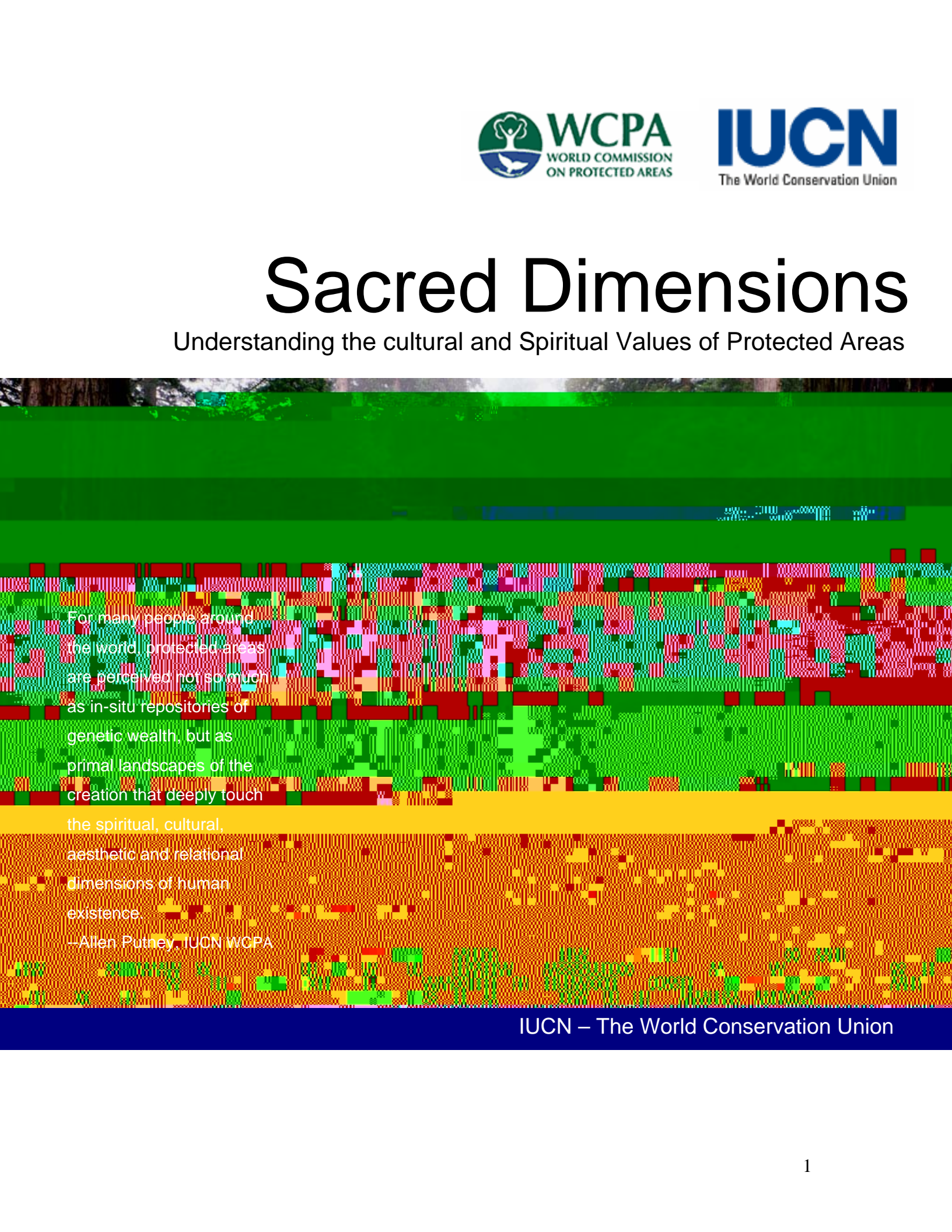


Sacred Dimensions

Understanding the cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas



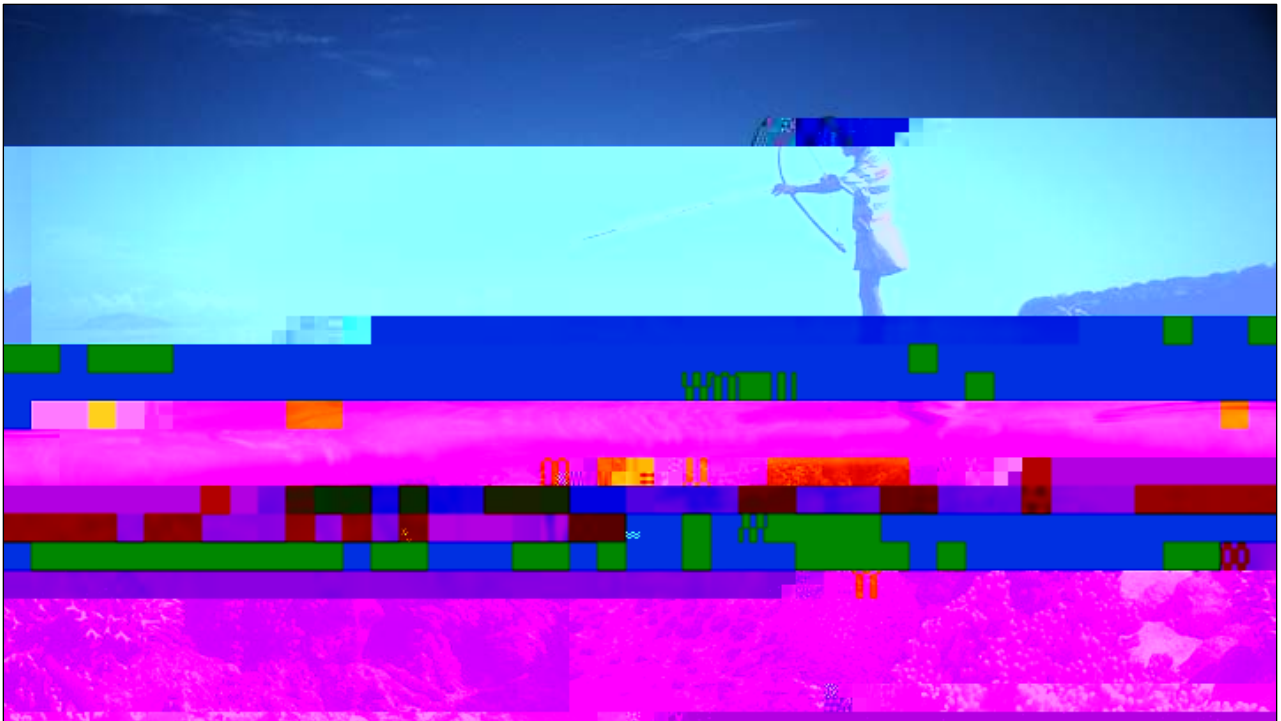
For many people around the world, protected areas are perceived not so much as in-situ repositories of genetic wealth, but as primal landscapes of the creation that deeply touch

the spiritual, cultural, aesthetic and relational dimensions of human existence.

