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International Partner



**RWYC, RECONNECTING WITH YOUR CULTURE:
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES & SUSTAINABILITY**

Vol. 1



INTRODUCING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, AND SUSTAINABILITY: INTERFACES WITH RWYC - RECONNECTING WITH YOUR CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The phrase 'cultural landscape' reflects upon a way of seeing landscapes (clairvoyance) and associated attributes that emphasize the interaction between human sensitivity (deep quest) and Nature's sublimity (inherent spirit), which passes overtime on the path of maintaining existence-continuity-transformation and transferability and evolved and represented with sacredscapes and ritualsapes. R W Y C- Reconnecting With Your Culture — is a visionary mission of awakening the youth to prepare for global understanding and human services and preserving our cultural heritage in the cosmic frame of Culture-Nature Interfaces (CNI) through the quality and deep ecology-rooted Education and Dialogues — a march re-appraising interconnectedness between Locality and Universality — Holiness (humanity) to Wholeness (sublimity): Humanism to Spiritualism. RWYC attempts to awaken and envision — Education for life, Education through life, and Education throughout life, which Mahatma Gandhi advocates. It further strengthens the scope and practice of deep ecology, Gaia, and ecospirituality. Manifesting culture as "the cosmic whole" will help to save our shared heritage. Cultural heritage and related landscape attributes require special care for understanding and planning — Preservation and regeneration — and maintaining them as a cultural nexus of visioning the future and fulfilling the SDGs as the UNO/UNESCO envisioned. An attempt is made here to present a synoptic review and appraisal of the literature. The present issue of *Esempi di Architettura* [vol. 11 (nos. 1~2), 2024] attempts to keep pace with these issues— theoretically, philosophically, implicatively, and regionally.

Keywords: Cultural landscapes, Sacredscapes, RWYC, Interlinkages, The Jena Declaration, Cultural sustainability.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: THE PERSPECTIVES

The concept of '*multifunctionality*' of the cultural landscape can help envision landscapes that cross urban-rural divides in a sustainable and integrated way – characterised by wholeness and ecospirituality that developed in the cultural history of landscapes. That is how the idea of 'wholeness' (*cosmality*) is transformed into 'holiness' (*sacrality*) – evolved and represented with sacred ecology and visualised through the cosmic frames of sacredscapes in the Asia-Pacific region. In the era of cybernetics, it has become a global concern to understand and re-revealed the grounds of shared wisdom among various cultures. Despite all the changes, the inherent roots and instinct spirits still lie in their hearts— this is also a pilgrimage. The real pilgrimage is 'an enacting of an internal process in the external world through the life-flow of religious heritage.' The interaction between sacrality and religion converges into a variety of ritualsapes. Spirits permeate matter and animate it, generating the inherent force of terrestrial unity, what we call ecological cosmology – the core of religious heritage. On this line, heritage ecology is conceived as a path to pilgrimage – a way of relating to the land (Earth/ Nature spirit) and the people (human psyche), resulting in emerging religious heritage (Singh 1995).

Virtually all landscapes have cultural associations because almost all landscapes have been affected in some way by human action or perception. Therefore, the phrase "cultural landscape" does not mean a particular type of landscape; instead, it reflects upon a way of seeing landscapes and associated attributes that emphasizes the interaction between human beings and nature over time — maintaining existence-continuity-transformation and transferability — that makes the cultural landscape ecology exposed and practiced in the purview of lifeways and lifeworlds. The cultural landscape is an object of change either by developing a culture or replacing cultures through human interfaces, interaction, and reciprocity. The datum line from which changes are measured is the landscape's natural condition with a primordial instinct. As a result, the cultural landscape shows influences

worked on people by their institutions, taboos, design preferences, built-up architecture, and system and spatial order, assemblages of cultural features which comprise their cultural landscape, and which support and embrace their civilisations — that is how the cultural landscape is conceived as an integral part of ecological cosmology.

The German geographer Otto Schlüter (1872-1959) is credited with first formally using “*cultural landscape*” as an academic term in the early twentieth century. In 1906, Schlüter defined two forms of landscape: the *Urlandschaft* (translated as original landscape) or landscape that existed before significant human-induced changes and the *Kulturlandschaft* (translated as ‘cultural landscape’) — a landscape created by human culture. The primary task of geography was to trace the differences in these two landscapes through human activities (Martin 2005, p. 176).

Since Schlüter’s first formal use of the term and Sauer’s influential promotion of the idea, the concept of ‘cultural landscapes’ has been variously used, applied, debated, developed, and refined within academia; and when, in 1992, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee elected to convene a meeting of the ‘specialists’ to advise and assist redraft the Committee’s Operational Guidelines to include ‘*cultural landscapes*’ as an option for heritage listing properties that were neither purely natural nor purely cultural in form (i.e., ‘mixed’ heritage) (cf. Fowler 2003).

Carl Sauer [1889-1975], a human geographer, was probably the most influential in promoting and developing the idea of *cultural landscapes* (for a critique, see Mitchell 2000, pp. 27-28). Sauer was determined to stress the agency of culture as a force in shaping the visible features of the Earth’s surface in delimited areas. Within his definition, the physical environment retains a central significance as the medium with and through which human cultures act (Sauer 1925/ 1963). This idea further reflects the clairvoyance and human’s role through the knowledge, perception, and manifestation of the image. One cannot get into the natural world without going through culture; that’s how the notion is that culture is the mirror and force to see and explain nature. Of course, our relationship with the natural world is infinitely more complex and cosmic than we simply realise. Science should not be the measure of the other knowledge system’s realness. In another way, science should seek to counsel other knowledge systems to have a better understanding of our natural world and the people living as an integral part of it. Artistically nature should be depicted as a cultural construct (cf. Fig. 1), where through human’s mind and thought nature gets shaped and experienced.

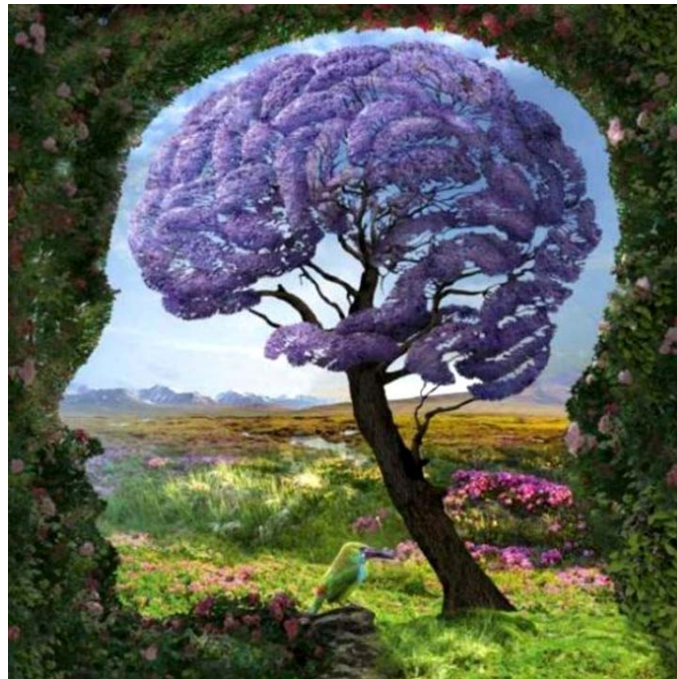


Fig. 1. Understanding nature through the human mind.

