Southeast Asian Studies

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Environmental Consciousness in Southeast and East Asia: Comparative Studies of Public Perceptions of Environmental Problems in Hong Kong (China), Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam

Preface

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Given the generally deteriorating state of the environment, both locally and globally, the question of the extent of popular concern about environmental problems in Asian countries has considerable importance. Government leaders often assume that the public is unaware of environmental problems and little concerned with their solution. Environmental NGOs, on the other hand, often assert that common people are deeply concerned about the state of their environment, reflecting traditional beliefs that people should live in harmony with nature. Empirical information on popular attitudes toward the environment in the countries of Southeast and East Asia is in short supply, however, so that no one really knows what the level of popular environmental consciousness actually is.

There is, of course, abundant anecdotal evidence that Asians care about environmental issues. For example, the rebellion that toppled Field Marshall Thanom from power in Thailand in the 1970s was triggered by popular outrage over media revelations that he and his cronies had been shooting wildlife in a national park from military helicopters. More recently, Thai farmers protesting against construction of dams have mobilized considerable public support, at least in part because of their argument that dams destroy the environment. Even in Japan, where people tend to avoid engaging in

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public controversies, voters in Nagano Prefecture recently overwhelming re-elected a maverick governor who had been forced out of office by the powers-that-be because he had ordered a halt to construction of more dams. Thus, we know that at least some members of the public in Asian countries do care about the state of the environment. But how people conceptualize the environment, what their attitudes are towards nature, and what measures they feel should be taken to protect the environment have all remained matters of speculation. It was to help fill this gap in our knowledge that the research reported in the following papers was undertaken.

The papers in this special issue of *Southeast Asian Studies* are the products of the second phase of a long-term multinational research project.[1] The project was designed and managed by a steering committee composed of the authors of this preface. A. Terry Rambo served as a project coordinator and Otsuka Takashi was responsible for administering the project for IGES.

In the first and preceding phase of the project, we did a broad survey of environmental consciousness and factors affecting it in a number of localities in Asia and the Pacific, including Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Palau, and Taiwan. The results were published as a special issue of *Asian Geographer* (Vol. 18, Nos. 1 and 2, 1999). These studies did not use a common methodology, however, and relied largely on sources other than the people in whose consciousness we were interested. We therefore decided to do a more intensive, interview-based study of attitudes at the cultural models they reflect in the four localities presented here, using a single methodology that had been used successfully in the United States.

Data collection for this portion of the project was carried-out in Hong Kong and Japan in 1999 and in Thailand and Vietnam during 2000. Initial reports of findings were presented by each of the national teams at an international seminar held at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2001. Revised versions of these reports were then presented at a panel of the Kyoto Environmental Sociology Congress in October 2001. These papers were reviewed by the project steering committee at a meeting at the National Institute for Environmental Studies in Tsukuba, Japan, in February 2002 and suggestions for revisions made to their authors. Thanks to the wonders of the Internet and the enthusiastic cooperation of the authors responsible for the individual papers, we have been able to prepare this special issue.

Methodology and Major Findings of a Comparative Research Project on Environmental Consciousness in Hong Kong (China), Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam

James E. Nickum* and A. Terry Rambo**

The papers in this special issue present the findings of research conducted as part of a comparative project on environmental consciousness in several countries (Hong Kong-China, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam) in Southeast and East Asia. This project was undertaken in order to try to better understand the nature of public environmental concerns in different countries and to search for commonalities and differences in these perceptions. In this introduction we describe the objectives of the research, the conceptual framework employed for the country studies, and the research methodology we employed. We then present a brief comparison of the cultural models we have generated for each of the countries and discuss some other key findings.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of the project were:

- To delineate "cultural models" of the environment in different Asian societies.
- To examine the similarities and differences of cultural models of the environment in different societies in Asia.
- To assess the extent to which individuals are concerned about environmental problems in different countries.
- To identify the reasons why people are concerned about environmental problems.
- To examine differences in the way in which members of the elite and lay people understand environmental problems.
- To identify policy implications of research findings

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Conceptual Framework

All of the four national research teams employed a common methodology derived from the study of environmental consciousness in the United States carried-out in the early 1990s by Willard Kempton and colleagues [Kempton *et al.* 1996]. This application of an established methodology also allowed us to make comparisons not only within our Asian sample but also with the quite different cultural system of the United States.

At the same time, we have come to recognize a number of limitations in applying the approach of Kempton *et al.* to our respective contexts. These include differences in interviewing cultures, identification (or lack thereof) of values as religiously based, and our use of a relatively unsophisticated and perhaps a bit outdated version of the rapidly developing field of cognitive anthropology (as compared, e. g., with Shore [1996], who, however, does not provide a methodology that is as clear-cut or replicable). Our primary purpose here, however, is to provide a brief introduction to the approach of Kempton *et al.*, and leave elaboration of the limitations to the country studies and subsequent discussion.

Kempton *et al.* provide a path-breaking analysis of the components and causes of popular environmental thinking in the United States, using a two-staged anthropological approach:

Stage 1. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, enabling informants to explain their beliefs and values in their own words. These words are then used to create a survey questionnaire that is used in Stage 2.

Stage 2. Closed-ended survey questionnaire, administered to a larger population, that tests how widely the findings apply across diverse groups. For a number of reasons, our study has not moved to this stage.

The semi-structured interview protocol has three main components. It begins by exploring the informant's *existing mental models* of environment and climate. Specifically, it inquires into attitudes towards the environment and the relationship between humans and nature in general, and attitudes towards the greenhouse effect in particular. It then offers a *briefing*, including charts, providing the informant with a summary of the current state of scientists' views of the greenhouse effect, and records the informant's reactions. It follows this by asking the informant to assess various *policy responses*. In the case of climate change, these are: wait-and-see, regulate, increase fuel prices, go nuclear, or adopt technological "fixes." Finally, it gathers personal information about informants (sex, age, political party affiliation, religious affiliation, annual income etc.)

and records the interviewer's impressions.

Kempton *et al*. carried out semi-structured interviews with 43 informants, including two pilot interviews with well-informed specialists and a nearly equal number of lay people and very broadly defined specialists. The selection of informants was more opportunistic, seeking to cover a broad range of possible mental and cultural models, than representative of the population as a whole. Thus, for example, males are over-represented (at a significance level of 0.10) as are the share, especially of lay people, who express an affinity with the Republican Party (GOP). This is not entirely coincidental, as in the United States males tend to vote more conservatively than females among the lay population, while the environmental specialist community tends to be independent or inclined towards the Democratic Party. This method places a great deal of reliance on the judgment of the researchers, which may make it a bit inelegant methodologically, but relatively easy to adapt to a low-budget multinational study such as ours.

Forty out of the 43 interviews of Kempton *et al*. yielded transcripts, totaling 458 pages, from which 165 pages of "key ideas" were gleaned. These ideas were further winnowed down into 142 statements that closely paraphrased informants' words and opinions. Sometimes they included both conclusions and some of the rationale for the opinion. On important issues, statements were selected with opposite biases and rhetoric. For example:

- Nature may be resilient, but it can only absorb so much damage. (♯109)
- The environment may have been abused, but it has tremendous recuperative powers. (♯29)
- The radical measures being taken to protect the environment are not necessary and will cause too much economic harm. (♯29)
- Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it. (♯58)
- The Creator intended that nature be used by humans, not worshipped by them. (♯69)
- There are too many environmental regulations right now. (♯81)
- We should return to more traditional values and a less materialistic way of life to help the environment. (♯141)

Combining these with 7 statements from a questionnaire on the "new environmental paradigm," Kempton *et al*. prepared a fixed form survey of 149 statements and administered it to a total of 142 people in five target groups in three categories: *environmentalist* (Earth First! and the Sierra Club); *economically threatened* (dry cleaners and laid-off sawmill workers); and the *lay public* (California subway riders, middle-class people at home, beachgoers and unidentified others). This allowed them to do statistical analyses and correlations.

We have opted in our project not to move to this second step of a fixed form survey.

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In part this was because of the lack of adequate human and other resources, but also it was because we felt that the returns to effort were likely to be considerably lower for our purposes than concentrating on the first, open-ended type of survey. This was because our primary goal was to see if we could construct coherent "cultural models" for each of our countries.

What Kempton *et al*. were looking for were *cultural models*, where a cultural model is defined as a widely shared *mental model*. A mental model in turn is "a simplified representation of the world that allows an individual to interpret observations, generate new inferences, and solve problems."

They found that the Americans in their sample, no matter what their political stance on environmentalism, draw on the same set of beliefs and values to interpret different kinds of environmental problems. This is particularly so of those that are (1) *complex*, with effects spread out in time and space; and (2) *ethically difficult*.

Kempton *et al*. found that American perspectives "are based on fundamental moral and religious views on" (1) the relationship between ourselves and nature; (2) the rights of other species; (3) the right of humans to change or manage nature; and especially (4) our responsibility to future generations. In particular, they found that environmental values have religious or spiritual origins that are made explicit (unlike respondents in most of our localities), and that they can be both anthropocentric (focusing on future generations, utilitarianism and aesthetics) and biocentric (with people seen as part of nature, species having rights to exist, and, less commonly, nature having intrinsic rights beyond mere survival).

They also discovered that informants used three different principal cultural models of nature: (1) as a limited resource that we rely upon; (2) as something that is balanced and interdependent, with unpredictable chain reactions if disturbed; and (3) as something that is devalued by the market, unappreciated by modern people, and respected by primitive people. In many respects, these lay models are at variance with those of scientific specialists, especially with regard to the "balance of nature" or the putatively greater respect of nature by our ancestors. At this level, we found a lot of resonances in our samples, but with indications of differences in areas such as the locus of responsibility for environmental degradation and action, the directness or explicit nature of reciprocity as an element of (or alternative model to) balance and interdependence, and the sense of efficacy of individual or social action—none of our sampled populations is known for having a high level of social capital, in the sense used by Robert Putnam [2000].

More specifically, it is clear that Americans incorporate global warming into existing concepts and (mis) interpret them through the lenses of previously salient environmental issues. They regard greenhouse gases as pollutants. They link them to ozone depletion. They connect them to photosynthesis and respiration, fearing the loss of the world's oxygen making capacity. And they link them to short-term variations in temperature. Many of our respondents made similar or identical linkages, indicating the existence, at

least at this level, of an internationally shared, continuously evolving, environmentalist discourse (or cultural model).

Research Methodology

In our studies in Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam, we employed a semi-structured questionnaire based on the model used by Kempton *et al.* The questionnaires used in each country included the same basic questions about how people conceptualize the relationship between people and nature, how people relate to nature in reality, are people concerned about the environment and what do they mean when they say they are concerned, do they think that other people are concerned about the environment, and why should the environment be protected. In addition, the questionnaires for each country incorporated a different environmental issue that is currently salient (suspended fine particulates for Hong Kong, dioxin for Japan, global warming for Thailand, and deforestation for Vietnam). Although quite different from one another, each of these issues shared the characteristics of complexity and ethical difficulty. We also modified some of the identifying information for respondents to fit local conditions—e. g., in Japan, not asking religious or political affiliations, but adding place of origin. In Hong Kong, Japan, and Vietnam, we also added brief comparative risk assessments, and in Hong Kong and Japan, willingness-to-pay sections.

Samples of from 20 to 33 informants were interviewed in each country. Each national sample was selected to include members of the elite (scientists, businessmen and government officials), and lay people (housewives, manual workers, shopkeepers). We were opportunistic in our samples, but tried as much as possible to interview a broad variety of people. Table 1 presents a summary profile of the respondents in the samples for each country.

Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and then subject to qualitative analysis to identify patterns in the responses. Each national team then prepared a report on its findings. These findings are described in the papers in this special issue by Yok-shiu F. Lee (Hong Kong, China), James Nickum, Aoyagi-Usui Midori, and Otsuka Takashi (Japan), Opart Panya and Solot Sirisai (Thailand), and Pham Thi Thuong Vi and A. Terry Rambo (Vietnam). The present paper offers a preliminary attempt to identify key similarities and differences in public environmental consciousness as manifested in the four countries.

Table 1 Summary of Characteristics of Respondents in Each Country

	Hong Kong	Japan	Thailand	Vietnam
Dates of interviewing	5–8/1999	2–4/1999	8–10/2000	9–11/2000
Number of respondents	23	33	22	20
Number of females/males	13/10	13/20	8/14	10/10
Number of lay/elite	16/7	13/20	10/12	6/14

Key Findings

In this section, we will briefly summarize comparative findings relating to three central issues: 1) cultural models of nature held by people in different Asian countries; 2) Similarities and Differences in Cultural Models; 3) the extent to which people in different countries are concerned about the state of the environment; and 4) the reasons why people are concerned about the environment.

1. *Cultural Models of Nature in Different Asian Countries*

Each of the four countries displays a somewhat different model of nature and human relations with it although there are some broad similarities among their models.

Hong Kong

Nature and humans are seen as having a very close relationship in which the welfare of human beings and nature is intertwined. Some elite respondents say that people and nature form an integrated system in which it is important to maintain some balance. Most view this interdependency from an anthropocentric and utilitarian perspective. A good natural environment is desirable because it would lead to good physical health and a good quality of life for people. Conversely, damaging the environment has negative consequences for humans. As one respondent summed it up, "People would be punished by nature, if the air quality, water quality, and the environment is degraded."

Japan

Respondents are divided as to whether or not people are part of nature but they share a common view that relations between people and nature are reciprocal. People should protect nature so that it can continue to provide them with benefits. This utilitarian view of the relationship is illustrated by one respondent's remark that, "In the end it will come back to us. [Environmental protection] is for our own sake." Most respondents also feel that modern people are not fully keeping their share of the bargain, taking from nature but not giving back. And they display nostalgia for an imagined simpler past when the impact of humans on the environment was more benign.

Thailand

All respondents see nature and the environment as being "the world around them," but lay and elite groups hold somewhat different views of this "world." Many lay respondents, particularly rural people, speak of a single integrated natural world whereas some elite respondents differentiate "nature" from "the environment" with nature associated in their minds with the rural periphery and environment associated with the modern,

man-made world of the cities. For both groups, however, nature is perceived as an organized and self-regulating system of which people are a part. People are seen as having a reciprocal relationship with the other elements of this system. Nature provides humans with food and survival necessities but nature needs human protection. Humans have a responsibility to maintain a harmonious balance with nature because, if the environment is degraded, people will suffer shortages of needed resources. Uniquely, among the four countries, a number of Thai respondents mention the moral and aesthetic values of nature to humans. Thus, one student said that, "the beauty of nature make's human minds fresh." The motives expressed by Thai respondents for protecting nature are predominantly utilitarian, however.

Vietnam

Most elite respondents see nature as a balanced system of which humans are an integral part while lay respondents perceive people as being dependent on nature since it provides them with the means for survival. Both models are utilitarian, however, since in either case, humans must avoid damaging nature or they will suffer negative consequences. As one lay respondent put it, "If the natural environment is good, people will have good physical health. But, if the environment is polluted, it will cause many diseases. [For this reason] people should protect the environment and keep it clean."

2. Similarities and Differences in Cultural Models

There are some strong similarities, and a few noteworthy differences, among the cultural models we have delineated for Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam:

- In all of the countries, nature and the environment are predominantly conceived of as the immediate surroundings of people—their homes, neighborhoods, and local communities. Only a few respondents display concern with the global environment.
- In all of the countries, people and nature are seen as being tightly intertwined. Some see people as part of nature, others say that people are separate from nature but closely linked to it, but all recognize that human welfare and the well-being of nature are highly interdependent.
- In all of the countries, the relationship between people and nature is seen in anthropocentric and utilitarian terms. Protection of the environment is justified by the benefits that this provides to people and the damages they will suffer, particularly to their health, if the environment is degraded.
- Almost no concern is shown for protecting nature for its own sake. Only a few respondents in Hong Kong invoke a biocentric rationale for protecting wild species.
- Excepting some respondents in Thailand, and one in Hong Kong, religious reasons

are not explicitly invoked as the rationale for protecting nature. This is quite different from what Kempton *et al.* [1996] found for Americans, who frequently offered religiously derived justifications for protecting nature.

- The aesthetic value of nature to people receives little attention. Only a few Thais and one Japanese refer to the beauty of nature.

- Lay respondents, especially those in Thailand and Vietnam, often do not recognize the official terms meaning "environment" (which are newly coined words in Thai and Vietnamese) but they all understand the concept once it is explained using more popular language.

- Respondents do not in general have a strong scientifically-based understanding of environmental problems. Perceptions of environmental problems appear to be strongly shaped by media coverage that, unfortunately, is all too often sensationalist and only weakly founded on scientific analysis. In Japan, for example, lay people perceive dioxin as a much greater risk than do scientists. In Hong Kong, most respondents say they are concerned about air pollution but few display any clear understanding of its causes or consequences. In Thailand, many respondents explained global warming as being mainly caused by deforestation, although there is no convincing evidence linking loss of forest cover to global climate change. One can argue, of course, as Panya and Sirisai do in their paper, that science should not be privileged above other paradigms for understanding environmental problems. Without disparaging the value of indigenous knowledge, we would simply note that in global environmental discourse, science is the standard against which policies are evaluated. If the public does not understand the underlying causes of environmental change, support for policies designed to mitigate such changes will be weakened.

- The countries differ in the kinds of environmental problems that respondents identify as important. Clean air, water, and local sanitary conditions are the major environmental components identified by most respondents in Japan and Hong Kong. Thus, although respondents in Hong Kong often initially pointed to air pollution as the number one environmental problem in the city, most working class people cited "noise," "broken toilets in public lavatories," and "littered streets" as specific examples of environmental problems that concerned them personally. In Thailand, many respondents mentioned destruction of forests and climate changes as important environmental issues. Deforestation and degradation of natural resources were also mentioned by many Vietnamese respondents. Only a few respondents, usually environmental scientists, in any of the countries, mention the viability of natural ecosystems or the survival of other species (biodiversity conservation) as environmental problems.

3. *Extent to Which People Are Concerned about the State of the Environment*
Concern about the state of the environment is very widespread in the publics of all four countries. Almost all respondents in all of the countries state that they are personally are concerned about the environment. Interestingly, lay people are as likely as members of the elite to express concern about the environment. However, although most respondents say they are concerned about the environment, the depth of their concern is often very limited. The state of the environment is not a highly salient concern compared to making a living or other day-to-day worries.

The great majority of our respondents in Japan and Thailand believe that most other people (family, friends, neighbors) are also concerned about the environment. In Hong Kong, however, most respondents state that they are personally concerned about the environment but say that their family and friends, the general public, government officials, and businessmen are *not* concerned about the environment at all, while in Vietnam, most respondents state that their family and friends are concerned about the environment but that only a few government officials and no businessmen are concerned.

In all of the national samples, respondents display little confidence in their capacity to do anything effective to protect the environment outside of their immediate living space. There appears to be a widespread lack of confidence in government as an agent of change.

4. *Reasons Why People Are Concerned about the Environment*
The motivations for protecting the environment expressed by individuals in all four Asian countries (with the partial exception of Thailand) are primarily personalistic, anthropocentric, and utilitarian. In general, their environmental concerns are not related to broad religious beliefs or moral positions. They fear that environmental change will adversely impact their own health, well-being, and quality of life and that of their families. They do not express much concern with conserving biodiversity or maintaining the balance of nature for its own sake nor do they invoke religiously based motivations for protecting the environment. The following major characteristics of public environmental concern are evident:

- Human comfort, health, and quality of life, especially that of themselves and their families, are the major reasons that respondents are concerned about the environment, i. e., their reasons for protecting the environment are primarily *anthropocentric* and *personalistic*.
- Only a few respondents are concerned with protecting natural ecosystems or conserving other species for their own sake. Respondents in Thailand and Vietnam, for example, who express concern about deforestation, tend to see this as a problem because it deprives country people of natural sources of food and other resources. Thus, their concern is a *utilitarian* one. They do not display *biocentric*

reasons for protecting the environment.

- Only a few respondents in Thailand, and one in Japan, make reference to the aesthetic value of nature. That more respondents do not mention the aesthetic value of nature is somewhat surprising in view of the shared Buddhist heritage of all of the countries as well as the important place that nature occupies in art and poetry in the traditional Confucian culture that underlies modern cultures in Hong Kong, Japan, and Vietnam.

- Religious reasons for protecting the environment are rarely explicitly expressed. *Spiritualistic* reasons for protecting the environment are not encountered except for some respondents in Thailand who suggest that nature and society cannot exist without each other so that moral bonds must exist between people and nature. In contrast, Kempton *et al.* [1996] found American environmental values were derived from three sources: religious beliefs, humanistic values, especially concern for future generations, and "biocentric" values that vest nature with intrinsic rights, such as the right of other species to a continued existence. That Americans express moral and religious justifications for protecting the environment whereas the Asians in our sample invoke anthropocentric and utilitarian justifications, is a rather surprising inversion of the stereotypical view of the East as "spiritualistic" and the West as "materialistic." The failure of our respondents to explicitly mention religious reasons for protecting nature, does not, of course, prove that religion plays no role in shaping their thinking about human relations with the environment. It may well be, as is suggested in the paper on Japan, that differences in the nature of religion in America and East Asian countries explains the lack of explicit references to religion by Asian respondents. Certainly, America stands out among Western countries for its high degree of public "religiosity." This does not, however, in any way suggest that Americans are more likely to display a higher morality in their dealings with nature than Asians; only that they are more likely to invoke moral and religious justifications in public discourse.

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Environmental Consciousness in Hong Kong

Yok-shiu F. Lee*

Abstract

The majority of the public in Hong Kong have repeatedly told pollsters that they believe environmental problems have become very serious in the city. They are, however, at the same time, highly skeptical about the actual degree of concern felt by their neighbors, friends and relatives. Their belief that only they themselves are environmentally conscious but not the others probably stems from the fact that people in Hong Kong tend to, unconsciously, think about the concept of "environment" at several different spatial scales and, unknowingly, switch between these spatial scales in evaluating their own environmental attitudes and behavior and those of other people around them. In the end, their scepticism is further reinforced by, or is a logical extension of, their own mental model of nature, where an emerging social norm on the importance of protecting nature is eclipsed by a fatalistic mood among the public, on the one hand, and the pragmatic concerns of the elite with economics, on the other.

Keywords: environmental consciousness, Hong Kong, cultural models, air pollution, public opinion

Survey results clearly demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of the public in Hong Kong believe that the city's environmental problems are very serious or very urgent [Chan 1993; ECC 1993; 1995; Green Power 1994; 1995; Lee *et al*. 1997]. These survey results, however, do not tell us much about the motivations, and reservations, if any, behind the public's expressed concern for the environment [Barnes 1997; Ng and Ho 1995; Lee 1999; 2002]. In order to improve our understanding of the underlying premises of and major factors in shaping public perceptions on environmental problems, in-depth interviews were conducted by the author with 23 individuals from May through August in 1999. Table 1 presents summary data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Using an interview protocol with open-ended questions, respondents were asked to describe and explain their perceptions of Hong Kong's environmental problems in general as well as their views on one of the leading environmental problems, as defined by the Hong Kong government's current policy thrust—respirable suspended

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Table 1　Profiles of Interviewees

Code	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Household Income（HK$）	Occupation
H 1	Chiang	M	20s	post-graduate	50k−60k	senior civil servant
H 2	Lau	M	50s	secondary	30k−40k	secondary school technician
H 3	Tsang	F	19	secondary	40k−50k	secondary school student
H 4	Chiu	M	40s	university	60k+	secondary school teacher
H 5	Lai	F	50s	secondary	20k−30k	housewife
H 6	Fung	F	20s	secondary	40k−50k	social worker
H 7	Lee	M	60s	primary	20k−30k	commercial van driver
H 8	Ting	M	30s	post-graduate	60k+	financial comptroller
H 9	Law	M	40s	university	60k+	lawyer
H 10	Siu	F	80s	primary	< 10k	retiree
H 11	Leung	M	50s	primary	40k−50k	taxi-driver
H 12	Lui	M	40s	university	50k−60k	newspaper editor
H 13	Ho	F	20s	university	30k−40k	newspaper editor
H 14	Tsui	F	50s	secondary	< 10k	housewife
H 15	Yeung	F	30s	primary	< 10k	housewife
H 16	Ma	F	50s	secondary	< 10k	housewife
H 17	Fung	F	30s	secondary	50k−60k	clerical worker
H 18	Ng	M	40s	university	60k+	local politician
H 19	Cai	F	30s	secondary	10k−20k	clerical worker
H 20	Tong	F	17	primary	< 10k	student
H 21	Cheung	F	40s	secondary	10k−20k	housewife
H 22	Ching	F	40s	primary	10k−20k	housewife
H 23	Mak	M	40s	primary	10k−20k	unemployed

particulates (RSP).

　　The interviewees' views on human-nature relationship are presented in the next section.　In Section II, perceptions on environmental problems in general, as well as their values, beliefs and personal experiences that have helped shape those perceptions, are discussed.　In Section III, the respondents' knowledge and their views on the causes, consequences and possible solutions of the respirable suspended particulates issue are examined.　The implications of the research findings are discussed in the concluding section.

I　Views on Human-Nature Relationship

I−1　*How Should People Relate to Nature?*
An overwhelming majority of the informants say that there should be "a very close relationship" between people and nature.　They believe that the welfare of human beings and that of nature are intertwined, although most of them look upon this interdependent relationship from a largely anthropocentric and utilitarian perspective.　A great number of respondents (H 11; H 13; H 17; H 23), mostly lay person, give a succinct and matter-of-

fact view: A good natural environment is desirable because it would lead to good physical health and a good quality of life for people. The elites tend to offer more elaborations. For instance, Mr. Ng (H 18), a local politician in his 40s, states that human beings and nature, the two together, make up "one integrated whole." "The dynamics of the entire natural system involve the human element; and people's activities also have impacts on nature," he affirms. He continues to add that "at a minimum, there should be a kind of balance achieved and maintained in the natural ecological system." Two other interviewees, both professionals, share his view. Mr. Ting (H 8), a young financial comptroller, who points out that: "Trees can absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen and this is good for human being. People would be affected, therefore, if the environment is degraded." Ms. Ho (H 13), a newspaper editor in her 20s, asserts that "people's daily activities should follow nature's normal cycle because nature prescribes a certain set of rhythm" in regulating the dynamics on earth. "People would be punished by nature," she continues, "if the air quality, water quality and the environment is degraded."

I-2 *How Do People Relate to Nature in Reality?*

While almost all the respondents agree that a norm has been reached by the public in Hong Kong regarding the importance of protecting nature and the environment, many of them (H 13; H 21; H 23) also point out that there is a big gap between that norm and what people are actually doing to nature. "The majority of people are in fact destroying nature," complained Mr. Ma (H 23), who is unemployed and lives in a village in the New Territories. Ms. Ho (H 13), the newspaper editor, while affirming the importance of forging a close link between human and nature, concedes that "in reality, it is almost impossible for people and nature [to maintain a close relationship] and that people in Hong Kong are in fact alienated from nature." She continues to explain that one of the major difficulties in trying to (re)establish a close link between human and nature is that "people would have to pay a very high price" for such a link and apparently most people are not yet convinced of the necessity of doing so.

Taking a more apologetic stance than Ms. Ho, Ms. Cai (H 19), a clerical worker in her 30s, believes that the lack of a close link between human beings and nature in Hong Kong is due to the fact that Hong Kong people are born and raised in a high-density urban setting effectively divorced from nature. "[Hong Kong people] do not have a choice," she demurs, "people born in foreign countries could enjoy from birth very spacious natural environment, but for people in Hong Kong, one would already be considered very fortunate if he/she is not born into a household residing in a public rental flat." Sharing this fatalistic perspective on human-nature relationship is the argument that, in the twin processes of urbanization and industrialization, it is inevitable that the natural environment would be affected or even destroyed by human activities (e. g., H 8; H 12).

An outgrowth of the inevitability argument is a pragmatic view expounded by several elite respondents, who believe that a balance should and could be struck between

the need for further development and the need to protect nature. For instance, proclaimed Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller: "In principle I support the protection of nature. . . . However, if there is a need for development, whether it is a government-funded public project or a private developer's initiative, shouldn't we consider finding some space in the city to allow development to proceed? I think there should be a balance [between development and nature]."

II　Perceptions on Environmental Problems

II−1　*Are People Concerned about the Environment?*

Almost all the respondents say that they themselves are concerned about the environment. The way they offer their responses (sometimes with hesitation; at times with doubt; and at other times with reservations), however, suggests that there are varying degrees of concern. The majority of interviewees have only *limited* concern and many have shown some second thoughts about the importance of this issue. Ms. Tsang (H 3), a secondary school student, for instance, expresses her doubt about the actual degree of air pollution reported by the government: "I notice that the air quality is bad in Causeway Bay [a major shopping area in Hong Kong island] when I walk past that neighborhood, but . . . it is not that bad . . . is it really that bad?" Mr. Leung (H 11), a taxi-driver in his 50s, says that he is somewhat concerned about environmental problems "but not necessarily so if there is a conflict of interest."

Most respondents admit that they have seldom discussed environmental issues in daily conversations with their friends, family members and co-workers. Almost all of the respondents say that they believe that the overwhelming majority of their family members, friends, and co-workers are generally *not* very concerned about the environment, unless their personal health is directly affected. For instance, Mr. Law (H 9), a lawyer in his 40s, says that "when people go swimming in polluted sea water and their personal health is adversely affected, then they will show a concern for the environment, if you would regard that as a 'concern.'"

Mr. Ng (H 18), a local politician in his 40s, says that he and his friends seldom talk about "environmental protection" issues *per se*, but he reminds us that it does not necessarily mean that they do not care about environmental issues, broadly defined. For example, although he and his friends would not use the term "environmental protection" explicitly in their daily conversation, he believes that sometimes their discussion might implicitly pertain to this issue—such as when they all agree that smoking should be banned in restaurants—without necessarily focusing on or mentioning the environmental agenda specifically.

Almost all of the respondents also believe that the general public in Hong Kong are *not* very concerned about the environment. Ms. Cai (H 19), a female clerical worker in her

30s, believes that the public's lack of concern for environmental issues is the result of "a poor sense of civic consciousness" in Hong Kong. She says that, in Hong Kong, "everyone is busy with making a living [and] no one has the time to pay attention to such issues." A number of respondents suggest that the general public might have only recently begun to have more concern for environmental issues because "air pollution has been worsening in recent years and this made people ask the question—why is air quality deteriorating" (Mr. Ng, H 18).

Furthermore, many respondents believe that government officials are, for the most part and/or up until several years ago, *not* concerned about environmental problems in Hong Kong. Mr. Ng (H 18), our local politician, points out that government officials "totally ignored" the environmental issues in the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s.

Mrs. Cheung (H 21), a housewife, thinks that even if government officials are concerned with the environment, they do not have the same level of concern for the environment in different parts of Hong Kong. She believes that there is "huge discrepancy" between different neighborhoods with regard to the level of attention paid by government officials. "The streets in the wealthier neighborhoods are cleaner [than those in poorer sections of the city]," says Mrs. Cheung.

Mr. Ting (H 8), a financial comptroller in his late 30s, points out that the government's approach to all sorts of problems, including environmental protection, is very much ad hoc and short-term. Given that government officials have no long-term vision and long-term strategy to deal with problems, he believes that they are not particularly concerned about the environment.

Lastly, most respondents believe that private corporations are *not* concerned with the environment. Both Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, and Mr. Mak (H 23), an unemployed construction worker, believe that private corporations are only concerned with "business interests" and will show concern for the environment only "when they are required by law to do so or are pressured by mass media reports." Concurred Mrs. Ma (H 16), a retired housewife, who says that big companies are only concerned with their "own internal environment"—meaning "their offices' physical outward appearance and internal hygienic conditions." Mr. Law (H 9), the lawyer, says that, for big corporations, making a profit is their first priority. "When their primary concern is focussed on the bottom line, they would not consider ethical issues [such as environmental protection]," observed Mr. Law.

II-2 *What Do People Mean When They Say They Are Concerned about the Environment?*
Most respondents have a rather simple notion or *narrow* interpretation about the meaning of environment and of environmental protection. Quite a number of interviewees understand environmental problems primarily as "littering" in the streets and in the countryside. Mrs. Ching (H 22), a housewife, and Mr. Mak (H 23), an unemployed worker, both of whom live in a village, refer to the environment simply as "water" and "air." For

them, environmental protection simply means "keeping clean"—do not litter.

For instance, the word "environment" is understood by some respondents (Mr. Lui (H 12), aged mid-40s, a newspaper editor; Mrs. Cheung (H 21), aged mid-40s, a housewife) as comprising primarily the "sanitary conditions of one's immediate living environment." With the meaning of the word "environment" interpreted as such, these respondents then say that their relatives and friends are concerned with such "environmental" issues as the "noise," "broken water closets in the public lavatories" and "littered streets."

Moreover, with such an interpretation of the meaning of the word "environment," they also think that corporations are concerned with "environmental" issues, as evidenced by the latter's emphasis placed on "maintaining a hygienic [office and/or shopping] space ... for the sake of their own businesses and corporate image." But, interestingly, these respondents continue to point out that "half" of the general public are not concerned with the environment. They believe that these people—harbouring a selfish attitude of "it's none of my business"—would care less about "air pollution" and "litters in the streets," problems generally perceived to be more prevalent at the city-wide level than in one's own neighborhood.

Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, says that for his relatives, the environment constitutes primarily "their immediate surroundings," such as "their living areas, working areas, and areas where they hang out frequently—such as certain streets and neighborhoods." Mr. Mak (H 23) believes that most people are concerned with their own immediate living environment because "they are selfish." Mrs. Ma (H 16) concurs, "My mother lives in the New Territories and keeps her immediate living environment very clean. But she does not care about areas outside of her immediate living area."

Finally, it is interesting to note that while younger and better-educated interviewees have no problem at all with the concept of "environment," some older and poorly-educated respondents do not have the slightest idea about this concept which most of us take for granted! Mr. Lee (H 7), a commercial van driver in his 60s, when asked about his views of the "environment" in Hong Kong at the very beginning of the interview, offers this response: "the [economic] circumstance for our business is not so good in this past year or so." His answer clearly shows that he has interpreted the meaning of the Cantonese word of "environment" as "the circumstance"—which is one of the valid meanings of the word. When he is told the exact meaning of the word used in the study, he then says that he seldom talks about or discusses this type of "environment" with his friends.

II－3 *Why Are People Concerned (or Not Concerned) about the Environment?*

Most respondents say that they are concerned about the environment because they find the environmental conditions in Hong Kong have deteriorated. Almost all of them identify outdoor air pollution as a serious environmental problem that has triggered their concern for the environment. Almost all of them also cite some firsthand experience with

outdoor air pollution, usually on their way to their offices or schools.