—Allen Putney, IUCN WCPA

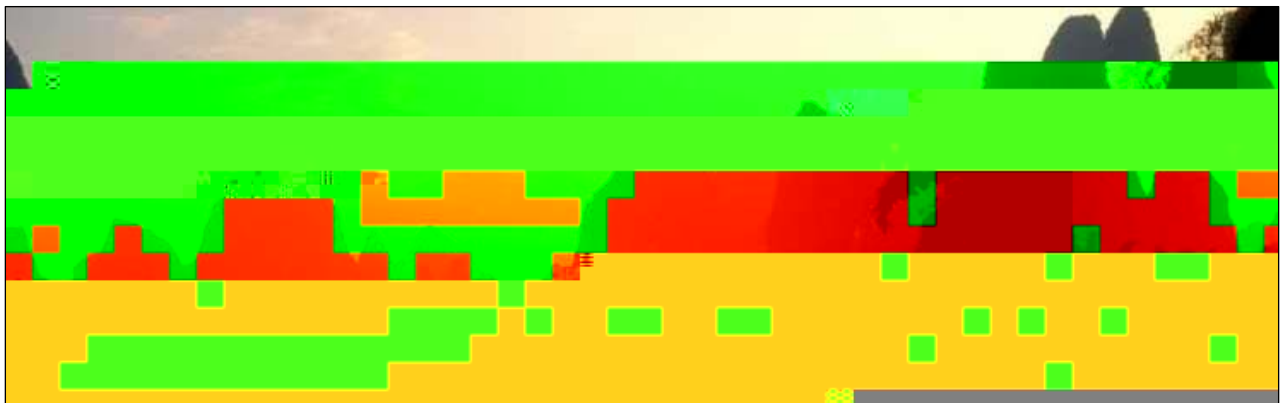
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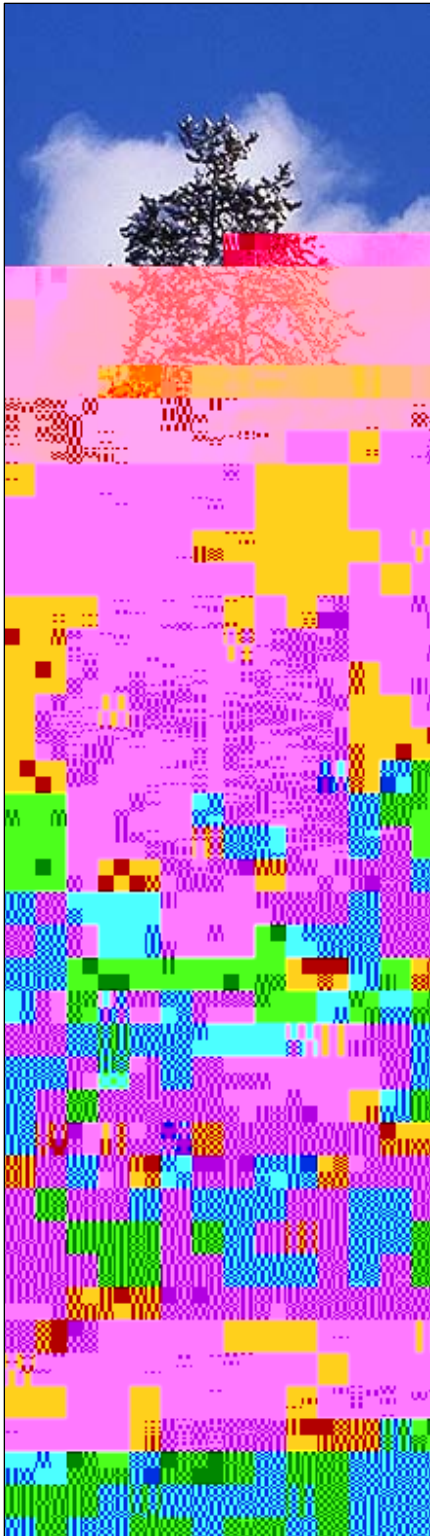
Introduction

Traditional societies all over the world have established sacred natural places and protected them from destruction from time immemorial. These are true “protected areas” that, however, are often not recognized and not protected under official conservation systems, and that currently are under



IUCN and WCPA

IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas combine a global conservation partnership with the world's premier network of protected area expertise.



