Conclusions and Preludes

The Many Lives of Sacred Forests

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> Even the so-called "egalitarian" or "acephalous" societies, including hunters such as the Inuit or Australian Aboriginals, are in structure and practice cosmic polities, ordered and governed by divinities, the dead, species-masters, and other such metapersons endowed with life-and-death powers over the human population. There are kingly beings in heaven where there are no chiefs on earth. Hobbes notwithstanding, the state of nature is already something of a political state. It follows that, taken in its social totality and cultural reality, something like the state is the general condition of humankind. It is usually called "religion."
>
> Marshall Sahlins, "The Original Political Society" (2017)

> [T]here is ever stronger support for my belief that sacred groves will be preserved, revived, or even newly created. That will require empowering the ecosystem people to fight back against the economically and politically powerful interests that want to grab timber, minerals, land and water for consumption by the biosphere people.
>
> Madhav Gadgil, "Sacred Groves: An Ancient Tradition of Nature Conservation" (2018)

Our case studies show that in many regions of South, East, and Southeast Asia, village sacred forests continue to flourish in the Anthropocene, but their numbers have diminished greatly in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Furthermore, we must question whether a grove of trees—or even a large tract of old-growth forest putatively protected by a village community—can be legitimately regarded as a sacred forest. To meet the strictest definition of a sacred grove, a given patch of woodlands would have to be protected by a common ethos, ascribed with transcendent value, and protected by a community in recognition of the power and agency of "metapersons" or superhuman powers residing in, or presiding over, the landscape. Some would argue that the religious or spiritual beliefs surrounding a given forest no longer matter, especially since the trees have managed to survive the modern onslaught of "scientific forestry," agribusiness, and the myriad forms of forest destruction entrained by several centuries of industrial development. In this context, does the grove not objectively embody a kind of biocultural victory, if only a small, local one?

DOI: 10.4324/9781003143680-28

That approach makes sense as long as "traditional cultural values" and notions of "the sacred" are extricated from "conservation landscapes" and confidently placed in the category of the "subjective." This tidy (modernist) epistemology lets us assign "idiosyncratic" and "atavistic" social constructions of nature to the category of "culture," and, to be safer still, we can place them chronologically in a pre-modern past. From that point on, we can proceed with the sanitary business of protecting some forests and ecosystems from the devastating impacts of contemporary human activity while allowing political and economic interests to destroy others. This is the dominant perspective of contemporary conservation biology, which is bound by the rules of secularism. Scientific conservation requires the deployment of truths discovered through replicable investigations of nature, and these truths must transcend the particularity of local cosmopolitics and thus "ecosystem people" themselves.

The one singular failure of this modern(ist) approach to nature conservation is that it has not proven capable of saving our planet from the sixth mass extinction, the global climate emergency, and the host of proximal human activities that drive these unfolding disasters. This is not the fault of the tens of thousands of scientists, conservationists, and activists who have devoted their lives, careers, and disciplined attention to ending the anthropogenic destruction of the biosphere, nor is the struggle over, but it does mark a tragic and ongoing failure to grasp and creatively deploy the infrastructure of cosmos, polis, and oikos to which Sahlins and Gadgil allude in the previous epigraphs. In the new vernacular deployed by Gadgil (2018), the trouble with "biosphere people" (who make up the majority of the world population) is that the reach of our consumption and our waste products is global—the human oikos is increasingly driving changes in the earth's biogeochemical systems, but there is, as yet, no corresponding worldwide political institution that can ensure that all "resources," and all lives, are joined in a common property regime. This is in no small part due to the absence of a shared cosmological vision that holds the capacity for a single moral community not based on authoritarian environmentalism but on a plurality of identities, visions, ontologies, and cosmologies.

