

Global Warming, Our Inevitable Fate? Some Buddhist Perspectives

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Introduction

The issue of global warming is now extensively debated around the world and increasingly occupies people's attention. This is perhaps owing to recent natural catastrophes witnessed in different parts of the planet in which the world's scientists have expressed their concerns about the imminent environmental crisis, believed to be caused by man's upsetting of the natural balance. From a Buddhist perspective, this essay attempts to consider how the core Buddhist teachings can have a bearing on this global issue which is threatening human-wellbeing worldwide. There are many interesting points to be considered and some of them might have already been raised by other authors. In this essay, however, the main point is Buddhist teaching and the concept of fatalism. So the question is raised as follows: is global warming our inevitable fate? If so, what is the Buddhist attitude towards this fate?

This essay is divided into four parts. To depict global warming, first, I will discuss some background information regarding the global warming phenomenon. In the second part I will deal with an analysis of this phenomenon according to the principle of Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*), however, other Buddhist tenets will be mentioned and referenced where it seems relevant. In the third part which is central, an argument on Buddhism and fatalism will be debated. Herein, the teaching of kamma will be analyzed in comparison to and contrasted with the concept of fatalism. Last but not least, from the proceeding discussion, the essay will culminate with some Buddhist approaches towards the global warming crisis.

What is global warming?

Global warming is not a new issue, there has been much in the media about this subject and it has been already debated on a worldwide scale, thus I do not think it is necessary to go into detail. In addition, I am not an expert in the subject, just someone with a basic interest in this subject and who sees that there might be some Buddhist perspectives worth exploring. However, in order to, however, review our existing knowledge and to give some information to those who have recently come across this issue, a precise definition is needed. This shall be the ground for looking at the problem from Buddhist perspectives and the reference point for global warming in relation to Buddhist teachings.

In response to the above question, 'global warming' is a term invented by scientists to refer to a steady increase in the earth's temperature which is 'caused by polluting gases such as carbon dioxides which are collecting in the air around the Earth

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and preventing heat escaping into space'². Global warming is a natural phenomenon documented climate research show that most of the warming in the past half century has resulted from manmade greenhouse gases and this phenomenon has caused the main consequence of climate change'.³ At first, global warming was a subject of controversy with some commentators suggesting that global warming has stopped. there has also been political debate as to whether human activities really cause warming. From a report of an environmental research organization, however, the evidence that global temperatures are rising is clear and that humans are largely responsible for this rise.⁴ So the subject now moves toward questions of how best to respond. In brief, global warming has been caused by the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases such as methane (CH₄), both of which are released by the natural ecosystem and human activities e.g. industrial, transportation and agricultural gases. The global warming results in climate change which in recent years has led to severe natural disasters such as hurricanes, cyclones, droughts, forest fire, rising tides, and flood. To avoid the worst consequences, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which consists of experts and scientists from 130 countries, has proposed the solution of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A plethora of reports, research and studies on causes, effects and suggested solutions for global warming, have been published over the past few years, all of which cannot be included in this short essay. Thus, I propose now to concentrate on the theme of the Buddhist viewpoint towards global warming crisis. Having considered causes and effects of global warming, we shall next turn our attention to how Buddhism looks at this phenomenon.

Global Warming and Dependent Origination

As I mentioned earlier my primary intention is to look at the global warming problem from Buddhist perspectives, thus, scientific debate on global warming will be referenced only when the issue is relevant. The principle to be used here as my main axiom for discussion and analysis of global warming and Buddhism is, Dependent Origination or to use the Pali term, '*Idappacayatā*'. The reason why the principle of Dependent Origination is chosen is, because it presents us with a way to look at problem by way of cause and effect. Moreover, it suggests the way to solve the problem. The short formula can be described by way of arising as "When there is this, that is (*Imassmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti*), with the arising of this, that arises (*Imassuppādā idaṃ upajjati*)" while by way of cessation going "When this is not, neither is that (*Imasmimā sati idaṃ na hoti*), with the cessation of this, that ceases (*Imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati*)."⁵ From a cursory glimpse, it is simple enough to say that excessive amount of carbon emission causes the rise of global warming. Because the globe is warms and the world's climate changes and fluctuates and this brings about natural catastrophe leading to loss of life and property. This is just a superficial take on this. If we, however, look beyond the surface from the

² Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary CD 3rd version.