Thus, for most respondents, their expressed concern for the environment is very much a *reflection* of their subjective experience/impression of the objective environmental conditions. For example, Mr. Chiu (H 4), a secondary school teacher in his early 40s, says: "The air quality has deteriorated in the past several years. The temperature has gone up. And it is muggier than before when you get out of the house." Mr. Lau (H 2), a secondary school technician in his early 50s, observes: "On my way to the office this morning, I walked past several trucks parked right next to a construction site. The drivers were enjoying the cool air inside the air-conditioned cabins but the emissions from the trucks were making me very uncomfortable when I walked past them." Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, points out that "in the past, one can get a nice view [of the Victoria Harbour] from the Peak. But nowadays [the visibility] is much worse." Ms. Ho (H 13), a newspaper editor in her late 20s, says that this perception—the visibility in the Victoria Harbour is getting worse—is particularly strong among people who have visited places outside of and have recently returned to Hong Kong. She points out that "even pictures taken on a seemingly clear day would turn out to be somewhat murky" and this is why she is concerned about the worsening conditions of Hong Kong's environment.

Mr. Law (H 9), the lawyer, says that he is concerned about the environment because he is concerned about pollution's impact on his *health*. He says that: "An increasing number of things cannot be trusted. For instance, the water coming out from the tap at home is sometimes yellowish and contains a lot of contaminants. Sometime you have to think twice about the quality of the drinking water. The tap water obviously needs to be filtered." All these considerations are making him quite concerned about the environment. Likewise, Ms. Fung (H 6), a social worker in her 20s, says that she is concerned about the environment because "I have allergy and air pollution worsens my health conditions."

One group clearly stands out in their strongly expressed concern for the environment—parents whose child/children are suffering from respiratory problems such as asthma (e. g., H 4 ; H 8). These parents are very concerned about air pollution issues because they strongly believe that there is a direct causal link between deteriorating air quality and the *health* of their children. Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller— originally from Hong Kong but has lived in the United States for 10 years before returning to Hong Kong 3 years ago with his then 2 years old boy—complains about the impact of bad air quality on his child's respiratory problem, which he insists developed only after they had relocated to Hong Kong. For instance, he says that he has learned from newspaper reports that: "Many people in Hong Kong suffer from allergies. For example, when my son first returned to Hong Kong [from the United States several years ago], he was often sick and he had running nose all the time." And he says that this is one major reason why he is concerned about the environment.

When asked the question why some people are not concerned about the environ-

ment, some interviewees say that their family members and friends are not concerned about the environment because, in the words of one of the interviewees (Ms. Yeung, H 15), "they do not sense that the environmental conditions have actually deteriorated that much."

Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller who has lived in the United States for about 10 years, however, offers a different explanation. He suggests that environmental protection is a relatively *new concept* for Hong Kong and therefore many people, particularly the older generations, are not familiar with this notion. He points out that: "It is only until recently that environmental protection issues have been discussed by the public in Hong Kong.... Therefore the level of [environmental] consciousness is not that intense." He adds that there are some practical considerations why Hong Kong people appear not to be concerned about the environment: "They [i. e., Hong Kong people] want convenience; they want to save time. [And such practical considerations] are regarded by Hong Kong people as more important than all those measures designed to protect the environment."

Ms. Ho (H 13), a newspaper editor, somewhat concurring with Mr. Ting, feels that most of her friends are not concerned about the environment because: "This issue does not have any direct, obvious consequences for them.... They all adopt an *utilitarian* outlook, meaning that they are more concerned with matters that would have an immediate financial cost or benefit impact for them personally."

Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, believes that "Hong Kong is a rather busy city and it is quite difficult to make a living. [Therefore] most people do not have much spare time to discuss this issue [environment].... After working for the whole day, [most people] will either play mah-jong or go to karaoke bar. Who would have the time to care about environmental problems ?"

Mr. Lui (H 12), on the other hand, believes that some people are not concerned about the environment because: "[They] have already *accustomed* to the [environmental problems] and feel that such problems cannot be changed. For example, there is much traffic noise on the streets.... It is difficult to change [such a problem], unless you relocate [your own residence].... If you think it is too noisy [in a certain location] then move to quieter neighborhood."

In fact, Mr. Lui's observation pertains to a recurrent theme that one encounters quite often in the discussion of environmental consciousness in Hong Kong. And that is, many people in Hong Kong believe that the solution to environmental problems could be obtained at the *personal* or *household* levels: One can obtain a better living environment by simply moving to a larger apartment in a better neighborhood. Such a belief reveals one major premise shared by many people: They have defined the word "environment" as comprising primarily one's immediate living conditions—the household and its surroundings.

Since both the problem and the solution of environmental problems in Hong Kong is

so narrowly defined at the personal/household spatial scale, many people then naturally focus their attention and energy in personal financial gains to enable themselves to attain (again, for themselves only) a better "living" environment. In other words, for many people in Hong Kong, personal affluence will lead to a better living environment. It is no wonder that surveys after surveys show that people in Hong Kong have placed economic growth on a higher priority than environmental protection because the solution to one's bad living environmental conditions lies in gaining wealth and, in turn, the ability to acquire a better living environment.

Of course, not everyone in Hong Kong subscribes to this belief. Ms. Ho (H 13), the newspaper editor, states that she is less concerned with the future of Hong Kong's economy than with RSP because: "It depends on what you are going after in life.... If the environment keeps deteriorating day after day, then it is meaningless even if you have become very rich."

II-4 *Why Should We Protect the Environment?*

Most respondents say that we need to protect the environment because a deteriorated environment has an immediate impact on their personal *comfort* and *quality of life*. Mrs. Ching (H 22), a housewife in her mid-40s, for instance, gives a rather succinct response to this question of why: "So that we can all live comfortably." Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, adds: "We need environmental protection because it would help improve the quality of life of our community."

Many interviewees also believe that a degraded environment has an impact on human *health* as well as the *well being* of the next generation. In other words, *anthropocentric* concerns, rather than ecocentric factors, constitute the primary motivation behind most adult respondents' decision to support environmental protection. Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, for instance, offers this answer when asked this question: "it [environmental protection] is all for the good of the next generation."

Interestingly, for younger respondents who are still studying at secondary school or who have recently graduated from secondary schools, their rationale for protecting the environment is mostly based on what they have learned in the school. For example, Ms. Tsang (H 3), a secondary school student, says that we need to protect the environment "because there is a hole in the ozone layer and we need to find a remedy to cure such a problem." Apparently, the environmental curricula in the primary and the secondary schools in Hong Kong have been highly effective in converting students' belief in this regard.

Only a small number of interviewees offer *ecocentric* consideration—such as "the protection of endangered species"—as the primary factor in accounting for their concern for the environment. Ms. Fung (H 17), a clerical worker in her 30s and a subscriber to the magazine published by the World Wide Fund for Nature, responds to this question by pointing out that "some birds and some marine organisms need to be protected because

they face the danger of extinction."

Only one interviewee mentions *religious* belief as the rationale for the need to protect the environment. Mr. Law (H 9), our lawyer, says that "it is rather difficult to state a clear reason on why we need to protect the environment." Nevertheless, he thinks that it is "a religious belief" that motivates his concern for the environment. He believes that he is just "a visitor [on planet earth]" and that he should "respect this place and keep it clean."

II–5　*Are People Willing to Pay Higher Taxes for Environmental Protection?*

Many respondents question the need to increase taxes to help pay for the costs of environmental protection and refuse to pay higher taxes for such a purpose. They believe that the Hong Kong government has much reserved money that could be tapped to help pay for such expenditure. Mrs. Ching (H 22), the village housewife, for instance, claims: "Of course I am not willing [to pay higher taxes]. The government has a lot of money. They should of course take care [of the environment]."

Mr. Mak (H 23), the unemployed, argues that the general public should not be asked to pay higher taxes for environmental protection. Instead, he believes that "the taxes should be levied on certain organizations and industries which are emitting air pollutants."

Mrs. Cheung (H 21), a housewife in her 40s, shows some reservations about paying higher taxes to help pay for the costs of environmental protection. She says that her support for a tax increase will depend on "the degree to which air quality would be improved" and "the cost effectiveness [of the proposed programs]." Mr. Law (H 9), a lawyer, sharing Mrs. Cheung's position, says that he needs to know "why there is a need to [increase tax] and what kinds of methods will be used [to tackle the environmental problems]" before he could reach a decision.

III　Perceptions on Respirable Suspended Particulates

III–1　*Have People Heard about "Respirable Suspended Particulates?"*

Most of the respondents have not come across this scientific term prior to the interview, even though almost all of them have identified air pollution as the major environmental problem that triggers their concern for the environment. When presented with new scientific data on RSP, therefore, most of the respondents confess that it is the first time for them to come across such information.

Interestingly, but not particularly surprising, two types of respondents—government officials and taxi drivers—are familiar with this term. Taxi drivers are familiar with this term because they regularly and intensely discuss issues relating to air pollution control and regulations with their colleagues—issues that have enormous implications for their job and livelihood.

Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, offers a considered view—not rare to the scientific community but not commonly found in the other interviewees—on the causal relationship between RSP and health. He points out that he knows that: "RSP is not good [for our health].... [But] you will have to inhale a large amount of RSP before you will get sick. By the time you get sick, however, you may not know if it is RSP that is the primary cause of your illness." He adds that he believes the air pollution problem in Hong Kong is caused to a great extent by air pollutants blown over from Shenzhen. He says that he "doesn't believe [everything about the environment] as reported by the media." "I feel that the air pollutants in Hong Kong are primarily blown over from factories in Shenzhen by the northerly winds.... [The air pollution problem] is not caused solely by Hong Kong's transport sector."

III-2 On Assigning the Responsibilities for Addressing the Issue of RSP

While most respondents say that several parties—government, vehicle owners, and the public—are responsible for the problem, the majority of the respondents believe that the government bears the primary responsibility in failing to regulate and control vehicular emissions. At the same time, they also believe that the government now appears to be committed to tackling the problem, but some suggest that additional social pressure in the form of media exposure and public opinion is needed to push the government into taking prompt actions.

Thus, regardless of the social background of the respondents, there is a major agreement among them that the government should take the leading role in regulating and/or enforcing the regulations over vehicular emissions.

Several other types of actions should be taken by the government—e. g., environmental education. Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, points out that it is important for the government to strengthen its work on educating the public about environmental issues by, for example, publicizing the adverse health impacts of RSP. His reasoning: "If someone like myself, who has served in the legislature [and should have been exposed to much environmental data], has not heard of the detailed information on RSP-related impacts, then you could imagine how much less information the public might have been exposed to." If we want the public to give support to the environmental cause, Mr. Ng argues, "then we need to make people aware of such problems in the first place."

III-3 On Assessing Impact of RSP on People's Health

When asked whether they believe RSP has had any impact on their personal health, a few of the respondents say that they remember a feeling of "discomfort" in their throats when they are exposed to "polluted air," particularly in areas with many vehicles. They have thus effectively equated "polluted air" with "RSP" in their thoughts.

However, many respondents say that either they are *not sure* or they think RSP only have a negligible impact on their own health. This may help explain the reservation and

hesitation shown by many interviewees when they answer the question: "Are you concerned about the environment―" Mr. Lui (H 12), a newspaper editor, says that: "Thus far we do not know exactly what the RSP look like. What consequences will result from inhaling various amount of RSP? ... The consequences are not visible. It seems that [the consequences] cannot be measured." Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller, admits that: "[I am] really not sure [whether RSP has affected my health]. May be it is because there are so many people on the streets.... One may get infected [by viruses] from being in a crowded place. So it may not be a direct impact from RSP."

Many respondents are not sure about the impacts of air pollutants (either RSP or second-hand smoke) on their own health. For instance, Mr. Ng (H 18), when asked whether he thinks he himself has been affected by second-hand smoke, says that "Yes, there is the general feeling [that I have been affected by second-hand smoke], but in fact I do not have any idea." Then, turning to the interviewer, he asks, "Do you know [the answer]?"

III–4 *On Proposed Suggestions in Addressing the Issue of RSP*

In this section, several proposals on dealing with the issue of RSP are read to the interviewees and they are asked whether or not they agree with such propositions. They are also asked to give an explanation for their views.

Proposal (i)

Respirable suspended particulates is a necessary evil to maintain our modern material lifestyle, so there is not much we can do about it.

Almost all of the interviewees do not agree with such a view. While they share the belief that something can be done to reduce RSP and yet maintaining the modern lifestyle, they differ in regard to the proposed solutions. Mr. Lau (H 2), the secondary school technician, believes that scientific research can help reduce RSP emission. Mr. Chiang (H 1), a government official, suggests switching from taking taxis to taking the subway train to help reduce RSP.

Ms. Cai (H 19), a clerical worker, agrees with the above views but thinks that there is a limit to our efforts in controlling RSP emissions. She says: "The emissions are linked to some of our necessities. You cannot go back in time and stop using motor vehicles. Are you suggesting that we should stop using trucks and instead use hand-push carts to deliver our goods? Is that possible?"

Proposal (ii)

We can cut back on the production of respirable suspended particulates by strictly regulating vehicular emissions. This will require some commercial vehicles like taxis and light trucks to switch to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which will result in higher operating costs for the operators and higher transportation costs for the consumers.

Many interviewees say that they are willing to pay a little bit more money for LPG taxis to help reduce RSP emissions (and to protect the environment). Some other interviewees say that people can take other means of public transport if they think LPG taxis are too expensive. There seems to be a consensus among all the interviewees that environmental protection does carry a price tag but that they are all willing to pay for a cleaner environment.

Proposal (iii)
We can reduce the total amount of respirable suspended particulates by expanding and promoting the use of public transportation networks such as the subway and railway systems. We can also reduce the total amount of respirable suspended particulates by restricting the use of private automobiles.

While all the interviewees agree with the proposal to expand and promote the use of public transportation networks, there is a major disagreement with regard to the restriction on the use of private automobiles, which is not necessarily a contest between those who drive and those who don't. Generally speaking, while interviewees who do not own any vehicles give their full support to the proposal in restricting private cars, owners of private vehicles (including all those who say that they support environmental protection and are willing to pay more to help protect the environment) invariably question the rationale and the effectiveness of restricting private cars.

Mrs. Cheung (H 21), a housewife who does not own a car, has reservations about this proposal because she is concerned about the consequences of restricting the number of private automobiles. She believes that such a proposed action will create "inconveniences" because it will reduce the total overall capacity of the transportation system. Moreover, she thinks that "reducing the number of private automobile will somehow make Hong Kong appear to be less prosperous." She adds, "If I could afford it, why can't I buy a car? If I have the money, I will buy one [for myself]."

Mr. Mak (H 23), who is unemployed, also expresses reservations about imposing control on the number of private cars because "Hong Kong is free market place . . . and if you impose control [on auto ownership] then it will benefit those who have already owned private cars." Moreover, adds Mrs. Ma (H 16), a retired housewife, "a restriction on private automobile will have an enormous impact on the economy because it will have repercussions for many other businesses such as auto insurance companies and repair shops." Therefore, she does not support such a proposal.

Proposal (iv)
We should cut back on our consumption of electricity because respirable suspended particulates are also produced by the power plants. This will require a change in lifestyles and possibly additional expenditures in the form of higher taxes and prices.

While older respondents say that they do not have any problem in reducing the use

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of electrical appliances such as air-conditioners, younger respondents express reservations about this proposal. Older interviewees say that cutting consumption of electricity—like turning off air-conditioners—actually saves them money and they do not care about air conditioning anyway. Therefore, they do not see any problem in supporting such a proposal.

Younger respondents, on the other hand, say that it is quite difficult to reduce the consumption of electricity because modern lifestyle is so dependent on electricity. For example, Ms. Tsang (H 3), a secondary school student, says: "Everything runs on electricity nowadays, such as the computer, and the computer needs to be put in an air-conditioned room." Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, believes that our modern life-style is inextricably linked with electricity consumption. For instance, he says that "it is almost impossible not to use air-conditioning in Hong Kong during the summer months . . . [if there is no air-conditioning], ha ha ha, we may die. . . ." He suggests that the real issue is not so much the problem of how we could reduce consumption of electricity but how we could search for alternative, renewable energy sources such as solar power.

Mrs. Cheung (H 21), a housewife, says out that she agrees that it is good for the environment for people to use energy-efficient appliances. But she points out that "the prices of energy-efficient light bulbs should be reduced . . . so that the general public could afford them."

IV　Public Perceptions on Risk Comparisons

In this section, interviewees are asked whether they are more concerned about RSP or about some alternative risk factors such as second-hand smoke, natural disasters such as typhoon and global climatic change, traffic accidents as well as the economic outlook of Hong Kong.

IV-1　On RSP vis-à-vis Second-hand Smoke
Some interviewees are more concerned about RSP than second-hand smoke, but most interviewees are more concerned about the latter than the former. Ms. Tsang (H 3), a secondary school student, who is more concerned with second-hand smoke than RSP, offers such a rationale: "May be it is because you can actually smell and see second-hand smoke, but you cannot see or sense RSP and therefore you do not know whether you are exposed to it." Her view is shared by several other interviewees, such as Ms. Cai (H 19), who has a very sensitive upper respiratory system and finds second-hand cigarette smoke extremely offensive.

Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, admitting that he does not have a complete knowledge of the respective impacts of second-hand smoke and RSP, thinks that most people in Hong Kong are more concerned with second-hand smoke because "the public in

general have already developed a better understanding of the problem of second-hand smoke whereas not many people have learned about RSP." Mrs. Ching (H 22), a housewife, for example, says that she is more concerned about second-hand smoke because there has been so much publicity on its adverse health impacts on TV.

Ms. Lai (H 5), a middle-aged housewife, is however more concerned with RSP than second-hand smoke. She points out that: "You can avoid exposure to second-hand smoke, e. g., by not going to places where there are a lot of smokers, but you cannot stay away from RSP which can be found anywhere." Ms. Fung (H 17), a clerical worker, offers a similar view: "I am less concerned with second-hand smoke because if I see someone smoking, I can walk away."

Nevertheless, Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller, reminds the interviewer that sometimes one simply cannot stay away from second-hand smoke even if one wants to. He explains: "Sometimes I go into a meeting with clients and everyone in the room is lighting up. I cannot walk away. I have to sit there for several hours and cannot avoid [the second-hand smoke]." Therefore, he is more concerned with second-hand cigarette smoke than with RSP.

IV-2 On RSP vis-à-vis Natural Disasters (e. g., Typhoons)

Most respondents are more concerned with the RSP than natural disasters such as typhoons. For instance, Ms. Lai (H 5), a middle-aged housewife, says: "You cannot escape from RSP because it is ubiquitous and you are exposed to it for a long-term period, while typhoons simply come and go in a few days and we always receive advanced warning from the weather station." In the words of another respondent (Mr. Ng, H 18): "Hong Kong has already developed the capability to manage and cope with the impacts of typhoons. Therefore, typhoons are no longer considered as a major problem."

But there are a few respondents who are more concerned with typhoons than RSP because the impacts from the former are highly visible and immediate. Mrs. Ching (H 22), for example, provides a vivid account on why she thinks typhoons are more frightening: "[During the typhoon season,] there are at times landslides and at other times the rivers are flooded . . . people could be killed instantly." Ms. Cai (H 19), the clerical worker, is also more concerned with typhoons than RSP because: "The scientists are still conducting research on the RSP [and therefore] we do not yet know the degree of damage that could result from [exposure to] RSP. . . . Thus far it is only 'talk' regarding [matters concerning] RSP." Mrs. Cheung (H 21) is also more concerned with typhoons than RSP because "man can control RSP . . . if man can create the RSP, then man should be able to control them and reduce them." But we "cannot control natural disasters—which simply come and go."

IV-3 On RSP vis-à-vis Global Environmental Change

Many interviewees find it difficult to compare these two issues because, in the words of one interviewee (Mr. Lau, H 2): "I don't quite understand the impact of such global

environmental issues and therefore cannot make a comparison." Others find it difficult to compare the two issues because, in the words of the civil servant, Mr. Chiang (H 1): "There is a close connection between these two issues. Resolving the RSP problem should probably help us resolve the other problem of global environmental change." Mr. Leung (H 11), the taxi-driver, also concurs with this view.

Mrs. Cheung (H 21), a housewife, along with a handful interviewees, is more concerned with global environmental change than RSP because "if the global warming problem cannot be properly controlled, then it will have disastrous consequences for the entire world."

Surprisingly, Mr. Mak (H 23), the unemployed, offers a quite sophisticated view on the issue of global environmental change, which he is worried about more than RSP. He says that: "Global warming . . . could affect the ozone layer. It requires the effort of more than just us [our government] to address this problem. It will require other countries to implement and enforce the same regulations simultaneously. Otherwise, the consequences [of global environmental change] will remain [unresolved]." One wonders from where/whom does he learn about these issues.

IV−4 On RSP vis-à-vis Traffic Accidents

Most respondents are more concerned with the RSP than traffic accidents. A typical response offered by several interviewees (Ms. Tsang, H 3; Ms. Lai, H 5): One can take active measures—be extra careful when driving or crossing streets—to minimize the possibility of getting caught in traffic accidents.

Again, there are a few respondents who are more concerned with traffic accidents than with RSP because the impacts from traffic accidents are much more visible and immediate than those emanating from RSP. Mrs. Ching (H 22), a housewife, who belongs to this category, claims that while she can readily visualize the aftermath of traffic accidents—which are frightening scenes—"it is not so easy to see the RSP which are not quite visible to the naked eyes, therefore they seem less frightening." Mr. Mak (H 23), the unemployed, says that he is more concerned with traffic accidents because: "[They are] immediate, whether you are injured or killed. You know the consequences right away. . . . The impact from RSP is not immediate . . . it will come slowly . . . and [therefore] we have time to deal with this matter."

IV−5 On RSP vis-à-vis the Future of Hong Kong's Economy

Almost all the interviewees, particularly the younger ones, reply that they are more concerned with the future of Hong Kong's economy than RSP. Typical responses from several respondents who express such a view: "The economy is of course a more important matter than RSP because a person will not even bother to think about environmental issues if he/she is out of a job" (Mr. Lau, H 2); "The future of the economy directly affects my livelihood, quality of life and basic living expenses. [Without a good

economy] we could easily not even afford to have a meal" (Ms. Cai, H 19). Mr. Ng (H 18), the local politician, says that he is more concerned about the economy than RSP because "we do not know when the economy will recover from the recent slump." Mr. Ting (H 8), the financial comptroller, admits that he is more concerned with the future of Hong Kong's economy than with RSP because: "It is my job to keep an eye on the city's economic prospect. I read the financial news reports on a daily basis because [financial matters] have a greater impact on me [than RSP]."

Discussion and Conclusion

While the public have reached a consensus that Hong Kong's environmental problems are serious and in need of urgent attention, several questions have remained unresolved and continued to puzzle researchers on Hong Kong's environmentalism: How do people view the relationship between human and nature, both in normative terms and in reality? What exactly do people mean when they say that they are concerned about the environment? Why are people concerned, and, for some, not so much concerned, with environmental problems? Why do they think they need to protect the environment? While results from this case study do not provide a complete answer, they offer further clues to help resolve these issues.

First of all, several principal dimensions of a cultural model on nature could be gleaned from the respondents' remarks on human-nature relationship. Nature is widely regarded as an indispensable component of a human-centered world. It is defined primarily by its use value to promote the comfort, health and well-being of the human race. However, while accepting that nature is an important element that sustains and nurtures human life and should therefore be protected, people in Hong Kong are generally not willing to make personal or collective sacrifices to help control or reduce development's adverse impacts on nature. Underlying such a tentative and ambivalent attitude toward nature protection is a rather widely-shared sense of powerlessness and resignation among the public in general and a notion of rational-pragmatism slowly spreading among the elite in particular.

Next, with environmental protection defined and accepted universally as a motherhood issue, it is no surprise that almost all the informants have affirmed their concern for the environment at the very outset of the interviews. But their answers show that this concern is, at best, qualified and, at worst, expressed with some reluctance. This impression of a limited concern among the public is further strengthened by the interviewees' own admission that the overwhelming majority of their friends, family members, and co-workers are generally not concerned about the environment. Moreover, the informants also believe that the general public, government officials and private corporations in Hong Kong are not very concerned about the environment. In other

words, in the minds of the interviewees, with the exception of themselves, almost everyone else in Hong Kong is not very concerned about the environment.

This opinion among the interviewees—that everyone else is not concerned about the environment but me—is something of an enigma. Why do they think that they are the only one who are environmentally concerned, but not people around them? A review of the explanations for their own expressed concern for the environment as well as those pertaining to their views that others are not concerned may provide a hint as to why they hold such a belief.

Invariably the interviewees have referred to their own firsthand personal experiences and observations as the basis of their concern for the environment: Our secondary school technician (Mr. Lau, H 2) grumbling about the emissions from trucks that make him uncomfortable; our social worker (Ms. Fung, H 6) complaining of air pollution that might trigger her allergy; and our financial comptroller (Mr. Ting, H 8) fearing that air pollution might worsen his child's asthma condition.

That is, the interviewees' expressed concern for the environment is primarily a reflection of their personal subjective experiences and firsthand impressions of the objective environmental conditions. And somehow they think that no one else, or at least not many others, but they themselves have encountered such experiences and made such observations. Hence, they would put forward the following remark in accounting for the other person's lack of concern for the environment: "they [their friends and family members] do not sense that the environmental conditions have actually deteriorated that much" (Ms. Yeung, H 15). Some respondents, without knowingly doing so, allude to their own personal backgrounds—overseas experiences, educational attainment—as the basis for their own unique sets of values that in turn distinguish themselves from the "other" Hong Kong residents on the issue of environment. Examples of setting the environmentally consciousness oneself against the larger environmentally insensitive crowd include the comment made by Mr. Ting (H 8) on how Hong Kong people's priority on "practical considerations" such as convenience overshadows their concern for environmental protection as well as the remark made by Ms. Ho (H 13) on how Hong Kong people's fixation on immediate personal financial considerations outweighs their interests in long-term societal gains from environmental protection measures.

The "frog-in-boiling-water" syndrome has also been offered by some interviewees to account for the public's perceived lack of concern for environmental problems. Mr. Lui (H 12) believes that many people in Hong Kong may have already accustomed themselves to the adverse effects of environmental problems and that they have implicitly accepted them as an unavoidable part—and necessary costs—of conducting their lives in this city. But, at the same time, Mr. Lui points out that for people who could afford it, they would usually opt for relocation to a better neighborhood to improve their own living environment—sort of jumping into a separate pot of cool water instead of trying to cool off the existing pot of boiling water. Underlying such a notion, interprets Mr. Lui, is primarily

a sense of powerlessness on the part of Hong Kong residents in effectuating any change in correcting the environmental problems in one's neighborhood.

Now that we have scrutinized the rationales for the interviewees' belief that they themselves are concerned about the environment but that other people are not, one cannot help but ask these questions: What exactly do the interviewees mean when they say they are concerned about the environment? What do they mean when they say that there is a need to protect the environment? Is there any connection between the way they interpret the meanings of the concepts "environment" and "environmental protection" and their belief that they are somehow above the crowd when it comes to this particular issue?

When asked directly what the environment means to them, many interviewees consider it constituting primarily one's "immediate living environment." Protecting the environment at that personal/household spatial scale thus simply means "do not litter." Moreover, most of them refer to anthropocentric interests—health, comfort and quality of life—as the primary considerations in their decision to embrace environmental protection. With the word "environment" defined narrowly as such and consigned at the individual/household spatial scale, and with the support for environmental protection driven mainly by anthropocentric factors, it is not surprising to find the informants claiming that they are concerned about the "environment."

But it is also precisely this rather narrow notion of the word "environment" that might have led them to belittle the environmentally insensitive "others." For instance, Mrs. Ma (H 16) tells us that her mother "keeps her immediate living environment very clean" but that, at the same time, "she [her mother] does not care about areas outside of her immediate living area." With everyone perceived to be interested only, or at least primarily, in one's own immediate living environment, the interviewees feel that problems generally observed to be more prevalent at the city/metropolitan level than at the household level—such as air pollution and litters on the streets—are thus neglected by the other members of the public.

Obviously, all the interviewees could have in fact operationalized the concept of "environment" at multiple spatial scales. However, based on the responses from the interviews, it is apparent that their perceptions of the "environment" operate predominately at two spatial scales—the individual/household and the city/metropolitan levels. And it is evident that they are, without consciously expressing or admitting it, referring to the former when thinking about their own concerns and yet switch to the latter when it is time to evaluate the public's. Accordingly, our interviewees have come to the conclusion that the public is not concerned about the environment—understood at the larger city/metropolitan spatial scale—but that they themselves are worried about the environment—defined as their own immediate living conditions. Such a proposition, of course, begs another question: Why do people switch from one spatial scale to another in thinking about environmental problems perceived by themselves as opposed to the

others？ The answer to this question will have to await further research on this dimension of Hong Kong's environmentalism.

Another set of interesting findings from the case study pertain to the public's perceptions of respirable suspended particulates. While almost all of the interviewees have identified air pollution as one major environmental problem that has triggered their concern for the environment, most of them admit that they have not heard of this specific term prior to the interview. They are thus totally ignorant of the specific details on the causes and possible consequences of RSP here in Hong Kong. Even a former legislative councillor—who should have been exposed to more environmental data than the general public—acknowledges that he is not aware of the detailed information on RSP-related impacts. Consequently, given their lack of the basic knowledge on RSP, many respondents concede that they are not sure if their health has been compromised by exposure to RSP specifically. They also add that they are not sure about the impacts of other types of air pollutants on their own health.

That is, the public have a general knowledge that air pollution can lead to adverse impacts on health. But when they are asked whether their own health, or that of their relatives and friends, has in fact been affected by RSP, most of them display a sense of uncertainty. What this means is that people's concern for the environment—although genuine—does not appear to be a direct outgrowth of a sense of victimization from pollution. Instead, their general knowledge about environmental issues has been acquired in large measure from stories reported in the mass media. This fact may also help explain why the interviewees are somewhat less than enthusiastic in expressing their concern for the environment.

Many respondents say that, in order to help reduce RSP emissions, they are willing to make small sacrifices—such as paying for a cleaner, albeit more expensive, mode of transportation; modifying their lifestyles to help cut the consumption of electricity; and buying energy-efficient appliances that cost them more money than regular ones. At the same time, however, many of them also point out that there is a limit to such environmentally friendly actions to control RSP emissions. Some of them even show empathy for those—such as taxi-drivers and automobile salespersons—whose livelihood may be adversely affected by the increasingly stringent environmental regulations.

In conclusion, while the majority of the public in Hong Kong have repeatedly told pollsters that they believe environmental problems have become very serious in the city, they are at the same time highly sceptical about the actual degree of concern expressed by their neighbours, friends and relatives. Their belief that only they themselves are environmentally conscious but not the others probably stems from the fact that people in Hong Kong tend to, unconsciously, think about the concept of "environment" at several different spatial scales and, unknowingly, switch between these spatial scales in evaluating their own environmental attitudes and behavior and those of others around them. In the end, their scepticism is further reinforced by, or sometimes in itself a logical extension

of, their own mental model on nature, where an emerging social norm on the importance of protecting nature is eclipsed by a fatalistic mood among the public, on the one hand, and the pragmatic concerns of the elites, on the other.

Acknowledgements

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Environmental Consciousness in Japan

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Abstract

Through semi-structured interviews with 33 Japanese respondents, using a protocol adapted from Kempton *et al.*, we seek to limn the environmental consciousness of Japanese and compare it with that of Kempton's American sample. After exploring views on the environment in general, we use the salient, contested, and weakly understood issue of dioxin as a way of probing the cultural models of respondents. We find that national differences are minor in environmental discourse, and hypothesize that the most significant disparity, in acceptance of the precautionary principle, is related to a feeling of political and social powerlessness. Unlike in America, which may be the outlier, religious discourse does not explicitly enter into the presentation of environmental consciousness in Japan.

Keywords: environmental consciousness, Japan, cultural models, dioxin, discourse

Outsiders often regard another nation's people as holding paradoxical, even contradictory, attitudes towards nature and the environment. Thus, many Japanese see Americans as unilateralist and selfish towards global climate change because their government refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol. Americans' opposition to whaling rings hollow to those who have read *Moby Dick* and remember America's Pacific expansion as being driven by the need to find ports for New England whalers. They are seen to espouse religious beliefs that justify a hegemonic attitude towards nature—and other peoples.

Similar finger-pointing is often directed at Japan's people. The land of Basho's exquisite nature haiku, celebrating the passing of the seasons, is also the land where rivers, beaches, and mountain slopes are liberally paved in concrete. The mountains that occupy 90 percent of Japan's land area are covered with trees, but primarily of two commercial species, left to grow and bring misery to millions with their pollen in the

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spring, while tropical forests elsewhere are depleted to satisfy the Japanese market.

Shallow interpretations of formal religious doctrine and interest group politics, both remote from everyday life, constitute a thin basis for assessing the environmental consciousness of a people, however. It is better to ask people directly. For this study, we interviewed 33 individuals in the Kanto area of Japan between February and April 1999. We interviewed a broad range of people, male and female, from college age to golden age, from lay people to environmental researchers, and from small shopkeepers and people between jobs to executives at some of Japan's largest corporations (Table 1).

In most cases, we carried out the interviews in teams of two. We used a semi-structured interview protocol adapted from that used by Willett Kempton and his

Table 1 Profiles of Respondents

	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Educ	Birth	Occupation etc.
1	Iwakuni	M				professor; leading environmentalist
2	Minamoto	M	50	BA	Kanagawa	environmental director
3	Sato	M				
4	Takeuchi	M	42	PhD	Nishinomiya	professor
5	Kataoka	F	26	MA		environmental activist
6	Yamanaka	M	36	BA	Fujisawa	former derivative dealer
7	Yamada	F	36	College grad		tax accountant
8	Kita	M	23	MA 2nd	Ishikawa	student
9	Sawa	F	26	PhD 2nd	Tokyo	student
10	Waki	M	22	MA 1st	Tokyo	student
11	Yoshida	M	71	PhD 3rd	Harbin	retired banker
12	Aoyama	M	46	18 yrs	Aichi	manager at steel company
13	Hino	M	47	16 yrs	Saitama	vice-director at steel company
14	Mifune	M	na	na	na	director at steel company
15	Suzuki	M	22	BA	Tokyo	secretary for a member of the diet
16	Yamamoto	F	64	HS	Ishikawa	grocer
17	Watanabe	M	57	HS	Tokyo	dry cleaner
18	Kojima	F	63	HS	Ehime	housewife
19	Yasuda	M	40	BA	Tokyo	union activist
20	Hayashi	F	24	BA	Kanagawa	secretary
21	Asahi	M	30	BA	Kobe	newspaper deliverer; preparing for a state law examination
22	Mizuno	F	37	na	Aichi	housewife
23	Nohara	M	24	na	Akita	student
24	Nagano	F	24	14 yrs	Nagano	student
25	Iwasaki	F	25	MA	Shizuoka	unemployed
26	Shima	F	33	BA	Yokohama	business person
27	Abe	M	40s	na	na	retired farmer
28	Murakami	F	60s	na	na	farmer
29	Nishida	M	na	na	na	
30	Nishida	F	na	na	na	wife of Mr. Nishida
31	Yamagata	F	na	na	na	pregnant woman
32	Kosugi	M	45	PhD	Tokyo	researcher; chemistry
33	Kawate	M	44	PhD program	Fukuoka	researcher, chemistry

associates in the United States [Kempton, Boster and Hartley 1995]. This allows us to compare and contrast the environmental consciousness of an admittedly limited sample of Japanese with those of people in the United States. Both countries are advanced both economically and in their history of environmental management, but have quite different senses of national identity and spiritual expression. We chose dioxin as a key issue for inquiry, since it was much in the news at the time and, like global climate change used by Kempton *et al.*, is complex, not directly observable, and not well understood, even by scientists. This makes it more likely that people will rely on the mental and cultural models they use for processing and making sense of other kinds of uncertain or ambiguous information.

