



Dr. John Danvers: Interwoven Nature: Relatedness and Identity in a Changeful World



John Danvers is an artist, writer, and poet whose work explores the natural world and our relationship to it, drawing on his experience of over fifty years of Zen meditation practice. Come join us in this reading and chatting experience to reflect on the interconnection that lives inside and outside of us.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: In times of stress and distress, coming back to the human breath in a very natural kind of way, is very helpful.

Zazen: “Sitting meditation” (Japanese term)

- Sitting quietly, paying attention to whatever arises in our embodied minds and in the world immediately around us.
- Breath as an initial focus of attention; a gateway to a realization of our interdependence with the world around us.
- It can be challenging as we experience our fears, anxieties, and conflicts... detachment is key.
- Being mindful: to mind, to care, to look after.
- Three aspects of awareness depicted by the Buddha: 1) Clear and realistic understanding of how things are, 2) Compassionate openness to others and the world, 3) Balanced attitude (equanimity and composure).

Zazen Effects: Relationship between body, mind, and world.

- Feelings of less division from the world and less alienation from ourselves and other creatures.
- A change in how the individual experiences him/herself and the way they relate to other beings and to the world.
- Nurture of kinship (empathy with other's struggles and difficulties, and being aware of their joys and achievements), fellowship, and compassion.
- Realization of interconnectedness/interdependence. It fosters social interaction/community/environmental awareness.

The Self: An ecological view: The self as a process that extends out into the world.

- We occupy space and at the same time, we serve as a meeting place for all the other organisms that share our skin envelope (we host a myriad of creatures). *“What I mistakenly refer to as my life, for it is their life as much as mine”.*
- From this perspective, self and the environment are not separate entities: *“My skin is also the skin of the world, a shared porous membrane, through which flow light, oxygen, food, water, sound, and other microscopic beings”.*
- Reconnecting with the world has to begin with reconnecting our divided self.

Capitalism: Grounded in greed division and inequality

- One group of people making money out of another, and all groups exploiting the Earth's resources in unsustainable ways nurtures desire and acquisitiveness; it's insatiable and self-propelling.
- A finite world with limited resources, insatiable desire, and consumption, will inevitably be destructive of ourselves, other beings, and the world we inhabit (great inequality, enormous wastefulness, and widespread suffering).

Art and Zazen Practice: Be present in whatever you are drawing.

- Both imply letting go of assumptions and the habitual way of looking at things: Looking at things with fresh eyes.
- Art: Is a form of relationship to the world around and within us. It can be a form of self-revelation (as you open up).

Resources

- ❖ **Books:** [Interwoven Nature: relatedness and identity in a changeful world](#)
- ❖ **Website:** <http://johndanversart.co.uk/books/> | **References:** John Donne, a poem of 1623 | Sulak Sivaraksa.



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The initiative was founded by Nicoleta Carpineanu (aka Nico de Transylvania), a Romanian, UK-based DJ/Producer who grew up in the forests of Transylvania. We began our first key project in Romania in April 2019 and in our first year planted over 25,000 trees. We reforest land that has been clear-cut, where natural reforestation would not occur. We only plant native, biodiverse species, grown locally and cared for until maturity in legally protected areas, adjacent to existing natural forests. Our aim is to plant one million trees in the Carpathians and beyond by 2025.

OUR MISSION is to preserve our forests and the people and wildlife they nurture, and to promote connection with nature through music, art, and culture.