

Interreligious Dialogue toward Overcoming the Eco-crisis

Hyun Min Choi

Abstract

The problem of eco-crisis is dualistic in nature, in that the human-centered view considers nature as an instrument for human benefit, whereas the eco-centered view rejects nature as merely instrumental, according to its intrinsic worth apart from its benefit to humanity. According to eco-centrism, a human being is only an individual entity which constructs within nature. But this interpretation of a human being raises the problem as to who is responsible for the preservation of nature? Another limitation of the eco-centrist view is that it tends towards the metaphysical rather than the aspect of ethical practice. Thus, we propose that a curative way to overcome eco-crisis is through a religious perspective which supports a practical approach.

The Buddhist law of Dependent Origination provides a blueprint for resolving the tension between dualism and anthropocentrism. Dependent Origination helps us to recognize that human beings and other beings are linked as one entity. Dependent Origination is not only a view of wisdom but also a view of compassion. Buddhist enlightenment is completed through the practice of 'One Body of Great Compassion,' a view that offers a possible

Hyun Min Choi is Visiting Professor in Religious Studies, Sogang Univ.

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solution to the ecocrisis. However, there are also some limitations in Buddhism that might be detrimental to environmental ethics such as, the problem of social practice and amorality; in other words, the moral subject in respect of responsibility. So how can we approach these issues in a positive way and overcome the problem of amorality and moral subject?

An answer may be found in the stewardship ethic of Christianity. In this view, human beings having been entrusted as stewards with a responsibility to take care of the world as collaborators with God—in nature, with nature and through nature.

Hans Küng says that our consciousness of global responsibility for the future of humankind has probably never been as great as it is now, which is why we acutely need a world ethic to support a resolution to the ecocrisis. In this regard we have seriously considered the possibilities for developing a successful world ethic through a complementary relationship between Buddhism and Christianity; a partnership concerned with a resolution to the ecocrisis by applying the wisdom of world ethics through interreligious dialogue.

Key words: Human centered view, Eco-centered view,
Law of Dependent Origination,
One Body of Great Compassion,
The problem of moral subject,
Stewardship ethic of Christianity,
World ethics through interreligious dialogue.

I. Introduction

The environmental crisis, with regard to its multiplicity of issues and concerns, is a burning topic in contemporary society. Interest in environmental problems has spread rapidly from philosophy to natural science and it is relevant to most fields of study. But a solution is not so easy to come by for such a complex problem. Conflict among people with different values is a major block to reaching amicable solutions. The most obvious dichotomy is

between people who seek economic development and those who want to preserve the environment, as each is motivated by very different values: human-centered versus eco-centered. Those who cherish economic development above all believe that environmentalists are impeding economic development, whereas, environmentalists assert that the value of nature has been degraded by the utilitarian view that sees it only as a resource for economic development. They believe that this singular view of the value of economic development has suppressed other essential values in modern society, upsetting the balance of the ecosystem and creating many environmental problems.

In the struggle between environmental conservation and economic development, a new concept of 'sustainable development' has emerged. It was initially introduced at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm (June 5-16, 1972) which was the first international gathering to look at the environment as affected by human activity.

In order to achieve a more rational management of resources and thus to improve the environment, States should adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to their development planning so as to ensure that development is compatible with the need to protect and improve environment for the benefit of their population.¹

It is said that sustainable development requires an integration of environmental conservation and economic development, but as most countries are now experiencing, even with a desire to build a common future based on such principles, it is far more difficult to put into practice than it is to express theoretically. It is a concept that is easy to describe on a global scale but tricky to implement at a local level so that, if it is to have a reality, it must seek that elusive ground between output and process, between social and environmental, and political and principled.

In order to practice sustainable development we need to reflect on the fundamental dimension. In other words, what is needed is transformation of perspective or attitude about nature; change in value is impossible without transformation of perception. Hermann Dembowski (1928-) defines an

¹ <http://www.unep.org/Documents/Default.asp?DocumentID=97&Article ID=1503>.

ecological crisis as a crisis of perception about nature (Dembowski 1989, 30-37). And J. Baird Callicott shows that we cannot make sense of, or begin to resolve, the ecological crisis without transforming our thinking about what it means to be human (Peterson 2001, 15). In order to resolve problems of eco-crisis, we need to change our perception about nature and humans and reflect deeply on our understanding of their fundamental dimension. The destruction of the environment points to both a distorted perception of nature and a distorted perception in all our relationships. With regard to the inter-connectedness of all beings, we have distorted not only the relationship between humans and nature, but also the relationship between us as human beings, and between human beings and God. The ecological crisis thus impels us to reflect on all our relationships. Here, we will analyze the relationship between humans and nature initially through a consideration of our traditional view of nature.

II. Understanding nature in terms of anthropocentrism

A. Judeo-Christian tradition as the root cause of ecological crisis

Human beings commonly view nature as object from the perspective of dualism. This viewpoint connotes the idea that human beings, as subject, can exploit nature for their own benefit and is based on the belief that nature is only an object for the purpose of furthering human welfare. In this human-centered view, nature is an instrument that humans control, and preservation of nature is only a value if such preservation furthers human welfare.

Lynn White (1907-1987) in his paper titled “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis,” asserts that the historical origin of eco-crisis is deeply related to the natural view that is based on anthropocentrism in the Judeo-Christian tradition (1973, 18-30). L. White holds that the monotheism of Judeo-Christian religions desacralized nature. According to him, “by destroying

pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feeling of natural objects....The spirit in natural objects, which formerly was protected from man, evaporated. Man's effective monopoly on spirit in the world was confirmed, and the old inhibitions to the exploitation of nature crumbled" (White 1973, 25).

Other authors who support L. White's thesis, especially R. F. Nash, concur with him in tracing the roots of our environmental crisis from the dominion passage of *Genesis* 1: 26-28 (1989, 90). Nash argues that the Hebrew verbs 'radah' and 'kabash' connote exerting absolute dominion, and as such conjure the image of a conqueror subjecting his enemy nature to enslavement. This understanding of the Hebrew term influenced Christians to interpret the dominion passage as a command to conquer and exploit nature because it was given to them solely to serve their needs. In other words, the Judeo-Christian tradition has emphasized the extreme principle that nature has no purpose except to benefit humans. People have used the Scripture to justify the exploitation of nature (White 1967, 1203-7).

