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The Humanistic Vision of the Ten Pāramīs (Perfections) and their Educational Implications for Sustainable Development

Do Tan Quang[1], Dr. Praveen Kumar[2]

[1]Research scholar (PhD), Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, U.P., India.
[2]Associate Professor, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, U.P., India.

Abstract

This article aims to construct a paradigm of Dhammic Humanism grounded in the ten pāramīs (perfections) as a philosophical and pedagogical strategy for integrating them into Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and global citizenship. The author identifies and responds to the psychological, fragmented, competitive, individualistic, morally unmoored, and ecologically collapsed state of crisis, arguing that sustainable transformation requires an extreme shift from mere knowledge transmission to the formation of character and consciousness. Utilizing the teachings of Buddhism throughout the ages, South East Asian Buddhist Ethics, and Global Humanistic Theory, the author describes the *pāramīs* as sustainable virtues that develop ethically resilient and socio-emotionally responsible relational intelligence.

This contribution positions the *pāramī* model in a positive interaction with the eudaimonist approaches of Damien Keown and Martha Nussbaum, and with UNESCO's transformative agenda for SDG 4.7. The author suggests that incorporating wisdom (paññā), compassion (karuṇā), and interdependence (paṭiccasamuppāda) into the construction of whole-person competencies to be fully functioning persons, ethical agents, and planetary stewards, *pāramīs* implement transformative ESD.

The article discusses how contemplative pedagogy, community-engaged learning, value-oriented curriculum reform, and peace-building education can be applied institutionally across school, university, monastic education, and public policy settings. It suggests that the *pāramī* path offers both pragmatically and philosophically a way to reframe and revitalise education as a transformative process of an individual's self-centeredness to the compassionate global citizenship.

The study believes that a sustainable civilization must be constructed with both structural and inner transformations. It posits that humanity's reliance on technological advancements for its future will be eclipsed by the development of virtue, universal (as opposed to national) responsibility, a civilizational outlook of compassion, and interdependence.

Keywords: Capable Approach, Compassionate Pedagogy, Dhammic Humanism, Buddhist Humanism, Sustainable Development, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Moral and Values Education, Global Citizenship Education, Transformational Education, Emotional Intelligence, Interdependence and Ecological Citizenship, Peace Education, Citizenship Education, Virtue Ethics, the Ten Pāramīs, the Five Precepts, and Compassionate Pedagogy.

1. Introduction

The moment we are living in is of great consequence in the temporal span of human history. It is the first time we have an unprecedented technological accomplishment in the face of grave moral ambiguity. While the world is experiencing extraordinary technological advancement with the artificial intelligence boom, hyper connected world, and phenomenal improvement in the life sciences, we are also witnessing a rapid escalation of the global crises: the climate emergency, wars and armed conflict, ideological polarization, forced migration, ecological collapse, widening economic disparity, and the mental health of the world population who, as a result of the disintegration of societies, are experiencing emotional indigence and a loss of purpose and belonging, as described in the latest report of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022, pp. 40-42) especially the youth. The IPCC states that because of the carbon-intensive, unsustainable patterns of development, we are reaching irreversible ecological tipping points in the very near future (IPCC, 2023, pp. 15-17). It is this convergence of crises that points to not only material disintegration, but also the collapse of the meaning, unity, and moral imagination of our collective humanity.

Structural and psychological issues of any kind can be mitigated through the power of education. Still, the primary educational model retains a focus on cognitive achievement, competition, productivity, and economic usefulness. This leaves moral and emotional reasoning and ethical awareness unarticulated and unaddressed. As a result, educational institutions continue to cultivate the gaining of knowledge with no understanding, the attainment of skills without concern, and the technological practice of caregiving without any sense of socio-moral responsibility. (Sterling, 2022, pp. 18–35). The Global Education Monitoring Report appeals to a shift in the manner we measure educational proficiency; bail out social, moral, and ecological turns in favor of systems of standardized testing (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9-11). The same can be said about SDG 4.7, where the aim is to educate on the knowledge, skills, and values for sustainable development, global citizenship, and peace (United Nations, 2015, p. 17). Although there are sound policy frameworks, formal education rarely, if ever, stresses moral interiority, emotional resilience, empathy, and ethical agency (Goleman, 1995). It is these very qualities that we need to tackle the deep relational and existential challenges of the 21st century.

Considering these limitations, we can argue that Buddhist virtue ethics, especially the ten *pāramīs* (perfections) of the *Theravāda* tradition, represent the most transformative and humanistic form of education; not education in the sense of the attainment of an empty degree, but education in the mind of the inner cultivation of the self, which serves as the basis for outer transformations, civilizational and social, and the cultivation of the self, the *Bodhisatta* in the narratives, exemplifies the *pāramīs* at the cost of many an eon, and that ideal for fully developed human beings whose awakening is always and inextricably intertwined to the welfare of the many (Bv II.117–167; Horner, 1975, pp. 20–23). The growing body of contemporary scholarship has sought to treat the *pāramī* system, in the contemporary context, as more than a mere religious ideal, as an intricate ethical and psychological framework of flourishing as a human being through the cultivation of the self, intentionality, and compassion as a universal, and the emergent moral (Harvey, 2000; *Anālayo*, 2015). The ethics of Buddhism, as Keown (1992) rightly points out, is teleological, and for the good of self and others. The moral development of Buddhism, as he notes, never occurs at the expense of one's own long-term good: it benefits both oneself and others (pp. 231–232).

