

# How do you speak up about sustainability as Buddhist?

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*How to cope, deal with, and relate to climate change and social sustainability? This invites us to reshape our deepest myths of creation and of being. Some find it exhilarating - others frightening. Entering the new era with openness and non-rigidity is a skill that can be learned. Are you interested?*

Dhammapītika and Gunaketu talked about how Buddhists can speak up about sustainability. Dhammapītika is chair of the Metta Vihara Buddhist retreat centre on the border of Belgium & the Netherlands and has engaged in social activism through a long life. He recently contributed to the book "The successful idealist: idealism on new roads". He is also manager of a health institution in the Netherlands.

Gunaketu is writing a PhD. thesis on how to use Buddhist practice to be more sustainable - whilst also teaching at the Oslo Buddhist centre, offering gestalt therapy, teaching social workers and living and loving as sustainably has he manages.

## Meditation led by Dhammapītika.

How to cope, how to deal with and relate to climate change, and how Buddhists can speak up about sustainability, is not a mental thing. It is not an intellectual exercise.

My experience is that really jumping or diving in eco material demands honesty & courage, and for that, as a prerequisite, kindness to oneself and a deeper feeling of connectedness is needed.

So, a short meditation on kindness & connectedness in 3 phases (it is a meditation based on the metta bhavana and adapted with connection to the issues that ecology and climate change confronts us with):

1. Kindness for ourselves, as we are aware now, acknowledging our concerns and questions, discomfort, confusion, sombreness about future maybe, about our role and response, etc
2. Kindness for a good friend
3. Kindness for the living species with and around us, loving kindness for self and others, in time and space, in connection to those who suffer and who cause suffering & widening circle

## Conversation

Who is Dhammapītika, and his path as a Dharmacari?

I strive for a better world and willing to contribute to a better world (idealism?), I am a father and grandfather, and my wish is to be a good ancestor, I am going for refuge, taking the precepts, including an ambition to develop inner freedom & peace of mind. My name, originating from the Dhammapada verse 79 (Dhammapiti sukham seti vippasannena cetasa, He who drinks in the Dhamma lives happily with a serene mind)

Who is Gunaketu?

Already at my first encounter with Triratna I loved the myth of building a New Society. This society is built both from the inside through meditation on fearless integration, love and insight, and from the outside through skilful actions in our local communities, our institutions and the global community of all living beings. My name can mean "he who carries the banner of victory". And when we do what we can to transform the World inside and outside, we are victorious – no matter what the outcome.

## Sustainability

With sustainability we mean a longitudinal perspective, spanning at least 7 generations. We also think sustainability needs to be ecological, social and economical.

## Sharing on idealism, what is idealism, where does it comes from

Reverence, respect: People with ideals take a pioneering role in "improving the world". Thanks to their work and effort, society has improved for the past and now for the better and many abuses are over. Think about the abolition of slavery, child labour. What would the world have looked like without the long-term commitment and without the impact of people who lived their ideals? A few examples Dr Ambedkar, Albert Schweitzer, Gandhi, Martin Luther King. Heroism, courage, reverence – these are all needed.

When asked what idealism is, people give a wide variety of answers. Idealism is something which you have, or you act with. Idealism deals with something that inspires you, idealism seem to be recognized in by others. Is idealism an aptitude, trait or temperament? Studying idealism, we end up in various fields of science, such as philosophy, theology, psychology, history and economics. People with ideals have traditionally been found among activists, but you meet them everywhere, in healthcare, education, political governance from left to right, in laboratories and science and in business. Idealism is widespread in society. Idealism is also abundant among all generations.

Idealism subscribes to the eternal values Goodness, Truth and Beauty, striving to increase their presence in the world. The spark of idealism is living in everyone's heart, because in every single human heart lives the possibilities of goodness. I would say, an idealist is someone who is convinced that a better world is possible, one that is more fair and kind, and an idealist is someone who personally acts on this conviction and who is prepared to make personal sacrifices, doing his utmost to avoid collateral damage.