Many of Asia's sacred groves consist of small islands of trees within veritable seas of agricultural land and urban industrial sprawl, but many still embody the values of a single moral community of humans and non-humans, all partaking in the shared productivity of a cosmopolity inseparable from ecology. As the reader may have noticed, most of our chapters describe sacred ecologies that are ordered and governed by "metapersons endowed with life-and-death powers over the human population . . . [and] . . . the state of nature is already something of a political state" (Sahlins 2017: 92). We take this persistence seriously because we know that culture is in part a dependent variable that emerges in contests and tensions between oikos, polis, and cosmos. The single moral community of the village-forest cosmos (Århem this volume) may be exceedingly difficult to cultivate at larger scales of socio-political complexity—after all, this would require that we "biosphere people" find a way to become "ecosystem

people"—but we live in a moment when the personhood of landscapes, ecosystems, watersheds, and more are being taken seriously in legal fora around the world, becoming part of transnational social movements and action networks.[1] For this reason, our short conclusion is also a prospectus in which we place our authors' contributions in the broader context of contemporary work on sacred natural sites (SNSs) and international nature conservation, the ontological turn in social research on indigenous peoples and human-environment relations, and the rapidly emerging rights of nature (RON) movement that is winning juristic personhood for culturally, socially, and ecologically important landscapes and features. We begin with a short summary of some of the common features of Asia's sacred forests, as described by our contributors, and we end with some thoughts on how a long-term view of Asia's sacred forests may help engender greater creative, inclusive, and socially just resource governance in response to the interlocking crises of the Anthropocene.

Common Features of Asia's Sacred Forests

The following observations are not meant to be comprehensive; instead we highlight several seminal features common to many of the forests described in this volume, and we venture a hypothesis on their origins. Each of our case studies shows that in villages where indigenous common property institutions remain robust, cosmological sanctions have helped prevent deforestation within areas of ecological importance. In such cases, hallowed trees and groves often protect, or themselves constitute, critical biotopes—distinctive ecological features in the landscape that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of local livelihoods. In addition to safeguarding the carbon resources critical for food, fuel, and building material, forests and trees are closely associated with water sources and microclimates, guarding human settlements and croplands from high wind, runoff, and erosion while protecting aquifers, soil water, and surface water features. In fact, well-placed and protected groves provide the most effective protection for slopes, soils, and hydrological features, and the latter include streams, rivers, and riparian zones; springs and wells; and ponds, tanks, reservoirs, and pools. These water sources are often sacralized as well, and it can be difficult or impossible to differentiate the specific focal points of sacred regard—local ontology often treats trees, groves, and wooded hills or mountains as the abodes of tutelary spirits that dwell within, protect, or otherwise possess a water body and various landforms that define its watershed (Ray 2020).

When we first convened for a workshop in Hanoi, one of our guiding questions was whether sacred forests are a relict of specific modes of resource use. Perhaps these forests were established as a response to deforestation associated with early agrarian states, with hinterland communities responding to regional deforestation by protecting groves critical for their collective well-being. While we still regard this as a reasonable explanation for the rise and persistence of sacred forests in many regions of Asia, we now recognize the multiple possible socio-ecological origins and transformations of sacred woodlands through

time. Sedentary cultivation is certainly not a necessary precondition of community resource zonation and the sacralization of critical ecosystems. In fact, our work documents sacred grove protection by numerous groups of shifting cultivators, including the Katu (Hoan and Le this volume; Århem this volume) Indonesian indigenes (Purwanto this volume; Boedhihartono this volume), and Adivasi in India (Mokashi this volume; Gogoi this volume). Perhaps more remarkable, Orang Rimba hunter-gatherers in Sumatra continue to protect "forbidden forests" (*setali bukit*) located within *inumon* (sacred areas) associated with mountaintop water sources presided over by tutelary deities and dangerous spirits (Wardani this volume). These preliminary observations suggest that Asia's sacred forests have a long and complicated history that cannot be reduced to a linear account based strictly on modes of resource use or processes of state expansion. While the latter undoubtedly played a critical role in amplifying pressure on carbon and hydrologic resources, which must have necessitated strict local forest protection grounded in the most powerful cosmological power and authority, hypotheses on the origins of these socio-ecological systems must remain speculative.