The Capability Approach, proposed by Sen, explains development as the removal or the reduction of the constraints that enable individuals to do and to be something (Sen, 1999, p. 75), while Nussbaum's approach emphasizes flourishing as a function of dignity, agency, emotional and moral development

(Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34), which is also aligned with the above-mentioned perspective. The ten *Pāramīs* consist of *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (ethical discipline), *nekkhamma* (renunciation), *paññā* (wisdom), *viriya* (effort), *khanti* (patience), *sacca* (truthfulness), *adhiṭṭhāna* (determination), *mettā* (loving-kindness), and *upekkhā* (equanimity), providing an ethical and relational framework and a structural design of the mind and the heart. Their influence is a development of the sociorelational and psychosocial dimensions of the inner and whole selves. In a world where consumerism, competition, and socio-political fragmentation are dominant, cultivating these ideals is essential to foster the virtuous qualities of psychosocial resilience, integrity, empathy, and solidarity.

The positive psychological, social, and educational value of empathy, altruism, and emotional intelligence has been documented in the field of humanistic education (see Maslow, 1954/1970, pp. 128–130; Rogers, 1980, pp. 140–142; UNESCO, 2022, pp. 11–14). These same voices, along with those in peace education and care ethics, advocate for the relational-affective foundation of learning as the bedrock of conflict transformation and non-violent pluralism (Reardon, 1997, pp. 21–23; Noddings, 2013, pp. 94–96). Similarly, Buddhist scholars posit that global crises require the ethical elements of compassion and interdependence (Dalai Lama, 1999, pp. 63–65; Macy & Johnstone, 2012, pp. 136–138). The inextricable link of inner transformation, ethical action, and planetary responsibility offers the *pāramī* framework as a means of filling the moral, affective, and existential gaps of contemporary education.

Hence, the ten *pāramīs*, from a humanistic perspective, allow for an ethical and philosophical basis for the reconstruction of education from a narrowly cognitive functioning to an all- encompassing formation and ethical global citizenship. This approach, termed Dhammic Humanism, intertwines individual enlightenment and social awakening, impacting individual and social transformations. It advances education by proposing the development of wisdom (*paññā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) as education beyond the individual. It speaks to the transformational needs of the self and the flourishing of the collective, particularly at the societal and global levels. Considering the crises of a massive proportion confronting humanity, the application of the *pāramī* construct is, at the very least, ethically justifiable as a necessary condition, not an alternative, to the fulfilment of the demands of SDG 4.7 and the re-conceptualisation of sustainable development for humanity.

Aim of the Article

The primary aim of this paper is to present Buddhism not only as a philosophy of self-liberation, but also as a path of social transformation, through the pedagogical lens of the ten *pāramīs* of *Theravāda* Buddhist virtue ethics. More specifically, I analyse the ten *pāramīs* as a multi-layered ethical framework for self-cultivation through compassion, wisdom, and moral responsibility. In the *pāramīs* as a Buddhist moral philosophy, the focus is on the transformation of suffering and on the liberation of personal potential into collective flourishing. This perspective reinforces what Keown describes as the ethical telos of Buddhism, realising the good for self and others. In this sense, Keown contends, moral development in Buddhism never occurs at the expense of one's long-term good; it benefits both oneself and others (1992, p. 231)

In relation to the above, the author explains how the *pāramī* framework presents a new constructive educational model that particularly engages innovative forms of sustainable human development. The *pāramīs*, particularly with the emphasis on social and ecological well-being, moving from the outer to the inner, resonates with Sen's (Sen, 1999, pp. 36–37) development as the expanding of substantive freedoms, whereby people attain that which they can do and become, and aligns with Nussbaum's (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34) focus on flourishing, which includes the dignity and agency of the person, the emotional and moral dimensions of a person, and the social and ecological well-being of the person. This point of view

is in agreement with the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education, which states that "quality education" means that learners should be socially and ecologically responsible and advocate for peace and social justice (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9–11). It also aligns with WD 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which speaks of the need for education focusing on sustainable development, global citizenship, and peace (United Nations, 2015, p. 17).

Third, the article states that the incorporation of the ten *pāramīs* into modern educational discourse provides a positive means of response to the crises of climate instability, social fragmentation, weakening mental health, and systemic inequities. It defends Dhammic Humanism—an integration of Buddhist virtue ethics and contemporary humanistic education as a theoretical and practical model for the formation of compassionate, tenacious, and morally accountable individuals and communities with the capacity to collaboratively actualize a harmonious and sustainable civilization. In this sense, the article advances the interdisciplinary field of Buddhist ethics, peace education, humanistic psychology, and sustainable development. It provides an education re-humanizing framework for the twenty-first century.

This paper intends to: (1) develop the humanistic influences of the ten *pāramīs* as a framework for the ethical self-cultivation process. This framework emphasizes compassion and wisdom. (2) Align the *pāramīs* with contemporary theories of human flourishing (including Sen's Capability Approach (Sen, 1999, p. 75) and Nussbaum's capabilities framework (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34) and the educational aims of SDG 4.7 and UNESCO's ESD (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 8–10); and (3) demonstrate that the *pāramīs* in education can spark a paradigm shift in developing a morally resilient and compassionate society that is ready to tackle the global ethical and ecological crises. It seeks to position Dhammic Humanism within sustainable development, peace pedagogies, and global citizenship education for the twenty-first century.

2. Humanistic Foundations of the Ten *Pāramīs*

The *pāramīs* (perfections) are central to the moral philosophy and spiritual pedagogy of *Theravāda* Buddhism. In the *pāramīs*, we find an integrated and transformative paradigm of the human potential that can be achieved through the refinement of consciousness, purification of the motives, and the shaping of one's character. The *pāramī* system is an example of the value of humanistic psychology and virtue ethics that focuses on the transformative potential of the individual, and the development of the individual as a whole cognitively, affectively, morally, socially, and spiritually. The *pāramīs* are progressive and developmental and can serve as a path of moral development that is the result of an individual's internal transformation, coupled with self-discipline and a commitment to the interpersonal. From this perspective, the virtue ethics of Buddhism is a process of becoming that is consistent with the development of one's character along a continuum of education, rather than the acquisition of mere information or a set of technical skills.

