There are few works that directly connect ecology and the study of Confucianism. However, there is a growing body of literature that provides insight into the cultural, philosophic, historic, economic, and religious elements of Confucianism that do bear upon any consideration of the modern ecological worldview. This bibliography is divided into two parts: texts specifically related to the topic of Confucianism and ecology and, general, supportive reference works (by region) for understanding the larger context of Confucianism and ecology.

**Texts Specifically Related to Confucianism and Ecology**


This is a review of Confucianism and Ecology, which is a collection of essays that was published in 1998 by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology.


This is a collection of thirteen new essays on the relationship between world religions and deep ecology. In examining how deep ecologists and the various religious traditions can both learn from and critique one another, the following traditions are considered: indigenous cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, Christian ecofeminism, and New Age spirituality. Contributors include Nawal Ammar, David Landis Barnhill, John E. Carroll, Christopher Key Chapple, John B. Cobb Jr., Roger S. Gottlieb, John A. Grim, Eric Katz, Jordan Paper, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and Michael E. Zimmerman.


In this work, the author discusses the ways in which destructive and injurious natural phenomena were experienced by the founders of Daoism and Confucianism. In particular, the author considers two views that these Chinese thinkers had of the relationship between benevolent and malevolent forces of nature. One view is said to be anthropocentric insofar as it interprets destructive natural forces as consequences of bad
human actions. According to the other view, natural forces are to be accepted as part of
the flow of the Dao, regardless of whether they appear painful or injurious to humans.

Berneko, Guy. “Ecohumanism, the Spontaneities of the Earth, Ziran, and K = 2.” Journal of

In this essay, Berneko discusses the contribution of Daoism, Neo-Confucianism, systems
theory, and Thomas Berry’s “Ecozoic” sensibilities for facilitating a sustainable future.
Berneko argues that the basic principles and formulae articulated in these different
perspectives offer insights that are greater than those offered by a single culture alone,
and that together, these perspectives avoid the problems of reductionistic, dualistic, or
merely utilitarian imperatives.

and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures, ed. Helaine Selin, 373-392. The Hague and

This is an account of the various ways in which nature has been interpreted in the
tradition of Confucianism. Berthrong shows how changes in the way Confucians
interpreted the principles of Confucianism accompanied changes in the Confucian
views of nature, with recent developments in Confucianism emphasizing ecology
and social ethics.

Black, Alison Harley. Man and Nature in the Philosophical Thought of Wang Fu-chih.

Introduces the Confucian theory of qi (material force or vital energy) that is at the heart
of Confucian views of nature. Black provides insights into the very complicated
Confucian theory of vital energy and explains how this theory informs the philosophy
Wang Fuzhi. For Confucians, qi is the basis for all theories of the natural world and
hence is crucial to the Confucian understanding of ecological issues.

Blakeley, Donald N. “Listening to the Animals: The Confucian View of Animal Welfare.”

In this essay, Blakeley articulates the ethical significance of animals for
Confucianism. Blakeley argues that, from the Analects to Mengzi and through
Neo-Confucianism, the Confucian tradition consistently describes the goal of
becoming humane (ren) as not only involving respect for the values of other human
beings, but also involving respect for natural phenomena such as animals.


A collection of maps, illustrations, and charts relating to the natural, social, political,
economic, and cultural history of China. Introduces the scope of the land, ethnic groups,
and the typography of China as well as its historical, economic, and cultural
development. Provides illustrations of Chinese land areas and discusses how human
beings have interacted with the land throughout the centuries.


Engaging with Ming Dynasty philosopher Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), Nicholas Brasovan presents Wang's neo-Confucianism as an important theoretical resource for engaging with contemporary ecological humanism. Brasovan coins the term "person-in-the-world" to capture ecological humanism's fundamental premise that humans and nature are inextricably bound together, and argues that Wang's cosmology of energy (qi) gives us a rich conceptual vocabulary for understanding the continuity that exists between persons and the natural world. This innovative work of comparative philosophy not only presents a systematic and comprehensive interpretation of Wang's thought but also shows its relevance to contemporary discussions in the philosophy of ecology.


This book is a collection of scholarly essays concerned with the variety of ways in which Asian peoples perceive the relationship between humans and the environment. This essays in the volume are interdisciplinary, including research from anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and geographers. In taking a cross-cultural approach, this book includes essays that discuss perceptions of nature among the different religions of Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, and indigenous traditions.


