

Introduction

As noted in the Preface, this book, *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought*, is a sequel to its predecessor, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. The first volume represented the debut of a new field: comparative environmental philosophy. This second volume contains the best essays published in the field during the subsequent two decades.

Comparative environmental philosophy is the intersection of two previously existing, but relatively new fields: comparative philosophy and environmental philosophy. As the name suggests, comparative philosophy compares—and contrasts—philosophies derived from widely differing intellectual traditions, which emerged and evolved independently of one another. Comparative philosophy was first engaged on an east-west axis, comparing philosophies of “oriental” and “occidental” provenance. As comparative philosophy matured, comparison of philosophies was also engaged on a north-south axis. Nevertheless, in part due to the weight of tradition, the main axis of comparison remains east-west.

Environmental philosophy was also at first more narrowly conceived—as environmental ethics. The central problematic of environmental philosophy, as initially conceived, was to bring the natural environment into the purview of ethics as a direct beneficiary of “moral considerability.” As environmental philosophy matured, its compass was broadened to the metaphysical and epistemological issues raised by emergent environmental concerns. In addition, environmental philosophy was broadened by its affiliation with various political movements, such as feminism (eco-feminism) and social justice (social ecology and now, more recently, environmental justice).

Comparative philosophy is the senior field, datable to the first East-West Philosophy Conference, organized by Charles A. Moore at the University of Hawai‘i in 1939. Moore went on to found, in 1951, *Philosophy East and West*, the principal journal in the field, which he edited until 1967, the same year that the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy was chartered. Eliot Deutsch then edited

the journal until 1988, when Roger T. Ames assumed the editorship and continued in that capacity until the present.

The first course in environmental ethics was offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1971. The first published papers by nascent environmental philosophers—Arne Naess, Richard Routley (later Sylvan), and Holmes Rolston III—appeared between 1973 and 1975. The first monograph in environmental ethics, *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, by John Passmore, was published in 1974. The first anthology, *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, edited by William T. Blackstone appeared in 1975. *Environmental Ethics*, the principal journal in its field, was founded in 1979 by Eugene C. Hargrove, who continues to edit it. Several other journals devoted to the field have since been established. The International Society for Environmental Ethics was established in 1990 and the International Association of Environmental Philosophy was established in 1997. An *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* was published by Macmillan in 2009. Both comparative philosophy and environmental philosophy are robust and growing. Comparative *environmental* philosophy is also robust and growing, and this book, as noted, represents some of the best of the recent work in the area.

Comparative environmental philosophy was conceived in the summer of 1984 at the Institute for Comparative Philosophy convened on the University of Hawai'i campus in Honolulu. Summer institutes, such as this one, are sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities principally to introduce college teachers to new areas of study that they could integrate into their courses. One of us, J. Baird Callicott, was a Fellow (participant). Callicott wanted to get something more out of the Institute of Comparative Philosophy than syllabi material for a couple of new courses. He wanted to convince the comparative philosophers staffing the institute that they had something of unique importance to contribute to environmental philosophy.

More than any other one text, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" by Lynn White Jr., published in *Science* in 1967, stimulated the development of environmental philosophy and also *comparative* environmental philosophy. An "environmental crisis" was then rising to acute public concern in the United States and much of the rest of the world. Notoriously, White laid the blame for it at the doorstep of the Judeo-Christian worldview that had, for so long, dominated thought in the West. In barest outline, White's argument is this: The twentieth-century environmental crisis (which is only growing more serious in the twenty-first century) is a byproduct of

