herself but also for his/her dependents. One must earn one's bread by oneself. *Bhoga*, the wherewithal for living, has to be acquired by just and fair means (Dhammavihari 2006).

Buddhism bifurcates ethical perfection into personal and social. In this regard, the general criterion employed to differentiate good (*kusala*) from evil or bad (*akusala*), which has wide social implications, is also adopted to differentiate between good (*samma*) and bad (*miccha*) modes of living (*ajiva*) (Nanayakkara 1995). For right livelihood, the person, including the journalist, needs economic security. Buddhism accepts *atthi-sukha*, freedom from want or economic security. Whereas capitalism focused on capital as the mode of production, Buddhism focused on an economy based on moral and ethical principles underlying the *panna* (ability to understand everything in its own nature) mode of production (Puntasen 2007).

The money we earn must come through righteous and justifiable means (*dhammikehi dhamma-laddhehi bhogehi*). The discourses in *Anguttara Nikaya* clearly show the inimical occupational areas: production of weapons of death and destruction (*satthavanijja*), living things (*sattavanijja*) such as animals and humans (*satta-vanijja'ti manussa-vikkayo*), the flesh of animals (*mansavanijja*), alcohol and drugs (*majjavanijja*), and poisonous substances (*visavanijja*) (Woodward 1932; Hare 2008). The Buddha admired the practice of a balanced way of life (*samajivitata*). Everybody alike should put forth effort (*virya*) and manliness (*purisathaama-purisakara*). One who practices a balanced life is more likely to enjoy economic security (*atthi-sukha*), meaningful use of his wealth (*bhoga-sukha*), and pleasure of not being in debt (*anana-sukha* and *anavajjasukha*). Those who live in such a manner would eventually acquire contentment (*santuttha*).

This list represents the type of employment that prevailed in Buddhist India: slaughtering of animals, and fishing, and those professions that involved deceit, treachery, sooth-saying, trickery, usury, and so forth. This list includes the prohibited employment in Buddha's era ("Social Dimensions" 1995: 38). Today, because all communication media have become integral parts of daily living, it has become incumbent on all professionals, including journalists, to dissuade themselves and their respective clientele from earning their money by reason of their association with *miccha-ajiva* (any form of livelihood that involves desire of adding to gain by resorting to trickery, fraud, and hypothetical talk).

Samadhi Dimension

Finally, we come to the *Samadhi* (Mental Development) dimension of the *magga* comprising three elements—*Samma vayama* (Right Effort), s*amma sati* (Right Mindfulness), and *samma samadhi* (Right Concentration). Because Chapter 9 elaborates on this dimension in detail, this chapter will confine itself to a few highlights helpful to mindful journalism.

Right Effort (Vayama)

Right Effort (*samma vayama*) means that we "cultivate a positive attitude and have enthusiasm in the things we do, whether in our career, in our study, or in our practice of the *Dhamma*" (Dhammananda 1987: 83).

When discussing *samma vayama*, an understanding of the special four aspects the Buddha explained is important for the journalist, as well as the others: two of these refer to evil, and the other two to good. First is the effort to reject evil that has already arisen, and the second is the effort to prevent the arising of evil. Third is the effort to develop unrisen good, and the fourth is the effort to maintain the good that has arisen. By applying Right Effort in our lives, we can reduce and eventually eliminate the number of unwholesome mental states and increase and firmly establish wholesome thoughts as a natural part of our mind (Dhammananda 1987: 83–84).

***Right Mindfulness* (Sati)**

Samma Sati has been rendered as Right Mindfulness in Buddhist documents. Here it will be clear that the principle Buddha has alluded to is the *Satipatthana Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikaya* (Thanissaro 2008). Right Mindfulness is useful in our day-to-day life as well. We must be mindful not only of our actions and feelings but also of our natural surroundings.

> Mindfulness can be developed by being constantly aware of four particular aspects. These are the applications of mindfulness with regard to the body (body postures, breathing and so forth), feelings (whether pleasant, unpleasant or natural); mind (whether the mind is greedy or not, angry, dispersed or deluded or not); and mind objects (whether there are mental hindrances to concentration, the Four Noble Truths and so on).
>
> (Dhammananda 1987: 84)

Buddha speaks of attentiveness to reality in three different forms or levels:

1. Attentiveness to what is being done: It is important to enter a task we have undertaken in a good mental state. In regard to this, it is important for a journalist to carry out his/her work with good understanding, commitment, and restraint.
2. Attentiveness to the realities of life: The person who genuinely follows the Noble Eightfold Path seeing through the futility of life realizes its inner reality. According to Buddhist philosophy, reality of life consists of *anicca* (transience), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (no self).
3. Attentiveness to inner impulses: We must pay attention not only to our inner feelings but also to those of others. Buddha has stated this in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* in *Digha Nikaya*: "Emotional life is transient. Strive ahead with attentiveness" (*vayadhamma snakhara appamadena sampadetha*) (Davids & Carpenter 1903). *Samma Sankappa* means proper placement of one's thoughts, or keeping oneself or one's thoughts in the right place (Fernando 1985).

***Right Concentration* (Samadhi)**

Probably a term like "self collectedness" or "re-collectedness" would convey to a Westerner the idea behind *Samma Samadhi* (Fernando 1985: 101).

Whereas Right Mindfulness is directing our attentions to our body, feelings, mind, or mental object or being sensitive to others (in other words, putting our attentions where we choose to), "Right Concentration is the sustained appreciation of that attention on the object without the mind being distracted" (Dhammananda 1987: 84).

> The mind or body of a person who is well concentrated would be directed at a single object. Their thoughts are always directed at one aim. *Samma Samadhi* brings two advantages. First, it leads to mental and physical wellbeing, comfort, joy, calm and tranquility. Second, it turns the mind into an instrument capable of seeing things as they truly are, and prepares the mind to attain wisdom.
>
> (Dhammananda 1987: 84)

THE *ANGULIMALA* LESSON

The good intention of a mindful journalist itself may not be sufficient to reduce the level of *dukkha* associated with cyclic existence. It is important that his aim too should be good.

The *Angulimala Sutta* in *Majjhima Nikaya* (Horner 1993–1995: 284–291) illustrates this point. Angulimala's original name was Ahimsaka (the Harmless). He was a bright, obliging pupil. Nevertheless, his teacher, out of jealousy, demands him to bring one thousand fingers as a gift (or fees) to his teacher. For collecting fingers Angulimala begins to kill people. Probably he had to kill people for his own safety also. He became famous in King Pasenadi's realm as a bandit: brutal, bloody-handed, devoted to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings. He turned villages into non-villages, towns into non-towns, settled countryside into unsettled countryside. Having repeatedly killed human beings, he wore a garland (*mala*) made of fingers (*anguli*) (Thanissaro 2003).

Here Angulimala, as a student, was acting on good intention. But his action was evil and the result too was evil. The most important point in my interpretation of the *Angulimala* story is the idea of organic unity of three components related to personal/social projects: Actor, Means, and Ends (as illustrated in Table 7.1). For a noble course all three components involved should be right. You may have good intentions, but for instance if you take the wrong/evil path, it will transform the other two elements into evil; both actor and ends will end up as evil. You may be a good person, but if your intentions in certain projects are evil, again everything will be transformed in to evil. So this rule obliges social actors (including journalists) to be vigilant and check their own inner dimensions, their real goals, and their work methods/path.

So far, Western civilization, Western thought, world vision, and social obligations have been the building blocks of the basic theories of journalism.

Table 7.1 The *Angulimala* Test for Journalists

Actor	Means	Ends
Ahimsaka—Evolved later as Angulimala. [*Angulimala* means he who wears a necklace of fingers.]	Violence. Killing could be done for an offering to teacher, as well as in self-defense and for pleasure.	"Offering to teacher" turns into genocide.

The structure of journalism in Sri Lanka and other former colonies of the West has been modeled after Western social needs and it reflects them. They did not develop in a natural way but were superimposed. They do not, in general, match our traditional values.

Development of indigenous and appropriate concepts of communication is logical. We can, in this regard, draw inspiration from our social thinking and religious and philosophical ideas. A consistent communication pattern exists in our traditional thinking. Buddhist communication is a result of South Asian thinking. Scholars have succeeded in carving out a mature and unique theory of communication of its own.

Buddhist philosophy asseverates that everything in the world has the characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*. Therefore, everything is subject to evolution, and no one can hang on to things permanently. This stands in contrast to Western communication theory centered on the individual, who is believed to have a self or soul, thereby implying permanence. From the Buddhist perspective, "I" am only one particle or part in a long process. If "I" do not care for the other, the relationship between "me" and the subject (subject and object) will be broken. Possession is the most important objective in the West, whereas in Buddhist philosophy excessive attachment to possession springing from desire is the source of all evil.

Media are an active component of society. They constitute one important institution in creative human existence. Buddhist philosophy does not view media as a natural development but as an offshoot of humans' excessive effort to overcome natural barriers—a violation of Right Effort. A media industry would not have arisen without the vitiation of Right Thought (compassion) and Right Livelihood (nonexploitation of labor and detachment from greed). Now, bringing the media industry under control would require social reformation—to undo social discrimination. As Buddha has said, before communicating a message, the receivers' hunger should be taken care of. Filling of the stomachs of receivers should be done through social reformation.

It is possible to effect changes in the concepts we follow. But that cannot be achieved automatically. Interested people must try to accomplish it. Further, there has to be a coherent philosophy behind that—not Western

liberalism. It must be a holistic concept with all its philosophical, economic, and psychological aspects. It is not the building of a concept of communication or theory. Development of a suitable society is also equally important. Eventually, the political issue of changing the social system will become the focus of those who vie for power.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MINDFUL JOURNALISM

Finally, I want to end this chapter by highlighting some salient thoughts pertaining to mindful journalism and its future practice:

- Mindful journalism would stay clear of the extremes by following the Buddhist *magga* and the related concepts of the Aristotelian Golden Mean and the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean. However, it is not a religious journalism because it uses Buddha's phenomenology, not religionized Buddhism, as its backbone.
- Mindful journalism contains principles that one could compare with the universally acceptable norms of Right Speech adumbrated in the *magga*. The paths specified in the *Sila* dimension cut across all forms and genres of journalism practiced in the world. Most codes of ethics in use today are outdated and media specific.
- Mindful journalism looks at the mass communication system as an essential component of an interdependent, interconnected, and interactive whole operating at several hierarchical levels—the community, the nation-state, the world, the universe, and variations within this range. It attempts to analyze phenomena through the lens of the Buddhist dependent co-arising model or PS Model (Chapter 4). It presumes that the collapse of one *nidana* (underlying link) in this system could cause the collapse of the entire system.
- Mindful journalism should predominantly convey the idea that people (and their environment) matter—the approach that Schumacher (1973) proposed for economics more than four decades ago. Recognizing that the world is now in the process of globalization, a euphemism for Westernization, *the kalyana-mitta* should expose the Western attitude to nature—the illusion of unlimited power. Mindful journalism has a vital role to play to help evolve a biologically sound new lifestyle.

NOTES

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Wimalagnana, Senior Lecturer, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

2. The *Samyutta Nikaya*, the third division of the *Sutta Pitaka*, contains 2,889 *suttas* grouped into five sections (*vaggas*). Each *vagga* is further divided into *samyuttas*, each of which in turn contains a group of *suttas* on related topics. The *samyuttas* are named according to the topics of the *suttas* they contain.
3. The *Majjhima Nikaya*, or "Middle-length Discourses" of the Buddha, is the second of the five *nikayas* (collections) of the *Sutta Pitaka*. This *nikaya* consists of 152 discourses by the Buddha and his chief disciples.
4. The *Anguttara Nikaya*, the fourth division of the *Sutta Pitaka*, consists of several thousand *suttas* arranged in eleven books (*nipatas*) according to numerical content.
5. The *Digha Nikaya*, or "Collection of Long Discourses" (Pali *digha* = "long") is the first division of the *Sutta Pitaka*, and consists of 34 *suttas*, grouped into three *vaggas*, or divisions.

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8 Journalism and Ethical Conduct

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Synopsis: This chapter covers the *sila* (ethical conduct) dimension of the *magga* encompassing Principles 8, 9, and 10:

a. Follow the Path of Right Speech (*Samma Vaca*)

Abstinence from lying, divisive speech (e.g., biased opinion writing), abusive speech (e.g., defamatory writing), and idle chatter (e.g., gossip writing). (However, Asanga, the fifth-century author of several Mahayana texts, maintained that a Bodhisattva will lie to protect others from death or mutilation (Harvey 2000: 139.)

b. Follow the Path of Right Action (*Samma Kammanta*)

This involves abstinence from taking life (e.g., harming sentient beings intentionally), stealing (including robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty), and sensual misconduct. (Some Mahayana texts, e.g., *Upāya-kausalya Sūtra*, justify killing a human being on the grounds of compassion in dire circumstances (Harvey 2000: 135). Similarly, a Bodhisattva may break the precepts of stealing and celibacy on compassionate grounds.)

c. Follow the Path of Right Livelihood (*Samma Ajiva*)

This means personally avoiding and discouraging others from activities that may harm others (e.g., trade in deadly weapons, trade in animals for slaughter, trade in slavery, and trade in intoxicants and poisons). Some may also include public relations and advertising as harmful to the extent that they are seen "as encouraging greed, hatred and delusion, or perverting the truth" (Harvey 2000: 188).

—Excerpt from the Introduction

We can all accept that professional ethical codes are not religious treatises. Equally, the holy scriptures of the various religions were not spoken or written as guidance to any single occupation. This chapter suggests that the fundamental teachings of one religion, Buddhism—aimed at helping its

adherents to achieve enlightenment—might actually be useful in a secular sense to journalists from very different cultural backgrounds in their ethical decision making. We anticipate that some will argue that some key elements of the libertarian model of journalism as practiced in the West might not sit well with this approach. We also fully accept that one could apply the basic principles of other religions in a similar way. Indeed, Christianity (via the Bible), Islam (the Koran), Hinduism (the Bhagavad-Gita), Judaism (the Torah) and the Confucian canon offer key principles that the news media could follow if they are reporting ethically. Some of these feature in the model of peace journalism identified by Lynch (2010: 543), directed at achieving peaceful, humane, truthful, and solution-driven reportage. The Dalai Lama acknowledged as much in his book *Beyond Religion—Ethics for a Whole World* (2011), where he suggested such core values drawing on a range of religious and cultural perspectives could offer humanity a basic moral compass for navigating the problems of modernity—of an intrinsically secular nature. We offer our application of Buddhist principles to inform a new "mindful journalism" in that spirit.

Kalupahana (1976: 59) describes the Noble Eightfold Path as offering "moral virtues together with the processes of concentration and the development of insight." Mizuno (1987: 160) has suggested that ordinary people (such as journalists) could use the path as a guideline for a moral life despite the fact that it was originally proposed as the path to enlightenment, mainly for monks or *bhikkhus*. In this chapter, we consider the ethical conduct component of the Eightfold Path's commitment to *sila* (right speech, right action, and right livelihood) and explore its relevance to journalism practice in the modern era.

APPLICATION OF THE *MAGGA* (THE BUDDHIST PATH) TO *SILA* (ETHICAL) JOURNALISM PRACTICE

Each part of the *sila khandha or sila* (ethical conduct) dimension of the Noble Eightfold Path (right speech, right action, and right livelihood) has an application to the modern-day practice of truth-seeking and truth-telling irrespective of whether one is a journalist working in a traditional media context, a citizen journalist, or a serious blogger reporting and commenting upon news and current affairs. Words, actions, and occupation already underpin most versions of professional ethical codes, including journalism, but these values lack an articulated moral rationale for their existence. Most of the international ethical codes of practice were born of an Anglo-American approach to journalism. Some, like McGill (2008), even argue "the specific injunctions of these guides to newsroom practice—not to plagiarize, not to lie to get a story, not to cause anyone harm, etc.—are nowhere connected to any fundamental vision of human existence or morals." The exploration of good conduct (*sila*) in this chapter can take some

steps towards addressing this moral vacuum because each is contrary to these steps in the Eightfold Path. It is also fruitful to explore journalism and news values from the key Buddhist view that life is impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and nonsubstantial (*anatta*); and the media's role in society in terms of the effect of one's intentional actions upon one's self and others (*kamma*).

Buddhists disagree over whether the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path should be considered in an independent and linear sense or as interdependent elements of a unified and holistic ethical behavior (Mizuno 1987). In this chapter, we adopt the latter view: that the phenomena of Right Speech (*samma vaca*), Right Action (*samma kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*samma ajiva*) are interdependent and that interdependence is further demonstrated by their grouping under the umbrella category of good conduct or moral discipline (*sila*). While each is interdependent, we must address each in turn to establish their essence and connections. As Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998) explains, the ultimate purpose of the moral discipline principles is spiritual, although they do offer guidance in restraining immoral actions and in promoting moral conduct. He notes that the *sila* (moral) training must come "under the tutelage of the first two factors" of the *magga*—Right Understanding (*samma dittha*) and Right Thought (*samma sankappa*)—so as to encompass and go beyond the trainings in concentration (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*panna*).

Bodhi (1994) explains the most basic form of moral discipline (*sila*) is the observance of the five precepts (*pañca sila*). These involve abstaining from taking life, taking what has not been given, engaging in sexual misconduct, using false speech, and using intoxicants. These are similar to some of the Christian Ten Commandments and the *Surat Al'-An'ām* in the Koran. All major religions deplore murder, theft, promiscuity, and deception as immoralities unacceptable to humanity.

At a secular and professional ethics level, the most relevant is the training in abstaining from false speech. Bodhi (1994) details the three levels of meaning of *sila*, entailing inner virtue, virtuous outward actions of body and speech, and the rules of conduct designed to bring actions of body and speech into line with the ethical ideals. In short,

> *Sila* harmonizes our actions by bringing them into accord with our own true interests, with the well being of others, and with universal laws. Actions contrary to *sila* lead to a state of self-division marked by guilt, anxiety, and remorse. But the observance of the principles of *sila* heals this division, bringing our inner faculties together into a balanced and centred state of unity. *Sila* also brings us into harmony with other men. While actions undertaken in disregard of ethical principles lead to relations scarred by competitiveness, exploitation, and aggression, actions intended to embody such principles promote concord between man and man—peace, cooperation, and mutual respect.
>
> (Bodhi 1994)

Once applied to journalism practice, this underscores the relevance of the mindful journalism model to the notion of "peace journalism" as explained by Lynch (2010: 543). Earlier chapters have discussed the different philosophical perspective of Buddhism and this applies to the moral dimension of the *magga* (Buddhist path). Bhikkhu Bodhi notes the English word "morality" differs markedly from the Buddhist notion of *sila* and suggests the "theistic background to Western ethics" could be the reason.

> Buddhism, with its non-theistic framework, grounds its ethics, not on the notion of obedience, but on that of harmony. In fact, the commentaries explain the word *sila* by another word, *samodhana*, meaning "harmony" or "coordination."
>
> (Bodhi 1998)

This too is in accord with the "peace journalism" principles outlined by Lynch (2010: 543).

Bodhi (1994) acknowledges a common criticism of the "rules orientation" of Buddhist moral discipline where critics question whether such a prescriptive approach leads to a "straightjacket conception of morality, to a constricting and legalistic system of ethics" rather than simply allowing one's own good intentions and intuition guide an individual to a moral course of action. His response is that such rules are of value in "aiding the development of inner virtue" and that the process of self-transformation requires principles of training because "only the very exceptional few can alter the stuff of their lives by a mere act of will." Despite the rules, the emphasis is on self-responsibility. They reiterate the interdependence with the other stages of the *magga* by explaining the moral training begins with outer observance of *sila* and "then proceeds to internalize self-restraint through meditation and wisdom" (Bodhi 1994).

Central here is the Pali phrase *attanam upamam katva* ("consider oneself as similar to others and others as similar to oneself"), which has parallels with the Christian Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Luke 6:31). This involves "a simple imaginative exchange of oneself and others" (Bodhi 1994). It is a fundamental element of a compassion-driven moral system, which some might find incompatible with modern journalism practice. However, it does not by definition rule out reportage of topics that might be confronting or painful to the subjects or sources of news. Indeed, if the matter is of public importance it can be more a case of undertaking the reporting of the painful facts in a way you might prefer them to be reported if you were the target or source of the story—with compassion, justice, and a right of reply. The reflection-in-action (Schön 1987) requiring professionals to do so in the midst of their work can be complemented and extended by the mindfulness training and techniques we explore in Chapter 9.

