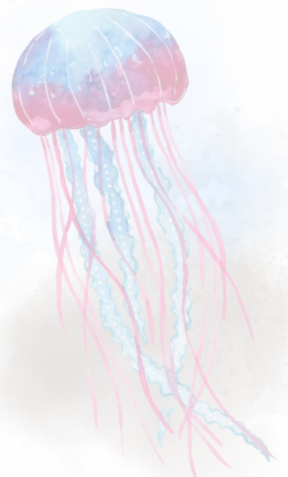
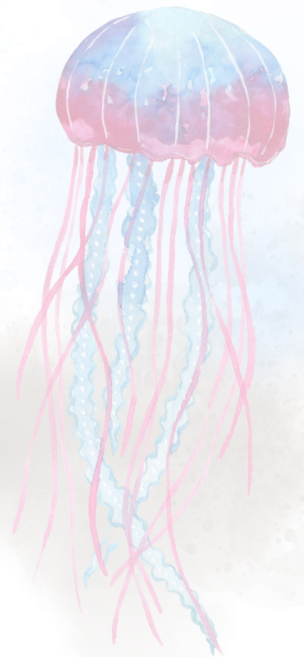


2026 Online Symposium of the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy

Mud, Islands and Ocean

November 5 - 6, 2026

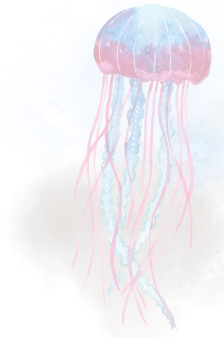
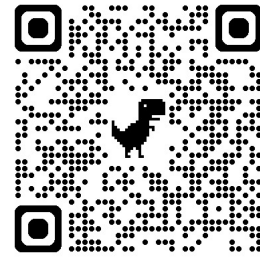


2026 Online Symposium of the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy

Dates: November 5 (Thu) – 6 (Fri), 2026

No conference fee, participation is free, registration →

Theme: Mud, Islands and Ocean



Mud, islands and ocean are places of mixture and changes. Animals and people leave traces in the mud. The NAEP symposium 2026 dives into **blue humanities** and interrogates the fringes between worlds and aims to explore views in terms of **fluidity and process**. In the mud, soil and water shift forms and transform. Boundaries are not clearly apparent. Environmental philosophy forces us to reconsider certain assumptions about clear boundaries delimiting and isolating things, and mud invites us to this journey.

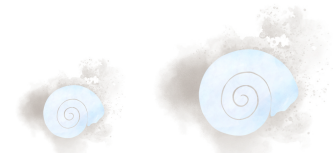
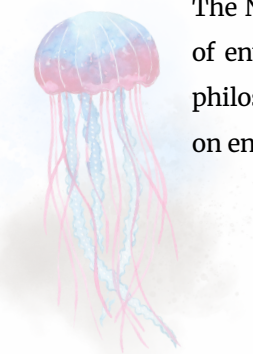
Oceans can be places of both encounters and separations, and islands can easily trigger narratives of isolation. Mud involves and interconnects lands and seas. Mud also hosts specific ecosystems and bridges the worlds of different species. But places of mixtures and changes can also be places of tensions; the encounter between different worlds can unleash clashes about access and belonging. Many **struggles about justice** unfold in muddy waters.

Language: The primary language of the conference is English. We aim to be non-native friendly, so we make it a rule that we speak slow and accessible English. If you would like to present in a language other than English, please contact us.