2.1 Anthropological Foundations of the *Pāramī* Path

Transcending the fixed positions of any given identity or status is encompassed in the positive nature of the *pāramī*. Managing to stay within the doctrinal limits of *paṭiccasamuppāda* and the five aggregates, one is compelled to consider human existence as a contingent and conditioned flow of the mental, affective, and volitional processes (MN 9; *Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi*, 2009, pp. 132–144). In this conception of the world, there is a hopeful element in recognising the positive potential for transformation, both moral and psychological. Because human beings are, at their core, trainable (*bhāvanā*), a teacher is someone who, in addition to instructing, purposefully engages in the cultivation of personal attributes.

The *pāramīs* can thus be understood as guiding the formation of a moral and emotionally intelligent agency, and the cultivation of a deliberate ethics. Keown (1992) argues that the effect of Buddhist ethics is, in the end, focused on the good, both for the self and the other, which is why it is structured in a way that moral development never occurs at the expense of one's own long-term good: it benefits both oneself and others (pp. 231–232). Therefore, it is within the *pāramī* that the possibility of human transformation is presented as a given along the ethical way.

2.2 The *Pāramīs* as Human Flourishing (Eudaimonia)

Contemporary virtue ethicists argue that the flourishing element in Buddhist moral philosophy and Aristotelian eudaimonism goes beyond rule-based or mechanical utility as moral virtue. (Keown, 1992, pp. 193-196). However, the *pāramī* pathway expands such a view, as growing is not rational optimization or social success, but spiritual liberation (*vimutti*). Universal love and compassion, flourishing in the release of rational, boundless light of consciousness, is liberation through the total obliteration of the three poisons of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), the fundamental cause of all suffering.

The *Bodhisatta* model represents the highest human ideal of self-transcendence for the liberation and welfare of all. This model embodies the essence of capability theory, which speaks of development as the emancipation and expansion of substantive freedoms and ethical (non-material) domains of increase (Sen, 1999, pp. 36–37; Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34). In such a context, the *pāramīs* conceptualize the vision of human flourishing as ethical self-cultivation and relational responsibility.

2.3 A Universal Humanistic Framework

Although *pāramīs* are based in Buddhist traditions, they also possess other universal philosophical implications that stem from three factors. The first is applicability: *Pāramīs* entail a positive experiential facet that strengthens psychological and social improvement. Practicing virtues like generosity, patience, and truthfulness can lead to emotional well-being and community resilience, and can also foster trust in interpersonal relationships (Maslow, 1954/1970, pp. 128–130; Rogers, 1980, pp. 140–142). Secondly, there is a developmental structure: *pāramīs* are said to be developed in stages, beginning with the foundational ethical conduct of *dāna*, *sīla* (giving and moral conduct), and moving through emotional mastery of *khanti*, *viriya* (persevering), to knowledge and wisdom of *paññā* (wisdom) and the attainment of equanimous wisdom of *upekkhā*. Lastly, the *pāramīs* focus on the community rather than the individual. Unlike the other models based on self-maximization, *pāramīs* focus on the community rather than the individual. The *pāramīs* also promote a sense of ethics of solidarity, compassion, and a community flourishing together. With the above features in mind, the *pāramīs* remove the separation of personal spiritual purification and the collective moral accountability as they unite both the individual and collective transformations.

2.4 The *Pāramīs* and the Modern Educational Crisis

Contemporary educational systems center on cognitive and technological skills and competition. There is little to no emphasis placed on empathy and compassion, emotional fortitude, values, and citizenship. Students learn about individual competition, but are not taught collaboration; they learn about accomplishing goals, but are not taught understanding. The contemporary educational challenge is not due to an excess of information. It is due to the absence of ethics, vision, and humanity.

The integration of *pāramī* and the contemporary education system attempts to resolve these challenges by balancing personal and collective well-being, inner and outer transformation, ethical fortitude and global responsibility, and the duality of international and local citizenship. This balance attempts to reflect and respond to the call from UNESCO in the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9–

11) and the associated indicators of peace, justice, and a sustainable environment, as embedded in the SDG 4.7 framework. Therefore, *pāramī* urges the education system to shift from knowledge-based systems to wisdom-based systems, where the center is the moral and ethical character of the individuals for sustainable development and genuine advancement of humanity.

3. The Ten *Pāramīs* as Sustainable Virtues

The structural formulation of the *pāramīs* as sustainable human virtues transcends the individual, and the integrative framework of the *pāramīs* as sustainable human virtues transforms individual transcendent empyreal civility into collective earthly societal well-being. The *pāramīs*, as transcendent empyreal civility morally perfected in the embodiment of the numerous lifetimes' phenomenon of the ideal *Bodhisatta*, articulate the philosophical anthropological embodiment of wisdom and compassion, and the moral strengthening fabric of ideal aspirational civilizational humanity and the paradigmatic anthropological *Bodhisatta*. The *pārami*, as an integrated sustainable human virtue of individual moral civility, transcends the individual and transforms collective earthly societal well-being. In the context of education, embodied *pārami* sustainable frameworks ease the and address modern socio-economic injustices and crises in the transformation and restoration of sustained peace, social justice, global citizenship, and sustainable development. In the context of UNESCO and SDG 4.7, the *pāramīs* as integrated sustainable human virtues demonstrate and promote embodied civilizational human virtue of secedes, socially relational, and ecologically sustainable integrated civilizational virtue responsible compassion, and sustainable human civility. The subsequent sections explore the pedagogical aspects and interpretations of the sustainable virtue embodied in each *pārami*.

