

# Buddhist Action Month 2019

Climate Action – Personal Action

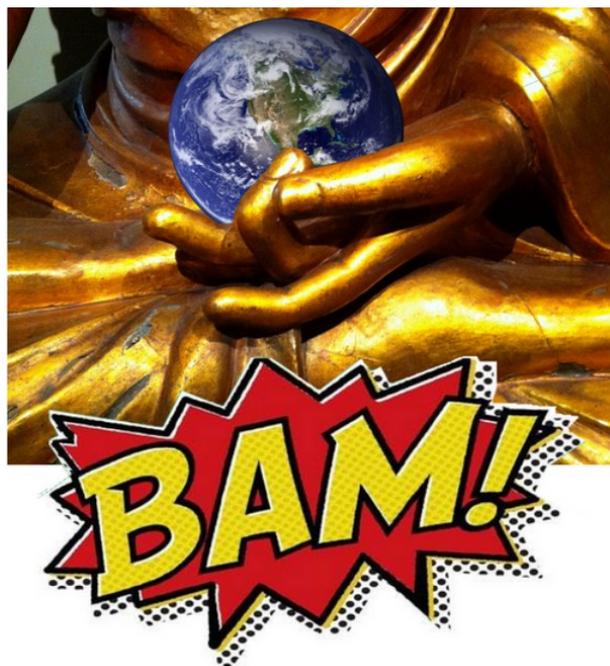


## BAM Handbook Ideas, Tips, Inspiration



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## 2019 Theme

The Network of Buddhist Organisations has chosen the theme *Climate Action – Personal Action* for Buddhist Action Month 2019.

In the last 50 years the average global temperature has risen at the fastest rate in recorded history.<sup>1</sup>

This rising temperature has fuelled the extreme weather patterns and events that we are becoming more familiar with. Climate change has created droughts that lead to forest fires, and floods that wipe out homes and habitats and lives.

As the temperature in the oceans increases tropical storms gather more energy and create more destruction.<sup>2</sup>

“Climate change is devastating people's lives all over the world. With drought, storms, floods, crop damage and sea-level rise, millions are fleeing their homes. And it's the world's poorest who are hardest hit.

The UN Refugee Agency says climate change adds to many of today's conflicts — from Darfur to Somalia to Iraq and Syria.”<sup>3</sup>

According to a recent study burning fossil fuels is now the “most significant threat to children's health”<sup>4</sup>

The first teaching of the Buddha was the Four Noble Truths. How can we form a Noble response to climate change?

Supported by the teachings of the Buddha and our teachers through the ages we begin to inhabit the good qualities the Buddha described: generosity, ethics, wisdom, compassion and so on.

Supported by experts in climate change and environmental work, we can bring these qualities to actions that make a difference.

We can educate others, change our individual habits and take collective action.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/> 21/02/2019

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/global-warming-101> 21/02/2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change> 21/02/2019

<sup>4</sup> Perera F, Pollution from Fossil-Fuel Combustion is the Leading Environmental Threat to Global Pediatric Health and Equity: Solutions Exist, *Int J Environ Res Public Health*  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29295510>

This handbook aims to provide inspiration and support to help you take action in June 2019: Buddhist Action Month.

## A Buddhist Approach

What is a Buddhist approach to responding to the climate crisis?

In February 2019 members of different Buddhist groups came together at an NBO facilitated event in London. Shared values that emerged from conversations at that event include:

- Compassion for self, others and planet, love of humanity
- Having responsibility for our actions and their consequences
- Truthfulness, non-greed and non-harmfulness
- Responsivity not reactivity
- Wanting to hold space for reflection rather than rushing in
- Becoming aware of our underlying motives to act
- Aiming to avoid polarisation: the middle way

### ***Notes on polarisation***

Polarisation is not just two strongly held different but opposing views, but a phenomenon where each view is dangerous to the other in some way. For example climate change activists might be frightened of being silenced by consumerist voices, and consumerist voices find climate change activists dangerous as they can undermine growth.

Polarised positions can produce strong feelings as the fear is one of survival, “Will my beliefs and even my identity manage to exist in the face of opposition?”

Polarisation in groups is more likely to produce strong feelings when our inner polarisations are not resolved. It is likely that we all have some greed in us, as well as caring for the living planet. When that greed is unacknowledged in our own psyche, we are more likely to be triggered into defensiveness by greed in others. The same is true in reverse. If someone’s care about the planet is in their own shadow, when we occupy that position strongly it can be harder for them to find it in themselves.

Therefore it’s important to keep self-examination as part of one’s own practice, asking, “Where is my greed, hate and delusion?”

If we can find compassion for our own negative states, we can find compassion for the negative states that others fall into: contrition softens the heart.

## Some more about Buddhist Action Month

June is Buddhist Action Month: BAM!

BAM is a contemporary Buddhist festival initiated by the Network of Buddhist Organisations (NBO) in 2012 to inspire and support social change and care for the environment. **BAM encourages Buddhists of all traditions to take their practice more explicitly into the world as a united force for good, exemplifying compassion, ethics, emotional positivity, creativity and wisdom, for the benefit of all beings.** Being limited to June, BAM is an opportunity to adjust a habit or to initiate an ethical ideal that remains an idea. It's also the season to be out in the world, connecting with the natural environment and with other beings.

As a grassroots project that **explores the challenges of ethical living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**, BAM encourages small changes and celebrates our aspirations. With faith in impermanence and process, even the smallest lifestyle adjustments are a great way to test out karma, and to generate awareness, energy and purpose.

First initiated in the UK by the NBO, after five years Buddhist Action Month was being celebrated beyond Britain, with actions and activities happening across Europe and in some places in Australia and North America. Not surprisingly, social media has been a useful tool facilitating this increased participation. **While face-to-face contact is optimal for this project, and promotion through physical posters and word-of-mouth, social media extends our reach and help us make connections in the wider world.** Some of us might choose to sign off from social media for the month of June, to simplify our lives and reduce the input we take in. On the other hand, some of us might choose to use social media for the month of June as an exercise in mind training, and with an emphasis on establishing mastery and awareness.

