



*A Buddhist Response to*

# THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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Wisdom Publications • Boston

Wisdom Publications  
199 Elm Street  
Somerville MA 02144 USA  
www.wisdompubs.org

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A Buddhist response to the climate emergency / edited by John Stanley, David R. Loy, and Gyurme Dorje.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-86171-605-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Global environmental change—Moral and ethical aspects. 2. Buddhism—Doctrines. I. Stanley, John, 1950– II. Loy, David, 1947– III. Gyurme Dorje.

BQ4570.E23B85 2009

294.3'377—dc22

2009008866

13 12 11 10 09

5 4 3 2 1

“The Bells of Mindfulness” reprinted from *The World We Have: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Ecology* (2008) by Thich Nhat Hanh with permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California, www.parallax.org

Cover design by Gopa&Ted2. Interior design by TLLC. Set in Bembo 12/16.

Wisdom Publications’ books are printed on acid-free paper and meet the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

Printed in the United States of America.



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## Overview of the Book

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The book begins and concludes with contributions (Parts I and VI) from the two most influential Buddhist teachers of our times: the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, and the Vietnamese master Thich Nhat Hanh. As their essays reveal, the climate emergency has become a paramount concern for both of them.

Part II provides a summary of the most recent scientific findings on the climate crisis, as well as related developments across the spectrum of environment and energy. The information is presented in a broad historical–evolutionary context, which incorporates a Buddhist perspective on how our present situation developed.

The following two sections form the heart of this collection. They offer a variety of Buddhist perspectives on the climate and sustainability crisis, by many well-known Asian (Part III) and Western (Part IV) Buddhist teachers. The first section opens with an essay by Gyalwang Karmapa and includes several aspirational prayers (monlam) by eminent Tibetan masters. Since this type of Buddhist meditative prayer may be less familiar outside Asia, Gyurme Dorje offers an explanatory preface to the section (footnotes to this section, and the translations, precede the general references on p. 279). A functional division “Asian Buddhist Perspectives” and “Western Buddhist Perspectives” was made to

structure the book. The intention here is not to create an artificial division in the one world of Buddhism, but to acknowledge how Buddhism has been transmitted in our time, and also to show how the new, global, Buddhist world is coming together over this crucial issue.

Steadily increasing awareness of the global ecological crisis and its implications means that these two parts could have been expanded indefinitely, with contributions from many other Buddhist figures. While we regret the absence of other Asian traditions in Part III, considerations of time and space placed limits on what could be included. We believe that it is important to publish this volume in 2009, the year when the United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen will decide a successor to the Kyoto treaty.

Part V reviews some major, collective responses we urgently need to implement if we are to manage and reverse the climate emergency. These solutions have intellectual, psychological, and social as well as technological dimensions. The emphasis is on scientific validity, proven efficacy, the absence of side-effects, and consistency with Buddhist values. In other words, here are solutions that work, that we can begin to actualize now. The section is not meant to be exhaustive, but to outline the direction of a rapid positive transformation of global society. We must all inform ourselves and play our part to assure a safe-climate future, for human civilization and for all the other beings who share this precious world with us.



JUST AS A MOTHER, even at the risk of her own life, protects her child, her only child, in the same way one should cultivate a measureless heart of love toward all beings. One should cultivate a measureless heart of love toward the whole world—above, below, and across—without constriction, enmity, or rivalry. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness: they call this “divine living” in this world.

—*Suttanipata*