



What to do when the Earth's ecological environment is in crisis?

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Eleven years ago in "Words from the Founder" of the August 2004 issue of the Lapis Lazuli Light magazine, the topic was "Creating a zero-pollution 21st century". That article explained in detail how the earth's ecological system was in crisis, with rising temperature and annually-declining crop production. Eleven years later, the human population has grown from 6.4 billion to over 7 billion, and the environment has deteriorated even more. The past year was the hottest year on record in the world's history, and temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit were common and temperatures at 120 degrees

Fahrenheit were not rare. This abnormal climate has created serious droughts and floods. Strong winds and dry forests have led to forest fires, leading to even greater damage to the environment. The current climate catastrophe is the most serious problem facing humanity and all of life on Earth.

The rising temperature has caused ice in the north and south poles to melt, resulting in rising sea water that has risen over part of the Antarctic land. Sea water, rather than land, is now below the ice. The land can maintain very low temperatures, but water is fluid and the temperature is much higher. This will accelerate the melting of ice in the Antarctica. When all of this ice has melted, the sea water would rise 69 to 80 feet. This will happen sooner or later.

People living in the most affluent nations have to bear the greatest responsibility for this crisis, while those who are the first to suffer are people from the poorest nations. Currently, even the most affluent nations are beginning to experience the problems caused by this climate catastrophe.

California is the place where immigrants aspire to go. It has a unique weather with warm winters and cool summers. It is also a productive agricultural region, with half of the U.S.'s agricultural products originating from there. However, four years of continuous drought has caused changes to the lives of the people there. There is severe water rationing, and agricultural production has decreased annually. The mountains in California do not have snow as this is the source of water for agricultural irrigation purposes. In recent years, the farmers have been relying on pumped groundwater, and wells have hit 800-1000 feet beneath the ground. Because of the



excessive pumping of underground water, the ground in the main agricultural areas in central California has accelerated their sinking to about two inches every month, up from a few inches every year.

The north-western part of the U.S. used to be ecologically protected area, with cool temperature and adequate rainfall. Unexpectedly, the forest fires caused by the drought were the most serious in history. The fire gathered from different directions, resulting in heavy smog. Canada's west coast also experienced the forest fire disaster, and, at one time, Vancouver was shrouded in smog caused by the forest fires.

There is a silver lining to this disaster. Last year, a Buddhist spiritual teacher in north-western U.S. commissioned and consecrated a large Amitabha Buddha stone statue in the woods of his retreat centre, and also initiated several celebrations and prayers related to Amitabha Buddha. He also commissioned and consecrated a Medicine Buddha statue in the woods of the retreat centre.

When the forest fires started spreading in all directions this year, many of the neighbouring houses were burnt except for the teacher's residence—the fire just surrounded the teacher's residence and stopped burning. More interestingly, the residences of the locals who had



spent money or effort towards building the Amitabha Buddha statue were also spared from the fire. Is this a coincidence? If you see photos of the fire, you can only say: Amitabha Buddha!

What exactly is the problem with the earth's climate? Is this damage to earth temporary or permanent? Just as I was thinking that we ought to understand this from all perspectives and write an introduction on this issue, I received a letter from the English portal of the Lapis Lazuli Light website. The sender of the letter was my former colleague, Dr. Betty Dabney, from 35 years ago. I immediately called her on the phone. She said she was looking for me for several months, and did not expect to contact me so quickly. She informed me about her work and its nature over the past 35 years, and mentioned that she was particularly concerned about the issues related to climate change and water scarcity. People living in Africa were already suffering from water scarcity, but they now have to walk even longer distances to find a few drops of water. On her own accord, she volunteered to write articles for Lapis Lazuli Light magazine. I immediately asked her to write about climate catastrophe, and in particular, ways to alleviate this problem. I did not set the usual word limit because of the importance and criticality of the issue.

"Final Autumn" is the article that all of us need to read. I was deeply touched after reading it, and also understood that it was providence that re-connected us after 35 years. The climate catastrophe is a major topic, and it is difficult for lay people to understand it fully in a short time. Dr. Betty Dabney was able to synthesize and summarize her research findings and observations in the article,

allowing us to easily understand its contents. Only when we understand the issue can we undertake some changes at the levels of the individual, group and society.

The article begins with a fictional story that describes the climate catastrophe that occurs 50 years in the future. In the story, all the snow and glaciers in the mountains in the world melted within a few days. Actually, this is already happening in California. In the world-famous Yosemite National Park, all the snow and glaciers in the year-long snow-covered Sierra Nevada melted. It normally snows in September, but this year(2015), there was no trace of snow. Professor Hubbard, who regularly hikes in the mountains in the area for over the past fifty years, walked 70 miles in the mountains this year but failed to see any snow or glacier. I specifically asked him to write about his observations about changes in the landscape over his five decades of mountaineering, and to remind us that snow is actually food from the farmland. I also requested the person in charge of Lapis Lazuli Light Malaysia to write about the impact of the climate catastrophe there.

In addition to exerting our own effort, we also have to pray to the heavens, perform more virtuous actions, maintain the eight precepts, as well as employ other methods to clear our negative karma and accumulate merits. On behalf of all life forms on earth, we have to accumulate merit and reduce the negative impact of this man-made calamity.

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