The Buddha’s Jatakas and Karl Marx’s Volumes on Capital – Towards an authentic perspective of Buddhist Economics for ASEAN.

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Introduction:

In December of 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) came into existence as an official running entity which will run the economics of the various nations in Southeast Asia. Many of the countries in the region are, to various extents, nations that subscribe to Buddhism as the religious ideology of the nation. Many Buddhists may have questions about how Buddhism responds to ASEAN or the AEC; therefore, this article responds to the AEC and the fundamentals of ASEAN, through looking at the old-world stories of the Buddha and the words of Karl Marx, because many of the nations, again, are Buddhist and have a background in Marxism or socialism. I am fully aware of Buddhism and Marxism, as created, has nothing to do with ASEAN, but there are hundreds or thousands of people with influence, who adhere to and propagate the ideology – so

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220 No. 12, 220 etc. (Nigrodhamiga Jātaka; Dhammadhaja Jātaka)
221 Colin Gordon(ed.) in Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, Afterword
91 Scott, James C., op. cit.,1985, p. 30
therefore the link is relevant still, in this era of new ideas. The slogan exists: stand on the shoulders of the giants – therefore, all six volumes of the Jataka stories, all three volumes of Karl Marx’s Capital, and the website for ASEAN were examined for the research material for this article. Selections for discussion are based on Jatakas that may have some aspect of economics discussed within it, and then some corresponding criteria from Capital is used to discuss the issue, then a level of independent analysis is given, and finally a reassessment was done after examining the website of ASEAN (and its various internal webpages).

The Jatakas, Capital, and Elaborations:

Even though the world has largely moved away from Marxian economic principles, the various interpretations of the influence of communism/socialism are still present and respected for the ethical principles that are paramount in the operating principles of ideology that runs counter to the existing capitalist doctrine that is exploiting and devastating the planet. Marxism, in some ideological shade, does have similarities with Buddhism, or Buddhist principles. A look is taken from Karl Marx’s extensive, voluminous-work, Capital, with my interjections in brackets:

“Capitalist production collects the population together in great centers [such as Bangkok, through this centralization process, and the concentration of bureaucratic power] and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. [More and more people move into the urban-center for the benefits that this collection of enterprises can bring to a capital-city.] This has two results. On the one hand it concentrates the historical motive of power of society [in the case of Bangkok, Siam/Thailand was founded on the basis of being an absolute-monarchy and later evolved into a constitutional-monarchy]; on the other hand it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth [people are no longer farmers or no longer operate and dwell in some self-sufficient manner: no longer grow their own food or no longer grow what is needed to sustain an independent life/lifestyle, instead the person is drawn into a scenario where alliances are needed to get aspects of what is needed to life and proceed in a decent way for one’s quality of life], i.e. it prevents the return to the soil [people lose their indigenous ways of life and the former connection one had with the earth, as agriculturalists] of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil. Thus it destroys at the same time the physical health of the urban worker 222and the intellectual life of the rural worker. But by destroying the circumstances surrounding that metabolism, which originated in a merely natural and spontaneous fashion, it compels its systematic restoration as a regulative law of social production and in a form adequate to the full development of the human race. …Capitalist production therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker.” (CVI, pp. 637-638) Capitalism has deeply infected the lives of nearly everyone across the globe, including Buddhists. Buddhism, as a relic or preserver of traditional ways, has old-world stories to assist in our comprehension of capital.

The Appaṇṇaka-Jātaka recognizes that merchants traveled widely, to the East and West, in large caravans, often featuring around 500 carts, driven by oxen:

222 https://c2.staticflickr.com/8/7599/17027861102_7ebe53baa9.jpg - this photo is of a caravan from Cambodia, but it is likely to have resembled the circumstances in ancient-India.
Caravans could not be too large, because it would be difficult to find fuel (wood for fires), water, food, etc., along the way to their destination—for the men and grasses for the animals.\footnote{Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 4} The Appaṅṇaka-Jātaka suggests that merchants would debate over which crew would depart first, and the determination was made that a wise merchant would wait six weeks after the foolish merchant departed.

Someone might think that the first to depart could be the first to engage into the exchange of goods into a new marketplace, but the Buddha knew, as we see in these stories, that there is more to consider. He mentioned that a wiser merchant could go to his distant destination and barter the stock for anything needed at twice or three times the value, and come back to his own city without losing a single man out of all his company.\footnote{Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 8} How is this possible? How could the merchant who departed later gain advantages?

The Appaṅṇaka-Jātaka presents a scenario where the merchant seeking a new market exploits the mistake of his predecessor, in some opportunist-fashion. The merchant who travels first makes many mistakes along the way when forging ahead into new territories. The merchant moving along first must make new roads into the new area, and along the way the ox (load-carrying animals) eat up any of the grasses, old and new, that grow along the route, and the personnel will have their choices of any herbs that can go into their curries. Any water that can be consumed for quenching thirst is undisturbed. The merchant can fix the price of his stock as he chooses when bartering.\footnote{Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 4} This sounds good. He is a trailblazer, bringing new ideas into new locations and taking advantage of the new situation that is presenting itself. Workers do have aspirations and rights, and Marx spoke about this, propagating: “During part of the day the vital force must rest, sleep; during another part the man has to satisfy other physical needs, to feed, wash, and clothe himself. Besides these purely physical limitations, the extension of the working day encounters moral obstacles. The worker needs time in which to satisfy his intellectual and social requirements, and the extent and the number of these requirements is conditioned by the general level of civilization. The length of the working day therefore fluctuates within boundaries both physical and social. But these limiting conditions are of a very elastic nature, and allow a tremendous amount of latitude. …The capitalist has bought the labor power at its daily value. The use-value of the labor power belongs to him throughout one working day. He has thus acquired the right to make the worker work for him during one day.” (CVI, pp. 341-342) “The use of my daily labor power therefore belongs to you. But by means of the price you pay for it every day, I must be able to reproduce it every day, thus allowing myself to sell it again. Apart from natural...
deterioration through age, etc., I must be able to work tomorrow with the same normal amount of strength, health and freshness as today. You are constantly preaching to me the gospel of saving and abstinence. Very well! Like a sensible, thrifty owner of property I will husband my sole-wealth, my labor power, and abstain from wasting it foolishly. Every day I will spend, set in motion, transfer into labor, only as much of it as is compatible with its normal duration and healthy development. …like every other seller, I demand the value of my commodity.” (CVI, p. 343)

How, now, are workers valued? The Buddha has an alternative perspective: this merchant is considered by the Buddha to be foolish; but how so? The wise merchant waits for the other merchant to go first, because his large caravan can travel more easily over the now-leveled rough spots along the route forged by the first merchant – making his way easier. His load-carrying animals will eat grasses that have regrown and are fresher, and his animals and personnel can drink from the wells that have been dug out in places where there is no water, taking advantage of the labor and any ingenuity from the first merchant. Again, he would have good fresh herbs for their curries, and could actually barter over the already fixed price – in order to get advantages over the previous venture.

It was from advantages like this, found in the Appaṇṇaka-Jātaka which suggests that Anathapindika (the famous merchant-capitalist, or treasurer) was able to acquire material wealth [possessing a store of flower-garlands, perfumes and unguents, oil, honey, molasses, cloths and cloaks], and could offer such gifts to the Buddhist Sangha. Here we have a presentation of giving, giving from a person who had gained so much through his enterprises that he could actually give from his store, to gain merit through offerings to the Sangha.