3.1 *Dāna* — Generosity and Altruism as Foundations of Solidarity

The first of the *pāramīs* is the cultivation of *dāna*, or generosity. It is the starting point of any ethical transformation of an individual. It is primarily concerned with empathy, selflessness, and, importantly, the urge to become responsible for the community. There is an element of material giving, but as Buddhist humanism makes clear, generosity may also be in the form of the giving of one's time, attention, emotional energy, and care for another. By practicing *dāna*, one moves from contraction of the ego into an expansion of the self, within which one can form deep social relationships and trust, cooperate with, and be socially cohesive with others. In today's educational systems, *dāna* needs to be implemented to address individualism and foster a culture of care and emotional support among peers. The GEM report reiterates that, for sustainability, education needs to be centered around teaching people to live in solidarity and support each other (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 24–26). Thus, *dāna* needs to be redefined as a foundational element of a pedagogy of ethical citizenship and collective flourishing.

3.2 *Sīla* — Ethical Integrity and the Formation of Moral Agency

Sīla (ethical discipline) includes non-harming, truthfulness, and taking responsibility. *Sīla* also provides the foundational elements of trust and social cohesion. In the Buddhist tradition, the teaching of ethics is not based on authoritarian command. It is instead rooted in the understanding of the consequences of one's actions and the attendant social relations. Author Keown (1992) notes that, in the Buddhist tradition, ethics is both teleological and relational, explaining that moral development (of one's self) never occurs at the expense of one's own long-term good; it benefits both oneself and others (pp. 231–232). In *sīla*, moral agency, trust, and transparency in institutions, which are vital in the education aimed at combating the polarization, the corruption, and the systemic injustices of the world, are in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4.7.

3.3 *Nekkhamma* — Wise Renunciation Against Consumerism

Nekkhamma (or renunciation) is the emotional distancing from the cravings and assumptions that well-being is associated with acquisition and consumption. It is not escapism; rather, it is a valuing of sufficiency, well-being, and simplicity. *Nekkhamma*, as an ethic of sustainable and mindful consumption, is particularly important at a time of rampant consumerism, digital addiction, and extractive development. Thich Nhat Hanh (2014, p. 72) suggests that letting go is the path of freedom. *Nekkhamma*, as a pedagogical virtue, enhances autonomy, emotional control, and constructive living.

3.4 *Paññā* — More Critical and Ethical Wisdom for More Complex Realities

Paññā or wisdom integrates reason, experience, and ethical consideration. *Avijjā* or ignorance, in Buddhism, is associated with suffering, so it is through wisdom that one is liberated. In the context of education, *paññā* is equivalent to reflective judgements and ethical reasoning and is aligned with systems thinking, which is one of the key competencies for transformative sustainability education (Sterling, 2022, pp. 32–34). With *paññā*, learners are equipped to not just understand the world, but also the responsible ways to change it.

3.5 *Viriya* — Effort and Resilience as Engines of Transformation

Viriya (energy, perseverance) also refers to cultivating disciplined, moral, and courageous determination. In contemporary research, it aligns with, yet diverges from, constructs of resilience and grit (Duckworth, 2016, pp. 8–10), as it bases constructive perseverance on 'soft' factors of empathy and moral concerns, as opposed to 'hard' constructs of competitor individualism. *Viriya* endows learners with the level of stamina required for the protracted engagement with deep social and ecological crises.

3.6 *Khanti* — Patience and Conflict Transformation

Khanti (patience) is the re-channeling of aggressive behaviors and reactive attitudes toward a person into tolerant emotional responses and higher-order empathy. In a context where there is a great deal of conflict and increasing violence (polarization), *khanti*, as a virtue of peace, helps to provide a basis for non-violent communication and restorative practices. In the case of peace education, the regulation of one's own emotions and the ability to empathically listen to others are some of the most essential elements for transforming a conflict (Reardon, 1997, pp. 24–26). Thus, *Khanti* reinforces principles of trauma-informed education and community resilience.

3.7 *Sacca* — Truthfulness and Social Trust

Sacca embodies honesty, authenticity, and faithfulness to surrounding circumstances. *Sacca* counters global distrust, the result of the misinformation, manipulation, and post-truth politics (UNESCO, 2022, pp. 24–25). Informed means the very foundation of media literacy, critical thinking, and constructive active participation in democracy, which in turn supports the tenets of responsible democracy and civic engagement.

3.8 *Adhiṭṭhāna* — Purpose and Ethical Commitment

The word *Adhiṭṭhāna* suggests a form of determination. It cultivates a sense of purpose and commitment that transcends the very basics of ambitions. It enhances the critical formation of the self and moral certainty in a world filled with existential dread and nihilism. Research on purpose as an aspect of learning demonstrates that value-based direction increases resilience and ethical agency (Seligman, 2018, pp. 245–247).

3.9 *Mettā* — Loving-Kindness and Compassionate Citizenship

Through the psychological lens of *mettā* (loving-kindness), we develop goodwill that surpasses the boundaries of nationalism, ethnicity, and ideology. This goodwill supports the psychological underpinning

of global citizenry, as well as a culture of caring. Research from neuroscience shows the positive psychological attributes of global citizenship and a caring culture are strengthened by loving-kindness and enhanced empathy and emotional regulation, and prosocial behaviors Ricard, 2015, pp. 171–173). *Mettā* as a pedagogical virtue fosters inclusion, mutual respect, and peace.

