Forum on Religion and Ecology

Hinduism and Ecology Bibliography

Bibliography by Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University, Allegra Wiprud, and the Forum on Religion and Ecology


An anthology with all articles appearing both in English and Korean, this book includes several articles on religion and ecology in an Asian context. Published in 2009 under the presidency of Jim Jung-Bae, it includes articles such as "Restoring the Natural Environment through Localisation" by Helena Norberg Hodge, "Ecological Restoration and Conservation for the Twenty-first Century" by Yoo Jeong-chil, "Ecological Crisis and Asian Philosophy" by Pak Yi-moon, "Touching the Depths of Things: Cultivating Nature in the Thought of Wang Yangming" by Mary Evelyn Tucker, and "Environment and Ecology from Asian Perspectives" by Christopher Key Chapple.


Pointing out that environmental sustainability has joined equity and growth as one of the major political concerns of Third World countries, Agarwal presents an analysis of social and ecological problems from a Third World perspective and offers proposals for sustainable development. Arguing that educated people need specific environmental education, the author emphasizes the socio-economic disparities underlying environmental destruction and makes specific recommendations for achieving sustainability: revaluing land and natural resources as common property, reviving traditional values and beliefs that display a respect for nature, and generating a sustainable approach to urban development.


Linking environmental activism in contemporary India to historical forms of resistance and British colonialism, Akula traces the evolution of eighteenth-century resistance movements and contemporary forms of grassroots environmentalism. He gives a brief overview of the ecological history of India, focusing on the destructive impacts of colonialism and distinguishing between five different types of grassroots resistance. Despite increasingly dire
environmental conditions and destructive development policies, he finds hope in recent attempts by diverse movements to form alliances against global capitalism.


Attempting to present an integrated perspective on the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), Alagh and Buch provide a history of the planning and engineering failures, miscalculations, and mistakes and demonstrate the bias of the Independent Review sponsored by the World Bank. They conclude that the project is unprecedented in its balanced ecological and developmental planning strategies, which include need-based hydropower and irrigation, crop pattern models, regional water allocations, groundwater models, conjunctive use, water management, farmer’s organization, water supply for domestic and industrial use, environmental impacts vis-à-vis sustainability issues, and guidelines for resettlement and the rehabilitation of the Indigenous population.


Allchin discusses the relationship between human culture and the environment in South Asia from the beginnings of the Stone Age by placing it in the general context of human cultural development. Using archaeological evidence, she emphasizes the mutually formative relationship between nature and culture in the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Chalcolithic periods and in different regions of South Asia before and after the Indus period. Contending that humans in South Asia and elsewhere seem to have exploited the environment as long ago as the Stone Age, she suggests that “a conscious awareness of the environment, and of its close relationship with the human race, goes back at least fifty thousand years, and probably much further” (p. 32).


Compiling Alley’s previous work with the river Ganges, this ethnographic study provides a detailed overview of the Ganges in terms of waste disposal, river water resources, urbanization, and the complex meanings of pollution and purity. Alley uses an outward layering methodology to focus on the relationship between religious, scientific, and official dialogues about the river, thereby identifying a wide variety of perspectives, problems, and solutions involved with the impact of wastewater flows on a sacred river.


Alley closely examines the arguments defending both the sacred purity and pollution of the Ganga river. Using Banaras as an example, she analyzes the cognitive categories and symbolic processes that connect the people and government to the river. Although each group views this age as a degenerate one, they differ on the loci of degeneracy so that the government cites population growth, urbanization, industrialization, and technological development as the source of problems, while religious people focus on moral degeneracy and atrophying virtue. Including perspectives from pilgrim priests, government officials, and scientists, Alley also demonstrates how the people continue to look to the government for infrastructural improvements in sewage treatment and management although they clearly assess the problems quite differently.


Defining waste as “a social construct or problem,” Alley examines various interpretations and “ideologies” of pollution and waste by differently situated Hindu residents of Benares in order to analyze the ways in which theories of purity and pollution influence public debates and governmental policies about the uses and condition of the Ganges.


This brief “research note” discusses the Ganges river and its significance for pilgrims, tourists, and residents dwelling in Varanasi. Alley highlights various political and ecological issues involved in the conceptualization and management of the river, whose waters are considered purifying despite evident pollution and public renovation plans.


Written by an MIT writer-in-residence, this book describes with vivid imagery a great number of encounters along the Ganges. As the writer makes his pilgrimage along the Ganges, he points to the intertwining of religious myths and rituals with geographical locations.


Challenging the claim to the universality of Cartesian rationality, Apffel-Marglin provides examples from the Andes and India in a variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g., economics, psychoanalysis, and genetics) to support her thesis that the marginalization of local knowledge threatens the diversity of other styles of cognition. She includes a detailed overview of Stephen Marglin’s episteme and techne, as well as thorough and analytical summaries of the essays comprising this edited volume. This book also speaks of the ontological cleft existing between the mind and the world.


Problematizing Western analytical categories generally thought to be neutral or universal, Apffel-Marglin illustrates the necessity to re-evaluate these categories in light of the violence toward and silencing of other realities that they will or have already perpetrated. The second half of article focuses on the practices of some people in coastal Orissa on the occasion of the festival of the menses of women and of the Earth and attempts to reveal an alternative form of cognition that she calls “embodied” (or “enactive cognition”). Apffel-Marglin makes the categorical distinction between the literal and the symbolic, embedding ecology in the social structure. She argues that the Orissans saw an identity between women, the Earth, and the Goddess that was substantive, not representational or symbolic. They do not stand for, but rather are, the earth and the Goddess. This is not simply a belief, but rather a purely mental phenomenon. This identity is what could be called an “enactive cognition”—a way of bringing invisible violence to the surface. The anthropological category of ritual, Apffel-Marglin argues, may have functioned as a way to keep the thinking agent separate from what he/she is thinking about.


Considering rituals and practices shared by Hindus and Muslims in Orissa from the eleventh and twelve centuries to the present day, Apffel-Marglin discusses “the interpenetration and mutual influence” of Hinduism and Islam. She argues that despite the attempts of outsiders to provoke conflict between them for political or financial gain, Hindus and Muslims living in the same region continue to participate in each other’s festivals and ceremonies (e.g., the shared observance of the Hindu festival of menstruation, earth, and the Goddess).


In this introduction to the edited volume on the exchange, circulation, and valuation of things, Appadurai presents a new understanding of the political links between the exchange and value by tracing the movements or “social lives” of objects through different “regimes of value.” Contending that commodities reflect different forms of knowledge, social arrangements, and political processes, he argues that tracing an object’s “career” reveals that knowledge about commodities tends to become more fragmentated and contradictory the farther it travels.


Providing substantial summaries and assessments of works by Amartya Sen, Paul Greenough, Michelle McAlpin, Morgan MacAlpin, and Kathleen Gough, this article compares and evaluates various analyses of the relationship between morality and politics in influencing the distribution and management of resources in South Asia. Appadurai focuses on two concepts in particular, “entitlement” and “enfranchisement,” and argues that these terms can provide new insights on the problems faced by the rural poor of South Asia.


The contributors to this volume provide ethnographic evidence collected from actresses, politicians, farmers, and housewives in England, Africa, Iran, Peru, Greece, and the former Soviet Union in order to investigate how space is perceived in its physical, social, and symbolic dimensions. Topics such as boundaries, time, place, political arenas, women as mediators of space, hidden virtues of private space and separation, relative space, vulnerability, sexual divisions, women’s mobility, and interior/exterior space are discussed at length and from multiple perspectives.


As the essays in this volume variously point out, the vast diversity of landscapes, ecological zones, and cultures in South Asia is both challenging and illuminating for environmental historians. Various agents of environmental change are addressed, including the role of the state, European colonization, domestic conflicts over resources, struggles for cultural meanings, and external forces such as migration, trade, and religion. Contributors also discuss the distinct form of environmentalism that has developed in South Asia as a result of its history and diversity.
This essay reviews three books that address the relationships of (and tensions between) classical religious texts, doctrines, symbols, and ritual performances to contemporary ecological practices. These books include Anne Rademacher’s *Reigning the River: Urban Ecologies & Political Transformation in Kathmandu*, Pankaj Jain’s *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities: Sustenance and Sustainability*, and Whitney Sanford’s *Growing Stories from India: Religion and the Fate of Agriculture*.


This collection of essays explores the effects of modernity on human communities and the natural world by considering competing knowledge systems, “modern” and “non-modern,” on the issue of forest management. Case studies from India, Finland, and Maine are used to emphasize local forms of knowledge and non-modern technologies as providing an alternative “rationale” to the dominant scientific, managerial, and bureaucratic approach to forestry that has been identified with modernity.


Arguing that today’s ecologically destructive practices represent a break in the “intimate relationship that Indians have with nature,” Banwari critiques contemporary forms of environmentalism as instrumentalist and suggests that traditional views and practices can more effectively counter the negative effects of Western approaches to development. Drawing on traditional concepts and ideas, he argues that the Indian perception of divinity in nature “qualifies India to be the most advanced among all nations” (p. 8) and can help to restore a healthy relationship between humans and the environment.


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


Analyzing the impacts of major public works projects on the urban poor, Bartolom discusses the demographics, adaptive strategies, and survival systems of the urban poor and the various effects of impending and actual displacement, using the Yacyreta Hydroelectric Project in Posadas, Argentina, as a case study. Contending that the prospect of displacement alone caused a marked decline in the living conditions of the urban poor in Posadas well before actual resettlement, he concludes that these “entropic effects” must factor into official impact assessments for such projects as well as compensatory programs for the displaced poor.


Openly rejecting the positivist perspective, Baviskar addresses theoretical concerns in social ecology and environmental history while presenting her own study on development, environment, and Indigenous resistance. Examining the lives of Adivasis in their struggle against the Narmada Bachao Andolan dam which threatens to displace them, Baviskar evaluates development and its impact on poverty, nature, and ideology, and highlights the transformation of Adivasi life through political collective action. She thereby presents a general theory of development and resistance also supported by her research on nature, ideology, and the role of religion in environmental action and theory.


Using folk traditions and religious texts, this article focuses on cardinal directions as employed in ritual, the symbolization of the body, and the relationship of Purusa to the Hindu temple.

Bentall suggests that anthropologists can offer ecologically sustainable economic development programs to advisors of the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) and because of this contribution they may be considered as more beneficial participants than either zoologists or ecologists. He also discusses various topics of interest such as: the Assisi Initiative; joint activities and projects on religion and ecology; the Alliance of Religions and Conservation; Orissa, India, and the cult of Jagannath; sacred Taoist mountain ranges in China; and the Russian Orthodox Church as a “stable” organization for ecological improvement.


By means of linguistic comparison, Benveniste attempts to reconstruct the origins and development of the vocabulary of institutions (e.g., economy, kinship, social status, royalty, law and religion) in the Indo-European family of languages. Beginning with individual terms from specific Indo-European languages and then contextualizing and analyzing them in relation to others, he aims to “restore a unity dissolved by processes of evolution, bringing buried structures to light and harmonizing the divergencies of technical usages” (p. 11). Assuming no linguistic expertise, the book is useful for scholars outside the field of linguistics.


Combining the philosophy of art with an appreciation of nature, Berleant seeks an aesthetic that will foster intimacy and immediacy of the environment rather than reflect Kantian notions of disinterestedness and distance. Berleant advocates that environmental perception can be learned through aesthetic engagement and illustrates how an ecological insight is simultaneously aesthetic and amoral. She also examines ways to cultivate an urban aesthetic ecology.


In this critique of Western modernity, industrial capitalism, and modern science as the inevitable products of a progressive “disenchantment of the world” that began in the sixteenth century, Berman argues that addressing contemporary social, psychic, and ecological ills requires a fundamental change in worldview. Although he does not advocate a simple return to animism, Berman seeks “a modern and credible form of re-enchantment” to replace the dominant technocratic worldview.


Placing the overall field of religion and ecology in a context that by necessity includes Western, indigenous, and Asian worldviews, Thomas Berry's *The Sacred Universe* articulates a vision that includes the pan-Asian image of the relationship between microphase and macrophase as essential for the development of a feeling of sensitivity to the earth. Berry identifies this with key terms in Sanskrit and Chinese: *Brahman, maya, nirvana, karma, dharma, li, tao, t'ien, jen*. The inspiring
and compelling book includes essays that Berry published between 1972 and 2001, and it is introduced with a foreword by Mary Evelyn Tucker. Some of the topics covered include modern alienation, the role of traditional religions in global civilization, Earth-based spirituality, the Gaia hypothesis, cosmology, ecology, and the place of divinity and wonder in the universe.


Bridging cultural studies and literary theory, Bhabha draws on a broad array of literature from around the globe and on theoretical debates about identity, community, nationality, postcolonialism, and postmodernity to argue that identity is constituted and negotiated in interstitial “domains of difference.” Depicting the liminal space in which identity is constructed as a creative opening for resistance and change, Bhabha suggests that the postmodern condition is to “dwell ‘in the beyond’” and “to be part of a visionary time” (p. 7). Understanding signification to be one of the primary means by which human beings seek to transform conditions and history, he argues that art and literature translate modernity by renewing the past in order to interrupt the performance of the present.


Hoping to contribute to the “ethnoscience of droughts,” Bharara examines selected villages in Rajasthan, where drought is a recurrent, “pathological condition.” Based on his own fieldwork conducted in 1977, this exploration consists of participant observation, interviews, and information gathered on oral traditions, beliefs, and values. This article contains empirical data in chart format as well as selections of Rajasthani drought lore and the author’s own observations and interpretations. Bharara proposes that Rajasthani drought lore be taken seriously as an alternative and supplementary form of knowledge alongside science and technology.


Using charts and tables, this short examination of street cleaning methods and solid waste management in several Indian cities discusses issues of organization, cost, methods of refuse collection, transfer, and public health. The authors conclude by briefly proposing a strategy for improvement that emphasizes environmental and health education, community involvement, improved equipment, methods of collection, transportation, sanitation, and long-term planning.

This book seeks to present India’s diverse culture and history as a unified totality in the form of a “Hindu civilization” or a common and identifiable “Hindu way of life.” Biardeau argues that the term “Hinduism” refers to select readings of the Vedas and their structural organization that support, adapt, and maintain the orthodox Brahmanism that lies at the heart of Hindu civilization. Concluding with a discussion of the encounter between India and the West, she wonders about the future potential of Hindu civilization to resist, adapt, or respond to the pressures of modernity and consumerism.


This is a short essay of Mahatma Gandhi’s contributions to environmental thought. It concludes with a list of Gandhi’s major writings and a list of further readings.


In this essay, Bilimoria examines the environmental ethics of Indian religious traditions by looking to Vedic hymns, the controversial ecological scholarship involved with Advaita Vedanta, traditions of dharma and karma, Jain and Buddhist sramanic traditions, and the contributions of Mohandas Gandhi to Indian environmentalism.


Focusing on scavengers in modern Third World cities and highlighting their role in systems of production and reproduction, Blincow argues that understanding scavenging requires a cross-cultural, historical approach. Using case studies in Japan, England, and France to consider scavenging in historical and theoretical terms, he contributes to discussions about scavenging and class in urban Third World contexts.


Stating that their intention is not to defend the World Bank, Blinkhorn and Smith provide an account of the Narmada project, including the evolution of Gujarat’s resettlement and rehabilitation policy, the role of the World Bank, and an analysis of the Bank’s experience. Conceding that there are situations in which the World Bank could improve, the authors make it clear that the institution is a lender, not the mode of implementation, meaning that greater ownership must be taken by borrowing countries and their own implementation agencies.

This book [*Ecological Crisis, Crisis of Values? Challenges for Anthropology and Spirituality*] is a French anthology that includes many articles on world religions and ecology, both in response to Lynn White, Jr.'s seminal article, and dealing with the broader issues surrounding the discourse of sustainability. The Parisian anthropologist Jean-Claude Galey contributes a compelling chapter on the Tulu of South India; Heather Eaton describes possible Christian feminist contributions, Chapple writes on Jaina nonviolence and ecology. The volume also indicates the resurgence of interest in traditional Christianity in the French speaking world.


Highlighting the growth of poverty, increases in economic and gender inequalities, and degradation of the environment in postcolonial societies as evidence to support a feminist critique of science and development as well as proposals for a new epistemology, the contributors to this volume offer a variety of feminist theoretical perspectives. With input from academics, development institutions, and citizen’s movements, specific topics include multiple subjectivities as opposed to scientific objectivity, deep ecology, social ecology and ecofeminism, potential pitfalls for women identifying themselves with nature, and the connection between science, power, and domination. The strength of this volume is its focus on women as environmental managers rather than victims.


