



SIMS Climate Change Action Group

Iris Antman

Several SIMS members and I recently formed a Climate Change Action Group. We see the formation of this group as firmly grounded in the dharma. Many of the Buddha's teachings speak to the interconnectedness of all things, from dependent origination to karma to compassion.

Compassion and care arise through our connection with others, human and animal, and with the beautiful earth, sky, and ocean. Ahimsa (non-harming) is the Pali word for the first precept in the Buddha's guidelines for ethical living. It is a training to be taken literally: to try not to harm anything or anyone, for their and one's own benefit. Essentially, the Buddha taught that ethical actions are those arising from a commitment to non-harming, honesty, and simplicity. The understanding gained through the practices of compassion and non-harming opens us to experience our interconnectedness and furthers the growth of wisdom. It teaches us about how we want to live on the planet.

For some of us at SIMS and for myself, these understandings, and our beliefs about justice, mean climate change is not only an ecological issue but also fundamentally, a moral/ethical issue that can no longer be ignored. It is clear that our current climate crisis is the unfortunate consequence of industrialization and powering our economies using cheap fossil fuels over the past two hundred years as well as deforestation. For several decades, scientists, activists, and politicians have understood this, yet little has been done to deal with the problems. Today we see and hear about the resulting suffering everyday in the news.

Our group feels that turning away is no longer an option. We believe that by being with and really seeing the suffering, opportunities for wise action will arise. Our aim is to educate ourselves, share resources, and act in ways that most skillfully address the issues. We also want to support each other in our grief and sadness about what's happening.

Our vision and mission statements and initial goals are posted on the social engagement bulletin board at the SIMS center. We would love for anyone interested in joining us to do so. If you would like to be put on our email list please contact Ken Yasuhara at ken.yasuhara@gmail.com. Currently our meetings are monthly on the second Monday from 7-8:30 p.m. Even if you are not interested in actively participating,

being on the email list allows access to the group's bulletin board with a variety of resources you may find useful.

It is said at the moment of the Buddha's Enlightenment, in an effort to resist Mara's powerful temptations, the Buddha reached out and touched the ground; a beautiful example of his deep connection to Earth and the Earth's power to heal. We find this an inspiring image to hold as we engage in the challenging work ahead. Let us use our hearts and minds, our caring and compassion to act from a place of wisdom and do our best for all sentient beings everywhere, none excepted, including ourselves, and for our Earth. We offer our efforts with much metta.