Spiritual Connections to Nature and to Climate Change Action

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Abstract—The Anthropocene world has caused mass extinctions of plant and animal species, polluted the oceans, and altered the atmosphere, among other lasting impacts. Human belief, spirituality, and practice mark the earth. One can hardly think of a natural system that has not been considerably altered, for better or worse, by human culture and spirituality. Buddhism teaches that spiritual connections to nature and climate change action are inextricably linked and organically related.
The Buddhist canonical texts describe humanity's relationship with the natural world under five laws (*niyāma*) which correspond to biosphere, biodiversity, will of mind, actions, and natural laws (*dhamma*). The Buddhist spirituality on *anatta* or "non-self" makes it clear that one cannot define "self" without "surrounding", namely ecology. Buddhist spirituality teaches us to look at the planet Earth as the interrelatedness of everything. Everything relies on everything else in the cosmos whether a star, a cloud, a flower, a tree, or you and me. Buddhist spirituality suggests human survival is only possible through sustaining the surrounding, the ecology. If we wish for a sustainable biosphere, we must live by the dharmic principle of self, sustenance, and surroundings with mindfulness.

Introduction

Spiritual connections to nature can play an important role in motivating people to act on climate change. Many spiritual traditions view the natural world as sacred and see human beings as stewards of the earth. By connecting with nature on a spiritual level, individuals may be more likely to develop a deep sense of responsibility for protecting the planet and taking action to address climate change.

The global crisis of climate change and environmental destruction are modern problems. These were unknown at the time of the Buddha; hence it can hardly be expected that the early discourses provide precise advice on how to handle these global crises. Nevertheless, several early discourses provide helpful perspectives and can be relied on in facing the current challenge. According to the Buddhist scholar C. A. F. Rhys Davids,[1] Buddhism explains the natural world as a "cosmodicy" and "anthropodicy" in contrast to the theodicy, or theistic position. What happens in this planet is a natural law that has nothing to do with God. It is partly the consequence of karma or human action,

[1] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism: A Study of the Buddhist Norm* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912).

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in other words "anthropodicy." The great wheel of cosmic order goes on without maker or without known beginning but continues to exist by virtue of a concatenation of cause and effect. The Buddhist way of looking at global crisis from a perspective of cosmodicy and anthropodicy emphasizes that global problems are partly created by human society.

Therefore, spiritual practices such as mindfulness meditation can help individuals cultivate a greater sense of inner peace and clarity, which may in turn help them make more informed decisions and take more effective action on climate change. Particularly, mindfulness practice cultivates a principle of living in balance between human greed and limited resources.

There are also many spiritual practices that focus specifically on honoring and connecting the natural world, such as nature-based rituals, eco-meditation, tree ordination, and earth-based spirituality. These practices can help individuals feel a deeper sense of connection to the natural world and may inspire them to take action to protect it.

Spiritual communities can be important allies in the fight against climate change. Many faith-based organizations are already working to address climate change, and these communities can provide support, guidance, and inspiration to individuals who are looking to act on this issue. In Thailand, Buddhist monasteries are closely related with protection of forest and nature. By working together, spiritual communities can help to create a more sustainable and just world for all.

A Buddhist perspective on the natural world

Religion distinguishes the human species from all others, just as the human presence on earth distinguishes the spiritual connections of our planet from other places in the known universe. Religious life and the environment, biosphere and biodiversity are inextricably linked in defining who we are and how we live on this planet earth. Human belief and practice mark the earth as we understood from the term "Anthropocene." One can hardly think of a bioethical system that has not been considerably altered, for better or worse, by human culture. Human belief and knowledge about bioethics are the distinctive contribution of our species to the environment, biosphere, and biodiversity itself.

Buddhism explains that everything on this planet consists of the four primary elements: earth, fire, water, and air. Observing the presence of all four of these elements within us, or even just one of them, can be an important way of recognizing how our individual composition is the same as the composition of the rest of the universe. This may be an intellectual understanding at first, but eventually, with practice, it can become a feeling—one of being exactly the same as everything around us.

In the Buddhist Pali Canon, there is a record indicating that in pre-Buddhist society, when people were threatened with danger in the name of religion, they worshipped forests, mountains, parks, gardens, and trees believing that they would be liberated from all ills of life (Dhammapada: 188).[2] In other words, religions, and spiritualities in olden days were directly connected with nature. Nature was considered as a source of life.

