

The importance of environmental protection and practical steps to support it

[Environment](#), [Ecology](#)



Since the second half of the 20th century, the results of environmental destruction and the exploitation of natural resources have become increasingly obvious. Now, 7 billion people are sharing this planet, and scientists predict that the population will increase to 10 billion people in this century. However, we already face difficulties with dwindling natural resources and environmental pollution. There is growing evidence that some natural disasters are due to our behavior. We already face tremendous changes caused by carbon emissions and deforestation.

Glaciers are melting, and sea levels rise continuously. Our hunger for more gas, oil and water even induced earthquakes. These 1 are enough experiences to wake us up! Environmental protection H. H. the 14th Dalai Lama (the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists) and H. H. the 17th Karmapa Urgyen Trinley Dorje (the spiritual guide of the Tibetan Kagyu tradition) are strong advocates for environmental protection. Vietnamese Master Thich Nhat Hanh is also very active in this regard, only to mention a few spiritual leaders who are engaged in environmental protection. H. H.

the Dalai Lama mentioned at the Environmental Summit in Portland in May 2013 that his strong commitment to environmental protection started more than 20 years ago. In 1992 the Dalai Lama attended the first environmental conference in Rio de Janeiro and spoke about his views on universal responsibility. One year later, he was invited to an international conference, " Ecological Responsibility -a Dialogue with Buddhism" in New Delhi, India. Prominent Buddhist teachers and scientists attended this

conference. As a result they published a public appeal entitled, " For Our Universal Responsibility.

" Many talks and articles by H. H. the DalaiLama about this topic followed and are now published in 2 diverse media worldwide. These can be found on his homepage. H. H. the Karmapa has spoken for a number of years on the importance of protecting the environment for the future of this world and for the Dharma. He says, " Ever since the human race first appeared on this earth, we have used this earth heavily. It is said that ninety-nine percent of the resources and so on in this world come from the natural environment. We are using the earth until she is used up.

The earth has given us immeasurable benefit, but what have we done for the earth in return? We always ask for something from the earth, but never give her anything back. " 3 Sentient beings are totally dependent on the four elements of earth, fire, wind and water. H. H. the Karmapa says, " Both the body and mind are strongly connected to the unaltered, natural elements. " 4 We only can survive because nature and other sentient beings make our lives possible. Therefore, we need to strive to bring this awareness into our lives for our own good. We need to educate each other about the importance of protecting and caring for our environment.

Practical Steps Towards a Healthy Relationship with the Environment H. H. the Karmapa's vision is supported by an association called " Khoryug," which means " environment" in Tibetan. Formed by Tibetan monasteries in the Kagyu tradition, the association promotes environmental projects under the Karmapa's leadership. A bilingual homepage in English and Tibetan has been

established to provide information on these projects. In 2009, the Karmapa organized the first conference for environmental protection for Kagyu monasteries and Dharmacenters in Sarnath, India.

As a result of this conference, he published a booklet entitled, “ 108 Things You Can Do To Help The Environment. ” You can download this booklet, which is inspiring and helpful not only for monasteries and Buddhist centers, but also for Buddhist practitioners and non-Buddhists worldwide. I’d like to mention some things you will find in this booklet about what we can do to protect our environment from destruction: Environmental protection starts with us. We need to look at our own behavior to consider how we can support a healthy environment for this century and beyond. To start, we can do aspirational