Less uncertain is the hypothesis that sacred forests are a complex, multilayered response to anthropogenic resource degradation—complex in the sense suggested by Sahlins's contention that "religion" (to which we refer as cosmology or *cosmos*), the state (to which we refer as the political realm or *polis*), and "the state of nature" (to which we refer as *oikos*) are all already at play no matter where a particular group of people may happen to reside in time and space. In this sense, sacred forests are also part of the history of conquest and territorialization, which make up the armature of a rich, ongoing, and often troubling history of tribal, precolonial, imperial, colonial, and post-colonial relations of production worldwide. The antagonists in these contests engage one another in and on the land through political, cosmological, ecological, and economic territorialization, which involves the assertion of property claims on behalf of specific polities, deities, commodities, or ecological demands. Sacred trees, small groves, and large forests have long figured in these agonistic encounters, as well as in places and times graced by relative peace and socio-ecological sustainability. The latter typically persist the longest in rural regions and in zones at a distance from, or completely beyond the reach of, powerful states and associated urban networks, polities whose economies are built on forest resource extraction from afar. The imbalance of power between small polities such as rural villages and shifting indigenous settlements, on the one hand, and cities, empires, and modern states, on the other, has grown through time. We have made what we hope is a strong case for a long historical process of increasing political control by the latter over the former, in which we see the geographic spread of state systems from valley and coastal lowlands into hilly, mountainous, or otherwise "out of the way" hinterlands through time. Only in the postcolonial period have military incursions, law enforcement systems, commodity chains, and other infrastructural networks fully incorporated nearly all of Asia's rural and indigenous communities into the global urban system. While sacred

forests and other kinds of sacred natural sites often persevere under the onslaught of resource expropriation and changing values, they frequently take on new meanings imposed by discursive formations associated with regional, national, and global claims over cosmos (ideology and transcendent value), polis (political legitimation), and oikos (economic and ecological value).

In this context, one of the critical roles of *culture* is that it constitutes the active material and symbolic interweaving of social power, community well-being, and cosmology. In this sense, sacred woodlands are a cultural feature that can be understood through the lens of polis-oikos-cosmos. In more precise terms, in small, relatively isolated, and autonomous self-sufficient communities, the collective resource management systems of a sustainable ecological economy can flourish where there is an ethic of common reciprocity with the inherent powers abiding in the landscape. In pre-imperial and pre-colonial contexts, cosmological authority is ascribed to spirits and deities that possess and preside over local lands, waters, resources, and other non-human beings. While one might assume that the loss of any of the original components (economic-ecological, political, or cosmological) would lead to a collapse of the community resource management system, we should keep in mind that each of the three components can (and has) developed along its own processual trajectories to a degree that can significantly change the emic value and meaning of a sacred natural site while still underwriting its protection. Our case studies show that a change of gods, a change of livelihoods, or a change of socio-political regimes can lead to forest degradation or destruction (see chapters by Sharma and Borde on the Sarna movement of Jharkhand, as well as Kent on tree cutting in Tamil Nadu, this volume). Changing conditions can also subtend new ascriptions of meaning to sacred groves and the rituals and narratives upon which their management and governance depends (see Borde this volume; Coggins et al. this volume). Today many of Asia's sacred forests are being symbolically reconstituted through transnational discourse on indigenous rights, sustainable development, nature conservation, and the reconceptualization of human-environment relations in the Anthropocene (see Zeng this volume; Man et al. this volume). Sacred groves can no longer be viewed as mere biocultural relicts of a time when the metabolism of rural communities mostly involved their own immediate environs. Yes, recognition of that phase in the ecological history of sacred woodlands needs to be interpreted for the broader public, but each of our case studies also shows that sacred natural sites can outlive the sociocultural and cosmological contexts that gave rise to them and sustained them in the past.

Asia's Sacred Forests, Sacred Natural Sites, and Biodiversity Conservation

The importance of sacred groves in socioecological and biocultural systems is emphasized by several authors offering concise overviews of the role of indigenous sacred natural sites in conservation (Stevens 1997; Tiedje 2007; Verschuuren et al. 2010; Byrne 2012; Heinämäki et al. 2014; Verschuuren 2016;

