

Proposal of the Seven-Year Plan (2019 to 2025) for Environmental Protection in the Chinese Daoist Community

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Ecological environment and the people's wellbeing are the foundations of the future of the nation. They are related to the “Two Centenary Goals” and the Realization of Chinese Dreams. In recent years, under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government has strategically elevated the construction of ecological civilization, integrating it into all aspects of economic, political, cultural, and social construction. It has promulgated a series of policies to promote environmental protection, green lifestyles, the construction of Beautiful China, and mobilization of the whole society to take positive actions to promote ecological civilization in a deep and lasting way, and accelerate the formation of a new pattern of modernization for the harmonious development of Humankind and Nature.

From ancient times to the present, Daoism in China has promoted respect for nature. It has advocated the harmony between heaven, earth, and humanity; upheld the balance between yin and yang, abided by the harmony between humankind and nature, and promoted the shared prosperity of all beings. Today's Chinese Daoist community actively responds to the call to build ecological civilization, vigorously promotes the Daoist emphasis on ecology and makes positive contributions to environmental protection. In 2009, the Daoist Association of China proposed the First Eight-Year Plan for Environmental Protection (2010-2017) and adopted a series of measures including offering ecological education, building ecological temples, promoting healthy lifestyles, advocating green architecture, adopting resource management and encouraging green pilgrimage and tourism. Since then, the Daoist Ecological Temple Network (DETN) has spread to 28 provinces, with 200 member temples. These measures have produced positive results which are widely recognized. To further the momentum, the Daoist Association of China now proposes the Second Long-Term Plan for the Protection of the Environment (2019-2025) for the Daoist community. It is proposed that starting from 2019, the Daoist community, local Daoist associations and temples will initiate the following specific actions:

I. Creating ecological model demonstration sites and educational programmes.

1. The ecological Daoist temples will serve as demonstration sites for best environmental practices: First they will strictly enforce the energy efficiency standards of buildings, promote the use of renewable energies such as solar energy and bio energy, and encourage, where applicable, temples to produce electricity from renewable energy and feed the rest to the grid. Second they will improve drainage and sewage systems and collect and recycle rainwater in the temples in order to improve the temple environment as well as to conserve water. Third, they will improve the recycling system of temples, separating waste and recycle as much as possible. Fourth, they will improve water management of temples, where applicable using efficient water saving technology and products, and promote water-saving awareness among the Daoist community and the wider society. Fifth, they will green the temples, planting trees inside and outside the temples' public spaces. Sixth, they will promote green lifestyles, requiring all Daoist followers in the Daoist

temples to live green and low carbon lives and avoid the waste of food. Seventh, they will use energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly low-carbon products such as high-efficiency electrical appliances and water-saving appliances and reduce the use of disposable articles in Daoist temples. Eighth, they will promote green travelling, use low-carbon transportation systems in temple scenic areas and give priority to public transportation, optimize transport modes, and promote energy-saving and new energy transportation.

2. Use temple hardware and software to publicize environmental protection to the public and raise ecological awareness. First, set environmental protection boards in each temple to display environmental protection education materials. Second, the offering of ecological protection lectures should be normalized in every temple to increase the awareness of the role of Daoism in environmental protection. Thirdly, explore Daoist ecological ideas and stories, create ecological literature and establish a number of educational bases to meet the needs of the Daoist community as well as the wider public for ecological education. Fourth, organize activities such as the ecological temple education to help young Daoists to establish ecological awareness and integrate ecological education as an important part of quality education.

II. Ecological Protection and Environmental Protection

1. Daoist temples actively participate in programmes to address climate change. By reducing energy use and improving energy efficiency in appliances, carbon emissions are reduced. Encourage temples and believers to plant trees to increase forest carbon sinks as well as make the environment more natural. By promoting the civilized incense burning and other activities, reduce the emission of greenhouse gas such as carbon dioxide and sulphides. Where possible, assist the local government and public in adapting to climate change in such key areas as agriculture, forestry, and water resources, especially in ecologically fragile areas.
2. Protect the ecosystems and natural landscapes around Daoist temples. Cooperate with local forestry, resources, ecological and environment departments to strengthen the management of Daoist sacred mountains and holy sites, helping local authorities to implement mandatory protection for important ecosystems and species, and effectively protect rare and endangered wildlife, ancient trees, famous trees and natural habitats. To protect the authenticity and integrity of natural ecology and cultural heritage.
3. Where possible, Daoist temples can participate in the construction of beautiful ecological villages and beautiful ecological towns. Under the premise of protecting the ecological environment, relying on the ecological resources of the villages and towns and their culture heritage, Daoist temples can work with the local tourist departments and the agricultural sectors to promote the development of organic Chinese medicine nurseries, cultural tourism, and green tourism to help protect the local environment as well as to reduce poverty.

III. Wildlife

Chinese medicine shall not use endangered animal parts which are forbidden by the government.

Daoists should advocate the use of herbs as much as possible and avoid as much as possible the use of animal parts for medicine. Daoist medicines and diet prohibit the use of endangered animals such as pangolin, which are protected by the Wildlife Law and listed as an endangered rare species. The Daoist community encourages temples to train Daoist doctors and believers on the laws and policies concerning the protection of wildlife in the country, as well as traditional Daoist values and raise public awareness and resist the illegal wildlife trade.

1. Do not buy or sell rhino horns and do not use rhino products. In 1993, the Chinese government banned the trade, possession and use of rhino horns. Daoism advocates simplicity and compassion towards all life. The use of rhino horns either as a status symbol or as a medicinal ingredient, is not only against the Chinese law, but also against Daoist teachings. Daoism calls on all followers not to use or buy rhino horns.
2. Do not buy or sell ivory and do not use ivory products. On January 1, 2018, the Chinese government banned all trade in ivory products. The Daoist community calls on believers to abide by state laws and follow traditional Daoist teachings and to avoid buying ivory products, avoid using ivory products, and resolutely resist ivory smuggling and other forms of illegal ivory trade.
3. The Daoist community has called on believers to be rational and scientific when they conduct mercy release. Harmful mercy release will not only result in the death of the released animals themselves, but will also encourage the proliferation of the illegal wildlife trade. It may also lead to invasive species damaging the local ecology. Daoists should encourage believers to avoid mercy release when uncertain of the ecological consequences or replace mercy release with other forms of charity. Where possible, in cooperation with the local forestry and environment departments, Daoist temples can provide guidance and training to believers who carry out mercy release, and reduce the negative impact of mercy release on environment.

IV. Work with all parties

1. Actively assist relevant government departments in promoting environmental protection. In line with environmental education and publicity, we will assist the government in implementing relevant environmental policies, improve the ecological awareness of the followers as well as the public. To promote ecological ethics, and put ecological values into action.
2. Join hands with the business community to promote environmental protection. Where possible, work with the business community to promote the use of low-carbon and environmentally-friendly products, such as environmentally friendly incense, candles, firecrackers etc.; and encourage TCM companies to use herbs to replace animal ingredients and avoid the use of endangered species as medicines.
3. Strengthen international exchanges and cooperation. Under the guidance and supervision of the relevant authorities, we will strengthen dialogue and exchanges with countries around the world in the field of ecological civilization and strengthen cooperation with international

environmental protection agencies in advancing ecological protection, environmental protection, wildlife protection and the promotion of global ecological security.

4. Establish Daoist ecological volunteer groups. Where possible, temples will set up Daoist ecological volunteer groups among believers to participate in environmental awareness campaigns and education, practice and promote green lifestyles, and create a beautiful and harmonious environment around Daoist temples and sacred sites.