The masterly and classic definition of ‘cultural landscape’ is given by its great progenitor Carl Sauer (1925/ 1963, p. 343, see Fig. 2):

“The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, and the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development”.

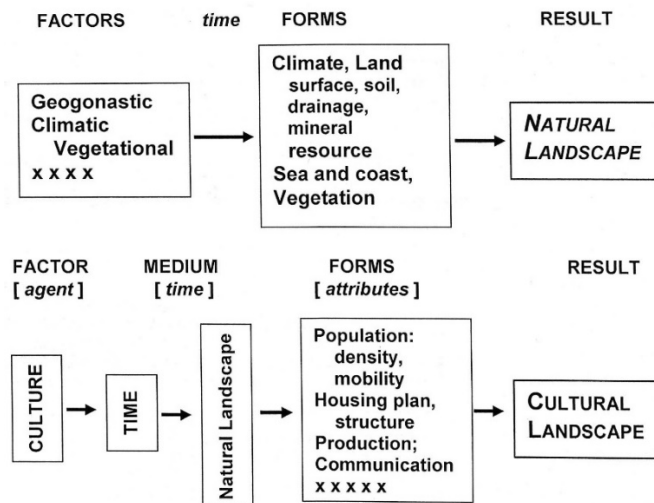


Fig. 2. Natural landscape and Cultural landscape (after Sauer 1925/ 1963).

Several aspects of this frequently quoted passage are worth examining, for they reflect not only the intellectual context in which Sauer was working and his scholarly concerns but also theoretical issues that have remained critical to discussions of cultural landscape to the present, especially in the context of habitat systems, rural and urban both.

Sauer's definition is grounded in a neat distinction between 'culture' and 'nature', a distinction that few cultural geographers would be so willing to uphold or defend today. Not only is there a broad acceptance that the *tabula rasa* of 'natural landscape' upon which 'culture' inscribes itself has probably never existed since its features are subject to constant change through geophysical, climatic, hydrological, and other processes of change, but 'nature' itself and the boundaries which separate it from the human are culturally contrived in radically different ways by different groups in different historical contexts (Cronon 1995). Thus, both nature and culture are best regarded together as co-productions. Therefore, all landscapes are equally natural and cultural, according to the contexts of questions and the processes chosen to examine concerning understanding evolution; this is the fundamental notion in landscape ecology. Furthermore, this implies that culture and nature are not mutually exclusive and that culturescapes do not have to be entirely human-created; rather they represent reciprocity at different levels, in different degrees, through various perceptions, by creating many images. This perspective again promotes landscape heterogeneity (cf. Wu 2006, and 2008a).

Difference or distinctiveness is not deficiency; so-to-say diversity is not divergence. Interaction, reciprocity, and symbiosis between natural sciences and humanities, designed to synthesize and integrate diverse perspectives, are crucial for deeper understanding. That is how landscape ecology (or architecture) can gain much from transdisciplinary collaborations with social sciences such as cultural geography and design sciences such as landscape architecture and engineering. A stronger emphasis on the cultural dimension will make landscape ecology even more relevant to sustainability (Wu 2010, p. 1149).

EXPRESSING SACREDSCAPES AS A FUNCTION OF LANDSCAPE

Sacredscapes function as a system of communication and power and embody; this diversity of character needs to be recognised in various contexts and concepts. For example, Meinig (1979) has proposed the 'ten versions of the same scene', which may be taken as essential notions expressing sacredscapes (cf. Singh 1995, pp. 103-104):

1) as *Nature*. The sky above, the ground beneath, and the horizon binding the two provide the basic frame as theologically expressed: sky the father, earth the mother, thus we all are brothers and sisters. The sacral power perceived by human beings in history was a realisation of nature-spirit.

2) as *Habitat*. Every landscape is a piece of the Earth as the Home of Mankind. Man, constantly works as a viable agent of transformation and change and the creator of resources (like heritage). In short, man is domesticating and cosmicising the earth.

3) as *Artefact*. In transformation and change, the man sets his mark on the landscape. The monuments, shrines, temples, and related structures — all testimony of human imprints on the sacred territory — are visible as artefacts in the sacredscape.

4) as a *System*. Man, and his interaction with the sacredscape form an intricate system of systems — some visible, but many invisible. This system is a part of the belief that implies faith in man as essentially omniscient — after all, he is also a part of the cosmos and God. In the cosmos, one is related to the other, and everything is related to the other, like a 'Self-regulating system' narrated in the Gaia hypothesis.

5) as a **Problem**. To know more to understand better is a notion of achieving religious merit perfectly and making rituals better for more profound experiences. As a human being the performer may incorporate something from all these other views: it evokes a reverence for nature, a deeply felt concern for the earth as habitat, and a conviction that as a child of the divinity, we can search our identity in the cosmos.

6) as **Wealth**. In a broader view, everything has or affects value within a market economy. As heritage resources, sacredscapes and their associated monuments and functions are to be appraised as property for monetary transactions like the development of pilgrimage tourism. This view of sacredscape is future-oriented, for market values are constantly changing, and one must assess their trends and demands in the future. But, of course, this notion is ultimately a western idea rooted in American ideology.

7) as **Ideology**. Seeing and visualising the sacredscape vary from person to person following the ideology used – it may be in the context of only abstract structure or objectivity or relative underpinnings or subjectivity. Meinig's remark is notable in this context: "To see the landscape as an ideology is to think about how it was created, but there is another way of doing that which, while at its best is reflective and philosophic, is also much more detailed and concrete (Meinig 1979, p. 43).

8) as **History**. All the underpinnings before our eyes are a complex cumulative record of the work of nature and man in a particular place. The visible feature at a sacred place or in the sacredscape yields to diligence and inference a great deal of the historical past. In itself, a sacredscape is the process and the product in space-place and in time; thus, it is an accumulation. However, it is not easy to interpret it in a concrete historical context.

9) as a **Special Place**. Sacredscape is a special place, as an individual piece in the infinitely varied mosaic of the Earth where the 'spirit of place' (*genius loci*) plays a vital role in making it distinct – a mosaic of a variety of patterns, relationships, interactions, meanings – between human being and the divine realm. The specific communicating character of sacredscape is the particularity of place, *mysterium tremendum*.

10) as **Aesthetic**. The aesthetic view requires a special conscious detachment by the observer. Sacredscape as art conveys the message for better understating the harmonic relationship between humankind and nature-spirit. In fact, "it seeks a meaning which is not explicit in the ordinary forms. It rests upon the belief that there is something close to the essence, beauty, and truth in the landscape" (Meinig 1979, p. 46).

The landscape is a perceived vision of experiencing the environment from the human sensory field generated with our internal environment which man expresses while encountering the 'worlds surrounding us'. It is not so much the value of what we perceive but how we feel about what we perceive that is crucial to understanding human belief systems. A landscape is sacred because humans perceive it as sacred a notion of deterministic idea. The idea of sacredscape is linked to man's quest for identity and role within the cosmic mystery.