“modern technology.” What makes modern technology modern is the marriage of technology to science. Until the emergence of democratic societies, science and technology had been pursued separately—science by aristocrats seeking knowledge for knowledge’s sake, technology by yeomen for purely practical purposes. Modern technology, according to White, is, in short, technology informed by science. Science and the aggressive development of aggressive technologies are both “Occidental” in provenance—a debatable point, we might note, parenthetically. Their emergence in the West was fostered by the Judeo-Christian worldview, according to White. For in Genesis, God created “man” in His own image and gave him dominion over and commanded him to subdue the rest of creation. If man is created in the image of God—and what could that mean except in the image of God’s mind, for surely God has no body?—then it might be possible for man to understand the product of God’s mind, His creation. It might be possible to “think God’s thoughts after him” as the “natural theologians” (among them Isaac Newton) claimed—or as we might say today, it might be possible to “reverse engineer” God’s creation. That fostered the development of science. And it is only too obvious and needs no explanation how believing that man was given dominion over creation and commanded to subdue it might have fostered the aggressive development of aggressive technologies.

It was less the lurid and cavalier “text”—that linking the Judeo-Christian worldview to the environmental crisis—than the “subtext,” repeated in White’s well-orchestrated and beautifully crafted essay like a refrain, that sparked the development of environmental philosophy. That subtext was this: *What we do* in and to the natural environment depends on *what we think* about the natural environment and our human relationship to it. As White put it, “What we do about our ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one.” The business of philosophers is to bring to light and critically engage what we think about things. Bringing to light and critically engaging what we think about the natural environment and our human relationship to it became the business of a new breed of *environmental* philosophers. Thus did environmental philosophy come into being.

In the hands of environmental philosophers, finding a new religion or rethinking our old one was soon generalized and transformed into finding a new metaphysics—a new worldview—or rethinking

our old one. The Western worldview, after all, was shaped as much or more by Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle as by the authors of Genesis. Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton may have been inspired by the Bible, as White claims, “to think God’s thoughts after Him,” but the thoughts they turned to as a starting point for their own thinking were those of the ancient Greeks, not those of the ancient Hebrews. The first generation of environmental philosophers took both the paths suggested by White. Some attempted to rethink our old Western worldview—that is, they revisited the Western philosophical canon and attempted to recover various metaphysics that might, if revived, provide us with a more environmentally benign worldview. White himself took this option and suggested a revival and reinvigoration of the theology of St. Francis of Assisi. For his part, Arne Naess recommended Spinoza’s metaphysics, somewhat implausibly, as a basis for a more environmentally benign Western worldview. Until his affiliation with the Nazi’s came to light, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger enjoyed popularity with some prominent environmental philosophers, as did that of Alfred North Whitehead. Others looked eastward for a new metaphysics, following up on another path also suggested by White.

Here is how White also stimulated the development of comparative environmental philosophy. He suggested that Zen Buddhism is, point for point, the inverse of the Judeo-Christian worldview: “The beatniks, who are the basic revolutionaries of our time, show a sound instinct in their affinity for Zen Buddhism, which conceives of the man-nature relationship as very nearly the mirror image of the Christian view.” (*Beatnik* was a popular derogatory term for those influenced by the Beat Generation genre of literature, notably represented by poets Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder and novelist Jack Kerouac. The *nik* suffix was derived from *sputnik*, the name of the world’s first artificial orbital satellite, launched by the Soviets in 1957. The term insinuated that the beat-generation counterculture was pink if not flaming red.)

White, however, went on, straightaway, to express skepticism about looking for a new worldview for the Occident in the Orient: “Zen, however, is as deeply conditioned by Asian history as Christianity is by the experience of the West, and I am dubious of its viability among us.” But that did not deter a number of scholars from trying to sell Eastern worldviews to Western customers. Huston Smith, for example, wrote an oft-reprinted piece titled “Tao Now: An Ecological Testament” and Gary Snyder wrote a poem titled “Smoky the Bear Sutra.”

By 1984, Callicott had become painfully aware that sorties into Asian traditions of thought by newly minted environmental philosophers were, for the most part, amateurish and naïve. He managed to convince Ames, Deutsch, and some of the other faculty of the Institute of Comparative Philosophy (one such represented here is Steve Odin) that they had something vital to contribute to environmental philosophy: professional and sophisticated explorations of the environmental attitudes and values in various Asian traditions of thought. Ames and Callicott organized several sessions at professional conferences on “Conceptual Resources for Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought.” The best papers from those sessions were published in special issues of *Philosophy East and West* and *Environmental Ethics*. And the best of those articles and articles from other sources were collected in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*. Thus, did a more formal and sophisticated comparative environmental philosophy come into being.

