

FOOTPRINTS

By
Diamond District – SGI-UK



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FOOTPRINTS

This booklet is a narrative created by members of Diamond District SGI to share awareness of the need “to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”.

For more info: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>

“Climate change is not some far off reality, and its impact is much more than ‘just’ melting ice and rising sea levels...many people and their livelihoods are already threatened by climate change today.

We are each responsible for rethinking our behaviour and making day-to-day decisions for a sustainable lifestyle and society. We must all become involved in the public conversation.

One thing is clear: “every person for him or herself’ will not save the world... together we will make a difference.”

From Davis Nelles and Christian Serrer, *Small Gases, Big Effect: This is climate change*, London: Penguin Books, 2021

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DIAMOND FOOTPRINTS

Our Determination in this Year of Hope and Victory is
"To work within our community to combat climate
change and its impacts and take individual actions to
achieve further UN Sustainable Development Goals as
we work towards 2030".



This is in line with
COP 26, a United
Nations Climate
Change
Conference
taking place in
Glasgow in
November 2021:

<https://ukcop26.org>

The United Nations has set 17 Goals to be achieved
globally by 2030.

Although our focus for this year within our community is no 13, (Climate Action) other goals are also relevant and interconnected. We cannot tackle climate change without engaging with all of them!



Climate Action

Our climate has always been changing, but in the past 200

years the changes have become more extreme because of human activity (us). Climate change is now affecting every country in every continent and the poorest and the most vulnerable people are being affected the most. Goal 13 is about finding solutions such as renewable energy and clean technologies to combat climate change. But it will take actions from governments, the private sector and civil society to make a significant impact. It is urgent to educate people and raise their awareness of climate change in schools and through community outreach.

How can we make a positive change as Buddhists?

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BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

An important concept in Buddhism is “The Oneness of Life and its Environment”:

Nichiren Buddhism. This Buddhist principle “esho funi” means that life (sho) and its environment (e) are inseparable (funi). Funi means “two but not two”. This means that although we perceive things around us as separate from us, there is a dimension of our lives that is one with the universe. At the most fundamental level of life, there is no separation between ourselves and the environment.(SGI Quarterly 1998)

Another important writing regarding Buddhism and our understanding of the environment is “Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” (Rissho Ankoku Ron in Japanese) WND -1, p. 6-30.

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this treatise in 1253, a time in Japan characterised by a succession of natural calamities. He determined to discover the fundamental

cause of this disorder that was causing so much suffering.



He felt that the disorder in the world at that time reflected disorder within human beings and this was caused by slander of the ultimate law of the

universe. In this text, Nichiren teaches us the importance of the relationship between human beings and nature (the environment), the relationship between human beings with each other and within themselves. He teaches us that when these relationships break down, when they are not based on the sanctity of life and respect for human dignity, disasters will occur.

Nichiren understood that change in the world must begin with change in the hearts of individuals and it is often said that the entire lifetime of Nichiren's teachings starts and finishes with Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land. Here you can read the full text:

<https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/wnd-1/Content/2>

Daisaku Ikeda, the third and honorary President of SGI, continued to think and lecture about these important

concepts. President Ikeda has been writing an historical novel that documents the development of SGI and in which President Ikeda uses the pen name of Shin'ichi Yamamoto. In *The New Human Revolution* Volume 5, Shini'chi writes "Buddhism does not regard human beings as the masters of the Earth, destined to conquer and subjugate Nature and all other forms of life. Instead, it views the universe as a single living entity, of which humans are only a small part... Buddhism perceives human beings and all other life, as well as the environment and phenomena surrounding them, as linked in a web of mutually interdependent and harmonious relationships, all of which serve to support and maintain life."(NHR, 5, Trailblazing Chapter)



Further Reading Suggestions:

Self and environment: <https://sgi-uk.org/Philosophy/Principles/Self-and-environment>

Daisaku Ikeda: *Green Revolution and Human Revolution*, EastWest Books, 2005.