Breman provides a close study of the legal and social dynamics of a labor force that has left the agrarian sector in order to seek employment in towns and cities. Consisting of peasants, agricultural laborers, etc., this urban workforce is now comprised of extremely low paid, temporary workers that have no laws to govern their social and political interests. Specific topics discussed by Breman include the interrelationship of town and country, the labor hierarchy and elite, and the growth of the informal sector into a substantial category of workers.


Brooks, Charles R. *The Hare Krishnas in India*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989. In this study of the interactions between Indian and foreign Krishna devotees in the pilgrimage town of Vrindaban in Uttar Pradesh, Brooks uses the sociological approach of “symbolic interactionism” to describe how encounters between residents, pilgrims, Indians, and foreigners shape symbols and determine meanings over time. He discusses the setting and symbolic locus of Vrindaban, its transformation from a forest retreat into a town, and the incorporation of the International Society for Krishna.

--------. “A Unique Conjuncture: The Incorporation of ISKON in Vrindaban.” In *Krishna*

Based on anthropological fieldwork conducted between 1981–1982, Brooks considers the relationship between American and Indian Krishna devotees in the pilgrimage center of Vrindaban. He explains how the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has attained a significant and permanent place in Vrindaban since the 1970s and concludes that for both Indian and foreign devotees, Vrindaban is simultaneously both a terrestrial and a celestial location. He reports that the majority of residents “see the physical surroundings, plants, animals, and people as part of the Holy Dharma” (p. 168) and describes the efforts of a local organization to return Vrindaban to its “original state” as a wild forest.


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.


Seeking an alternative approach to traditional ethnological studies of menstruation that tend to be universalizing, ethnocentric, and reductionistic in their focus on taboo, pollution, and Western science, this volume aims to give a sense of the diversity of cultural and symbolic meanings of menstruation through specific ethnographic case studies. The essays collectively point out the culturally constructed nature of menstrual taboos, rules, conceptions, and meanings not only of menstruation, but of Western anthropology and biology as well.


In this essay, Burgat elucidates the ethical imperative of non-violence toward all animals that Gandhi derives from the Hindu practice of protecting cows. The essay elaborates how Gandhi’s work with animal husbandry was committed to nationally reorganizing the exploitative practices involved with breeding farm animals, attempting to demonstrate that a non-violent attitude toward animals can be economically feasible and can conform to universal ethical principles that are found in Hinduism and other religions.

The essays in this volume include French and English essays. The contributions come from an international symposium at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) in June 1998. These essays represent the perception of the elements as a framework for the history of religions, with particular attention to the perception of the elements in Hindu traditions. Each of the elements is discussed by a specialist in a different academic field, thus bringing out a variety of approaches relevant to the study of religion. Ether ('akasa') was assigned to philosophy (Wilhelm Halbfass), wind to the history of religion (Bettina Baeumer), fire to classical philology (Peter Schreiner), water to a specialist on Indian medicine (Arion Rosu) and earth to anthropology (Gabriella Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi, specializing on Tamil literature).


Buttel contends that institutional “environmentalization” or “greening” should be understood in the context of the larger social, political, and economic changes taking place in the last decades of the twentieth century. Focusing on Western agricultural sustainability, sustainable development in the Third World, and “the environmental symbolization of rural spaces,” he argues that greening may have ambiguous consequences for rural societies and underscores the necessity of both social and environmental justice.


In this informative overview, Buttel argues that the sub-discipline of environmental sociology has strayed from its initial goal of fundamentally reorienting the field of sociology, which is characterized by specialization, fragmentation, and dualism. Claiming that environmental sociology has become routinized and conformist since its emergence in the 1970s, he suggests that it might benefit from engaging with other sub-disciplines, particularly the sociology of development.


Buttel and Taylor urge environmental sociologists to both move beyond analyses of individual nation-states and to take a more critical approach to global constructions of environmental problems. Contending that global environmental change functions simultaneously as “scientific concept and social ideology,” they conclude by offering specific recommendations about how to expand the scope of environmental sociology and how to articulate an explicit environmental sociology of science.


Callicott presents a systematic discussion of Indigenous and traditional environmental ethics and suggests that there are similarities between recent postmodern trends and traditional, ecocentric worldviews. Drawing on the work of Taoist scholars, Callicott outlines how deep
ecological and contemporary feminist thought on “appropriate technology” and “sustainable development” share Taoist concepts of harmony, aesthetic order, process-orientation, and the ideal of *wu-wei* (non-action).


Stating that the field of “environmental ethics” does not belong to the more recent philosophical category of applied ethics nor does it fit neatly into the two other classical categories of natural and moral philosophy, Callicott describes environmental philosophy as holding a unique place in the discipline of philosophy. Through the presentation of five different worldviews (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Buddhist, Indian, and Ecological), Callicott argues that the emphasis of environmental ethics functions as a criticism and reformulation of Western moral and metaphysical presuppositions. Thus, environmental ethics is not a derivative of these presuppositions and is not meant to address the environmental crisis on a superficial level.


In the form of a three-way dialogue between two Christian monks and a scientist, this book considers the parallels between recent trends or “paradigm shifts” in science and theology. In both form and content, it emphasizes the importance of engaging in dialogue across differences. Beginning with a general discussion about the relationship between science and theology, the participants ultimately draw out five parallels between new paradigmatic thinking in each of these disciplines. The book concludes by considering the social implications of new paradigm thinking in science and theology, and by emphasizing responsibility, justice, sustainability, dialogue, and collaboration among the disciplinary participants.


A compilation of nine essays from the Conference on Religion in South India (1980). The essays respond to Dumont’s work in which he collapsed the categories of auspiciousness and purity. In order to restore these categories to their original distinguished position, Carman presents views of purity, ascetism, auspiciousness, etc., found in the Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions.


This book examines the figure and role of the Hindu *guru* and the *guru-sisya* (teacher-student) relationship in the classical tradition of Advaita Vedanta. Contextualizing Sankara’s writings with a historical review of Indian education and the Upanishads, Cenkner first addresses the ideal of the *guru* and the *guru-sisya* relationship as expressed in philosophical texts and law books from the eighth century. He then compares five twentieth-century *Sankaracaryas*
([gurus] within this tradition) with Sankara’s ideal of a guru.


Pulling from such religious texts as the Rig Veda, Atharva Veda, and Mahabharata, Chaitanya depicts Vedic views of nature and the cosmos within discussions of myth as ecological reality and the poetry of redemption.


Surveying the Hindu tradition in order to present “the Hindu view of population control,” Chandrasekhar writes that the concept of birth control dates back to the Upanisads, although scientific and reliable methods emerged only in the twentieth century. Finding evidence to support both sides of the contemporary debate about population control, the author discusses the Hindu view of marriage, the cultural desire for sons, the ideal of abstinence, scriptural injunctions and customs governing reproduction, and conflicting views on abortion. After considering different perspectives on the sanctity of life, Chandrasekhar explains why contraception and abortion are legitimate in the Hindu view.


Chapple shows a distinctly South Asian environmental rhetoric consisting of rural and working-class movements as well as grassroots urban activism. He describes tribal, Post-Gandhian, and renouncer models of environmentalism in addition to outlining specifically Buddhist, Jaina, and Yogic inspired environmentalism. Utilizing a systems approach, and stressing the need for a modern program of education in India, Chapple seeks to maintain caution against the potential negative influences of modernization on traditional Indian culture and civilization.
In this short article, Chapple highlights some of the fundamental elements shared by various Indian religious traditions regarding consciousness, embodiment, and spiritual practice. Drawing upon diverse sources ranging from ancient scriptural materials to contemporary Indian activist movements, he argues that India’s spiritual traditions can serve as a resource for contemporary environmentalism.

This essay, republished in Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology (pp. 113-119), discusses Indian attitudes toward nature, focusing primarily on the Jain ethic of respect for life and the corresponding simple lifestyle that minimizes consumption and thus curbs environmental degradation. Examples of this nonviolent ethic as it is manifest in India include the Anuvrat Movement, the Centre for Science and Environment, the Centre for Environmental Education, the Chipko movement, and the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

Chapple provides an insightful history of the concept of nonviolence in the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions. He also presents them as potential resources for addressing contemporary animal rights and environmental protection issues.

This collection of essays presents a scholarly approach to assessing the relationship between Yoga and ecology. It opens with essays on the Vedic heritage of honoring the earth, particularly as found in the *Atharva Veda*. Ian Whicher and Beverley Foulks examine "earth-friendly" aspects of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra*. Knut Jacobsen documents the influence of the Bhagavad Gita on Arne Naess’s theory of Ecosophy. Jeffrey Lidke examines the world-affirming aspects of Tantra through an ecological prism. Laura Cornell advances eight models for Yogic environmentalism through a reinterpretation of knowledge (*jnana*), devotion (*bhakti*), the forest (*aranya*), the body (*hatha*), the mind (*manas/raja*), action (*karma*), community (*sangha*), and integration (*tantra*).


With contributors such as Dorion Sagan, Lynn Margulis, Patricia C. Wright, J. Baird Callicott, Daniel B. Botkin, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Mary Evelyn Tucker, this volume explores topics of ecological cosmology, micro- and macroscopic views of life, patterns of human migration, urbanization, Christian and Far Eastern paradigms, primal religious traditions, and radical American environmentalism. The first section explores notions of the Earth as a complex living system, a paradigm intended to provide for a more informed and life-sensitive discipline of science and technology. The second section examines the relationship of humanity and nature through religion and aesthetics while also addressing romanticist and activist tendencies in the history of American environmentalism.


This is a collection of essays on the ecological implications of the philosophy and history of Hinduism. This book was published by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology. It contains supplemental bibliographies appended to the essays.


Beginning with a discussion on the ambiguity of the word “naturalism,” this essay goes on to highlight the different views of naturalism as articulated in the Vedas and Upanisads. It then traces the development of these views within Vedic (stika) schools such as śāmkhya, Vaisēśika, and Vedānta, and within non-Vedic or anti-Vedic (nastika) schools such as Buddhism. The essay concludes with the similarities between these Indian perspectives on naturalism.


In their joint struggle to reduce the high pollution rates of the Ganges, Veer Bhahra Mishra, Hindu priest and professor of hydraulic engineering, and the American-based Friends of the Ganges Fund hope to turn the greatest obstacle to their efforts into their greatest asset: belief in the river’s sacred purity. Although devout Hindus have resisted efforts to curb pollution based
on their belief that its waters are purifying, their devotion to the Ganges represents its greatest hope, for they also consider polluting the sacred river to be sacrilegious.


Clarke draws on the hermeneutical philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer in order to understand relationships that exist between Western and Oriental intellectual traditions. He gives a historical account of their interactions and critically reflects, rethinks, and reconceptualizes their relationship with respect to contemporary theoretical debates. He addresses Edward Said’s notion of orientalism, knowledge, and power as well as a variety of other issues such as relativism, interpreting and/or projecting across boundaries, racism, fascism, irrationalism, quietism, modernity, postmodernity, and postcolonialism.


Calling upon Christians to help build a more just and sustainable society, Cobb addresses the role of both individuals and the Church in pursuing social justice and emphasizes the importance of envisioning a better future. Advocating “realistic hope” as an alternative response to both despair and complacency, he discusses the economic, political, and theological changes that are required for dealing with the current ecological crisis and for attaining the vision of a more sustainable future.


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.


Submitted in working toward a PhD in Humanities at the California Institute of Integral Studies, this dissertation presents research into the ecological significance of yoga, particularly in terms of what the author calls Green Yoga. Through collaborative and organic modes of inquiry, Cornell shows how Green Yoga can be integrated into yoga practice, into yoga teaching, and into communities of yoga practitioners. Cornell is the founder of the Green Yoga Association.


This short article discusses the contributions of yoga to environmental studies. The main
sections include the Green Yoga Values Statement, the Green Yoga studios pilot program, and the first International Green Yoga conference held in 2005.


A study of the conception of Vrndavana in primary and secondary literature, this book considers the historical, mythological, and symbolic dimensions of this major pilgrimage center and its role in the development of modern Vaisnava Hinduism. Focusing on concepts such as *avatara* (incarnation of a Hindu deity) and *lila* (play), Corcoran explains that Vrndavana is understood to be “an aspect of the divinity itself,” a holy place where devotees can participate in the divine play of Krsna.


Seeking to present an overview of Balinese life and culture, Covarrubias relates information he gathered in Bali during a visit in the early 1930s. This largely sympathetic portrait addresses the island and its residents, their economy, religion, rituals, ceremonies, arts, kinship structures, and the impacts colonialism and missionary activities have had on the island. Depicting Balinese religion as an earth-based mixture of Hinduism and animism, Covarrubias suggests that Balinese culture is based on traditional rules and religious beliefs that seek to harmonize human life with the forces of nature.


Here Coward examines various Hindu views of nature and the environment by looking to Hindu scriptures (depicting the story in the Rgveda about the earth as the body of the sacrificed Purusa) and Hindu philosophy (elaborating Karma Theory). He then turns to a section on Hindu spirituality in action, wherein he elucidates the ecological contributions of Indian women. He concludes by contrasting Hindu views on the environment with those of Western ecotheology, focusing on the example of Project Tiger (a park network of tiger reserves in India that displaced many tribal villages in its creation).


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.”
Scientists, social scientists, and humanists from various countries around the Pacific Ocean discuss the tensions between economic development and environmental conservation, and between traditional and modern approaches to the environment in this region. Addressing scientific, economic, moral, and religious issues pertaining to the environment, individual essays focus on particular issues and themes in specific locations on the Pacific Rim. Case studies are drawn from British Columbia, Russia, the Columbia River Basin in the United States, and China’s Pearl River Delta region.

Coward utilizes Tillich’s “correlational method” in order to examine karma in the Jaina, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. His analysis illustrates that there is a lack of separation between humans and other forms of being, thereby affirming a radical form of continuity. As karma theory and nonviolence are the most powerful forces moving Jains toward liberation, Coward emphasizes that the continuation of being offers a different sense of individual and cosmos. He concludes by warning that the Western philosophy of deep ecology should not be transported to South Asia as they have their own “ethic.”

Aiming to remedy a perceived lack of attention to religion in debates about consumption and population, the editor of this collection of essays argues that the world’s religions serve as powerful forces in guiding human behavior and that their cooperation in successfully addressing global problems is essential. After providing a “baseline” of current social and environmental conditions on a global scale, contributors offer perspectives from various religious (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) and cultural (e.g., Chinese, and Aboriginal) traditions. Various secular topics, such as North-South relations, the market, international law, family planning, the status of women, poverty, and consumption are also discussed. The volume concludes with a delineation of specific policy proposals.

Crawford presents an overview of the religious and philosophical structure of Hinduism upon which its ethics (based first on dharma [duty] and ultimately on ahimsa [nonviolence, non-harming]) are built. Dividing his analysis into three sections, he discusses philosophical assumptions, principles for ethical decision-making, and the application of ethical principles to the issues of population, abortion, and the environment. Representing Hinduism as being compatible with ecological and evolutionary science, he contends that there are three basic values in Hindu ethics that promote a healthy relationship between humans and the
environment: interconnectedness, the value of restraint, and human continuity with the rest of the natural world.


Defining Hindu ethics as a dynamic process involving both continuity and change, Cromwell uses primary sources to argue for the existence of a single Hindu ethical tradition. He traces the evolution of Hindu ethics between the Vedic Period, the Sutra and Epic Period, and the Darsana Period, considering each on social, personal, and transcendental levels. Concluding with a brief application of Hindu ethics to environmental issues, he suggests that Hindu philosophy is able to provide a basis for an environmental ethic because of its unique ecological consciousness.


Taking an anthropological approach to development and environment studies, this collection of essays uses case studies from Asia and Africa to examine the dynamics between nature and culture. Focusing especially on food and issues relating to land and water use, the contributors explore how cultural images, myths, symbols, and worldviews influence how humans use and manage natural resources. Seeking to advance sustainable development, this volume emphasizes local knowledge and attends to issues of power and distribution.


The essays within this book study the physical embodiments of Hindu divinities, looking to such topics as bhakti (devotion), rituals of puja (worship), and spirit possession to explore religious images.


Unlike previous works on Vedic cosmology, which discuss the model of the universe without describing its connection to a theory of nature, this book discusses the theory before it describes the model. A deep understanding of the theory is essential if the model is to be understood, because there are numerous differences between modern and Vedic cosmology, such as a geocentric vs. a heliocentric solar system, round vs. flat descriptions of the planets, higher and lower planetary systems in a hierarchical space, dynamic vs. stationary models of the Earth, and linear vs. cyclic descriptions of time. This book discusses the reasons in science for adopting a different theory of space and time, and how the problems of meaning, mind, and consciousness entail a different view.