Whatever joy there is in the world,  
All comes from desiring others to be happy  
And whatever suffering there is in the world,  
All comes from desiring myself alone to be happy.  
But what need is there to say much more?  
Santideva, Bodhicaryavatara, Ch. 8, 129-130

### Who's involved: cross-traditional and inclusive

Buddhist Action Month is inclusive, and invites practicing Buddhists to get involved, as well as those who do not consider themselves Buddhist but who are receptive and sympathetic to the Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha. BAM therefore encourages anyone to get involved who is interested in Buddhism, in ecological or social justice, or in the possibility that meaningful change will be through spiritual means.

## Who are the Network of Buddhist Organisations UK (NBO)

The Network of Buddhist Organisations UK (NBO) was founded in 1993 to:

- a) promote fellowship and dialogue between Buddhist organisations.
- b) facilitate co-operation in matters of common interest.
- c) work in harmony with other Buddhist and like-minded organisations (e.g., the European Buddhist Union and Inter Faith Network for the UK.)

The NBO is a registered charity, entirely dependent on the generosity and activities of its volunteers. Our members are volunteers inspired by their own traditions and forms of practice. As such, the NBO does not promote, validate or endorse any Buddhist tradition, but aims to work for the good of Buddhism in Britain, for the good of society. As the founder of Buddhist Action Month, the NBO invites all its members to get involved, including Buddhists with no affiliations and individuals belonging to its member organisations, which include:

FPMT UK	London Shambhala Centre
SGI UK	Sangha House
Triratna Buddhist Order & Community	La Verita Studios Ltd
Order of Buddhist Contemplatives	Buddhist Group of Kendal
Western Chan Fellowship	Wild Goose Zen Sangha
Amida Trust	IPBS UK (Fo Guan Shan)
Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds	Stonewater Zen Sangha
Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Group	The Shrimila Trust (Awakened Heart)
Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society	Zenways
	Open Heart
	Satipanya Buddhist Trust

The BAM committee comprises individuals from several traditions, including Triratna, SGI-UK and Western Chan Fellowship. If you are interested in maintaining Buddhist Action Month as an annual tradition, then please get in touch and consider getting involved with the BAM committee. Just email [chair@nbo.org.uk](mailto:chair@nbo.org.uk) with 'Buddhist Action Month' in the Subject.

# What Can I Do?

## Individual actions

Personal action can make a difference. As well as bringing our own lives more in line with our ideals, and the direct effect that has on the world, we also act as an example and a beacon to others. Below there is a list of personal actions that you might want to consider during Buddhist Action Month. You can think of these as an inspiration and a guide, and as an additional precept that you take during June.

## Group actions

Taking action as a group can have a more powerful effect on the world. The benefits to the world are greater, as more of us engage in reducing our carbon footprint, or rewilding spaces, for example. When we stand as a group we are a brighter light for others as well.

Group actions might also include making changes at your local Buddhist centre, temple or group. How do your actions as a community affect climate change?

## Joining with other groups

2019 has seen the flourishing of XR: Extinction Rebellion, and the global movement that has sprung up around the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. Joining with groups that already have energy for taking action is a great way to become socially and environmentally engaged. There are also existing faith based climate action and socially engaged groups.

## Adjust your lifestyle

Tick the boxes you'd like to try out for the month of June	
Well-being and reflection	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take time every day to "just sit" in nature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced mindfulness (e.g., mindful eating, tune in with your breath at every clock, bell or beep)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek opportunities to be generous, to others, to yourself, to future generations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make time for creativity: paint, draw, sing, write poems
<input type="checkbox"/>	Team up with friends to take on a BAM activity or project together
<input type="checkbox"/>	Connect with the BAM community on social media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meditate more, chant more, dedicate more time and space to your practice
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust the settings of your phone or how you use your screens to allow more space into your daily life

	Take time out to reflect on the world you wish to inhabit, and the world you wish to leave as a legacy
	Learn a verse by heart, recite it to birds and trees
<b>Waste</b>	
	Compost kitchen scraps and organics
	Refuse plastic bags or wrappings offered by shop keepers, consider shopping at places that are not plastic intensive
	Bring shopping bags from home
	Set up an efficient and easy recycling system at home
	Organise a litter pick in your local park
	Try making your own toothpaste or deodorant
<b>Transport</b>	
	Use car less, consider alternatives for short trips (less than 5 km)
	Check your tyres are properly inflated.
	Plan your schedule to walk, cycle, use public transport, or carpool.
<b>Energy</b>	
	Install insulating products (walls, ceiling, floors, water heater blanket)
	Adjust drapes and shades: install thermally lined curtains or roman blinds OR install pelmets OR create a good seal with curtains (length, distance from frame)
	Block air draughts
	Insulate around plumbing pipes, electrical cables, or any other holes or leaks using caulk or spray foam
	Install weather stripping/ draught stopping around windows and doors.
	Install energy efficient lighting
	Heed appliance best practices
	Initiate a method to avoid overfilling the kettle.
	Use a clothesline instead of a dryer
	Adjust hot water temperature

Water	
	Install rain tanks
	Install tap aerators
	Install gizmos/ flush limiters/ flow restrictors
	Install low flow showerhead
	Avoid using the hot water tap unless you need enough water to merit firing up the boiler
	Check for leaks/ check meter
	Reduce shower time to 2 songs, turn off tap while brushing teeth

### ***Become an Ethical Consumer***



Living ethically in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is complex and very challenging, but there are tools and resources that can help us make informed and effective choices. In the UK, **Ethical Consumer Magazine** is an independent, not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder co-operative whose mission is to make global businesses more sustainable through consumer pressure. Founded in Manchester in 1989, Ethical Consumer helps consumers to shop ethically, campaigners to challenge corporate power, and businesses to improve their supply chain.

