A MATTER OF GREAT CONSEQUENCE

by Stephanie Kaza

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The Earth Charter is a call to awaken a bell ringing out in the big sky—listen! listen! The earth is calling to the people—attend! attend! This is a matter of great consequence—wake up now!

The wake-up call is the heart of Buddhist teaching, the primary motivation for spiritual practice. Many texts from many eras have reiterated the Buddha’s basic teaching—wake up! Follow the path to enlightenment! According to the Four Noble Truths, one must first face the inescapable existence of suffering. The Earth Charter articulates this suffering for the environment and for human relations with the environment, marked strongly now by violence and abuse. Given the pervasive nature of suffering, the human spiritual task is to develop compassion and act out of kindness rather than self-centeredness. The

“To study the karma of violence, poverty, and suffering outlined in the Earth Charter is to engage the structural agents which harm many members of the web of life. The Earth Charter is a call for karmic responsibility, for generating awareness around the consequences of individual and corporate actions.”
human beings' curiosity for the unknown.

- The Earth Charter can help the world's peoples become a plural community practicing together each culture's wisdom. The charter's principles can help mankind to the earth's resources and preservation. The Earth Charter is a global charter, timeless and helpful in human understanding and the promotion of global environmental ethics. It would seem more consensual and participatory under a United Nations framework.

Buddhistic traditions are those who carry the light of understanding, wisdom and compassion to the world's peoples. The United Nations framework could play a central role in this context. The charter would be a reminder of our human nature and aspirations.

Buddha: Peace begins with the mind.