According to many historians and biblical scholars, White's claim that the exploitative attitude towards nature is rooted in *Genesis* 1: 26-28 is a misinterpretation of *Genesis* (Nash 1991, 102). But J. A. Nash holds that White has misinterpreted both the image of God and the dominion concepts of *Genesis*. Nash interprets the concepts (image and dominion) within the context of other Hebrew Testament (N. B. Since Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* document in 1965, the Church prefers the term Hebrew Testament to Old Testament.) passages and concludes that the interpretation is not despotic (Nash 1991, 104). According to Robert H. Ayers, when *Genesis* is interpreted within the context of *Genesis* 2, the Hebrew Testament renders dominion as a call to stewardship (Ayers 155). C. J. Glacken's views are the same. He holds that human beings are stewards of God's creation and not its plunderers (Glacken 1967, 168). David A. S. Fergusson interprets dominion in terms of stewardship as well. He argues that the term 'dominion' emphasizes the relational rather than the substantive sense of the *Imago Dei* (Fergusson 1998, 15).

This discussion concerning all White's statements leads us to conclude

that his Judeo-Christian position is based on an imbalance of historical data. John Passmore, who criticized L. White's assertion, hypothesizes the Greco-Christian tradition is at the root of the ecological crisis.

B. The Greco-Christian tradition as the root of the ecological crisis

Passmore agrees with White that, in as far as the interpretation of the Hebrew Testament is concerned, nature is not sacred.² But he asserts that Greek philosophy and Christianity are responsible for the environmental crisis. J. Baird Callicott also says that it is Greek philosophy not Jewish biblical religion that encouraged despotism.

Newton and other seventeenth century scientists may have been inspired by belief in a transcendent creative deity and the *imago Dei* to try to 'think God's thoughts after him,' but the details of the creator's thoughts were inspired by Pythagoras and Democritus, not Moses and Paul. In my opinion, the culpable conceptual roots of our ecological crisis are traceable to the intellectual legacy of Greek Natural Philosophy—which may have insidiously influenced the environmentally controversial parts of Genesis... (Callicott 1991, 110).

E. C. Hargrove also supports Passmore's Greco-Christian explanation. He asserts that Western religion borrowed many ideas from Western philosophy and was itself victimized by it (Hargrove 1989, 15). The Greek philosophers (especially Plato, Aristotle and the Neo-Platonist Plotinus) had no interest in objects of nature. They viewed nature as evil, irrational, impermanent, and perishable and in a constant state of change. Their interest was in objects of knowledge or reason, which are held to be permanent, eternal and unchanging. The only value non-human creation has is its instrumental value. Is it any wonder then, that Greek philosophy with such a utilitarian perspective towards nature influenced the Western world to have an exploitative attitude towards it?

Greek philosophy, with its dichotomy between nature and human beings,

² "Nature is in no sense sacred; this was a point on which Christian theology and Greek cosmology agreed" (Passmore 1974).

became extreme in the thought of Descartes. Descartes claimed that nature is purely material without mental traits, in the dichotomy between '*res cogitu*' and '*res extensa*' (Collinson 1997, 58). Descartes holds that nature exists as a resource for humankind and there are no moral obligations restraining humankind's manipulation of nature. For Descartes, everything that exists without consciousness is a mere machine which humans can manipulate without scruples; for him, nature is like a machine, just doing repeated movements (Passmore 1974, 21). The philosophical origin of modern science is based on the understanding of nature in the anthropocentric and mechanical views. After all, human beings have damaged nature by using it arbitrarily for their interests, which has resulted in the eco-crisis that threatens the lives of humans themselves.

Christian religion borrowed many ideas from Greek philosophy to express its faith but in the process was victimized by it (Hargrove 1987, 15). Evidence of Greek philosophy's influence on Christian concepts is seen in the theology of redemption that encouraged humankind to look at nature as evil, temporal, and something from which to escape. The Christian duty was to mind the salvation of one's soul rather than pay attention to the welfare of nature. This kind of theology does not encourage protective attitudes towards nature.

Actually, dualism existed when Gnosticism was flourishing in the Christian tradition. The Gnostics proposed a dualism between soul and body in that the soul is good but the flesh is evil. They considered only the soul to be important, whereas the material was insignificant. But Christianity rejected Gnosticism as a heresy by emphasizing Jesus' divinity and humanity. However, the dualism of this movement reappeared in Christian history (Peterson 1974, 21). The Albigen (Catarian) thought that flourished near the Rhone River in the southwest of France in the 13th century, for example, was based on Monism. They asserted that the Creator of the world is not a good god, but an evil god, because this world and its substances themselves are evil. The Human person is a dualistic being, having soul and body in an evil world. Consequently, if humans want to go from this evil world to the good God,

they must go through the ascetic way that denies body and purifies soul (Peterson 2001, 31). Catarians had a strong desire to escape this material world in order to get to heaven. They looked down on physical life and were obsessed with the soul. Thus, they revived the Gnostic idea of dualism between soul and body.

We can also see dualism in the ideas of Augustine. According to him, soul and body are partners, but not equal: the body is not innately evil, but it is both secondary and ephemeral compared to the soul (Peterson 2001, 33). We can see that his idea also included a hint of dualism between soul and body. In line with this dualistic and human-centered view, Western Christianity had no interest in other creatures. Even if scientific developments are not a direct result of Christian thought, Christian ideology certainly didn't discourage scientific development from creating the ecological crisis. The attitude of Christians has at best been passive at best, on the destruction of nature and the creation of the eco-crisis. In the anthropocentric view, the understanding of 'human' and 'nature' has resulted in nature being degraded to an instrumental object.

C. Other factors as causes of the ecological crisis

We have already considered L. White's Judeo-Christian tradition and Passmore's Greco-Christian tradition as the root cause of our ecological crisis. But there are other views that also posit causes for the crisis. M. Northcott rejects a single primary root cause. He claims the cause is complex and composed of multifactorial forces (Northcott 41-85). For him, the root of the crisis lies in a range of changes which he identifies as agricultural revolution, market-economy, science and technological progress. And P. R. Ehrlich proposes over-population as the fundamental cause of the environmental crisis (Ehrlich 1991; Ehrlich and Holdren 1995, 12-13, 206-7). He argues that the doubling of the human population in a short time has been one of the major factors behind the destruction of the environment. The impact of population growth on the environment is well understood when it is related to human

consumption and the use of technology. Denis and Donella Meadows show that if world population and industrial production, pollution, food production and resource depletion, continue to grow exponentially, the global limits will be exceeded within a few decades (Meadows 1972, 187). For J. De Tavernier, the economic cause is closely linked with technological cause. He sees the development of technology as the most important factor that empowers economic growth to exert its destructive impact on the environment (De Tavernier 1994, 239-40). Population explosion, technological-economic impact, patriarchal domination and capitalistic egoistic tendencies have contributed to the ecological crisis. In other words, it is impossible to establish a single force or root cause of our present ecological crisis. The environmental crisis has been indirectly linked to multiple causes.