3.10 *Upekkhā* — Equanimity and Sustainable Peace

The mental health benefits of *Upekkhā* (equanimity) include building mental clarity and emotional balance. *Upekkhā* helps with emotional stability and fosters one's mental clarity, all of which are needed during stress and uncertainty. These are essential and necessary during the global epidemic of anxiety and burnout (WHO, 2022, pp. 8–10). *Upekkhā* integrates insight with compassion and thus brings and cultivates sustainable peace.

Education that is both humanistic and holistic involves teaching the *pāramīs*. The *pāramīs* transcend the dualities of inner and outer collective change, emotional and ethical resilience, and personal and planetary wellbeing. The *pāramīs* give us a way to describe nurturing wise love and ethical global citizenship rather than the transmission of content as education. This definition of education fits the teaching of Dhammic Humanism and the intention of guiding humanity to a more harmonious and sustainable way of living.

4. Transformative Pedagogy for Education for Sustainable Development Based on *Pāramīs*.

The *pāramī* framework integrated with transformative learning, emotional intelligence, contemplative pedagogy, and community-based ecological mindfulness offers one of the most robust foundations for pedagogy centered on education for sustainable development, unlike traditional modes of schooling, which view learners as empty vessels whose only cognitive mastery, after competition, and productivity, as instrumental outcomes, *pāramī* pedagogy calls for processes that build learners' character, ethical agency, and relational consciousness. These are essential for the transformation of the global community. It suggests a developmental continuum where learners not only think, feel, and act, but also grow in the ethical and existential dimensions of their being, thus moving from a self-centered construct of identity to one characterized by compassionate global citizenship. This, in fact, speaks to the transformative aspirations of SDG 4.7 (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9–11; UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 42–45).

4.1 *Pāramī* Annotation and Transformative Learning Theory

According to Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory, authentic learning does not come from simply acquiring more knowledge, but instead uses critical reflection to shift meaning perspectives, and change through 'transforming frames of reference' (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 5–12; Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7–11). This perspective aligns with *pāramī*-based education, where the emphasis on learning is through the perspective of insight (*paññā*) and self-transformation, which is the basis of ethical action. Mezirow and Buddhist pedagogy are similar in that they understand the meaning of transformation to be a change in consciousness that deconstructs the egoic conditioning and the other attributed layers of unexamined assumption and affective habit.

The emotional pliancy instead of emotional defensiveness fostered by learners' *khanti* (patience) and *upekkhā* (equanimity), and the moral imagination, transcending the self to a prosocial, ego-less commitment, inspired by *dāna* (generosity) and *mettā* (loving-kindness). Violence, inequality, and ecological collapse are structural issues that threaten the just and compassionate alternative futures learners envision, and that *paññā* (insight) empowers them to see. In this sense, embodied ethical re-orientation is what differentiates transformative learning from *pāramī* pedagogy. They are operationalized to shift more than a learner's intellect.

4.2 Development of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman, for instance, identifies as central to leadership and the thriving of people, the ability to regulate one's own emotions, empathy, and relational competencies (Goleman, 1995, pp. 43–45). Frameworks for the deliberate cultivation of these attributes are offered by *pāramī* ethics. *viriya* (effort) and *adhiṭṭhāna* (determination) develop resilient agency and stamina to overcome setbacks. *Khanti* fosters peace constructively, replacing a punch with an understanding-why disposition towards the other. *Mettā* is concerned with the expansion of concern and care for the other and is one of the foundations of peace and conflict education and the practice of intercultural dialogue. *Sīla* (ethical conduct) and *sacca* (truthfulness) nurture a sense of trust and authenticity in the collective.

While in many current forms of schooling, emotional and ethical development is often overlooked, in *pāramī*-based education, emotional maturity and emotional intelligence are integrated and are not seen as a measurable output of the learning process, but instead serve as an inner compass of empathy and relational accountability (Noddings, 2013, pp. 94–96; Palmer, 2007, pp. 63–65).

4.3 Whole-Person Education and Contemplative Pedagogy

The integration of the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of learning is the primary goal of whole-person education. Mindfulness, reflective dialogue, deep listening, and body awareness are all forms of Contemplative pedagogy, which supports integration by developing the learner's ability to think and act clearly and attentively. Zinn (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, pp. 108–110) explains that the practice of contemplation improves emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, which are important for ethical reasoning and well-being.

During *pāramī* pedagogy, inner transformative contemplative practice translates into outer ethical action. Students' ability to gain insight into and manage their internal feelings, intentions, and actions through journaling, compassionate dialogue, and meditation is an example of practice that responds to the call by UNESCO for an education that promotes internaluves of peace, empathy, and ecological empathy, rather than the externally oriented strict educational goals (UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 48–51; UNESCO, 2023, pp. 24–27).

4.4 Community-Based Learning and Ecological Citizenship

The *pāramī* model helps reshape education from focusing on the individual achievement paradigm to one focused on the individual achievement to one focused on community and the planet. Integrating *dāna*, *sīla*, and *mettā* within programs focused on social justice, poverty alleviation, and ecological restoration can be done through supportive, collaborative service-learning and community-engaged practices. Such programs foster democratic citizenship and peace-building (Reardon, 1997, pp. 38-41).

The principle of interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) takes the interdependent relationship of all beings and the moral and ontological foundations of ecological citizenship, assuring that the environmental and human conditions are intertwined. *Nekkhamma* combats the moral issues related to the social evils of consumerism and overconsumption by advocating for self-sufficient, mindful, and sustainable ways of living. While *upekkhā* develops the needed emotional resilience to withstand ecological grief and climate anxiety, as Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us, understanding and love become action for genuine change (Hanh, 2014, p. 115).