Buddhists believe the benefits of *sila* include rewards in the present life, in future lives, and in the "ultimate good" (Bodhi 1994). When applied to journalism in a secular sense, it is the first and the last of these that can bear fruit through mindful practice. As for the benefits for a journalist in his/her own life and career, the words of Bodhi (1994) ring true:

> Following the precepts helps to establish a good reputation among the wise and virtuous. At a more inward level it leads to a clear conscience . . . But maintaining the precepts results in freedom from remorse, an ease of conscience that can evolve into the "bliss of blamelessness" (*anavajja sukha*) when we review our actions and realize them to be wholesome and good.

Journalists applying moral discipline will enjoy the respect of their peers and of the thinking public. The clarity of mind reflected in their reportage will go hand in hand with the ease of conscience brought about by sound ethical practice.

As for the "ultimate good," a journalism that sets out to reduce suffering through the mindful assessment of the consequences of one's actions upon others can only be for the "ultimate good," particularly if it is a bold journalism of legitimate public service, willing to tell sometimes painful truths in a compassionate way.

Follow the Path of Right Speech (*Samma Vaca*)

Right Speech (*samma vaca*) is the third element of the Buddha's *magga*. Right Speech invokes the avoidance of falsehood, divisive and abusive speech, and gossip mongering. Bhikkhu Bodhi notes both spoken and written speech can impact in both good and bad ways:

> Speech can break lives, create enemies, and start wars, or it can give wisdom, heal divisions, and create peace. This has always been so, yet in the modern age the positive and negative potentials of speech have been vastly multiplied by the tremendous increase in the means, speed, and range of communications.
>
> (Bodhi 1998)

We can examine the translated *suttas* (Buddha's discourses) for our foundational principles of right speech, which we can then use for an analysis of journalism and a prescription for sound ethical practice.

Right Speech in the Negative: What It Is Not

There appears to be as much said about what right speech is not as there is about what it is. The Buddha is said to have spoken a few words about right

speech as part of an exposition on all eight steps in the path in his teachings as translated in *Magga-vibhanga Sutta—An Analysis of the Path:*

> And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, abstaining from divisive speech, abstaining from abusive speech, abstaining from idle chatter: This, monks, is called right speech.
>
> (Thanissaro 1996)

The practice of lying or "false speech" is underscored in the *Itivuttaka*:

> For the person who transgresses in one thing, I tell you, there is no evil deed that is not to be done. Which one thing? This: telling a deliberate lie. The person who lies, who transgresses in this one thing, transcending concern for the world beyond: there's no evil he might not do.
>
> (Thanissaro 2001)

A considerable portion of Buddhist literature analyzes the notion of "false speech." As with many other Buddhist teachings, the *atuwacarias* (commentators) have divided the relevant literature into numbered lists for the ease of memory and understanding.

Bhikkhu Bodhi quotes the Buddha in a discussion on the negative and the positive sides of the precept of abstaining from false speech (*musavada veramani*):

> Herein someone avoids false speech and abstains from it. He speaks the truth, is devoted to truth, reliable, worthy of confidence, not a deceiver of people. Being at a meeting, or amongst people, or in the midst of his relatives, or in a society, or in the king's court, and called upon and asked as witness to tell what he knows, he answers, if he knows nothing: "I know nothing," and if he knows, he answers: "I know"; if he has seen nothing, he answers: "I have seen nothing," and if he has seen, he answers: "I have seen." Thus he never knowingly speaks a lie, either for the sake of his own advantage, or for the sake of another person's advantage, or for the sake of any advantage whatsoever.
>
> (Bodhi 1998)

Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998) points out that the "motivating root" of lies is central to assessing their level of individual shortcoming and social disruption. He suggests it is important to consider whether the root of the lie is greed, hatred, or delusion. In journalism, the striving for truth through the processes of accuracy, verification, and attribution is an important foundational skill. Serious falsities stemming from obvious greed (circulation and ratings) sometimes arise, and many such instances have been detailed in defamation cases in the courts and in important inquiries into media practices (e.g., Leveson 2012). No doubt on some occasions a motivation of hatred, perhaps grounded in the severe contempt for an

individual or his/her background or position, sometimes also motivates a journalistic falsehood. And clearly delusion is a common cause of journalistic lying, particularly within the bounds of the definition offered by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998): "the irrational lie, the compulsive lie, the interesting exaggeration, lying for the sake of a joke." The latter two are common fare in the modern media, with the first sometimes described by the term "sensationalism" and the latter falling within the domain of what some call "satire" or humour. Again, laws deal with the latter, with defenses in defamation and copyright available for fair criticism in such a vein on matters of genuine public interest, while blatant lying where the joke falls flat can be found liable under the law or the ethical codes of journalism regulators.

***Abstaining from Slanderous Speech* (Pisunaya Vacaya Veramani)**

Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of the Buddha's purported words is insightful in its disdain for slanderous speech, which he indicates causes dissension (Bodhi 1998). Slanderous speech is speech intended to create enmity and division, to alienate one person or group from another. The motive behind such speech is generally aversion, resentment of a rival's success or virtues, the intention to tear down others by verbal denigrations. Other motives may enter the picture as well: the cruel intention of causing hurt to others, the evil desire to win affection for oneself, the perverse delight in seeing friends divided.

> Slanderous speech is one of the most serious moral transgressions. The root of hate makes the unwholesome *kamma* already heavy enough, but because the action usually occurs after deliberation, the negative force becomes even stronger because premeditation adds to its gravity. When the slanderous statement is false, the two wrongs of falsehood and slander combine to produce an extremely powerful unwholesome *kamma*. The canonical texts record several cases in which the calumny of an innocent party led to an immediate rebirth in the plane of misery.
>
> The opposite of slander, as the Buddha indicates, is speech that promotes friendship and harmony. Such speech originates from a mind of loving-kindness and sympathy. It wins the trust and affection of others, who feel they can confide in one without fear that their disclosures will be used against them. Beyond the obvious benefits that such speech brings in this present life, it is said that abstaining from slander has as its *kammic* result the gain of a retinue of friends who can never be turned against one by the slanderous words of others (Bodhi 1998).

In the religious poems of *Vangisa*, as translated by Ireland (2005), the Buddha introduces the concept of "no-harm," a common theme of the ethics of communication in Western philosophy. Interesting, however, is the application of the no-harm principle to the speaker/author:

> One should speak only that word by which one would not torment oneself nor harm others. That word is indeed well spoken.
>
> (Ireland 2005)

Another form of speech a journalist should abandon is useless talk. Journalists should not include useless or meaningless words in their messages. We can find in Buddhism a number of reasons why a communicator should avoid meaningless words. In a message the *kālavādi* (timely quality) is important. This means sending the message at the right time. The message that is not timely will be useless. Similarly, the *bhutavādi* (quality) is also important. *Bhutavādi* means reporting what has really happened. Further, the words of a communicator must be *nidhānavatim*, or worthy of retaining in mind. Words should be used in the proper way.

Using words that cause anguish is *pharusa vaca*. Here attention should be paid to the contextual meaning as well as to the semantic meaning of a word. In this regard, *nēlā* or correctness is important. Every journalist should strive to avoid errors in a sentence, errors in pronunciation, and errors in writing.

Thus, we start to narrow down Right Speech by what it is not:

- Lying
- Divisive
- Abusive
- Idle chatter
- Speech that does harm to self or others

We also receive guidance on whether the reporting of other people engaging in these practices of "not right speech" should also be avoided. The Buddha makes this clear as he addresses each of the main kinds of "unrighteous verbal conduct" in the *Saleyyaka Sutta* as translated by Ñanamoli:

> And how are there four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone speaks falsehood: when summoned to a court or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus, "So, good man, tell what you know," then, not knowing, he says "I know," or knowing, he says "I do not know," not seeing, he says "I see," or seeing, he says "I do not see;" in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends or for another's ends or for some trifling worldly end. He speaks maliciously: he is a repeater elsewhere of what is heard here for the purpose of causing division from these, or he is a repeater to these of what is heard elsewhere for the purpose of causing division from those, and he is thus a divider of the united, a creator of divisions, who enjoys discord, rejoices in discord, delights in discord, he is a speaker of words that create discord. He speaks harshly: he utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, censorious of others, bordering on anger and unconducive to concentration. He is a gossip: as one who tells that which is unseasonable, that which is not

> fact, that which is not good, that which is not the Dhamma, that which is not the Discipline, and he speaks out of season speech not worth recording, which is unreasoned, indefinite, and unconnected with good. That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.
>
> (Ñanamoli 1993)

The first two discourses in the *Digha Nikaya* explain how to get rid of false speech. Truthfulness is important. *Saccavadi* means speaking only the truth (*sacca*). There is no dispute over the fact that a journalist should always speak the truth. *Saccasando* means matching truth with truth. Bhikkhu Bodhi suggests "truthful speech establishes a correspondence between our own inner being and the real nature of phenomena, allowing wisdom to rise up and fathom their real nature" (Bodhi 1998).

Right Speech in the Positive: What It Is

Thankfully, we do get some guidance from some of the Buddha's teachings on the positive framing or best practice of Right Speech. In the *Vaca Sutta*, Buddha identified five qualities that render a statement "well-spoken, not ill-spoken . . . blameless and unfaulted by knowledgeable people":

> It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of good-will.
>
> (Thanissaro 2000)

In *Vangisa*, the Buddha counseled to use only pleasant words, those that would not bring evils to others:

> One should speak only pleasant words, words which are acceptable (to others). What one speaks without bringing evils to others is pleasant.
>
> (Ireland 2005)

Kanna sukha means speech that is pleasant to the ear, or communicating a message that would be pleasant to the receiver. It is important to select words carefully so as to please the mind. This is called *pori*. Words carelessly used in a message could cause serious damage to society. *Bahujana kanta* means communicating a message to be pleasant to a majority of the hearers.

The Buddha devoted a section of a *sutta* to address the notion of skillful speech by counterposing the negative with the positive in an address to a silversmith called Cunda (Thanissaro 1997a). The dialogue included repetition of most of the negatives qualities of speech and some of the positive qualities already mentioned above, but it importantly introduced some new qualities of Right Speech: speech uniting or creating concord; speech that

is soothing, is factual, in accordance with other teachings and their goals, worth treasuring, reasonable, and circumscribed.

It is very important that one thinks and considers well the idea one intends to state. Further, it should be *paccayika* (credible for the listeners). One should refrain from *mugga suppata*—leaving out what should be included in the message. Further, s/he should be a person who does not cheat the world (*avisanvādako lokassa*). Also avoid *Pisunavāca* (communication that causes disharmony among people). The journalist should communicate in a way to *bhinnānam va sandhāta* (unify those who are divided). [In Sri Lanka, even after the end of the 30-year civil war, some journalists use reporting to cause disunity in society. Headlines such as *Kudu langa tabagat muslim jātikaya* ("The Muslim who kept heroin with him") or *Dravidha jātika säka karu* ("Dravidian/Tamil suspect") show how some of them highlight ethnicity in their reports.] The journalist, in such a context should attempt to *sanhitānam vā anuppadātā* (enhance unity through agreement), *samagga nandi* (enjoy in victory), *sammagga karanam vacanam bhāvitā* (speak words causing harmony), and *samaggarato* (be peace loving).

In the *Pancaka Nipata* of the *Anguttara Nikaya*, we find five qualities of a good communicator of *dhamma*, but they are relevant to modern communicators as well. They include having carefully planned how one will communicate, clarifying the points being made, having compassion when communicating, communicating without a profit motive, and communicating without self-praise and the denigration of others (Bodhi 2012).

The *Duteyya Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikaya* describes the qualities of a *dhammaduta* engaged in missionary work. These qualities will be useful for a missionary even today: He will listen and cause others to listen. He will learn and retain in things in his memory. Being *viññu* (understanding what is useful and what is useless), he will educate others.

Thus, we start to formulate a list of the positive attributes of Right Speech:

- Correct timing (or in season)
- Truthful and factual
- Affectionate
- Polite
- Beneficial
- Pleasant and soothing
- Worth treasuring (significant and memorable)
- Reasonable
- Circumscribed
- Reinforcing other teachings (or moral values)
- With good will (or Right Thought, the second step in the *magga*)
- Promoting unity, harmony and peace

Clearly, the practices of journalism and professional Web 2.0 communication can accommodate all of these readily, other than perhaps the

"affectionate" quality. If we broaden the scope of this translation to incorporate comparable terms like being "polite" or "civil," we would clearly discern a desirable quality in most modern professional communication.

Rules and Schema of Right Speech

In the *Abhaya Sutta*, the Buddha addresses Prince Abhaya on the qualities of Right Speech. He relates to the prince six criteria for deciding what is worth saying. These criteria could be used as a framework to derive a schema for the analysis of news media talk:

1. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* [the Buddha] knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial (or: not connected with the goal), unendearing and disagreeable to others, he does not say them."
2. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, unendearing and disagreeable to others, he does not say them."
3. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be factual, true, beneficial, but unendearing and disagreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them."
4. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial, but endearing and agreeable to others, he does not say them."
5. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, but endearing and agreeable to others, he does not say them."
6. "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be factual, true, beneficial, and endearing and agreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them. Why is that? Because the *Tathagata* has sympathy for living beings" (Thanissaro 1997b).

In the Noble Eightfold Path, in using *samma vācā* or right speech, it is necessary to consider the nature of the receiver groups.

The *Catukka Nipata* of *Anguttara Nikaya* mentions four kinds of "receiver groups":

1. *Uggatitaññu* (intelligent people who can grasp something quickly)
2. *Vipacitaññu* (those who understand slowly and gradually)
3. *Ñeyya* (those who understand with great effort by repeatedly learning)
4. *Pada parama* (those who are unable to understand however much they try) (Attanayake 1997)

Silence and Listening

Abhaya Sutta illustrates the Buddha's use of silence as Right Speech during conversational exchanges. As the *sutta* says, "The Blessed One acquiesced with silence." However, former *New York Times* reporter Douglas McGill points

out that journalists sometimes misuse silence as an interviewing ploy to extract information the interviewee might otherwise be reluctant to reveal:

> There is an old interviewing trick journalists use to get people to say things far more intimate than they planned to reveal. The trick works when the journalist, instead of asking a follow-up question during the silence that follows an answer, instead stays silent. The compulsion to fill conversational vacuums is so powerful that people often blab intimacies they didn't mean to share.
>
> (McGill 2008)

It injects a reality to the title of Australian talk show host Andrew Denton's successful 1990s celebrity interview program *Enough Rope*, a phrase extracted from the colloquial expression "If you give them enough rope, they'll hang themselves."

Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh cites the *Lotus Sutra* as evidence that listening is also a crucial component of Right Speech. He says in *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*:

> Deep listening is the foundation of Right Speech. If we cannot listen mindfully, we cannot practice Right Speech. No matter what we say, it will not be mindful, because we'll be speaking only our own ideas and not in response to the other person.
>
> (Hanh 1998: 86)

The *Patimokkha* collapses into five questions the advice on Right Speech that monks might ask themselves to analyze their own communication competence, particularly when they are admonishing:

1. "Do I speak at the right time, or not?"
2. "Do I speak of facts, or not?"
3. "Do I speak gently or harshly?"
4. "Do I speak profitable words or not?"
5. "Do I speak with a kindly heart, or inwardly malicious?" (Ñanamoli 1992)

Of course, such admonitions occur publicly and routinely in the news media, whether journalists are doing it themselves, or in quoting others in their stories, or in the comment streams on their websites and social media channels. Bodhi (1994) notes that nonverbal communication, like writing and hand gestures, are often used to deceive others, so they too must be classified as "false speech." Clearly, this is instructive to mindful journalists both in their writing and their interviewing.

Smith and Novak (2003) suggest falsities and uncharitable speech as indicative of other factors, most notably the ego or self-serving ends of the

communicator. In journalism, that ego might be fuelled in a host of ways that might encourage the selection of certain facts or the portrayal of an individual in a negative light: political agendas, feeding populist sentiment, peer pressure, and corporate reward. They state:

> False witness, idle chatter, gossip, slander, and abuse are to be avoided, not only in their obvious forms, but also in their covert ones. The covert forms—subtle belittling, "accidental" tactlessness, barbed wit—are often more vicious because their motives are veiled.
>
> (Smith & Novak 2003: 42)

This calls into question the very essence of celebrity journalism for all the obvious reasons. Gossip about the private lives of politicians, barbed commentary, imposing labels upon them—all fail the test of Right Speech. As the Buddha tells Prince Abhaya in the *Abhaya Sutta*:

(2) "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* [the Buddha] knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, unendearing and disagreeable to others, he does not say them" (Thanissaro 1997b).

None of this is to assert that harsh and uncomfortable truths must not be told. In fact, the Buddha gives Prince Abhaya the prescription for doing so:

(3) "In the case of words that the *Tathagata* knows to be factual, true, beneficial, but unendearing and disagreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them" (Thanissaro 1997b).

McGill (2008) has proposed the use of Buddhist ethics to create a "journalism of healing" and a "journalism of timely, truthful, helpful speech." However, investigative journalism exposing uncomfortable truths can be accommodated because of its orientation towards truth and the improvement of society, just as peace journalism contains a "truth orientation" as a crucial component, allowing journalists to "expose self-serving pronouncements and representations on all sides" (Lynch, 2010: 543).

What may be investigated here in conceptualising the notion of "right speech" (and in general, of all eight components of the *magga*) is the "deep purpose of our actions": how much journalists are aware of the real purpose of their actions. Is it sensationalism and personal gain in terms of money or popularity, or the truth and well-being of people? At times Buddha would not pronounce even the "truth" for a given time if he would see that this truth might harm a person. So the "right speech" is of course the word of truth, but only that which serves the well-being of humans. This leads directly into our discussion of the path of "Right Action."

Follow the Path of Right Action (*Samma Kammanta*)

Right Action, the fourth aspect of the *magga*, is central to all moral or ethical codes. The Buddha expressed it simply this way:

> And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from unchastity. This is called right action.
>
> (Thanissaro 1996)

On the face of it, these seem fairly straightforward edicts that are common moral guidelines for almost all cultures and religions. Given we are dealing with mindful journalism at a secular level and do not propose that journalists should become Buddhists, we shall put the issue of "unchastity" in journalists' personal lives aside. Equally, whether or not journalists take the life of other humans or living things falls within the domain of the criminal law and/or their own religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds. A broader reading of the teaching, however, opens both of them up for a discussion about whether a journalist's actions might encourage such behavior in others, by either condoning the taking of life or sexual indiscretion by reporting upon them in a positive way, or by publishing words or images that might be seen to encourage others to do so. Similar concerns can be raised about the consequences of producing journalism that creates inappropriate sexualization with potentially harmful consequences or feeding into immoral or illegal desires of those who are psychologically vulnerable. Examples might be the sexualization of young girls through the positive coverage of childhood beauty pageants; the glamorization of unhealthy body shapes leading potentially to mental health and nutrition issues; and the promotion of cruel practices like female genital mutilation on cultural or religious grounds.

With the abstaining from taking life, this principle is again complementary to the peace journalism model, where Lynch (2010: 543) explains that media can be complicit in war and conflict through reportage supportive of a party's warmongering and via the neglect to cover initiatives for peacekeeping and voices of those opposing war.

Without suggesting journalists should be society's moral guardians, there are also situations where reportage might encourage unchastity, such as via the explicit coverage of the sexual indiscretions of celebrity role models.

Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998) explains taking what is not given (*adinnadana veramani*) means "appropriating the rightful belongings of others with thievish intent." It can encompass outright stealing and robbery, fraudulence, and deceitfulness.

The principle of abstaining from stealing offers particularly vivid examples in the modern media on a range of fronts. Theft of data has been

central to the allegations and trials of journalists and others in the recent revelations about the *News of the World* and other media outlets in the UK, and the Leveson Inquiry (2012) into those activities and the reform of media regulation in that country. Hacking into the phone messages of celebrities and the victims of high-profile crimes is clearly a form of theft, and its practice has resulted in widespread condemnation, which has brought shame upon the parent News Corporation empire owned by the Murdoch family.