A sympathetic and comprehensive study of the sacred Ganges, this book traces the history of the relationship between the river and human culture from the first Aryan settlers to the contemporary period. Darian discusses the geographical and mythic source and setting of the river, its settlers and devotees, and its economic, social, and ecological functions and considers the role and depiction of the Ganges in Indian art and religion. He concludes with a chapter on Western images of the Ganga.


Describing the origins, evolution, and secularization of Alpana, a ritual form of art traditionally practiced by women and girls in Bengal, Das Gupta argues that the traditional form, which is created by hand from rice flour, is worth preserving. The book aims to raise awareness of traditional Alpana practice and presents a program for the revival of the art which would synthesize the old and new forms.


In this essay on the origins and development of mother worship in India, Das Gupta argues that the long history of Goddess worship has played a formative role in Indian religion and culture. After discussing the various goddesses of the *Vedas*, who eventually merged into the single mother goddess of the Puranic Age, she considers the philosophy of Shakti. Lastly, she addresses devotees of the Mother such as Ramprasad, Shri Ramakrishna, and Shri Aurobindo, and concludes by considering the positive implications of the legacy of mother worship for Indian women and for Indian culture in general.


Das focuses on two texts, the *Dharmaranya Purana* and the *Grihya Sutra of Gobhila*, and demonstrates the importance of literary texts in examining Hindu social life. Familiar categories such as Brahman, king, and *sanyasi* are discussed in addition to how the combination of descent, locality, and cult determine one’s *jati*. Outlining a thorough ideological and methodological starting point, Das discusses the sacred and profane in Hindu terms illustrating the differences from Durkheimian categories and providing suggestions for structuralist perspectives.


Weaving together elements of Hindu epic literature, documented and undocumented material culture, local knowledge, anthropological history, pilgrimage, and the physical, religious, and figural landscape, Deegan illustrates that cultural wealth is threatened by rapid social, economic, and demographic change. He demonstrates the centrality of the Narmada river in its roles as deity, giver of darshan, a temple, a tirtha (sacred crossing), etc., and concludes that the future of the valley is also intertwined with technology, economics, and social reform.


Motivated by concern about the loss of biological and cultural diversity in the world’s rain forests, contributors from various professional and academic backgrounds discuss various ways in which people use, manage, and impact the rain forest environment. Individual essays present case studies from South and Central America, Africa, and Asia, and address an array of issues, including tropical rain forest ecology, depictions of rain forests in Western art and literature, human interactions with the rain forest in different regions and historical periods, Indigenous struggles for justice, conservation strategies, and the implications of deforestation, business ventures, and development schemes.


In this two-volume work, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the cultural context in which concepts of humanity and nature were formed in Hindu traditions. The philosophy of Hinduism is presented in a way that is accessible to beginners while still containing textual analyses that are relevant to scholars and researchers who are more familiar with Hinduism. Contributing to the search for new “ecological” approaches to ethics, the author connects the traditional perspectives of Hinduism with contemporary environmental issues.


Locating the ecological crisis in Western-based technology and its metaphysical underpinnings, Deutsch turns to Indian Vedanta to find both a radical discontinuity between reality and nature and, in terms of karman, a strong continuity between humanity and nature that is appropriate for an environmental ethic. Deutsch also draws on Kantian aesthetics as well as Karl Potter’s theory of karman developed from the karma yoga of the Gita, in order to further illustrate his point that discipline in attitude and understanding may provide an alternative to the West’s view of nature as fact and as empirically rational.


Dharmadhikary critiques the use of the United States, with its consumptive, capital-intensive, and socially abusive paradigm, as a role model for India. He provides a cost-benefit analysis that incorporates the financial, social, and environmental costs of the project. Focusing on hydropower, not irrigation, Dharmadhikary calls the project’s financial feasibility into question and offers alternatives such as wind power, conservation, efficiency improvements, gas-based power generation, and baggage or biomass-based cogeneration. Due to India’s lack of capital, resources, and infrastructure, he asserts the use of new paradigms that address environmental problems.


Combining insights from both anthropological and economic perspectives, Douglas and Isherwood offer a unique analysis of “consumption as a series of rituals,” and break with commonly held assumptions regarding individualism by looking at community dynamics. Drawing on Keynes and Weber, the authors understand community in more than “sentimental” terms and evaluate the psychology, sociology, and cognitive processes that may underlie consumption patterns, desires, obligations, etc.


Using household surveys, participant observation, and document analysis, Dove argues that there is a meaningful link between the ancient Sanskrit term jangala (savanna) and the contemporary Urdu word jangal (forest). Tracing this transition over time, he suggests that the shift in meaning reflects changes in both the physical environment and cultural values and perceptions. Emphasizing the dialectical relationship between nature and culture, he contends that the transition from jangala to jangal exemplifies this co-evolutionary process.


Georgina Drew offers a detailed ethnographic engagement with the social movements contesting hydroelectric development on the Ganga. The book examines the complexity of the cultural politics that, on the one hand, succeeded in influencing an unprecedented reversal of government plans for three contested hydroelectric projects, and how, on the other hand, this decision sparked ripples of discontent after being paired with the declaration of a conservation zone where the projects were situated. Drew offers a nuanced understanding of the struggles that communities enact to assert their ways of knowing and caring for resources that serves as an example for others.
critically engaging with the growing global advocacy of the “green economy” model for environmental stewardship.


This book explores the potential of the Bhagavad Gita to educate humanity about the proper way to live within the environment. Commentary on many verses within the Gita is given with a view to raising environmental consciousness. Devanagari script of the verses is employed throughout, with English translations.


This is a short essay of Vandana Shiva’s contributions to environmental thought. It concludes with a list of Shiva’s major writings and a list of further readings.


Dumont and Pocock review Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas’ book, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*, in which Srinivas focuses on the Coorg’s conceptualization of purity and impurity, and points to the ambivalence and inconsistencies in their religious beliefs and practices. After demonstrating the co-existence of both Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic beliefs and distinguishing the cults of different Coorg social groups, Srinivas concludes that the Coorgs do participate in Hinduism by their recognition and practice of purity and impurity. By calling attention to the behavioral bias of Radcliffe-Brown to whom Srinivas often turns in his analysis, Dumont and Pocock conclude that the book is strictly sociological.


This essay examines some ways in which the cultural and spiritual perspectives of Hinduism relate to contemporary environmental problems. In particular, Dwivedi examines the Hindu concept of divinity as present in creation and related exhortations for Hindus to treat the natural world with respect. Dwivedi also investigates the environmental implications of Hindu concepts of dharma and karma as well as the Hindu concept of an extended family held together by Mother Earth. The essay provides some observations and interpretative explorations of these concepts as they relate to the ecological challenges currently facing Hindus and all of India.


Focusing on India as a prime example of the connections between development and the
environment, Dwivedi discusses various environmental issues and their social, economic, political, legal, religious, and international implications. Addressing in turn environmental management, international environmental issues, and the relationship between culture, religion, and ecology, Dwivedi argues for the need to revive an “ecological consciousness” and presents a global model for sustainable development.


Arguing that the world’s religions have important roles to play in protecting the environment, Dwivedi focuses on Hindu attitudes toward nature, comparing traditional ecologically friendly views with destructive approaches stemming from Muslim and British cultural domination. Emphasizing the conservationist potential of Hinduism, he appeals to the concept of “forest satyagraha” or a wider “satyagraha for the environment” as a viable course for resisting globalization and consumerism and for promoting social and ecological justice worldwide.


This collection of essays by Canadian and Indian authors focuses on the relationship of the environment with the following religions: Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.


The authors show how women's voices within the Christian and Hindu traditions contain resources for dealing with ecological issues. Drawing on Hinduism's teachings about Mother Earth and newly crafted eco-feminist theories in Christianity, Dwivedi and Reid focus on two movements. First, the Chipko movement, organized by local Indian women, prevented the commercial harvesting of lumber in the Uttarakhand province. The second movement comes from Christian women's religious orders in North America, which have converted many of their properties into organic gardens and wildlife sanctuaries.


Arguing that ancient Hindu religion and culture “enshrined a respect for nature” and developed an ecological code of conduct aimed at preserving and protecting the environment, Dwivedi and Tiwari compile evidence for this characterization by reviewing various doctrinal and scriptural sources. Explaining that Hinduism has not been able to avert ecologically destructive trends because of external, foreign influences (e.g., Muslim and British) that suppressed and
replaced ancient Hinduism, the authors suggest that India should “rekindle the ancient respect for nature” exemplified by the Hindu tradition.


Motivated by the conviction that the world’s religions have an important role to play in addressing the global environmental crisis, Dwivedi and Tiwari set out to identify “the Hindu concept of ecology.” After discussing various aspects of Hinduism in relation to the environment, they conclude that Hinduism has long cultivated a deep respect for nature and a vision of ecological harmony through its scriptures and customs. The “partnership-cum-stewardship ethic” Hinduism espouses suggests that India has an important role to play in the global environmental.


Eck reviews references to the city of Varanasi in Sanskrit *mahatmya* literature, a genre that describes and praises holy places, times, or activities. Noting the variety of sources for the study of the city, Eck contends that “together they present one with thousands of lines of mythical, ritual, geographical, theological, hymnic, and historical materials” (p. 19). She hopes that the study of Varanasi, which is considered to be a prime example of a *tirtha* (crossing place), may shed light on the phenomena of *tirthas* more broadly.


This comprehensive study of the sacred city of Banaras is based on Eck’s experiences and on her analysis of Sanskrit texts, including praise literature, myths, ritual literature, and geographical descriptions of the city. According to Eck, describing the city from various perspectives (e.g., historical, geographic, artistic, religious, relational) provides a sense of its multivalency. Ecological themes emerge in Eck’s discussion of the mythical origins of Banaras as a forest paradise, the tradition of forest hermitages around the city, the Ganges “archetype of sacred waters,” and the belief that all creatures, not only humans, attain liberation in Banaras.


Eck describes the Ganga in her river and goddess incarnations while demonstrating how these dual forms act inseparably in the spiritual lives of her worshippers. She discusses how
the Ganga is known in the Vedas as well as through Vaisnava and Saiva myth and ritual. Commenting also on the persistence of natural geographical symbols in India, Eck also illustrates the Hindu conception of the Ganga in her explanation of the *avatarana*, or “descent” to the Earth.


In this study of one of the oldest and currently popular forms of Hindu piety, Eck examines the notion of *tirtha*, a “crossing place” or “ford” across rivers, social categories, life stages, and worlds. Interpreting *tirtha* as part of the “locative” or place-based strand of Hinduism, she traces the various meanings of the term in Indigenous piety, Vedic sacrificial and Upanishadic wisdom traditions, and in the sacred geography of India, in which “tirthas of the earth” include rivers, mountains, seashores, forests, cities, and sites that are considered sacred to diverse sects.


In this short article about Visheswar Saklani, a native of a Pujargaon village who began to plant trees with his brother when the construction of a road near their childhood village encroached upon the surrounding forest, Emett describes Saklani’s ensuing career as an avid planter and the visionary person responsible for motivating his tree-planting initiatives in India. Saklani’s efforts to counter deforestation have earned him both the “Friend of the Trees” Award (1987) as well as time in jail for planting on government property.


Considering the ancient roots of deforestation, Erdosy uses the study of pollens to determine changes in vegetation over time. After presenting the available evidence and discussing the impact of early settlement and cultivation practices on the environment, he argues that although massive and irreversible deforestation did not occur until the twentieth century, human alterations of the vegetation cover, including denudation, stem back to the early stages of cultivation in the third millennium BCE.


Erndl explores the nature of the Goddess and the experiences of her devotees by approaching the Goddess in her independent form rather than her role as consort. Drawing from interviews, participant observation, and her analysis of oral and written texts, Erndl uncovers two recurrent themes of *sakti* and *bhakti*, and explores their relationship to and release from this world. Erndl notes that the worship of female deities in Hinduism is not limited or necessarily connected to feminist agendas, and therefore poses some epistemological and hermeneutical questions
relevant to subjects such as divine possession, pilgrimage, worship, and supplication.


Eschmann focuses on a tribal ritual of renewal in order to observe the final stage of Hinduization (e.g., the process whereby tribal cult is completely substituted by the gradual addition of Hindu ritual). She describes what is involved in the ritual and who performs it, while emphasizing the need for strong community support regarding ritual practices.


Members of the Orissa Research Project contribute to this comprehensive study of the origin and development of the Jagannatha cult as well as tirthas (sacred places), religious and socio-economic networks, and the mutual relationship between religious and political developments in Eastern India from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries. Re-evaluating Srinivas’ concept of “Sanskritization” and Redfield’s notion of “the great and the little tradition,” authors in this volume use their research on the various regional traditions in order to illustrate that these depict neither the “unspoiled” Sanskrit tradition nor the pure village life.


This book deals with various places connected geographically and imaginatively by people living in western Indian in the state of Maharashtra. Feldhaus focuses on the connections between places that are associated with religious ideas, practices, and narratives, showing the interconnectedness between rivers, mountains, pilgrimages, deities, temples, and human beings.


Feldhaus demonstrates a fundamental congruence between oral and written Sanskrit and Marathi texts, as well as Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical rituals, festivals, and deities in Maharashtra. Deliberately not addressing common scholarly topics of religion such as world renunciation and asceticism, she focuses on a cluster of religious values such as wealth, beauty, long life, good health, food, love, and the birth of children. In terms of ecology, Feldhaus describes traditional conceptions and images of rivers in praise and ritual. Feldhaus’ last chapter focuses on sin and the washing away of sin (evil), although she clarifies that rivers, generally associated with women and goddesses (e.g., Sri, Lakshmi, Annapurna, Jaya), symbolize more than purity and pollution.

In this chapter, Feuerstein discusses the ecological crisis in relationship to yoga. He writes that humans can better understand their responsibility toward the natural world by looking to the ethical principles of yoga as articulated in the yamas and niyamas. He also presents eight guidelines for cultivating the practice of eco-yoga.


*Green Yoga* addresses the vital interrelationship between yogic practices of self-transformation and the preservation of our natural environment. Georg and Brenda Feuerstein give practical advice supported with traditional practices and textual resources in light of what the authors regard to be a new ethical imperative. Calling for Yoga practitioners to live by the principles of Yoga “off the mat,” that is, in relationships with the natural world, the authors discuss the environmental and social problems of contemporary civilization, and they show how Yoga can provide solutions to those problems by facilitating sustainable (or “green”) lifestyles.


In this short article, Fields elaborates on “Earth yoga.” Pulling from Christopher Chapple’s yogic environmentalism, James Lovelock’s Gaia hypothesis, and John Seed and Joanna Macy’s Council of All Beings, Fields discusses how the various practices involved with yoga constitute a spiritual response with which humans can face the ecological devastation of the Earth.


This book investigates views of plants in Indian thought, addressing such topics as plant sentience, vegetarianism, ahimsa, and karma. It includes a survey of traditional literature from Vedic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, and cites numerous examples of religiously inspired environmental activism, as found in Auroville, the Ashram of Ammachi, the work on behalf of seed preservation by Vandana Shiva, and other contemporary examples. It also discusses the Thai Buddhist tradition of forest protection. Texts devoted to botany, medicine, law, art, literature, and religion, for example, depict human conversation with trees, humans marrying trees, and humans delineating their responsibilities for the well being of plants in the greatest detail.


This is a brief review of Jainism and Ecology, which was published in 2000 by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology.
First International Meeting of People Affected by Large Dams. Declaration of Curitiba, Brazil, 14 March 1997.


In this review of literature about nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Fisher critiques idealized depictions of NGOs as “disinterested apolitical participants in a field of otherwise implicated players” (p. 442) and argues that they should be seen as fluid processes of contestation, overlap, and change. Concerned that idealized characterizations obscure the differences between NGOs as well as their susceptibility to routinization and oligarchic rule, he calls for an ethnographic approach that focuses on individual organizations in specific contexts and for a more chastened and realistic assessment that recognizes both the problems and the potential of NGOs.


Fisher contributes this essay to a larger volume devoted to Sardar Sarovar Project in India and outlines the history of the tensions between the state and Indigenous people surrounding the project. He highlights how the vocabulary of social justice and sustainable development is used by each side for their own purposes. Fisher then provides an overview of the seventeen essays comprising this volume giving particular attention to the alliances and antagonisms of the project, involvement of the World Bank and NGOs, phases of opposition, cost benefit analyses, and the role of civil society in such projects.