A *pāramī*-based pedagogy reconceptualizes the transformative power of education as a journey from self-interest to concern for the whole cosmos. It assimilates critical reflection, emotional maturity, depth of contemplation, and ecological activism. This is a form of enactment for the SDG 4.7 aspirations. It does not develop a competitive mindset for economic gain, but for the 21st century's ever-evolving,

multifaceted problems, it encourages the emergence of a leader who is imbued with compassion, an ethical person, and a planet-caring steward. This is the function of education as a collective awakening, an evolution towards Dhammic Humanism, where sustainable civilization is built on the foundations of compassion and wisdom.

5. Dialogue with Contemporary Global Ethics

The ten *pāramīs ashloka* model inspires empathy and connection with the frameworks of global ethics. Global ethics is concerned with human dignity, the moral agent, social responsibility, and sustainable flourishing. It is interdisciplinary and cross-cutting. The *pāramī* model is grounded in Buddhist ethics and pedagogy, and *pāramī* ethics bridged the Buddhist ethics and secular humanism as educational and developmental paradigms beyond the economic and competitive paradigms (Sterling, 2022, pp. 28–31; Noddings, 2013, pp. 102–105). The *pāramīs* are placed in relation to three key currents of global ethics: Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach, Keown's Buddhist eudaimonia, and UNESCO ESD and SDG 4.7.

5.1 Alignment with Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

Expansion of human capability, agency, and dignity is Nussbaum's (2011, pp. 18–24) primary focus in any educational and developmental endeavor. Within this context, Nussbaum (2011, pp. 18–24) dismisses economic growth as a progress indicator. What development means is what people being actually able to 'be' and 'do', i.e., the practical possibilities of constructive activities that promote human wellbeing (Sen, 1999, pp. 74–76). Essential capabilities on emotional development, practical reasoning, social affiliation, and empathy, along with active participation in community life, provide the ethical foundation for transformative education for justice and human dignity.

The ethical vision of the *pāramī* path is in close proximity to this. The *pāramīs* create the requisite internal attributes for moral agency and flourishing in healthy relationships: *dāna* fosters empathy and altruism, *sīla* participants and fosters integrity and active non-violent social participation, *khanti* nurtures emotional maturity and non-violence, *paññā* fosters active non-violent participation and non-violent social participation, and *adhiṭṭhāna* purports the attributes of agency and practical purpose to people. The predominant focus of the Capabilities Approach is on external opportunity constructs, whereas the ethics of *pāramī* stress that inner changes are central to meaningful freedom. These ideas are merged in humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1954/1970, pp. 128–132; Rogers, 1980, pp. 142–145).

The relation between the *pāramīs* and capability theory is strengthened by positioning flourishing within a relational ontology of interdependence as opposed to achievement. The mentioning of the terms *bahujanahita-bahujanasukha* suggests that to achieve the flourishing of any one person requires the flourishing of all people and the ecosystem as one. This is a precursor to the contemporary ethics of global citizenship (UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 36–38).

5.2 Dialogue with Keown: Buddhist Eudaimonia and Sustainable Flourishing

In contrast to neoliberal models that equate success with productivity or accumulation, *pāramī* ethics encourages the cultivation of emotionally regenerative clarity. In the case of Damien Keown, the Buddhist Ethics and the case of Western Aristotelian Ethics of virtue, as with Ethics of Virtue, it could be argued that the center of ethics, of morality, is, and remains, 'eudaimonia', that is, human flourishing from the cultivation of virtues rather than mere obedience to rules or to the calculating of ends (Keown, 1992, pp. 231–232). However, Keown makes a difference. He argues that Buddhist flourishing, the Buddhist conception of flourishing, is not the rational and the social, but that it is also and, in addition, the spiritually

liberating (*vimutti*), the religiously and ethically disencumbered from the greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

The *pāramīs*, with and through their ten pathways or virtues. Sustainable flourishing begins when persons go beyond ego-centered and liberating (*vimutti*), the ethically disencumbered from the greed (*lobha*), the hatred (*dosa*), the delusion (*moha*). The *pāramī* ethics promote the cultivation of emotionally regenerative clarity, ethical responsibility, and relational integrity, which are essential for sustainable peace, and are in sharp contrast with the neoliberal models that equate success with productivity or accumulation (Orr, 2004, pp. 26–30; Ricard, 2015, pp. 455–458).

Thus, it could be argued that, in this case, the Buddhist conception of eudaimonia and the eudaimonia of the Buddhist *pāramī* are aligned. In all cases, we can argue that the *pāramī* of Buddhism is the eudaimonia of the sustainable and or sustainable. Eudaimonia, wherein the *pāramī* represents and may be performed as exemplars of the virtues. The eudaimonia of the sustainable and or sustainable is said to be exemplars of the virtues of the eudaimonia, in all cases. (Reardon, 1997, pp. 42–45; Noddings, 2013, pp. 118–121).

5.3 UNESCO ESD & SDG 4.7: Ethics, Sustainability, and Action

The UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 4.7 aim to develop the global community's knowledge and understanding of the tools, structures, and principles of violence-free and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2023). The GEM report discusses the most fundamental ethical and moral challenges when it comes to the need for a holistic and integrated approach, which goes beyond a simple reliance on technology or a curricular response (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9–11; UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 48–50).

The *pāramīs* directly operationalize these aspirations:

- *Dāna*, altruism, and culture of care;
- *Sīla*, social trust, and ethical accountability;
- *Mettā* and *upekkhā*, emotional well-being and peace.
- *Khanti*, peace and restorative justice, and the able transformation of conflict;
- *Nekkhamma*, overcoming consumerism, the fostering and stewardship of sufficiency, and caring for the earth.