The extension of the notion of "theft" to the theft of intellectual property raises issues of plagiarism, breach of copyright, and the downloading of Internet and social media images and materials to accompany news stories. Interestingly, in some jurisdictions the law of copyright has been extended to include the term "moral rights"—essentially granting the creator of materials the right to sue over their wrongful use. Similarly, consumer laws protect audiences against the misleading and deceptive practices of media outlets engaged in making dubious claims about products and services because of secret sponsorships or advertising contracts. The age-old newspaper genre of the "advertorial" raises such questions when it is not made clear to readers that a claim is being made in the context of an advertisement rather than a news column. Modern equivalents are the fake and vindictive online reviews of accommodations and restaurants and the surreptitiously sponsored endorsements of products and services by celebrities on their social media postings. These are examples of the legal system incorporating this 2,500-year-old Buddhist principle of Right Action, albeit in a modern context.

Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998) points to the positive counterparts of stealing being the virtues of honesty, "which implies respect for the belongings of others and for their right to use their belongings as they wish"; contentment—"being satisfied with what one has without being inclined to increase one's wealth by unscrupulous means"; and generosity, "giving away one's own wealth and possessions in order to benefit others." The latter suggests journalistic practices like the donation of words and images to the Creative Commons and similar free use platforms, as well as the donation of one's time and journalistic talents to worthwhile causes.

Right Action also calls to center stage the foundational Buddhist principle of *kamma* (*karma* in Sanskrit)—another overlapping phenomenon that has been heavily theorized and popularly misunderstood. The Buddha's translated teachings have linked *kamma* firmly to "intention" and the taking of responsibility for one's own actions:

> Intention, I tell you, is *kamma*. Intending, one does *kamma* by way of body, speech, and intellect.
>
> (Thanissaro 1997d)

> I am the owner of my actions (*kamma*), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.
>
> (Thanissaro 1997e)

Again, we are not proposing that reporters and editors must accept Buddhist beliefs about the spiritual consequences of one's worldly actions in the afterlife, although again most religions incorporate repercussions after death for one's misdeeds (or sins) during a lifetime. However, at a secular level, a journalist could not argue that his/her actions in reporting and publishing a story has very real worldly repercussions for many fellow humans—sometimes quite starkly by exposing them to some physical harm or a deprivation of their freedom, and sometimes more subtly by perhaps shaping the views and behaviours of those who consume their journalism, perhaps involving a ripple effect upon the views and behaviours of generations to come. Being mindful of this potential brings the notion of Right Action into center stage in the practice of mindful journalism. As the Buddha was reported to have said to his young son Rahula:

> Whenever you want to perform a bodily act, you should reflect on it: "This bodily act I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily act, with painful consequences, painful results?" If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskilful bodily act with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily act of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction . . . it would be a skilful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then any bodily act of that sort is fit for you to do.
>
> (Thanissaro 2006)

Again, we are not proposing only a happy, "sunshine" journalism would emanate from an adherence to the step in the path of Right Action. We are instead proposing that unskillful actions by journalists—those they have perhaps not undertaken reflectively and mindfully—can have unexpected consequences which might indeed be painful to themselves and others. Painful consequences are also inevitable in the course of responsible mindful journalism—which is also in accord with the principle of *kamma*—but a mindful approach does its best to ensure that any suffering is endured by those whose own actions have necessitated its exposure in the greater public interest.

As Smith and Novak (2003: 43) explain, the step of right action also involves "a call to understand one's behavior more objectively before trying to improve it" and "to reflect on actions with an eye to the motives that prompted them." It also further demonstrates the interdependence of

the various steps in the Eightfold Path, because such reflection is a form of mindfulness which we address in Chapter 9.

Follow the Path of Right Livelihood (*Samma Ajiva*)

The Buddha named some livelihoods that, if pursued, made the achievement of enlightenment questionable. These were of course shaped by the social customs and values of his time, and included the poison peddler, the slave trader, the prostitute, the butcher, the brewer, the arms maker, and the tax collector (Smith & Novak 2003: 45). It is reasonable to ask, if he were constructing such a list today, whether journalism would sit in this list following the revelations of the Leveson Inquiry (2012). The basic ethical premise of journalism has, of course, been challenged previously. Writer Janet Malcolm famously questioned the moral foundation of journalism when she wrote the classic condemnation of the journalistic interview in her book *The Journalist and the Murderer*:

> Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible.
>
> (Malcolm 1990)

The word "occupation" implies work that "does indeed occupy most of our waking attention" (Smith & Novak 2003: 44), so it raises serious questions about some journalistic business models centered upon spying, prying, and spreading malicious rumors for commercial purposes as exposed by Leveson (2012).

Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998) contends that one should acquire one's livelihood "in ways which do not entail harm and suffering for others" and that "any occupation that requires violation of right speech and right action is a wrong form of livelihood."

It is not simply about the journalism sector in which one works, or about the round or topic one reports upon. De Silva contends:

> Even a blameless means of living can become blameworthy if practiced with inordinate greed and dishonesty. If a doctor in private practice makes mints of money exploiting his patients, he is guilty of wrong livelihood even though medicine itself is a noble profession.
>
> (De Silva 1986)

INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE STEPS

As we noted at the outset, the interdependence of the steps of the Eightfold Path are crucial to their understanding and application. The Buddha was also reported to link Right Speech with other steps of the Eightfold

Path—particularly the notion of Right Mindfulness or moral/spiritual reflection. Addressing monks in *Maha-cattarisaka Sutta*: The Great Forty, the Buddha is said to have explained the interconnection of the steps from Right View, Right Effort, and Right Mindfulness, with Right Speech as the centerpiece:

> And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong speech as wrong speech, and right speech as right speech. And what is wrong speech? Lying, divisive tale-bearing, abusive speech, and idle chatter. This is wrong speech.
>
> One tries to abandon wrong speech and to enter into right speech: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong speech and to enter and remain in right speech: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, and right mindfulness—run and circle around right speech.
>
> (Thanissaro 1997c)

The Buddha reinforced this link with mindfulness in a dialogue he had with his son, Rahula, where he urged him to go through a series of steps of reflection upon speech before, during, and after any utterance. We could extend these steps in this era to any communication form (Thanissaro 2006). In Chapter 9, we turn our attention to that mental dimension of mindful reflection.

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9 Journalism and Mental Cultivation

Mark Pearson

Synopsis: This chapter covers the mental cultivation dimension of the *magga* encompassing Principles 11, 12, and 13:

a. Follow the Path of Right Effort (*Samma Vayama*), which has four steps: the effort to

- Discard evil that has already arisen
- Prevent the arising of unrisen evil
- Develop the good that has already arisen
- Promote the good that has not already arisen

b. Follow the Path of Right Mindfulness (*Samma Sati*), which has four foundations:

- Reflection relating to the body (*kaya*)
- Feeling (*vedana*)—repulsive, attractive or neutral
- Thought
- Ideas (*dhamma*) pertaining to the experienced phenomena (such reflection enables one to overcome covetousness and discontent)

c. Follow the Path of Right Concentration (*Samma Samadhi*), which consists of the attainment of the four preliminary stages of contemplation (*jhanas*) that culminate in the development of unprejudiced perception or equanimity with regard to what is perceived. (This is also considered a middle standpoint in the way in which we perceive ourselves in the world.)

—Excerpt from the Introduction

THREE ASPECTS OF MENTAL CULTIVATION

The expression "mindful journalism" implies those working in the news media will invest their energies in a reflective consideration of the implications of their actions upon others. Doing so skillfully requires considerable

effort at accomplishing the techniques of "reflection-in-action" (Schön 1987). It also implies a level of concentration in one's work that is the mark of all accomplished professionals, creators, and sports performers—the ability to enter into the mental "zone" of performance where the highest level of accomplishment is almost effortless because the individual is absolutely absorbed in the dimension of creation. This chapter addresses these final three steps of the Noble Eightfold Path—the mental cultivation (or concentration) dimension of the *magga*, namely Right Effort (*samma vayama*), Right Mindfulness (*samma sati*), and Right Concentration (*samma samadhi*).

Each has important implications if applied at a secular level in journalism and together they represent a culmination of the investment in the other stages, although we acknowledge that it is an iterative process wherein a journalist would be cognizant of all stages and would move seamlessly from one to the other depending on the task and decision at hand. If implemented in an interdependent and uniform way, these final three steps offer guidance on how mindful practice can improve journalism for the enhancement of good and the relief of suffering, professional reflection on work practices and ethics, and a clarity of vision in writing and reporting.

As with other stages of the Eightfold Path, and many of his other teachings, the Buddha used monks as his target audience and he aimed the lessons towards their attainment of "Enlightenment"—ultimately an eternal escape from re-becoming in the afterlife. But a feature of the teachings is their utility in their secular interpretation and application—just as the very term enlightenment has relevance in its secular English usage. As we know, the synonyms for enlighten are to edify, inform, educate, tell, and clarify. These have strong parallels with the role of the journalist in society. Further, if one is enlightened in English, one is rational, progressive, free-thinking, open-minded, tolerant, educated, liberal, informed, instructed, and edified. While such meanings do not precisely match the meanings of the Buddha's original spoken words—much of which has been lost through hearsay and translation—these are surely worthy goals for mindful journalists and, through their reportage, for their audiences once enlightened by their work. Mindful of this goal of the mental cultivation dimension of the *magga*, we now turn to its three steps and their application to journalism.

The Path of Right Effort (*Samma Vayama*)

The Path of Right Effort (*samma vayama*) has four steps: the effort to discard evil that has already arisen; prevent the arising of unrisen evil; develop the good that has already arisen; and promote the good that has not already arisen.

In an address to monks, the Buddha defined Right Effort by dividing it into four exertions:

> [**i**] [where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds and exerts his intent] for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskilful qualities that have not yet arisen.
> [**ii**] [where a monk generates desire . . .] for the sake of the abandonment of evil, unskilful qualities that have arisen.
> [**iii**] [where a monk generates desire . . .] for the sake of the arising of skilful qualities that have not yet arisen.
> [**iv**] [where a monk generates desire . . .] for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, and culmination of skilful qualities that have arisen (Thanissaro 1996).

Thus, Right Effort, as defined by the Buddha, is a predominantly spiritual one: a steady, patient, and purposeful path to enlightenment. However, we can also apply such principles to the goal of ethical journalism practice in a secular way. The passage involves a call to be on constant guard against the adoption of unethical and unprofessional perspectives and practices and to try to eliminate those that one notices in oneself or that others observe. Further, there needs to be effort to find and implement sound perspectives and practices that one lacks and to shore up those that one already possesses.

The Right Effort is in the strategic addressing of these shortcomings and talents. Examples abound. Journalists are often encouraged in the early stages of their careers to focus upon quantity rather than quality—and in their ambitious drive for recognition will sometimes sacrifice the basic requirements of quality journalism such as attribution and verification. Yet it is these very features and techniques that set journalism apart from other entertainment and information products in the Web 2.0 era. Right effort can help a journalist achieve a suitable level of productivity within deadline by reflecting purposively upon the ethical dimensions of their work. There can also be newsroom pressures from editors, colleagues, producers, and sources that might tempt a journalist to stray from core ethical values, demanding a right effort to persist with the original mission to make a worthwhile difference to society that attracted many to the career in the first place.

While not addressing journalism directly, the Dalai Lama summed this approach up in *Beyond Religion* with the words:

> The practice of patience guards us against loss of composure and, in doing so, enables us to exercise discernment, even in the heat of difficult situations.
>
> (2011: 142)

The interdependence of Right Effort with the other steps in the path were underscored with the Buddha's lesson to monks in *Maha-cattarisaka Sutta*: The Great Forty:

> One tries to abandon wrong view and to enter into right view: This is one's right effort . . .
> One tries to abandon wrong resolve and to enter into right resolve: This is one's right effort . . .
> One tries to abandon wrong speech and to enter into right speech: This is one's right effort . . .
> One tries to abandon wrong action and to enter into right action: This is one's right effort . . .
> One tries to abandon wrong livelihood and to enter into right livelihood: This is one's right effort (Thanissaro 1997a).

The Buddha acknowledged that it was possible to try too hard—that there was also a preferable "middle course" for Right Effort. In his advice to the Venerable Sona, who was contemplating a return to comfortable lay life once his family had found wealth, the Buddha is reported to have instructed:

> Sona, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune ("penetrate," "ferret out") the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there pick up your theme.
>
> (Thanissaro 1997b)

Such advice would serve many a rookie journalist well, when they are led to believe that increasing output of content is the key to their career success. Their editors will encourage this, particularly in the newly constrained digital environment with budgets tight and staffing diminished. However, the focus on quantity rather than quality of reportage inevitably leads to one-dimensional stories where corners are cut; facts remain unverified or easy options like press releases are used in newsgathering. Too often it leads to the "young gun" making the serious error, or worse, being exposed as unethical to the detriment of the media organization as a whole. This happened to the *New Republic* in the renowned rise and downfall of the fraudulent upstart reporter Stephen Glass, about whom the 2003 film *Shattered Glass* was made. Glass was ultimately exposed as having fabricated 27 of his 41 bylined pieces in the magazine over the two and a half years he was employed there (Bissinger 1998).

Although the Glass case was unusual, and involved both fraud and a desire to please by coming up with a succession of incredible stories in a short period of time, it exemplifies what can happen when a journalist finds

the wrong "pitch" for his/her persistence (or effort), and when the media organization is primed to accommodate and even encourage it.

The Path of Right Mindfulness (*Samma Sati*)

The path of Right Mindfulness (*samma sati*) has four foundations, all centered upon purposive reflection that can take the form of meditation: reflection relating to the body (*kaya*); feelings (*vedana*), whether repulsive, attractive, or neutral; thought or mind; and ideas (*dhamma*) pertaining to the experienced phenomena (Thanissaro 2000; Gunaratana 2012).

> And what is right mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in and of itself—ardent, alert, and mindful—putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in and of themselves . . . the mind in and of itself . . . mental qualities in and of themselves—ardent, alert, and mindful—putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. This is called right mindfulness . . .
>
> This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and distress, for the attainment of the right method, and for the realization of Unbinding—in other words, the four frames of reference.
>
> (Thanissaro 2000)

Smith and Novak (2003: 48) suggest right mindfulness "aims at witnessing all mental and physical events, including our emotions, without reacting to them, neither condemning some nor holding on to others." When applied to journalism, this is the technique of self-examination similar to that Schön (1987) and Sheridan Burns (2013) called "reflection in action" and is the step we have selected as central to an application of the Eightfold Path to reportage in the title for this book: "Mindful Journalism."

As Wallace (2007: 138) explains, Buddhism had adopted introspection as a form of metacognition long before educationalists and psychologists had coined that term, referring to "cognition about cognition" or "knowing about knowing." Many an editor has described an understanding of the newsworthiness of an event as a sixth sense: "news sense" (Jervis 1985). Buddhists have also proposed a sixth sense beyond the basic five sense faculties: mental perception (Wallace 2007: 111). It is also the sense most amenable to refinement and extension through training. The ordinary person's mind is untrained and tends to alternate between excitation and laxity, which can be addressed through training. At an advanced level this can involve rigorous meditation regimes and extended retreats. While one would not expect journalists to suddenly adopt the lotus position to meditate in their newsrooms

or at the scene of a breaking news event to peacefully contemplate their options, effective reflection upon one's own thoughts and emotions is crucial to a considered review of an ethical dilemma in a newsgathering or publishing context. At a basic level mindfulness and its associated meditation techniques can be applied in journalism in a variety of contexts—taking time out of a stressful situation to focus upon one's breathing; pausing to reflect upon the reasons one might be pursuing a particular story or angle; thinking about the implications of one's story upon various stakeholders; and in finding peace for strategic planning and clarifying context for one's role and career trajectory.

It is also essential to have gone through such a process if a journalist is later called to account to explain his/her actions. Many ethical decisions are value-laden and inherently complex. Too often they are portrayed in terms of the "public interest" when the core motivating factor has not been the greater public good but, to the contrary, the ego of an individual journalist or the commercial imperative of a media employer. The Leveson Report (2012) detailed numerous instances where such forces were at play, often to the great detriment to the lives of ordinary citizens. Gunaratana (2012: 9) offers the insight that developed awareness through mindfulness "frees us from the desire to grasp on to things and other people with the thought 'this is *mine*.'"

Bodhi (1994) explains the strong connection between the ethical conduct division of the path (*sila*) and mindfulness, which helps "to protect our observance of the precepts." In other words, once there is a commitment to an ethical path, regular reflection upon one's adherence to it is important.

> Mindfulness is awareness, constant attention and keen observation. Mindfulness embraces all aspects of our being—our bodily activities, our feelings, our states of mind, our objects of thought. With sharpened mindfulness we can be aware exactly what we are doing, what feelings and states of mind are impelling us towards particular courses of action, what thoughts form our motivations.
>
> (Bodhi 1994)

Further demonstrating the interdependence of the steps, Bodhi underscores the importance of Right Effort—what he calls "energy"—in the process:

> Through mindfulness we gain awareness of our states of mind; through understanding we can ascertain the tendencies of these states, their qualities, roots and consequences; then through energy we strive to abandon the unwholesome and to cultivate the wholesome.
>
> (Bodhi 1994)

In fact, the Buddha is said to have counselled a systematic reflection upon one's ongoing adherence to each of the other steps in his basic definition of mindfulness outlined in *Maha-cattarisaka Sutta*: "The Great Forty":

> One is mindful to abandon wrong view and to enter and remain in right view: This is one's right mindfulness . . .
> One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve and to enter and remain in right resolve: This is one's right mindfulness . . .
> One is mindful to abandon wrong speech and to enter and remain in right speech: This is one's right mindfulness . . .
> One is mindful to abandon wrong action and to enter and remain in right action: This is one's right mindfulness . . .
> One is mindful to abandon wrong livelihood and to enter and remain in right livelihood: This is one's right mindfulness (Thanissaro 1997a).

The actual techniques of mindfulness have also been explained, both in the translations of Buddha's teachings and in the wealth of modern Western literature on mindfulness meditation. It is helpful to consider both when we assess the value of mindfulness in a journalist's life and work. That demarcation between life and workplace is important. There are proven mental health benefits of mindfulness based meditation, particularly in the treatment of anxiety and depression, well documented by Segal and colleagues (2012). Journalists, like professionals in many other fast-paced and high-stress careers, might reap the advantages of the therapeutic and relaxation benefits of meditation to simply give themselves some "time out" after a busy and stressful day in the newsroom or in the field. That is certainly one use of some of the techniques, although some would argue the same benefits might be gained from the pursuit of hobbies and pastimes, quiet contemplation within the spirituality of one's own religion, or through the solitude of surfing, fishing, walking, or listening to one's favorite music. Each can indeed "clear the mind" and "recharge the batteries," with the accompanying benefits for better focus and productivity during working hours. Many workplaces still allow smokers to take "smoke breaks" of perhaps 15 minutes' duration three or four times per working day. While this accommodates the nicotine addiction of the workers, it also allows them a few moments of rest, relaxation, and reflection. One approach would be to extend this to all workers as routine "mindfulness breaks"—preferably for reflective breathing without the cigarette in the mouth. This is also in accord with workplace and newsroom best practice for ergonomics. For example, the Columbia University Journalism School's Handbook recommends routine stretch and relax breaks from extended periods on the computer (Columbia University, 2011). Such rest periods could easily incorporate a few minutes of contemplative breathing and meditation exercises to aid reflection and focus.

In *Maha-satipatthana Sutta*: "The Great Frames of Reference" (Thanissaro 2000), the Buddha details the four foundations of mindfulness, which have been summarized well by Henepola Gunaratana (2012). Many of the elements therein have application only to a personal regime of meditation, which could well be a worthwhile practice for many journalists. However, those detailed here are especially adaptable to the workplace.

As Henepola Gunaratana (2012: 12–14) explains, the four stages of mindfulness are mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and *Dhamma* (teachings/mental qualities). All of this is again interdependent and circular, because mindfulness of the *Dhamma* invokes all of the Buddha's other teachings, including those we have examined in this book.

The *Maha-satipatthana Sutta* is a lengthy teaching, going into considerable detail for monks on the achievement of right mindfulness. In it, the Buddha works through those four frames of reference systematically by explaining the process of the meditation practice keeping the focus on the breath throughout while contemplating the five hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, sloth and drowsiness, restlessness and anxiety, and uncertainty); the five clinging-aggregates (material form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness); the six internal and external sense media (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and intellect); the seven factors for Awakening/Enlightenment (mindfulness, investigation/analysis of qualities, persistence/energy, joy/rapture, relaxation/serenity, concentration, and equanimity); and finally the Four Noble Truths of stress/suffering, the origination of stress/suffering, the cessation of stress/suffering and the Eightfold Path to its cessation. He concludes by asserting that anyone who worked for seven years (or even seven days) to develop these four frames of reference would achieve *Nibbana* (Thanissaro 2000).

