Responding to climate change as a Bodhisattva activity – part one of three (open to all)

Posted by Tejopala on Mon, 1 February, 2016

Dear brothers and sisters in the Dhamma,

I’m writing to you about the question of climate change and our response to it as a Sangha. I believe this is a very serious ethical issue for us and that there is a lot more that we can do between us to help address it. As some of you know this subject has long been close to my heart as it has for many other Order members. I am writing to ask for your help.

My aims in writing this are (1) to help build a consensus within our Order that the climate crisis is a moral issue that we agree to take seriously and (2) that Order members agree that taking action to prevent the worst potential consequences of climate change is an integral and obvious part of what it means to practice the Dharma in our current global circumstances. I would like us to address to be part of our practice on the levels of body, speech and mind and for each of us to do whatever we can within three spheres of influence: ones own individual habits, the way we set up and run the institutions of our movement and the level collective Sangha engagement with bringing about of broader societal change. I think that nothing less than this is morally adequate to the size of the issue at hand.

That said, I am not trying to bring about one uniform response from Order members, even if that were possible. There are many ways that each person can respond with metta to this problem and my hope is that we come up with a number of these between us and cooperate with one another – in other words I value the fact that we are a Sangha and not a group.

I know this is an ambitious thing to hope for. I don’t imagine that every Order member will want to back these aims and that others may do so only after some serious thought. But I might as well be open about the fact that this is what I’m trying to bring about. I hope to do this by writing these articles, organising with other Order members who feel likewise, giving talks on the subject, helping to develop materials that can be used at our Centres, raising the issue with the International Council and by discussing it with as many people as possible at the international Order convention in August.

Having just read the words above I feel more than a bit nervous. I don’t know if I’m going to receive the kind of response I’d like to receive when people read this. This is because I know that the question of how we as a community might respond to the climate crisis is a tricky one. Opinion on it is certainly not uniform.

On the one hand there are plenty of Order members (and mitras and friends) who have raised this issue in Shabda, who marched on the recent climate protests just prior to the summit in Paris, who have participated in BAM, who have created a means of assessing the sustainability of a Buddhist Centre and who have even set up a whole retreat centre dedicated to this issue. On the other hand there are Order members who question whether spending our time on the climate problem is the best use of our resources, or if we should avoid political issues or see it as ‘social work’ rather than Dharma practice, or who think we are already doing enough simply by living relatively simple lives.

I also know that, at least outside of the Order, this topic is one that can easily lend itself at times to the worst kind of moralising. So let me say straight away that I do not wish to browbeat anyone or fall into the trap of self-righteousness. I am open to being told so if it is your view I’m doing this at all. I’m also not claiming to be perfect in my own carbon habits. For one thing I will be coming to the international convention in August and that won’t be my first long haul flight and, given the way my family is configured, probably won’t be my last. I’m aware of the contradiction this creates.

That said, I have a request to make. If climate change, or the discussion of it within our Order and movement, is something which you tend to want to switch off from or that you find annoying, or if you think that doing something about climate change is not really what the Sangha should engage in, please read this article and the two which will follow it. I am addressing these three articles in large part to those people who feel this way and I am trying to open up a genuine and mature discussion and I would value it a great deal if those Order members who feel differently from the way I do would be willing to engage with me in it.

Each of the three articles I am writing will address a distinct theme. I hope in this first article to provide a coherent overview of the climate issue. Many people will be very familiar with some or all of this, but others may not be, so I think it’s worthwhile starting right at the beginning and making sure the main facts are stated. In the second article, I will also go into the Dharmic basis, at least in as much depth as I can manage, for trying to help with the climate problem. The third article will suggest how we as a Sangha might practically best respond.

It’s worth stating my background in this area. I have worked in the environmental movement in one form or another for a large part of the past twenty years. Most of that has been in the area of energy efficiency rather than climate change directly (though the two are clearly linked). I have audited homes for their energy use, coordinated a nationwide program across Australia that did likewise and am currently working as an advisor to the Victorian state government in Melbourne on the same subject. I have managed a climate adaptation project for the Victorian government. In June 2014 I had the extreme good fortune of spending three days training in how to give Al Gore’s famous presentation on climate change during which those of us there received an excellent overview of the situation from leading climate scientists, experts in carbon trading systems, fire experts, communications trainers and one whole day with Mr Gore himself. I have read various UN reports on the subject (the Fourth and Fifth Assessment Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)).

