**“Saving the Earth”**

**6 Week Meditation & Buddhism Course –**

**Teaching notes for people *familiar* with the 2 meditations**

**WEEK 1: Introductions**

(Preparation needed for the class: a copy of the book ‘Saving the Earth’ for everyone on the course; get familiar with the Three Minute Breathing Space -3MBS; pens & quality of life surveys for everyone (this could be optional); & get everyone’s email address.)

0.00-0.05 Start with 3 Minute Breathing Space (3MBS) & ask them why they are here.

0.05-0.25 i) In pairs to share names & why they are here (about 5 mins.)

ii) Then in the whole class to do this again

0.25-0.45 Introduce myself/ this course

- Course structure

- Homework (HW)

- 2 email reminders a week

- Quality of life surveys (optional)

0.45-1.25 Check postures even of experienced meditators & practice the

Mindfulness of Breathing (MOB)

1.25-1.50 Hand out surveys to fill in & tea break

1.50.-2.25 Practice Mettabhavna

2.25-2.30 Give homework:

1) To meditate everyday everyday for at least 30 minutes, alternating 'The Mindfulness of Breathing' one day with the Mettabhavana the next meditation. If you wish you can miss one or two days of meditation.

2) To do one 'Three Minute Breathing Space' everyday. You can do this in any comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing. You can do this in many, many places for example in your bedroom; in front of the computer; on the bus; on the toilet; on a park bench; in a church; on the ferry etc. etc.

3) To read the attached notes on 'The Three Minute Breathing Space.'

4) To read chapters 1 & 2 (about 24 pages) and to come to the next class with one or two real questions or issues you'd like us to explore. (Hand out copies of the book.)

5) This weeks' 'daily life practice' is this: **the traffic lights practice!** When we are waiting at the traffic lights (when walking or driving) I'd like us to become aware of our feet and then become aware of our breathing. And, if it's possible, to cross the road only once the lights have turned green, this will probably mean waiting 15 seconds longer than the people around you!

6) Optional homework: To read Tejopala’s excellent article ‘Responding to climate change as a Bodhisattva activity – part 1 ’ (About 6,000 words)

**WEEK 2: ‘The path starts at your feet’ & ‘The awakening**

**heart and mind’**

0.00-0.05 3MBS

0.05-0.20 Home Practice Review (HPR)

i) Pairs 🡪0.12

ii) Whole class 🡪 0.20

0.20-0.30 Q & A on meditation

0.30-1.00 Practise Mettabhavana, include animals & the environment in the last stage

1.00-1.15 Tea Break

1.15-2.20 Collect questions & issues from the text (Ch. 1 ‘The path starts at your feet’ & 2 ‘The awakening heart and mind’); study/discuss:

Some possible questions/issues to discuss:

1. Pg.7 “It…seems to me that a love for the environment is a natural and even indispensable part of being a Buddhist.” What do you think or feel about this? Do you agree? (Akuppa in October 2016 wrote this: “I’d probably phrase this differently now, as ‘the environment’ increasingly seems an alienating and anodyne word. I think I’d prefer ‘the natural world’ or, even better, something like ‘oceans and forests and skies’.”

2. Pg.14 “Networks of actions and their consequences spread out across the whole world.” Can you think of any, small or large, positive examples of this?

3. Pg.15 Do you have any experiences of ‘the bystander effect’?

4. Pg.23 What role, if any, does boredom play in your life? How do, or might you, respond to it?

5. Pg.29 Since taking up meditation or Buddhism do you think you are happier? If so, in what ways?

2.20-2.25 Silence & report out very briefly on one thing you’ve learnt/something

that made an impact on you

2.25-2.30 Give HW:

1) To meditate everyday everyday for at least 30 minutes, alternating 'The Mindfulness of Breathing' one day with the Mettabhavana the next meditation. If you wish you can miss one or two days of meditation.

2) To do one 'Three Minute Breathing Space' everyday. You can do this in any comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing. You can do this in many, many places for example in your bedroom; in front of the computer; on the bus; on the toilet; on a park bench; in a church; on the ferry etc. etc.

3) To read chapter 3 'Only Connect!' (about 15 pages) and to come to the next class with one or two real questions or issues you'd like us to explore.

