



NEPAL BUDDHIST FEDERATION
FAITH PLAN
FOR ENVIRONMENT
2024 - 2034

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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To live a pure unselfish life, one must count nothing as one's own in the midst of abundance.

– Gautama Buddha

PREAMBLE

The teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha is based solely on the ground reality, nothing but the truth only. The truth is not based on belief of faith alone but on the relative cause and effect. Buddha has taught that the universe and the inhabitants are not the creation of a creator or that they exist with no reason, but are due to the individual's and collective causes and conditions known as 'karma'. Therefore, the universe, the entire ecosystems and resources on this planet is the resultant product of all the inhabitants of this universe.

Today millions of species on this planet are in danger of extinction. In fact, many have already been lost to centuries of human exploitation. Human greed has ruined the ecosystems. Though all inhabitants have equal rights over earth, water, vegetation, and all other natural resources, only humans have manipulated them all and put other inhabitants' lives in danger.

Buddha was very clear from the beginning about the endangerment of nature exploitation and therefore emphasized the importance of plants and trees. He advised his followers not to break even a single plant with no proper reason. He banned fellow bhikkhus from digging earth and taught followers not to pollute drinking water sources.

To exhibit the importance of environment conservation, he chose all his important life deeds to be associated with trees: birth in Lumbini garden under the Sal tree, meditation under banyan tree, gained enlightenment under the bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, first sermon of teaching under a tree in Sarnath, and finally he rests in peace under a tree in Kushinagar.

This Faith Plan for Environment is a document produced by Nepal Buddhist Federation in consultation with Buddhist leaders and communities from around Nepal, with support from WWF Nepal. It aims to reinforce Buddha's teachings to save the environment and all sentient beings including people.



BUDDHISM AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

BACKGROUND

Association of Buddhism with nature...

..goes back to the establishment of the Kingdom to which Lord Buddha was born. Ancient knowledge contends that Buddha's birthplace – Tilauranagar in Kapilavastu, Lumbini, was founded on the premise of this region being rich in frogs. It is believed that Sage Kapila asked the Shakya people to establish a new Kingdom in Tilauranagar, associating its natural purity with abundance of frogs. Subsequently, Gautama Buddha was born as the most famous prince to this Kingdom around 5th Century BCE.

Through Buddha's life, many important turning points were associated with nature – from His birth under a Sal tree to His enlightenment under a Bodhi tree. Acknowledging that 'all sentient beings wish for happiness and peace', Buddhism promotes 'ahimsa' (or non-violence). Realizing our 'interdependence', Buddhism speaks of 'karma – cause and effect'. These are only some examples.

Over generations, Buddhist communities continued to follow the teachings of Lord Buddha, and developed strong ties to nature. Fellow Buddhist inhabitants of the Himalayan regions learned to thrive even in the harshest regions, establishing and practicing sustainable lifestyles that met their needs and protected the environment. They practiced and implemented faith-based laws of non-violence to prevent poaching of wildlife in monastery-governed areas. Such practices based on traditional knowledge – gathered through centuries of experience, systematic observations, and experiments - formed early basis of conservation in many regions of Nepal; contextual understanding and adaptation offer valuable insights to preserve the natural environment, even today.

Our world today..

..faces a multitude of challenges. The survival of entire humanity is threatened, among others, by the triple planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The interconnectedness between nature and people transfers such risk to human communities. The stakes are higher for people in developing countries like Nepal, and more so for the mountainous communities who depend on the land and nature for their lives and livelihoods.

With increasing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions, the world's climate is undergoing due to global warming. In Nepal, these are visible in the form of increased natural disasters such as floods, landslides, droughts, forest fires, among others, caused by changing climatic conditions notably precipitation patterns. Other than direct impacts on people's lives,



such changes in climate pose grave challenges to farming - jeopardizing food security and livelihoods of communities across Nepal. Reports also indicate potential link to increased diseases in livestock and wildlife.

Globally, the world's biodiversity faces a drastic decline due to diverse threats including habitat loss and fragmentation, poaching and wildlife trade, among others. The Living Planet Report shows an average of 69% drop in global vertebrate wildlife populations since 1970. Through sustained conservation efforts, Nepal is among a few countries that has been able to bend the curve of extinction of some species. However, the threats to biodiversity remain ever-present.

Pollution of our surrounding – water, air, land – is the most visible of the threats facing our existence today. Irresponsible use of pesticides and plastics have polluted water sources and land, while toxic gases from vehicles and industries pollute the air. With our lives dependent on these elements, poisoning of these elements have adverse effects on physical human health. With livelihoods significantly dependent on agriculture and nature (tourism), pollution also risks straining overall wellbeing, by impacting household economy.

Buddhism values..

..also known as 'dharma' – guide followers to meaningful existence – to attain 'Nirvana' or 'full enlightenment (Buddhahood)' to free oneself and others from suffering. The interconnectedness in our existence ensures that our negative actions generate bad karma leading to

greater suffering, but this can be changed with positive actions that generate good karma. The 'Four Noble Truths' teaches that all forms of suffering comes from greed, that suffering can end, and that there is a path to ceasing suffering. The eight-fold path to cease suffering includes – right thoughts and understanding, right effort, mindfulness and concentration and right speech, actions, and livelihoods.