Karl Marx suggests: “All directly social or communal labor on a large scale [we are considering that an ox-caravan of 500 is a large-scale merchant/trade operation] requires, to a greater or lesser degree, a directing authority [either the King directing Anathapindika, or Anathapindika acting independently according to his intellect], in order to secure the harmonious co-operation of the activities of individuals [his staff and animals traveling or the market-capitalist that is also engaging into trade with Anathapindika], and to perform the general functions that have their origin in the motion of the total productive organism [market-trade], as distinguished from the motion of its separate organs [transportation of material-goods via ox-carts]. A single viola player is his own conductor [Anathapindika is his own merchant-business owner/capitalist]; an orchestra requires a separate one. The work of [Anathapindika would include] directing, superintending and adjusting [so that his work-guidance] becomes one of the function of capital [guiding his capital-goods], from the moment that labor under capital’s control [his ox-carts] becomes cooperative [Anathapindika must work with the drivers of the ox-carts to ensure that their needs are met or cared for, while traveling along towards their route and in their return visit. Their itinerary must be accounted for to ensure that their subsistence is met while traveling under the banner of the capitalist]. As a specific function of capital, the directing function [Anathapindika’s guidance] acquires its own special characteristics.” (CVI, p. 449) “Simple cooperation has always been and continues to be the predominant form of those branches of production in which capital operates on a large scale but the division of labor and machinery play only an insignificant part. Cooperation remains the fundamental form of the capitalist mode of production, although in its simple shape it continues to appear as one particular form alongside the more developed ones.” (CVI, p. 454) Anathapindika, as the merchant-capitalist, needed farmers to provide the agricultural-

226 Society, 2004), p. 1
goods, as sellers of their product to the merchant, who would then trade these goods with a distant-partner in mercantilism.

The economic activity in the Akatannu-Jataka suggests that there was a rival merchant in the border-region who was on friendly terms with Anathapindika [this friend was the operative-partner in mercantilism]. He, likewise, loaded 500 carts with local produce and with orders to travel to Anathapindika, would barter for goods for their value, and bring back the received goods in exchange. Similarly, Anathapindika did the same, except that these merchants were disrespected, somewhere along trade-route. The alleged friendly merchant sent another caravan, but this caravan was robbed by Anathapindika’s men, as revenge for the previous disrespect, leaving them shirtless and with no wheels and no oxen on their carts. They had to drag their platforms back to the village of origin in disgrace for violating principles of mercantilism. The jataka suggests that the friendly yet disrespectful/ungrateful merchant was to blame for the original-disrespect, and not by Anathapindika’s men.227

To this point, Karl Marx suggests: “As far as the many variations in the exploitation of labor [farmers are probably not paid until the ox-drivers return from their distant engagement, and Ananathapindika is not repaid either until the caravan returns and he withdraws his profits before paying or reimbursing the ex-drivers and farmers] between different spheres of production [the mercantilism of Ananathapindika and the produce-selling farmers] are concerned, Adam Smith has already shown fully enough how they cancel one another out through all kinds of compensations, either real or accepted by prejudice, and how therefore they need not be taken into account in investigating the general conditions, as they are only apparent and evanescent.” (CVIII, p. 241) This is clear, in the simple level or economic-engagements. Marx continues to emphasize: “The capitalist mode of appropriation [acquiring the produce], which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property [the produce, when leaving the possessing of the farmer, then becomes the property of Ananathapindika]. This is the first negation of individual private property [the farmer parting ways with the fruits of his labor], as founded on the labor of its proprietor [Ananathapindika]. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a natural process, its own negation. This is the negation of the negation. It does not re-establish private property, but it does indeed establish individual property on the basis of the achievement of the capitalist era: namely co-operation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production produced by the labor itself.”(CVI, p. 929) One aspect that needs to be illuminated towards moving forward is what becomes of the produce that is acquired before it is being produced (manufactured) into a needed product? There is little discussion in the Jatakas pertaining to the production-processes, such as the actual weaving processes of any acquired cotton into linen, or the production and storage of fruit into juices, and any preservation of meats for future consumption when times dictate scarcity. Marx is also demonstrating that the capitalist is taking interest in the farmer’s ability to produce the crop, since the production process cannot re-create the crop (the duty of the farmer) – so the capitalist/merchant, interested in the best product, also decides to cooperate with the farmer – and a new relationship is created and shareholders eventually emerge.

Additionally, the Khandiraṅgāra-Jātaka discusses how the rich treasurer Ananathapindika often gave gifts to the Sangha, but was warned by a spirit that said he is becoming heedless of his own future, and how drawing upon [the wealth of] his [stored]...
resources only enriches the Buddha [and the Sangha, by extension] – since he is no longer engaging in traffic and business. Anathapindika eventually gave all that he formally possessed to this now wealthy-Sangha, including the last of his sour rice-husk porridge, left over from the day before, leaving Anathapindika impoverished, but never lost any faith and participation in Buddhism. Karl Marx discusses this storing of wealth: “In the meantime it is stored up, and exists only in the form of a hoard in the process of formation and growth. This the accumulation of money [it is uncertain if Anathapindika was paid in gold or in the fair-exchange of material goods, but here are other jatakas that pronounce that payments were made and in some cases there was exchanging of gold, so the presumption exists that there was accumulation of primitive forms of money], the formation of a hoard [large storage of determined-wealth], appears here as a process that temporarily accompanies an extension of the scale on which industrial capital operates. [In the case of Buddhism, an advanced industrial society didn’t exist in India at the time, but there could have been villages that specialized in some basic modes or means of production, such as the processing of cotton into linen, that would then be bought by the mercantile-capitalist.] Temporarily, because as long as the hoard persists in its state as a hoard, it does not function as capital [because, as a stagnant-entity, it is not being used in any productive manner or endeavor], does not participate in the valorization [pronouncement of value] process, but remains a sum of money that grows only because money available to it without any effort on its part is cast into the same coffer.”(CVII, p. 163) “For the capitalist who has others to work for him [Anathapindika’s ox-drivers and the associated farmers selling their produce to the merchant-capitalist], buying and selling is a major function. Since he appropriates the product of many people, on a larger social scale, so he has also to sell on such a scale, and later to transform money back again into elements of production. [Farmers need their reimbursement to invest into the next seasons’ agricultural product, and the merchantcapitalist has an interest in receiving a better crop that can be acquired and sold at higher prices, to not only regain the salaries of the merchants, but to also gain a profit from the venture into the various territories.] Now as before, the time taken up with buying and selling creates no value. An illusion is introduced here by the function of merchant’s capital. But without going into further detail, this much is clear from the start: if we have a function with, although in and for itself unproductive, is nevertheless a necessary moment of reproduction, then when this is transformed, through the division of labor, from the secondary activity of many into the exclusive activity of a few, into their special business, this does not change the character of the function itself.” (CVII, p. 209) From one producer, from the transporter, from the trader, towards the producer or consumer, more people are involved who also seek subsistence and the means or desire for future survival, and all seek to gain from being involved in these business transactions.

Take now for instance, the economic activity found in the Serivāṇija-Jātaka involving a dealer in pots and pans. He had a collection of cooking-wares, one of which was a grimy-old pot which was gold, but tarnished or hidden beneath the grime. The owner of the pot was unaware of his own possession, and was cheated from it by a keen junkcollector. There are people who are waiting to exploit others, there are people who endeavor to take advantage of whatever situation that they can, in order to prosper at the expense of others. Marx explains: “…how to make white black and black white, and better than the Eleatics, how to demonstrate before your very eyes that everything real is merely apparent.” – and the footnote reads: “The Eleatics were Greek philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, who held that Being alone was true, and that everything