4) The 'daily life practice' is this: to **do your best to consume as little paper, plastic and glass as possible!** There are many, many ways we could do this. For example,

\* by carrying a re-useable bag with us

\* by cooking more at home

\* by using a plastic or glass water bottle over and over again

\* by refusing paper tissues, packaging & bags as much as possible

\* by buying fruit and vegetables that are not in packaging

\* by only printing things if it's really necessary

Here's that quote I read at the end of the class:

*"As an interesting exercise, carry a rubbish bag over the course of a single day and collect all the materials you throw away. Most people would be surprised to find out how much waste they generate. Rubbish is a feature of all modern societies, but the most extreme case is the United States - the classic ‘disposable society’. In the United States, an average person tosses out close to five pounds of paper, metal, plastic and other disposable materials daily (about 50 tons over a lifetime). For that country as a whole, this amounts to about 1 billion pounds of solid waste produced each and every day."*

*pg 876 "SOCIOLOGY: a global introduction"*

*John J Macionis & Ken Plummer; 5th edition published 2012*

5) This is optional: but I'd like to encourage you all to watch the TED talk:

"The why and how of effective altruism" by Peter Singer (17 minutes):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Diuv3XZQXyc

**WEEK 3: ‘Only connect!**

(Preparation needed for the class: a small bowl of fruit; a packet of biscuits etc.)

0.00-0.05 3MBS

0.05-0.20 Home Practice Review (HPR)

i) Pairs 🡪 0.12

ii) Whole class 🡪 0.20

0.20-0.30 Q & A on meditation

0.30-1.00 Practise the Mindfulness of Breathing

1.00-1.15 Tea Break

1.15-2.20 Collect questions & issues from the text (Ch.3: ‘Only connect!’); study/discuss:

- ‘We depend on others in countless ways even for the most basic necessities of life.’ pg. 37

**Group Reflection**: Place in the middle of the room a small bowl of fruit (or a packet of biscuits for example) & for 5-10 minutes get the whole class to reflect out loud on some of the many, many conditions the bowl of fruit depended upon for being there. This excercise might well have quite a big effect on many of the course participants.

Some possible questions/issues to discuss:

1. Pg 36. ‘When you are brought up within a particular culture, you unconsciously imbibe it's values and habits. We can come to consider the strangest things quite normal.’ Can you think of any examples of this?

2. Pg 36. Have you had any experiences in your life of a strong sense of community and co-operation?

3. Pg 39 Do you have any examples of working with somebody who was so friendly that they had a definite uplifting and harmonising effect on their colleagues?

4. Pg 42. Who is one person who has had a very positive influence on your life? What was it about them that affected you?

2.20-2.25 Silence & report out very briefly on one thing you’ve learnt/something

that made an impact on you

2.25-2.30 Give HW:

1) To meditate everyday everyday for at least 30 minutes, alternating 'The Mindfulness of Breathing' one day with the Mettabhavana the next meditation. If you wish you can miss one or two days of meditation.

2) To do one 'Three Minute Breathing Space' everyday. You can do this in any comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing. You can do this in many, many places for example in your bedroom; in front of the computer; on the bus; on the toilet; on a park bench; in a church; on the ferry etc. etc.

3) To read chapter 4 'Love, love, love' (about 26 pages) and to come to the next class with one or two real questions or issues you'd like us to explore.

4) There are two 'daily life practices' :

i) **If you are a meat eater to do your best to be vegetarian for one week; if you are vegetarian to do your best to be vegan for one week; and if you are vegan to do your best to only eat & buy things produced only within your own country for one week! And…**

ii) **When you are waiting for something or somebody (for example, at the bus stop or for a friend to turn up) to use that time to look around you for anything that's beautiful. It could be many, many things: a mosque, a church, a plant, a tree, a colour, a quality of lighting, someone's face, a dog, it really could be many, many different things.**

5) To read this artcle, "Saving the Planet, One Meal at a Time" by Chris Hedges (2014):

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/saving\_the\_planet\_one\_meal\_at\_a\_time\_20141109

& to look at this website: http://www.angelamorelli.com/water/

6) This is optional breath awareness in daily life: if you want to, from time to time during the day, you can take your attention to your natural breath. It could be very short, for just 1 one-and-out breath but it could be a little longer like 5-10 seconds. You could do this once a day or if you like 5-6 times a day or more, it's fully up to you.