Although these teachings and values of Buddha correlate to higher existential philosophy, these have meanings and interpretations in our daily lives. The interconnectedness and karma indicate that the causes of our actions – positive or negative - on our environment will have correlating effect on our lives. For instance, human actions causing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution have led to increased human suffering, which is proven by modern science.

Likewise, following the eight-fold path can help put humanity back in corrective pathway. This begins with right thoughts or intentions towards non-violence against all sentient beings and our environment. It needs understanding of our complex interconnected world, using all knowledge and evidence available to us - traditional as well as modern science – in an unbiased manner. It needs right effort, mindfulness, and concentration to promote goodness and reduce evil against our environment and the sentient beings. It requires right speech, actions, and livelihoods by all to ensure that our collective good karma is enhanced.

'Eco-dharma' for 'eco-nirvana'..

..is the need of the hour today. Notwithstanding the new phrasings, the practices of environmentalism is embedded in Buddhist philosophy and teachings; these have been practiced by individual Buddhist leaders and followers around the world, as well as in Nepal, for generations. Even in the drastically changing world of today, these practices are embedding positivity and generating positive karma. However, considering the challenges facing our world today, without greater contributions from each one of us, our world will encounter greater suffering. Buddha has shown us the way, and our leaders are leading us along this pathway. Positive contributions by each one of us – however small – will help.

This document – the Faith Plan for Environment – is an effort to consolidate teachings of Buddha as well as leaders from different traditions of Buddhism, to guide believers to take actions for the environment to reduce suffering of all sentient beings, including people. This is a call for unity and action to revive the traditional Buddhist eco conservation practices and rejuvenate our commitments to the 'eight-fold pathway' to earn our individual positive 'karma', and to work towards ending suffering of all.

POLICY LANDSCAPE

These human-induced crises seem daunting; however, we are not alone in working to find solutions. Countries around the world recognize and acknowledge individual responsibilities to reduce these threats to our existence. Numerous global commitments have been made at the highest government levels, and targets set to integrate the environment in their development agenda.

Nepal is also a signatory to different international conventions and treaties, to protect biodiversity, curb climate change and address pollution. These include the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and United Nations Environment Assembly's resolution to 'End Plastic Pollution', UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as well as multiple resolutions for species conservation such as the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program.

Contributing to these multilateral environment agreements, Government of Nepal has prepared key policies and important legal instruments that support national biodiversity conservation



and ensure well-being of human communities. National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, National Parks and Wildlife Protection Act, Forest Act, Environment Protection Act, Provincial Forest Acts, National Climate Change Policy, Wildlife Damage Relief Guidelines, are some examples.

Adhering to these policies, plans, and legal frameworks, this Faith Plan aspires to contribute to the larger vision of Nepal government to ensure well-being of Nepalis while preserving the nature for sustainable use. For this purpose, acknowledging limitations, NBF has collaborated with WWF Nepal through a Memorandum of Understanding, and will continue to build partnerships with different government and non-government institutions and individual experts to help contribute to this vision.

FAITH PLAN PREPARATION

Individual monasteries, leaders, Buddhist communities and followers of all Buddhist traditions have traditionally and inherently been practicing activities that benefit the natural environment for millennia. With the challenges facing our world today, especially in view of the complexities that define our interdependent world, there is immense need for working collaboratively and in a coordinated manner for greater impact.

Considering aligned priorities, in 2020, WWF Nepal reached out to Nepal Buddhist Federation (NBF) to work together to ensure well-being of nature and people, building on foundations of diverse activities conducted earlier. A year later, this culminated in a Memorandum of Agreement between the two institutions.

Globally, WWF's Beliefs and Values Programme and Faith Invest - a network for the Faiths, have prepared an ambitious faith-driven initiative 'The Faith Plans Framework' together with many faith-based organizations. This is supported by many organizations, UN, environmental groups, and faith networks including the NBF.

Working collaboratively, NBF organized multiple discussions on Buddhism and environment conservation at national level with Buddhist leaders from Buddhism Philosophy Promotion and Monastery Development Committee of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal and all major traditions, to grassroots levels with local leaders and communities in remote districts of Nepal. These discussions laid the foundation for the commitment and preparation of the draft of the 10-year 'Faith Plan for Environment.' The draft plan was reviewed through sharing and discussions and fine-tuned to its current state.

This Plan primarily focuses on environmental issues affecting communities of Nepal and attempts to bring together entire Buddhist community to collectively work towards practical solutions embedding Buddhism values.

SCOPE OF THIS PLAN

Buddhism values all life forms, and the teachings set no limit to the amount of goodness that can be done. However, considering immense challenges we face, and practical limitations, this Plan prioritizes this thematic and geographic scope for collective drive to implement the eight-fold path to 'eco-dharma'. The overall objective is to ensure wellbeing of people through efforts that reduce the triple planetary crises and risks arising from them to people. To meet this objective this Plan acknowledges the values of both traditional knowledge, values, and practices, as well as modern sciences and opportunities.

