



## **Buddhism and the Environment**

### **All beings are connected**

Buddhism teaches that the idea of separateness is an illusion. The health of the whole is inseparably linked to the health of the parts, and the health of the parts is inseparably linked to the health of the whole. This means that caring for the environment begins with caring for oneself: ‘When our hearts are good, the sky will be good to us,’ says Venerable Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia, a founding patron of ARC.

### **Respect for life**

Buddhist practice makes one feel one’s existence is no more important than anyone else’s. If one treats nature as a friend and teacher, one can be in harmony with other creatures and appreciate the interconnectedness of all that lives.

### **Simplicity and moderation**

Buddha taught people to live simply and appreciate the natural cycle of life. Craving and greed only bring unhappiness, since demands for material possessions can never be satisfied and people will always demand more, so threatening the environment. This is why the real solution to the environmental crisis begins with the individual.

Buddhists in Japan tell a story. The Buddha once received a donation of 500 new robes for his followers. So he considered what to do with the old ones. They would be used for bed-sheets, he decided. And the old sheets would become towels. And the old towels would be used as cleaning rags. Everything should be used and reused.

### **Right livelihood**

According to Buddhism, the way you earn your livelihood – not killing, not stealing, not taking more than you need – all these are part of the Buddhist way of life. A livelihood that avoids harming others, such as trading in weapons, meat, alcohol or poisons – is in harmony with nature.

Source: <http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=3>