Article

Landscape and Divinity Spoken in the Same Breath

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Abstract: From where can we draw inspiration to cultivate an intimate sensibility into the spiritual nature of landscape, the foundation for designing gardens for meditation and healing? Through various spiritual lenses, this inquiry penetrates fundamental grounds for our subtle relationship with landscape. Beginning with excerpts of a private audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Middlebury College, at which I present my proposed plans and designs for Milarepa Center in Barnet, Vermont, this inquiry looks into the profound links between spiritual inquiry and the practice of designing gardens, making design of landscape integral to a spiritual path, and the profound relationship between Landscape and Divinity. It is presented in three parts: (1) spiritual inspiration; (2) setting terms on the table; and (3) expressions of sacred landscape.

Keywords: sacred landscape; spirituality; divinity; Buddha-nature; awakening

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1. Spiritual Inspiration

In September 1984, members of Milarepa Buddhist Meditation Center were invited to a private audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Middlebury College, Vermont. The purpose of the audience was to allow me to present my proposed plans and designs for buildings and gardens of the meditation centre's 270 acres of meadows and woodlands overlooking the broad, sweeping valley of the Connecticut River in Barnet, Vermont. The project would provide facilities to accommodate ways of spiritual life that developed in the East for over 2500 years, translated into a design vocabulary conducive to teaching, meditation and retreat on Mahayana Buddhist practices in North America, as guided by the teachers of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.

Combining my background in architecture, environmental analysis, landscape architecture with philosophy and practices of Tibetan Buddhism and its relationship with landscape, I based the design on six particular threads of investigation:

One: Fundamentals in the philosophy, rituals and practice of Tibetan Buddhism during migration from India to other lands, particularly China, Japan, Southeast Asia and Tibet in the east and here in the west.

Two: Signs and symbols adapted to mediate between spirituality and design of physical form and space. A means to find linkages between the perceived and the felt landscape, subtle relationships akin to Jung's "objects of the known world hinting something unknown; the known expressing life and sense of the inexpressible" (Jung 1964).

Three: Historical evolution of sacred landscapes, monasteries and meditation gardens, and the transmission of design techniques and adaptations where these artistic expressions developed. A means to find landscape and architecture as expressions of spiritual practice, culture and philosophical view, indispensable to design in accord with any school of thought.

Four: Environmental analysis practices used in standard exoteric procedures and esoteric geomantic tools, including *feng-shui* siting techniques and identification of earth energies, to properly locate buildings and gardens. This is a means to find the ability of landscape to support or repel spiritual activities and functions, and to enable synchronicity between the subtle anatomy of body and mind with the subtle fabric of the earth.

Five: Cultivation of an intimately intuitive manner in my presence with the operations of nature, a means to attend to the balance and harmony attuned to characteristics and moods of land, water, sky, sun, moon and stars in their continual dynamic steady state of equilibrium in relationship with everyday life.

Six: Intimate explorations through meditations on kindness, clarity and insight, with nature, space and beauty as expressions of Divinity. This is a means to find narratives and rituals of landscape that reinforce one's place on the earth, and respect for natural and spiritual systems from which they grow. Silence—and the unbearable lightness of space.

During my presentation, His Holiness appeared keen at hearing about this comprehensive approach to the design of a Buddhist meditation centre in the west. He knowingly commented on particular design details such as the 'many mandalas in the plan'. He appreciated that my proposal did not attempt to place an out-of-context Tibetan temple on a Vermont farm landscape, referring to a previous visit to a Buddhist meditation centre in Europe that had done just that, much to His Holiness' chagrin. However, near the end of my carefully prepared presentation, His Holiness succinctly asked me:

"What is the basis for this design? From where does it come? What is its source?"

I was floored. Regardless of my seemingly extensive research of precedents, references, environment, energies and expressions of Buddhism in architecture and landscape, I was frighteningly aware I had no answer to his seemingly simple question of a depth I was unable to penetrate. I was unable to offer more than sophomoric sophistry. Without pressing, he kindly accepted my response and gave the centre his approval and blessings (Winters 2014, pp. 26–27).

Following the audience, my dissatisfaction with my presentation finale refused to abate. I would continue offering insufficient hindsight answers. Between digging and dishwashing, my head reverberated with His Holiness' questions, forcing me to realize that were I to continue my long-range intent as a landscape architect to design spiritual centres and gardens for meditation and healing, I would require firm physical, mental, emotional and spiritual foundation. One akin to Psalm 84:

"God, I love your home. Beautiful, sublime; an unchained melody. I ache wishing to live with you. Those who do are undeniably giddy with delight, continually giving thanks to you. And a Whisper replies, 'Why not design a home for us?' 'How do I go about it?' I ask. 'That's what this inquiry is about', whispers the whisper".¹

Through my agonizing, I realized His Holiness had pointed to the fundamental grounding for my life's work—the profound link between spiritual inquiry and the practice of designing gardens, making design of landscape integral to a spiritual path—directing me to seek the tools I would need to deliberate with more clarity on his question. Now, where to begin?