Thematic scope:

Following Buddha's teachings of compassion against all beings, this plan will focus on reducing violence and promoting traditional coexistence with nature. As a priority, this plan will focus on the Himalayan region of Nepal with snow leopards as flagships – considering that securing these mountain ecosystems ensures water security for millions of people in the sub-continent. This plan will also focus on reducing exploitation of wild animals and plants.

Considering close association of Buddhism with natural spaces, this plan will contribute to securing traditional sacred sites that are crucial for human existence including water springs, sacred lands, and forests. This plan will also promote creation of new refuge for nature and people through plantation of trees, contributing to global and national priorities, and declaration

of 'Ahimsa Chhetras (non-violence zones)'. This plan will also promote documenting and preserving many traditional knowledge and practices that have helped in sustainable use of these natural spaces, and adaptively revive them for sustainable wellbeing of people and nature.

Noting that all such achievements boil down to contributions by individuals, this plan will promote conscious adoption of the eight-fold



pathway by Buddhists to reduce footprint, including management of pollution.

Geographic scope:

Buddhist individuals and institutions are found in all districts of Nepal. However, this plan identifies certain priority districts for focused interventions, based on higher proportion of Buddhism followers or those hosting many important Buddhist pilgrimage sites or monuments. Many mountain districts have been considered as priority areas in this plan since the Himalayas are also known as the world's third pole. Preserving these mountainous ecosystems will assure water security and therefore wellbeing of people of whole of Nepal as well as India. However, this plan notes that when opportunities arise, the geographic scope may include other districts.

Priority districts: Humla, Mugu, Dolpa, Mustang, Manang, Gorkha, Solukhumbu, Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha, Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Rasuwa, Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Nawalparasi, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kavrepalanchok, Okhaldhunga, Nuwakot.



Specifically, for implementation of this Plan, expertise, knowledge and help from many institutions will be needed. Among a few identified are the Buddhist Philosophy Promotion and Monastery Development Committee of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation will also be key stakeholder, along with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Forests and Environment, District and Municipal governments, Khoryug Nepal, Lumbini Buddhist University, Lumbini Development Trust, Buddha Area Development Committee, Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal. Support of WWF Nepal will be continued as knowledge partner as well as for implementation. Other relevant stakeholders will be onboarded through partnerships during the implementation of this plan.

ACTION PLAN

- I. Vision:** The Faith Plan envisions a harmonious society of people appreciating and respecting nature, enhancing stewardship toward environment conservation through strengthened Buddhism values.
- II. Mission:** The Faith Plan aspires to enhance contextual understanding and application of Buddhism values including interdependence, compassion, and the eight-fold path to aid environment conservation and assure people's well-being.
- III. Goals:**
 1. Mountain ecosystems of Nepal are safeguarded through greater stewardship among communities, with improved understanding and adoption of Buddhism values.
 2. Buddhist leaders and followers are equipped with traditional and modern knowledge to contribute to reducing threats from triple planetary crises, for greater well-being of people.

STAKEHOLDERS FOR THIS PLAN

Considering that this is a Plan for all Buddhist of Nepal, the primary stakeholders include Buddhist monasteries, nunneries, schools of all traditions, as well as Buddhist leaders and followers within Nepal. However, to achieve the global targets, greater support will be needed, and therefore this Plan may be useful for other global citizens.



ENVISIONED BIG WINS/OUTPUTS

ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION FROM YOUNG AGE

Environmental issues incorporated in education curriculum in Buddhist traditional schools and local government schools in Bhot language medium.

In Buddhism, the habit of respecting nature is implanted in children's behavior at an early age. Today, with overabundance of information access, ever-increasing newer knowledge, and lines blurred between opinions and facts, it is ever more important to provide strong foundations for unbiased review for appropriate individual actions. Nepal government has accordingly prioritized school education as the fundamental basis for creating competent citizens. Many Buddhist institutions – monasteries and nunneries – also run schools teaching young children about Buddhism values as well as other knowledge, mainstreamed as per curriculum developed and approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.



In alignment with its goal to provide quality teaching and learning to every school, the government has formally supported Monastic Education through NBF's advocacy. NBF has extended its help in the preparation of government-based curriculum for Monastic Schools. NBF is also helping the government in preparing Bhot translation of the approved curriculum used by the Monastic schools as well as other government and private Bhot-medium schools across Nepal.

This Plan will support to incorporate relevant environmental information in partnership with government and non-government institutions in Bhot language for use across Nepal. These curricula will provide students understanding of the challenges facing our environment and their impacts on people, Buddhism values' association with environment preservation, as well as drive them to take individual actions against these challenges.



We need to remember that everyone and everything is interconnected and with this understanding develop a sense of urgency in taking personal and global responsibility. For that non-violence, good heart combined with wisdom is indispensable.