To summarize, the core of the environmental crisis is based on the anthropocentric idea. That is, the fundamental cause of the ecological crisis is the subject-object dualism in perceiving humanity and nature. Therefore we need to change the fundamental view of the relationship between humanity and nature. The holistic view emerges from this reflection.

III. Understanding nature in terms of eco-centrism

A. The background of the eco-centrist understanding of nature

Eco-centrism³ constitutes a radical challenge to the anthropocentric attitudes which are deeply rooted in Western culture. In the human-centered view, nature is considered to be an instrument for human benefit and the only purpose therefore, behind the preservation of nature is to enhance human benefit. However, eco-centrists reject this instrumental view of nature and regard nature itself to have value, apart from its benefit to humanity. Aldo Leopold is an eco-centrist who recognizes the apparently intrinsic value of

3 The term "Ecocentric" is preferred by some deep ecologists to "Biocentric" because it more closely reflects the fact that deep ecologists see "life" more broadly than its merely biological definitions: rivers, mountains, forest or prairie ecosystems, etc., are all "alive" from a Deep Ecology perspective.

nature. In his famous book "Land Ethic," Leopold urges us to transform our perception of nature using a new paradigm. He asserts: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold 1968, 224). "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively, the land...[A] Land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conquerors of the land-community to plain members and citizens. It implies respect for fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such" (Leopold 1968, 204). His theory of 'land ethic' did not receive social acceptance initially, as it was considered too radical, but the following generation has claimed him as the founding father of the eco-centric approach. Aldo Leopold's earlier statement provides an appropriate basis for an ethical system based on deep ecological principles. His view is considered to be consistent with 'deep ecology' in that it approaches Arne Naess' eco-philosophy. Clare Palmer describes Deep Ecology as follows:

Deep ecology was a term first used in print by the Norwegian philosopher Naess in 1973. Naess argued that the environmental movement had two key strands, which he called the "shallow" and the "deep." The shallow movement, he maintained, was primarily concerned with human welfare and with issues such as the exhaustion of natural resources. In contrast, the deep environmental movement (with which Naess identified himself) was concerned with fundamental philosophical questions about the ways in which humans relate to their environment (Palmer 2003, 29-30).

Naess takes a holistic approach to ethical consideration of ecological wholes rather than individuals. The holistic view considers everything as interconnected; if something is isolated, it self-destructs. A key idea in the metaphysical insight of deep ecology is an inherent interconnectedness between nature and humanity. According to J. Baird Callicott, an individualistic approach which concerns itself only with the moral significance of environmental concerns cannot be the basis for a proper Ethic. An environmental ethic, he maintains, would have to take a more holistic

approach (Pojman 2001, 52-63).

In terms of axiological insight, deep ecology's key idea is that anything in nature has intrinsic value. This reflects the first of eight principles formulated by Arne Naess and George Sessions in 1984 (Loy). The principle states that: The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth are values in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes. The richness and diversity of life forms contributes to the realization of these values, while being also values in themselves. Callicott provides a view of the intrinsic value of non-human beings:

...How to discover the intrinsic value in nature is the defining problem for environmental ethics. For if no intrinsic value can be attributed to nature, and then environmental ethics is nothing distinct. If nature, that is, lacks intrinsic value then environmental ethics is but a particular application of human-to-human ethics (Callicott 1995).

Two ultimate disciplines develop from Naess' viewpoint. The first Self-Realization is according to Naess, the goal at an individual level to fully realize one's identification with nature. This involves neither a sense of an independent self nor the loss of the self in the oneness of nature. Self-realization is the full awareness of the self-in-Self. Individually, each person is not an autonomous individual but rather a self-in-Self, a distinct node in the web of nature .

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Self in relationship to all other members of the land community, human and non-human, including creatures both great and small, ecosystems, and natural processes. This “broad” or “deep” Self is achieved by direct and intuitive experience of natural places. Self-realization is then linked to eco-centric egalitarianism as the second discipline. Eco-centric egalitarianism is a viewpoint in which all creatures, ecosystems, and natural processes are accorded equal intrinsic value (Harbold 1994). Humans are fully a part of nature, and there is no ontological separation between our species and other species.

So, deep ecology which utilizes a holistic viewpoint and recognizes nature’s intrinsic value, suggests a way to overcome anthropocentrism. But we also have some questions about deep ecology. What is the ethical implication of the two insights—on the one hand, the interrelation between nature and humans, and on the other, the intrinsic value of nature? Deep ecology has suffered a decline in popularity due to the teleological question “what for?” This question arises out of the anthropocentric attitude that values beings only in so far as they are good for something—in effect, useful for our own purposes. But deep ecology emphasizes letting things be in order for them to flourish, not for our sake and not even for their own sake, but for no sake at all, such that questions of utility and justification no longer apply. “Letting things be” challenges the basic principle of our technological and consumerist society, but it also subverts our notion of ego-self (Loy). This brings us again to the first “ultimate norm” that Naess derives from the non-duality between the human and nonhuman realms: Self-realization, which includes learning to identify with the whole of the biosphere (Loy). But there is also another question. Who is responsible for the current environmental destruction? According to Klaus Michael Meyer-Abich, the concept of responsibility is used only by human beings (Meyer-Abich 1993, 68). We cannot expect inter-responsibility with every species of nature. He holds that ‘reciprocity’ is not a sense of responsibility but that something exists for the other thing. Thus, in reciprocity we exist for them and they exist for us. In this perception deep ecology overcomes anthropocentrism, but it still has limitations as an

ecological ethic because it does not emphasize a sense of responsibility.

B. Limitations of eco-centrism

Naess points out that to see ourselves as intimately connected with nature is “a difficult ridge to walk: To the left we have the ocean of organic and mystic views, to the right the abyss of atomic individualism.” At any level of realization of potentials, individual egos “do not dissolve like individual drops in the ocean” although “the individual is not, and will not be isolatable” (Naess 1988, 165, 195). Naess’ confession shows important problems with deep ecology.

Deep ecology emphasizes a holistic viewpoint which means that centralism becomes decentralism. All centralisms—anthropocentrism, Singer’s animal centrism (1990), Taylor’s bio-centrism—have a center, even though the focus might be different, as in human, living being, and ecosystem. So, even when we expand the range of subjects having moral status to encompass all living beings, we still cannot escape the conflict of values, as all have a dualistic view, in the sense of human beings and nature, animals with sensory organs that are able to feel pain and non-sentient beings, all living beings and non-living beings. And although deep ecology has the advantage from the perspective of holism which counters dualistic constructs, nevertheless, when deep ecology accepts the ecosystem as the center the problem of dualism again emerges.