[2] Valerie J. Roebuck, *The Dhammapada* (London: The Penguin Group, 2010), p. 128.

Figure 1. Ordaining trees (picture from: https://www.seub.or.th/bloging/into-the-wild/blessing-trees/)

Moreover, nature was a source of religion and spirituality. Those ancient religions may not be related to the modern concept of protecting nature and climate change action but the outcome of taking refuge in nature had a direct outcome in protecting nature and it leads to climate change action. This concept, of course, is not new. Native Americans have been nature-centric in their religious expression for centuries. Animists in Asian countries consider nature as divine and sacred. Many cultures including Buddhism believe in forest angels and trees as a dwelling place of tree angels. Similarly, there are spirits and local deities in nature everywhere. There are many stories in Buddhism about spirits in the forest. Some stories are about Buddhist monastics being disturbed by spirits in the forest and Buddha teaching those monastics to spread loving-kindness to those spirits—in other words to respect and appreciate nature and live in harmony with nature. Accordingly, there are many rituals connecting people with nature throughout the year. In Thailand, there is a Buddhist ceremony for ordaining trees as a measure for protecting them (Figure 1). People believe that if a tree is wrapped by a saffron robe, the tree is possessed by spirits, and they become scared of cutting down those trees. In the modern context, many misunderstand those rituals as superstition without knowing the true wisdom behind them.

With globalization, many cultures are influenced by world religions and modern development but indigenous belief and wisdom are still practiced in parallel. Contemporary individuals are likely to see nature as an instrument of self-expression, especially since the natural environment is no longer viewed as a threat to survival. Furthermore, people often operate within a moral schema that imagines the environment as sacred, either because it is a divine creation or because it is inherently holy. In Southeast Asia, people believe the forest is a perfect dwelling places for spirits, ghosts and even

Figure 2. The Buddha and nature; illustration in a paper folding book, Part 4 of Mālālaṅkāra vatthu, Burma, 1875. © British Library Board, Or 14405, f38r

deities and angels. In other words, forest and nature are sources of both good and bad; it depends on how each individual treats forest and nature. Forest is the source of life. On the other hand, Buddhism regards nature as the best place for religious practice. Most of the important events in the Buddha's life took place in nature (Figurs 2, 3). Buddha himself was born in the Lumbini garden, got awakened under a Bodhi tree in the park, gave his first sermon in the deer park, spent a total of forty-five years teaching amidst nature and finally died in a grove. Therefore, Buddhism makes a connection with nature either as divine/sacred or as a source for enlightenment.

In Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhism, the term for mountain is *giri*. Surprisingly, *giri* etymologically means "a place that discharges water and medicine." From this linguistic perspective, Buddhism makes a very deep spiritual connection with mountains. The word itself shows how quintessential the mountain is for human sustenance.

Similarly, in Pali, forest is called *vana*, which etymologically means enjoy, associate, or shout. Thus a forest is a place where all beings enjoy happiness, a place where all beings associate, a place where all beings shout freely and a dwelling place for one who is seeking isolation.

In the Thai language, *vana* or forest may have some negative meaning as a dense place, a place of danger from wild animals and a place of fear. In Pali, it has wider meaning: *vana* as wood, a place of pleasure and sport; *vana* as jungle, a place of danger and frightfulness; *vana* as forest, a resort for ascetics, noted for its loneliness.

With these Buddhist vocabularies, it shows that Buddhism has its deep spiritual connections with nature. Each etymological meaning shows how all sentient beings

Figure 3. The Buddha and nature; Buddha receives the understanding from King Bhimisara; *phrabot*, Thailand, Rattanakosin era; from James Bogle, *Thai and Southeast Asian Painting, 18th through 20th centuries* (Schiffer, 2011)

have very close connections with nature. Peter Harvey characterizes Buddhism's ideals of relationship with the natural world as embodying "harmonious cooperation."[3]

Through his ethnographic studies, Chayan Vaddhanaphuti[4] explores the Thai perspective on climate action both from vernacular and indigenous beliefs. In the vernacular Thai language, there are several interchangeable compound words used to talk about the weather: *ākāśa* (air), *din fa ākāśa* (earth-sky-air), *lom fa ākāśa* (wind-sky-air) and *fa fon* or *fon fa* (air-rain/rain-air). On the other hand, the term *bhumi ākāśa* (geo-air) is rather a technical term, and is used to translate the Western term "climate." Interestingly, to maintain and convey an idea of global-scale temperature increase, the Thai media often use the term *lok ron* or global warming, because the Thai translation of climate change is very wordy.

