

Dhammapītika, chair at Metta Vihara, Retreat centre, opened the Buddhist Action Month in the Netherlands with a joined meeting at the Buddhist Centre at Arnhem on June 8th, 2022.

Subject was: 'What is going on? Determining your CO2 footprint and making a concrete intention'.

We started the evening with a 'grounding exercise' in giving care and awareness to what the climate change is doing with us, with our emotions, our mental health. Such an impact! We introduced ourselves using the metaphor of sharing some of the climate dilemma's we deal with. This could be such as: "Something that is breaking my heart, something I am really struggling with, what I am finding hard about living in this time of crisis..."

Music of Amanda Corman (Earth Rise) was listened to.

Dhammapītika brought some of the 'naked facts' about the nine planetary boundaries, of which temperature rise and climate change is one. Using the statistics of the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii we know the global carbon dioxide levels in the global atmosphere surpassed 415 parts. Carbon dioxide is a gas to be thankful to, without carbon dioxide the earth would be extremely cold. This changed after the industrial revolution when mankind discovered fossil energy to use. We all know about the high rise of carbon dioxide and its dramatic effects.

Using IPCC statistics and the book of Mark Lynas (Six degrees) we heard about possible scenarios and the consequences of fossil burning and temperature rise on earth, with explanation of the double thermal inertia process.

Most of us know very little about carbon dioxide: what is our own footprint? Using a carbon dioxide quiz we learned about our own carbon dioxide production, with food, travel, housing, clothing.

How to relate to this? – actively and with hope. See chaos without going crazy. What is hope, what is optimism? What can I do? Contributing, amid great changes taking place, the great turning.

We need to:

1. Acknowledge the truth of where we are (Gratitude & Facts, including acknowledging pain)
2. Identify new positive perspectives
3. Taking active steps in that direction

How do we relate to the deep ecology, how to enrich the connection with web of life? How to redefine our definition of self, in terms of interbeing? And secondly, how do we relate to deep time, to our ancestors, what was before us, and to our future generations? Can we be aware of evolutionary gifts from our ancestors and experience feelings of gratitude in the process? Landscape of sun, wind, rain, growth: the deep time is within us.

And: we also wish people in the future to enjoy blue sky, fertile earth, clean sea. Also, for future generations we experience feelings of connection and love. As a support for developing imagination, new seeing with a hoped future and new perspectives, with a basis of metta and resilience, Dhammapītika asked us and invited us respectfully to travel forward in our mind, many years, say 200 years, to the year 2222, the 7th generation, "life has continued, humans made it". And from there we were asked to write a letter as the future person, 'what do I want to say to myself in 2022'. The aim: to give the 7th future generation a voice, bringing them nearer to us in a way they help being guides with their perspective.

We all were motivated to at least one action, in the next week, in this month