Eco-centrists say that nature is a valued reality in its own right. Thus, if human beings do not interrupt nature, nature itself maintains sustainable balance. Here, nature refers to the ecological system that has not been affected by human beings and in this perspective eco-centrists consider naturalness a concept distinct from human beings. In other words, to preserve nature means to protect it from the control of human beings.

But in here the question arises: Is there anything of wilderness which has not been affected by human beings? Naturalness has been heavily manipulated by human beings for hundreds and thousands of years. For

example, there is no unmediated representation of nature which has not been affected by climatic change caused by human activities. In this respect, humanity has affected every place of the earth's surface. In the relationship between all creatures, including human beings and the world, nature has been transformed. This is confirmed by modern scientific study and philosophical research. Nature is not permanent; rather it has been changed and continues to be transformed along with other creatures. If we claim that wilderness leaves no place for human beings, our claim embodies a dualistic vision in which all humanity is entirely outside nature. We thus reproduce a dualism that sets humanity and nature at opposite poles.

Eco-centrists consider human beings as only a part of nature. According to eco-centrism, a human being is only an individual entity which constructs within nature. This interpretation of the human being raises the problem as to who is responsible for the preservation of nature? This understanding of the human in eco-centrism is related to the egalitarianism of deep ecology.

According to social ecologists, deep ecology fails to realize the nature-social connection and fails to realize that our conceptual understanding of nature and subsequent attitudes are reflected in our social structures and attitudes. The problem is not human beings or human-centeredness but particular socio-economic systems. We cannot solve the problem of our relation to nature without solving fundamental social problems. Deep ecology also ignores the plight of particular social groups that need special attention because of the injustice and oppression they suffer. Social ecologists hold that deep ecology misses the important difference in their criticism of anthropocentrism. Deep ecology needs to recognize that many people are oppressed by the domination worldview. In particular, social ecologists have accused deep ecologists of neglecting the issues of class and race and that deep ecology overlooks the significance of authoritarianism, hierarchy, and the nation-state as causal in respect of environmental and social problems.

According to eco-feminists, "Deep ecology fails to realize that our conceptions and attitudes toward nature reflect our conceptions and attitudes toward women. Women and nature have been treated similarly and the

environmental problem is not anthropocentrism but androcentrism: male-centeredness, which has allowed males to exploit both women and nature. Hence, we cannot solve the problem of our relation to nature without solving the problem of sexism.”

Another limitation of deep ecology is that it has a tendency to the metaphysical aspect rather than the ethical practice aspect. This is reflected in Neass’ expression as he admits he is ‘not much interested in ethics or moral s...(Since) Ethics follows from how we experience the world’ (Fox 1990, 219). But today’s eco-crisis requires the ecological ethic that has a strong power of execution. Deep ecology with its strong preference for philosophical vision is weak in its practical ability. Max Oelschleeger criticizes environmental philosophy for being too technical and narrowly addressed to academic specialists:

The ethical theory of the professional environmental ethics community is powerless to overcome the pervasive influence of utilitarian individualism, an ideology institutionalized in political and economic institutions. Further, eco-philosophical discourse offers its ethical insights and ecological panaceas in a language inaccessible to lay publics (Peterson 2001, 7).

So how and where can we find an alternative that has a more practical vision?

In White’s criticism, Christianity has caused the eco-crisis because of its anthropocentric and dualistic view. Since the root of the eco-crisis is based on religion, we have to find the cure for the restoration of the environment in religion. “What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny, that is, by religion” (White 1967; reproduced in Barr 1971, 10). Max Oelschleeger holds that we can restore the sense of holiness of all living beings through religion (2001, 6). His assertion is similar to that of Thomas Berry who said that religion is the only way to motivate change in the world along with education, enterprises and government (Hope and Young 1989, 750). Anna Peterson said

that we must learn from religion how to live ethically. In contrast to secular ethics, religious ethics is more an ethics of living. Peterson asserts that religions have some potential in defining ethics for living (Peterson 2001, 20).

As Hans Küng mentioned, there is one thing that those who have no religion cannot do, even if in fact they want to accept unconditional moral norms for themselves: they cannot give a reason for the absoluteness and universality of ethical obligation. An unconditional view claims that a ‘categorical ought’ cannot be derived from the finite conditions of human existence, from human urgencies and needs. And even an independent abstract ‘human nature’ or idea of humanity’ (as a legitimating authority) can hardly put an unconditional obligation on anyone for anything. Even a ‘duty for humankind to survive’ can hardly be demonstrated conclusively in a rational way (Küng 1991, 52). This is why we should try to find a curative way to overcome the eco-crisis through religions.

IV. Buddhist thought as a resolution to the ecocrisis

A. Understanding of self based on Dependent Origination

In our earlier discussion about understanding nature, we mentioned that the core of the ecocrisis is dualism and anthropocentrism. If we do not overcome these ideas it will be difficult to resolve environmental problems. Environmentalists are interested in Buddhism because they think that Buddhist thought offers a means to resolve dualism and anthropocentrism. Gary Snyder, a Buddhist scholar, asserts that ecocrisis is caused by what may be called anthropocentrism, that is, the view that nature is inferior to human beings. He claims that we need to become free from anthropocentrism through the wisdom of Dependent Origination. Buddha expressed his experience of enlightenment as the truth of Dependent Origination: “When this is, that is. From the arising of this comes the arising of that. When this isn’t, that isn’t. From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that” (*SN*, 12. 61). In

simple terms, all things are interrelated.

The ontological view of Dependent Origination is deeply connected with Buddha's teaching that "all things within *Samsara* are impermanent" and "all things are 'absence of separate self' or no-self." No-self refers to *anatta* (Pāli) or *anātman* (Sanskrit). One scholar describes it as "meaning non-selfhood, the absence of limiting self-identity in people and things" (Rawson 1991, 11). Its opposite is *atta* (Pāli) or *ātman* (Sanskrit), which is the idea of a subjective soul or self that survives rebirth and which was explicitly rejected by the Buddha. In other words, Buddhists say that everything is in a constant state of flow and change and there is no essence that persists unchanged throughout life, nor is there any thing such as an abiding self.

