



# Can Intimate Ecological Knowledge Evoke Spirituality?

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# CAN INTIMATE ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE EVOKE SPIRITUALITY?

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# Nature Evokes Spirituality and Design in Exclusive Meijer Gardens Exhibition



Michele Oka Doner, 'Root System', 2002–2003. Bronze, 69 x 116 x 77 inches. Photo; Courtesy: Doner Studio.

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI.-** Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation’s most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, is hosting an exclusive exhibition by American artist Michele Oka Doner

“Religion and spirituality exist all around us, binding humankind and nature together in dialogue; art and design becomes the language for our conversation,” said Oka Doner.

# The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan celebrated the birth of the crown prince by planting over 108,000 saplings



*IMAGE: ROYAL OFFICE FOR MEDIA/PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP IMAGES*

In Buddhism, trees are considered to be the provider of life. Each sapling represents a prayer from the person planting it that the prince grows up to be healthy, strong and wise like the tree. The number 108 is also considered to be sacred in Buddhism.

# Our Spiritual Connection to Nature

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Spiritual Leader, Global Humanitarian, Peace Ambassador and Founder,  
Art of Living Foundation

Above all, we need to be able to experience our world with an open mind that is free from stress, and from that place we need to create the means of protecting our beautiful planet Earth. For this to happen, human consciousness must rise above greed and exploitation.

Spirituality, the experience of one's own nature deep within, provides the key to this vital relationship with oneself, with others and with our environment. This connection to our own essential nature eliminates negative emotions, elevates one's consciousness and creates a spirit of care and commitment for the whole planet.

# The Center for Spirituality in Nature

Offers relaxed and engaging experiences in nature, which provide the time and space for people who want spiritual connection to be a more regular part of their lives. These programs explore our deep theological, spiritual and ecological connections with the earth and all its creatures, and reclaim the wisdom of our ancestors in faith by seeking the Creator in the creation.

# Patterns: The Art, Soul and Science of Beholding Nature

Nature's spiritual voice says that nothing exists in and of itself. Everything exists within a network of interrelationships where everything is dependent on everything else. That voice evokes human feelings of love, gratitude, awe, wonder, delight, and being connected to a whole. It is the voice of value and meaning. It is the voice of sanctity - a voice of reverence for all that lives. <http://www.patternsinnature.org/Book/EngagingNature.html>





# Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part I): From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism

Earth and nature-based spirituality is proliferating globally. In Part I of this study, I argue that although participants in countercultural movements often eschew the label religion, these are religious movements, in which these persons find ultimate meaning and transformative power in nature. Focusing on the deep ecology movement, I further argue that (1) experiences of nature spirituality are evoked by practices as diverse as mountaineering, neo-shamanic ritualizing and states of consciousness induced by hallucinogens; (2) earthen spiritualities are often contested and may be viewed as inauthentic or dangerous by practitioners of other forms of nature spirituality; and (3) despite significant diversity, a sense of connection and belonging to nature (sometimes personified as a transforming, if not transcendent power) unites these cross-fertilizing and sometimes competing spiritualities. 2001 Academic Press

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[http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental\\_articles/pdf/Taylor--Religion31\(2\).pdf](http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental_articles/pdf/Taylor--Religion31(2).pdf)



# One Native American View



*Monument Valley Arizona 2009 © Gerla Brakkee*

**“In his observation of Nature, the Indian not only enjoyed the beauty that abounded in his environment, but was also aware of an overlying spiritual feeling that exists throughout all of creation.”**

# Adding Awe and Wonder to Children's Lives



“Allowing a young child to experience the natural world is not just a nice thing to do; it is their birthright and is essential for their academic, physical, emotional and spiritual development.”

# Musings and Comments



Overlooking the Salish Sea  
by R. Clark Feb 2015

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