
Buddhist Ways of Healthy Living for People in the Information Technological Era

Ven Pannasara¹ Sanu Mahatthanadull² Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhani³

International Buddhist Studies College. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University^{1,2,3}

e-mail: 6301106006@mcu.ac.th¹

Submitted: 02/02/2024 * Revised: 17/06/2024 * Accepted: 17/06/2024*

Abstract

This study aims to elucidate the Buddhist principles guiding a healthy lifestyle amidst the prevalence of information technology in contemporary society. The examination of issues related to unhealthy habits in this technological era highlights the potential physical and mental ramifications of unmanaged technology usage on individuals' posture maintenance during activities such as sitting, working, standing, and lying down, as well as the loss of mindfulness in daily routines. In accordance with the teachings found in Buddhist scriptures on healthy living, individuals are advised to adhere to four essential components for fostering a healthy lifestyle: the development of positive karma, the cultivation of mental acuity through mindfulness practices aimed at achieving mental purity, the creation of a conducive environment for well-being, and the consumption of nutritious foods to nourish the body and sustain vitality. Furthermore, spiritual enlightenment, as outlined by the seven factors of enlightenment, plays a pivotal role in promoting healthy living. Ultimately, embracing the Buddhist approach to healthy living is imperative for addressing both physical and mental health challenges among individuals dedicated to following these principles. In the context of the information age, individuals are encouraged to adopt three key strategies: 1) Engaging in Buddhist practices that enhance physical well-being through appropriate physical exercises and mindful consumption of nutritious foods; 2) Prioritizing mental health by employing techniques to alleviate distracting thoughts, fostering positive emotions, and combating mental illness; 3) Striving for holistic body-mind harmony through profound Buddhist practices that promote overall well-being, including maintaining purity in body, speech, and mind, as well as engaging in acts of generosity (offering-dāna), upholding moral principles (five precepts), and practicing meditation (bhāvanā) to foster a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: Buddhist Ways; Healthy Living; Technological Era

Introduction

Buddhism guides the society to control mind and senses individually so that they could avoid bad habits of food eating and to have a healthy life which is praised by the Buddha as highest wealth (*Ārogya paramā lābha*). (Ven. Ayagama Siri Yasassi, 2019, 378). We need to train physical and mental process in our daily life to become good health. Especially, mind is to train mental process with the three training: Morality (*Sila*), Concentration (*Samādhi*), and Wisdom (*Paññā*) through exercise of mindfulness meditation for the health. Body also is to train any exercise in daily life to become good health. Therefore, writer mentions that to keep yourselves physically healthy, you go to a gym for an exercise, which is to make yourselves stable and physically strong. In the same way, to have a stable and strong mind we do meditation, which is mental exercise. Many people associate meditation with superstitious or extraordinary ideas. However, generally meditation in Buddhism is mental training. (Ven. Khammai Dhammasami, 2006, 2). Buddhist way to health and well-being curing are accepted to regain the former healthy position but not get into illnesses is the key. To be away from illnesses, one has to train and to control our mind and body. Physical and mental illnesses do not affect only the one who is sick but the others as well. (Ananda, 2019, 314). The Buddha was recognized as a doctor for physical and mental illnesses as well and during his mission of forty-five years he extensively elaborated plenty of discourses for the welfare and progress of humankind. *Girimānanda*: among discourses elaborated by Buddha have the qualities of dealing with some critical health issues. (Kemananda, 2019, 339).

In the information technological era, the pervasive use of technologies such as computers, smartphones, and other digital devices has profoundly impacted both physical and mental health. Extended periods spent on the internet have been linked to increased suicidal ideation, depression, stress, a low sense of happiness, and higher incidences of mental illness, contributing to significant mental health problems (Wongkoblap et al, 2022). Furthermore, the physical health consequences are equally concerning. Prolonged technology use leads to physical discomforts such as eye strain, back pain, headaches, and general bodily pain. This is particularly evident among youths, who face both physical and mental health challenges due to excessive screen time (Monteiro et al, 2019).

Modern society has seen a significant decrease in physical activity, with many individuals engaged in sedentary work such as office jobs, driving, and watching TV, leading to a rise in health problems. Despite public health campaigns emphasizing the importance of

physical activity, many people fail to connect their inactivity with health issues (Monteiro et al, 2019). Prolonged use of handheld tablets, smartphones, and computers is particularly problematic, causing eye diseases, headaches, shoulder pain, and backaches. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching methods exacerbated these problems as both lecturers and students spent extended hours sitting in front of computers. Improper posture management during these activities further contributes to physical health problems.

