
Testimony on the environment

Testimony on the environment, in direct connection with a sincere practice

By Thierry Kozan Barnet

The planet is not doing well. We are slaughtering animals, constantly destroying forests to make place for concrete buildings or intensive agriculture because of financial profits only, and we put biodiversity and life in danger.

A human being constructs himself in relation to his surroundings. In our so-called “modern” civilization, a child is less and less in contact with a natural environment: he lives in a sanitized environment. For today’s children, a concrete environment is normal, an environment in which nature is mostly confined to images or Internet. It is just as in the famous sketch of Coluche in which it is natural to think that fishes are square and coated with breadcrumbs.

In a single generation, our idea of nature has been completely truncated, distorted, reduced to virtuality. It destroys the natural, healthy and simple environment, to give way to a complicated, confused and thought-based world. A more and more complicated world that leads to a more and more complicated situation, without any way out, making people unhappy and often unaware of their latent suffering: they rush to obtain everything this sick society (sick but rich in proposals) can offer them as compensation. This race to overconsumption plunders our ecological nest and impoverishes the planet, day by day; it makes us all blind to the roots of our suffering.

We live in a world based on intellect, competition and bidding.

We talk about ecology; we talk also a lot about meditation...

Are these the new concepts in fashion? The «good» that opposes the «less good», the opposition between samsara and nirvana? Everything functions with the intellect, cutting us off more and more from our spirituality. Even meditation becomes an object of consumption and ecology also is a “selling concept”, offering a wide choice of alternatives to a system we maintained for decades.

By adopting a purely intellectual position, we are simply changing our disguise of “polluter” into the disguise of “green caring person”. But - basically - nothing changes, except that our way of thinking is an illusion based on illusion.

A sincere and profound awareness of our true nature is founded on a broader base than our individual personality. This awareness can only be achieved through sincere practice, with faith and honesty. For us, in our dojo, it goes through zazen. Everyone knows what is Good, even a three-year-old can understand it, yet even an old man cannot put it in practice.

To do good, to want to save the planet purely by the intellect is only an illusion: we must be aware of our real situation. Unconsciously, we maintain the duality between the Self and the

planet, the Self and the rest of the world. It is separating ourselves from what is around us and creating a distance that we will never fill.

Deep practice naturally brings out the Paramita: abandon our personal views to make room for a Vast vision, a natural flow of our nature to the Heart of nature, becoming, naturally, the Heart of heart, the Heart of everything. And when everything becomes an extension of oneself, it is impossible to harm, because then harm somebody would be harming oneself.

Practice is a long-term commitment, a karma that arises in time, but begins here and now. The committed Buddhism begins on the zafu. Changing is to change ourselves, here and now, when we let right action arise. A right action is not an impulse of our discriminating mind, but a vast action that takes into account the entire environment of the whole Universe...

An action in harmony with the Whole, in the moment itself, sowing the seeds of the next moment ...

A huge responsibility that builds itself on our practice of silent sitting ...

Simple sitting as a simple way of life ...

When a person wants more and more, he goes himself from morning to night, he can be sure of becoming ill and to see his life becoming a suffering of every moment. The practice of Universal love begins with eating simple food, taking only what is necessary to continue to practice, and leading naturally a simple life that takes into account the needs of life itself.

Initiatives to address environmental problems are laudable on all sides, but initiatives are impermanent as everything. It is therefore necessary that they come from the Heart of our nature, so that they become an innate practice, as natural for us as breathing in and breathing out.