Idealism is linked to having ideals and "being idealist". For some, this entails a difficult dynamic, because, however important ideals may be, the image of the idealist is ambiguous and sometimes even negative. People who are intrinsically driven by an ideal do not often like to be called an idealist. They think that being an idealist is not a compliment, but that it rather detracts from their true intentions and even their identity.

The issues we face globally make a new boom of idealism urgently needed. That people, then and now, young and old, are touched by a spark of idealism, which fuels a will to strive for a better world for themselves and with others, that may be idealistic. It is also hopeful and important. There is nothing wrong with idealism, nor with 'improving the world'. And with imaging it. Idealism as a "binding factor of humanity" makes an important contribution to solving major social, political, economic and ecological issues.

The imagination is important to live out our idealism. How can I be creative, help create a better world, if I can't or will not imagine it? We need to find new and strengthen old myths or stories about how to live that will sustain us in our idealist striving. The myth and image of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara with 1000 arms who reach out to help all sentient beings is such a myth. It is worth

looking up how the monk Avalokiteshvara ended up with 1000 arms. Another myth is what Sangharakshita, who founded the Triratna Buddhist community, calls the New Society. It incorporates communities or living situations that supports and fosters playful spiritual development and deep rest; co-operatives and various types of livelihoods and institutions that support people economically, socially and spiritually; and places of worship where people are invited to meet and share their highest values and practice together.

These myths need to be acted out. They will never become anything like the description in the myth, yet by trying to live them out it will manifest in ways that is recognisable – at least for the people living the myth.

What happens at the moment where ‘the lightning strikes’ and idealism catches fire? Example of the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, who was nearly dying of alcoholic poisoning, and then suddenly was overwhelmed by a peaceful spiritual experience which profoundly changed his life. He drank no more alcohol, and started AA, through which huge amounts of alcoholics were cured of their addiction. Father Damien felt called upon to serve patients of leprosy when there was no cure for it. He followed his heart and ultimately died of leprosy. The calling of Mother Teresa happened when she was travelling in a train. Luther: Here I stand, and I cannot act differently than following my inspiration in the way I am doing. Dr. Ambedkar suffered personal and institutional hardship and saw the need for both institutional change (and wrote the Indian constitution) and inner transformation. This led him to convert to Buddhism with millions of his followers to break out of sociocultural bonds and pursue spiritual and political freedom.

Inside, a great saboteur can be busy and destroy the work and impact of what good people intend. There are lots of possible booby traps with idealism (see the study: Fire of Goodness, pdf available if you send us an email). One booby trap is turning ideals into a rigid ideology, and from there it is a small step to fanaticism, absolutism, extremism and terrorism. There are many sad examples in history. Creating lots of suffering. Another booby trap is limited social skills and the attitude of some of the ‘typical’ idealist. With his clear vision, deep emotions and strong convictions, he is prone to be stubborn, and does not compromise easily. Idealists are notorious for making conflicts escalate when principles are involved. Many idealists’ initiatives are damaged or even destroyed from the inside or fail to realise their full potential. In his interactions, the idealist often finds strong emotions overruling common sense. He is simply too involved and inclined to take criticism too personally. Within his team, because of the necessity for swift and clear decisions, he is tempted to act against the very democracy he so strongly advocates elsewhere.

Summarizing:

- Idealism: contributing to society / contributing to welfare / reducing dukkha / working for the good.
- Idealism has positive resonance with ethics, positive emotions, positive effort, with the altruistic dimension of life.

On closer inspection, in my study on the subject, and on my own path as a Dharmacari (ordained into Triratna Buddhist Order):

1. Idealism is often driven by mixed intention / motivation (a mix of both deficiency motivation and altruistic motivation, Maslow)
2. Idealism is often built on some mental state of dissatisfaction, frustration, fear, indignation, anger, etc. If these conflicts and feelings are denied and not integrated with recognized values,

the idealism, enthusiasm and so on, is based on loose sand. This is why we in Triratna's system of practice start with integration of all these thoughts, feelings and impulses.

