

# GREEN ECONOMY COMMUNITY MODEL DERIVED FROM BUDDHIST ECONOMICS

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to 1) study the Buddhist Economic principles and their effects on society, 2) investigate the green economic concepts and benefits of green cities, and 3) develop a Green Economy Community model for sustainability. This qualitative research is investigated with in-depth interviews. The findings of the study indicate that Buddhist economic principles can be applied to economic issues as a way of life. Buddhism envisions balanced production and consumption as a means of achieving life satisfaction and self-sufficiency, as well as a method for organizing people to coexist in harmony. This results in production-oriented economic management and the integration of production elements that support the economy, society, and culture, thereby integrating theory and practice to propel society toward sustainability. Buddhist economics equates the fundamental purpose of life with the quality of life, which emphasizes genuine welfare and a simple desire rather than material accumulation as the path to true happiness. Concerning the green economy, it is a long-term strategy to address problems and lessen the environmental impact of all economic activities. The green economy consists of ‘inputs’, ‘processes’, and ‘outputs.’ Input elements assess the sustainability of a resource, while process dimensions evaluate the resource effectiveness of production operations and their environmental tolerance. Moreover, the green economy requires genuine and shared wealth, with human capital, society, and the environment constituting a pillar. For economic, social, and environmental sustainability,

green city concepts necessitate a balance between the three factors. Sustainability in accordance with the green economy is an essential structural change that elevates awareness of the environmental, energy, and socioeconomic situation in order to preserve the environment and balance sustainable solutions. The fundamental concepts of Buddhist integrated economics must be combined with the established principles of the green economy to create a green, tranquil, and environmentally sustainable green community.

**Keywords:** Green economy, Buddhist economics, Green economy community model

## **Introduction**

Multiple phases of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused an unprecedented economic crisis in Thailand, which is currently in recovery. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for Thailand to identify new growth drivers in order to reverse the pre-pandemic trend of declining productivity growth and face the challenges of a post-pandemic world. However, the COVID-19 crisis also presents an opportunity to better align development policies with climate objectives in order to strengthen recovery and economic resilience and position Thailand on a solid path toward achieving its climate mitigation objectives. (Kaendera & Leigh, 2021) Moreover, the past economic development of Thailand has significantly depleted natural and biological resources, leading to pollution, environmental degradation, and public health issues. The economic system prioritized production quantity over value creation, resulted in unequal distribution of wealth, and was susceptible to external factors. The economy grew by an average of 3% annually over the past decade. (NSTDA, 2021).

The Bio-Circular-Green Economy model was introduced by the Thai Government as a strategy to create sustainability and inclusiveness in Thailand's economy, society, and environment. The model places emphasis on applying science, technology, and innovation to turn Thailand's comparative advantage in biological and cultural diversity into a competitive advantage. Thus, a green economy needs to be understood as a new way of looking at the contribution of economic activities to sustainability. A green economy needs to recognize the true value of ecosystems and natural resources, and the economic benefits of

long-term ecologically and socially sound economic activities. Green Economics is economics that can accept and integrate differing positions on the world's big ideas. Green Economics fundamentally incorporates the ideas of progress in scientific thinking and in scientific methodology. It is open and able to explore new ideas, which fundamentally change our perspective. (Kennet & Heinemann, 2006) The Green Economic is a Buddhist economic paradigm intended to cope with a global-integral reality. It is based on the premise that people conduct relations of mutual guarantee, and aspire to an altruistic socioeconomic model that demonstrates the advanced stages of a society that has adopted such relations as a way of life. The optimum balance will evolve naturally for the benefit of the people whom those models are meant to serve.

Buddhism teaches that we are dependent upon Nature and other creatures. Nothing exists as an independent and separate entity, so everyone's well-being depends on the well-being of others and the planet. In Buddhist economics, interconnectedness shifts our focus from an individual's well-being to the well-being of everyone and the environment. Buddhist economics ties the suffering of one person to the suffering of all people, and social welfare is contingent upon the well-being of each individual and of nature. (Brown. & Zsolnai, 2018) It provides guidance for restructuring individual lives as well as the economy that creates a better world for achieving higher economic growth and sustainability.