I recently gave a presentation on this issue to the Australasian Order convention. It was a tailored version of the slideshow presentation that Al Gore gives. As I put was putting the slideshow together I wondered what image to start it with. I ended up using the image that Lokabandhu made a few years ago of Avalokitesvara out the faces of hundreds of Order members from around the world. This is where I would like to begin: the vision of the Bodhisattva, and of our Order as a compelling and meaningful manifestation of that vision. One thousand arms reach out to alleviate the suffering of all beings. Eleven heads look in all the directions of space. And the Bodhisattva does this in the gentle knowledge that everything is ultimately the clear blue sky.

The next image was a photo of the Earth from space. It is the classic beautiful shot of the blues of the ocean, the whites of the clouds and the utter black of space. Every living being that we know of and every subtle ecological relationship that creates the web of life is in that one photo. This is, surely, our field of concern and activity as aspiring Bodhisattvas.

So, what do we do, as aspiring Bodhisattvas, to respond to what climate change is doing to this beautiful world? In order to answer that, I will start by describing what climate change is, how it works and what some of the possible consequences will be depending on whether we act effectively enough or not.

This is how it works. In the course of natural events, solar radiation in the form of light waves passes through our atmosphere from space. Most of this radiation is absorbed by the Earth and warms it. Some energy is then radiated back out into space by the Earth in the form of infrared rays. Some of this outgoing infrared radiation is trapped by the Earth’s atmosphere as if it were a greenhouse and this warms the atmosphere. This is all natural and has nothing to do with human activity.

However, the exact amount of heat that is trapped in this way is determined by the levels of certain gases in the upper atmosphere. These gases are called the ‘greenhouse gases’ as they determine the extent of the so-called greenhouse effect described above. The gases are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and a group of fluorinated gases. The higher the level of these gases the greater the amount of heat that is trapped. Since the industrial revolution the level of these gases has increased to levels unprecedented for hundreds of thousands of years. The main cause of this is human activity in the form of burning coal, oil and gas. So far, the global average temperature has increased by about 0.9 degrees Centigrade (1.6 degrees Fahrenheit). If we continue to burn coal, oil and gas at present levels our best models predict an increase in average global temperatures of at least four degrees Centigrade and possibly as high as six (between 6.4 and 9.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

At first glance this could look relatively unimportant. The world gets a bit warmer. So what? The consequences are, however, as is very well known, anything but. Yet it bears more than a little reflection just what the consequences would actually be if we carried on burning fossil fuels at present rates.

According to the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report “anthropogenic (human-caused) warming could lead to some impacts that are abrupt or irreversible, depending on the magnitude of climate change…. As global temperature increase exceeds about 3.5C, model predictions suggest significant extinctions (40-70% of species assessed) around the globe.” The IPCC also predicts more than 3 billion people experiencing water stress, widespread mortality of coral systems, decreases in cereal crop productivity, more than 15 million people at risk of coastal flooding each year, increasing malnutrition, increasing diarrhoea and infectious diseases including malaria and dengue fever, a huge increase in droughts and heat waves, a massive increase in forest fires, a huge increase in the number of storms like Supertyphoon Haiyan and Hurricanes Sandy and Katrina, sufficient rise in sea level to wipe out whole island nations and destroy major cities like London, New York and Shanghai, millions of people dead, hundreds of millions of refugees, acidification of the ocean and whole regions of the planet that effectively become uninhabitable of the planet because it’s no longer possible to grow food and it’s too hot to work outside. According to www.cal-adapt.org (a collaboration between various Californian government agencies and major universities such as Berkeley as well as Google and the U.S. Geological Survey) an increase of 4C would lead to the average number of days in inland California of temperatures of 102 degrees Fahrenheit (38.9C) would go from four such days per year on average to 30 to 60 days a year by 2100. You don’t need to think too hard to imagine the effect in terms of droughts and fires. Essentially, the whole of the fragile web of ecology that sustains life on Earth being massively disrupted. All of this would be irreversible and would last for thousands of years.