As such, the concept of no-self is based on Dependent Origination which is the fundamental understanding of existence in Buddhism. From an ontological perspective, mountains are deeply related to other things, so mountains and the presence of sun, water, land, etc, constitute an inter-dependent reality; in contrast to the passive view that the reality of mountains does not exist. The doctrine of Dependent Origination in early Buddhism is reinterpreted as Dharma Dependent Origination in the *Flower Garland Sutra*, one of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures. According to this Scripture, all things, from the smallest parts to the total Universe, are linked by endless overlapping mutual dependence. The story of Indra's Net in the *Flower Garland Sutra* illustrates the remarkable interconnection of reality. This story tells how each jewel in Indra's jeweled net reflects all the others in the universe. The scripture says that "there are all things in the one and there is one in all things, one is all things and all things are one."

The Dharma Dependent Origination is the view that all things are related to each other. Accordingly, Buddhists say that self is not independent; rather that individual existence is inter-dependent being that is internally related to all things. It is thus a fallacy in the Buddhist view that self is independent and real. The Buddhist view that human beings are interdependent with all things, and all things are interconnected with each other, helps to free

us from self-centeredness and dualism which are characteristic of Western thought. From this perspective we can transcend the dichotomy between ‘*res cogitu*’ and ‘*res extensa*’ in the thought of Descartes.

Can we then suggest from our earlier consideration of Naess’ view of Self-realization, that there may be some striking similarities between the deep ecologists’ conception of Self-Realization and the conception of Zen awakening? Naess’ holistic view was much inspired by Zen Buddhism; he especially acknowledged Dōgen as a major inspiration (Curtin 241; James 2004, 76), Bill Devall and George Sessions refer approvingly to Zen in articulating their conception of deep ecology (Pojman 2001, 158). Warwick Fox concludes his influential *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* with a quotation from Dōgen arguing that Zen is based on what he calls an “ontologically based identification,” a profound awareness of “the fact that things are,” which has important implications for environmental philosophy (Fox 1990, 250-51, 268).

But even though deep ecology is influenced by Zen Buddhism there is a difference between the Self-realization of deep ecology and the awakening of no-self in Buddhism. As we have seen, Buddhists deny the existence of ātman. Yet, Naess’ Self-realization presupposes a substantial self (*ātman*) as he refers sympathetically to *Advaita vedānata* in articulating his position, and so encourages the idea that realizing one’s self is to realize one’s identity with some metaphysical Absolute—Brahman, perhaps (Naess 2001, 151-53). We must then conclude that the idea of self-realization is at odds with Zen.

In the Buddhist understanding of self as no-self, the real meaning of this expression is that human beings exist only through the interrelationship of all things, rather than the passive view that self does not exist. When we perceive our interrelationship with nature we can realize that the death of nature is deeply linked with our lives. Buddhist thought helps us to overcome the attitude that human beings and nature are independent. The Buddhist understanding of human beings which is based on the doctrine of Dependence Origination is deeply related to the understanding of nature.

B. Understanding nature through the thought of Buddha-nature

In the *Mahaparinirvana sutra*, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature.” The notion that beings possess Buddha-nature means that all beings are like a seed destined to ripen into Buddha-hood. Dōgen, on the other hand, asserted that the sentence should be reread as “All is sentient being, all beings are (all being is) the Buddha nature” (James 2004, 66). Dōgen also rejected the idea expressed in the tathagata-garbha tradition - that Buddha-nature is permanent. He proclaimed, on the contrary, that the very impermanence of grass and tree and forest, is the Buddha-nature (Dumoulin 2005, 85). Hee Jin Kim says that Dōgen identified Buddha-nature with Tathata or Dharmata, although the meaning of Buddha nature here is translated from psychological to universal. Dōgen shifted the meaning of Buddha-nature from Immanence of Buddha Nature to actualization of Buddha-Nature. The previous view of Buddha nature is that all beings have Buddha-nature, but Dōgen suggests that everything including nature is Buddha-nature.

In this view, Dōgen recognizes the Buddha-nature of non-sentient beings. Dōgen says that all things, including plants and trees and territories and the hosts of heaven, are living beings with mind because they are Buddha-nature. By acknowledging the Buddha-nature of non-sentient beings, Dōgen dismissed the general idea that Buddha-nature may be restricted to sentient beings. Recognizing the Buddha-nature of non-sentient beings, Dōgen believes that mountains and rivers and earth are also beings that speak a message. There is a chapter in “Shobo Genzo” titled Sansui Kyo, which means ‘scripture of mountains and waters.’ Dōgen said that mountains and waters themselves are a kind of scripture, because they have implied Speeches of Truth. In essence, mountains and waters are not dead beings, but living aspects of Dharma–Body.

In the chapter Kisei-Sanshiki (The Voices of the River Valley and the Form of the Mountains) in “Shobo Genzo,” Dōgen said that the sound of the stream is the truth of Dharma and the light of the mountain is the speech of Dharma-body, as in the example of Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-?, 俗稱 蘇東坡) who,

on hearing the sound of streams, recognized the sound as the truth of Dharma.⁴ Thus, Dōgen says that when we have practiced correctly, we can recognize the sounds of streams and mountains and the shapes of valleys and mountains. And all of them are the hymns of 84,000 Sutras.

In light of this understanding, Dōgen says that if we are enlightened by the truth we can fully understand the fact that nature is living and always speaks the truth. In Dōgen's view, the phrase "green mountains are always walking and mountains have been active" is not a vague kōan 公案⁵, but factual truth. That is, mountains have been active since the Empty Eon. The hidden meaning of mountains is that they are the beings of time.

This idea will become clear only when we keep in mind his view that time is being; that nature is active and living. This is to say that, not only human beings but also nature is a being of time. It is difficult to recognize this because there is a difference between the time of human beings and the time of nature. Dōgen speaks of the long and slow movement of mountains through many eons of time. On this point, he said that "mountains and waters are right now, the actualization of the ancient Buddha way." Because of the time nature needs for processing, this helps us to be released from the view that nature is a mechanical and closed system. In a human-centered viewpoint we think that mountains and rivers are dead, but, if we awaken the truth we can recognize nature as a living being. Dōgen's view of Buddha-nature helps us to recognize that nature is a living and active being and we need only to change our perception of nature to see it in this way. A new relationship between nature and human beings is called for, a homogenized view where both are living and active.

As we discussed previously, all beings are interrelated from the viewpoint of non-self and impermanence. This is based on Dependent Origination and the non-sentience of Buddha-nature, according to Dōgen. In this respect, we can consider Dependent Origination not only from the view of wisdom but also compassion. This is the meaning of the enlightenment, that

4 <http://www.shomonji.or.jp/soroku/genzou.htm>.

5 A Kōan is a short story or question that can be used to inspire students to realize their true nature.

‘One Body of Great Compassion’ is completed through the practice of ‘One Body of Great Compassion.’