Chayan further analyzes that in northern Thailand, the irregularities of their weather are deemed to be "good" or "bad" according to three related sets of religious belief systems. As the weather carries moral significance, there is always an agent that can be held responsible for the positive or negative changes in the weather. In the animist belief system, the reason for the changing weather is that the deities who reside in the sky are either blessing or punishing people. People have to carry out the Cat Parade or worship

[3] P. Harvey, "Buddhist Attitudes to and Treatment of Non-Human Nature," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 3, 1 (1998), 35–50; https://doi.org/10.1558/ecotheology.v3i1.35

[4] Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, "Governing climate knowledge: what can Thailand Climate Change Master Plan and climate project managers learn from lay northern Thai villagers?" in *Climate Change Governance in Asia* edited by Kuei-Tien Chou, Koichi Hasegawa, Dowan Kun, and Shu-Fen Kao (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis, 2020).

at spirit houses to appease the deities. In the Buddhist belief system, adverse changes in the weather are something to be accepted as natural, rather than to be fixed. People have to learn to be stoic and to cope through livelihood strategies such as crop diversification. In the third belief system, the deeper moral perspective, the explanation for the changing weather is that it is caused by the erosion of cultural traditions and morality. Only by re-living the golden past, caring for nature like the ancestors used to, will enable the "good" weather to return.

Buddhism and the environment

Buddhism teaches that all beings are part of a larger web of interdependence, and that our actions have a ripple effect on the world around us. This includes our relationship with the natural world, and our impact on the climate. One of the key principles in Buddhism that relates to the environment is the concept of dependent origination. This teaches us that everything in the world is interconnected and that our actions have consequences that affect others including nature and climate. For example, if we pollute the environment, we are not only harming ourselves but also other living beings and the planet as a whole.

Another important principle in Buddhism is the concept of impermanence. This teaches us that everything in the world is constantly changing and in flux, including the natural environment. By recognizing the impermanence of the natural world, we can better appreciate its beauty and value, and take action to protect it for future generations.

Buddhism also emphasizes the importance of compassion and non-harm towards all living beings. This includes animals, plants, and the environment as a whole. The Buddha taught that all beings have the potential for enlightenment and that we should treat them with kindness and respect.

Monastic disciplines in Buddhism are clearly laid out for monks to be an active agent for protecting nature. The first lesson for every newly ordained Theravada Buddhist monk is to live by the four dependencies (*nissaya*). These four Buddhist bioethics are about the foundation of living a life of sufficiency in order to keep a balance between biosphere and biodiversity in this planet. The four foundations of monastic life are:

Living a livelihood of sufficiency (*pindiyalopabhojanam*)
Living by a principle of recycling (*pamsukulacivaram*)
Living in harmony with nature (*rukkhamulasensasanam*)
Living a life of self-sufficiency (*putimuttabhesajjam*)

Among Buddhist monks, the first foundation of monastic life is to live a life by sufficient livelihood. People these days live a life led by consumerism or even immoral consumerism. Immoral consumerism and excess consumption destroy the balance between "need" and "want." As Mahatma Gandhi said: "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." Therefore, the first monastic discipline laid out by the Buddha for his monks was encouraging them to live a life with

consciousness of truth of dependencies. Accordingly, one should live by the principle of sufficient livelihood. In other words, to consume mindfully.

The second foundation of monastic life is to live a life by the recycling principle. The planet is inundated with waste that humans created as a by-product of human consumption and technologies. Therefore, a sustainable life according to Buddhism is living a life with the principle of recycling (*pamsukulacivaram*). For example, a monk is supposed to wear robes made of rags collected from a dust-heap, preferably from cemeteries. This applies not only to robes but everything that we consume in our lives. In essence, the monastic life is designed around a circular economy.