³ <http://environment.nationalgeographic.co.uk/environment/global-warming/gw-real.html>

⁴ Met Office Halder Centre, *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change*, p. 4.

⁵ Vsm.3/375 as quoted by Payutto in 'Buddhadhamma' p.79.

Buddhist point of view, the questions raised is, what are the hidden causes of this excessive emission of carbon? This problem can again be studied by the teaching of Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*).

Briefly stated, Dependent Origination consists of twelve stages: ignorance, karmic action, consciousness, body-and-mind, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth and finally, old age and death. These twelve stages can be described in both forward and backward ways with each capable of being the cause and effect for each other. Because of ignorance, beings perform their karmic action in various ways, the karmic action then causes consciousness that allows beings to perceive what they see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think. This consciousness forms the body and mind as complete beings equipped with six senses providing beings with the facility to make contact with the outside world. Having contacted with five classical physical objects: visible objects, sounds, smell, taste, touch and mind object as thought, which then produces three kinds of feelings: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral causing beings to crave more of the pleasant ones, oppose and try to escape the unpleasant ones and have equanimity towards neutral ones. As beings experience pleasant feeling, they generate craving and when this craving is stronger it matures into clinging 'wherein the desire starts to become a "project." Plans are made, actions are taken and this culminates in becoming'⁶. By 'becoming' here, we mean the formation of self as a person or being performing various behaviors (birth) and all beings that were born are subject to experience ageing and death. Thus this whole mass of suffering comes into being.

The teaching of Dependent Origination can also be summarized as the triple round, rounds of defilement, kamma and result as follows, 'ignorance, craving and clinging are the round of defilement, formations (kammic action) and becoming are the round of kamma, consciousness, mentality-materiality, sixfold base (sense), contact and feeling are the round of result'⁷. This triple round will spin, resolving for ever as long as the round of defilement is not cut off. In brief, because beings have defilement, they thus perform kammic action and receive a result as consciousness, body and mind, six senses, contact and feeling.

As both the teaching of Dependent Origination and the Triple Round are analyzed here to consider the cause of global warming crisis, so now shall we move our attention back to what I mentioned earlier. In the language of Dependent Origination, the cause of the global warming can be tracked as follows: because of ignorance, we perform various actions, because of actions we are aware of sensations: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. Because of the awareness of sensation, body and mind are formed (the animated organism) ready to function. Because of the presence of body and mind, six senses are equipped. Because of the sense bases, there is a contact between awareness and the outside world and this contact generates feeling of pleasure, pain or indifference. As the feelings are caused by the sense contact, we then have a desire to seek pleasurable sense objects and consume products made from petro-chemicals and

⁶ <http://www.arrowriver.ca/dhamma/climate.html> (23/02/09)

⁷ Vism.581 p.672

produce carbon dioxide as a by-product.⁸ To put the process in line with the traditional formula, it can be stated thus:

Because of sense-desire there arises consumerism, because of consumerism there arises commodity production, because of commodity production, there arises resource extraction, because of resource extraction there arises green-house gas release and because of green-house gas release there arises climate change.⁹

Dependent Origination also offers the other way round (cessation) to help us understand how the problem comes to an end. We may begin with controlling our sense desire by being content with what we need, not what we want. Then consumerism is reduced, less consumerism reduces commodity production, less production brings less resources extraction. With less resources extraction, the emission of green-house gas is reduced and hopefully it will decrease the dangers predicted as the consequences of climate change. The solution to the climate change problem as recommended by the IPCC is to reduce green-house gas emissions by 25 percent to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and by at least half by 2050. If this action somehow fails, as most people are concerned it will, climate change is going to be larger and more difficult to deal with, then the predicted dangers may happen and this may lead to the end of our world as we know it.

