

A Call to Contemplation and Action on Climate Change

April 19, 2009, HALIFAX–Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche offers the following teachings in support of Earth Day, April 22, and the work of the [Touching the Earth](#) working group of the Sakyong's Council.

Our precious planet and the innumerable beings who dwell here face an unprecedented crisis. The escalating threat to the world's environment and climate stems from a profound predicament that affects all humanity. We are ever more rapidly losing our connection with the sacred nature of our world. This tragedy affects us in so many ways, but at its heart, it is a crisis of the spirit. We are harming our planet and fellow beings because we are losing touch with the basic goodness of our own sacred being.

This disconnect from our primordial basic goodness is amplified by unparalleled technological and industrial capacity, dramatic population growth and the vast inequalities we witness everywhere in our world.

Disastrous as this situation is, it is still possible to change course. The Earth is calling to us for protection and for a return to basic sanity. We must all heed this call by adopting an approach that returns to a deep respect for our environment, and conserves our threatened resources.

We can take advantage of both traditional methods and innovative technological advances based on living in harmony with the fundamental intelligence of nature. But this global crisis cannot be transformed into a new way of living if we rely on the same attitudes and habits that brought us to this terrifying brink in the first place. To do that would merely reinforce, despite our good intentions, the degradation and inequality that are already so widespread.

This emergency calls for a complete transformation of how we live—a transformation of our underlying attitudes, our approach to human society and our relationship to planet Earth and all its inhabitants. My father, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the great Tibetan meditation master and founder of Shambhala, foresaw this turning point in human history. His words could not ring truer: "When human beings lose their connection to nature, to heaven and earth, then they do not know how to nurture their environment or how to rule their world ... Healing our society goes hand in hand with healing our personal, elemental connection with the phenomenal world."

In the Shambhala tradition it is said that it is precisely in dark times like these that the inherent wisdom of the universe makes itself felt. Now is the time to draw on the inspiration of humanity's wisdom traditions. All remind us of the sacred oneness of life, the interdependence of all beings and the inexorable laws of cause and effect. These teachings could not be more relevant to our collective imperative: the creation of enlightened and sustainable societies.

I am delighted that, within the Buddhist world, there is increasingly deep reflection on how the wisdom of this particular tradition can shine light on this common goal. Now is the time for us to tap the power available to us from our diverse disciplines, cultures and societies to cultivate the dignity, confidence and fearlessness necessary to protect our Earth. By doing so, we can help to reconnect all humanity with its primordial basic goodness, transform our relationship to sacred world and be inspired to sane choices, compassionate leadership and wise activism.