C. The interrelation of wisdom
and compassion through ‘One Body of Great Compassion’

The view of dependent origination which states that every entity exists because of its interrelationship, helps us to recognize that my existence and the existence of the other are linked as one entity. When we recognized the fact that my life is linked with the lives of all other beings, we can awaken to the fact that the tranquility of all other beings is my tranquility. The Great Compassion reached its climax in the ‘Bodhisattva path’ of Mahayana Buddhism. There is a famous phrase related to great compassion toward all living things that offers consolation to the invalid in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. Vimalakirti replied, “Manjusri, my sickness comes from ignorance and the thirst for existence and it will last as long as do the sicknesses of all living beings.” In other words, Vimalakirti is saying his body and the beings of all bodies are one body. The phrase, “Were all living beings to be free from sickness I also would not be sick,” captures the meaning of the ‘One Body of Great Compassion.’

This kind of compassion applies to both human and non-sentient beings. From the Buddhist standpoint, a human being is the resultant person, and nature is the dependent condition or environment, e. g. country, family, possessions, etc. and there is non-duality between humanity and nature. This idea of non-duality between humanity and nature is another aspect of Dependent Origination. A few years ago, there was a report about a Korean Buddhist nun, Jiyul, who fasted for 100 days. She was protesting against the construction of a controversial rail tunnel through Cheonseong Mountain in South Gyeongsang Province over the previous two years. She said that she had heard the mountain cry when it was broken by machines, and she promised at that time to rescue the mountain and so, put her life on the line in fighting to save the mountain. Her hunger strike was the practice of great

compassion based on the idea of non-duality between human beings and nature. Jiyul's story vividly illustrates what we mean by this great compassion, "Were all living beings to be free from sickness, the Bodhisattva also would be free of sickness."

The great compassion of Dependent Origination offers wisdom for a possible solution to the eco-crisis. But although Buddhism proposes a perspective for overcoming the dualistic viewpoint of Western Christianity, there are still some limitations to it to be used as the framework for effective environmental ethics.

D. The limitations of Buddhism as an environmental ethic

Firstly, a serious limitation that prevents Buddhism from offering a suitable framework for an effective environmental ethic is the problem of social practice. Theoretically, the target of Buddhist enlightenment is a harmonic relationship between wisdom and compassion. Buddhists say that if we become enlightened, we recognize the interrelationship of all beings and we will have compassion for all beings. But in reality, we see cases in which individual enlightenment has not been sublimated into social practice. Gary Snyder said that Buddhism has an amazing insight on the nature of self, but this insight cannot be sublimated into harmony between wisdom and the social practice of compassion. Traditional Buddhism, or instrumental Buddhism, has overemphasized enlightenment for one's own salvation, resulting in a passive attitude towards social practice and world affairs. Snyder asserts that we have to extend our community from Buddhist Sangha to the life-community of all beings (Snyder 1980, 15-16). His assertion is good advice to enable a shift in Buddhist practice in order to incorporate integration into lifestyle, this practice having been lost in the Buddhist tradition.

Secondly, the enlightenment of Zen Buddhism is characterized by amorality.⁶ Mumon (1183-1260) claims that "Thinking good and evil is

⁶ I am using the term 'amoral' in a loose sense to encompass the accusation that Zen is in fact immoral. Historically, the charge that Zen is amoral or even immoral and anyway too little concerned with society has been often raised by Confucian and Neo-Confucian critics. (On this, see Whitehill [1987, 11-13].)

attachment to heaven and hell.” The rationale here is presumably that the distinction between good and evil is the result of a dualistic perception and that awakening, by contrast, involves the cessation of discriminative thought (James 2004, 31). Zen Buddhists say that if you achieve enlightenment, you can live morally without needing to make a self-conscious effort to behave morally. But the ordinary person is non-enlightened and as such, may misunderstand the meaning of amorality, and therefore, in danger of neglecting the moral dimension. In this respect, the overemphasis on amorality in Buddhism is one hindrance to its becoming the framework for an effective environmental ethic.

On another point, the Buddhist view of no-self which is based on Dependent Origination has a problem of ethical subjectivity with a responsible consciousness. Dependent Origination means that all beings without exception are relative and relational so there is nothing absolute, eternal, or unchangeable. When we consider the problem of the subject from the ontological understanding of interrelationship, ultimately, all terminological values and subjective consciousness disappear. In this respect, Buddhism with its totalistic viewpoint may endanger the individual to be lost in the totality. From the standpoint of environmental ethics, we wonder who the subject is that is charged with ethical responsibility?

Buddhists hold that even though we have no self-identical body we can be subject with self-responsibility. And even though we have no unchangeable permanent substance as a self-identical body, moral responsibility and salvation is possible. Although we are no-self; we are able to have limitless responsibilities and practice ‘one body of Great Compassion.’ The assumption of moral realization we need is therefore not concerned with the self-identical body but with the no-self, not subject as substance but subject as non-substantiality.

In other words, Buddhists assert that we need the self-identical body linked with past, present and future existence. If we do not require a subject with a self-identical body, there is little point in discussing morality and salvation. According to various interpretations concerning no-self, many theories

related to no-self have emerged in the history of Buddhism. But we will not discuss this problem here; we just want to point out that the problem of the subject's relation to ethics of responsibility is a controversial point in Buddhism, because if we understand human beings as no-self there is a possibility that we weaken the importance of the subject of ethics.

Buddhists have tried to practice endeavor, as we consider the case of the Buddhist nun, Jiyul, and the practice of 'One Body of Great Compassion' which is based on non-duality between humanity and nature. So Buddhists have tried to practice in an effort to overcome the ecocrisis, but today's ecocrisis requires a subject with moral responsibility and a stronger power of execution.

Hans Küng holds that the ethical goal for the third millennium is a planetary responsibility (1991, 29). In the late 1970s, the German-American philosopher, Hans Jonas, thought about 'the principle of responsibility' in a completely changed world situation in a new and comprehensive way for our technological civilization. His view involves action as a global responsibility for the whole of the biosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere of our planet. So a new kind of ethics is called for out of concern for the future and reverence for nature (Küng 1991, 30). In light of this view we have endeavored to solve the problem of an ethics of responsibility from a Christian perspective of stewardship. But our approach is not from the perspective of human superiority in which humans dominate nature; it is a perspective of responsibility which was handed down from God. J. Baird Callicott says that the concept of stewardship, among the several possible Christian attitudes to nature, has the most potential to motivate environmentally responsible behavior (Peterson 2001, 13).

