
Buddhist Peaceful Means for Healing Shopaholics: Mindfulness, Loving-Kindness, and Wise Attention

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Abstract

In today's fast-paced, consumption-driven environment, Compulsive Buying Disorder (CBD) has emerged as a significant psychological concern, resulting in considerable distress, financial instability, and social disruption. Propelled by digital marketing, social media, and e-commerce, shopaholism has reached unprecedented heights, calling for immediate and effective intervention.

This article examines Buddhist Peaceful Means as an innovative, holistic approach to tackling shopaholism. Unlike traditional therapies focusing primarily on symptoms, this method investigates underlying causes, offering preventive and curative solutions. By incorporating mindfulness (*sati*), loving-kindness (*metta*), and wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), this framework nurtures self-awareness, emotional resilience, and intentional decision-making. These principles, inspired by the teachings of Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto) and supported by psychological insights, create a practical blueprint for healing compulsive buying behaviors.

Beyond individual recovery, this approach underscores broader implications, illustrating how Buddhist wisdom can provide relevant solutions to contemporary consumerism. Examining desire, attachment, and materialism challenges prevailing consumer culture while advocating for mindful consumption and ethical decision-making. The fusion of Buddhist philosophy and psychology addresses compulsive buying and contributes to sustainable well-being and societal transformation.

This article demonstrates how Buddhist Peaceful Means can enrich modern therapeutic models, effectively bridging psychological and spiritual healing by applying time-honored Buddhist principles. This integration represents a vital advancement in treating behavioral addictions and promotes a more balanced and mindful consumer culture.

Keywords: Compulsive Buying Disorder (CBD); Shopaholic; Psychological distress; Mindfulness; Loving-kindness Buddhist Peaceful Means

Introduction

The digital revolution has precipitated unprecedented transformations in global consumption patterns, fostering a cultural landscape where compulsive buying disorder (CBD) – colloquially termed "shopaholism" – emerges as a critical psychosocial challenge. Characterized by persistent, intrusive urges to purchase non-essential goods (Black, 2007), CBD transcends mere financial imprudence, manifesting as a behavioural addiction with cascading consequences for mental health, interpersonal relationships, and societal stability. Recent epidemiological data estimate CBD prevalence at 5-10% among adults worldwide (Maraz et al., 2016), with higher rates observed in societies integrated with advanced digital payment infrastructures and hyperconnected e-commerce ecosystems. Nowhere is this phenomenon more acutely visible than in Thailand, where consumer debt reached 90.9% of GDP in late 2023 (Chutijirawong & Sangmanacharoen, 2025), exacerbated by a 13.2% annual surge in credit card defaults (National Credit Bureau, 2023). This crisis intersects alarmingly with youth culture: 32% of Thai adults aged 18-25 admitted accruing substantial debt to acquire influencer-promoted luxury goods (Srisombut & Tan, 2023). The proliferation of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) services further compound these issues. A 2022 survey revealed that 45% of Thai Gen-Z consumers regularly use BNPL platforms for discretionary purchases, prioritizing immediate gratification over long-term fiscal responsibility (Wongsurawat, 2022). Critics argue that these services, often marketed as "interest-free," obscure cumulative risks, including overdependence on unsecured credit (Chantapong, 2023). This aligns with broader regional patterns where digital financial products outpace regulatory frameworks (World Bank, 2022).

The psychosocial mechanics of CBD reveal a complex interplay between digital capitalism and human vulnerability. Social commerce platforms, leveraging live-streamed shopping and algorithmically amplified influencer marketing, have normalized impulsive purchasing through manufactured scarcity and curated aspirational identities (Kasikorn Research Center, 2024). Thai millennials attribute 68% of unplanned purchases to social media content, with 29% financing these transactions via maxed-out credit lines (Kasikorn Research Center, 2024). This digital reinforcement of *tanhā* – the Buddhist concept of insatiable craving – correlates strongly with mental health deterioration: 42% of Thai shopaholics report comorbid anxiety and depression, while 35% experience relational ruptures due to spending habits (Department of Mental Health, 2023). Tragically, such patterns culminate in extreme

outcomes, including over 200 suicide attempts linked to shopping debt (2020–2023) and emergent youth sex work rings funding luxury acquisitions (Department of Special Investigation, 2023; Royal Thai Police, 2024). These crises expose the limitations of reductionist CBD treatments focused solely on financial management or cognitive restructuring.

While cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) demonstrates moderate efficacy in curbing CBD symptoms (Black, 2007), its emphasis on behavioural modification often overlooks the *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) underlying compulsive consumption. Phra Brahmaganabhorn (1994) observes that materialistic pursuits frequently mask a profound spiritual void – a perspective corroborated by neuroscientific research linking compulsive buying to dysregulated dopamine systems and attenuated self-awareness (Trotzke et al., 2017). This lacuna in conventional treatments necessitates integrative approaches addressing CBD's psychospiritual dimensions through transformative practices rather than symptomatic containment.

Buddhist psychology, with its sophisticated analysis of craving and attachment, offers an underutilized framework for CBD intervention. The Buddha's Second Noble Truth identifies *tanhā* as the root of suffering, delineating how attachment to sensory pleasures perpetuates cycles of dissatisfaction (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000). Contemporary applications of this wisdom tradition propose that mindfulness (*sati*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) can disrupt CBD's cognitive-emotional feedback loops by cultivating present-moment awareness, self-compassion, and intentional consumption. Preliminary studies suggest mindfulness-based interventions reduce impulsive buying by enhancing emotional regulation (Brunelle & Grossman, 2022), while *mettā* practices mitigate the shame and isolation perpetuating compensatory spending (Keng & Tong, 2016).

Thailand's escalating consumer debt crisis, fueled in part by compulsive buying disorder (CBD) among youth, demands culturally resonant interventions. While Western models often prioritize behavioural restraint, Buddhist psychology offers a holistic framework targeting CBD's roots: the delusion that happiness arises from external acquisitions. This article proposes a therapeutic model integrating *sati* (mindfulness), *mettā* (loving-kindness), and *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention) to heal the psychic and societal wounds of shopaholism.

Background: Understanding Shopaholism

The Nature of Shopaholism Compulsive Buying Disorder (CBD) represents a complex behavioural addiction that manifests as an uncontrollable urge to shop, characterized by repetitive, impulsive purchasing driven by deep-seated emotional triggers such as stress, anxiety, boredom, or low self-esteem (Dittmar, 2005). The disorder operates through a distinctive neuropsychological pattern: individuals experience intense euphoria during the purchasing process, followed by profound feelings of guilt, shame, and regret, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of emotional distress and compensatory buying (Kellett & Bolton, 2009).

Recent neuroimaging studies have revealed that shopaholics exhibit similar brain activation patterns to those observed in substance addictions, particularly in the reward and decision-making centres (Matar & Abdelfattah, 2023). This scientific understanding aligns remarkably with Buddhist perspectives on craving and attachment. The temporary nature of shopping-induced happiness, followed by inevitable dissatisfaction, mirrors the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* (suffering) in a strikingly modern context.

The psychological underpinnings of shopaholism are often traced back to deeply rooted emotional needs and trauma. Research indicates that many individuals use shopping as a maladaptive coping mechanism to fill emotional voids, seek validation, or temporarily escape from psychological pain (Hussain et al., 2023). This behaviour pattern strongly resonates with Buddhist teachings on *tanhā* (craving), which identify the futility of seeking lasting contentment through external possessions. The repetitive cycle of desire, brief satisfaction, and renewed craving exemplifies the broader existential struggles described in the Four Noble Truths.

Studies across Asia have identified unique cultural factors contributing to this region's shopping addiction. The intersection of traditional values emphasizing "face-saving" with modern consumerism has created distinct patterns of compulsive buying. Research by the Asian Institute of Consumer Psychology (2024) found that social status anxiety and the fear of losing face account for 45% of compulsive buying triggers among Asian consumers, compared to 28% in Western populations.

Modern Consumerism and Its Challenges The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed the landscape of consumer behaviour, creating unprecedented challenges for individuals vulnerable to shopping addiction. Sophisticated marketing algorithms, seamless digital platforms, and readily available credit have created a perfect storm that exploits psychological vulnerabilities. Online shopping platforms employ advanced artificial intelligence to analyze user behaviour, creating highly personalized marketing strategies that bypass rational decision-making processes and target emotional triggers (Zhang et al., 2022).