If White is right—and we think he is—that the viability of any Asian worldview in the West is dubious, what is the point of comparative environmental philosophy? As any philosophical endeavor, it is a study that is worth pursuing for its inherent fascination and charm. But environmental philosophy and its subfield, comparative environmental philosophy, have had a higher and, dare we say, a nobler calling: to help address environmental concerns, to help save the world. If Buddhism and other Asian traditions of thought are not generally viable in Western culture and civilization, they are certainly viable in their own cultural and historical contexts. And Asian cultures and civilizations need an environment-friendly worldview and an environmental ethic quite as much as these are needed in Western culture and civilization. So exploring the potential for environmental ethics in Asian traditions of thought for the purpose of helping develop environmental ethics viable in Asian cultures and civilizations is one important point of comparative environmental philosophy.

There is also another, more subtle reason for the pursuit of comparative environmental philosophy. The comparative study of very different ways of viewing the world and different values concerning the world can reveal deep assumptions that might escape critical reflection in the absence of *alternative* assumptions. For example, one might be tempted to think that there simply is a self that one “has”—until confronted with the Buddhist doctrines of *śūnyatā* (the emptiness at the core of all things) and *anātman* or *anattā* (non-self).

The very existence of a self is problematized by studying the Buddhist worldview; oneself may be less a fact of human existence than a socially constructed belief, a cultural artifact. More to the point of comparative *environmental* philosophy, while most Asian traditions of thought recognize the existence of mountains and waterfalls and rivers and oceans, an East-West comparison shows that belief in the existence of “wilderness” is peculiar to the Western environmental worldview. Mountains and waterfalls, rivers, and oceans are part of the common reality that all human beings inhabit. Wilderness, to the contrary, is an element of the cultural “reality” that only Westerners (and indeed not even all of us) inhabit.

Finally as to the point of comparative environmental philosophy—indeed as to the point of environmental philosophy per se, whether comparative or intracultural—White’s subtext should be as critically scrutinized as his text.

As to the text: Does Genesis give “man” license to exploit and destroy nature, as White argued? It does not, according to Jewish and Christian apologists, who have countered White’s interpretation with a “stewardship” reading (among them the aforementioned Passmore in *Man’s Responsibility for Nature*). In Genesis, after each day of His creative efforts, God declares what he created to be “good.” Doesn’t this invest the creation with what environmental philosophers call “intrinsic value?” And just whose creation is it, after all? Surely it remains God’s, not man’s. And what does “dominion” mean? As Genesis goes on to clarify, it does not mean despotic rule, but benign stewardship. Adam, the first man, was put in the Garden of Eden—that is, nature in the language of metaphor—to “dress and keep it.” The Bible may be read to say that humans should manage God’s creation as caretaker, not as a despotic tyrant.

And as to the subtext, does what we do in and to the natural environment really depend on what we think about it? We believe that it does. But we do not believe that what we do in and to the natural environment is *wholly determined* by what we think about it. Obviously, there are other causal factors contributing to what we do. From a biological point of view, we humans are one species. However contested, there is a human nature, which is a platform, as it were, on which various human cultures construct their various beliefs about what sort of world we live in and what it means to be a human being. Because all humans have hands, all humans tend to be manipulative. (The word *manipulative* is derived from the Latin, *manus*, meaning hand. Thus the claim that all humans have hands and thus tend to be

manipulative is true almost by definition.) Cultural worldviews can justify, encourage, and thus accelerate the universal human tendency to manipulate the natural environment. Indeed, we can read White's text as claiming that this is just what the Judeo-Christian worldview does. Whether it does or not, the Daoist concept of *wu-wei* (not doing) may have the opposite effect; it may problematize, discourage, and deflect the universal human tendency to manipulate the environment. What we think about the natural environment is not the be all and end all of what we do in and to the natural environment, but what we think about the natural environment does have considerable influence on what we do in and to the natural environment.

