

## Common Ground in Eco-Christianity and Eco-Buddhism

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### Abstract

Buddhist environmentalist Ian Harris holds that “the emergence of eco-religiosity, a specifically religious concern for the environment, has manifest[ed] itself as a significant theme in the major religions of the late twentieth-century” (Harris, 1990). The purpose of this paper is to reveal common ground between Buddhism and Christianity that can promote healthy dialogue and mutual action to address the present ecological crisis. I have found that the Christian version of “eco-religiosity” can be summarized by three terms: 1) relatedness; 2) responsibility; and 3) redemption. After defining and offering support for these terms, I apply them to a number of Buddhist writings and demonstrate how they offer a common language that provides both ontological and material underpinnings for Buddhist and Christian environmental awareness and ethics. In doing so, I demonstrate that at least two ‘major religions’ find themselves engaged in this common and global context of ecological crisis and reach similar, constructive conclusions.

### Eco-Christianity

#### I. Relatedness

In the 20th century, ecology emerged as the science of the community of nature. One cannot define any living being in isolation from its environment, but only in relation to its environment. That relation is essential to the identity of the living being. For example, an owl is not just a bird. It is a bird that prefers certain kinds of woodlands to others, hunts particular night creatures and not others, prefers certain waking and sleeping hours over others, and so on. Furthermore, evolution states that owls, and all species, derive from a very complex interplay of natural influences, played out over long periods of time. The wide spectrum of differentiation that we find in nature has occurred within the context of the dynamic relatedness of all things, at any time and over eons of time, which makes differentiation possible. As John Muir described it:

Nature is ever at work building and pulling down, creating and destroying, keeping everything whirling and flowing, allowing no rest but in rhythmical motion, chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another. (Muir, 1899)

Perhaps a run-on sentence, but that is a good way to think of the creation: a run-on sentence. It forever speaks something new in “endless song.” The creative process of life is organic, and some writers of eco-theology and biology go so far as to speak of the earth and even the universe as a kind of “life” itself. Like Muir before him, the Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson speaks of nature in such a way:

Living nature is nothing more than the commonality of organisms in the wild state and the physical and chemical equilibrium their species generate through interaction with one another. But it is also nothing less than the commonality and equilibrium (Wilson 2006, 32).

Those who refer to a “life force” or a “living spirit” are usually referring to this kind of interaction that underlies and supports “living nature.” One hears this in Rosemary Radford Ruether's characterization of earth as “Gaia, the living and sacred earth (1992, 1).” I define living nature as the God-given order of relatedness through which creation happens: it is the ongoing, pervasive, and relational genesis from which species emerge and evolve.

This understanding differs from the traditional interpretation of the biblical creation story, which remains in conflict with the science of ecology, the theory of evolution, and modern cosmology. Yet the notion of a dynamic and living earth is not without its support from the Christian tradition, when viewed in light of the ecological crisis. For example, Thomas Aquinas speaks of God as the primary cause of creation with each created thing functioning as a secondary cause unto its God-given end: its *telos*. While in the time of Aquinas creation was viewed in a relatively static and hierarchical sense, today we can interpret the ecological and, particularly, the evolutionary aspects of nature in a teleological sense. God's creation seeks to create. The creation itself seeks to “be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:22, NRSV).” It seeks to live, grow, survive, thrive, and evolve as a whole, and it is not simply the sum of independent species that over and over again reach the same, unchanging ends in every subsequent generation. This may not have been Aquinas' exact intention, and Ruether is correct in assuming that “there is no ready-made ecological spirituality and ethic in past [Christian] traditions (Ruether 1992, 206).” However, the theme of God-given ends in creation is a fundamental part of Christian tradition and adds sacred meaning to the view of a living earth.

Nature in all its relatedness is not just an instrument of survival and evolution; it is also the element of sacrament. These two aspects cannot be separated. In *De Visione Dei* (The Vision of God), the 15<sup>th</sup> century mystic Nicholas of Cusa characterizes a sacramental beholding and experience of nature that is an emerging aspect of the spirituality in today's eco-Christianity:

O Lord, that sweetness by which You now feed my soul is so great that my soul is somehow aided by means of what it experiences in this world and by means of those most agreeable likenesses which You inspire (Cusa, 23).

