

Program

2022 Online Symposium of the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy



Dates: 17-18 June 2022

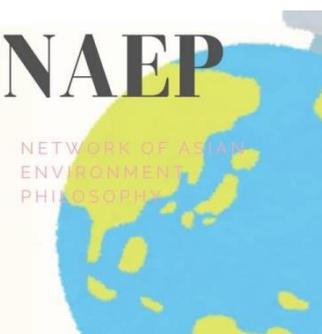
Registration: <https://lmu-munich.zoom.us/meeting/register/JcruurqDwvHNfxGRZebzjs58lefFUgwk9N>

Theme: Diversity of Environmental Philosophies in Asia

Environmental philosophy explores the ways we, humans, relate to the environment. The environmental crisis urges us to (re-)explore how we relate and act towards the natural world. Approaches to environmental philosophy broadly conceived are highly diverse. This diversity is also reflected within traditions and grassroots perspectives on environmental issues in Asia. Therefore, there is a need to develop, exchange and make accessible these approaches to foster dialogue towards sustainable solutions:

- Can we speak of “Asian Environmental Philosophy”?
- How is environmental philosophy conducted and practiced in different contexts and traditions in Asia?
- What are the influences of these ideas on the local ways of life?
- What could be the role of Asian environmental philosophies in a global context?
- What are the challenges and opportunities faced by environmental philosophy scholars in Asia?
- What is the role of Indigenous knowledge in Asia to address environmental issues?

Language: The primary language of the conference is English. We aim to be non-native friendly, so we make it a rule that we speak slow and accessible English. If you would like to present in a language other than English, please contact us.



Organisation: Layna Droz, Orika Komatsubara, Romaric Jannel, Duy Hung Nguyen, Marie Lagasca-Hiloma, Rika Fajrini, Jerry Imbong

About the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy (NAEP)

The Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy (NAEP) was founded by a group of scholars in the field of environmental philosophy in Asia in 2019 with the goal to support works related to environmental philosophy within Asian traditions of thoughts broadly conceived or related to grassroots perspectives on environmental issues in Asia. Visit our website: www.asiaenviphilo.com and contact us at: asiaenviphilo@gmail.com

June 17 16:00- 22:30 (all times are in Japan Standard Time)

16:00 - 17:00 JST	Workshop
	Meanings of Nature in East and South-East Asia Workshop Experience Open discussion on the future of NAEP

15mn break

17:15 - 18:45 JST	Session: Asian philosophies
Novritsar Hasintongan Pakpahan	Indonesian Environmental Philosophy of Co-Existing with Nature
Rajnikant Parsaniya & Kinjal Ahir	Selected Hindu philosophies: A case for economically and ecologically sustainable model of using cow-dung logs for cremation in India
Rhoderick John S. Abellanosa	Where is the Environment in Filipino Philosophy?

30mn break

19:15 - 20:15 JST	Session: Philosophical traditions
Zhuofei Wang	Aesthetics of Atmosphere and East Asian Traditions
James Darwin N. Lagman	Deeper than Being Ecological: The Principles of Tao Towards Ecological Being

45mn break

21:00 - 22:30 JST	Session: Policy
Masako Ichihara	Reconfirmation of the traditional cultural philosophy of Kyoto: identifying “futurability” that lets future generations inherit sustainable nature and society in face of the climate crisis
Eberval Gadelha Figueiredo Jr.	Bhutan: the shape of things to come?
Martin Fricke	Asia as a counterexample to ideological explanations of environmental degradation

June 18 16:00-22:00 (JST)

16:00 - 16:45 JST	Workshop
	Workshop on Nationalism and Environmental Philosophy in Asia

15mn break

17:00 - 18:30 JST	Session: Literature
Seçil Erkoç	Building Bridges across the Binaries: The Dialogue between Humans and the Street Cats of Istanbul in <i>Kedi</i>
Sophia Ardya Garini	Ecofeminism as Shown in Ayu Utami’s <i>Bilangan Fu</i>
Sayantana Chakraborty	Cultural Preservation and Environmental Conservation at the Time of Extractivist Development: Khasi Poets on Khasi Environmental Philosophy