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228 Society, 2004), pp. 100-105
outside the one fixed Being was merely apparent.” (CVI, p. 358). There are people who manipulate the truth into being something false, and who later benefit from this deception. Some people are deceptive, but this is for the basic level of necessary survival – a story of such deception is found in the economic activity derived from the Cullaka-SethhiJataka involving a rich-merchant family’s daughter that had sex with a slave. The slave and the daughter, together, both decided to run-away and live as a couple. The Jataka suggests that the wise boy of the treasurer found a dead mouse on the road and sold it to someone with a cat for a small piece of money. He had to hustle or intelligently-deceive to survive. With that money, he bought some molasses and mixed it with drinking-water. He would exchange this energy-drink to the tired flower-gatherers who would in exchange give him a handful of flowers as compensation for the beverage. Later, he was able to sell the flowers for eight-pennies, obviously increasing his initial investment from the found dead rodent. Later a disaster hit the king’s palace and the opportunistic-boy removed the fallen branches and leaves, and thus worked for a to-be-later-paid favor. The little-boy was able to work for owed-favors and odd-items which he could later sell. Eventually from his meager investment and cunning-intelligence: he built up a network of favors amongst strategic partners: such as horse-dealers, land-traders and sea-traders. From the credit owed to him, he was able to gain the usage of a ship capable of sailing the oceans, and hundreds of people would the pay him thousands for a share of using the ship. The young-man, the runaway-slave, was able to gain sizeable wealth from what originally started out by selling a dead-rodent to a cat-owner. He, this cunning and opportunistic capitalist, later becomes the town’s chief treasurer. Marx explains this illusion: “…on the other hand we have swindling and general promotion of swindling, through desperate attempts in the way of new methods of production, new capital investments and new adventures, to secure some kind of extra profit which will be independent of the general average and superior to it.” (CVIII, p. 367) A boy from nothing, started from nothing and climbed to the chief position and served as an example for future hustlers. Marx discusses this process of turning nothing into something, but in economic terms: “By turning his money into commodities which serve as the building material for a new product, and as factors in the labor process by incorporating living labor into their lifeless objectivity, the capitalist simultaneously transforms value, i.e. past labor in its objectified and lifeless form, into capital, value which can perform its own valorization process, an animated monster which begins to work as if its body were by love possessed. If we now compare the process of creating value with the process of valorization, we see that the latter is nothing but the continuation of the former beyond a definite point. If the process is not carried beyond the point where the value paid by the capitalist for the labor power is replaced by an exact equivalent, it is simply a process of creating value; but if it is continued beyond that point, it becomes a process of valorization.” (CVI, p. 302) The boy probably discusses how the dead mouse would be valuable for the cat, and how the sugar-water would benefit the tired workers, and how his labor in exchange for a future favor would be beneficial, and from this exercise in valor, he was able to turn an aspiration into validation, through his valorization (enhancements).

There are alternative forms of hustling which have different results: the economic activity in the Tandulanali-Jataka involves a rice-inspector who checks rice for its quality and then issues rice from the store-room by a ticket-system which enables senior people to acquire better rice and lesser-quality to junior people - when the system got messed up, seniors felt that they were robbed of their profit or just-due. The Jataka progresses to speak

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of someone who values [inspects and assesses] horses, elephants, jewels, gold, and so on – he would pay a fixed and proper price to the owners of the goods. The king felt that he was being exploited and sought another inspector-valuer, who made certain irrational claims. The jataka continues, and this statement is made: “We used to think that the earth and the realm were beyond price; but now we learn that the Kingdom of Benares together with its king is worth a single measure of rice…” – and with that, the original valuer was able to retain his job over the one brought in.  

People who make proper assessments through their inspections are valued, perhaps after a second-opinion or after an invalid experiment.

From trials and errors, we can also learn from Marx: “…other developments take place on an ever-increasing scale, such as the growth of the co-operative form of the labor process [everyone needs assistance in these socio-economic interactions], the conscious technical application of science, the planned exploitation of the soil, the transformation of the means of labor into forms in which they can only be used in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the growth of the international character of the capitalist regime. [We have already seen this through the engagements of Anathapindika’s mercantilism.] Along with the constant decrease in the number of capitalist magnates [because, as the simile suggests: big fish eat smaller fish], who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this process of transformation, the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, and exploitation grows; but with this there also grows the revolt of the working class, a class constantly increasing in numbers, and trained, united and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production.” (CVI, p. 929) Marx continues: “At a certain stage of development, it brings into the world the material means of its own destruction. [One day these practices of exploitation will terminate from its own pressure and mistakes.] From that moment, new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society, forces and passions which feel themselves to be fettered by that society. It has to be annihilated; it is annihilated. [Here is why:] Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated means of production, the transformation, therefore, of the dwarflike property of the many into the giant property of the few [monopolization], and the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil [urbanization and centralization], from the means of subsistence and from the instruments of labor, this terrible and arduously accomplished expropriation of the mass of the people forms the pre-history of capital. It compromises a whole series of forcible methods…” (CVI, p. 928)

The economic activity in the Nigrodhamiga-Jataka suggests: “Friend, the deer are being destroyed in great numbers [over-exploitation of resources, senseless and careless slaughter of animals]; and, though they cannot escape [any natural] death, at least let them not be needlessly wounded. Let them go to the blocks [face death, hunted] by turns [strategically, systematically], one day one from [one] herd, and next day one from [the other herd]…” Overhunting and negligence in managing wildlife is detrimental to any species. Humans can do better to manage species under their control, protection or observation. Humans shouldn’t have any species going extinct when properly managing nature-reserves and wildlife. Likewise, the economic activity in the Āyācitabhatta-Jataka suggests that killing animals for a sacrifice, when doing so would bring profit to the

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230 Society, 2004), pp. 21-23
231 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 36-42
business - believing in that is a foolish endeavor.\textsuperscript{232} We can establish: killing for profit and mismanagement of resources is essentially problematic, and has enduring consequences and devastating effects upon the ecology.

The economic activity in the Kaṇha-Jātaka suggests: a young merchant hired 500 ox-carts for 1000-coins [\textit{again, here is the evidence of the usage of money for payments or reimbursements}] to travel some distance across a river, but when the fee of only 500 was paid: “…this fellow is not paying me according to the contract! I will not let him move on!” – so the chief-ox stood across the path and blocked the way; but when he was paid in full he strenuously-endevored to successfully pull the carts across the river.\textsuperscript{233} This is evidence of a worker’s strike, when the employer is not fulfilling its part of the employment contract, but when properly paid, the worker will endeavor for the employee. Marx suggests: “Since the worker spends the greater part of his life in the production process \textit{[ox spend their day in the fields eating/resting, or pulling cargo for humans – the connectedhumans to this process are engaged in animal-husbandry or the associated trade-activities]}, the conditions of this production process are to a great extent, conditions of his active life process itself, and economy in these conditions of life is a method of increasing the profit rate. \textit{[The ox need fed, and the drivers need compensation for their labor and time, engaged into the trading for or on behalf of the capitalist.]} In just the same way, we previously saw how overwork \textit{[or underpayment]}, the transformation of the worker into a beast of burden \textit{[in this case, an actual beast-of-burden, or the human involved in this engagement]}, is a method of accelerating the self valorization \textit{[increase in the value, due to some labor – thus someone can gain some benefit/profit – and in this sense it is an arbitrary increase, which has nothing to do with the actual merchandise being traded – but may be some compensation for the transportation of the goods and something extra so that the trader gains or exploits the consumer… -it somehow validates itself]} of capital, the production of surplus-value.” (CVIII, pp. 179-180) Marx, then offers this suggestion, for additional consideration: “…there is more to this than the alienation and indifference that the worker, as the bearer of living labor, has towards the economical, i.e. rational and frugal use of his conditions of labor. The contradictory and antithetical character of the capitalist mode of production leads it to count the squandering of the life and health of the worker, and the depression of his conditions of existence, as itself an economy in the use of constant capital, and hence a means for the raising the rate of profit.”(CVIII, p. 179) Charges are added to compensate for the burdens incurred during the engagement to being the product to the consumer. Everyone seek a gain, to sustain or increase their ability to have a livelihood.

The Buddha, himself, knew of these economic activities, from first-hand insight: the economic activity in the Kuhaka-Jataka suggests that the Bodhisatta often went to the border-districts for the sake of trading\textsuperscript{234}, in a previous existence or manifestation of his lifeforce.