In support of Buddhist Action Month 2019, Ethical Consumer Magazine is offering a free copy of the magazine, as well as a special discounted subscription of 14 months for the price of 12. On top of that, BAM participants are welcome to share our subscription with our spiritual communities, meaning not only the magazine but also the website. In that case, choose a Username and Password that are straightforward, and make sure that nobody changes those details.

→ <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buddhist-action-month>

Ethical Consumer has developed an easy-to-use ethical rating system based on detailed research of over 40,000 companies, brands and products. The ratings are updated daily and in real time from a Corporate Critic database, which is a result of over 20 years of primary and secondary research and systematic organisation and ratings. Some of this information is free to access, while the full set of tools is available for a small yearly subscription, which in turn helps fund the work.

### Divest your money

Want to do something effective but don't know where to start? One of the most tangible and straightforward things each of us can do is to **financially withdraw our support from anti-social businesses**. This is known as divestment.



Image credit: 350Maine.org

The historical precedent in divestment is the campaign that helped end the apartheid system in South Africa. Currently, the two most successful global divestment campaigns are the **Carbon Divestment Movement** ("Go Fossil Free"), which is tackling climate change, and the **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement**, which focuses on the human rights issues in Palestine/ Israel.

**Divesting is a perfect BAM precept.** Changing one's bank or funds may be annoying, but it's not impossible. In addition to your personal accounts, why not tell others what you are doing and encourage them to do the same. Become a divestment champion for the month of June!

Divesting involves changing banks, pension funds or shares to those that do not engage in anti-social business. In the case of carbon divestment, this also means changing your electricity supplier to one that offers 100% green energy. By the end of 2016, more than \$5 trillion worth of investment funds worldwide had divested from coal, oil and gas, and roughly half of that had occurred in 2016 alone. This implies a sea change that should fill us with optimism!

Carbon divestment is effective in three ways. The text that follows has been adapted from Go Fossil Free (<https://gofossilfree.org/not-a-penny-more>).

#### 1) **Divest** from fossil fuel companies.

Divestment holds the fossil fuel industry responsible for its culpability in the climate crisis. By shifting public support and our money away from the fossil fuel industry, we can break the



hold that they have on our economy and our governments, while making way for a just transition to renewable energy.

**2) Defund** new fossil fuel projects.

Financing any new fossil fuel project, anywhere, is unacceptable due to the dangers fossil fuels pose to society, ecosystems, and the planet. Local campaigns are pushing their cities and towns to stop using the banks backing fossil fuel development. It's time for banks to stop the lines of credit and project-level loans to fossil fuel infrastructure like new pipelines or fracking drill rigs.

**3) Desponsor** museums and cultural organisations.

We can shift public support away from the fossil fuel industry by pressuring our public institutions to break the sponsorship ties they have with many fossil fuel companies.



Music action (Oct 5th, 2017) 'Drop Shell sponsorship' Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Image courtesy Kate Honey and Kate Ponchel.

“Grace happens when we act with others on behalf of our world.”

Joanna Macy

## Group BAM activities: organising for your spiritual community

Following are some tips and suggestions for organising on behalf of, or for, your spiritual community.

### *Organising for your sangha*

Working with others on a BAM event or action is a great opportunity to make friends, build sangha, and do something meaningful. Depending on your outlook, it can also be a tangible way of working towards your personal Pureland, developing your role towards the Bodhisattva Ideal, or other.

The best approach for organising and running a BAM event for your community or sangha is to **do something you are personally interested in**, and to establish a small group of people who are also interested and committed. That means you and your team will have a meaningful day, whether anyone else comes along or not.

### *Timing and logistics*

Since June is a busy time of the year, the sooner your event is advertised, the better. If you belong to a Buddhist Centre that produces brochures to publicise its program, make sure you are in touch with the Centre team about your ideas for Buddhist Action Month well in advance. Time-wise, ideally we'd start in January to brainstorm what we wish to do, who will do what, and what dates work. Then start coordinating dates with the Centre by February, or March at the latest. Below is a rough chronology based on my own experience organising BAM events at Sheffield Buddhist Centre, which is a big centre with a busy calendar.

Within your spiritual community:		Timing
	Brainstorming ideas, dates, etc.	January
	Contact Centre team about ideas, dates, etc.	February
	Provide Centre with blurb for web calendar and brochure	March- April
	Create a poster for notice board	
	Post event on social media	mid-April
	Mount poster/ notice board	May, June
	Announce upcoming events at group gatherings	May, June
Tell the BAM community about it		Timing
	BAM Facebook group	May, June
	Twitter: #BuddhistActionMonth	June

### *Promoting your BAM action or event*

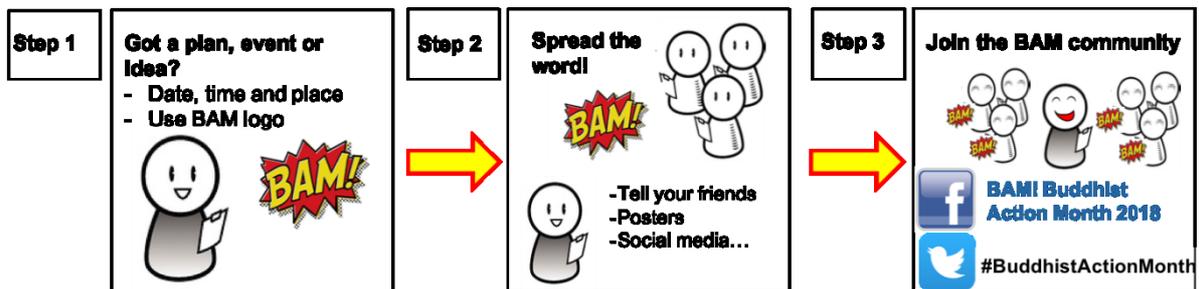
Word-of-mouth is the finest form of promotion, so make this a number one priority in the time leading up to your event. **Announcements at gatherings are invaluable**, as questions can be answered on the spot. If you can't make them yourself, ask others to help you with announcements, and with spreading the word in general. Posters are also an important form of promotion. Be sure to use the BAM logo (on the BAM Resources page of the NBO

website), and to include all the vital information: date, time, place, what to expect, what to wear, what to bring, etc. If your event is open to participants from outside your spiritual community, make this clear and hang the poster in cafés or locations where it will be seen.

