



Planting Seeds with Wise Intention

Iris Antman and the Climate Action Group

The SIMS Climate Action Group is a year old. We continue to evolve in terms of who and what we are, and as we continue to meet, talk, and meditate, our connections, dedication and direction gain clarity.

We spent our first months learning about each other and how each of us plugs into addressing the climate crisis through our practice. We defined our vision, mission, and goals. We shared resources, books, organizations, and strategies that we read or engaged in individually and in concert with others, all of which heightened our understanding and deepened our questioning of how to address these critical problems.

In April, in response to a request from our group, Tim Geil gave a strong and heartfelt climate change-related Dhamma talk in honor of Earth Day, followed a week later by a discussion night. On May 04, members from our group facilitated a half-day discussion forum dedicated to Buddhist perspectives on facing climate change. Fourteen interested sangha members met on a glorious Saturday morning to explore the question Tim raised in his talk: How do our Dhamma practice and understanding help guide our engagement with climate crisis issues? Summary notes from this forum are posted on our group's online bulletin board, which can be accessed [here](#).

Some of the issues that surfaced were feelings of grief, being overwhelmed, helplessness, and anxiety about the enormity of the problem. At the same time, there was joy and deep appreciation for the opportunity to come together to explore the issues more deeply and to support each other in community. There was an awareness of the need to figure out how to make changes in our individual lives and collectively in order to truly make a positive difference.

When feelings of being overwhelmed and helpless arose, out of the wisdom of the group, we realized that any actions we take, any seeds we plant, must be done wisely, accepting that we cannot be certain of the results of our actions. When our commitments to action are contingent on specific results, we risk suffering the disappointment and discouragement that can proliferate into resignation or worse, despair and hopelessness. While uncertainty about the future sometimes troubles us with worry and fear, we talked about how receiving this uncertainty with deep acceptance and humility can in fact bring us real hope (as Joanna Macy teaches). We

realized that out of wise action, not attached to results, comes the joy of opening our hearts and minds to the dilemmas and problems, holding all the complexity of the issues, and then moving forward to engage in right action that arises from wisdom, compassion, and a deep understanding of our interconnectedness.

The forum was just the start of rich discussions relating climate action to so many aspects of the teachings, including judgment, loving-kindness, craving, non-harm, and resolve. One recent event was gathering together to watch a documentary entitled *The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism & Community*, with a discussion afterwards. Going forward, we are planning more climate-related sangha events, for example, an event to explore grief, addiction, and renunciation as it relates to the climate crisis and our actions. For those who are more inclined to direct action, our online bulletin board's many resources include links to local community, regional, and national groups.

Our committee continues to evolve. We are open and interested in participation from any and all sangha members. This is a crisis that we all face together. We must draw upon the strength and nurturance of the sangha; to quote the Buddha—the sangha is the whole of the holy life.

The SIMS Climate Action Group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. To join the group and email-mail list, please contact Iris Antman at antwomaniris@gmail.com or Ken Yasuhara at ken.yasuhara@gmail.com.