According to the Nāmasiddhi-Jataka, even slaves earned pay.\textsuperscript{235} However, from Marx, we see: “Capital therefore takes no account of the health and the length of life of the worker \textit{[and it shouldn’t as something non-human]}, unless society forces it to do so. Its answer to the outcry about the physical and mental degradation, the premature death, the

\textsuperscript{232} Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 53-54

\textsuperscript{233} Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 73-75

\textsuperscript{234} Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 218-219

\textsuperscript{235} Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 237-238
torture of over-work, is this: Should that pain trouble us, since it increases our pleasure (profit)? But looking at these things as a whole, it is evident that this does not depend on the will, either good or bad, of the individual capitalist. Under free competition, the immanent laws of capitalist production confront the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him.” (CVI, p. 381) Demands, and sometimes irrational demands, are placed upon the consumer.

Marx echoes the Buddha, through these words: “If we confine our attention to some determinate quality of raw material [the capital that will be transformed through the production process], to a heap of rags, for instance…we perceive that it passes successively through a series of stages in the hands of the various specialized workers, until it takes its final shape.” (CVI, p. 464) [The individual owner of the robes, the Buddhist monk, can transform the linen himself, into the various forms that he needs the linen for or to serve that intended purpose, as something multifunctional.] According to the Guna-Jataka, the economic activity here features a gift of robes that will be worn, but the old robes will be: made into a cloak, old cloaks made into shirts, old shirts into a coverlet, old coverlets into a mat, an old mat into a towel, an old towel will be chopped up and mixed with clay to be made into mortar for building houses. No gift will be destroyed, the materials are all recycled.236 It would be apparent that Buddhism would support recycling-centers, and the reusing of manufactured-goods, into something useful on a later occasion. There are not too many instances from the Buddha where he discusses any kind of production-process; so, this is the closest we come to the reutilization of some product or possession that is reimplemented into an additional process, a transformation, for the sake of another product.

We cannot forget though, what we are discussing; Marx begins by defining what a commodity is: “an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind. The nature of these need, whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference.” (CVI, p. 125) Humans trade commodities in other locations to satisfy a scarcity, deficiency or unavailability in the current or another location. These commodities are partitioned in: “socially recognized standards of measurement for the quantities of these useful objects.” (CVI, p. 125) The usefulness of the commodity is determined to be the use-value, and constitutes the material form of wealth and exchange-value. (CVI, p. 126). There is some abstract quantitative relationship for the exchange of commodities. The need or desire to acquire this commodity exists, and the means are taken to acquire this product for local consumption or an alternate variable. The processing of commodities can be done by intensive or lazy labor and this gives some value to the product. (CVI, p. 130) “A commodity’s simple form of value is contained in its value-relation with another commodity of a different kind.” (CVI, p. 152) The product of labor is an object of utility in all states of society. (CVI, p. 153) “Man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him.” (CVI, p. 163) “As soon as men start to work for each other in any way, their labor also assumes a social form.” (CVI, p. 164) “The labor of the private individual manifests itself as an element of the total labor of society only though the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and through their mediation, between the producers.” (CVI, p. 165) The worker demands compensation for his effort and for the time he expends in the work or the transformation process of the commodity into a useful product that has in it, an amount of value added, to be paid by the consumer.

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236 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 17-21
Marx continues to express: “Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labor into a social hieroglyphic. [This arbitrary concept can be confusing and different for anyone.] Later on, men try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of their own social product [the need arises to comprehend one’s own creation – self assessment]: for the characteristic which objects of utility have of being values is as much as men’s social project as is their language. The belated scientific discovery that the products of labor, in so far as they are values, are merely the material expressions of the human labor expended to produce them, marks an epoch in the history of mankind’s development, but by no means banishes the semblance of objectivity possessed by the social characteristics of labor. Something which is only valid for this particular form of production, the production of commodities, namely the fact that the specific social character of private labors carried on independently of each other consists in their equality as human labor, and, in the product, assumes the form of the existence of value, appears to those caught up in the relations of commodity production (and this is true both before and after the above mentioned scientific discovery) to be just as ultimately valid as the fact that the scientific dissection of the air into its component parts left the atmosphere itself unaltered in its physical configuration.” (CVI, p. 167) One’s own delusions are impermanent.

The economic activity in the Sihacamma-Jataka, pertains to the merchant selling his goods in various places, and he used a donkey to carry the items for him. When he went into the city to sell his things, he would put his donkey in a field before entering the city, and cover the donkey with a lion-skin so people would not steal his donkey, and thinking it was a lion - people would leave the lion alone. [Aesop also has a story of a donkey wearing a lion’s skin, but we would think that villagers would care less about a donkey than the prize of killing a lion, so the person covered his donkey with the wrong type of covering, sure to draw a crowd.] Yet villagers, despite hearing the hee-haws from the donkey, still beat the animal to its death, and stole the lion-skin. Delusion and deception doesn’t get past every person, nor should it be conceived to be an effective method for engaging into some economic activity. Marx states: “Small scale land ownership [although this may pertain to the farmer’s field where the merchant put his donkey, we continue] presupposes that the overwhelming majority of the population is agricultural [indeed, it was in ancient-India, and in most rural places where Buddhism is still effective] and that isolated labor predominates over social [people work/produce/manufacture for self – for one’s family; much like this independent merchant and his donkey]; wealth and the development of reproduction [the engagement of the merchant into this market-place], therefore, both in its material and its intellectual aspects, is ruled out under these circumstances, and with this also is the conditions for a rational agriculture. [The actual field where the donkey is resting is not under discussion, although it is the scene of the animal’s slaughter.] On the other hand, large landed property reduces the agricultural population to an ever decreasing minimum and confronts it with an ever growing industrial population crammed together in large towns [obviously the drain of agriculturalists seeking new urban livelihoods leave few behind who can work with the land, and then work with any land that has not been taken up and zoned for some industrial purpose]; in this way it produces conditions that provoke an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by the natural laws of life itself. The result of this is a squandering of the vitality of the soil, which is carried by trade far beyond the bound of a single country.” (CVIII, p. 949) It would appear that since the village was close
to the city, the people would be educated enough to comprehend that a donkey is not a lion, even with the skin draped over the donkey. It would look odd dressed inappropriately. With a rural area drained of population, and likely it is the more educated who venture into the cities to find better work, the uneducated were left behind to act in an uncivilized way towards the donkey. These is a metabolism that is keen on devouring any animal or killing any animal that may be a threat to either the crops in the field or any residence near this field. Of course we can react to the death of our donkey in a variety of ways: true, perhaps, the bewildered farmers felt threatened (absurdly) by a fake-lion or were devious enough to rob the merchant of his vehicle; and now the merchant is without his vehicle and is owed compensation for what was taken from him. Here, in this jataka, we can see beginnings of the rift or divide between the urban and rural centers.

The economic activity in the Kurudhamma-Jataka involves: the maintaining of righteousness. A rich man went to his rice-field and knew of its productivity, but had yet to give a portion of it to the King (tax), so before eating any of it, he felt some guilt, suggesting that he could never take from another man, and summoned the King’s master of the granaries to take out, by measurements, the portion that should belong to the king. The state owns a portion of what is produced; if the state does not acquire through taxation, the state will acquire through acquisition of produce. In this sense, the economic-activity in the Macc-uddana-Jataka also becomes important to discuss: “…There is no prosperity for the cheat.” And then in some verses: “There’s no good fortune for the wicked heart, and in the sprites respect he has no part; who cheats his brothers of paternal wealth and works out evil deeds by craft and stealth.” Those who cheat the system will be punished. Marx may consider: “Things are in themselves external to man, and therefore alienable [many government policies may be alienable, yet people strive onward with their lives]. In order that this alienation may be reciprocal, it is only necessary for men to agree tacitly to treat each other as private owners of those alienable things, and, precisely for that reason, as persons who are independent of each other.” (CVI, p. 182) But this relationship of reciprocal isolation and foreignness does not exist for the members of a primitive community of natural origin. (CVI, p. 182) Men have often made man himself into the primitive material of money, in the shape of the slave but they have never done this with the land and soil. Such an idea could only arise in a bourgeois society, and one which was already well developed. (CVI, p. 183) “Today the product satisfies a social need. Tomorrow it may perhaps be expelled partly or completely from its place by a similar product.” (CVI, p. 201). “The seller sells an existing commodity, the buyer buys as the mere representation of money, or rather as the representative of future money. The seller becomes a creditor, the buyer becomes a debtor. Some the metamorphosis of commodities, or the development of their form of value, has undergone a change here, money receives a new function as well. It becomes the means of payment.” (CVI, p. 233) “He releases the money, but only with the cunning intention of getting it back again. The money therefore is not spent, it is merely advanced.” (CVI, p. 249) “The proprietor of labor power must always sell it for a limited period only, for if he were to sell it in a lump, once and for all he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a community. He must constantly treat his labor power as his own property, his own commodity, and he can do this only by placing it at the disposal of the buyer, i.e. handing it over to the buyer for him to consume, for a definite period of time, temporarily. In this way he manages both to alienate his labor power and