**WEEK 4: “Love, love, love”**

0.00-0.05 3MBS

0.05-0.20 Home Practice Review (HPR)

i) Pairs 🡪 0.12

ii) Whole class 🡪 0.20

0.20-0.30 Q & A on meditation

0.30-1.00 Mettabhavana

1.00-1.15 Tea Break

1.15-2.20 Collect questions & issues from the text (Ch.4: ‘Love, Love, Love’) ; study/discuss:

Some possible questions/issues to discuss:

1. Pg. 48 "The problem of following rules is that you can forget the original motivation for doing so and it becomes a very dry experience." Do you have any examples of this from your own life and practice?

2. Pg 50 "...being as non-violent *as you can*, trying our *best* in each circumstance to see the *best* way forward." (Vajracaksu's italics) Emphasise this as a very good description of Buddhist ethics in actual practice.

3. Pg 53 "You can love nature, and nature can love you back." What does it mean for nature to love you back?

4. Pg 55 "It is relatively easy to be moved to action when we know the people concerned. But it is rather more difficult to feel the same motivation for those far away. Bring to mind, for example, the people who live next door to you. Now imagine that every time you use too much electricity, or book a flight, it floods their home and destroys their livelihood." Discuss

5. Pg 57 "Some people have embraced the idea of 'voluntary simplicity' and made radical changes to their lifestyles, working less and consuming less." Do you know any examples of this in your own social circles?

6. Pg 65 "Depending on the reason for the flight, we might feel that more good will come from our journey than the harm done in making it." Can you think of any examples where it might be more ethical to fly than not to fly?

2.20-2.25 Silence & report out very briefly on one thing you’ve learnt/something

that made an impact on you

2.25-2.30 Give HW:

1) To meditate everyday everyday for at least 30 minutes, alternating 'The Mindfulness of Breathing' one day with the Mettabhavana the next meditation. If you wish you can miss one or two days of meditation.

2) To do one 'Three Minute Breathing Space' everyday. You can do this in any comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing. You can do this in many, many places for example in your bedroom; in front of the computer; on the bus; on the toilet; on a park bench; in a church; on the ferry etc. etc.

3) To read chapters 5 ‘The two wings of a bird’ & 6 ‘The still point of the turning world’ (about 36 pages) and to come to the next class with one or two real questions or issues you'd like us to explore.

4) The 'daily life practices' are these:

**i) To donate 10% of your spending money in one month to an ecological foundation/trust/charity.**

For example

\* 350.org: www.350.org

\* Greenpeace

\* Friends of the Earth

\* ATMOSFAIR: https://www.atmosfair.de/en/kompensieren/wunschbetrag

By 10% of your spending money for one month, I mean the average money you earn/get in one month minus your rent, bills, food, transport costs etc. So if you are left with 2000TL in one month I'd like to encourage you to donate 200TL; if you are left with 150TL, to donate 15TL. If you don't want to do this please don't; and if you want to give to other projects/charities you can. And if you’d like to give more than 10% of course you can!

**ii) When we are walking I'd like us to make a special effort to notice the beautiful behaviour of other people. For example, a loving touch; an act of compassion; expressions of affection; generosity etc.**

5) This is optional homework: to practise what I can 'breath awareness in daily life.' If you want to, from time to time during the day to just briefly bring your attention to your natural breath, it could be as short as for one in- and-out breath but it could also be longer, say 10-15 seconds. You might do this this once a day or 5-10 times a day, or not at all. It's completely up to you.

**WEEK 5: ‘The two wings of a bird’ & ‘The still point of the**

**turning world’**

0.00-0.05 3MBS

0.05-0.20 Home Practice Review (HPR)

i) Pairs 🡪 0.12

ii) Whole class 🡪 0.20

0.20-0.30 Q & A on meditation

0.30-1.00 Mindfulness of Breathing

1.00-1.15 Tea Break

1.15-2.20 Collect questions & issues from the text (Ch.5 ‘The two wings of a bird’ & Ch.6 ‘The still point of a turning world’; study/discuss:

Some possible questions/issues to discuss:

1. Pg. 76 "Our silence can be an act of complicity in harm." Can you think of any examples of this?

2. Pg 78 What *does* make you come alive?

3. Pg.83 "It is very easy for our sense of self worth to get bound up with how successful we are, or how highly we are regarded. Buddhist practice... encourages us to develop a sense of self-appreciation that does not depend on external conditions or the opinion of others." Discuss.