We begin by offering interviewees' views on the relationship between people and nature or the environment. We then turn to their perceptions of environmental problems in general. We follow this by examining respondents' knowledge and views on the dioxin issue. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings and areas for further study, in particular a closer assessment of the frequently mythologized relationship between religion, spirituality and environmental consciousness.

I The Relationship between People and Nature

In this section we examine our respondents' idealized views of the relationship between people and nature and follow that with a discussion of how they see that relationship in actuality.

I−1 *What Is the Relationship between People and Nature? What Should It Be?*

Kempton *et al.* began their study with the intent to focus on cultural models of global warming. They found, however, that these were embedded in broader cultural models regarding the relationship of people with the environment (ecosystem). They summarize these models for Americans as falling into three sometimes contradictory broad categories: (1) Humans are part of the environment, which is limited, and depend on it. Wastes enter cycles that bring them back to us; (2) Nature is interlinked ("balanced"), with unpredictable chain reactions from one fragile part to another, making it advisable for humans to refrain from interfering in it; and (3) Modern lifestyles, materialistic and market driven, devalue nature, while people are alienated from nature because they lack contact with it, unlike more primitive peoples and earlier times. In some ways, these categories are contradictory—how can people be part of nature but refrain from interfering in it?—but there is no need for logical consistency in people's perceptions.

By and large, at this level, the cultural models of our Japanese respondents appear to be quite similar to those of Kempton's sample. Indeed, the similarities would appear to be

far greater than the differences, especially for the first and third categories. There may be some significant differences in the second category, however.

Humans as a part of the environment. Mr. Nohara, a student, sees humans as being very much part of nature: "People are a part of nature. We cannot cut people off from nature." Ms. Iwasaki evinces a cultural model of interdependent nature: "In the end, it will come back to us. [Environmental protection] is for our own sake."[1]

Yet Mr. Watanabe, a 57-year old dry cleaner, sees human activity as being separate from the environment. He feels that "even though we are not in the environment, humans should preserve the environment." It should be noted that "nature" and the (natural) "environment" are often conflated in people's discussions, although many "environmental" problems, such as pollution, are actually primarily between people. This confusion may be one reason why there is a difference in apparent views over whether or not people are a part of nature/the environment.

For Ms. Mizuno, a 37-year old housewife, people and nature are *equal*. But, according to her, we should "have a reverence for nature" like we do for our parents. This kind of parent-child "equality" is reflected in other responses, that see the proper relationship between people and nature as *reciprocal*, but one-sided in practice, with people taking from nature. For example, according to Mr. Minamoto, the director of environment and safety for a major corporation: "Nature gives to humans mental and physical/scientific benefits. Humans must do things for nature such as protect rainforests. . . ." Yet in practice: "Humans are always receiving things from nature but not giving anything in return." Mr. Watanabe sees the ideal as one where we rely on nature and give it a helping hand.

Nature as interlinked and unpredictable. Our respondents did not often resort to this set of cultural models, indicating a possible difference in perception from their American counterparts that we will explore further in the concluding section. Mrs. Yamamoto, a 64-year old grocer who grew up in remote Ishikawa Prefecture, cautions that we should leave nature alone, even at the cost of progress: "What is the scariest is that as new things come in they will destroy nature."

Modern lifestyles as alienating from nature. Mr. Minamoto uses an example from his childhood:

> When I was a child, my mother told me that I must eat up everything on my plate. If I had a fish on my plate, I should eat the whole fish, so the fish would be happy. I suppose this is Buddhist thinking, or maybe Japanese? We must give something to nature in return for what we receive.

Mr. Minamoto's example alludes to the possibly shared culture-specific constructs of

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1) We have used pseudonyms to identify our respondents to protect their privacy.

mottainai (wastefulness/defilement) and *ongaeshi* (gratitude/repayment of a favor). We will come back to these as well in the conclusion. Here we focus on the avoidance of waste.

Mentioned prominently as an example of consumer waste is packaging—Japan is known for having a wrapping-obsessed culture, especially in consumer goods but also in areas such as the presentation of gifts and symbolic layers of meaning [Hendry 1995; Ben-Ari *et al*. 1992]. To cite Mr. Minamoto once again:

> We need to change our lifestyle. In Japanese supermarkets everything is wrapped in plastic and styrofoam and is prewrapped. In the US they sell produce by weight and put groceries in paper bags. In Japan the plastic wrapping improves the appearance but increases waste. I hate the wrapping. It's a terrible habit. America is better. Japanese consumers need to change their habits but their consciousness is low.

Here, at least for rhetorical purposes, America is presented as an idealized other. This may come as a surprise to those who are aware that total municipal solid waste (MSW) per capita is quite low in Japan compared to other OECD countries, and certainly compared to the United States. The source of concern may not be with comparative quantities of solid waste, however, as the belief that Japan is a small (*semai*), crowded land. In addition, plastic is an epitome of an unnatural material, and is associated with dioxin production when incinerated.

Aside from avoidance of waste, the aspect of Mr. Minamoto's tale of the fish that others evidently share is not religious faith, which is almost never mentioned explicitly by our respondents, but a nostalgia for a life of their youth where, at least in their memories, the impact of human activities on nature was more benign. A similar nostalgia for the less wasteful past is expressed by 71-year old Mr. Yoshida, who bemoans both increases in population (not a major problem in recent Japanese history) and the waste-fulness of a luxury lifestyle, exemplified by "people throwing out electric appliances rather than repairing them, because repair fees are so expensive."

I-2　*How Do People Relate to Nature in Reality?*
Ms. Yamada complains that "people seem not to care how they dispose of their wastes," not separating them into burnable and non-burnable in Tokyo, as they are supposed to:

> The new generation, such as my niece and nephew, has had educational lectures. Still, people seem not to care how they dispose of their wastes. It's not a big effort but some people don't want to do it. Now in Tokyo everyone has to separate their waste into burnable and non-burnable materials.

The alienation theme is raised by Professor Iwakuni, but with an interesting twist.

He implies that nature represents a kind of ideal state that contrasts with our everyday realities:

> There is a big difference between how we actually are and how we would like to be. People have dreams of doing things like working in a home office in the middle of the forest.

II   Perceptions of Environmental Problems

In this section we explore the extent to which our respondents say that they are concerned about the environment, assess the depth of that concern, identify who they feel is responsible for causing environmental problems, look at their sources of information about the environment, and examine the reasons they give for why the environment should be protected.

II–1   *Are People Concerned about the Environment?*

As is the case elsewhere [Dunlap 1995: 63–114], opinion polls in Japan indicate that concern over the environment is widespread but not deep ("salient"). We found indications that this is true for a significant proportion of our respondents as well.

Most informants express concern over the environment, although a significant number indicate that they are not intensively concerned: "not particularly" (Mr. Watanabe) and "not so much, but a little" (Ms. Iwasaki) being typical responses. Ms. Iwasaki, a 25-year old unemployed M. A., goes the farthest: "Is it ok if I say I'm not [concerned]?" Of course, such a denial of concern may be a way of protecting oneself against being expected to sound informed. In many cases, the respondent went on to discuss in detail certain environmental concerns. Such responses may also indicate that "the environment" and "environmental problems" are placed in different mental compartments. Mr. Watanabe, a dry cleaner and a middle-school graduate who answered "not particularly" about his concern for the environment, is wary of the solvents he works with day in and day out.

II–2   *What Do People Mean When They Say They Are Concerned about the Environment?*

One reason for the lack of salience compared to other critical issues, and for the compartmentalization, is that the environment is not as well defined or unambiguous as, say, the economy, education, crime or immigration. When asked for a specific problem of concern, people respond with a great diversity of answers. Ms. Yamada, who also says she is not concerned in general, raises a lot of specific problems of concern: waste disposal, children's allergies, the ozone hole, and recycling of PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) bottles. Ms. Yamamoto begins by associating the environment with very global issues, but when asked to identify a specific problem, she brings up the need to separate

the trash.[2]

The propensity of the business world to engage in strategic planning shows in the answers of two of our respondents with corporate experience. Mr. Minamoto sees latent hazards that "have the potential to become a big problem" and Ms. Yamada, a tax accountant, looks at the potential for a catastrophe, alluding to the uncertain quality of the "effects" of "an environmental disaster." Mr. Minamoto, Ms. Yamada and Mr. Yoshida, all present or past corporate employees, raise the question of cost, as does Ms. Mizuno, a housewife (and, if typical Japanese, therefore the household CFO).

The ozone hole, as the first well publicized global issue, seems to have become the most emblematic environmental problem for many, and is raised voluntarily by a number of respondents in Japan (as in Hong Kong and the United States). Ms. Yamamoto, our grocer, expresses alarm that the air is running out of oxygen due to ozone depletion. While this response is not scientifically "accurate," it does indicate a linking of global problems to her own living environment in a kind of synthesis that Kempton *et al*. found among American lay cultural models. In contrast, Ms. Yamada, our corporate tax accountant, volunteers concern over ozone depletion but opines that it is someone else's problem, notably that of light skinned people who she sees as having a skin that is more vulnerable. In this she agrees with dominant scientific thinking, but only to a degree. Other posited effects of ozone depletion, such as increased incidence of cataracts, immune system disorders, damage to crop species and destruction of phytoplankton at the bottom of the aquatic food chain, are not related to skin pigmentation [Litfin 1994: 56–58; Leaf 1993].

II-3　*Who Is Responsible for the Environment?*
Respondents place the locus of responsibility for dealing with the environment in different places. Ms. Yamamoto discusses what ordinary people can do about the environment. Ms. Shima, a 33-year old businesswoman, points without elaboration to deficiencies in the consciousness of ordinary citizens, as do Ms. Mizuno and Ms. Nagano. Ms. Sawa, a 26-year old Ph. D. student, sees the political system as the biggest problem. Mr. Watanabe puts the onus of environmental problems on the government and nation rather than on individuals. Ms. Yamagata, a pregnant woman, notes the lack of cooperation between the state and individuals.

Ms. Yamada, who complained about people's not separating wastes, does not put the

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2) A possible interviewing bias in respondents' selection of specific issues should be noted. Since many of them had prior knowledge that the interview would address dioxin, they may have raised those problems that seemed to them most germane to that topic: separation of plastics from the waste stream and health problems that may have to do with endocrinal disruptions. Nonetheless, most people offered a broader range of environmental problems as of concern to them, indicating that this bias is probably not strong if it exists at all.

blame entirely on the consumer:

> Some people do not follow these simple rules. It is a problem. Some people do not understand how to separate their trash. The manufacturer of the packaging should label them for proper disposal.

It is common for respondents to exonerate others in civil society, especially by indicating that they have not been provided proper education by government or business. In a Confucian society, it is the government's responsibility to provide moral guidance and education to the ordinary people.

II-4 *Where Do People Obtain Information and Attitudes about the Environment?*
    Do They Trust These Sources?

Most respondents indicate they receive their information from the media, notably television and newspapers. Mr. Watanabe also mentions radio. Mr. Minamoto and Ms. Nagano indicate they received some information from seminars and symposia. By and large, respondents seem to have a high level of trust in the media. At one extreme is Ms. Yamamoto the grocer:

> Don't we have to believe them? They say the same thing in other countries. They say it in Japan too. We copy the world.

At the other extreme are Mr. Kita ("People put too much faith in the media.") and Mr. Minamoto:

> I only watch television for fun, but I found a lecture by a EU [European Union] advisor to be very interesting. Japanese television mass media tend to be very emotional, and this is a problem when ordinary people watch it. We need to stay cool-headed when we hear these things.

Mr. Asahi, 30, once worked in a life insurance company supervising its saleswomen. He feels that his supervisees made too big a deal about the dioxin incident in Tokorozawa that was extensively covered on television. Ms. Nagano, a graduate student, notes that she is influenced by the environmental concerns that excite the people she is around—in her case, dioxin and energy.

Given the bias in our sample towards those with some interest or expertise in environmental issues, especially among the experts, it is not surprising that many informants also note lectures, discussions with colleagues, and professional journals as sources of information, especially on dioxin.

Related to the sources where people receive information on environmental problems

is how their interest was sparked in the first place. Some people's interest in the environment stems from experiences as a child, especially excursions into the country-side to gather mushrooms or other flora and fauna of the wild. Some, especially the young, learn about the environment in school, although few of our respondents point to this as the source of their environmental consciousness. Mrs. Yamagata says she learned about global warming from a foreign teacher in an English class. She is currently pregnant, but says that nonetheless she only has vague concerns about environmental problems.

Mr. Minamoto claims to have first become interested in the environment when he was given the job of environmental director of his company. Similarly, Ms. Murakami, a farmer in her 60s, indicates a customer-driven interest in organic farming.

II−5　*Why Should We Protect the Environment?*

Kempton *et al.* [1995: 87 ff.] found that Americans' environmental values stem from a mix of three sources: religion; *anthropocentric* (human-centered) values, especially concern over future generations; and *biocentric* values, especially the intrinsic rights of nature, such as the right of species to continue to exist.

We did not find a similar reference to religion as a common source of environmental values in Japan. Anthropocentric arguments dominated. In particular, as in the United States, concern for the environment was linked strongly with a feeling of responsibility towards future generations, especially but not exclusively among women. Pregnant women such as Ms. Yamagata and recent mothers are particularly concerned about pollutants such as dioxin in human breast milk. She also states that "we have to protect [the environment] for everyone's survival from here on out." Ms. Mizuno expresses concern specifically over future generations.

Many expressions of concern for future generations were not presented in entirely altruistic terms. According to Ms. Shima, we should stop global warming "for our own health . . . and also for the sake of future generations." Ms. Yamamoto lists one's own personal life alongside that of one's grandchildren. Mr. Watanabe concurs both regarding future generations and present benefits.

Mr. Minamoto has a very complex view of the environment, and of human behavior. He stresses the disconnection between what we know we should do and what we are really concerned about. For example, although he has a good understanding and apparent concern over long-term effects—one of the few to associate dioxin with long-term ecological disruption—he also admits to a personal bias towards the present, the short-run, and his own personal environment. He opines that this short-sightedness is a national characteristic, in contrast to Europeans, who, in his idealized view, "think in the long-term, many generations ahead."

Mr. Nohara and Ms. Nagano, both 24-year old students, are *utilitarian*: for our own sake. Ms. Nagano, a student, pulls biocentric and anthropocentric arguments together,

linking our fates to those of the entire globe: "For the sake of the earth as a whole, including ourselves."

Mr. Minamoto emphasizes restoration of a past clean environment, but does not directly say why. Ms. Yamada, a tax accountant, uses an *aesthetic argument*: "There is an emotional need to protect nature, and to enjoy benefits such as clean air and water." But she is pessimistic about the possibilities of satisfying this need, because convenience is more compelling:

> For example, chemical detergents destroy water. This is one reason for Japan's poor water system, but they are quick-acting and remove oils and stains, unlike ordinary soap. Faster is better.

Perhaps more than in the United States, "emotional" is a loaded, nearly pejorative term in Japan, used especially by government officials and businesspeople to indicate a lack of clearheaded rationality. For Mr. Minamoto, science is more likely to support rational decision making, and profitability, than "emotional" activists such as Greenpeace or local NIMBY activists, or "emotional" press reports. Ms. Yamada and Mr. Minamoto, both presumably reflecting Japanese corporate culture, use the word "emotional" where an American counterpart would be more likely to use a term such as "alarmist." This choice of terms probably reflects deeper cultural assumptions, but there is no space to explore this in depth here.

Environmental lawyers have suggested that a *biocentric* perspective be brought into the legal system by according defensible rights, or standing, to nature or the environment. The controversial Endangered Species Act of the United States is an exemplar of this kind of law. In response to an example of the reclamation of two of Japan's few remaining tidelands, Isahaya Bay and Fujimae, used to illustrate situations where one might consider whether nature has separate rights, Ms. Yamada opines that environmental rights would be a useful way to stop "construction in foolish places." Her arguments are primarily economic, however, although phrased in terms of intergenerational equity: "It is important to look at the long-term costs of a project that would affect future generations." These might "outweigh its current value."

Mr. Yoshida, a retired banker and now graduate student, explicitly rules out biocentrism:

> The increase in population is destroying the environment. Yes [we should preserve the environment] because of other people. No, not for the sake of the environment. Yes, for future people.

III　Perceptions of Dioxin

We chose to use dioxin as a focal problem in our interviews. Dioxin is likely to be more salient than the environment in general, yet it is an issue domain where our relatively verifiable knowledge remains limited. Hence, it should be a good means of probing mental and cultural models. Even scientists often have a poor understanding of the sources, pathways, and health effects of dioxins. Policies to address the real or perceived dioxin problem in Japan involve modification of incineration policies that in turn have resulted from the waste disposal problems of a high material lifestyle in a country with few viable disposal alternatives.

Dioxins are an unintentional by-product of combustion, the manufacturing of some chemicals (such as some pesticides that are no longer used), some bleaching of paper, some industrial processes involving chlorine and other halogens, and perhaps forest fires [Powell 1997: 1]. In Japan, the principal source of new dioxin emissions is incineration, particularly of municipal solid wastes (MSW) (*gomi*), with wide variations depending on factors such as technology employed, feedstock (especially, the chlorine content of products such as certain plastics), temperature of incineration, and operating rules (dioxins tend to be produced more during power-up and power-down, favoring 24-hour incineration).

Scientists count as "dioxin" the 75 "congener" chemicals in the PCDD ("dioxin" proper) family, the 135 congeners in the PCDF ("furan") family, and increasingly (but not always), even the 209 congeners in the PCB family, because of their apparent similarity in acting on the Ah receptor. Of these, only 7 PCDDs, 12 PCDFs and 12 PCBs are believed to be at all toxic, and most are several orders of magnitude less toxic than 2,3,7,8–TCDD. On the other hand, many of them are far more abundant than 2,3,7,8–TCDD. Scientists use a "toxic equivalency factor" (TEQ) to convert the various congeners' toxicity to 2,3,7,8–TCDD equivalencies. This lumping together makes sense at a practical level in terms of toxicology and policy-making (e. g., standard setting), but does mean that the chemical that was found to be the "most toxic" in tests of over two decades ago usually constitutes a very small, sometimes negligible, portion of the dioxin cocktail.

In Japan, most exposure to dioxins comes from eating—primarily fish, shellfish, secondarily fatty meats and dairy products. Breastfeeding is a relatively high-concentration pathway to a particularly vulnerable population, especially to the extent that dioxins affect the endocrines of infants (through the Ah receptor). Ironically, limited but consistent time-series data from a number of industrialized countries indicate that the dioxin content of breast milk has been declining significantly for over a decade, even in Japan. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but may indicate that certain herbicides used in the 1960s and early 1970s, notably 2,4,5–T, produced much greater loads

of dioxin in the environmental pathways than has incineration.

Dioxin exposure at high levels has been associated with a skin condition called chloracne. Some suspect it of being a culprit in an apparent rise in skin problems such as atopic dermatitis among children in Japan, especially those who are breast-fed. Studies to date indicate that any such effect is slight, and are probably outweighed by the immunological benefits of breastfeeding.

III−1 *What Do People Know about Dioxin and Its Effects?*

All of our respondents had heard of dioxin, but the level of knowledge of its reputed effects varied widely, both within elite and lay groups of respondents. Time referents span over three decades: Mr. Watanabe, a 57-year old dry cleaner, associates it with defoliants in the Vietnam War, while Ms. Nagano, age 24, citing its concentration in breast milk, relates it to current problems in Tokorozawa, the site of a cluster of relatively unregulated industrial incinerators. Responses, at least in this instance, reflect both age and gender differences.

Most respondents mention incineration and/or solid wastes. Mr. Nohara is unusual in mentioning solid wastes without explicit reference to incineration, stating that dioxins are produced by a "chemical reaction of solid wastes."

Most respondents, both elites and lay, noted that dioxins affect people's bodies in some way. Ms. Yamagata goes a step further and says "They make you sick" but could not be more specific than that, even when pressed. Mr. Yoshida, a retired banker, claims that all he knows is "that they remain in the body." Lay people such as Mr. Asahi and Mr. Watanabe also mention bioaccumulation. Like many others, especially lay people, Mr. Watanabe also specifically refers to birth defects.

Despite its reputation as a powerful carcinogen, few people name cancer as a possible health effect of dioxin, even though this effect is often mentioned in the press. This may be due to a lingering cultural reluctance to discuss cancer, but it also seems that it is the effect on future generations via birth defects and genetic damage that is of the greater concern to most respondents. In this regard they concur with scientists.

Ms. Yamada refers to a very specific synergistic effect that appears rarely if at all in the scientific literature:

> I read in an article somewhere that a combination of dioxin and cadmium may cause problems. It is not visible at first, but I read that cadmium can destroy the organization of the nervous system. It can cause numbness. I have read some alarming articles about this. Perhaps they are too emotional.

It is interesting that of all the possible health problems that can be attributed to dioxin, Ms. Yamada chose one that is relatively improbable. Perhaps this is because the cadmium poisoning (Itai-Itai) was in one of the Four Big Pollution Cases of the early

1970s that are part of the shared historical narrative of most Japanese.

Ms. Yamamoto, a grocer, is one of the few to associate dioxin with environmental destruction aside from health effects, but then incorrectly (that it decreases the level of oxygen in the air) and without apparent consideration of nonhuman ecological effects. Kempton *et al.* also found a linkage of environmental problems, in their case, greenhouse gases, to concerns over depletion of atmospheric oxygen. In that case the mechanism (disruption of photosynthesis and hence the carbon cycle) was scientifically correct but of minor significance compared to climate change.

III–2 *What Causes Dioxins to Be Produced?*

Some aver that they know little specific about dioxins, except, for example, that they are bad for human health (Ms. Yamagata). Ms. Yamagata further associates dioxin production with industrial wastes (a locally important source when incinerated, but probably not so significant in the aggregate). Ms. Iwasaki knows from television that tea leaves in Saitama Prefecture had high levels of dioxin.

Others are better informed about detailed characteristics. Professor Takeuchi points to the high toxicity of dioxins and their persistence (they take a long time to break down). Mr. Kawate notes that they are unintentional by-products of production and incineration, highly toxic, with chronic toxicity and genetic effects on future generations (the genetic effects are considered likely but not proven by scientists). Mr. Kita notes that the probability of birth defects is higher in the vicinity of incinerators. Most informants, even those who are relatively well informed, appear to associate exposure with proximity to incinerators. Actually, for most people, dioxin exposure comes through the food chain, not location.

Professor Iwakuni, an environmental expert, opines that the largest source of dioxins in Japan is herbicides, followed by incinerators, with burning outside of incinerators (such as building fires) third. In the 1970s, this was true, and much residual dioxin found in sediment is from herbicides, but these days incineration is a far more significant source.

III–3 *Do Dioxins Affect You Personally or Your Work?*

Some of the best-informed respondents (e. g., Prof. Iwakuni, Prof. Takeuchi, Mr. Kawate, and Ms. Iwasaki) opine, probably accurately, either that dioxins do not actually affect their own health or only do so to a small degree. Others (e. g., Ms. Shima, Mr. Kita, Ms. Sawa and Mr. Waki) claim that dioxins are not of great concern to them at present, at the same time confessing a lack of knowledge or awareness. Expressing greater concern in the face of present uncertainty, Ms. Yamagata, who is pregnant, is concerned about the dioxin content of breast milk. Here her concerns are in line with the current state of scientific knowledge.

The most common answer is that dioxins likely have some (usually unspecified)

effect on them personally. Nonetheless, few are able to cite impacts on their workplace or work, aside from the two professors of environmental studies (citing it as a topic of academic concern) and Ms. Shima, a travel agent. An important consideration for a few is whether their home or workplace is located in a "clean place" (Mr. Minamoto) or where "there are no incinerators (or nuclear power plants) nearby" (Mr. Yoshida). This latter indicates a disjuncture between the perceptions, even of elite respondents, and those of scientists regarding exposure pathways. Mr. Sato, in his 20s, notes that he is "very worried about vegetables," a concern that current data would indicate is misplaced, with a few possible exceptions such as spinach, which has a total dioxin concentration comparable to that of chicken (but lower than beef, higher than pork) [Miyata 1999: 22–24].

III–4   *Are Others Concerned and Well-Informed?*

Ms. Yamada relates dioxins to pollen allergies (probably due to other causes) and atopic dermatitis that are of concern to her co-workers:

> I am not sure whether dioxin affects me personally although I sometimes feel allergies from food and have itchy eyes. Many people have hay fever and increasing problems with pollen these days. I wonder why, because when I was young I never heard about this. Also many of my friends' children have atopy (atopic dermatitis), a kind of itchy skin rash that is believed to be caused by food allergy and other things. Some working mothers in my company who I talk to often complain of this problem. It can even kill children.

In general, respondents report that dioxins are only a subject of office conversations when they are related to work. Ms. Sawa says that when dioxin is in the news, people talk about it. Mr. Minamoto notes that people talk about dioxins a lot at his workplace, because they are an object of work, but they do not express any opinions about them. He says his family is "very nervous," however. Similarly, Mr. Kawate claims it is his wife who is most concerned. Mr. Yoshida, who is studying chemistry and was given a copy of the protocol in advance, notes that the perception of his workmates was that others have the wrong idea about dioxin, but the difference seems largely semantic:

> I asked my laboratory colleagues. No one knew any details. Dioxin has a bad name. It's a problem of chlorine, but people don't think of this when they think of dioxin.

Mr. Kawate notes the fixation people appear to have on the most toxic form of dioxin, 2,3,7,8–TCDD:

> Dioxins are often described as the most toxic substance. People mistakenly think all of the over 200 types of dioxin are as potent as 2,3,7,8–TCDD.

Ms. Yamada has a cultural explanation for why she does not hear more about dioxin (or other serious topics) at work:

> There is not a lot of talk among people I know about the dioxin problem. This may be because many people do not like to talk about serious topics so much. I have time for conversations at lunch for example, but Japanese don't like to talk about serious topics at lunch.

Speaking for himself, Mr. Yoshida reiterates the view that ordinary people are in the dark, responding to uninformed fears:

> People don't know about dioxin, they just fear it because it is a bad word, like the atomic bomb.

Prof. Iwakuni directs his criticism at groups in opposition to MSW (municipal solid waste) and "environmental hormones" (endocrine disruptors):

> They don't draw a clear line between what they understand and what they do not. They operate on fear.

Mr. Kita and Ms. Iwasaki claim that they themselves no doubt have the wrong idea. Mr. Kita uses that to substantiate a supposition that others must have wrong ideas too (but without giving specifics). Ms. Iwasaki says her probable misunderstandings stem from her "passive temperament."

III–5　*What Policies Should Be Adopted to Address the Dioxin Problem?*

We presented five proposals for consideration, focusing on different levels and modes of action: (1) acceptance and adaptation; (2) waiting for conclusive research findings before acting; (3) modifying personal behavior to avoid exposure; (4) adopting possibly costly regulation; and (5) changing lifestyles. Lay people are more likely than the experts to offer an opinion about actions to address the dioxin problem. Most commonly, respondents propose that solid waste streams need to be reduced. Excess packaging is frequently cited as an example of present wastefulness.

　　The first proposal.　*Accept dioxin as a necessary evil*. This "hard realistic" proposal received no support from any respondent: "That's nuts!" (Ms. Nagano, student)

　　The second proposal.　*Research first, then take action*. This also received no support.

　　The third proposal.　*Reduce exposure by eating less fish and meat*. There was little support for taking personal defensive action to this degree. Some representative views:

> It is not reasonable to stop eating fish and meat even though they contain dioxin, which is potentially harmful. (Ms. Yamada, tax accountant)
> Some may be of that opinion, but personally I don't think I could do it. (Ms. Yamagata)

No way I can agree with that. If you are really afraid of dioxin, you might give up fish and meat, but you also get nutrients from fish and meat to build up your body. (Ms. Shima)

That's a personal matter. (Ms. Iwasaki)

If you want to eat poisonous food, that's your business. So I don't think it's necessary to make any special efforts on an individual basis. It's a personal matter and should not become a policy slogan. (Prof. Takeuchi)

Mr. Kita notes that attention should be paid to where the fish and meat are from. In this, he agrees with the experts, who see a wide variation in dioxin content depending on factors such as fat content, where the fish was caught, and what the animal ate.

Ms. Sawa and Mr. Waki point to the adverse effects implementing such a proposal would have on employment of fishermen and middlemen. Thus, according to them, any policy should tread lightly. It is difficult to ascertain whether their views are purely pragmatic or whether they reflect a kind of empathy towards others' livelihoods. It is also unclear how widespread this kind of concern is among Japanese respondents, but this would be a good area to explore in subsequent studies, as it may reflect a cultural difference.

The fourth proposal. *Strictly regulate dioxin emissions even if it means closing incinerators at great cost.* Nearly all support this proposal, although with little elaboration.

The fifth proposal. *Stop incinerating trash, reduce trash, increase recycling, even if it requires lifestyle changes and higher taxes and prices.* This receives broad support, but with a wide variety of comments and elaborations. Ms. Yamamoto: "The government should do that." Mr. Watanabe: "That's a no-brainer." Mr. Yoshida: "The idea is very good but at present it is impossible." Ms. Nagano: "No choice; I approve." Many others respond with the same words as Ms. Nagano that "We don't have a choice." As noted previously, Mr. Minamoto focuses on cutting back on plastic wrapping in supermarkets.

Ms. Yamada has a relatively nuanced response:

Personally, I try to buy products that can be recycled, like drinks in paper containers. This is sometimes difficult for me, and is even more troublesome for mothers who have many children. I can accept an increase in price if it helps reduce pollution. Of course I would expect the company to cut costs within first.

Ms. Yamamoto cites vinyl products, but expresses concern over the livelihood of those who produce them if action were taken on vinyl.

Most talk in terms of taking action to improve emission sources (such as incinerating equipment) without assigning responsibility for action. A few respondents suggest that it is up to government, especially local governments, to address the dioxin problem. They see a problem in so doing, however, because of strapped local budgets or problems of bureaucracy or politics. Mr. Kawate points to the "quality of bureau-

crats," in particular their reluctance to take risks. Ms. Sawa sees the problem as systemic, originating with government administration and profit-seeking business sector, but also involving those households who operate small incinerators. No matter what the source of the problem, Ms. Sawa sees the solution as necessitating counteraction at an individual level, through reducing the solid waste stream. Mr. Kita notes that MSW is the "raw material" for dioxin in incineration, and should be reduced. At an abstract level, at least, these two respondents see the problem as being one of material lifestyle, which can be corrected through individual action. Ms. Yamagata points to recycling as a solution, one with more ambiguous loci of responsibility and intervention.

　　Additional proposals. A few respond with a specific proposal. Mr. Minamoto proposes that freedom of information would make a big difference. Mr. Watanabe indicates that the individual does not know enough, so it is necessary to rely on specialists. Ms. Nagano, a student, suggests consciousness-raising at the individual level. Ms. Shima proposes childhood education. Prof. Iwakuni calls for removing conservative members of parliament who are too close to industry. Other than that, he suggests adopting a deposit-refund system. Mr. Kawate proposes a "radioactive waste" model, where potentially dioxin-producing wastes would be stored until technical progress would allow for proper disposal.

III−6　*How Does Dioxin Compare to Other Risks?*

We asked respondents to compare their level of concern between dioxin and five very different types of other "risks": tobacco smoke (either direct or second-hand), earthquakes, global warming, traffic accidents and the state of (and prospects for) the Japanese economy (Table 2, for 22 respondents). For the most part, we found respondents quite capable of risk reasoning using arguments that fall into standard risk trait categories, such as familiarity, personal control, voluntariness, impact on future generations, level of current understanding, and immediacy of adverse effects [Kuran and Sunstein, 1999].

Table 2　Risk Comparisons by Respondents: "Which Are You More Concerned about?"

	Number		Number
Tobacco	11	*Traffic*	14
Dioxin	7	Dioxin	7
Same/other	4	Same/other	1
Earthquake	11	*Economy*	15
Dioxin	7	Dioxin	3
Same/other	4	Same/other	4
Global warming	3		
Dioxin	9		
Same/other	10		

In particular, we found that only global warming was considered less risky than dioxin, and even then a significant number of respondents considered these two remote and "invisible" risks to be of comparable magnitudes. This validates our intuition that our local issue is a good basis for comparison with the study of Kempton *et al*. Concerns over more immediate risks such as traffic accidents and the Japanese economy were far greater than over dioxin.

Concern over smoking and earthquakes was only slightly greater than that over dioxin, although in the case of earthquakes there appears to be a gender difference. Eight of our 13 males were more concerned about earthquakes, while only one picked dioxin. The proportion was reversed for our female respondents: 6 picked dioxin, only 3 chose earthquakes. Ironically, both genders used efficacy arguments, but with different inter-pretations. As a whole, males picked earthquakes because of the inability to protect oneself; females who picked dioxin did so because it is possible to do something about it. Given the size of the sample, we cannot make too much of this difference, but it bears further exploration.

IV Discussion and Areas for Further Exploration

Although we sought to interview a broad spectrum of people in the Tokyo area, the total number of interviews we were able to do was quite limited, and our questions, although open-ended, were not often answered in great depth. To enhance our confidence in our interpretations of this limited set of data, we used a number of null hypotheses. In most cases, we found few definitive conclusions, but some indications of areas for possible future explorations of Japanese environmental consciousness, in particular the role of religion.

Hypothesis 1. Actually, the environment is a universal, contemporary discourse that is widely shared, and the Japanese are no different than anyone else in their attitudes.

By and large, we agree with this hypothesis. As noted, the cultural models of the environment held by our Japanese respondents appear to be more similar to than different from those Americans studied by Kempton *et al*. This appears to be true in our Hong Kong, Thai, and Vietnamese studies as well. One possible explanation for this is that environmental discourse, having developed almost in step with the spread of international mass communication, transcends national boundaries, and constitutes a break with traditional cultural models held nearly everywhere, including the United States and Japan. For example, "protecting" or "preserving" nature in the sense of ecosystems is largely a contemporary concern. Another possibility is that all use a common language, but with different connotations. Given the common view that the national cultures of the two populations are different in many fundamental ways, this is

an area that bears further investigation.[3] At the same time, we would like to raise a few areas where we see some differences, in particular, in the way some characteristics of Japanese culture may provide a different frame for the way our respondents approach environmental problems.

Hypothesis 2. Feelings of political and social efficacy (or lack of it) explain much of the difference between Japanese cultural models on the environment and those of Americans.

We also agree with this hypothesis, and feel it applies to other Asian cases in this study as well, although perhaps expressed in different ways. In particular, Japanese "lack a sense of a precautionary principle" at an individual level because of a feeling of powerlessness to take precautionary action.   This is particularly true of the older generation whose attitudes were formed in a society driven by an obsession with material progress, evidenced most clearly in the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. The precautionary principle is becoming more politically correct in Japan, and is increasingly reflected in the decision-making processes of local governments, as reflected in the recent suspension of development projects, such as the reclamation of the Fujimae and Sambanse tidal lands or the construction of power plants of various kinds (not just nuclear). At the same time, the prolonged economic and political stagnation of the 1990s may have reinforced a sense of powerlessness in the younger generation as well. One area where people do not feel so powerless is against nature.