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238 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 251-260
to avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it.” (CVI, p. 271) “Nature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labor power. (CVI, p. 273) Taxation in some sense implies that the farmer is temporarily under servitude, a system imposed upon and external to himself, but is made to endure and actually feel some sense of belonging or patriotism in doing so, until that time comes when differences have been determined. Even if the taxation is for a social purpose, it may be squandered by leadership through displays of excess – and the common people are left to wonder why their fruits-of-their-labor have been heedlessly lost, perhaps through some lavish ceremony or sacrifice. Yet, when the taxation or produce has been turned over, it is no longer a possession of the farmer, and he needs to not be concerned about it, and must emotionally disconnect from his fruits. It was only his effort and an effort that he will have to reenact and perform again for the next appropriate season. Even if his next season of crops fail, he must still pay some form of tax or face criminal charges.

From facing charges because of one circumstance, other people face charges of differing circumstances - the economic activity in the Kulavaka-Jataka states: “…the village headman thought to himself: when these men used to get drunk and commit murders and so forth, I used to make a lot of money out of them not only on the price of their drinks but also by the fines and dues they paid.”240 This suggests that crime, or the subliminal promotion of vice, is part of the operation of the criminal justice-system. “The overseer’s book of penalties replaces the slave-driver’s lash. All punishments naturally resolve themselves into fines and deductions from wages, and the law-giving talent of the factory… arranges matters that a violation of his laws is, if possible, more profitable to him than the keeping of them.” (CVI, p. 550) “…killing [not] murder... if done for the sake of profit…” – but the reader is directed towards a footnote which references “appropriate moral and religious justification for the assassination…” (CVIII, p. 183) Crimes are actually part of the legal system and violations are expected. In a perverted sense, crimes are encouraged.

A portion of the Būridatta-Jātaka contains a part of a dialogue that states: “a poor Brahmin in Benares had got deeply in debt, and being pressed by his creditors, said to himself, ‘Why should I go on living here?’241 and decided to move away into the forest to die, but then would later go on to lead some other adventures, and gain some livelihood. Later in the same old-world story, but in another part, it is stated that an ascetic asked for a large sum of money to be placed out due to a bet, but the king inquired: ‘Is it some debt your father left or is it all your own? That you should come and ask from me such an unheard-of loan.’242 The king tries to slander that ascetic: “I am a man well-backed with means, and you are a bankrupt clown. Who will stand surety on your side, and where is the money down?”243 The debtor wanted to flee or escape his economic responsibility – default on his loans or ignore the repayment of what he borrowed – impoverished, he has nothing to show for himself.

On more institutionalized crime - the economic discussion in the Nimi-Jataka suggests: “Describing how sin ripens and bears fruit: These men are they who in the marketplace, haggling and cheapening from their greed and gain, have practiced knavery

240 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 76-83
and thought it hidden like one that hooks a fish, but for the knave. There is no safety, dogged by all his deeds these cruel creatures begat sin, and they are lying yonder swallowing the hook.”

Somehow, the thought extends to represent that this could be talking about interest and the collection of interest – and the evil that is derived from exploiting customers.

An aspect of the Mahājanaka-Jātaka that deals with economics, states: “We who have nothing of our own may live without a care or sigh, the kingdom may lie desolate, but naught of mine is harmed thereby. We who have nothing or our own may live without a care or sigh, feasting on joy in perfect bliss like [a radiant deity].” Some people are happier without material possessions and this demonstrates that materialism does not equate to happiness. There are measurements now that consider a nation’s gross-national happiness, taking in factors such as available social-services, education, relative price of consumer goods, access to clean water, and other variables that comprise the data formulating that statistic. Thailand today, operates or rather propagates the principles of sufficiency-economics, where people engage into everything with moderation, reasonableness, and have resiliency – or risk management; knowledge and virtues derived from Buddhism are also important factors. How else can people live with nothing and be happy unless they train themselves to be content and derive happiness from being in such an unfortunate predicament.

More people live with nothing but have done something about it – the economic activity in the Samudda-Vāṇija-Jātaka pronounces: travel to a foreign place, and find some place there to dwell in, a forest, cut down some trees to build a mighty ship, and launch it from a river, and go away from the town, and go back and get family members, then proceed to the ocean. They sail where the wind takes them, until reaching an island in the middle of the ocean. The island had all of the great wild-plants and fruits, rice, sugar-cane, banana, mango, rose-apple, jack, cocoanut, etc. When they had to relieve themselves, they dug holes in the sand and hid it there, to prevent this only danger – and had to be very careful with this point. Then after the homes were established and they started to dwell – there was only two master craftsmen. When they decided to make some fermented drinks (alcohol), the deities were angered and suggested that they dwell there no longer that half a month, or the sea would destroy them, and they should flee the place. Later, the entire company packs into the ship, and waited for the waves to bring them back out into the ocean. The suggestion here is when traveling or immigrating into a new area – and note that they were encouraged to travel abroad (no need for passports and visas or complicated administrative procedures, as if individuals are property to be transferred like cattle or slaves) - ensure that the proper facilities are established, live within the means of the circumstance, or the entire endeavor will lead to the destruction of the colony. Be prepared and plan for your endeavors, and have mindfulness while performing your endeavors – and know that the possibility exists to begin a new life and live again in a new location.

The economic activity of the Losaka-Jātaka discusses that a ship was being put out to the sea and a person hired himself out for service to the boat.

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244 E.B. Cowell & W.H.D. Rouse [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume VI (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2005), p. 60
246 See: [http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat_english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293](http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat_english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293) also, see: [https://www.academia.edu/1165803/Buddhist-Marxist_Perspective_of_Thai_Sufficiency_Economics – by Dr. Dion Peoples – both pages accessed on 25 August 2015](https://www.academia.edu/1165803/Buddhist-Marxist_Perspective_of_Thai_Sufficiency_Economics – by Dr. Dion Peoples – both pages accessed on 25 August 2015)
have already seen, the worker actually treats the social character of his work, its combination with the work of others for a common goal, as a power that is alien to him; the conditions in which this combination is realized are for him the property of another, and he would be completely indifferent to the wastage of this property if he were not himself constrained to economize it.‘(CVIII, p. 179) It’s difficult, at first, for the human to work together with others, it takes a higher mind to comprehend the value in this – and since the human knows that the property is not one’s own, then wasting the scraps is of little consequence to the heedless worker. The worker hiring himself out to the ship-owner knows the boat is not his, but must be more mindful of his endeavors since his life is at stake on the rough seas – carelessness cannot be tolerated.

The worker sees his place within the scheme of things, and comprehends his period of employment, perhaps under a suitable contract discussed between them. A large boat needs many personnel to operate or perform several key-functions, for the sake of everyone on the boat. Space is limited on boats, so there can be nothing wasted, everyone must have a function. The needs of the boat are greater than the need of the individual worker and the processes are beyond his minor function. When he places himself into servitude, he agrees to perform things he may not normally do, if operating as a free-individual.