The first aspect of the "body" dimension of mindfulness of the body mentioned by the Buddha in the *Maha-satipatthana Sutta* was mindfulness of the breath. Breathing techniques have a long and rich tradition throughout Asian cultures, especially within the yogic, Hindu, and Buddhist practices. This focus on the breath is something almost absent in Western culture, and journalists have much to learn about being conscious of, and focusing upon, breathing in a range of workplace contexts.

The Buddha is said to have addressed mindfulness of breathing in his *Anapanasati Sutta* to monks. There, he spoke of the "great fruit," "great benefit" of the "mindfulness of in-and-out breathing" which, he said, "brings the four frames of reference to their culmination" (Thanissaro 2006). The focus on the in-and-out motion of the breath, centered upon a particular thought or feeling, is a common entry point to meditation, and sometimes an end in itself. In the *Anapanasati Sutta* the Buddha explained the first step is to breathe in and out, noticing the length of the breath. A monk should then train himself to focus his breathing on sensitivity to the entire body, to calming the body, then to feelings of rapture then pleasure, to mental processes and their calming, then to the mind—its satisfying, steadying,

and releasing—and finally upon inconstancy, dispassion, cessation, and relinquishment (Thanissaro 2006). A journalist could find value in several elements of this process—from the pausing to think about the duration of a single breath for calming purposes, followed by a self-assessment of thoughts, perspectives and feelings about the story or matter at hand, including breaths to acknowledge the changing nature of things, the separation of the journalist's ego from the story, and breaths devoted to the implications of the story for those it might impact upon, from the individual who might suffer through their actions being exposed through to others who might benefit by learning from that person's experience. Thinking about those thoughts might bring clarity to decisions related to the story—suitable priorities, whom to interview, what to check, questions to be asked, and how the facts might best be presented. Recording those thoughts—in a note or audio form—might offer a retrospective justification for the journalist's actions if they are later called to account. Such metacognition can even become evidence in some court proceedings resulting from a story to demonstrate a journalist has acted in good faith in making "reasonable inquiries," even if the publisher cannot prove the truth of the reputation-damaging material, as is the case with criteria for the qualified privilege defense in some jurisdictions (see "Reynolds' Case" 1999).

The Buddha proposed that monks should develop mindfulness of the body as if their lives depended upon it, using the parable of a man who finds himself in the midst of an excited crowd watching a beauty queen singing and dancing. He is ordered to carry a bowl filled with oil on his head through the excited crowd, under threat of beheading by a sword-wielding man if one drop of oil should spill from the bowl.

> The bowl filled to the brim with oil stands for mindfulness immersed in the body. Thus you should train yourselves: "We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, hand it the reins and take it as a basis, give it a grounding, steady it, consolidate it, and undertake it well." That is how you should train yourselves.
>
> (Thanissaro 1997c)

This training proposed for monks has similarities to that proposed by Schön for professionals to "reflect in practice," while not quite as risky of course. Schön wrote that the educational preparation of professionals like architects, nurses, and teachers should be so grounded in their problem-solving capacities that they should be able to draw upon the cognitive skills developed in their training to solve new problems as they arise in the professional context.

While many journalists might not wish to adopt a meditation regime in their lives, they might at least take on the secular meaning of "being mindful" in their planning and reflection upon their stories. Put simply, a process of reflecting briefly upon the ramifications for their sources, audiences,

and other stakeholders of a question, an angle, a phrase, or a shot might better serve the public interest than bulldozing ahead just to make a deadline. Some individuals journalists encounter are notoriously "vulnerable," and the potential implications of a story for such vulnerable groups are worth special reflection. Our Australian Research Council Linkage Project on "Vulnerability and the News Media" (Pearson et al. 2010) pointed to those who were still in shock after a news event, along with children, people with a disability or mental illness, and the aged and indigenous as especially vulnerable to news intrusion and exploitation. Some even require a journalist to take advice on whether they have obtained "informed consent" before engaging in an interview, capturing images, or using quotes in a story.

This is not a call for a weaker form of journalism. Even the Dalai Lama has acknowledged that hard truths sometimes must be told:

> Depending on the context, a failure to respond with strong measures, thereby allowing the aggressors to continue their destructive behavior, could even make you partially responsible for the harm they continue to inflict.
>
> (Dalai Lama 2011: 59)

This approach is quite compatible with the peace journalism model proposed by Lynch (2010: 543). Wallace (2007: 113) describes the cultivation of compassion as "like a silken thread that runs through and connects all the pearls of Buddhist meditative practices."

> Moreover, a common Buddhist adage states that compassion without wisdom is bondage, and wisdom without compassion is another form of bondage. Thus, these qualities must be cultivated together, and empathy is a common root of both.
>
> (Wallace 2007: 114)

This insight is core to the notion of mindful journalism because it is the impact of one's actions upon others, and the potential for harm of one's speech and actions that underscores mindful communication in the legitimate public interest.

Johns (2013: 3) details five stages of reflection for a practitioner, on a scale from "doing reflection" through to "being reflective." First on the scale, at the "doing reflection" end of the continuum is "reflection-on-experience," where a practitioner reflects on a professional situation that has occurred in hindsight to help guide future practice. The second, "reflection-in-action," is where the professional steps back from the unfolding situation and reframes it to help reach the optimum outcome. The third, the "internal supervisor," involves the professional engaging in a self-dialogue while engaging in an action or while in conversation with another "as a process of making sense and response." For example, a

journalist might have this separate conversation *about* an interview and its direction in the *midst of* that interview. The fourth, "reflection-within-the-moment," is where a professional "is mindful of his pattern of thinking, feeling, and responding within the unfolding moment whilst holding the intent to realize desirable practice." The final stage is what Johns (2013: 3) actually labels "mindfulness," and describes as "seeing things for what they are without distortion." Clearly, each of these has application for journalism practice at numerous stages of newsgathering, production, and dissemination.

Johns suggests practitioners actually diarize or journal their reflection experiences to reinforce the practice of reflection in action. He writes:

> Through writing and reflecting on practice, practitioners learn to pay increasing attention to self within practice. They become more aware of patterns of thinking, feeling and responding to situations. They become more curious and intentional. In time, with discipline, reflection becomes a natural attribute. The ultimate expression of this awareness is mindfulness; seeing self clearly at all times without distortion.
>
> (Johns, 2013: 3)

Schön (1983) viewed reflection-in-action as a means by which a professional could even lift the standard of that occupation by striving to improve practice:

> Through reflection, a practitioner can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of specialized practice and can make new sense of situations of uncertainty or uniqueness.
>
> (Schön 1983: 61)

As Sheridan Burns (2013: 46–47) warns, "critical reflection" in journalism "should never be confused with the personal navel-gazing journalists sometimes indulge in at a bar at the end of a long week."

> It is not about indulging in guilt or defensiveness about action already taken. It is an active commitment in journalists to scrutinize their own actions, exposing the processes and underlying values in their work while they are doing it.
>
> (Sheridan Burns 2013: 46–47)

It seems Sheridan Burns envisages fruitful professional reflection as being further up the Johns (2013) scale of reflection than the entry level retrospective reflection-on-experience. While she does not explore the Buddhist approaches to mindfulness, her notion of effective reflective practice presumes decision making in action further along that continuum.

The Path of Right Concentration (*Samma Samadhi*)

The Path of Right Concentration (*samma samadhi*) consists of the attainment of the four preliminary stages of contemplation (*jhanas*) that culminate in the development of unprejudiced perception or equanimity with regard to what is perceived. This is also considered a middle standpoint in the way in which we perceive ourselves in the world. Such unprejudiced perception is certainly a quality worthy of cultivating in a journalist.

The Buddha is said to have defined Right Concentration to the monks as consisting of four "developments" leading to:

- "a pleasant abiding in the here and now"
- "attainment of knowledge and vision"
- "mindfulness and alertness"
- "ending of the effluents" (the mental "effluents" of sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance) (Thanissaro 1997d)

When we look further into that teaching we find considerable guidance for journalists because the implication is that through Right Concentration they might reach new heights in their work by enjoying the moment, gaining knowledge and insight, being mindful and alert, and avoiding distraction, dogma, and ignorance. The Buddha elaborated on each, with our focus here on the first two of the four:

(1) And what is the development of concentration that, when developed and pursued, leads to a pleasant abiding in the here and now? There is the case where a monk—quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskilful qualities—enters and remains in the first jhana: rapture and pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts and evaluations, he enters and remains in the second jhana: rapture and pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought and evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, and alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters and remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, "Equanimous and mindful, he has a pleasant abiding." With the abandoning of pleasure and pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation and distress—he enters and remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. . . .

(2) And what is the development of concentration that . . . leads to the attainment of knowledge and vision? There is the case where a monk attends to the perception of light and is resolved on the perception of daytime [at any hour of the day]. Day [for him] is the same as night, night is the same as day. By means of an awareness open and unhampered, he develops a brightened mind (Thanissaro 1997d).

Elite sports performers and top classical musicians sometimes speak of being "in the zone" when they are focused with a clarity of purpose on achieving their record-breaking or optimal performance. Smith and Novak (2003: 48) suggest a series of concentration exercises, sometimes involving attention to the breath, are built into the preliminary steps for meditation styles.

> Initial attempts at concentration are inevitably shredded by distractions; slowly, however, attention becomes sharper, more stable, more sustained.
>
> (Smith & Novak 2003: 48)

However, the quote from the Buddha above tells us the step of Right Concentration involves much more than a trained ability to "concentrate" in the lay English sense of the term. While it incorporates that to an extent, there is also a strong ethical dimension evident. It invokes a sense of joy in doing one's work properly. In fact, the four *jhanas* mentioned in the first development have strong parallels with the famous "courage is grace under fire" quote from Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. There, the main character—the aging Santiago—battles a marlin with respect and honor in the context of his affinity with the sea and the dignity of the fish. It is an honest battle, and when sharks deprive him of his prey he accepts that as an outcome over which he had no control but which could not take away the reality of the ethical contest in which he and the fish had competed and he had won (Hemingway 1952).

It is such Right Concentration—"grace under fire"—that is required of consummate professionals in the midst of covering a major news event. This is when the mindful journalist might find himself or herself in "the zone," with enhanced abilities to weigh all the relevant professional and ethical implications of their stories from the perspectives of all key stakeholders and the wider audience. This is central to the mindfulness and concentration techniques, as Wallace points out:

> The overarching theme of all these practices is the cultivation of a multiperspectival view of the self, others, and the intersubjective relations between them. The techniques are explicitly designed to yield insights into these facets of the lived world, but they all have a strong bearing on the cultivation of compassion and other wholesome affective states, without which the cultivation of wisdom alone is said to be one more form of bondage.
>
> (Wallace 2007: 118)

Right Concentration is not independent of Right Mindfulness. It is interdependent to the extent that going into that "zone" can be approached mindfully and can allow for the ongoing conversations with oneself outlined

in the Right Mindfulness discussion above (Johns 2013: 3). The mindful journalist might find the investment of all of the earlier steps in the path can unite simultaneously, in accord with their other professional demands of news angle, accuracy, verification, and attribution—all in the context of a sense of clarity and concentration which allows them to elevate their decision making above the chaos of a newsroom or breaking news event.

Gunaratana (2012: 156–157) describes concentration as "like a muscle that strengthens as you exercise it." He outlines several techniques for developing concentration, such as reflection upon the motivations for the concentration practice; keeping in mind the present moment; and remaining ardent and alert. He explains that concentration and mindfulness work together as a team to "purify the mind and help keep the hindrances suppressed" (p. 158).

THE CONSUMMATE MINDFUL JOURNALIST

The journalist who has implemented the three steps of the mental cultivation dimension of the *magga*—Right Effort (*samma vayama*), Right Mindfulness (*samma sati*) and Right Concentration (*samma samadhi*)—into his/her practice could indeed be described as the "consummate mindful journalist." This is because the interdependence of the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path makes each of these steps inclusive of the other five, and we have been reminded of this through the Buddha's teachings discussed in this chapter. There are uncanny parallels with the discussion of "reflective practice" we have explored in the educational literature over the past three decades—particularly given the Buddha's development of such concepts dates back more than two millennia.

The journalist who has mastered all of these techniques at a spiritual level would be a rare individual indeed: an "enlightened" one. However, if we can build training in right effort, mindfulness, and concentration into journalism education and professional training we might at least achieve the lay English meaning of "enlightened" as we work towards the development of the "mindful journalist"—a reporter, editor, or even citizen journalist who is rational, progressive, free-thinking, open-minded, tolerant, educated, liberal, informed, instructed and edified. If we achieved at least this, then the quality of reportage in the interests of all stakeholders would be assured.

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10 Wisdom in Journalism

Kalinga Seneviratne

Synopsis: This chapter covers the *panna* (wisdom) dimension of Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path as applicable to "mindful journalism." In the Buddhist context, *panna* is the right understanding of the Four Noble Truths—or the real nature of cyclical existence—gained phenomenologically through one's own personal experience. The *panna* dimension covers the mastery of two paths: *samma ditthi* (Right Understanding/View) and *samma sankappa* (Right Thought/Conception), which we have already discussed in preceding chapters (see Chapters 1 and 7 in particular). In secular parlance, *samma ditthi* simply means the wisdom of seeing the world as it really is: that is, uncovering the (Buddhist) truth about the link between *dukkha* and existence, its causation, its cessation, and the path to assure its cessation. In simple language, *samma sankappa* means the cultivation of three forms of thought: thoughts conducive to selfless renunciation or detachment; thoughts of love and compassion; and thoughts of nonviolence toward all beings. Mindful journalists should note that the Buddha placed these threefold thoughts as part of the wisdom dimension thereby giving a unique twist to the secular meaning of *panna*.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND[1]

When applying the principles of the eightfold *magga* to the practice of mindful journalism, it is essential for practitioners to keep in mind the systemic nature of the eight pathways. None is independent. All are interconnected, interdependent, and interactive with one another. Consequently, one cannot pick and choose to focus on one of the three dimensions at a time.

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana (2013) asserts that human happiness lies in the seeker's disciplined journey through each of the eight pathways that converge toward the ultimate destination of Enlightenment and *nibbana*—the mental state of nonexistence or *sunyata* (emptiness), which one can potentially reach in "his/her" current lifetime (see Chapter 1). However, some analysts believe that the *panna* dimension, encompassing the two pathways

of understanding and thought, is the most arduous to complete because it subsumes the other two dimensions (Jayasooriya 2005).

If that is so, this chapter cannot deal with the *panna* dimension alone in its relevance to journalism without touching on the other two dimensions—*sila* and *samadhi*—as well. Moreover, as Bhante Walpola Rahula (1959: 49) points out, the Buddhist concept of *panna* (wisdom) also goes well beyond the secular meaning of that term by adding the elements of detachment, compassion, and nonviolence toward all beings. Thus, it is obvious that a discussion on the applicability of the *panna* dimension alone to secular journalism would constitute an unsatisfactory exercise. An understanding of all elements of the *magga* is necessary for the elevation of news from a commodity to a social good.

To connect the roots of unwholesome life with greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), as the Buddha found, the journalist must first investigate the illusion identified in conventional truth as "self," which in terms of absolute truth is merely a composite of the Five Aggregates of attachment. (See the excursus to Chapter 6 to understand the Buddhist concept of truth or *sacca*. We have already discussed the relationship of the Five Aggregates—which are matter (*rupa*) and the four aggregates comprising the mind (*nama*)—to the *tilakkhana* of *dukkha*, *anatta*, and *anicca* in the first three chapters.)

The Buddhist View of Mind

Sooth to say that Buddhism focuses on the mind, which it considers to be the source of all suffering, as well as the wellspring of all joy inasmuch as mind precedes all actions. Only a cultivated mind can understand the absolute truth about reality: the *dukkha* associated with inconstancy (*anicca*) and asoulity (*anatta*). The four intangible aggregates of the Five Aggregates, shared by all "beings," tempted them all toward the roots of *dukkha*. Buddha identified these four as *viññāṇa* (consciousness), *sanna* (perception), *vedana* (feeling), and *sankhara* (volitional formations/thoughts).

A "being" had a modicum of control over the aggregates through "its" mind consciousness that it could use to extricate "itself" from the aggregates by following the *magga*. The Buddha called upon everyone to discover the absolute reality by starting with investigating "himself/herself"—the *vipassana* technique of meditation that the Buddha used to understand the absolute truth about reality as briefly sketched in this section.

This chapter asserts that the current state of global journalism can reshape itself into a more wholesome enterprise if it accepts and applies the Buddhist concept of "wisdom" encompassing Right Thought (*sankappa*) and Right View (*ditthi*) to:

- accommodate Eastern thinking on detachment from avarice and greed, loving-compassion for all beings, and structural nonviolence toward nature and the environment

- reflect the world as it really is by deploying the variety of mediatized communication to reconcile and interpret the "quantum" differences between the invisible absolute truth (insights gained from mind cultivation through Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration) and the visible conventional truth (findings based on measuring and testing "illusionary" matter)

We *kalyana-mitta* (advisers) must lead the way in exposing the failure of conventional journalism to recognize the power of mind-generated energy in relation to matter-generated energy. A major reason for this might well be traditional journalism's deference to West-centric philosophy and science. Although Western thinkers and neuropsychologists disagreed widely about the nature and function of mind consciousness—or even about the existence of such a thing—journalism has virtually ignored the Buddhist concept of mind that withstood the challenges of Western science and epistemology for more than 25 centuries.

Neither the famous psychologists Sigmund Freud and William James nor the important philosophers of mind like Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Heidegger, Searle, and Dennett succeeded in finding a satisfactory solution to the mind–body problem, which considers whether mind is somehow separate from physical existence (dualism and idealism) (Kügler 2012). Thus, the relationship of mind to the brain and the physical nervous system remains unresolved because of the reluctance of the skeptics to concede what the Buddha discovered through "mind power" or the *samadhi* dimension of his *magga*.

Adopting the Mindful Approach

Mindful journalism requires the practitioner to work within the framework of the broader meaning of wisdom that we have already explained. This also means the adoption of Buddha's insight (*vipassana*) meditation as a method of personally verifying the absolute truth of reality pertaining to any or all phenomena. As Bhante Gunaratana (2002: 34) explains, "Essentially, insight meditation is a practice of investigative personal discovery."

Investigation is an integral part of journalism. What the Buddha might advise the mindful journalist would be to investigate "himself/herself" first to understand the absolute truth before "s/he" ventured to investigate others so that the journalist could apply the "wisdom" so gained to reporting with detachment, compassion, and nonviolence reflecting Right Understanding and Right Thought (subsuming the three components of the *sila* dimension). Buddha's advice to journalists might have been: "Don't just accept somebody else's word. See for yourself." This advice is consistent with what the Buddha told the Kalamas when he exhorted them not to rely on "repeated hearing" of what others might have said, or upon tradition, rumor, scripture, supposition, axiom, questionable reasoning, bias, or the

supposed status or role of another, but to form one's own judgment after independent inquiry and assessment (Soma Thera 1994). Bhante Gunaratana (2002: 32–33) clarifies that *vipassana* meditation means the cultivation of the mind that leads to insight and full understanding. He says that it provides "a special way of seeing life . . . and [to] train ourselves to see reality exactly as it is." He adds that *vipassana* "is a process of discovery, a participatory investigation in which you observe your own experiences while participating in them."

Mindful journalists should also adopt the five communication principles that the Buddha mentioned in various *suttas* in the *Anguttara Nikaya* (see Chapter 7): presenting the message in a carefully planned method of communication; clarifying all points in a message; presenting the message with compassion, without praising oneself or degrading others and without any intention of gaining profit.

USING WISDOM TO REVIVE JOURNALISM

Mindful journalism as we propose it owes a debt to the Burmese-Indian Buddhist meditation master S.N. Goenka, who made *vipassana* a global movement. Hart (2012: 19) quotes Goenka as follows: "A life without wisdom is a life of illusion . . . Being sensitive to the suffering of others does not mean that you must become sad yourself. Instead you should remain calm and balanced, so that you could act to alleviate their suffering."