Hypothesis 3. More than others, Japanese operate with "double codes."

We do not find this commonly stated hypothesis particularly compelling in our sample. Certainly, the idea that people, individually and as a species, say one thing and do another is strong in many responses. This may relate to a common perception among Japanese that people have a "front" (*omote*) side that observes social proprieties (such as expressing concern over the environment) and a less proper "back" (*ura*) side that is how they actually feel and, if they can, act. A number of other similar "double codes" are legitimated by dominant discourse, including *tatemae* (socially or politically correct) and *honne* (hidden, authentic, personally desirable sentiment) and *soto* (outside/r) and *uchi* (inside/r) [Sugimoto 1997: 25–26].

Some of our respondents make a statement of what they consider the socially proper thing to say, but follow it with a statement declaring a different, more "selfish" personal reality for themselves or others. This appears to be in contrast with the typical presentation by the Hong Kong respondents that they themselves are more concerned about the environment than are others. Nonetheless, while our responds may use a

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3) Another approach is to review the ways that social scientific approaches, largely developed in the West, may have "exoticised" Japanese culture. An interesting exploration of this theme is Kreiner and Ölschlager [1996].

double coded rhetorical framework, an equally compelling explanation is that they are expressing a frank awareness of the well-known disjuncture between what is good for society and what is good for the individual that underlies environmental concerns everywhere.

Hypothesis 4. Japanese see nature in direct, reciprocal, social terms.

According to this hypothesis, the idea of a relatively circuitous, indirect "balance" of nature or ecosystem concept would occur less frequently than in the US. This hypothesis assumes that the reciprocal nature of gift-giving and repaying favors that permeates Japanese social order is reflected in attitudes towards nature. Traditional folk tales (most famously, *Tsuru no Ongaeshi*), often deal with shape-shifting animals such as cranes who assume a human guise to return favors bestowed on them by kind people. These tales in turn are related to Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, or metempsychosis, which recognizes a porous post-mortem border between human and non-human souls.

There does seem to be a difference between Japanese and American respondents in the appropriate cultural model to use in negotiating the relationship between people and nature. A hierarchical relationship appears to be felt more strongly by Americans, whether they support hegemony of people over nature or stewardship. The Japanese, who have a highly refined sense of relative status in social relations, are more likely to see nature as at an equal or even superior level to people, deserving respect but not always receiving it.

In practice, we found that respondents do frequently use the word "balance" (*baransu*), using the linguistic variant that is imported from English. At the same time, they refer to "harmony" (*chowa*) with nature, a concept that originated with Buddhism, and appears to be a bit more "Japanese." As noted, we did not find as strong a belief in the irretrievable precautionary principle as in the American sample.

A traditional value in Japanese culture, as in most other cultures before the rise of modern consumerism in the postwar era, is to avoid wastefulness. Mr. Minamoto (age 50) remembers his mother's admonition to eat the whole fish; Mr. Yoshida finds the inglorious dumping of electric appliances, the emblem of postwar consumerism, to be a clear example of wasteful behavior.

A key term that Japanese associate with wastefulness, *mottainai*, has religious origins and, possibly, continuing religious connotations. In particular, it means

- A defilement of the original value of something that has its own meaning, co-existent and co-equal with other things (from Buddhism), hence
- An admonition to minimize the take from nature but to maximize the utilization of goods derived from nature.

Hypothesis 5. Religious discourse does not explicitly enter into environmental consciousness.

At the same time, we found that our Japanese respondents, unlike their American counterparts but similar to most respondents in the other Asian countries we studied, almost never refer explicitly to religious bases for their environmental beliefs. The exceptions are the reference by Mr. Minamoto to the happy eaten fish, and, interestingly, a reference to the Christian concept of "original sin" by Dr. Kosugi, a scientist, in referring to the relationship between human activities and the environment.

We could think of two possible explanations for the lack of explicit reference to religious discourse. One is that Japanese do not see nature or the environment as having religious meaning. This does not ring true to the Japanese authors, as Japanese sometimes see a mountain (such as Mt. Fuji) as a religious place, occasionally enshrining it. Such beliefs are rooted in Shintoism, itself derived from animism, and is still very much alive in people's minds. Many Japanese houses continue to have a family altar (*kamidana*), which is Shinto, and dedicated to the land, and a Buddhist altar (*butsudan*), where one honors the spirits of the ancestors.

Possibly, the problem goes to the nature of religion and religious belief.[4] Unlike the monotheistic faiths (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), Japanese religions are not "confessional" or "revealed," seen as separate from secular life with a different vocabulary. Monotheism is more likely to require a declaration of obedience to a god or doctrine, and to seek to draw clear lines between true believers and others. Japanese "syncretism," part Shinto, part Buddhist and part Confucian, may lead to religious or spiritual elements being assimilated into value systems without any felt compulsion to identify them as particularly religious.

At this point, this is still a quite untested hypothesis, as it requires us to interpret an absence of text rather than its presence. It is equally plausible, given the utter lack of evidence in our interviews that religious beliefs of any kind influence the way Japanese conceptualize their relations with the environment, that religious commitment does not run deep, or that it is somehow kept in a separate mental compartment. The relative relationship of religion, spirituality and environment is very complex, and apparently more hidden, in at least some Asian populations, and merits further investigation.

V Conclusion

Even in our limited study, we have found much that runs counter to common wisdom on environmental sensibilities in Japan. We found that the similarities in cultural models on the environment between our respondents and those of the Americans studied by

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4) For a classical statement of the view that "religion" itself is a "western" concept, see Smith [1991].

Kempton *et al*. are much greater than the differences. In the case of dioxin, respondents are strongly influenced by the media (just as Americans), but are capable of making reasonable comparisons across risk categories. Perhaps the most significant differences from the American sample are in the Japanese view of unrequited reciprocity, where nature provides benefits to inadequately grateful people, and in the absence of explicit links to religious belief.

It is important to emphasize that Japanese respondents, like those elsewhere, do commonly express individual concerns over nature. Such concerns appear, however, to be suppressed by a sense of powerlessness to take effective action in an economic system that remains oriented towards development and a pervasive consumer culture that stresses convenience and presentation over essential and long-term relationships with the environment. Increasingly, there are signs that Japanese are asserting their concerns in a public decision making arena that embraces, at least rhetorically, the necessity for realizing a sustainable society. We hope that future surveys such as this will show an increasing sense among respondents that they can act to realize their environmental consciousness.

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Environmental Consciousness in Thailand: Contesting Maps of Eco-Conscious Minds

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Abstract

Although different groups in Thailand display somewhat different concepts of human nature relations, certain common elements can be identified. Both nature and environment, are seen by all respondents, depending on where they live, as the world around them, but not all respondents perceive the same sort of "world." The "world" to the lay people and the NGO leaders is understood as a natural world, whereas the urban-based and educated population lives in a modern or man-made sphere. Accordingly, to them, nature is associated with periphery, rurality, and wilderness. Environment, on the other hand, is perceived of as a modernized and developed world.

It appears that in Thai society, people develop "cultural models" not merely to shape the meaning and "representations" of the environment but rather to reflect contesting views of it. The lay population, most of whom live in rural areas, and their NGO sympathizers, have used "local knowledge" guided by religious and spiritual beliefs to make sense of the rapidly changing world. The urban-based and educated population, on the other hand, have dominated the rural communities with modernized and applied-science knowledge in interpreting the urban environmental problems.

As a result, the general Thai public lack a sense of personal efficacy and responsibility, feeling that environmental "action" is outside the individual's responsibility, and that it belongs to the urban-based elite and environmental experts. Religious values and beliefs, which are strongly held by the rural sector, play insignificant part in shaping the collective "eco-consciousness" of Thai society as a whole.

Keywords: environmental consciousness, Thailand, cultural models, climate change, public opinion

Introduction

In Thailand, "eco-consciousness" has been on the rise since the early 1970s, not too far

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behind the emergence of environmental awareness in the Western world [Hirsch 1997]. Thailand has done its best to meet the environmental challenge. A capacity and infrastructure have been built at the national scale by setting up various institutions to deal with environmental impacts associated with economic development programs. A national environmental committee was set up as early as the conclusion of the 1972 Stockholm Conference. The first set of environmental laws, known as the National Environmental Quality Act, was promulgated at that time and subsequently revamped in 1997. A number of high-level institutions were established to carry out environmental research, education and training. Thailand's Mahidol University, for example, was a pioneer in training graduate students in resource and environmental management beginning 27 years ago [Mahidol University 1999].

Despite these efforts, environmental degradation and resource over-exploitation in Thailand have gone beyond the crisis point. Over the past 40 years or so, we have destroyed nearly all our natural forest (with roughly 28 percent remaining) and half of the mangrove forest was wiped out during just the last 10 years. More than 300 wild animal species are under a severe threat. Moreover, nearly 70 percent of the major rivers have been contaminated by the overuse of agriculture chemicals and dumping of toxic wastes by industries, causing shortage of water for drinking and domestic uses. Conflicts over the use and control of natural resources are running strong and on the rise [Panya *et al.* 2000; OEPP 1997].

Despite these problems, urban-based, middle-class Thai environmental movements have not strongly responded. Only recently have we witnessed involvement of businessmen and women in promoting environmental awareness in cities (e. g., Sophon Suphaphong of Bang Jak Corporation, and Khunying Chod Choi of the Bangkok Bank).

What is significant for Thailand is that the strength of environmental movements lies at grassroots level. Local people and national NGOs, particularly those who come from rural and regional backgrounds, have always represented the public voice of environmental concerns [Quinn 1997; Narintarangkul Na Ayudhaya 1997].

Despite institutional weaknesses in the environmental movement, concern with environmental problems is widespread in Thailand. Most, if not all, Thai people interviewed stated that, in fact, they are concerned with environmental problems, and are fully aware of the decay and degradation of natural resources, have experienced warmer climate and seasonal changes, and are able to identify weaknesses in environmental education and management policy. What do these people tell us? Is what people said one thing and what they did another? Do they represent the summation of Thai "environmentalism" or "eco-consciousness"? How can what the individual "knows" and "thinks" be transformed into stronger, public environmental action? How would this be strengthened so as to cope with the pressing environmental problems? These are the key issues to be addressed in our study.

Conceptual Approach and Methodology

We employed an anthropological approach, relying on semi-structured interviewing of 22 key informants. Key informants were chosen randomly covering all regions of Thailand. As Table 1 shows, lay people form the largest group. These are farmers and wage laborers, mostly living in rural areas or having rural origins, and having low levels of formal education. Others are chosen from urban and semi-urban areas, including diverse groups of student-youth, media-business, NGO advocates, policy-legislator, and environmental specialists. Fourteen informants were male and 8 female.

We undertook the interviews mostly together as a team during the period August to October 2000. Each interview was tape-recorded and then transcribed, involving approximately 120 hours of transcription yielding over 200 pages of text.

In order to choose an environmental problem that was widely understood by Thai informants, we initially interviewed 15 people at random, asking them to list 5 important environmental problems and rank them in order according to their significance. These respondents were located in a suburb on the west of Bangkok. It was found that climate change/global warming came first on the list. It is worth noting here that most key informants interviewed appeared to have difficulty listing more than three problems.

In our journey to explore environmental consciousness in Thai society through the use "mental" and "cultural" models, we employed a similar methodology to that used by Willard Kempton and associates in their study of American environmental attitudes [Kempton *et al.* 1996] to guide organization of the topics to be discussed in our interviews. Under the term "cultural models," we collected information on: 1) nature and its relations with humans, 2) environmental concerns and awareness, 3) global warming, a specific environmental problem widely recognized in Thai society, and 4) policy reasoning, a reflection from each informant about relevancy and effectiveness of the government's current policy in dealing with the issue of global warming. Our analysis was also guided by concepts relating to the construction of knowledge in Bradd Shore [1998], in his *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning* and the widely cited *The*

Table 1 Key Informants by Occupation, Geographical Regions, and Sex

Occupation	#	Geographical Region	#	Sex	#
Environmental specialist	3	Central	6		
Policy & legislator	2	North	3	Male	14
Student & youth	2	South	5		
Lay	10	Northeast	2	Female	8
NGOs	3	Bangkok	6		
Business & media	2				
Total	22		22		22

Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding by Maturana and Varela [1992].

Historical Changes in Thai Concepts of Nature and the Environment

The traditional cosmology of the Thai people was shaped by Theravada Buddhism, dated back over 700 years during the early Sukhothai period [Department of Fine Arts 1983]. This later influenced Thai thinking about: Nature—*Dharmmachart*, (literally means the law of *Dharmma*), and Truth (the teaching of the Lord Bhudda about conditioned existence of nature). This cosmology is reflected in one of most respected works in Thai literature, *Trai Phoom* (three spheres or worlds), according to which the Earth is situated in the universe, the Great Wall of the Universe, to be precise. The Earth's surface contains a series of continents, all of which are surrounded by oceans. Most significant is "the three living spheres"—*Trai Phoom*, where lives evolved, transformed and advanced. The three spheres are further divided into 31 sub-spheres, all of which are placed into an ordered and hierarchical whole. All living forms, humans included, evolved, transformed, and advanced within these sub-spheres according to each individual's intellectual (*panya*) and moral (*sila*) developments. This cosmology gradually lost its significance for the Thai elite as Thai society developed close contact with the Western societies, beginning with King Mongkut in the second half of the nineteenth century. Subsequent use of science and technology such as cartography has dramatically changed the way in which Thai people see themselves, nature, the world, and universe [see, for example, Winichakul 1994]. Nevertheless, this cosmology still persists through a variety of religious ceremonies annually performed in rural areas throughout the country.

In the past 100 years, Thai society has undergone dramatic and rapid changes that have caused "leaps" and discontinuities in social structure on a larger scale than many historians have suggested [see, for example, Wales 1934; Vella 1978; Wyatt 1982]. It has been argued that the changes and transformation that have taken place in Thai society during the twentieth century have undermined, rather than empowered, the strength of civil society, the Sangha (Buddhist monks) organization included.

Development of land and forest resource management is a clear example of the national hegemonic process. Prior to the Western colonial threat in the second half of the nineteenth century, traditional land ownership fell into two categories: individual (household) and communal properties (*sithi naa muu*—literally means land for the whole community). Individual households had rights to use the latter in time of deprivation caused by droughts and floods, but were not allowed to claim ownership. But as a threat was seen coming from the British-ruled Burma on the northern and western frontier, the Thai state "centralized" its authority over the country's natural resources creating what was to become a basis for today's Land Code, which states that "unclaimed land,

mountains, rivers, lakes and seas are the subjects of the Crown" [Ganjanapan 1992]. In effect, the Law canceled out the "communal" land ownership and recognizes only two ownership systems—land that belongs to the State and land that belongs to individual households.

During the two World Wars, the rise of anti-Western feelings in Asia had implanted nationalism in society. This created a situation in which cultural diversity and pluralism in Thai society was seen as a source of instability in the nation, mostly led by a vicious cycle of dictatorial regimes. The Cold War brought centralization of development and modernization. Only in the 1970s, especially the 1973 and 1976 student uprisings, did the political pattern began to change. Thai civil society groups in the form of Non-government Organizations (NGOs) have begun to exert themselves as a social force competing with the mainstream state apparatus [Panya 1995].

This short account clarifies the context in which changes have occurred in Thai society in response to external pressure. In doing so internal power structures and relations were altered. So too was the power of knowledge process, as the Bangkok-based elite had a hegemonic control over the national discourse. It follows that new sets of meaning, a new worldview, and new forms of knowledge were adopted by the elite and then imposed upon the traditional forms, but the traditional models have not disappeared. As will be shown, although most Thai key informants have shared a similar cultural model of nature and environment, a great deal of diversity is found among sub-groups, mainly between those with rural and those with urban backgrounds.

Diverse Thai Views on Human-Nature Relationship

In general, most key informants view nature as "a world around us." It is an organized or law-like process in which humans are a part. The human-nature relationship is seen as based on interdependence, with emphases varying depending on the utilitarian values of the individual key informants.

For farmers, "a world around us" provides them with a food resource and necessities for living. For some, there is also an element of emotional bonding. Boonrawd, a female farmer in the Central Plain said, "Nature and human are like fish and water: nature is a food source." This view is shared by a village leader who lives in northeastern Thailand.

A taxi driver from the countryside who is now living in Bangkok explained: "Humans and nature are related to each other as partners: no nature, no humans who can survive. At the same time, where there are no humans existing, matter is absent."

"Nature, from what I understand, is a system governed by God. It is a law of natural process that is always changing, not fixed. For example, when we allow grapes to ferment, it will produce wine. This is natural," says Pa Jii, a Moslem villager in the southern part of Thailand.

Students and youths seemed to have a romantic view of nature as something being green and beautiful. "Nature is the greenness that people can take a breath of fresh air," a young female student in the city of Chiang Mai tried to give her view of nature. Another view from Noi, another female student, was, "When we see beautiful nature, it makes us feel good and relaxed, and our good feeling toward nature will happen." Boonchu, a waitress who worked at the provincial resort, provides a similar view: "When humans are with good nature, their hearts and minds are good. At the same time nature needs human to maintain its existence."

NGO advocates view nature as an integrated system of "all things" and nature exists in a balanced state. Their view reflects the influence of formal environmental knowledge. Wiboon Khemcharoen, a leading Thai national NGO advocate explained, "Nature is an integrated system of all things, which exist in a balanced state." He also added, "Nature is a system of relationships between humans and nature, in which humans use culture to manage the status of the two." Alongkot, a young rural-born national NGO worker advocate stressed, "Humans cannot be separated from nature."

Media and business people view nature as: "Things born out of their own, existing by their own law," said a young businessman. On humans-nature relationship, he believed that "humans and nature are living together: if nature is good, there will be no disasters."

Key informants who lived in an urban setting saw the relationship between humans and nature differently. Led by environmental specialists and policy makers, they added an "environment" discourse on "nature," thereby creating a dynamic process between "man-made" and "natural" environments. "Man-made" environment was seen as world for urban people while "nature" was out there in the countryside for rural people. For example, Dr. Suraphon, a leading Thai environmental scientist, said: "Nature is a law-like phenomena. No one can ever change it, because it is the thing that occurs by nature." "There is no line demarcating nature and environment: it can be viewed as a dynamical process and only be explained by sciences." he adds.

A female scientist working in Bangkok sees nature and environment is the same thing as "a surrounding." She explained: "Nature and environment as well as pollution are natural resources. Therefore, environment and nature is the same thing, which is surrounding us. The only difference is that I am here surrounded by buildings, houses, vehicles, rivers, canals and so on, all of which are different from the nature viewed by rural people."

Thai Cultural Models of Nature and the Environment

Individual key informants see both nature and environment, depending on where they live, as the world around them, but not all respondents perceive the same sort of "world." The "world" to the lay people and the NGO leaders is understood as a natural world,

whereas the urban-based and educated population lives in a modern or man-made sphere. Accordingly, to them, nature is associated with periphery, rurality, and wilderness. Environment, on the other hand, is perceived of as a modernized and developed world.

For the lay people and the NGO leaders, their cultural model of nature is that of a "single whole where humans and nature exist through physical, emotional, and spiritual bonding." Yet, this "single whole" can narrowly be defined as a small world just "around us" which provides food and necessities. Nature is understood as an ordered system of harmony and balance. Humans are only a small part of this highly complex world; but, depending on our poor development of insightful knowledge (*panya*) and wisdom, can push nature off a harmonic and balanced state. Our relation with nature is reciprocal, characterized by emotional, moral, and spiritual bonding. "False minds lead to environmental decay," as one of the lay respondents put it.

To those with high education and those who live in urban areas, the world in which they live is different from that of the rural inhabitants. It is viewed as a sphere of modernized and man-made environments. Environment (*sing waed lorm*), by definition, is a subset of nature or human's habitat, which has kept expanding onto and transforming nature. Nature is seen as another "world" out there in the periphery—the countryside. Again, they are concerned with immediate surroundings that have an effect on their health and living space (e. g., crowdedness, congestion, untidiness, etc.).

What do these different views mean with regards to Thailand's environmentalism? In *Environmental Values in American Culture*, Kempton *et al*. identify three sets of values that influence the rise of environmentalism in American society. They include: 1) religious and spiritual values based on religious teaching and spiritual beliefs; 2) anthropocentric values or human-centered view centered on human benefits (aestheticism, included) and goals; and 3) bio-centric values emphasizing rights and ethics of nature. Although our study does not have the same depth as that of the Kempton's, similar patterns of Thai cultural models do emerge and are worth exploring.

Taking the three sets of values as a basis, it can be said that Thai cultural models on nature and environment are largely influenced by anthropocentric values, e. g., nature is seen as a source of food, socio-cultural well-being, and healthy living. Bio-centric views are also found emerging among the younger key informants, reflected in statements like, "Humans are part of nature," "Nature and human is like fish and water," and "We must look at nature with gratitude and thankfulness." These models are not different from that of the American people.

However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that religious and spiritual values do play a part in the interpretation of nature among the lay informants, most of whom live in rural areas. Recent studies have documented several success stories that demonstrate the use of Buddhist rituals and practices by the grassroots environmental action groups in protecting community-based forests and in many cases to successfully rehabilitate the degraded water bodies and watersheds [see, for example, Taylor 1996; Narintarangkul Na

Ayudhaya 1996]. This shows that religious values based on either Theravada Buddhism (e. g. conditioned living as mindfulness, selflessness, intellectual development, etc.) or Islam (i. e., "false mind causing environmental decay") appear to have contributed to the meaning of nature among the rural but not the urban-based and educated population (see statements quoted earlier from Wiboon and Pa Jii).

As for the urban-based and educated population, religious beliefs and values seem to play little role in generating their environmentalism, because for this group, environment "can only be explained by sciences." Both environmental specialists and a person from media showed a great deal of uncertainty when dealing with global warming. This suggests that these professionals depended much on diverse sources of environmental knowledge, and thus lack a sense of urgency and self-determination in response to environmental issues and problems affecting them.

When asked about whether or not an individual key informant considered herself or himself an environmentalist, most responded that "only those with 'environment knowledge' should be considered as an environmentalist." Here, it is not the case of lacking environmental consciousness and awareness, but a lack of personal efficacy and responsibility. It may well be that there is a lack of alternative "local paradigms— a constellation of ideas, values, beliefs and world views" [Capra 1994], which would deepen their understanding of the serious environmental problems they have encountered. This is why there is a general notion among the Thai urban sector that the "governmental institutions" should be responsible for environmental action. Most Thai people interviewed, more so in the urban setting, see themselves as "victims" rather than "agents" of environmental change and management. Our study might shed some light on why Thailand's urban environmental movements are not as strong and active as the grass-roots movements.

Perceptions of Changes in Nature and Explanations for Why Such Changes Are Occurring

Next, we will see that the interpretations of nature and human's relations begin to narrow down into a few sets of "mental models." When it comes to giving an explanation as to what causes nature to change, respondents tend to make reference to things they have perceived in their immediate surroundings. Indicators of change in nature and the causes identified by the key informants across sectors included:

- "Food sources disappeared" (Lay)
- "Forest are being destroyed for commercial and agricultural purposes" (Student & Youth)
- "A system or phenomena which is unnatural: rain no longer falls at the season that

is supposed to" (Media)
- "Changes in ways of living, eating, and sleeping, all of which are not in tune with nature" (NGO)
- "Things that destroyed the balance of nature" (NGO)
- "Seasons changed and natural disasters increased" (Specialist)

Causes of changes included:

- "Population increased leading to increased conflict over resources" (Specialist)
- "Dumping toxic chemicals onto nature" (Lay)
- "Values on nature changed: then we live in forest, now we sell forest for money" (Policy & Legislation)
- "We consume without having much to think about" (Policy & Legislation)

From the above examples, people have been able to describe changes in nature from their own experiences, from what is closer to them, and from what they can make sense. Lay persons, especially those living in rural areas where their livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources, are seriously concerned about the disappearance of natural food sources caused by deforestation and changes of seasonal patterns. As a young woman from the rural South said, "Natural sources of food have declined. In the past we used to have forests everywhere and so abundant with wild animals that they came to find food under our houses. Now they disappeared." Furthermore, A local farmer in the Northeast summarised the changes as she saw it: "It has gotten colder, warmer, and rain has not followed the season."

Thai Perceptions of Environmental Problems

In Thailand, the word for "environment" (*sing waed lorm*) was only recently invented. Designed and introduced by the central authority, the word itself may suggest the notion that humans are at the center of the environment. On the other hand, the word for "nature" (*dharmmachart*) was used long before the term for environment was coined. In the case of nature, it carries the notion of Buddhist philosophy as "Dharmma," the teaching of the Lord Buddha. Perhaps, because of this, the people interviewed found it very difficult to discuss the definition of "environment." On the contrary, most of them, particularly the lay people, could go on and on when talking about nature. They seemed more comfortable taking about nature than the environment.

The lay people associated the term "environment" with the natural environments on which their livelihoods depended. To the lay respondents, environment carried a negative connotation, and the environmental problems were seen as the result of ill-

treatment, misuse and mismanagement of natural resources by the people themselves.

A taxi driver in Bangkok, for example, defined environment as "pollution caused by the destruction and change of nature." Significant to note is the fact that the lay people see human beings as being part of their "environments" too.

"Environments encompass people around us, nature, people in the house, and the neighbors," said a housewife in a village of the Northeast. A similar view was emphasised by Pa Jii, a local Moslem in the South, who elaborated that "People in general often understand that the environments are the things around us. They forget that they themselves are the environments, all of which can be polluted.... When the environments are degraded, the minds of the people decayed."

Are Our Respondents Personally Concerned about the Environment?

All key informants interviewed expressed their concerns about environmental problems. Three main reasons can be identified as to why people have become concerned over the environmental problems: 1) they were experiencing the depletion of the local resource base, 2) the way they were brought up since childhood, and 3) they were given by society a role of environmental responsibility.

Young people who grew up in rural areas had seen their livelihoods were affected by the environmental degradation. For example, Tarn, a young woman living in a rural area of the South, said: "Our lives were so dependent on the environment for four factors of necessities. In forest, we used to have wild animals; in streams, we had fish and all kinds of food. But today, they have all gone."

Do Our Respondents Think That Other People Are Concerned about the Environment?

When we asked about whether the Thai public in general was concerned about the environment, the responses were diverse. The Thai public appears to be divided into those who are greatly concerned about environment and those who are not. Those who are concerned give reasons like the following:

"For those who have children, they are very concerned about how they are going to be when they grow up," a woman in a village of the Northeast said.

Different reasons were given to explain the fact that the majority of Thai people are not interested in environmental situations. A young woman from the South said: "We are fighting against various, unknown movements such as the industry and media, both of which make us feel that environmental situations are not serious. But as we look deeper, it is frightening." This view was also shared by at least five others.

For environment specialists, they viewed that Thai people had diverse concerns over the environment, depending on the potential benefits a person saw in the environments. "Some groups are very concerned about the environments. Those who live in cities would not feel the problem of deforestation," said a female specialist from an environmental agency.

"Thai people think only for their own, short-term benefits. Anything to gain from it, even it will destroy the environment, they will take it," was a critique from a retired physician in a province near Bangkok. Another specialist claimed, "Some Thai are certainly aware of the impacts; but I take it that the majority of Thai people lack environmental consciousness."

Thai Perceptions of an Environmental Problem: Global Warming

Based on our brief preliminary survey, "global warming" was identified as a common topic of environmental concern to the general Thai public. We then designed four questions to draw on "cultural models" of global warming: 1) their experiences of warmer climate, 2) reasons underlying warmer climate, 3) who should be responsible for solving the problem, and 4) their advice on how the problem should be addressed.

We began with the question: "Have you experienced warmer climate lately?" In response, most of the respondents in all sectors said that they had experienced warmer climate and observed the changes of seasonal patterns. Among those who said that they had experienced warmer climate, a local farmer in the Northeast observed: "I felt the climate has not been normal. It has gotten hotter in the hot season and the winter gets shorter."

The lay people's explanations centered on what they experienced locally. This included the loss of trees in producing shade and absorbing heat. They saw an increase of "green" vegetation could be a solution. The more educated, urban-based groups relied on scientific models, seeing the impact of industries and population increase as two main contributors to global warming. A leading NGO advocate suggested that a simple technique of soil conservation—increasing humus and nurturing living organisms in soil—would keep moisture, hence lower soil surface temperature. In his view, nature has a way of healing itself, as a balanced and self-regulating system.

When posed with the question of responsibility and what could be done about it, we could observe that here "collective" ideas and meaning were at work. All people said that environmental problems needed collective actions from "everyone" and every sector in society. In general, the government's role was seen as ineffective and prone to corruption. The private sector was seen as consisting of "more bad people than good ones," who immorally treated nature and the environment. At the individual and family level, each came up with different responsibilities, including, for example, "telling family member

not to destroy nature"; "using energy efficiently"; "planting more trees"; and "compromising family's needs and individual's lifestyles."

Beliefs about the Causes of Global Warming

As for the reason why this condition changed, most lay respondents associated it with the decline of forest. Young Mard Suren, a Moslem villager in the South gave his reason: "It's because nature has lost its balance. Big trees are virtually gone, and there remains only small green plants, which are grown for commercial purposes."

People in the media and business also saw that global warming was associated with deforestation. Trees were claimed to have a major role to play in protecting the Earth from direct exposure to the Sun's rays. But they saw that industries worldwide were the main contributor of greenhouse gases. A young businessman outside Bangkok explained: "The causes of global warming come from various industries, destroying atmosphere and ozone layers. This allows the heat from the Sun to pass directly to Earth's surface without the forest acting as filter. This increases the heat on Earth."

Scientists and specialists were reluctant to admit that they felt the temperature changes, but had to be convinced by scientific evidence. A woman working in an environmental agency explained: "I . . . have to believe it, because there is a lot of evidence suggesting global warming. . . . There are many scientific indicators—movements of glaciers, resulted from the rise of global temperature. The melting has caused a lot of sudden floods in some areas where there were not supposed to take place." A provincial physician also told of his experience, "It certainly is getting hotter." He then concluded that "it is caused by the destruction of forest, hot air released from air conditioners and the changes of sea currents."

What Can Be Done about Global Warming?

The group of policymakers and legislators was the one that was really serious about the problem of global warming and their views on the causes were firmly based on scientific arguments. Adul Wichiencharoen gave his reasons behind global warming and clearly indicated that it was directly linked with deforestation. He said, "Our biggest problem is the loss of forest in a vast amount, which in future will have a great impact on atmosphere leading to global warming." He gave his suggestions: "We must use energy efficiently and minimize the use of all forms of energy use, for example, use of car pool systems. In making policy recommendations, I have tried pushing for the use of solar energy in small communities so that it will not cause pollution and the increase use of burning fuels."

Among the key informants, one of the NGO advocates deserves some attention. His explanation of global warming is distinct from the rest. Former local leader Wiboon was convinced that scientists must be correct in saying that the earth has gotten warmer and had no arguments against scientific explanations. What was interesting, however, was

his explanation as to how we could help prevent and resolve the problem of global warming. He believed that simply increasing "green" or vegetation areas and most importantly "rejuvenating" the soil would help solve the problem of global warming, saying that,

> My way of doing is simple. We can help by increasing the green areas and soil humus. But what an increase of soil humus and micro-organisms can do is critical. Humus keeps moisture in soils, reduces risks for organisms underneath, and controls soil temperature. [He then continued] For me, I have employed sustainable agriculture, trying to keep balance of the three components. First, economics deals with self-sufficient livelihood. Second, good relationships within community must be built. Third, we must try to rehabilitate the environment to keep a balance in nature.

Who Should Be Responsible for Solving the Problem of Global Warming?
There was a consensus among the people interviewed that solving the problem of global warming needs collective action. The typical view on collectivity is that strong action from governmental institution was needed. This normally came from traditional formal leaders in the rural area, such as these two key informants.

"Although the problem is dependent on local individuals, advice must come from agencies under Department of Local Administration" stated Boonrawd, former village leader in the Northeast. Similarly, Chuan, an owner of a shrimp-farm on the East coast said that: "It's better for the Government to issue orders. Orders must come from the Ministry of Interior."

The two key informants above represented a typical patron-client relationship between government officials and local leaders. A sense of dependency still persisted even though the two had retired.

Not all people in the rural area saw it that way, however. Pa Jii in the South stressed collective action both from various organizations and from participation of people from all walks of life.

> All sectors and organizations must cooperate among each other. This is not about the individuals. A single organization will not be able to do it. Because good environments are virtually gone, we must build new structure for environments. Therefore, we need various organizations to work together.

A young woman, Tarn, from a village raised an issue of "rights" and responsibility, as she said,

> We must talk about the rights of the people too. At present, Thai citizens have not been entrusted with responsibilities and rights to protect themselves. So I am not quite clear how to handle this responsibility problem.

As for institutional responsibility, the government received some sympathy from some respondents. One specialist said a very similar thing to Pa Jii above,

> All people must take responsibility together. Formerly, I thought environmental problems should all fall on government's responsibility. But now the problems have accelerated, intensified, and become more complex. Consumers and users of natural resources should also be responsible. As for the government, it should take a supervisory role in providing financial and technical supports.... Polluters should pay back or give something in return to society.

The second response on responsibility stressed the need for individuals to act— "every individual must take responsibility." This view included family responsibility too. The following statements reflect a diverse set of individual strategies employed in daily life.

"I and my family will not do things that will cause problems—like cutting down forest. At the same time, I will help build knowledge and ideas in the community," said Tarn, a young woman from the South.

"If it gets hotter, we can change our quarters. For example, building air-conditioned rooms, turning on electric fans, and finding things to protect from the heat," said Nawa, a housewife in the Northeast. Similarly, Mr. Chuan, a shrimp-farm operator said: "Collectively we should plant trees. Do not destroy them. In the area where forest has disappeared, we must replant them. Houses can be altered, by adding more windows and space to allow easy airflow."

Both Nawa's and Chuan's views reflect a general trend in Thai society in responding to warmer climate they experience. It shows that their perception of the problem, as they were personally experiencing the "heat" of climate, was merely local. They did not seem to see "global warming" to be extended beyond the localities in which they live.

Other examples of individual responses can also be found in the media and business group, who represented an educated and urban-based view on a response to global warming. Controlling needs and keeping lifestyle modest was seen as another way of coping with environmental problems. A young journalist, Jaeng, echoes an "econocentric" view of environmental values.

> I would minimize the use of energy. I would use it, only if necessary. If I wanted a house, I would build a simple one, which did not require a lot of energy. I feel using a lot of energy will destroy natural resources. This goes with the use of papers, electricity and water. It should be in our consciousness that we will use them without creating problems for the later generations.

"Be less selfish. Do not leave air conditioners on all the time. Do not cut down trees, but plant more of them," a retired provincial physician suggested.

It is interesting to note that these two types of solutions to environmental problems

are based on two different rationales: scientific and applied local knowledge. Specialists, administrators, and, especially the scientists, all stressed that the Thai public seems to have inadequate knowledge of global warming. To them, global warming must be explained and dealt with by scientific "knowledge." As leading environmental scientist Suraphon Sudara strongly suggested, "Everything can be explained by sciences, and normally, sciences must be able to explain everything, even social phenomena."