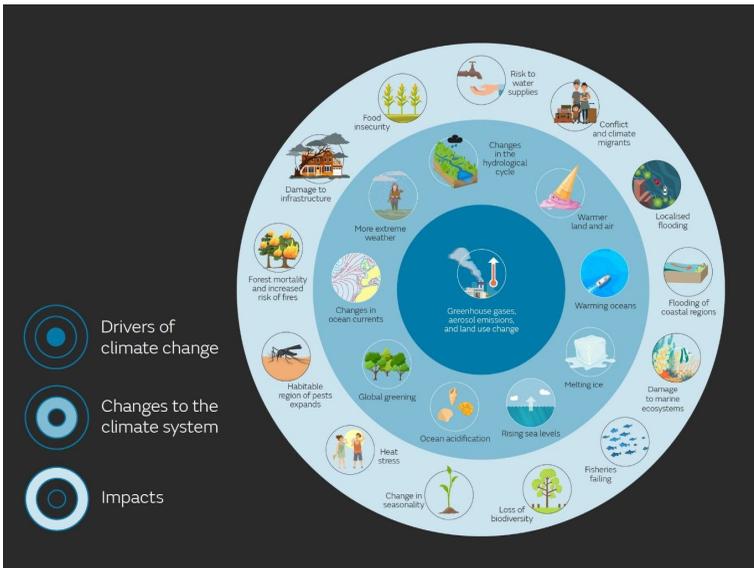
Exhibition "Seeds of Hope":

<https://earthcharter.org/seeds-of-hope-visions-of-sustainability-steps-toward-change/>

4.

Climate Change

In the UK?



Which of these drivers portrayed in the image are found in the UK? The Met Office projects that in 50 years' time, by 2070, Winter will be between 1 and 4.5°C warmer and up to 30% wetter and Summer will be between 1 and 6°C warmer and up to 60% drier.

The impacts for us in this country if we do not take urgent action to reduce emissions will be:

- Rising sea levels causing coastal flooding with risks to low lying areas
- Flooding caused by heavy rainfall causing damage to humans, buildings and transport
- Heatwaves expected to increase, with a risk to health and the economy
- Increased drought causing difficulties for farmers
- More frequent and intense weather extremes with risks to health and more
- Even if we were to stop all greenhouse emissions today, we would not prevent these changes, but the sooner we cut emissions, we can reduce these changes.

5

What can we do in our everyday life?

KNOW

- Calculate how much you're wasting
 - WWF Footprint Calculator:
<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>
 - Carbon Footprint:
<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>
- Read and become informed

ACT - AS ONE PERSON

- ENERGY
 - Switch to a green energy provider
 - Get a smart meter to track energy use
 - Use energy-saving light bulbs
 - Turn off appliances when not in use

- Fly less and take public transportation
 - Walk and cycle more
- FOOD
 - Freeze foods you can't eat while they're fresh
 - Try to buy loose produce
 - Avoid wasting leftover food
 - Grow your own vegetables
 - Try sustainable recipes:
<https://www.wwf.org.uk/recipes>
- PLASTIC WASTE
 - Use reusable goods/ goods with less or no plastic packaging
 - Make sure you recycle
- MONEY
 - Support ethical, sustainable businesses
 - Support ethical, green banks

ACT - IN COMMUNITY

- Spread the word

- Donate to environmental organisations and campaigns.
- Join an environmental group
- Write to your MP to continue climate action

Check also:

WWF: How you can help nature: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/how-to-help-nature>

Friends of the Earth: What can I do to stop climate change?:
<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/what-can-i-do-to-stop-climate-change>

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PLAY WITH US

How much do you know about Nature? We challenge you! Try our games:



Can you grow some plants in your garden, on a windowsill, in an outside space?

Can you recognise these seedlings?

Tomatoes? Fava beans? Chard?



A.



B.



C.

Can you be a Truth Teller?



Art by Reina

Tell your friends the facts about climate change.

Can you answer these questions?

1. How much plastic gets recycled?
a. 50%; b. 25%; c. 9%
2. How much extra heat can the ocean take in?
a. 93%; b. 86%; c. 70%
3. Why are sea levels rising?
a. Heavy rainfall; b. Glaciers melting; c. Too many fish in the sea
4. Which of these are fossil fuels?
a. Coal; b. Natural Gas; c. Oil; d. Wood



Can you be an Amazing Activist? Use your voice to let others know we need change!

Environmenters



Word puzzle: What word could an activist use?

1. Dialogue
2. Happiness
3. Environment
4. Conviction
5. People
6. Celebrate
7. Future
8. Wisdom
9. Courage
10. Compassion

a h t a q g f a s c b r v b s
v a r t l v h o q r v g w u w
n p o b m o k n m f u t u r e
c p b m c d p j p q e n k q j
d i a l o g u e c o i e f p t
r n x c u v b n f h y w p m i
w e d a r n x v e o d i y p s
b s g b a e o i t r s c d l z
d s n f g z q r g e a e f p f
x g n m e g b o h f i h j e k
l a j h g c o n v i c t i o n
u n m i c d a m x y e y r p q
e p o h k y d e f p l z o l x
n k l j z i l n e i e n h e w
g j a k l z b t w q b r x s g
a m f l k b j c j e r d v e x
c o m p a s s i o n a p a h t
z f l d c g c k h b t y i w j
k w i s d o m c d l e x m i a

Become a Wildlife Warrior by protecting nature with bird feeders, growing bee friendly flowers. Find out how to make an insect or a bug hotel, a house for a hedgehog at <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>

And even adopting an animal, protecting habitats around the world.