This is deeply disturbing stuff. Moreover, as I will demonstrate shortly, we have about the next fifteen years to make sufficient changes to our carbon burning habits to avoid an increase of between 1.5 and 2C, which is the point at which the consequences of our actions become dramatically worse. And, given that almost every aspect of our lives from crop fertilisers to electricity generation to how we travel is entwined with fossil fuels the way a cancer becomes entwined within a body, the complexity of what we need to do to address this is utterly enormous. There is no one single answer. It requires action on every front imaginable. In short, we are in an unprecedented race against time. And, given the fact that it is the systems that we all participate in that are causing this, there is no moral basis for opting out of this race. This cannot be said by anyone to be “not my issue.”

Why do all these consequences ensue? Each one is a result of the increased heat. Let me go into some of the effects of the heat that have already been felt.

In addition to the increase in average temperatures the number of very warm days have increased. In the middle of the twentieth century (the period 1951 to 1980) 0.1% of the surface of the Earth at any one time experienced “extremely hot” temperatures (three standard deviations or more outside the norm). By the period from 2001 to 2011 the same temperature range was found over 10% of the surface of the Earth.

Ninety per cent of the extra heat goes into the ocean. As temperatures increase, more moisture evaporates into the atmosphere. This in turn means that downpours get bigger. All around the world we have seen an increase in flooding. Those in the UK hardly need reminding of recent floods. This is a pattern that has played out everywhere from India to Queensland to Greece to China to the Iowa. In June 2013 huge floods affected Calgary and ironically affected the headquarters of oil companies in charge of the notorious tar sands extraction in Alberta including BP and Shell. Even the recent historically massive snowstorm that hit the Eastern USA was consistent with this pattern. Snow does not fall when temperatures get too cold. It only falls in a certain temperature range. It falls in greater amounts when there is more moisture in the air to start with.

In addition to greater downpours the increase in ocean temperatures and warmer air lead to more energy overall in the climate system. This results in greater wind speeds and more ferocious storms. When supertyphoon Haiyan hit the Philippines on November 7th 2013 the sea surface temperature was in places 5C (9F) higher than normal for that time of year. The result was the most high-energy storm system ever to make landfall. And in March of last year when Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu I could only think of friends in Auckland, New Zealand who come from Vanuatu, and of the places I had seen on Efate and Moso islands a few years earlier. One friend posted before and after pictures on Facebook taken by her friends there of whole hills where the hills were covered in trees and then suddenly weren’t. I knew that the airport and this hospital were out of action. I felt desperate to help.

Sadly, the same increase in temperature that leads to greater precipitation in some places also leads to increase evaporation on land masses in other places. This means droughts. Again, around the world there has been an increase in the number and length of droughts. By May 2014 the whole of the state of California was in a drought that could be categorised as at least ‘severe’ and 25% was in an ‘exceptional’ drought. In May 2011 dry earth was seen in the wide riverbed of the Loire River near the Anjou-Bretagne bridge in Ancenis in western France. The French environment minister said that France was in a ‘situation of crisis’ and imposed curbs on water consumption in a third of France’s administrative departments. Photographs of the land were more reminiscent of Sudan than France. This pattern has played out in many places.

The increase in temperature creates more heat waves and also combines with the drier land then combines to create more forest fires. In 2009, when Melbourne suffered the infamous Black Saturday fires, more people in fact died from the heat wave than from the fire itself. I heard this from the former Victorian Fire Service Commissioner. All around the world we have seen more heat waves, such as the one that hit Europe, especially France, in 2003 and which turned the grass in London’s Victoria Park to dust. I have seen the new growth bravely making its way back on the foothills of the Rockies in Colorado after the 2013 forest fires there and every summer my iPhone gives me alerts as to the bushfires in my area here in Melbourne.

The places that will be the worst hit by heat waves will be those already prone to them and which are least able to afford adequate shelter from there – central India will certainly be very badly affected, for example.

Then there is the effect on food production. In August 2010 the increase in smoke from massive fires in Russia led to a spike in the amount of poisonous carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, leading to crop failures. Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan halted grain exports. This led to a spike in food prices around the world and consequent riots in Pakistan and as far away as Panama.

Of course, increases in temperature mean melting glaciers and polar ice caps. We have already seen large parts of the West Antarctic ice sheet break off. Anyone who wants to see actual footage of an area the size of Manhattan breaking off a glacier in Greenland should watch the film ‘Chasing Ice’. This in turn will lead to rising sea levels. Already, high tides in Miami regularly cause floods. Whether we are able to avoid an increase in sea levels that would put island nations like Tuvalu underwater is really not known. It depends on what we do now.