Turning to Thailand, he argued that an environmental problem was often understood from different perspectives, even among scientists and specialists themselves.

"A proper way to solve environmental problems in our country is that," he proposed: "We must bring all qualified people of different views to sit down and work out the differences. We as scientists must provide the public with correct knowledge. And it must be reliable."

A female specialist at an environmental office argued that global warming required scientific explanations. And this should be the role of the government to give advice to the public what action should be taken. Environmental education is another major responsibility falling into government's responsibility. Formal education was a means to raise environmental awareness. "Education is very important. We must implant environmental consciousness in children," the same specialist added.

NGO advocates, on the other hand, seemed to view "knowledge" as process of learning—collective learning, to be precise—as opposed to a transfer of tangible "pieces" of knowledge from experts to recipients. "Community learning is the main issue. We must trust the community to work things out, by using the government's resources," said Alongkot, an NGO working for wildlife conservation.

Knowledge was viewed by NGO advocates, as well as the student and youth group, as a collective learning process. Through the process of group consensus and local forums, people will be able to identify different levels of cause and effect of the problems. To them, environment was not just about the work of sciences. It was related also to culture and livelihood, which were generated and passed on from one generation to the next. Highly regarded former local leader Wiboon put it nicely:

> Education must be able to make people understand the relationship between their livelihoods and nature. Environment should not be understood purely by the work of sciences. Environment is about life.

This view is the opposite of what a trained scientist Suraphon Sudara said earlier that environmental problems must be dealt with by sciences.

In addition to people's awareness of and responsibilities for solving global warming, we asked key informants to give their views on Thai government's rationales and policies with regards to global warming. In general, they had no disagreements with what the government has outlined, but saw them as inadequate. The government, they claimed,

has concentrated solely on a regulatory approach in preventing emission of greenhouse gases.

Conclusion

The Thai case shows a significant difference in the use of "cultural models" of environmentalism. Whereas Kempton *et al*. suggest that all Americans share a single common cultural model of the environment, our study suggests that Thailand may have two distinct sub-cultural models—one employed by the urban-based population, the other characterizing the rural population, or the "center" versus "periphery." Environmentalism should not be considered to have originated from a single source of knowledge and to operate according to a common rationale. Members of an individual "sub-culture" use their cultural resources to interpret and make sense of a world in which they live and of the changes that affect them. Imposing one set of "paradigms" (e. g., dominance of applied sciences over local knowledge) over the others, as the Thai case demonstrates, may have brought about inactive environmentalism: people know about and are aware of environmental problems, but lack individual efficacy and collective action. Environmental problems then are not seen coming from within but from somebody else out there somewhere.

To this end, environment and environmentalism—or "eco-consciousness" is a complex process of organizing ideas and knowledge, not only about a world in which we live "out there," but also about how we define our social existence. There appears to be two sets of knowledge that different groups use to interpret the two separate "worlds," reflecting the widening gap between the urban and rural population sectors. The two sets sometimes oppose each other. For example, a trained scientist stressed that "environment can only be explained by sciences." But a local leader did not see it that way: "Environment is not all about sciences; environment is about life," as one of the key informants, Mr. Wiboon, put it. From this perspective, our ability to work together, allowing each individual segment of the population to "learn" to shift his or her "mental model" will be a great challenge of Thai "environmentalism" in this century.

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Environmental Consciousness in Vietnam

Pham Thi Tuong Vi* and A. Terry Rambo**

Abstract

This paper presents findings of a preliminary exploration of the environmental consciousness of urban Vietnamese. Based on in-depth interviews in Hanoi with 20 respondents from various walks of life, it finds a high level of awareness of environmental problems and a considerable degree of concern about this issue. Most respondents report that they themselves, and their family members and friends, are concerned about environmental problems, but they believe government officials and leaders of big corporations and enterprises are not concerned. They say that they believe that humans are destroying nature because of the urgent need for resources on the part of the poor and the desire for wealth on the part of the rich and powerful.

The views of respondents about ideal relations between humans and nature can be categorized in terms of two general cultural models. The first model views nature as a limited resource on which humans must rely for their survival. The second model views nature and human beings as having a balanced and interdependent relationship. The models are similar in that both express anthropocentric and utilitarian views. Most lay informants express variants of the first model, saying that human welfare depends on the natural environment. In particular, they stress, physical health concerns. Almost all of the elite interviewees employ variants if the second model, stating that people's activities have impacts on nature, and nature reactively affects the welfare of human beings. Consequently, they perceive a need to maintain ecological balance.

Deforestation is recognized as a serious problem by all respondents but they display considerable differences in their assignment of blame for causing this problem and also in their proposed solutions to this problem. In comparing deforestation with other problems, most consider that deforestation is a more important problem than air pollution, climate change and global warming, and natural disasters, but less important than traffic accidents and the future of the Vietnamese economy.

Keywords: environmental consciousness, Vietnam, cultural models, deforestation, public opinion

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In the traditional Vietnamese worldview, people should live in harmony with nature [Le Trong Cuc 1999]. At the same time, however, they must make use of natural resources to provide for their day-to-day survival [Jamieson 1991: 5]. Nature was also seen as a constant threat to human survival, with the frequent occurrence of floods, typhoons, droughts and other natural calamities [Rambo 1982: 410]. Regardless of what relations between Vietnamese people and nature may have really been like in the past, due to growing population pressure and recent rapid economic growth, environmental problems have increased significantly in recent decades. Consequently, environmental protection has become a major concern of the Vietnamese government, as is indicated by the recent formation of a separate Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The extent to which the public is concerned about environmental problems has not been known, however, although many officials assume that the public is largely ignorant and unconcerned about matters relating to the environment.

In order to explore public perceptions of environmental problems in Vietnam, information was collected by using a standardized questionnaire similar to that employed by teams in the other countries taking part in this project. Because of limitations of time and funds, it was possible to interview only 20 respondents, all residents of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, from September through November in 2000. Respondents, who are identified only by pseudonyms, were selected to represent a range of age, gender, and occupational roles (Table 1). Six of the respondents (R1; R2; R3; R7; R8; R9) are classified as lay people, including housewives, street vendors, and motorbike taxi drivers, while 14 are categorized as members of the elite, including 3 university students (R4; R5; R6) and 11 professionals (R 10–20).

Given the difficulties of getting people to agree to be interviewed in Hanoi, our sample was an opportunistic one, with respondents drawn from among people who already knew us and would agree to be interviewed. It is also exclusively made up of urban dwellers, although several respondents had moved to Hanoi from rural areas, where 80 percent of Vietnam's population still resides. Respondents are all also drawn from the Kinh ethnic group (ethnic or lowland Vietnamese), the majority population of the country. Although Vietnam is a multiethnic country, made up of 54 officially recognized ethnic groups, the Kinh account for 86 percent of the total population of 76 million and, consequently, it is the Kinh value system that is dominant in national discourse [Rambo forthcoming].

In this paper we begin by presenting respondents views on the ideal relationship between people and nature and how they see this relationship as it is realized in practice. We then examine their perceptions of environmental problems in general and their assessments of the extent to which they and other people are concerned about these problems. That is followed by their views of deforestation as an environmental problem in Vietnam and their comparison of deforestation to other environmental problems. Finally, we discuss some implications of our findings.

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Code	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Birth Place	Occupation
R 1	Mr. Xuan	M	50s	graduated high school	Hanoi	motorbike taxi-driver
R 2	Mrs. Thi	F	52	graduated high school	Hanoi	street vendor
R 3	Mrs. Do	F	35	2nd year primary school	Nam Dinh	junk-buyer
R 4	Mr. Le	M	21	3rd year Commerce University	Hanoi	undergraduate student
R 5	Ms. Dao	F	21	2nd year Geography Faculty, Physical Sciences University	Lai Chau	undergraduate student
R 6	Ms. Nhu	F	21	4th year Environmental Sciences, Physical Sciences University	Binh Dinh	undergraduate student
R 7	Mrs. Van	F	63	graduated high school	Quang Tri	retired housewife
R 8	Mrs. Nguyen	F	44	graduated high school	Hanoi	housewife
R 9	Mrs. Hang	F	32	graduated high school	Hanoi	housewife
R 10	Professor The	M	69	Ph. D. in Agricultural Economics	Hue	senior agronomic expert
R 11	Dr. Trong	M	45	Ph. D. in Ecology	Ha Tinh	ecologist
R 12	Professor Thanh	M	71	Ph. D. in Bio-diversity	Ha Tinh	senior bio-diversity expert
R 13	Mr. Quang	M	41	M. Sc. in Environmental Studies	Hanoi	environmental technical specialist
R 14	Mrs. Ha	F	48	B. Sc. in Forestry	Phu Tho	forestry protection officer
R 15	Mr. Cao	M	50	B. Sc. in Forestry	Hanoi	forestry specialist
R 16	Dr. So	M	46	Ph. D. in Anthropology	Hanoi	anthropologist
R 17	Mrs. Kim	F	38	MA in Gender and Development	Hanoi	gender specialist
R 18	Mr. Po	M	46	MA in Economics	Hanoi	policymaker, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development
R 19	Dr. Luc	M	59	Ph. D. in Ecology	Hanoi	policymaker, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
R 20	Dr. Gen	F	46	Ph. D. in Agricultural Economics	Hanoi	economist

I The Relationship between People and Nature

In this section we describe the cultural models of the ideal relationship between people and nature that are employed by our respondents and present their views on how contemporary Vietnamese actually relate to the environment.

I–1 *What Is the Relationship Between Humans and Nature?*
The views of the interviewees about ideal relations between humans and nature can be grouped into two general environmental models. The first model views nature as a limited resource on which humans must rely for their survival. The second model views nature and human beings as having a balanced and interdependent relationship. The models are similar in that both express anthropocentric and utilitarian views.

In the view of most lay informants, human welfare depends on the natural environment. In particular, they stress physical health concerns. "If the natural environment is good, people will have good physical health. But if the environment is polluted, it will cause many diseases. [For this reason], people should protect the environment and keep it clean," says Mrs. Thi (R 2), a street vendor. This view is shared by several other lay informants (R 2; R 3; R 7; R 9). Other informants (R 1; R 2; R 3) note that: "Trees release fresh air and oxygen that help us breathe comfortably. So we should protect the environment for our better health." Elite respondents also have anthropocentric and utilitarian views. They say that humans rely upon on nature for the resources needed to support human life. However, nature's ability to support humans is limited, so "humans must protect nature in order to exploit it in the longer term" (R 12; R 18; R 4). For example, Professor Thanh (R 12), a leading bio-diversity expert, expresses the view that "Humans live within nature, while at the same time, humans also exploit nature for their livelihood. Humans must protect nature [which provides limited resources] enabling them to exploit it in the long term." This view is also shared by two policymakers.

Nearly half of the professional respondents, as well as a few lay informants, view the human-nature relationship from ecological-balance perspectives. For instance, Dr. Trong (R 11), an ecologist, said: "Humans are a part of nature. All elements, like humans, ecological systems, water, land, etc., together make up a whole. In order to keep the whole system in balance, each element must be in harmony and balanced with each other." This view is shared by Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, who notes that "human beings are a component of the entire system of nature [which is made up of humans and nature]. Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to co-exist." Similarly, Mrs. Nguyen (R 8), a housewife, says that "humans must not hunt animals, birds or whales, etc., which should be protected, otherwise the balance of nature will be disturbed."

Almost all of the elite interviewees believe that the human relationship with nature is interactive. People's activities have impacts on nature, and nature reactively affects the welfare of human beings. For example, Mrs. Ha (R 14), a forest specialist, says: "If humans affect nature positively, it in turn gives us pleasure, such as fresh air and good climate [which create great conditions for agricultural production]. But if our activities impact badly on nature [deforestation as an example], it will negatively affect our livelihoods [for example with droughts or floods]." A similar view is expressed by Ms. Dao (R 5), a geography student, who says that: "Humans impact on nature and nature also affects human beings. If humans destroy nature, they must suffer from negative

reactions from nature." Dr. Gen (R 20), an agricultural economist, comments that "Human beings and nature have an interactive relationship. For example, the more the environment is degraded, the worse the [agricultural] production conditions become. This results in low productivity [that causes poverty in poor areas]. Therefore, people have to pay high costs to fix environmental degradation."

I–2 *How Do People Relate to Nature in Reality?*

Almost all informants acknowledge that even though public awareness of the importance of protecting nature and the environment has only developed recently in Vietnam, in reality people still "treat nature without respect" (R 5); they are exhausting natural resources; and they are destroying nature and the environment.

Most elite informants believe that many ordinary people lack appropriate knowledge about the human-nature relationship. For example, Professor Thanh (R 12), a bio-diversity expert, points out that: "[In practice], humans behave badly toward nature and the environment, because they do not deeply understand the interdependent relationship between nature and human beings. So they often tend to exploit nature rather than protect it." Mr. Quang (R 13), an environmental specialist, explains that the concept of environmental problems has been raised fairly recently in Vietnam; therefore many ordinary people perceive environmental issues in terms only of their immediate surroundings that directly impact their health and well-being. Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, adds that the lack of broader knowledge of the important relationship between humans and nature is reflected in the lack of concern that many people display about caring for the environment. Some lay informants, on the other hand, give more practical reasons to explain why people in general still have bad behaviors toward nature. For example, Mrs. Do, a junk-buyer, says: "What can you do when there are too many people in the city [Hanoi], but a lack of rubbish dumping places?"

Another argument made by many elite respondents is that economic interests cause people to over-exploit the environment. For example, one-third of the elite informants say: "People are 'running to follow' their short-term economic profits. Therefore, they use up natural resources. This leads to destruction of the environment" (R 11; R 14; R 15; R 17; R 18). Moreover, some elite respondents point out that the main reason that poor people exploit nature is to meet their needs for economic survival. For instance, Dr. Gen (R 20), an agricultural economist, explains that: "I think the poor understand [the importance of maintaining a healthy environment]. However, their survival is the most important thing for them. Thus, they are forced to exploit nature. For example, [the locals] know if they destroy the forest, they will directly suffer from drought or floods or soil erosion. But if they do not cut down trees to sell for food, they have nothing to eat. Of course they prefer to die a bit later [due to natural disasters] than die now [from hunger]."

II   Public Concern about Environmental Problems in Vietnam

In this section we describe the extent to which our informants state that they are personally concerned about environmental problems and present their assessment of the extent to which other people are also concerned.

II-1   *Are People Concerned about the Environment?*

Almost all of the respondents answer that they are themselves concerned about the environment, though the levels of their concern are varied. Most of the interviewees believe that many of their family members and friends are also concerned about the environment. A few, however, say that their friends think that environmental issues are "only of concern to the rich." Most say that the general public in Vietnam has recently paid attention to environmental issues. In contrast, most respondents say that few government officials, and no businesspeople, are at all concerned about environmental problems (Table 2).

Most of the respondents express concerns about the environment but they display different levels of concern. The majority of informants say that the environment is important because it directly affects their quality of life or relates to their work. A few interviewees, however, say that they are "not very much" concerned about the environment. Mr. Le (R 4), a university student of commerce, for instance, expresses his concern about the environment: "Yes, I think that I am concerned about the environment but not very much. I am concerned about water pollution, for example, just because I have had an assignment about this issue. Since I know about problems of water pollution through my study reading materials, I think I should be concerned about this issue a little bit." Ms. Dao (R 5), a university student of geography, says that she is somewhat concerned about the environmental problems "but not necessarily. I have other more important things relating to my life to be concerned with."

Table 2   Summary of Respondents' Perceptions of Those Who Are Concerned about the Environment and Those Who Are Not Concerned

Individuals Who Are Concerned about the Environment	Individuals Who Are Not Concerned about the Environment
Almost all of the respondents	Only a few of the respondents
Most of the respondents' friends and their families	A few of the respondents' friends
A large share of the general public of Vietnam	Some members of the general public
A small number of government officials	Most government officials
No business-people	All business-people heading corporations and enterprises

II-2　*What Environmental Issues Are of Greatest Concern to the Interviewees and What Are the Reasons for Their Concerns?*

Many informants identify air pollution and water problems in urban areas as serious environmental problems that have stimulated their concern about the environment. Deforestation, environmental problems associated with natural resources, and various other environmental problems related to some informants' work such as soil erosion, solid waste pollution, lack of environmental planning, imbalance of ecosystems, poverty relating to environmental problems, and so on, are mentioned as their greatest concerns about the environment.　Additionally, quite a few respondents point out that safe food and hygienic conditions are their greatest concerns regarding "environmental problems."

More than half of the respondents say that they have concerns for the environment because they worry that environmental problems would have negative impacts on their health.　In the case of Ms. Dao (R 5), a student in the second year at Physical Sciences University, her greatest concerns are about air and water pollution because she believes such environmental problems "impact on my health and everyone else's health as well." Mrs. Thi (R 2), a street vendor, observes: "The tap water in my home used to be yellowish and now it sometimes contains too much chlorine.　But clean water is the most important factor in human health."　These issues are making her quite concerned about the environment.

A minority of the interviewees say that their concern about the environment, especially air and water pollution, is very much a reflection of their (subjective) experiences.　For instance, Mr. Xuan (R 1), a motorbike taxi-driver, observes: "I am on the road everyday.　I can see many motorbikes, cars and trucks release their emissions into the air. When traffic congestion occurs, smoke from these vehicles is all over the place."　Mrs. Kim (R 17), a gender analyst, speaks out from her own experience: "Air pollution must currently be at its worst.　My house here is not so close to Thuong Dinh industrial zone. However, emissions from the tobacco plant and the rubber factory [in the zone] blow up during windy days and make us very uncomfortable.　In addition, if I come home from work after struggling with a traffic jam, my son says that even my clothes and skin smell terrible like smoke released from burnt petrol in motorbikes."　Similarly, Dr. Gen (R 20), an economist, points out: "When I drive past the industrial zone on my way home on hot summer days, tears come out non-stop from my eyes.　If it is rainy on these hot days, a disgusting smell is emitted from the river [located in front of her house], which makes us sick."　Ms. Nhu (R 6), an undergraduate student who is studying environmental sciences in the fourth year of Physical Sciences University, says that her main concern about the environment is air pollution because: "Air pollution such as dust or smoke from vehicles in our city is so obvious.　You can see and smell it."

Information about environmental problems that is delivered in the mass media also influences people's concerns about the environment.　Some interviewees explain that they are concerned about the environment because they have learned from the media

that some environmental problems have occurred and affected people's livelihood. By way of example, Mrs. Van (R 7), a retired housewife, points out that: "In some areas of our city, residents have to use drinking water from their individual wells. News on television says that drinking water tested in some wells contains some heavy metal agents that cause cancer. This makes me have the greatest concern about water pollution." Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, says that: "I have read an article about cancer being related to environmental problems. The article has shocked me a bit. It makes me feel that a lot of things such as drinking water, and particularly food now cannot be trusted." He says that this has caused him to be concerned about the environment.

A significant number of professionals say that they are concerned about the environment because their work somehow relates to environmental issues. Professor The (R 10), a senior agronomist, says: "My research is about issues relating to sustainable rural development. Of course, I must be concerned about the environment because in order to develop rural areas in a sustainable way, environment issues need to be taken into consideration." In the case of Professor Thanh (R 12), an expert on bio-diversity, he has the greatest concern for environmental issues associated with natural resources and bio-diversity because "these are the issues that I am specialized in and I think they are the most important environmental matters in Vietnam." Likewise, Dr. Luc (R 19), the head of the environmental policy department, explains his concerns about the environment as being "based on my position as an environmental policymaker." Mrs. Ha (R 14), a forest protection officer, has a similar explanation about deforestation as her greatest environmental concern, "because environmental issues associated with the forest relate to my work."

II–3 *What Environmental Issues Do the Interviewees Think Are of Greatest Concern to Other People?*

Most of the interviewees say that they believe their family members and friends are concerned about environmental problems but say that they are mostly concerned about specific problems that directly affect their lives in general and their personal health in particular. For example, Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, states: "The overwhelming majority of my friends are only concerned about whichever environmental problems directly affect their health. They do not care about other environmental problems which impact in the long term, because they have too many other things relating to their daily lives to worry about." Mrs. Kim (R 17), the gender specialist, thinks her family members have the greatest concern about water and air pollution because: "Air pollution created from the industrial area located nearby our place could impact negatively on our lungs. Also, the tap water in our home sometimes is yellowish and unclear. All these problems would make our health weaker over time." Mrs. Ha (R 14), an officer from the department of forest protection, says that: "Our family members are very much concerned about waste water problems. There used to be an open sewer running in front of our house.

The horrible smell from the sewage used to make us sick most of the time."

Some respondents believe that their family members have become concerned about the environment because they learn from the mass media that environmental problems would have negative effects on their lives. By way of example, Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, explains the reason that her family members are concerned about water and air pollution: "Due to the mass media distributing information and reports about these issues [water and air pollution], my family understands the environmental problems so they are concerned about them." Agreeing with Ms. Dao, Ms. Nhu (R 6), the environmental student, says: "My family members are concerned about air pollution and problems of clean food, because they have watched the reports about these problems on television." According to Mr. Le (R 4), a student who is studying commerce, his parents' greatest concern is about deforestation, because: "There is very much recently said about problems of deforestation in the newspapers."

Some respondents admit that they do not discuss environmental issues in daily conversations with their friends or colleagues at work. Mrs. Kim (R 17), a gender specialist, says: "My colleagues do not often discuss environmental issues in our office. Environmental issues are not a topic mentioned in our daily conversation at the work place." Mr. Le (R 4), the commerce student, admits: "I do not know if my friends are concerned about the environment because we neither talk about it nor do any of my friends mention such issues." In the case of Dr. Trong (R 11), an ecologist, a few friends of his do not care about the environment because: "They consider that the environment is not a matter for them to be concerned about but is a matter for the rich."

Many respondents believe that the Vietnamese people in general have begun to have more concerns about environmental issues in recent years. The reasons for their concern about the environment are, according to most respondents, the introduction of the first environmental law (1994), the increasing number of environmental risks (water pollution, heavy floods, etc.) having negative effects on people, and the increased coverage of environmental problems in the mass media. Professor Thanh (R 12), the bio-diversity specialist, suggests that personal experiences have made people more concerned about environmental protection: "Through doing my recent development projects, I have learned that more and more people are concerned about the environment. Most people involved in my current project used to over-exploit the forest because they were very poor. When their livelihoods are improved by economic and technical support from the development project, they are the people who voluntarily protect the forest the most; because they strongly understand how important it is to their lives to conserve the forest."

Even though they state that an increasing number of Vietnamese people are concerned about the environment, some elite respondents say that the level of this concern varies among different groups of people. They believe that people having higher economic status, with higher education and so greater access to the information are more

concerned about environmental issues, whereas people having a low economic level, lower education and poor access to information are thought to have "little" concern about the issue. Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, comments: "Intellectuals have more concern about the environment; because not only do they have knowledge of environmental problems, but they also have better economic conditions in which to do so. On the other hand, for the 'working class', their [poor] economic conditions constrain them from being concerned about environmental issues." Mrs. Van (R 7), a retired housewife, says: "Farmers who are street vendors in my street pick up broken rubber wheels to use for cooking. I don't think they have the information to understand that the smoke from burning the rubber is harmful to their health, their community and other people."

Most of the interviewees believe that government officials in general have only limited or no concern about the environment. Ms. Nhu (R 6), the environment student, for instance, says: "I think government officials in general have little concern about environmental problems. Government officials are only concerned about something urgent, therefore they do not pay enough attention to such issues as the environment." More negatively, commerce student Mr. Le (R 4) says "I do not think that government officials are concerned about environmental issues. Because if they were concerned about these issues, there would not be so many illegal cases of timber exploitation." Moreover, many respondents think that environmental issues are granted only second priority in the thoughts of government officials. For example, Professor Thanh (R 12) considers that government officials have so many concerns about other issues than the environment; they, hence, do not see the importance of environmental issues; "for them, issues such as poverty alleviation, building infrastructure or education and health-care are more important than environmental issues."

A few respondents think that even if government officials are concerned about the environment, they do not have the long-term vision to deal with environmental problems. For example, Mr. Po (R 18), a policymaker, states: "Those people who are responsible for the forest, for instance, only care about deforestation problems, but they do not care about bio-diversity or soil erosion. They do not link development with protection. Additionally, they deal with environmental problems in a passive way. They act like officials of the fire brigade who only stop a fire after the flames have been created." Professor Thanh (R 12) adds that: "government officials often say in the media that they are concerned about the environment. However, in practice, their actions show that their concern is still at a low level."

Finally, almost all interviewees believe that business-people of both private and state corporations and enterprises are not concerned about the environment and are only concerned for "their own profits." For instance, Mrs. Thi (R 2), a street vendor, comments: "Corporations and enterprises are not concerned about the environment. For example, many factories have discharged hazardous smoke, untreated wastewater, and untreated industrial waste. They do not care about communities living around the factories. They

only care about their own profits." In the same way, Mr. Po (R 18), an agricultural and rural development policymaker, adds: "Profits are the first priority of corporations and enterprises. If they are concerned about the environment, this concern is only at the bottom of their priority ranking." Some respondents have no doubt that corporations and enterprises will show their concern about the environment only "when they are required by law to do so" or "their concerns [about the environment] are only to cope according to the pressure of mass media reports." According to Mr. Po (R 18), business-people are not concerned because of "lack of good regulations related to issues such as environmental tax or environmental penalties to deal with environmental problems," while "poor regulations regarding environmental impact assessment" are said by Dr. Trong (R 11), an ecologist, to be the reason that "corporations and big enterprises do not consider issues of environmental protection."

II−4　*Why Should We Protect the Environment?*

Many informants say that we need to protect the environment because environmental problems impact directly on their quality of life as well as the well-being of future generations. Ms. Nhu (R 6), the environment student, says: "Environmental problems have an immediate impact on our lives. Thus, protection of the environment is necessary to improve our quality of life." Similarly, Mr. Cao (R 15), a forest specialist, explains simply: "In order to have a high quality of life and to have a long life, there is no other way than to protect the environment." Dr. Gen (R 20), an economist, agrees with Mr. Cao: "Environment protection is quite an important issue to improve the quality of life." In addition, Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, says: "Not only do we protect the environment to improve our quality of life, but we also do so for the good of future generations."

Some lay people think that we should protect the environment to enable themselves and the community to have "comfortable lives." For example, Mr. Xuan (R 1), the motorbike taxi-driver, and Mrs. Do (R 3), a junk-buyer, express similar reasons for protecting the environment: "We should protect the environment in order to have fresh air and a clean environment [meaning good hygienic conditions] so that we ourselves as well as our communities can live comfortably." Moreover, many informants believe that a degraded environment has an impact on human health, thus we should protect the environment. For example, Mrs. Nguyen (R 8), a housewife, responds to the question of why we should protect the environment: "Because if we do so it means we keep air always fresh, for instance."

The majority of elite respondents cite the need of people for natural resources as a justification for protecting the environment. Thus, Professor The (R 10), a senior agron-omist, says: "On the one hand, environmental destruction results in reducing natural resources. On the other hand, production is based on natural resources. Therefore, lack of natural resources leads to crisis in production." Along the same lines, Mr. Po (R 18), the

agricultural development policymaker, states that: "It is clear that we should protect the environment in order to have natural resources in the long term. To develop in a sustainable and safe way, and in the long term, people have to do so [protect the environment so preserve natural resources]."

Only few informants offer a moral rationale for the need to protect the environment. For example, Mr. Quang (R 13), an environmental technical specialist, believes: "Environmental protection has also a deep meaning of equality among different generations. The environment protected today is also preserved for the next generation. Otherwise, our children's generation will suffer." He explains that his belief is based on a social moral in which he follows "the philosophy: 'we live not only for our generation but also for our future generations.'"

III   Perceptions of Deforestation as an Environmental Problem

Because of the importance of forest resources for rural livelihoods in Vietnam and the great attention paid to loss of forests by Vietnam's mass media, we selected deforestation as the focal environmental concern for our interviews.

III−1   *Have People Heard about Deforestation?*
All respondents say that they have heard about the problem of deforestation prior to the interview, although most of them identified other environmental problems as having made them concerned about the environment. Almost all of the respondents believe that an increased number of natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, in recent decades is associated with deforestation. Some specialists state that deforestation results in loss of bio-diversity, land degradation and soil erosion.

The mass media have a strong influence on the awareness of the interviewees. All of the interviewees say they have learned about problems of deforestation from television, radio or newspapers. "The mass media even releases more reports and speaks out more about cases of destroyed forest than responsible people," comments Mr. Cao (R 15), the forest specialist. Professor Thanh (R 12), a bio-diversity specialist, expresses doubt about the accuracy of media reports, however "in practice, problems of deforestation are much more serious compared with what has been said in the mass media." Most elite respondents have also come across the problem of deforestation one way or another through their related work. Interestingly, one lay interviewee says that she has heard about problems of deforestation from talking to her friends.

III−2   *Perceived Causes and Agents of Deforestation*
Most of the respondents say that illegal logging organized by outsiders on a large scale is a major cause of deforestation. Mrs. Ha (R 14), the forest protection officer, explains:

"Illegal logging is organized by the people having money. They don't themselves do the logging but they conduct it distantly." Like many respondents, Mrs. Thi (R 2), the street vendor, points out that "high profit from trading timber encourages illegal logging." On the same line, Mr. Cao (R 15), the forestry specialist, suggests that "it is necessary to review the 'closed natural forests' policy of the government" because this policy allows the exploitation of "only 300,000 cubic meters of timber per year but the timber demand is 3 million cubic meters per year." He concludes "the big gap between the demand side and supply side of the timber market allows the timber smugglers to obtain super profits" which leads to an increase in illegal logging. Moreover, a few respondents such as Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, say that the existing forest protection law and its enforcement are not good enough, so "illegal logging occurs easily." In addition, some respondents acknowledge that poverty is also a factor that drives the poor to be involving in illegal logging.

Half of the respondents believe that shifting cultivation by ethnic minorities also contributes to deforestation. Some elite interviewees mention that clearance of land to cultivate industrial crops, mainly in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, causes forest loss, but no lay interviewee mentions this issue (although it is now acknowledged by the government forestry authorities to be the largest single cause of deforestation). Mrs. Ha (R 14), a forest protection officer, says: "All trees from the natural forest [in some areas] have been cut down [in order to have land] to cultivate coffee, rubber and cashew nut trees. This is a problem." Along the same lines, Dr. Luc (R 19), the environmental policymaker, adds: "Nowadays a lot of forest is cleared for planting industrial crops. This is a problem [resulting in deforestation]."

In addition, spontaneous migration is claimed by some of the interviewed specialists to cause deforestation. For instance, Dr. So (R 16), the anthropologist, lists spontaneous migration as the third most important cause of deforestation. He says that "they [some spontaneous migrants] have destroyed the forest in Tay Nguyen (the Central Highlands) to occupy the land." According to Professor Thanh (R 12), the senior bio-diversity specialist: "There are many spontaneous migrants at the present time. They are out of control. If there is the forest available where they have been, they just instantly cut the trees. For example, the forest has been destroyed massively in Tay Nguyen."

It is surprising that only a few respondents make any reference to population pressure as a critical cause of deforestation. This factor is mentioned only by Professor Thanh (R 12), the senior bio-diversity specialist, and professor The (R 10), the senior agronomist.

Some interviewees from the lay group do not use "scientific" words such as "spontaneous immigration," "pressure of high population growth," or "shifting cultivation," but that does not mean that they do not know about these issues. For example, Mrs. Do (R 3), the junk-buyer, says that she has heard: "A lot of people migrate from other places to live in the forest" [meaning spontaneous immigration]. There are more and more people

[meaning population growth]. They [spontaneous migrants] have exploited the forest [meaning clearance of land] to plant food crops, and coffee, cassava, and cashew nut trees." Mr. Xuan (R 1), a motorbike taxi-driver, is referring to shifting cultivation when he says that: "Burning forest is the major cause of deforestation. Because they burn trees in an area of the forest. After burning, they use that land for planting something, for example crops. This piece of land could be a small plot or a farm."

III-3 *Who Is Responsible for Solving the Problem of Deforestation?*

While some informants say that all people, including local communities in the forest areas, government forest management agencies, state forest enterprises, businesses, and the public, are responsible for solving the problem, most informants say that the government is most responsible for dealing with deforestation.

Most lay respondents believe that the government would be able to solve the problem if forest management agencies did their work well, and the forest protection regulations were seriously enforced. They also believe that the government should have development programs to improve the livelihoods of communities living around the forest. For example, Mrs. Thi (R 2), a street vendor, says: "[The government] should produce stricter regulations [of forest protection]. They should enforce them as strongly as possible. The government should also have responsibilities to improve the livelihoods of the people over there [around forest areas]."

Many professionals, however, think that it is very difficult for the government to deal with deforestation problems. Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, says: "I don't think the government can deal with the problem in the near future. We have just started protecting the forest, though we have spelt out slogans [about forest protection] for a long time. In order to deal with the problem, there needs to be a thoughtful, sustainable, suitable, reasonable strategy, and good social management. However, we have not had these." Mr. Po (R 18), the agricultural development policymaker, is very cynical about whether either the government or ordinary people could deal with the problem of deforestation. He says: "It [forest] will continue to be destroyed until it becomes a disaster. Then they [the government and maybe ordinary people] would be concerned." Professor The (R 10), an agricultural economist, suggests: "I don't think only the government can deal with the problem, but there needs to be additional social pressure to push the government into taking actions. For example, research organizations should provide knowledge, reports [about problems of deforestation] for National Assembly members in order for them to debate with the government."

Some professionals, as a result of their work experiences, perceive poor institutional management of the forest and ineffectiveness of reforestation programs as problems that relate to deforestation. Mr. Cao (R 15), the forest specialist, gives an example of poor public administration system of the natural forest in an area in the south of Vietnam. He says: "Yen Lap Protection Forest Management Board is responsible for managing 26,000

hectares of natural forest. However, the Board has only seven people so how they could control the area? Even if one officer is given to manage 1,000 hectares of the forest, he/she would not have controlled it." He wonders "if the government still manages the forest [the mentioned area] like that [in such an institutional way], how could they handle it?" A policymaker, Mr. Po (R 18), from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, criticizes reforestation programs (that often are undertaken following policies from the ministry): "Planting programs are important. But activities of replanting do not often generate profits [in the way they are implemented now]. If forest planting is not a beneficial enterprise, people will never be involved in it. [This means that] they would never involve themselves in replanting forest or protecting forest."

III–4　*Assessing the Impacts of Deforestation*

Almost all interviewees state that deforestation has affected them in some way or other. Some declare that deforestation has had a direct impact on their financial situation. For example, Professor The (R 10), an agricultural economist, complains "the price of timber had increased rapidly when I built my house." Many people state that deforestation directly affects their lives because it results in natural disasters such as floods and storms and also reduces supplies of water. Mrs. Thi (R 2), a street vendor, says: "It [deforestation] results in floods and typhoons that would threaten our lives. Many people have been killed by flooding [in the country]."

　　Some interviewees believe that deforestation has impacts on Vietnam's economy so it indirectly affects their living standards. For example, Mr. Quang (R 13), the environmental technical specialist, says that: "As a result of deforestation, flood or drought occurs in a large area. As a consequence, crops in the area are lost. This leads to weakening the country's economy so it negatively impacts our living standards."