– 7th Shechen Rabjam

SACRED 'UMBRELLA' SPECIES TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

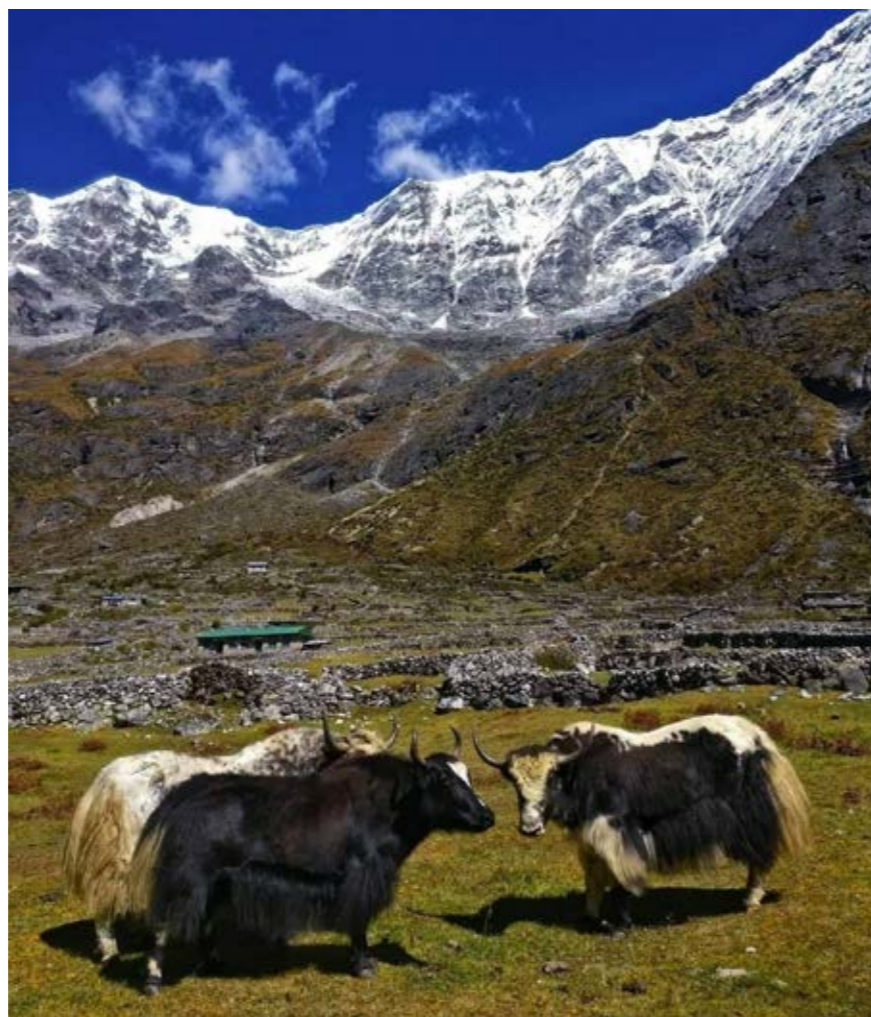
Nepal's Himalayas, their biodiversity, and ecosystem services to people, safeguarded through sensitization of 1,000,000 followers on snow leopard conservation.

The Himalayan range is recognized as the world's third pole – water towers assuring freshwater security for millions of people downstream. Many of the Himalayan districts falling within Nepal are dominated by Buddhism followers, and therefore are included as priority areas in this Plan. This region supports a wide range of biodiversity – animals and plants – many of which are globally threatened. These include snow leopards – whose global population is estimated to be around 2710-3386 adult individuals.



Compassion for animals is intimately connected with goodness of character, and it may be confidently asserted that he who is cruel to animals cannot be a good Buddhist.

– Dalai Lama



Snow leopards are apex predators, also widely recognized as umbrella species, whose protection assures safety to all wildlife – animals and plants – that thrive their landscapes. Mountain communities respect the presence of snow leopards as an indication of local deity and have traditionally protected this species and all life forms. However, this traditional coexistence is currently challenged due to livestock killed by snow leopards; often such instances are associated with dissatisfaction of the protector deities, against destruction of the environment among others. Nonetheless, such losses cause a huge financial burden on individual households dependent on livestock. Nepal Government protects snow leopards as Schedule I species, and provides relief to communities for losses of livestock. However, many mountain communities are unable to access relief due to circumstantial challenges.

This Faith Plan aspires to encourage all Buddhist individuals and other Nepali citizens to respect all life forms, following principles of compassion, spread awareness on the endangered species – flora and fauna – found in mountains, and revive traditional coexistence with nature. For optimization of impacts within the limitations of time and resources, as well as concerns placed by the mountain communities of challenges of living with wildlife, this Plan specifically focuses on snow leopards. To do this, this Plan aims to capacitate Buddhist leaders on practical solutions provided by Nepal government and conservation institutions, and help transfer this knowledge to the communities on ground. This will eventually help sustain the communities' stewardship for nature, and aid in safeguarding snow leopards and other life forms of our mountains.

CASE STUDY:

Helping communities coexist with nature

Nepal Buddhist Federation, as part of the preparation process for this Faith Plan conducted numerous consultations and sharing in Kathmandu as well as in the remote regions of Nepal. Among the latter included 16 grassroots awareness events conducted in 16 municipalities of Dolpa, Mustang, Solukhumbu, and Sindhupalchowk. During these sessions, local Buddhist leaders and NBF representatives not only shared teachings about challenges facing nature and Buddhism values to resolve them, but also learned from the communities, the extreme challenges they faced, including conflicts with wildlife such as the snow leopard.