<https://support.wwf.org.uk/adopt-an-animal>

More resources:

NASA Climate Change explained for children (and others):

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-action-superheroes/>

Can you join our Climate Action Superheroes to #ACTNOW?

Solutions:

Seedlings: A. Fava beans; B. Chard; C. Tomatoes

Quiz: 1. C; 2. A; 3. B; 4. A, C, D.

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Movements Campaigning for our Planet

Connect4climate <https://www.connect4climate.org/>

Extinction Rebellion

<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/>

Friends of the Earth

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/>

Greenpeace

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/>

The Climate Coalition

<https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/>

The Tree Council

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/>

Download and join 'Waterbear' which highlights different campaigns and is dedicated to focusing on how we can protect our planet and its future.

<https://www.waterbear.com/>

Why discover Ocean Science and begin to get involved with ocean conservation? *You will be amazed to learn that our ocean produces more than 70 percent of oxygen for every breath we take. So, let's take every little step in our day-to-day life to make any small changes to prevent wasteful use of a resource to help in tackling climate action and its impact. We share some useful links and information on the ocean below that can inspire our audiences to take action.*

BBC One - Blue Planet II

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1FlfcGGKPSWv3m7JdfBT5dv/get-involved-with-ocean-conservation>

2021 - 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Developments

<https://oceandecade.org>

Oceanic Global

<https://oceanic.global>

WWF

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/> *"I became a member of the Worldwide Fund for Nature to support their mission to save the planet from destruction, tackling climate change, helping to protect wildlife and polar regions and putting a stop to the ways of food production that harm the Earth."*

More links:

<https://climatemuseumuk.org/>

Students United for Justice: follow this link: [Students United for Justice](#)

Seeds of Hope : <https://sgi-uk.org/In-Society/Exhibits>
We have been inspired by this exhibition.

Disclaimer: these campaigns are included for information, not for promotion and do not necessarily reflect the views of SGI-UK.

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...And in our Community

Eco Birmingham <https://ecobirmingham.com/> : based in Northfield. Their projects include Edible Brum, Cycle South Birmingham, Green Generations (education and arts projects)

Glean for Brum <https://gleanforbrum.org> : newly formed, website is not yet fully functional, but they are present on social media. They glean to fight for food inequalities!

Recipe collection

<https://centralenglandquakers.org.uk/2019/08/08/food-for-thought/> : Written and produced by local Quaker group, this is a collection of very tasty recipes... as I know after trying some of them myself!

<https://centralenglandquakers.org.uk/about-quakers/our-work/climate-emergency-action/>

Ten Acres Conservation

<http://www.tenacresconservation.co.uk/>

Friends of Ten Acres

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftenacres> : Ten Acres Conservation is a community project developed and managed by Sustainable Life Birmingham. They work in conjunction with the Friends of Ten Acres who look after the Ten acres area as a whole. On their website they have blog posts on the characteristics of flora and fauna found around Ten Acres and they keep track of sightseeing of specific plants and animals. It is an incredible resource to understand our immediate environment.

Orchard in Cotteridge Park:

<https://cotteridgepark.org.uk/orchard/> This orchard was planted in 2006. The story of this lot is a beautiful example of community's involvement in creating a better urban environment: "Along the side of the park, near the railway line, is a strip of land that used to be allotments that belonged to British Rail and was used by railway workers. From 1997 the land was sold to a series of private owners at auction and over time the land was used to dump rubbish on and the weeds ran riot - turning the land into a tip and rat haven! Eventually local residents, with support from the Midlands Co-operative Society, raised nearly £7,000 to

buy the land and restore it as a community orchard.”
Check their website to know more!

Naturally Birmingham Future Park Accelerator

(FPA): <https://naturallybirmingham.org> An initiative started in 2019 to enhance the future of Birmingham’s parks and green spaces. They have lots of initiatives for active participation, such as the park counter or the “green Champion” programme. Check them out!