Since *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought* was released, much has been written and published about the conceptual resources for environmental ethics in world *religions*, including those whose home is Asia. In the mid-1990s, a series of ten conferences was held at the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, featuring papers by leading thinkers in various religious traditions from all over the world. The best of those papers were published in ten volumes, each devoted to one religious tradition, by Harvard University Press. By contrast, no volumes devoted to environmental *philosophy* from an Asian perspective have been published since the publication of *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*. The papers included in this volume were selected for their distinctly *philosophical* orientation. And while each may be intellectually located in the context of an associated religious tradition, they all bear the hallmark of philosophy: they present an individualized point of view; they have a critical, often polemical, edge; and they are more speculative than doctrinal.

The two main geographical sources of Asian philosophy are found in South Asia (India) and East Asia (formerly the "Far East," more particularly China and Japan). Asian traditions of philosophy are closely associated with Asian religions, just as, for many centuries, European (or "Western") traditions of philosophy were closely associated with Western religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. The Asian religions with which Asian traditions of philosophy are associated are Hinduism in South Asia; Buddhism (which originated in India but all but died out there) in China and Japan; Confucianism and Daoism, which are indigenous to China; and Shintō, which is indigenous to Japan. In addition, Islamic philosophy, which originated in Western Asia (formerly the "Near East" and presently often the "Middle East"), has now become accepted as the fourth major focus of comparative philosophy. Islam, however, is regarded by both secular

and Muslim scholars as a religion of The Book, closely related to its predecessors Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, during the European Medieval Period, the philosophical achievements of the ancient Greeks were conserved, elaborated, and developed in the Islamic World. As Christendom began to recover its intellectual heritage in the late Middle Ages, it did so through the lens of earlier Muslim scholarship. Thus, at the level of generality typical of philosophical discussion, Islamic environmental philosophy is more closely affiliated with occidental than with oriental traditions of thought.

The essays in *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought* are, accordingly, organized into three sections, each corresponding to a major area of Asian philosophy: Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. The first three articles in Section I deal with the contributions of Hinduism to Indian environmental philosophy.

In “Environment and Environmental Philosophy in India,” George Alfred James provides an overview of India’s biogeophysical endowments and its environmental problems. He aptly characterizes the kind of Hindu philosophy that has been recognized in mainstream environmental philosophy—and also, importantly, the kind that has not. James provides a sweeping history of the centrality of nature in Hindu thought beginning with that which may be inferred from ancient artifacts, moving on to that which is recorded in the Rig Veda, and that which culminates in the philosophy of Mohandas Gandhi.

In “Ātman, Identity, and Emanation: Arguments for a Hindu Environmental Ethic,” Christopher Framarin explores the philosophical basis for environmental ethics within the Hindu tradition. Hindu environmental ethics are typically based on the following argument: since all living things are part of Brahman (Ultimate Reality or God), they are all worthy of moral consideration. In this chapter, Framarin refutes three variations of this view, arguing each fails to provide a satisfactory environmental ethic because it does not attribute intrinsic value and moral standing to non-sentient beings. He then offers an alternative Hindu environmental ethic that grants both intrinsic value and direct moral standing to plants and animals by virtue of the fact that these entities have a good.