We might refer to this kind of stewardship as a 'chastened weak anthropocentrism'⁷ because it recognizes both the limitations of human beings and also their responsibility. Weak anthropocentrism is different from the anthropocentrism mentioned earlier. Bryan Norton speaks of strong

7 'Normative anthropocentrism' which limits moral standing to human beings and confines the scope of morality to human interests, 'teleological anthropocentrism' is literally anthropocentrism of goals or purposes (Peterson 2001, 73).

anthropocentrism and weak anthropocentrism and suggests that strong anthropocentrism means that all values are determined by the degree of satisfaction of human beings' felt preferences. On the other hand, weak anthropocentrism means that all values are determined by the degree of satisfaction of human beings' considered preferences (Norton 1984, 131-47). Norton holds that weak anthropocentrism can make a case for harmony with nature and the value of experiences of natural objects and undisturbed places (spiritual experiences, nature as teacher) (1984, 131-47). We will discuss stewardship ethics as weak or moderate anthropocentric ethics.

V. Stewardship ethics as a 'chastened weak'

A. Responsibility as human identity

Some Christian theologians have argued that stewardship ethics should be considered an alternative environmental ethic. There has also been criticism that stewardship ethics places too much emphasis on human-centeredness. In spite of such criticism, consideration of the environmental crisis inevitably leads to discussion of who should take responsibility for the global problem, or what guidance should be provided for moral action. We have mentioned the problem of ethical subjectivity with responsible consciousness as one of the limitations of Buddhism. In awareness of the problem, we try to consider the concept of steward as "collaborative identity." Stewardship ethics is related to human identity within the text and context of the Hebrew Testament. *Genesis* uses two different metaphors to describe human identity. In *Genesis* 1: 26-27, human beings are described as being created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*).

Then God said: "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created humanity in his

image; in the divine image he created them; male and female he created them.

In *Genesis 2: 7*, the first human being is molded with ‘the dust’ of the ground.

The LORD God formed a man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so a man became a living being.

The two metaphors used in *Genesis 1* and *2* might seem ambivalent, in that the image of God is innate in human existence while a human being is none other than ‘the dust’ which has nothing to do with the divine entity. Thus, *Genesis 1* and *2* present us with two possible interpretations of human existence. Traditionally, most Christian theologians have preferred the metaphor of the *imago Dei* in *Genesis 1* which belongs to the Priestly Account, rather than the metaphor of dust in *Genesis 2* which is the Yahwist Account. Because of this, the *imago Dei* has become the central metaphor for Christian interpretation and understanding of human existence or identity.

According to Linn White, the fact that Christian understanding of human beings has been exclusively rooted in the image of God has contributed to the current eco-crisis. This has come about through an oversimplification of the Scriptures and by an erroneous use of the image of God analogically. It cannot be denied, however, that it has also been a critical point in the Christian tradition as the image of God has been utilized to give privilege to human beings to the exclusion of all other creatures. On the basis of this Christianity, human beings came to consider themselves as separate from nature, and so easily able to justify dominant human activity.

The biblical idea that God bestows his image on human beings actually has its origin in royal ideology in both Mesopotamia and Egypt: the king was literally regarded as resembling God’s image (Hessel 2000, 138). Applying this ideology to the Christian context, biblical scholars have argued that the resemblance between God and human being does not lie in their figures or characters, but in their roles or functions. The image of God described in

Genesis is better understood as a divine mandate to rule creatures, rather than as the unique ontological likeness only bestowed on human beings. In other words, human beings should be identified as the very beings to perform this divine function as their vocation (Hessel 2000, 138).

Besides *Genesis* 1, *Genesis* 2: 7 also depicts the first human being, named “Adam,” as molded from “the dust (adamah)” (Hessel 2000, 139). The Hebrew word, *adamah*, refers to topsoil, that is, the arable land. It means that human beings from their origin have had an inseparable relationship with the ground. Because of this intimate relationship, human beings received from God a command to “cultivate” and “care” for the ground (*Genesis*, 2:15). This is the vocation given to them as farmers, that is to say, land-caretakers.

Philip Hufner’s definition of ‘human identity’ may be helpful in integrating the meanings of these two, seemingly ambivalent, metaphors of *Genesis* 1 and 2. Hufner describes human being as “the created co-creator” (Hefner 1993, 27). At first there may seem to be a dissonance in the two terms: “the created” and “co-creator.” The first, ‘human being is the created’, obviously implies an ontological dependency on God for human existence; humans are absolutely not self-made, human lives are given as gifts by the transcendental being. It should be kept in mind that, in the process of creating the world, human beings were the last to come into existence; the creation of the world preceded human beings. The world belongs to the Creator God not to human beings. Since human beings were molded from the dust in *Genesis* 2, human existence is intertwined with the fabric of Nature from the very moment of being created. A similarity is found in the Buddhism’ Indra’s Net in the *Flowers Garland Sutra*: all the small parts originating from the total universe are endlessly overlapping in mutual dependency.

The second of term in Hufner’s above statement: “human being is the co-creator,” is also linked with *Imago Dei* in *Genesis* 1. Since human beings are made in the image of God, humans are his co-creator, but this doesn’t mean that human beings have dominant power to rule over the environment. Like God, as his assistants they should take care of their environment. Our initial dissonance can therefore be resolved in the understanding of human

beings as stewards.

Stewardship is etymologically related to the Greek *'oikos'* which means *'house'* or *'household.'* In the *New Testament* (*Lk*, 16:2-3; *Tit*, 1:7; *1 Pet*, 4:10) there are several occasions where *'oikonomos'* is mentioned. It means "house manager or supervisor" since the prefix, *'oikos,'* means a house, and the suffix, *'nemo'* means 'distribute' or 'manage.' A steward can thus be understood as a manager who has responsibility for taking care of the house. Several scholars also use a similar definition for stewardship. J. D. Hall mentions that a human being as steward is to be responsible for all the creatures (1991, 26). Calvin also states that everybody is God's collaborator. E. Sauer asserts that the human being is a being for the remedy of global creation (1967, 97).

Leonard Boff further argues that whether or not human beings take responsibility for their environment is not dependent on a person's free will (2001, 48). This responsibility is imposed and described as human existence at the time of being created. At that very moment 'stewardship' was also "created." Human beings as God's stewards were created according to the image of God.

B. Image of God as a community subject

In addressing the problem of a subject who should be morally responsible for the destruction of the environment, we see that the eco-crisis is a social issue and the settlement of the problem is beyond individual responsibility. When we seek a responsible-person in social-ethical matters we find the person is different from 'the individual.' The individual as an ethically responsible person must be able to recognize their relationship as a member of a community, able to analyze ethical matters and settle them; in other words, a public personality who is responsible for the environmental problem. On this basis, we will determine human identity as a public personality created in the image of God as the central Christian interpretation of the human being.