The third foundation of monastic life is to live in harmony with nature. The Buddha spoke of the "foot of a tree" as the basic shelter for monastics. The first prototypes of Buddhist monasteries were forest and parks. Accordingly, it is a task of Buddhist monks to take care of their abodes, the forest and parks. Also, there are monastic codes that prevent monks from destroying vegetation. The common belief at the time of the Buddha was that plants (and even soil) were "one-faculties life." To destroy any kind of life is fully prohibited for a monastic who is called "a peaceful one" (*samana*). Therefore, destroying a living plant, such as felling a tree, uprooting a flower, picking fruit from a tree, or burning grass, is a Confession offense. It is an offense of wrongdoing (*dukkata*) to damage or destroy fertile seeds or pips, or viable seedlings. Buddhist monastics observe rules of not defecating, urinating, or spitting in water or on living crops. This is to protect water sources from being polluted. At the same time, the Buddha gave emphasis to planting new trees and protecting water sources as a means of making merit. Consequently, in Thailand, forest monks are well known as the best protectors of the forest.

The fourth foundation of monastic life is living a life of sufficiency. To lessen the damage created by humans on the planet, Buddhism encourages people to live by a principle of sufficiency. We can all take steps to reduce our carbon footprint and be more self-sufficient. For some, that might mean heading to the countryside to live off the land. For the rest of us, the reality might involve smaller, but no less important, lifestyle changes: cutting back on plastic or food waste, growing vegetables, preserving meat and fish, preparing jams and chutneys, baking sourdough bread, making your own plant-based milk, or keeping a chicken or two.

The Pali term *gharavāsa* simply means a householder. However, in Pali, *ghara* or house etymologically means a place where you indulge yourself with the five senses (eyes, nose, ear, tongue, and body). Therefore, a householder literally means a person who lives a life of indulgence in the five senses. In essence, a householder means a person who looks at the world from an "egocentric" perspective. Egocentrism leads to exploitation of resources, of nature. It downgrades the importance of other people and of nature. This simply means that humans prioritize humans and tend to exploit nature for humans' sake. This is the main reason why people need to develop consciousness so that people can have a mutual respect between humanity and nature.

In Buddhist practice, when someone is transformed from being a householder to become a "homeless" or monastic person, he must rethink about himself in relation to other humans, the environment, and nature. He should live in balance with humans

and nature. That is the exact meaning of being a "monastic" in a true Buddhist practice. Therefore, in Pali a monastic is called *samana* which means someone who is at peace with humans and nature.

These age-old Buddhist practices are directly related to what we now call bioethics, particularly about the nonhuman biological environment, although there was no such term as bioethics in the time of the Buddha.

Dependent origination means that everything is conditioned by everything else. A flower needs the conditions of sunlight, soil, and water to grow. All things arise dependent on conditions. They do not appear out of nowhere. This is common sense but if we follow this teaching all the way, the view becomes deeply profound and illuminates the importance of bioethics, biosphere, and biodiversity in the planet.

Knowledge of dependent origination is the bedrock of Buddhist wisdom. It enables all of the other teachings to have their effect. This means that humans depend on nature and nature depends on humans. Some may say that nature does not need humans! In that case, humans do not need humans either. Harming one part of this whole is the same as harming all of it. Therefore, if people learn to live simply and in harmony with the world, the whole environment will benefit. Thich Nhat Hanh coined the word "interbeing" meaning to inter-dependently co-exist. The concept of interbeing recognizes the dependence of any one person or thing on all other people and objects.

Environmental ethics is a branch of applied philosophy that studies the conceptual foundations of environmental values as well as more concrete issues surrounding societal attitudes, actions, and policies to protect and sustain biodiversity and ecological systems. There are many different environmental ethics, running the gamut from human-centered (or "anthropocentric") views embedded in traditional Western ethical thinking to more nature-centered (or "ecocentrism") perspectives. Ecocentrics argue for the promotion of nature's intrinsic value rather than its instrumental or use value to humans. For some ethicists and scientists, this attitude of respecting species and ecosystems for their own sakes is a consequence of embracing an ecological worldview; it flows out of an understanding of the structure and function of ecological and evolutionary systems and processes. This view is also shared by Buddhist bioethics.

Biosphere and biodiversity in Buddhism

There is an unique explanation in Buddhism about the nature of this world where Buddha uses similar modern terms like biosphere and biodiversity.