Sustainability must advance from knowing to being to doing (Sterling, 2022), which is a key point of ESD. The *pāramī* ethics of a selfless commitment provide the dispositions and virtues needed to embody ethical action and planetary responsibility.

The most crucial point of contact between *pāramī* ethics and contemporary global ethics is that all understand that for the world to cultivate dignity, agency, accountability, and empathy, and respond to the global challenges, the education system has to prioritize these attributes. The contemporary frameworks support the structural necessities of international ethics, while Buddhist humanism offers the most profound inner grounding of global ethics. Together, they speak to the most fundamental aspects of the moral horizon of a sustainable world: compassion, wisdom, justice, and interdependence; the fundamental aspects of what we may call Dhammic Humanism.

6. A Dhammic Humanism Model for Sustainable Education

6.1 Interbeing and Interdependence (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) as Global Citizenship Foundations

The very foundation of Dhammic Humanism is Interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), which asserts that every occurrence happens due to a set of conditions. These conditions may be relational or causal and not due to a fixed or self-existent core. Throughout the Nikāyas, the transformative power of insightful

perception and the dissolution of the ego and the perception of separateness is described (MN 28.38; *Ñāṇamoli* & *Bodhi*, 2009, pp. 278–285, esp. p. 284). This phenomenon contradicts the majority of modern frameworks that advocate the perception of individuals, competition, and the dominating mastery of nature; i.e., anthropocentrism.

Interdependence demonstrates that the flourishing of human beings is entirely reliant on the flourishing of one another, and the psycho-social, ecological, economic, and existential spheres of flourishing are interdependently relational. In the field of education, *paṭiccasamuppāda* is defined as the philosophy of global citizenship. This is not to be confused with the cognitive knowledge of international systems, but rather the ethical dimension of empathy, the sense of responsibility, and the value of solidarity. According to UNESCO, the interdependence and global citizenship of people, together with the willingness to act for the common good, are the cornerstones of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 9-11; UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 32-34). Interdependence prompts learners to engage with the risks of action and inaction. The consequences of consumer choice on the environment; the divisive and distrustful social impact of polarization; the social and structural inequity, and the resultant 'sick' social system. Therefore, in the case of education, Dhammic Humanism recontextualizes the emphasis from the individual to the relational; and from citizenship, it focuses on the welfare and happiness of the countless.

The recent IPCC report (2023) presents an expression of climate-related anxiety that can be explained through the principle of interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) as an ontological concern. The IPCC (pp. 71-73) references the psychological effect of an environment that is collapsing, resulting in sadness, loneliness, depression, and, in the case of the *pāramī* framework, ecological grief is viewed more optimistically as a constructive motivator for collective action. By recognizing the self and the environment as interdependent, the learner transcends the paralyzing fear of loss. In this case, the *upekkhā* (equanimity) of the learner is not apathy but an emotional anchor that helps the learner maintain clarity of thought in the midst of crisis. *Nekkhamma* (wise renunciation) shows learners how to reduce anxiety by consuming and destroying less and, therefore, more responsibly. In this way, Dhammic Humanism reframes the climate crisis as an opportunity for an interspiritual and inter-ethical crisis, where interbeing is the answer to loneliness, and compassion for the self; caring for the Earth is an act of compassion for the self.

6.2 The *Pāramīs* as an Architecture of Ethical Resilience

Dhammic Humanism exemplifies ethical resilience through the ten *pāramīs*. Here, the *pāramīs* exemplify the building of positive mental and emotional strength to the challenges one encounters. The psychological resilience, ethical pākīnās, and the virtuous network (MacIntyre, 1981/2007, pp. 187-191; Keown, 1992, pp. 231-232) encourage pākīnās altruism, ethical virtue, and psychosocial recovery.

Core Ethical & Educational Contributions of the *Pāramī*:

1. *Dāna* Empathy, altruism, and caregiving.
2. *Sīla* Trust, accountability, and social responsibility.
3. *Nekkhamma* Consumerism, and the practice of enough.
4. *Paññā* Critically and systemically thinking.
5. *Viriya* Perseverance, and facing adversities.
6. *Khanti* Self-regulation and the transformation of conflicts.
7. *Sacca* Trust, and transparency to the public.
8. *Adhiṭṭhāna* Agency, purpose, and ethical determination.
9. *Mettā* Empathy and constructive conflict.

10. *Upekkhā* Equanimity and peace.

These virtues pertain to most of the critical challenges encountered in contemporary studies, such as the mental health crisis (WHO, 2022, pp. 8–11), civic disintegration (UNESCO MGIEP, 2022, pp. 36–39), and the climate-related anxiety (IPCC, 2023, pp. 71–73). Ethical resilience refers to the ability to turn problems into positive development and to respond with understanding and empathy. No amount of innovation or reform in policies will bring about peace, justice, and sustainability without this kind of inner change (Orr, 2004, pp. 12–14; Ricard, 2015, pp. 458–460; Noddings, 2013, pp. 102–104).

6.3. Institutional Applications: Educational Institution, Monastic Education, Policy-Level Changes, and Reform

Institutional systematic change can benefit from the Dhammic Humanism model applied at all levels of education. Regarding elementary and secondary schooling, the integration of *pāramī*-based pedagogy and social-emotional learning could be combined with contemplation pedagogy circles/restorative justice practices and community building. These approaches can change the culture of the classroom to one of collaboration and cooperation, increasing student well-being and relational learning (Noddings, 2013, pp. 171–174; Canton, 2006, pp. 68–71).