Social media is an excellent tool for connecting with others, particularly on projects in which participants are scattered around the world. **Let’s use it for what it is worth, while infusing it with Dharma and positivity!** Social media can bring people together, for real, while also building the sense of being part of a supportive network, one that is bigger than “me” or even “us”.

The BAM Facebook page (**BAM! Buddhist Action Month 2019**) is a central hub hosted by the NBO. Use it to showcase your event (possibly attracting participants from your area), and for sharing your BAM precepts and your experiences.

Twitter is effective for compiling similar events and projects according to the hashtag with which they are ascribed. So, if BAM Tweeters all use the hashtag **#BuddhistActionMonth** for our events, impressions, experiences and anything else associated with BAM, Twitter this will automatically collate these together. As suggested in the Introduction to the theme for BAM 2018, let’s use **#myBAMdream2018** to share any real-world examples we that exemplify aspects of the kind of world we want the future to be like.



## UN Sustainable Development Goals

On 1 January 2016, the world officially began implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a transformative plan of action that is defined by **17 Sustainable Development Goals**. The agenda is a road map for people and the planet to ensure sustainable social and economic progress world-wide. It seeks not only to eradicate extreme poverty, but also to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - in a comprehensive global vision.

As individuals and in groups, we can get involved in this great UN project. In the spirit of Buddhist Action Month, consider taking a single or some points that are relevant and bring this global project to life. Check out the Lazy Person’s Guide to Saving the World: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction>



We can refer to the SDGs when we do something, embody a BAM precept that aligns with any of the SDG goals. This can be illustrated using Twitter: if I were to switch my energy provider, I might Tweet something like this

 **#BuddhistActionMonth** I've switched to @ecotricity and am helping to increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix @GlobalGoalsUN

## Suggestions for BAM Activities

Personal BAM precepts, At Home
Create more space to 'just sit' in nature, to meditation, prayer, mantra, chanting, ritual or puja
Adjust the settings of your phone or how you use your screens, to allow more space into your daily life
Use a garden composter or a vermicomposter to divert organic waste from landfill
If you have a garden, grow some food, learn about permaculture, create habitat for pollinators, birds, hedgehogs, etc.
Seek opportunities to be generous, to others, to yourself, to future generations
Mindful water consumption: initiate a method to avoid over-filling the kettle; avoid using hot water if you don't need it; reduce shower to two songs; Install gizmos/ flush limiters/ flow restrictors; Check for leaks/ check meter
Take time out to reflect on the world you wish to inhabit, and the world you wish to leave as a legacy
Travel with lower impact: use the car less and make sure the tyres are properly inflated; cycle or walk more; use public transport; consider car sharing
Adjust your diet: try veganism (at least 1 day/ week) , reduce plastic consumption by re-using bags, making your own toothpaste and deodorant.
Connect with the BAM community (in person, on social media)
Measure your carbon footprint and implement methods for reducing it
Install energy efficient lighting; Adjust hot water temperature; Heed appliance best practices; Block air draughts; Insulate around plumbing pipes, electrical cables, or any other holes or leaks using caulk or spray foam;
Adjust drapes and shades: install thermally lined curtains or roman blinds OR install pelmets OR create a good seal with curtains (length, distance from frame)
Use a clothesline instead of a dryer
Improve your recycling system (even if it means taking items to a recycling point, which your Council does not collect)
Switch your energy supply to a 100% renewable energy provider
Divest your money and savings and pension fund ( <a href="https://gofossilfree.org">https://gofossilfree.org</a> )
Learn a verse by heart, recite it to birds and trees
Go on a 'plastic diet'
For your local community, in your local community

Organise a litter-pick (with spiritual friends, neighbours, other faith groups, local community centre)
Run a cooking demonstration (e.g., healthy vegan, foraging, or using local produce or leftovers)
Run a planting day in your area: native, seasonal, pollinator-friendly plants
Guerilla gardening to make your area friendlier, tastier, and more beautiful: edible hedges, herbs, wildflower meadows
Promote the reduction of food waste, of buying local produce, of shopping organically
Organise a canal or beach clean-up with your local agencies
Join in/ plan a local "Great Get Together" (June 22-24, 2018), as part of 'More in Common' ( <a href="http://www.greatgettogether.org/partners/faith-groups/">http://www.greatgettogether.org/partners/faith-groups/</a> )
Join your local Transition Town movement, maybe with some spiritual friends ( <a href="https://transitionnetwork.org">https://transitionnetwork.org</a> )
Get informed about fracking, consider supporting your community
Get more involved with a local co-operative
Subscribe to Ethical Consumer Magazine or The Positive News

At your Buddhist centre (if relevant)
Follow the Quakers' lead: commit to becoming a 'low-carbon sustainable centre'
Form an 'eco-dharma team' to make your Centre into a Sustainable Buddhist Centre
Switch your energy supply to a 100% renewable energy provider (e.g., Ecotricity, Good Energy)
Get your Centre to 'go vegan' for the month of June
Help your Centre to become a Fair Trade temple
Measure the carbon footprint of your Buddhist Centre (as a starting point to reducing it)
Produce a Centre newsletter devoted to issues around climate change / peak oil and how to engage with this.
Organise documentary film nights at your Centre and engage debate
Organise an Earth Hour: for an hour on a particular day, get together with others and be together without using any energy, either at your Buddhist Centre or at sangha homes