Fisher problematizes key terms such as “sustainable development,” “tribal,” “Indigenous people,” and “local participation” that are used by multiple sides in the Narmada River project. With poignant questions, Fisher demonstrates how the terms connote debate more than consensus and raise various human rights issues. According to Fisher, these terms, with their anthropological histories and ambiguity, have measurable and observable consequences in the real world.


This volume includes seventeen essays collected from papers presented at the Working on Sustainable Development Conference held at Columbia University (1992). A prime candidate for a multidisciplinary investigation, the Sardar Sarovar Project provides a glimpse into complex questions about sustainable development, grassroots resistance, NGOs, social and environmental costs of development, Indigenous resistance, differing points of view, and conflicting values. The volume includes an overview of the project and the history of resistance
to it, outlines resettlement and rehabilitation programs associated with the project, and explains technical and environmental concerns and alternatives. It also includes an independent review on the project along with an evaluation of the politics involved in its creation.


Flinders offers a retrospective view of her path with Eknath Easwaran and her interactions with the texts of various mystics in light of the patriarchal world around her. She draws what she considers not so evident parallels between spirituality and feminism, and provides a very moving analysis of the spiritual maturation process. Recognizing that spirituality and feminism are both mutually necessary, she explores the lives of Catholic mystic Julian of Norwich and the primary female character of the Mahabharata, Draupadi, in order to analyze her experiences as a feminist and spiritual seeker.


This anthology explores current environmental and ecological issues amidst the various worldviews, cultures, and traditions that constitute the world’s major religions. Part one presents the global conceptual landscape with selections that focus on the spiritual and environmental crises associated with modernity. Part two distills all of the major world religions’ perspectives—Eastern, Western, and newly emerging—on contemporary ecological issues. Part three rounds out this collection with an exploration of other cross-cutting motifs in today’s enviro-cultural criticism, including radical environmentalism, ecofeminism, ecojustice, and the rising voice of the Global South.


This book argues that the standard arguments for and against the claim that certain Hindu texts and traditions attribute direct moral standing to animals and plants are unconvincing. It presents careful, extensive, and original interpretations of passages from the Manusmrtri (law), the Mahabharata (literature), and the Yogasutra (philosophy), and argues that these texts attribute direct moral standing to animals and plants for at least three reasons: they are sentient, they are alive, and they possess a range of other relevant attributes and abilities.


Documenting his pursuit of the 1987 monsoon from Kerala to Mumbai, Fraser presents an array of personal experiences, historical data, and geographical and meteorological facts about monsoons and Indian culture.


Here Frawley discusses the ecological implications of Yoga and Ayurveda, noting that the internal and external methods involved with yogic and ayurvedic practices provide a helpful alternative to the imbalances of our present civilization.


David Frawley, a popular writer and advocate of the Hindu view of life, suggests that the experiences of meditation and ritual can help people change the world and change themselves, thus reconnecting with the bare essentials needed for human flourishing. Describing various forms of sacred fire (cosmic, spiritual, internal, external, etc.) throughout the evolution of matter, life, and consciousness, this inspiring book begins with a Vedic vision but as developed by modern Yogis like Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi, who show how this vision can be embodied in our lives today. Frawley claims that humans need to develop a new relationship to sacred fire to address the challenges of our times.


Challenging what he calls “neo-Hindu ecology,” Freeman argues that there is little correlation between the concerns surrounding the institutionalization and maintenance of sacred groves as given by environmentalists and those as given by local people in Kerala. The author warns against idealizing traditional Indian society, while arguing for examining the specific cultural, political, and ecological details when researching sacred groves.


Using a series of case studies from Calcutta, Furedy proposes a typology of scavengers in order to shed light on the relationship between scavenging and the economic systems of urban centers in developing countries. She concludes by noting the respective benefits and health risks of scavenging for the economy, the environment, and the urban poor.


Führer-Haimendorf provides a comprehensive anthropological history of the Indian subcontinent and, after remarking on its cultural and ethnic heterogeneity, finds that assimilation is not particularly desirable. Categorizing the tribes by subsistence methods (e.g., gatherers and hunters, archaic farming societies, shifting cultivators, farmers of permanent
holdings, advanced farming societies, and trading/herding), he questions why populations who have survived successfully on their own now have to be protected or aided by the government. Führer-Haimendorf notes the how the externality of development has disrupted traditional lifestyles.


Führer-Haimendorf examines the social problems created by the growing influence of economically advanced and politically powerful groups on other societies which have thrived, until recently, by following their traditional lifestyles. After providing a general overview of various tribes, he describes, in detail, the relations between tribes and government, the fate of tribal land, tribes and forest policy, economic development, tribal education, processes of social change, transformation of beliefs and rituals, and relations with non-tribal populations. By using other case studies, he also touches on the issue of conversion.


Seriously questioning the dualism of human and nature, the contributors to this volume include both activist and academic voices illustrating, with concrete examples, a theoretical framework for women in environmentalism, animal liberation, and feminism. The culmination of an effort starting in 1989 at the annual convention of National Women’s Studies Association, this collection of essays includes topics such as: ecofeminism, green politics, animal rights, feminist theory, political realities, cross- cultural critiques, ecology, and Native American cultures.


Tracing the ethic of “ecological prudence” as it developed and deteriorated over the course of Indian history before and during colonialism as well as after independence, Gadgil writes that a renewed understanding of this traditional, religiously-rooted conservation ethic, in conjunction with modern, scientific analyses of the need for prudent resource use, must inform India’s environmental policies.


Through published materials, fieldwork, and discussions with academics, activists, and administrators, Gadgil and Guha examine environmental issues in the context of India and offer a constructive proposal based on their belief that care for the environment must be integrated into public policy. Dividing Indian society into three classes, omnivores, ecosystem people, and ecological refugees, they consider the differences between these classes in relation to the environment and contend that conflict over resources has generated “a vibrant environmental movement” in India that is diverse in terms of constituency,
perspectives, and strategies.

--------. *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Pointing out the distinctly different nature of the environmental debate in India from that in the West, Gadgil and Guha examine the change in human interactions with resources. Stating that production and use of nature for subsistence and profit is a firmly rooted concept in India and then asking themselves under what conditions one may expect human beings to exercise prudence in their use of natural resources, the authors provide a look at the technological infrastructure and belief systems which describe these human interactions including social conflicts between various groups of resource users and the impacts of changing patterns of resource use. Supported by an introduction to ecological history and a brief interpretation of how the cultural and ecological mosaic of Indian society formed, the authors also include the impacts of British colonialism.


Drawing on the disciplines of economics, sociology, and engineering, Gallagher argues that contrary to official statistics and policy makers, rickshaws play an important social, economic, and functional role in Bangladesh. Placing rickshaws in historical and geographical context, he discusses different kinds of rickshaws in Bangladesh and abroad, critiques official policies to restrict rickshaw use and licensing, and makes specific suggestions for improving traffic problems, the technology of rickshaws, and the conditions of rickshaw-pullers. The book concludes with a brief postscript on rickshaw art.


Ghosh begins with three important questions: What does environmental and ecological degradation mean? What are the costs? How do we prevent it? Using examples of air and water pollution, the changing the face of the Earth through the felling of trees, unplanned quarrying and mining, and large dams, he discusses the concept of ecological imbalance. Ghosh includes tables of land use in India, on soil erosion, village depopulation, forest area lost, and the sedimentation rates of selected reservoirs, and uses these as evidence for the need to make wiser decisions regarding independent project funding and the enforcement of environmental legislation.


Contrary to characterizations of the contemporary era as postmodern, Giddens argues that we are currently living in an advanced stage of modernity, “high modernity,” in which the
Institutions and consequences of modernity have been “radicalized” and “universalized” instead of transformed or surpassed. He highlights both positive and negative aspects of its “globalizing” and “future-oriented” nature and concludes that a truly postmodern order is possible in the future. Calling for a global response to the ecological consequences of modernity that are themselves global in scope, he espouses a model of “utopian realism” as a way to help develop realistic, “future-oriented projects.”


In this book, scholar of religion Ariel Glucklich recounts his experiences at Neot Smadar, an ecologically and spiritually-oriented intentional community that has been thriving in the arid Southern Israeli desert for a quarter century. Glucklich provides a detailed portrait of a dynamic farming community that runs on principles of spiritual contemplation and mindfulness, thereby creating a working environment that is highly ethical and nurturing.


In this essay, Gold draws upon folktales, songs, and rituals of a Hindu agricultural village in Rajasthan, India to explore the people’s interactions with their environment. The intersection of cosmology, ritual, and action is highlighted, as well as the intertwining of politics and poetics of nature. In addition, the relationship of emotions and morals with the production and consumption of food is considered.


Drawing on her extensive interviews with villagers, Gold describes their perceptions of a causal web of change comprised of landscape, weather, and *dharma* (morality). Illustrated by the villagers’ own deductions based on their observations of fewer trees and local climate change, Gold’s discussion also includes an analysis of the villagers’ ecological sensitivity demonstrated by their connections between the highly contagious game of *pap-lila* (sin) and punishment, dwindling human affection, and environmental destruction.


Attempting to demonstrate the relationship between landscape, memory, and social and environmental change in Sanwar, Rajasthan, Gold and Gujar present stories and memories of wild pigs told from different social locations. They suggest that memories of historical realities shape the present and the future, both socially and environmentally, and contend that environmental history is inextricably related to political, social, economic, and ideological history.


Gold presents a comprehensive account of her questions, crises, methodologies, and conclusions as an ethnographer within a field confronted by its historical complicity in perpetuating human inequalities. Retaining Indigenous categories and exegesis as well as utilizing a methodology that attempts to suggest the ineffable by means of the concrete, Gold provides an analysis of three pilgrimage patterns in addition to the motives and understanding of the pilgrims who perform them. She discusses the connection between moksha and pilgrimage, inner and outer wandering, and the meaning behind “the return.”


Motivated by the observation that the domains of deities in Rajasthan are notably lush and beautiful compared to the landscape surrounding them, Gold and Gujar explore the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine in order to understand “why and how” Rajasthani deities protect nature. After discussing divine territoriality and conservation in Hinduism, they present eight stories collected during fieldwork in which deities protect their domains from exploitation and harm. The authors conclude with a consideration of the implications these beliefs and stories may have for our contemporary environmental context.


Co-authored by a Western anthropologist and a native Rajasthani school-teacher, this article combines excerpts from interviews, songs, and stories with interpretation and background information that examines the real and imagined ways that children interact with their natural surroundings in a rapidly changing environment. The essay is organized into three parts: methods and sources; the historical, cultural, and natural setting of Rajasthan; and quotations from the children themselves. The authors conclude that views of both humans and landscapes are forged in childhood and that a notable continuity of knowledge exists despite drastic environmental and social change.


Gosling looks into the historical and contemporary roles of Hinduism and Buddhism (primarily Theravada) in dealing with ecological problems in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. The author bases his arguments on his personal fieldwork in these regions. The book is framed by the socio-political context of religious change as analyzed by Amartya Sen, emphasizing participative education, healthcare, and gender equality as necessary factors of social and environmental advancement. Gosling also criticizes Western environmentalism for giving priorities to issues such as ozone depletion while diverting attention from important social justice issues such as how the poor are affected by resource depletion.


Green Yoga Times is the newsletter of the Green Yoga Association. This issue features the following articles: “Opening to Nature through Yoga: An Interview with Shiva Rea,” “Water as Wellspring of Life,” “What is Green Yoga?”, “Yoga Ethics for the Earth: An Invitation to Dialogue,” “Creating an Eco-Friendly Yoga Studio: An Interview with David Lurey,” “Rethinking Yoga Mats: The Search for a Green Solution,” and “The Path of Ecology and Yoga.” Also included is the Green Yoga Association statement about values and goals, as well as information about the 2005 International Green Yoga Conference.


Grove examines the relationship between environmentalism and colonialism and argues that concern for the environment on a global scale emerged out of the experience of European colonialism in the tropics between 1600–1860. Influenced by non-European epistemologies of nature and the negative effects of capitalist colonialism, colonial physicians and scientists were able to anticipate contemporary ecological crises. Grove argues that the theories and stewardship models they generated in response formed the basis of modern, Western environmentalism.

Presenting the environmental history of an expansive and diverse territory, this volume examines colonial approaches to natural resource management in South and Southeast Asia, its effects, and Indigenous responses. Individual essays emphasize the history of interactions between forests, people, and the State as well as colonial forestry policies and discourses in India, Burma, and Malaysia. Aiming to draw attention to marginalized regions, cultures, and ecologies and to further recent trends in history and the natural sciences, contributors focus on “very local, small-scale histories of single communities and their experiences of ecological pressures and change over time, as part of a broader social agenda aimed at local empowerment and environmental awareness” (p. 17).


In this article, Gruzalski addresses Vinay Lal’s skepticism about Gandhi’s role as an environmentalist, making clear a number of Gandhian contributions to environmental theories and practices. The author discusses Gandhi’s strong environmental position promoting biocentrism, non-violence, simple living, appropriate technologies, and small self-reliant rural communities.


Gruzalski analyzes the Chipko movement, a grassroots cooperative, as having been inspired by Gandhi’s social, moral, and economic guidance with roots in his statement, “an inner infection warrants an inner remedy.” Immediately identified as a women’s movement, Chipko was initiated in order to respond to large financial interests who were clearcutting and replanting hydrologically-sound mixed forests with more economically lucrative trees. In Gruzalski’s opinion, Chipko is a model for all the world as well as a movement symbolic of the liberation of villages and women from inner colonization.


This book presents a comparative environmental history of India and the United States, which are described in terms of “agrarianism” and “wilderness thinking” respectively. In an accessible style, Guha makes a convincing case for social ecology as the best alternative to scientific industrialism, a return to hunter-gatherer origins, or subsistence farming. As in earlier critiques, he decries the notion that North American deep ecology bears relevance for India, which must meet the needs of a huge population. Guha includes chapters on the historical, subaltern, and democratic visions of social ecology in the work of Lewis Mumford, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, and Madhav Gadgil respectively.
In this brief text, Guha attempts to contextualize the American environmental movement by documenting the history of environmentalism on a global scale. He highlights the similarities and differences of various strains of environmentalism, focusing on the United States and India, but also addressing the former Soviet Union, China, Africa, and Brazil. Guha explains how the emergence of environmental concern in different locations follows a similar pattern and he identifies three “generic” varieties of environmentalism that have developed and spread over time. The volume also includes a thorough bibliographic essay.

Describing himself as a “sympathetic outsider,” Guha, utilizing a Third World perspective, defines and critiques what he refers to as the deep ecology trend in American environmentalism. Identifying what he considers to be its four central “tenets,” he associates deep ecology with the wilderness preservation movement and critiques it as a correlate of consumer society. He concludes that the German Green and Indian environmentalist movements are more effective in addressing the socio-economic and political underpinnings of contemporary, global ills.

Challenging the claim that American environmental ideals are universal, Guha analyzes two major phases in the American movement namely, Progressive Conservation and Wilderness Thinking. Lamenting the neglect of overconsumption in American environmentalist agendas, Guha points to three other neglected areas: equity, sustainability, and peace. Making connections between wilderness, masculinity, and militarism, he describes the movement as conservative imperialism while simultaneously criticizing its co-optive nature borrowed from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Finally, he critically examines the American claim that it is on the cutting edge, serving as a global environmental leader and cites the overwhelmingly adverse effect American policies have had on Third World countries as evidence of its failure in these areas. Guha also provides some remarks regarding how early American conservationists took lessons from the British forestry and irrigation projects in India. Wilderness preservation is seen as cultural nationalism; therefore a monumentalism rather than environmentalism lay behind the national park idea. Guha argues that wilderness nationalism has since become wilderness internationalism.

Exploring the increasingly pressing problems related to urbanization in the developing world, Guibbert argues that conventional, state-sponsored sanitation methods are inadequate to meet the current “urban crisis.” Instead, he advocates a “systems approach” to sanitation in which cities are understood as “urban ecosystems” and endorses a “popular ecology” framework in which collaborative, democratic management is combined with a shared commitment to meet the needs of the poorest members of society.

This book presents a collection of essays by various authors researching human-Earth relations in the Himalaya. It explores how different populations and communities in the region understand the environment, how their understandings vary across socio-cultural determinations (e.g., gender, class, age, status), and what this implies for policy makers in environmental conservation and development. The chapters in this book include many perspectives, such as Hindu religious perspectives as well as perspectives from scientists, public officials, policymakers, and people with livelihoods in the Himalaya. This book is interdisciplinary, crossing boundaries between religious studies, environmental anthropology, geography, and ethnography.

