

---

# Direct Action and Ecology – First steps

**By Ariane Lambert**

*Editorial note : At the Summer camp, Ariane told us that - for her and some other members of our association - ecological action required also social actions aimed at influencing political and economic decision-makers, but while respecting our Precepts (and therefore non-violent and including moments of meditation). We have since then maintained the contact with those members and you will find here some excerpts of this correspondence, in a diary form:*

August the 10th: « I am writing to inform you about what I am doing with Extinction Rebellion (XR). After a very fruitful and enthusiastic exchange, we decided to form a group named « Zazen R.I.O » (R.I.O for “October International Rebellion”) to coordinate meditative actions during the other actions scheduled for next October.

In fact, Extinction Rebellion organizes around the world (in 60 capitals) an “international week of rebellion” to alert about climate changes and to demand immediate and radical action in line with the injunctions of IPCC scientists. Several meditation practitioners and committed Buddhists from Thich Nhat Hanh’s sangha cooperated, with “Youth for Climate” as well as beginners”.

August the 29th: “We meet for the first time for an initiation to zazen. The idea is to do zazen on bridges, but also as part of the regenerative culture actions of Extinction Rebellion. This approach is a part of a broader movement, because in England Buddhist practitioners are actively involved in Extinction Rebellion and introduced also meditation into their actions”.

October the 6th: “The action of October the 5<sup>th</sup> consisted in a sit-in in a shopping mall, with 3 zazen of 30 minutes. This was extremely well received by the public. We were sitting behind the gates of a store and towards the end of the action, we were joined by many people from the other side of these gates.

But the big days will be October the 7<sup>th</sup>, when we will be on the front line, and after that the 9<sup>th</sup>, when we will call for a great “Medit'action” on the square in front of the City Hall.

Here is an excerpt of the invitation launched on Facebook by “Extinction Rebellion - Ile de France/Paris”:

*“Great Medit'action for the Planet.*

*The Medit'action group of Extinction Rebellion will meet for a great collective meditation in open air on Wednesday October the 9th, from 5 pm to 8 pm in Paris, during the RIO.*

*It will be a meditation for respect for the planet and the life it shelters. Come and sit beside us ...*

*No matter which your state of mind is, calm or restless, determined or undecided, anxious or calm. Decelerate, refocus, exhale deeply. Sensations, emotions, thoughts pass and the welcoming mind smiles...*

-----  
*Join us in this Action to share a moment of tenderness for the planet!*

*Practical details regarding the exact location of the meditation will be given on Wednesday on the social networks. You can bring your rug, your cushion, your cousin of course, your friends...*

*Extinction Rebellion is a non-violent movement, it demands recognition of the seriousness and urgency of the climate and ecological crises. XR rejects no one, we cultivate hospitality and attention to others: this is what we call "regenerative" culture.*

*Meditation helps us to embody these values and sow them to all winds. Medit'action is meant to be inclusive and suitable for everybody, big or small!"*

October the 11th: "I am in the heat of the action. Tomorrow will be also a great day with a new sit-in, and Medit'action will be on the front line to protect the demonstrators. We did the same on Monday and Saturday, and the effect was very strong on both the activists and the police forces.

The force of zazen is miraculous and the «Rebels» who were with me were very impressed: some simply said "Wow!", others thanked us almost with tears in their eyes ... It's really great to bring our practice into this movement".