Terracycle recycling point @ Stirchley Public

Library: If you are anything like me... you will be happy to know you can recycle your (too many?!?) crisps bags! But, hey, the recycling point collects also oral care and personal care products and beauty packaging, and other packaging not currently recycled through city council. Follow the link to have more detailed instructions. If you cannot access it via Facebook, please contact me and I will provide you with details.

<https://www.facebook.com/sustainablestirchley/posts/148024843212417>

Allotments, provided by Birmingham City Council:

allotments are a great way to reduce plastic waste, to compost, to spend more time outside, and to meet new people. Birmingham City Council provides several sites around Birmingham and in South Birmingham

with affordable rent prices. I found this experience incredibly rewarding, even if time consuming. It could be a great way to have a garden, even if you live in an apartment like me!

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20090/allotments/173/allotments_information

Community fridge in Walsall:

<https://www.hubbub.org.uk/the-community-fridge> Food waste is at the intersection of many systemic issues and tackling food waste means tackling many SDGs at once, including no. 13 about climate action. The volunteers of Community Pantry (<https://communitypantry.co.uk>) put up a community fridge in Walsall. A community fridge can be accessed by anyone (with a few rules pertaining to health and safety), and anyone can give to or take food from the fridge! A future action may be to create a fridge closer to us for our own community...

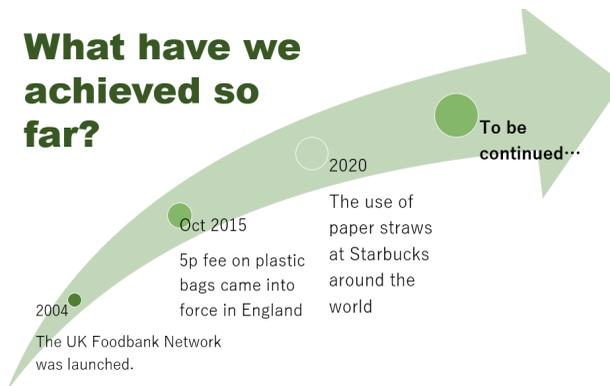
Footsteps: <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/> Footsteps brings together faith groups in Birmingham, to respond to the challenge of moving to a low carbon future.

Disclaimer: these organisations are included for information and referencing purposes, not for promotion and do not necessarily reflect the views of SGI-UK.

9

Do you think small actions won't make a difference?

Unfortunately, a survey conducted by YouGov showed almost 25% of Britons are unwilling to change their daily habits to combat climate change. Participants in the survey might see individual action as meaningless. Ummm, is that really true??



Don't underestimate the power of small actions.

A big achievement always comes from a small action!!



I personally started to think of the environmental issues at the age of 8 when I heard my favourite polar bears were in danger of extinction. To save polar bears, like our lovely superheroes from future division, I started to take actions like bringing my own bag to a supermarket instead of using plastic bags which were not charged at the time. This small action encouraged my parents and friends to do so and the cycle of inspiring people can eventually result in a great change. Since 2015, when a 5p charge came into force in England, the percentage of the use of plastic bags has been down by 90%. As the brief timeline of our environmental action above shows, we made some remarkable progress even reflecting on our daily lives. Let's start with one of those actions suggested on this footprint and inspire the next generation with our achievements!

10

Soka Gakkai International

As Diamond District we are part of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist organisation. What does SGI do around the world for climate change?

Exhibition: Seeds of Hope and Action

This exhibition was co-created by SGI and Earth Charter International and suggests actions that individuals can take.

<https://www.sokaglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/seeds-of-hope-and-action-en.pdf>

Mapping

A free mobile App to discover the SDGs and promote sustainable actions and projects through picture & video sharing! Created by Soka Gakkai International and Earth Charter <https://www.mapping.org/>

Soka Institute of the Amazon

Manaus, Brazil, and Tokyo, Japan, Sep 25, 2020: On September 21, National Day of the Tree in Brazil, responding to the tragic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Soka Institute of the Amazon near Manaus launched an initiative to plant one tree in honor of each Brazilian victim of COVID-19. More than 100,000 trees will be planted over a four-year period. This "Life Memorial" project is supported by Fundacao Rede Amazonica, charitable arm of the main TV station in Amazonas State

For more info:

<https://www.sokaglobal.org/contact-us/media-room/press-releases/soka-institute-amazonian-trees-for-covid-initiative.html>

SGI-UK and Climate Change

SGI-UK has a long history of exploring issues around the environment, biodiversity and the climate crisis. They have hosted events, seminars and other activities at our centres and around the UK. See: <https://sgi-uk.org/Climate-Change>