Mental illness has become a major global concern, with the rise of social media and information technologies contributing to the issue. The analysis of social media activities has been used to detect and monitor mental health problems, although it has often focused on single-based content. This approach neglects the complementary information provided by multi-modal content, limiting the understanding of mental health phenomena (Wongkoblap et al, 2022). The rapid increase in mental illness cases, including depression, schizophrenia, and dementia, represents a serious global health threat. Technological advancements, such as the Internet of Things, offer new capabilities for early detection and care for mental health patients (Gutierrez et al, 2021).

It is evident that the widespread use of technologies such as tablets, smartphones, and computers can dominate a person's attention for prolonged periods, leading to physical ailments from improper posture and lack of mindfulness, as well as mental diseases from the influence of social media. Many people suffer from mental conditions such as mental illness, mental disorders, severe depression, and psychosis, which lead to reduced energy and poor concentration. Therefore, this research aims to address the problems of physical and mental suffering by exploring Buddhist ways of healthy living as depicted in Buddhist scriptures.

The Issues of Unhealthy Living from IT Era

We can see that some people use technologies the periods of time spent on the internet increase suicidal ideation, depression, stress, a low sense of happiness, and the incidence of mental illness leading to mental health problems. Even though they get physical health problems such as the painful body, they will get mental illness when they use technologies form negative impact. Not only youth mental health a concern, but also the amount of screen time youths are exposed to taking a toll on their physical health leading to the issues of unhealthy living. Otherwise, most of university students or researchers sit in front of computers to study their works using over time or long time, and they will have physical

health problems such as eyes, backaches, headaches, and a painful body leading to issues of unhealthy living. One student sits in front of the computer to study his work using long time or over time, and he has eye disease and has difficulty breathing. Therefore, most of students or researchers have to balance their body structures when they use technologies for their studies or works.

1. Physical Illness from Information Technologies

Human beings are very much less physically active in modern society than previously. People spend most of their time engaged in sedentary work in offices, driving cars, and watching TV, etc. and spend very little time on physical activities. Understanding the essential importance of physical activity to population health, the authorities spend much effort in public campaigns, yet a majority of the population tends not to make the personal connection between their physical activity patterns and their health. (Ma et al, 2012, 354-369). From the above mentioned, most of users are eyes disease, head-ache, pain shoulders, backache of physical health problems using technologies such as the handheld tablets, smartphones, and computers, etc., for using long periods. Especially, not only lectures but also students are sitting in front of computer during the COVID-19 sing online teaching method. If they cannot manage their body postures: sitting, working, standing, and lying, they will be in more painful their body and they will get physical health problems from IT. Otherwise, most young people are sitting in front of the computer to play games long time in their daily life, and some young people are using handheld tablets, and smartphones to play games for a long time in their daily life. They will get physical health problems from IT.

2. Mental Illness from Information Technologies

People with mental illness have become a major concern all over the world. Many efforts have been made to improve the process of detection and surveillance of people with mental illness and one of them is through analyzing users' activities on social media from information technologies. Mental illness in social media has mainly focused on single-based content rather than multi-based content. Due to a rapid growth of multi-content data, considering on single-based content only will ignore the complementary information that offered by other modalities. In consequence, single-based content does not provide an insight knowledge on the phenomenon of interest. Mental illness is through social media big data thus, contributes to the field of public health by providing an early intervention for people

with potential mental illness problems, across the world. (Kamaruzaman et al., 2019, 126-141). The increase in mental illness cases around the world can be described as an urgent and serious global health threat. Around a million people suffer from mental disorders, among which depression, schizophrenia, and dementia are the most prevalent. Revolutionary technological paradigms such as the Internet of Things provide us with new capabilities to detect, assess, and care for patients early. (Gutierrez et al., 2021, 2-13).

In the information technological Era, most people live and use more technologies such as surrounded by various technological elements consisting of wireless internet, game consoles, tablets, smartphones, TVs, videos, mobile devices, and computers without their management of posture: sitting, working, standing, and lying, and losing mindfulness in their daily life. Therefore, IT can cause a physical and mental disease such as eyes, headaches, backache, neck, pain shoulders, kidneys, depression, anxiety, mental illnesses, mental disorders, etc. using technologies without management in daily life.

Healthy Living According to Buddhist Views

Buddhist teachings emphasize the importance of healthy thinking and living, recognizing that both physical and mental well-being are integral to a fulfilled life. In contemporary society, individuals often grapple with various illnesses, both physical and psychological. Research indicates that these ailments frequently stem from misguided thoughts and attitudes. Adopting Buddhist principles can facilitate a beneficial shift in perspectives, potentially leading to healthier lifestyles (Panahaduwe Yasassi Thero, 2014).

These six gateways represent the foundational principles for achieving welfare in both mundane and transcendent contexts. They signify the key avenues toward a fulfilling and healthy life in the Buddhist tradition.

