

Buddhist Perspective on Climate Change and the Environment

Presentation at Buddhist Vihara, RFF Multi-Faith Walk on 18 10 15

Welcome to the Buddhist centre. We are pleased to see you.

It's good to start the walk here at the Buddhist centre because the practice of Buddhism encourages mindfulness, stillness, awareness of what we are doing. That is the first practice we need if we are going to listen to the cries of the earth.

Some young people from our classes had a workshop and talked about how we can care for nature and stop climate change

We first talked about what we love about the earth and how that might be destroyed

At our workshop we made some bunting. On one side we wrote what we love about the earth and on the back what will happen to what we love if we do nothing about Climate Change.

One person said that they love

- Rain, sunshine
- Shade, trees
- Moonlight, sky
- Barefoot grass walk

Another person loves

- The milky way from a dark area
- Beaches
- Car free areas
- Sunny days
- Animals in their natural habitat

They would be sad to lose these because of the ways we are damaging the earth

How Buddhism inspires us to look after nature

Here are some of the ways that Buddhist teaching inspires me to care for the earth

- Buddhists don't kill animals, we try not to harm anything
- Buddhists don't take intoxicants
- Buddhists should live simply, and not have too much stuff
- Buddhists take the Middle Path. That means not taking too much from the earth.
- For example, Buddhists understand that greed leads to excessive tree cutting.
- The Buddha gained enlightenment under a tree and respected a tree for sheltering him.
- He was also born and died under a tree and asked his followers to respect trees.
- Buddhists believe that everything is inter-connected, so damaging the environment damages people as well
- We believe in Karma, that, is that all our actions have consequences

Now we will hear why the Bodhi tree is important to us as Buddhists. For Buddhists the Bodhi tree is very important. We have one here. We have heard that the Buddha found enlightenment under a tree, it was the Bodhi tree. Every Buddhist Vihara has a Bodhi tree nearby if they can .

What we can do practically to care for nature

There are different ways we can care for creation and help to stop climate change

- We can make changes ourselves and with our families
- We can make changes at the Vihara
- We can make changes in our schools
- We can ask local and national government and international agencies to make changes

Like a puzzle, which needs all the pieces to complete, we need to do things in all these areas if we want to make a change. At our workshop we wrote ideas for what we can do on each of the puzzle pieces. We chose our top two ideas from each of the pieces of the puzzle

Me and my family

- We can cycle or use eco- friendly transport
- We can create home for wildlife, for example, we can make a bird table

My school

- We could use bio-degradable products
- We could start a gardening club
- We could do charity events which are about caring for nature

The Vihara

- We could try not to waste food when we hold events
- We could grow plants in the Vihara garden

Governments

- The Government could provide solar panels for schools and houses
- Governments could make laws to make factories clean

To show our care for creation we are going to plant a fruit tree now in our garden. We invite you to join us there.

Buddhist resources on climate change

<http://www.ecobuddhism.org/>

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/BAM/bam-2014-suggestions-buddhist-centre-or-sangha-actions>

<http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/buddhism/>

<http://www.buddhistgeeks.com/2012/04/bg-252-climate-change-is-happening-on-our-watch/>

<http://www.buddhistgeeks.com/2012/04/bg-252-climate-change-is-happening-on-our-watch/>

<http://www.newbuddhaway.org/newsideas/climatechangeaction.html>

youtube clips

<http://www.pri.org/stories/2011-09-01/fighting-climate-change-buddhism-not-science>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnaG0RkJp2E>