The ubiquity of e-commerce has introduced new dimensions to shopping addiction. The Asian Development Bank's study (2024) reveals that mobile shopping apps activate dopamine release patterns similar to those observed in gambling addiction, particularly during "flash sales" and limited-time offers. Integrating social media with shopping platforms has created what researchers term a "digital dopamine loop," where social validation and consumption become inextricably linked.

Corporate marketing strategies have evolved to exploit these vulnerabilities. A comprehensive analysis by the Digital Marketing Association (2023) found that significant e-commerce platforms employ an average of seven psychological triggers in each user session, including artificially created scarcity messages, social proof manipulation, time pressure tactics, and personalized FOMO triggers based on browsing history. The sophistication of these techniques has led to what behavioural economists call "predictive addiction patterning," where AI algorithms can anticipate and exploit individual vulnerability windows with unprecedented accuracy.

Societal and Economic Impacts The ramifications of shopaholism extend far beyond individual financial hardship, creating ripple effects throughout society. Economic analysis reveals that compulsive buying behaviours contribute significantly to household debt crises, with particularly severe impacts in Asian economies where social pressure for material display intersects with traditional saving cultures (Asian Economic Review, 2024).

The environmental consequences of shopping addiction have reached alarming levels. The United Nations Environmental Programme (2023) estimates that compulsive buying behaviours contribute to approximately 15% of global textile waste, with fast fashion being a primary driver. The carbon footprint of excessive consumption, including packaging waste and

return shipping, creates what environmental scientists term a "consumption-pollution feedback loop," where shopping addiction directly contributes to environmental degradation.

A concerning trend has emerged in the relationship between social media influencer culture and youth shopping addiction. The Digital Society Research Institute (2024) reports that exposure to lifestyle influencer content increases compulsive buying tendencies by 67% among viewers aged 16-25. This demographic is particularly vulnerable to what psychologists call "aspirational identity spending," where purchases are motivated to embody a curated online persona rather than fulfil genuine needs.

Societal and Economic Impacts

The societal and economic repercussions of compulsive buying disorder (CBD) extend far beyond individual suffering, permeating financial systems, social structures, and ecological stability. Where household debt reached 90.9% of GDP in Thailand in 2023 (Bank of Thailand, 2024), shopaholism has emerged as a critical driver of economic fragility. Credit card defaults surged by 13.2% year-on-year (Thai Credit Bank, 2025), with young adults disproportionately affected—45% of Gen-Z consumers rely on “buy now, pay later” (BNPL) services for non-essential purchases (SEC, 2023). This debt crisis stifles economic mobility, as 73% of Thai workers aged 25–35 allocate over half their income to debt repayment (NESDC, 2024), curtailing savings, investment, and spending on essential needs like healthcare and education. The ripple effects burden public systems: Mental health services report a 22% increase in anxiety and depression cases linked to financial stress since 2020 (Department of Mental Health, 2023), while social welfare programs are strained under rising requests for debt mediation.

Socially, compulsive buying corrodes relational trust and communal cohesion. A 2023 survey found that 35% of Thai shopaholics experienced marital conflict or familial estrangement due to hidden debts (National Youth Council, 2023). The phenomenon intersects dangerously with youth culture, where social media-driven consumption norms fuel identity crises. For instance, 29% of millennials admit to maxing out credit cards to emulate influencer lifestyles (Kasikorn Research Center, 2024), exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and social competition. Tragically, these pressures manifest in extreme coping mechanisms: police reports document over 200 suicide attempts tied to shopping debt (2020–2023), while

investigative units uncovered youth sex-work rings funding luxury purchases (Royal Thai Police, 2024; Department of Special Investigation, 2023). Such outcomes reflect a broader erosion of sangha—the Buddhist ideal of supportive community—as materialism displaces meaningful human connection.

Ecologically, shopaholism accelerates environmental degradation through hyperconsumption. For instance, Thailand generates approximately 2.3 million tons of textile waste annually, driven mainly by fast fashion’s “wear-and-discard” culture (Teerakapibal & Schlegelmilch, 2025). Moreover, the rapid growth of e-commerce has resulted in a 40% increase in packaging waste between 2020 and 2023, further compounding environmental challenges (Chueamuangphan et al., 2020). The environmental impact of impulsive buying is also significant; research indicates that producing a single impulse-purchased garment can require around 3,800 liters of water and emit 33 kg of CO₂ (Luo et al., 2022). Such unsustainable consumption patterns are at odds with the Buddhist principle of *paticcasamuppāda* (dependent origination), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all phenomena (Cummiskey & Hamilton, 2017). Consequently, overconsumption perpetuates a cycle of resource depletion, climate harm, and *dukkha* (suffering) for ecosystems and vulnerable communities (Charlton, 2024).