Verschuuren et al. 2017; Verschuuren 2019, 2021). These works move beyond a narrow focus on state-led, top-down nature conservation by delivering critical social analyses of the relationship between indigenous sacred space and modern nature conservation policies and institutions. The contribution of this volume is our insistence that sacred groves and other sacred natural sites are inherently political, ecological, and religious (cosmological), but we also show that the political relationships between village polities and state conservation institutions are complicated by conflicting conceptions of who has control over what kinds of resources and why. Across Asia, the rise of science and technology supported a relentless pattern of industrial development and subsequent economic growth at the expense of many sacred groves and local resource management systems in each region. International and national conventions, guidelines, and laws have been established to counter and reverse these entrenched patterns of ecological injustice, but their implementation is challenged by complex political conditions in each country. International policies and recommendations include the IUCN's Protected Area Categories (particularly Category V—Protected Landscapes and Seascapes),[2] the UN's World Heritage Convention (Ray 2020), and the Akwé: Con Guidelines developed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2004 (CBD Secretariat 2004). Each of these provides protocols for the protection of indigenous and traditional rural landscapes of high conservation value. The last of these provides guidelines for cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or likely to affect, sacred sites and the lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities (Heinämäki 2014). The Akwé: Con Guidelines acknowledge that indigenous and local communities have developed unique and often sustainable human-environment relations based on unique traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that are deeply rooted in the environment on which they depend. The deployment of these international guidelines to establish legally binding arrangements may help ensure that sacred forests throughout Asia can be addressed with much greater care and granted greater importance. Similarly, at the scale of the nation, India's Forest Rights Act of 2006 (Gadgil 2018; Borde this volume), China's Ecological Civilization policies (Coggins et al. this volume), and Indonesia's Decision Number 35/PUU-X/2012 (granting indigenous and local people control of their own customary forests) hold potential for the restoration of local resource management and villagers' rights over sacred natural sites. Perhaps the greatest barrier to the realization of indigenous environmental justice lies in the fact that many post-colonial nation states express great antipathy toward "superstition." As nodes of the supernatural and manifestations of deep spiritual connection to place, sacred forests represent limits to the nation state's control over land, resources, communities, cosmologies, and the individual souls of citizens-as-subjects (Coggins and Yeh 2014; Verschuuren et al. 2016; Verschuuren 2021; Studley and Jikmed 2016). Including spiritual governance in the IUCN management and governance matrix for protected areas may make it easier for conservationists and development actors to take the concept seriously and

gain discursive traction in official conservation narratives, but those narratives are still dominated by western ontologies, neoliberal market ideologies, and the authoritarian environmental policies of nation-states whose political and economic elites are more concerned with "national security" and territorial hegemony than with the common and converging planetary socio-ecological crises that will certainly present unforeseen political and economic problems for a long time to come.

Sacred Forests, Spiritual Ecology, and the Ontological Turn in Social Theory

Our contributors show that sacred forests are intricate spiritual landscapes central to the eco-social constitution of many village communities across Asia. Århem's contention that the "village-forest cosmos" is based on an "animist ecology," along with Man, Steehhuisen, and Verschuuren's explanation of how Karen sacred forests are commensurable with Descola's (2013) theory of animism (as one of four ontologies found across the spectrum of human culture), places this volume squarely within current research and theory associated with "the ontological turn in social theory" (Holbraad and Axel Pedersen 2017). Furthermore, Coggins, Minor, and Chen's contention that vitalist cosmology underpins the "fengshui landscape" and is based on older forms of landscape animism provides additional material for comparative analysis. Beyond this anthropological interest, we have made what we hope is a sound "anthropo-geographic" argument that relates cosmology to polity and ecology within the context of watersheds, the growth of urban-centric states, and the persistence of small polities that have maintained a significant degree of autonomy in their capacity for local resource management. In the introduction, we make the case that animist cosmologies have long governed the small upstream and upland polities associated with Zomia (Scott 2009)—the mountain and hill regions largely beyond the reach of the state until colonial and postcolonial times. It is clear that local tutelary deities have held dominion over hydro-ecological resource zones in the uplands and tributaries within each region until they and their associated polities and ecologies are overcome by exogenous forces, typically emerging from powerful valley states. Each of our sectional introductions attempts to describe these processes within one of the three regions of Asia featured in this volume, and each of our case studies supports this argument.

With the rise of western colonial power in Asia and continuing to the present, sacred forests have emerged as battlegrounds where animist and vitalist cosmologies clash with capitalist and statist conceptions of private property and national territory. Today, capitalist patterns of accumulation by dispossession often bring corporate legal entities endowed with artificial personhood into direct conflict with the superpersonhood of sacred national sites. While the personhood of corporations typically holds greater standing—their political and economic power allowing them to destroy resources virtually at will—we find hope in the capacity of the subaltern and their allies to save large-scale sacred landscapes, as is

demonstrated in the case of Niyamgiri Mountain in Odisha, India, sacred to the Dongaria Kondh, who were able to stop a mining project by the multinational corporation, Vedanta Resources (Borde this volume). Legal cases of this kind mark the possibility of a new regard for cosmopolitical territorial claims, bringing indigenous sacred space into legal fora from which they have long been excluded.