The imagery of tasting and partaking of food that nourishes the soul, and yet comes from the very things around him, is not only sacramental but eco-spiritual.

Ecology is a science, of course, but in the most comprehensive sense. It is an affirmation of all things in all things: all things are “unfolded” (Cusa) into some kind of distinction, but never into isolation and independence. Likewise, all things enfold back toward oneness and, ultimately, their Source and Creator God. The simple taste of sweet food enfolds back to stimulate in the person the taste of divine sweetness in the soul. This

opens up the possibility for a spirituality that explicitly affirms the immanence of God in creation. God is in all the details of creation and life on earth, meaning not just in the “beauty of the earth,” but there as well with the downtrodden, the polluted, the profaned, the exploited – all the victims, be they humankind or otherkind. Thus, in the teachings of eco-Christianity, one commonly hears a hope for the rediscovery of divine revelation in nature, wherein we will find clues as to what ought and what ought not be allowed in a living, evolving, communal, and sacramental world. “In such a renewal,” says Thomas Berry, “lies our hope for the future and for ourselves and the entire planet on which we live (Berry 1999, 106).”

## II. Responsibility

To seek the well-being of the earth we must first accept our place of mutual relatedness in the ecological whole. Then, in the context of ecological relationships, we can define ethical behavior as that which sustains the diversity and natural processes of life. This begins with education, especially in ecology, but also in evolution and modern-cosmology, which tie together as the creation story. In *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World*, Holmes Rolston asserts, “The first lesson learned in evolution was perhaps one of conflict, but a subsequent one is of kinship, for the life we value in persons is advanced from but allied with the life in monkeys, perch, and lousewort (Rolston 1988, 23).” He then places this idea within a religious framework:

Mixed with other values, this Noah principle of preserving a breeding population is powerfully present in the Endangered Species Act. But if life generically is of value, then every specific individual in some degree insists on this value, and this is why, without due cause, it is a sin to kill a mockingbird (Ibid. 23).

Rolston moves from observing that in evolution all things are related to making inferences about value and ethical behavior, and in doing so uses religious language and religious story. He brings together the natural (evolution), the doctrinal (sin), and the biblical (the Noah principle) as an integration of religion and science, observing, “We do now find a trend in nature – its projecting of life, stability, integrity, culminating in a sense of beauty when humans enter the scene – that we ought to follow (in the axiological sense)... (Ibid. 225).” Based on this evolutionary trend in nature, he jumps to a religious imperative, concluding that we should “love your neighborhood as you do yourself,” (Ibid. 312) and extend its application to other creatures on the basis of ecological and evolutionary science. It is our responsibility as aesthetically conscious and moral beings to understand, accept, and integrate scientific knowledge into our religious thought and practices; and then to respect, protect, enhance, and even enjoy the goodness of the diversity and creative, sustaining dynamics of God’s creation.

It is also worth noting the factor of spirituality, deriving from that sense of divine immanence in creation, which influences spiritual experience and how we behave as

human beings. In *What Are They Saying About Environmental Theology?*, John Hart lifts up the notion of a “sacramental universe,” which he describes in this way:

The Spirit permeates all of creation; all creation in some way has the potential to be revelatory of divine presence. On such occasions, this experience of divine presence is a sacramental moment in the sacramental commons of a sacramental universe (Hart 2004, 102).

From this perspective, life in creation and on earth is filled with what one might call sacramental moments with a small “s,” – those not limited to the two or seven Sacraments of mainline Protestant or Roman Catholic doctrine.

Panentheism is the emerging theological understanding of God that affirms a “sacramental commons” in a “sacramental universe.” Matthew Fox, in particular, has brought this new understanding to light, although he might argue that he is only recovering a theology that has been marginalized by the Church, referencing writings such as those of Hildegard of Bingen and Meister Eckhart (Fox 1983). Most eco-Christianity today embraces panentheism as the underlying basis for spirituality and religious development, including ethical development. Briefly put, panentheism affirms both the transcendence and immanence of God with respect to the creation. This is to say that the creation is in God and God is in the creation, but God is not limited to the creation. A common conclusion in eco-Christian literature is that there will be no stopping the ecological crisis without claiming or reclaiming the role the earth plays in human spirituality and moral development. Panentheism affirms the creation as a sacramental cathedral – the house of God. Surely that has value worth saving.

