CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURE IN PROTECTED AREAS, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

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[This seminar is possible thanks to the support obtained by the Universities of Girona and the Balearic Islands for the consolidation of Projects of Excellence (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports Resolution of 4 December 2015, Case No. CEI15-09)]
The Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature

Connecting Natural and Cultural Heritage
Girona University, Spain, 4th October 2018

IUCN WCPA Specialist group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas
www.csvpa.org

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Outline:
1. The inspiration
2. Origins in nature conservation
3. Linking with the nature culture journey
4. Connecting Practice: Mongolian Altai
5. A dedicated IUCN-CSVPA programme
6. More about the book
1 - The Inspiration
Interconnectedness of the cultural and natural world
“The inseparable bond”

What do Alexander von Humboldt, the Connecting Practice Project and this new publication have in common?
“The inseparable bond”

“In a world where we tend to draw a sharp line between the sciences and the arts, between the subjective and the objective, Humboldt’s insight that we can only truly understand nature by using our imagination makes him a visionary. This connection between knowledge, art and poetry, between science and emotions—the ‘deeply-seated bond’, as Humboldt called it—is more important than ever before. Humboldt was driven by a sense of wonder for the natural world—a sense of wonder that might help us today realise that we only protect what we love.”


Let’s take a look at how the cultural and spiritual significance of nature has been integrated in nature conservation today.
2 - Origins in Nature Conservation
About CSVPA

Mission Statement
The mission of the CSVPA is to promote the appropriate recognition and inclusion of all relevant cultural and spiritual values, knowledge, and meanings into nature conservation theory and practice, and in particular, into protected areas policies, planning, management, and evaluation.

From the 2003 WPC Recommendations and a peer reviewed book CSVPA moved onwards...
A focus on Sacred Natural Sites

2011 Inari, Delos 3

2016 Verschuuren & Furuta

2008 Wild & McLeod
Commitment to process in IUCN

2003: Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (Rec. V13)
2008: Sacred Natural Sites: Support for Custodian Protocols and Sacred Natural Sites (Rec. 143)
2012: Recognition of the Diversity of Concepts and Values of Nature (Res. 4.099)
2012: Recognition and Conservation of Sacred Natural Sites in Protected Areas
2012: Encouraging Cooperation with Faith Based Organisations and Networks (Res.009)
2014: Promise of Sydney
2016: Recognising Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in Protected Areas (Res. 033)
3 – Linking with the Nature Culture Journey
Linking with the IUCN-ICOMOS Nature Culture Journey

2006: IUCN World Conservation Congress, Hawaii:

Mālama Honua commitments:
1. Recognize the spiritual and sacred dimensions of nature and culture;
2. Value the inspiring examples of harmonious approaches to nature and culture including: place-based approaches, governance and equity, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and strengthen traditional institutions;
3. Recognize our deep concern that cultural and natural diversity and heritage are seriously threatened around the world
4. Call upon IUCN to develop and adopt a policy on understanding and incorporating cultural values and practices in nature conservation;
5. Call upon ICOMOS to further develop its activities for incorporating natural values and practices in cultural heritage.
2017: ICOMOS General Assembly, India:

The Yatra aur Tammanah

Western languages that reflect a western ontology that separates nature from people and this permeates our culture, thinking and approaches. ICOMOS, IUCN and all their partners should therefore aim to find different concepts and words that can overcome this situation. For these reasons, we use naturecultures (with no space, hyphen or ‘and’ between them) because we recognise these domains as inseparable, entangled and mutually constituted.

- How to further integrate the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature?
- Lets take a closer look at NATURECULTURES in the Connecting Practice Project.
4 – Connecting Practice: Mongolian Altai
CHAPTER 11: ENTANGLED LANDSCAPES

Connecting conservation practices for naturecultures in the Mongolian Altai

Steve Brown and Bas Verschuuren

“Watch out!” Steve called to Bas. “You are about to stand on a rock engraving”. “Watch out!” Bas retorted. “You’re standing on an endangered Juniper bush”.