Implicit in this quote, when applied to journalism, is an expectation that the news media could play a constructive social and political role in society premised on the ground that the press mirrors the interests of the public. But right across the globe, including Asia where the government control of media is endemic, mainstream media as a whole have become increasingly commercially oriented, thereby vitiating news into a commodity. Thus, entertainment or entertainers have become news, with gossip, slander, and sensationalism dominating news reporting.

The challenge of mindful journalism is to apply the virtues of *panna* to produce a secular brand of journalism that is devoid of commercial contamination, inherently based on *tanha* (craving) and *upadana* (attachment).

Controlling Emotions to Gain Insights

Journalism involves observation, investigation, analysis, and communication. The success of perfecting these skills depends on the practitioner's ability to control and guide his/her emotions—a central theme of Buddhist teachings:

> We first have to learn how negative emotions and behaviors are harmful to us and how positive emotions are helpful. And we must realize

> how these negative emotions are not only very bad and harmful to one personally, but harmful to society and the future of the world as well.
>
> (Dalai Lama 1999: 25–26)

Thus, it is important to explore how to reverse the negative direction toward which journalism practice is heading so as to restore its originally intended role as a more socially responsible institution.

The Dalai Lama goes on to say that if someone seeks happiness, s/he "should seek the causes that give rise to it," and if someone doesn't "desire suffering, then what you should do is to ensure that the causes and conditions that would give rise to it no longer arise." Contemporary journalists should apply the doctrine of dependent origination (the PS Model elucidated in Chapter 4) and summarized in simple language by the Dalai Lama to assess the current state of *dukkha* associated with their calling.

It is well known that most news reporting, both in the West and the East, emphasizes the negative and the sensational: the attributes that sell. It tends to entertain the audience or readers, sometimes in a perverse way. The issue is: Are we creating conflicts, and hence suffering, by focusing on the negatives? And, could journalists play a role by focusing on more positive aspects of events, and mindfully steer reporting toward creating the condition that could help resolve conflicts rather than fuel them?

A View from the Buddha's Birthplace

Internationally renowned Nepali journalist Kunda Dixit, in a recent talk at his alma mater St. Xavier's College in Kathmandu (in Nepal, the country where the Buddha was born), made these observations about the practice of journalism in his country in the context of the civil war there between Maoist rebels and government forces:

> I soon found out that covering a war in your own country is completely different from covering other people's wars. Unlike war correspondents covering battles, we had to learn to look for the roots of conflict. The seeds of war are laid in peacetime; the precursors of violence lie in prevailing inequality, injustice and intolerance. We overlook the visible faults in ourselves but spend endless hours dissecting the imagined shortcomings of fellow-Nepalese. Just look at politicians, they can't say or do anything that gives us hope—all they do day in and day out is run each other down. And we in the media spread the cynicism by treating politics as one big endless quarrel. This obsession with finding fault is self-perpetuating, self-fulfilling and self-defeating. It is this refusal to see any goodness in our own kind that I think is at the heart of Nepal's present crisis.
>
> (Dixit 2013)

He pointed out a number of examples from Nepal, where when things get tough, people with integrity and commitment come forward to help the community and especially the less fortunate and the destitute. These examples hardly get reported in the local media.

Applying the Four Noble Truths

The search for a Buddhist-oriented journalism should start with the Four Noble Truths, the foundation of the Buddhist philosophy.

As Gunaratne (2009) argues, the Four Noble Truths concede that everything is subjected to ongoing change (*anicca*), the first of the three characteristics of existence. Therefore, the mindful journalist should assume the role of constructive change agent rather than that of the defender of the status quo. This could pave the way to the understanding of the reasons for the existence of *dukkha* (sorrow/suffering), and dissuade him/her from using journalism to knowingly promote attachment to desire. The focus of stories filed by a mindful journalist could discourage conspicuous consumption as a means to human well-being and look for story angles that reflect obtaining maximum well-being with the minimum of consumption. Mindful journalism should convey the idea that people matter and economic growth figures must be related to it.

Panna *and People-Centric Journalism*

As explained earlier and elsewhere in this volume, the practitioner of mindful journalism must embrace the Buddhist concept of "wisdom" to play a socially productive role.

In an essay 'A Buddhist Social Ethic for a New Century' in the book *Facing the Future. Four Essays*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American-born Buddhist monk, noted the statistics on poverty and mortality from preventable diseases, and weapons trade in "a world bent on unlimited economic growth on a planet whose finite resources are rapidly dwindling" (Bodhi 2000: 8). He went on to discuss how engaged Buddhists should respond to these problems:

> The first principle that the Buddha's teachings gives us in responding to these problems is a methodological one: not to rush to foregone conclusions but to investigate the underlying causes at all levels, and not to stop until we have reached the deepest roots.
>
> (Bodhi 2000: 9)

Tarzie Vittachi, who founded the Asian Press Union in the 1960s and is credited with having coined the term "development journalism," argued in a 1987 interview with UNTV that when Asian journalists came for training in economic reporting they did not want to be called "economic reporters"

but "development journalists," because economic reporting was a matter of development reporting. Vittachi noted:

> Unfortunately, this phrase was got hold of by various governments who restricted the meaning of that phrase to reporting the good things that happen in the country and ignore the bad things . . . Development reporting is a critically appreciative analysis—not a hostile one—of the development process that takes place in your country.
>
> (Vittachi 1987)

One can interpret this as reporting on events as if the people mattered rather than based on economic growth figures and other statistics periodically put out by banks, development agencies, and governments. It is also reporting in the spirit of free inquiry. A journalist could report in a "critically appreciative" manner if s/he understands and acknowledges the multidimensional aspects of the development process, while critically examining it.

The Buddha's advice to the Kalamas (Soma Thera 1994) should be the guiding principle of a people-centered mindful journalism, where research, investigation, and analysis should take precedence over merely reporting an event based on who said what and when. Guruge (1965) quotes Anagarika Dharmapala repeating the Buddha and asking people not to rely on holy men alone for authority.

The "holy men" Dharmapala referred to above could be interpreted in today's environment as bankers, so-called experts from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank, or many of the multinational financial institutions whose words and economic analyses are often quoted by the media, while the voices of people affected by their policies are missing in the stories.

Reporting Human Rights, Democracy, and Corruption

Reporting on human rights and democracy are two areas that need deeper thinking about root causes. Mindful journalists need to analyze, dissect, and review the proclivity of West-centric media to bundle human rights and multiparty democracy in a "one-size fits all" formula. They could bring in the Eastern principles of harmony, consultation, and consensus rather than superficially focusing on human rights and democracy. This means going beyond conventional truth in a deeper journey to discover ideational/absolute truth and at least getting to the point of intuitive truth. Such a journey might even reveal that corruption and money-politics are endemic in putative democracies throughout the world. "Why [do] the media think election is so important? North Korea has elections. China also has elections. Why [are the media] so fixed about an unelected body?" asked Termsak Chalermpalanupap, the lead researcher for political and security affairs at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

He was responding to my press query in early 2014 when Thai anti-government protestors were asking for a People's Council to be elected to draft a new constitution that could ban vote-buying in Thailand's elections (Seneviratne 2014). "Winning elections is not the only important point of democracy. A more important part is how elected representatives use their power in the House (parliament) and in the Senate to serve national and public interest," he said.

To investigate and analyze money-politics and corruption, a mindful journalist does not need to go into the most complex Buddhist teachings. There are key lessons in the *panca sila* (five precepts), the basic code of conduct for lay Buddhists that includes principles on refraining from stealing, killing, lying, harmful social misbehavior, and intoxication. All these are clearly evident in corrupt practices—be they in politics, business, or one's daily professional life.

To really come to grips with such a story, a journalist has to practice *samma ditthi* and *samma sankappa* at a deeper level. One might argue that modern journalism schools teach the importance of researching a story and analyzing it with the assembled research material and the interviews. True, but a journalist has to go beyond merely having the skills in research methodology and content analysis. S/he needs to bring in moral, ethical, and even spiritual values into his/her research methodologies.

Another loophole in mainstream journalism relates to how the international media have reported human rights—particularly the developments in Sri Lanka since the government defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the battlefield in May 2009. Many international media outlets simply viewed the issue in oversimplified terms as one group (the Tamils as a repressed minority) and the other group (the Sinhalese as a powerful majority), without understanding the roots of the conflict that goes back to British colonial rule. No single conflict can be reported mindfully through such a simplistic frame or lens. This is what Galtung (1996) identifies as war journalism, or what we call reporting without right understanding and right thought. In their study of conflict reporting, Maslog, Lee, and Kim (2006) found that foreign wire copy or the stories originating from Western news agencies tend to emphasize war, conflict, and violence. This is where *panna* comes into play and especially the right understanding approach to analyze the roots of the suffering and the path to eradicating it. Much of it is rooted in colonial history, cultural identities, and the fear of the "other," which is not necessarily based on numbers (that is, that the numerically superior are a powerful political entity).

The Market Dogma and Economic Reporting

A great challenge for a mindful journalist is to dismantle the norms of economic reporting, be it local economic issues or those dealing with the global economy, especially international trade agreements.

In December 2013, Singapore's *Straits Times* carried a front-page news item headed "WTO Seals Landmark Bali Package" (Hussain 2013). The article followed a familiar theme of global media reports in the past two decades on World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings, both of which serve to open up domestic markets for multinational corporations, rationalized as aiming to free up world trade and create employment. The article hailed the deal hammered out by trade ministers in the Indonesian resort island of Bali that claimed to add an estimated $1 trillion a year to a struggling global economy and create 21 million jobs, mainly in developing countries (Hussain 2013). Similar figures have been quoted by trade ministers and WTO officials for the past 20 years at the end of WTO and APEC meetings, where deals are hammered out behind closed doors.

The *Straits Times* report only quoted government, WTO, and chamber of commerce officials saying similar things but using different words. No civil society spokesman was quoted on why they thought it might marginalize the world's poor, nor there was any analysis of its impact on the people. They tend to talk about "economies" rather than people.

While these deals have been stuck at regular intervals and hailed as such with almost identical figures, over the same period we have gone from one major economic crisis to another, such as the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and the near collapse of Western economies in 2008. In the meantime, people have suffered with job cuts in public service, the slashing of welfare payments and government subsidies to farmers, and the bankrupting of small retailers—who have toiled at family businesses for generations—with the opening up of the local retail industry to foreign chain stores. When the big banks and major companies fail, governments come up with multibillion-dollar bailouts, and the corporate media remain indifferently mute when people demonstrate against such bailouts with public money, such as the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests that fizzled out due to lack of sustained corporate mainstream media coverage and sympathetic reporting of the peoples' voices. This is in sharp contrast to the coverage the tea party movement got in the American corporate media. Both these movements came into being around the same time, the former having a liberal inclination and a strong message of disdain for the rich, and the latter having a conservative platform advocating tax cuts and small government. Thus, it is no surprise why OWS did not get the sustained exposure in the influential corporate media in America except for an initial media frenzy. In a May 2014 article based on declassified documents, the *New York Times* reported that there was extensive surveillance and infiltration of OWS by U.S. government authorities (Moynihan 2014).

This brings us to the question of whether the existing dominant corporate media model (not only in the United States but across the world) is inadequate in addressing the three poisons emphasized in Buddhism: *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (delusion). Issues of economics need to be analyzed and reported from these three perspectives.

THE *PANNA* OF REPORTING ON SUFFICIENCY ECONOMICS

A Buddhist approach to economics reporting would need some familiarity with Buddhist economic theories such as "sufficiency economics." It was at the height of the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997, which started in Thailand, that the Thai king came up with a Buddhist approach to eradication of suffering caused by the crisis (UNDP 2007). Sufficiency economics, however, was not a new idea. In the 1970s, British economist E. F. Schumacher wrote the famous book *Small Is Beautiful*, which was based on Buddhist ideas on economics (Schumacher 1973).

King Bhumibol Adulyadej's "sufficiency economics" model embraces the three pillars of Buddhism—*dana* (generosity), *sila* (morality) and *bhavana* (meditation/concentration)—and is based on the Buddhist principle of the Middle Path, the avoidance of extremes (of greed). In its report, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hailed Thailand's new "Middle Path" development model as a key to fighting poverty, coping with economic risk and promoting corporate social responsibility (UNDP 2007).

UNDP describes sufficiency economics as a set of tools and principles that help communities, corporations, and governments to manage globalization—maximizing its benefits and minimizing its costs—by making wise decisions that promote sustainable development, equity, and resilience against shocks. Thus, the report says that the sufficiency economy is a much needed survival strategy in a world of economic uncertainty and environmental threats.

Joana Merlin-Scholtes, UNDP's resident representative in Thailand, asserted in the preface to the report: "The King's philosophy of 'Sufficiency Economy' has great global relevance during these times of economic uncertainties, global warming and unsustainable use of natural resources. It offers a more balanced and sustainable path of development—a much-needed alternative to the unsustainable road the world is currently travelling down" (UNDP 2007: v). But neither the Thai media nor the international media have done much to analyze or enhance this model, especially as to how it could help developing countries facing similar economic woes and development problems to develop a people-centered economic model. They have often dismissed it as utopian or backward (Swearer 2011).

Sulak Sivaraksa, Thai social critic and cofounder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, describes the globalization model promoted by the likes of WTO, APEC, and the Western media giants as "free-market fundamentalism" and a "demonic religion imposing materialistic values." "The term modernization is in fact, racially coded; its precursor was Europeanization," Sivaraksa (2009: 10) writes.

Interestingly, the mainstream journalism paradigm and the Buddhist teachings both recognize that news is *anicca* because the elements of a "newsworthy" event change every moment. The two approaches differ to the extent

that the news paradigm treats the event as a fixed entity whereas the Buddhist approach sees it as a continuing process, which becomes increasingly complex as it reciprocally interacts with other factors (Gunaratne 2009, 2011).

The coverage of the Asian tsunami illustrates this connection between the news paradigm and the Buddhist concept of *anicca*. The global media organizations gave the tsunami intensive coverage for the first few days, because it was a sudden event and there were dramatic pictures available, well suited to television news. They essentially produced news that sells, by increasing their ratings for the news broadcasts. But the rebuilding process, the rebuilding of not only the destroyed infrastructure but also the lives of the people who were affected by it, is a long, drawn-out process that needs reporting. For the most part, the global media lost interest in the story after a few days and they moved onto other events, revisiting it on the anniversary of the event each year—which usually refers back to pictures from the original event (Seneviratne 2006).

Reporting the rebuilding process involved a whole range of complex issues, which also touched on the ethical conduct of relief agencies, government officials, and even donor agencies; the relevance of the rebuilding process to rebuilding lives of those affected; corruption within rebuilding agencies and governments; the unethical conduct of foreign evangelical groups; and so on. These are issues that have simmered on for years that need reporting (Seneviratne 2006).

Development reporting presents unique challenges for journalists who may not be well prepared for this role by modern journalism schools, which tend to emphasize economic indicators as the yardstick of development reporting rather than the root causes of suffering and the processes needed to address these. Thus the major task of a Buddhist approach to development reporting is well covered by the principles of the Four Noble Truths, the spirit of free inquiry enshrined in the *Kalama Sutra*, and the principles of the *panca sila*.

American Buddhist journalist Doug McGill (2008) argues that Buddhism allows the concept of a "journalism of healing" that makes journalists aware of suffering in society and directs them to alleviate suffering. Their responsibility would thus be to help individuals and society heal the pain caused by injustice, hatred, racism, ostracism, and violence. It means that instead of asking the question of what is the truth and to what purpose the truth is told, Buddhist journalists should measure every word and story they produce with the question of whether it helps cease individual and social suffering.

APPLYING *VIPASSANA* TO CONTEMPORARY REPORTING

As already pointed out, the Buddhist approach to journalism should be people oriented. Its focus should be on suffering, the reasons for such suffering, the need to address the root causes that leads to such suffering,

and the minimization of suffering. Reporting about measures for poverty alleviation—a jargon often used by development agencies and funding bodies like the World Bank—is about addressing the root causes of suffering. A Buddhist approach to reporting such issues needs to address the shortcomings of mainstream journalism especially in promoting greed, delusion, and egoism (such as in celebrity news). While doing so mindful journalism may also find common ground with mainstream media in exposing corruption, promoting environmental protection and alleviation of poverty.

These are areas where mindful (*vipassana*) journalism and mainstream (Western) journalism could work in alliance. Whereas the mainstream media are good at breaking news stories or spot news reporting, the very nature of mindful journalism calls for developing expertise in better-researched analytical stories, which could put the spot news story in a better context. As mentioned earlier, using the principles of the *panca sila* could bring in moral and ethical values to investigative journalism practices.

Let us now look at how to apply the principles of mindful journalism to some contemporary news stories.

Global Financial Crisis

The global financial crisis is a classic case of where greed and delusion have got the better of mankind. The commercially driven mainstream journalism focused on how to save the banks and the economy, and backed the use of public funds to save banks that were "too big to fail." Their coverage did not give enough attention to the root causes—sheer greed and delusion—that gave rise to the crisis. As U.S. District Judge Jed S. Rakoff questioned in a hard-hitting article in the *New York Review of Books* in 2014, more than five years after the crisis hit not a single high-level bank executive had been prosecuted for any fraud (Rakoff 2014). Also it must be pointed out that international reporting has given scant coverage to how austerity measures introduced by governments to cut public funding (to help bail out banks) were creating widespread suffering to people, especially in the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. Mindful journalists need to focus on how to reduce greed and delusion of materialistic progress, and look at alternative economic models such as the Thai king's idea of a "sufficiency economy" or the "small is beautiful" economic model.

On the same day in May 2014, Singapore's *Straits Times* carried two reports that reflected the flawed principles of economic journalism based on gross domestic product (GDP) figures. The report "Philippines No Longer The Sick Man of Asia: Aquino" (Dancel 2014), mainly based on a speech given by President Benigno Aquino to the World Economic Forum of East Asia, claimed that the GDP of the Philippines had been growing at a rate of more than 7 percent since Aquino came to power in 2010, and that stock

markets and foreign investments had hit record levels. In just one sentence toward the end of the news feature, the report stated: "Critics point out that only 0.01 percent of the population are benefiting from the growth, with the wealth of the 40 richest Filipino families equivalent to 76.5 percent of the GDP increase in 2012" (Dancel 2014).

The above sentence should be the crux of the issue that needs more analysis, and perspectives from the 99.9 percent of the people who are not benefiting from the growth was missing in the story. The report contained no quotes from these people, although it included many quotes from President Aquino's speech and comments from rating agencies and economists from private business research firms.

The Occupy protest movement in the West drew the world's attention to this vast gap in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Protesters complained that those who belonged to the 99 percent of the population badly hit by the crisis did not benefit from the governments' multibillion-dollar bailout packages. The mainstream media gave negligible coverage to their voices. In August 2014—after the Bank of America agreed to a settlement amounting to US$16.7 billion to end state and federal probes into its mortgage bond sales that led to the 2008 financial crisis—Bloomberg moved a story on this huge payout, which was reproduced by Singapore's *Straits Times* with the heading "Sub-prime Saga: What Happens To The Penalties Paid?" Although the heading indicates a social consciousness, the report lacked any analysis of US$7 billion set aside as "soft money," whether or even how this amount may help offer relief to tens of thousands of struggling homeowners and communities affected by the crisis. It only raised this issue in one paragraph, but none of those affected were quoted (*Straits Times*, 2014).

While focusing on people's movements that stem from the grassroots, mindful journalism should include the voices of the labor unions, people's cooperatives, public servants, and critical academics.

An AFP (2014) wire service report published in the *Straits Times* described how the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott was under fire by callers to talk radio for budget cuts. A picture that appeared alongside the article showed a placard carried by a demonstrator that had Abbott's picture with the words "Spends billions on war planes . . . cuts education." The budget cut health and education spending while tightening welfare benefits. But a few weeks before the budget, the Abbott government announced that it would spend $4 billion to purchase eight new military aircraft from the United States, saying the defense of the nation was the government's most important priority. The picture seemed out of place because the article did not mention anything about this purchase and its impact on the government's budget deficit. Mindful journalists should ask questions of the government and its policy makers about how to justify such expenditures (to buy fighter jets) in the midst of harsh cost cutting in areas that are important for the well-being of the community.

Casino Economies

In many Asian countries, establishing casinos (or "gaming industries" as they call it) to fuel GDP growth has become a popular economic path. This includes predominantly Buddhist countries like Cambodia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. The governments now call them "integrated resorts"—giving them an aura of job-creating tourism development, rather than activities that promote gambling, prostitution, and organized crime.