4. Pg.86 Politicians "do tend to take notice of the size of their postbags and the people they meet face to face." Do you have any relevant stories in this regard?

5. Pg.95 "I've found that one of the main lessons I've had to learn is how to say 'no'" What are some skilful or sensitive ways of saying 'no'?

2.20-2.25 Silence & report out very briefly on one thing you’ve learnt/something

that made an impact on you

2.25-2.30 Give HW:

1) THIS HAS CHANGED A BIT. To meditate everyday for at least **40 minutes**, alternating 'The Mindfulness of Breathing' one day with the Mettabhavana the next meditation. If you wish you can miss one or two days of meditation.

2) To do one 'Three Minute Breathing Space' everyday. You can do this in any comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing. You can do this in many, many places for example in your bedroom; in front of the computer; on the bus; on the toilet; on a park bench; in a church; on the ferry etc. etc.

3) To read chapters 7, 8 (‘Beauty will save the world’ & ‘Dance, dance, dance’ & the Epilogue) (about 23 pages) and to come to the next class with one or two real questions or issues you'd like us to explore.

4) The 'daily life practice' is this**: I'd like us to consciously encourage trust in our various relationships & in society.** I'm mainly thinking of little acts but it could be many different things: baby sitting for a friend; sharing some food with your neighbours; being honest about your intentions; mindfully not making promises but if you do making sure that you keep them; as much as possible taking every opportunity to mindfully thank people; asking lost looking tourists if they'd like some help etc. etc.

5) This is optional homework: to practise what I can 'breath awareness in daily life.' If you want to, from time to time during the day to just briefly bring your attention to your natural breath, it could be as short as for one in- and-out breath but it could also be longer, say 10-15 seconds. You might do this this once a day or 5-10 times a day, or not at all. It's completely up to you.

6) This is also optional but I would like to encourage you all to watch this video clip of Stephen Covey who coined the phrase ‘circle of influence’:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-slG\_vgDo0 (14 minutes)

**Week 6: What have I learnt?**

(Preparation needed for the class: pens, writing paper & envelopes for everybody; and have the poem “Autobiography in 5 short chapters” with you. )

0.00-0.30 Course Mettabhavana

0.30-1.00 Fill in quality of life survey (compare with 1st survey in week 1) & tea break

1.00-1.40 (This is much shorter than usual) Collect questions & issues from the text (Ch.7 ‘Beauty will save the world’; Ch.8 ‘Dance, dance, dance’ & ‘Epilogue’) study/discuss:

Some possible questions/issues to discuss:

1. Pg 113 "We all have some experience of natural beauty - perhaps a passing sense of being stirred by a particular sight, or an unexpected peace and oneness with nature while out walking in the countryside. Sometimes these experiences can have a deeper feel to them, as if they concern the meaning and purpose of life itself, as if they are showing us something of how to live our lives." Have you had any experiences like this?

2. Pg 122 "Thinking about the inevitability of the end of life on earth - whether in a hundred years or in a hundred million years - prompts us to ask the same question all the more deeply." What does in your actual experience give your life (some) meaning and purpose?

3. Pg 122 What do you find beautiful in yourself?

4. Pg 123 "...no act of kindness, great or small, is ever wasted. Compassion is in itself, and for itself, beautiful." Discuss.

5. Pg. 128 Do you have any examples of your actions positively affecting others in ways that you couldn't have predicted or that surprised you?

1.40-1.50 Reflect on whole course: remind people very briefly of what we’ve covered on the whole course eg. Slowly read the chapter titles from the book & remind people of all the D.L.P homeworks for the whole course and give them 2-3 minutes to reflect on what they’ve learnt during the past 6 weeks, what do they want to remember from the course in 4- 5 weeks time?

1.50-2.00 Write themselves a letter about what they have learnt. Stress, this is just for them, you will not read it! (You will post it to them in 4-5 weeks time!)

2.00-2.20 If it’s not too personal/sensitive for everyone to report out/share some of their learnings & insights.

2.20-2.25 What next?

i) Think about setting up some supportive conditions eg. Setting up a

shrine space; buying mats and cushions etc. İf you haven’t already done so.

ii) Keep meditating, be realistic about expectations

iii) Aim to do 1 3MBS everyday

iv) Come on other courses

2.25-2.30 3MBS & then read poem “Autobiography in 5 short chapters”