1. The Dhammapada articulates this sentiment succinctly in the verse: “*Ārogyaparamā lābhā santuṭṭhīparamaṃ dhanaṃ viśāsaparamā ñātī nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*” (Dhp. XII. 436; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1997). This translates to the understanding that health is the greatest gain, contentment is the best of wealth, trust is the most valuable kin, and ultimate happiness found in Nibbāna. The implication here is that without good health, one's ability to engage in life's activities is severely restricted. Similarly, another verse reinforces this by stating: “*Lābhā ārogyaparamā dhanaṃ santuṭṭhi paramaṃ ñātī viśāsaparamā nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*” (Dhp. XII. 437; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1997). This further underscores that health is paramount, while

contentment with one's circumstances is the highest wealth, and that true happiness is incomparable to the bliss of Nibbāna.

Moreover, the Khuddakanikāya highlights essential attributes for healthy living, “Ārogyamicche paramañca lābham, sīlañca vuddhānumatam sutañca; Dhammānūvattī ca alīnatā ca, atthassa dvārā pamukhā chaleteti” (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 211; David et al, 1707; Francis & Neil, 1969). Here, the text identifies good health as the foremost gain, complemented by ethical behavior, approval from wise elders, knowledge, adherence to the Dhamma, and the pursuit of excellence as gateways to human welfare. The concept of health (ārogyam) encompasses both physical well-being and a serene mind. A body afflicted by disease cannot experience true pleasure, while a healthy body allows for the enjoyment of life's gains. Similarly, in terms of mental health, the presence of defilements obstructs the enjoyment of attained insights and jhānās (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262 Verse 211; David et al, 1707; Francis & Neil, 1969). Pursuing health, therefore, is recognized as the greatest gain and a primary aspiration for all individuals.

2. The virtue (sīlañca) aspect pertains to ethical conduct and relationships rooted in good character (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262; David et al, 1707; Francis & Neil, 1969).

3. Approval by elders (vuddhānumatanaṃ) indicates the importance of gaining insights from wise and virtuous mentors (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262).

4. Learning (sutañca) signifies acquiring knowledge that is rational and beneficial in society. This characteristic is integral to fostering a knowledgeable community (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262).

5. Conformity to the Dhamma denotes adherence to ethical teachings that align with a wholesome lifestyle, facilitating spiritual and personal growth (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262; David et al, 1707; Francis & Neil, 1969).

6. Striving (alīnatā) indicates a disposition of diligence and excellence, promoting a clear and unclouded mind (Khuddakanikāya, Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, Verse 262; David et al, 1707; Francis & Neil, 1969).

The Healthy Living Practice to Seven Factors of Enlightenment

For the healthy living and happy life, the mind can assist the body. If one is sick, for instance, a mind inspired, cheerful, bright, and so on, can reduce the severity of an illness. Moreover, by generating an increased strength of mind one can not only alleviate symptoms,

but one can accelerate healing and even cure illnesses altogether. The healing depends on our degree of acceptance and power of attention. The Buddha and his great disciples attained spiritual perfection: they were endowed with perfect mental health. Whenever they wished, they could summon inner resources to fully attend to their physical needs. If it was within the realm of possibility, they could draw upon their spiritual prowess to cure themselves of illness. The teaching on the seven factors of enlightenment is not intended exclusively for the sick; its application is much more wide-ranging. We can appreciate its objective by examining the term seven *bojjhaṅga* such as Mindfulness, Investigation of the Dhamma, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration, and Equanimity. (Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya, 2020, 3).

The seven factors of enlightenment have the following attributes: 1) It penetrates the truth of all phenomena; it sees everything clearly; it is stainless; it purifies the mind of all defilement. It can thus also be called pure knowledge or purifying knowledge: 2) It leads to awakening. Initially, we are all asleep: we are caught up in indulgence and heedlessness; we don't open our eyes and see the truth; we are captivated and enthralled by various sense objects. With the arising of enlightenment knowledge, one wakes up: one emerges from a state of stupor and intoxication; one is freed from attachment. In sum, one wakes up from delusion, and 3) The previous two attributes of purity and awakening naturally bring about inner peace, happiness, and liberation. In today's parlance, such a wholesome state of mind can be described as perfect mental health. (Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya, 2020, 4).

Above mentioned in Buddhist scriptures, the seven factors of enlightenment are given in spiritual perfection supported healthy living: 1) Carefully attention to things is a basis for the enlightenment, 2) Carefully attention to moral actions and immoral actions, bright and dark, wholesome and unwholesome states, 3) Carefully attention to twofold: physical energy and mental energy, 4) Carefully attention to things are a basis for the enlightenment factor of rapture, 5) Carefully attention to physical tranquility and mental tranquility, 6) Carefully attention to the sign of serenity and the sign of non-dispersal, 7) Carefully attention to that is the nutriment for the arising of the un-arisen enlightenment factor of equanimity.