Organisation: Lařna Droz, Orika Komatsubara, Dipanwita Pal, Concordia Marie Lagasca-Hiloma, Romaric Jannel, Spriha Roy, Felipe Cuervo, Thiri May Aye, Phyo Susan

About the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy (NAEP)

The Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy (NAEP) was founded by a group of scholars in the field of environmental philosophy in Asia in 2019 with the goal to support works related to environmental philosophy within Asian traditions of thoughts broadly conceived or related to grassroots perspectives on environmental issues in Asia. Visit our website: www.asiaenviphilo.com

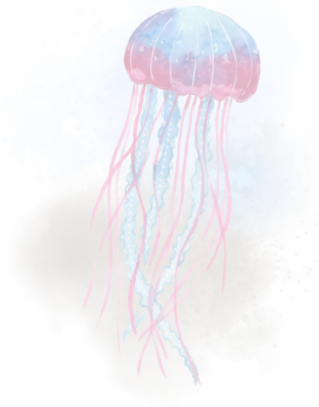


Program of the 2026 Online Symposium of the Network of Asian Environmental Philosophy

Dates: November 5 (Thu) – 6 (Fri), 2026

No conference fee, participation is free. [Registration is required here!](#)

Theme: Mud, Islands and Ocean



Day 1: Thursday November 5 (14:00 – 20:30 JST)

Session 1 (14:00-14:25 JST) Opening Remarks on the theme and NAEP

Session 2 (14:30-16:00 JST) Shells, Movement, and Memories (Moderated by Orika Komatsubara)

- **Mingxuan Liang**, Ocean after the Ocean: Shells, Memory, and the Making of Place in Beihai
- **Danang Aditya NIZAR** and **LY Quoc Dang**, Displacement Before Movement: Living Between Home and Relocation in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta
- **Jyoti**, Muddy Memories: Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Environmental Justice, and Living Landscapes in Bastar

Session 3 (16:30-18:00 JST) Decay and Mud in Asian Philosophies (Moderated by Laïna Droz)

- Roundtable with **Kristien Hens**, **Franlu Vulliermet**, **Thiri May Aye** and **Felipe Cuervo**.

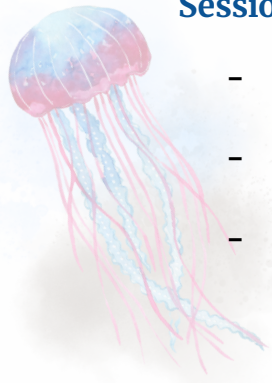
Session 4 (19:00-20:30) Relationality (Moderated by Felipe Cuervo)

- **PRIYA GUPTA**, Relational Resonance: Reimagining Animal Ethics Through Asian Philosophical Frameworks
- **Vandana Sharma Diya**, Beyond Boundaries: Dependent Origination, Ecological Holism, and the Dissolution of Human–Nature Dualism in Buddhist Philosophy
- **Ramapuram Samuel Vijay Sukumar Babu**, Non-Interventionist Ecologies: Masanobu Fukuoka, Śūnyatā, and Comparative Environmental Thought in Japan and India



Day 2 November 6, Friday (13:00 – 20:00 JST)

Session 5 (13:00– 14:30 JST) Mud and Soil (Moderated by Phyo Susan)

- 
- **Sam Ben-Meir**, Muddy Ontologies: Interanimality and the Threatened Worlds of the Sundarbans
 - **Nisha Daga**, Invisible Lives, Visible Ethics: Jain Ontology and the Moral Significance of Soil and Water Microbial Communities
 - **KABERI DATTA**, Whose mud? Rights and responsibilities in the fluid ecological world of the Sundarbans

Session 6 (15:00–16:30 JST) Memories, Ocean and Islands (Moderated by Dipanwita Pal)

- **Touhida Sultana**, Muddy Memories: Memory Landscape, Bon Bibi, and Tidal Relationality and Environmental Philosophy in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide
- **Christine Carmela R. RAMOS**, Currents of Memory: Reflections on a Father's Mindoro Hometown
- **Mario Valori**, Peacekeepers on Warships: Femininity and Maritime Security in High School Fleet

Session 7 (17:30–18:30 JST) Justice and Corals (Moderated by Thiri May Aye)

- **Hilal ARSLAN**, When Ice Becomes Mud: Anticipatory Justice and Unequal Cryospheric Disasters
- **Anneliese HARDMAN**, Corals and Culture: How Changing Culture and Coral Populations in Cambodia are Linked

Session 8 (18:45–20:00 JST) Discussion and Concluding remarks

- Summary of the diverse discussions of this symposium
- Open discussion about possible collaborations and next steps.