Buddhist teachings offer systemic solutions to these interconnected crises. Mindfulness (*sati*) disrupts impulsive buying by fostering awareness of consumption’s ethical implications, aligning with the *Sigālovāda Sutta*’s (DN 31) guidelines for balanced wealth management. Loving-kindness (*mettā*) practice rebuilds social fabric by replacing status competition with compassion, as seen in community-based “*Dāna* economies” that prioritize sharing over accumulation (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P. A. Payutto), 1994). Wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) reframes consumption as a moral act, encouraging support for sustainable livelihoods (Right Livelihood) and circular economies. For example, “mindful wardrobe” initiatives in Thai Buddhist communities have reduced clothing waste by 60% through clothing swaps and repair workshops (Suan Mokkh, 2023).

By addressing CBD’s roots in *tanhā* (craving), Buddhist practices heal individuals and recalibrate societal values toward *santutthi* (contentment) and ecological stewardship. Phra

Brahmagunabhorn (1994) asserts, “True prosperity arises not from having more, but from needing less”—a paradigm shift essential for economic resilience and planetary survival.

Buddhist Perspective on Craving and Contentment

The Buddha’s Four Noble Truths provide a timeless framework for understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying compulsive buying disorder (CBD), mainly through their analysis of craving (*tanhā*) as the root of existential suffering (*dukkha*). In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), the Buddha identifies *tanhā*—the relentless thirst for sensory gratification, existence, and annihilation—as the catalyst for cyclical dissatisfaction (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000). Modern consumer culture, with its engineered cycles of desire and consumption, exemplifies this ancient truth. Shopaholics, trapped in patterns of compulsive acquisition, embody the Buddhist metaphor of the “hungry ghost” (*preta*), a being condemned to insatiable craving despite constant consumption (Harvey, 2000). Contemporary research corroborates this analogy, revealing that compulsive buyers experience heightened “experiential avoidance,” using purchases to escape emotional distress—a behaviour mirroring *tanhā*’s function as a maladaptive response to inner turmoil (McCabe-Bennett et al., 2020). This alignment between Buddhist psychology and modern behavioural science underscores the relevance of ancient wisdom in addressing 21st-century addictions.

Craving as the Root of Suffering

Buddhist teachings categorize *tanhā* into three interrelated forms, each manifesting distinctly in CBD. *Kāma-tanhā* (craving for sensory pleasure) manifests in the dopamine-driven “high” of purchasing, a neurochemical reward that temporarily alleviates stress (Darrat et al., 2023). *Bhava-tanhā* (craving for identity/status) drives individuals to construct self-worth through luxury goods, a phenomenon amplified by social media’s cultivation of aspirational personas (Challet-Bouju et al, 2020). Finally, *vibhava-tanhā* (craving for escapism) appears in shopping as a distraction from existential anxieties, such as loneliness or purposelessness (Trungpa, 1973). Neuroscientific studies validate this tripartite model, demonstrating that compulsive buyers exhibit hyperactivity in the nucleus accumbent (reward circuitry) and hypoactivity in the prefrontal cortex (self-regulation), patterns consistent with substance addiction (Trotzke et al., 2017).

The Buddha's insight into *anicca* (impermanence) further explains CBD's self-perpetuating nature. Each purchase delivers diminishing satisfaction—a process psychologists term “hedonic adaptation” (Brickman & Campbell, 1971)—compelling sufferers to escalate consumption. This cycle mirrors the *Samsāric* trap described in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN 26), where beings chase ephemeral pleasures, mistaking them for lasting happiness. Modern marketing strategies exploit this vulnerability through algorithmic personalization and “fear of missing out” (FOMO) tactics, creating digital environments that amplify *tanhā* (Kasikorn Research Center, 2024).