Panentheism, then, is a spiritual complement to ecology that gives deeper meaning and broader scope to human moral agency. It encourages us today to believe that when Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me,” (Matthew 25:40, NRSV) he was including, as our responsibility, compassionate care for “Sister Earth, our Mother, Who nourishes and gives us food and fodder, And the green grass and flowers of every colour,” and care for all the other “brothers and sisters” mentioned by Francis of Assisi in his *Canticle of Creatures*, such as air and water and “all Thy works whate’er they be (Armstrong 1973, 228).”

### III. Redemption

Jay McDaniel explains, “What spawns the hope for life after death is not a desire for immortality but rather a recognition that so many lives – indeed, the vast majority – end in incompleteness (Mc Daniel 1989, 46).” McDaniel speaks generally of a goal of “shalom” for life. Simply defined, shalom is the “peace of God” and implies God-given vision and intent. One important characteristic of shalom is reverence for life by human beings. In *Of God And Pelicans*, McDaniel tries to explain how some of the apparent harshness and cruelty of nature can be reconciled as inherent to shalom and worthy of reverence. This is the challenge of “backup” pelican chicks, which are seemingly redundant and expendable, and

usually die young. The relationship of things to God is particularly important for the vision of shalom in that it imputes the ability for all living things to contribute positively to God's own experience of creation. He notes that even a tragic life may contribute something to God (Ibid. 43). With respect to the young pelicans and all life, McDaniel believes in the possibility of redemption as a transformation of life into a better state (an afterlife) where all things experience the fulfillment that each thing yearns for in this life in its own way (its own *telos*, referring back to Aquinas), but which frequently is not attained. With respect to a vision of what ought to be on planet earth, McDaniel is able to accept nature as it exists without human interference. God created it good and we should not think of ourselves as needing to improve it. Nature can be part of God's shalom just as God created it because of the possibility of an otherworldly redemption.

Yet in an eco-Christian view, redemption is seen as more than a hoped-for afterlife. Here and now, God empowers us to eliminate attitudes, institutions, conditions, and thoughts that harbor and produce sin and unnecessary suffering, or that thwart the God-given *telos* of creation to "be fruitful and multiply." Redemption, therefore, is more than the individual forgiveness so frequently spoken of as salvation; it is the compassion and challenge to interactively heal broken relationships that oppress people, ruin ecosystems, and threaten the survival of otherkind. Redemption in the ecological crisis is to: 1) reclaim the sacred or "enchanted" value of nature, as alluded to by Cusa and others; and 2) relieve the stress in which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain," (Romans 8:22, King James Version) especially the stress we have created through acts of selfishness, injustice, and irreverence. John Hart summarizes it nicely in *Sacramental Commons*: "Ecojustice is the act of linking responsibility for the natural world, engendered by engagement with the Spirit, with responsibility for the neighbor, as required by Jesus as the Son of Man present among the 'least brethren (Hart 2006, 66).'"

Eco-Christianity articulates a vision for a *redeemed* world that requires human *responsibility* in its emergence, which cannot happen without understanding the degree to which all creation is causally and dynamically *related* as a web of life created by God and in which the Creator God is present with good intentions. These elements of soteriology (redemption), ethics (responsibility), and ontology (relatedness as divine intent) are the cornerstones of eco-Christianity. With them as backdrop, I now show how eco-Buddhism can also be described using this three-fold construct.

## Eco-Buddhism

### I. Relatedness

In *The Sun My Heart*, the Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh speaks of "interbeing endlessly interwoven," and literally marvels at the interrelatedness of the universe. He says "there is no phenomenon in the universe that does not intimately concern us, from a pebble resting at the bottom of the ocean, to the movement of a galaxy millions of light years away (Nhat Hanh 2000, 84)." Nhat Hanh is keenly aware of the science of life, cosmology,

ecology, and evolution, noting that the principle of interbeing “is not just Buddhist, it is scientific (Ibid. 85).”