For these communities, livestock rearing is an important livelihood option. For snow leopards, naturally, livestock is an easy prey. Losing livestock, especially in huge numbers during instances of 'surplus killing' by snow leopards, can cause massive financial burdens on local households, leading them to question their faith and its values. To help these communities, this Faith Plan therefore prioritizes learning about new opportunities, from experts and governments about solutions and help the information reach these remote communities.

SACRED 'NATURE' REFUGE

Sacred spaces (sacred sites including 'naga' or communal water springs; wetlands; sacred lands and forests; etc) for Buddhism followers identified, mapped, and at least 5 protected as 'Ahimsa Chhetra (non-violence zones).'

“
The sun of real happiness shines in your life when you start to cherish others.

– Lama Zopa Rinpoche

People believing nature, mountains, and water sources as divine has helped maintain their purity and discourage their destruction for generations. Buddhist communities, practicing Buddha's teachings have thus secured natural areas benefiting a whole range of biodiversity as well as people. Examples of Monasteries being built around natural areas to prevent killing of animals to create sacred areas are found from around Nepal. Likewise, our ancestors protected spring water sources as 'nagas', respected snow mountains and lakes as abode of deities, established 'spiritual forests' and even declared 'Ahimsa Chhetras' or 'non-violence zones', using values of Buddhism that cautions that disrespecting and polluting these spaces can result in harm for our own existence. Sadly, with modern pressures and changes over time, traditional knowledge and practices safeguarding nature and therefore people, are being deteriorated.



CASE STUDY:

Tsum Valley - an 'Ahimsa Chhetra'

The precepts of Buddhism urge people to refrain from hurting others and learn methods of healthy environmental coexistence.

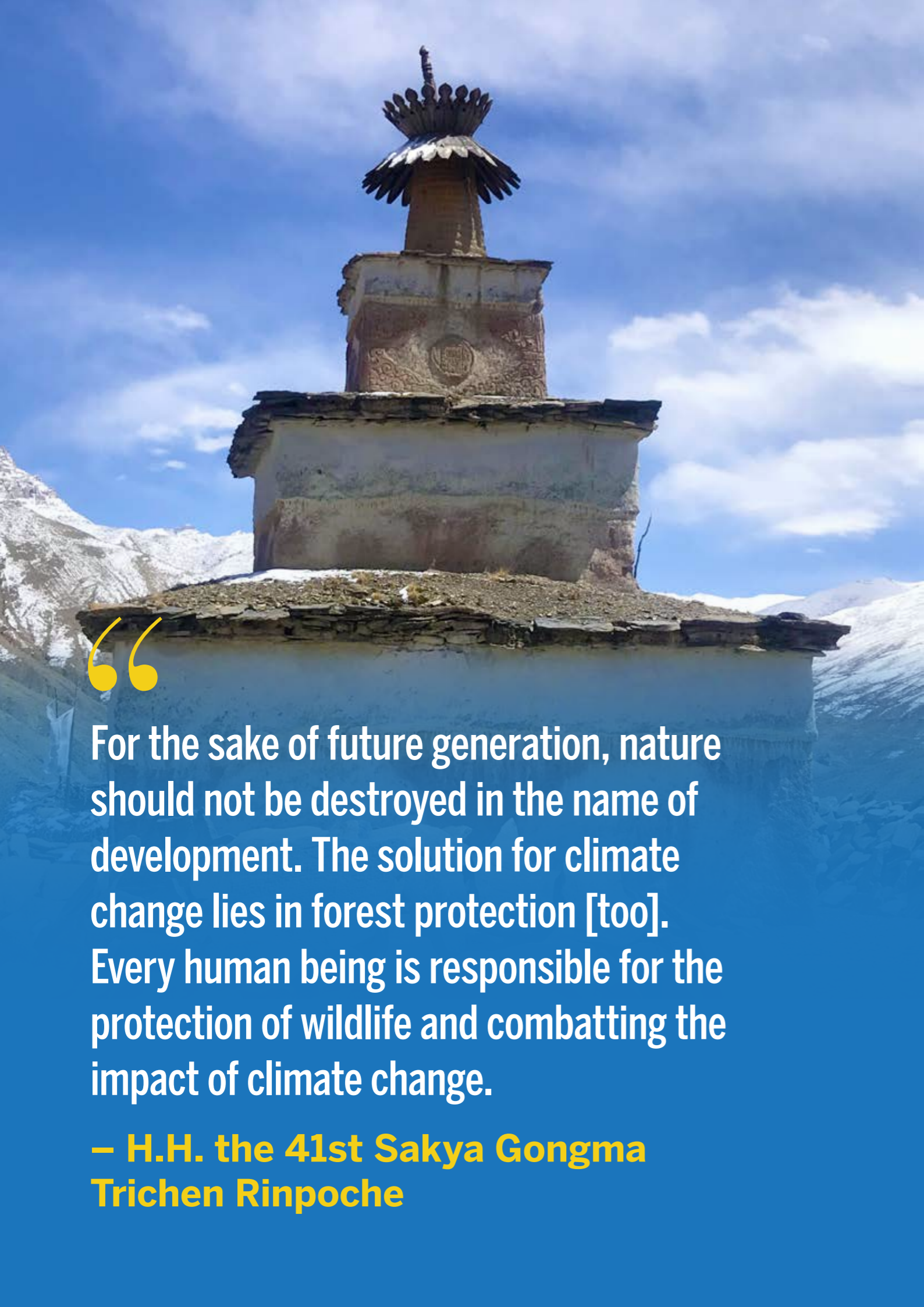
Renowned Dukpa Rinpoche adhered to this belief and declared Tsum Valley in Gorkha district - a non-violence zone, as early as 1920. With this declaration, Tsum Valley upholds the extremely rich ancient Buddhist culture where hunting, killing, and selling of animals for meat have been forbidden for over a century.