The forgoing discussion presents the problem in view of the principle of cause and effect helping us to understand this global predicament from the Buddhist perspective. The dangers from climate changes, as we discussed above, are only estimated from severer natural catastrophes the world has encountered in recent years. If these catastrophes become more frequent and severe, then global warming might be seen as an indication of doomsday. Science and Buddhism precisely state that the world will eventually come to an end one day. If so, the world's destruction is inevitable. Buddhism, however, is different from science in that the world's destruction is seen as a common phenomenon; the world is of the nature to arise, have being and decline in conformity with the teaching of impermanence, and there is a chance for the world to be reformed whereas science does not yet confirm its reformation. According to the *Kuddhakanikāya Itivuttaka Catukanipata*, there are four kinds of kappa (eon)¹⁰: *saṁvattakappa*, the eon that the cosmos is getting destroyed by fire, water and wind, *saṁvattadhāyīkappa*, the eon of emptiness until the reformation of cosmos, *vivattakappa*, the eon of reformation until it is mature and, lastly, *vivattadhāyīkappa*, the eon of maturation to degeneration again. We are now in *saṁvattakappa*, the eon of destruction. The Buddha mentioned how the earth is destroyed by fire in the *Sattasuriyasutta*, a discourse on seven suns when he wished to teach the monks about the impermanence of conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*). 'Though the earth (*Sineru* = mountain) is large, when a long period of time has passed, there will be no rain for many years, for many hundred, thousand and ten thousand years. Then plants and grass will wither and die, so is the way of all conditioned things. When a longer period of time has passed, the second sun will appear causing small rivers, small ponds everywhere to dry up ...when the third sun appears, big rivers like the

⁸ <http://www.arrowriver.ca/dhamma/climate.html> (23/02/09)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Anguttara-Nikaya Part II p. 142.

Ganges, *Yamunā*, *Aciravadī*, *Sarabhū* and *Mahī* will all dry up....when the fourth sun appears, the big sources of rivers will dry up....when the fifth sun appears, seas in the oceans will subside as there will be so little water left....when the sixth sun appears, smoke will emit from the earth...and when the seven sun appears, the whole earth and *Sineru* mountain will be burnt, and while burning, neither ashes nor soot will be found... so is the way of conditioned things.....¹¹

To see how the world is destroyed in detail, Buddhagosa, the great commentator on Theravada Buddhist canonical texts, described in the *Visuddhimagga*, Path of Purification (XII, 32-63 pp.456-462 [415]) that:

Now it should be understood how its destruction and reconstitution come about thus. On the occasion when the eon is destroyed by fire, first of all a great cloud heralding the eon's destruction appears, and there is a great downpour all over the hundred thousand million world-spheres. People are delighted; they bring out all their seeds and sow them. But when the sprouts have grown enough for an ox to graze, then not a drop of rain falls any more even when asses bray. Rain is withheld from then on. This is what the Blessed One referred to when he said 'Bhikkhus, an occasion 'comes when for many years, for many hundred years, for 'many thousand years, for many hundred thousands year, 'there is no rain' (A.iv, 100). Beings that live by rain die and are reborn in the Brahma World.

How the world is destroyed by water? Buddhagosa goes on to say:

A great cloud of caustic waters (*khārudaka*-caustic waters) appears. At first it rains very gently, but it goes on to rain with gradually great deluges, pouring down upon the hundred thousand million world-spheres. As soon as they are touched by the caustic waters the earth, the mountains, etc., melt away, and the waters are supported all round by winds.....herein, the period from the time of the great cloud heralding the eon's destruction up till the ceasing of the eon destroying waters constitutes one incalculable phenomenon. That from the ceasing of the waters up till the great cloud of rehabilitation constitutes the second incalculable phenomenon. That from the great cloud of rehabilitation.....

Lastly the world will be destroyed by wind as Buddhagosa goes on to say:

Here a wind arises in order to destroy the eon. First of all it lifts up the coarse flue, then the fine flue, then the fine sand, coarse sand, gravel, stones, etc. until it lifts up stones as big as a catafalque, and great trees standing in uneven places. They are swept from the earth up into the sky, and instead of falling down again they are broken to bits there and cease to exist. Then eventually wind arises from underneath the great earth and overturns the earth, flinging it into space. The earth splits into fragments measuring a hundred leagues, two, three, four, five hundred leagues, and they cease to exist. The World-sphere Mountains, and the

¹¹ *Anguttara-Nikaya* Part IV pp.100-103.

Mount Sineru are wrenched up and cast into space, where they crash against each other till they are broken to bits and disappear.