45mn break

19:15 - 20: 45 JST	Session: Indigenous knowledge
Christine Carmela R. Ramos	The role of Filipino’s indigenous concept of “ loob” to social and environmental transformation
Courtney Work	Eating Kin: Re-centering the Water and the Land and Putting the State and Religion in their Places
Hesron H. Sihombing	Trees, Economics, and Sustainability: An Iconic Materialist Reading of Batak Cosmology

15mn break

21:00 – 22:00 JST	Session: Movies
Paul Mart Jeyand J. Matangcas	Sea Gypsies: Marine Pollution through the Eyes of Project Dyesabel
Jain Pankaj	'Children of the Earth' to 'Dark Wind': Nature, Environment, and Climate in Indian Films

Abstracts

Indonesian Environmental Philosophy of Co-Existing with Nature Novritsar

Unlike classic philosophies, environmental philosophy tends to be unrecognized among people, including Indonesian. Environmental philosophy is a philosophy that focuses on the relationship between human and natural environment. Due to the nature of environment that does not form worldly communication, humans tend to value nature or environment as expendable. Yet, such mindset could be perceived as dangerous seeing that the majority of earth actually consisting of nature instead of humans. The act of exploiting nature or environment may be justified in the name of business or law considering that there is no apparent consequence to these acts. Yet it could bring an apocalyptic consequence for humans. An example could be made is the frequent landslide happening in Borneo due to the lack of forest caused by intentional wildfire in the name of land expansion or palm farm. Another example could be made is the flood that often happens in Indonesia due to clogged drainage caused by humans' trash. Modernity should refer back to Indonesian Customs that appreciate and respect the nature. Some Indonesian customs put nature as a priority and in fact some places it as religion, such as Marapu beliefs that nature has a spirit within. By heeding to Indonesian customs while finding proper reason towards it, Indonesian Customs may become a unique environmental philosophy that may assist the sustainability of co-existing between humans and nature.

Keywords: Indonesian Environmental Philosophy, Belief, Customs, Environment, Nature

Selected Hindu philosophies: A case for economically and ecologically sustainable model of using cow-dung logs for cremation in India

Rajnikant Parsaniya & Kinjal Ahir

India is home to 272 million vegetarians, about 30 percent of the Indian population. In Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, cow is treated as a sacred animal. Indian ethical values like 'Ahimsa' restrict slaughter of living beings. Feeding cows is considered to be an act of 'punya'. Cow-slaughter and beef consumption are legally banned in several parts of India, and exports of beef are banned. The status of cows is treated as synonymous to that of a mother. 'Gaushalas' are places where cows are taken care of even after their productive milk-rearing age and many times even without any economically tangible returns. Many 'Gaushalas' rely on philanthropic contributions happily donated by Hindus, for the act being treated as religious 'punya'. Besides, cow dungs are used in religious ceremonies involving small fires for religious ceremonies. Cow urine is also believed to have medicinal values in 'ayurveda'- the traditional Indian medicinal practice. Another Hindu religious philosophy is cremating dead human body on a pier of fire, mostly using wooden logs.

In this backdrop, a simple technique of using 'cow-dung logs' made by compressing cow-dungs into logs and drying them, to be used for cremation can prove economically and environmentally sustainable for most of the stakeholders. It would save many trees from cutting down, is environmentally less polluting and would make 'Gaushalas' self-sustaining. In addition, religious gratification derived from cremating human bodies using cow-dung logs instead of wooden logs would facilitate the social acceptance of the suggested practice.

Where is the Environment in Filipino Philosophy?

Rhoderick John S. Abellanosa

Through the years, Filipino scholars and academics in Philosophy have been discussing about the core or substance of Filipino Philosophy, and almost always the analyses, readings, perspectives, and interweaving debates would revolve around the human person.

This paper argues that the "environmental discourse" is a gap in what we may call the ongoing conversation on Filipino Philosophy for two (2) good reasons: (1) Filipino culture from pre-colonial times up to the present is characterized by a dialogic relationship with nature, and (2) despite the significant role of nature in the lives of Filipinos, environmental destruction is apparently a growing concern that confronts the citizens of the country especially the poor who are in the margins and most vulnerable to the destructive effects of climate change.

If Filipino philosophy, therefore, is to advance, as it should be a "discourse of resistance", especially in a post-colonial context, then it must integrate the environment not just as a matter of academic-thematic necessity but as a concern, a human concern, that lies at the very core of any meaningful existential-anthropological-and even-theological questioning.