Research and host exercises from Joanna Macy's 'Work that Reconnects'
Promote cycling/ public transport/car sharing to the centre
Set up a food bank collection and delivery for a local charity
Set up a Carbon Pledge Scheme, so people pledge x amount of ways they will reduce their energy usage

#### Resources for Guidance and Inspiration

Community action can received funding from the Big Lottery (grants up to £10k) ( <a href="http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk">www.biglotteryfund.org.uk</a> )
Carbon Calculator ( <a href="http://www.carbon-calculator.org.uk">http://www.carbon-calculator.org.uk</a> )
Carbon Trust tools and resources ( <a href="https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/">https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/</a> )
Sustainable Buddhist Centre certificate ( <a href="https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/sustainable_buddhist_centre_guide_1.pdf">https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/sustainable_buddhist_centre_guide_1.pdf</a> )
Ethical consumer magazine and website ( <a href="http://www.ethicalconsumer.org">www.ethicalconsumer.org</a> )
Freecycle ( <a href="http://www.freecycle.org">www.freecycle.org</a> )
Friends of the Earth ( <a href="http://www.foe.co.uk">www.foe.co.uk</a> )
Groundwork (try your local branch) ( <a href="http://www.groundwork.org.uk">www.groundwork.org.uk</a> )
Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords
Incredible Edible ( <a href="https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk">https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk</a> )
Love food hate waste ( <a href="https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com">https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com</a> )
New Economics Foundation ( <a href="http://www.neweconomics.org">http://www.neweconomics.org</a> )
The Quakers in Britain ( <a href="http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability">http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability</a> )
Third Sector Organisations, like local charities and voluntary groups (web search 'environment' or 'litter picking' and your town/ city)
Woodland conservation (some funding available) ( <a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</a> )
Go Fossil Free ( <a href="https://gofossilfree.org">https://gofossilfree.org</a> )
Guerilla Gardening ( <a href="http://guerrillagardening.org">http://guerrillagardening.org</a> )
One Earth Sangha ( <a href="https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/resources-on-dharma-and-climate">https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/resources-on-dharma-and-climate</a> )
UN SDGs Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World ( <a href="https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/">https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/</a> )

## Appendix 1: The Language of Climate Change

How to talk about the living world and the threats it faces

A Twitter thread by @Georgemonbiot

<https://twitter.com/GeorgeMonbiot/status/1103600562447282176>

In this thread, [@cartoonralph](#) and I discuss new ways of talking about the living world and the threats it faces, so that our language stimulates people's imagination and encourages them to act. We share our thinking so far, and ask for your opinions and ideas. \*Please RT\* 1/30

Many terms in popular use are scientifically precise, but cold and alienating. We're aware that some of the alternatives we suggest are less precise (for example Wildlife, as opposed to Biodiversity) but we believe they are more likely to engage people. 2/30

Let's start with the coldest and emptiest word of all: the Environment. Have you ever seen the Environment? The word creates no pictures in the mind. So what we suggest instead is: The Living Planet The Natural World Our Shared Home. Your thoughts? 3/30

Environmental may still be a useful adjective, however. For example: the Environmental Crisis, or Environmental Breakdown. Or can you think of a better one? 4/30

The next term we want to replace is Climate Change. It is muted and neutral, creating no sense of the existential crisis we face. We propose two terms with slightly different meanings: Climate Chaos, that leads to Climate Breakdown. 5/30

Climate Chaos is what we're already experiencing: heatwaves, droughts, floods, intensified storms etc Climate Breakdown is what will happen if we don't take immediate and decisive action. 6/30

Global Warming sounds, well, warm and comforting. Who doesn't like warm weather? It invites that old denialist talking point: "Brrr, where's that global warming they promised?" We suggest Global Heating or Global Over-Heating. 7/30

Biodiversity might be precise, but how many people know what it means? Like Environment, it's a term that makes it hard to see what we're talking about. This is why we prefer Wildlife. 8/30

When we talk about fish numbers, we tend to use the term Fish Stocks. This suggests that fish exist to serve us: their meaning and purpose is as food for humans. We suggest Wild Fish Populations. 9/30

Natural Resources has a similar connotation, suggesting human ownership. We propose Living Systems and, when talking about non-living materials, The Earth's Fabric. 10/30

Worse still is Natural Capital: a term that commodifies and reduces the living world to a subset of the human economy. How about just Nature? Or the Living Planet, Natural World etc - see above 11/30

Ecosystem Services is also anthropocentric and reductive, suggesting that the Living Planet is part of the service economy. We propose Life Support Systems. This reminds us that we depend on a healthy natural world, without suggesting that it's all about us. 12/30

Perhaps even worse in terms of its anthropocentric and instrumental focus is Natural Infrastructure, used to describe features like rivers and hills. [@GreenAllianceUK](#) and [@nationaltrust](#), among others, have been using this framing. Just stop! [https://www.green-alliance.org.uk/new\\_routes\\_to\\_decarbonise\\_land\\_use.php...](https://www.green-alliance.org.uk/new_routes_to_decarbonise_land_use.php...) 13/30

Nature Reserve is another cold and distancing term. Reserve means "a lack of warmth or openness in manner or expression." We haven't settled on a term yet, but our suggestions include Wildlife Haven Wildlife Sanctuary Wildlife Refuge Special Wildlife Area Over to you. 14/30

Sites of Special Scientific Interest is a carcrash of a term, peculiar to the UK. It's bureaucratic and distancing, and suggests these treasured places are interesting only to scientists. Perhaps something like Protected Wildlife Haven? That's not quite right. Ideas please. 15/30

We feel that terms like Habitat Destruction, Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss remove the agency behind these processes, making it sound almost as if they are happening by themselves. We suggest replacing them with Ecocide or Annihilation. 16/30

Given that almost all living systems are now in a state of extreme depletion, we no longer believe that Conservation or Preservation are appropriate terms. We would replace them with Restoration. Conservation groups should rename themselves Restoration groups. 17/30