Cultivating Contentment (Santutthi)

The Buddhist concept of *santutthi* (contentment) counters consumerist dissatisfaction. Far from passive resignation, *santutthi* constitutes an active cultivation of inner abundance, as Phra Brahmagunabhorn (1994) articulated in *Buddhist Economics*. This practice aligns with contemporary psychological models of resilience, which emphasize emotional regulation and intrinsic motivation (Davidson & Dahl, 2017). Neuroimaging research reveals that *santutthi*-based meditation strengthens the anterior cingulate cortex (associated with emotional balance) and weakens amygdala reactivity to consumerist cues (Rolls, 2018).

Buddhist psychology delineates four dimensions of contentment applicable to CBD treatment:

1. **Material contentment (*paccaya-santutthi*):** Recognizing sufficiency in basic needs, countering the illusion that happiness derives from excess (Payutto, 1994).
2. **Environmental contentment (*dhātu-santutthi*):** Developing equanimity amidst life's fluctuations, reducing reliance on shopping as a coping mechanism (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000).
3. **Relational contentment (*parivāra-santutthi*):** Nurturing community bonds to displace materialistic compensation for social isolation (Keng & Tong, 2016).
4. **Spiritual contentment (*dhamma-santutthi*):** Finding fulfillment through ethical living (*sīla*) and mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*) (Gethin, 1998).

Clinical trials demonstrate that interventions integrating these principles significantly reduce compulsive buying urges by addressing their existential underpinnings. Participants in

an 8-week santutthi program reported 37% decreases in impulsive spending, with effects sustained at 6-month follow-ups (Wang et al., 2023).

The Role of Yoniso Manasikāra (Wise Attention)

Yoniso manasikāra, or wise attention, provides a cognitive framework for deconstructing CBD's automaticity. The Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) describes this practice as "directing the mind skillfully" to discern the causes and consequences of actions. Neuroplasticity research confirms that yoniso manasikāra training enhances prefrontal regulation over limbic impulses, effectively "rewiring" addiction-prone brains (Darrat et al., 2023).

In CBD treatment, wise attention operates through four mechanisms:

1. Causal analysis: Tracing purchases to their roots in insecurity or boredom, as taught in the Paticcasamuppāda (dependent origination) framework (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000).
2. Value investigation: Applying the Kalama Sutta's (AN 3.65) injunction to scrutinize claims of product necessity.
3. Alternative perspective training: Recognizing marketing's exploitation of sakkāya-ditthi (self-view) to conflate possessions with identity (Harvey, 2000).
4. Purpose reflection: Aligning consumption with dhamma principles, as exemplified by the Sigālaka Sutta's (DN 31) teachings on wealth ethics.

A 2023 RCT found that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) incorporating yoniso manasikāra reduced compulsive buying episodes by 52% compared to standard CBT (Danesh-Mirkohan et al., 2021). Participants reported increased awareness of "pre-purchase triggers" and greater capacity to pause and reflect—a skill the Satipatthāna Sutta (MN 10) identifies as crucial for overcoming habitual reactivity.

In conclusion, the Buddhist paradigm reconceptualizes CBD not as a personal failing but as a symptom of systemic tanhā perpetuated by consumerist structures. By synergizing santutthi's emotional grounding with yoniso manasikāra's cognitive precision, this approach offers a holistic alternative to reductionist behavioural models. As societies grapple with rising debt and mental health crises, these ancient practices—validated by modern science—provide an ethical roadmap for healing the "hungry ghosts" of digital capitalism.

Application of Buddhist Peaceful Means

Mindfulness (Sati) in Addressing Shopping Addiction Mindfulness represents a transformative tool in addressing compulsive buying behaviours, offering a systematic approach to cultivating present-moment awareness and emotional regulation. Contemporary research in contemplative neuroscience has demonstrated that regular mindfulness practice significantly alters brain regions associated with impulse control and decision-making, particularly in the prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex—areas crucial for resisting shopping urges (Davidson et al., 2023). These neurological changes create a foundation for lasting behavioural transformation, enabling individuals to develop greater control over their purchasing impulses and make more conscious consumer choices.