INTERLINKAGE: SHARED VISION – MAN-NATURE INTERRELATEDNESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Broad and more popularly, three broad groups of qualities are used for evaluating landscapes: natural (ecologically valuable, geologically distinct, or known for rich flora and fauna), cultural (expression of human imprint or creative art forms), and aesthetic (panoramic view or landmarks). These are categorised and characterised by cultural acceptance and legal jurisdictions in different countries. In historical and national contexts, different meanings are also inscribed. In the above context, three basic meanings, in historical context, to the understanding of cultural landscapes proposed by Arpin (1993, p. 553) include:

- a *political* meaning – to assume responsibility for the decisions;
- a *cultural* meaning – to save culture rootedness and sense of continuity; and
- a *didactic* meaning – to promote citizen's participation.

These meanings are associated with deconstructing the cultural value of heritage into its essential parts, identifying the following six *value elements* (Throsby 2009, p. 21):

- *aesthetic value*: the visual beauty of the building, site, and so on;
- *spiritual value*: the significance of the asset in providing understanding or enlightenment or in representing a particular religion or religious tradition;
- *social value*: the role of the site in forming a cultural identity or a sense of connection with others;
- *historical value*: connections with the past;
- *symbolic value*: objects or sites as repositories or conveyors of meaning; and
- *authenticity value*: the uniqueness of visiting 'the real thing'.

Taking issues of maintenance of values, existence-and-continuity, structural transformation, appraising the vitality and overall sustainability for the future, and all the other resultant and auxiliary issues are relevant at different levels and varying degrees according to contextuality, regional personality, and rationale of demands. In the purview of the Chinese landscape and its ecological imperative, set theory is used to explain the interactions, reciprocity, and overall "integrative habitat (rural-urban) ecosystem" between bio-ecologic and socio-ecologic

perspectives, which together make “cultural landscape perspective”. The two sets (Natures: bio-ecologic forms, and Cultures: socio-economic ways) in a way get superimposed that may be better emphasised in the visions and approaches of interdisciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity (Fig. 3).

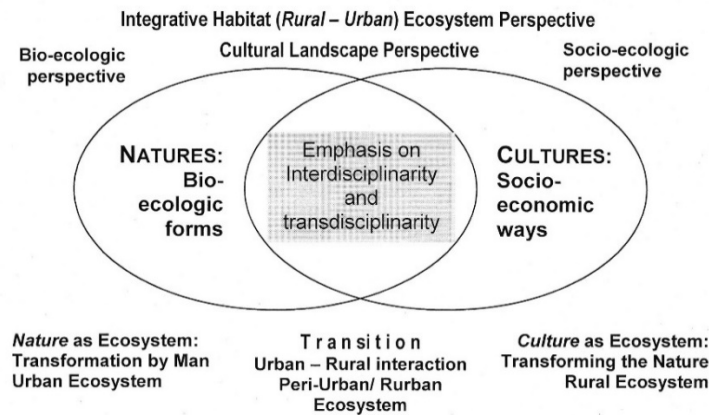


Fig. 3. Habitat ecology and its significant characteristics (modified after Wu 2008, p. 44).

The bio-ecological perspective views *habitats* (rural and urban settlements) as severely disturbed ecosystems and humans as disturbance agents, which adopts a biology-centred, basic science approach, and finally offers little interdisciplinarity between natural and social sciences. The socio-ecologic approach, on the other hand, views *habitats* as socioeconomic systems designed for human welfare—that’s how it tends to deemphasize the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, thus again discouraging cross-disciplinary interactions between natural and social sciences (cf. Fig. 2). The settlement systems perspective and the integrative habitat ecosystem perspective are centred on the principles and methodology of the systems approach and consider humans as integral components of the settlement systems, leading to encouraging interdisciplinary and problem-solving research. Although the systems approach has proven to be quite powerful in studying feedback and process interactions, its ability to deal with spatial heterogeneity of ecological and socioeconomic patterns, which is essential in settlement studies, is limited. The cultural landscape ecology perspective is considered to be the most inclusive approach in which all previous approaches can be integrated as complementary elements (Wu 2008, p. 43)

The rethinking should be based on the foundational value — the reasoning that underlies the ethical sense of a more profound understanding of Man-Nature Interrelatedness, which is the basic philosophy of coexistence — referred to in different cultures in their ways, like harmonious coexistence (*tabunka kyosei*) in Japan, harmonious society (*xiaokang*) in China, multicultural co-living (*‘Old-comer’*) in Korea, *wahi tapu* (sacred places) in Māori’s New Zealand, African humanism (*ubuntu*) in South Africa, and global family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*) in Indian thought. The ethical domain is based essentially on foundation value which for Gandhi was *ahimsa* (non-violence), for Schweitzer *reverence for life*, and for Aldo Leopold *the sacredness of land* (cf. Skolimowski 1990: 98). Another vision from New Zealand, i.e., Mātauranga Māori refers to ‘the knowledge, comprehension, or understanding of everything visible and invisible existing in the universe’, and is often used synonymously with wisdom. Moreover, in the contemporary world, the definition is usually extended to include present-day, historical, local, and traditional knowledge; systems of knowledge transfer and storage; and the goals, aspirations, and issues from an indigenous perspective. This altogether makes the holistic frame like cosmic integrity. Nobel laureate humanist philosopher Albert Schweitzer (1949, pp. 158-159), rightly said: “A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that in need of help.” On this line of thought, the habitat unit of *Satoyama* may be taken as a model to represent the Asian vision of cultural landscape, as it represents a good integration of the complexity of nature and adaptability and continuity by human beings.

THE VISION

Vision without Action is Empty. Action without Vision is Blind. Let the Vision be the *force* behind Action, and Action the *energy* behind Vision. This is the *way* to understand the interconnectedness between human beings and Mother Nature. Let us keep the spirit always awakened and pray the Mother Nature (as *landscape*) to direct us on the right path of realizing the sense of interconnectedness. This calls for the nourishment of Soil, Soul, and Society where Humanity meets Divinity. Let us try to Understand and Feel it and ultimately get it framed in making ‘sustainable landscapes’ (Singh and Olimpia 2023b, p. 37). Let us keep the spirit always awakened and pray the Mother Nature (as a *sublime landscape, erhabene Landschaft*) to direct us on the right path of realising the sense of

interconnectedness. This is a call for nourishing Soil, Soul, and Society where Humanity (Culture) meets the Divinity (Nature). So let us try to Understand and Feel it, and ultimately get it framed in making 'sustainable landscapes' through creating happy, harmonious, and humanistic places (cf. Singh and Olimpia 2023c, p. 9).

A recent study remarks that "If the urban SDG is to prove useful as a tool as intended for encouraging local and national authorities alike to make positive investments in the various components of urban sustainability transitions, then it must be widely relevant, acceptable, and practicable" (Simon et al., 2016, p. 60). This is valid in the case of Asian cities, where one always faces the problem of linking locality and universality. Additionally, central to this task has been the challenge of determining how to benchmark and measure performance according to the SMART criteria (i.e., specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-specific) based on specialist scholarship, the existing literature and practical experience of the site (cf. Singh 2022, p. 6).

