

Dear Sakyong's Council,

The Touching the Earth Working Group is seeking the support of the Sakyong's Council for our involvement in planning and participating in a proposed International Buddhist Conference addressing the worldwide ecological crisis. We feel this is an important way Shambhala can contribute to an issue of great global consequence wherein our approach of unified view of the spiritual and secular brings important, perhaps unique, offerings of value. We also believe participation would enrich and inspire Shambhala and Shambhalian and is entirely consistent with Shambhala's worldwide vision and commitment to develop compassionate leadership including in environmental sustainability. We are also cognizant and sensitive to the Sakyong's and Shambhala's longstanding intention to preserve our stature as a non-biased and non-political entity both within and beyond the Buddhist lineages.

Please enjoy reading the attached article "Can Buddhism Save the Planet" in the winter issue of *Buddhadharma* magazine where the idea for this International Buddhist Conference is thoughtfully proposed.

Exactly how Shambhala could be of most benefit to the process leading up to and during this conference is a matter yet to be explored. The progress towards this conference (or conferences) is gaining momentum and seems likely to happen at this point. But planning is still in early stages and details such as when, where, size, facilities need, etc. are still to be determined. With our mandala's expertise shaping containers for hosting perhaps we could explore how we can help in that way and/or other ways.

We are seeking authorization and guidance in this matter from the Sakyong's Council. Perhaps a special task group could be formed to engage with the conference organizers, and including members of our Working Group along with others deemed helpful by the Sakyong's Council.

To get more information we have contacted the authors of the article that presented the call to action and who are actively proceeding with this project. They have kindly sent a brief synopsis of their progress which is attached. They are well connected with Buddhist leaders worldwide and John Stanley has just returned from India where he met with (among others) both HH Gyalwang Karmapa and HH Dalai Lama who have endorsed this initiative, at the forefront of a growing list of Buddhist leaders. A partial list is below. We are informed that in particular the HH Dalai Lama has in essence become a key patron of this event and has been regularly talking about this wherever he travels. In addition a book is soon to be released exploring the Buddhist viewpoint on engagement on the globe's ecological crisis including a compendium of perspectives offered by a wide range of leading Buddhist teachers.

Exciting momentum is building. We believe this initiative is timely and astute and could be of useful benefit. We hope you will share our current enthusiasm about this opportunity and will endorse our further investigation of the event and Shambhala's potential contribution.

For the benefit of all sentient beings,  
Touching the Earth Working Group, December 5, 2008

From John Stanley, 4 December 2008, via email to David Wimberly.

“In response to your request for a short synopsis of progress, although in no special order -

1. We produced an intermediate POD version of a book under the title *When Snow Mountains Wear Black Hats*. We have now signed a contract with Wisdom Publications to produce the full length book, provisional title *A Buddhist Response to the Climate Emergency*. I am sending the final manuscript to Wisdom on December 10th and am told the book will be made available online from May-June and in bookshops somewhat later in 2009. It presents fully updated science and solutions of global warming from a Buddhist viewpoint. Its central content is an anthology of essays, interviews, aspiration prayers and poems by eminent Buddhist teachers.

2. These teachers come from across the spectrum of Buddhist traditions. They include most, not all, of those so far interested in a Buddhist Climate Conference.

They are: HH Dalai Lama, Thrangu Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, Ato Rinpoche, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche, Ringu Tulku Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, HH Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Robert Aitken Roshi, Joanna Macy PhD, Alan Senauke Roshi, Susan Murphy Roshi, Taigen Dan Leighton Roshi, Lin Jensen, Stephanie Kaza PhD, Joseph Goldstein, Matthieu Ricard PhD, Bhikku Bodhi, and HH Gyalwang Karmapa. The above is the chronological order of contribution to the book, whose first chapter is by the Dalai Lama, and concluding chapter is by the Karmapa.

3. HH Dalai Lama has stated his interest in setting up an inter-faith conference of Buddhist and other religious leaders and scientists to address the issue. He began to speak widely about the issue on his recent tour of Japan. He has also introduced the (scientific) concept of *the Tibetan plateau as the Third Pole* into his presentation of the Tibet issue. We are awaiting further news of his plans.

4. Gyalwang Karmapa plans to address the ecological and climate crisis extensively at the Kagyu Monlam, 2008. He is preparing specific guidelines for Karma Kagyu practitioners.

5. Several Tibetan lamas consider the year 2009, leading up to the Copenhagen UN Climate Conference, to be a critical one. With reference to Vajrayana Buddhism, practitioners could use certain meditative prayers [and sponsor pujas] to protect the climate/biosphere and support a transition to renewable energy, plus negotiation of a breakthrough climate protection treaty next December. Mentioned were: *The Prayer of the 8 Noble Auspicious Ones*, *Sampa Nyurdrupma* and (accumulation of) the short *Barche Lamsel*.”