

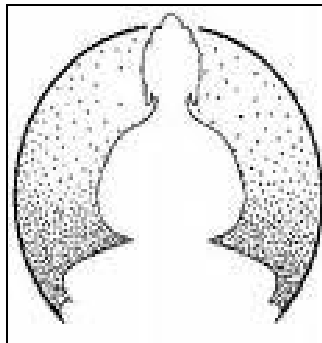


Buddhist Views - Oneness of Humanity, Peace and the Environment

We are the same as plants, as trees, as other people, as the rain that falls. We consist of that which is around us; we are the same as everything. - Buddha

According to the Vietnamese monk
Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh:

"Buddhists believe that the reality of the interconnectedness of human beings, society and Nature will reveal itself more and more to us as we gradually recover — as we gradually cease to be possessed by anxiety, fear, and the dispersion of the mind. Among the three — human beings, society, and Nature — it is us who begin to effect change. But in order to effect change we must recover ourselves; one must be whole. Since this requires the kind of environment favorable to one's healing, one must seek the kind of lifestyle that is free from the destruction of one's humanness. Efforts to change the environment and to change oneself are both necessary. But we know how difficult it is to change the environment if individuals themselves are not in a state of equilibrium."



In the words of **Maha Ghosananda:**

"When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us. The trees are like our mother and father, they feed us, nourish us, and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk. They give us food and satisfy many of our needs. So we spread the Dharma (truth) of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the Dharma of the Buddha. When we accept that we are part of a great human family — that every being has the nature of Buddha — then we will sit, talk, make peace. I pray that this realization will spread throughout our troubled world and bring humankind and the earth to its fullest flowering. I pray that all of us will realize peace in this lifetime and save all beings from suffering."

Today our world stands at the brink of an **environmental crisis**. The habits of humankind have been causing cumulative global environmental effects that are beginning to degrade the well-being of humanity. The dangerous depletion of the Earth's protective ozone layer and global warming caused by the burning of fossil fuels are just two publicized examples. In addition, some 50,000 species are becoming extinct each year, many from causes directly linked to human influence. According to the principle of oneness of life and the environment, a fouled environment is the product of polluted hearts and minds. It in turn functions to pollute the bodies, hearts and minds of those living within it. The ongoing destruction of nature, in this light, is clearly a sign of people's ignorance of the true nature of life."

-'Living Buddhism', By **Jeff Kriger (SGI-USA)**

www.sgi-usa.org/buddhism/buddhismtoday/bc004.htm