*Erich Neumann: take care if you aim to develop into a better version of yourself*

*The psychological dangers of "wanting to be better than you are" and "participating in the moral world championships" are great. This jeopardizes both the inner integrity of the idealist and the stability of his personality. "Wanting to be too good is evil," said psychoanalyst Neumann. The psychiatrist Arnold Beisser expressed the paradoxical theory of change: You don't change by trying to be something you are not. Change happens when you become who you are.*

*Neuman's message for those who take idealism seriously: "the more one's own ideal in consciousness is normatively raised, with perfectionism towards ourselves, the more threatening it will be to encounter your own shadow".*

*"The shadow, which conflicts with recognized values, cannot be accepted as a negative part of one's own psyche, and for this reason is transferred to the outside world and experienced as an objective reality. It is then combated, punished and exterminated as "the strange outside" rather than accepted as the own inner problem."*

This undermines the idealists' efforts.

3. Idealism often resists seeing life as it is: Life is not perfect, and it will never be perfect, however painful that conclusion may be. The quest can be: How to cultivate and feel both the basis of peace & equanimity as well as the basis of action & resistance. How to combine and integrate both inner work & action in the world.

What are the lessons learned from idealism: How to cope, deal with and relate to climate change?

How to cope, deal with and relate to climate change? This invites us to reshape our deepest myths of creation and of being. Some find it exhilarating - others frightening. Entering the new era with openness and non-rigidity is a skill that can be learned. Are you interested?

There are many good and clearly written books, seminars, talks etc. on climate change, on Buddhism & ecology, on ecodharma. Read them, explore them with curiosity. See the literature list below.

On my path as a Dharmacari I have deep striving for a better world and a strong wish to contribute. I am a father, grandfather, I have a wish to be a good ancestor. I go for refuge in the triple gem (Buddha, dharma – the Buddhas teachings, and the sangha – the community of people practicing dharma), including taking the precepts and wanting to develop inner freedom & peace of mind. So, I have a double orientation, inner & outer, personal spiritual practise & activism based on ideals to strive for.

- How?

*My first steps: a phase of learning to look and to see, a phase to grow in awareness, a phase to acknowledge, also to dare to grow in feeling of discomfort, uneasiness, pain.*

My honest acknowledgment to:

1. to the facts as they are / climate situation facts / CO2 ppm / permafrost / biodiversity / thermal inertia / MIT study presented of the Club of Rome up to IPCC facts & figures of 2021 / nine boundaries / aware of the self-reinforcing systems / warming up 1 – 6 degrees C and its' ramifications
2. to our human heritage, the homo sapiens, our violence and discriminations, our mess, the ecocide (Harari Yuval c.s)
3. to myself, my eco footprint, my CO2 production, my frequent flying in the past must have contributed killing of living species, buying cheap goods produces in unsustainable ways in sweat-shops around the world, but also, my using zoom (& my using polluting google data centres, etc), my dirty hands in all aspects
4. to my confusion and limited understanding, until recently I did not realise so strongly that my generation & myself are stealing the future of our next generations
5. to my discomfort, guilt, doubt, mixed emotions
6. to my tendency, as a confession, to condemn others regarding their behaviour and contributing to their guilt (I try to prevent behaviour of an eco-moralist).
7. to my skills to be refined, as to how to have a proper climate-conversation which is not turning into a mood of depression. The subject is so huge, big, nasty etc, - so, how to express words and opinion in the proper way? I wish to stay away from eco-radicalism and eco-fascism.
8. to my uncertainty as to which subjects to share and in which depth with my children (they have a right to be young and live life, haven't they?);
9. to my tendency to go into action in order to feel better (change to solar, stop flying, shorter showering, being activist trying to stop tree cutting for new motorway in the Netherlands, eating vegan, cooperating in de Buddhist Action Month, etc) – so, learn to stay away from guilt, learn to stay with the uncertainty.

*My second steps, deeper acknowledgment, with a basis of metta & gratitude, bringing new seeing:*

Practising kindness meditation

Practising truthfully apologies – use Bhante's poem

Practising deepening gratitude & reverence.