Interbeing, then, draws out some disagreement between the modern understanding of the human self and the teachings of the Buddha about the human as non-self. In *The Concepts of Self, Person, and I*, David Galin says that western psychology has mistakenly “come to see the self as a bounded persisting entity rather than as a dynamic open network of relationships (Galin 2003, 108).” The very notion of an independent or inherent self is mistaken, according to much of Buddhist thought, which asserts that a self cannot exist objectively and independently of everything else, as evidenced by this somewhat esoteric summary statement by Galin:

A person is a dynamically changing, self-organizing, multilevel, quasi entity without sharp boundaries, and embedded in a causal thicket; self is the current organization of the person; and I is the self’s point of view, its set of currently possible discriminations (Ibid. 136).

This statement is akin to that of Muir, in which he describes “whirling and flowing” nature “chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another.” Galin asserts that “Buddhist tradition holds that the root cause of suffering is the Ordinary Man’s erroneous view of self as an unchanging essence (Ibid. 107).” The Buddhist concept of the relational non-self is consistent with the emerging ecological way of viewing reality.

Ecology has been taken up by Asian and western Buddhists alike for its value to eco-Buddhism. In *The Hermeneutics of Buddhist Ecology in Contemporary Thailand*, Donald Swearer notes the teaching of Thai Buddhist Buddhadasa Bhikku that our “... own personal well-being is inextricably dependent on the well-being of everything else, and vice versa (1997, 29).” The teachings of Buddhadasa define this interrelatedness or dependency in traditional Buddhist language and doctrine. Buddhadasa identifies nature with the *dhamma* and says the “lessons nature teaches us lead to a new birth beyond the suffering [*dukkha*] that results from attachment to self (Ibid. 25).” So, Buddhadasa brings together the ecological interrelatedness of nature, the teachings of the Buddha, and enlightenment: an integration aptly described by Swearer as “the ontological realization of interdependent co-arising (Ibid. 29).” This is interrelationship at the core.

Modern eco-Buddhism, therefore, integrates two kinds of interrelatedness: ontological and ecological. For example, ontological beliefs such as interdependent co-arising, karma, non-self, and emptiness were not inspired by understandings of ecological science. They are consistent with the Four Noble Truths arising out of the Buddha’s quest for freedom from suffering and attainment of enlightenment. These beliefs are of an ontological nature pursuant to freedom from rebirth and the attainment of nirvana. Absent the contemporary context of the ecological crisis, these ontological beliefs are substantially about freedom from undue attachment to ultimately “empty, impermanent” nature. In other words, these ontological beliefs lead to recognizing the unsatisfying attachment to impermanent things and, in a manner consistent with the middle way, regulating those attachments in accordance with the *dhamma* so as to create karma in hope of enlightenment and at least rebirth to a better state. Historically, this ontology did not result

in an environmental ethic applicable to the contemporary ecological crisis because it was not ultimately focused on “conventional existence,” a term that is important to a Buddhist worldview. Alan Wallace describes conventional existence this way:

All phenomena are found to exist as dependently related events, “empty” of any intrinsic identity of their own. In this view both subjective and objective phenomena have only a conventional existence, relative to the mind that perceives or conceives them (Wallace 2003, 283).

Even though all phenomena are “empty” and reduce, in some way, to an ontological oneness, Buddhism accepts that we experience conventional existence, however impermanent it may ultimately be. It is within this realm of conventional existence that life is karmic. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century context of the ecological crisis, eco-Buddhism draws on ecological interrelatedness as a conventional material world corollary to underlying ontological reality. The net effect of this integration of ecological and ontological relatedness is summarized by Ruben Habito who, writing from a Zen perspective, speaks of a mindfulness in which the “Zen practitioner is able to gather together the disparate elements of one’s life and achieve ever greater integration (Habito 1997, 168).” This proceeds to an “awakening to one’s true self” where dualisms disappear and one is aware of “seeing and relating to everything in the universe (Ibid. 168).”

Eco-Buddhism offers a doctrine of ontological oneness that merges with ecology to provide a highly complex perspective of existence as causal, dynamic, and karmic. By acknowledging nature and its dynamic ecology as a place for mindfulness and action, eco-Buddhism offers a basis for human responsibility in an age of ecological crisis.