The article focuses on the cosmogenesis narratives that can characterize sustainability in such a way that can benefit the Earth-human environment. It says that the narratives, paradigms and observations can interpret the evolving universe as embodied in its participants. It mentions guan (observation) as a process in which the forms of things and forms of seeing things coincide, and discusses philosopher Confucius' theory of continuity of being, which states that human is a dimension of the Earth.


This book is the sequel to the foundational volume in Asian environmental ethics, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought.* It is an anthology composed of chapters by leading scholars who draw from the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese traditions of thought to provide a normative ethical framework that can address the environmental challenges being faced in the twenty-first century. Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist approaches are considered along with those of Zen, Japanese Confucianism, and the contemporary philosophy of the Kyoto School.

Chen Lai. “On Morality From the Perspective of Ecology: The Ecological Dimension of


This book guides the reader to the emerging Ecozoic Era, when humans will be present upon the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner, calling for an Ecozoic spirituality. It also illustrates an important direction for theology and spirituality and for deep ecumenism that is yet to be fully realized and opens more doors for such dialogue. By giving special attention to the integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity, the works of Thomas Berry (1914–2009, USA) and Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073, China) provide insights that speak to the current ecological crisis, a cosmological context for developing an Ecozoic spirituality, while helping to advance clear values and ethical parameters that lead to a more authentic human presence on Earth.


This article is a summary of the ways in which people of a sample from Hong Kong perceive the risks associated with various environmental hazards. The authors consider the role that Confucianism has in influencing the way in which these people perceive such risks. The study found that women, less educated people, and the elderly perceived more environmental risk than did men, more educated people, and younger people.


This anthology addresses the relationship of the world’s religious traditions to environmental concerns. Various chapters focus on the religious traditions of India and China, Abrahamic faiths, and Indigenous cultures. Also included are chapters on the environmental significance of philosophy, pantheism, romanticism, aestheticism, educational practices, and the Gaia hypothesis.


Beginning with the same understanding of the word “religion” as the “response to the sacred,” contributors to this volume present the Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, African religious, and Chinese responses to issues of overconsumption, environment, and demographics. Utilizing Tillich’s correlational methodology, the contributors remark that if the global market economy is a powerful new religion, then economics functions as its theology. Chapters, therefore, include, “The Religion of the Market,” “Sustainability and the Global Economy,” and “Self as Individual and Collective: Ethical Implications.”

In this book, the author discusses numerous political, historical, and economic factors involved with the widespread environmental degradation in contemporary China. The author also discusses the role of Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought in shaping Chinese attitudes regarding the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This work includes research from historical inquiry, case studies, and interviews.


This is an account of over 3,000 years of Chinese history, particularly with a view to the history of the relationships between humans and the environment. Elvin explores a wide variety of environmental phenomena and shows how different aspects of Chinese traditions have contributed to environmental degradation in China. He uses the decline in the elephant population of China as a symbol for the entire history of environmental degradation in China. Elvin's investigation intertwines many threads of Chinese cultural history, including its politics, economics, aesthetics, and religious traditions (particularly Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism).


This is a collection of scholarly essays exploring the relationship between humans and the environment throughout the history of China. The essays deal with a variety of topics, including the ecological significance of Chinese religions (including Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism).


In this essay, Fan argues that Confucian environmental ethics can be best understood as a form of “weak anthropocentrism.” In this context, weak anthropocentrism means that Confucianism is anthropocentric--interpreting intrinsic value as a mainly human phenomenon, and this anthropocentrism is “weak” insofar as it is oriented toward cosmic principles.


In this older interpretation of Chinese and Confucian views of nature and the physical sciences, Forke reveals how cosmological worldviews define how human beings see themselves as parts of nature and how this has meaning for the development of human ecological theory and practice. Ecology is always related to view of nature and Forke provides an overview of how classical Chinese thought interpreted the natural world.

Gale provides a translation of an early, classical debate on the role of government in the development and promotion of industry. Gale examines questions regarding a possible governmental monopoly on the production of iron and salt, as well as social, political, and philosophic issues concerning human relations with the natural and social worlds. The Confucian tradition has always been concerned with nature conservation and this text reveals how questions regarding the human relationship to the natural order were framed in terms of an economic policy debate.


This essay reviews the common claim that Confucian ethics is supported by a cosmology that views the world as organismic, nontranscendent, and nondualistic. The author shows to what extent this claim is actually articulated in the works of scholars such as P. J. Ivanhoe, David Nivison, R. P. Peerenboom, Henry Rosemont, and Tu Wei-Ming.