As for infectious diseases, the reason that climate change has already started to cause an increase in malaria and dengue fever is that the mosquitoes that spread these diseases are able to survive further and further from the equator and at lower altitudes as the temperature range they need spreads. A larger part of Australia is already affected by these diseases than used to be the case.

I hope by now I’ve managed to communicate as sense of both the scale of the problem and the fact that some of the consequences are happening already. I have not yet addressed the question of how we know that this is being caused by human activity and what the methods are by which we know that temperatures really have been increasing.

First, though, let’s be clear that the scientific debate on this issue has been closed for some time now. The IPCC’s Fifth Assessment report said that it was “unequivocal” that climate change was happening and “almost certain” that human-induced climate change was happening. There are technical definitions of both these terms. “Almost certain” means a confidence level of 95% or greater. It needs to be said that science is never 100% certain about anything. In May 2013 John Cook et al published the results of a survey of papers on this subject in Environmental Letters showing that 97.2% of climate scientists agreed that human activity is causing the climate to change. That survey included some older papers. Since then the consensus has grown stronger. Between November 2012 and December 2013 there were 9137 authors who published articles in peer-reviewed publications. Of these 9136 agreed that climate change was being caused by humans. One did not. That’s 0.01%. Every national scientific academy of every major country in the world agrees that we are causing this problem. Not one does not.

Just as an aside, I have often wondered just what it takes to get that many scientists to agree to anything, let alone the reality of climate change. Scientists are people who disagree with one another all the time. Anyone who has ever known a few scientists will know they don’t generally hang around with one another having a prolonged agreement. If anything should alert us to the reality of the situation, perhaps it’s this.

Even so, just in case anyone would like more evidence as to how we know this problem is real, here is a quick snapshot.

One of the ways we know what CO2 and temperature levels have been like in the past is from ice core samples. This is core sample, typically removed from an ice sheet in Antarctica or Greenland. The properties of geological layers of ice dating back hundreds of thousands of years can be analysed (using isotopic analysis) to create a climatic record which shows us both the atmospheric composition and the local temperature over time. One pattern stands out: temperatures go up and down in almost perfect sync with CO2 levels. And in the last 800,000 years the level of CO2 in the atmosphere has never gone much over 300 parts per million. Last year it exceeded 400 parts per million. This means we can expect a temperature increase greater than we have seen on Earth in nearly a million years.

To track temperature changes on a short time scale scientists use data from tree rings. In temperate regions, trees only grow during the growing season and the length of this season each year depends on the climate. Trees generally grow in wetter and more favourable temperature conditions and tend not to grow so much when they are stressed. In the last 150 years people have also gathered daily records of sea surface temperatures using water samples taken at sea all around the world. More recently this has been augmented using satellite data. All data sources point in the same direction – an increase in temperature.

Of the sixteen hottest years ever recorded, fifteen have taken place this century. The odds of that taking place randomly must be tiny. The hottest year ever was 2014 until last year when it was beaten by 2015.

Even if we know that scientists agree that climate change is real, caused by human activity, causing considerable damage and that it will cause truly catastrophic consequences if we don’t address it, there is still the question of just how urgent it is. It is nearly always spoken of in the future tense. Yet the most critical years in terms of doing something about it are the next ten to twenty.

As I’ve mentioned, in order to avoid the worst consequences of climate change the total increase in average global temperatures need to stay under at least 2C and probably under 1.5 above those experienced in the pre-industrial era. We’re already increased this by 0.9 degrees. So we have somewhere between another 0.6 to 1.4C left before things get very serious indeed. So, how much more carbon could be burned before we reach this level? In l June 2012, Bill McKibben from the campaigning organisation 350.org published an article in Rolling Stone magazine that answered this question. The answer was another 550 gigatonnes (550 billion tonnes). According to the IPCC the amount left in our collective ‘budget’ was actually somewhere between 550 gigatonnes and 1100 gigatonnes, depending on the level of risk you’re willing to take. The lower figure gives us an 80% chance of staying under a 2C ceiling. The higher one only a 60% chance. At this stage this seems a bit like Russian roulette. McKibben went on to mention two more crucial numbers, however. The UK’s Carbon Tracker Institute had recently worked out how much more CO2 would be emitted if the world burned its known reserves of coal, oil and gas. The answer was around 2600 gigatonnes. He also pointed out that the world was emitting around 50 gigatonnes a year. From this two conclusions become immediately clear. First, we cannot afford to burn some of the known reserves of fossil fuels. This is stuff that people are already trading futures prices on. We need to keep the vast majority of it in the ground. It is simply unburnable. Second, we are heading towards blowing our worldwide carbon budget at an alarming rate. If we took 550 gigatonnes as the limit that would give us eleven years and the clock started over three years ago. As of today, emissions levels are still pretty much the same.