## II. Responsibility

Ecological interrelatedness is the basis for examining one’s impacts on nature, while nature’s ontological value as *dhamma* and partner in enlightenment speaks to the karma of impacts. Swearer says that “Buddhadasa’s biocentric ontology can be interpreted deontologically, or, as Buddhadasa phrases it, nature implies certain moral maxims or duties (Swearer 1997, 39).” One such way this plays out is against the backdrop of suffering and the Four Noble Truths which, summarized by Donald Rothberg, teach us “...that there is profound suffering or unsatisfactoriness in life; that the roots of such suffering are in greed, hatred, and delusion; that it is possible to end suffering, to uproot greed, hatred, and delusion; and that there are clear, practical ways to transform suffering through and into wisdom and love (2001, 162).” Therefore, one ought to act in such a way as to not create more suffering and, to every extent possible, alleviate suffering for all things. This translates into an ethic of compassion, which Thich Nhat Hanh defines as “a mind that removes the suffering that is present in the other (Nhat Hanh 1991, 81).”

William Ames speaks of the nature and role of compassion in Mahayana Buddhism:

Mahayana has its own characteristic emphasis on universal compassion, which aims to liberate all sentient beings from suffering, and on wisdom, which comprehends the emptiness of all phenomena. The Mahayana ideal is exemplified by the bodhisattva, who, motivated by compassion, seeks to perfect wisdom and skillful means in order to attain complete enlightenment for the benefit of all beings (Ames 2003, 298).

To understand this statement, it is important to remember that when Ames says wisdom “comprehends the emptiness of all phenomena,” he could just as easily have said that wisdom “comprehends the nature of interdependent co-arising.” These two definitions are two sides of the same “*dhammic* coin.” Emptiness means that nothing stands alone and goes it alone. All things are “empty” in that sense; rather, all things “arise” interdependently. Therefore, eco-Buddhism defines compassion as the ethic for interrelatedness, and it seeks to remove suffering.

Nevertheless, one does not easily find a “skillful means” prescription for responsible eco-Buddhist behavior. For example, the Four Noble Truths address suffering that is rooted in human greed, hatred, and delusion. Good karma is behavior that leads to greater and greater freedom from greed, hatred, delusion, and suffering. One’s behavior in Buddhist life grows out of the desire for freedom from rebirth and the attainment of enlightenment. With respect to suffering as *dukkha*, in what way does that kind of suffering exist in non-human nature? Only human beings are greedy, hateful, and deluded. That can certainly have consequences for how human actions will impact nature and cause suffering, but non-human nature itself (sentient and non-sentient) is not greedy, hateful, and deluded in the sense of the Four Noble Truths. And yet, even absent the impacts of human behavior, we say there is suffering in nature, such as the pelican chick. So a purely deontological approach to nature, rooted in a desire to minimize and ultimately escape suffering brought on by human attachment to things (*dukkha*), is only a partial approach to caring for nature in which there is suffering that is not easily understood as *dukkha*.

Eco-Buddhism, like eco-Christianity, is revisiting, revising, and reinterpreting its tradition in order to enable responsible judgments with respect to diverse, oftentimes competing entities. The incorporation of “rights” into Buddhist thought is an example. Damien Keown concludes that “in classical Buddhism the notion of rights is present in embryonic form although not yet born into history (Keown 2000, 64).” However, with respect to “giving birth” to the notion today, Keown says “the most promising approach will be one which locates human rights and dignity within a comprehensive account of human goodness, and which sees basic rights and freedoms as integrally related to human flourishing and self-realization (Ibid. 70).” He incorporates this into the human ability to live up to the third and fourth Noble Truths, which he interprets as revealing the “literally infinite capacity of human nature for participation in goodness (Ibid. 71).” The practical value of human rights is one of empowering human goodness to discern at least relative right and wrong between people and establishing justice within human relationships. More explicitly environmental in tone is the emergence of animal rights as a guide to responsible eco-Buddhism. Traditional challenges to animal rights by Buddhism are the bad karma associated with animals and brief history of interpreting care for animals as meritorious in



the sense of good karma. However, Paul Waldau suggests that these challenges are not insurmountable, noting that “a desire to be informed so as to act responsibly leads one to assess the consequences of one’s actions, and this could in turn have led to inquiries about the nature and complexities of the living beings affected by human action (Waldau 2000, 100).” Waldau believes that through a reexamination of the Buddhist tradition today within the context of the ecological crisis, this “desire to be informed so as to act responsibly” is supporting an ethic of animal rights founded upon: the precept against killing; a concern for the consequences of one’s actions on the non-human animal world; and an examination of the actual complexities and distinctions in the realm of non-human animal life that have never been acknowledged in Buddhism but are now the focus of modern ecology.