There might be the question why the world is destroyed this way. According to Buddhagosa, the beings' defilements: greed, hatred and delusion, the three roots of all evil deeds, give force to the world's destruction as he describes thus:

When greed is more conspicuous, it (the world) is destroyed by fire. When hate is more conspicuous, it is destroyed by waters--though some say that it is destroyed by fire when hate is more conspicuous, and by water when greed is more conspicuous. And when delusion is more conspicuous, it is destroyed by wind.¹²

From what is described in the Vissuddhimagga, it can be said that the moral degeneration of human beings has an impact on nature. In reality, the world is degenerating in accordance with the law of impermanence; moral degeneration might be considered as the factor that speeds up this degeneration. When sense-desire becomes conspicuous the environment is destroyed to please man's unlimited wants, as a result, it brings about suffering in the form of natural catastrophe. Referring to the dangerous consequences of climate change as scientists estimated, if they are real, then according to Buddhist teaching, the global warming crisis indicates the world's destruction by fire. The forgoing discussion implies that global warming is inevitable and will bring the world to an end one day. Does this phenomenon sound fatalistic or determined by something? In response to this question, next we will discuss fatalism, determinism and Buddhism.

Fatalism, determinism and Buddhism: Different or the same?

Before going into further discussion, it is worth looking at some background information about fatalism and determinism. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, fatalism is defined as 'the belief that people cannot change the way events will happen and that events, especially bad ones, cannot be avoided'.¹³ Scott (2001) gives a similar definition that it is 'a belief that events are determined by fate. Fatalism is a belief that we have to accept the outcome of events, and that we cannot do anything that will change the outcome, because events are determined by something over which we have no control'¹⁴. Simon Blackburn has defined fatalism as 'the doctrine that human action has no influence on events. To make it easier to understand, he further gives an example of a bullet 'either a bullet has my number on it or it does not; if it does, then there is no point taking precautions for it will kill me anyhow; if it does not then there is no point taking precautions for it is not going to kill me; hence either way there is no point taking precautions.' The dilemma ignores the highly likely possibility that whether the bullet has your number on it depends on whether you take precautions.¹⁵ This sounds like the expressions 'what will happen will happen anyway, so there's no need to worry or take any precautions' or 'there is a solution to all problems, if there is

¹² Visuddhimagga XIII 64 p. 462.

¹³ Cambridge University, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (CD 3rd edition), (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

¹⁴ Alex Scott 2001. The Implications of Fatalism <http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/fatalism.html> 27/03/09

¹⁵ Simon Blackburn, Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 137.

not, then it is pointless to worry'. There is another doctrine that is often confused with fatalism, that is determinism, which by itself carries no implications that human action is ineffectual. According to Blackburn again:

Determinism is a doctrine that every event has a cause. The usual explanation of this is that for every event, there is some antecedent state, related in such a way that it would break a law of nature for this antecedent state to exist yet the event not to happen. This is a purely metaphysical claim, and carries no implications for whether we can in principle predict the event.¹⁶

In brief, fatalism believes that events are beyond our control and we cannot change the outcome of events whereas determinism holds that every event is caused by something other than itself. At first glance, both fatalism and determinism may be consistent with the teaching of kamma in Buddhism. However, that is a misconception, because kamma does not mean only the consequences of action, it sometimes functions as intention as given in the Buddha's words, *cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kamaṃ vadāmi*: Monks! Intention, I say, is kamma. Having willed, we create kamma, through body, speech and mind.¹⁷ Sometimes kamma functions as a conditioning factor, the agent that shapes the direction of life, in brief it refers to 'saṅkhāra' or volitional impulse which influences our body, speech and mind. Kamma sometimes functions as personal responsibility, the expression of thought through speech and mind. For example, a person experiences remorse after he has done bad things. Kamma also functions as a consequence of action; this is called '*vipāka*'. Many people, when referring to kamma, are often mistaken kamma with its result as they give more importance to the relation between kamma performed in their previous lives and bad fortune experienced in this present life and everything is determined by kamma. But according to the law of kamma, what happens now is not shaped only by the past actions, but also the present ones. Kamma allows us to change our destiny through present actions.