Booklet of Abstracts – NAEP 2026

Individual Papers

● **Mingxuan Liang**, Ocean after the Ocean: Shells, Memory, and the Making of Place in Beihai

What happens to the ocean after shells leave the sea? This paper explores this question through shell carving in Beihai, a coastal city in southern China where shell carving has become an important form of local intangible cultural heritage. Rather than treating shells simply as raw materials or shell carving as a representation of the sea, I ask how marine materials continue to participate in terrestrial practices, memories, and senses of place.

The paper examines three interconnected questions: How does the materiality of shells transform relationships between the ocean and life on land? How have shell-carved objects participated in domestic and local memories of Beihai? And how does contemporary heritage-making reshape the relationship between shell carving, oceanic identity, and place? Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Beihai, including participant observation and interviews with artisans, heritage practitioners, museum staff, and other local actors, the study also follows the changing social lives of shell objects from craft materials to household decorations, museum objects, and heritage commodities.

The paper proposes that shell carving reveals the ocean not as a bounded space ending at the shoreline, but as a continuing material and cultural presence that travels through shells, craft practices, memories, and institutions. By following these transformations, I explore how the boundaries between ocean and land, nature and culture, and material and memory are continually made and remade.

● **Danang Aditya NIZAR and LY Quoc Dang**, Displacement Before Movement: Living Between Home and Relocation in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta

Riverbank erosion is often understood as a trigger for mobility, yet for many communities environmental change also produces prolonged experiences of remaining in place. This paper examines the case of residents living along deteriorating river dykes in An Thạnh Commune, a riverine island in Viet Nam's





Mekong Delta, where land and water continuously reshape the boundaries of everyday life. Although severe erosion has made continued residence increasingly untenable and residents have been identified for government relocation, implementation has stalled because recent land policy requires household financial contributions that many cannot afford. The result is a condition of waiting, where residents live between home and anticipated relocation.

Bringing together anthropological understandings of ‘displacement in place’ and ‘displacement as condition’ with scholarship on the governance of internal displacement, the paper explores displacement as an ongoing process rather than simply physical movement. Drawing on visual ethnography using photovoice, participant-generated photography, semi-structured interviews, and policy analysis, the study examines how environmental transformation reshapes people’s relationships with place, home, and future aspirations before relocation occurs. Residents describe prolonged uncertainty, diminishing investment in homes and livelihoods, and emotional and material loss as riverbanks continue to erode while relocation remains out of reach.

By examining displacement through the fluid materialities and temporalities of a changing riverine island, the paper argues that environmental transformation unsettles not only landscapes but also the categories through which mobility is recognised and governed. It invites a processual understanding of displacement that foregrounds lived experience, waiting, and the shifting boundaries between staying and moving.

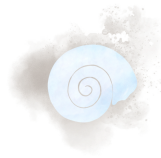
• **Jyoti,** Muddy Memories: Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Environmental Justice, and Living Landscapes in Bastar

Environmental philosophy often challenges fixed boundaries between humans, nature, and culture. Drawing from Indigenous communities in Bastar, Central India, this presentation explores how ecological knowledge emerges through lived relationships with forests, rivers, soil, and seasonal cycles. While Bastar is geographically distant from oceans and islands, its Indigenous worldviews resonate strongly with the symposium’s theme of fluidity, interconnectedness, and transformation.

The presentation examines how landscapes are understood not merely as resources but as living entities that carry memory, identity, and responsibility. Indigenous knowledge systems in Bastar recognize continuous exchanges between land, water, humans, and non-human beings, offering alternatives to dominant approaches that separate nature from society. Through examples from community narratives, oral traditions, and environmental practices, I explore how ecological wisdom is transmitted across generations and adapted in response to changing environmental and social realities.

Particular attention is given to questions of environmental justice, displacement, and the preservation of cultural memory amid development





pressures and climate uncertainty. The concept of "mud" serves as a philosophical metaphor for spaces where boundaries blur and multiple worlds meet places of encounter, negotiation, and resilience.