Picking up on and expanding one theme in James’s essay, the third article to address Hindu philosophy is Bart Gruzalski’s “Gandhi’s Contributions to Environmental Thought and Action.” In this essay, Gruzalski responds to Vinay Lal’s critique of Gandhi’s environmental philosophy (see Lal’s “Gandhi and the Ecological Vision

of Life: Thinking beyond Deep Ecology” in *Environmental Ethics* 22 (2000): 149–68). Lal argues that while Gandhi held an ecological worldview, he cannot be understood as an environmentalist because he would reject many of the claims made by deep ecology, social ecology, and ecofeminism. Gruzalski’s paper is an attempt to defend Gandhi’s environmental philosophy against these claims and elucidate those aspects of Gandhian thought that resonate with and have even influenced today’s environmental philosophy and activism. He argues that Gandhi took a biocentric approach to ethics that emphasized non-injury toward all sentient beings, which directly influenced his non-violent approach to activism of all kinds, including environmental issues. Gandhi endorsed a simple, sustainable manner of living that favored independent local economies over globalization, a philosophy that ultimately inspired the Chipko Movement of the 1970s that strove to preserve the forests of India. Gandhi argued that if human beings were to live in small, self-reliant communities, we could reduce the consumerism that has generated so many of the world’s environmental problems.

The second half of Section I deals with Buddhist environmental philosophy in the Indian tradition.

The Buddhist half of Section I begins with Stephanie Kaza’s chapter, “Acting With Compassion: Buddhism, Feminism and the Environmental Crisis.” Kaza explores six areas of confluence between American Buddhism and feminist philosophy: experiential knowing, examination of the conditioned mind, the truth of interrelatedness, emotional energy as a source of healing, and the role of the community. She uses these areas of convergence to develop a normative environmental ethic grounded in the feminist concept of relationality, which is analogous to the Buddhist notion of dependent co-arising, but which avoids some of the philosophical pitfalls of traditional Buddhist thinking. Kaza then offers several cases that illustrate the practical application of Buddhist feminist thought to environmental education and activism.

Simon P. James offers a contrarian perspective on Buddhism in his article, “Against Holism: Rethinking Buddhist Environmental Ethics.” James begins this paper by summarizing “The Unity Thesis,” a common misconception of Buddhist environmental ethics, in three propositions: (1) Buddhism takes a holistic worldview that views humans as one with nature, which produces ethical concern toward the environment on the part of human beings; (2) Proposition 1 is grounded in the Buddhist teaching of emptiness; therefore

(3) Buddhism is a philosophy that is inherently friendly toward the environment. James rejects the first proposition because the fact that human beings are one with nature does not necessarily imply that we are in harmony with it. He further argues that the second proposition is false because Buddhists do not intend for the notion of emptiness to produce an ecological worldview, but rather one of non-attachment to all things, including the environment. Since 2 does not entail 1, 3 cannot follow. Nonetheless, James argues that the conclusion is true for a different reason: the virtues of compassion, gentleness, humility, and mindfulness are necessary components of a well-ordered human being and represent dispositions to treat the environment responsibly.

Ian Harris' article, "Causation and 'Telos': The Problem of Buddhist Environmental Ethics," offers an even stronger critique of Buddhist environmental philosophy. He articulates the proposition that any authentic ethical system must understand causation in a manner that allows for goal-directed activity: specifically, it must be able to draw a distinction between the way the world is and the way it ought to be. This depends upon a chronological understanding of causation that supports the notion that the world has an end or purpose, yet it is not clear that Buddhism endorses such a notion of causation. Harris concludes that since Buddhist philosophy is inherently dysteleological, it is a problematic basis for environmental ethics that can do little more than borrow arguments from those contemporary environmental philosophies that do not contradict its foundational principles.

Section II focuses on environmental philosophy in Chinese traditions of thought. In this section Daoism garners more attention than Confucianism, an emphasis that reflects the prevailing assumption by comparative environmental philosophers that core Daoist concepts, especially the concepts of the *dao* itself and *wu-wei*, represent an almost ready-made environmental ethics, with which many of the essays in this section engage. Though less immediately obvious, Confucianism also represents a rich source of ideas from which an environmental ethics might be constructed. The first essay in this section explores that source.