Amongst all of this, there are still some very powerful vested interests trying to do whatever they can to prevent any real change to business as usual. The same lobbyists and public relations companies that tried to slow down action on tobacco have been using the same techniques they used for that dubious cause. If you want to learn more about this I recommend seeing the documentary movie ‘Merchants of Doubt’. The most well and longstanding financial backers of these efforts known are the brothers David and Charles Koch, American billionaires who own considerable coal interests, who have pledged to spend $900 million US funding candidates they prefer in the upcoming presidential election.

Any fair minded person at this point would, I think, be pretty alarmed. Facts like this can be utterly terrifying. The danger is that one can jump straight from inaction due to too little knowledge to paralysed inaction due to too much. I have the greatest respect for those people working in the climate movement and who have not succumbed to the latter.

There are in my view, despite all of this, considerable reasons for hope. Worldwide, the market for renewable energy is growing exponentially. Solar power is anticipated, at current growth rates, to become the largest source of electricity in the world by 2050 and to double by about 2020. Wind is also growing rapidly. There are around 80 countries now where rooftop solar works out to cost less, allowing for all costs, than buying off the grid. This situation, known as grid parity, is likely to cause further dramatic changes as more people stop using the grid and the cost of maintaining it gets passed onto fewer customers, meaning that the price difference becomes ever greater. This could further accelerate the already high rate of solar installation.

There is also a major worldwide movement of divesting from fossil fuel investments. This movement started only a few years ago on college campuses in the USA. Today, both individuals and institutions are getting their money out of anything that emits carbon. Nearly every form of banking or other investment has some money in coal, oil or gas somewhere in its portfolio. Universities like Stanford and the Australian National University have divested as have religious organisations like the Uniting Church in Australia. Even the Rockefeller Foundation has announced that it’s divesting and they pretty much invented the oil business! Individuals are changing banks and their pension fund providers. The effect of this movement has already been felt. In Australia, where Indian coal giant Adani wants to build a new mega coal mine in the Galilee Basin in Queensland, one financial institution after another has declined to back the project. In large part this is no doubt due to a long term drop in coal prices – itself an encouraging trend – but some of it can be attributed arguably to a reticence to be seen to be backing a coal mine which would emit only slightly less than the whole of Germany. The divestment movement is making a pariah of the fossil fuel industries, particularly coal.

At the same time, mainstream financial institutions have been talking for the past few years now about fossil fuel investments becoming ‘stranded assets’ as the reality of the impossibility of burning existing reserves becomes more keenly felt. These institutions include the Bank of England and the European Central Bank. In addition, investment experts in the coal market are saying that it’s now just a matter of time before a major investor dumps its coal stocks and that there will be a sudden stampede (see the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s documentary ‘The End of Coal’ from their Four Corners program).

At the level of direct action, people around the world are joining a growing movement of ‘blockading’ major new fossil projects – literally standing in front of machinery and otherwise physically blocking these projects from getting off the ground. The most well known of these was the movement to stop the proposed Keystone XL pipeline from the Alberta tar sands to the Gulf of Mexico. In November, after years of such pressure, President Obama finally rejected plans to build this pipeline. This pressure involved a number of arrests including that of James Hansen, the climate scientist whose testimony to the US Congress in 1989 sparked the modern climate movement and gave rise to the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In Australia, a similar movement is fighting to stop the proposed coal mine in the Galilee Basin. In Germany the Ende Gelande movement (the name means “here and no further”) has been trying to stop large coal mines in Rhineland.

In addition, there are now a number of places where fracking has been banned: Tasmania, France, New York, much of Scotland and Wales, to my knowledge.

The Pope has of course released his encyclical (called ‘Laudato Si’) which is an astonishingly far-reaching critique of consumer capitalism and its effect on both the environment and the human condition.