III–5　*Respondents' Comments on Proposed Solutions to the Problem of Deforestation*

Nine alternative proposals for dealing with the deforestation problem were read to the interviewees who were then asked to comment on these proposals.

Proposal 1
Deforestation is a necessary evil in order to maintain our lifestyle involving the use of timber products, and to maintain the livelihoods of one-third of the country's population living on/nearby the forest and depending on collecting forest products and cultivating swidden fields. Therefore, there is not much we can do about that.
Almost none of the interviewees agree with such a view. They believe something can be done to reduce deforestation. Their comments regarding this proposal are different, however. Some strongly disagree with the view that deforestation is necessary partly to maintain the livelihoods of people living around the forest. Most interviewees suggest that the government should be committed to creating more effective development

programs or projects to improve the livelihoods of the population living around the forest. Mr. Cao (R 15), the forest specialist, says: "I don't agree with such a view. Some lowland people [for their own profits] are primarily responsible for destroying the forest. The upland people [who are living around the forest] have done [less damage]." He suggests that: "They [the government] should have good policies to enable them [the upland people] to have stable livelihoods. Then, I am very sure that they will be the most responsible people to protect the forest. In practice, such projects and programs have been successful." Some other interviewees recommend that a change from using timber products to other products can help to reduce deforestation. Dr. So (R 16), the anthropologist, suggests "it is possible to switch from producing timber products from natural forest to planted timber products to reduce deforestation."

Both Mrs. Do (R 3), the junk-buyer, and Mrs. Hang (R 9), a housewife, agree with the proposal, but Mrs. Do objects to the idea that highland people destroy the forest by their practice of swidden agriculture. She says: "They [people living around the forest] have to cut trees in order to [have land] to cultivate their crops, so we can not do anything about that. However, they reserve [the forest] at a level that keeps both old and young trees; they only cut down trees that are too old."

Proposal 2
There is much we do not know about the effects of deforestation on human livelihoods. Before we undertake any concrete action, we should invest our money and time in research on this topic.

There are two contrary positions regarding this proposal. While all interviewees in the lay group, and some students, agree with the proposal, only a few professionals hold this view. The few professionals that do agree say that the general public lacks knowledge about the long-term effects of deforestation on people's livelihoods, therefore more research should be done on the topic so that its results can be made known to everyone. Ms. Nhu (R 6), the environmental student, holds this position: "It [research about the effects of deforestation] is necessary. Because before carrying out a project, we need to enhance awareness about the project issues. This can help us to implement the project better."

Most of the professionals, however, believe that ordinary people are already aware of deforestation impacts. Hence, research about this topic is not needed. Dr. So (R 16), an anthropologist, strongly rejects this proposal: "It is not appropriate in what you want to do research about. I think they [upland people living around the forest] are aware of the importance of deforestation because it directly affects their livelihoods. However, they have no other way to live. They must worry immediately about their survival so they have to do swidden agriculture. By doing this, they destroy the forest." Moreover, Mr. Cao (R 15), our forest specialist, adds: "Documents related to effects of deforestation, or even forest policy oriented documents, can be piled up as high as a mountain. However,

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the matter is that we should apply them [such documents] in practice. We also lack investment for people's livelihoods in upland areas."

Proposal 3
We can reduce deforestation by strictly regulating the exploitation of timber products.
Most interviewees think that this proposed solution is necessary but not adequate. Some of them suggest that forest exploitation regulations need to be strictly integrated with other practical solutions such as creation of a suitable timber market, reforestation, allocation of land and forest to households and so on. Professor The (R 10) comments: "It [the above proposal] is insufficient. It is necessary to have a suitable market for trading timber. At the same time, we need to replant trees for producing timber. Also, it is necessary to manufacture suitable non-timber products to replace timber products." However, a few interviewees have a totally different opinion. Mr. Cao (R 15), the forest specialist, says "the more strict the regulations [of timber exploitation] are, the more serious deforestation is." As he has explained earlier, if strict regulations reduce the volume of timber cut legally, then illegal logging would occur more aggressively so it is difficult to control.

Proposal 4
We should tax timber exploitation highly.
Almost all respondents say that this proposal is not useful for reducing deforestation. Many respondents anticipate that once the timber exploitation tax is increased, the extra cost would mean "the users pay" so this produced tax would not help to reduce forest exploitation. Some other respondents believe that an increased tax on timber exploitation even encourages illegal logging. Thus, the above proposal may have an opposite effect to that intended. Mr. Quang (R 13), the environmental technical specialist, holds the view: "With existing systems of forest management in Vietnam being weakly interconnected, if timber exploitation is taxed highly, this would lead to tax-evasion so illegal logging would occur."

Proposal 5
We can reduce the pressure for over-exploitation of timber by expanding and promoting the use of non-timber products.
Most interviewees do not see any problem with using non-timber products instead of timber. However, some of them are concerned that it would be difficult to accept the use of non-timber products if they have a higher price and if they do not last as long as timber. Mr. Cao (R 15), the forest specialist, wonders if the existing technology in Vietnam is ready to produce as non-timber products of as good quality as timber products. Interestingly, Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, suggests another consideration: "Non-timber products [she would use] must be environmentally friendly."

Proposal 6

We can reduce exploitation of forest by improving the livelihood of people who live in/nearby the forest through other development activities to replace forest exploitation.

While all of the informants agree that improvement of the livelihoods of ordinary people living around the forest would help to decrease over-exploitation of the forest, some point out that only carrying out such development activities/programs to improve forest-dwelling people's livelihoods is not effective enough to reduce deforestation. These programs ought to be implemented together with programs of education and public awareness propaganda regarding forest protection. Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, says: "The proposal is partly accurate. Improving their [people living around the forest] livelihoods is important because if their livelihoods are difficult they destroy the forest. However, if they are not aware of the importance of the forest, they may still exploit the forest even when their lives are better. Therefore, improving livelihoods is necessary but needs to be done together with propaganda and education [about forest protection]." Furthermore, Dr. Luc (R 19), the environmental policymaker, adds: "I agree [with the proposal]. However, it needs to be integrated with increasing the strength of [forest protection] regulations and empowering management forces."

Proposal 7

We can stop deforestation by giving local communities management responsibility for forest-land.

Regardless of social background of the interviewees, almost all of them agree that giving rights to local communities to manage forestland is good in principle. However, many elite interviewees hold the view that to ensure the effectiveness of the proposal "macro" policies by the government such as market policy, monitoring of forest management, and improving management capacities of local communities need to be coordinated with assigning management responsibilities to local communities. For example, Dr. Trong (R 11), the ecologist, comments: "It is a good idea. Also, it is necessary to have a clear policy about their [local communities] rights and obligations [in managing the forest and land forest]. However, it needs to have a good mechanism to monitor their management; otherwise after allocating [the forest and forest land] they would exploit more timber if the timber price is very high in the market." Moreover, Dr. So (R 16), the anthropologist, thinks that the model of community management of forestland should only be applied in those communities where the traditional forest management model is still strong. He explains that: "traditionally, a community was made up of only one ethnic group and only had basic needs so it was easy to manage. A community nowadays is different. Commonly, several groups of people with different ethnic backgrounds live in the same community; consequently social management is complicated. I think community management of forest land should take place, but issues such as where it should be implemented, with which ethnic group and when should be taken

into account carefully."

Proposal 8
We can stop deforestation by increasing the strength and authority of the Forest Protection Offices.
Almost none of the informants support the view that the forest protection offices would be able to stop deforestation even if they were given more power or authority. At the same time, however, they acknowledge that forest protection officers do help to reduce deforestation and favor increasing their authority to enable them to enforce forest protection regulations more strongly and more productively. For instance, Mr. Quang (R 13), the environmentalist, says: "A 'plague' of illegal logging is recently spreading out to destroy the forest. This happens intensively because, I think, the forest protection force is 'thin' [inadequate]; and their power is limited. Experience from several cases [illegal logging] shows that they have very great difficult in doing their job. So I think this work [increasing the strength and authority of the Forest Protection Offices] is needed."

Proposal 9
We can increase forest cover by implementing projects on reforestation (for example: the Vietnamese government is implementing a project to plant 5 million hectares of forest in order to increase the forest cover of the country from 25 percent to 40 percent).
All interviewees agree that the proposal on reforestation is a necessity. However, they recognize that replanting projects should be carried out together with other projects as a whole in order to develop the forest. Professor The (R 10), an agricultural economist, says: "It is not only reforestation [to increase the forest cover]. Parallel to replanting, it needs to have an all-sided rural development planning, including cultivation of annual crops and permanent trees, of swidden and paddy fields, of livestock, services, tourism, and other off-farm activities that create employment, etc." Moreover, some interviewees point out that it is not easy to implement reforestation projects because "it takes time for trees to grow [to make forest]," Ms. Dao (R 5) comments; or "where can you find such big money to invest [in reforestation]."

IV　Comparisons of Deforestation with Other Environmental Risks

Interviewees were asked whether they are more concerned about deforestation or other problems such as air pollution, climate change and global warming, natural disasters, traffic accidents, or the future of the Vietnamese economy.

IV–1　*Deforestation Compared with Air Pollution*
Some respondents are more concerned about deforestation than air pollution and some

have more concern about air pollution, but almost half say that they are concerned about both problems. Professor Thanh (R 12), the bio-diversity expert, who is more concerned with forest degradation, offers this explanation: "Deforestation, I consider, is the most important issue in Vietnam. At the present, it is a serious problem. Two-thirds of the country's total land area contains forests and mountains. The loss of forest leads to losing land and water becomes scare. Without forest, water is lost. Our country relies very much on agriculture. Without water how can we cultivate crops? Drought and flood [resulting from deforestation] cause loss of crops. This results in hunger." Several other ecological-oriented specialists share similar views with Professor Thanh. For example, Dr. Trong (R 11), the ecologist, says: "Overall, deforestation is still the most important issue in Vietnam. Air pollution is an environmental problem in urban areas only."

Mrs. Do (R 3) is more concerned about air pollution than deforestation, "because it [air pollution] directly affects you. Everyday, you need air to live." For Mr. Quang (R 13), "it [air pollution] is a practical problem affecting directly, specifically and immediately the quality of life." Ms. Dao (R 5), the geography student, and the two other students, Mr. Le (R 4) and Ms. Nhu (R 6), share the same view: "I can feel it [air pollution] immediately. But about deforestation, I live here [in the city] so I cannot see directly [problems related deforestation]. Also, my knowledge of deforestation is limited."

Almost half of the respondents are equally concerned about deforestation and air pollution because, according to them, the two problems are both serious in Vietnam and they have an interrelationship. For example, Dr. So (R 16), the anthropologist, says: "I am concerned about both problems, because at present they are very serious. They affect each other. If the forest is kept in a good condition, it limits air pollution."

IV‑2 *Deforestation Compared with Climate Change and Global Warming*

Most respondents are more concerned about deforestation than climate change and global warming. A minority believes that deforestation is related to climate change and global warming. For example, Mrs. Ha (R 14), the forest protection officer, says: "I am more concerned about deforestation because it is related to climate change. The forest makes climate equable." Some others have a different reason to be more concerned about deforestation. Mr. Quang (R 13), the environmentalist, who is representative of this group, says: "[This is] because it [deforestation] is national issue and we can think of solutions to deal with it. But for a small country like ours, if you are concerned about global warming, it is for fun [meaning one country cannot individually deal with the issue]." Mrs. Thi (R 2), the street vendor, expresses a somewhat similar rationale: "I am more concerned about deforestation because it directly affects my well-being. But climate change is a job of heavenly spirits. Who knows [what could be done to fix it]?"

For most of the lay interviewees, "climate change" means simply that the weather is changing rapidly. Therefore, they are more concerned about climate change than

deforestation, because they believe that the former directly affects their health.[1]   For example, Mr. Xuan (R 1), the motorbike taxi driver, gives a reason for his being more concerned about climate change: "because it [climate change] makes people tired, and unusual weather, higgledy-piggledy cold and hot."

IV−3　*Deforestation Compared with Natural Disasters*

Almost all respondents say that they are more concerned about deforestation than natural disasters because they believe that deforestation results in natural disasters like floods and typhoons.   Dr. So (R 16), the anthropologist, says: "Deforestation is one of factors causing natural disasters.   Deforestation also results from social problems, so it can be controlled."   On the other hand, Mr. Xuan (R 1), the driver, and Mrs. Do (R 3), the junk-buyer, are more concerned about natural disasters because "floods and typhoons could destroy houses, crops, forest trees," as Mrs. Do says.

IV−4　*Deforestation Compared with Traffic Accidents*

A little more than a half of the respondents are more concerned about traffic accidents than deforestation.[2]   A common response is that the impacts from traffic accidents are much more visible and immediate than those created by deforestation. For example, Mrs. Nguyen (R 8), a housewife, says that she is concerned more about traffic accidents because "they are very dangerous [to people]. I am frightened. They are catastrophic and happening in front of you."

The rest of the respondents find it difficult to compare the two problems. They are equally concerned about deforestation and traffic accidents because traffic accidents are a serious problem in cities and thus concern urban people such as they themselves, but deforestation impacts people in the whole country. For example Mrs. Kim (R 17), the gender specialist, says: "Comparison [of the two problems] is difficult. Traffic accidents are local problems, for example in this city or another city. But deforestation impacts on everybody."

IV−5　*Deforestation Compared with the Future of the Vietnamese Economy*

Most respondents reply that they are more concerned about the future of Vietnam's economy than deforestation.   A common view of lay respondents is that "I am more concerned about the economy, because it impacts directly on us. Everybody must worry about economics first. 'If the country is rich, its people will be strong'" says Mrs. Nguyen

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1) Most Vietnamese believe that rapid changes in the weather result in illness such as colds and the flu.

2) Because of the recent explosive increase in the number of motor vehicles, the generally poor condition of the roads, and the lack of driving skill, Vietnam has one of the world's highest rates of traffic accidents.

(R 8), a housewife, reciting one of the country's official development slogans. Mrs. Ha (R 14), the forest protection specialist, offers a different explanation: "Realistically, everyone is concerned about how Vietnam's economy will develop in the near future. I am most concerned about economic development because this includes forest development."

Slightly less than half of the respondents say that they are concerned about both the future of the country's economy and deforestation, because they see these two problems as being related to each other. However, they say that they are a little more concerned about deforestation. For example, Professor Thanh (R 12), the bio-diversity expert, says: "Forest is Vietnam's economy. If there is not any forest [left], the economy is difficult to develop in the long term. If drought and flood occur 'everyday' [often] what is left to develop? Money spent on that cost much more than what would have obtained from selling timber." Dr. Luc (R 19), the environmental policymaker, says that he is concerned about both issues because: "They are related. Good forest management is basic to developing the economy well."

Summary and Conclusions

Environmental problems have increased significantly in recent decades due to population growth and rapid economic growth. However, public awareness of environmental problems has developed much more recently. This research has been undertaken to understand public perception of environmental problems in general and deforestation in particular.

We have identified two closely related but somewhat different cultural models of human relations with nature that are employed by Vietnamese. The first model views nature as a limited resource on which humans must rely for their survival. The second model views nature and human beings as having a balanced and interdependent relationship. The models are similar in that both are anthropocentric and utilitarian in orientation.

Most lay informants employ the first model of human-nature relations, in which human welfare depends on the natural environment. They say that we need to protect the environment because "this means to protect ourselves"— if we damage the environment, then environmental problems will impact on our quality of life, our comfort, and our health. Thus, their evaluation of the environment is conditioned by their concerns about their personal well-being. Elite respondents are more likely to believe that, because people are part of the entire natural system, human activities will cause significant changes to nature. Therefore, humans should live in harmony with nature in order to "co-exist"; otherwise nature would react unfavorably to humans' disrespect toward it. For most elite respondents, a degraded environment will lead to a production crisis, because agricultural production in Vietnam very much relies on natural resources.

Almost all of the respondents see themselves, their family members and the majority of their friends, as being concerned about the environment. At the same time, they believe that most government officials and all officers of big corporations and enterprises do not care about the environment. They believe that the general public in Vietnam has only recently begun to pay attention to environmental issues.

Respondents' concerns about the environment are based primarily on their own personal experiences and observations. In other words, they are concerned about environmental problems that they can directly sense (e. g., smell, see) or that directly affect their health and lives. Thus, they believe that if an environmental problem impacts their health or well-being, it also affects others who are living in similar conditions with them. It is for this reason that they consider their family members and close friends to be as concerned about the environment as they are themselves. The mass media in Vietnam have recently begun to distribute a large quantity of news related to various environmental problems [Le Thi Van Hue 1999: 111]. Therefore, the respondents' own concerns are very much influenced by the media and they think it also influences the wider public's concerns about the environment. Moreover, some elite respondents are concerned about the environment because their professional work relates to environmental issues.

Moral values, especially concerns for inter-generational equity, influence some respondents to support environmental protection. They seem to have the philosophy that "we live not only for our generation but also for our future generations."

Regarding the issue of deforestation, all respondents have heard about the problem in the mass media (and some elite respondents have also read technical reports about the problem). They say that they believe the problem is a real one because they "can see it visually" (meaning they see the news and documentaries on television or pictures in newspapers). Lay respondents and some students display considerable faith that the government will respond effectively to deforestation. Professional respondents are less sure of this.

The findings regarding the binary comparisons of deforestation with other risks indicate that the choices of respondents reflect their perceptions of which risks pose immediate threats to themselves according to their individual knowledge of the risks.

It is what we did not find that is most surprising. Despite well-documented evidence that in the traditional Vietnamese worldview, nature was conceived of as having a large supernatural component, with the relationship between people and the natural environment one in which supernatural beings and spirits played an important role [Le Trong Cuc 1999: 69; Rambo 1982], references to heaven or spirits are almost wholly absent from the responses of our interviewees.[3] Of course, public discourse in Vietnam has been

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3) The sole exception is the remark by Mrs. Thi, a street vendor, that she is "more concerned about deforestation because it directly affects my well-being. But climate change is the job ↗

deeply influenced by the official atheism of the socialist regime that has been in power in Hanoi for half-a-century but, given the recent revival of religion and the very deep roots of animistic views in Vietnamese thought, the absence of references to the supernatural in respondents' comments is difficult to explain.

It is also surprising, given the important place that natural phenomena hold in traditional painting and poetry (although less so in the contemporary arts, which tend to focus on human subjects), that none of the respondents express any aesthetic reasons for protecting the environment. Nature is important to people for the resources it provides and the damage it can cause to them if abused; it is not seen as having intrinsic value for its beauty. Nor, is there any evidence of respondents holding bio-centric views in which other species are seen as having an equal right to existence with humans.

Because our sample is small and wholly urban, we are reluctant to claim that our findings are representative of all Vietnamese since 80 percent of the population still lives in rural areas. Other research suggests, however, that rural Vietnamese, both members of the Kinh (ethnic Vietnamese) majority and ethnic minorities, also show a generally high level of awareness of environmental problems and are able to readily identify environmental problems affecting their lives [Le Quang Trung and Rambo 2001].[4] The many informal discussions of the environment that we have engaged in with rural Vietnamese over the years suggest that they largely share the cultural model of human relations with nature that we identified for our lay urban sample: Nature is seen as a source both of the resources that support human life and of the natural disasters and health problems that make life so difficult. Their views are anthropocentric and utilitarian, not based on any moral linkage between people and nature. Certainly, in their actual behavior towards the environment, rural people display few signs of the supposedly dominant traditional Vietnamese cultural value that people should live in harmony with nature. Instead, rural Vietnamese have often engaged in quite destructive behavior toward their environment [Jamieson 1991]. Thus, we believe that findings of our exploratory study are likely to be supported by more systematic research with rural Vietnamese. But clearly, a much broader survey is needed before we can claim to

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of heavenly spirits." Her statement may reflect belief in the power of the spirits but more probably is a metaphorical way of saying that climate change occurs on such a large scale that it cannot be influenced by the actions of an individual person such as her.

4) A recent study of five villages in Vietnam's Northern Mountain Region found that "people's perceptions of the term 'environment' are simple. People mention one or more of these elements: trees, forest, land and soil, water, humans, social relations, things surrounding humans, etc. Most of the people say that the 'environment' consists of trees and forests" [Le Quang Trung and Rambo 2001: 219]. Respondents were also able to readily identify many environmental problems that affect their lives including water pollution, forest destruction, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters, declining soil fertility, and environmental health. Air pollution, however, was mentioned by only a minority of respondents in most communities [*ibid.*: 221–222].

understand the character of environmental consciousness in Vietnam.

Acknowledgements

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Village versus State: The Evolution of State-Local Relations in Vietnam until 1945

NGUYỄN THẾ ANH*

Abstract

The traditional perception of the village as a closed and self-regulating corporate community has more often than not overstated its high degree of autonomy, downplaying thereby the interaction between the state and the local social units. This article aims at bringing some rectification to this type of misrepresentation by considering the dynamics of state-local relationship from the standpoint of the strategies laid out by the successive central governments in Vietnam to endeavour to integrate the rural communities into the national space.

Keywords: Canton (*tổng*), communal charter (*hương ước*), communal house (*đình*), council of notables (*hội đồng hào mục*), private land (*tư điền*), public land (*công điền*), register of fields (*điền bộ*) and of recorded inhabitants (*đinh bộ*), village chief (*xã trưởng or lý trưởng*)

Under China's political control and owing to China's influence from the Tang period on, the Vietnamese rural commune (referred to in the ancient Vietnamese language as *kẻ, chạ, chiềng,* etc., and commonly as *làng*—village) started to assume the Chinese term *she* 社 and to be called *xã*, as it took on the role of the primary administrative unit of society. The term *xã* was generally adopted under the Trần dynasty, when with the reorganization of the regional administrative system in 1242 large villages (*đại tư xã*) and small villages (*tiểu tư xã*) were distinguished, and officials (*xã quan—xã chính*, chief, *xã sử*, secretary, *xã giám*, assistant) were appointed to each *xã* [*Toàn Thư* 1985: II, 16; *Cương Mục* 1998: I, 462]. It was also in 1242 that the first census of the population was carried out, and the resulting rolls served to determine the amount of taxes and other contributions that were to be paid to the state. However, the *xã* did not as a general rule represent the smallest unit of the regional administration even after this reform, partly because the command the Trần court could exercise over the entire country was tenuous, to say the least.[1]

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1) For a general discussion of the socio-economic conditions of the ancient Vietnamese village, see, among other publications, Nguyễn Thế Anh [1998]. Detailed analyses of different aspects of the socio-economic life of four villages in the delta of the Red River are presented in Papin & Tessier [2002].

Nevertheless, much has been made of the village at all times as the basic unit of Vietnamese society, as the major point of reference for the Vietnamese people's behaviour and for its socio-political characteristics.[2] Opinions concur that Confucian influence in shaping the Vietnamese traditional elite must be balanced against the fundamental importance of the village at the grassroots of Vietnamese society. In particular, the village is often said to have been independent of central authority as "a state within a state" behind its thicket of bamboo, bounding its inhabitants into a meaningful whole that links place with identity, and dealing with all its own affairs independently. Being nearly self-sufficient, most of the villages certainly found little cause for contact with either the government or other communities: theoretical discussions on the economic mode of operation of villagers have more often than not focused on "closed corporate communities," imagining therefore the villagers as homogenous and resistant to change.[3] In other words, the relevant social and political concerns of most Vietnamese were concentrated within the village itself, according to the Vietnamese proverb having it that "each village strikes its own drum and worships its own deities," which suggested that every village was a unique, distinct, compact and isolated community, with its specific charter (*hương ước*), customs and laws, its own manners and mores, and its communal house (*đình*) serving both as the administrative centre and the place of worship for the guardian spirit, whose sacred powers, sanctioned by a royal certificate, were believed to secure the village's prosperity. Predating supposedly the establishment of monarchical power, communal charters were at first known by word of mouth, but under the Trần dynasty many villages already had a written *hương ước*. The charters grew and evolved along with village life, eventually covering the whole gamut of social existence.[4]

Spelling out the rules and rituals associated with every village festival, celebration and anniversary, enumerating the principles governing agricultural production and economic life, defining the rules governing human behaviour and relationships within

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2 ）What appears to be "local" has been usually linked to key concepts such as "traditional" and "authentic" to create the myth of village autonomy, which uncritical assessments by both Vietnamese and foreign scholars have contributed to reinforce [see for example McAlister 1971: 30–33, following Mus 1952: 23–35], saying nothing about the fact that "locality" has often been shaped in relation to outside forces of change.

3 ）Village studies have been overwhelmingly preoccupied with representing the Vietnamese nation as a "nation of villages." Most works on rural Vietnam describe the village as an inward-looking place profoundly oriented towards the traditional past, with its political autonomy, economic self-sufficiency, and closed corporate organization (reinforced by the practice of village endogamy) constituting a stable, self-contained microcosm [for example, Phan Huy Lê *et al*. 1993]. However, the divergent "moral economy" [Scott 1976] and "rational economy" [Popkin 1979] analyses of the Vietnamese rural communities have in a way contributed to revise some of the misconceptions about peasant resistance to change.

4 ）See, for one, Grossheim [1996: 103–123; 2001].

the village, detailing the measures designed to ensure law and order, the *hương ước* contained therefore a mixture of administrative rules, customary laws and religious guidelines the purpose of which was to regulate the interactions and relationships of each village's society. The existence of these bylaws had led to the famous adage "The customs of the village have precedence over the laws of the king" (*Phép vua thua lệ làng*). In reality, these bylaws were always scrutinized by officials to make sure that they did not go against the spirit of imperial laws. As a matter of fact, the villages were far less autonomous than the popular saying would suggest, and the degree of independence varied with the central government's ability to carry its policies out. Most of the time, nevertheless, the dynamics of state-local relations were characterized by transactions over the state's access to local resources, and those transactions would reflect the tensions brought about by the state's attempts for political, economic, and cultural integration. There were of course inevitable differences in the pattern of village administration and society between North, Centre, and South, as beneath the broad picture of institutional conformity there was probably considerable diversity in actual village arrangements, particularly regarding differences of origin and size, and patterns of power and wealth involving the dominant village families. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that, in the course of the *Nam tiến*, the southward progression of the Vietnamese, the same essential traits had been taken south and reproduced in a new environment.[5]

State and Village in the Kingdom of Đại Việt

The communal charters, with their special features in structure, relationship and tradition, contained anyway potential germs of centrifugation, as they were bound to clash with the rules and edicts from the central government. The emperors of the Lê dynasty, for one thing, were well aware of these separatist tendencies, and attempted to limit the scope of the *hương ước*, in order to wrest power and authority back to the centre.

Indeed, as soon as it was established, the Lê court moved vigorously toward Đại Việt's centralization, determined as it was to control the villages for the sake of the stability of political power, the management of manpower, and the expansion of arable land. In 1428 Lê Thái Tổ had new family and land registers drawn up and made the distinction between three categories of villages, small (*tiểu xã*) of less than 50 families, run each by 1 xã quan; average (*trung xã*) from 50 to 70 families, with 2 *xã quan* each; and large (*đại xã*) of over 100 families, with 3 *xã quan* each [*Cương Mục* 1998: I, 844]. But it was Lê Thánh-tông who set the appellations of the authority of the village heads and the mode of their appointment: in 1462 he changed the title of *xã quan* to *xã trưởng*, then in

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5 ）See, for example, Hickey [1964], describing the history and institutions of the village of Khánh Hậu in Long An province, south of Saigon. As for recent case studies, see Kleinen [1998] and Papin [forthcoming].

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1465 ordered the officials of *huyện* (sub-prefectures) and *châu* (districts) to summon the *xã trưởng* to the capital with the census registers in view of collating them [*Toàn Thư* 1985: II, 408]. In 1488 he decided that sub-prefects and district chiefs were to choose and appoint the head of every commune, together with his secretary (*xã sử*) and assistant (*xã tư*), among former students (*nho sinh*) or graduates (*sính đồ*), and ordained that prefecture and district officials were to prevent the nomination of two or more *xã trưởng* among relatives in the same village (this order was repeated in 1496) [*ibid.*: II, 507, 519].[6] Thereby the concern was expressed for having available for peacekeeping local officials sufficiently infused with the official way of thinking to be loyal defenders of the monarchy. In controlling village administration, the aim was thus to consolidate central authority through the expansion of population and the dissemination of Confucian ethics. For, even if he recognized implicitly that the villages were managed by men from their very midst by having the officials of the *huyện* and *châu* appoint those recommended by the villagers to the post of *xã trưởng*, Lê Thánh-tông would not tolerate the independence of the rural communities.

　　Therefore, it does not appear, as has been too readily asserted [UBKHXH Việt Nam 1971: 275], that the villagers elected the *xã trưởng* on their own accord and that the autonomy of the village had expanded during the reign of Lê Thánh-tông. Above all, the central government's will manifested itself through the prerequisites imposed on the person of the *xã trưởng*. Indeed, to be qualified as *xã trưởng*, the recipient had to be a learned person as well as a mature and virtuous member of a good family. There was also a provision in the *Hồng Đức thiện chính thư* (The Book of Good Government of the Hồng Đức Reign) to the effect that if a *xã trưởng* would form cliques or harm public morals, then the person that recommended him first should be punished [Yu Insun 2001: 164]. Expected to be the "vanguard of moral transformation," the *xã trưởng* had therefore the duty to provide the villagers with guidance and to lead them towards goodness and away from immorality [*ibid.*: 165].

　　The reforms accomplished under the first Lê emperors marked the high-water point in the degree to which the state endeavoured to control the resources of the country. They were actually associated with the fiscal demands of the royal government: a new fiscal base for the state was laid, with the formalization of a new pattern of land tenure, in which public lands (*công điền*) were regularly parcelled out among the inhabitants,[7] and at the same time served to guarantee the village's collective obligations to the state (the communal land taxes and the head taxes levied on the registered villagers were to

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6 ）In 1490 the number of *xã* amounted to 6,851 [*Toàn Thư* 1985: II, 510].

7 ）The distribution of land was the extreme form of interference that the state could assume in agricultural production and land possession: the state retained the right to elaborate the whole system of land usage, to decide on the size of land-holdings for all of its subjects, from the lowest to the most notable. For the regulations on land allocation of the Hồng Đức period, see *Cương Mục* [1998: I, 1145, 1149].

provide the public treasury with regular revenues), while private lands (*tư điền*) allowed a pattern of independent peasant production to develop.[8] Allotting a more substantial role to smallholding peasants and tenants, the new social order would reinforce the kingdom by providing larger rural revenues and permitting more effective penetration of the countryside, as the regulation of the disposition of communal lands would enable the central government to strongly inject itself into local village affairs. The reforms contributed also to the stabilization of the rural communities: communal lands were to be distributed periodically, every six years, to all of the villagers and the distribution was to be determined by the social rank of each individual; they could neither be sold nor transmitted by inheritance; the formation of large land holdings was forbidden. The principal objective of the Lê fiscal system as it took form in the 1430s and 1440s was especially to keep private hands off the *công điền*. In so doing, the government achieved considerable success in keeping the villages and their resources locally independent and directly linked to the capital [Whitmore 1997: 668]. On the district level, in jurisdictions of 30–70 villages, district officials gathered census data and promoted textually based Confucian social norms. The officials' principal new tasks included the encouragement of agriculture, the standardization of weights and measures, and the promulgation of exhortatory moral prescripts [*Toàn Thư* 1985: II, 499–500]. On the sub-district level the 1480s saw a major effort, as mentioned above, to restructure the role of the *xã trưởng*, in order both to consolidate district efforts and to bring Confucian ideology deeper into society.

The officials of the sub-prefectures and the districts not only saw to the distribution of land, they also directly collected poll and land taxes. As the accuracy of the registration of the different categories of villagers was fundamental to the determination of the taxes to be paid to the state and the periodical redistribution of communal lands, their duty was to directly supervise the classification of adult males during the compilation of the registers of households (*đinh bộ*) and lands (*điền bộ*). But the *xã trưởng* were supposed, every four years, to revise these registers, for the drawing up of which they were directly responsible, and on which the imposition of taxes and the recruitment of manpower for military service and corvée labour (*công dịch*) were founded.[9] Neverthe-

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8) Yumio Sakurai argues that the autonomy of the village, centred on the distribution of state land (*công điền*), was weakened by encroachments made by the state in the early Lê period [Sakurai 1987]. Private ownership was attested by a royal ordinance of 1135 stipulating the conditions for the sale and the purchase of rice fields [see Ngô Kim Chung 1987].

9) At least four types of register were usually kept: two for the benefit of higher-level officials, the other two for use solely within the village. In the former category were the *điền bộ* (register of fields) on which the assessment of land tax was based; and the *đinh bộ* (register of recorded villagers subject to obligations), which—although listing only some of the inhabitants—formed the basis of the village's assessment for corvée and personal taxes. The other two records were the *sổ thu thuế* (tax collection list) used to allocate the tax burden among the inhabitants; and the *sổ hạng xã* (list of categories of people) used for the actual allocation of communal lands.

less, it was not up to them to decide who would be liable for conscription: the state based on the *đinh bộ* to enlist those individuals liable for military service.

Lê Thánh-tông, however, seemed to have been unable to regulate the village completely. In fact, while forbidding the application of the private village code (*tục lệ*) which had long been the basis for village customs, he tolerated it in some way by allowing it to survive on the condition that it were rewritten by a person of virtue within the village. He was probably not averse to allowing the village a certain amount of autonomy provided that this did not go against national interests. Thus, if the need temporarily arose for the distribution of communal land following the promotion or dismissal of an official, the death or coming of age of a village member, freedom was given to the *xã trưởng* to carry it out.

Anyway, the early period of the Lê dynasty corresponded to an era of peace, when the central government exercised effective control over land, private and communal, when banditry was minimized, when public works were maintained, and when the local village elites, who held positions of leadership thanks to their economic status or their kinship and education, were the most strictly regulated, to the benefit of the population at large. But a change took place in the first half of the sixteenth century, with a decline in the political importance of the monarchy as the result of the internal political conflict which caused the breakdown of central authority, until then remarkably effective and stable. The state of civil war monopolized the attention of the men of power, for whom the priority was the strengthening of their military supremacy rather than the control of the villages. The ensuing deterioration of state authority unleashed the centrifugal tendencies characterizing village society, each village going in the direction of increasing its own autonomy, since it had no recourse but to solve its own problems by itself. Although few historical sources referred to the situation within villages during this period, it is possible to infer, from what we could gather from the documents of the time, that by then the rural commune had considerably freed itself from central government supervision. The weakening of governmental control benefited mainly the position of the village elites, who took advantage of population dispersal resulting from the civil wars to usurp land and create vast estates, while impoverished peasants attempting to escape state demands of taxes and corvée (and forfeiting their rights to communal land in so doing) sought to bind themselves and their services to wealthy families in return for protection and economic security [Ngô Kim Chung 1987]. Furthermore, the troubled times introduced a third social actor into the binary organization of state-village relationships, with the sudden increase of the floating population of migrant labourers, itinerant peddlers, religious figures and criminal groups that had always existed outside state and village control.