Gupta writes as a Hindu ecofeminist and therefore perceives the pollution of the Ganga as having a direct connection to the proliferation of Indian patriarchy—not just the imported Western variety, but also patriarchal values located in Hindu culture and religion. She discusses the connectedness of women to the Ganga, and, after summarizing the Ganga myth, suggests ways in which patriarchal Hinduism may have contributed to the pollution of the river. She mentions religious notions such as purity and pollution in addition to prakrti, dharma, the Laws of Manu, the significance of the symbol of the lotus, and the immanence and transcendence of Brahman, in order to identify resources within Hinduism that could help Hindus form an ecological strategy suitable for a contemporary culture that finds itself with a polluted, sacred river.

The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology provides the most comprehensive and authoritative overview of the field. Many of the essays included therein address issues related to Hinduism and ecology and, more broadly, to the study of the ecological implications of South Asian religion and culture. In his “Hinduism” chapter, Haberman touches on the pollution of river...
This ethnographic-style book explores religious conceptions of trees within the cultural world of tree worship at tree shrines of northern India. This book reevaluates concepts such as animism, anthropomorphism, and personhood in the context of the worship of the *pipal*, a tree of mighty and ambiguous power; the *neem*, an embodied form of a goddess whose presence is enhanced with colorful ornamentation and a facemask appended to its trunk; and the *banyan*, a tree noted for its association with longevity and immortality. Here is a spirited exploration of the practical consequences, perceptual possibilities, and implicit environmental ethics suggested by Indian notions about sacred trees.


Celebrated as a goddess for thousands of years, the Yamuna is one of Asia's great rivers and is also said to be one of India's most sacred rivers. This book documents the ravaging of this river through industrial pollution and neglect. Drawing from traditional lore, science, and his own experience, Haberman describes the flow of this river from the Himalayas through the megalopolis of Delhi down into the sacred region of Braj, narrating its decline and the attempts at its revitalization. He includes original translations of religious songs and poems in praise of the river.


In this study of the Ban-Yatra pilgrimage in the land of Braj in north-central India, Haberman utilizes textual and ethnographic research methods “to explore the experiential effects of the Ban-Yatra and to weigh the implications of this circular journey for current theories of pilgrimage” (p. viii). Challenging depictions of Hinduism as a religion of renunciation, he describes the Ban-Yatra as “a celebration of nature” and refers to its underlying “environmental theology” in which the natural world of Braj is affirmed as divine. Providing four different perspectives, he discusses the history of the Braj and the Ban-Yatra; the experience and structure of the pilgrimage; theories of pilgrimage; and his own bodily experience as a participant-observer.


Haberman applies sociological theories about role-playing to the study of “a religio-dramatic technique” practiced by the Gaudiya Vaisnavas of Bengal, in which devotees enter into a religious reality by taking on the identities of mythological figures. Considering the wider implications of this for the study of religion, he offers “a comparative model of religious action” and argues that attention to dramatic technique yields fresh insights about religious...
experience and transformation.


In this study of the phenomenon of *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage), Harmon discusses the religious, textual, historical, and cultural aspects of sacred marriage as it is celebrated in the South Indian temple city of Madurai. Placing his particular study in broader context, he addresses the concept and metaphor of sacred marriage in religious studies and in Hinduism; ritual and kinship theory; Tamil literary history; and the meaning and function of marriage in Hinduism and in India more generally. He argues that the concept of sacred marriage is a devotional metaphor in which lineages (human, divine, animal) are joined and the bride in particular serves as the link between different realms.


Using Benares as the focal point for a broad study of Indian religion and culture, Havell discusses the Vedic period, the Hindu epics, the origins of Buddhism, the history of Jainism, and the rise of modern Hinduism in addition to describing various aspects of the city itself, including its layout, temple complexes, artistic and pilgrimage traditions, the Ganges, and Hindu- Muslim relations. Although this Western scholar claims to present a neutral depiction of Hinduism and Indian culture based on a “sympathetic study,” the book ends with a positive assessment of British colonialism as providing infrastructure and order to the ancient city that has helped it to flourish.


This is a book about a deeply beloved place—many call it the spiritual capital of India. Located at a dramatic bend in the River Yamuna, a hundred miles from the center of Delhi, Vrindavan is the spot where the god Krishna is believed to have spent his childhood and youth. For Hindus it has always stood for youth, a realm of love and beauty that enables one to retreat from the weight and harshness of world. Now, though, the world is gobbling up Vrindavan. Delhi’s megalopolitan sprawl inches closer day by day—half the town is a vast real-estate development—and the waters of the Yamuna are too polluted to drink or even bathe in. Temples now style themselves as theme parks, and the world’s tallest religious building is under construction in Krishna’s pastoral paradise. What happens when the Anthropocene Age makes everything virtual? What happens when heaven gets plowed under? Like our age as a whole, Vrindavan throbs with feisty energy, but is it the religious canary in our collective coal mine?


A dense collection of twenty-three essays by scholars of diverse genders, ages, disciplines, and cultures presented at the “Radha and the Divine Consort” conference held at the Center
for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School (1978). Divided into two main
groups, the first describes and evaluates Radha, Krsna’s cowherdess lover and consort, while
the second group of essays examines other female deities found throughout India. Women
saints, sexuality, and psychology are discussed in relation to consort goddesses such as
Parvati (with Siva), Sita, Sri, and Pinnai as well as independent Goddesses including Kali,
Ganga, and Sitala.

Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin.

Herring, Ronald J. “Rethinking the Commons.” Agriculture and Human Values 7, no. 2 (1990): 88–
104.

Hill, Christopher V. South Asia: An Environmental History. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008.

Christopher Hill gives a chronological account of the history of the people of South Asia (e.g.,
India, Nepal, Sri Lanka), from the early Indus civilization, through invasions from Asia and
Europe, to the division of India and Pakistan in 1947, and finally the human tragedy caused by the
tsunami of December 2004. In tracing this history, Hill crosses boundaries between studies of
religions (including Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Islam), politics, social and cultural history,
and the natural environment. He articulates ways in which the people of South Asia have affected
and been affected by the natural environment. Along with the chronological overview, the book
also includes three case studies that look closer at human-Earth relations in South Asian history.
The book contains helpful reference material, including bibliographic essay and bibliography,
glossary, chronology, and a list of important people, events, and concepts.


Hopkins, E. Washburn. “Mythological Aspects of Trees and Mountains in the Great Epic.” Journal of

Hull, R. B. and G. R. G. Revell. “Cross-cultural Comparison of Landscape Scenic Beauty Evaluations:

Finding more similarities than differences when comparing the aesthetic evaluations of natives
and tourists in Bali regarding rural landscapes, Hull and Revell conclude that assessments of
scenic beauty ultimately transcend cultural differences. They also identify three methodological
issues necessary for undertaking a cross-cultural study of aesthetics: the participant’s purpose
for evaluating a landscape; the participant’s familiarity with the landscape; and the
appropriateness of the criteria used for comparison.

Illich, Ivan. H2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness: Reflections on the Historicity of “Stuff.” Dallas,
Tex.: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1985.

In this discussion of different meanings, uses, perceptions, and representations of water,
philosopher Ivan Illich reflects on the relationship between water and the imagination and considers the use and misuse of water in historical perspective. Drawing information from myths, rituals, philosophies, and cultures from various geographical and historical locations, Ivan describes the historical process by which water has been transformed from a source and symbol of spiritual purity to an industrial/technical cleaning fluid.


This book, arranged from a historian’s perspective, is a criticism of the Indological branch of orientalist discourse that upholds Enlightenment essentialism. Drawing on R. G. Collingwood, Michel Foucault, and Gramsci, Inden proposes a theory of human agency that can be methodologically applied to the study of Islam, Africa, China, Japan, pre-Columbian America, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Inden looks at the idea of caste, rural political economy, and different versions of oriental despotism, in order to interpret India through the lens of his own reconstructed polity titled an “imperial formation”—also known in Indian discourse as the “circle of kings.”


Motivated by the discrepancy between the little amount that is known about Indigenous cultures and the development projects sponsored by governments, transnational corporations, and development banks, this report draws attention to the presence of various Indigenous peoples around the globe, the problems they face, and their struggles for justice. After providing background information about the definition, demographics, and histories of Indigenous peoples, the report addresses specific issues that demand humanitarian action, including environmental destruction and the unequal distribution of natural resources, and concludes by evaluating national and international responses.


This fact sheet provides a timeline the development of the Tehri Dam, the projected benefits and costs of the dam, the players involved, and various problems and responses.

This is a brief review of Jainism and Ecology, which was published in 2000 by the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions as part of the book series on Religions of the World and Ecology.


As the first monographic study of prakrti (nature), this book traces the history of prakrti through Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious texts, as well as through proto-Samkhya, Samkhya, and Samkhya-Yoga texts. This book also explores the religious encounter called prakrtitalaya (“merging with prakrti”) with the intention of drawing out significant implications for interspecies ethics and environmental ethics.


This article examines the contributions of Hinduism to Arne Naess’ Ecosophy T. The author compares interpretations of verse 6.29 of the Bhagavadgita as given by Hindu commentators as well as by environmentalists. While Naess and other environmentalists and social activists such as Gandhi and Radhakrishnan often quote this verse to illustrate the oneness of all beings, human responsibilities of non-injury, and self-realization, Hindu ascetics often interpret this verse as instruction to free the self from the bondage of the material world.


In this critique, Jacobsen considers why Mircea Eliade chose to misrepresent the Samkhya and Samkhya-Yoga traditions as being anthropocentric (i.e., when he denied that these traditions have a cosmic ecology). Jacobsen also considers the actual view of these traditions concerning the religious nature of human and non-human lives, as well as the basis and purpose for classifying living beings in this manner.


This essay compares the relationship between humans and the environment in ancient India in light of two opposing discourses: that of the priestly sacrificial cult (which viewed all living beings as food) and that of the renunciants (who held to an ethics of non-injury toward all beings). The essay shows the radical changes of ethics in ancient India to help show the possibility of radical changes in current environmental ethics.

Jain, Pankaj. *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities: Sustenance and Sustainability*. London and
In Indic religious traditions, a number of rituals and myths exist in which the environment is revered. Despite this nature worship in India, its natural resources are under heavy pressure with its growing economy and exploding population. This has led several scholars to raise questions about the role religious communities can play in environmentalism. Does nature worship inspire Hindus to act in an environmentally conscious way? This book explores the above questions with three communities, the Swadhyaya movement, the Bishnoi, and the Bhil communities.


--------. “The Dharmic Method to Save the Planet.” Huffington Post. May 12, 2011.


This article focuses on the Swadhyayis (yogic self-study practitioners) in Gujarat and Maharasthra. The Swadhyaya movement arose in the mid-twentieth century in Gujarat as a new religious movement led by its founder, the late Pandurang Shastri Athavale. In lieu of any term for "environmentalism" in the Swadhyaya. The author shows that the concept of dharma can be applied as an overarching term for the sustainability of the ecological, ethical, and religious dimensions of the lives of Swadhyayis.


Using examples from Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature, Jaini presents an “Indian view” of animals as capable of moral and spiritual development and relates this to the tendency of Indians, especially Jains, to revere all forms of life.


Sunderlal Bahuguna is an environmental activist in his native India. In the 1970s, he was instrumental in the successful Chipko (or “hug”) movement during which local people hugged trees to prevent logging for outside concerns. George James introduces Sunderlal Bahuguna’s activism and philosophy in a work based on interviews with Bahuguna himself, his writings, and journalistic accounts, writing that Bahuguna’s work in the Indian independence movement and his admiration for the nonviolence of Gandhi has inspired a vision and mode of activism that deserves wider attention.


Using the theoretical work of Edward Said to frame his analysis, James argues that the legacy of Orientalism has shaped Western environmental philosophy to this day. Examining the work of leading Western environmental ethicists, he identifies two contrasting Orientalist images of the East in general, and of India in particular, as being either a romanticized Other, with inherently ecological teachings beneficial to the West, or a primitive, irrational, and puerile Other whom the West has far surpassed.


Written for a broad, international audience, this collection of essays aims to provide an alternative to the Orientalist attitudes that have characterized Western environmental discourse by focusing on how India’s environmental issues are understood and addressed by Indian activists and professionals. Collectively, the essays suggest that Indian culture has traditionally valued nature and is thus an important resource for generating an effective environmental ethic for our contemporary context.


This is the first volume in the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Sustainability*. It includes contributions that cover various topics on sustainability, specifically with regards to the relationships between sustainability and the various spiritual and religious traditions of the world, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as indigenous traditions, nature religions, sciences, environmentalism, politics, economics, ethics, philosophy, and more. This volume is a project of the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

This politically controversial book challenges the popular Hindu belief that the cow is a holy animal. The author takes a historical look at Hindu diet using religious and secular texts, arguing that beef was an important food of ancient India, even within Brahmanical and Buddhist diets.


Based on evidence gathered from six villages in the districts of Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, and Nagaur from the 1950s to 1980s, Jodha argues that the effects of the mid-century land reforms, combined with commercialization, population pressure, and the introduction of tractors, may ultimately strip the arid region of Rajasthan of its natural endowments and advantages. In response, he suggests that protecting and developing common property resources would make it possible to correlate economic activities with regional natural resources for the mutual benefit of both the land and society.


Vamsee Juluri shows us that what the Hinduphobic worldview denies virulently is not only the truth and elegance of Hindu thought, but the very integrity and sanctity of the natural world itself. By boldly challenging some of the media age's most popular beliefs about nature, history, and pre-history along with the Hinduphobes' usual myths about Aryans, invasions, and blood-sacrifices, Rearming Hinduism links Hinduphobia and its hubris to a predatory and self-destructive culture that perhaps only a renewed Hindu sensibility can effectively oppose. It is a call to see the present in a way that elevates our desa and kala to the ideals of the sanathana dharma once again.


This book traces a journey through Tamil Nadu, exploring how the localized meanings attached to forested shrines are changing under the impact of globalization and economic liberalization. Confounding simplistic representations of sacred groves as sites of a primitive form of nature worship, the book shows how local practices and beliefs regarding sacred groves are at once more imaginative, dynamic, and pragmatic than previously thought. Kent argues that rather than being ancient in origin, as has been asserted by other scholars, the religious beliefs, practices, and
iconography found in sacred groves suggest origins in the politically de-centered eighteenth century, when the Tamil country was effectively ruled by local chieftains.


This article focuses on sacred groves, with specific attention to the meanings that Tamil villagers in the Madurai region attach to them. The author describes the perspectives of local people while also articulating the environmental and political historical contexts of those local discourses. The forest gods of Tamil Nadu, I argue, are closely modeled on the pālaiyakkāras (or poligars), fierce local chieftains of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The author including discussion of some lessons implicit in the worship of forest gods and some criticisms of the violent modes of worship those gods require.


Here Khanna provides an ecological perspective of two Hindu myths, namely the earth mother as given in the Atharva Veda, and the Ganges River as the waters of life. The essay focuses on the feminine principle of nature for the purpose of gaining insights into current environmental threats.


Khilnani presents a history of the state of India with its transformation from a society governed by diverse local methods to one managed by a single authority. Although Khilnani makes many references to precolonial history, his primary focus is on the post–1947 period, a period that he views as India’s failed political idea. The book is divided into four main chapters with an epilogue weaving together the thoughts expressed in the previous chapters, including the role of democracy in India, remnants of partition in Indian consciousness, and ancient habits and modern ambitions. He concludes that the viability of India is inextricably linked with its ability to sustain internal diversity and to give no reason to any group to desire exclusive nation state status.


Summarizing the life of Mahatma Gandhi and the foundations and characteristics of his “bottom-up” approach to development, Khoshoo describes the yogi code of conduct that shaped Gandhi’s environmental ethic as having been consistent with the goals of sustainable development. Fostered by his philosophy of moderation and restraint, Gandhi’s bioindustrial model of development was based on local initiatives to promote social justice and enhance the production of the biomass.


Kinsley compares and contrasts the concepts of spiritual geography and sacred land in Hindu pilgrimage with those of the “walkabout” in Australian Aboriginal religion and concludes by reflecting on their ecological implications. He outlines parallels between pilgrimage routes laid out in the Hindu epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the “songlines” of Australia, and demonstrates how they give the land both coherence and structure. Drawing on the work of Victor Turner, Kinsley recognizes a non-linear perspective that demonstrates the implicit spiritual meaning, or story, of the land. Kinsley does not observe good implications of such a view though his citations of examples such as the pollution of the Ganges and the overlooking of environmental degradation focus on the pilgrimage itself.