The region boasts an abundance of biodiversity, and practicing non-violence following Buddha's teachings has contributed to the preservation of the well-being of people and the environment. The practice has also strengthened the socio-cultural aspect of unifying residents to create a sacred nature refuge for Buddhist followers and wildlife.

The local government has supported this initiative by rolling out vegetarianism in all restaurants and engaging local police personnel and tourists in this commitment for non-violence. Livestock are reared here for dairy.

This Plan encourages identification of natural sites that may be culturally-important - globally, nationally, regionally, or even locally, and take steps towards granting them legal protection. In addition to securing ecosystem services, such spaces may also present livelihood opportunities for local communities, in the form of nature or culture-based tourism. Various progressive laws and policies of the Government of Nepal authorize and mandate use of traditional knowledge and practices for sustainable use and management of natural spaces and resources. This Plan therefore also encourages partnerships with relevant government authorities and non-government institutions for the use of appropriate measures and steps to make these safeguards permanent under Nepal government policies and legal instruments.





For the sake of future generation, nature should not be destroyed in the name of development. The solution for climate change lies in forest protection [too]. Every human being is responsible for the protection of wildlife and combatting the impact of climate change.

– H.H. the 41st Sakya Gongma Trichen Rinpoche

TOWARDS A 'TRILLION TREES'

1,000,000 trees planted and raised by Buddhism followers across Nepal to contribute to the global goal of planting 1,000,000,000,000 trees

Buddha teaches us to create nurturing environments for all living beings, and planting trees that provide refuge are one way for us all to contribute. This Plan calls upon all believers to join hands in this noble initiative that not only serves Buddha's teachings but also contribute to Nepal government's efforts to bring under 45% of the country's area under forest cover.

However, from our experiences and learning from elsewhere, we know that not all tree plantations are successful. Moreover, wrong plantation – for instance planting wrong varieties of trees – may do more harm than good and adversely affect the environment. So, it is important to embed available scientific knowledge to strengthen our contribution to this noble cause.

Globally, major conservation organizations have joined hands in an initiative - 'The Trillion Tree Campaign' that brings together partners on plantation to heal the earth from impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The UNEP, in partnership with WWF has produced 'Tree Growing for Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration: A Guide for Faith-Based Actors'.

This Faith Plan aspires to support and encourage tree plantations by Buddhism institutions and individual followers through sensitization on the need and approaches, build capacity and encourage partnering with governments, non-government, and academic institutions for technical support for successful plantations. Such plantations may be done on spiritually important occasions or festivals in tribute of our Gurus/Rinpoches, or any other time.

CASE STUDY:

Eco-dharma in Phulhari Monastery

Formally and informally, Buddhist institutions across Nepal have been promoting and following environment-friendly activities including tree plantations - that not only benefit people but also nature. One such example is Phulhari Monastery, located on a hilltop in Gokarneshwor municipality in the outskirts of Kathmandu. The monastery has actively participated in eco-restoration since its founding in 1992, transforming formerly barren terrain/land into a greener space. In addition to providing spiritual respite to resident Lamas and the visiting public, this space serves as a safe refuge to over 50 species of birds and animals. This is just one of many eco-friendly initiatives by Phulhari Monastery, guided by Khoryug – His Holiness Karmapa's 108 steps for environment.

GREEN GATHERINGS

Buddhism festivals and rituals revive traditional practices and embed relevant modern solutions to reduce pollution.

Teaching gatherings and festivals honoring values of Buddha as well as Guru/Rinpoches are an integral part of Buddhism. These are also occasions where many believers meet, learn and share.

Over the years, with changing global circumstances, our festivals have also changed; unintentionally, these have notably included increased use of plastics, thereby contributing to pollution. Such pollution impacts both nature, and people's lives and livelihoods.

This Plan aspires to support and encourage revival of traditional ways or embed modern eco-friendly approaches and practices during our festivals to reduce our individual



Learn about the wildlife in your area. Include these animals in your aspiration prayers and in your teaching.

– H.H. the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje

CASE STUDY:

Eco-dharma during Buddha Ribo Festival

Making eco-friendly choices and practices as part of gatherings helps minimize harmful impacts on the environment as well as people. Understanding the need, many monasteries have already embraced environmentally conscious practices.