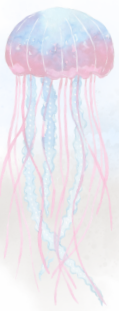
By bringing perspectives from Indigenous communities in central India into dialogue with broader Asian environmental philosophy, this presentation highlights the importance of local knowledge systems in imagining more just, relational, and sustainable futures.

●**PRIYA GUPTA**, Relational Resonance: Reimagining Animal Ethics Through Asian Philosophical Frameworks

Western animal ethics often relies on rigid frameworks like animal rights or utilitarianism. While useful, these models view animals as isolated individuals, separating them from the ecosystems they belong to. As the Zhuangzi reminds us, "Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me." This paper takes this classical insight seriously, proposing an alternative animal ethics rooted in Asian philosophy. By combining the Buddhist doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination) with the Daoist concept of *ziran* (spontaneity), it challenges the sharp divide between humans, animals, and nature. The paper argues that animals are not just independent creatures with rights, but are deeply interconnected parts of a shared, dynamic world. The Buddhist rejection of a permanent, isolated self (*svabhāva*) creates the relational framework that allows the Daoist reality of natural, unforced freedom to flourish. Shifting our focus from individual mental capacities to radical interdependence dissolves the barrier between animal protection and environmental preservation. Ultimately, this paper presents a relational ethics based on cosmic empathy. In this view, protecting non-human life is not an abstract duty, but an essential requirement for the harmony of the entire ecosystem.

●**Vandana Sharma Diya**, Beyond Boundaries: Dependent Origination, Ecological Holism, and the Dissolution of Human–Nature Dualism in Buddhist Philosophy

The accelerating ecological crisis has revealed the philosophical inadequacy of conceptual frameworks predicated upon rigid distinctions between humanity and nature, subject and object, or culture and environment. Such artificial delimitations have legitimized anthropocentric modes of knowing that fragment the continuity of life and reduce the natural world to an object of instrumental control. This paper argues that Buddhist philosophy offers a radically relational ontology that dissolves these conceptual boundaries through the doctrines of *Pratītyasamutpāda* (Dependent Origination), *Anātman* (Non-self), and *Śūnyatā* (Emptiness). Rather than understanding existence as an assemblage of discrete substances, Buddhist





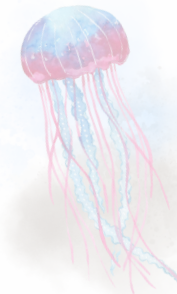
thought conceives reality as an interdependent process in which beings, ecosystems, and environments arise only through reciprocal conditions. The distinction between the human and the non-human is therefore epistemically constructed rather than ontologically fundamental.

Drawing primarily upon the Pāli Nikāyas, the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna, and the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, this study reconstructs a Buddhist philosophy of ecological holism grounded in first-order textual sources. The celebrated formulation, *imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti* (“When this exists, that comes to be”), establishes a relational metaphysics in which no phenomenon possesses autonomous existence, thereby undermining essentialist divisions between organism and environment, self and other, or land and sea. The doctrine of Anātman further destabilizes anthropocentric exceptionalism by denying any permanent, independent self that could legitimately claim ontological privilege over other forms of life. Nāgārjuna’s analysis of emptiness extends this critique by demonstrating that all conceptual boundaries are conventionally designated and devoid of intrinsic essence, thereby exposing the philosophical contingency of human-centred classifications that structure modern ecological exploitation. The paper further argues that Buddhist holism should not be conflated with animism or substance monism. Instead, it advances a dynamic process ontology in which relationality itself constitutes reality. Such an understanding resonates with contemporary ecological systems theory while avoiding both reductionism and metaphysical essentialism. Through the image of Indra’s Net in the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, Buddhist philosophy portrays the cosmos as an infinitely interconnected network in which every phenomenon reflects and conditions every other, anticipating contemporary notions of ecological complexity and distributed agency. Within this framework, environmental degradation emerges not merely from technological excess but from *avidyā* (ignorance), which reifies artificial boundaries between humanity and the living world. Ecological responsibility therefore begins with epistemic transformation rather than regulatory intervention alone.