The Buddhist Ways to Live Good Physical Health

As the good living of physical health, physical activities are very essential for every person leading good physical health. We have to train in many activities for physical fitness,

and which activities do we have suitable for training of physical health? Otherwise, four physical needs also are very essential for leading to good physical health not only monks, and nuns but also laypeople, which are 1. Food, 2. Clothes, 3. Shelter, and 4. Medicine for living with good physical health.

1. The Ways to Practice Physical Health

The way of physical exercise of walking is also helpful to maintain a healthy and strong body. The Buddha mentioned five advantages of physical exercise of walking: (1) Exercise of walking to get the benefit of facilitation of long journeys, (2) Exercise of walking to get the benefit of facilitation of mind purification, (3) Exercise of walking to get the benefit of decrease of diseases and sufferings, (4) Exercise of walking to get the benefit of easy digestion of food and (5) Exercise of walking to get the benefit of establishment of concentration. According to this way of physical exercise, maintenance of physical fitness through regular exercise is highly advocated. (Rathnasiri, 2019). In Buddhism, *Cankama* can refer to walking practice. If we mindfully practice walking, it should include the postures of standing, sitting and lying down, too. In other words, we should be aware of all the four body postures as a continuous mindful flow of attention to every posture leading to good physical health. When we step on the ground, it is like momentarily standing. When we stop for a moment, it is like sitting. When we stand mindfully a little longer, say to rest, it is like lying down. So, we have to balance our body postures of practices of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down to be in good physical health. (Tan, 2015, 3).

2. The Ways of Eating Foods for Physical Health

Buddhism is called the Middle Way because the Buddha realized that extremes do not lead to the awakening of the individual. However, living life between extremes, with balance and moderation, does lead to less stress and awakening for the development of a healthy life. (Leelakulthanit, 2017). People who always keep their hearts and minds calm and know the right amount to eat experience few pains, age gracefully, and live long lives. When we do not gobble down our food by force of habit, but instead face a meal with a calm heart and mind, we can awaken to a sense of gratitude. Then, as we become aware of the ill effects from eating more than we need of the things we like, we naturally will start to eat in moderation, helping us maintain a healthy condition. Of course, it goes beyond saying that gratitude fosters a heart and mind that respects the sanctity of life and is the starting point for

developing a healthy heart. (Niwano, 2016). Moderation of food is one of the basic facts related to the prevention of disease. This is also considered in Buddhism. (Hewamanage, 2016).

From overeating of food, the King Pasenadi of Kosala used to eat rice by the bucket. Then, after eating King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, huffing and puffing. He bowed and sat down to one side. Then, knowing that Kosala was huffing and puffing after eating food. The Buddha recited this verse: “When a man is always mindful, knowing moderation in eating food, his discomfort fades, and he ages slowly, taking care of his life”. (S. I. 176; Bhikkhu Bodhi, Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (2012). Then, King Pasenadi of Kosala followed the Buddha’s verse, and he gradually reduced his intake of food to at most a pint pot measure of boiled rice. At a later time, when his body had become quite slim, he stroked his limbs with his hand. (S. I. 177; Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2012). Otherwise, in the Abhidhamma, the Buddha delivered the way to eat moderation of food: Here somebody wisely thinking takes food not for the sake of amusement, not for pride, not for decoration, not for ornamentation, so far as it is necessary for the preservation and keeping up of the body and for the sake of relieving the distress of hunger, helping the cause of a holy life: Thus, I shall put an end to my past feelings and shall not give occasion to new feelings; thus shall come to me sustenance, purity, and peaceful life; that which is contentment, moderation, thoughtfulness as to food this is said to be moderation in food. A person possessing such temperance is said to be moderate as to food. (Law, 2006, 36).

Mindful eating also is a very personal undertaking, designed to stop the practitioner’s own mindless eating and bring her closer to a state of health. However many people involved in the mindful eating movement understand their goal to be much larger than healing one person at a time. With a Buddhist view of interdependence, these teachers emphasize that eating practices are not simply private actions but are knit into a wider network of beings, things, and processes. Our actions impact others; our choices affect our environments; and we are affected by others and our environment. They teach the practitioner that internal efforts to transform mental defilements and external work to save the environment and make peace are connected. One’s mindful eating becomes imbued with meaning and value well beyond the simple desire to lose weight or look better. (Wilson, 2016).