Since October 2020, SGI-UK and the Centre for Applied Buddhism have been organising a monthly series of webinars looking at the climate crisis, and making positive suggestions for a hopeful future. Each month the focus alternates: when SGI-UK takes the lead they look at the contribution made by the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism and the actions of SGI members. In alternate months, the Centre for Applied Buddhism involves people from different backgrounds and introduces an interfaith or multifaith dimension. See: <https://sgi-uk.org/Climate-Change/Bodhisattvas-for-the-Earth>

Our National Centre, Taplow Court in Berkshire, is set in a beautiful estate and recently, the grounds have been replanted in a less formal manner, and some of the fields have been allowed to grow wild, fostering wildlife, and promoting pollinating insects, such as bees.

Also, one of the recent buildings erected on the site by SGI-UK (Ikeda New Century Hall) is composed primarily of biodegradable and recycled materials in an innovative design) and features many ethical features, such as heavy insulation to retain heat, use of local materials in the construction, and use of recycled grey water for toilet flushing.



Photo by Yuki

11

QUESTIONS

Why should I recycle plastic if it's just going to be sent abroad to be dumped? We believe you should carry on recycling but try to cut down on plastic packaging. Make friends and colleagues aware of this problem, add your name to a petition to tell our government to fix the UK's plastic waste crisis and write to your MP to strengthen the environment bill.

Are we the main cause of global warming? Yes scientists agree that we are. We release carbon dioxide, a heat trapping gas by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

So what can we do? The good news is that if we have caused global warming we can make a difference by our actions e.g. it's not the car that has responsibility for emissions but the person who drives the car instead of taking public transport if they can.



Will reducing meat in my diet really help the climate? All agriculture produces greenhouse gases that warm the planet, especially meat production. Reasons include destruction of forests, using vast amounts of water and fertiliser to grow food for the cows and the cows themselves produce emissions of methane. If we all reduce our consumption of meat or switch to chicken or even better a plant based diet, that will make a difference.

What if I can't take any of the actions encouraged here? I can't change my lifestyle because of my circumstances. We believe that if we can all make small differences to the way we live, it will make a big difference to our future world.

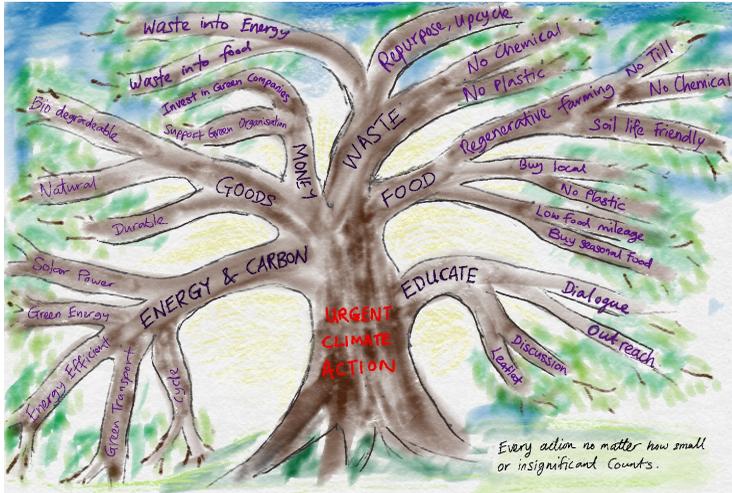
What is a nurdle (microplastic) and how harmful can it be to our wildlife and sealife? It is a very small pellet of plastic which serves as raw material in the manufacture of plastic products that includes polyethylene and polyester fibres. These tiny plastics are washed down into our drains every day and therefore into the sea water. As a result these nurdles are being ingested by sea creatures such as sea birds and the fish we eat.

12

Next Steps?

Composing this narrative, we have explored the issues around climate change and the ways to tackle its impact. Our aim was to raise awareness and take action. Climate Action is one of the 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to end poverty and hunger and to protect our planet so that it can support the needs of present and future generations.

Diamond District members decided to take actions in their lives. Here is what they plan to do:



Covid-19 has shown us how deeply connected we are in this world and much more needs to be done by all of us.

Will you join us in taking the next steps?

Are you ready to take action?

You can share your actions here

<https://www.sokaglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/seeds-of-hope-and-action-en.pdf> Click on or scan this QR code



Please do view the Seeds of Hope and Action exhibition first and of course this booklet!

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS!

"Even one seed, when planted, multiplies."

WND-2, 602



"*Myo* means to revive, that is, to return to
life."

WND-1, 149