The most common view shared by institutionalised and indigenous spiritual traditions is that the world is a 'multiple level hierarchic reality', like Mircea Eliade's *hierophany* (1957, pp. 10-11). These relationships may be represented with a simplified model showing three different planes that overlap (cf. Fig. 4). It shows that management of sacred sites should consider all values and stakeholders involved. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge that in this world where many different worldviews coexist, each worldview may have its own hierarchy of values. Within these worldviews, other traditional cosmological sciences have evolved – often in harmony with nature – many of which are still alive in different regions around the world (cf. Verschuuren 2007, p. 308; for complete treatment, cf. Verschuuren et al. 2010).

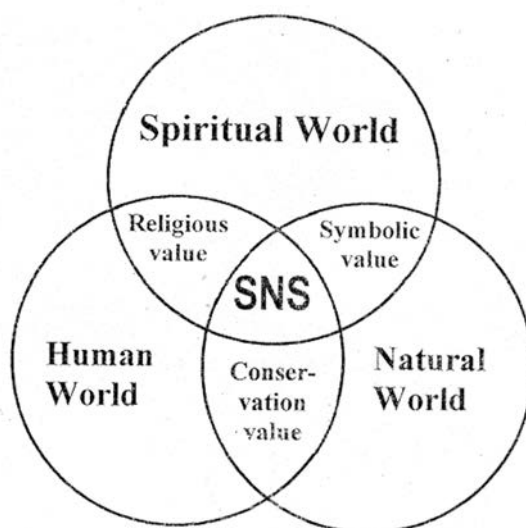


Fig. 4. Main constituent values of Sacred Natural Sites, SNS (after Verschuuren 2007, p. 308).

Reverence – the sanctity of life as a deeper vision, responsibility – the connecting link between ethics and rationality; *frugality* – grace without waste and promotion for others; and *ecojustice* – value-specific ecological cosmology, all together form the minimal core of intrinsic values for right conservation and preservation of the spirit of sustainability (as advocated by Skolimowski (1990, pp. 100-102). Reverential development is unitary in the broadest and most profound sense, combining reverence and sanctity of life to contemporary economic, social, moral, cultural, and traditional premises to bring peace and harmony with nature (Skolimowski 1990, p. 103). The fact that they may be challenging to implement in practice in no way negates their importance and desirability.

Remember what Devereux (1990, p. 216) said, "Let us hope we will have the sense to seek, the wisdom to listen, and the patience to learn". Paraphrased Carl Jung's (cf. 1970 as quoted in Swan 1991, p. 304) provoking should be taken as a moral and ethical concern for the sacred landscapes:

"People of our earth would never find true peace until they could create a harmonious relationship with the landscapes they live in. Therefore, learning to encourage, harmonise with, and perhaps even converse with the spirit of each place be an essential survival skill to create a future world of peace where people live an ecologically sustainable lifestyle."

Also, remember what once Nobel laureate humanist philosopher Albert Schweitzer (1949, pp. 158-159) said: "A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that in need of help." This can be achieved and maintained by the moral imperative of education among youth; RWYC is one such noble path toward self-awakening mass conscience and discretion.

PAVING THE PATH OF RWYC

“RWYC - a visionary mission of awakening the youth to prepare for Global Understanding and Environmental Conscience, human services, and preserving our cultural heritage in the cosmic frame of Culture-Nature interfaces through the quality and deeply-rooted Education & dialogues: a march re-appraising interconnectedness between Locality and Universality- Holiness (humanity) to Wholeness (sublimity). The RWYC attempts to awaken and envision – Education *for* life, Education *through* life, and Education *throughout* life.” *The authors.*

The RWYC pedagogical program brings the younger generations closer to the values of the local cultural heritage for the sustainability of the local community. RWYC promotes respect for the diversity of Culture and Cultural Heritage, helps train responsible citizens through knowledge of their cultural heritage, encourages local cultural policies for the conscious development of communities, and prepares herewith the embedding of sustainability policies in local cultures.

Given the difficult problems that exist in the world today as well as the international experiences of RWYC and other organizations over the last few years, it is apparent that this is the perfect time to be focusing on broadening and deepening young people’s - and indeed all people’s - education and training in this area, as well as the need for synergistic actions and relations between cultures and cultural policies as well as the creation of the requisite teaching methods and techniques. This should be complemented by creating educational systems, curriculums, courses, and models that are designed to serve and respond to local needs, investing in community cultural and heritage projects, developing teaching methods and techniques that improve students’ and people’s skills and capabilities, and providing internship and employment opportunities in cultural organizations and heritage institutions.

The idea of ‘interrelatedness’ shows that the management of sacred sites should consider all values and stakeholders involved. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge that in this world where many different worldviews coexist, each worldview may have its own hierarchy of values. Within these worldviews, other traditional cosmological sciences have evolved with time – often in harmony with nature – many of which are still alive in different regions worldwide but relatively more visually and actively in Oriental Asia (cf. Singh and Niglio 2024a). Thus, RWYC is the path to understanding and proceeding for the deeply-rooted walk together with the basic principles of Ecoliteracy, which consists of four perspectives: Nature is our teacher, Sustainable living is a community practice, the real world is the optimal learning environment and Ecological literacy is rooted in a deep knowledge of the landscape (cf. Singh and Niglio 2023c, p. 13).

This should also include education in the natural and ‘cultural tangible, intangible, and transitory heritages’ of the diverse countries in the world and humankind as a whole, studying the valuable role that the UNITED NATIONS and especially UNESCO have played and continue to play in building up and promoting these historical and contemporary achievements throughout the world and capitalizing on all the available technological devices, digital techniques, and communication channels that are available for these purposes. This will require the implementation of projects aimed at knowing, protecting, and enhancing the cultural diversity of all nations and the sustainability of all countries through innovation, conservation, creativity, imagination, and the development of the cultural value chain proposed by RWYC’s international programme <http://esempiarchitettura.it/sito/edakids-reconnecting-with-your-culture/>.