Genesis 2:7 states that “The LORD God blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.” The breath that God put into humans is just the life of God. In this sense, to say that humans have *imago Dei* is to infer that humans have God’s existence. God’s existence reveals the dynamic love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. When we understand God through the dynamic love of the Triune God, we can recognize that human existence is rooted in this love among the three persons of God. When we consider God’s nature in the dynamic relationship of the triune God, we see God as relation, loving, self-giving and creative. God is not a God in isolation but a God with creation, who makes room for a genuine other (Case-Winters 2007, 153). So the human being who received God’s nature is also not a being in isolation, but a being with God and all the rest of creation.

In this aspect of relational creation, the self-perfection of humanity is not accomplished in the individual, but in the relationship of the entire world, including nature. Human beings who exist as co-creators also have the responsibility for saving the world. In other words, humanity has responsibility for the environmental problem. In respect of this, stewardship is related not only to human identity, but also to the self-perfection of humanity.

John Ruusbroec (1293-1383) helps us to understand the concept of the person and the nature of human beings.⁸ Ruusbroec’s axiom is that the essence—the *wesen*—of a human person is not his or her individuality but is a transcendent relationship (Faesen 2007, 77). When we understand the core of the person as a transcendent relationship, we view the human being not as a static existence, but as a continuously creating being. The Creator God has not only created once in the past, but is continuously creating (*Creatio continua*). *Imago Dei* does not mean ‘possession,’ but ‘being that is continuously creating.’ In other words, the human being is a dynamic being who is

⁸ John Ruusbroec states that the core of the person is called *wesen*. In the absence of a real equivalent, it is usually translated as “essence,” which might create a misunderstanding. In Middle Dutch, the word *wesen* is related to the verb “to be” (*zijn*). The core of the person in John Ruusbroec’s understanding, is different from the view of Ockham’s nominalistic thought: *quaelibet res singularis seipsa est singularis* (*Sent.* I, *dist.* II, *q.* vi) In the nominalistic view, it is the essence of a being to be individual. Every being coincides completely and fundamentally with itself.

continuously creating, not a static being who possesses individuality.

The Bible suggests Jesus Christ as the exemplar for beings who are continuously creating. Incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth is not an exception to God's ordinary way of acting in the world but rather, because of his perfect responsiveness to divine initial aims, we see in him what God is intending and doing, everywhere and always. God's intentions and actions for each and all become transparent in Jesus Christ. He is their 'chief exemplification' (Case-Winters 2007, 143). The life of stewardship is an extension of the life of Jesus. Jesus' life concentrates on God's kingdom and indicates that the completion of God's kingdom is not governance and rule of the world, but care and service for all creatures. In this respect, we have inherited the vocation of service and care for the world, following Jesus' example of real stewardship. God gives human beings a crown of honor and glory (Psalms 8); this crown does not symbolize privilege as with a ruler, but responsibility as a steward that cares for all beings. Self-perfection does not finish in Jesus who is a real *Imago Dei*, but continues in all humans. St. Paul says that self-perfection is not just an ideal for humans, but is a true potentiality given to every human being.

Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator (*Colossians*, 3: 9-10).

When we consider stewardship on the basis of human existence as *imago Dei*, we shall know that the relationship between human beings and nature is deeply linked to self-perfection of the human being. In our consideration that we need to reflect on human identity, with regard to the problem of environmental destruction we have established that stewardship rests on the public individual who must resolve the problem of the eco-crisis.

The Biblical metaphor of stewardship is linked with the God-world relation. This suggests a need for Christians to dialogue with Buddhists,⁹ as

9 In Christian dialogue with Buddhists regarding God, Whitehead's philosophy has substantial potential.

the steward metaphor corresponds not only to the way of Christians, but to the way of being human.

VI. Conclusion

Hans Küng says that it is probable that consciousness of our global responsibility for the future of humankind has never been as great as it is now. Abstinence in matters of ethics is no longer possible. It has become abundantly clear why we need global ethics, for there can be no survival without a world ethic (Küng 1991, 69). As Hans Küng insisted, we acutely need a world ethic for resolution of the ecocrisis. Accordity, with its potential for a world ethics, is what modern society demands of us. As we discussed earlier, Buddhism has some alternative ideas which help to overcome anthropocentrism. This is the enlightenment of interrelationship between humanity and nature and the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature through the view of Dependent Origination and Buddha Nature. Buddhism can also complement deep ecology with its strong preference for philosophical vision, because there is the power of execution of 'One Body of Great Compassion.' Nevertheless, as we have acknowledged previously, Buddhism's contribution is limited in the problems of social practice, morality, and the issue of subject in the ethic of responsibility. We have also discussed stewardship ethics which are related to the problem of the subject, as another limitation of Buddhism.

Today's ecological problems are linked with all dimensions of modern society, directly and indirectly. This paper is an attempt to find a conclusion that is intertwined with everything. We have recognized to that end, an

Whitehead's concept of God in its pantheism, dual transcendence, and shared creativity, presents a pathway for conceiving God and the God-world relation in ways that maintain the relational transcendence of God. According to Whitehead's Process Philosophy, God's transcendence does not lie in being separate from all else, but in its 'surelativity.' That is, God is supremely relative, internally related to all that is and therefore "all in all." This is a transcendence that includes rather than excludes relation. This distinctive understanding has resonance with the understanding of transcendence as a "crossing over to the other." God is not the world and the world is not God, but neither are these two mutually exclusive (Case-Winters 2007, 88-90, 99).

opportunity to reflect on human identity. The human being is a ‘community subject’ which goes beyond an individual subject. We need the community subject to take responsibility for solving the eco-crisis by transcending individual subjectivity. A just community subject can become the subject of the ethical responsibility that modern society needs so acutely. In our consideration of the possibility of a complementary relationship between Buddhism and Christianity in world ethics we have established a ground for Buddhism and Christianity to be partners for the resolution of the ecocrisis, by way of the wisdom of world ethics through interreligious dialogue.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

(K=Korean, C=Chinese, J=Japanese)

- Cheonseong (K) 千聖
Gyeongsang (K) 慶尙
Kisei-Sanshiki (J) 溪聲山色
Kōan (J) 公案
Mumon (J), Wumen (C) 無門
Sansui Kyo (J) 山水經
Shabo Genzo (J) 正法眼藏
Su Dandpo (C) 蘇東坡
Su Shi (C) 蘇軾

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