This article aims to clarify the Buddhist economic principles and develop its model for the green economy in order to transform the current standards of living to achieve resource-efficient, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable communities and develop a new model for a Green Economy Community that is based on the Buddhist Economic Principles.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To study the Buddhist Economic principles and their effects on society
2. To investigate the green economic concepts and benefits of green cities
3. To develop a Green Economy Community model for sustainability.

## **Literature Reviews**

Based on research evaluations, research articles, books, as well as Tripitaka, Buddhist principles, to be used as data for analysis to meet the aims of this research, it is possible to draw two conclusions: Buddhism and green environmental economics This is to be utilized in the incorporation of a new model and a model for a green sustainable community.

### **Concepts of Buddhist Economics in Thai Society**

According to Zinchenko and Boichenko's (2022) research, the concept of Buddhist economics is garnering increasing support for its validity. This concept returns to the traditional conception of economic rationality, which emphasizes concern for people and their stable well-being over capital accumulation for its own sake. The administration of the economy should be guided by its quality and the satisfaction of the population's fundamental needs. Environmental considerations must take primacy over consumption. Future philosophical inquiry in the domains of collective agency and collective responsibility, social dilemma and social agreement, and environmental ethics, as well as theory, small communities, and creative networks, should center on Buddhist economics. Future economies and economics will likely require a level of rationality comparable to Buddhist economics.

Brown (2017) in her book 'Buddhist Economics: An Enlightened Approach to the Dismal Science' created a comprehensive model based on the premise that quality of life should be assessed by more than national income. Instead of ignoring principles, ecology, and equality, she proposes organizing the economy around them. She blends Buddhist values of interdependence, shared prosperity, and pleasure into her vision for a sustainable and compassionate world. Buddhist economics teaches us to be attentive in our daily lives and recognize how our actions influence others. We can make future generations' lives more meaningful and happier by replacing the endless cycle of desire with more beneficial social activity.

Schumacher's works are split into four sections: The Modern World, Resources, The Third World, and Organization and Ownership. He studies the modern economy, its resource use, and its implications. Schumacher predicted

many of the world's difficulties, including imports and exports, the energy crisis, oil consumption, and parallel economies in developing nations. Right Livelihood from the Noble Eightfold Path is the focus of Buddhist economics in section four of part one. The materialist wants goods, whereas the Buddhists want liberation. However, Buddhism is "The Middle Way" and does not oppose physical well-being. The connection to wealth, not the enjoyment of enjoyable things, prevents emancipation. Buddhist economics emphasizes simplicity and nonviolence, with startlingly tiny means generating stunningly rewarding results. It makes very rational arguments for building our economies around communities rather than businesses. (Schumacher, 1975).

Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacarya (2016) redefined most economic words to reflect Buddhist economics, including value, consumption, production, work, competition, and choice. Moderation, non-consumption, over-consumption, cooperation, and other Buddhist economic themes are also examined. Middle-way economics also emphasizes the harmonization and integration of open-ended social development and closed-ended personal development. It includes economic activities. Economic activity is conditional on two levels of this interdependent system, and economics must understand this. 1) The link between economics and other human social activities and issues such as popular values, traditions, ethics, public health, politics, and education. Thus, economic activity will be blended into a more joyous and unfettered lifestyle. 2) The interaction between the economy and society, the natural environment, and an individual's life. Otherwise, economics must support healthy, happy lifestyles for individuals in a peaceful society with a nice and refreshing atmosphere. This will lead to real, long-term development. Thus, to attain equilibrium and success in complex interdependent systems, economics must integrate and coordinate the many factors. This is the core idea of middle-way economics.

Speece (2019) discovered that Thailand's Buddhist reform movements, which share a similar genesis, are driven by the need to modernize traditional Buddhism. Most Buddhist societies' systems reflect sustainability debates. Buddhism is entering Western environmental discourse. Western understanding of Buddhist economics is limited to one form. Thai Buddhism encompasses all sustainable philosophy. These Thai movements desire Buddhism to guide urban middle-class people and fix major social issues. They all support Buddhist economics that may help this effort, but they understand it differently. Even if

some Asian societies use the same terms, there is no single perspective on modernisation and globalization.