As an initial step in response to the foregoing, this work proposes a Filipino Environmental Philosophy built on the notion of *pakikisangkot* (being involved) and *pakikiisa* (being in solidarity). These are subthemes or topics in the writings of Enriquez-Santiago and Miranda: authors who contributed much to the advancement of Filipino Philosophy.

Aesthetics of Atmosphere and East Asian Traditions **Zhuofei Wang**

Since the 1990s, especially in the contemporary context of the revival of aesthetics as a theory of sensibility (aisthesis) in a broader sense, the subject *atmosphere* has gone beyond the physiometeorological scope and become a new aesthetic concept. As In-between constructed by the perceiving subject and the perceived object, which is pervaded by specific affective qualities, atmosphere is a ubiquitous phenomenon forming the foundation of our life experience. Here the decisive question is: in what kind of environment are we situated and in what way do we experience and respond to the qualities emitted from this environment and the things in it to enhance human well-being? The richness of atmospheric experience displays the inexhaustibility of life experience. For this reason, the aesthetic concept of atmosphere does not claim to be the sole authority in interpreting aesthetic phenomena, but develops its own approach, which in turn should not be underestimated by other forms of aesthetic approaches. Such an approach would trigger a reconsideration of the scopes and limits of Western epistemological terms like *concept*, *judgment*, *reflection* and *insight*, which are more associated with substance or entity and tend to presuppose a critical distance between subject and object, and thus promote the transformation of aesthetic methodology from an ontological and/or epistemological *what* to a phenomenological and anthropological *how*.

The complexity of atmosphere and the diversity of sensory accesses open up horizons for aesthetic phenomena that embody the East Asian traditions (Qi, Feng Shui, Wabi Sabi ...). These phenomena lie between fullness and emptiness, form and formlessness, visibility and invisibility, presence and absence, and can only be experienced as events and processes in a holistic manner. In this sense, the aesthetic concept of atmosphere, conceived so far primarily in a Western context, shows potential for promoting the contemporary development of an interculturally oriented aesthetics. In an open-minded manner, this concept attaches importance to those aesthetic practices that are based on the integration of physical perception, emotion and spirit, rooted in different spatial and temporal perspectives, and developed in diversified geographical, environmental, historical, ethical, political and religious conditions, in order to reveal their respective cultural origins, identities as well as family resemblances.

Deeper than Being Ecological: The Principles of Tao Towards Ecological Being **James Darwin N. Lagman**

Man's adept use of technology made great advancements in the quality of life. The goal of man in using technology is to create and make lives easy. Taking a cue from Martin Heidegger's Perspective on technology, one sees technology as a mode of dwelling or revealing of existence.

Therefore, man must exhaust all of his/her potentialities to achieve his/her limit. However, the period of modernity has unfolded the onset of human distancing to the environment. The interruption of man's connections to the environment and its creatures; has materialized the concept of humans as an "interrupted being". This interruption brought death, destruction, and this time, a possible irreversible environmental crisis.

Currently, man sees that the continuity of his actions would bring death on his existence thus, a call for discontinuity arises. A discontinuity that is characterized by the unification of man and the environment. However, the discontinuity may not be the ending of what humans have started. It rather shows the invention of a new being known as an "Ecological being". The "Ecological being" is characterized to be innovative in the field of technology. The said "being" is also framed in the Dao principle of harmony between man and nature. The paper aims to discuss the actuality of an Ecological being that depicts the importance of technology in life and technology that supports sustainability. Hence, the Ecological being calls forth a new dwelling, a dwelling that sees the world as a complex totality of technology and organisms that co-exist. Thus, the new period calls us to be an Ecological being that is connected. Connected which means balance between nature and creative fidelity.

Keywords: Technology, Sustainability, Environment, Ecology

Reconfirmation of the traditional cultural philosophy of Kyoto: identifying "futurability" that lets future generations inherit sustainable nature and society in face of the climate crisis

Masako Ichihara

In Kyoto, nature adjoins urban areas broadly, which has promoted profound human-nature interactions through Kyoto's long history. Kyoto Climate Change Adaptation Center, launched in July 2021, conducted interviews with those who are engaged in traditional Japanese culture, such as Tea, Ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement), gardening, etc. to reveal how they sense emerging climate change impact in their fields. This survey unveiled their serious concern that increase of serious natural disasters such as stronger typhoons and heavier rains, both of which have been exacerbated by climate change, might affect general people's sense of nature fundamentally; nature used to be something awe, respectful and familiar, but is changing another thing scaring, terrifying, and threatening.

