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Buddhist Economic Thought and Action

**“Buddhist Values and Economics: Investing in a
Sustainable Future”**

April 13-14, 2019

The University of Hong Kong

Overview

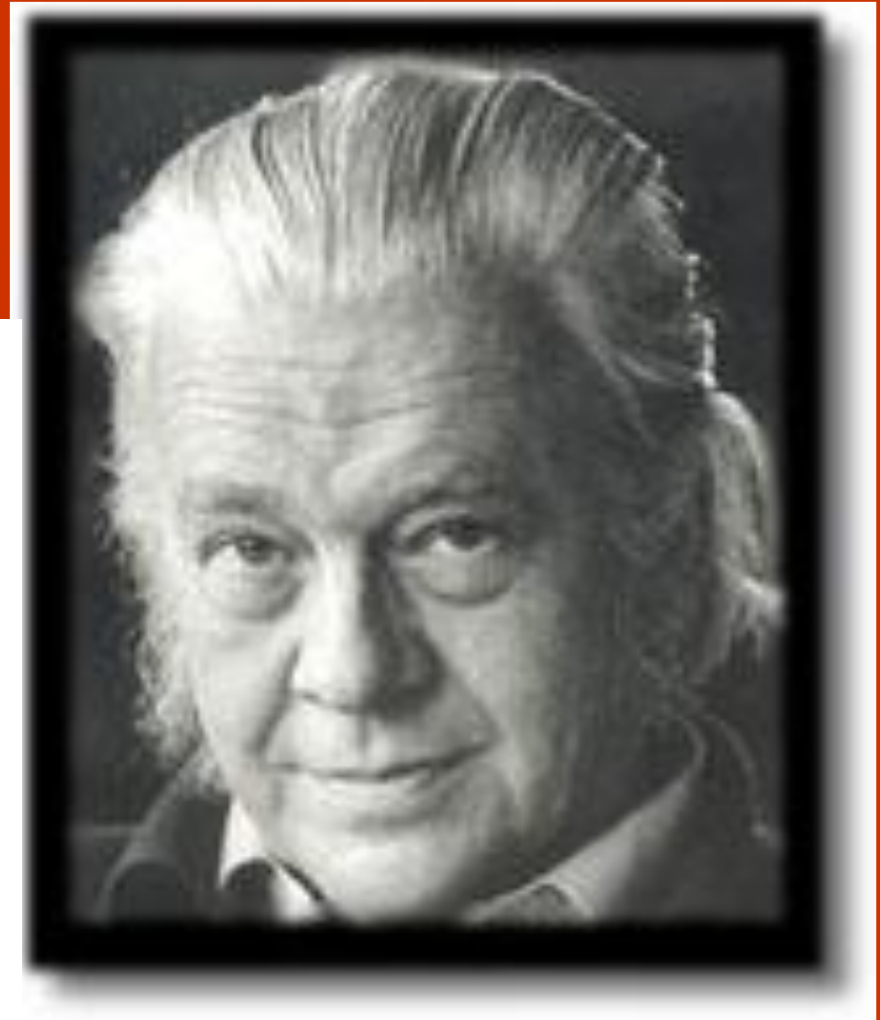
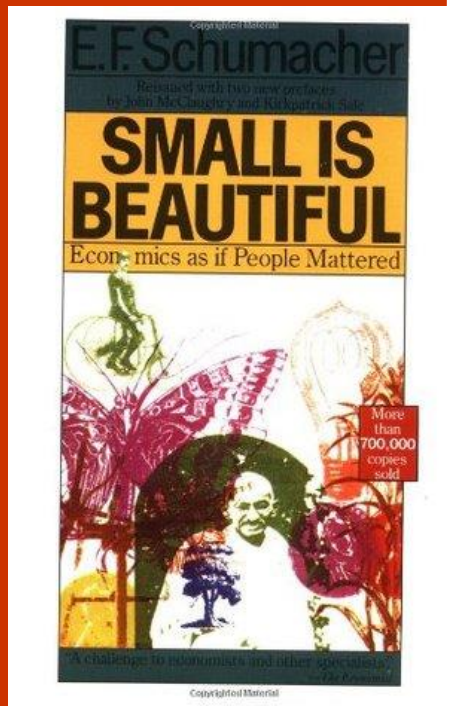
- 1 Buddhism and Economics**
- 2 Principles of Buddhist Economic Action**
- 3 Mindful Markets**
- 4 Conclusion**