With kindness. With space for deeper listening & acknowledgment.

Acknowledging, becoming friends with my discomfort, with my implication denial, with my unease. Development of a new 'conviction' that life is equivalent to freedom, that life is secure, rather than prisoned and unsafe. Abundance rather than shortage. Beauty rather than ugliness.

Freedom also helps to disclose deeper patterns.

For instance, what do I encounter in my 'inner life' disclosing deeper patterns:

1. Pieces of Judaeo-Christian creation myth, "humans are (have been) (should be) the landlord, gardener or steward" (but is that true?)
2. The place of humans on top of the evolution ladder (confusion: is that true?)
3. The natural need or 'right' of the use and the consumption of eating (i.e. taking life) of others incl. animals, plants, minerals (up to which extent?).
4. Patterns that I think my actions and my attitude should achieve certain results. That results count. (is that so?). Means & goals sometimes are mixed.
5. Soon to come: Dealing with artificial life forms who are somehow conscious of their own existence.
6. Acknowledging and embracing my own fear of death – for myself and those dear to me.

Acting sustainably, participate in energy transition, no car, veg eating, BAM participation, etc, all this is important but not enough. A one-sided worldly orientation is not enough. And on the other hand, a one sided other-worldly (transcendental) orientation is not enough either. This question upholds a dualism (between world and transcendental world) and that dualism seems not fulfilling either.

Happily rejoicing in two big men in the recent past: Jonas Salk & Arne Næss

Jonas Salk: Researcher, full of idealism: due to his decade of meticulous research, a first and safe vaccine against polio in 1955 was developed. It was a particularly important breakthrough: polio, a disease that causes paralysis, infrequently resulting in death, makes half a million worldwide a year. Salk was immediately hailed as a miracle worker. But it wasn't for his fame, he never wanted to patent the vaccine either. He wanted to “do humanity a favour” and leave something good for future generations. Generosity par excellence.

At an old age, Salk summed up his philosophy of life with the question, “Are we good ancestors?” To underpin that—and to cope with a crisis like the destruction of nature by nuclear war—to radically shift our time perspective, he believes, to a point of view that was much more focused on long-term thinking and the consequences of our actions that extend beyond our own lives. Rather than thinking in terms of seconds, days, and months, our time horizon should have been created for decades, centuries, and millennia. Only then will we be able and able to start future generations. Roman Krznaric brought Salk’s key question into a more active form - 'how can we be good ancestors?' – (see: his new book, *The good ancestor*)

Arne Næss: Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer, he is considered one of the founders of deep ecology, a philosophical movement that puts the intrinsic value of all living organisms first. Næss introduced the term deep ecology in 1973 as a critique of what he understood as “superficial ecology”: an ecological activism that fights against pollution of the earth and loss of biodiversity based on the idea that humans depend on the well-being of the earth. Technological innovation leading to gene-modified food production that is more resistant to drought and heat and massive global energy transition to another generation of energy without actually reducing energy consumption are both examples of measures from the “superficial ecology”, interesting and important but not enough. To counterbalance or complement, Næss introduced a “deep ecology” that values the intrinsic value of the Earth as a living ecosystem independent of humans and the importance of the human community. Principles of non-violence from India (ahimsa) and the influence of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza particularly influenced Næss.

Arne Næss did not see man and nature as I understand it as two different things but as one whole. Man is of the earth and the earth is of man. According to Næss, you cannot learn this unity, you must feel it. The natural world around our farms and cities is not ‘for decoration’ but is essential to regulate climate and ecosystems of the earth, as James Lovelock said it. According to Næss, if we want to develop a sense of identification with nature, we would do well to learn to look again at the beauty of creation. From yourself and from nature. So, it is better to develop a sense of beauty, positive mindfulness, awareness associated with kindness and reverence. The experience of beauty brings us the experience of connectedness. In the long run, he was convinced, this would stick better and be more effective than a raised moralistic finger. Not surprisingly, Næss ties in Buddhist ethics & dharma closely.