### **Green Economy Concept for Sustainability**

According to Naik (2021), the green economy concept analyzes the numerous viewpoints expressed by eminent researchers in the field of Economics and Sustainability. In addition, the effects of implementing a green economy on the two sectors that will be most impacted: trade and employment. Moreover, the concept of a Green Economy is multidimensional, encompassing all facets of an economy. The transition from a traditional economy to a green economy is a significant transformation that will inevitably affect nearly all economic sectors. Employment and trade are the two sectors most significantly impacted. When contemplating a green economy as a strategy for achieving sustainable development, it is possible to identify certain limitations. Here, only the most significant are discussed. However, despite this, Green Economy still emerges as one of the most viable alternatives to attain sustainable development.

The challenges of the society era will be determined by the green economy. In order to address the challenges of the modern era, it is necessary to develop green economy products. This study seeks to identify the challenges and limitations associated with marketing green economy products that are beginning to decline and are required by degenerative communities as dietary staples. In order to increase the market share of green economy products, digital marketing platforms are recommended by the research methodology and marketing mix employed in this study. It is anticipated that the optimization of this digital marketing program will increase market share and bolster the positioning of green economy products. It is necessary to innovate in the marketing sector, product design, nutritional content, and raw materials with minimal use of chemicals, to increase people's purchasing power and become the hope for degenerative communities to consume green economy products. (Sufiyanto. et al., (2021).

D'Amato & Korhonen (2021) studied the green economy, circular economy, and bio-economy are prevalent concepts in macro-level sustainability discussions in policy, scientific research, and business. These three narratives provide three distinct approaches to addressing economic, social, and ecological

objectives, thereby promoting three distinct pathways for sustainability transformations. We utilize the well-known Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development to determine the relative and integrated contribution of the three narratives to global net sustainability. They conclude that none of the three narratives individually provide a comprehensive bundle of solutions. However, when viewed as collaborative narratives, they point to a society and economy based on renewable/reproductive and biodiversity-based/beneficial processes, delivering material and immaterial benefits that meet the economic and social needs of all people in the present and future. While the complementary understanding of the circular economy, bioeconomy, and green economy provides important guidelines for sustainability transformations post-Covid-19, more holistic, systems-wide, and integrative research on potentially competing or supplementary sustainability narratives is required.

According to a survey of the research papers and journals, there has not yet been a research-reviewed paper that combines Buddhist Economics and Green Economics. Because of this, it is desirable to study this research in order to supply it with the goal of gaining further benefits.

## **Research Methodology**

This qualitative investigation employed both document analysis and in-depth interviews. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the examination was divided into 2 sections. Document analysis was used to summarize and discuss the results of the first section study, the collection of data from the primary sources of English translations of Tipiṭaka in order to carry out an exploration of Buddhist factors in relevance to economics. The secondary sources of commentaries, textbooks, research works, and journals are also investigated. The second section examined the determinants based on in-depth interviews. The data in this section were collected with the assistance of seven experts and knowledgeable individuals. Finally, an integrated process model of the green economy is based on Buddhist economics principles.