This article searches classical Chinese and American philosophy for concepts and social forms that can account for the contemporary environmental crisis, particularly as it relates to contemporary China and the United States of America. The author argues that Confucius as well as certain classical American philosophers can help us come to deal with both the decay of established orders and the overwhelming novelty now sweeping through human consciousness.


This paper identifies two broad approaches to environmental ethics. The 'conservationist' approach on which we should conserve the environment when it is in our interest to do so and the 'preservationist' approach on which we should preserve the environment even when it is not in our interest to do so. The authors propose a “relational” approach that tells humans to preserve nature as part of what makes us who we are or could be. Drawing from Confucian and Daoist texts, this paper argues that human identities are, or should be, so intimately tied to nature that human interests evolve in relationship to nature.

A modern study of the history of the development of Chinese cosmological worldviews that assists the reader in understanding the philosophic and scientific background of Confucian theories regarding the natural order. Covers the history of Chinese cosmology from the classical period to the end of the imperial order.


In this article, Huang argues that determinations of values (what one “ought” to do) are not independent of determinations of facts (what one “is”). After reflecting on basic problems in Western ethical theory from Plato to Kant and contemporary philosophy, Huang articulates what he calls a “Neo-Confucian ontological virtue ethics” (p. 453), which is based on the identification of virtue and nature expressed by the Cheng brothers, Hao and Yi.


Reflecting on the work of the scholar of Chinese philosophy and religion Wing-tsit Chan (1901-1994), Inada shows how Chinese ethics are based on the cosmological and ecological principles implied in the concept of Dao (“the Way”). Inada considers Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist contributions to the Chinese understanding of Dao.


Noticing that the Western paradigm in economics is lacking a moral dimension in relationship to nature, Jenkins argues that the Chinese worldview offers conceptual resources that make it possible to place economics within a more encompassing socio-ecological context. Jenkins looks at Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, and popular religious practices that contribute to the Chinese worldview. Although these traditions contain ideals of harmony and the perfectibility of human nature, Jenkins notes that they also contain utilitarian impulses that have been quite problematic insofar as they have contributed to increases in environmental degradation.


The *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* provides the most comprehensive and authoritative overview of the field of religion and ecology, including appreciative and critical perspectives on religious traditions, communities, attitude, and practices. Several chapters are relevant to the study of Confucianism and ecology, especially the chapters on “Confucianism,” “Asia,” and “China.”

In discussing the significance of animals in the thinking Mengzi (Mencius), the author argues that, although Mengzi ate the meat of animals, this does not contradict the compassion toward animals that is promoted by Mengzi and other Confucians. Because love and compassion take place according to relationships, Mengzi accounts for the possibility that one’s treatment of animals can only be as benevolent as is possible within the context of one’s relationships.


This is a brief review of Confucianism and Ecology, which was published in 1998 by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology.


Responding to an increasingly interconnected world, this book presents a comparative theological and philosophical attempt to construct new underpinnings for the idea of democracy by bringing the Western concept of spirit into dialogue with the East Asian nondualistic and nonhierarchical notion of qi. The book follows the historical adventures of the idea of qi through some of its Confucian and Daoist textual histories in East Asia, mainly Laozi, Zhu Xi, Toegye, Nongmun, and Su-un, and compares them with analogous conceptualizations of the ultimate creative and spiritual power found in the intellectual constellations of Western and/or Christian thought—namely, Whitehead’s Creativity, Hegel’s Geist, Deleuze’s chaosmos, and Catherine Keller’s Tehom.


This essay, Louden considers the history of Western interpretations of the ethical significance of Confucianism, particularly in light of the work of Christian Wolff in 18th century Germany. The author shows how Western conceptions of ethics have influenced the ways in which Western philosophers interpret Confucian ethics.


The authors of this essay discuss the ecological implications of contemporary forms of Confucian spirituality. This work includes discussions of passages from important Confucian and Neo-Confucian texts, and it accounts for the work of prominent scholars of Confucianism and ecology, including Tu Weiming, Mary Evelyn Tucker,
and John Berthrong.


A multi-volume history of traditional Chinese science, including material from the ecological sciences (e.g., earth and biological sciences). This enormous project is helpful for those interested in the development of Chinese ecology. Various volumes in the series contain exhaustive bibliographies for additional reading.