(Brown & Verschuuren 2018, p)

Defining new methods and strategies to support Nature and Culture through engagement in the World Heritage Convention

✓ Lets take a closer look at NATURECULTURES in the Connecting Practice Project.
Nomination files developed with a focus on art-history rather than naturecultures or a deeply seated bond.
The natural environment in itself invites you to get emerged in it and forget that this is a cultural nomadic landscape, but...
The landscape is crafted by nomads, their livestock and many different cultural traditions over time. It requires an understanding of entanglement of nature and culture.
Expert vehicle driver
Protected area expert
Pastoral nomad expert
IUCN expert
Other than human person expert

What about me? Non-human species expert
Sacred mountains and spirits control the cultural use of resources on these mountains.

Homesteads and winter-camps are spread throughout the landscape and motorised traffic impacts nature.

Rock art becomes a long history of rock engravings marking different expressions of human culture.

Looking back to find a way forward.

FIGURE 5: WH Criteria (v), (vi) and (vii) as 'bridging' criteria

...... culture focus ...... [ bridging criteria ] ... nature focus ...

(i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii) (viii) (ix) (x)
5 – A Dedicated IUCN-CSVPA Programme
Cultural and spiritual significance of nature: Concepts

“The cultural, spiritual, aesthetic, historic and social meanings, knowledge, values, feelings, ideas and associations that natural features and nature in general reveal to and inspire in people - both individuals and groups”.

- This **significance** emanates from the relationships between people and nature and is as diverse as there are cultures around the world.
- We use significance in order to include knowledge, values, meaning and feelings.
Why is this significance of nature important for protected area management and governance?

**Innovative and effective**
- Helps build sustainable and effective conservation solutions that are equitable and inclusive of peoples’ relationships with nature.

**Evidence of implementation and impact**
- Improved understanding and willingness of all stakeholders to care for and support protected areas and conservation.

**Plays an important yet under-recognised role in Protected and Conserved Areas:**
- Improved integration in management and governance is required.

Guardian Mzee Ali Khamis collaborates with the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative and local organizations to conserve sacred groves and caves on Zanzibar (Photo: Robert Wild, courtesy of SNSI).
Cultural and spiritual significance of nature in Protected Areas

CSVPA’s Cultural Significance of Nature Program

Book

Case Studies

Best Practice Guidelines

Training Modules

Network of Professionals

Join: www.csvpa.org
6 – More about the book
Covering the full spectrum: Cultural and spiritual significance of nature

Harmon & Putney 2003

From the 2003 book to the 2018 book: Celebrating 20 years of work on the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature

Verschuuren & Brown 2018
Cultural and spiritual significance of nature in Protected Areas

1. A product by members of IUCN CSVPA
   ✓ Published by Routledge

2. Inspired by the Nature Culture Journey
   ✓ IUCN ICOMOS

3. 20 chapters by some 48 authors:
   Conservationists, Protected Area Managers, Adherents of Mainstream Faiths, Indigenous Peoples, Natural and Social Scientists

4. 3 sections:
   ✓ Concepts
   ✓ Policy and Practice
   ✓ Case Studies
A mural in a Bhutanese monastery depicts the Buddhist cosmology or world system according to the Kalacakra or Wheel of Time teachings. In the centre, viewed from directly above, is Mount Sumeru.

Photo: Edwin Bernbaum 2017
Cultural and spiritual significance of nature in protected areas

**Policy and Practice**

- Nature Culture Journeys, IUCN ICOMOS
- World Heritage: Connecting Practice
- Ramsar Convention: nature and Culture

Painting by Indigenous artists from Lake Cocibolca, Nicaragua, presented with a Mesoamerican ‘People's Declaration on Wetlands’ to the COP7 of the Ramsar Convention, 1999.
Cultural and spiritual significance of nature in protected areas

Case Studies

✓ Fengshui Forests in China,
✓ Batwa Forest Culture in Uganda,
✓ Human and Non-Human Agency in Conservation in Vanuatu,
✓ Religious Landscapes in Italy,
✓ Place Attachment in Australia.

Batwa Elders wearing headdresses of forest vegetation inside Kasinga Cave, located inside Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Caves were important sites of refuge, shelter and worship.

Photo: Medard Twinamatsiko, 2012
COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:
IUCN Best Practice Guidelines & The Book
The Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature

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