To fulfill its mandate and commitment to the development of a deep-seated education in culture and heritage as well as the realization of a sustainable future, RWYC has been complementing its programs and courses in communities and schools with several closely related pedagogical activities. Included here are international seminars and conferences on subjects such as *Culture as an Idea and Reality* in conjunction with ICOMOS (April 18, 2021), *Reconnecting With Your Culture in the World* with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (November 20, 2021), and *Culture: Key to Systemic Change and Sustainable Development* (April 23, 2022); the creation and circulation of exhibitions of young people’s drawings in Albania, Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, China, Columbia, Egypt, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Romania, Spain, Ukraine, USA, Venezuela, and other countries; distribution of periodic newsletters and comprehensive bulletins; creating collaborative arrangements with such organizations as EDA International Research Centre, New European Bauhaus, American University of Europe, and others, and promoting such relevant and recent publications written by prominent RWYC associates, dealing with regenerating cultural religious heritage (Niglio 2022), emerging cultural geographies (Singh, Ravi, *et al.* 2022), placemaking and cultural landscapes (Singh, Niglio, and Rana 2023a), culture and cultivation in understanding the cosmic whole and cultural awakening for sustainable and harmonious age (Schafer 2022, 2023, 2024), and sacrality and pilgrimage places (Singh & Niglio 2024b). In a similar vein, using the platform of a bi-annual *International Journal of Architecture and Engineering: EdA Esempi di Architettura*, the two volumes have covered the themes of historic cities and cultural-religious heritage: preservation & regeneration (Singh & Niglio 2022a, 2022b), and reconnecting culture, heritage, and architectural symbolism (Singh & Niglio 2023a); both the volumes are represented with contributions from different parts of the earth (for a comprehensive review and appraisal see, Singh and Niglio 2023a, 2023b). In continuation, the present volume (*EdA*, 11, 2024) elucidates issues on ‘RWYC, Reconnecting With Your Culture: Cultural Landscapes & Sustainability’.

These activities are intended to ensure that young people and future generations get the education and training in culture and heritage in general - and exposure to specific cultures, heritages, and their values, value

systems, aspirations, and ideals in particular - to become committed adults and responsible citizens. It is hoped that these activities will eventually lead to the creation of the requisite pedagogical foundation, framework, curriculums, and principles in cultural and heritage education that are required to contribute to the realization of a more sustainable, peaceful, harmonious, and secure world.

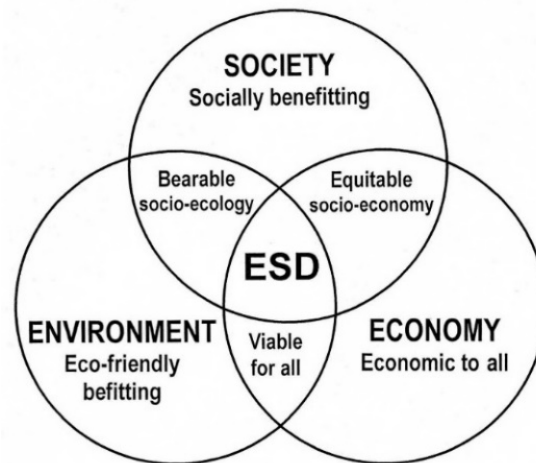


Fig. 5. Education for Sustainable Development

Education is considered one of the most vital strategies for maintenance and continuity of the process of achieving and maintaining sustainability, which Gandhi has already provoked in the early 20th century; he said, 'there's enough in the world to meet the needs of everyone but there's not enough to meet the greed of everyone' (Gandhi, *CWMG*, vol. 39, p. 197). By education, Gandhi means "an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit that makes the world harmonious, happier and peaceful" (Gandhi, *CWMG*, vol. 25, p. 390). Gandhi was, the real provocateur of education of sustainable development; his thoughts can better be befitted into the three sets of three attributes of sustainability, viz. Society (S), Environment (E), and Economy (C), which by the interaction of their essence converges into three sub-sets, i.e., Bearable socio-ecology ($E \cap S$), Equitable socio-economy ($S \cap C$), and Viability for all ($E \cap C$), which at the next level of cross-interaction result into ESD, Education for Sustainable Development (see Fig. 4), in terms of set representation as $ESD = S \cap E \cap C$.

This makes activating *Culture's Compass* through UNESCO-Mondiacult-2022 in Mexico City and other means and initiatives the key to opening the doors to a much different era in global development and human affairs. We at RWYC feel very privileged to participate in this process and make a presentation at this timely Conference and its ability to chart a new course for humanity and the world in the months, years, and decades ahead.

Let us join our co-pilgrimage on the pathway of RWYC:

Let us believe CULTURE will save our common heritage.
 Let every day we work together, also realise together.
 Let us follow on, proceed on, march on this sacred path.
 Let us join hands in helping the universal community to realise.
 Let us have a dream with action and vision and be into action.
 Let our emotions be awakened through our inner light.
 Let our CULTURE be a vital force to feel God in all the life-forms.
 Let this way awaken humanity to meet with sublime divinity.

"A religion is one that teaches respect for the dignity and sanctity of all nature. The wrong religion is one that licenses the indulgence of human greed at the expense of non-human nature" (Toynbee and Ikeda 1976, p. 324). We need a religion that promotes pantheism, a variety of forms, and a variety of inherent meanings as exemplified in Hinduism where all forms of nature and its objects are manifested with a distinct sanctity, and somehow at some point accepted as part of worship. The moral ethics and religious values provoked in almost all religions agree that there is one true religion, which is to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with that earth spirit sacred power/God (Clark 1994, p. 127). Heritage ecology is the vision and way in this, and RWYC is a path and process of awakening.

Healing the Earth is the message of sacred ecology that envisions the interconnectedness between Man and Nature and further makes a way to environmental and cultural guardianship by creating a bridge linking realisation (*anubhava*) and revelation (*anubhuti*). This healing process requires a specific mode of conduct or cultural consciousness, a spiritual code of conduct—*dharma*, a moral duty (or, to say like sacred duty, the virtue one holds as a human being). "To hold" means giving the sense of that which has everything together in a 'whole'. The *dharma* of water is wetness. The *dharma* of honey is sweetness. The *dharma* of wind is blowing. The

dharma of fire is heat (cf. Jarow 1986, p. 2). The *dharma* of landscape is to sustain the sacred power manifested therein. The *dharma* of our culture is to save its sacred ecology – promoting deeper moral values – the gateways of knowing the cosmic identity of human beings. Practising sacred ecology is the “*yoga of landscape*” and the sacred journey to the symbol of Nature’s spirit, i.e., heritage (Singh 1995, p. 196). The pioneer of the land-ethic, Leopold’s (1945, pp. 224-225) call is noteworthy in this context: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community (human beings). It is wrong when it tends otherwise”.

Let us cross the disciplinary boundaries in envisioning ourselves through ‘Reconnecting With Your Culture’ – a way of cosmic understanding and concern for humanity. Altogether, it promotes a worldview of a Spirituo-Cultural Landscape—a spirit of wholeness, a sense of holiness—grounded on an evolutionary cosmology in the core of which lies human dignity and future vision. Sustainable development appears to be a contradiction, a paradox, which can be fully resolved only by the evolution to a higher level of human consciousness through deeply ‘Reconnecting With Your Culture’. Carl Jung (1959, p. 28) has expressed, “In the history of the collective as in the history of the individual, everything depends on the development of consciousness”.

In this era of cybernetics, the commonly accepted paradigm shift is perceiving and practicing “Seeing culture as part of something larger to seeing culture in holistic terms as the whole or total way of life so timely, valuable, and indispensable” (Schafer 2022, p. 257). He further adds (*ibid.*), “Nothing confirms the power, potential, and potency of the holistic perception of culture better than the realization that culture and cultures are the change agents that are urgently needed during this difficult period in human history. How often have we heard people and organizations say in recent years that it is necessary to “change the culture”?