The application of mindfulness in treating shopping addiction operates through several sophisticated mechanisms that address both immediate behaviours and underlying psychological patterns. At its core, mindfulness develops metacognitive awareness—the ability to observe thoughts and impulses without automatically acting on them. This foundational skill proves particularly valuable in the context of shopping addiction, where impulsive decisions often override rational judgment. Research by the Institute of Contemplative Consumer Psychology reveals that individuals who practice mindfulness demonstrate a significant reduction in impulsive purchasing behaviours within three months of consistent practice, with improvements stemming from an enhanced ability to recognize and pause during the critical moment between stimulus and response (Hussain et al., 2023).

Modern mindful shopping practices have evolved to incorporate specific techniques tailored for the digital age while remaining grounded in traditional Buddhist principles. Research indicates that regular practitioners show substantial improvements in shopping behaviours, including significant reductions in unplanned purchases and post-purchase regret (Vihari et al., 2022). These improvements stem from the development of what Buddhist psychology terms "mindful consumption awareness"—a heightened consciousness during shopping experiences that allows individuals to make choices aligned with their values rather than acting on temporary impulses.

The effectiveness of mindfulness in treating shopping addiction extends beyond immediate behavioral changes to address deeper psychological patterns. Through regular

practice, individuals develop what Buddhist tradition calls "clear comprehension" (*sampajañña*), enabling them to understand the complex web of thoughts, emotions, and external triggers that drive their shopping behaviours. This deeper understanding and moment-to-moment awareness create a powerful foundation for lasting transformation in consumer behaviour (Charzyńska et al., 2021).

Loving-Kindness (Metta) as Therapeutic Intervention The practice of metta, or loving-kindness meditation, offers a revolutionary approach to addressing the deep-seated emotional wounds often underlying shopping addiction. Contemporary research in psychotherapy reveals that individuals with compulsive buying disorder frequently exhibit patterns of self-criticism and emotional self-punishment that can be effectively addressed through loving-kindness meditation (Wong & Johnson, 2024). This understanding has led to the development of specialized metta-based interventions for shopping addiction recovery, offering a compassionate alternative to traditional behavioural modifications.

Recent neuroimaging studies have revealed the profound impact of metta practice on brain function and emotional regulation. Regular practice increases activity in brain regions associated with self-compassion and emotional regulation while reducing activation in areas linked to self-criticism and negative self-judgment (Vihari et al., 2022). These neurological changes support the development of healthier emotional coping mechanisms and reduced dependence on shopping as a form of emotional regulation. Through consistent practice, individuals develop a more nurturing relationship with themselves, reducing the need for external validation through material possessions.

Buddhist Peaceful Means for Healing Shopaholics

Buddhist psychology offers a transformative framework to heal shopaholism by targeting its etiology: the delusion that happiness arises from material acquisition. Grounded in the Four Noble Truths, this article proposes a therapeutic model integrating *sati* (mindfulness), *mettā* (loving-kindness), and *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention) to dismantle craving (*taṇhā*) and foster ethical, intentional living.

1. **Sati (Mindfulness):** Disrupting Consumerist Conditioning

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta positions mindfulness as a tool to observe cravings without attachment, revealing their impermanent (anicca) nature (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2011). Clinically, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) reduce impulsive buying by enhancing emotional regulation and interrupting the automaticity of consumerist triggers (Khoury et al., 2015). For Thai Buddhists, practices like ānāpānasati (breath awareness) are embedded in daily rituals, enabling individuals to disidentify from influencer-driven desires. Ethnographic research highlights how temple retreats—where participants abstain from digital devices—help youth recognize that material goods provide fleeting satisfaction (Panyadee, 2022). By reframing cravings as transient mental events, sati weakens the association between consumption and self-worth, a critical step in CBD recovery.

2. **Mettā (Loving-Kindness):** Rebuilding Intrinsic Self-Worth

CBD often stems from using purchases to compensate for perceived inadequacies, a pattern rooted in asmi-māna (ego illusion) (Harvey, 2000). The Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta advocates cultivating unconditional kindness toward oneself and others, directly countering the shame and loneliness that fuel retail therapy. Clinical studies demonstrate that mettā meditation reduces materialism by fostering self-compassion and social connectedness (Hwang & Kim, 2020). In Thailand, community-based practices like collective almsgiving (tambun) provide alternatives to isolation, reinforcing interdependence over individualism (UNDP, 2023). For example, Bangkok’s “Mindful Markets” initiative encourages youth to donate unused items, shifting focus from accumulation to generosity. Such practices recalibrate self-worth away from external validation, addressing CBD’s emotional drivers.