The Buddha says there are five laws at work in the cosmos that cause things to happen. These are called the *Five Niyāma* and they explain how matters are determined by nature. Present circumstances are the result of countless factors that are always in flux. There is no single cause that makes everything to be the way it is. In the canonical text, the Buddha uses the term *niyāma* in describing the inevitable work of dependent origination (Paccaya Sutta, S.II. 25)[5] or to describe the intrinsic nature of things. In

[5] *Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, vol. II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), p. 25.

another discourse Buddha uses it in the context of a "causal law of nature" (Uppadaya Sutta, A.I. 285).[6]

This Buddhist perspective sees that everything in this world functions under such an order. However, in later Buddhist commentaries[7] from the 5th to the 13th century CE, *niyāma* is categorized into five distinctive kinds. C. A. F. Rhys Davids was the first Western scholar to draw attention to the list of Five Niyāma in her 1912 book, *Buddhism.*[8] Her reason for mentioning it was to emphasize that we exist in a "moral universe" in which actions lead to just consequences according to a natural moral order, a situation she calls a "cosmodicy" in contrast with the Christian "theodicy".

The *Five Niyāma* or five laws which explain the Anthropocene and natural world are:

biosphere laws (*utu-niyāma*): laws concerning human beings' external environment, such as laws governing temperature, weather, climate and seasons; law of non-living matter;
biodiversity laws (*bīja-niyāma*): laws concerning reproduction, including heredity, laws of seeds or germs, plantation, vegetation;
psychic laws (*citta-niyāma*): laws concerning mental activities, will of mind;
karmic laws (*kamma-niyāma*): laws concerning intention and human behavior, such as the law of actions (kamma) and their results; and
natural laws (*dhamma-niyāma*): general laws of nature, especially those of cause and effect; laws concerning the interrelationship of all things.

This is how Buddhism describes the causes of the global problems. Many global crises are caused by living unethically in contravention of these five laws.

Buddhism and climate change

Climate change is a pressing global issue that has significant implications for both the environment and human well-being. Buddhism and its teachings have a strong connection to environmental ethics and sustainability, making it relevant to the issue of climate change. While Buddhism does not specifically address climate change as a modern phenomenon, its principles and teachings can offer valuable insights and guidance for addressing environmental challenges.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement within Buddhism to address the issue of climate change and to take action to protect the environment. Buddhists around the world are increasingly recognizing the urgent need to address the environmental crisis, and are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint, promote sustainable living practices, and advocate for policies that protect the natural world.

[6] *Anguttara-Nikāya*, vol. I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1989), p. 285.

[7] Buddhaghosa, *The Expositor (Atthasalini)*, Vol. II, tr. Maung Tin (London: The Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 360–362; see also in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī (Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā), DA.II.432.

[8] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 118–9.

Significantly, Buddhism teaches us to cultivate mindfulness, which can help us to become more aware of our impact on the environment. By becoming more mindful of our actions and their consequences, we can make more informed choices that are in line with our values and the greater good.

Based on biosphere laws, Buddhism sees that some climate changes arise naturally as all things are impermanent. These changes are beyond human reach. Humans must gradually evolve and adapt to the changes in nature. However, Buddhism also sees that many outcomes of climate change and natural disasters are man-made and these outcomes can be mitigated through global action.

A Buddhist declaration on Climate Change entitled "The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change"[9] was first developed in 2009 and updated in 2015 for presentation to the negotiators at the COP 21 climate summit in a ceremony of all faith-based petitions. In October of the same year, the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, issued the "Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders", calling on world leaders to reach "an ambitious and effective climate agreement" at the Paris Climate Change Conference. The statement urges humanity to act on the root causes of climate change, which is driven by fossil fuel use, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of awareness and lack of concern about the consequences of our actions. The statement is based on the understanding that all things in the universe are interconnected, and the consequences of our actions "are critical steps in reducing our environmental impact".[10]

The statement calls for phasing out fossil fuels, and moving toward 100 percent renewable and clean energy. It describes actions that individuals can take, including protecting forests, moving toward a plant-based diet, reducing consumption, recycling, switching to renewables, flying less and using public transport. One important concept in Buddhism that relates to climate change action is the idea of "sustainable action", meaning taking actions that are aligned with our values and with the greater good of all beings. By integrating Buddhist teachings and values with concrete actions of "sustainable action", individuals and communities can play an active role in mitigating climate change, fostering environmental sustainability, and promoting the well-being of all beings.

Buddhist spiritual connections to nature and to climate change action

Buddhist spirituality can provide valuable guidance and inspiration for spiritual connections to nature and climate change action. One example of this is the concept of the "Three Jewels", which are the Buddha, the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), and the Sangha (the community of Buddhist practitioners). In the context of environmental action, we can see the Buddha as a symbol of our inner nature, the Dharma as a guide to ethical living and the Sangha as a means of environmental stewardship.