RWYC AND TJD-THE JENA DECLARATION: MOU (16 AUGUST 2023)

Between the Reconnecting With Your Culture International (RWYC), and The Jena Declaration (TJD) UNESCO chair on Global Understanding for Sustainability, Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Germany) an MOU (memorandum of understanding) is made on the 16th August 2023, with agreed signatures of the authors (Olimia Niglio and Rana P.B. Singh), and Prof. Benno Werlen from the TJD. The two parties (bodies) include: (i) Reconnecting With Your Culture International (“RWYC”) in Italy, Olimpia Niglio, via Fillungo 208, 55100 Lucca, Italy, and (ii) The Jena Declaration UNESCO Chair on Global Understanding Sustainability, Loebdergraben 32, D-07743, Jena, Germany, (“TJD”). The details of the structure and operation system are detailed below.

1.Aims

The Parties wish to explore collaboration on topics that are described in the Jena Declaration (2021) in dialogue with UN Agenda 2030.

2.Status of this Memorandum

Other than paragraphs 6, 7, and 8, this Memorandum is not intended to create a contract between the parties. If, as a result of further discussion, the Parties agree to collaborate in any of the activities anticipated in this Memorandum, the Parties shall enter into a formal and legally binding collaboration agreement, setting out the rights and obligations of each party concerning that activity.

3.Areas of potential collaboration

3.1. Subject to paragraph 3.2, the Parties will explore opportunities for potential collaboration in the following areas:

1.Research and publications.

2.Educational and learning programs Courses, seminars, workshops, living labs, and international conferences.

3.2 The development of a collaborative relationship between the parties focuses:

1.Establishing a global perspective of local living conditions (point 3 of TJD).

2.Humanistic education and knowing the cultural heritage (point 4 of TJD).

3.Familiarization with cultural traditions of the transformation of local natural conditions (points 2 & 4 of TJD).

4.Training programs for engaged local communities and Institutions (point 7 of TJD).

5.Living sustainably (point 1 of TJD).

6.To motivate the national and regional partners of RCWYC international to become institutional signatories of TJD.

4.Financial implications

Each party shall be responsible for its own costs incurred in connection with this Memorandum. RWYC and TJD shall, where possible, explore opportunities for external funding of the collaborative activities anticipated in this Memorandum.

5.Exchange of information

Each party will exchange information with the other to understand whether it would be effective and practical for the institutions to work together in specific projects.

6.Confidentiality

Any information classified as confidential by one party and disclosed to the other party shall not be disclosed to any third party other than (a) the parties’ professional advisers; (b) as required by law or a relevant regulatory

authority; (c) with the prior written consent of the other party; or (d) where the information has come into the public domain through no fault of the party wishing to disclose it.

7. Intellectual Property

Unless agreed otherwise in writing, any Intellectual Property rights belonging to the Parties, whether in existence at the date of this Memorandum or created during the course of it, shall belong to the respective Parties.

8. Publicity

The Parties will not include the name or logo of the other Party in any advertising or publicity material without the prior approval of the other Party on a case-by-case basis. Neither Party will do anything which, in the reasonable opinion of the other, would damage the other's reputation and/or business.

9. Disputes

9.1. The Parties shall attempt to resolve in good faith any dispute arising between them out of the operation of this Memorandum.

9.2 Any dispute arising out of the operation of this memorandum shall be finally settled by the court.

10. Duration, termination, and review

10.1. This Memorandum shall commence on the last date of its execution by the parties and shall continue until 28 February 2026. It may be extended by written agreement of both parties.

10.2. It may be reviewed and/or extended by written agreement of both parties.

10.2. Either Party may terminate this Memorandum at any time by giving to the other party 6 months' notice in writing. Termination of this Memorandum shall be without prejudice to any other collaborative arrangement between the Parties.

WALKING ON THE PATH OF SACREDSCAPES: SEARCHING DESTINATION

Relp (1976, p. 30) states that 'the spirit of a place lies in its landscape'. Yet, at the same time, despite changes in space and time, the subtle power of a place is retained and can be experienced too. This constitutes the very uniqueness and distinctiveness of place character. Lawrence (1964, p. 6) wrote: "Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars; call it what you like. But the *spirit of a place* is a great reality". If one understands and experiences and tries to be part of it, we hope one would be a great practitioner of landscape architecture (cf. Singh, 1997).

In Indian tradition, heritage is called '*dharohara*', which is a combination of two words, i.e., *dhara*- ('the mother earth, Prithvi/ Lord Vishnu who holds'), and *-ihara* ('endeavour of identity through time'). The word also carries the meaning of 'bearing' and 'preserving' the surface of the earth. Prithvi is also called *dhara*, *dhri*, *dharti*, *dhriti*, meaning that which holds everything (see the *Sathapatha Brāhmana*, a Vedic text: 10.56.6; 10.59.25; 10.68.48). That is how it should also be explained in terms of the 'root' ('*shrota*') and 'identity' ('*asmitā*') — a framework of continuity of interconnectedness and a personality of culture, thus in terms of space it combines the micro-space, site (*sthān*), the extended space, habitat (*pariyāvāsa*, extended as '*dwellingness*') and the regional projection, territory (*parikshetra*), and ultimately linking to terrestrial, cosmos (*brahmānda*). Additionally, it also connotes the tangible, intangible, and visual attributes. In other context, the word '*dharohara*' also refers to spatial-functional symbol that links 'locality' and 'universality', consisting of four hierarchically covering layers, viz. *sthān* (site), *parikshetra* (defined territory), *simānta* (border transition), and *brahmānda* (cosmos).

Think *cosmically*, see *globally*, behave *regionally*, and act *locally* but *insightfully* (cf. Singh and Niglio 2023b, p. 45); this is an appeal for cosmic vision, global humanism, and Self-realization in making and maintaining rural cultural landscapes as a mosaic of happy, peaceful, and sustainable places. This idea may be comparable to a deeply rooted indigenous society of Māori (New Zealand). For Māori core cultural values and principles include *Kotahitanga* (unity, consensus, participation), *Urunga-Tu* (participation), *Kaitiakitanga* (environmental guardianship), *Tau utu utu* (reciprocity, giving back what you take), *Wairuatanga* (spiritual wellbeing, taking into consideration the spiritual dimension) (for details cf. Harmsworth 2007).

Since all the problems are generated from the mind, the solutions will also come from the mind; said Legrand (2021), "All the problems we face come from our minds and hearts. There also lie the solutions." However, this needs a constant practice of awakening the mind on the path of deeply-rooted education and understanding cultural interconnectedness, and awakening and rejuvenating the human conscience to actively be part of the universal family (*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*, as in the *Mahā Upanishad*: 6.72-73). We should realize global interdependence as the ultimate reality, thus making a sustainable global order through optimal international governance (cf. Lopez-Claros, et al. 2020), through a new dynamic world order and global balance while walking on the path of Ethics, Values, and Virtues (cf. Stückelberger 2020). This could be made operative to move from an economic to a cultural age—linking cultural conscience and holistic understanding in the light of Sustainable Development (cf. Schafer 2020). Culture and the cosmos are interconnected in creating conscience from civilisational continuity in reviving the path we should reconcile our minds and hearts through spiritual awakening (cf. Legrand 2021).