We often talk about our desire for Clean Rivers or Clean Seas, which makes us sound like an advertisement for toilet cleaner. To keep the focus on the life we want them to contain, we suggest Thriving Rivers and Thriving Seas. 18/30

When environmental policies or targets are out of line with the science, NGOs tend to say they are Disappointed, Concerned or that the policies are Unambitious. We urge them to use more accurate language, such as Unrealistic, Inadequate and Not Based on Reality. 19/30

Fossil Fuels is, from the environmental point of view, quite a useful term, as it suggests redundancy. But we feel that Dirty Fuels is a stronger description. 20/30

However, it might be interesting to think of ways to extend the notion of redundancy. For example, by calling the old, dirty processes we want to replace the Fossil Economy. 21/30

People who deny Climate Chaos call themselves Climate Sceptics. But scepticism implies open-mindedness. To dismiss the massive weight of accumulated evidence, your mind has to be locked and bolted. 22/30

We differ slightly on this one. George prefers Climate Science Denier. Ralph feels this invokes the fake climate debate. He prefers Climate Breakdown Denier or, as their goal is to prevent action, Climate Breakdown Cheerleader or Climate Breaker. Your thoughts? 23/30

We also like the term [@AOC](#) uses to describe people who don't deny climate science, but impede action to prevent Climate Breakdown: Climate Delayers. 24/30

Groups like [@iealondon](#) and [@ASI](#) call themselves Free Market Think Tanks. But they refuse to reveal who funds them, while arguing in favour of fossil fuel companies, tobacco firms and other highly destructive industries. We prefer Covertly-Funded Lobby Groups. 25/30

One of the most misused phrases in the English language is Sustainable Development. "Sustainable" is now tacked onto almost everything, however destructive it may be. We haven't yet thought of a good substitute, that can't be so easily abused. Ideas please. 26/30

Sometimes we find ourselves talking about "Saving the Planet". This invites a set of common responses: "the planet doesn't need saving", "who are you to set yourself up as a saviour?" etc. We prefer Defending Our Shared Home / Living Systems / Life Support Systems 27/30

We also propose that we should stop using wildlife as metaphors for unpleasant people and bad behaviour. Wolves, weasels, hyaenas, sharks and other species get a bad rap as a result. These metaphors are likely to reinforce people's hostility towards them. 28/30

When governments or powerful interests want to reduce a wild animal's population, they say Culling. Whether the policy makes sense or not, we believe it should not be disguised with this euphemism. Killing is more honest, and reminds people of the weight of the decision. 29/30

This is just a start. As well as commenting on the suggestions we've made, and proposing better alternatives if you don't like them, we invite you to name other inadequate terms and possible substitutes. Please RT this thread, so we get plenty of feedback. Thank you 30/30

## Appendix 2: Letter to the Earth

This was written by Kaspalita, as part of the *Letters to the Earth* project

Dear people of Earth: human-animals

I am writing in the wake of Cyclone Idai. Just one of many recent extreme weather events driven by the climate crisis we are now facing. As the sea temperatures rise and drive more energy into tropical storms we'll probably see more events like this.

This is a human disaster, and a disaster for non-human animals as eco-systems and habitats are disturbed and destroyed.

I'm one of the lucky ones. When it gets cold later I'll turn on my gas powered central heating, and maybe I'll go for a drive in my car. Last year I flew to the other side of the world.

It's difficult to digest the hard truths of the climate crisis in a way that leads to making changes in our lives for the benefit of the whole world.

In the past year Australia and the United States have been ravaged by forest fires. The homes of humans and animals were destroyed, lives were lost and carbon that had been locked away for hundreds of years was released into the atmosphere.

How can we witness this, and still allow the wheel of greed to keep turning?

As a psychotherapist I listen to the deep fears of others. As a Buddhist practitioner I have come to know my own deep fears.

Where does my own greed come from? From a fear of not having enough. When I examine this fear more deeply it exposes a woundedness that comes from loss and disconnection. The desire for stuff is trying to salve a wound but it is the wrong medicine. We need some resources to sustain us; food shelter and so on. Those things keep us alive. But what our spirits long for is connection. Our souls are fed by love.

If you look into your own hearts and investigate your own greed my hunch is that you will find the same kind of woundedness. Of course the specifics will be different, we have grown up in different families, at different times, and in different cultures, but the basic wound is the same.

When I look into my own heart and see my own greed, and my own woundedness, it softens my judgment of other people's greed, and in that softening is the possibility of genuine connection.

If it is fear that keeps us from making changes that will heal the living world, then love and connection offer a way forward.



The more deeply I feel loved, the more connection I experience, the less fear I have and the less powerful my greed is. The more deeply I feel loved the easier the process of change becomes. I can begin to let go of using and having so much stuff.

What can support us to love and to feel loved?

Connecting to the other than human world: sitting in an outside place and noticing how it is already true that I am connected. We are all part of the same great web of life. We are all made of the same stuff.

Connecting to people with the same good intentions: for me that's my spiritual community. You will find your own tribe, somewhere.

Setting an intention to love and to be open to love where it appears: each of us will foster connections in our own ways.

Continuing to explore the depths of my own heart: the more deeply I come to know my own nature — the strange mix of compassion and greed, of caring and despair — the more space there is for love.

There is strength in anger, and for many of us anger is hard to receive and we end up more entrenched in our habits when we're being told off, rather than freed from them. You might think that in softening the heart your energy will dissipate, but my experience is the opposite — as I come to know myself and others more deeply, to love and feel loved — a sustainable energy is released which allows me to take steps towards changing my life and communicating with clarity and compassion.

So love is the answer. That and planting more trees.

With love,

Kaspa Thompson

Psychotherapist and Buddhist teacher

## Appendix 3 : Resources for our times

### Good reads

Yogaratna, 2018. '**Breaking the silence, changing the story: Buddhism versus neoliberalism**'  
Self-published. Currently available for free download  
(<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/buddhist-action-month-2017/breaking-silence-changing-story-buddhism-versus-neoliberalism>)

Raworth, K. 2018. '**Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economist**'. Cornerstone.