## Results

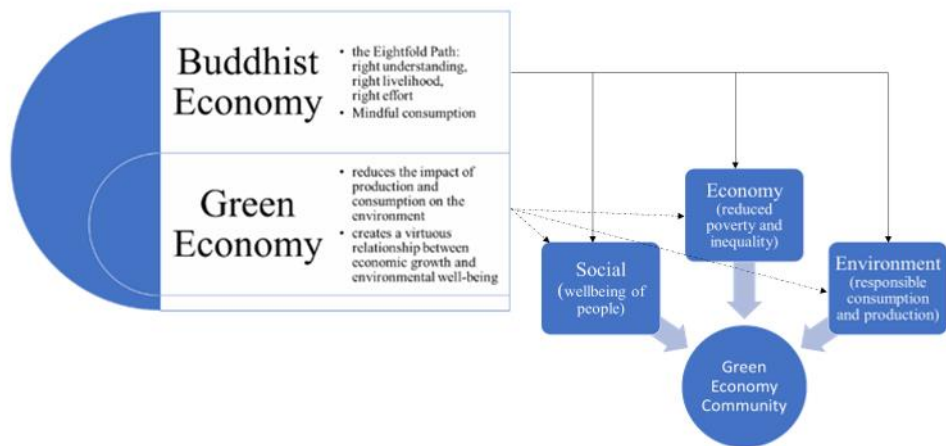
1. Buddhist economics emphasizes that human economic activity should not dominate or destroy life. Buddhism shows that the economy often overlooks the producing process while focusing on output. Buddhist economics balances production and consumption to help people become self-reliant. This concept promotes balance under lifestyle satisfaction and sufficiency and the management movement mechanism to help people learn to coexist. Additionally, it leads to the management of the economy that focuses on production and combines productive components that support the economy, society, culture, and religions, merging theory and practice to inspire society. The social group follows Buddhist teachings to live a balanced life. Therefore, Buddhist Economics is used for social development as the sufficiency economy to provide a framework for living and economic advancement. Moreover, Buddhist economics analyzes and integrates ultimate goals and their quality of life impacts. This emphasizes the true nature of welfare and the psychology of desire rather than simplistic and flimsy assumptions that material acquisition leads to happiness. Therefore, it is better to spend less and optimize the benefits or enjoyment from saving and managing limited resources. While the system agrees on this idea for input usage and efficiency, the Buddhist Economic perspective lays significant restrictions on the utility or well-being that can be acquired from physical things, regardless of their manufacture and consumption efficiency.

2. The world's future is a green economy due to humanity's current and future problems from climate change, biodiversity loss, global inequity, and more. A green economy can solve humanity's problems, but it must become a reality. The main goal of the green economy concept is to achieve significant progress in the relationship ecology, as a pillar of the concept of sustainable development, and proposals to governments to move to sustainable development, which includes promoting investment in natural capital, solving energy problems and providing the population with ecologically clean food, paying attention to land use and optimal resource management, transitioning to more efficient, environmentally friendly. Thailand's adoption of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model (BCG) intends to exploit natural assets more efficiently with little environmental damage. BCG uses a whole-of-society strategy to implement this idea, putting Thailand on pace to establish a healthier,



greener, and more inclusive economy after the pandemic. Thus, green economy is a new trend that is seen as an important area of structural reform and aims to raise awareness of the world's real environmental, energy, and socio-economic situation by identifying ideological options for better understanding the dilemma of economic growth versus environmental protection and finding optimal solutions and more effective tools to solve society's problems. The green economy aims to integrate environmental concerns into decision-making and transition to sustainable production and consumption in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. The green economy is a new social element, an innovative and integrated perspective of the world, which assures the harmonious development and interaction of society and nature, with the goal of resolving environmental problems that have emerged as a result of market conditions. The green economic community model from which the three social, economic and environmental aspects are interrelated. Buddhist economics focuses on all three aspects. It also covers the principles of green economy in terms of the period inherited from the time of the Buddha according to the teachings, especially the Eightfold Path. Every stage of the Eightfold Path contributes to the development of human capital, but right understanding is the first and most crucial step in the creation of unlimited human capital. Right thought increases one's capacity to act constructively, which in turn aids in the accomplishment of subsequent steps along the path. right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Each of these measures enables us to act without harming others. The final steps allow the development of concentration through right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. (as Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Green Economy Community Model source: Nattakitt, et al., 2023

## Discussions

The Green Economy is a chance for extant economic activities, especially agricultural products, to become less harmful to the environment and have better odds. However, products can be packaged more attractively, and consumers' perceptions of the value they receive can be enhanced. Due to the inclusion of societal expenditures in their cost calculations, items from the green economy are typically more expensive than their conventional counterparts. The 21st century put society with a decision regarding the direction of future development and the economic development model to pursue. There are contradictions within the current economic model of development. Economic development is accompanied by the emergence of crisis phenomena, the predatory use of natural resources, the transformation of landscapes, and unwarranted environmental pollution. A paradigm of a green economy, which is currently forming before our eyes, could represent an alternative mode of economic development in society. (Zharov& Isaev, 2021) Moreover, Sufiyanto, et al. (2021) studied to identify the challenges and limitations associated with marketing green economy products that are beginning to decline and are required by degenerative communities as dietary staples. In order to increase the market share of green economy products, digital marketing platforms are recommended by the research methodology and marketing mix employed. It is

anticipated that the optimization of this digital marketing program will increase market share and bolster the positioning of green economy products.