Considering that the long history of Kyoto is undoubtedly supported by the above-mentioned local environmental philosophy, such conceptual change might be a serious threat. This presentation firstly reports the outcomes of the above-mentioned surveys, especially how people engaged in traditional Japanese cultures feel recent

climate change, possible effects on general people's sense of nature, and the role of traditional culture to maintain preferable relation and distance between human and nature. Secondly, it provides clarified challenges posed on citizens in Kyoto so that they can sustain good relations with the environment, including ongoing climate change. Finally, it suggests the application of Future Design (Saijo, 2015), a method that triggers "futurability", people's innate but currently often unactivated ability to prioritize the benefit of future generations with sacrificing their current benefit, which could be identified in underlying Kyoto's environmental philosophy.

Bhutan: the shape of things to come?

Eberval Gadelha Figueiredo Jr.

It has become somewhat of a rhetorical commonplace to claim that we now live in a new geological epoch, defined by human activity and its impacts upon the Earth: the Anthropocene, the dawn of which is arguably a direct sequela of technical-ideological modernity as we came to know it, namely the cult of unlimited profit and progress, widespread industrialism and the Great Acceleration which took most of the world by storm during the last one hundred years or so. However, not all contemporary human societies pertain to this increasingly volatile paradigm. The Kingdom of Bhutan, a small landlocked country in the middle of the Himalayas, is among those which don't. Notorious for being the very first carbon-negative country, as well as for having established in its constitution that at least 60% of its surface must remain perpetually covered in forests, Bhutan is a small nation which can nonetheless boast some quite impressive environmental statistics. A careful examination of their idiosyncratic policies and the Drukpa-inspired philosophy behind them, its strengths as well as its weaknesses, is paramount for the purpose of evaluating its suitability as a blueprint for a post-growth civilization, suited for the challenges awaiting us in the environmentally troubled future of our planet.

Keywords: Anthropocene, degrowth, Bhutan, environmentalism, Drukpa

Asia as a counterexample to ideological explanations of environmental degradation

Martin Fricke

For the purpose of this talk, I propose to distinguish between ideological and technological explanations of the present environmental degradation. Ideological explanations assert that the environmental degradation in a given place is due to the ideas the people administrating the place have about their relation to the natural world. Paradigm examples of such explanations are L. White's claim that Christian anthropocentrism is at the root of our ecological crisis or the later Heidegger's view that a metaphysical tradition gone wrong from about Plato onwards is responsible for much of today's ills (environmental and otherwise). Technological explanations, by contrast, locate the problem in our ignorance about how correctly to use current technologies (understood in a broad sense where they include "social technologies") with the help of which we relate to our environment. Here it is not a general view of ourselves in relation to the rest of nature, which is to blame for the ecological malaise, but rather more specific problems with how we put some specific technology to use in our environment.

In my talk, I wish to argue that Asia is relevant in the debate about which kind of explanation is appropriate, because there are many places in Asia where environmental degradation occurs, although the ideologies supposedly responsible for it, according to the first kind of explanation, do not seem to be present. The Chinese, for example, have environmental problems, but it is at least unclear in which sense it might be correct to say that they believe in Christianity or in Western metaphysics. In consequence, the importance of Asian solutions to environmental problems (for example by way of indigenous knowledge) would seem to lie more in technological contributions, than in ideological ones.

