



# HHMH Statement on Environmental Harmony

**Joint Statement by Bishop Eric Matsumoto and  
Steve Lohse, Chair of the Green Hongwanji Committee,  
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii**

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“We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

We experience rapid, extreme environmental change as crises, and when our environment is in crisis, we suffer. We depend on the environment for everything, including stable climate, public health, clean air and water, energy, fertile soil, healthy food, land and sea resources, and the biodiversity that underlies sustainability. Environmental crises give rise to social, economic, political, and spiritual crises that in turn further degrade the environment. We are inescapably interdependent with the environments that we abuse as well as with the environments that we protect.

The causes of environmental crises are not external threats, we do this to ourselves. As our sheer numbers, consumer expectations, and developing technologies combine to overwhelm natural systems, we are witnessing an era of transition from life defined by natural processes to environments defined by human activity. Sadly, it is increasingly clear that greed, anger, ignorance, and ego-driven human activities are out of harmony with sustainable natural systems. Meanwhile, global responses to environmental degradation remain inadequate and directed largely at symptoms rather than causes.

As Buddhists, we see a way forward. We see that environmental harmony arises from Interdependence and from addressing root causes of environmental crises – our own greed, anger, and ignorance. We see that inner transformation, from ego-driven thinking to Dharma-guided entrusting, prepares us to understand and commit to wise, compassionate, effective action for environmental harmony. Just as Buddha touched the Earth as bearing witness to Enlightenment, so we touch the Earth to bear witness to Dharma guidance that inspires us to engage in skillful environmental action as an Earth Touching Sangha.

David Loy said, “Engagement in the world is how our personal awakening blossoms.” As we go to the Dharma for guidance to live in harmony and sustainability with our precious planet, we commit to the following:

- understanding the inherently interdependent, holistic nature of Buddhism;
- transforming environmental actions by first transforming environmental thinking;
- teaching clean, healthy, sustainable environments as a basic human right;
- acting effectively, always informed by Cause/Effect and scientific best practices;
- supporting sustainable societies based on social/economic/environmental equity, universal human rights, respect for nature and for future generations, and a culture of peace.



In Gassho,  
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