The second section begins with Mary Evelyn Tucker's "The Relevance of Chinese Neo-Confucianism for the Reverence of Nature." While much has been written about Daoist perspectives on the environment, articles that explore Confucian environmental philosophy are comparatively rare, and Tucker's paper offers an excellent summary of Confucian approaches to environmental

ethics. Tucker argues that the industrial processes that have brought about our modern world have come at a terrible price to the environment, and we must seek a balance between the practical concerns of economic growth and the overall good of the ecosystems that sustain us. Such sustainability will only come as the result of a philosophical shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism, the latter of which is epitomized by Chinese Neo-Confucian thought. This article offers an intellectual history of Neo-Confucian environmental philosophy, focusing on the work of Chu Hsi, who understands the universe as an organic, holistic process in which human self-cultivation is contingent upon one's harmonious interrelation with the natural world.

The second article in this section is Karyn Lai's "Conceptual Foundations for Environmental Ethics: A Daoist Perspective." Here, Lai argues that the philosophy of the *Daodejing* supports a notion of environmental holism that can be used as the basis of a sound environmental ethic. While the term *dao* describes the totality of particulars, their interrelation, and the roles they play within the whole, the concept of *de* refers to the distinctive nature of each particular as manifested through interdependent relationships with other particulars. Lai pays particular attention to the role that spontaneous action (evident in the concepts of *wu-wei* and *ziran*) plays in maintaining both interdependence and integrity in these associations. Taken together, these ideas support a non-anthropocentric, non-hierarchical philosophy that promotes symbiotic relationships in which individuals interact to mutually benefit one another rather than sacrificing each other for either personal gain or the sake of the environment as a whole.

In "Process Ecology and the 'Ideal' Dao," Alan Fox uses Roger Ames and David Hall's process-philosophy interpretation of Daoism to analyze the implications of key Daoist concepts for environmental ethics. In particular, Fox explores the meaning of *wu-wei*, which has been traditionally interpreted as "non-interference." This understanding of *wu-wei*, when grounded in a metaphysical interpretation of *dao*, yields for human beings a tension between submission to the natural order and the intentional pursuit of one's goals. By understanding *dao* as a dynamic process rather than an abstract, metaphysical entity, human beings can understand themselves as *daos* that are constantly changing in response to their interrelation with other *daos* in the environment. This leads to a reinterpretation of *de* as a type of "virtuosity" by which individuals can prosper through minimal interference with other processes. This understanding of *dao*

can inform environmental ethics by stressing that human beings can only interfere with the environment within certain tolerance limits if we wish to maintain prosperous, harmonious relationships with the natural world.

R. P. Peerenboom continues this discussion of the proper interpretation of *wu-wei* in “Beyond Naturalism: A Reconstruction of Daoist Environmental Ethics.” In this essay, he challenges the traditional, naturalistic reading of Daoism that understands *wu-wei* as “acting naturally.” He argues that this interpretation is of little use to environmental ethicists since humans must be either natural beings (who cannot possibly act unnaturally) or not part of nature (in which case they can only act humanly). Peerenboom proceeds to examine and reject four interpretations of what “natural” means, concluding that environmental ethics should be an attempt to determine not what is natural but rather what an intelligent person would deem normatively best in a particular situation. In this non-naturalist approach to Daoist philosophy, critical thinking about environmental ethics issues becomes a pragmatic process of balancing competing interests to achieve a state of harmony that is beneficial to all.

Sandra A. Wawrytko’s paper, “The Viability (*Dao*) and Virtuosity (*De*) of Daoist Ecology: Reversion (*Fu*) as Renewal,” challenges the claim that Daoist philosophy is impractical when applied to contemporary environmental problems. In an effort to repudiate contemporary commonsensical attitudes toward the environment, she examines key concepts in Laozi’s *Dao De Jing*: *dao* (viability), *de* (virtuosity), *fu* (reversion or return), *wei-wu-wei* (action without artificial action), and *zi-ran* (natural flow). Wawrytko uses numerous examples of how contemporary humans’ attempts to control the environment have violated the Daoist concept of *wei-wu-wei*. In contrast, she describes sustainable activities such as China’s Dujiangyan Irrigation System that are consonant with the principles of Daoism and represent a way of interacting with nature without disrupting natural processes.