Singapore has had several recent cases where top professionals, including senior public servants, have been charged for corruption—some for stealing millions of dollars from their employers—to help pay gambling debts. Reporters focused on the court cases and the corruption issue rather than analyzing how the gambling addiction (*dukkha*) may have been fuelled by the introduction of the casinos, and what can be done to protect the country's citizens from such addiction.

In Sri Lanka, when Buddhist monks took to the streets to protest against a large casino project promoted as an integrated tourism resort designed to increase the country's tourism revenue, the government viewed them as "troublesome clergy," even though some of them were their own allies. What got lost in all this labeling was the fact that this investment came from a major casino operator in Australia, whose casinos have been blamed for creating huge social problems for lower-income groups for promoting gambling addictions and resulting debts and family breakdowns (Markham & Young 2014).

Mindful journalists should take a critical view of this type of economic model and question its moral values and social ills, which will lead to *dukkha*. The *Siggalovada Sutta* should give good insight into how to develop a Buddhist perspective into reporting such economic and social issues. In his advice to a young man the Buddha explained many social evils could have an impact on one's own life as well as on people around you. He advised him on how not to cheat people, and about ways of earning wealth in a just way without harming others and the society. He listed reasons for social breakdown of society such as alcoholism, addiction to gambling, haunting streets at unfitting times, bad company, and habitual idleness (Piyaratana 2013).

Climatic Change

Living in harmony with nature and the environment is an important area that mindful journalism must focus upon. Many Buddhist discourses address this issue, and it could be a guide to developing story ideas. People living in harmony with nature should get more focus than those who are destroying it in the name of progress. Thus stories on indigenous people, loggers who destroy the environment, lifestyles that reduce the carbon footprints, and consumerist lifestyles that fuel climatic change should all be addressed.

Rather than alarming people about impending gloom and doom, analytical reporting about good practices should become a regular component of climatic change reporting.

We need to look at climatic change reporting through the approach of what is creating the *dukkha*: the negative impact of climatic change. Then we should proceed to trace the remedies that are needed to address the problem, such as right actions, right livelihoods, and so on.

China, aware of the possible environmental damage that could arise because of the rising desire of the middle class to own automobiles, has done much to introduce electric cars, with the aim of having 100 million such cars on the road within a decade (Watts 2009). Sweden has been running a biogas-powered passenger train between Linköping, south of Stockholm, and the Baltic coast city of Västervik, where biogas obtained from decomposing organic matter produces much less carbon than traditional fossil fuel (Bird et al. 2008: 51). Rather than focusing purely on the economics of such technology, a mindful journalist should look at the social dimensions of such technology.

If electric cars are used, how are the batteries being charged? By electricity from a national grid fueled by greenhouse gas–emitting, coal-powered power stations? If biogas is used, is it using plant material that is produced on farmland, which deprives local communities of food sources? Every action has implications for others, deserving deeper levels of reportage.

Another issue that a mindful journalist must be alert to is the carbon trading schemes being mooted by governments and financial institutions in developed countries. Carbon trading schemes could turn out to be bigger scams than the derivatives that brought Western economies to their knees in 2008. The global financial crisis showed that derivatives were not well regulated, and in the case of carbon trading, regulations are practically nonexistent (Seneviratne 2010). A mindful journalist must investigate and analyze whether such carbon trading would deprive communities in developing countries of opportunities to improve their standard of living and condemn them to a subsistence economy. A mindful journalist could examine whether such trading could provide much-needed funds to develop economic models to improve their lifestyles and provide sustainable livelihoods that would be in harmony with the environment and local culture. People in the grassroots communities that are the subject of the carbon trading should be consulted and quoted in such reporting.

Arab Spring and Democratic Revolutions

Mindful journalists must play an important role in covering people's struggles for democratic change, but at the same time should be wary of interest groups that try to manipulate people's aspirations for freedom and change.

The principles enshrined in the *Kalama Sutta* (Soma Thera 1994) and other teachings on freedom of thought and a person's responsibility toward society must be kept in mind when covering such stories.

The transformation of the Arab Spring into an Arab Winter is a good example of how reporters can be swayed by well-funded protest groups that may be running an agenda manipulated by their foreign donors and not grassroots communities (Seneviratne 2012). Western powers in particular now find it useful and cheaper to fund local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to destabilize countries that are not subservient to their economic and geopolitical interests—such as Libya, Iran, Venezuela, Bolivia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Malaysia—rather than sending in their gunboats (or more recently, their missile-firing drones).

It is imperative for mindful journalists, especially in those countries that are targeted, to be aware of the manipulative nature of some NGOs and their funding sources. They need to be able to dissect the claims of bogus NGO spokespersons, who will say whatever the donors want them to, disguised as voices of the people. Here again, mindful journalists need to understand the root cause of the people's grievances (*dukkha*) and what local remedies are needed to address these.

Water Crisis

A mindful journalist has much scope to cover stories on the looming water crisis around the world, and Asia in particular, through the perspective of noncommercialization of water resources, and better resource management to provide water to the people at an affordable rate. Environmental factors that contribute to the water crisis must also be addressed in the spirit of searching for the causes of *dukkha*.

International financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have been funding projects in developing countries to privatize the water supply systems to poor communities and rural farmers—projects disguised as making water available to the poor.

In 2000, Thai rice farmers staged huge demonstrations at an Asian Development Bank meeting in Chiang Mai to protest against ADB's $600 million loan to the Thai government to help kick-start the Thai economy devastated by the 1997 financial crisis. Singapore's *Straits Times* carried a front page story on the protests titled "Mobs Overshadow ADB Meeting" (Tang 2000), which quoted only ADB officials, economists, and Thai government officials. No demonstrating farmers were interviewed or quoted. On the same day, the IPS news agency carried a report filed by two Chiang Mai–based Indian journalists titled "ADB Takes Water Away From Poor Farmers, Say Critics" (Gill & Sivaraman 2000), which focused on interviews with the protesting farmers. The report started with the following two sentences:

> For centuries, the Thai saying "rice in the fields and fish in the water" has been held as a metaphor for the country's agricultural prosperity and the underlying reason for the easy-going nature of its people. Little

> wonder then that Thailand's farming community and social activists are battling a new proposal to charge farmers a fee for supplying water—without which neither rice nor fish are possible.
>
> (Gill & Sivaraman 2000)

The above, of course, gives a different perspective to a mob battling police outside the meeting without giving them the opportunity to express their reasons for such protests.

Other Issues for Mindful Journalists

Several other issues lend themselves to the attention of the mindful journalist. Stories on combating poverty would be a major area of concern for the mindful journalist. This is where the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path apply because poverty is *dukkha* and its alleviation is possible only by following the *magga*. This is bound to be a major challenge for mindful journalism—an area of reporting that requires the *kalyana-mitta* (advisers) to develop a new standard. Because corruption plays a major role in these societies, mindful journalism could apply the principles of the *panca sila* to such reporting.

Mindful journalism could make a great contribution to attempts around the world (including in Western countries) to introduce animal welfare legislation and protect both domestic and wild animals. They should not shy away from reporting abusive practices of animal slaughter for food or religious rituals, or raising animals (such as chicken and sheep) in unsanitary conditions for human consumption. They should critically examine the role of the food industry and also report wildlife protection measures more analytically. They could, as well, pay greater attention to the slaughter of certain endangered species for medicinal needs or ornaments. The first precept of *panca sila* is not to kill living beings.

Mindful journalists should not shy away from reporting on arts and entertainment or pop culture, but should take a critically analytical view of the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs as part of the entertainment industry. Again, *Siggalovada Sutta* could be a guide and so is the *panca sila*. Emphasis may be placed on reporting about social ills of alcohol and smoking, which could also involve reporting on health issues. Positive reports on anti-smoking and anti-alcohol campaigns or regulations should also be part of mindful journalism.

The modern-day equivalent of slavery is also a crucial issue deserving the attention of mindful journalism. For industrialized or emerging countries as host states that face declining birth rates, immigration can be an effective solution to fill the gap of labor shortage. For developing countries as source states, migration can relieve unemployment and social tension in the population, and boost their economies with the remittances the workers send back to help their families (in countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka).

Despite such benefits from labor migration at a macro-policy level, there are many problems associated with migration in both host and source countries, and these issues pose high costs on migrant workers themselves. Human rights activists have often referred to it as a modern-day slave trade. The domination of private employment agents in the recruitment, transport, and placement of migrant labor across the world—particularly in Asia and the Middle East, where laws are lacking to protect the migrant worker—has opened up avenues for exploitation and abuse. The media often turn a blind eye to these abuses. A mindful journalist has to go beyond economic imperatives to look at the human aspects of this trade and focus on the *dukkha* it creates, and how eradicating certain practices of private recruitment agencies could create a win-win situation.

Mindful journalism should take a stand against both using terror to promote one's cause and the escalation of armed conflict and militaristic approaches to solving the problem of terror. One should not promote militarization or the arms race, but should critically examine it and point out alternatives such as cross-cultural understanding, dialogue, compromise, and negotiated settlements.

In the coming months and years, it is in containing regional disputes and promoting cooperative consultative processes toward conflict resolution not only in Asia, but also in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, that mindful journalism could play a crucial role. This is what *panna* or wisdom is all about.

NOTE

1. Professor Emeritus Shelton Gunaratne, lead editor of this volume, was instrumental in developing the doctrinal framework in this introduction.

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11 Conclusion

Shelton A. Gunaratne, Mark Pearson, and Sugath Senarath

JUSTIFICATION FOR MINDFUL JOURNALISM

We feel this book has conclusively presented the case for introducing a new genre of journalism to the many journalisms already in existence (Gunaratne 2007). We have named it "Mindful Journalism" after the seventh stream, Right Mindfulness (*samma sati*), in Buddha's *magga*, or the roadmap leading to *Nibbana*. Buddhism is a phenomenology, although people have inaccurately categorized it as a philosophy or a religion. We do not deny the existence of a religionized Buddhism that the interpretations of the later commentators (*atuwacarias*) helped to engender so as to attract more adherents (Harvey 2000: 4). Our endeavor was to rely on the *Sutta Pitaka* of the Pali canon rather than on the *Abidhamma Pitaka* embellished by the *atuwacarias*.

We claim that the *magga*, also known as the Middle Path, is a composite of the moral/ethical, mental development, and wisdom principles that none of the contemporary religions of the world could dispute. However interpreted, the values upheld in the *magga*, particularly the Five Precepts that guide the Buddhist laity, are also applicable to adherents of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic faiths who observe the Ten Commandments. They are also consonant with the Vedanta Hindu path to liberation outlined in the *Bhagavad Gita* (see Chapter 3—Excursus) and the eight basic Confucian moral principles: loyalty, filial piety, compassion, love, trustworthiness, responsibility, peace, and equality. In all these "religions," the path to the destination is remarkably similar, whereas their understanding of the destination is very different.

Then, despite these similarities across different religions and traditions, why did we select the "Buddhist" path as an appropriate model for mindful journalism? Let us make it very clear that we do not believe journalists must become Buddhists in order to become "mindful journalists." We agree these common foundational codes in different religions and cultures allow for a practice of mindful journalism wherever an individual is afforded a framework and a technique for moral reflection. We have three key reasons for suggesting Buddhism as an appropriate template for this new moral compass

for journalism, particularly for individuals who do not have an available frame of reference for this purpose. Our first reason is that Buddhism is a phenomenology that permits an "individual" to ascertain "truth" through personal experience, rather than through an expert or divine intervention. As Soma Thera (1994) explains, the Buddha's teaching relies heavily on the mindful/insight (*vipassana*) approach to seeing things as they really are. In the *Kalama Sutta*, he welcomes "careful examination at all stages of the path to enlightenment [with each step] intimately bound up with examination and analysis of things internal: the eye and visible objects, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile impressions, the mind and ideas."

Second, the Buddha clarifies in no uncertain terms how a "person" should use the phenomenological approach to ascertaining "truth," thus:

> It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, "The monk is our teacher." Kalamas, when you yourselves know: "These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill," abandon them.
>
> (Soma Thera 1994)

These ways of investigating the "truth" stand to reason sometimes even better than the method of science reified in the Western culture. To qualify as scientific, a phenomenon must be measurable and testable. But most of the intangible phenomena in the universe such as mental formations (*sankhara*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), and consciousness (*vinnana*) that constitute four of the Five Aggregates that make up the illusory "individual" elude precise measurement not only because of their intangibility but also because of their nonlinearity. Contrary to what other "religions" asseverate, Buddhism adamantly declares that everything in the universe, with no exceptions, is mutually interdependent, thereby casting doubt on the Western scientific model, which valiantly attempts to determine the effects of "independent" variables on "dependent" variables (as explained in Chapter 4).

Third, Buddhism offers through the *magga*—the Noble Eightfold Path—a functional set of core ethical principles by which anyone (in this case a journalist) can assess his/her thoughts, motivations, and actions for moral integrity. When illustrated in a graphical form, those eight principles can indeed represent a moral "compass." While they are meant to be interdependent, as we have shown through discussion and examples in

this book, their presentation as memorable items in a set of eight guidelines make them eminently suitable to their application to journalism as a lens by which reporters and editors can review and reassess their ethical decisions.

Thus, training in mindful journalism will improve the quality of mainstream journalism by warning journalists not to mislead the people by attributing outcomes to a single or "independent" cause and by studying parts of a system without the context of the whole—a premise based on sound evidence that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The Buddhist theory of dependent co-origination (or the *Paticca Samuppada* model) appears to be a precursor, together with the Daoist *Yijing* model, of the contemporary variants of systems theory (Macy 1991; Gunaratne 2006).

This phenomenological approach to ascertaining the "truth" should provide inspiration to all people, particularly to journalists engaged in investigation. In fact, all good reporting entails thorough investigation. Thus, training in insight meditation, which stimulates the "practice of investigative personal discovery" (Bhante Gunaratana 2002: 34), becomes an integral part of the repertoire of mindful journalism. Before the journalist sets out to investigate others "objectively" s/he should have the know-how to assess the reality or the truth of who s/he is in regard to everyone else and the environment. One cannot be mindful of others if one cannot investigate oneself. Mental development or purification of the mind was how Buddha attained Enlightenment. The popularity of mindful meditation in the Western world attests to its recognition as an effective tool to reduce the level of suffering (Heaversedge & Halliwell 2010).

Inasmuch as a mindful journalism cannot succeed without adequate training in mindful/insight meditation, this book exhorts all aspiring journalists to go through the rigors of mental development that will enable them to be sensitive to how they develop the frames for reporting people and events. As explained in Chapter 9, we do not expect all newsrooms will suddenly designate "meditation breaks" for their staff and that journalists will adopt the lotus position to meditate in the shadow of a looming deadline. However, we are confident mindful journalists will designate some parts of their lives to quiet reflection, and that those who become accomplished at this routine practice will be adept at drawing upon this skill at the moments when it is most needed in their work. Such moments might be: before they attempt the intrusive interview involving a vulnerable source; as they shape the headline accompanying a story about conflict between individuals or cultural groups; before they select or crop the graphic image of a war victim; and as they decide upon the voices missing from their coverage who deserve to be heard.

Buddha's application of phenomenology or "investigative personal discovery" enabled him to reveal the three marks of existence—*dukkha* (suffering), *anatta* (no self) and *anicca* (inconstancy)—and their interdependence

and interaction with one another to perpetuate cyclic existence. As elucidated in the first three chapters of this book, these three marks constituted the building blocks of the Four Noble Truths—the crux of Buddhism.

Here, we must note that "no self" (in contrast to self or soul, which implies permanence), is unique to Buddhism. Because *vipassana* meditation is essentially experiential, its successful practitioner stands to realize the "insight" of *anatta*—that there is no permanent entity called "I," "me," "being," or "self/soul." Mindful journalists are most likely to benefit from their experiential discovery that excessive individualism, has contributed to increase *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) in the world. This has shaped Western journalism through the glorification of the byline at the expense of what stands beneath it, and the Hollywood-driven invention of the social identity of the heroic and morally tainted, ego-driven journalist. Individualism enhances one's ego, which engenders the deleterious mental states of *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger), and *moha* (ignorance).

Therefore, however strange it may sound to the elite practitioners of journalism as it has evolved in the post-Enlightenment thinking of the Western world, we argue that it may be time to de-Westernize journalism to enable the restoration of news as a social good rather than letting it plunge further into the realm of a profit-motivated commodity signifying greed (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadana*), the principal causes of our unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*) in our cyclic existence (Chapter 9). The knowledge of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood (Chapter 8) will enable journalists to function ethically by using their personal judgment without relying only upon media-specific codes of ethics, many of which have become obsolete because of mediatization and the inroads made by citizen journalism (Chapter 3).

The power of concentration gained through mental development will enable the *kalyana-mitta* (wise advisers) of mindful journalists to interpret news devoid of the five hindrances (*nivarana*) associated with one's mind and illusory ego—sensory desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt. To crown it all, meditation inculcates wisdom embodied in Right Understanding (*samma ditthi*) and Right Thought (*samma sankappa*)—the two faculties needed to see the world as it is—and to use compassion as a way of life (Chapter 10).

Ours is not an attempt to eliminate the predominant Western approach to journalism but to seek a niche as a legitimate genre of journalism reflective of Eastern thinking that can coexist with the mainstream. In our opinion, we uphold here the Daoist view of unity within diversity (Chapter 5). Every system has a *yang* and a *yin*—the two elements that are opposites or complements of each other. They must coexist within the bounds of unity. So our choice of the Buddhist *magga* was also inspired by the need to reduce the heavily lopsided Western approach to journalism.

THE *DUKKHA* OF MAINSTREAM JOURNALISM

Buddhists believe that the natural law of cyclic existence featuring the triadic marks of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), *anatta* (no self), and *anicca* (inconstancy) applies both to tangibles and intangibles. This means that all phenomena arising from the interaction of the Five Aggregates (matter (*rupa*), sensation (*vedana*), perceptions (*sanna*), mental formations (*samkhara*), and consciousness (*vinnana*))—such as concepts, hypotheses, theories, ideologies/dogmas, beliefs, attitudes, values, and so forth—are inextricably entangled in the vortex of the wheel of becoming (*bhavacakra*). They rise, grow, mature, decay and die. This wave-like process of ongoing change continues after each re-becoming (*punabbhava*).

Journalism is a conceptual construct of the human mind that emerged in the wake of the invention of the printing press (Stavitsky & Dvorkin, n.d.: 3–4). Propelled by the insatiable desire (*tanha*) for information and gossip about other people, they planted the seed for what evolved to be journalism—a term that came into widespread use in the 17th century (Stephens 1988: 128). Journalism began as a product of the print media, which saw the market potential for the dissemination and analysis of news and other information. As with every concept, journalism went through ongoing change (*bhava*) since its birth because of the need to adjust itself to the cravings (*tanha*) of changing audiences as new technologies became news platforms. Never was there one journalism as such. Sooth to say that journalism split into numerous genres: popular journalism for the masses; quality journalism for the elite; feature journalism for the leisure oriented; radio journalism for the sound oriented; television journalism for the audio-visual oriented; and so on. Waves of genres are evident in the history of journalism from the Industrial Revolution to the Digital Revolution. Coinciding with the Digital Revolution of the 1980s, several other genres (e.g., public/civic journalism, citizen journalism, peace journalism, and development journalism) have appeared. Thus, journalism has never been exempt from *anatta* or *anicca* or their concomitant *dukkha*.

However, because the prolific growth of journalism first occurred in the Western hemisphere, journalism's first *bhavacakra*, which presumably is going through the stage of decay and death following the Digital Revolution, was very much influenced by Euro-American philosophy, culture, and religion that colonial historians proudly identified as the Enlightenment—the offspring of the Renaissance.

In Chapter 1, we have methodically critiqued the Euro-American-shaped journalism/news paradigm, which placed heavy emphasis on the primacy of individualism or self (rather than interdependence), linear causation (rather than mutual causality), analysis of news atoms (without the context of the whole), competition and conflict (rather than cooperation and harmony), press as the independent Fourth Estate, and related notions. Thus, the paradigm excluded some of the core values associated with Eastern thinking and mindful journalism.