This paper examines how China's major religious philosophical traditions have historically attempted to balance and integrate the forces of heaven, earth, and humanity. Special attention is given to the central role of mountains within these traditions. The author argues that the complementary relationship among China's three teachings provides a culturally relevant and viable space in which an emerging sense of environmental consciousness and social justice may flourish in China.


This is a review of Confucianism and Ecology, which is a collection of scholarly essays that was published in 1998 by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology.


Mencius and Aristotle were contemporaries, but are often understood to represent opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum. Mencius is associated with the ecological, emergent, flowing, and connected; Aristotle with the rational, static, abstract, and binary. Douglas Robinson argues that in their conceptions of rhetoric, at least, Mencius and Aristotle are much more similar than different: both are powerfully socio-ecological, espousing and exploring collectivist thinking about the circulation of energy and social value through groups. Robinson tracks this collectivistic thinking through a series of comparative considerations using a theory that draws impetus from Arne Naess’s “ecosophical” deep ecology and from work on rhetoric powered by affective ecologies, but with details of the theory drawn equally from Mencius and Aristotle.


This book contains various scholarly articles that account for the role of the natural environment in non-Western worldviews. Some essays deal with general problems in this area of study, including problems relating to the study of indigenous knowledge, the
environmental implications of other worldviews, and the problematic distinction between "Western" and "non-Western." Other essays deal specifically with the significance of the environment for particular indigenous communities, including discussions about indigenous peoples from Japan, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, Oceania, and the Americas. This book also includes essays on the role of nature in Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam.


In this book, Shapiro considers the impact of Mao Zedong’s political rule on the Chinese people as well as the Chinese land, showing how abuses of the natural environment are often interrelated with abuses of human beings. This book considers the role of Maoist ideology in supporting industrial development while suppressing the ancient Chinese traditions, including Confucianism, and ignoring the cautious procedures of Western scientific method.


Using the example of China’s Wutai Shan—recently designated both a UNESCO World Heritage site and a national park—Robert J. Shepherd analyzes Chinese applications of western notions of heritage management within a non-western framework. What does the concept of world heritage mean for a site practically unheard of outside of China, visited almost exclusively by Buddhist religious pilgrims? What does heritage preservation mean for a site whose intrinsic value isn’t in its historic buildings or cultural significance, but for its sacredness? Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism are all addressed in this volume, although it is framed primarily in terms of Buddhism.


This article is a broad survey of research undertaken in studying the intersection of Chinese traditions (e.g., Confucianism, Daoism, folk practices) with problems relating to ecology and environmental ethics. This paper can serve as a guide for someone beginning research into the relationship between Chinese religions and ecology.


In this article, Julia Tao considers some ways in which the moral tradition of Confucianism can facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world. Tao argues that, for Confucianism, it is possible for humans to cultivate a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature by discerning the interpenetration and interdependence between the way of humans and the way of nature.

Taylor, Rodney L. *The Confucian Way of Contemplation: Okada Takehiko and the Tradition*
A study of the thought of an important contemporary Japanese Confucian, including a section that deals with the ecological crisis. One of the few studies in English that illustrates how modern Confucians are thinking about the ecological crisis— Confucians believe that human beings are part of nature and that they have a responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural world.


This essay considers the Classical Confucian view of Heaven, man, and moral virtue in light of key passages from Lun Yu (the Analects of Confucius), Meng Tzu (the works of Mencius), and Hsun Tzu (the works of Hsun Tzu). It then looks at the Neo-Confucian ethical vision involving metaphysical models for moral action and a vision of unity. The essay concludes with a conversation between the author and the Japanese Neo-Confucian thinker Okada Takehiko on the subject of the use of animals in science.


A standard history of early modern Japan (ca. 1600–1868) that includes material on Japanese theories and debates about forestry management. Totman also provides a review of how pre-modern Japanese governments and intellectuals attempted to deal with the natural environment. Ecology has a long history in Japan and this study illustrates how ecological concerns have been connected to economic, political, and social factors in that country.


In this essay, Tu pays particular attention to the implications of Confucianism for facilitating a response to the present ecological crisis facing the world. Tu describes the Confucian worldview as “anthropocosmic” (rather than anthropocentric), because Confucianism views the relationship between Heaven, Earth, and humanity as a dynamic and interpenetrating unity.