While the military demands of civil war strained the resources of the system, the deteriorating socio-economic situation required that measures be taken to restore social order. Therefore, in the mid-seventeenth century, when the north-south confrontation

between the Trịnh and the Nguyễn entered a period of respite, the Trịnh lords sought to strengthen state authority in the name of the restored Lê dynasty, and at the same time to reinstate the social order within the village by stressing Confucian ideology. Trịnh Tạc's Confucian-oriented policy concentrated first on revitalizing the bureaucratic system and on keeping land and manpower out of the private control of influential families (thế gia). In 1653, a decree detailed the functions of local officials who were in direct contact with the population, and the penalties against official encroachment on property rights [Tạ Văn Tài 1988: 204–206]. In order to gain a better control of the countryside, the central government concentrated on institutionalizing the social and political elements of the local population [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1994b: 374–375]. Some 8,900 villages covered then the lowlands of what is now northern Vietnam; at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy, they were more crucial than ever not only for taxation and military service, but also for the maintenance of social order. In 1658, instructions were given to prefecture and district magistrates to nominate as xã trưởng, xã sử (secretary) and xã tư (assistant) individuals chosen among honest, uncorrupted, just, diligent and learned people, or Confucian students. Those village chiefs would represent their communities to the government, handle judicial cases, and explain to the people the court's moral precepts twice a year. Thus directly appointed by district officials, the village chiefs were more integrated than before into the governmental structure of the kingdom [Yu Insun 1990: 125–129]. If the villagers still had their word to say concerning the choice of their administrators, the latter, once appointed, were considered as parts of the national mandarinate: the system of evaluation of the xã trưởng's merits, introduced in the Cảnh Trị reign (1663–71), rewarded their zeal with promotions to district offices (huyện quan) [Hiến Chương 1974: III, chap. 14]. But the submission of the village chiefs to the official evaluation system would mean that henceforth negligence of duty or behaviour deviating from the Confucian line would no longer be tolerated from them. On the other hand, they were required to report annually all the legal cases of their villages, closed or not, to district officials.

State interference into village affairs reached a further step with the specification of new regulations on the registration of the population and the levy of taxes, for the purpose both of cutting down on peasant movements and keeping the peasants tied to their land and their villages, and of eliminating evil practices by village authorities and securing for the state the necessary revenue and manpower. It was decided after 1664 to replace the census system enforced up to then with a "stabilized regime" of registration (bình lệ), each village being given a fixed taxation and manpower quota, and tax collections and the mobilization of manpower placed under the direct surveillance of province and prefecture officials [Cương Mục 1998: II, 324–325]. No longer allowed to negotiate the calculation of their taxation, the villages could supposedly be more tightly controlled. Nonetheless, as since 1662 the village authorities were held responsible for apportioning the incidence on households of the share of the government's requirements

for revenue to be met by the commune (assessed by the district mandarins), the state in fact relinquished its control over individuals. By concentrating its growing demands upon the villages as administrative units rather than dealing directly with persons or families, the state lost contact with individual villagers.

Political stability did not last long, however. The last two decades of the seventeenth century witnessed a deepening administrative crisis, as the incompetence and corruption of the officials in charge of enforcing law and order caused the discontent of the people and thus undermined the position of the central government. The result was an increasingly turbulent countryside. The particular case of the village of Đa-giá-thượng (in present Ninh Bình province) shed light on the failure of the authorities in securing order: having built a rest house for travellers, its inhabitants would, after dark, put to death all those who stopped by to seize their belongings; their industry lasted for more than 20 years before it was discovered in 1694 [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1994b: 379].

The crisis was sharpened by natural disasters, themselves in part the result of administrative shortcomings, above all the neglect of irrigation works. Several provinces were severely hit by floods or droughts and their unavoidable sequence of famines: Sơn Nam in 1663; Thanh Hóa in 1667 and 1679; Sơn Tây, Sơn Nam and Thanh Hóa in 1684; Sơn Nam and Hải Dương in 1694; Thanh Hóa in 1695 then again in 1702. Relief work was slow and ineffective, and as usual, deprivations intensified the tendency of the peasants to leave their villages and wander. They either took shelter under the power of the wealthy families, or joined bandit gangs, or made up the main body of insurgents in the popular revolts that broke out for instance in 1681 in Hải Dương, or in 1683 in Sơn Tây. The social and political consequences of this situation were reflected in the drop of the recorded population in the registers. Those who did not leave their village had to bear the entire fiscal burden. Opportunity was offered in this way to the rich and powerful to accumulate in their hands both private and communal land. Only in 1711 did the government try to check the process by prohibiting influential families and mandarins from gaining control of large estates and large numbers of followers [*Cương Mục* 1998: II, 399]. Thus, after Lê Dụ-tông ascended the throne in 1705, financial disaster was threatening the central government as state resources had been sharply reduced: over a total of 206,311 fiscal units inscribed on the roles in the beginning of the eighteenth century, only 64,267 (less than one third) actually paid taxes to the government; the rest was attributed as allowances to the aristocracy and to military and civil officials [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1994b: 380].

Against such a background of social instability, the diverse efforts made to secure the collection of taxes and manpower needed by the state could hardly achieve their aim. With the promulgation in 1711 of the ordinance on the equal distribution of land (*Quân cấp công điền lệ*) [*Cương Mục* 1998: II, 398–399], the government resigned itself to take into consideration village conventions: it was no longer up to district officials to decide upon the order of priority for the allocation of *công điền*, henceforth carried out according to

the ranking of the villagers as determined on their own initiative. Furthermore, the responsibility of land redistribution was entirely entrusted to the *xã trưởng* [*Hiến Chương* 1974: VI, chap. 30]. This led to a shift in the concept of *công điền*, considered more and more as land owned in common by the village rather than as state land. Another consequence was the generalization of the fraudulent practice of omitting the registration of *công điền* in land records, since duty was not to be levied on unregistered land (*lậu điền*). The decision made in 1722 to tax private land for the first time had certainly something to do with the diminution of land revenues due to such a practice. Then in 1723 Trịnh Cương introduced a new system of taxation called *tô-dung-điệu* (land, head, and service) modelled on that of the Tang dynasty of China [*Cương Mục* 1998: II, 439–441]. Tantamount to an abrupt increase of the tax load, this new system was bound to come up against the opposition of the villages, and had to be abolished in 1730. A new modus operandi for population census was then adopted, whereby the *xã trưởng* were called on to report the increase or decrease in population to be recorded, but no actual resurvey of the population was carried out [*Hiến Chương* 1974: VI, chap. 29; *Cương Mục* 1998: II, 474]. Thence, it appeared impractical to tax and conscript villagers individually, and ever since the imposition of taxes and military service on the village as a unit was established as a normal procedure.

The last step of the autonomy of the villages in the choice of their heads was taken in the eighteenth century. Phan Huy Chú noted indeed in his *Quan chức chí* (Mandarinal Offices) that beginning with the Long Đức (1732–35) and Vĩnh Hựu (1735–40) reigns, the designation of the communal authorities was left to the villagers, and district mandarins no longer proceeded to the examination of their records in view of their promotion to higher positions. The right bequeathed to villagers to select their *xã trưởng* meant the resignation of the state in its efforts to control the village and, consequently, a greater dependence of the *xã trưởng* on the village elite, because in the absence of state support, it was not possible for the *xã trưởng* to restrain the power of the notables, and he had to gradually become their follower. Of course, subsequent edicts to regulate the village would still be promulgated from time to time, but they were nothing more than vain attempts of the state to reassert its jeopardized authority.

By the end of the Lê dynasty the development of self-government in the *xã* had gone so far that the commune was the only legal entity with which the government had dealings. It had become so much more important than the family that even penal responsibility was deemed collective. For example, the discovery of a corpse on the village's land (which included not just the houses but also fields and forest up to the territory of the next commune) could lead to the uprooting of the village and banishment of its members or to the levying of such a crushing collective fine that the villagers chose to abandon hearth and home of their own accord and flee elsewhere. In any event, having established its own autonomy, the village presented already some of the features that were to characterize it in the nineteenth century, under the Nguyễn dynasty.

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State and Village under the Nguyễn Dynasty

When he got down to lay the foundations of a modern state, Gia Long, the founder of the Nguyễn dynasty, had to restore first an administration and an economy devastated by 30 years of civil war during the Tây Sơn interlude. If the reconstruction of the social and political order took some time, the regime set up by Gia Long was an absolute monarchy. Confucianism was made central to the administrative structure, in view of reinforcing the state's control over the society. Bureaucratic centralization closely modelled on borrowed Chinese institutions (in 1812 legislation was revised with the substitution of a new law code inspired by the code of the Qing to the old *Hồng Đức* code of the Lê) was the weapon with which the Nguyễn dynasty fought centrifugal trends, military and political, in the provinces [Woodside 1971].

However, the effect of the reforms undertaken by Gia Long (1802–19) and his successor, Minh Mệnh (1820–41), was to emphasize the symbolic unity of a national state but to do little to secure it by practical means. Stress was laid, to a much greater degree perhaps than under the previous dynasties, on the need for the emperor to approve, by the issue of certificates of appointment, the tutelary spirit to be worshipped in each village as a way of confirming village harmony and obtaining prosperous harvests. It was by investing the village god with its stamp of approval that the state exerted control over village religion, bringing thus the Vietnamese countryside under state authority from within through the village matrix. But when the vermilion signature and seal had been appended, it was as if the emperor had thereby discharged his responsibility for good government in that particular village once and for all, relying on the Confucian maxim "Like the boiling of a small fish, the government of a large state should not be overdone" [Duncanson 1968: 57]. The centralizing state, even as it brought localities into a greater degree of conformity with a set of overarching Confucian normative patterns, gave the impression of allowing for localized variations. Yet, while the cult of the tutelary deity symbolically communicated the political fact of village autonomy, it also served to maintain the presence of the emperor who alone could, and must, deliver credentials to each tutelary deity before it could exercise its guardianship over the village properly. In this way, what could stand for the instrument of village immunity from governmental encroachment became the instrument of direct linkage to the throne.

In reality, the structure of power was not actually very impressive: at any one time, probably fewer than 2,000 individuals performed mandarinal functions as full laureates of the civil service examination system revived by Gia Long in 1807, a rather small number of administrators for a society of perhaps 9 or 10 million people [Smith 1973; 1974]. On the other hand, the substantial extension of the territoriality of the dynasty created problems in the construction of the political order, and contested identities kept

on growing at the margins that the Vietnamese political center controlled imperfectly. The pioneer plains of the Đồng Nai and the Mekong in particular, originally part of Cambodia and only gradually brought under Vietnamese control, still remained a frontier land under the first emperors of the Nguyễn dynasty. Thus, of the 1,024,388 officially recorded male taxpayers in all of Vietnam in 1847, only 165,598 of them lived in the six southern provinces, and southern land-holding patterns were not surveyed until 1836 [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1970: 28–29; Huỳnh Lứa 1987]. Indeed, the attempted political, economic and cultural integration did not go without strains, as the apparatus of the Confucian state seemed alien-remote in space, superfluous in purpose, and more often than not in conflict with the village's interests or those of its leaders. At any rate, the villages acted part way to meet the government's efforts at administrative centralization, agreeing to the state's access to local resources in order to maintain a degree of autonomy. As a result, the Hải Vân pass stood out apparently as the geographical divide between two forms of village organization. North of the pass, most villages had been established during the state-sponsored migration of peoples from areas of the northern Hanoi-based kingdom, and their charters were rooted in a system of communal land tenure dating from the Lê times. South of the pass, less "traditional" communities made up part of the territory of the Nguyễn *chúa* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and had become the point of departure for further southward expansion by the Vietnamese. The advance of the pioneer front and distance from the political center explained that southern communities had at their disposal more private land, and this was reflected in the three different scales of land taxes applied to the North, the Centre and the South.[10] On the contrary, concerning the system of conscription, each village in the Centre was required to draft 1 infantryman (*lính*) for every 3 registered inhabitants (*đinh*), whereas the ratio would be 1/5 for the South, and only 1/7 for the North. Such a system was indicative of the higher degree of reliance the imperial government held for the inhabitants of the Centre, as well as its greater control of the population of this region.[11]

Under these conditions, the village appeared outwardly as an agricultural settlement marginally attached to the state, superficially touched by its "Great Tradition." Its economy, which was somewhat below self-sufficiency, neither called for state support nor

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10) Detailed in Nguyễn Thế Anh [1970: 94–116]. The land registers (*địa bạ*) and census records (*đinh bạ*), compiled meticulously since 1807 as part of the administrative reforms, provided a fundamental tax base.

11) Recruits chosen by the villages tended to be the "unsettled" (*dân lậu*, not recorded in the registers) and landless, although the practice was expressly forbidden. Upon demobilization, soldiers were encouraged, as in earlier generations, to found fresh *đồn điền* (agricultural colonies), especially in the South: these were supposed to constitute pockets of loyalty in otherwise unreliable regions. But how far could this device really secure loyalty must remain an open question, for desertion even from the ranks was notoriously widespread, and rebels seemed to flourish in the vicinity of the *đồn điền* just the same.

encouraged undue state depredation. Even the head and land taxes, and other state dues, such as public and military service, were assessed by the central government on the basis of figures supplied by the village itself, and levied on the village as a unit depending upon the taxable population.

But a rather special institution, known as the *tổng* (canton), linked the villages to the central administration. A *tổng* was an administrative unit composed of two to five villages placed under the authority of a chief, and sometimes a sub-chief as well. These persons' duties to the central government, via the head of the sub-prefecture (*huyện*), were to collect taxes from their area and to draft military recruits. In practice, they became the messengers, brokers and mediators poised between the government and the villages. They transmitted orders down and requests up. Their status and mode of recruitment reflected a delicate balance between the centre and the periphery. They were selected by the district or prefecture mandarins from the lists submitted to them by the villages to be affected. Their selection was acknowledged and honoured by a formal, though provisional, appointment from the court. If they served satisfactorily for three years, the appointment became permanent and they were given the title of mandarin at grade 8 (*bát phẩm*). Three additional years of service with a perfect record would move them to grade 7 (*thất phẩm*), but that was as far as they could go. They enjoyed exemption from taxation and corvée labour, but their salaries were not comparable to those of the regular mandarins. For these reasons, villagers considered them still very much their own people, of a kind with their notables. The assimilation of the *tổng* officers into the mandarinate was symbolic rather than substantial, but a very clever symbol it was, for while it conferred honour on the villages, it also reminded them that they were integrated into a larger scheme of things called the nation [Trương Bửu Lâm 1982: 20]. The *tổng*'s importance as an administrative unit was seen in the manner in which an individual formally identified himself in nineteenth century Vietnam: he always mentioned successively his name, his village, his *tổng*, his district, his prefecture and his province [*Điển Lệ* 1962: 45–47].

At the level of the village (*xã*) the basic elements were the *lý trưởng*, the village headman, responsible to the bureaucracy for collecting taxes and executing court orders, and the *hội đồng hào mục* (or *kỳ mục*), the council of notables, or elders, who deliberated and decided on matters concerning the village. The council established policy and was ultimately responsible for execution as well. It managed the properties of the village, particularly its public lands, which in principle it allotted to residents uniformly since 1840, after Minh Mệnh put an end to the regime based on ranks set by Gia Long in 1804 and decreed the equal repartition of communal land (*quân cấp khẩu phần điền thổ*) [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1970: 94–108]. The revenues from public lands provided the notables with a set of funds for the community's annual budget. The major expenditure in that budget went towards the rituals and celebrations organized annually in honour of the tutelary deity. The council of notables also administered justice, especially to settle civil

disputes, but offences involving members of two or more villages in the same *tổng* required the attention of the *tổng* chief, while murder, treason and other serious breaches of the law would have to be settled higher up.

The council of notables consisted of as many members as were qualified to sit on it. These included: all villagers 60 years or older, officials of the central government in temporary residence at the village (occasioned by mourning, for example), degree-holders not engaged in a mandarinal career, former executive officers, and wealthy men who held minor titles purchased from the central government. The composition of the council of notables indicates that many of its positions were simply honorific. The very old notables and those in temporary residence at the village could not have contributed to the council deliberations. The articulate and influential members, there-fore, were likely to have been degree-holders or, at least, literate persons. They, in addition, often doubled as village officials since literacy was mandatory in these respon-sibilities. Rather sparse in the villages, the literati, nevertheless, held considerable power and consolidated their position as the ruling class, supporter of the state Confucian ideology.

As the council was too large a body to function on a day-to-day basis, its routine chores were delegated to village officials (*hương chức*) whose number depended upon the size of the village and its population. The head of the village was the *lý trưởng* (chief of village) who functioned as liaison between the *tổng* officers and the village council. His principal tasks were: to keep the population and land records (*đinh bạ* and *địa bạ*), collect taxes, call up draftees, and recruit manpower for state projects. Selected by the village council for a term of three years, the *lý trưởng* could be reappointed: many in fact held their posts some 20 or 30 years (which fact infers that the post of *lý trưởng* was considered worthwhile in terms of power and prestige). The two assistants to the *lý trưởng* were the *cai thôn* (village commissioner) and the *cai tuần* (police commissioner). The *cai thôn* supervised all public construction of roads, canals, dykes, etc. He saw to the proper maintenance of the communal house (*đình*), the symbolic centre and gathering-place of the village, and the place of worship of the tutelary deity of the community. Village order was maintained by the *cai tuần*. He organized night watches and was otherwise responsible for the internal security of the community.

An adequate picture of the real structure of power in the village system of Nguyễn Vietnam is yet to be specified, particularly concerning the relationship between villagers and mandarins and the precise nature of the concentration of power. Records of the Confucian examination system indicate the procedures by which a small number of individuals, drawn probably from the wealthier elements in their respective villages, could rise to become powerful mandarins at the provincial level or above. At the end of their careers, after their mandarinal fortunes had been made elsewhere, those always returned to their native villages, where they maintained the link between the top and bottom of society, while helping to redefine the villagers' everyday life [Papin 1999: 77]. A

great many people who could not be categorized as either village leaders or scholar-mandarins held also influential positions, for example district level officers, who performed tasks not requiring scholarly status, and one may rightfully ask what relationships existed among these "invisible" categories of people. And certainly, those families which produced scholars and high officials would assign other clan members to look after the family shrine and estate, and perhaps to control affairs in the clan's native village. Anyway, education, wealth, age, all these could be made to serve in the council of notables, to whom belonged the effective decision-making power in the village administration.[12] It remains that the bipolar distribution of political responsibility between the court mandarins and the village-based scholar-gentry had led to the existence of a dual power at the village level.

Anyway, the central government, represented by the district magistrates and their staff in the administrative seats of the *phủ* and *huyện*, seemed far away and meant above all two things: taxes and conscription for military service or corvée labour for the construction of dikes, irrigation canals, city walls, roads, bridges. Under such a regime, custom inevitably became the rule rather than law. The village held in fact complete sway over the lives of its residents, which allows some authors to characterize the administration of Vietnamese communes as exploitative [Popkin 1979: 98–109]. Decisions on individual tax rates were normally made by the council of elders on the basis of the number of registered stakeholders, legitimate villagers declared in the *đinh bạ* registers and therefore known to the central government. But there existed a floating population of unsettled farmers who attached themselves to the village as landless agricultural labourers and were classified as *dân lậu* (the uncontrolled, in violation of the law, who deliberately evaded taxes or who were too poor to pay taxes), not counting temporary residents or "outsiders" classified under the categories of *khách hộ* or *ngoại tịch*. It was in the interest of the village leaders, however, to retain the illegal and undefined status of this rural proletariat: first, the smaller the number of registered residents, the less the amount of taxes, corvée requirement, and military assessment imposed on the village; secondly, those who were not on the village register were not eligible for the not easily stretchable communal lands.

Certainly, the central government's demands for corvée labour and for the provision of local materials for road making or for building granaries, ports, citadels (and also the palaces and royal tombs at Huế) fell on rich and poor in equal measure. But they weighed most heavily upon the peasants, who hardly shared the religious or political purposes which inspired their rulers' building mania. Indeed, the bureaucracy that the Nguyễn strove to build, in spite of its apparently understaffed structure, exceeded the needs of an agricultural society based on a subsistence system. The lot of the masses stayed

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12) From this viewpoint, Philippe Papin supposes that the *lý trưởng* was not actually the notables' man, but the man of a clan, a family, a lineage [Papin forthcoming].

unimproved, because of a resolutely agrarian but ineffective policy, which kept the economy stagnating in the self-sufficiency scheme of a small-scale agriculture, in no way shifted to commodity production, even in less "traditional" southern communities marked by more private property and greater participation in the South China Sea trade. Thus, even though rice had become an item of maritime trade, the Vietnamese emperors stifled any gain that might have accrued to the delta areas on this account by placing a ban on the export of rice, in observance of the ancient precept of Confucian economics, the so-called "ever-even granary" (*kho thường bình*), whereby grain surpluses in good years should be stocked by the government when prices were low and sold again to equalize the market in bad years when prices were high [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1970: 139–141].[13]

Above all, the central government failed in the end to overcome the resistance of the village authorities in the contest for land control, the most essential aspect of the peasants' subsistence base.[14] The problem of landlessness remained in fact unsolved, as, faced with the tendency of influential people in the village to misappropriating land, the government would rather endeavour to have fallow land cleared and increase rice production than implement land redistribution by confiscating private land. In reality, such a measure as that applied in 1839 in the province of Bình Định to impound half of the private holdings in the province and to turn the estates thus confiscated over to the villages of the province as communal property to be distributed periodically amongst their villagers was quite exceptional [Nguyễn Thiệu Lâu 1951; Nguyễn Thế Anh 1970: 108–116]. Then, despite multiple previous reiterations of the ban on selling communal lands, in 1871 Tự Đức resigned himself, under the French threat, to tolerate the sale of communal lands in order to finance his army. Four years later, in 1875, with the same end in view, he launched the reform of the land tax, which ultimately sanctioned the evolution of the structure of land ownership towards the extension of private property at the expense of communal lands [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1994a].

Thus, the situation immediately prior to the arrival of the French was one of a weak state, unable to manipulate any aspect of the life of the peasants in a manner favourable to the development of support, political or fiscal, of the central government by the villagers, and consequently unable to unify and organize Vietnamese society solidly enough to keep external enemies at bay. The central government even gave the

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13) From this viewpoint, the Nguyễn's economic policy seemed to be in regression compared to the policy of the Lê, whose code illustrated a legal tradition that accommodated international trade, market exchange and private property rights. In particular, strict rules on the regulation of foreign trade helped to reinforce the image of an inward-looking Vietnam, while the rigidity of the Nguyễn court's bureaucratic preconceptions about how foreign trade should be conducted put a brake on commercial development [see Woodside 1971: 261–281; Nguyễn Thế Anh 1999].

14) For a precise example, see Papin [1996].

impression of losing interest in the local affairs of the villages, more or less left to their own devices for the problems concerning the security of their inhabitants or the maintenance of their water control works, guarantee of good harvests [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1992: 13–25; 1995].

French Colonial Administration and Vietnamese Village

The formation of the Union indochinoise meant for Vietnam the dismantlement of its territorial unity, while the bureaucracy of the "protected" Vietnamese king was merged into a highly centralized system dependent exclusively on the competence of France's representatives, who surrogated themselves to the authority of the king on the one hand, and his mandarins on the other, for the effective exercise of power. Under such a regime of protectorate, the distinction between direct and indirect rule was legal rather than practical. However, the trait that, on the surface, gave the French system the character of indirect rule was especially the preservation of the autonomy of the village. Indeed, albeit some details (such as land registration) over which practice differed between the colony of Cochinchina and the protectorates of Annam and Tonkin, the main features of traditional village administration by notables and of internal allocation of liability for land tax, of liability for corvée and for military service continued much as before.

Nonetheless, it must be said from the outset that French colonisation replaced the dual authority of state bureaucracy and communal council with a unitary administration that allowed for the transformation of the space of rural life into a nationally and internationally connected economic space. Local institutions were not only altered by the direct actions of the colonial government; they also underwent radical changes because of the socioeconomic impact of colonisation. The village leaders' economic responsibilities towards their own community diminished as the colonial regime introduced new ways and means to consolidate the authority of the central government, and effected an economic penetration that subtracted increasing percentages of resources. French rule opened also the country to capitalist economic development, and this development had profound effects on rural life. The specialization, integration and monetization of the economy massively disrupted social relationships, not counting the fact that colonial interventions transformed village social relations by creating a widened gap between conflicting sets of leadership criteria (Confucian values of age and generation against changing access to education, wealth and social power). The permanency and intimacy of shared values which had helped to check abuse in the past gave in thus to the stronger imperatives of modern economics. In particular, the commercialisation of the countryside resulted in the dislocation of rural populations, as labour and land were shaken loose from their historic roots and mobilized as

resources[15]: the proof is that, when the French administration came in the 1930s to implement thorough statistical surveys of land ownership and land distribution, it was not interested in village structures but only in the application of "modern" categories of individual (or household) ownership, tenure, etc. [Henry 1932].

Through their economic policies, the colonial authorities forced therefore the villages into the overbearing world of the state. Some institutional restructuring was effected, in so far as the village councils of notables and the village leaders were subjected to demands that they carry out administrative functions for the colonial administration. In other words, they were required to become the agents and servants of a central power that, to make matters worse, also held confusingly alien views. What happened in the councils of notables of colonial times deviated from earlier patterns: the sudden disappearance of the traditional balances between country and town, the role of which was no longer limited to that of a mere administrative centre, and between the literate and the common man disrupted the mechanism of authority. As power changed hands, leaving the countryside for the town, while the realm of knowledge became peripheral to politics, the village matrix ceased to function.

All the reforms the French attempted to introduce at the local level simply confirmed further the fact that local institutions no longer served local needs. Village leaders had to collect on behalf of the colonial government such taxes as having increased tenfold over what they had been in traditional times.[16] They were obliged to implement the laws of the colonial government, including the highly unpopular law against local production

15) Cf. for example Nguyễn Thế Anh [1987]. In the Mekong delta, the process of agricultural development between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1920s produced in some areas a pattern of landownership and tenure quite uncharacteristic of traditional Vietnam, with the formation of two social groups, the *điền chủ* (landowners) and the *tá điền* (tenant farmers), the former group including both absentee large landowners and small land owners, whose living conditions were not necessarily very different from those of the *tá điền*, squeezed between the French colonial authorities and the large landowners [see Brocheux 1995].

16) Indochina's fiscal regime was established in 1897 by governor general Paul Doumer who introduced the common general budget funded by the proceeds of indirect taxes (customs, taxes on opium, alcohol, salt, etc.), while revenues from direct taxes (land and poll taxes) were assigned to the regional administrations. Until the mid-1920s, alcohol, salt and opium excises supplied up to 70 percent of all the taxes the colonial regime collected. In general the formal tax burden on Vietnamese peasant families, measured both in money terms and in relation to rice yields, increased significantly between the 1890s and the 1930s. Attempts to impose any kind of "progressive" direct taxation in rural areas were doomed to failure, however, given the limitations of rural administration. On the other hand, the colonial authorities tried their best to eliminate formal exemptions from personal tax on the ground of official status. An important reform was the abolition of the *grande corvée* (unregulated forced labour for major public works) in Cochinchina in 1881 and the commuting of the *petite corvée* (five days' labour on village maintenance) for a small tax payment to the budget of the *xã*, which then hired labour instead. The reform was applied later in Tonkin and Annam: reduction to 48 days a year and, after intermediate reductions, absorption into↗

of alcohol. They were responsible for controlling banditry and preventing rebellion in their local communities. The village that supported or harboured a rebellion was severely punished. Among the possible penalties were the dissolution of the village community and its annexation to neighbouring villages, the confiscation of property belonging to villagers, and the levying of fines against the leaders and notables of the village.

Under these conditions, many qualified men shirked participation in village councils or in village leadership positions, rather than serve as agents of a government for which they received little or no benefits and for which they made themselves vulnerable to the resentment of both villagers and authorities. Those who sought positions on councils tended to be those who were more concerned with their personal fortunes than with promoting communal interests. As early as 1902, the crisis affecting the administration of rural communities was obvious to the Lieutenant-Governor of Cochinchina as he wrote. "The recruitment of notables becomes, unfortunately, more and more difficult in some provinces; the prosperous and honorable families show a certain repugnance for these perilous functions, which thus too often fall into the hands of those who are unskilled, and even, sometimes, dishonest" [Osborne 1969: 151].

The difficulty was not confined to Cochinchina, where there was no pretence of indirect rule; the countryside of the two protectorates of Annam and Tonkin was affected as well. The core of the problem lay in the French compulsion to control Vietnamese villages in ways never before attempted by the Vietnamese court. The colonial government's fear of resistance lurking in the countryside motivated it to assert this control in many ways, including that of imposing its ideas on how a country should be run, that is, always from the centre. Given the motivations of the French, it was only normal that they would want to see on the council of notables persons on whose allegiance they could count. Attempts were, therefore, made by the colonial authorities, repeatedly, with all means at their disposal, to pack as many of the village councils as possible with candidates of their choice, in total disregard of the traditional village criteria for selection.[17]

Yet, despite their recognition that the village social organization was deteriorating, the French implemented policies that purported to bring some order to the chaos of communal administration, but had the opposite effect of causing further disintegration of communal life. In 1904, a decree reduced the number of notables in the councils and defined the functions of these members in terms of the requirements of colonial local

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the personal tax in Annam in 1918 and in Tonkin after 1920. It was to trigger, nevertheless, a large movement of protest in 1908 in Central Vietnam [see Nguyễn Thế Anh 1973; 1992: 214–216].

17) For example, the incident reported by Smith [1968: 61–63], in which a slate of Catholics took over an entire council of notables in the province of Tân An in 1895–96.

administration rather than the needs of the local community. In 1921, communal elections were established in Tonkin, then in 1927, the councils' autonomy was increased in both Tonkin and Cochinchina, with the provision however that the notables were subject to approval by the province chief. The purpose of these measures was to invest a limited number of notables in each *xã* with responsibility for actual performance, in replacement of the informal assemblies of the past in which all the notables had had a voice but no responsibility. They were presented as a step toward the establishment of democratic institutions at the local level, but in reality they undermined the authority of the councils in the eyes of villagers, whereas they increased rather than diminished the bickering, corruption, and local factionalism that were traditional to Vietnamese village life [Pinto 1946: 38–42].

Actually, the consequence of the intervention of the colonial administration in village affairs was that it alienated the notables from the rest of the population. Whether particular notables continued to be chosen by the villagers or in fact received their appointments from the government was immaterial; in practice, they quickly ceased to represent their fellow villagers. Instead, they turned into agents of a central government which demanded their total allegiance, at no return wage, for the government paid them no salary. It simply amended the traditional village convention to say that the notables should now act on its behalf, exclusively. Accordingly, initiative gave way to administrative routine, and personal relationship yielded to bureaucratic detachment. The glaring abuses of the notables described in novels and other writings of the colonial period derive largely from that altered relationship.[18] Village administrators no longer needed their constituents. They experienced a new freedom in their positions, which allowed them to manipulate land allotments, taxes and so on.[19] Their fellow-villagers could no longer make or unmake them, as the last word now rested with an outside power.

The colonial authorities, whether through insensitivity or necessity, transmitted through the notables requirements that far exceeded the normal expectations of the old court of Huế. For example, on behalf of rational management, demands were made that the centuries-old tax assessment based on the village as a whole be converted to one based on individual villagers and individual pieces of land. Where the notables of the past had sometimes downgraded the tax value of the village and showed flexibility in assessing the dues of villagers from year to year, every man was now to be tied singly and inexorably to his prescribed share. Improved recording and auditing techniques, coupled with accurate and frequent land surveys, made it very difficult for villagers to under-

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18) In particular Ngô Tất Tố with his work *Việc làng* (Affairs of the Village), see Boudarel [1991].

19) The imposition of taxes, direct and indirect, created indubitably the opportunity for the dominant "rich" elements in each village to use their influence to the disadvantage of poorer families, as the increased burden would be less than equitably distributed between rich and poor in each village community.

report figures, as they had done from time immemorial. To make sure that the notables executed their tasks as ordered, the French marked off their personal fortunes as security for the quota of village revenue.

The most serious breach of village trust occurred when the colonial government required of the notables that they inform their administrative superiors of all village activities that touched in any way upon the interest of the government; this, in addition to filing regular reports on a number of assigned issues. As for customary law, the French authorities made that defer, whenever possible, to French law. Whereas disputes in traditional Vietnam had been settled essentially through arbitration and practically all derelictions and crimes short of manslaughter or high treason were adjudicated in the villages themselves without outside interference, village notables had as additional obligation to function as judiciary officials, whose presence at the district capital could be required everyday, as one case or another needed settlement. These extra duties burdened the notables greatly at the same time as it fanned the resentment of their fellows. For these reasons, although a seat on the council could be used lucratively, many shied away from the ignominy it carried. Therefore, responsible persons respected for their traditional qualities saw little reason to squander away their social prestige on an office which, changes notwithstanding, remained subordinate to French interests. This, inopportunely, gave the more marginal elements of society the chance to emerge in village councils.[20]

When the Second World War broke out, the French were caught still fighting this battle for the loyalty of competent men. The war made it even more necessary that they should win the Vietnamese away from Japanese influence. Consequently, a decree was issued in 1941, abolishing all formal elections of notables and allowing instead for the selection of these men by informal consensual agreement. It was then too late. The degradation of the sociopolitical institution of village council, much debased because of its subservience to the French administrative machinery, had been such that the deterioration in the relationship between villagers and their leaders had become irremediable.[21] At the village level, the foundation of leadership had completely grown estranged from the population. Appointed by the colonial administration or by one another with the acquiescence of the colonial administration, the notables were seen as detrimental to the interests of villagers. Their legitimacy had long ceased to stem from the recognition

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20) To quote Smith [1968: 64], "In a report of 1922, the Governor of Cochinchina complained that the notables of the villages were for the most part very inferior to their task, not only because of their barely elementary education, but even more because they bring to their work a routine spirit hostile to every new idea." The fact was, the report continued, that fewer and fewer people wanted to become notables so that good candidates rarely presented themselves for office.

21) For other assessments concerning changes in the villages, see Woodside [1976: 118–148], Popkin [1979: 83–183], and Luong V. Hy [1992: 51–126].

of an authority derived from personal virtue and attainment, as in the past. It was therefore easy for Việt Minh propaganda to denounce them as the henchmen of an intolerable regime, when it concentrated on mobilizing the peasants against taxation, corvée labour, rice requisitioning by the administration to meet Japan's requirements for food supplies.[22]
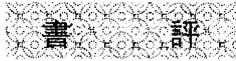
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22) For more details, cf. Nguyễn Thế Anh [2002].

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書　　評

Michael T. Rock. *Pollution Control in East Asia: Lessons from Newly Industrializing Countries.* Washington, D. C.: Resources for the Future; Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002, 197p.