Experts agree that a major reason for the decline of the mainstream ("legacy") journalism paradigm is the current digital revolution, which has pulverized journalism into varying modes of unstructured citizen journalisms (Anderson & Ward 2007; Mensing 2010; Davis & Kent 2013; Marcus 2014). The re-becoming of journalism is evident in the massive inconstancies related, *inter alia*, to the following:

- The rapid decline of hard news, once the staple of mainstream journalism, and the concomitant rise of soft news, once considered fit only for the lighthearted.
- The dilemma of journalism education that, in cahoots with industry, tried to elevate journalism, along with other communication careers like advertising and public relations, into an eminent profession.
- The decline of the supremacy of print, and the realization that effective communication entails the combined deployment of all modes, including the symbolic and the unusual Zen methods.
- The rise of citizen journalism and the social media, which rendered far less relevant mode-specific top-down codes of ethics.
- The dilemma of determining whether news is a commodity or a social good (or both) because of our ambivalence in addressing the inherent conflict between democracy and capitalism.

Neither the professionals nor the educators who determined the meaning, purpose, scope, structure, and style of journalism succeeded in grounding it on a universally acceptable social philosophy. They applied capitalist principles to journalism, thereby with few notable exceptions making news a commodity. Salability of news became the hallmark of journalism overriding the public good and other axiological considerations. A journalism model based on unbridled *tanha* (profit motive) could only increase *dukkha*. Those who are trying to revive journalism on the same economic principle have failed to understand this reality. There are, however, promising examples of new models for journalism driven by the social conscience of philanthropists and the generosity of other citizens who have been willing to answer the calls of those seeking crowdsourcing for worthwhile reportage that can make a genuine difference and relieve suffering. Some of these examples have been documented by Simons (2013).

Willnat and Weaver (2014) recognize the arrival of "the era of specialized niche media" as evident from "the overall decline of the mainstream U.S. media and the explosion of online niche media" (p. 15). They point out that "the Internet has dramatically changed the way journalists do their work" (p. 18). Moreover, the increase in overlap between social media and traditional mainstream media has instigated many journalists to demand additional training in areas such as video shooting and editing, social media engagement, documents and record utilization, web coding and design, and so forth.

Mensing (2010) has pointed out the need for journalism schools to move away from the industry-centered model to a community-centered model to solve the crisis they have created for themselves by aligning too closely with the dying genre of commoditized journalism. Mindful journalism advocated in this book is consonant with Mensing's notion of community-centered journalism, which will situate "journalism" within the axiological bounds of a universally acceptable philosophy. Mensing explains:

> Rather than conceptualizing an independent reporter as the "defining role in American journalism," a community-oriented model of journalism would place the journalist as reporter, editor and facilitator within a community. This configuration would emphasize the needs of community first and make the journalist part of a network of relationships.

She calls on educators to concede the reality of networked journalism or collaborative journalism and recognize the need to expand the boundaries of journalism for the very survival of journalism schools.

Under the current adverse circumstances, many U.S. universities have moved to merge their journalism programs into other majors or eliminate them altogether (Marcus 2014) because of the soft job market for graduates trained in "old" mainstream journalism. Meanwhile, journalism scholars Davis and Kent (2013) have proposed the reformulation of both journalism and journalism education based on framing theory and research. They call their strategy for implementing these reforms "framing journalism." This strategy requires integrating framing theory and research findings into day-to-day news production. Current news production practices are based on cultural traditions that have only a limited ability to produce balanced, accurate, and objective reports of events. Davis and Kent contend that traditional journalism failed to provide adequate support for democratic government. Research findings confirm that news is often structured in ways that lead to misunderstanding and low recall. Problematic frames give rise to cynicism, ignorance, and apathy. News tends to reinforce the status quo and to impede useful social changes.

Political and social elites increasingly use framing theory and research to control the way journalists frame issues and events. Framing journalism—grounded in social constructionism, critical theory, and symbolic interactionism—would allow journalists to better understand and anticipate the consequences of their work. They could challenge elite manipulation and be proactive in educating the public about important issues and events. However, the successful implementation of framing journalism will depend on collaboration between journalists and framing researchers in tertiary institutions—which could well be the old trade-school-type journalism schools transformed into publicly funded centers to assist all segments of media to apply communication research findings to everyday practice. The *kalyana-mitta* in these centers could help journalists identify and rectify

badly framed news. Framing journalism provides an essential basis for the ethical practice of journalism in a global media era.

When we planned to write this book in early 2014, we failed to comprehend the extent of audience dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) with mainstream journalism nurtured on a materialist philosophy that ignored the humane aspects of Eastern thinking, particularly the Middle Path approach of Buddhist phenomenology, also reflected in the Daoist "Pooh Way." Therefore, we started with the presumption that the characteristics of mindful journalism might not appeal to a predominantly Western audience whose craving (*tanha*) for and attachment (*upadana*) to material benefits far exceeded their capacity to comprehend the systemic interaction of the three marks of existence—unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), no self (*anatta*), and inconstancy (*anicca*) as elaborated in Chapters 1–3 in this book. Therefore, we took the precaution to warn the readers that mindful journalism would signify a new genre of journalism and a "different breed of journalists who could bring about amity and sanity in the world community." We did not intend it to compete with mainstream journalism.

Looking back, it seems to us now that in the context of the major upheaval in mainstream (traditional) journalism, which many see as heralding its demise, the new genres of "reborn" journalism could adopt many characteristics of mindfulness we have discussed in this book. Such a development would accommodate the aspirations of the community-centered model of Mensing (2010) and the framing model of Davis and Kent (2013).

MINDFUL JOURNALISM AND THE BUDDHIST WORLD

When we began this book project, we did not intend it to be a one-sided critique of Western-style journalism, but more as a critique of mainstream journalism as practiced worldwide by almost all countries great and small, including those in Asia, the birth continent of all major "religions." Colonialism helped the West to project itself as the "superior" and the East the "inferior." Humbled by the "success" of the West, the East became easy prey to adopt the theory and practice of journalism as it evolved in the West. Besides, the insidious propagation of Orientalism (Said 1978) imparted through missionaries, scholars, philosophers, civil servants, and sundry imperial agents denigrated Eastern thinking as mythical and irrational.

In a comprehensive survey of the state of mass communication in Asia at the turn of the century, Gunaratne (2000), assisted by a team of scholars, assessed the historical development of journalism in 22 countries, excluding those in the Middle East and the former USSR. A reanalysis of the documented material shows that none of these countries, which nourished the exemplary axiological principles enmeshed in Eastern philosophy, attempted to apply them to the operational dynamics of the imperial concept of "journalism." Thus, the values that determined newsworthiness—impact,

prominence, timeliness, proximity, conflict, the unusual, currency, and necessity—remained almost the same the world over. All presumed that these values were universally applicable to engender an "objective" view of the world. In short, looking for the conventional (rational) truth became the professed goal of journalism. Even the East turned a blind eye to the insight that "conventional/rational" truth would be misleading without the context of "absolute/ideational" truth and "intuitive/sensate" truth (Chapter 5). A mindful journalism could not arise without a focus on the wisdom (*panna*) dimension of the *magga*—Right Understanding (*ditthi*) and Right Thought (*sankappa*).

A brief look at the historical roots of journalism in some Buddhist countries in Asia would clarify this point. Gunaratne (1982) observed that the British introduced journalism to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) after they occupied the island as a crown colony in 1802. The original newspapers were published in English by Englishmen mainly for Englishmen. Even after the elite "brown sahibs" took over the English-language press, it continued to defend pro-Western and pro-Christian interests. Journalism in Sinhala, the language of the majority, began in the 1860s with a strong pro-nationalistic and pro-Buddhist bias; journalism in Tamil, the language of the minority, began with a religious and ethno-nationalist orientation in the 1840s. However, it is noteworthy that both the Sinhala and Tamil streams used the imperial concept of journalism to push for their narrow ethno-religious interests. Mindfulness or axiological considerations to improve the quality of "journalism" or the search for "truth" were not a matter of interest to them.

In Thailand, which the West failed to colonize, journalism began as a conduit of Christian missionary activity. An American medical missionary published Thailand's first newspaper in English in 1844 that established the model for Thai journalism. Another missionary published the country's first daily in 1868, also in English. The Buddhist majority in Thailand let the foreign-owned press condition the course of journalism in their land. During the reign of King Rama VI (1910–1925), the Western concept of press freedom reached a climax so much so that, to quote Daradirek Ekachai, "the press became so sensational and irresponsible" (Gunaratne 2000: 433). The Thai Buddhists failed to see the relevance of the *magga* to make news a social good during the formative period of Thai journalism.

In Myanmar (formerly Burma), another predominantly Buddhist country, professional journalism began about 1836 in the British-controlled territory of Moulmein, where three English-language newspapers appeared. The first Burmese language newspaper appeared in Mandalay in 1874 (Gunaratne 2000). Thus, it was again a case of transplanting the Western concept of journalism with no reference at all to the *magga*. The post-1962 dictatorship of Myanmar twisted journalism to serve the ruling class thereby moving it further away from "truth seeking" in the Buddhist sense. Interdependence of the Five Aggregates in Buddhist thinking does not permit tight control of one aggregate over another.

The preceding examples show that people in Buddhist countries themselves violated the principles of mindful journalism because of historical circumstances, ignorance (*avijja*), or the rulers' desire for and attachment to power.

Let's take another look at Sri Lanka, where two of our three editors were born. Most journalists in this country, where Buddhism has flourished since 250 BCE, appear to have dissociated themselves from following the middle path because their journalism practice reflects the narrow adherence to an extremist ideology embracing their particular political views, ethnicity, religion, geographical boundaries, and so on. As we have already mentioned, these weaknesses have prevailed since the starting of vernacular journalism. Lack of professional knowledge and skills has made them oblivious to the problems engendered by such extremist practice. The conflict between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Hindu Tamil minority, as well as the religious biases of the powerful Christian-oriented English press, has conditioned the state of journalism in Sri Lanka. Commoditized journalism has vitiated the journalists' duty to transcend the extremes to ascertain the "truth."

The Buddhist view on the middle path doesn't mean that someone who maintains the middle path will, to some extent, adhere to some qualities representing the two extremes, because this is about transcending the both of axes of extremes. We agree with Rahula (1959/1974) that the Buddhist *magga* provides the most effective path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (dissatisfaction) that lies between the extreme of the search for happiness through sensual pleasure (*kamasukhkallik anuyoga*) and the other extreme of the search for the same through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism (*aththakilamath anuyoga*).

Right Livelihood (*samma ajiva*) is a basic moral foundation necessary for the well-being of everyone. This applies to journalists as well. The journalist should avoid biases in his/her professional work. S/he should not be tempted by bribes. S/he should uphold the moral foundations of journalism and reject all malpractices that would mislead others.

Right Action (*samma kammanta*) also demands the attention of all journalists. Journalism entails a high degree of responsibility because of its presumed "cultural power" to shape society. Thus, journalists should pay utmost attention to their real intentions and the steps they took to accomplish them. Because of the potential "cultural power" journalists exercise by penetrating and conditioning the consciousness of their audience, they have the social obligation to be careful about the intended impact of the messages on the audience. Hence every step a journalist takes should reflect Right Action.

The journalists in all Buddhist countries stand to benefit should they train themselves in the mind development dimension of the *magga* as well. The practice of Right Effort (*samma vayama*) would encourage them to aim at the spiritual and physical well-being of the people. Right Mindfulness

(*samma sati*) would train them to become unbiased investigative reporters and lead them toward Right Concentration (*samma samadhi*)—the deep inner silence that leads to mental and physical well-being; it turns the mind into an instrument capable of seeing things as they truly are. It also prepares the mind to attend wisdom.

We suggest the appropriate units of civil society in Buddhist countries of the world—Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam—consolidate their resources, both tangible and intangible, to initiate a strategy for introducing mindful journalism at the local government level as a means of alleviating *dukkha* in the world. Governments should stay away from this endeavor because the desire and attachment for power has historically led rulers to misuse journalism and forget the truth about *anicca* and *anatta*. This would mark the re-becoming of journalism as a social good nurtured by the elements of a universally applicable phenomenology.

POSTSCRIPT: OUR SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

We concluded the Introduction to this book with the following promise:

> We distributed the . . . synopses to each of our chapter authors to enable them to focus on their topics without excessive duplication. However, in a book dealing with interdependent (nonexclusive) subjects some degree of overlap is inevitable. We will evaluate our successes and failures of our foray into mindful journalism in the concluding chapter.

So, how did we do? Here are the views of the three editors:

- *Gunaratne*: the lead editor who determined the overall structure of the book and the chapter synopses:

I think we succeeded in avoiding many redundancies because our small team of contributors knew beforehand the focus of each chapter. Moreover, each contributor was good enough to submit at least one revision after editorial feedback.

The fact that I wrote at least five chapters, including the Introduction and the bulk of this Conclusion, also helped. It also made me realize that some redundancies were necessary and desirable. For instance, the highly abstruse concept of dependent co-arising (PS Model), which explains the operational dynamics of the 12 *nidanas* that conditioned *dukkha*, is difficult for a beginner to grasp in one single chapter. So, I decided to introduce the concept in Chapter 1 on *dukkha*, explain the standard 12 *nidanas* in Chapter 2 on *anatta*, and elaborate on their causal dynamics in Chapter 4. Meanwhile, the

two contributors who wrote Chapter 3 on *anicca* had jumped the gun to introduce a Thai interpretation of the PS Model. But I let it stand because it provided additional information to understand a difficult concept.

Another problem was the repetitious use of the Pali terms instead of using simple English renditions. The fact is that the simple English rendition (e.g., suffering) of a complex Pali term (e.g., *dukkha*) could lead to great misunderstanding. The Pali word *dukkha* has a much broader meaning than physical agony. It could involve both mental and physical discomfitures of all types and shades. Western people often regarded Buddhism as a pessimistic "religion" because they associated it with the narrow meaning of suffering. Thus, despite their lack of appeal to the Western reader, we repeatedly used the Pali terms in the interest of accuracy.

The two components of the *Panna* dimension of the *magga—samma ditthi* and *samma sankappa*—often confused the reader with different English renditions: *Samma ditthi* had at least two renditions—Right Understanding or Right View. *Samma sankappa* also had at least two renditions—Right Thought or Right Intention. We justify our failure to avoid the repetitious use of Pali terminology for the sake of our concern with accuracy.

A significant alteration to our original outline of the book occurred when we decided to include the excursus on the close affinity between Buddhism and Hinduism to Chapter 3 with the permission of the two joint authors assigned to focus on the chapter synopsis. Because a main purpose of mindful journalism is to restore amity and sanity in communities, we reasoned that journalism should not become an instrument of conflict arousal between ethnic communities as in the case of Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka. Inasmuch as everything was becoming from moment to moment, it made no sense to seek permanent solutions to processual roadblocks. We reckoned that the best location to place this view for implementation was the chapter on *anicca* (inconstancy/impermanence/change).

- *Pearson*: the editor in charge of Chapters 8, 9, and 10 relating the *sila*, *samadhi*, and *panna* dimensions of the *magga* to "mindful journalism," a term he invented for the title of this book:

Let me begin this postscript by stating that most of this Conclusion represents the research, thinking and authorship of our lead editor and author, Professor Shelton Gunaratne. I was deeply honored to be invited by my coeditors to help edit this book and to contribute two substantive chapters. Of course, even three editors with a common purpose and a keen scholarly and personal interest in this new phenomenon of "mindful journalism" will not reach consensus on everything. Gunaratne has

been researching in this field for many years and holds stronger views than me on some key issues raised in this coauthored Conclusion. My own view is that "mindful journalism" can indeed be accommodated within commercial models of journalism as they are rapidly transforming in the new era. I do not agree with his suggestion that the principles of mindful journalism should necessarily replace the professional ethical codes that abound in the mainstream media. Such ethical charters are essentially prescriptive rules of journalistic behavior recommending that reporters and editors follow certain professional practices and desist from others. They are indeed highly problematic internationally because they vary across industries and media, no nation has the perfect mechanism for their enforcement and—as Gunaratne has noted earlier in this chapter—they come from centuries-old traditions of journalism values which may not be applicable to bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media commenters. However, I would still distinguish them on the ground that they are rules of professional behavior, whereas mindful journalism offers the potential for a journalist to possess an inner moral compass which might be applied at a range of levels in both general life and in the newsroom.

An academic reviewer of the proposal for this book described the sample chapters as "utopian" in their description of mindful journalism. This was framed as a potential shortcoming of the book, but I would argue that it is an overwhelmingly positive attribute. In the midst of dismal outlooks for the future of mainstream journalism, we believe we have illustrated the application of an idealist—perhaps even "utopian"—roadmap for journalists to draw upon when confronted by an ethical dilemma or career-shaping decision. Gunaratne recently explained to me that the "utopian" tag has been used previously by scholars trying to denigrate Buddhism. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of Buddhism—and, by implication, of mindful journalism—because it actually proposes an aspirational set of normative ethical guidelines with the expectation that few people might actually achieve them. Gunaratne explained that this gap between the norms and our traits, or actual performance, is what is known as *dukkha* (suffering), the key trait of life that the Buddha identified as a feature of existence. Striving for the ideal offers the opportunity to reduce that gap, thus decreasing the suffering experienced by ourselves and others impacted by our actions. I suggest that a journalism aspiring to the relief of suffering—a mindful journalism—is the kind of journalism one should expect of a noble profession. If we can educate to the ideal, and encourage the striving, then the utopia of mindful journalism can become a reality for the very best—just as the four-minute mile was achieved by the greatest athletes and master classical pianists have risen to the challenge of playing the most complex works ever written.

- *Senarath*: the editor in charge of translating the entire volume into Sinhalese for the benefit of journalism training in Sri Lanka:

> I hope that I succeeded in convincing journalists that working on a project with clear goals or "ends" could be a good one. In Chapter 7, however, I illustrated that having a good aim alone is not enough. The path or "means" they use to achieve the goal is also important. If the path the journalist uses is wrong, it will cause dangerous effects on the character of the journalist, as well as on the nature of the goal. In fact, the *Angulimala* parable, which I introduced to illustrate this point, carries the wisdom of the organic unity of three components: Actor, Means, and Ends. (Wijesiriwardena 2010). The aim of Ahimsaka (a person with nonviolent nature) was to pay homage to a beloved teacher, but the path he took was violent. This transformed Ahimsaka into a serial killer—Angulimala (who wore a necklace of human fingers)—and as a result caused him to lose his aim as well. This story shows that journalists should train themselves to be constantly mindful and critical about the three organic components of a journey: the journalist's own character, intentions, and habits; the means and methods used to achieve his/her goal; and the outcome and the impact s/he should envisage.

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Appendix
Buddhist Goals of Journalism and the News Paradigm[1]

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Abstract: This essay compares and contrasts the *goals* of Buddhist journalism with the general *traits* of the dominant/Western news paradigm to demonstrate the gap between the moral aspirations of the Orient and the instrumental materialistic traits revealed through the performance of the dominant/Western paradigm, which has even marginalized the moral imperatives of the Decalogue. The essay goes on to assess the unique opportunities offered by Buddhist journalism, which no other genre of journalism—developmental, civic/public, peace—is able to offer to improve the quality of journalism, journalists and their profession.

American journalist Doug McGill (2008) says that in Buddhism he "finally found . . . explicit and practical morals of human communication." A journalism grounded in Buddhist morals, McGill asserts, would produce (1) a *journalism of healing* because the goal of Buddhism is achieving the end of "suffering," which connotes many facets of existence, and (2) a *journalism of timely, truthful, and helpful speech* based on the Noble Eightfold Path.

This essay attempts to explore how a genre of journalism based on original Buddhist philosophical principles—whose ethical-conduct component is similar to that of the Decalogue common to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—would look like in a secularized world dominated by capitalism and socialism, a comparison and contrast of Buddhist goals with traits of the contemporary mainstream news paradigm seems quite appropriate. Some may, however, question such juxtaposition inasmuch as goals are normative while traits denote performance with all its warts and shortcomings. Yet, pinpointing the gap between traits/performance and goals/aspirations is vital because we need to understand journalism practice in the context of a set of underlying but transformative beliefs and values, which engender normative journalistic goals.