That is an initial look at the responsibility of eco-Buddhism. It is engaged in a dialogue to bring together seemingly disparate concepts, such as non-duality (an ontological concept) and unity-in-diversity (an ecological concept), into an ethic of compassion for the entities and life of the conventional world.

### III. Redemption

Action to stop the ecological crisis is implicitly goal-seeking, the goal being an end to the crisis and a way of living that avoids such a crisis for the foreseeable future. All goal-seeking behavior includes an existing condition and a desired condition. Together these motivate and give direction to redemption.

The modern religious response to the ecological crisis teaches that an awakening (or reawakening) to space as holy ground would help create the desired condition and sustain a proper ethic toward the environment. Be it eco-Christianity or eco-Buddhism, the argument is that a sense of the sacred in nature would promote reverent regard for natural things, including non-human life, leading to compassionate, sustainable use of the earth. The ecological crisis challenges us to connect ontological truth with responsibility toward conventional symbols of ontological truth, meaning everything in the world.

Don Swearer describes Buddhadasa’s practice as bio-centric: “...listening to nature and caring for nature are both forms of *dhammic* self-forgetting, not merely instrumental to human flourishing (Swearer 1997, 28).” While not describing a vision per se, this view shows a regard for nature as holy or reverent, which easily speaks for a vision in which plunder and exploitation do not exist.

In *Nuclear Ecology and Engaged Buddhism*, Ken Kraft speaks of animals, plants, and the whole earth having eco-karma (Kraft 2000, 278-9). The soteriology of enlightenment and its possible attainment by all beings leads to a regard for all life as part of the religious community or *sangha*. Even if enlightenment ultimately transcends the natural world (as with the Christian after-life), whole-earth karma mitigates against individualism and implicitly supports a vision of mutuality in the here and now supported by appropriate ethical regard and virtue. This plays out in a manner fully informed by ecology and the needs of healthy ecosystems since, in the words of Rita Gross, interdependence is “one of the most basic teachings of Buddhism (Gross 2000, 295).”

I have presented two potentially important influences on an eco-Buddhist vision for nature: 1) nature as *dhamma*, specifically teaching the transparency of ontological truth in ecology; and 2) whole-earth karma with the possibility of universal enlightenment. These are substantive elements for a compelling vision of nature in an age of ecological crisis. This is not to say that “*dhamma* as nature and whole-earth karma with the possibility for universal enlightenment” easily translate into such a vision. Though still an emerging ideology, eco-Buddhism is a call to live gently, interdependently, sustainably, and sufficiently. That, in itself, is a redemptive vision.

As with eco-Christianity, eco-Buddhism reveals the perennial religious struggle to bring spirituality to bear in the lived context, which is always changing; or, put another way, to bring the ontological to bear in the ever-changing conventional world. This is the struggle to be neither too worldly nor too otherworldly; to be both non-monist and non-dualist; to follow the middle way. Inspired by the *dhamma* of nature, whole-earth karma, and the prospect for universal enlightenment, eco-Buddhism seeks greater integration between ontological oneness and ecological connectedness in order to promote ecological health and sustainability through skillful, compassionate living in a conventional world.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there is important common ground between eco-Buddhism and eco-Christianity. One such element is that both seek to justify themselves within the context of their own complex histories and traditions. Eco-religiosity is only emerging – not fully developed or widely expressed in the teachings and practices of the mainstream. However, in a world community that looks for faith communities to offer hope and guidance during times of crisis, both eco-Christianity and eco-Buddhism can proclaim a common message of relatedness, responsibility, and redemption. They acknowledge a *relatedness* of all material or conventional life that is ecological and ontological. There is a oneness that is absolute, which is both the source and goal of all ecological diversity. There is suffering in life: suffering inherent to a diverse, dynamic “living world;” but, also, suffering that is a consequence of human action. The human *responsibility* affirmed by both eco-Buddhism and eco-Christianity to address such consequent suffering is broad in scope, deeply compassionate, and salvific. Both believe in a *redemption* that is transcendent and yet is perceived and manifested through immanence, be it *dhammic* or divine, that guides practical behavior and has practical outcomes.

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