東アジア（東南アジアと東北アジア）の環境問題の全体像をつかむことは簡単ではない。経済発展の問題だと一人当たり GNI（国民総所得）ないし GDP（国内総生産）が経済発展の水準を示し，それを国際比較することによって国の経済がどの段階にあるかが分かる。たしかに，GNI なり GDP は違った通貨で計算されており，それを共通な通貨（普通米ドル）に換算するために為替レートを使うのか購買力平価を使うのかという問題がある。しかしどちらでも相対的な国の所得水準はだいたい同じようなもので，また購買力平価を使った場合は縮まってもまだかなりの格差が残るので，そこからなぜ国によって所得水準は異なるのかという経済発展の中心的な課題に入っていける。

ところが環境問題はそう簡単にはいかない。特定の国がどのような環境問題を抱えるかはその国の環境問題を調べればある程度分かるが，それでは他の国と比べてどうなっているのかということになると比較できる環境問題の総合指数はない。大気汚染を示す指標，水質汚濁を示す指標などはあるが，環境問題は騒音，ごみ処理問題，森林破壊など広範囲に亘っており，これらを総合することは難しい。しかし国ごとの環境マネジメントの差はどうなっており，なぜ格差が生じるのかという問題は興味深い問題で，本書はこの問題に答えようとするものである。

方法論は事例研究で，第2章がシンガポール，第3章が台湾，第4章がインドネシア，第5章が中国，第6章がマレーシアとタイの環境問題への取り組みとその成功度を論じている。そして最終章である第7章で第2章から第6章までの事例研究から環境マネジメントの差がなぜ生じ，それを改善するためにはなにをしなければならないかを論じて締めくくっている。

東アジア諸国の環境問題がどうなっているかは多面的にとらえなければならないことは前述したが，国のランキングを決めて，環境マネジメントに成功している国とそうでない国に分けることはできないのであろうか。著者は恣意的に1）大気中の浮遊粒子状物質の濃度と，2）organic water pollution intensity of industry（製造業が 1,000 ドルの付加価値を生産するために排水する水中汚物濃度）を基準にして国の環境マネジメントの成功度を決めている（p. 4 の表1–2）。二つの基準の内の後者はあまり使われることのない水質汚濁の指標であるが，前者は大気汚染の指標にはよく使われる。どちらも同じような結果を示しているが，マレーシアが判別しにくい。著者が同国を環境マネジメントに成功している国とみなしているのは前者に重点を置いたからなのであろう。タイは後者ではマレーシアとあまり差はないが，浮遊粒子状物質の濃度が高いからであろう，環境マネジメントに失敗している国と見なされている。

国の環境マネジメントの決定要因は一般に所得と制度であるが，著者は制度の問題を中心に議論を進めている。ただ，9ページに環境クズネッツカーブを示しているので所得効果を完全に無視しているのではない。だが，著者はそれにあまりスペースを割くことなく，得意とする分野，特に政策，官僚組織の問題に大半のスペースを割いている。そこで例えば，民主主義が進めば政府の環境問題への取り組みは改善されるという一般論はタイでは妥当しないことを明らかにし，それはなぜかという問いへの答えを試みている（p. 126）。

ただ，制度についての説明を読んで幾つかすっきりしない点も残った。例えば，環境マネジメントに成功した国と成功していない国に分けること自体に問題がないとしても，後者は環境マネジメント能力が低いということには必ずしもならないと思う。中国の場合がそうで，環境が悪いのは経済発展の段階（つまり所得が低く，重化学工業がまだかなり重要性を持っている発展段階）に原因があるので，中国政府は環境マネジメント能力が低いとは必ずしも言えない。このことを著者はある程度認識しているが（p. 106），政府の取り組みの姿勢に問題があることをより重視している。たしかにそこに問題はあ

ろうが，取り組みに問題があるのは政府のマネジメ
ント能力に問題があるのではなく，現在の経済発展
の段階では環境改善へのニーズを強く感じていない
ということに問題があるのではなかろうか。また，
官僚の能力ないし組織に問題があるとしても，それ
は所得水準が高くなるにしたがって教育水準が上昇
し，環境予算も増加して改善される可能性が高い。
そうすると問題は環境クズネッツカーブに関係する
もので，経済的要因から独立した制度の問題とは言
えなくなる。

　もう一つ読後感がすっきりしない理由をあげる
と，マレーシアの環境マネジメント能力である。評
者の抱く疑問は著者が言うようにマレーシア政府の
マネジメント能力は高いのかということである。確
かにタイと比べれば高いかもしれないが（第6章），
シンガポールや台湾と同水準（pp. 144–147）とは言
いがたいのではなかろうか。たしかに，著者が議論
しているように，マレーシア政府がパーム油工場か
らの排水中の汚物濃度を低下させることに成功し，
これは政府の環境マネジメント能力の高さを示して
いるが，最近はジョホールバルーなど水質汚濁が進
んだり，またゴミで環境が悪くなったりしている地
域が増えてきている。そうかと言ってマネジメント
能力は低くはない。著者が主張するようにタイに比
べれば高い。タイはインドネシア，フィリピンより
もマネジメント能力は高いように思われるので，マ
レーシアは発展途上国の中ではマネジメント能力の
ある国だと言えよう。著者の主張するようにマレー
シアは環境問題克服の成功組とは思えないが，タイ
などのように「失敗」組でもない。このマレーシア
の二面性を著者に説明してもらいたかったし，その
理由を追求して欲しかった。

　環境に関する国の制度はどこに問題があるのかと
いうことは，国際比較をすることによって初めて見
えてくる点が多い。本書は制度を国際比較し，それ
によって環境マネジメント格差を説明しようとする
パイオニア的な著作である。すっきりしない読後感
は残るものの，教えられたことが多く，経済学を中
心とした社会科学を方法論とする評者にとって知的
な刺激の多い書であった。

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Resil B. Mojares. *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History*. Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002, 324p.

"History," argues American feminist scholar Joan W. Scott, "is in the paradoxical position of creating the objects it claims only to discover." Historians do not merely make routine decisions about what to include and exclude, and how to organize and present their "data" or "material." Their decisions are informed by interpretive practices that determine what is knowable or arguable in a given discipline—what in effect counts *as* history, understood in both its senses as object of study and as verbal account. Historical representation is inseparable from the reality it helps in part to define and structure.

But what are historians to do when there are few surviving written records, material artifacts, and other sources on which they can base their research? The problem of sources poses seemingly insurmountable difficulties for scholars of precolonial and colonial Philippines already working within the constraints of their limited access to archives within and outside the country, not to mention full teaching loads and time-consuming administrative work within their respective institutions.

Filipino nationalists of the nineteenth century such as José Rizal, when faced with the challenge of reconstructing a past obscured, overshadowed, or distorted by Spanish and American colonialism, found themselves working with, and often against, the few documents (written from the ethnocentric viewpoint of the colonizers) that survived the ravages of time and circumstance. "Recovering" the past was not simply an intellectual exercise, but a political act which sought to empower the colonized by positing a pre-existing "national" identity—however anachronistic that identity may have been, rooted as it

was in a "Philippines" whose boundaries were demarcated and substantiated by the colonial state—and the agency with which to challenge and dismantle the colonial order, and imagine and realize a better future.

The 12 essays in this meticulously researched and beautifully written book by one of the Philippines' preeminent scholars demonstrate, even as they reflect on, the challenges faced by nationalist efforts at recovery of the past. The author's original training as a literary critic is very much evident in his exemplary readings of texts, covering such topics as folklore, travel narratives, Orientalist scholarship, biographies, procedures for the canonization of saints, stories of religious images lost and recovered, colonial books of conduct, newspaper accounts and menus of dinner parties, poetry, radio commentaries, and indigenous notions of the "soul." In these texts—materials often overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant or at best supplementary by historians—Mojares discerns and delineates a wider field of socio-cultural meanings and practices with which both long-ago and recent inhabitants of what is now "the Philippines" made sense of, and acted in, their world.

To understand Philippine culture is to understand Philippine politics, for it is precisely in what is taken for granted, in the realm of what is felt and left unsaid and unthought, in the habits and minutiae of everyday life, that the workings of power, accommodation, and resistance are most visible. Texts do not simply point to an "out there," and should not therefore be treated as mere repositories of "facts." They encode assumptions about the way things are and the way things ought to be, and in so doing illuminate and organize the social, political, and cultural relations that are lived, and sometimes subverted and reinvented, by the anonymous majority.

Several of the essays in fact underscore the centrality of representation in constructing and deconstructing a given social order. Mojares demonstrates how Antonio Pigafetta's seminal account of Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation of the world and ill-fated sojourn in the Philippines employs rhetorical strategies that legitimize Magellan's intervention in the power struggle among local chieftains by rendering his actions in heroic terms. Pigafetta authoritatively presents the Philippines as an object of knowledge—and of putative colonial expropriation—for European consumption. "What was important was that the islands had been located, fixed, and named, and could be verified and reoccupied again and again. Their very incompleteness and 'emptiness' stirred desire and offered the motive for their occupation and possession.... The writing on the Philippines primes it for possession."

Likewise, books of conduct produced during the Spanish period reveal how the body of the colonized had to be policed through regulation of its appearance and actions. As part of the colonial apparatus for "producing" docile, pliable *indios* ("natives"), Christian conversion involved daily applications of so-called Christian virtues to the disciplining of mind and body. Yet these books' reliance on indigenous vocabularies for depicting bodily movements that they wished to proscribe inadvertently exposes the "rich and persistent materiality" of Philippine cultural expressions.

In another essay, Mojares shows how current political commentaries broadcast over the radio work to delimit the field of political thought and action through their definition of what political choices are available, and what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate political behavior. The irony of the Philippines' highly touted claim to having one of the freest mass media systems in Asia is that the apparently democratic character of the media masks the media's capacity to

subtly discourage real dialogue and discussion.

Mojares raises the important question of who gets to talk, or whose talk gets heard and acted upon: "Who, after all, 'talks politics'? Presidents and dictators don't, they *do* it; peasants and housewives don't, they *suffer* it." He directs his reader's attention to the gaps and omissions in Philippine historiography, the absences that signal the silencing, extirpation, or exclusion of ordinary Filipinos. It is not by chance that Mojares devotes a number of articles to biographical accounts of "obscure" Filipinos, extrapolating from these narrated lives the larger narrative of the social world in which they were articulated.

He painstakingly examines the politics behind the proposed beatification of Pedro Calungsod, a Bisayan martyred in Guam in 1672. Calungsod entered the historical records only in the company of the Spanish Jesuit missionary, Diego Luis de Sanvitores. While the latter's beatification was aided speedily by the fact that his life merited full and elaborate documentation in the Spanish archives, Calungsod's case has been plagued by numerous delays due to the paucity of available biographical data, even as prospects for beatification remain optimistic in light of the Vatican's policy of actively promoting the incorporation of local churches in Asia and Africa into the Roman Catholic religious community. In this instance, Mojares traces the outlines of a Filipino life in the margins of a fuller account of a Spanish priest's death.

In another mid-seventeenth century biography that he analyzes—the greatly "reduced" account of a pious 16-year-old named Miguel Ayatumo, whose truncated life and consequent lack of history made him an ideal candidate for divinity—Mojares argues against the tendency of present-day readers to read and judge colonial texts in light of current modes of historical representation which privilege "background" informa-

tion, psychological depth, and motivation. "The problem of the Ayatumo vida [life] does not only say something of changing conceptions of biography but of the variant ways in which 'history' is comprehended and recorded."

The power of the text to index history resides precisely in its openness to diverse readings. Moreover, the writing of history can be—and has often been—conscripted in the service of or against powerful social blocs through its selective inclusion and exclusion of materials. The story of Mariang Makiling, the eponymous goddess incarnated in Tagalog and numerous folktales across the Philippines, lends itself to being told and retold by people with different, sometimes competing, agenda, across time. It can be used for didactic purposes to orient its audience in the social virtues of cleanliness, gratitude, temperance, and decorum. But it can also be a tale of paradise lost, of harmony, cooperation, and reciprocity breached upon the advent of Spanish colonialism. It can also be a pointed reference to existing political conditions of abuses, exploitation, suffering, and severed relations with nature and among people. The folktale was recast in prose form by Macario Pineda in the post-war years to serve as a guide for social action in the service of the newly independent nation, and in poetic form by José Lacaba to chronicle the turbulence and disillusionment of the pre-martial law years.

Circulating stories of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Cebu island fish out details from Mexican sources while anchoring themselves in a specifically Philippine context. Depending on how the story is told, the appearance of the Virgin, the place in which she manifested herself, and the person to whom she showed herself can potentially generate interpretations which cannot be contained by the "mission of conversion" for which they were originally deployed. They derail the impulse to establish "authentic" ori-

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gins by displacing the Virgin from her place in European Christian iconography and relocating her within local myths and precolonial sacred sites.

In the open-endedness of the text, in the ability of the text to lend itself to being interpreted in more than one way, Mojares reads something of the chimerical nature of Philippine culture. It is the conscious and unconscious evasion of absolutes and prescriptions (as much as submission to them) that ultimately accounts for cultural persistence, permutation, and transformation. "We are a culture blessed with moves to avoid the claims of those who say they have seen the Truth."

The implications of this open-endedness extend to Mojares' idea of the Filipino nation as process, not product. Mojares critically resists the impulse to take the nation for granted as a unit of analysis or as a set of prescriptions dictating the writing of history. But he also argues that the incompleteness or "unfinished project" of nationalist attempts at recovering the past spurs rather than disables scholarship towards that end. To the extent that the nationalist project remains unfinished, there cannot be any simple solution to attempts at national self-definition, nor any easy acceptance or rejection of the nation itself. Reflecting on Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa's continued attachment to the country he often violently critiques, Mojares offers a modest rejoinder: "What Llosa does not quite say is that it is precisely in this ambivalence, this gap between hate and love, that a writer must locate his or her work. It is the space of haunting where the writer, negotiating the distance between anger and tenderness, suspicion and desire, refuses the malignancies of blind faith and easy self-love but claims, even against all contrary signs, what Benedict Anderson calls the 'goodness of nations.'" For Filipino scholars who labor under the burden of

their country's history—the burden of forgetfulness, marginalization, invisibility, and non-representation—this profound ambivalence about the nation may well be the enabling condition of their work.

(Caroline S. Hau・CSEAS)

> 佐藤　仁.『稀少資源のポリティクス —— タイ農村にみる開発と環境のはざま』東京大学出版会，2002，254p.

本書は，近年，タイの森林保護を中心に，環境と開発に関する政治経済学的研究で注目されている佐藤仁氏の，東京大学総合文化研究科に提出された博士論文に加筆・修正を加えたものである。森林保全と開発の両立をめぐる議論の潮流を幅広く押さえ，簡潔に整理した上で，タイでのフィールドワークによる事例研究に基づき，自論を展開している。

まえがき
第1章　経済発展と稀少資源の保全
第2章　「はざまの土地」の形成過程 —— せめぎ合う農地と林地
第3章　「はざまの人々」の形成過程 —— 仕切られるカレンと森
第4章　開発と環境の結合 —— 外部アクターと作られる「はざま」
第5章　稀少性とシンプリフィケーション
補　論　理論と方法の再検討 —— 学問のシンプリフィケーションを超えて

この章立てが示す通り，「開発」と「環境保全」がしのぎを削る「はざま」に焦点を当て，そこでの大きな政治経済的力学と，そのせめぎ合いのなかで弾き飛ばされてしまう小さな人々の暮らしの連関を論じている。

各章の議論を見ていこう。

「まえがき」で本書を書くに至った経緯や個人的な略歴を紹介した後，第1章で，問題提起と議論の枠組み提示を行っている。経済発展の流れから外れたところで森林に依存して暮らす人々がいる。経済発展の代償に森林は稀少化し，彼らの周りの森林が

いまや保護の対象となった。さて，彼らが残された森林を用いて自らの生活を豊かにすること ―― 地球レベルの「保護」の要請と「開発」との両立 ―― はいかにすれば可能か？これが著者の基本的な「問い」である。

特に重視するのは，森林の稀少性が高まるほど，政府など政治的強者が資源のコントロールを強め，長らく森林を維持してきた地域住民は疎外されてしまうという政治経済的構図である。森林資源が豊かなのに周辺で暮らす人々の暮らしが困窮している，タイ中西部ホアイ・カー・ケン保護区周辺に暮らすカレンの人々の事例研究を通してそうした政治経済的構造を分析し，上の問いに答えようと試みるのである。

第2章では，広く，タイの森林政策の歴史を俯瞰することで，政府による一元的管理制度が行き渡り所有権が曖昧な土地が縮小してゆく過程を辿る。19世紀，おもにイギリスによるチーク伐採が始まり，森林が資源として重要になる。これを契機に資源管理が中央政府の下に集権化される。時代が下るに従い伐採対象樹種は増加し，政府の森林保全制度も強化されてゆく。他方で，木材伐採や商品作物の導入といった開発によって森林は急激に失われる。開墾された農地に対する土地権利の認証が進む。こうして，法的には国有林でありながら実際には農地化されている「所有権の曖昧な『はざまの土地』」は「森林」か「農地」のどちらかに取り込まれて少なくなってゆく。そして，「はざまの土地」をめぐる競合はますます熾烈になってゆくのである。

様々な土地配分計画の実施には，政府内関係部局同士の綱引き，住民運動の圧力，時の政権の目先の利益，さらには，計画に乗じて配分を受けた貧農の土地を狙う資本家，といった様々な利益が絡み合ってきた。これに対抗し，森林局も，植林のために住民の排除を行ったり，僅かに残った森林を「保護区」に組み入れたりすることで権力の維持に努めてきた。著者は，このような交錯する利害を公平な形で調整する仕組みを構築する必要性を説く。近年，進展している，地域住民による森林管理である「コミュニティ林」についても，一見，民主的な匂いが強いが，定義が曖昧な「ラベル」として，利害の対立を覆い隠してしまうという危険性を指摘する。

第3章では，そうした「はざまの土地」に暮らす「はざまの人々」に着目する。ホアイ・カー・ケン保護区周辺のカレンの村落でのフィールドワークに基づき，森林保全と農地転換の最前線がぶつかる土地での人々の生業活動の変遷を論じ，森林へのインパクトを分析している。元々，当地のカレンの人々は，循環的焼畑による自給自足的生活を送ってきた。人口密度も低く生態系に対し破壊的なものではなかった。ところが，ダム建設による強制移住で人口密度が上がり，保全林・保護区の指定が進んだ。これにより，農地と森林が明確に区分けされ，常畑に転換するなど森林利用に大きな制限が課せられた。新規開墾が許されないなか，「土地なし」も現れた。さらに，換金作物の導入や道路の整備により村人たちの暮らしは市場経済に編入されてゆく。

著者は，こうした状況での村人の生計の森林資源への依存を専ら計量的に調査し，村人同士の相互評価で示された村落内の経済格差との連関を探るとともに，森林へのインパクトの把握を試みている。唯一，現金収入源となる林産物はタケノコである。タケノコ採りは，初期投資を必要としない上に，農業より労働時間当たりの見返りが高い。また，農事暦との関係で，耕作規模の大きいものはタケノコ採りに従事することができないため，特に貧しい人々にとって便益の多い資源として機能している。一方，自給的な生計依存については，経済格差を反映し易い野生動物の捕獲を指標にしている。調査の結果，経済的な格差による依存度の違いは著しいものではないことがわかった。また，法律上，厳しく保護されている狩猟対象はオオトカゲのみで，それ以外のものも含めた全体でも自然環境に破壊的インパクトを与えるほどではないという。このような村人の森林への依存は「生存防衛」であり，大規模な「破壊」を行う能力も動機もない。しかし，確かに違法な狩猟や農地拡張も確かに存在する。この点について，著者は，辺境地にあって市場経済における競争力も弱く，生産基盤である農地の拡張も許されないという「市場と保全の挟み撃ち」にあっているという背景を無視し，現況だけを見て村人の資源管理能力を論じることは筋違いであると訴える。

第4章では，政府でも地域住民でもない「外部アクター」の役割に注目する。具体的には，海外援助

団体や NGO である。とりわけ，保護区の外延の
「バッファーゾーン」での保全と開発を両立させる
試みに焦点を当て，第 2 章，第 3 章で検討した調査
地での事例を踏まえ，「外部アクター」の果たすべき
役割を論じている。特に，後半部では開発と保全と
をいかにリンクさせるべきかについて，著者自身の
見解を示し，事実上の結論となっている。

　「バッファーゾーン」の概念は，1970 年代にユネ
スコで考案された。当初の自然科学的な人為インパ
クトの計測から，1970 年代後半には，地域の人々の
社会経済的ニーズを取り入れた資源管理が提唱され
るようになった。タイでは，1980 年代後半にカオ・
ヤイ国立公園周辺での NGO によるプロジェクトで
初めてバッファーゾーンの概念が導入された。しか
し，このプロジェクトは，小規模なものであった。

　調査地のホアイ・カー・ケン保護区も，世界遺産
指定に伴い，政府，海外の援助団体，国際機関によ
る環境保全プロジェクトを「引きつけた」という。
結局，実施にこぎつけたのはデンマーク政府出資に
よるプロジェクトだけとなったが，これは，複数の
村落を対象にした，本格的なバッファーゾーン・プ
ロジェクトとしてはタイで初めてのものとなった。
このプロジェクトには，森林局と農地改革局の対立
という外部的足かせの他，プロジェクト自身に内在
する問題点も見出された。プロジェクトは，森林に
依存する人々に他の資源を用意することで森林から
引き離し，保全と開発を両立するという理念に拠っ
ている。しかし，開発活動自体が森林保全へのイン
センティブを喚起するようなものではなく，両者の
リンクは不明確である。さらに，開発活動は，耕作
権付与を軸にインフラ整備を行うもので，土地なし
層など，森林への依存が比較的高い人々に届かな
い。

　こうした問題点は，近年，世界的に注目されてい
る「保全・統合型プロジェクト（ICDP）」に共通す
る。著者は，ICDP の「外から所得源を持ってくるこ
とで森林へのインパクトを減らす」という基本姿勢
は，「森林破壊を引き起こすのは地域住民の貧困で
ある」という誤った認識に基づいていることを指摘
する。種々のアクターは，森林のあるべき像につ
いてそれぞれ異なる認識をしている。この認識の齟齬
をそのままに，政治的な力の強弱で実際の施策が決

められる。この中では地域住民の声は反映されな
い。このような政治経済的構造をそのままに，ICDP
が代替資源を用意することで保全を達成しようとす
れば，必然的に，競合の少ない，あまり魅力的では
ない資源しか提供できず，地域住民の低開発の固定
化につながりかねないと批判する。そして，外部ア
クターは，特にその資金力を武器に，アクター間の
対話を促進し，地域住民の発言力を強めるような利
害調整役を担うべきであると主張するのである。

　第 5 章は，結論として第 4 章後半の議論を敷衍
し，「問い」と「答え」を再確認している。特に，本
書に随所に使われている，ジェームズ・スコットが
「国家が人々や資源を管理し易いように単純化・画
一化して把握する」というほどの意味で用いた「シ
ンプリフィケーション」の語で，国家による従来型
の森林保全・環境保護政策を整理し，その呪縛から
の開放，つまり，地域の自律性と多様性を重んじる
社会制度の必要性を説いている。

　以上は，本書の論理構成に沿った概略である。こ
の他，本文中で触れられなかった先行研究との関連
について，補論でさらに詳細に検討している。

　本書は，環境破壊を地域社会，国家から国際社会
にいたる政治経済的枠組みとの相関関係から分析す
る「ポリティカル・エコロジー」の流れに位置付け
られよう。ポリティカル・エコロジーに限らず，ミ
クロなレベルで得られる密度は濃いが限られた範囲
でのデータを，国家や地球規模での一般的議論にい
かに結びつけ，整序するかは，常に悩みの種である。
本書は，そうした現在の社会科学が抱える重要な方
法論的課題に一つの答えを出した。これが最も評価
されるべき点だと思われる。著者は，臨地調査によ
る議論で，あえて客観的検証に耐えうるような定量
的分析に徹した。これにより，環境と開発の大きな
枠組みとの整合性を保ち，既存の諸理論を説得的に
論破することに成功した。加えて，環境保護と開発
という大きな対立を集約したような調査地の選定
や，表には出ないが，長期間の定着調査中の経験的
知見を隠し味にしている点など，著者のセンスを感
じさせる。

　もう一つの特徴は，本書自体は，基礎的研究であ
りながら，例えば「保全・統合型プロジェクト」の
ような実務的な議論の検討が大きな核になっている

ことである。森林保護にかかわる政治的分析のみならず，コモンズ論や開発援助のターゲッティングなど，経済学的な議論に紙面が費やされているのも，実務的な枠組み構築を説得的に行うためである。先に挙げた方法論の確立も，実はこうした実務的な問題意識と裏表であり，ゆえに，第一に評価されるべきポイントなのである。

　その裏返しとして，理論的な新味や，視角のユニークさには欠ける。開発と環境のせめぎあいの根本的なパラダイムについての見解が示されていないのである。例えば，第1章冒頭で示された，「遅れてきた人々にまだ置き換えの権利はあるのだろうか」という問いである。もし，「我々」がそうしてきたように，「彼ら」にも，等しく，身近な自然環境を経済的富に置き換えることが許されると考えるなら，保全はどのように正当化されるのか？　あるいはそれを制限するべきだというのなら，その根拠は何か？この問いに対する著者なりの答えは書かれていない。悪く言えば，どのようにすれば，「保全」と「開発」が両立するかという小手先の技術論だけで，資源や保全をめぐる社会的公正についての根本的な哲学が示されていないのである。

　「開発」や「貧困」とは何か，という点についても同様に不明瞭である。調査地のカレンの人々は，何をどうしたいと思っているのか。どういう生活を望んでいるのか。その中で森林資源はどう位置付けられるのか。これが本書の結論である，「地域の自立，多様性重視」の中心であろう。しかし，そうした情報は明示されていない。根拠のないままにいわゆる経済的発展を「開発」として議論されている箇所も見られる。

　このほか，「勧善懲悪」的な図式化，つまり，政府は悪者，外部アクターも実はそれほど善人ではなく，ひとり地域住民がかわいそうに理不尽な目にあっている，という構図がいささか陳腐な印象を与える。政府の政策を，全て省庁の利権抗争，もしくは政治家や資本家と結託した利益追求とみなすのは単純化が過ぎる。森林局はじめ，各省庁には，時々の政治的制約の中で，それなりに良かれと考えた政策を展開し，何とか森林を守ろうと尽力してきた人々がいたことを，多くの役人にインタビューした著者が知らないはずはない。現在から見れば偏狭に思える政策も，その時代には善しとされていたのである。

　著者の結論は，地域住民の声が反映されるように政治経済的構造を変革しなければならない，というものだった。では，どう変えればよいのか？　単に，イデオロジカルな「民主化」「分権化」ではない，地域の実情に適した秩序を模索するには，歴史的構築物としての地域を知る必要がある。すなわち，どのような制度が何を目的としていかなる状況下で作られ，それが実際にはどう運用されてきたのか，さらに，カレンの人々はどのような影響を受け，また対応してきたのか，もう少し詳細かつ重層的に検討する必要があろう。そうすることで，否応なしに，タイ，あるいはその地域固有の歴史的背景や社会・経済的特質も浮かび上がってくる。筆者は，「本書は地域研究的なものではない」と宣言している。これは，実務的見地から，現実の環境保護のレジーム構築を強く意識するゆえであろう。しかし，最もその地域にフィットした仕組みを構築するには，迂遠なように見えても，「地域研究的」アプローチこそが真に実務的なのではないだろうか。

　　　　　　　　　　（藤田　渡・国立民族学博物館）

【現地通信】

ベトナムの変化の中で

柳　澤　雅　之*

　ベトナム紅河デルタの東北端に位置するハイフォンは，北部ベトナムの最大の港湾都市である。海上ルートでの北部の輸出品のほとんどすべてがこの港を通過すると言ってよい。そのため，1995年当時，ハイフォンと首都ハノイを結ぶ国道5号線の整備は外国からの援助計画の中でも最優先事項の一つとされていた。というのは，国道5号線は，その重要性にもかかわらず，道路も橋も十分に整備されているとは言えなかったからである。線路・道路兼用の橋は車1台分の道幅しかなく，片側交互通行である。車は対向車や列車の通過を待たなければならない。橋がないところも数カ所あり，渡河にはフェリーが必要である。いずれの場合も多くの時間が費やされた。ベトナムの物流システムの改善，経済の発展には道路や橋の整備が欠かせなかった。

　そうしたフェリー乗り場や橋の手前では，老若男女をとりまぜた物売りの人たちが大勢いた。

　ハイフォン近郊のフェリーで10歳の女の子の物売りと乗り合わせた。お古の菅笠をかぶり，手にはビスケットの袋を1つだけ持っている。はじめてのベトナムならいざ知らず，何度も来ている私にとっては誰が物売りなのかはすぐわかる。物売りも，誰がカモなのかがすぐわかる。フェリーが動き出すと，女の子は私に売り込みを始めた。実際の価格の3倍くらいからスタートしたが，フェリーが河の中ほどまできた頃にはほぼ実際の価格にまで下がってしまった。すでに他の客に売るつもりはなくなってしまったのか，私の人差し指を握ったまま離そうとはしない。どれくらい物売りの経験を積んでいるのかは知らないが，所詮は10歳の女の子である。ビスケットを買ってくれないことと自分のことを気に入ってくれないということとが感情として一致して

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しまったのだろうか。フェリーが対岸に近づくにつれて口数が少なくなり，私の目を見上げたままそらそうとはしない。何かぐっとこらえている。やがて，フェリーが対岸に到着し人々が下船の準備をしている中，私はビスケットを買ってお金を手渡した。岸に降り立ちバスに乗り込んでから振り返ると，女の子はこらえたままの顔で何度も手を振っていた。

　フェリー乗り場から約100メートル下流では，国道5号線を支える橋脚がJICAの援助によって現在建設中である。ベトナム経済がどう発展していくかは橋が完成してからが正念場である。彼女がどのような生活を送っていくかも，ベトナムがどのような経済発展をするかにかかっている。

　こんな文章を1995年に書いた。どこにも発表していないが，いまさら発表することもできない。国道5号線沿いでこのような光景はもはや見られなくなってしまったからである。片側2車線の道路が完成し，1995年当時，ハノイ−ハイフォン間は片道8〜10時間もかかったのが，今なら3〜4時間もあれば到着してしまう。ベトナム経済も，最盛期ほどの勢いはなくなったがそれでも数字の上では発展を続けている。人びとの暮らしも目に見えて良くなった。ハノイの町の変化には，訪れるたびに驚かされる。

　変化の度合いから言えば，紅河デルタ農村の方が都市よりも変化は急かもしれない。デルタのほぼ中央部にあり，私が1994年以来，調査を継続しているナムディン省コックタイン合作社では，泥の道は煉瓦やアスファルトで舗装され，農業用水路はセメントで固められた。新しい家の建築や大規模な改築があちこちで進んでいる。コックタイン合作社の8つの集落のうちの一つであるXom B集落で2000年の夏に私たちの調査隊が行った全戸調査によると，150戸ある屋敷のうち70%以上が1990年代に建築

あるいは大規模に改築されたことがわかっている。

　耐久消費財の購入を見ると，同じく Xom B 集落において，テレビはすでに 65% の農家が所有している。購入時期のわかっている 94 台のうち，1 台を除いてすべてが 1990 年以降に購入された。しかも，その中の 66 台（70%）が 1995 年以降に購入されている。

　ビデオも，テレビの購入後にほしくなる商品であり，90 年代の人気商品の一つである。現在，27% の農家が所有し，購入時期の不明な 1 台を除き，2 台が 90 年代前半の購入，残りのすべてが 90 年代後半の購入であった。

　また，もう一つの村の三種の神器ともいうべきオートバイは，16% の農家が所有している。購入時期のわかっている 16 台のバイクのすべてが 1991 年以降に購入され，このうち 13 台は 90 年代後半の購入である。バイクの場合，農家の経済レベルが向上したことに加えて，1,000 ドル以内で購入できる中国製の安いバイクが入手できるようになったことが 90 年代後半の購入を促進しているのかもしれない。

　このように，ベトナム農村での 90 年代の，特に後半の変化はすさまじいものがある。

　ベトナム農村の 90 年代の急激な変化は，農業や開発など，人びとの暮らしを研究の対象にしている研究者にとっても他人事ではない。研究の内容が，急激な変化を追っているだけでは表面的なものになることに注意する必要がある。現在の状態にのみ基づいて提言まで書いているようなレポートは，そのまま実施してもほとんど役に立たない。内容が薄いばかりか，レポートが発表された頃には提言と同様の内容の政策がすでに実施されてしまっていることが多々ある。もっとも，このことはベトナムに限ったことではないかもしれない。

　一方，長期にわたる基礎的な研究も，成果が出るまでに時間がかかり，現在の政策にすぐに役立つような研究をもっとしてほしい，あるいは，開発にかかわる具体的な提言までしてほしいという批判や要望をカウンターパートや現地の研究者・政策立案者から受けることがある。これに対して，「私たちのやっているのは基礎研究であり，基礎がしっかりしていないと応用はきかない」とか，「物質的に豊かになることだけでなく，文化的・精神的な豊かさに目

をむけるべきだ」という答えは，時には彼らをがっかりさせる。現地の研究者を含め，さまざまな人びとが農村での研究にかかわることができるようになり，私としては，多様な研究の方向があれば良いと考えている。実際，私自身は基礎的研究にかかわることが多く，直接すぐに政策決定や開発に役立つ研究を第一に目指しているわけではない。しかし，近年になって，現地研究機関が蓄積する情報は，特にベトナムなどでは，膨大なものになってきた。10 年前とは隔世の感がある。カウンターパートや現地研究機関との協力体制が情報の入手だけではなくさまざまな側面で地域研究にとって不可欠であり，また，ベトナムの研究機関の多くにとって，彼らが国から期待されているものが実際の政策へのコミットメントである以上，彼らと共同研究する私たちもまた，何らかの期待に答えなくてはならないであろう。

　ベトナムの社会経済の急激な変化の中で，研究者は実際に役立つ研究を行うことが多少なりとも求められる。実際の政策にコミットするためには，フェリーの女の子の生活と国レベルの開発との両方を考えることのできる広い視野が求められる。こんな時こそ，やっぱり，しっかりとした基礎研究が必要なのだな，と思う。

　ただし，そうした基礎研究から成果が出て実際に役立つまでの時間は，かつてよりも大幅に短縮する必要があるかもしれない。現実の変化に対応できないからである。そのためには，たとえば，プロジェクト間でのテーマの重複の回避，収集データの早い段階からの公開と共有，政策立案者と研究者のさらなる交流，研究者による研究成果の発表をさらに迅速化・単純化・明確化すること，などが少なくとも必要となるだろう。

　あるいは，研究者自身が，政策立案者であり教育者であり活動家であり政治家であるようなマルチプレーヤーであっても良い。研究者個人がそのようなマルチプレーヤーになることが困難なのであれば，少なくとも，プレーヤー間の垣根を低くして，相互乗り入れをしやすくすれば，研究とその応用までの時間が短くてすむ。

　学者がその国の大臣になることはすでに実例が存在する。さらに進んで，日本人の東南アジア地域研

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究者が，東南アジア諸国の大臣になることを現地の人たちから要請されるような時代が来ることはないだろうか。こんなことを言えばかつての植民地支配を思い出す人がいるのかもしれない。しかし，私の本意は，それは，国の主権や利益，国家の枠というものを超えた包括的なものの考え方ができ，かつ，地域や国のことをよく理解した上でその地域や国の利益を最大限に引き出すことのできる人材が国籍や職業にかかわらずでてくることを意味する。こんなやりかたも，地域を研究対象とする地域研究者の現在のひとつの貢献のあり方ではないかと思っている。