3. The Ways of Personal Hygiene for Physical Health

Personal hygiene is about recognizing your inherent value as a human being. It is also regarded as a sign of spiritual growth and purity. Keeping everything clean and tidy is a way of

showing that you care about yourself, other people, and your surroundings. It is a good habit to keep our surroundings and ourselves clean and tidy. Some nations attach the utmost importance to cleanliness. Cleanliness of body leads to purity of mind, which elevates our moral and spiritual life. Preservation of health: Cleanliness ensures good health. If the body is regularly washed, dirt cannot choke the pores of the skin. This removes dirt through perspiration for physical health. (San Di Mar, 2018, 55-70). Hygiene is one of the basic necessities of life. It is a basic human need. Most of the human activities revolve around the hygiene. Hygiene plays an important role in maintaining cleanliness and purity of the body. The attempt was to find out whether monks had the knowledge of hygiene, whether they were concerned about it, and what arrangements were made to maintain the hygienic system of the Sangha. It is evident from the literature the monks were aware of the problem of hygiene and Buddha had made rules for cleanliness in the monasteries, especially in the bathroom and privies. (Patil, 2021, 174-189).

Buddhism instructs its followers to clean the *Vihārās* and monasteries each day and to arrange clean and beautiful offerings as if we were inviting a distinguished guest. Likewise, Buddhism instructs us to clean our bodies and homes each day as a way of showing respect to ourselves and to the people we meet. (Deepali Patil). One of the Buddhist ethical precepts is not to do anything that would cause others to think badly of us or cause them to show us disrespect. Being dirty and smelly certainly makes others lose respect. If we maintain personal hygiene, we feel good about ourselves and improve our self-image. Others are happy to be in our presence and gain a favorable impression of us. These are important factors for being successful in life for healthy living. (Patil, 2021, 176-190).

The Buddhist Ways to Live Good Mental Health

As the ways to live good mental health, it is very essential for everyone in their daily life: 1) People have to stress manage and reduce any stress leading to good mental health, 2) People have to understand the Buddhist methods of psychotherapy used to build mental health, 3) People have to contemplate physical and mental relaxation both the physical and mental tenseness with activities like entertainment, hobbies, and so on leading to good mental health, 4) People have to reduce craving for sensual gratification and to reduce attachment leading to good mental health. It also is very important to reduce it because who is the more craving and attachment, will live in an unhealthy mind, and 5) People have to

reduce anger or hatred for checking one's own mental posture with aware and wise attention leading to good mental health.

1. The Ways of Thinking for Mental Health

Everything begins with thinking, good thinking must be systematic and organized, which will bring good results and effectiveness. It is probably said that just good thinking with a system gets more than half won. On the other hand, thinking is the source of actions and words, hence systematic thinking leads to systematic action and speech. In the opposite sense, unsystematic thinking leads action and speech to be directionless and ineffective. (Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2021). Thinking is the use of wisdom to analyze the acquired or existing information. This may be done by reason, deliberate, rationalize, calculate, problem solve, to work something out. Then summarize the concept using the method of classification, differentiation, systematization, and interpretation of information. It is the brain process of connecting received information or stimuli to one own original information or experience to create meaning. The thinker must be conscious mindful, and keep in mind what you are thinking about to lead yourself to the achievement of goal-oriented and effective thinking.

From the Noble Eightfold Path, one way is right thinking or thought (*sammā-sankappa*): thoughts, considerations, and motives which do not harm oneself or others, are not corrupted by defilement, and are conducive to well-being and happiness, for example thoughts of renunciation, well-wishing, kindness, and benefaction; pure, truthful and righteous thoughts; thoughts free from selfishness, covetousness, anger, hatred, and malice. (Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2021). The right thought is that our mind should be clear before committing any action. The mind should be pure, it should be ready, it should be free of unwholesome thoughts during any action or in problem-solving, and it means that our mind should be free from sensory desire, ill-will, cruelty, hatred, doubts, worries, and laziness leading to purity of mind for mental health. At the same time, we should be willing to relinquish anything that obstructs our mental and psychological progress in the way of right thoughts good mental health. (Phangcham, 1993, 35-36).

2. The Ways of Feeling for Mental Health

The Buddha describes feeling as a guest house. Just as there might be a guest house where various types of people from four directions can come and rest in it for a while, so also

the various types of feelings can come and go in our body. They just stay and exist for a short time. The body is a guest house while the feeling is just like a guest. In good weather or suitable conditions, we can live and stay comfortably. Pleasurable sensations will occur when the body or the mind is in a good state. It is called a pleasant bodily feeling (*kāyika sukha*) when arising in the body; it is called a pleasant mental feeling (*cetasika sukha*) when arising in the mind. (Sayadaw Nandamālābhivamsa, 2014).

The Buddha gave nine ways to contemplate feelings with right knowing as follows:

1. When a monk feels a pleasant feeling, he knows that it is a pleasant feeling.
2. When he feels a painful feeling, he knows that it is a painful feeling.
3. When he feels a neither-painful-nor pleasant feeling, he knows that it is a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.
4. When he feels a worldly pleasant feeling, he knows that it is a worldly pleasant feeling.
5. When he feels an unworldly pleasant feeling, he knows that it is an unworldly pleasant feeling.
6. When he feels a worldly painful feeling, he knows that it is a worldly painful feeling.
7. When he feels an unworldly painful feeling, he knows that it is an unworldly painful feeling.
8. When he feels a worldly neither painful nor pleasant feeling, he knows that it is a worldly neither painful nor unpleasant feeling.
9. When he feels an unworldly neither-painful nor unpleasant feeling, he knows that it is an unworldly neither-painful nor unpleasant feeling. (D. II. 339; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1997).

