



One Earth Sangha

Session Four: Introduction

Transcript of EcoSattva Training 2023-24 Video

Agreement

First, a little business. By accepting this document, you agree not to share with anyone who is not registered for the EcoSattva Training. No one is turned away from the training due to lack of funds, so if you would like to share it with someone who cannot afford the registration, please let them know they can [request discounted or free registration](#).

Session Profile

Session Four: Reckoning with Entangled Structures

[Session Resources](#)

Speakers in this video

- Kristin Barker - director and co-founder, One Earth Sangha

Transcript

Kristin:

All right, well welcome everyone to Session Four of the EcoSattva Training, where we're moving from exploring the experience, the causes, the conditions, the dynamics of ecological crises, ecological breakdown, ecological harm at the individual level. Now we're opening up to the collective level. And in that, inviting you into this investigation of the collective mind, if you will, this mind that has, like the individual mind conditioned into being over instead of a lifetime, not just decades, not just hundreds of years, but thousands of years, eons, going really, really far back.

Of course, there would be a collective mind, and minds even, if we can imagine culture as a collective mind of sorts, to see in that how I am inevitably impacted and to validate those impacts, being conditioned by culture into certain ways of looking, ways that I



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conceive the world. Of course, that would emerge out of whatever culture I grew up in and also how I contribute to it, how I further it, my relationship to collective mind, but to have the focus now, as opposed to at the individual level, now at that collective, at that mind itself, the tendencies in relationship with that mind.

Usually it's not put in those terms, right? It's like the collective story or whatever, sometimes talked about, but often most of the time not discussed, not seen or seen and just critiqued, hated even. So in this middle way, we're seeing the inevitability of collective narrative, looking at particular collective narratives and investigating them from the perspective, not so much of true or not true in a dualistic way, but the truthiness of it, the truthfulness of it. And equally important. What does it condition? What does it lead to? What kind of individual minds does a given narrative grow? What kind of impacts on planet, living earth community does it grow?

So we're in this space of what Woodbury was pointing to in that article on collective trauma, this radical turning towards that is foundational in the Buddhist wisdom practice, turning towards, in this case not individual suffering, but the collective suffering and the collective manifestation of suffering, the collective contributing to suffering through that collective mind.

So here we're in the space of racism, of colonialism, especially those two, but so many other isms, patriarchy, just this culturally codified mind, the institutions, the values, the perceptions that happen at that level. It can be difficult to open up to the fullness of this what Jon Kabat-Zinn called in MBSR, the full catastrophe. This is like an even fuller catastrophe. This is the global, now global catastrophe that a certain kind of collective mind has brought about.

So this is the mind that takes the unfathomable subject and makes object, and with that flattening, with that devaluation, with that objectification, enabling exploitation, because we cannot exploit what we deeply respect and hold sacred and unknowable and really bow to. We can't exploit it. And so collective narratives often function in order to enable that exploitation where there are winners and losers in the material sense, but also so much in the spiritual emotional sense. All of this applying, yes, so much to people, but also to planet, so much to the living earth community.

So with our guests, Dr. Larry Ward, and also a beautiful contribution from Peggy Ward in the form of a guided meditation, we explore these collective narratives and the potential



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for an Earth centered social imagination, what Dr. Ward calls it, and invites us to see ourselves having a living experience on an inherently beautifully, very much living planet. So in that compassionate investigation of the collective narrative, we can see what it leads to, and this is part of what he takes us through.

And then Dr. Michael Yellow Bird, and I really invite you to check out his biography. I'm so excited that he's part of the training this year, exploring a particular collective narrative, Manifest Destiny. So this is one that comes out of the US history, where it was promoted, actively promoted. As Europeans were encouraged to move west, to go west and take land from Indigenous Peoples, as our own. We had to have a collective narrative to fuel and justify that flattening, that theft, that exploitation. So again, it's a US centered narrative that he and I go into and are exploring, but it's also for us to recognize that dominating cultures will have their fantasy of domination, of how it is that that is justified, and the power of that and the reverberations of that, how it continues, how is it still here today?

Also with Dr. Yellow Bird investigating what is the alternative? How can we skillfully relate to harmful collective narratives? Ones that transmit in a certain way, the colonial fantasy. And so he walks us through neuro-decolonization, what I think is a really beautiful, powerful framework, leading to this embodied relationship with Earth and the living earth community that reinforces what we might call in our traditions, the felt sense of interdependence. What practices can really lead to that so that it is known in the body?

Okay, so I'm so excited for you to experience these two offerings from Dr. Ward and Dr. Yellow Bird, as well as Peggy's guided meditation. Thank you for your practice. Let's open up to this full catastrophe, these big, big, big stories, big impacts together, all while really being supported by the resources of your group and other resources that you identified in session two. Okay, thank you for your practice.



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Dana

We hope you have found this transcript helpful. We invite you to help offset the cost to produce this transcript and the rest of the training by [making a donation to One Earth Sangha](#). Whatever you offer will be used wisely and is deeply appreciated.