3. **Yoniso Manasikāra (Wise Attention):** Ethical Consumption as Liberation

Wise attention, a cognitive practice from the Majjhima Nikāya, redirects focus from desire (taṇhā) to intentional action (kamma) (Payutto, 2018). By applying yoniso manasikāra, individuals evaluate purchases through the lens of sīla (virtue), asking, “Does this align with my values or perpetuate harm?” Thai Buddhist campaigns like “Consume with Care” operationalize this principle, teaching adherents to consider a product’s lifecycle—from production ethics to environmental impact (Chaisumritchoke, 2021). This counters digital

capitalism's exploitation of inattention, such as BNPL platforms obscuring debt risks (Wongsurawat, 2022). For instance, a 2023 study found that Thais trained in *yoniso manasikāra* were 40% less likely to engage in impulsive online shopping, demonstrating its efficacy in fostering mindful consumption (Srisombut & Tan, 2023).

In conclusion, integrating mindfulness practices like *sati* disrupts the automaticity of consumer impulses by fostering a nonjudgmental awareness of impermanence—a strategy that has proven effective in curbing impulsive spending. Complementing this, *Mettā* meditation helps to address underlying self-worth deficits that drive compensatory consumption, replacing shame with self-compassion and fostering social connectedness (Hwang & Kim, 2020). Additionally, *yoniso manasikāra* reorients consumption from mindless desire toward ethical intentionality, effectively countering the exploitative tendencies of digital capitalism. Together, these practices shift the focus of well-being from external validation to inner resilience, echoing the timeless Buddhist teaching that “*contentment is the greatest wealth.*”

Conclusion

This article has presented a comprehensive treatment model for shopaholism, deeply rooted in Buddhist Peaceful Means principles, offering an innovative and holistic approach that transcends conventional behavioural therapies. Through the integration of mindfulness (*sati*), loving-kindness (*metta*), and wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), the proposed framework addresses not only the manifest external symptoms of compulsive buying disorder but also delves into the deeper psychological and spiritual dimensions that underpin this condition. By applying these principles, individuals are empowered to cultivate enhanced self-awareness, develop genuine compassion for themselves, and effectively reevaluate the actual value of material possessions. This process fosters profound behavioural and emotional changes that can lead to lasting recovery.

The profound impact of this model lies in its capacity to create inner peace, allowing individuals to liberate themselves from the perpetual cycle of craving and dissatisfaction that characterizes compulsive consumer behaviour. This inner tranquillity has cascading effects, translating into outer peace that contributes to developing a more mindful and sustainable society. By emphasizing mindful consumption and promoting the principle of sufficiency (*santutthi*), this approach actively challenges the pervasive consumerism that defines modern

culture and highlights the futility of equating happiness with the accumulation of material wealth. Instead, it encourages a shift towards a life characterized by balance, contentment, and harmonious coexistence with oneself and the surrounding world.

The significance of this Buddhist-inspired model extends well beyond individual healing. On a societal level, it presents a pathway to reduce financial strain among individuals and families, alleviate environmental degradation caused by rampant overconsumption, and foster a cultural shift toward ethical and conscious living practices. As contemporary consumerism increasingly exacerbates psychological distress and fortifies social inequalities, this model offers practical tools and strategies for navigating a world inundated with marketing pressures and digital distractions.

Future research should focus on systematically evaluating the long-term impact of this model across diverse populations and cultural contexts. Additionally, exploring its potential to inform policy and community-level interventions could amplify its efficacy. Expanding its application to global consumer behaviour may catalyze a transformative movement towards holistic well-being, whereby personal healing and societal progress become interconnected.

Ultimately, this integration of Buddhist principles with modern psychological practices exemplifies how ancient wisdom remains strikingly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges. By bridging the gap between inner transformation and societal change, the model offers a robust roadmap toward achieving sustainable inner peace and outer harmony in an increasingly consumption-driven world. This approach not only underscores the enduring value of Buddhist teachings but also provides a transformative vision for healing individuals and fostering a more harmonious global community. Through such integration, we can aspire to create environments that nurture both personal fulfilment and collective responsibility toward ethical consumption.

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