To distinguish kamma from fatalism and determinism, the Buddha mentioned 'three kinds of beliefs which are contrary to the law of kamma; 1. *Pubbekatahetuvāda*: the belief that all happiness and suffering arise from previous kamma (Past-action determinism), 2. *Issaranimmānahetuvāda*: the belief that all happiness and suffering are caused by the directives of a Supreme Being (Theistic determinism). 3. *Ahetu-apaccayavāda*: the belief that all happiness and suffering are random, having no cause (Indeterminism or Accidentalism).¹⁸ Fatalism and determinism may be consistent with the three beliefs in the way that every event, including everything we do, is caused and determined by something (past-action determinism and theistic determinism) and that not every event has a cause (indeterminism) and some events cannot be explained by the law or principle.¹⁹ The law of kamma in Buddhism is non-linear and goes beyond that. Compared with fatalism, Buddhism holds that kamma allows us a chance to change some outcomes of events, whereas with determinism, kamma is not the cause that determines all events in our life, kamma is just one conditioning factor. With indeterminism, Buddhism holds the view that nothing arises without a cause, and nothing arises from a

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 102.

¹⁷ Payutto, P.A., *Buddhadhamma*, p.150.

¹⁸ Payutto, P.A. *Buddhadhamma*, p. 209.

¹⁹ Alex Scott, 2001. The Implications of Fatalism <http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/fatalism.html>
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single cause. Thus, Buddhism is different from the above three beliefs. Buddhism teaches us to accept the outcome of event, but it does not mean there is nothing we can do to change the outcome. Buddhism teaches that the events in our life are partly determined by what we do, but this does not necessarily mean that everything must happen as it does, something can be changed.

In the eyes of most people who have a shallow view of the concept of kamma, many westerners for example, 'kamma functions like fate, especially bad fate at that: an inexplicable, unchangeable force coming out of our past, for which we are somehow vaguely responsible and which we are powerless to fight'.²⁰ Since fatalism is thought to be the same as kamma, thus people assume that kamma 'sounds like the kind of callous myth-making that can justify almost any kind of suffering or injustice in the status quo.'²¹ When people are stricken by bad fortune, we often hear them express 'it is just the result of my bad kamma that I am unlucky' or 'those victims who lost their lives in natural disasters, wars etc, did so because of their kamma'. They express it this way because they see no alternative to resigned acceptance.

Now that we we debate much about the consequence of global warming from which the world is suffering, is this crisis a consequence of our own kamma? If we consider this issue according the teaching of kamma, we may agree to say that global warming is caused by our own kamma, that is, as a result of human activities. If we believe in fatalism, we would have to accept it as there is nothing we can do to change it as this phenomenon is determined by our fate. As a result we would not have an eagerness and effort to make a change. If we believe in determinism, then we cannot blame anybody for this crisis because the event was predetermined by something. We were all pre-programmed to produce carbon emission, thus we all are blameless for global warming. On the contrary, 'from the standpoint of kamma in Buddhism, though, where we are coming from is our old kamma over which we have no control'²², but it does not mean that all the events in our life in the future will be entirely determined by old kamma that we do possess the capability and will to change it. Karma in the present moment gives us room for freewill to counteract bad events. If global warming is so strong, little can be done, this is like when the flow of water is so strong, what we can do is just stand fast. However, if global warming is still curable, then there is every reason to take action to prolong the world as long as possible and this may be like when the flow is gentle enough to be diverted in almost any direction.

There is another argument saying that 'it is already too late, we are going to die anyway, so why bother? The truth is that we do not actually know what the exact predictions will be like and when they will come. 'The reports from the scientific community state the impossibility of making exact predictions, precisely because so much depends on how we respond, right now and in the coming years'.²³ This may be like

²⁰ Bhikkhu Thanissaro, It is not about fatalism: http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/karma_thanisaro.html (23/02/09)

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Dharmacarini Akasati, 2007. Climate Change: Towards a Buddhist Response http://fwbo-buddhist-articles.org/?request=climate_change (27/02/09)

when people were diagnosed as having finger cancer, but deny any possible treatments e.g. cutting off of that finger but waiting instead until the cancer reaches a terminal state which is more difficult to deal with. If global warming is compared to finger cancer, we then need to cut off something that is not vital for living, that is our overuse of energy to cater for our sense-pleasure, the activities that produce more carbon emissions. If we deny taking the necessary action to reduce carbon emissions, we may inevitably put ourselves at a risk and end up like patients with finger cancer.