1 Buddhism and Economics

Buddhist Economics

conceived by

E. F. Schumacher



Middle Way Economics



Venerable P.A. Payutto

Realization of true **well-being** by activities that
do **not harm oneself** and
do **not harm others**.



ECONOMICS WITH A BUDDHIST FACE

The First Conference of the Buddhist Economics Research Platform

August 23–24, 2007, Budapest, Hungary

**Business Ethics Center
Corvinus University of Budapest**

&

**East–West Research Institute
Budapest Buddhist University**

FRONTIERS OF BUSINESS ETHICS

1

Business within Limits

Deep Ecology and Buddhist Economics

edited by

LASZLO ZSOLNAI

and

KNUT JOHANNESSEN IMS

Peter Lang



Issues in Business Ethics 33

Laszlo Zsolnai
Editor

Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation – A Buddhist Approach

 Springer

2 Principles of Buddhist Economic Action

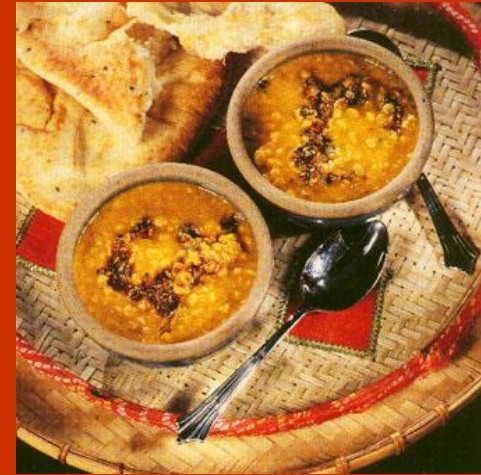
Principles of Buddhist Economic Action (1)

Minimize suffering
of human and non-
human beings.



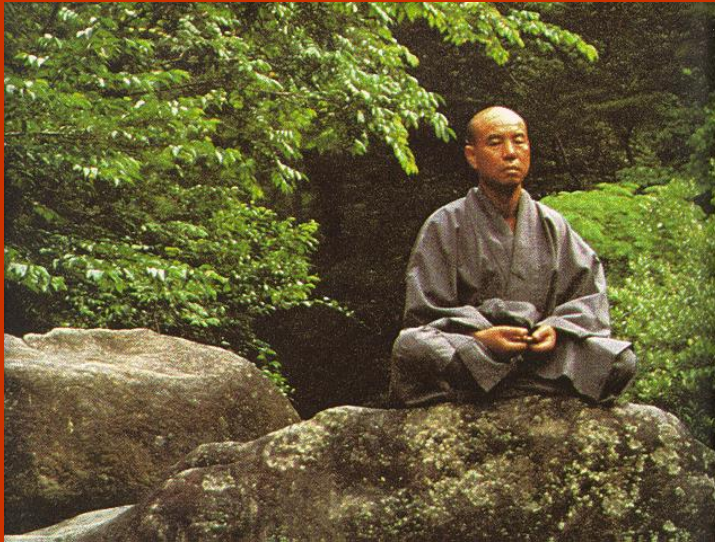
Principles of Buddhist Economic Action (2)

Simplifying desires



**Materialistic value
orientation destroys
well-being.**

Principles of Buddhist Economic Action (3)



Practicing non-violence
 (“ahimsa”)

**Market-driven violence
in society and nature.**

Principles of Buddhist Economic Action (4)

Genuine care
responsible organizations
can be rewarded for the
higher cost of caring.