An economic activity from the Mahabodhi-Jataka stated: “From former action still both bliss and woe begin; this monkey pays his debt, to wit, his former sin: each act’s a debt discharged. Where then does guilt come in? If such the creed thou holdest and this be doctrine true, then was my action right when I that monkey slew. Couldst thou but only see how sinful is they creed, though wouldst no longer then with reason blame my deed.”249 The content dealing with economics is the idea of debt: owing someone for what was previously borrowed or taken, or gratitude for a favor. Guilt is the feeling derived from compromising your own ethical-principles and the insight that the violation incurs a form of punishment for that violation. The ethical-violations of the capitalists must be met with some form of punishment. Guilt is a condition of negativity, of a mind with unwholesome characteristics, one bound for a hell or animal realm.

The Sudhābhojana-Jātaka, as long as it is, features a small portion that discusses some economic activity, involving a monk with a history of charity, in verse-form, as follows250:

Merchants through hope seek treasure far and wide And taking shop on ocean’s billows ride: There sometimes do they sink to rise no more, Or else escaping their lost wealth deplore

In hope their fields the farmers plough and till Sow seeds and labor with their utmost skill But should some plague or drought afflict the soil No harvest will they reap for all their toil

Ease-loving men, led on by hope take heart And for their lord’s sake play a manly part Oppressed by foes on every side they fall And fighting for their lord lose life and all

Grain stores and wealth renouncing for their kin
Through hope aspiring heavenly bliss to win
Long time harsh penances they undergo
And by bad ways attain to state of woe

Deceiver of mankind thy suit is vain
Thy idle craving for this boon restrain
No claim hast thou to seat or water pot
Much less to heavenly food.
Begone I like thee not.

The Sudhābhojana-Jātaka is teaching us here that risk-taking or going out into the unknown opens us into a fate that is uncontrollable. Some fate is left to the forces of nature, and there is no real precaution that humans can take to protect endeavors from these forces – so again, this is known to also be risk-taking. Humans are easily swayed by their passions, and are always up against antagonists. The capitalist hoarders, seeking to protect themselves, actually, cheat society and from their own low-mind-states, are subjected to fines and other forms of sanctioned social punishment. All of these miscreants, must know that their livelihoods hurt and hinder humanity – the risk-taking and the exploitation don’t benefit anyone. Today, we would be wise to bolster oneself or become resilient in the face of strive – operating in economically-sufficient ways and means. It would be wise to protect and prevent oneself against a possible horrible fate, and this can be done without being greedy.

Some people think that the acquiring of money is the solution for their dilemmas. Marx continues this discussion: “As paper, the monetary existence of commodities has a purely social existence. It is faith that brings salvation. Faith in money value as immanent spirit of commodities, faith in the mode of production and its predestined disposition, faith in the individual agents of production as mere personifications of self-valueing capital.” (CVIII, p. 727) “…the vulgar economist does nothing more than translate the peculiar notions of the competition-enslaved capitalist into an ostensibly more theoretical and generalized language, and attempt to demonstrate the validity of these notions.” (CVIII, p. 338) Our foundations for whatever we desire in economic-terms is nothing more than arbitrary-concepts from our imaginations. We are not valuing things that are necessary for our lives, but we have come to be indoctrinated to accept as a reality things that are imposed upon us externally. It’s meaningless and only matters because we make it matter – materializing an idea into matter.

The Sāma-Jātaka presents some words that pertain to economics, but due to the length of the citation, just a summary will be presented, here: a young man become a monk for the sake of gaining alms-food to support his parents who were living in poverty, by giving them his food-ticket. After twelve years of forest-isolation he finally visited his impoverished relatives, and began to pass his almsfood to them; however he was criticized for supporting his family. He supported his family, even to the detriment of his own health. He was brought before the Buddha, and the Enlightened One suggested: “…Well done, you are in a path which I have traversed before you: I in old time, while going [on almsround] supported my parents.”

Buddhism places a great social emphasis upon

taking care of one’s parents. Although in some places Marx advocates for the abolishment of the family structure, here he instructs: “Parents must not possess the absolute power of making their children mere machines to earn so much weekly wage… The children and young persons therefore in all such cases may justifiably claim from the legislature, as a natural right, that an exemption should be secured to them, from what destroys prematurely their physical strength, and lowers them in scale of intellectual and moral beings. [Take notice that Marx is advocating for the individual human-rights of children.] It was not however the misuse of parental power that created the direct or indirect exploitation of immature labor powers by capital, but rather the opposite, i.e. the capitalist mode of exploitation, by sweeping away the economic foundation which corresponded to parental power [The high prices of consumer-goods, food, hours of work, low salaries, residential or industrial zoning laws, and other factors mandated that the family structure erode into a situation where both parents must work in order to provide for their families, or by necessary extension, then a child must work], made the use of parental power into its misuse. However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system may appear, large scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organized processes of production, outside the sphere of domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. …It is also obvious that the fact that the collective working group is composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages must under the appropriate conditions turn into a source of humane development, although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalist form, the system works in the opposite direction, and becomes pestiferous source of corruption and slavery, since here the worker exists for the process of production and not the process of production for the worker.” (CVI, pp. 620-621) Civil society is taking away the “rights” of parents, whatever these rights are – and these parents are under constant surveillance. School teachers look for marks of abuse on children and report beatings from parents to the police. Civil society has ventured along to the point where parents are no longer allowed to discipline children, and children can be taken away by the state, to be institutionalized and raised by taxpayers. The time may come when parents, and then only a select few, will just be breeding-machines. The capitalist society believes that humans breed for the sake of the jobs that they are creating for their own profits; and not for the sake of families living life, and living a liberated life away from the forces of a globalized society – or their version of a civilization. Here we can mandate that the terms: civil, civilization, and civilize – all be defined and studied for what they are and what they do – and what is done under the rubric of these constructions, that have created social disharmony; forced adaptations:

- A definition of civil implies to be courteous and polite.
- A definition of civilize implies bringing social, cultural or moral development to other societies, and expecting them to be polite and well-mannered towards this change.
- A definition of civilization implies the exorcism of defiance in a culture towards the refinements and developments that occur through the adaptation or civilizing processes, so that this society can appreciate what has become of themselves operating in these new circumstances.

Children have rights, and sometimes parentage gets in the way of the rights of the individual, and the individual’s right to achieve betterment even though it may go against the emotional ties and judgment of the parent. Not every parent can correctly provide for
a child, and in many cases the state or society can better provide for the children. Many children today have grown up in child-care centers and have developed well and have become productive members of society.

There is another episode in the Nimi-Jataka, where a king tells a deity: “As when a chariot or when goods are given on demand, so is it to enjoy a bliss given by another’s hand. I care not blessings to receive given by another’s hand, my goods are mine and mine alone when on my deeds I stand. I’ll go and do much good to men, give alms throughout the land, will follow virtue exercise control and self-command: he that so acts is happy, and fears no remorse at hand.” This implies that economic endeavors should be fair and that there should be no exploitation of another person – fair trades or a fair price for every commodity or product. There should be markets where goods are available as people require or desire certain items. The merchant owns his products and they are his to exchange. A good merchant (capitalist) should take care of his men (employees), give back to the community and follow a code of morality that is virtuous. “The private property of the worker in his means of production is the foundation of small-scale industry, and small-scale industry is a necessary condition for the development of social production and of free individuality of the worker himself. Of course, this mode of production also exists in slavery, serfdom, and other situations of dependence. But it flourishes, unleashes the whole of its energy, attains its adequate classical form, only where the worker is the free proprietor of the conditions of his labor, and sets them in motion himself: where the peasant owns the land he cultivates, or the artisan owns the tool with which he is an accomplished performer.” (CVI, p. 927) Doing much good for the benefit of others might entail the acquisition of the means of production to improve the product or the manufacturing process for the product wanting to be consumed or purchased by the consumer. An aspect of the bliss may be in the manner that someone implemented unique innovations to the product, but the bliss may not be so much in the innovations but just in the acquisition of the material, likewise, in becoming one who hoards or stores items. Impositions upon manufacturers employ workers into conditions of servitude where workers must subsume themselves under the condition of the capitalists paying for what is being produced or manufactured under the conditions that have been issued. However, in the liberated state, the owner of the means of production can create and innovate as necessary, under no pressure or need to compromise any principle for the sake of some invisible-hand mandating a certain level of performance and output. Again, creators or base-level manufacturers (small-scale industry) do take pride from their skillful-work, when producing something for a consumer, and perhaps returning dignity to the working-population is the bliss that social society is yearning for and wanting to attain.