Transformative learning frameworks (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 5–12) can be utilized in higher education through the inclusion of ethics in all disciplines—sustainability, trauma-informed pedagogy, dialogue, peace, and the ecological humanities. Universities can be laboratories for compassionate innovation instead of engines of extractive development (Sterling, 2022, pp. 32–35).

Monasteries personify the living pedagogy of the *pāramīs* and can train in ethical leadership, interfaith dialogue, and contemplative pedagogy. They exemplify the value of sufficiency, mindfulness, simplicity, and communal responsibility.

Grounded in Dhammic Humanism, curricula reform in line with SDG 4.7 opens avenues for the development of such policy frameworks. These may suggest increased attention to the training of teachers in Contemplative Pedagogy, character, peace, and environmental education, and community-school partnerships (UNESCO, 2023, pp. 22–25).

Dhammic Humanism outlines an educational model based on sustainable positive global citizenship through the interrelated education pillars of interconnectedness, virtue, steadfast responsibility, and structural and inner change. Academic models of individual, inner transformation, and social transformation, and outer liberation offer structural and inner change. Through the lens of ethical, transformative, and relational consciousness, inspired institutional, peace-just, and sustainable society construction frameworks, we provide hope in ethically positive, transformative models. In global crisis times, Dhammic Humanism re-defines education as the life-sustaining, compassionate wisdom needed to sustain and protect the planet.

7. Conclusion — Toward a Civilization of Compassion

Education means more than informing people. It is designed to change people. What kind of people do we want to be? This question captures the moral and spiritual essence of every possible future. In terms of a vision of sustainable futures, pioneering technologies or new political frameworks will be irrelevant if we do not change the answer. The ten *pāramīs* reflect the answer; in this case, the answer is a development architecture of the pliancy of character and ethics. There is no doubt that systems and structures sustain, nor are the elements of a purified mind (*citta-visuddhi*) and the engaged compassion (*karuṇā*) absent from

sustainability. Thus, building that future is less significant than the becoming of that future (Keown, 1992; Ricard, 2015).

Technological advancements and economic growth cannot fix the crises of the 21st century, such as the climate emergency, violent conflict, ecological destruction, social trust erosion, and polarization. As UNESCO states, these are the results of the failure of empathy, ethical imagination, and the recognition of interconnectedness. These failures are also evidence of a lack of consciousness. The *pāramī* path explains progress as a shift to wisdom, compassion, and universal loving-kindness. It is a divergence from the 'progress' narrative of competing, extracting, and accumulating. Buddhism teaches that we do not keep our distance from the world, but we do engage, and that engagement brings with it a strong ethical commitment to a flourishing that we will realize as a collective.

Interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), one of the main principles of Buddhist philosophy, highlights the relational aspect of existence (*Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi*, 2009). This suggests that if nothing exists independently, inflicting harm on others would also inflict damage on oneself; therefore, looking after others is looking after everyone. This has the potential to establish a new ethics of global citizenship, where one's identity encompasses more than one's tribe, nation, or any ideological formation, but a recognition of humanity, and of belonging to the Earth (Nussbaum, 2011). This type of ethical framing is needed to imagine sustainable futures in peace, which is more than the absence of war, but the presence of justice, dignity, and compassion.

The ten *pāramīs* furnish the virtues necessary to embody this vision. They are illustrated as follows: *dāna* for the cultivation of generosity and solidarity; *sīla* for the cultivation of trust and integrity; *nekkhamma* for the simplification of one's lifestyle to combat and transcend consumerism; *paññā* for the development of ethical reasoning; *viriya* for the cultivation of tenacity; *khanti* for the transformation of conflict through and the attainment of peace; *sacca* for the cultivation of consistency and accountability; *adhiṭṭhāna* for the attainment of steadfast and intentional commitment; *mettā* for the cultivation of love and compassion for all, especially the marginalized, and *upekkhā* for the attainment of balance or the equilibrium of the mind, and the establishment of peace in an ongoing way through the absence of strife. All these virtues embody a holistic and restorative pedagogy of ethical resilience that can rebuild the moral infrastructures necessary for the renewal of civilization (Noddings, 2013; Orr, 2004).

According to the most recent publication from UNESCO (2023), the global standard for educational curricula SDG 4.7 lists empathy, compassion, human rights, and care for the planet as foundational priorities. Well-meaning policies that integrate empathy and compassion at the surface level, while lacking structural support, will be ineffective. Rhetoric without compassion is empty. Technology without wisdom is purely mechanical. Without moral courage, the deepening divides will only worsen the inflicted wounds. An educational paradigm rooted in the principles of *pāramī* Dhammic Humanism offers a clear path in which values and ethics, knowledge and wisdom, individual transformations and collective liberation are harmoniously integrated.

The first teaching of the historical Buddha was that actual change is where suffering is. This suffering is the turning of the gaze to the vulnerable and the building of compassion from the ground up that becomes the foundation of liberation. His life exemplifies a kind of leadership, unlike others, that is not grounded in conquest or ideology, but in clear morals and love for all. For survival, this kind of leadership must become the dominant human quality of our time.

There is also an urgent need to rediscover ethical awakening. This is an awakening to the spiritual dimensions of humanity. The *pāramīs* show the way to a better future based on competing civilizations.

In competing civilizations, interdependence is sacrificed to isolation. Also, foolish endless accumulation is preferred to wise sufficiency. The *pāramīs* show the way to a future based on compassion, not competition.

On this path, education becomes the cultivation of the sacred, the cultivation of the spirit, and the cultivation of the human person. When this is achieved, the world will be filled with the flourishing of life in peace and with dignity.

In this world, the human heart must also change. If we can keep our hearts open, we will allow hope to flourish. This will be a hope of shared freedom and of a civilization of compassion. The *pāramīs* show us the way to this better future.

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