With respect to the world's destruction discussed early, Buddhism, fatalism and determinism may be consistent by holding the notion that the global warming is inevitable and may lead to the world's destruction as everything comes to an end anyway. However, no exact time of world's cataclysm has ever been predicted. Fatalism holds the view that the world's destruction is bound to happen as it does no matter what we do about it whereas determinism holds that world destruction is caused by something which is not in our control. Although Buddhism acknowledges the world's cataclysm, it does not suggest people should end up despairing. From the viewpoint of climate change experts and Buddhism, the dangerous consequences from climate change may indicate the world's cataclysm. Without effective and appropriate actions, the world may come to an end soon. Just as our elderly parents become ill and will certainly die one day, from our common sense, is it acceptable to let them die without taking good care of them before their demise? Indeed, nothing can be done to stop them from dying, but before that event happens, shouldn't some appropriate things be done in accordance with the situation? Of course, the solution as suggested by climate change scientists, is not intended to stop the world from cataclysm, it is actually to alleviate the severity of natural disasters caused by climate change that humanity experiences now and also to prevent the severer problems that may happen if we do not respond to this crisis properly or in time.

Conclusion

When Buddhists approach the issue of global warming, it is not as climate change experts, but as members of the human race who are concerned about environmental crisis. We have to bear in mind that the reasons why we are called upon together at this conference are not just to exchange our words on environmental crisis, make a nice joint-communicé and leave it behind when we go back home, but to find out how Buddhist communities, whatever their tradition, can make a concrete contribution to the world at this time of crisis.

From the study of Dependent Origination and global warming, we may agree to say that the underlying causes of this crisis are human ignorance and greed. Greed or desire for material objects to please the senses is identified as the immediate root of climate change. More and more natural resources are extracted to satisfy our pleasure because of our value system which is based on finding happiness through pleasing the senses. With ignorance, some people have not given much attention to environmental crisis. They still enjoy profligate consumption habits, seeing the culture of buying and throwing away as normal practice. This is because they wrongly assume that the earth

has no limits to its natural resources. If we carry on living this way, then we put ourselves at a risk of natural shortage.

According to the principle of Dependent Origination, global warming is caused by desire; to address the causes and conditions of global warming, desire should be uprooted. From what we learned from the principle of triple round (*vaṭṭa*), as long as the round of defilement is not cut off, human beings are subject to continue the cycle of suffering endlessly. With regard to the global warming crisis, though desire cannot be eradicated immediately, but if it is under our control through living a simple life, using natural resources to respond our need, not our wants, using energy that causes carbon emission as little as possible. Perhaps this will be a good opportunity for the monastic communities to serve as an example of a life-style which offers fulfillment without frenzied consumption. At the same time, the monastic community can emphasize the teaching of contentment (*Sarītuṭṭhi*), encouraging people to live a simple life in conformity with nature. Nature can exist without human being, but human beings cannot exist without nature, as all resources for human survival come from nature.

Global warming, according to Buddhism, is inevitable in that when the cause that is to say carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases are released, the globe's temperature increases as a result. From the Buddhist teachings discussed above, we learn that the world will definitely end in a cataclysm, perhaps global warming will be its cause this time. However, we do not exactly know when this event will happen. We know for sure that we all will die one day, but we never know when, where and how we will die. Before that day comes, we must decide whether we live our lives through heedlessness or heedfulness? If we accept that the world is now sick, should we find ways to cure its sickness or take no action or speed up its demise by aggravating the causes of sickness? If there is still a chance for us to save the world, there is every reason to take action. Of course, this cannot be done by isolated individuals, the world belongs to us all, thus, it is the responsibility of all of us to work together for positive change.

For all these reasons, I would suggest that although global warming is inevitable, it does not mean nothing can be done and it is going to get worse if we continue to close our eyes to the problem. As Buddhists, we ought to try every possible way to counteract this problem. The underlying causes and conditions are spiritual malaise, thus it is indeed the religious duty to start by curing these factors before they become incurable.

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