We ourselves cannot reverse the outcome of global warming, nor the nine boundaries of the planet that are being crossed. But, Arne Næss, with his inspiration based on ahimsa (non-violence) stimulates and encourages us to learn to look and to learn to see, to experience beauty of creation with awareness. I personally come to the invitation - *regardless of the outcome* - to experience beauty, reverence and gratitude and to integrate reverence and gratitude in the daily Buddhist practise.

## So, where are we now?

1. With acknowledgement, somewhere on the path to a greater understanding the facts.
2. With idealism & enthusiasm as a useful source.
3. With deeper understanding that everything is connected to each other, nothing is in itself: consuming, neglecting, mutilating or destroying a part, damages the whole. The Shambhala warrior has two instruments: compassion and the insight in interdependence and interconnectedness.
4. With a strong intention to live life with the inner compass, with metta (universal loving kindness), with the sense of beauty, beauty of creation, with reverence and gratitude. Gratitude being the "5<sup>th</sup> brahma vihara". No transformation without reverence and gratitude. This helps me unfolding a new seeing.

*With acknowledgment and new seeing, I enter my path more firmly with new based action. This is a positive self-reinforcing spiral.*

5. With understanding of the helpful distinction between superficial and deep ecology, which is not an "either-or" but a "both-and".
6. With my intention to act skilfully where I can, with the exercise to detach my intentions and my actions from its expected outcome. What I intent and what I do is (in my best days) regardless of the outcome.
7. Re-evaluating my responses to uncertainty; uncertainty brings mystery and adventure; the future has not been decided upon and uncertainty is the twin of hope and perspective.

Deeper acknowledgment, kindness & metta, practising apology, practising gratitude & reverence brings me new seeing and new seeing brings me new action. Action based in a new perspective, embedded into I would say, the taste of freedom, the taste of both kindness, compassion, insight & altruism.

## Ethics

The ethical training principles are a rich compass:

Metta, loving kindness  
Generosity  
Simplicity, contentment  
Right communication  
Clearing mind and creating more moral clarity

## For the future

How to cope, deal with and relate to climate change? How can Buddhists speak up about sustainability?

Part of our sustainable living deals with what we do and how we act: some of our decisions can demand great individual and collective efforts. Sangharakshita stimulates us to have our voices raised in protest this or that abuse of the social and natural world.

Sustainable living deals also with the exploration of how to continue to develop the sense of beauty, aesthetics, with positive mindfulness, with awareness carried by kindness and reverence. The experience of beauty of oneself and of nature and their interdependence brings us to a deeper understanding of interconnectedness. This is transformative. This work is a Tantric Guru.

We don't have ready-made solutions for others. We are willing to walk together. To walk together the path that makes us more beautiful people with a deeper connection with our living environment with all living beings.

It brings us to the experience of the most beautiful aspects of the human mind & human life: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. And 'a fifth brahma vihara': gratitude.

Meister Eckhardt: if you would only say and pray "Thank you" in your life, that is enough.

Gratitude is independent of the outcome of our actions.

Social engagement means not only as individuals helping other individuals but finding ways to address the problematic economic and political structures that are deeply implicated in the eco-crisis and the social justice issues that confront us today (David Loy). This is also the basis of Active Hope.

Joanna Macy, the work that reconnects

Dhammapītika is currently participating in a three months Practise based on the work of Joanna Macy, The work that reconnects. A fascinating journey as to how to develop resilience in times which are unsecure, painful, maybe even perspective-less.

In the first evening there came an important question to me, how to act positively, how to act creative and appropriately, when you cannot initially imagine it?

As a support for developing imagination, with a basis of metta and resilience, I was asked and invited respectfully to travel forward in my mind, many years, say 200 years, to the year 2221, the 7<sup>th</sup> generation, "life has continued, humans made it". And from there I was asked to write a letter as the future person, what do I want to say to myself in 2021. In a 5 min breakoutroom, writing, intuitive writing with comfort, peace and gratitude. The aim: to give the 7<sup>th</sup> future generation a voice, bringing them nearer to us in a way they help being guides with their perspective. Suggestion: write it yourself, make the connection!

