

2014 Pyeongchang Buddhist Declaration for Life-Peace

-- All Beings are Buddha in Their True Nature -

By viewing nature as a resource to be controlled and exploited, humans have largely destroyed the habitats of animals and plants, thereby driving them to the brink of extinction. This crisis comes back to us as in karmic form, posing in turn a threat to our very survival. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has played a significant role in preserving biodiversity. However, it should be noted that the Convention is ethically limited as it also assumes living organisms to be an exploitable resource for economic benefit

In Pyeongchang, the venue of the COP 12, Korean Buddhists are to repent for the life-destroying activities undertaken so far and instead strive to create the momentum to restore our oneness with all living organisms. By doing so, we should end the prevailing culture based upon violent domination over nature and build a civilization of the living, where nature and humans co-exist in peace.

Saving life in crisis is an urgent, universal task. The moment to commence the walk to this goal is now. We cannot afford the luxury of further delay. Through the daily activities of individuals as well as cooperation at the local, national and global levels, we should strive together to build a sustainable all-encompassing society of life.

Woljeongsa monastery in Pyeongchang, where COP 12 is taking place, is an ancient monastery extending back one millennium and containing the 40th Power of Vow, through which the Bodhisattva of Compassion aspired to purify the world by cooling all earthly fever. To seek the wisdom to live in harmony with all forms of life as well as cool the fever of Earth, Korean Buddhists promulgate the following 2014

Buddhist Declaration for Life-Peace.

Every Life is A Universe.

The universe is the Indra's net, where each bead sheds light all over the world. All in one and one in all exist as a great life that cannot be parsed. A life as small as dust remains a creature that the entire Universe works in unison to make, and nowhere is there a small being that does not shine across the Universe. All forms of life are interconnected and interdependent, helping all in mutual survival. All manifestations of life are inherently and innately noble and precious, regardless of their necessity or usefulness for humans. Therefore, we cannot put a price-tag on them nor should we abuse them as a means for production or profit. Without justification, they should be neither harmed nor killed. Humans should always be prudent and humble in the face of nature and life.

All Lives are Equal.

Life embraces not only sentient beings but also non-sentient beings such as sunlight, air, wind, earth and water. Based upon causal relations, they have temporal continuity from the past to the present and to the future. Therefore, they are equal, without either superiority or inferiority, and not being distinguished by good or evil. We must consider fairness for life not only in the present but also in the future. We should realize that equality is complete only through the ethics of mutual care and respect.

We Should Create A Culture that Sanctifies the Preservation of Life.

Buddhism, as a religion of the forest, has long been in communion with the natural world. In Korean culture, forests or mountains without temples are hard to imagine. From its origins, Korean Buddhism viewed land itself as life and built temples to revive the spirit of the earth, thereby laying the foundation for the forests of national parks. As such, tradition and culture in harmony with nature is the source for biological diversity and ecological abundance. A culture that saves lives should be based on the power of local people.

Therefore, we should not forget that the cultural efforts of indigenous and local people to preserve biodiversity paved the way to biodiversity conservation.

Humans are Responsible for the Peace of All Life.

The crisis facing the existence of life today is rooted in human civilization that has wrongfully divided and demarcated the world that inherently cannot be separated or disconnected from its nature. We, as members of humanity, have wrongfully perceived finite resources as infinite, ruling them as if we were lords of Earth. We should first repent for our having exploited all beings in existence to satisfy our desires. We should realize that we are able to live only by the grace of all living things and thus lead a "life of requital" to express appreciation for and return of their grace. All forms of life have the right to happiness and peace, and we as humans have a responsibility to uphold that right. We should restore the bonds that we have severed. We are responsible for establishing a sustainable eco-circular society by protecting the equality of and right to life.

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Life-Peace Loving Buddhists in Korean