Of course, most recently, world leaders signed the Paris Agreement on climate change. This was an important start. It contained agreeing to finance the transition to clean energy and for developing nations to adapt to the tune of $100 billion a year. This, like other targets in the agreement, will be reviewed every five years and is regarded as a floor - the figure can only go up. This will provide considerable momentum for the transition towards clean energy. However, there is no obligation on any one country to provide a specific amount towards this total. The agreement does send a clear signal to investors as to the way the world is heading though.

It also contains a much more ambitious overall goal than anyone expected: all countries have agreed to aim to keep temperature increases to under 2C and doing everything possible to keep it to 1.5C.

That said, there is a major discrepancy between this aim and what each country has undertaken to do towards it. Under the Agreement each country made its own individual pledge and when these are combined their sum total put us on track for a roughly 3C increase or more, which would be an utter catastrophe. The hope - and at the moment it is only a hope – is that these pledges will be increased over time and that they will be tightened soon enough keep the increase in global average temperatures under the stated aim of 1.5C at most The basis for this hope is that the contributions each country has pledged to make are due to be reviewed every five years. Whether the reviews combine sufficiently with the new finance for renewable energy grassroots pressure to create more meaningful policy commitments from individual countries remains to be seen. The situation is probably best summed up by Bill McKibben from 350.org who said “This agreement won’t save the planet. It may have saved the chance to save the planet (if we all fight like hell in the years ahead)”.

So, that concludes my overview of the climate crisis as things stand. I’m well aware that I have not yet started to address directly some of the concerns I have heard over the years as to whether, noble as involvement in this cause may be, this is something that our movement could or should involve itself it. That will be the subject of my second article. I hope I have at least made it clear in writing this though that there is a major challenge to each of us in terms of our practice of the first precept and metta.

I know that I have also yet not made any practical suggestions as to what we could practically do to help. As I’ve mentioned, that will be what I discuss in the third article. I’d like to say just a few things about this now, in brief. Mostly I’d like to ask you to ask what you think can be done in the three spheres of influence I’ve suggested: the level of personal action, the level of the institutions of our movement, and the level of direct involvement in societal change.

In particular I’d like to ask you to consider financial divestment from fossil fuels of any banking, investments or retirement funds you or your Centre may have. You may be surprised at how heavily invested even the most bland and normal financial institutions are in this business. I have recently changed both my superannuation provider and my bank and it feels really good to know that my money is only being used for ethical purposes and that none of it is making this problem worse. I know that the Sydney Buddhist Centre has decided to move its finances, including bank accounts, away from financial institutions that invest in fossil fuels.

I’d also like to encourage much more direct involvement in bringing about societal change. I was very heartened that a number of people from the Triratna community got involved in the protests that took place all over the world in the days before the Paris summit. In some places Order members wore kesas. Here in Melbourne about thirty of us including twelve or more Order members marched under a large banner painted by Dharmamati which carried the words ‘Buddhists for Climate Action’. I was very proud to be part of a strong Buddhist presence on this march as we walked towards the Victorian parliament with 50,000 others. I heard that the Dublin Buddhist Centre made it a primary activity on their Sangha Day. More recently the Dublin Sangha held a protest outside the Dail, the Irish Parliament, in the lead-up to the election there. They called their event ‘System change not climate change’ and they were asking voters to consider climate change as a major priority in deciding how to cast their vote.

These are some of the kinds of activities I think we could do a lot more of. There are many others. Please check out Amalaketu’s Sustainable Buddhist Centre Certification Scheme – a straightforward and effective tool for assessing how sustainable your Centre is. And have a look at the some of the very helpful resources that the Eco Dharma team have put together on www.ecodharma.com

I hope I have given you reason to reflect further on this issue and I hope that this article and those that follow will stimulate a healthy debate and discussion. I very much hope that we do arrive in the not too distant future at a consensus that the climate crisis is a moral issue that we agree to take seriously and that taking action to prevent the worst potential consequences of climate change is an integral and obvious part of what it means to practice the Dharma in our current global circumstances. Please contact me if you would like to discuss this on tejopala@gmail.com and please do reply in these pages if you have a strong view one way or the other. And tell me what you think I’ve got wrong, if that’s what you think.

With much metta to all,

Tejopala