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Tibetan Buddhist Society New Year Festival 28 February 2009

One day a young Buddhist on a long journey to visit a great teacher came to the banks of a wide river. Staring hopelessly at the great obstacle in front of him, he pondered for hours on just how to cross such a wide barrier. Just as he was about to give up he saw the great teacher on the other side of the river. He yelled over to the teacher "Oh wise one, can you tell me how to get to the other side of this river"?

The great teacher pondered for a moment, looked up and down the river, and yelled back "My son, you are on the other side".

- This is humorous but also has meaning when we think about some of our biggest challenges.
- In addressing the issue of global heating it can be said that there are "great obstacles" before us, entrenched scepticism, self-interest driving the resistance of large companies, a view by some that it is too hard, it's too late, we can't make a difference because we are a small nation, that the barriers are insurmountable, it doesn't matter what we do.
- But I believe we can make a difference. The reality of what needs to be done is on 'our side of the river'.
- The science of climate change is becoming real before our very eyes.
- In recent weeks devastating floods and storms in North Queensland and the stark contrast of horrific bushfires in Victoria on the hottest day in Melbourne's history, are all a part of the phenomenon of global heating and climate change.
- The Tibetan plateau, which feeds the great rivers of Asia: the Indus, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Salween, the Irrawaddy, the Mekong, the Yangtze and the Yellow, is now melting at an alarming rate.
- One-point-four billion people depend for more than half of their drinking water on the rivers and spring systems that flow from the ice of the Tibetan plateau.
- The harm being done to the Tibetan plateau does not only have far-reaching consequences for Tibet, it also affects surrounding areas and even the global climate.
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama has pointed out "Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life."
- His Holiness said "that of all the various species on the planet, human beings are the biggest troublemakers. That is clear. I imagine that if there were no longer any humans on the planet, the planet itself would be safer!"

- His Holiness has said that “our beautiful world is facing many crises.... It is not a time to pretend everything’s good.”
- “Many of the earth’s habitats, animals, plants, insects and even micro-organisms that we know to be rare may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capability and the responsibility to act; we must do so before it is too late.”
- “Just as we should cultivate gentle and peaceful relations with our fellow human beings, we should also extend that same kind of attitude towards the natural environment. Morally speaking, we should be concerned for our whole environment.”
- “This, however, is not just a question of morality or ethics, but a question of our own survival. For this generation and for future generations, the environment is very important. If we exploit the environment in extreme ways, we will suffer, as will our future generations. When the environment changes, the climatic condition also changes. When the climate changes dramatically, the economy and many other things change. Our physical health will be greatly affected. Again, conservation is not merely a question of morality, but a question of our own survival.”
- “Therefore, in order to achieve more effective environmental protection and conservation, internal balance within the human being himself or herself is essential. The negligence of the environment, which has resulted in great harm to the human community, resulted from our ignorance of the very special importance of the environment. We must now help people to understand the need for environmental protection. We must teach people to understand the need for environmental protection. We must teach people that conservation directly aids our survival.”
- I believe His Holiness has clearly identified that we must act as a community; we must act as a nation, to ensure future generations can enjoy the richness of the natural environment that nourishes all of us.
- We must protect our forests, protect our oceans, protect our rivers. We must harness the clean energy of the sun, and other renewable technologies. We must leave room on this planet for other species.
- Taking care of the planet is nothing special, nothing sacred, and nothing holy, say His Holiness. It is something like taking care of our own house. We have no other planet or house except this one.
- I wish you all harmony and peace in welcoming the New Year.