The World Conservation Union

IUCN is the world's largest and most important conservation network. The Union brings together 82 States, 111 government agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

The Union's mission is to influence, en

The Value of Protected Areas

Cited from Allen Putney's essay: **The Non-Material Values of Protected Areas**

The inter-relatedness of all things is a basic concept that is central to many fields of study, such as economics, ecology, physics, and spirituality. Yet, it is the profound personal,



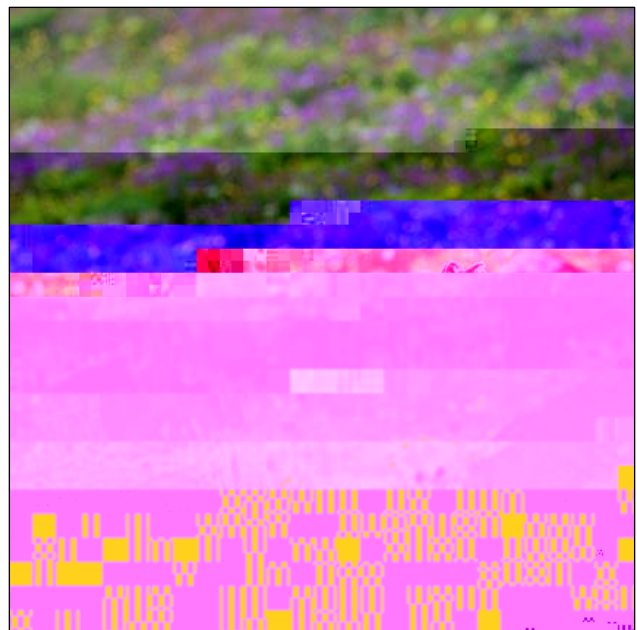
spiritual or cultural values associated with protected areas are meaningless if humans are taken out of the picture. Intrinsic values tend to be associated with modern-day 'deep ecologists' and 'ecofeminists', and indigenous peoples.

Different societies, and different segments within a society, generally approach protected areas in different ways (Harmon 2001). Some assign intrinsic value to an area, regardless of whether it has 'protected area' status or not. This is certainly the case of people, especially traditional peoples, who have developed a deep 'sense of place' that encompasses the area. Indeed, for indigenous and traditional peoples, community, culture, spirituality, nature, and territory are an indivisible whole (Masinde and Tavera 1999).

Others tend to assign value to an area's features precisely because it has been designated a 'legally protected area'. This tends to be a characteristic of urban populations that perceive protected areas as natural spaces accessible to them for recreational purposes. Still others value a protected area as a setting that provides opportunities for discovery or fulfillment of deeper values, regardless of the particular features of the area. Of course, these three ways of approaching protected area values are not mutually exclusive, and for many individuals may operate simultaneously.

Environmental philosophers tend to separate these values into three distinct categories (Posey 1999). The most commonly identified values are those that are *anthropocentric*, which relate to human welfare and concerns. *Biocentric* values are based on an approach that assigns moral standing to species according to their characteristics of sentience (awareness) and conation (the capacity to strive for certain ends). Values that are derived from a concern for ecology of whole communities and their interdependent relationships are *ecocentric* in nature. For example, the religious traditions that developed in the Middle East (Islam, Judaism and Christianity) tend to view nature in anthropocentric terms, while Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism) and the cosmologies of indigenous and traditional peoples, often relate to nature in ecocentric terms.

Perhaps most appreciated by the scientists and environmentalists of western society are the material



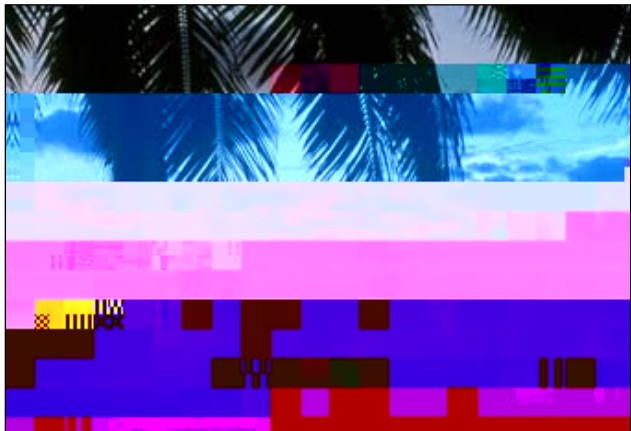
Sacred Sites

You can list your own projects here – these are from the SNS Concept paper.