Building Bridges across the Binaries: The Dialogue between Humans and the Street Cats of Istanbul in *Kedi*

Seçil Erkoç

As a geological epoch, the Anthropocene spotlights the expansive influence of humankind whose intervention in the regular functioning of the ecological dynamics has triggered environmental crises all around the world. Living in such strange times, especially considering the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, it is not peculiar to witness how the agential facilities of a virus have been able to dethrone the image of an all-powerful human 'subject'. Hence, instead of sharpening the egocentric outlook, it is important to establish an egalitarian and nonhierarchical set of connections with the more-than-human world. Within this perspective, the reformative capacity of art and creative mediums cannot be ignored since they enable humankind to develop a more constructive dialogue with the nonhuman – without necessarily otherizing them but attempting to see the world from their perspective. Limiting the scope of this study to Asian Environmental Philosophies and their creative reflections in art forms, it is intended to analyse Ceyda Torun's *Kedi* (2016), which is a documentary delineating the stories of the street cats living in Istanbul. The geographical location of the city itself also proves functional because Istanbul operates like a bridge connecting Asia and Europe to each other. In this manner, illustrating the permeable boundaries of human-cat 'intra-actions,' *Kedi* underlines the

need to develop more eco-centric visions. Focusing on the encounters between the human and the nonhuman inhabitants of the city, therefore, this study not only brings theory and the practice together, but it also aims to elucidate the diversity of non-anthropocentric representations in Turkey.

Keywords: Human-Animal encounters, Istanbul, Street cats, Documentary, Asia-Europe.

Ecofeminism as Shown in Ayu Utami's *Bilangan Fu* Sophia Ardya Garini

Environment is closely related to women's existence. In ancient life, women were given the duty to raise children and nurture their surroundings. In other words, women have an important role in keeping the environment because women have the sense of fostering and looking after.

The nature protection is shown by Mbok Manyar, a shaman in the village of Sewugunung hills. She could not resist the karst mining exploitation that is fully supported by the local's authoritative. Karst mining has caused the spring lack of water, a place where Mbok Manyar has been preserving for the rest of her life.

This research aims to find out the representation of women and nature of Sewugunung from human destruction. As a woman, Mbok Manyar tries to show the relationship between human life and their surroundings that are repressed by economic activity. By applying eco-feminism by Vandana Shiva, the researcher believes that women and nature have interrelated issues of being oppressed by the patriarchal system.

Keywords: karst mining, preservation, women's oppression, patriarchal system

The role of Filipino's indigenous concept of "loob" to social and environmental transformation Christine Carmela R. Ramos

In Southeast Asia, societies faced extreme rapid change. Schools have failed to connect the meaningful past to the present. In the Philippines, the culture of the public world seems to be dominated by business and consumerism, mass media, anonymity and individualization have deemed the view of the nation, common good, and civic activism.

In this vein, this effort serves as a humble way to avert the irrelevance of culture and tradition of the Filipinos amidst a fast-paced life. (1) This paper discusses and appreciates Filipino indigenous thoughts and how it shapes our history as a nation. "Loob" encompassed Filipinos' humanity and daily experiences. It aspired to harmony with others and nature to be in one with God. This explained the dualism in body-soul and emotional-rational of the Filipinos.

(2) Secondly, this paper also focused on the two dimensions of "loob": interior and holistic. The interior "loob" affirmed the innate goodness of the person. "Loob" is reconstructed not only the world but itself as well. The holistic model signified the unified entity of the world and the non-dualistic point of view of the world in addressing environmental issues. It is important to articulate non-violence - locally, nationally, regionally, and globally, in face of an intensifying global consciousness.

Eating Kin: Re-centering the Water and the Land and Putting the State and Religion in their Places Courtney Work

The ethnographic record- both historic and contemporary- reveals a universal (but highly varied) form of sociality in which human communities engaged with the world as members of extended kinship systems that included non-human actors. The extended families included humans as well as plants and animals who both cared for and ate each other. The most ancient members of the kin network, geological features of the landscape like mountains, rivers, and oceans were/are understood (in a variety of ways) to deliver both life and death to their extended families, and through this, to manage access to resources. This system works more like a political economy than like religion, but in contemporary times, it has been bifurcated and classified as social life and religion. Social life referring to the relations between humans and religion referring to the relations between humans and non-humans, plants and animals and also elemental entities, ancestors, and the various contingents that populate the parallel quantum world. This is not a natural, but a political distinction. The politics inherent in this are obscured by history but remain visible, particularly in Asia, in the dynamics involved as humans began to claim power over the energies of the soil. I'm working on understanding the stories and practices that underlie the myths of human mastery over the planet. Through this I work to reconfigure care and diffract history toward a more entangled and responsible future.

