

Tibet is the High Ground: Part III, 2009

The research of Chinese glaciologists
and glaciologists from India
appears to be right
80% of the glaciers in Tibet
and surrounding areas
can disappear in the next 25 years
Measurements of glaciers large and small
show the melting of the Tibetan plateau
to be about seven percent a year
triggering drought, flood, desertification
and sandstorms
Irrigation and hydroelectric power will suffer
More mountain lakes will burst their dams
The list is long and getting longer

Research further indicates
these glaciers will shrink so much
that their melting borders will dry up
profoundly affecting
the Salween, Mekong, Huang-Ho,
Brahmaputra, Yangtze, Ganges,
and Indus River Systems
that traverse Inner Mongolia,
China, Tibet Autonomous Zone, India,
Burma, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam,
Bangladesh, Kashmir, and Pakistan
A Force Majeure has come into being
in the form of Global Warming
that will work to the disadvantage
of 1/6th of the Earth's population,
or about the 1.2 billion people
who live in the 7 drain basins
that comprise
2,404,820 square miles

The constancy
of a whole ecosystem
is becoming erratic
As the Force Majeure
becomes stronger
any counter force
remains invisible
It is not clear that
the countries of China,

Burma, Laos, Cambodia,
South Vietnam, India,
Bangladesh, Kashmir
and Pakistan can put aside
differences of culture,
race and religion
habits of conflict
and governance,
differences in
border disputes
and legal systems in order
to create a counterforce at
virtually continental scale

Thus, we make
an unlikely proposal
Clearly people from
every country affected
by the flow of these waters
need to meet to generate
a new form of governance
which is indifferent
to national boundaries
and charged to define
and then protect
shared Commons
to be responsible for
the wellbeing
of these seven rivers
and the well being
of their watersheds
and the well being
of all those
who depend upon them
A new form of governance
which will enable transcontinental
and paleobotanical research
to locate forest
and savannah ecosystems
which existed in millennia past
when temperatures were similar to those
which are in the process
of happening in the now
and thereafter
search to locate similar
or equivalent ecosystems that exist in our now

in other parts of the planet
and to begin designing and in part creating
through assisting the migration
of whole ecosystems
able to replace or restate
those now coming under extreme stress
and with new forest in part replacing
the water holding properties of glaciers
to normalize river systems

Long term survival requires a phase shift
where cultural belief and legal structures flip
from valuing extraction to valuing nurture