Principles of Buddhist Economic Action (5)

Generosity

giving without
expecting any return



“Homo reciprocans”

people tend to reciprocate
what they get

Western Economics versus Buddhist Economics

Western economics represents a **maximizing framework**. It wants to maximize profit, desires, market, instrumental use, and self-interest.

“bigger is better”
“more is more”

Buddhist economics represents a **minimizing framework** where suffering, desires, violence, instrumental use, and self-interest have to be minimized.

“small is beautiful”
“less is more”

3 Mindful Markets

Mindful markets consist of

- (i) mindful **consumption**
- (ii) mindful **entrepreneurship**
- (iii) mindful **economic policy**

Mindful Consumption

Mindful consumption is
wise (it serves one's true well-being),
non-violent (it does not hurt other sentient beings), and
compassionate (it helps others to satisfy their needs).

- **Vegan food**
- **Efficient use of water**
- **Ecological housing**
- **Ethical clothing**
- **Preventive and natural medicine**
- **Eco-literacy**
- **Sustainable energy**
- **Fair trade product**
- **Ethical banking**

Mindful Entrepreneurship

Mindful entrepreneurship is the application of **Buddhist virtues** in **business activities** including **production** and **trade**.

Production is only truly justified when the **value** of the **thing produced** outweighs the **value** of that which is **destroyed**.

Buddhist Business (1)



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COMMON THREADS INITIATIVE

REDUCE

WE make useful gear that lasts a long time
YOU don't buy what you don't need

REPAIR

WE help you repair your Patagonia gear
YOU pledge to fix what's broken

REUSE

WE help find a home for Patagonia gear
you no longer need
YOU sell or pass it on*

RECYCLE

WE will take back your Patagonia gear
that is worn out
YOU pledge to keep your stuff out of
the landfill and incinerator



REIMAGINE

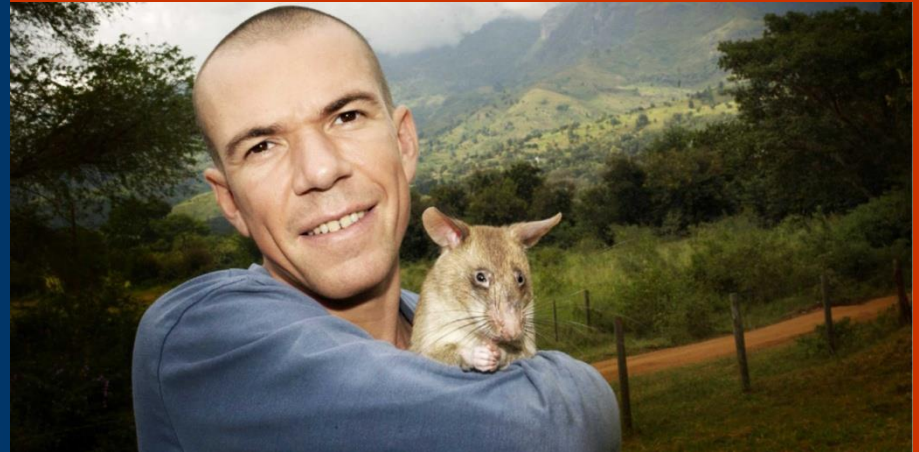
TOGETHER we reimagine a world where we take
only what nature can replace

patagonia
patagonia.com

Buddhist Business (2)



Buddhist Business (3)



Buddhist Business (4)



Mindful Economic Policy

Buddhism suggests to evaluate **economic performance** holistically by measuring how well people live (**prosperity**), how fairly resources are distributed (**justice**), and how well the ecosystems are functioning (**sustainability**).

4 Conclusion

For the **development** of **sentient beings** (human and non-human alike) we need **economic actors** who **behave** in **ethical ways**.

In doing so economic actors should **avoid vices** such as greed, hatred and ignorance, and **exercise** the **virtues** of generosity, non-violence, compassion, contentment, wisdom, and mindfulness.

Let all sentient beings be happy.

Peace for all beings.