A portion of the Bhūridatta-Jātaka states, that one person recited a Veda wrongly, so the correction should be said in some demonstrated proper manner – but here, just the portion dealing with an economic process is mentioned: “…though all earth’s trees in one vast heap [clear-cutting of the forest – senseless waste of resources] were piled [hoarding of resources] to satisfy the fire’s insatiate child [greedily], still would it crave for more insatiate still… milk ever changes – thus where milk has been butter and curds… when cooks light fires or blacksmiths at their trade or those that burn the corpses of the dead… these brahmins all a livelihood require, and so they tell us Brahma worships fire… Brahmans he is made for study, for command he made the Khattiyas, Vessas to plough the land, Suddhas he servants made to obey the rest… these greedy liars propagate deceit and

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fools believe the fictions they repeat… why are his creatures all condemned to pain? Why does he not to all give happiness? Why do fraud, lies, and ignorance prevail? Why does falsehood – truth and justice fail? …as full of silver, gold and gems for us, with heavens unknown delights as overplus [surplus], they would have offered for themselves alone, and kept the rich reversion as their own. These cruel cheats, as ignorant as vile, weave their long frauds the simple to beguile… A clever low-caste lad would use his wit and read the hymns nor find his headpiece split; the brahmins made the Vedas to their cost when others gained the knowledge which they lost. Thus sentences are made and learned by rote, in metric form not easily forgot… The Brahm’s Veda, Khattiya’s policy, both arbitrary and delusive be… The forest was cleared, all of the trees were piled up – in previous jatakas a discussion illustrates the setting of backfires, but here… fire is used as an illustration for greed, and no identity for the wood, being a valuable economic resource, although it demonstrates that keeping a fire is necessary for various economic endeavors. The sutta illustrates the caste system, a way of fraudulently and economically segregating people by occupational-classes. The story says within itself that the policies of the Brahmadas and the ruling Khattiyas are oppressive. Marx examines the issue: “If small-scale landownership creates a class of barbarians standing half outside society, combining all of the crudity of primitive social forms with all the torments and misery of civilized countries, large landed property undermines labor power in the final sphere to which its indigenous energy flees, and where it is stored up as a reserve fund for renewing the vital power of the nation, on the land itself. [It was previously accounted for in the jataka, above.] Large-scale industry and industrially pursued large-scale agriculture have the same effect. If they are originally distinguished by the fact that the former lays waste and ruins labor power and thus the natural power of man, whereas the latter does the same to the natural power of the soil, they link up in the later course of development, since the industrial system applied to agriculture also enervates the workers there, while industry and trade for their part provides agriculture with the means of exhausting the soil.”(CVIII, pp. 949-950) The sutta propagates how Brahma ushers in collective-suffering and how the caste-system, itself, propagates social exploitation and oppression, and denying certain groups of basic human-rights, in particular the right to an education. Not only do they control education, the upper castes control what is disseminated for others to learn.

Here we are reminded by what the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan propagated, and of which, resonate deeply: “When they kill us, are you all going to be peaceful? Well, should we be? That’s a question, we got to keep asking ourselves.” A bit later in the interview, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan said, that it is social-engineering that leads to the conditions that create the circumstance for people to fail in the society; the society is not doing enough for itself to educate the young generation to be successful, it has alternative aims. He said it is a nation that has been put into this miserable condition by criminals engineering criminals. If someone commits a crime against the society, there should be a form of punishment [as to the level, I won’t discuss].

There needs to be something ‘socially’ in place – laws, to prevent social/culture deviance. There should be pre-emptive measures in place to ensure everyone has a valid and welcomed position in the society where they can be productive members, constructively contributing to the welfare of the community and state. However due to the concept of freedom or liberation, over time: adaptations or alternative forms of expressions

253 I can recollect a statement by a popular radio-DJ on 105.1 The Breakfast Club, Charlemagne Tha God, who often states: “No one will believe the truth if the lie is more entertaining.”
may emerge – and these may deserve some scrutiny or face consideration, which could prevent the collapse of the social structure – and some people ring out for justice, and demand justice. Like a tree: once the establishment of the necessary culture grows ‘roots’ and matures, fruits are produced and emerge as beneficial for society. Obviously, some people are raw, ripe, spoiled or have completely fallen off. Justice, is a weighty issue to manage, and is not the theme of this paper, but it cannot be ignored, so only this small paragraph serves as the statement that there is vigilance within this writing. Most people would seem to implement the fairest decisions possible.

Marx also wants justice, and wants to discuss progress: “Modern industry never views or treats the existing form of a production process as the definitive one. Its technical basis is therefore revolutionary, whereas all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative. By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually transforming not only the technical basis of production but also the functions of the worker and the social combinations of the labor process. At the same time, it thereby also revolutionizes the division of labor within society, and incessantly throws masses of capital and of workers from one branch of production to another. (CVI, p. 617) We have policies that create exploitation and the means of production, our own human processes create and induce levels of suffering upon the working-classes. Workers are made to accept and believe these deceptive and dangerous ideas and constructions.

The Vidhurapandita-Jataka discusses some aspect of economics: “When he is asked to carry out some business, like a well-fixed balance, with a level beam, and evenly poised, he must not hesitate; if like the balance, he is ready to undertake every burden, he may dwell in a king’s court. Whether by day or by night, the wiser man should not hesitate when set upon the king’s business; such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. The wise man who when set upon the king’s business, whether by day or by night undertakes every commission – he is the one who may dwell in a king’s court.256 Managing the household of the king is a great responsibility, and it takes ingenuity for every process to function effectively. If the king aims for gains, the economist must manage the household-affairs of the royal-family effectively, for the benefit of the Royalty. We could be reminded of this statement: “Capitalism needs non-capitalist social-organizations as the setting for its development, but it proceeds by assimilating the very conditions which alone can ensure its existence.”257 The economist may not necessarily be the capitalist, but just manages the affairs of the leadership in the ways or under the ideology expressed by leadership in order to maintain the employed position. The economist is driven to manipulate every transaction for the benefit of leadership, at the expense of the people.

Another aspect of economic-theory from the Vidhurapandita-Jataka includes: “Trained, educated, self-controlled, experienced in business, temperate, gentle, careful, pure, skillful – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. Humble in behavior towards the old, ready to obey, and full of respect, compassionate, and pleasant to live with – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. Let him draw near and devotedly attend on virtuous and learned monks and Brahmins – desiring thereby his own real good. Let him not seek to deprive monk or Brahmins of any gift previously bestowed on them, and let him in no way hinder mendicants at a time of distributing alms. One who is righteous, endowed with wisdom, and skilled in all business arrangements, and well-versed in times and seasons – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. One who is energetic in business, careful and skillful, and able to conduct his affairs successfully – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s

court.” Skillful and educated economists are needed inside of the King’s court, someone who actually is a benefit to the kingdom and not someone who is a drain on the system, but one that ensures economic prosperity for the empire.

Another statement from the Vidhurapandita-Jataka states: “Let him employ in offices of authority servants and agents who are established in virtue and are skillful in business and can rise to an emergency.” When there is a crisis-situation, the skillful economist must turn around the negative fate of the kingdom and again restore prosperity to the kingdom.