There are many Buddhist monasteries (*wat*) in Thailand that are actively involved in

[9] https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/buddhist-declaration-on-climate-change/

[10] http://sdg.iisd.org/news/buddhist-leaders-call-to-scale-up-climate-finance/

Figure 4. Recycling at Wat Chak Daeng; (top) collectopn center; (middle) monks sorting plastic waste; (bottom) sewing a "nano-robe" (photos: top and bottom by Jarunee Khongsawasdi; middle from https://www.khaosodenglish.com/featured/2019/09/18/this-temple-recycles-plastic-bottles-into-monk-robes/)

Figure 5. Solar power at Wat Sisaengtham, Ubon Ratchathani; (top) the "solar monk" and solar panels; (bottom) teaching on energy (photos from https://infocenter.nationalhealth.or.th/node/27686)

zero waste projects. One of the successful models is at Wat Chak Daeng in Samut Prakan province (Figure 4), an eastern suburb of Bangkok. Wat Chak Daeng is considered a community learning center on waste management engaged in study and development of waste recycling processes for all types of waste, and in training on garbage segregation via community leaders to promote waste management behavior at the household level, and to raise awareness and participation among community dwellers regarding environmental issues and waste management. The temple has received cooperation from the private sector, resulting in behavioral change among Bang Kachao community dwellers who became interested in the segregation process. Food waste can be redeemed for consumer products at the temple's zero-waste station, and this waste is converted into organic compost for community use. Wat Chak Daeng also operates a project for recycling plastic bottles into monk's robes. Thes robes, made from a mixture of recycled plastic, cotton and zinc oxide nanoparticles, are called "nano-robes".

Another monastery active on projects related to climate change is Wat Sisaengtham in Khong Chiam District, Ubon Ratchathani province in northeast Thailand (Figure 5).[11] The abbot is popularly known as "the solar monk". The monastery started by founding Sisaengtham School, a private secondary school, which not only uses solar power but also includes teaching on alternative energy design, installation, and maintenance in the school curriculum. The school also has its own organic gardens where students learn to tend crops for their own consumption. Beyond promoting technological progress, academic improvement, and spiritual enlightenment for his students, the solar monk is also active in disseminating these ideas nationwide.

Wat Sisaengtham is now popular with installment of solar cell system in hospitals, schools, wats and public buildings. The project has extended to education on agronomy systems which leads this Buddhist temple to be an unique model of Buddhist action for climate change.

Another important Buddhist principle related to climate change is the idea of impermanence. This teaches us that everything in the world is constantly changing and in flux, including the natural environment. By recognizing the impermanence of the natural world, we can better appreciate its beauty and value, and take action to protect it for future generations.

Conclusion: ecosattva

Overall, Buddhist spiritualities encourage us to be mindful of our relationship with the natural world, and to take responsibility for our actions to protect the environment and promote a more sustainable future. This planet is not only a perfect dwelling places for enlightenment but equally quintessential for survival of sentient beings.

Certainly, at the time of the Buddha, there was no problem with nature and climate change. Therefore, there is no direct discourse on natural protection and climate change

[11] Phrapanayawachiramoli and Wasana Kaewla, "The Solar Monk in Siseangtham School: Mission Engaged for Society," in *ASEAN Journal of Religious and Cultural Research* (Mahachulalongkorn-rajavidyalaya University), 8, 3 (2019): 1–4, https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/ajrcr/article/view/249777/168387

action in early Buddhist texts. However, Buddhism promotes concern and caring for nature and the environment and has much to say about human ecology. Buddhist teachings prompt us to realize our interdependence with others, and the inter-relatedness of environment, biosphere, biodiversity and humanity. They aim to ensure the preservation of nature. Buddhism aims to balance sustainable human happiness along with a sustainable environment and ecology. Buddhist spiritualities can be applied as practical spiritual connections to make this planet sustainable both for humanity and nature.

Buddhist spirituality suggests human survival is only possible through sustaining the surrounding ecology. If you wish for a sustainable biosphere you must live by the dharmic principle of self, sustenance, and surroundings with mindfulness.

In other words, Buddhism teaches us to see the self as an "interbeing" who needs to adhere to the universal spiritual connections of "ecodharma" in order to transform the self to be a true ecological spiritual person, an "ecosattva".[12]

[12] David R. Loy, *Ecodharma: Buddhist Teaching for the Ecological Crisis* (Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018).