Accordingly, Ionescu, V. R. et al. (2022) use the policies of the European Union to evaluate the influence that innovation has had on the quality of life and the sustainable economy. The results of the regression analysis indicate that differences in the growth of the green economy are mostly attributed to differences in the level of investment in the area. The green economy and specialized policies call for significant financial investments, which are difficult for the poor Member States to obtain. Whereupon, Chang (2019) recognized explosive and impending economic, social, and ecological challenges that threaten our modern economy and civilization. Mainstream economists and policymakers worldwide favor the production-for-profit economic paradigm, which causes many of these issues. The study then debunks the production-for-profit economic paradigm and its philosophical foundations. It shows that Buddhism's in-depth examination of human dilemmas and pragmatic approach to solving them can form the philosophical foundation for an alternative economic model that not only solves mainstream economic theories' problems but also promises a comprehensive solution to the human struggle for survival and prosperity. Examples of applying Buddhist teachings to economic difficulties help create a new economic paradigm for the global community to reassess our current approach to economic well-being and critically evaluate a wisdom-based Buddhist economic paradigm.

A green economy integrates with the Buddhist economy enhances human well-being and decreases inequalities over the long term without exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Cities and urban areas offer exceptional opportunities to actualize a sustainable economy. Due to the geographical concentration of people, infrastructure, knowledge, economic activity, and resources, cities are able to achieve "more with less," or to transform density and systems into ecoefficiency. Cities and a green economy can actualize opportunities to improve human welfare and local natural resources while reducing future costs, ecological scarcities, and environmental risks.

## Conclusions

Buddhist economics focuses more intently on the analysis and integration of ultimate aims and the quality of life effects of the means employed to reach these ends. This refers to an emphasis on the true nature of welfare and the psychology of desire, as opposed to simple and shaky assumptions that material acquisition has an unqualifiedly positive and direct relationship with happiness. Similarly, Buddhist economics and sustainability methods concur that greater physical consumption is a means and not an end in and of itself. In actuality, consumption involves the destruction of the object's utility source. Consequently, it is preferable to spend less and maximize the services or satisfaction that may be received from conserving and managing limited resources. While the system agrees on this concept for input usage and efficiency, the Buddhist Economic perspective places distinct boundaries on the utility or welfare that can be obtained from physical items, irrespective of the efficiency involved in their manufacture and consumption.

The world's future is a green economy due to humanity's current and future problems. Humanity faces climate change, biodiversity loss, global inequity, and more. A green economy can solve humanity's problems, but it must become a reality. The main goal of a green economy is to achieve significant progress in the relationship ecology, as a pillar of sustainable development, and proposals to governments to move to sustainable development, which includes promoting investment in natural capital, solving energy problems, and providing the population with ecologically clean food, paying attention to land use and optimal resource management, and transitioning to more efficient, environmentally friendly technologies. Thailand's adoption of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model intends to exploit natural assets more efficiently with little environmental damage. BCG uses a whole-of-society strategy to implement this idea, putting Thailand on pace to establish a healthier, greener, and more inclusive economy after the pandemic.

The green economy is a new trend that is seen as an important area of structural reform and aims to raise awareness of the world's real environmental, energy, and socio-economic situation by identifying ideological options for better understanding the dilemma of economic growth versus environmental protection and finding optimal solutions and more effective tools to solve

society's problems. Thus, the green economy aims to integrate environmental concerns into decision-making and transition to sustainable production and consumption in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The model of a green economic community where social, economic, and environmental aspects is interconnected. The poor gain directly from natural capital, hence green economics involves managing natural resources and ecosystems. All three are equally important in Buddhist economics.

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