From the above mentioned, these nine ways are very systematic methods when we feel painful feelings. We have to know with mindfulness that the practice of feelings can lead to deep mindfulness and clear comprehension. When emotions will subside in focused mind, calm mind is made, and arises a deep feeling of bliss leading purity of mind. Therefore, we can follow these ways leading to healthy mind and we can live healthy living with mental health.

The Buddhist Ways to Live Perfect Body-Mind Health

The Buddhist ways to achieve perfect body-mind health offer a profound and holistic approach to well-being leading to physical and mental healthy living. Through practices such

as purity of body, purity of speech, and purity of mind leading to well-being for healthy living, he or she can cultivate a harmonious relationship between their physical bodies and mental states. This union of body and mind is essential for achieving a balanced and fulfilling life. By following these Buddhist principles of ways as follows, he or she can transcend the confines of physical and mental suffering, achieving a state of perfect body-mind health.

1. The Buddhist Ways of Healthy Living with Offering (*Dāna*)

A noble giver is happy before, during, and after giving. Before giving he is happy anticipating the opportunity to exercise his generosity. While giving he is happy that he is making another happy by fulfilling a need. After giving he is satisfied that he has done a good deed living with purity of mind. (De Silva, 1995, 1). In the same way, all forms of charity or offering (*dāna*) living with health for three types of *cetanā* namely as follows:

***Pubba cetanā* (prior volition or Happiness before Living a Healthy Mind)**

The good volition which occurs while procuring and preparing for charity is *pubba cetanā*. Your *cetana* must be free from vain pride or selfishness such as, “I am the builder of this pagoda, I am the donor of this monastery; I am the donor of offer- tories” etc. While you are preparing for the charity you and members of your family must not indulge in quarrels and disagreements. You must not be hesitant in carrying on with the good deed once you have already decided. When you feel delighted and cheerful during our preparations throughout, you may then rest assured pure and sincere *pubbha cetanā* will prevail.

***Munca cetanā* (prevailing volition or Happy During with Living Healthy Mind)**

Munca means renunciation, or detachment. Therefore, in the act of giving charity, you must renounce the offertories from your possession completely. In offering alms food to a *bhikkhu* your thought should be “I renounce this alms-food from my possession” and then physically offer alms to the recipient. This is *munca cetana* (pre-vailing volition). While performing *kusala* (good) deeds, no *akusala* (bad) minds such as greed, pride, anger, or attachment to the recipient, etc. should interfere. You should not crave future benefits. Just freely let go of the offertory generously.

***Apara cetanā* (post-charity volition or Happiness after Living a Healthy Mind)**

The third *cetanā*, which occurs after the deed of the merit, is the bliss of accomplishment you enjoy for having done a virtuous act. You feel joyous for your accomplishment of the deed, recall it often, and wish to repeat it soon. This is the burgeoning

of your *apara cetana* (post-charity volition). However, at a later time, *apara cetana* can be contaminated if you feel dissatisfied at the loss of the property donated or if you feel disappointed with the abbot for whom you have donated a monastery. Then you might ponder: Maybe I should not have given that charity. If so, not only your *apara cetana* is spoiled but also you develop an evil attitude of dissatisfaction (*akusala dosa*). (Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa, 1997, 100).

Above mention of three types of *cetanā*, these are support to healthy mind for living with happiness in life because some people donate or offer to a monastery or nunnery and monks or nuns, or poor people and they are so happy in mind before donating to them: they are so happy in mind during donation to them: they are so happiness in mind after donation to them to decrease the roots of greed, hatred, and delusion, mental defilements leading to healthy living.

2. The Buddhist Ways of Healthy Living with Morality (*Sila*)

Morality, or *sīla*, constitutes a foundational aspect of Buddhist ethics vital for achieving peace and security in daily life. The Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*) serve as ethical guidelines that purify both bodily and verbal actions, thus preparing the way for advanced practices such as *samādhi* (meditative absorption) and *paññā* (wisdom) (Ven. Pamokkha & Moorti, 2020). Observing these precepts can result in significant personal benefits, including:

Physical Well-being:

Following the five precepts contributes to a longer and healthier life by promoting actions that protect the body.

Mental Well-being:

A commitment to morality cultivates a gentle and calm mind, reducing stress and other negative mental states. It establishes a foundation for purifying thoughts and motivations, as all actions stem from the mind. Mindful adherence to moral principles encourages a harmonious existence (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018).