In late 2020, **Reconnecting With Your Culture (RWYC)** was created to awaken, understand, and be part of the cultural appraisal and save the world through deeply-rooted education (cf. Niglio 2021, also Niglio, Schafer & Singh 2022). Given the complex problems that "exist in the world today, as well as the international experiences of RWYC and other organizations over the last few years, it is apparent that this is the perfect time to be focusing

on broadening and deepening young people's—and indeed all people's—education and training in this area, as well as the need for synergistic actions and relations between cultures and cultural policies as well as the creation of the requisite teaching methods and techniques” (Singh and Niglio 2023a, p. 11).

Because all the life forms are interwoven and interconnected, the land and its living creature can be viewed as symbols reciprocally and interactionally responsive to each other, which is popularly represented as a spiral frame of the *mandala* that begins at the centre and expands into infinity. Spirits permeate matter and animate it, generating the inherent force of terrestrial unity, which we call ecological cosmology. That is how the rich symbolic association brings the sacred as a *life-force* into everyday life. Each cultural landscape in the visual form of habitat and cosmos, such as a forest, cave, mountain, or even island, is like a chapel for a higher life where lies the more profound human quest to get connected with the spirit of their ancestors through various symbolic natural attributes, including varieties of landscapes, as well as the sun, clouds, moon, or sea. This spirit encourages human sensitivity to march from realisation (*anubhava* in Sanskrit) to revelation (*anubhūti* in Sanskrit).

Through the practice and use of sacred ecology a strategy for sustainable development considering heritage conservation and preservation, *reverential development*, should be accepted in the service of human civilisation and its symbolic identity, which can be regulated by deeply-sensed education promoting cultural interconnectedness. Let us come to an end through the words of the African ecologist Babu Diou (as cited in Singh 1995, p. 213):

In the end

We will conserve only what we love.

We will love only what we understand.

We will understand only what we learn.

COVERAGE WITH *EDA*, VOL. 11 (2024)

Within the system of complex interconnectedness and interactions among cultures, heritage, and landscapes and their resultant attributes—all that are rooted in the past, together we seek to search ways, paths, and means that are implied for framing and making a base for the UN Sustainable Development Goals that to be promoted by the 2030 Agenda, together with community development, and nature-based education. The trajectory of understanding, awakening, and action programmes through deeply-rooted education is taken here as a force to make the world happy and harmonious.

Thus, cultural heritage and related landscape attributes require special care for understanding and planning—Preservation and Regeneration—and maintaining them as a cultural nexus of visioning the future and fulfilling the SDGs as the UNO/UNESCO envisioned. This will be vitalised and activated through deeply-rooted and culturally-envisioned education systems and networks. This special issue of *Esempi di Architettura* [vol. 11 (nos. 1-2), 2024] attempts to keep pace with these issues—theoretically, philosophically, implicatively, and regionally.

Papers are invited by the professionals and scholars from various cross- and multi-disciplines to deliberate and explain the role of education imbued in culture in the evolution, maintenance, and regeneration of human habitat and associated cultural landscapes—to be illustrated with theoretical debates, case studies, images, critical appraisal of policies, and planning perspectives, etc. Papers were asked on any of the sub-themes that should cover the sub-themes, focussing on different perspectives on Reconnecting with Culture and Heritage; sub-themes included:

- 1. **Interconnection among Culture, Education, Heritage, and Sustainability:** Pedagogy & involvement, Ideologies, the Role of institutions and Community organizations, Cultural landscape approach: Cultural sustainability, Reconnecting culture, and Gaia theory.
- 2. **Cultural interconnectedness: Sacredscapes, Spirituality, and Human Security:** Culture as Holistic frame, Culture-Nature reciprocity, Learning process: 'Succession-Sustenance-Sustainability', Transformative conscience, Ecoliteracy, Science-Society interplay.
- 3. **Ethics, civility, and moral Imperative:** Reverential Development and Non-formal education, Courses and sense of ethics, Cultural Education and Human Development, Human rights & security, Cultural transformation, Geopietry, Ecological cosmology, Buddhist ecology.
- 4. **RWYC - Progress Reports: County, Regional, & Local levels:** National representations, Goals, and achievements: generalised ideas, linkages, ideologies and laws, RWYC and Jena Declaration: Perspectives and implications, RWYC - co-shared and collective awakening.
- 5. **Cultural Performances and Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Indigenous knowledge, the role of ICH in education and mass awakening, deeply-rooted education and cultural imperatives, representation of festive and performance arts promoting nature-based education.
- 6. **Culture and Spiritual image in Landscape architecture:** design, metaphysical meanings, aesthetics, change, and continuity; links among cultures, civic formation, and cultural heritages, Culture vis-à-vis Sacred and Heritage Ecology, Culture: Worldview &Cosmology.

- **7. Culture as the covering envelope of Sustainability:** Status of culture, heritage— Heritagization & Sustainable Planning; dialogue with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be promoted by the 2030 Agenda, and community development, Cultural Future.

At the first instance of screening, 34 abstracts were assessed by July 2023, and 23 were approved, taking into view the thematic focus, coverage, and contents, which were arranged into two parts of the *EdA* [vol. 11, nos. 1 & 2, 2024]. These contributions are in the continuity of the thought process linking the two other volumes of *EdA* (vol., 9, 2022, and vol. 10, 2023). We hope that the vision and action of RWYC will serve as a path and process for the Great Cultural Awakening in making an equitable, sustainable, and harmonious age (cf. Schafer 2023, 2024).

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ASIAN RURAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: CULTURE-NATURE INTERFACES AND SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Asia recorded a share of around 47.4% of its total population as rural in 2023 (UN estimates), but at the regional level, there appears to be a contrasting scenario. By 2030, around 40% will be in rural areas. The rural environment of Asia presents a distinct-cum-diversified rural cultural landscape where village life and nearness to nature are common. In a habitat sense, the concept of the cultural landscape also includes the nature-ness of the surrounding environment. India comprises 66.83% of its population as rural, living in over 640,930 villages (consisting of 3,287,263 sq. km). Contrarily, China consists of 36.44% of its population is rural, living in around 690,000 villages. Chinese rural landscape is represented by agri(cultural) landscape and typically nucleated settlement types; its philosophical and cultural foundation of the landscape is very similar to the Indian rural landscape. Japanese rural landscape presents a natural setting in which rice fields surrounded by trees and mountains and small clustering of wood houses are the common scenes. The Korean rural landscape also presents a similar scene to that of the Japanese; however, under the 'New Village Development Plan' strategy, rural tourism is now developing rapidly. The philosophy of harmonious co-existence (*kyosei*) and the concept of culture-nature reciprocity settlement (*satoyama*) that historically developed in East Asia and are now debated as pathways of a sustainable future for rural cultural landscape, together represent the Asian vision of Cultural Landscapes and expected that they would present a model for similar conditions in the rest of the world.

Keywords: Asian vision, Cultural landscapes, India, China, Japan, Korea, *kyosei*, *Satoyama*, Sustainability, World Heritage Site, Landscape ecology.