Kinsley presents a textbook overview of traditional and contemporary forms of ecological spirituality. Part one focuses on Indigenous cultural traditions that include the Aboriginal Australian, Ainu, Koyukon, Mistassini Cree, and other Native North American religions. Part two looks at three Asian religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Chinese religions. Part three examines the Bible, Christianity (as both ecologically harmful and ecologically responsible), the modern “disenchantment” of nature, and the ecological spirituality of nature writers (e.g., Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold) as having made formative contributions to contemporary ecological discussions. Part four surveys the contemporary discussion, from contemporary ecotheology (represented by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Matthew Fox, Douglas John Hall, Thomas Berry, and Sallie McFague) through the animal rights, deep ecology, ecoactivist, and ecofeminist movements. This section concludes with reflections from four “ecological visionaries”: Murray Bookchin, Wendell Berry, Gary Snyder, and Barry Lopez.


In this survey of Hindu goddesses, Kinsley aims not only to address the importance and diversity of goddess worship in Hinduism, but also to contribute to the growing field of women and religion by considering Hindu conceptions of the feminine. Conceptions of the Earth, India, and the Ganges as goddesses are discussed in a chapter entitled “Goddesses and Sacred Geography.”

As the concept of *lila* (play) is especially important in bhakti cults of northern India, Kinsley uses Krishna and various saints as examples to demonstrate that “play” need not be studied in strictly evolutionary or developmental terms. Kinsley examines the relationship between play and religion as well as the significance of play as a positive religious symbol and activity. He explains play in terms of the Gods who need and desire nothing, Gods that do not suffer from incompleteness.


In an attempt to de-romanticize Western conceptions of Indians as exemplary in their humane treatment of animals, Kipling argues that the relative prominence of animals in the legends and religio-cultural traditions of India should not be assumed to indicate a more humane or merciful treatment of animals in everyday life. Describing the average Indian attitude toward animals as one of “tolerance or indifference” instead of reverence or compassion, he argues that concern about animal suffering and abuse is just as “modern” in India as it is in other countries throughout the world.


Emphasizing the moral and spiritual dimensions of the ecological crisis, Klostermaier proposes that Hindu *bhakti* (devotion), particularly Vaisnavism, is a potential resource for addressing contemporary environmental problems. He envisions a contemporary ecotheology based on the notion that the world is a sacred part of divine revelation. He commends the Hare Krishna movement for combining *bhakti* (devotion), *ahimsa* (non-killing), and ecology in a promising way.


Ramanuja’s Vaisnava theology serves as a starting point for Klostermeier’s exploration of the implications of the notion of the “body of God” in ontological, moral/ethical, practical/spiritual, and karmic terms. With passing references to Advaitin, Tantric, and Saiva Siddhanta philosophies, Klostermeier clearly understands the “body of God” as a heuristic device that enables one to view reality as a whole and he subsequently makes the case that the Vaisnava tradition can be representative of Hinduism. He finds evidence of alternative knowledges in the *Rg-Veda, Bhagavad Gita, Vishnu Purana*, and the writings of Ramanuja and includes a discussion on the objectivization of nature in scientific disciplines.


This is a collection of essays from various well-known authors (“Himalayan celebrities”) exploring relationships between humans and the environment in the Himalayas, specifically in light of increasing interest in Himalayan mountaineering and tourism. The essays are grouped into
five sections. The first section focuses on Himalayan ecology, including discussions of human impacts on the environment as well as conservation and preservation efforts. The second section focuses on culture, including accounts of Buddhist and Hindu myths, ritual, and art related to the Himalayas. The third section looks closely at tourism in different Himalayan regions. The final two sections, titled “Adventure” and “Down the Memory Lane,” present narrative accounts of a variety of tourist and mountaineering experiences of the Himalayas.


Attempting to create a cross-cultural aesthetic of recycling and scavenging, Korom examines the Indian ideology of purity and pollution that implicitly affects Indian garbage dynamics. In order to increase the cultural value of recycling in a country where recyclers are ostracized and considered polluted, Korom includes a discussion on the discipline of aesthetics and its potential to overshadow traditional negative associations with garbage.


In a highly stratified society struggling with environmental degradation and social injustice, Indian tribal and peasant people have found it necessary to break rigid caste/tribe barriers in order to create new alliances that address their contemporary problems. Kothari and Parajuli seriously question the distributive aspect of development and provide demonstrative evidence that social struggles are often connected to, or even identical with, ecological struggles. The authors conclude by arguing for new ecological practices that will address the severe social and ecological consequences of maldevelopment.


Belief in the sanctity of animals originated from ideas of karma and the transmigration of souls. This book draws on the ancient religious traditions of India Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism to explore the customs and practices that engendered the veneration of animals in India. This book outlines animals as Indian deities, examining the traditions that gave animals in India protection.


This book argues that the standard arguments for and against the claim that certain Hindu texts and traditions attribute direct moral standing to animals and plants are unconvincing. It presents careful, extensive, and original interpretations of passages from the Manusmrti (law), the Mahâbhârata (literature), and the Yogasûtra (philosophy), and argues that these texts attribute
direct moral standing to animals and plants for at least three reasons: they are sentient, they are alive, and they possess a range of other relevant attributes and abilities.


By going beyond the traditional academic focus on literary, Brahmanical Hinduism, Kulke examines the political and social history of feudal Orissa. With eighty percent of the local population tribal accustomed to an egalitarian society, Kulke explains how the Hindu rajas and their policy of elevating tribal gods, goddesses, and non-Brahmin priests to the status of tutelary deity allowed them to legitimize their authority among the tribes. This article’s main focus is the substantive influence that tribal religions, cults, and beliefs have had on ideological and political developments in India.


Challenging the conception of museums as apolitical institutions devoted to the exhibition of objects and artifacts, Kurin argues that museums are socio-political institutions that can help to conserve living cultures by providing arenas for “the practice of cultural representation.” To demonstrate this potential, he utilizes two exhibitions hosted by the Smithsonian Institution in 1985, “Aditi: A Celebration of Life” and “Mela! An Indian Fair,” in which Indian activists and street artists collaborated with museum staff, volunteers, and scholars to present an “ethnographically real” cultural exhibition that involved an “inversion and leveling” of status among the various collaborators and helped to legitimate the culture of street artists.


Here Lal discusses how Hindus views animals in light of science, focusing on such topics as moksa, animal sacrifice, pets, the venerated cow, recognition of human kinship with nature and animals, and ahimsa. There is also a section concerning the distinction between duties regarding animals and duties to animals. The essay concludes with a look at the medical, exploratory, and cosmetic uses of animals from the doctrinal Hindu standpoint, and from the standpoint of popular Hinduism.


Lansing looks at the effects of the Green Revolution by analyzing traditional water temples and irrigation management from an engineering perspective. He draws on Michel Foucault and critiques Karl Marx’s idea of “humanized nature.” The book is arranged around four themes: the relationship between the traditional system of water temples and the nineteenth-century Dutch irrigation bureaucracies; the dynamics of power in the water temple system (e.g., the relationship between the social and technical aspects of terrace management as well as the ability of ritual to bring forth, define, and empower social relationships in the context of the productive process); the relationship between representations of power in the rituals of water temples and the royal cult of divine kingship; and the contest of rationales between water temples and the state.


Larson identifies two basic positions in South Asian thought that might provide conceptual resources for a pragmatic and reverential environmental ethic: a “naturalistic, nonintuitionist cognitivism” drawing on early Buddhism that views good as a natural property of the world, and a “nonnaturalistic, intuitionist a-moralism” drawing on the Madhyamika and Yogacara traditions of Buddhism where nothing is truly or intrinsically good. Admitting a discomfort with appropriating Asian concepts and injecting them into Western frameworks, Larson encourages developing a more sophisticated methodological approach to comparative philosophy. He argues that comparativists should generate better metaphors for construing problems and encourage more interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research in order to address the environmental crisis.


Seeking a comprehensive understanding of Abhinavagupta’s system of thought, this article brings together Abhinavagupta’s views about aesthetics and philosophy or religion, which are often treated separately. Larson argues that Abhinavagupta managed to transcend reductionistic dualisms by “homologizing” the aesthetic and the religious without collapsing them. As distinct components of culture, each plays an important role in constituting and expressing the totality of a given culture and the individual lives contained within that culture.


In this bibliographic and analytical literature review, Ludden discusses trends, developments, methodological approaches, and theories in the disparate field of South Asian agrarian history and the study of local power and productivity. After identifying distinct methodological traditions and highlighting convergences between them, he reviews scholarship on power and debt and concludes by setting out some specific principles for comparative agrarian history.


Lynch’s study of the Vaishnavite Hindu pilgrimage to Mathura city, called the caurasi kos parikrama (circumambulation of Braj) or ban yatra (forest pilgrimage), is based on sixteen months of interviews, participant observation, and analysis of printed materials. Describing the stations, structure, and root paradigm of the pilgrimage, the author reflects on the interconnections between the natural world and the emotional experience of the pilgrim. He concludes with some general critiques of Western, academic stereotypes of Hinduism as otherworldly, ascetic, or primarily metaphorical and visual.


Based largely on fieldwork and contemporary fiction, Madan represents the “disciplined, this-worldly” life of the Hindu householder as an alternative ideal to the figure of the renouncer. After discussing the ideology, lifestyle, and values of the paradigmatic householder, the author concludes by considering the impacts of Western secularism, democracy, and development on traditional Hindu ideals.


Suggesting that other cognitive structures need to be explored outside of the significant contributions by Dumont and Srinivas on the subject of purity and pollution, Madan examines their meaning in Hindu Brahmanical culture. Wary about entering the philosophical or semantic controversies surrounding the terminology of subha (auspicious) and suddha (purity), Madan looks to other contexts and demonstrates how dimensions of time and space figure into these two concepts; the first being about events, while the latter is an attribute of objects.


In this essay, Mawdsley focuses on the problematic nature of Tehri Dam resistance by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), a Hindu nationalist organization that uses environmental issues to promote its political agenda (often advocating hatred toward the Muslim “outsider”). In giving a history of the Hindu Right, Mawdsley argues that caution needs to be taken when using religious ideologies to respond to environmental problems, as the fundamentalist rhetoric of the VHP downplays the inequalities of those facing the danger of the Tehri Dam.


Elizabeth McAnally strikes a remarkable balance in this academically rigorous and spiritually rich approach to the myriad global issues related to water. McAnally draws from Christianity’s sacramental consciousness of baptism, loving service of the Yamuna River in Hinduism, and the compassionate wisdom of the bodhisattva to develop “an integral approach to water ethics.”


In his introduction, McKibben draws a poignant picture of the political and social debates surrounding the state of the environment and points out their embarrassing insignificance in the face of global warming and the planet’s subsequent deterioration. He offers stories of hope from such places as Brazil and the Adirondacks to India and New England. He provides examples demonstrating a will to change and the transformation that follows, even if it is out of step with current politics and economics, and urges others to do the same.


This essay considers whether there are notions of nature that are unique within the traditions of Hinduism, and if so, what other cultures can learn from these notions.


Based on their participation in feminist and environmental movements in Germany and India
respectively, Mies and Shiva contend that an examination of local struggles against ecological destruction reveals that women worldwide share similar concerns, analyses, concepts, perspectives, and visions for change. Suggesting that these commonalities provide a basis for solidarity across differences, they present a collaborative ecofeminist platform characterized by “a subsistence perspective” that views social, economic, and ecological justice as inextricably related.


Stating clearly that her ideas are simply speculative suggestions, Mumme emphasizes that a viable Srivaisnava ecological theology would need to come from within the tradition itself. However, she does explore the tradition’s heritage of models, motifs, and mythical images which may be used in such an endeavor. Recognizing some congruity in thought with Sallie McFague’s Christian theological construction that offers a pantheistic and transcendent theology, Mumme explains how the world as the body of the Lord (as depicted in the *Gita*) inspired both Ramanuja and the Srivaisnava tradition of *Visiistadvaita* (qualified nondualism).


Naess challenges humans to think of themselves ecologically by identifying themselves with all living beings and by expressing love for this widened and deepened notion of self. He argues that such identification is an essential prerequisite for compassion and therefore shifts environmental ethics from simply moral acts to beautiful acts. Naess widens the notion of self by appealing to the Sanskrit understanding of *atman* and by challenging the opposition of self and other implied in the English word altruism.


Discussing the role and representations of Varaha (an incarnation of Vishnu in the form of a boar who is said to have saved the Earth from destruction) in India since the Vedic Period, Nagar notes the appeal that Varaha has had for rulers who seek to cast themselves as saviors or liberators.

Due to the fact that “ecology” has arisen within the context of Western science, Nagarajan calls for a reevaluation and deconstruction of the term from within a Hindu context, which would disclose culturally and religiously framed ecological conceptions. Cautioning against blindly considering a belief ecological because it is “sacred,” Nagarajan demonstrates how Western categories may collapse by exploring embedded ecologies. Using the example of kolam, the women’s ritual art tradition, in Tamil Nadu where waste, sin, and pollution are seen as one, Nagarajan demonstrates how nonecological practices hold cultural, aesthetic, and religious orientations to natural spaces.


Beautiful color photographs accompany this essay on the tradition of kolam, a form of ritual art performed by women, in which designs are drawn on the ground with rice flour as a means of consecration. Nagarajan considers the social, religious, and ecological implications of kolam in Tamil Nadu and America, emphasizing its significance as a specifically female tradition of maintaining good relations within human, animal, divine, and plant realms.


Exploring relationships between Hinduism, modern science, secularism, and politics, Meera Nanda presents a critique of the tendency to romanticize the traditional insights of the Hindu faith or overstate their relevance to contemporary life. This book is comprised of three essays: “Secularism without Secularization: Reflections on the Religious Right in America and India”; “Hindu Ecology in the Age of Hindutva: The Dangers of Religious Environmentalism”; “Making Science Sacred: How Postmodernism Aids Vedic Science.” Nanda includes comparisons between American and Indian culture and between Hindu and Western religious traditions. Nanda is particularly critical of religiosity appropriated by conservative politics.


This collection of academic essays by Indian authors deals with the relationship between ecology and various religious traditions. Each tradition mentioned in the book has two essays that discuss its ecological significance, except for Jainism, for which there are three essays.

Narayan provides a vivid description of the religious significance of water and wood for Hindu traditions, situating a number of myths and rituals related to water and wood in the context of current ecological problems and responses. The author argues that focusing on scriptural texts for ecological resources does not necessarily mean that these texts will be integrated into an effective worldview. Instead, Narayanan purports that a focus on dharmic practices (i.e., activities involved with duty and justice) that are manifested through stories, songs, and dances is more helpful in integrating effective worldviews.


After providing a brief overview of the Hindu texts that outline the spiritual goals of human beings such as dharma (righteousness, duty), artha (wealth, power), kama (sensual pleasure), and moksha (liberation), Narayanan points to a contemporary shift from tattva/moksha texts to religious/dharma resources that have more direct relevance to this-worldly behavior. She uses the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita as an example of a text that combines the principles of ascetism, dharma, and liberation, and examines the Laws of Manu, sacred trees, rivers, classical dance, ecology, contraception, abortion, adoption, population, hunger, and traditional values of sharing. She concludes by urging religious institutions to confront the falsehood behind the “increasingly dominant religion of consumerism.”


In this critical and constructive analysis of current systems of managing solid waste in Indian metropolitan areas, Nath argues that the inadequacies of current systems are due to a fundamental lack of resources and the failure to develop techniques of waste management that are suited to the particular environmental and social conditions of these locations. He concludes by making recommendations for more efficient and safe methods of urban solid waste management and refers to a pilot study done in the Calcutta Metropolitan District in which appropriate designs, technology, management collection, and transportation procedures have generated a cost-effective system with higher levels of human and environmental protection.


This book is a collection of essays focusing on changes in Indian religion and society during the later half of the first millennium CE, when the major Puranas were being compiled. This time period marked a transition to a feudal economy, and it brought about a restructuring of the brahmanical system. The essays in this book use the available Puranic evidence to get insights into the Puranic world, including its material culture, its ways of dealing with environmental issues, its use of myth to interpret history, its gender based differentiation, and its recent ritual formations (e.g., Mahadana and Tirthas).

After describing the logic of *advaita* as moving in the direction of acosmic monism, Nelson also states that it has the same alienation from the natural universe as is manifest in the Jaina, Samkhya-Yoga, early Buddhist, and Christian traditions. He points out that although *advaita* is an esoteric gnosis reserved for the Brahmin elite, the prestige it carries makes it relevant for the ecological situation in contemporary India. Nelson discusses Sankara and the *advaita vedanta* tradition in order to demonstrate that the liberation experience does not revere, but tolerates nature, which “undergoes a wholesale objectification and radical ontological devaluation.” He concludes by exploring how *advaita* philosophy still can be relevant to an ecological ethic.