This book brings together some of the insights of what it might mean for the world’s religions to take our emerging “cosmic context” seriously in reforming these traditions to attend to the contemporary ecological crisis. In a section on the “Transformative Context”, Tucker describes how Dogma, Rituals and Symbols, Moral Authority, Soteriology, and Ethics are the major areas that the world religious traditions can be most effective in transforming the human community toward a realization of “worldly wonder.”
In this essay, the author explores the resources of the Confucian tradition for helping promote a global ethic that can respond to the challenges of the contemporary ecological crisis. In particular, Tucker considers the Confucian view of Heaven, Earth, and humanity as interconnected in a cosmos of organic holism and dynamic vitalism.

In this essay, Tucker accounts for the role of nature in Neo-Confucianism. Tucker describes the anthropocosmic worldview of Neo-Confucianism, according to which the cosmos is an organic whole characterized by the dynamic interpenetration of humans, Earth, and Heaven.

A collection of scholarly papers on aspects of Confucian thought about ecology examining the philosophy and history of Confucian culture in relation to ecological concerns. Includes supplemental bibliographies appended to the articles.

This volume presents papers on the role of worldviews, particularly religious ones, in responding to the environmental challenge. Introductory essays explore necessary spiritual resources that aid us in transcending an ever-present “Enlightenment mentality” (Tu Wei-Ming). Additional essays in this section present prospects for a scientifically and culturally grounded international environmental ethic (J. Baird Callicott). Subsequent essays explore a wide range of religious traditions: Native North American (John Grim), Judaism (Eric Katz), Christianity (Jay McDaniel), Islam (Roger E. Timm), Baha’i (Robert A. White), Hinduism (Christopher Key Chapple), Buddhism (Brian Brown), Jainism (Michael Tobias), Taoism, and Confucianism (Mary Evelyn Tucker). A final group of essays on contemporary ecological perspectives examine topics such as: the ecological worldview (Ralph Metzner), cosmology and ethics (Larry L. Rasmussen), ecofeminism (Charlene Spretnak), Whitehead’s philosophy (David Ray Griffin), deep ecology (George Sessions), “Ecological Geography” (Thomas Berry), and “Cosmogenesis” (Brian Swimme).
This book contains descriptions of over 200 hundred Chinese gardens, public and private. The author considers the ways in which Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist ideals have influenced ethical and aesthetic aspects of Chinese gardening practices. Along with historical and cultural information, this book contains hundreds of photographs of Chinese gardens.


This work accounts for the political and cosmological dimensions of the early Chinese worldview. The author accounts for the role of Confucian and Daoist principles in shaping political and cosmological ideals. Furthermore, the author shows how the political and cosmological dimensions of early Chinese culture affected and transformed one another.


This essay is a summary of the Neo-Confucian thought of Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528). Yamauchi discusses the environmental implications of Yang-ming’s thinking, emphasizing that the basic moral principle for Yang-ming involves the unity of knowledge and action.


In this essay, Yu considers the implications of Confucianism for bioethical problems regarding the relationship between humanity and nature. According to Yu, Confucianism can help humans understand the interpenetration of humanity and nature precisely because Confucianism can help humans learn to distinguish the way of humans from that of the natural world.


This essay discusses the sensibilities expressed in the Chinese notion of tianrenheyi (the unity of humanity and Heaven), which is a basic principle in Confucianism. Weber discusses the contemporary philosophical significance of tianrenheyi, considering its implications for morality, spirituality, and the meaning of transcendence. According to Weber, tainrenheyi implies that the relationship between oneness and particularity is one of mutual co-implication.

General Reference Works


**Monographs: China**


Hall, David, and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in*

Ho uses paleo-archeological evidence to investigate the potential indigenous origins of the Shang civilization. His analysis begins with a look at agriculture, pottery, bronze metallurgy, numerals, and script dating from the early fifth millennium BCE and proceeds to topics such as Chinese literature, ancestor worship, and contemporary technological advances.


Ko, Dorthy. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century*


Neville, Robert C. The Tao and the Daimon: Segments of a Religious Inquiry. Albany, N.Y.:


_______, Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness. Albany, N.Y.:


Monographs: Japan


A Neo-Confucian philosopher fascinated by the flora and fauna of Japan, Ekken understood and studied the natural world. Although most Confucians were known for their interest in cosmology, albeit removed from the details of the natural world, Ekken is one of those rare Confucians who both studied and wrote about nature and ecology.


**Monographs: Korea**


Choung Haechang, and Han Hyong-jo, eds. *Confucian Philosophy in Korea*. Kyonggi-do: The