By bringing Buddhist relational ontology into dialogue with current debates concerning natural boundaries, ecological holism, and more-than-human philosophies, this paper demonstrates that Buddhist thought provides a philosophically rigorous alternative to both anthropocentric and biocentric paradigms. Rather than replacing one centre with another, it proposes an ontology of radical interdependence in which rivers, forests, coastlines, oceans, animals, and human communities participate in a continuously co-arising reality. The study thus contributes an Asian philosophical perspective to contemporary environmental humanities by showing that the dissolution of conceptual boundaries is not merely an ethical aspiration but the necessary consequence of understanding the conditioned nature of existence itself.



•**Ramapuram Samuel Vijay Sukumar Babu**, Non-Interventionist Ecologies: Masanobu Fukuoka, Śūnyatā, and Comparative Environmental Thought in Japan and India



This paper discusses Masanobu Fukuoka's (1913–2008) concept of natural farming and places his "do-nothing" approach in the context of Japanese and Indian environmental theory. Fukuoka's rejection of industrial agricultural control is seen as part of an East Asian ecological mindset that values little interference and respect for natural processes. His intellectual engagements in India provide an important context for investigating the global reception and reinterpretation of his ideas within agrarian and ecological movements. The study finds similarities between Fukuoka's ecological minimalism and Indian philosophical traditions, including Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts of śūnyatā (emptiness), anabhisamkāra (non-fabrication), sahaja (spontaneous naturalness), and prakṛti (self-ordering nature). These are viewed as non-equivalent but structurally similar frameworks that challenge anthropocentric control over ecological systems. The notion of ahimsā (non-violence) is viewed as an ecological ethic that extends moral constraint to non-human existence. The study is theoretically based on Arne Naess' Deep Ecology and posthumanist environmental philosophy, with a focus on relational ontology and the decentering of human agency. It employs comparative philosophical analysis and interpretive historical hermeneutics, with references to Fukuoka's writings, Indian Buddhist and Sanskrit philosophical sources, and secondary literature on environmental movements. The research concludes that both Fukuoka's natural farming and Indian non-dualist ecological traditions articulate convergent critiques of industrial modernity, providing a shared but pluralistic ethics of non-interference in human-nature relations as part of a larger Asian ecological philosophy.

•**Sam Ben-Meir**, Muddy Ontologies: Interanimality and the Threatened Worlds of the Sundarbans

Mud troubles boundaries. Neither simply land nor water, solid nor liquid, it is a materiality of mixture, transformation, and passage. Drawing on my book, *Ethical Interanimality: Towards a Relational Philosophy of Nature*, this paper argues that the environmental crisis demands more than an environmental ethics; it requires a different philosophy of nature. I develop this argument through the Sundarbans, the vast mangrove delta spanning India and Bangladesh, where shifting relations among water, sediment, mangroves, human communities, and nonhuman animals continually unsettle distinctions between land and sea, organism and environment, nature and culture. Drawing on ecological studies of the delta's changing hydrology and biodiversity, together with ethnographic research on human livelihoods and multispecies encounters, I examine the Sundarbans as a multispecies world increasingly threatened by interacting climatic and



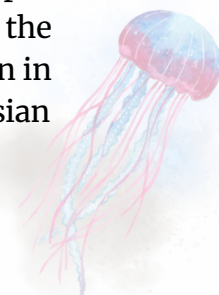
anthropogenic pressures. These pressures reveal that ecological destruction does not simply eliminate individual organisms or resources; it transforms the relations through which a living world constitutes and sustains itself.

Philosophically, I turn to Goethe, Schelling, Jakob von Uexküll, and Merleau-Ponty to understand nature not as an assemblage of finished things but as an ongoing process of formation and transformation. Uexküll's concept of the *Umwelt* is especially important: living beings inhabit meaningful perceptual worlds that overlap, encounter, and disturb one another.

