



DAOIST

CHINA DAOIST ASSOCIATION

Future Plan and the SDGs

China has more than 1,500 Daoist temples, and approximately 30,000 Daoist monks and nuns. Tens of millions of people in China follow Daoist practices, and millions more engage in pilgrimages and visits to Daoist sites every year. This ancient indigenous faith still has a great deal of influence on this modern nation. As one of the five recognized religions in modern China, Daoism has recently reassessed its beliefs and values with regards to environmental issues. Daoists believe that humanity should obey nature's rules, maintain the balance of our ecological systems and protect the species that live besides us.

GOAL 1 END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

- Illness is a major cause for poverty in China. In the next ten years, Daoist temples will open more clinics for the poor and sickly and help them better their overall health to prevent serious illness such as cancer.

One of the major causes for poverty in China is illness. According to statistics, in 2014 there are over 70 million Chinese still live under 1 dollar per day, which is the official UN designated threshold for poverty. Of these people, over 40% are caused by high expenses over some form of illness. Because access to hospitals has become so expensive since the marketization of the health care system, it is often enough to plunge an entire family into poverty if one family member acquire some form of serious illness such as cancer.¹

Daoist temples will open more clinics to help treat patients that cannot afford access to hospitals. Patients only need to pay a small price for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) prescriptions and acupuncture. Moreover, Qigong classes are sometimes offered for free at the clinics. TCM remedies alone are usually not sufficient for serious medical

conditions such as cancer. Nonetheless, they can help strengthen the body's resilience against a wide range of illnesses that too often bring entire families into poverty.

GOAL 3 ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELLBEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES.

- Daoist temples will continue to host health preservation trainings, Qigong classes and TCM lectures to promote healthy and simple lifestyles among the public.
- Daoist temples will plant more herbal nurseries and work with local TCM companies to promote the use of herbal remedies in TCM to replace animal ingredients to better people's health.

GOAL 4 ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

- Daoist temples will continue to financially support children from poor families to receive basic education and provide learning opportunities for local communities by hosting lectures and forums.

GOAL 6 ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

- Daoist temples hope to mobilize water-saving technology to promote water toilet to replace pit toilet for improved sanitation and prevention of water source pollution.
- In areas where water supply is scarce, Daoist temples hope to help local communities with access to clean water by digging wells, collecting rain water and mobilize other water preserving techniques.

A lot of Daoist temples located in remote areas and the countryside still use pit toilet (typically a hole is dug in the ground to host human waste). Typically these toilets are not properly built, emit bad odor, cause health hazards and result in ground water pollution. The Daoist Ecological Temple Network, mobilizing existing water-saving technology will promote water toilets (flushed toilets) in new-built temples for improved sanitation and hygiene for Daoists and pilgrims alike.

GOAL 13 TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

(taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum.

- Daoist temples will expand the “Fasting Calendar” campaign to encourage people to fast on the 1st and 15th day of each Chinese lunar month as according to old Chinese tradition to promote healthier lives and battle against climate change.

Over the past thirty years, China has witnessed a huge increase in meat consumption. In 1978, China’s meat consumption of 8 million tons was one-third the U.S. consumption of 24 million tons. By 1992, China had overtaken the United States as the world’s leading meat consumer. Today more than a quarter of all the meat produced worldwide is eaten in China. China’s annual meat consumption of 71 million tons is more than double that in the United States.²

Increased meat consumption has placed a severe restraint on Chinese agriculture land, diverting food into feeding livestock, polluting water and causing diabetes, obesity and other illness. Livestock is also one of the major producers of greenhouse gases (GHG). It is estimated that the GHG from the livestock sector are estimated to account for 14.5% of the global total, more than direct emissions from the transport sector.³ Taking these factors into account, cutting down meat consumption in China is necessary not only for the long-term development of sustainable agriculture and food security, but also for the wellbeing of the Chinese people and the battle against climate change.

Both Daoists and Buddhists advocate vegetarian diet. In both traditions, the 1st and 15th day of each month are reserved for honoring the Gods and therefore no meat should be consumed. Based on this tradition, Daoists have started a campaign to promote vegetarian diets by distributing once every year at Chinese New Year a “fasting calendar” that marked out the 1st and 15th day of each lunar month for vegetarian fasting. Fasting on these two days is an easy way to gain favor with the Gods, and hence is popular amongst most Chinese people. Given China’s large population, the mainstreaming of this practice can significantly reduce meat consumption and thereby all the associated harmful effects on the environment. It can also help cultivate the habit of eating a purely vegetarian diet, which is in contrast with the Chinese belief that “every meal must have meat”.

The Daoists hope to continue the fasting calendar campaign and expand it significantly in the next ten years so as to achieve a more visible impact in the next ten years.

GOAL 15 PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION, AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS.

- Daoist temples will continue to run regular youth camps to help young people from urban areas to learn about the beauty of nature and develop a habit of protecting nature.
- Daoist temples will continue to work with forest and tourist authorities to protect the forest coverage, water sources and biodiversity of Daoist Sacred Mountains and areas surrounding Daoist temples.
- Daoist temples will continue to oppose the use of ingredients derived from endangered animals and plants in medicinal remedies. Daoists will also advise people who come to them for health advice not to use prescriptions that include endangered animals or plants.
- Daoist temples will continue to work with businesses to develop sustainable incense, ink, paper, tea and other products commonly used in traditional Chinese culture.
- Daoist temples will continue to promote socially responsible incense burning and green pilgrimage to protect the environment in and surrounding Daoist temples and Daoist sacred routes.
- Daoist temples in dry areas will continue to plant trees, grass or other suitable vegetations to help prevent desertification and soil erosion.

GOAL 17 STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

- Daoist temples will continue to work within government standards and regulations to enhance cooperation with the business and environmental sectors to create inventive ideas that will help facilitate sustainable development goals.

¹ Statistics quoted from a Xinhua News Agency report on poverty reduction: http://news.xinhuanet.com/2015-06/22/c_1115686260.htm

² Statistics quoted from the Earth Policy Institute: http://www.earth-policy.org/plan_b_updates/2012/update102

³ The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates emissions attributable to the livestock sector amount to 7.1 GtCO₂ e per annum. This includes emissions associated with activities along the value chain, including feed production, livestock production, slaughter, processing and retail; see FAO (2013). The IPCC estimates direct emissions from global transport amounted to 7.0 GtCO₂ e in 2010; see IPCC (2014).