I. BUDDHIST APPROACH TO JOURNALISM

The search for a Buddhist-oriented journalism should start with the Four Noble Truths, the foundation of Buddhist philosophy. The first truth

(about existence) is that there is *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow). As McGill explains:

> It is ordinary everyday suffering, aches and pains, mental moods and afflictions, sickness and death. On a social level, suffering in Buddhism is defined as any harshness, violence, and division of the community. A Buddhist journalism would therefore be aimed at helping individuals overcome their personal sufferings, and helping society heal the wounds caused by injustice, hatred, ostracism, and physical violence. Such a defined professional purpose would give the Buddhist journalist a measuring stick for each word and story produced: does it help overcome individual and social suffering?
>
> (McGill 2008)

Existence has two other characteristics: *anicca* (impermanence), and *anatta* (no-selfness). Impermanence is usually treated as the basis for the other two. The timeless wheel of existence represents these three functionally related characteristics. Because everything is impermanent, there cannot be an unchanging or fixed self. Sorrow arises with impermanence. Where all is process, so is the self, which is not separable from its experience. Buddhism rejects "the conceit of enduring selfhood" associated with substantialism and reification (Macy 1991: 109).

In short, Buddhism does not recognize a separate individual self to be actualized in contrast to the Western "external integrity" model, which conceptualizes moral agency as a measure of external relations (R's) between autonomous self (a) and others (b–i). The Buddhist view of *anatta* (no-selfness) also contrasts with the Hindu belief in self (*ātman* or *attā*) as the ultimate reality (*brahman*)—eternal, distinctionless, and absolute. The notion of *anattā* (no-selfness) takes us even beyond the "intimacy" model built on internal relations, where self still occupies a little space (a), to a unique Buddhist model, which eliminates even that little space (Kasulis 2005).

Important journalistic principles that we can dig out of the first truth may take the following forms:

- Concede that everything is subject to ongoing change (*anicca*), the first of the three characteristic of existence (*ti-lakkhana*), and assume the role of constructive change agent rather than that of the defender of the status quo.
- Concede that no-selfness (*anattā*) is the reality of existence, and refrain from over-emphasizing individualism, which has a causal link with egocentrism (e.g., celebrity pitfalls). Focus more on cooperative efforts highlighting mutual interdependence at different levels—international/global, national, or local. "Where minds interact, they mutually create" (Macy 1991: 186).

- Understand the reasons for the existence of *dukkha* (sorrow/suffering), and desist from using journalism to knowingly promote attachment to desire.

We now turn to the next two truths: The second truth asserts that suffering arises from attachment to desire, and the third truth asserts that suffering ceases when attachment to desire ceases. In "primitive" Buddhism, these two truths are succinctly expressed in the doctrine of *paticca samuppada* (dependent co-arising). The early texts (e.g., *Samyutta Nikaya* and *Majjhima Nikaya*) describe dependent co-arising as a four-part formula expressed in four succinct lines:

> This being, that becomes;
> From the arising of this, that arises;
> This not being, that becomes not;
> From the ceasing of this, that ceases. (Kalupahana 1976)

Buddhist texts also explain dependent co-arising in terms of an interdependent chain of 12 conditional factors known as *nidānas*, *upathis*, or *paccayas*. These factors, referred to as *this* and *that* in the four-part formula, are:

- *avijjā* (ignorance)
- *sankhārā* (volitional, or karmic formations)
- *viññāna* (consciousness or cognition)
- *nāmarūpa* (name and form, or the psycho-physical entity)
- *satāyatana* (the sixfold senses)
- *phassa* (contact)
- *vedanā* (feeling)
- *tanhā* or *trsna* (craving)
- *upādāna* (grasping)
- *bhava* (becoming)
- *jāti* (birth)
- *jarāmarana* (decay and death)

Some scholars have erroneously presumed *avijjā* (ignorance), which often begins the *nidāna* series, to be "the first act" of the not-yet-individualized soul, or "the primary cause of all existence" (Macy 1991: 49). Buddha has repeatedly asserted that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable. As *Anguttara Nikaya* attests, *avijjā* is not a causeless first principle inasmuch as it "is causally conditioned" (p. 50). Many metaphors and analogies in the early scriptures clearly convey the interrelatedness of all causes. Textual evidence abounds that the relationship of the *nidānas* is one of mutual dependence. For example, *nāmarūpa* (name and form) arises conditioned by *viññāna* (consciousness), while *viññāna*, in turn, is conditioned

by *nāmarūpa*. Thus the cybernetic feedback loops attached to the notion of mutual causality makes dependent co-arising an "interdeterminative" process (p. 54).

The doctrine of impermanence (*anicca*) is integral to apprehend the meaning of dependent co-arising. "No factor external to change, no absolute that is not definitive of process itself, secures our existence" (Macy 1991: 34–35). Existence is suffering as it is associated with the mutual causality of the 12 conditional factors, which represent attachment to desire. Furthermore, the appearance of continuity ("order") occurs within the reality of change ("chaos"). This contrasts with the linear view of causality that order requires permanence (equilibrium conditions). Trinh Xuan Thuan explains:

> The world is a vast flow of events that are linked together and participate in one another. There can be no First Cause, and no creation ex nihilo of the universe, as in the Big Bang theory. Since the universe has neither beginning nor end, the only universe compatible with Buddhism is a cyclic one.
>
> (Thuan 2001: 206)

Matter/energy and consciousness have co-existed, co-exist, and will co-exist for all times. They are co-arising. They rise from infinite potentiality into the phenomenal world, go through the cycle of birth, growth, and death just like other living systems, and return to infinite potentiality. Let us dig out some more principles appropriate for journalism from the doctrine of dependent co-arising subsuming the second and third truths:

- Understand the significance of mutual causality for journalistic interpretation and analysis. Refrain from extensive use of linear cause-effect reasoning. Keep in mind that feedback loops condition both "causes" and "effects" and blur the conventional distinction between the two. Therefore, analyze problems and solutions within "articulated integration" (Macy 1991: 185)—the middle path between atomism and holism.
- Advocate the need for humanity to work in harmony with Nature, including all its flora and fauna, because everything is functionally interrelated, and nothing is entirely independent. "There is no aspect of 'I' . . . that is not conditioned or not interconnected with at least something else" (Kasulis 2005: 398–400).
- Discourage conspicuous consumption "since consumption is merely a means to human well-being" and our "aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher 1973: 47–48).

We must now turn to the fourth truth, which asserts that freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path, also known as the Middle Way or the Middle Path. This path has three functionally

interdependent areas for practice: *paññña* (wisdom), *sila* (virtue or ethical conduct), and *samādhi* (concentration or mental development). It provides the Buddhist ethical guidelines, which journalism could adapt. As an overall ethical guideline, journalists should:

- Follow the Middle Way, and avoid the extremes on any issue. Journalism should convey the idea that people mattered. This is the approach that Schumacher (1973) proposed for economics more than three decades ago:

Now, we shall examine each of the paths enumerated under the three co-arising categories. *Paññña* (wisdom) involves two paths: right understanding/view and right thoughts/conceptions. These provide the practitioners of journalism (including public relations and advertising) the means to cultivate moral principles such that their output does not contribute to increasing *dukkha*. Therefore, the practitioners should

- Follow the path of right understanding/view (*samma ditthi*): the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (that is, the understanding of oneself as one really is). "Buddhist's intimacy orientation says, 'I am moral when I am most truly myself' " (Kasulis 2005: 301).
- Follow the path of right thoughts/conceptions (*samma sankappa*) in its threefold form: thoughts of renunciation as opposed to those of sense pleasures; kind thoughts as opposed to those of ill-will; and thoughts of harmlessness as opposed to those of cruelty. This involves a *commitment* to ethical and mental self-improvement.

Sila (virtue or ethical conduct) involves three paths: right speech, right action, and right livelihood. These provide the essential ethical guidelines for a journalism based on Buddhist goals. The practitioners should relate these guidelines not only to their own actions but also to the actions of those who consume their output. McGill asserts that the Right Speech doctrine provides many of the tools and materials necessary for the healing purpose of suffering:

> The midway place of Right Speech along the Noble Eightfold Path is interesting, because speech is the first action to follow the gaining of wisdom and positive intention, as developed in meditation. By this view, speech is a person's very first chance to act morally in the world. It is followed then in the Noble Eightfold Path by "Right Action" and "Right Livelihood." Also, very helpfully for journalists, the identifying traits of Right Speech are specifically defined as "timely, truthful, helpful, and spoken with a mind of good will." Likewise, the five main types of speech to avoid are lies, divisive speech, harsh and abusive speech, and idle and distracting speech.
>
> (McGill 2008)

Let us now interpret these three *Sila* paths to fit journalism practice:

- Follow the path of right speech (*samma vaca*): abstinence from lying, divisive speech (e.g., biased opinion writing), abusive speech (e.g., defamatory writing), and idle chatter (e.g., gossip writing). (However, Asanga, the fifth-century author of several Mahayana texts, maintained that a Bodhisattva will lie to protect others from death or mutilation (Harvey 2000: 139).)
- Follow the path of right action (*samma kammanta*): abstinence from taking life (e.g., harming sentient beings intentionally), stealing (including robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty), and sexual misconduct. (Some Mahayana texts, e.g., *Upāya-kausalya Sūtra*, justify killing a human being on the grounds of compassion in dire circumstances (Harvey 2000: 135). Similarly, a Bodhisattva may break the precepts of stealing and celibacy on compassionate grounds.)
- Follow the path of right livelihood (*samma ajiva*) by personally avoiding and discouraging others from activities that may harm others (e.g., trade in deadly weapons, trade in animals for slaughter, trade in slavery, and trade in intoxicants and poisons). Some may include public relations and advertising also as harmful to the extent that they are seen "as encouraging greed, hatred and delusion, or perverting the truth" (Harvey 2000: 188).

Samadhi (mental development) requires the practitioners to improve their moral discipline as an ongoing activity through three mutually interacting paths: right effort/endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Kalupahana 1995). Accordingly, the practitioners should:

- Follow the path of right effort (*samma vayama*), which has four steps: the effort to (a) discard evil that has already arisen, (b) prevent the arising of unrisen evil, (c) develop the good that has already arisen, and (d) promote the good that has not already arisen.
- Follow the path of right mindfulness (*samma sati*), which has four foundations: reflection relating to the body (*kāya*); feeling (*vedanā*)—repulsive, attractive, or neutral; thought; and ideas (*dhammā*) pertaining to the experienced phenomena. (Such reflection enables one to overcome covetousness and discontent.)
- Follow the path of right concentration (*samma samadhi*), which consists of the attainment of the four preliminary stages of contemplation, which culminate in the development of unprejudiced perception or equanimity with regard to what is perceived. (This is also considered a middle standpoint in the way in which we perceive ourselves in the world.)

We have outlined the framework of the Noble Eightfold Path as a set of goals for practitioners to judge their inputs and outputs. The perfection

of all eight paths means reaching enlightenment. The characteristics of existence—*anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (no-selfness), and *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow)—imply that a perfect journalism is not attainable. However, the Middle Path points out the multiple pathways available to practitioners to aim at reaching the ever-elusive equifinality. One should note that the Buddhist approach requires the journalists to improve (or purify) their minds through the paths of *paññā* (wisdom) and *samādhi* (mental development).[2] The presumption here is that journalists with "impure" minds would produce "impure" journalism that would increase *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow) no matter what awards they receive.

II. TRAITS OF MAINSTREAM JOURNALISM

[NOTE: Because of space restrictions, the editors decided to exclude from the Appendix this section of the original article. However, the reader can find the substance of the missing material in the section titled "Reporting on Happiness and Suffering" in Chapter 1. Also, please refer to Chapter 1's list of references to locate missing references for some callouts in the Appendix.]

III. BUDDHIST STRAND VS. OTHER STRANDS

The preceding two sections examined the principles of a journalism based on Buddhist goals, and how the structural elements of the news paradigm deviated from or agreed with those principles. It is appropriate now to reiterate the major differences between these two approaches before we bring in other strands—peace journalism, developmental journalism, and public/civic journalism—for comparison.

The two perspectives that we have discussed represent the views of two mega-civilizations defining Orient and Occident respectively. Galtung (1996) points out that Buddhism defines the Orient while Christianity (with Judaism and Islam) defines "the hard Occident" (p. 81). The *time* cosmology and *social* cosmology of these two civilizations fundamentally differ. Buddhist time is infinite because "there is no beginning or no end, although there is the transcendence of *nirvana*" (p. 81). Christian time "is bounded with beginning, a *genesis*, and an end with *apocalypsis-catharsis*" (p. 81). The social cosmology of Buddhism emphasizes "individual connectedness" whereas Christianity emphasizes "separable and eternal, individual souls" (p. 81). Although one might argue that the West has replaced religion with the secular legal tradition, the similarities in all essentials have not changed (p. 83). Admittedly, secularization has weakened the Buddhist values of the Orient with creeping globalization (meaning Westernization and reification of capitalism).

The news paradigm of the Occident (*yang*)—which evolved in practice as the mirror of Western cosmology—emphasized atomism, individualism, finite time, center-periphery space, subordination of nature to man, and reification of news values (Galtung & Vincent 1992). This emphasis increasingly epitomized the needs of capitalism rather than the morals of the Decalogue. Thus, it was able to gloss over the potential challenge of a news paradigm based on the goals of a Buddhist/Oriental journalism (*yin*) that exemplified holism, interconnectedness, infinite time, diversity within unity, harmony with nature, and flexibility of news values. One could envisage the performance-based mainstream (Western) news paradigm and the goal-based (normative/hypothetical) Buddhist/Oriental news paradigm as complements/opposites that flow in parallel directions to control each other—a presumption of the *yin-yang* theory. It is now the collective responsibility of the Orient to move from the goals assigned to the Buddhist paradigm to goal implementation thereby propelling the two complementary paradigms to interact with each other and improve the quality of contemporary journalism.

Let us now examine how a journalism based on Buddhist goals relates to three other strands of journalism—developmental, public/civic, and peace—that emerged because of dissatisfaction with the mainstream news paradigm. Lee and Maslog explain that "like public journalism and developmental journalism, peace journalism is grounded in communitarian philosophy—namely the commitment to the idea of civic participation, the understanding of social justice as a moral imperative, and the view that the value and the sacredness of the individual are realized only in and through communities" (2005: 312).

Gunaratne (1998) argues that the new strands of journalism represent phases of the evolution of the social responsibility theory, which arose as a reaction to the excesses of a journalism based on libertarian principles. Developmental journalism coincided with the end of colonialism in the 1960s, when the newly independent countries realized that the news paradigm had to be adjusted to meet the needs of development. The debate on the New World Information and Communication Order exposed the weaknesses of the news paradigm, which failed to awaken the public from the slumber of civic and political apathy. This gave rise to the public journalism movement at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s. Zelizer (2004) clarifies that public journalism "evolved from a sense of public despair with the news media following the U.S. political campaigns of the mid-1980s" (p. 104). Peace journalism—first proposed by Johan Galtung in the 1970s as a self-conscious, working concept for those reporting on wars and conflicts—fits into the framework of both developmental and public/civic journalism. These strands do not uphold the myth of objectivity for they justify "the nonobjective, self-conscious intervention by journalists" to reach the objectives of the particular strand (Lee & Maslog 2005).

From the Buddhist perspective, all strands of journalism are interrelated and interdependent. They are the outcomes of dependent co-arising. All strands, including the mainstream, agree that the mass media must go

beyond traditional news values to provide a more useful service to the community. The news paradigm itself has added new factors, such as currency and necessity, as news values; and it has become much more flexible on objectivity. The new strands have influenced the traditional news paradigm itself to embrace the vision of communication as conversation thereby recognizing the importance of bottom-up participation. If mutual causality has conditioned all strands of journalism, what is the need for a journalism based on Buddhist goals?

IV. CONCLUSION

A Buddhist-oriented journalism goes well beyond journalism *per se* for the journalist must acquire the right understanding about the functional interdependence and interaction of mass media with all other social subsystems—legal, economic, religious, educational, administrative, political, etc. It is incumbent upon the journalist to make journalism the right livelihood and follow the paths of right action, and right speech. To do this, and to acquire inner peace, the journalist must also improve his/her mind through the paths of concentration and wisdom. The journalist's obligation is to promote social well-being, not the capital accumulation of conglomerate media. The existing strands of journalism pay no attention to building the power of the journalist's mind, which cannot be done by scholarship alone.

The Buddhist-oriented journalism model, as outlined in this essay, provides a normative model for those who aspire to elevate news from a commodity to a social good. A Buddhist-oriented journalism is incompatible with advertising-dependence but cyberspace offers it a fertile ground for goal implementation intended to circumvent *dukkha*. The focus of the putative Buddhist newspapers, as it has been since 1880s when the theosophists kick-started engaged Buddhism in Japan and Sri Lanka, continues to be on Buddhism and related activities rather than on the application of process journalism to explain the mutual causality of co-arising factors related to various phenomena over time.[3] Because of the belief in mutual interdependence, Buddhism holds both the individual and the society responsible for an individual's deviance. It prefers rehabilitation of the deviant rather than imprisonment and execution. Thus violence, war, crime, and punishment are not newsworthy from the perspective of Buddhist philosophy although explaining these phenomena as a mutually interacting process is permissible. It does not pass judgment on the Occidental news paradigm, which may continue with event-oriented reporting, as a functionally interdependent category (or shade) of the continuum of journalism.

A Buddhist-oriented journalism cannot depend on revenue from advertising, which is instrumental in increasing *tanhā* (craving) and other *nidānas*, which are linked to *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow). Therefore, it cannot thrive as a competitive private enterprise. It can succeed only as a community

enterprise supported by ordinary people, global civil society, and foundations committed to Buddhist values. In short, Buddhist-oriented journalism must move on to situate itself within the framework of interdependence (or no-self), a vital aspect of Oriental cosmology,

Buddhist nations should be the trailblazers of a Buddhist-oriented journalism although the "new" Buddhists in the West have shown a greater interest in using cyberspace, as well as newspapers, to promote Buddhist views (cf. McGill 2008). The state (in Buddhist countries, such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) could support Buddhist-oriented journalism through a modest tax specified for the purpose. Engaged Buddhists, like those in the Fo Guang Shan movement in Taiwan (Berkson 2005), can play a major role in elevating the existing form of Buddhist-oriented journalism to the level of process reporting. Inasmuch as mutual interdependence is a verifiable fact, Buddhist-oriented journalism would be an interdependent, rather than an independent journalism. It would take the Middle Path, following neither the authoritarian nor the libertarian proclivities. Because diversity and unity are complementary (as illustrated in the *Yijing* model of 64 hexagrams), mainstream journalism should accommodate and support the practice of Buddhist-oriented journalism.

Adherence to Buddhist goals does not make it a religious journalism for its allegiance is only to the Buddhist phenomenology. Anyone from any religion could do Buddhist-oriented journalism to promote the collective good, not individualism or vanity of celebrities. Its supreme purpose is to create a healthy environment for all living beings who could live in harmony with Nature because everything grows together in the manner of a web (Galtung et al. 2000: 82). It cannot be the purveyor of titillating news intended to arouse the darker side of human beings. Ethical action is much more important than legal justification as required by right action, right speech, and right livelihood—paths that receive endorsement from the Decalogue as well. Last, but not the least, the purification of human character is more important than "a multiplication of wants" (Schumacher 1973: 46). The "new" American Buddhists are striking a careful balance between meditational training and political activism (Prebish & Tanaka 1998). Buddhist journalists, both in the Orient and the Occident, can do the same.

NOTES

1. Note: This is a condensed version of the original paper on the Buddhist approach to journalism that the author presented to a staff seminar at the University of Queensland on March 7, 2006, and published in *Javnost—The Public, 16*(2) in 2009. Excerpted with permission from Euricom.
2. Clarke (1997) points out that in recent years meditation has become popular as a psycho- physiological therapy both at the professional and popular levels. He cites Gestalt theorists Claudio Naranjo and Robert Ornstein who say that "oriental meditation techniques give importance to psycho-physiological

factors and to the experience of everyday sounds, images, movements, and bodily functions" (p. 161).

3. Some examples are *Budusarana*, a Sinhala weekly (with random articles in English and Tamil) published in Colombo by Sri Lanka's state-owned newspaper company; *Merit Times*, a daily published in Chinese (in Taiwan) and English (in California) by Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order and the Buddha's Light International Association in collaboration with the *Chinese Daily News*; and several U.S. publications, including the quarterly *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, the bimonthly *Shambhala Sun*, and *Turning Wheel*, the journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The *Merit Times* does not publish news about violence, war, accidents, and the like; it focuses on Buddhism-related events, and interesting events that occur around the world.

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Glossary

We refer the readers to the following glossary for understanding Pali Buddhist terminology:

A Glossary of Pali and Buddhist Terms. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*. Available at www.accesstoinsight.org/glossary.html.

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