The Buddha Ribo Religious Festival hosted in the Dho valley in Dolpa district in 2023 is one example. This once-in-12-years festival celebrates the victory of Guru Rinpoche over evil and His bestowing blessings of prosperity upon this region. With over 1000 people attending this festival, the leaders sensitized the participants on climate change and environment preservation. The festival used biodegradable khadas and lungtas to reduce the impact, and served healthy organic offerings made of Rice and Tsampa in reusable utensils, reducing plastic use by the thousands.

and collective carbon footprint. Among others, these will include innovative approaches to reduce use of plastics by phasing out packaged foods for traditional healthy foods as offerings, replacing plastic utensils with reusable ones, use of eco-friendly biodegradable lungtas (flags) and khadas (scarves), among others.

REVIVING AND CONTEMPORIZING TRADITIONS

Traditional Buddhism knowledge, values and practices are contextually and adaptively revived, with special focus on 'Sowa Rigpa' ensuring its sustained benefits to communities.

Many Buddhism teachings have centered around reducing human suffering. Yet, despite a lot of valuable teachings, Buddha is believed to have asked followers to take their actions 'with thorough investigation and experiments'. Practical realities of survival in resource-constrained areas for many Buddhist communities have generated rich traditional knowledge and practices that promoted sustainable natural resource management, especially among remote mountain communities. These are valued globally – as in the case of traditional Sowa Rigpa medicines by the WHO, CITES and UNESCO, - as well as within Nepal. Often however, when such traditional knowledge is not contextualized, they risk losing meaning, and if not adapted to modern context, they risk losing existence.

This Plan values this knowledge and aspires to help contemporize and use it for sustainable well-being of people. This specifically includes supporting initiatives of Amchis and Sowa Rigpa institutions to phase out parts of endangered animals and plants, replacing them with sustainable alternatives. This is crucial as Sowa Rigpa has traditionally been (and remains for many communities) the only source of healthcare. While historically, Sowa Rigpa is believed to have been a plant-based practice considering Buddha's teachings of non-violence, wildlife and animal parts gradually entered its pharmacopoeia. Survival of Sowa Rigpa in current context relies on reversal to its Buddhism roots, or adaptation to modern scenario that necessitates avoiding use of endangered animal and plants parts, replacing them with sustainable effective alternatives.

Likewise, this Plan will also support government and non-government institutions in documenting traditional knowledge and its contextual application for sustainable natural resource management. Such actions will not only benefit nature and communities, but also help preserve this knowledge generated through generations of practical experience.

COMMITMENTS FOR A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL

1,000,000 Buddhists and 1,000 institutions commit to sustainable practices that reduce the triple threats.

The universe is a result of individual actions, and the global issues facing our environment today are a result of many individual actions. Reversing this trend will need many of us to work individually towards creating a positive impact on the environment, which will collectively create a more positive outcome for the entire world. This will, in turn, have a positive impact on the lives of every one of us – people and animals – that depend on this earth.

Following Buddha's teachings as an individual is one of the key ways for us all to contribute our bit to assure a better world for all. Attachments of materialistic possession and greed are the root cause behind all three of the planetary crises – pollution, biodiversity decline and climate change. If we let go of these attachments as taught by Buddha, the exploitation of our earth would decline. Likewise, His teaching of compassion for all life forms – to not hurt or kill – will ensure reduction of poaching – one of the key threats to biodiversity. These are only some examples, and each of Buddha's teachings has benefits to us all as individuals as well as collectively. Accordingly, this Faith Plan focuses a great deal on ensuring that all Nepali Buddhists as well as other citizens take individual steps, based on Buddha's teachings.

Nepal as a country has contributed very little to cause climate change, but our communities face its impacts. Yet, to reduce impacts of climate change, this Faith Plan will capacitate and encourage each Buddhist to plant native trees, adopt vegetarian and need-based (rather than greed-based) lifestyles, to reduce our carbon footprint.

To curb pollution, this Faith Plan will work with Buddhist leaders and communities to reduce their imprint, learning and teaching about the ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. Among the actions that can be taken will include simple steps such as reducing use of plastics – by carrying reusable biodegradable bags, by using biodegradable khadas and lungtas, by reducing use of plastic packaged products, etc. Likewise, pollution of the land and water can be addressed by reducing use of chemical fertilizers in our farms. Wastewater can be recycled and reused. All of these also have positive impacts on our individual health.

To reduce loss of biodiversity, this Faith Plan will work with Buddhist leaders and communities to revive compassion for all life forms, learning and teaching practical ways to coexist with nature. These will include commitments to not kill or hurt animals at individual as well as institutional levels, to reduce poaching, create non-violence zones, to learn about and



Protect the earth, live simply, act compassionately: our future depends on it. In order to save the himalayas and tibet from the threats of deforestation, climate change, and pollution, we have to be full of courage and believe wholeheartedly that this endeavor is winnable. The alternative is unthinkable.

– H.H. the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa
Ogyen Trinley Dorje

avoid being part of illegal wildlife trade, even inadvertently. This Plan will also work towards creating positive correlation between nature and people's wellbeing and livelihoods, to preserve biodiversity by communities, as has been done for ages by Buddhist communities.