Trees, Economics, and Sustainability: An Iconic Materialist Reading of Batak Cosmology

Hesron H. Sihombing

Some Asian environmental philosophies have largely focused on the animistic nature of environmental elements, not the materialist functionality of the elements themselves, while at the same time disregarding interdisciplinary philosophical approach and ignoring the postcolonial hybrid reality of particular Asian communities. This presentation will explore the subjective agency of nature in discussion with icon and new materialist studies to look at the conception of trees in the Batak community, an ethnic group in Indonesia that is predominantly Christians. I will argue that by epistemologically building conversation with iconic and new materialist studies, the Batak conception of trees may reflect not only on the people's relationships with the divine and natural world, but also reinvent their communitarian identity and collective understanding of environmental sustainability.

Drawing upon the works of Anicetus Sinaga, Paul Pedersen, Mircea Eliade, and David Chidester, among others, I will first locate Batak environmental philosophy within Asian environmental philosophy and introduce Batak philosophy of cosmology in relation to its conception of trees. Next I will trace the iconoclastic and pietistic turn of the Batak community as they embraced Christianity that contributed to the loss of indigenous wisdom, the deflected meaning of trees to merely economic commodities, and the new encounter with capitalistic way of life. I will then turn the discussion to new materialist and iconic studies to reflect on the issues of the "political economy of the sacred", community identity, and environmental sustainability in relation to the community's hybrid Christian identity.

Cultural Preservation and Environmental Conservation at the Time of Extractivist Development: Khasi Poets on Khasi Environmental Philosophy

Sayantana Chakraborty

The Khasi indigenous community, the original inhabitants of the Khasi Hills, has an intricate relationship with the natural world of the Khasi Hills. Their traditional culture, belief system, lifeworld, and subsistence pattern are connected to the Khasi Hills. In recent years, the traditional Khasi culture is undergoing changes under the influence of capitalist economy and development policies which lead to reckless extraction of natural resources of the Khasi Hills. Due to the influence of extractivist forces, the relationship of Khasi culture with the Khasi Hills is undergoing radical transformations. The Khasi poets Desmond Kharmawphlang, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, and Esther Syiem probe deeply into the relational crisis of the Khasis with the Khasi Hills and Khasi culture. These poets engage with the experience of complex negotiations of the indigenous community members who are struggling for defending cultural preservation and environmental conservation. The negotiations lead the community members to the realization of the need for establishing a renewed relationship between the Khasi Hills and the Khasi culture in the current context of a changing environment and the withering of the traditional culture. What emerges from their poetry is a potential environmental philosophy at the time of changing social formation and environmental degradation.

Sea Gypsies: Marine Pollution through the Eyes of Project Dyesabel

Paul Mart Jeyand J. Matangcas

Marine pollution has always been a global phenomenon that continues to worsen by the day. In the Philippines, one of the most affected communities by the ravaging effects of this occurrence are the Badjaos or "Sea Gypsies." However, there has been a rise of initiatives that aim to combat the effects of this debacle such as Project Dyesabel, a non-profit group aimed at promoting marine conservation. To immortalize and present this advocacy to a broader audience, this study followed a creative work's design specifically through a documentary film which served as the lens to present the efforts and activities conducted by Project Dyesabel. Moreover, the analysis of the results revealed that literacy and conflict sensitivity are needed to address the issues of marine pollution among the Badjao community as well as a more open dialogue for understanding and inclusivity.

Keywords: Project Dyesabel, marine conservation, literacy, conflict sensitivity, creative works.

'Children of the Earth' to 'Dark Wind': Nature, Environment, and Climate in Indian Films

Jain Pankaj

India is widely known as the biggest producer of films, now globally known with the portmanteau "Bollywood." India also grabs the media attention for another reason – climate change. In 2015, *The New York Times* published an op-ed with a cartoon showing India as the proverbial "elephant" blocking the progress at the Paris Climate Change Conference. With the staggering number of films that India produces and the steady increase in climate change-related disasters that India faces, the critics embraced the film *Kadvi Hawa* (literally, Dark Wind or Bitter Wind, 2017) as the "pioneering" film raising the critical issue of climate change. However, the issues raised in the movie were amply dealt with in several other Indian films in the last several decades. This article is a survey of Indian films that have shown or dealt with nature, environment, or climate starting from the 1940s till the present time.