Sacred Forests: Naimina Enkiyio of the Maasai

“The Naimina Enkiyio indigenous forest is the centre of our lives. It means our survival, our spirit, our past and our future. As we are part of it, it is part of us. The forest is the holy temple or shrine of our people, a place of worship and communion with our deity. In the centre is the Cathedral of the Seven Trees, a sacred place where the Laibons or prophets bring offerings to Enkai, our Maasai God. Many ceremonies essential to our way of life are performed within or at the edges of our sacred forest. Emowuo Olkiteng, the beginning of a new age group when boys begin their rite of passage as young adults is marked by initiation rites. Enkitainoto Olorrip Olasar Lolporror – when the chosen spiritual leader of the new age group, accompanied by an elder spends the whole night awake standing motionless under a sacred tree deep within the forest. Emayian oo Nkituak/ Ntomonak – where Maasai women are blessed and cleansed to enhance their fertility under sacred trees of the forest. Ilpuli – in which morans partake of meat feasts deep within the forest to convalesce and restore their strength, commune with God, develop brotherliness and test their courage. Our spirituality is ultimately at one with the forest and everyday life. Our culture has preserved Naimina Enkiyio since it is the spiritual centre of our lives” .

Sacred Seas: Customary Maori Fisheries

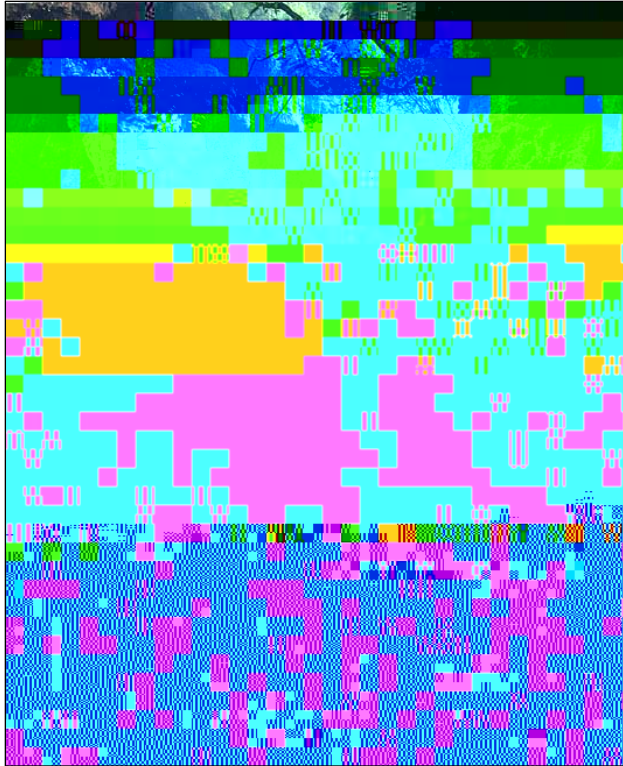


In Maori culture all elements of the natural world originate from the gods, and are thus imbued with mana atua - the presence and the power of gods. Fish, like all living things, are possessed of mauri – the physical life force. The fisheries are mahinga kai – places of customary food gathering, and because of their origins and utility, they are taonga or valued resources. The customary rules and practices by which Maori managed their waters and fisheries reflected the significance of this view. Conservation has always been important to the Maori, and traditional Maori fishing practices included measures intended to maintain the habitat, preserve fish stocks, and regulate fisheries use.