The Sundarbans makes this interdependence unusually tangible. Human livelihoods, mangrove forests, tidal waters, sediment, fish, and tigers participate in overlapping worlds whose boundaries are continually made and remade. I call the ethical dimension of this condition interanimality. Ethics begins not with autonomous subjects confronting an external nature, but with living beings already implicated in one another's worlds. The threatened Sundarbans thus becomes both material condition and philosophical provocation, inviting a movement from substance to process, isolation to relation, and mastery over nature toward participation within a vulnerable living world.

● **Nisha Daga**, *Invisible Lives, Visible Ethics: Jain Ontology and the Moral Significance of Soil and Water Microbial Communities*

Contemporary environmental philosophy increasingly recognizes that ecological integrity depends upon microbial communities inhabiting soil and water, yet prevailing ethical frameworks continue to privilege visible organisms and sentient life as the primary loci of moral concern. This paper argues that Jain ontology offers a distinctive philosophical framework for addressing this limitation by extending ethical consideration to subtle and imperceptible forms of life without collapsing biological and metaphysical categories. Rather than treating microorganisms as direct counterparts of Jain earth-bodied (*pṛthvīkāya*) or water-bodied (*apkāya*) beings, the paper develops a conceptual dialogue between Jain classifications of living beings and contemporary microbial ecology to illuminate a shared commitment to the ecological significance of invisible life. It contends that the Jain conception of *jīva*, together with the ethical imperatives of *ahiṃsā* and epistemic humility embedded in *anekāntavāda*, reorients environmental ethics from an organism-centered model toward an ontology of pervasive interdependence and moral attentiveness. This shift does not claim that Jain philosophy anticipates modern microbiology; rather, it demonstrates that Jain metaphysics provides conceptual resources for interpreting the ethical implications of scientific knowledge about microbial ecologies. By placing Jain philosophy in conversation with contemporary environmental thought, the paper advances a non-anthropocentric account of ecological responsibility in which the moral significance of life is not determined by perceptibility but by participation in interconnected ecological processes. In doing so, it contributes an original Asian



philosophical perspective to current debates on environmental ethics and the more-than-human world.

● **KABERI DATTA**, Whose mud? Rights and responsibilities in the fluid ecological world of the Sundarbans

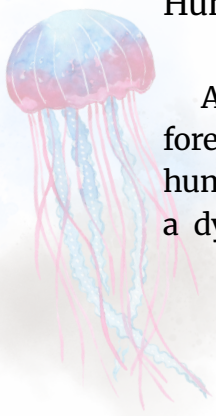
The Sundarbans is a delta landscape in which the boundaries between land and water, human and non-human, and resource and habitat are continually shifting. Its mud is not merely inert matter: it is produced, transported and transformed through the interactions of rivers, tides, sediment deposition and erosion, rich mangrove community, microorganisms, animals and human communities. Yet this fluidity raises a fundamental ethical question: whose mud is it?

This paper explores the Sundarbans through the intertwined concept of ecological rights and responsibilities. If ecological rights imply corresponding responsibilities, then who has the right to the mud of the Sundarbans and therefore who consequently bears responsibility for restoring and sustaining the ecological processes that create and maintain it? If human communities have rights to access ecological resources to sustain livelihoods, what responsibilities accompany those rights? Conversely, if the mangroves possess value beyond their usefulness to humans, what category of corresponding responsibilities should their continued existence and ecological functioning generate for human societies?

The paper proposes that rights and responsibilities are relational and reciprocal rather than independent claims. In the Sundarbans, however, responsibility cannot easily be assigned to a single actor because ecological processes cross administrative, social and species boundaries. The paper therefore explores the Sundarbans as an integrated socio-ecological system, in which rights and responsibilities form a reciprocal feedback relationship with ecological integrity and human wellbeing. The paper asks whether such an integrated framework can offer a more appropriate ethical basis for negotiating competing claims over the Sundarbans than approaches based primarily on ownership, fixed boundaries and the separation of human interests from ecological processes.

