

THEME 5: WORLDVIEWS ON WATER

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Abstracts

Water: A Divine Gift from Allah to his People in the Islamic Religion and Environments.

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Water holds several meanings in Islam. It is the origin of life and serves to purify the human body- soul. In the Koran, water appears as a symbol of divine generosity. Being the element of nature and the basis for life on Earth, water is deep-rooted as the religion itself. Islam cares for the environment and calls for protecting all its elements that keeps life's balance. Muslims should remember that (1) the importance and necessity of water, (2) prohibition of water monopoly, (3) giving water in charity, (4) digging wells, and (5) combating water pollution.

Moreover, water plays a crucial position in the garden, symbolizing life and mercy. While its sight and sound give comfort and pleasure, it makes Muslims feel grateful to Allah. Consequently, water in Paradise is referred to 'rivers' that constantly flow. Five types of water features in Paradise are rivers, fountains, springs, wells, and streams. The qanats are the earliest example of water technology by the Persians. The court of the Lion in Alhambra elaborates the Koranic verse of "Gardens underneath which rivers flow". Originally necessary for irrigation, channels and pools were developed for the visual beauty and incorporated into sophisticated architectural schemes.

In the Koran, the splendid nature is Allah's sign which Muslims contemplate on them. Garden is the space of meditation and an earthly reflection of Paradise. Moreover, in the Abrahamic faiths, it is the perfect state of the world before the fall from grace, and that will be restored in the world to come. Notions of Paradise are cross-cultural, laden with pastoral imagery and may be cosmological or eschatological or both. In eschatological contexts, it is imagined as a home of the virtuous dead; Heaven is a paradisaic relief. 120 references describe Koranic Paradise as a green garden with vines, fruit-laden trees, fountains, and streams which evoke a spiritual journey.

...., glad tidings of gardens (janna) under which rivers flow, and where, when they eat the fruits that grow..." (Koran 2:25)

Water is a complement to the nature of Islamic architectural ornamentation. Its application for ornamentation as well as for coolness is seen in secular architecture. Water conveys a sense of repose and coolness and, by its mirror effect, openness and breadth to the enclosed spaces. Water is a mirror to reflect the architecture and multiply its ornamental themes and a means of

highlighting its visual axes. Pools of water multiply the images they contain and distort their reality. They are irreversible, yet altering; fluid and dynamic, yet static. The gardens and the palace and tomb architecture of Mughal India and Spain have kept the best surviving examples of the elaborate, combined uses of water for the symbolic, decorative and practical purpose.

My paper discusses how water has contributed to the Islamic religion, living environment and cultural heritage. A few examples are taken across the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, with a glimpse of Hindu-Buddhist and Christian architecture for a comparison. It aims to underline the significance of water in the Islamic worldview.

Water in its context of ecological and socio-cultural systems – opportunities in heritage policy, practice and research, from the Ramsar Convention to contemporary artists (and beyond)

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This contribution to the conference will examine the ways in which multiple values of water environments have been incorporated at the landscape, community and ecosystem scale in the policy and implementation frameworks evolved since 1971 in the intergovernmental Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and in a range of related fields of work that are helping to serve similar objectives.

The concept of “cultural ecosystem services” now informs much of the heritage discourse in this sphere; but further work is required (potentially through the proposed ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage) to develop the language and tools that will embed a better understanding of the values at stake in relevant decision-making.

The contribution will draw on recent projects, initiatives and guidance products that have addressed this in contexts such as the Ramsar Convention and UNESCO, including collaborations between these and other interests concerned with traditional & indigenous knowledge systems, intangible cultural heritage, international protected area networks and contemporary creative practices.

In relation to the last of these, examples will be given of networks and collaborations between artists, heritage researchers and water managers that are developing interdisciplinary and more holistic solutions to the challenges faced by society in this area; challenging some of our existing norms and potentially offering new kinds of imaginative hope for the future.

This contribution is particularly relevant to the question defined in the conference concept paper concerning “governance and policy initiatives shaping contemporary efforts to recognise water as heritage and to enable collaboration over pluralities of water and land use”, and it will support theme 1 (in terms of ecosystem services), theme 2 (in terms of water-related “place-making” insights) and theme 5 (in terms of value systems, world-views and ways of enhancing socio-ecological resilience).

Worshipping Sacred Natural Sites as Heritage System of Safeguarding and Sustainable Use of Water Sources and Resources in Mongolia

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Key words: water-as-heritage, worshipping tradition of the Mongols, sacred cultural sites, river and lakes, sustainable livelihood, resilience to changing world.