ORIENTATION

The total world population presently reached around 8.10 billion (2023 UN est.), of which 4.77 billion live in Asia (i.e., 59.22%, in 51 countries, cf. Table 1). Among the ten topmost populous countries of the world, the ones included from Asia are India (17.76%), China (17.72%), Indonesia (3.45%), Pakistan (2.99%), Bangladesh (2.15%), and Japan (1.53%); altogether they share 45.6% of the world's population. Presently Asia is a predominantly rural continent, recording 47.40% living in the countryside (rural areas); however, having wide variation in countries like Sri Lanka (81%), Nepal (78%), Cambodia (74%), Afghanistan (74%), India (67%), Pakistan (65%), Bangladesh (59%), China (36%), Korea (18%), and extremely low like Japan (8%).

Table 1. Selected countries of Asia: Population characteristics, 2023 (UN estimates)

Se	Country	Area, '000 sq. km	Population, million	% share in World Population	% of Rural Population	Number of villages
1	India	3,287,263	1,428.63	17.76	66.83	640,867
2	China	9,596,960	1,425.67	17.72	36.44	690,000
3	Japan	377,974	123.03	1.53	8.14	4,534
4	Korea	97,230	51.78	0.64	18.3	5,745
TOTAL ASIA		31,105,763	4,772.12	59.22	47.4	--

Though the cultures of Asia elucidated with different kinds of cultural heritage of many nationalities, societies, and ethnic groups in the region, and having little unity or common history for many of the cultures and peoples, it also forms a common image that shows an interconnectedness and reciprocity of faith systems, predominantly Hindu traditions, Buddhism, Taoism, Zionism, Islam, and several indigenous and animistic belief

systems. The distinctiveness, diversities, and interconnecting generalisations are visible in different degrees, at various scales, and in a variety of ways among the Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean landscapes and their layers and frames of place attachments and spiritual magnetism. The overall Asian region is perceived and seen as rural landscapes where Man-Nature Interrelatedness is practiced in daily lifeways and belief systems — altogether that converges into a complex ‘whole’ portrayed as the “Asian vision of Cultural Landscapes”, which is inherent in the long history, traditions, lifeworlds, pilgrimages, built structures, sacredscapes, *genius loci*, and above all the deeper sense of interrelatedness and ecological cosmology. In fact, diversity is the strength of the Asian vision that promotes a sense of mindset searching for interrelatedness and ordering. There has also been a general convergence in lifestyles between urban and rural areas as distance and time have collapsed. Consequently, the traditional distinction between urban and rural areas has become insufficient for many purposes and an enormous challenge for interdisciplinary studies (cf. Singh 2011a).

Just as the scale and extent of the urban transformation have increased, settlement systems have also increased in their complexity constantly making the rural cultural landscapes. It is expected that by 2030 almost 62% of the population in Asia will live in urban and peri-urban areas. Certainly, we need to project the implicit and inherent messages and visions of Asian cultural landscapes in a sustainable way that fits their mindsets and inherited cultures. There is considerable uncertainty surrounding the scale and pace of future urban growth; nevertheless, certainly, the fact that the scale of urban growth in Asia is full of contradictions and complexities. The vivacity, distinctions, varieties, and overall changes in the transformation process of landscape heterogeneity together with the maintenance and continuity of rural cultural landscapes of Asia are illustrated in its overall scenario.

INDIAN VISION

Out of the country’s total population (1.43 billion in 2023 est.), 67% live in the rural areas, territorially consisting of 640,867 villages — each in a way represents heritage and cultural cells. The words ‘heritage’ (“*dharohara*”) and ‘*sanskriti-parikshetra*’ (“cultural territory/ landscapes”) are commonly used in a broad sense involving both natural and cultural milieu, and in a more extended form, they also refer to the ideas, beliefs, and ways of life that people value and use when faced with change — above all the link to an intimate relationship between the human psyche (humanity) and the mystery of nature (divinity). Religion is a major factor and has the capacity to endow space with sacred meaning. All the sacred spaces vary according to the special sense attached to them, depending on how ‘sacred’ the space is — persons, cultures, or faiths, and the intensity of attraction at a sacred place as a centre of pilgrimage. In India, the holy centres, sacred sites, and centres of pilgrimages are almost identical, and together in a complex way represent the archetype mysticism-built structure, historicity, and culturoscapes that together result into *faithscape* — to be understood and explained through the framework of landscape ecology. Heritage, the notable attribute of the cultural landscape, is to be seen as embodying human feelings that developed within the historical-cultural processes in the milieu of the world of landscape ecology (like ecological cosmology), therefore it should be studied for understanding a deeper and hidden truth while interpreting it in terms of intrinsic meanings and reverence. The landscape is at once a *spatial phenomenon* as it always exists in space making it transformed into place by human interaction and attachments; a *temporal product* as it evolved, changed and preserved the superimpositions in the passage of time while carrying the layering of the past and accommodating the contemporary changes induced by human actions; a *psychological state* as it always has sense of attachment, belongingness, interrelatedness and power — altogether that makes identity and vision; and with these characteristics it becomes a ‘*resourceful whole*’ (like mosaicism, thus the idea of *heritagescapes* or *culturoscapes*) where varying attributes, subjects, ideas and practices and associated traits can get their hold and uses it within their own context and perspectives, and ultimately get interconnected to the others — leading to the idea of expanding territory (*parikshetra*) (cf. Singh and Rana 2011).

The basic idea of India’s cultural heritage and landscape ecology, which has endured since remote antiquity despite subsequent acculturation, is the maintenance of a unified sensibility in the search for wholeness and interrelationships among matter, life, and mind. In this regard, a theory of archetypal transformation of the celestial realm (*macrocosm*), on the earth as the visual and experienced reflection (*mesocosm*), and down to the individual temple or body symbolism (*microcosm*), has been developed by Indian seers; thus referred the three-tier hierarchy of cultural vision of landscape archetypes. In a harmonic balance between nature and humanity, a close interlinkage between all three realms is maintained. Such thought processes provide the essence of the ethics behind the development and maintenance of India’s heritage landscapes (cf. Singh 1997, p. 101; also, Singh and Rana 2011, p. 88). That is how, the cultural landscape perspective can be an essential underpinning for all historic preservation projects, as exemplified in recent studies (cf. Longstreth 2008).

In Indian tradition, heritage is called ‘*dharohara*’, which is a combination of two words, i.e., *dharā*- (‘the mother earth, Prithvi/ Lord Vishnu who holds’), and *-ihara* (‘endeavour of identity through time’). The word also carries the meaning of ‘bearing’ and ‘preserving’ the surface of the earth (cf. Singh and Niglio 2024, p. 14). Altogether the Indian word ‘*dharohara*’, thus connotes a wide and expanded frame, therefore it should be better translated as ‘*heritagescapes*’ [always in plural] and to be explained in the purview of ‘heritage ecology’ in corroboration with ‘deep-spiritual geography’ (cf. Singh 1995, p. 197). It possesses the spirit of spirituality and interconnected-ness that have roots in the past giving messages, existence in the present promoting experiences,