● **Touhida Sultana**, Muddy Memories: Memory Landscape, Bon Bibi, and Tidal Relationality and Environmental Philosophy in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) philosophizes mud, islands, oceans, forests, and rivers as situated relational worlds and dynamic agents shaping human and non-human lives. This article explores that the Sundarbans constitute a dynamic living assemblage wherein humans, mud, islands, ocean, mangrove



forests, rivers, the tide, dolphins, tigers, and the indigenous Bon Bibi tradition co-constitute realms of meaning and endurance. It exhibits the Sundarbans as a dynamic memory landscape where mud, islands, waterways, human communities, and more-than-human life are reformed by tides constantly. It claims that Ghosh converts the archipelago into an environmental archive in which memories are not simply well-preserved in anthropological narratives but are substantially inserted in watercourses, forests of mangroves, mudflats, wildlife, and ever-changing islands. The novel foregrounds native environmental knowledge as a form of alive environmental memory. The folklore Bon Bibi is a corporeal mnemonic system—carrying moral knowledge of cohabitation, helplessness, and the parameters of human rights over the nonhuman world. This research paper studies how Ghosh agitates traditional distinctions between history and ecology, nature and culture, and human memory and physical landscape. The Sundarbans turn into a “memory landscape” in which stories, species, and places join in recalling ecological violence and exchanging belonging. It also establishes how fictitious depictions of tidal environments can improve other ecological philosophies built in indigenous knowledge, relationality, and multi-species survival, suggesting critical outlooks on environmental justice and the uncertain futures of Asian coastal communities facing climate change.



● **Christine Carmela R. RAMOS**, *Currents of Memory: Reflections on a Father's Mindoro Hometown*

This story examines grief, family ties, and the loss of nature in San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro and was inspired by Father's Day. It alternates between the difficult reality of running an 18-hectare estate after my father passed away during the pandemic and memories of happy childhood summers—wading in the sea, eating halo-halo, and feeling incredibly loved. In the end, a failed sea wall project in a nearby town puts families at risk of flooding, bringing together the warmth of the past and the uncertainty of today. What started as a personal homage becomes a statement about how vulnerable our society has grown.

A few lines from Carlos A. Angeles' poem "Gabu" are used in the narrative as literary anchors to enhance this contemplation. The ecological and emotional facets of coastal life and memory are framed by the poem's imagery of the restless sea, erosion, and the passage of time. This disturbance reverberates throughout the archipelago, where old seagrass beds and thriving coral reefs perish, and the sea that once characterized our summers is now a global route of displacement for Overseas Foreign Workers.

Anecdotes and the sea are inevitably a part of the same ecological and social tide rather than existing independently. The piece also considers how situated memory and embodied listening create an ecopoetic sensibility, where storytelling becomes a moral way to care for delicate, changing coastal environments.



●**Mario Valori**, *Peacekeepers on Warships: Femininity and Maritime Security in High School Fleet*



High School Fleet (Haifuri), a multimedia franchise comprising an anime series, OVAs, a film, and manga, imagines an alternate maritime society produced by environmental transformation: the large-scale submergence of territory has transformed Japan's relation to the sea. Its alternate history traces this transformation to the intensification of resource extraction after the Russo-Japanese War; the subsequent proliferation of marine cities and shipping routes, in turn, generates new institutions devoted to maritime safety. Among these, the all-female Blue Mermaids occupy an especially paradoxical position. They appear as peacekeepers, and as figures of professional aspiration for girls, while operating vessels materially and symbolically descended from warships. This paper examines that paradox as a form of feminised demilitarisation. Naval power is not abolished but reclassified – through gender, education, and the vocabulary of protection. Girls acquire technical authority, occupational futures, and public responsibility precisely within an infrastructure whose military genealogy remains unmistakable. Femininity functions, therefore, neither as merely decorative moe nor as the simple sign of empowerment. It becomes a cultural mechanism of recoding: the means by which armed maritime authority is rendered civic, protective, non-threatening. Placed within a world already remade by extraction, submergence, and transnational maritime institutions, this gendered recoding acquires a larger significance. Haifuri, the paper argues, offers a distinctive cultural negotiation of environmental transformation: unstable boundaries between land and sea do not produce correspondingly fluid social forms, but new structures of security, discipline, and belonging.