Monbiot, G. 2017. '**Out of the Wreckage: a new politics for an age of crisis**'. Verso.

Evans, A. 2016. '**Eden 2.0: Climate Change and the Search for a 21st Century Myth**'  
Cameron.

Vaddhaka. 2015. '**The Buddha on Wall Street**'. Windhorse publications.

Marshall, G. 2014. '**Don't even think about it: why our brains are wired to ignore climate change**'. Bloomsbury.

Graeber, D. 2013. '**The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement**'. Spiegel & Grau.

Hanh, Thich Nhat. 2013. '**Love Letter to the Earth**'. Parallax Press.

Doppelt, Bob. 2012 'From Me to We: The Five Transformational Commitments Required to Rescue the Planet, Your Organization, and Your Life'. Greenleaf Publishing.

Rust, MJ & Totton, N. (eds) 2012 '**Vital Signs**' Karnac Books

Macy, J. & Johnstone, C. 2012. '**Active hope**' New World Library

Singer, P. 2010. '**The Life you can save: how to play your part in ending world poverty**'.  
Picador.

Macy, J. 2010. 'Pass It on: Five Stories That Can Change the World'. Parallax Press.

Jackson, T. 2009. '**Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a finite Planet**' Routledge.

Kessel, B. 2009. '**It's not about the money**'. HarperCollins publishers.

Loy, D. 2008. '**Money, sex, war, karma: Notes for a Buddhist revolution**'. Wisdom publications.

Kaza, S. 2008. '**Mindfully Green**' Shambhala.

Macy, J. 2007. 'The Work that Reconnects'

Plotkin, B. 2007. 'Nature and the Human Soul: Cultivating Wholeness and Community in a Fragmented World'. New World Library.

Klein, N. 2006. '**The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism**'. Metropolitan Books.

Eisenberg, E. 2000 '**Ecology of Eden**' Picador.

Abram, D. 1997. '**The Spell of the Sensuous**' Vintage.

Schumacher, EF. 1993. '**Small is Beautiful**'. Vintage publishing.

Macy, J. 1991. '**World as Lover, World as Self**'. Parallax Press.

Macy, J. 1991. 'Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems'. State University of New York Press.

Hunt Badiner, A. (ed)1990 '**Dharma Gaia**' Parallax Press.

### Fims and documentaries

'The Story of Stuff' (series of films starting in 2007 to present)

'Before the Flood'(2017)

'Chasing Coral' (2017)

'Awake, a dream from Standing Rock' (2017)

'A Plastic Ocean' (2016)

'Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things' (2016)

'How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change' (2016)

'The Bentley Effect' (2016)

'HyperNormalisation' (2016)

'WeTheUncivilised' (2016)

'The Age of Stupid' (2015)

'This Changes Everything' (2015)

'Demain (Tomorrow)' (2015)

'Planetary' (2015)

'Merchants of Doubt' (2014)

'Joanna Macy and the Great Turning' (2014)

'Cowspiracy' (2014)

'Do the math' (2013)

'Bidder 70' (2013)

'Blackfish' (2013)

'Speed - In search of lost time' (2012)

'Chasing Ice' (2012)

'Samsara' (2012)

'Gasland' (2011)

'An Ecology of Mind' (2010)

'Animate Earth' (2009)  
'The Age of Stupid' (2009)  
'The End of the Line' (2009)  
'The Messenger' (2009)  
'No Impact Man' (2009)  
'Home' (2009)  
'Avatar' (2009)  
'Who killed the electric car' (2006)  
'An Inconvenient Truth' (2006)  
'Sharkwater' (2006)  
'Power Trip' (2003)  
'Winged Migration' (2001)  
'Anima mundi' (1992)  
'Koyaanisqatsi' (1982)

## Talks

Christine's 'Introducing BAM 2018' (<https://youtu.be/iQuiyIS6oF8>)

Vaddhaka on 'Going Beyond Capitalism (2014) (<http://vimeo.com/96757414>)

Joanna Macy on 'Befriending our despair' (2006) (<https://vimeo.com/74502395>)

Sangharakshita on Buddhism, Peace and Nuclear War (1984)  
(<https://www.freebuddhistaudio.com/audio/details?num=162>)

## Appendix 4: Other Groups

### *Dharma Action Network for Climate Engagement (DANCE)*

DANCE share the same interests and goals of BAM. There has been friendly cross-pollination in the form of collaborations (e.g., Green Earth Awakening) and friendship. DANCE was established at Gaia House as a self-organising network for individuals interested in engaging with issues around climate change. Connections between BAM and DANCE could be advanced, at little expense, which would be beneficial to both. Check the DANCE website to find out about groups or actions near you. <http://www.thedancewebsite.org>

### *Faith for the Climate Network*

Faith for the Climate is an interfaith network of 130 faith-based organisations and individuals working on climate change. Find them on twitter: @fftcnetwork

## Appendix 5: Verses for inspiration

### The Karaniya Mettā sutta

Mettā (maitri: Sanskrit) means loving-kindness or friendliness, and Karaṇīyam means "(This is what) should be done". The sutta describes a complete path that begins with Right Vision, progresses through ethics and, with the cultivation of metta, arrives at Insight. This discourse, or sutta in Pali (sutra: Sanskrit) summarises the Buddha's instructions on the cultivation of universal loving-kindness. It is said to have been taught by the Buddha to a group of monks troubled by the animosity of tree-devas, spirits who dwelled in the trees of the grove they had chosen for their retreat. Through recitation and meditation, and perhaps supported by the befriended devas, the monks eventually gained Enlightenment.