The short intuitive personal letter in a 5 min reflection during the course, written by me in 2221, to myself in 2021:

*Dear Dhammapītika, Live in peace. Live your life in freedom. Beyond borders of mental disruption, fear, feelings of insufficiency. Life is short, life in temporarily. Life is like a fire you give; you hand over to the next generation. A flame given 'to the next'. Life is not a possession, life it not yours, or a property. Life does not belong to you; you belong to life. Life is King. Live life in peace. Develop equanimity actively. Embrace life. Embrace your wife and children every day. The love and dedication with which you live your life now, that is the only true seed which counts for the happiness in future. Yours truly,  
Dhammapītika*

These sentences are for me the pivot: *The love and dedication with which you live your life now, that is the only true seed which counts for the happiness in future.* This is for me, how to cope, how to deal with and relate to climate change. This is how entering the new era with openness and non-rigidity. This is how I currently think how Buddhists can speak up about sustainability.



Sharing experience, more contact?

Gunaketu, Oslo

[www.oslobuddhistsenter.no](http://www.oslobuddhistsenter.no)

[gunaketu@live.no](mailto:gunaketu@live.no)

Dhammapitika, Netherlands

[www.mettavihara.nl](http://www.mettavihara.nl) (a sustainable Triratna retreat centre on the border of Belgium & Netherlands)

[dhammapitika@gmail.com](mailto:dhammapitika@gmail.com)

## appendix

### Suggestions - questions for meeting each other, subgroups

1. Do you experience engagement with the world problems like climate change as a distraction from your personal spiritual practise, or do you experience the engagement with world problems as fruitful or even as essential to our own transformation?
2. We live in a globalized, secular, consumer-driven, hyper technological world that may be self-destructing. Still, given these facts, do you dare to be part of our mythic adventure? Do you dare to believe we are part of a bigger story also for the next hundreds of years - do you have confidence in that? What is it you need, to make imaginations alive and to join in the adventure?
3. What is it you need to create resilience for you personally, in relation to the dealing with climate change and its impact on earth and living species?
4. One action I am inspired to do, next week, is ....

## Meditation on kindness & connectedness

*How wonderful it is that you don't have to wait a moment, to make the world a more beautiful place (Anne Frank, her diary).*

Welcome & acknowledgment.

Welcome from different cities, countries, nationalities, being Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Our identity is not our gender, country, or our faith of religion. We are all human.

Welcome & acknowledgment is all-inclusive with who we are and how we feel at this moment. Welcome with our thoughts, emotions, feelings, maybe with inconvenience, maybe sombreness about climate perspectives. Welcome with confusion, perhaps with anger, understandable, because, we want the world, the imperfect world, to be different from what it is now. Welcome if you experience a phase of mental struggle, of being tossed about, with questions as to how to live as a good person yourself, how to live as a good ancestor.

In a language of active hope, this is a short meditation on kindness and connectedness. It is a meditation based on the metta bhavana which I have adapted with connection to the issues that ecology and climate change confronts us with.

Time indication for individual practise or with groups: 30 - 40 min

---

### Take time to Settling in.

Find a comfortable place to sit. Take an upright position. Let your posture express the dignity of being human and doing something worthwhile. Close your eyes gently.

Allow yourself to sit and to explore without expectations, maybe, with a gentle curiosity.

Focus a few moments on the sensation of your bottom on your chair or cushion. Have a sense of the earth, solid beneath you.

Experience your breath, coming in and out. Have a sense of the rhythm of the breath. Maybe connected with feeling of calmness.

---

**Phase 1:** Allow yourself to connect with positivity, openness, kindness, loving kindness. Kindness to ourselves, while experiencing your breath, coming in and out. Wish clarity for yourself, warmth, love, inspiration in your life. May I be happy. Try to let go expectations or judgments, just listening to what is happening. To say a full yes to yourself, to the situation there is, all included. Wishing yourself well, enfolding whatever is happening in your experience in a kindly awareness.