**Conclusion for the Demands of ASEAN**: Buddhist nations (Buddhism is an aspect of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community) must adapt to the impending ASEAN Economic Community – where the collection of Southeast Asian nations will unify towards common aims. Economically, this features the free-flow of: goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labor. Each nation will have to take their own measures to foster coherency amongst its population, for adapting to this new AEC program. In the case of Thailand, a Buddhist nation, much of this fostering is being raised by the Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha. In the specific case of Thailand, the nation has four principles to uphold: the Nation, Monarchy, Religions, and the People. Any policy for adapting to the demands of ASEAN must conform or link towards supporting these treasured institutions. Thailand and many other ASEAN nations are Buddhist, the 2nd largest religion in the region (because Indonesia is vastly populated by Muslims – otherwise Buddhism would dominate the public discourse). Because these numerous nations are so diverse, there is a lot of talk on harmony, and acceptance of diversity, and other traits in the printed and propagated media towards unifying people of diverse backgrounds. All trade barriers and various discriminatory procedures are to be removed. The various doctrinal-ideas of capitalism are entrenched and protected in the documentation of ASEAN’s Economic Community, which involved a lot of regulatory procedures. Although Capitalism is the dominant form of government-economics, and perhaps to some extent the ideology of people who have the means to exploit others, another large-segment of society prefers to engage into transactions or engagements in a more socialized manner. No measurements of this assessment have been made here, but the point is that there are competing ideologies for the way in which we go about managing our domestic-affairs (economically), and in ways we manage our office or businesses (in relation to the workers, rather than the relationship with the customer or consumer) – so there are different dynamics that should be considered. We have to comprehend that leadership demands their potion in order to function and serve, but this demand and functionality, according to ethics, should never be a burden upon the very population that serves this protector. People still need their organic relationship to the planet – and this aspiration seems distant in modern-societies where we have synthetic and harmful relationships. There is a shift in the ecological metabolism, one that finds greed and delusion as the elements fueling our development, which may alienate our true aspirations for a proper and nutritious development. We grow along with distortions in our once-socialized pathways for our civilization, and have become like drug-addicts to the junk that fuels individualism and exploitation that

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260 All material pertaining to ASEAN is taken or derived from their website, and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint: [http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf](http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf)
capitalism demands – and our expressions as a species have become detrimental towards our own neighbors. We’ve lost what it once meant to be human and have turned into an alien-construction penned by a delusional-thinker who never held your concerns.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community aspires to achieve enduring solidarity and unity amongst the various people, while forging ahead with a common-identity in a more caring and sharing society. This society will be greatly enhanced for the people’s welfare, concerned with: human development, social welfare and protection, social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability, building the ASEAN identity, and narrowing developmental gaps. The advice above from the Buddha and Marx is more and more relevant, when it seems – as reality dictates – that the capitalists have other aims. ASEAN needs to be balanced, and the people left unexploited.

Humans have traveled wide-enough on this land to see how other nations endure and survive; humans have traveled wide-enough on this land to see how other nations educate and propagate ideologies for the national ideology or other perspectives idealized as our basic human rights. Why then are these values manipulated by employers and why do employees compromise – and our families begin to fail? Mistakes are made and these errors have consequences, but ultimately who is paying the larger price in the grand-scheme of things? The capitalist demands the labor-time of the worker and the development of the product valued enough to sell to demanding consumers; the worker demands a salary and recreation time with the family – but knows that labor is the trade-off to achieve this desire – since the detachment from a relationship with the Earth, as an agriculturalist, has been transformed in the industrialized and technologically-advanced civilizations. The Buddha has suggested that we observe workers who have previously ventured out, and we make adjustments in our progress to ensure those same mistakes will never be replicated. We progress with more knowledge and wisdom. If we do progress with more knowledge and wisdom, and we are still making the same mistakes as those who previously encountered those problems, then we have not gotten very far as an intelligent-species.

Some members of our species are keen enough to think about how advancements can be made in our condition, and for some people, this is a respectable perception when this is done with intelligence and performance of those endeavors would never lead to the detriment of anyone involved with those processes, regardless of the amount of faith one had with a selected economic-system.

The individualism of our capitalist demands compromises by our landless workers, exploited for the sake of the company’s profit – profits that are, in actuality, the withheld wages of those being employed to produce and put value into the product. By its very construction, the capitalist system of exploitation cannot survive, because to exploit a resource means, ultimately, the destruction of the source of the material being taken – and it can never be wholesomely replaced, leading to a dearth and void, and the collapse of the enterprise. It can take but it needs to give-back so that there is more available for future acquisitions. It needs to foster development and encourage development, and actively participate in development. Capitalism, to be successful must induce a transformation amongst the collective-consciousness of the labor-class to cooperate in the process of production, which may take into consideration the private activities or recreational activities of those employed – so that there is a mutual benefit for everyone’s survival.

Buddhism doesn’t care too much about the production process, but it does care about the management of the affairs of the relationships between workers and the boss, and between those in the household, and even between teachers and students. Buddhism cares about society, but in economics, it is the process of various levels of exploitation that
have become central to the system regulating the acquisition of wealth – important for those in the highest positions in leadership.

We are also seeing, in the Buddhist texts, a development in the psychology of the merchant-class and those that became attached to the court-duties for managing the kingdom’s economics. These economists, or court-treasurers, were relied upon to enrich the pockets of the kingdom. Enrichment doesn’t come about through exploitation, as the discourse alludes to in the jataka about killing off the deer-herd suggests. Buddhism advocates then for management of the ecology – otherwise species-extinction results, obviously. Treasurers and economists have devised marvelous-schemes for the acquisition of wealth for leadership, in order to please them and maintain a position of employment. Leaders sponsor and endorse the legislation devised to exploit or plunder resources from nature and taxes from citizens, for the benefit of the nation and often enough for personal amusemen of leadership, as suggested in the jataka that addresses sacrifices. Leaders also endorse that there are levels of deceit constructed into the system that regulates the affairs of the nation – deviations from social-norms are expected, and no system is expected to operate smoothly without violation, that is why there are punishments or penalties devised for any deviant/criminal activity. Liberation is also expressed, fleeing crimes and the beginning of a new life without the negative social-history can occur; liberation expressed additionally as the development and establishment of new places to live in lands previously uninhabited – there are many choices for achieving socio-economic security and well-being, and endurance for the species.

Someone may ask: Is the Buddha a socialist or a capitalist? From the assessment of the criteria above, a determination can be made that he promotes capitalistic values, but mandates that these capitalistic-values for the development of the business should never bring about the decline of the ecology and economic-livelihoods of those employed or engaged into the system – it would have to be a socialized-capitalism that the Buddha would ultimately or collectively express – as formulated from the examination of the jataka collection. The Buddha is not short of his criticism towards the vulgar or unscrupulous capitalist; however, where can we go from here, in absolute honesty – when ideology is on hold? This acclaimed Buddhist-Socialist must come to grips with the reality that the Buddha advocated for a responsible capitalism – the promoted gains, gained wholesomely.

**We must adapt to improve ourselves and society.**

A higher form of human development is also expressed, one which determines a new role for children who oversee and protect the parents from falling into states of woe, and where children and workers ensure that parents are taken care of as much as a worker would support the processes for the production of goods inside of the factory. Traditional family values are reassessed for the greater benefit of everyone collectively. The study, here, also addresses class-distinctions and how these constructions are arbitrary and divisive and should be dismantled. Therefore, advice that terminates the discussion, suggests that only those established in virtue and in skillful means should be employed in these important managerial positions for the development and prosperity of places where economics is important. We have to never forget that economics truly means the sciences behind how we manage our domestic affairs – and for the confused, this means how we manage our house and family, how we manage our careers and employees, and how we manage our communities and customers, and how we manage our state and lives of the citizens that demand protection under the state, acting as a parent of the home. This interconnectedness demands a disciplined social-responsibility. The advice from Buddhism and Marx will need to be taken more seriously.