Moving more deeply into the nature of political claims for sacred ecology, it is essential to keep in mind that we members of global consumer culture are rarely challenged to think beyond our own conceptualizations of forests and nature. We may well cherish our time in the "wilderness," or the "outdoors," and we may understand the essential role of healthy ecosystems and intact biomes to prevent the earth's biogeochemical cycles from permanent, non-linear, and devastating derangement (Ghosh 1917). But how do we sense, feel, and communicate with "the world out there"? The persistence of sacred woodlands and other sacred natural sites challenges us to look through the eyes of those who do not share a naturalist cosmology based on possessive individualism and a human-nature divide. To conceive of (and experience) a world of dividualism and partible personhood (Sahlins 2017) may help us gain a glimpse of what these forests are within the sensoria of those for whom they hold agency and power—places where non-human sentient and sapient beings dwell within and preside over the land as owners or hosts—including tree spirits, forest guardians, and gods protecting mountains and water bodies, as well as ancestors who remain in the landscape as benefactors of the community. While it is easy for most readers to comprehend modern conceptions of multiculturalism, which is associated with naturalism in the theory of Descola (2013) and Viveiros de Castro (1998), the "other reality" of animism, which is a kind of multinaturalism (in which a multitude of intelligent persons are separated by different kinds of biological or geomorphic bodies) can be far more difficult to entertain. Thus, we end with three points. First, in seeking to understand animist thinking objectively, etically, and historically, we can gain a radical conception of the potential of the human sensorium for new forms of being in harmony in a world of others. Second, in seeking to understand animism subjectively, emically, and contemporaneously, we may gain the imaginative and experiential capacity to be more deeply and compassionately engaged in a world of non-human others, species with whom we share more in the way of cognitive capacity and experiential richness (as a preponderance of scientific research has proven) than we can possibly realize from a point of view bounded by the ontological fallacies of modernist possessive individualism (Taylor 2010). Third, as recent research in cognitive psychology suggests, the very origin of religious experience and the power of religious institutions may lie in early human ascription of agency to non-human forces "out there" in the environment; the "hypersensitive agency detection device" may have been, and may continue to be, a key to the survival of our species, among others (Barrett 2016). The ontological status of sacred forests and sacred natural sites is not simply a theoretical matter for contemplation; however, it also plays a key role in political and economic struggles over specific places and their local ecologies, polities, and cosmologies, which are,

after all, simultaneously essential components of the earth's biomes and microcosms of human-environment relations worldwide. It is from this perspective that we approach the question of how sacred forest governance may find traction within the emerging rights of nature movement.

Sacred Forests and the Global Rights of Nature Movement

If animist ontology assumes that certain non-human species, ecosystems, and landforms have personhood, can the rights of these beings be defended in a court of law? The answer is, increasingly, yes. In short, since 2006, numerous governments worldwide have adopted legal provisions that recognize specific ecosystems, mountains, rivers, and other landforms as subjects with inalienable rights. In legal terms, this is established through the granting of juristic personhood to entities that are not "natural persons" (*persona natura* in Roman law) but rather "fictional persons" (*persona ficta*) or "juristic persons" (Studley and Bleisch 2018). As Kauffman and Martin (2019: 261) note

> The world is undergoing a normative shift in thinking about how we legally define our natural world. . . . Rights of Nature (RON) legal provisions now exist in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Mexico, New Zealand, and the United States (U.S.).

In 2011, the Vilcabamba River in Ecuador became the first ecosystem to have its rights defended and recognized by a court. In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court (UHC) in India granted juristic personhood to the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers, stating that

> [T]he Rivers Ganga and Yamuna, all their tributaries, streams, every natural water flowing with flow continuously or intermittently of these rivers, are declared as juristic/legal persons/living entities having the status of a legal person with all corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person in order to preserve and conserve [the] river[s] Ganga and Yamuna.
>
> (Kauffman and Martin 280–281)

In the same year, the Himalayan ecosystem of Uttarakhand was legally established as multiple juristic persons by the UHC (Studley and Bleisch 2018). In 2018, the UHC issued a ruling in a case brought to end cruelty to horses used for transport, declaring that "Every species has an inherent right to live and are required to be protected by law" (Schmader 2018).