Cautioning Christians who face rigid fundamentalism in their own tradition and who may perceive that the East is free from such elements, Nelson examines seventh-century Hindu philosopher Sankara who, as the systematizer of *advaita* (non-dualist) philosophy, was deeply conditioned by Hindu hierarchical thinking. Although his philosophy is commonly portrayed in the West as universalistic, Nelson clarifies that Sankara believed that the theistic outlook was better suited for the masses (e.g., women, *sudras*), and others, who were in early stages of their spiritual development). Nelson concludes that the *advaita* discourse of ignorance and illusion leaves the Hindu *bhakti* tradition in a precarious position.


This volume offers theological and textual analyses of the Hindu tradition in addition to insights based on extensive fieldwork of various Hindu sects in India. The contributors examine topics such as asceticism, common to many Indic religious traditions and capable of informing an ecological ethic, as well as the theory of *karma* and its implications. They also look closely at Hindu connections between human morality and environmental decline, concepts such as *lila* and *yuga* in teleology, environmental activism, *vedanta* theology, as well as the ways that religious people construe nature in contrast to scientifically-oriented government conservation officials and environmental activists.


Covering three thousand years of history, Nugteren draws upon traditional literature from the Vedas, the Dharma Shastra, and the literature of Buddhism, to explain the material and symbolic
significance of tree worship in India. The author cites the contemporary examples of the
harvesting of sacred trees for worship in Puri during the time of the Jagannath festival and the
ongoing influence of the Chipko tree protection movement. Nugteren shows how trees and sacred
geographies connect contemporary ecological issues with traditional religious values and
practices. These connections are shown to be ambivalent insofar as religions are implicated in
respectful as well as destructive attitudes toward the natural environment.


This report focuses on four major social movements begun between the years 1972 and 1985:
the anticaste movement, the women’s movement, the farmers’ movement, and the
environmental movement. Omvedt examines the relationship of each with Indian society and
the state, the Marxism of the existing left parties, and Indian intellectuals. Suggesting that
Marxism served only the needs of the industrial working class, Omvedt finds Marxism
inadequate for the liberatory struggles of women, *dalits*, tribals, and low castes. Therefore, in
“reinventing revolution,” Omvedt seeks to focus on women not as victims of an exploitative
capitalist society, but rather as activists and a force for change.

Orenstein, Henry. “The Structure of Hindu Caste Values: A Preliminary Study of Hierarchy and

Applying Levi-Strauss’s method of structural linguistics to the rules of Hindu caste by focusing
on the Dharmashastras, Orenstein identifies what he considers to be the implicit premises
underlying the caste system. Examining in particular textual statements about the polarity
between pollution and purity, he finds some “distinctive regularities” that “reveal implicit
thought processes” and that can be understood as structural “paradigms” of the caste system.

-------. “Toward a Grammar of Defilement in Hindu Sacred Law.” In *Structure and Change in

Arguing that laws are “declined” according to differential qualities such as caste, gender,
individual life history, and moral standing, Orenstein undertakes a structural analysis of
the *Dharmashastra* based on what he calls “a grammar of defilement” in which each type
of pollution has its own “paradigm” of orderly rule modifications. After reviewing these
various “declensions” of defilement, he considers some of the implications of this
grammatical approach to the study of laws and ethics.

Palmer, Martin, and Victoria Finlay, eds. *Faith in Conservation: New Approaches to

This book draws extensively upon joint World Bank and ARC/WWF projects worldwide. It
shows, through stories, land management, myths, investment policies, legends, advocacy and
celebration, the role the major faiths play in ecological well-being. The book explores issues
of climate change, forestry, asset management, education and biodiversity protection and
does so using the techniques of the great faiths - storytelling, example and celebration. Part II offers “Faith Statements on Ecology” by many of the world’s religious traditions. The challenge of living with integrity in a pluralist world underlies the book and it offers models of how diversity is crucial in attempting to ensure we have a sustainable world.


Applying the theories of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner to the Hindu epics, Parkhill argues that in both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the forest functions as a liminal, intermediary space of transformation, a threshold between stages or states of being. By passing through the forest, heroes and heroines attain the sacred power necessary for carrying out their missions and quests.


Patel provides the historical background of the tribals and three involved Indian states from the 1960s to the present, including an overview of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal. As tribal concerns developed in response to resettlement and rehabilitation programs proposed by the project, questions of tribal identity and rights also arose. Patel describes the process of organizing tribals within each of the three states as well as the evolution of tribal activism, which ranges from the pursuit of a better resettlement policy to an Anti-Sardar Sarover Project SP movement. Patel concludes by asking the question, “What do the tribals want and who is to decide?”


Surprised by enormous opposition from human rights activists and environmentalists, Patel, who is an actively involved chairman of the organization implementing construction of the Sardar Sarovar Project, describes the genesis of the project, the legal hurdles, and attempts to accommodate new paradigms that provide social and ecological sensitivity. Suggesting that the opposition is acting from an emotional, rather than a rational or even constructive, analysis, Patel outlines activist misinformation and reemphasizes the thoroughness of his organization’s approach and actions.

Based on conversations with Medha in 1994, this article presents the evolution of the Narmada struggle from an Indigenous perspective. The author provides an inside look at Indigenous activism, the unification of tribals in the struggle, and their differences in action. Specifics about one such tribal activist group, Andolan, their demands for dialogue about rehabilitation, legal actions, and the use of satyagraha, are also discussed.


Dissatisfied with Western models of environmental attitudes that assume a postmodern, postindustrial context, Peritore presents an alternative based on fieldwork done with professional elites in New Delhi, Udaipur, Jaipur, Calcutta, and Bombay in 1990. Identifying three “Indian opinion types” and four “administrative action types,” he maps these onto axes of Indian-Western and Traditional-Modern to create a complex model better suited to what he defines as the “amalgam of extant cultural elements” that constitutes Indian environmentalism (p. 817).


This essay shows how Tamil Shaivite saints incorporated specific places, landscapes, and myths into their devotional hymns. By doing so, the saints were able to help devotees evoke the presence of the god Shiva while taking pilgrimages to particular shrines in Tamil country.


This essay deals with the ambiguous relationship that women in India have with nature and Hindu goddesses. Although India women are often compared to natural and divine powers, this comparison is not typically advantageous for women.

Powell, Robert, ed. The Ultimate Medicine: As Prescribed by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. San Diego,
This book provides a personal take on the power of spiritual practice with the eight elements of ancient Hindu cosmology. Author Ranchor Prime movingly and transparently illustrates his spiritual ‘midlife crisis’ and his journey back to faith through a renewed connection with God in the eight elements of the natural world. The book is illuminated by the author’s own illustrations.


Here Ranchor Prime gives a perspective of how to react to the current environmental crisis by looking to the Vedas, a collection of ancient Hindu texts. The book includes sacred stories, poetry, and art, as well as interviews with contemporary environmental figures like Vandana Shiva and Anil Agarwal.


Prime evaluates the environmental values found within the Hindu tradition by examining past and present teachings and practice. He introduces Hindu teachings with an introductory overview of Vishnu in his various forms, the Ten Avatars, and Krishna, and proceeds to describe both village economics as taught by Gandhi and a life of sacrifice as demonstrated by Satish Kumar. The final section looks at prominent Hindu environmental activists and thinkers, contemporary grassroots environmental projects, and religious intentional communities in India.


This book examines the complexities of river restoration in Kathmandu. In this rich ethnography, Anne M. Rademacher explores the ways that urban riverscape improvement involved multiple actors, each constructing ideals of restoration through contested histories and ideologies of belonging. She examines competing understandings of river restoration, particularly among bureaucrats in state and conservation-development agencies, cultural heritage activists, and advocates for the security of tens of thousands of rural-to-urban migrants settled along the exposed riverbed. Throughout her analysis, Rademacher emphasizes ecology as an important site of dislocation, entitlement, and cultural meaning.

*First Citizens* engages with the political and historical processes which go into the formation and adoption of identities and labels by indigenous and tribal communities, and explores a number of critical issues confronting this extremely vulnerable section of Indian society. The essays document the diverse causes for migrations of India's 'tribal' populations, notably women, and their absorption into both rural and urban informal economies; the multi-layered aggression of 'development' policies impinging on the lives of those inhabiting mineral-rich habitats; the violent interface between politicized forest dwellers and the Indian state; the theory and practice behind the Forest Rights Act and the environmentalists' dilemma; and state legislation which may be enabling or otherwise for forest-based communities.


Commenting on how the ritual act of prestations has been overlooked by scholars, Raheja documents the semiotic aspects of giving and receiving in Northern India as well as the intercaste relationship between the Ksatriya and Brahman. Raheja redefines “dominance,” as understood by North Indians, by analyzing their conceptions of land, harvest, and distribution. These concepts have their own integrity and are not solely based on economic principles. She provides a close look at the Jajmani system which maintains both functions of mutuality and hierarchy.


Ram provides the scientific background for how much water is actually available for the project, an amount that is much less than originally proposed. Although there exist assurances of viable sources of drinking water for people and livestock, there is no plan in place to provide them. Issues such as irrigation, canals, waterlogging, and salinization are also discussed in order to prepare Ram’s two-tiered conclusion that the project will consume more power than it can generate and that both project and government officials have deliberately overexaggerated all the benefits that are claimed for this project.


Focusing on the evolution of colonial forestry policies on a provincial level, Rangarajan considers British forest and game management as well as colonial cultivation practices. He takes a middle position between theorists who hold colonialism responsible for disrupting the harmonious Indigenous relationship with nature and those who see colonialism as continuing environmentally destructive trends already at work in precolonial Indian societies. Acknowledging the unprecedented intrusion of the British into local modes of production, social organization, and land management, he also draws attention to the agency of local inhabitants, who had their own goals and priorities that impacted the natural environment.


Characterizing Raginранath Tagore as a proponent of an environmental philosophy akin to Aldo Leopold’s land ethic, Ray credits Tagore with founding what might have been “the first curriculum in environmental studies” (p. 219) and favorably compares his vision to that of Mahatma Gandhi.


Aiming to contribute to necessary cost-benefit analyses of the extended process of human intervention in and increased control over the natural environment, this study focuses on land use and rural development in northern India during a 100-year period. The authors document various changes in the land and in land-use policies and conclude that while colonial and postcolonial governmental policies have increased the productive capacity of the land and of society, the serious depletion of natural resources that has accompanied this process threatens to halt further development.


In this essay, Rieger focuses on the question of ownership and responsibility, “Whose Himalaya?” He considers how the Himalaya primarily is, according to the Hindu tradition, the abode of the gods. After describing the ecological myth of the river Ganges’ descent to earth through Shiva’s hair (i.e., the vegetation of the mountain), Rieger notes that if humans utilize the natural resources of the Himalayas, they are acting in trust for the gods, and should thus protect, preserve, and conserve these natural resources.

Robbins, Paul. “Shrines and Butchers: Animals as Deities, Capital, and Meat in Contemporary North India.” In *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture*

Focusing on the example of the 1994 closure of Igdah (Delhi’s largest slaughterhouse), Robbins argues that animals in India have filled roles pertaining to spirituality, economy, and economy. Avoiding Orientalist and nationalistic moral monism, the author elucidates a plural ethic describing human relationships with animals.


Remaining critical of the direct appropriation of Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism by the West, Rolston describes the value of their varying perspectives for the purpose of opening contemporary environmental discourse in the fields of science, philosophy, and human behavior. He utilizes a mixed methodology of “hard-nosed” philosophy of science and the “gentler discipline” of comparative religion in order to discuss the implications of Eastern thought for new conceptions of the biological world. Examples cited include: Taoism’s Yin/Yang opposition, Hinduism’s advaita vedanta, and Buddhism’s sunyata.


Hinduism scholar Steven Rosen explores the world of the Hare Krishna movement, which has been instrumental in raising awareness of vegetarianism and the plight of animals in the United States. This book begins by introducing the Hare Krishna movement and of its colorful singing and dancing, its book distribution program, and especially its restaurants, sacred food distribution, and delicious vegetarian cuisine. Rosen illustrates how deeply Hare Krishna devotees have influenced the contemporary vegetarian movement and its call for ahimsa, or nonviolence, toward all living beings.


After identifying the conflict between two different approaches to development in India, the traditional, sustainable model that focuses on local communities and the growth and prosperity model that emphasizes modernization and globalization, Sampat considers various social and environmental problems that have resulted from rapid development, industrialization, and Green Revolution activism since the 1990s. Arguing that radical changes must be made in natural resource management and distribution in order to strike a balance between the needs of the India’s growing population and its natural resource base, he offers some suggestions for how India can begin to cope with these problems.

The costs of industrial agriculture are astonishing in terms of damage to the environment, human health, animal suffering, and social equity, and the situation demands that we expand our ecological imagination to meet this crisis. In response to growing dissatisfaction with the existing food system, farmers and consumers are creating alternate models of production and consumption that are both sustainable and equitable. In Growing Stories from India, Sanford uses the story of the deity Balaram and the Yamuna River as a foundation for discussing the global food crisis and illustrating the Hindu origins of agrarian thought.


This book is a comprehensive volume covering topics such as hydrology, tributaries, water uses, and environmental features like river water quality, aquatic and terrestrial flora/fauna, natural resources, ecological characteristics, sensitive environmental components and more. The book is divided into 4 parts: Part I gives a basic introduction of the Ganga river; Part II looks at the rich biodiversity of the Ganga Basin; Part III examines Ganga water quality as well as its associated challenges; Part IV looks at the complexities of issues confronting the river Ganga in changing times; and Part IV touches on economic aspects derived from the river such as business opportunities and tourism.


By observing the rituals of Nandadevi in Uttarakhand, Sax begins to describe the differences in understanding men and women have over the concept of sacred performance. Sax explains that men are interested in containing women and that their conception of the goddess’ jats has to do with “proper” places of residence. Women, however, are more interested in affirming their natal link with place.


In this essay, Schmidt provides a fundamental study of the relationship between ahimsa and rebirth as developed throughout the Vedic period. Instead of demonstrating that this relationship originated solely with indigenous peoples, Buddhists, or Jains (as other theories hold), the author locates the origin of the relationship between ahimsa and rebirth within a complex account involving many historical layers.


In this essay, ahimsa is elucidated as India’s chief ethical value, supporting vegetarianism and panjrapoles (institutions of animal protection).


This is a collection of essays that explore ways in which perceptions of space, place, and land relate to social and aesthetic realities in the Tamil region of India. Including discussions of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, the essays in this volume address the role of Indian cultural traditions in shaping and enacting the boundaries of human-Earth relations. This is an interdisciplinary work that weaves geography together with studies of religion, history, cosmology, literature, linguistics, and more.


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.

This volume illuminates cosmovisions and attitudes towards the “environment” held by indigenous and tribal peoples of India. With essays by authors of indigenous origin and by scholars from around the world, this volume illuminates the little-understood ways that indigenous cosmovisions are carried out in arts, agriculture, and cultural survival.


Drawing on his experience as an engineer, Shah presents an independent study criticizing the current Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP). Shah does not relinquish Narmada water as a potential solution to Gujarati water problems but rather urges the opponents of the SSP to redirect their efforts to planning an improved project, one that evaluates problems and proposes alternatives influenced by Indigenous people. He specifically criticizes the undemocratic planning process and inequitable distribution of irrigation benefits in addition to discussing the loss of groundwater and its potential recharge and restoration.


Focusing primarily on the foundational *Bṛhadaranyakga* and *Chandogya Upanishads*, Sharma makes some concise and insightful reflections on the misconceptions of Sankara’s notion of *advaita* as not being ecologically relevant. By providing extensive quotations from the texts as well as including a very short comparative paragraph with Christianity, Sharma suggests that while specific solutions to the ecological crisis might not be found in the *Upanishads*, they may provide “the frame of mind” for finding them.


In this virulent critique of global capitalism and free trade, Sharma defines the “new economic policy” as an extension of “the colonial paradigm of development” in both its aims and effects. Describing the objectives of the new economic policy as the exploitation of natural resources, labor, and the creation of captive markets for merchandise, he highlights the devastating effects such policies have on Indigenous peoples and urges the Indian state to take a stronger role in protecting its tribal peoples and natural resources.


After a brief overview of the basic principles of ecofeminism, Sherma explores the Hindu Tantric tradition through this lens in order to interpret traditional teachings in light of ecological and contemporary concerns. She emphasizes that the “self/other dichotomy” must be reanalyzed for there to be any healing of the Earth, and suggests that Hindu nondualism can provide such environmental and philosophical success. Particular Hindu concepts and beliefs (e.g., maya, prakṛti, purity/impurity categories, and the perceptions of female nature) are also examined through an ecofeminist lens and re-envisioned from the tantric perspective.