10 min

**We come to the 2nd phase:** Now invite into that heart space a friend you feel good about. View him or her kindness. Wish him or her well. May he or she be free from suffering. Free from confusion, free from troubled mind. May he or she be happy. Stretch kindness to your friend.

5 min

**We come to the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase:** Opening your heart to more people. Start close to home, anyone in your house, with whom you meditate, or your friends and family. Let warm feelings of love and friendliness widen out, like ripples on a lake. May he or she be happy.

5 min

Stretch then to include other forms of life, mammals, birds, insects.  
Connect with kindness, with a smile, with plants and trees.  
Enjoy the fly and the shit.  
Connect with kindness for the rice, rice planter and the buffalo in the paddy field,  
See that the bee and the flower are inseparable needed. See that there is a chain of coherent existence, of us, human beings with our environment.

5 min

Stretch then to include kindness with the whale & the whale hunter.  
Connect with kindness with the fish and fisherman.  
Connect with kindness with the tree and tree cutter.  
Stretch to include kindness to those who suffer and to those who cause suffering.

5 min

Stretch then to include kindness to more human beings in time & space. Come in contact with kindness as it were, for the generations to come after us. Our connection in kindness to the born and yet unborn beyond our time. Connect with the trust 'we will make it' and connect in friendship and kindness to those who carry life long after ours. May he or she be happy.

5 min

**We come to the rounding off phase:** Stay in connection with kindness for yourself and for others. You may experience love, beauty, reverence and gratitude. Stay in connection with beauty you may experience, beauty of creation and beauty of the interdependence and interconnectedness of life even beyond our time & space. Everything is connected, nothing exists.

All there is, does not belong to us. Nothing is a property. Even life is not "mine" or "yours ". Life does not belong to us; we belong to Life.

5 min

Rounding off meditation, closing, in a way which is appropriate for you.

(Meditation of kindness & connectedness, compiled by Dhammapitika, June 2021)

## Appendix / suggestions for further inspiration and reading

1. Melanie Challenger, *How to be animal: A new history of what it means to be human*
2. Dh Dhammapitika, *Fire for Goodness, bringing ideals alive through a better understanding of the psychology of the bumpy road underneath idealism and activism* (provisional translation in pdf from the Dutch version (*Verlangend Vuur*) is freely available via de author)
3. Ruben L. F. Habitoa, *Environment or earth sangha: Buddhist perspectives on our global ecological well-being*, *Contemporary Buddhism* 8 (2):131-147 (2007)
4. Amanda Gorman, *EarthRise* (a poem), <https://youtu.be/xwOvBv8RLmo>
5. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens. From Animals into Gods. A Brief History of Humankind*
6. Daniel Henning, *Buddhism and deep ecology*, (*Buddhism And Deep Ecology* presents basic ideas, knowledge, experiential exercises, examples, public participation aspects, and a Dhammaecology glossary on how Buddhism and Deep Ecology relate to each other and to protecting natural forests and the environment.)
7. Paul Kingsnorth, *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays*
8. Roman Krznaric, *The Good Ancestor*
9. David R. Loy, *Ecodharma, Buddhist teachings for the Ecological Crisis*
10. Mark Lynas, *Our Final Warning – Six Degrees of Climate emergency*
11. Robert Macfarlane, *Underland. A deep time journey*
12. Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope* (see also: <https://www.joannamacy.net>)
13. Arne Næss: <https://openairphilosophy.org/arne-Næss/>
14. Dh Shantigarbha, *The Burning House: a Buddhist response to the climate and ecological emergency* (see also : <https://seedofpeace.org/book-the-burning-house-a-buddhist-response-to-the-climate-and-ecological-emergency/>)
15. Evelyn Tucker, *Buddhism and ecology*, Harvard University Press (1997) (Given the challenges of the environmental crisis, Buddhism's teaching of the interrelatedness of all life forms may be critical to the recovery of human reciprocity with nature. Twenty religionists and environmentalists examine Buddhism's understanding of the intricate web of life.)
16. Timothy Morton, *Being Ecological*; and *Dark Ecology*.