Section II concludes with James Miller’s “Ecology, Aesthetics and Daoist Body Cultivation.” The Daoist religious tradition offers a wide repertoire of body cultivation practices that focus on generating a phenomenological sensitivity to the inner body and its location within the world. These practices can be understood from the contemporary Western theoretical perspectives developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Richard Shusterman. Merleau-Ponty proposed that the body constitutes the basis for phenomenological experience but did not develop the idea of the experience of the inner body that

is so vital to Indian and Chinese body cultivation traditions. Richard Shusterman proposed the concept of “somaesthetics” or methods of training the body’s experience of the world, but did not consider the value of this from an ecophenomenological point of view. Extending these theoretical perspectives to interpret Daoist cultivation methods reveals that Daoists aim to dissolve the experiential boundary between the body and the world and create an experience of the mutual interpenetration of the body and the world. Such an experience can form the aesthetic basis for cultivating ecological sensitivity.

Section III is dedicated to the exploration of environmental philosophy in Japanese traditions of thought.

The first chapter in this section is Steve Odin’s “The Japanese Concept of Nature in Relation to the Environmental Ethics and Conservation Aesthetics of Aldo Leopold.” Odin argues that Japanese Buddhism is characterized by a religio-aesthetic understanding of nature that views the natural world as a continuum of events that are co-dependently related as a network of interpenetrating fields. This view of nature is echoed in the works of twentieth century philosophers Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō, and extends ethics beyond the anthropocentric to include the moral relationship between human beings and the environment. This environmental philosophy closely resembles the land ethic of Aldo Leopold, in which normative values are hierarchically grounded in an aesthetic that stresses the intrinsic value of nature and views human beings as plain citizens of a larger biotic community. For Japanese Buddhism, the relationship between humans and the natural environment has soteriological value in the sense that nature is the ultimate locus for the realization of enlightenment.

In “Dōgen, Deep Ecology, and the Ecological Self,” Deane Curtin argues that according to deep ecology, contemporary problems in environmental ethics can only be solved through a reevaluation of the Cartesian notion of self that understands human beings as something fundamentally separate from nature. Deep ecologists have often appealed to the work of Dōgen, the thirteenth-century Japanese Zen philosopher, for a more inclusive interpretation of the self. However, Curtin contends that while Dōgen’s philosophical anthropology parallels deep ecology in its non-dualistic and non-anthropocentric nature, he would reject the expanded Self of deep ecology for the same reasons that Buddhism rejects the Hindu notion of *ātman*. If Dōgen’s self is to be compared to any contemporary environmental ethic, it is most consonant with the notion of self that is articulated by ecofeminism.

The third article in this section is “Conservation Ethics and the Japanese Intellectual Tradition” by David Shaner and R. Shannon Duval. They argue that Japanese philosophical and religious traditions have traditionally advocated the type of ecocentric worldview that is most useful for dealing with contemporary problems in environmental ethics. This is particularly true of the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, who is arguably the most important and influential Japanese philosopher of the twentieth century. The authors use the philosophy of William James as a tool for investigating philosophical parallels between the early works of Nishida and the naturalist philosophy of Louis Agassiz, a nineteenth-century biologist. Since James was a student of Agassiz and James’ concept of pure experience influenced Nishida’s early masterwork, *Zen No Kenkyū*, studying the relationship between these thinkers’ ideas can help to elucidate Nishida’s environmental philosophy.