●**Hilal ARSLAN**, *When Ice Becomes Mud: Anticipatory Justice and Unequal Cryospheric Disasters*

On 26 August 2026, a glacier collapse in the Nepal–China border region triggered a catastrophic debris flood, causing more than 1,200 reported deaths and leaving thousands missing across Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Fifteen months earlier, the collapse of the Birch Glacier above Blatten, Switzerland, mobilized millions of tonnes of rock, ice, and water and reached the village in approximately 40 seconds, yet claimed a single life. This paper asks how cryospheric hazards generate radically unequal human consequences.

Using a comparative case-study approach, the paper examines scientific assessments, disaster-management records, and contemporaneous reporting on both events. It compares hazard monitoring, early-warning communication, evacuation capacity, infrastructure exposure, and cross-border environmental data-sharing. In Blatten, monitoring of accelerating slope and glacier movement enabled the village to be evacuated nine days before the collapse. In the Himalayan



case, many downstream residents received no actionable warning before the debris flow struck.



Drawing on environmental philosophy and disaster justice, the paper challenges the framing of glacier collapse as a purely natural disaster. When ice becomes mud, the capacity to detect danger, communicate warnings, and act before impact is unevenly distributed across material and technological infrastructures and national borders. Blatten demonstrates the life-saving potential of anticipatory governance, whereas the Himalayan losses reveal the human consequences of infrastructural and informational inequality. The paper proposes “anticipatory justice” as a framework for allocating monitoring technology, climate finance, and transboundary data access according to vulnerability rather than national wealth.

● **Anneliese HARDMAN**, Corals and Culture: How Changing Culture and Coral Populations in Cambodia are Linked

In recent history, Cambodian corals have faced swift degradation due to sedimentation, overfishing, rising sea surface temperatures, and pollutant run off from coastal development. Dramatic shifts in coral populations and resulting fish, plankton, and other marine life has elicited visual responses from contemporary Cambodian artists. Specific interventions central to this paper include Fonki's Enlightenment, Prum Ero's Sangket Sakor series, and Thang Sothea's Plankton. Together these works highlight how impacts to ocean worlds also impact above water ones. Ero's Sangket Sakor links the fates of humans and marine species by draping a red thread over underwater coral reefs. Sothea's Plankton brings these marine impacts out of the ocean through his massive sculpture of recycled trash in the shape of a coral reef. Finally, Fonki's Enlightenment expands coral lifeforms to heavenly realms by revealing the implications to Buddhist expression when coral materialities become limited. Specific questions asked include: what is the significance of diminishing coral populations to Cambodian cultural production? How are corals visually explored as connective threads between species below and above the water? Can contemporary artistic responses to negative coral impacts be read as a direct intervention into environmental issues through practices of recycling and salvage? In answer, paper research relies on close study of Jane Bennet's material vitality, interspersed scientific studies of coral populations, and inclusion of Cambodian Buddhist philosophy about corals. Key research findings learned by working with Ocean Conservation Cambodia to propagate and revitalize corals impacted by climate change, pollution, and overfishing will also be discussed.



Roundtable

- **Roundtable on Decay and Mud in Asian Philosophy (Moderated by Laïyna Droz) with Kristien Hens, Franlu Vulliermet, Thiri May Aye and Felipe Cuervo.**

Can mud be said to be alive? Mud tends to be neglected because many find it not aesthetically pleasing. Mud is hard to define and evades clear classification. In-between decay and generation, mixing organic and non-organic elements, it cannot be taken apart while remaining mud. In this roundtable, we will discuss what a philosophy of mud could become, and how mud could be an entry point into key philosophical questions. Kristien Hens will dive into the mud to meet the bacterias flourishing there. Franlu Vulliermet will bring insights on decay from Kamo no Chōmei and Yoshida Kenkō. Thiri May Aye will relay stories and songs from muddy riverbanks in Myanmar. And Felipe Cuervo will approach mud from animistic lenses.