This essay describes and assesses various “micro-movements” in India that emerged in the 1970s to compensate for the failure of mainstream institutional political processes and bodies such as legislatures, political parties, and trade unions. Looking briefly at grassroots movements that focus on human rights, ecology, and feminism, Sheth argues that such groups seek further democratization and socio-political transformation and that their ultimate goal is to make the Indian state accountable to civil society.


In this work, Shiva exposes numerous ways in which traditional life patterns are being interrupted in Asia, with specific attention to India. With vibrant language, including a critique of "food fascism," Shiva advocates the honoring of local village lifestyles as an antidote to creeping global consumerism and as the only solution to the looming environmental challenges in India and around the world. Shiva’s concept of Earth democracy includes “water democracy” (jal swaraj), “food democracy” (anna swaraj), and “seed democracy” (bijā swaraj). In proposing the building of living economies and living democracies, Shiva draws on Gandhi’s work with concepts of ahimsa, swadeshi, swaraj, satyagraha, and sarvodaya.


Shiva presents an account of the environmental and social challenges currently faced in India. She traces the history of India from its colonization by the British Empire, through its independence in
1947, when the colonial regime departed and left behind a divided India/Pakistan, up to its current standing in an era of globalization. Shiva addresses many vital issues, including terrorism, fundamentalism, war, Hindu and Indian identity, nationalism, biodiversity, genetic engineering, water wars, corporate control of natural resources, and the movement to resist corporate globalization in favor of “Earth democracy,” which supports the flourishing of cultural and biological diversity.


This book focuses on water in light of discourse on rights, climate change, colonialism, corporations, food, scarcity, and the sacred. The final chapter on “The Sacred Waters” considers the ecological myths and practices surrounding the sacred Ganges River. There is an appendix on the 108 sacred names for this river, enumerating the Sanskrit names and their English meanings.


Contending that “there are in India, today, two paradigms of forestry—one life-enhancing, the other life-destroying” (p. 92), Shiva contrasts Indigenous and colonialisit approaches to forestry by describing the former as ecological and derived from “the feminine principle” and the latter as reductionistic, exploitative, and patriarchal. After describing the detrimental effects of scientific, market-driven forestry practices on both the environment and women, she discusses the contemporary Chipko movement as an example of resurgent Indigenous wisdom and local resistance to “wasteland development.”


Focusing on the ways in which women in Third World societies have responded to the global environmental crisis, essays in this volume seek to make connections between global and local contexts; health and environmental issues; humans, society, and nature; and social and environmental forms of exploitation. Individual chapters address topics such as: AIDS and ecological collapse in Thailand, women and toxic waste in the United States, the connection between human health and the environment, sex-selective reproductive technologies, legal rights, Indian and Filipino women’s peasant movements, ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, biotechnology, ecological concerns in global perspective, and ecological economics.


An overview of the history, structure, and strategies of the contemporary Chipko Movement, a growing grassroots effort, comprised mostly of women and originating in the Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh in the early 1970s, to protect forests, cultures, and livelihoods from socially and ecologically destructive approaches to development. Growing out of the Gandhian tradition of Satyagraha, the Chipko movement is “the expression of an old social consciousness in a new context” (p. 233), which, the authors suggest, can serve as a model for resolving conflicts over the management and distribution of natural resources around the globe.


Based on research conducted in Bandung between 1984–1985, Sicular discusses the function and implications of urban scavenging as an efficient and undervalued form of solid waste management that might well be incorporated into the formal waste management system of the Indonesian state. By collecting, sorting, and selling refuse to industries, scavengers produce valuable industrial materials without harming the environment, a service which could become the basis for a new, decentralized system of waste recovery and recycling.


Dedicated to David Sopher (Indian Geography) and Thomas Berry (cultural historian and geologian), this book is a collection of essays by Rana P. B. Singh, whose work with Indian Geography addresses the intersection of religion and ecology, specifically with attention to Hinduism and its relevance to the challenges of the twenty-first century. The book includes essays on literary, historical, and cultural geography, metaphysics and sacred ecology, the Indian lifeworld, belief systems, sacred space (faithscapes), the Ganges River, heritage ecology, (heritagescapes), development and technology, and a phenomenology of an Indian village. Along insightful and accessible writing with extensive references, the book contains many helpful tables, figures, and images.


In this collection of essays, the author examines the relationships between ecology and culture in India, particularly in an attempt to show how Indian religious traditions (specifically Hindu traditions) relate to contemporary environmental, social, and spiritual issues. The essays touch on a variety of themes, including Indian cosmology, ecospirituality, Hindu pilgrimages, Gaia theory, Gandhi’s vision of sustainable development, dialogue between East and West, and more. The book includes an appendix with related essays by three other theorists of Indian geography: Oskar Spate, David Sopher, and Anath Mukerji.

Addressing various themes relating to the city of Banaras, a unique faithscape of shrines, monuments, sacred and devotional paths, and festivals, this volume approaches the city as the cultural capital of India because of the diverse traditions it has maintained. Contributors from various disciplinary and national backgrounds discuss an array of topics, including specific deities and festivals, myths, rituals, nomenclature, pilgrimage, landscape, sacred time, patronage, demography, and nationalism. The volume includes a historical chronology, a selected bibliography, illustrations, diagrams, maps, charts, and tables.


In this brief article about the increasingly global scope of environmental awareness, Singh argues that global efforts to address ecological problems must proceed from “a world environment that is just and equitable,” in which cultural and biological diversity are valued, and nation states are respected as independent and accountable entities within the larger global community. Assessing first the global environmental agenda and then, more specifically, the agenda for India, Singh calls on northern countries to take responsibility for their role as the primary consumers of the planet’s resources and recommends that each nation develop its own environmental policies.


Within this book, Skolimowsky discusses ecoyoga as a practice developed on the principle that all life is yoga. Ecoyoga includes meditations and techniques that can help humans deeply connect with the environment. By cultivating personal healing and harmony, the world is positively affected.


Sullivan provides a concise introduction to Caitanya’s sixteenth-century Gaudīya Vaishnavism, the concept of Krṣna līla, and its subsequent elaboration by the Gosvamīs into the aesthetic theory of rasa. He demonstrates how all of these describe the spiritual environment in Vrindavan, India, the birthplace of Krṣna. He subsequently focuses on the reforestation program in Vrindavan and other ecological endeavors that benefit from international support as well as their potential to increase environmental awareness and activity in India.


The articles in this two-volume encyclopedia document the multiplicity of complex and varied relationships between religions and the natural world. With a comprehensive and diverse selection of articles, this interdisciplinary encyclopedia includes numerous contributions related to world religions (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, Christianity, Islam, indigenous traditions, etc.) and to new religious movements, philosophy, spirituality, environmentalism, art, sciences, and much more.


Drawing from such sources as the Purusha Sukta, the Bhagavad Gīta, and the Brahmanda Purana, Tigunait discusses the Hindu notion of nature as the body of the Divine, and the role of humans to recognize this relationship and their responsibility to protect nature.


Focusing on the preservation of sacred groves in India, Tomalin explores the environmental ideology of Hinduism and considers the degree of which religious environmentalism has influenced current views about Hinduism. Furthermore, the similarities of religious environmentalism with the Hindu nationalist group called the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) are explored, particularly concerning how representatives from both groups have participated in protesting against the Tehri dam to protect the Ganges River.

--------. “The Limitation of Religious Environmentalism for India.” Worldviews: Environment,

This essay focuses on the limitations of religious environmentalism, a type of environmental scholarship that extracts environmental ethics from religious traditions. Tomalin argues that religious environmentalism is a romantic vision, being that it stems from a Western construct of nature as inherently pure and aesthetically pleasing. In addition, the origins of many religions pre-date the global environmental crisis. Furthermore, some religions of developing countries cannot accommodate religious environmental goals due to direct dependence on the environment.


Problematising the notion that religious systems inherently carry with them the equipment needed to develop a valid approach to environmental ethics, the author states that two models have emerged from the project of thinking about religion and ecology: either a Romantic attitude toward nature or a managerial approach to nature driven by anthropocentric self interest. The author suggests that environmental ethics entails a projection of western values onto local societies, and that this is in some way dishonest. She points out that survival in traditional societies has traditionally been driven not by a concern for other-than-human life forms but by human self-perpetuation. In her conclusion, the author states that there is “no simple, linear relationship between religious and cultural values and how people relate to their natural environment.” Nonetheless, she also states that “religious environmentalism... is by now a prominent and well-established feature of the contemporary environmental movement” (181).

Another area that Tomalin explores is the one-time close relationship between Hindu fundamentalists and the environmental movement. She notes that this was probably an opportunistic moment and that members of the BJP party quickly abandoned environmental issues when elected (171).

http://www.layogamagazine.com/issue17/Feature/greeningofyoga.htm

This article highlights the ecological emphasis of yoga as articulated by two scholars on the subject: Chris Chapple and Laura Cornell. It also describes the five guidelines of the “Green Yoga Checklist” as developed by the Green Yoga Association (of which Cornell is the founder and executive director). These guidelines indicate how yoga studies can minimize harmful environmental impact. The article concludes with examples of green yoga studies located in California.


This book deals with a Gandhian ethics of economics which helps us to re-engage the religion and ecology debate, and to re-envision ecology's more-with-less philosophy as an invitation to liberation rather than deprivation. While traditional asceticism has often been seen as life-negating, a Gandhian-inspired neo-asceticism goes beyond kenosis towards a renewed
appreciation of the beauty and joy of a life of less consumption, and greater compassion for all living beings.


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.”


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).


Udall critiques the World Bank’s assessment of and involvement in the Sardar Sarovar Project. She finds the institution consistently incongruent with its stated environmental priorities, social policies, and loan conditions. After discussing the international Narmada campaign and the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank, she analyzes the Wapenhaus Report—a report that exposed internal pressures at work in the World Bank. She draws attention to the World Bank’s development model and institutional deficiencies, and then asks whether it would be more beneficial for donor governments to give money to another institution (which would be more accountable, responsible, and transparent) than to
continue to work through the World Bank.


This open access book provides both a broad perspective and a focused examination of cow care as a subject of widespread ethical concern in India, and increasingly in other parts of the world. In the face of what has persisted as a highly charged political issue over cow protection in India, intellectual space must be made to bring the wealth of Indian traditional ethical discourse to bear on the realities of current human-animal relationships, particularly those of humans with cows. Dharma, yoga, and bhakti paradigms serve as starting points for bringing Hindu—particularly Vaishnava Hindu—animal ethics into conversation with contemporary Western animal ethics. The author argues that a culture of bhakti—the inclusive, empathetic practice of spirituality centered in Krishna as the beloved cowherd of Vraja—can complement recently developed ethics-of-care thinking to create a solid basis for sustaining all kinds of cow care communities.


This survey article reviews recent scholarship pertaining to the study of the intersections between Hinduism and nature. The review is primarily indebted to the essays contained within the following two volumes: Purifying the Earthly Body of God (1998) and Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water (2000). The highlighted sections include: “Green” Themes in Hindu Traditions; Sacred Topography; The Legacy of Gandhi; Globalization, Feminism, and Resistance; and Animals.


This book examines the ecological teachings of the Vedas, focusing on the Rsis’ perception of the universe, nature, and cause-and-effect relationships. Hymns of the Rgveda are analyzed to demonstrate the Vedic reverence for nature.


Veen der Veer analyzes the main forces that mold religious identity and experience. By studying Ramanandi sadhus and the Ayodhya Brahmin priests, he argues that research cannot be limited to values but must also include behavior. Therefore, van der Veer approaches
concepts such as sin, greed, purity, and independence by examining the history of moneyexchange at a major pilgrimage center. Having become an impersonal market relationship between a seller of ritual services and a buyer, the author understands pilgrimage moneyexchange as demonstrating the interplay and competition of political actors making their presence known in the pilgrimage area. The conclusion clarifies the methodological and epistemological assumptions and explanations supporting van der Veer’s views.


Suggesting that pilgrimage is the best example of an institution that levels social diversities and upholds the unity of faith in the Hindu tradition, Vidyarthi, Makhan, and Saraswati re-examine sacred geography, specialists, and performance in textual categories as well as contextual transformations. The cults of the Tirthas, Vishwanath, Ganges, and the Shmashan are described along with their pilgrims in order to demonstrate the manner in which the sacred complex, more than an intangible philosophy, becomes the reality that integrates geographical, social, and linguistic heterogeneities.


Discussing the opportunities and current techniques of recycling material wastes in various Third World countries, Vogler draws attention to a wide variety of recycling and reclamation patterns and strategies among developing countries. Drawing evidence from different countries, he concludes that the extremely poor scavengers who provide the raw materials for recycling are “grossly exploited” by industrial and market powers and he points to the excellent opportunities that exist for improving the safety, efficiency, and equitability of reclamation processes in developing countries.


This anthology gathers together essays from Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Indigenous traditions about the complex history of religious vegetarianism. The focus of the book is on how different religious traditions respond to questions about animal suffering, dietary observances, and human responsibilities.

Focusing on Veer Bhadra Mishra, chief priest of the Snakat Mochan Hindu temple in Benares and a professor of hydraulic engineering at Benares Hindu University, this article discusses the relationship between the rising pollution rates of the Ganges and its sacred status as inherently pure and purifying. Ward describes how the problems and possibilities associated with the paradoxical relationship between the worship and pollution of the river have been recognized by various figures advocating its cleanup.


Hindu theology views rivers as goddesses who confer blessings and spiritual purification. The release of celestial waters from the grip of “Vritra”, the demon dragon, to flow down from the heavens and relieve drought on earth is a recurring theme in Hindu mythology. The book draws extensively on Hindu sacred texts to present the mythological stories relating to the seven sacred rivers, namely, Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Narmada, Godavari and Kaveri, and the practices connected with river goddess worship. The shared concerns of sacred and secular ecology in modern India are also discussed. A comprehensive reference list and detailed end-notes and glossary are provided which should make this a useful reference text for research scholars and academics. The book is also extremely reader-friendly with 20 colour illustrations and should appeal to a wide and varied audience.


This book is an ethnographic exploration of the field of religion and ecology and phenomena of religious environmentalism. The author provides chapters focusing on the ecological visions of specific religious traditions, including Indian (Hindu and Jain), Chinese (Confucian and Daoist), Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic visions. Analyzing the responses of these traditions to environmental problems and, more generally, problems of the modern worldview, Watling describes various visions of “religious ecotopias,” which are religious imaginations of a more harmonious and cooperative relationship between humans and the natural environment. With these ecotopias, Watling shows how religious environmentalism calls for a re-imagining of religion and of human-Earth relations.


Writing from a political science perspective, Wilmer examines how Indigenous activists gain international support for self-determination and legal protection. He examines categorizations of Fourth World People, modernization, colonization, conquest, moral and political boundaries, and decolonization. Arguing that Indigenous activism challenges the normative basis of international politics, Wilmer includes an overview of international appeals and responses, Indigenous activism, and international relations theory then examines the moral exclusion theory by reviewing treaty language and paradigms. He also explores responses toward international Indigenous activism, impacts that large-scale projects often have for Indigenous peoples, symbolic and substantive reparation actions,
the role of the World Council of Churches, and the protection and recovery of sacred sites. He concludes with an Indigenous deconstruction of the global narrative and provides an Indigenous perspective on the normative foundation of the world community. Includes appendices: a chronology of events related to Indigenous activism, a list of international documents pertaining to Indigenous rights, the United Nations (UN) working definition of Indigenous peoples, the locations and populations of various Indigenous peoples, and the Preamble to the Earth Charter.


This article explores the influence of Indian ethical tenets on the ascetic practices of medieval European Christianity. Part of this influence includes an understanding of a spiritual kinship between humans and animals, which is documented in medieval hagiographies that describe saint-animal relations. The author shows similarities between these hagiographies and other Western and Indian sources, including Buddhist Jataka stories, the asceticism of St. Francis of Assisi, and the syncretistic doctrines of the Manichees.


In this examination of the changing conceptions of the jungle from the Sanskrit *jangala* (dry or open lands) to the Hindi *jangal* (tangled or luxuriant vegetation), Zimmerman analyzes classical texts in order to trace the elaborate polarity between dry and wet lands that categorizes flora and fauna into a catalogue of knowledge in which “the world is seen as a sequence of foods.” Interpreting this system as an ecological form of knowledge that was essentially utilitarian in its focus on the medicinal properties of various foods, he discusses
the various levels of knowledge it comprises: geography, zoology, botany, physiology, pharmacy, and cosmology.