Practicing morality promotes peace—not only for oneself but also within the broader community—enhancing the quality of life for everyone involved. Thus, following the Five Precepts—refraining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants—can lead to a healthier life both physically and mentally (Cao Thi Bich Diep, 2019).

3. The Buddhist Way of Healthy Living through Meditation (Bhāvanā)

Meditation (bhāvanā) is recognized as a vital component of body-mind health within Buddhism. It serves as a therapeutic practice that has been utilized for centuries, enhancing both mental and physical well-being. Research indicates that meditation positively influences brain function and overall biology (Singh, 2022). The benefits of meditation include:

Improvement in Mental Health

Regular meditation practice correlates with improved mental health outcomes, promoting resilience to stress and enhancing emotional clarity (Lee, 2020).

Physical Health Benefits

Studies have shown that consistent meditation can lead to lower blood pressure and reduced physiological stress responses, contributing to improved physical health (Pasri, 2016).

Meditation fosters a mind-body connection that not only aids in stress management but also enhances cognitive functions. Engaging in regular mindfulness meditation will lead to a better overall quality of life and heightened mental well-being, solidifying its importance for individuals seeking to achieve perfect body-mind health.

Conclusions

The integration of Buddhist principles provides a comprehensive approach to addressing the physical and mental health challenges faced by individuals in the information technological era. The emphasis on good karma, mindfulness, a supportive environment, and nutritious food forms the foundation for healthy living. The seven factors of enlightenment further enhance this foundation by contributing to spiritual well-being. By adopting Buddhist practices for physical health, mental health, and holistic body-mind health, individuals can achieve a balanced and healthy lifestyle. These practices, including mindful eating, physical exercises, mental purification techniques, and adherence to ethical and meditative disciplines, offer practical and profound ways to overcome health issues and promote overall well-being. As such, Buddhist ways of healthy living present valuable solutions for navigating the complexities of modern life, fostering both physical vitality and mental clarity.

Healthy living, as depicted in Buddhist scriptures, transcends mere physical and mental well-being, offering a holistic approach to overall health. Physical practices are crucial for maintaining health, especially in the context of modern technology where prolonged sitting, standing, or lying down can lead to physical discomfort and pain. To avoid these issues, it is

important to balance our physical postures by alternating between sitting, walking, standing, and lying down. Integrating Buddhist practices into daily life helps manage these physical activities, promoting a balanced and healthier lifestyle.

Mental health also benefits from Buddhist practices. By addressing and controlling distracting and negative thoughts, such as anxiety, depression, and stress, individuals can achieve mental purity and a positive mental outlook. This mental clarity contributes to overall well-being. Buddhist ways to achieve healthy living offer a profound and holistic approach to well-being. Practices focusing on the purity of body, speech, and mind foster a harmonious relationship between physical and mental states. This union is essential for a balanced and fulfilling life. Adopting principles such as generosity (dāna), morality (five precepts), and meditation (bhāvanā) allows individuals to transcend physical and mental suffering, achieving a state of perfect body-mind health. By following these Buddhist principles, one can cultivate a well-rounded, healthy lifestyle that addresses both physical and mental dimensions of health.

Abbreviations

Dhp = Dhammapada Patisambhidamagga

S.I. = Devata-samyutta

JA = Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā

References

- Ananda, A. S. (2019). *Buddhist approach to health and well-being: the way forward sustainable future*. Ed. Thich Nhat, Tu.
- Bhikkhu Bodhi. (trans.) (2000). *The connected discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*. Wisdom Publications.
- Davids, R., Chalmers, R., Francis, H.T., Rose, W.H.D. & Cowell, E.B. (trs.). (1907). *Jātaka aṭṭhakathā*. PTS.
- De Silva, L. (1995). Giving in the Pali canon. Dana, the Practice of Giving, Selected Essays.
- Diep, B. C. T. B. (2019). A study of the five precepts regulation for the young at Bat Mau Temple, Hanoi, Vietnam. *The Journal of International Association of Buddhist Universities (JIABU)*, 12(1), 187-197.