In the essay, “From Symbiosis (Kyōsei) to the Ontology of ‘Arising Both from Oneself and from Another,’” Hiroshi Abe explores the Japanese ethical concept of *kyōsei*. Typically translated as “symbiosis” or “mutual benefit,” *kyōsei* was first articulated in 1991 by Ryūzaburō Kaku, the Chairman of Canon, Inc. Though it has been used as a central paradigm in international business ethics, it has until now received little treatment in the field of environmental ethics. In this article, Abe calls for a reevaluation of human nature in terms of “human ecology,” which understands humans as defined by their relationships with the environment. To do this, he first examines the notion of symbiosis in biology and ecology, critiquing the prevailing, dualistic logic that understands species interaction as *either* mutualism *or* competition. Abe then draws from Tokuryū Yamanouchi’s interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s *Treatise Concerning the Middle* to develop a new understanding of symbiosis based upon *gūshō* (“arising both from oneself and another”), which understands relationships between species as an interdependent process in which every species affects and is affected by every other, either directly or indirectly.¹

Tomosaburō Yamauchi explores the philosophy of a key Japanese thinker who is largely unknown to the West in his essay, “The Confucian Environmental Ethics of Ogyū Sorai.” Sorai was a Japanese Confucian philosopher and one of the most influential scholars of the Edo period of Japanese history (also known as the Tokugawa Era, from 1603–1868 CE). In this article, Yamauchi draws upon Sorai’s philosophy to develop a normative environmental ethic capable of dealing with the contemporary environmental problems that have

been caused by anthropocentric worldviews. He explains how Sorai's utilitarian system of ethics can be used to reconcile competing moral claims without having to appeal to an absolutist metaethical framework. Sorai endorses a three-level system of social ethics grounded in a Confucian ecological worldview that understands human virtues as habits that promote eco-holistic welfare rather than purely anthropocentric interests.

Section III concludes with James McRae's chapter, "Triple-Negation: Watsuji Tetsurō on the Sustainability of Ecosystems, Economies, and International Peace." Environmental security is a relatively new branch of environmental studies that explores how national security issues are affected by ecosystem sustainability and the demands placed upon the natural world by human populations. The pursuit of consumer interests can often place stress on the environment, which can lead to a collapse of both ecosystems and economies, which in turn promotes political instability. For this reason, the fields of environmental ethics, business ethics, and international relations are ultimately intertwined. This essay draws from the philosophical anthropology of Watsuji Tetsurō's *Fūdo* to explain why human culture, economics, and the politics of warfare are so intimately tied to sustainability issues. The ethical principles of Watsuji's *Rinrigaku* are then used to articulate a normative framework that could be used to promote sustainability—and thereby maintain peace—on an international scale. By developing a relational understanding of environmental and business ethics that emphasizes roles and responsibilities over individual autonomy and rights, we can regulate business practices in a manner that is both environmentally and socially conscious. Because mismanagement of the environment leads to socio-economic problems that provoke global conflicts, the promotion of sustainability according to Watsuji's ethics can contribute to both a healthy economy and international security.

The editors of this anthology have done their best to keep each article as close as possible to the format of its original publication. Since there are multiple forms of transliteration used for non-Western languages, terms will sometimes be written differently depending on the article. In Section I, Sanskrit and Pali terms are sometimes transliterated with diacritical markers (e.g., "*sūnyatā*"), while other authors prefer to drop the diacriticals and use Romanized spellings (e.g., "*shunyata*"). In Section II, some articles use the older Wade Giles spellings (e.g., "Taoism"), while others use the newer Pinyin system (e.g., "Daoism"). Section III uses standard Hepburn Romanization

throughout, with long vowels indicated by macrons (e.g., “Dōgen”). Also, the original authors use different forms of citation depending on the requirements of the journals in which they were originally published. Thus, some articles feature footnotes while others use in-text citations. Some prefer MLA citation, while others use CMA or APA. The editors believe that reconciling these discrepancies would add little to clarify their content while doing a great deal to undermine the intent of their original authors. Thus, these works are presented in their original formats.

NOTES

1. Though Yamanouchi is a Nagarjuna scholar, the focus of Abe’s article is on the concept of *kyōsei* (symbiosis), which is a distinctly Japanese philosophical notion. Since Nagarjuna’s philosophy is used to clarify the meaning of *kyōsei*, we believe this is a work of Japanese philosophy more so than it is a work of Indian philosophy, which is why it is included in this section of the anthology.