### *The Buddha's words on loving-kindness*

This is to be done by one skilled in aims  
who wants to break through to the state of peace:  
Be capable, upright, & straightforward,  
easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited,  
content & easy to support,  
with few duties, living lightly,  
with peaceful faculties, masterful,  
modest, & no greed for supporters.

Do not do the slightest thing that the wise would later censure.

Think: Happy, at rest,  
may all beings be happy at heart.

Whatever beings there may be, without exception:

weak or strong,  
long, large,  
middling, short,  
subtle, blatant,  
seen & unseen,  
near & far,  
born & seeking birth:

May all beings be happy at heart.

Let no one deceive another  
or despise anyone anywhere,  
or through anger or irritation  
wish for another to suffer.

As a mother would risk her life  
to protect her child, her only child,  
even so should one cultivate a limitless heart  
with regard to all beings.  
With good will for the entire cosmos,  
cultivate a limitless heart:  
Above, below, & all around,  
unobstructed, without enmity or hate.

Whether standing, walking,  
sitting, or lying down,  
as long as one is alert,  
one should be resolved on this mindfulness.  
This is called a sublime abiding  
here & now.

Not taken with views,  
but virtuous & consummate in vision,  
having subdued desire for sensual pleasures,  
one never again  
will lie in the womb.

"Karaniya Metta Sutta: Good Will" (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.than.html>

## “Active Hope”, by Joanna Macy

Active Hope is not wishful thinking.  
Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued . . . . by some saviour.  
Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act.  
We belong to this world.  
The web of life is calling us forth at this time.  
We’ve come a long way and are here to play our part.  
With Active Hope we realize that there are adventures in store,  
strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.  
Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths  
in ourselves and in others;  
a readiness to discover the reasons for hope  
and the occasions for love.  
A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts,  
our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose,  
our own authority, our love for life,  
the liveliness of our curiosity,  
the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence,  
the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.  
None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk.”

## “This is Your Age”, a Poem for Generation Hope

On March 17th 2018, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) hosted a meeting across three venues in the UK to unite 6000 young people in a shared commitment for peace. SGI is a socially engaged movement based on Nichiren, in which Soka means the 'creation of value' and Gakkai means 'society'. SGI teacher, Daisaku Ikeda prepared a poem for that meeting.

### **This is your age**

The future rests in your hands  
I hope you will make the twenty-first century truly wonderful  
Please make it a century in which the life of each individual is cherished and respected to the utmost.  
A century without discrimination, without bullying, war or murder.  
A century in which no child cries with hunger, in which no mothers or children take their own lives in despair.  
A century without environmental destruction.



A century free from academic elitism, greed and materialism.

A century in which human rights are upheld as the most precious treasure.

A century of true democracy, in which the people hold corrupt political leaders to account. A century in which the people exercise sound judgement and pay no heed to the lies of the mass media.

I hope you will make it a century in which each of your precious dreams come true and your unique individuality blossoms to the fullest.

To realise these goals, it is vital that you achieve victory, that each of you grow into people of philosophy and compassion, into people who possess both real ability and the sincerity to understand the hearts of others.

Your victory will be the victory of the twenty-first century.

You are our only hope.

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### **Letter of encouragement from Nichiren**

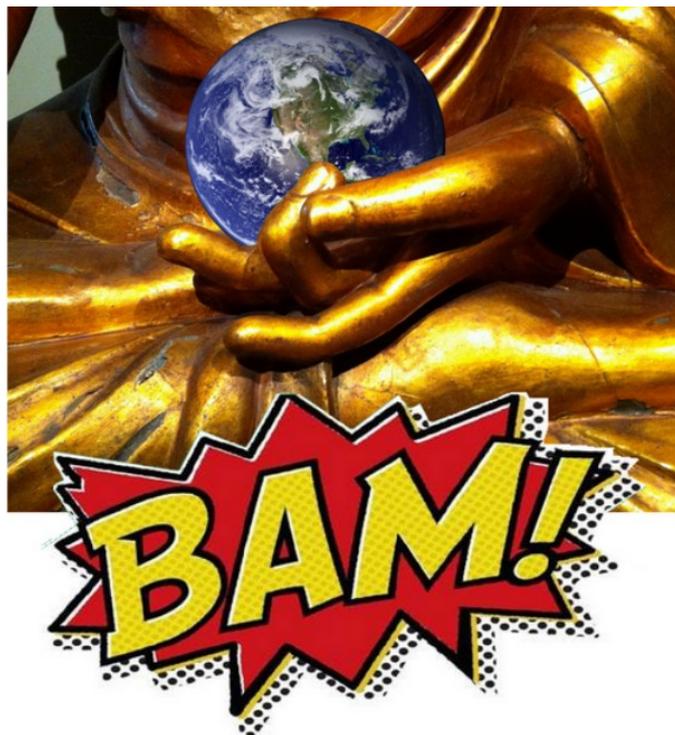
Live so that all the people of Kamakura will say in your praise that Nakatsukasa Saburō Saemon-no-jō is diligent in the service of his lord, in the service of Buddhism, and in his concern for other people. More valuable than treasures in a storehouse are the treasures of the body, and the treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all. From the time you read this letter on, strive to accumulate the treasures of the heart! (13<sup>th</sup> century Japan)

## “Service to humanity is another name for Zen training”

In his 2013 book, **‘Not Everything is Impermanent’** (Woodsmoke Press), the Head of Amida Shu, Dharmavidya David Brazier, wrote:

The spiritual apostle goes forth for the benefit of the many. This does not mean that such people are opposed to the practise of a mystical discipline. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was taught by my Zen Master that “Service to humanity is another name for Zen training”. For “Zen” one can read “mysticism”, the deeper experiences of the spirit that arise through the discipline of religious prayer, reflection and meditation.

A hallmark of spirituality, as I understand it, is the bringing together of two dimensions of religious life: the socially engaged and the direct seeing into the heart of reality. Tearing these two apart does profound damage to the human spirit. Nonetheless it is common and many people fail to see how the two come together as one. (p. 193)



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