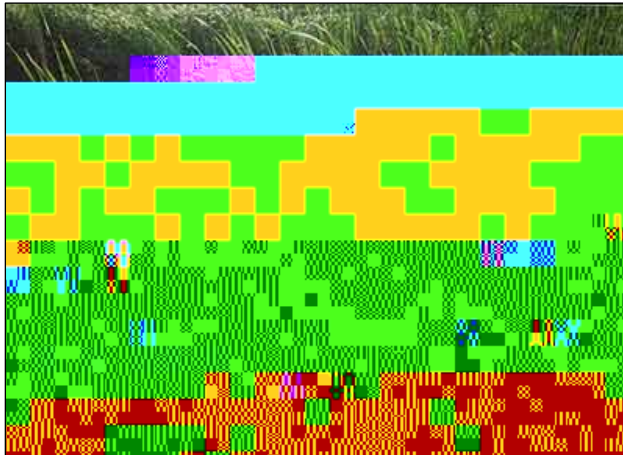
Contributions to Livelihoods: Sacred Groves in India and Ghana

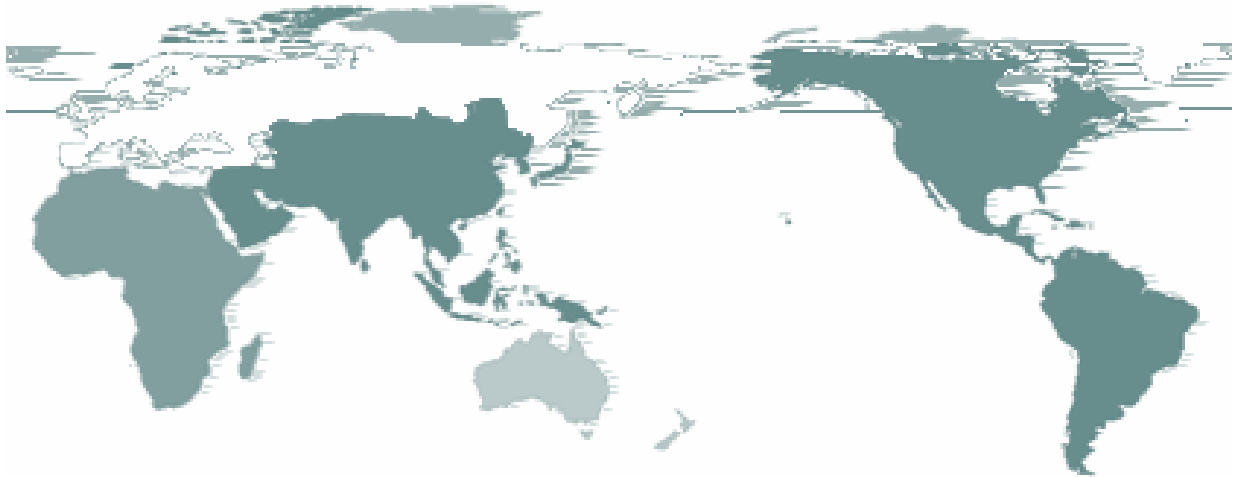
In several sacred groves of the Western Ghats of India, people are allowed to collect fallen dry wood, fruit from the forest floor, honey, sap (by tapping *Caryota urens* to make an alcoholic beverage) and other products. In some groves, cattle grazing is permitted. In most groves however, timber cannot be felled without the express permission of the deity, which is obtained through a ritual process known as kaul . In Ghana, the use of products from sacred groves

Sacred Mountains: The 'Dragon Hills' of Yunnan Province, China.



The Dai (T'ai), an indigenous ethnic group in South-West China, inhabit the Xishuangbanna region in Yunnan Province. According to their traditional concepts a Holy Hill or Nong is a forested hill where gods reside. All the plants and animals that inhabit the Holy Hills are either companions of the gods or sacred living things in god's garden. The Dai also believe that the spirits of great and revered chieftains go to the Holy Hills to live, following their departure from the world of the living. Their management of the Holy Hills through informal and informal norms, ethical rules and religious beliefs has





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