- Francis, H. T., & Neil, R. A. (1969). *The Jātaka: Or, stories of the Buddha's former births*. Vol. 3-4. Luzac.
- Gutierrez, L. J., Rabbani, K., Ajayi, O. J., Gebresilassie, S. K., Rafferty, J., Castro, L. A., & Banos, O. (2021). Internet of things for mental health: open issues in data acquisition, self-organization, service level agreement, and identity management. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(3), 1327. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph 18031327>
- Kamaruzaman, N. N., Husin, N. A., Mustapha, N., & Yaakob, R. (2019). Towards a multimodal analysis to predict mental illness in twitter platform. *International Journal of Advanced Trends in Computer Science and Engineering*, 8(1.4), 126-130. <https://doi.org/10.30534/ijatcse/ 2019/1981.42019>
- Kemananda, M. (2019). *Current Health Issues and the Application of Cirimānanda Sutta*. University of East.
- Law, B. C. (1922). *Designation of human types= Puggala-Paññatti*. Translation series. Pali Text Society.
- Lee, A. (2020). Mindfulness Meditation, Mental Health, and Health-Related Quality of Life in Chinese Buddhist Monastics. *East Asian Arch Psychiatry*, 30 (3), 71-86.
- Leelakulthanit, O. (2017). The factors affecting life in moderation. *Asian Social Science*, 13(1), 106-113. doi:10.5539/ass.v13n1p106
- Leonardo J. Gutierrez, & Kashif Rabbani. (2021). Internet of Things for Mental Health: Open Issues in Data Acquisition, Self-Organization, Service Level Agreement, and Identity Management. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 18(1), 2-13.
- Ma, W., Tran, D., Hong, L., Zhou, S. M., Oh, B., Waddington, G., ... & Huynh, D. (2012). Information technologies: opportunities and challenges in personal healthcare systems. *International journal of healthcare technology and management*, 13(5-6), 345-362.
- Mahatthanadull, S. & Mahatthanadull, S. (2018). The Five Precepts: Criteria and the Promotion of Individual and Social Peace. *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (JIABU)*. 11(3), 192-207.
- Monteiro, D., Machado, S., Moutão, J., Bento, T., Vitorino, A., Alves, S., ... & Cid, L. (2019). Physical exercise and sedentary lifestyle: health consequences. *Espiral. Cuadernos del profesorado*, 12(25), 75-88

- Niwano, N. (2016). *Eat in Moderation for a Healthy Body and Mind*. Dharma World. 43(1), 1.
- Panahaduwe Yasassi Thero. (2014). *Buddhist Perspective on the Importance of Healthy Thinking Towards Healthy Living*. Sri Lanka: Buddhist and Pāli University of Sri Lanka, Department of Buddhist Culture.
- Pasri, B. (2016). Buddhism and brain: beyond the limitation of human brainwaves by Buddhist autogenic meditation. *Journal of the International Buddhist Studies College*, 2(1), 21-33.
- Patil, D. (2021). The Importance of Hygiene in Buddhist Sangha. *National Journal of Hindi & Sanskrit Research*, 1(34), 174-189.
- Phangcham, C. (1993). *Buddhism for Young Students*. Pim-Pun Printing.
- Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, S. (2022). The Development Of Systematic Thinking Based On A Buddhist Approach In The 21st Century. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(8), 5105-5111.
- Prodbumrung, J. (2015). An Analytic Study Of Principle Of Five Precepts In Health Care. *Journal of Buddhist Education and Research*, 1(2), 56–63.
- Rathnasiri, R. M. (2019). *An Explication of Healthy Living in Buddhist Perspective*. University of Kelaniya.
- San Di Mar, A. (2018). A Study of Physical Cleanliness Management in Theravada Buddhism. *The Journal of International Association of Buddhist Universities (JIABU)*, 11(2), 41-56.
- Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa. (1997). *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*, Tr., U Sein Lwin & U Kyi Nyunt. Kaba-Aye. State Pariyatti Sasana University.
- Sayadaw Nandamalābhivamsa. (2014). *An Analysis of Feeling (Vedana)*. Aggācāra Dhamma Distribution Group.
- Singh, P.K. (2022). Effect of Meditation on Mental Health and Physical Health. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 7(3), 640-652.
- Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya. (2020). *The Seven Factors of Enlightenment A Buddhist Way of Enhancing Health*, R. Moore (tr.). Wat Nyanavesakavan.
- Tan, P. (2015). (Tr). *Cankama Sutta The Discourse on Walking*. The Minding Centre.
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (1997). *The Dhammapada: A Translation*. Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (2012). *Samyutta Nikaya*. Epitome of the Pali Canon. Chroniker Press Book.

- Ven. Ayagama Siri Yasassi. (2019). The Buddhist concept of food in moderation for global healthcare. The 16th United nations Day of Vesak Celebrations 2019. <https://www.undv2019vietnam.com/en/conference/sub-theme-02-buddhist-approach-to-harmonious-families-healthcare-and-sustainable>
- Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami. (2006). *Mindfulness meditation made easy*. Oxford Buddha Vihara.
- Ven. Pamokkha & Moorti, U. S. (2020). Practicing Sila (Virtue) in Daily Life: A Panacea for Peaceful Life. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 7(2), 367-379.
- Wilson, J. (2016). Mindful eating: how North Americans use Buddhist meditation to heal the body, mind, and world. *Dharma World*. 43 (2), 17-32.
- Wongkoblap, A., Vadillo, M. A., & Curcin, V. (2022). Social media big data analysis for mental health research. In *Mental Health in a Digital World* (pp. 109-143). Academic Press