

Mahāyāna Practices for Healing, Reconciliation, and Peace

An Ethical Approach

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A few years ago, one of our senior nuns together with some farming experts started practicing the Fukuoka Method of Farming¹ by following Fukuoka's five principles: 1. No tillage; 2. No fertilizer; 3. No pesticides or herbicides; 4. No weeding; 5. No pruning. The results:

- The ecological environment became more diverse.
- The farmers observed that two very sick pest-infected papaya trees recovered by themselves and eventually grew much healthier and stronger.

1. Masanobu Fukuoka, *The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming* (Emmaus, Pa: Rodale Press, 1978).

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- The production of the mango farms increased from seventy-five mangos to one thousand mangos in four years to ten thousand mangos in the fifth year!

What does this tell us? Natural farming skips all the processes used to kill “harmful” beings and instead provides all living beings—including plants, weeds, insects, worms, and small organisms—a healthy environment. In the end, all living beings managed to heal themselves and live in a great harmony with better production.

If all the living beings on the farm can do it, we human beings can definitely do it too. This is the reason why Dharma Drum Mountain has been promoting the “Four Kinds of Environmentalism” and the “Six Ethics of the Mind.” We seek thereby to stop unnecessary judgments and artificial manipulations in relationships with our family members, with our schoolmates, with our colleagues, with our society, with different ethnic groups, and with our mother nature. What we need to do is to decentralize our standpoint for living that is based on our individual self, and bring our mind to the state of unconditional loving kindness. If we do, all living beings can live in harmony and prosper together. Here are the Four Kinds of Environmentalism and the Six Ethics of the Mind.

Four Kinds of Environmentalism:

Protecting the Spiritual Environment

This is the most important and fundamental of the Four Kinds of Environmentalism. The contamination of the spiritual environment is mainly caused by people's actions, thoughts, and words. Therefore, to protect the spiritual environmental, we purify our

own mind by treating others with compassion, by acting with wisdom, and by alleviating our own vexations and impurities.

Protecting the Living Environment

Our needs are few, even though our desires are many. If we seek only what we need, we will not be ruled by desire. In our daily living, be simple, diligent, orderly, and content. Avoid wasting energy and resources while helping to reduce garbage and pollution.

Protecting the Natural Environment

Cherish our blessings and be grateful to the Earth. Realizing that humanity is part of Nature, we treasure all resources, not wasting them or polluting our environment. When Nature is revered and protected, it will be able to sustain ongoing life.

Protecting the Social Environment

If we purify our own thoughts and harmonize our body and mind, proper behavior and speech will naturally follow. This way, we harmonize with others and society will be at peace.

Six Ethics of the Mind:

Family Ethics

Family ethics focuses on the mutual help and interaction within the three interpersonal relationships of husband and wife, parents and children, and siblings. Many times family members calculate only their personal interests in decision making and do not consider harmony in the family. Instead, family ethics means giving and contributing oneself to family harmony. In this way, whether poor or rich, harmony brings happiness and well-being.

Living Ethics

The main point of the living ethics is frugality, simplicity, and refraining from waste. The more we want, the more we feel dissatisfied. The other meaning of living ethics is respecting both others and ourselves; in addition to benefiting ourselves, we should also benefit others. We should not only cherish and make good use of all the resources in our life, but also take care of and respect our natural environment.

School Ethics

The focus of school ethics is on teachers, students, and parents. Healthy and heart-warming school ethics lies in how to enable mutual respect and support and harmonious interactions among students, teachers, and parents. Parents and students should respect and show gratitude toward teachers. Teachers should treat parents and students with respect by talking with parents, and showing care and understanding towards their students. They should teach in accordance with each student's ability in order to develop their potential. Also, the principal of each school should set up a code of ethical conduct for teachers, students, and parents, under which each party fulfills their duties and responsibilities so as to cultivate students of competence and character.

Environmental Ethics

The main concern of environmental ethics is the natural ecology, including living creatures and non-biological resources and environments. All plants and natural resources are related to the survival of humanity. As consumers of natural resources, we humans should cherish and protect them. Today, it is generally acknowledged that we have only one Earth and so it must not be

destroyed. However, the interaction of humankind with nature, the unbridled exploitation and destruction of natural resources, serve to speed up the destruction of the Earth. Concern for environmental ethics involves efforts to enrich the Earth's ecology and natural resources, to bring about greater sustainability for the Earth as a whole, and to create a safer environment for the future survival of humankind.

Workplace Ethics

Any workplace involves interpersonal interactions, whereby each individual should fulfill their responsibilities and duties, work with enthusiasm, give of themselves to their colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and society. They need to help others to achieve their goals. A common problem in the corporate world is that the workforce and management are in opposition to each other, both parties demanding more rights and benefits from the other. In addition to the labor-management relationship, enterprises also face interactive relationships with upstream and downstream companies as well as with their customers. A healthy management views its shareholders, clients, workforce, and consumers as a shared entity, wherein everyone cares for each other. Profits made should be shared with people related to the business. In a healthy workplace, all workers, regardless of position, should serve and contribute to the spirit of equality, regarding the workplace as their home and every other member as their family.

Ethics Between Ethnic Groups

Ethics between ethnic groups focuses on showing respect and tolerance toward ethnic groups, cultures, languages, customs, and religions different from one's own. Faced with the current

multiethnic situation in the world, it is best to open our hearts and minds to make contact and establish friendships with each other, treat each other with mutual respect and tolerance, and learn from and contribute to each other. This way, we can truly demonstrate the richness and noble value of a pluralistic society. When coming into contact with other ethnic groups, we must not act from a sense of superiority and look down on them, and we should definitely not be hostile to them. Rather, we should interact with them in all sincerity so as to learn from and serve our new friends. If we treat them like our relatives or neighbors, they will also respond in a well-disposed manner, and in this way we will develop friendships.

In conclusion, I would like to share steps for handling difficulties and conflicts from our "Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign":

1. **Face it** with repentance. Things happened by the principle of cause and effect. We all are part of it, and therefore, all of us need to take responsibility. We **repent** for not making it better.
2. **Accept it** with gratitude. Things are impermanent and therefore subject to change by their conditions. We give **gratitude** for being able to be part of a change for the positive.
3. **Take care of it** with loving kindness. We are not separated from each other (oneness). The way to make things better is to make others better. We transfer all our merits/forgiveness to all others, and treat others with **loving kindness**.
4. **Let go of it** without any attachment. Only when we decentralize our ego-centeredness and **detach** from our

selfish grasping can we truly heal ourselves and others from the roots of ignorance, and of craving, hatred, jealousy, arrogance, and suspicion. This is the Middle Way, the true liberation.

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