When the world is in deep ecological problem, the significance of nomadic culture and its tradition have been growing in the conservation and protection of the nature and environment without harming it and promotion of sustainable development.

In addition, the significance of cultural landscape concept has recently been incorporated, as new paradigm, into the sustainable development of modern society. The cultural landscapes have been shaped by the interactions of people and by traditional patterns of land and water use. Sacred landscape is most important and fruitful manifestation of cultural landscape concept. Sacred landscapes are deeply rooted in particular combination of natural values and tangible and intangible cultural expressions of the site.

Mongolians have been believed that sacred natural sites, including sacred mountain and sources of rivers, streams and springs contain vital spiritual energy of deities who help maintain the organic balance of relationships between humans and nature and to nourish spiritually the existence of all living beings within these sacred sites. Since ancient time among the nomadic Mongols it is said that water is the “precious wish-granting jewel” the magic of which can provide one with long, healthy and happy life, and treats all diseases. Therefore, the tradition of worshipping natural ground and water is one of the outstanding cultural heritages created, practiced and transmitted by nomadic Mongolians. Mongols have transmitted valuable customs and traditions which are strictly prohibiting washing close to sources of rivers, streams and springs, throwing waste water into streams, relieving oneself nearby to the water source and never pollute water, instead they highlight the purity of the water. This significantly has been contributed to the preservation of our nature and water resources as sacred and pristine. For nomadic Mongolians water today is yet “precious wish-granting jewel” and “living heritage” having magical spiritual significance and dimensions.

The large rivers in Mongolia originate from the three huge sacred mountain ranges of Mongol-Altai, Khangai-Kuvsgul and Khentii. The rivers are divided into three main basins depending on their drainage system: The Arctic Ocean Basin, The Pacific Ocean Basin and the Internal Drainage Basin. In this case, these sacred mountains and rivers are endowed with significant ecological and water value not only in a Mongolian context but by virtue of their role in conserving and maintaining internationally important water and biodiversity resources for the rest of the World.

However, the concern for today is that these holy customs and tradition may get seriously threatened when Mongolia has experienced rapid urbanization and expansion of mining industries within which some sacred sites are located and values concerning water sources and maintaining water resources are being lost.

In this article we will show how can the worshipping tradition of sacred site and water help to increase resilience to and adapt to rapidly changing Mongolia and World; and how to enable fruitful collaboration among different stakeholders and local nomadic communities over water

and land use in Mongolian rural nomadic life spaces and areas.

Indigenous World View: Water Ethics and Heritage

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All over the world there are human beings who have not separated themselves from the land, the water and all of nature. Indigenous cultures have an unbroken chain that extends back to the time when our ancestors first settled the continent. For thousands of years we have lived here and it remained much as it was in the beginning under our care, we have utilized the knowledge passed down from our ancestors. Such is our water ethics and heritage.

The Indigenous Peoples' outcry to protect water comes from their worldview: water, (including surface and subterranean water) carries the essential cultural, social, historical, genealogical and economic connectedness of all people, plants and animals in the region. Cultural and social perspectives of water have existed for millennia, and are largely overlooked when decisions are made that affect the Indigenous Peoples' waterways.

This article will address potential means to develop innovative water solutions, indigenous resiliency, and applications for recognition and implementation of water rights and responsibilities, including successful efforts of upholding the Indigenous original instructions and sacred responsibility of caring for the sacred water in assuring the water rights of their people were upheld. These success stories need to be told to provide lessons learned, and to instill hope in other similarly situated indigenous communities throughout the world.

Water Rights for the People of the Desert – Southwest Arizona: a case study about the 23-year legal challenge to regain inherent water rights. The settlement established the water rights through the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act, 1982.

The Whanganui River Claim and Settlement: Established personhood for the Whanganui River. After 140 years of negotiation, Māori tribe wins recognition for Whanganui River, meaning it must be treated as a living entity. An indigenous people's claim and relationship to the Whanganui River has been the longest running litigation in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. The people of the Whanganui River – Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi – finally settled this claim in August 2014, and the settlement was enacted in March 2017. The settlement established a new legal framework, including legal personhood for the Whanganui River, recognition of intrinsic values, a human face and voice for the Whanganui River, as well as strategies, resources and commitments to advance social, cultural, environmental and economic imperatives. This article will discuss the origins of the Whanganui River and its people, provide background to the Whanganui River claim, and explain key elements of the settlement and implications for the future.

It is the desire of Indigenous Peoples to bridge the gap, to communicate our worldview to all people of the planet.