STRATEGIES

1. Document, adaptively revive, formalize and contextually apply traditional Buddhism based conservation practices facilitating sustainable management of nature.
2. Create, capacitate, and operationalize environment and wildlife sub-committees of Lamas to coordinate implementation of Faith Plan.
3. Strengthen networking among Buddhist individuals and institutions to generate baseline, share learnings, and implement this Faith Plan.
4. Build partnerships with government and non-government institutions at national, provincial, district, municipality levels to aid implementation of Faith Plan.
5. Generate mass awareness on impacts of triple planetary crises, and revival of Buddhism values for redemption.
6. Sensitize, capacitate, and engage faith-leaders and followers on pollution control.
7. Sensitize, capacitate, and engage faith-leaders and followers on tree plantation.
8. Sensitize, capacitate, and engage faith-leaders on opportunities from national policies and laws for knowledge-sharing on participatory conservation and benefits for communities preserving traditional coexistence with wildlife.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Nepal's Buddhist population is estimated to be around 3,000,000 individuals; many of them are associated with over 3000 monasteries and nunneries around the country. All these institutions and individuals adhere to Buddha's teachings. The efforts that make up this Plan are already being implemented by individual Buddhist institutions and individuals across Nepal. This Plan is an initiative to coordinate and consolidate these efforts at a national scale for greater impact, contributed by our Faith and its values.

Noting opportunities for collective and impactful actions, NBF has assumed the role of facilitating this process through voluntary efforts and engagements. NBF have no paid staff to implement this plan and consider this an extension of the work of Buddha. With a strong

belief that Buddhism individuals and institutions will continue to contribute towards this larger cause on their own volition, this Plan does not assume the responsibility of bearing the costs for individual actions.

However, this Plan acknowledges the need and focuses on collective learning - from each other and from national and global experts available - to guide actions that have long-term benefits for nature and people and minimal negative consequences, if any. Many actions are already being undertaken by individual Buddhist institutions and individuals as well as other citizens of Nepal; accordingly, this Plan will be collating the work being done and bring them to one page, which will provide us with baseline for future work as well as immense learnings.

For coordination with these individuals and institutions, this Plan aspires to create and capacitate environment sub-committees at different levels. For implementation, through these sub-committees, this Plan will reach out to 3000+ Buddhist institutions and 3,000,000+ individuals and capacitate them strategically to help implement this Plan through individual contributions. Each one of us is our own Master.

BUDGET SUMMARY

NBF intends to work with partners to carry out fund-raising – largely to invest in the seven strategies focused on capacitating Buddhist institutions and individuals, and for coordination at national, regional, and local levels for effective implementation. When opportunities arise, for strategically important situations and to create or showcase models for replication, individual or institutional actions will also be supported as part of this Plan’s implementation. However, this Plan acknowledges that for institutional efforts to implement activities, additional budget may be needed, which is not incorporated here. Accordingly, the budget for the seven strategies and other priorities for basic facilitation of this Faith Plan is estimated to be around NPR 18,65,00,000 for 10 years.

S. No.	Title	Amount	Nos	Unit Cost	Annual Budget	Budget for 10 years
1	Create, capacitate, and operationalize environment and wildlife sub-committees of Lamas to coordinate implementation of Faith Plan.	Sub-Committees	20	200000	4000000	40000000
2	Strengthen networking among Buddhist individuals and institutions to generate baseline, share learnings, and implement this Faith Plan.	Network	1	200000	200000	2000000
3	Build partnerships with government and non-government institutions at national, provincial, district, municipality levels to aid implementation of Faith Plan.	Events	5	50000	250000	2500000
4	Generate mass awareness on impacts of triple planetary crises, and revival of Buddhism values for redemption.	Events	100	10000	1000000	10000000

S. No.	Title	Amount	Nos	Unit Cost	Annual Budget	Budget for 10 years
5	Sensitize, capacitate, and engage faith-leaders and followers on pollution control.	Trainings	10	200000	2000000	20000000
6	Capacitate faith-leaders and followers on scientific tree plantation.	Trainings	10	200000	2000000	20000000
7	Sensitize, capacitate, and engage faith-leaders on opportunities from national policies and laws for knowledge-sharing on participatory conservation and benefits for communities preserving traditional coexistence with wildlife.	Trainings	10	200000	2000000	20000000
8	Document, adaptively revive, formalize and contextually apply traditional Buddhism based conservation practices facilitating sustainable management of nature.	Trainings	10	200000	2000000	20000000
9		Numbers	20	200000	4000000	40000000
10	Support implementation of exemplary innovative eco-dharma activities	Monthly	12	100000	12,00,000	1,20,00,000
Total Amount					1,86,50,000	18,65,00,000*

**This is the basic minimum budget anticipated for facilitating this Faith Plan. This does not incorporate actual investments needed to implement activities, and additional funds will be required to bear implementation cost, especially for institutional activities.*



The essence of Buddhism lies in the union of compassion and emptiness: the deeply felt dedication to alleviate the suffering of all living beings and the understanding that everything is devoid of self-nature. These two halves of a philosophical whole speak particularly to the goals of the environmental movement.

– 17th Gyalwang Karmapa