In court cases, legislative decrees, and municipal charters around the world, rights of nature are being established for ecosystems and, in some cases, species. In addition to granting them legal personhood, the new laws establish a guardian body to serve as advocate (the nonhuman entity is considered a legal minor) and embed the guardian body within a multi-stakeholder integrated ecological

management institution with the capacity to uphold RON principles. RON advocates frequently site indigenous animist cosmology as the foundation for this powerful new institutionalization of what is essentially a postcolonial regard for nature. In fact, sacred forests and other sacred natural sites provide a durable model for understanding the collective regulation of common property resources that bear cosmological power and spiritual value. Like sacred forests, the ecosystems now protected by RON represent landscapes in which management institutions are charged with ensuring that oikos, polis, and cosmos work in concert. In other words, RON advocates envision a world where the ascription of legal personhood to more-than-human nature marks a radical new structure of regard in which, for instance, the quadrillions of organisms within a given watershed are recognized as sentient, sapient, and vital to our collective planetary well-being.

Questioning the commensurability of indigenous sacred natural sites and the modern Western institutional foundations of RON, Studley and Bleisch (2018) show that the former are based on relational ontologies binding specific numina to places where human communities have developed ongoing relations of reciprocity with their terrestrial-divine counterparts. In contrast, Western conceptions of rights of nature are based not on relationships between human communities and particular, idiosyncratic genii loci but on abstract principles derived from panentheism, pantheism, and, more recently, ecocentricism (Studley and Bleisch 2018). These philosophies lack the place-based relational connections and reciprocal transactions that are normative components of non-Western, indigenous SNSs. Their critique foregrounds the strong potential for successful implementation of juristic personhood at SNSs as long as guardianship is granted to the polities who have sustained animist relations with particular ecosystems rather than to state organs or outsiders. Since most SNSs are parts of community landscapes, village and inter-village community polities may serve as the best arbiters in the protection of enspirited places. We contend that there are inherent cosmological and ontological contradictions between the RON system of assigning guardian status to humans who will speak for enspirited ecosystems, on the one hand, and animist ontology, in which tutelary deities protect, punish, and often make specific demands of the mortals who reside within their domains, on the other. Still, in a world where corporations enjoy the powers and protections of artificial personhood, RON represents a powerful legal strategy for protecting ecosystems and empowering indigenous communities and their traditional sacred natural sites. Similarly, RON opens the door for creative biocultural assemblages built on strong legal foundations, new forms of socio-ecological activism essential for the restoration of functional biomes in which vibrant communities of humans and non-humans work in concert for the realization of planetary well-being.

Forest Preludes—Trees, Landscapes, and People in the Anthropocene

The protection and restoration of Asia's communal sacred landscapes requires continuing collective effort on the part of local people, non-governmental organizations, and governing bodies, but it also requires an understanding of

the fluidity of the economic, political, and ecological conditions that shape communities and ecosystems worldwide. Our contributors describe multiple local and regional forms of resistance to capitalist extractivism and its seemingly magic power to transform a plurality of material forms and beings into "one kind of thing" (Povinelli 2020: n.p.). No place remains beyond the thrall of global urbanization, and there is no "going back," but there is a "going forward" that includes a plurality of beings, ontologies, cosmologies, and cultural forms that are always in the making (Taylor 2010). Thus, there are lessons to be learned not only from sacred forests of the past but also from those of the present and those that appear to be vying for a place in the future. These lessons appear increasingly applicable at all scales around the planet. Asia's sacred forests can be seen as in which village communities have labored to maintain resilient cosmologies responsive to ecological and political change. Scaling up the moral community of the village-forest cosmos in the Anthropocene is a crucial component in the struggle to build socially just ecological governance.

Care and reverence for our living landscapes is not a primordial cultural practice but rather a critical part of dynamic and ongoing socio-ecological relationships. These relationships have always involved political claims to territorial governance and guardianship. Today they must embrace a still more profound ethic of inclusion for a plurality of human and non-human beings.

Notes

1 We also note that a pluralistic community is necessarily a contentious one, and several of the chapters of this book describe ethnocentric, classist, and sexist social structures associated with village sacred landscapes that are, quite justifiably, contested by community members or questioned by the authors (see Borde, Sharma, Gogoi, and Coggins et al.).
2 The IUCN's Category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape consists of "A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values" (IUCN 2021).

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