While classical texts on garden-making, such as the CE 11th century Japanese text *Sakuteiki*, and the *Sansui narabi ni yagyo no zu* (trans. *Illustrations for Designing Mountain, Water and Hillside Field Landscapes*) (Slawson 1987), say study works of accomplished garden masters, I would particularly be drawn to those also distinguished as spiritual teachers. Why? (1) To corroborate His Holiness' inference linking design of landscape integral with spiritual paths. (2) To identify historically significant precedence of temple and monastic landscapes designed for spiritual inquiry as expressions of spiritual teachings and paths themselves. (3) To inquire into the basis upon which natural landscapes of lands, waters and skies are considered expressions of the body, speech and mind of Divinity; for Buddhists, landscape as Buddhas themselves.

As a Buddhist, I would be led to Muso Soseki, 14th century Abbot and designer of Kyoto's first Zen gardens, the naturalist landscapes of Saiho-ji and Tenryu-ji. Although we generally associate Zen Buddhism with the *kare-sansui*—the dry landscapes of stone and gravel and sometimes plants (which I call the 'Intensely Disciplined, Chop Wood, Carry Water Gardens'), these first Japanese Zen Buddhist naturalist gardens actually were

woodland gardens inspired by Taoist views highlighting the spiritual values of establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with natural systems. As such, Muso Soseki's Taoist-based approach: to assist landscape to do what it might have done for itself under more favourable circumstances.

At the south base of Mt. Arashiyama, Kyoto's most poetically revered and relished mountain, Muso Soseki designed Saiho-ji so as to speak the language of the stones that compose Mt. Arashiyama. By setting stones in the garden, he had Saiho-ji tell the story of the mountain's beauty, its arising, abiding and dissolution. By reconfiguring waters running through the garden, he had Saiho-ji speak in the language of the river, its flow down the mountain, alongside the temple, through the narrow valley. By re-formulating the waters of Saiho-ji, he designed a garden that told the story of the river's movement and rest.

Muso Soseki designed Saiho-ji as a composition produced by nature itself. Its intricate weaving of solidity, wetness, heat, cold, atmosphere and space over time became the focus of a walking meditation through the woods, enabling adherents to better know themselves; to teach that the balance and harmony revealed most dramatically in nature—the forms that nature assumed, processes that shaped them and the period of time it took to produce, abide and dissolve—to abide deeply within each individual.

His devotion of spiritual energy to the design of Saiho-ji and Tenryu-ji, and the lessons he learned through this work, provided me with continual inspiration from which I would derive support throughout my professional and spiritual life. He would say to those of other persuasions who mocked him for all the time he spent designing the garden and not on the meditation cushion:

“There are people for whom landscape sustains their search for truth—this is truly noble, for there is no distinction between love of landscape and a search for truth. These people will see the great earth of mountains, rivers, trees and stones in their changing appearances through the four seasons—as means to search for truth in their making a garden”.²

As a Buddhist, I would be led to spiritual texts such as the *Mahavastu* of the Mahasanghikas, *Lalitavistara* (The Life of the Buddha), *Uttaratantra* of Maitreya (Buddha-nature), *Prajna-paramita Sutra* (Perfection of Wisdom Sutra) and *Vimalakirti Sutras*—all profoundly connected qualities of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with landscape, thus guiding me to see landscape as much part of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as their own bodies and minds.

I would hear the Japanese Esoteric Shingon Buddhism of Kobo Daishi:

“The earth element of the Buddha's body is the earth element of earth and the entire universe; likewise, the water, fire, and wind elements of the Buddha's body are the same elements of earth and the entire universe.” (Kukai 1972, p. 87; Snodgrass 1985, pp. 372–73).

And I would hear the Soto Zen Buddhism of Eihei Dogen, his Sutra of Mountains and Waters and Voices of River Valley and Form of Mountain Sutra:

“Mountains and rivers right now are the emerging presence of the ancient Great Teachers”.

“The voices of the river-valley are the Buddha's wide and long tongue,

The form of the mountains is nothing other than his pure body” (Dogen 1994, n.p).

Taken together, I would be exposed to landscape as a physical expression of the spiritual teachings; the beauty of its artistry the expression of Divinity. Accordingly, not only would landscape be a source of inspiration, the teachings would reveal spiritual paths showing how awakened teachers learned to do what they did. Going more deeply to the source of these designs would teach me the means to express landscape as spiritual practice, calling it ‘the truth of design’.

What kind of landscape? Special places to which we travel on pilgrimage. Engaging hardship, alighting with possibility, receiving blessings of landscapes that, with their

magical and mysterious qualities, captivate and move us to increased awareness—places energizing feelings and thoughts attending the spiritual dimensions of life.

As a Buddhist seeking Buddhist precedence for design of landscape, I would walk in the steps of the Buddha, seeking its earliest evidence. Having decided that six years of austere, uncompromised living—that is, subsisting on one grain each of jujube, sesame and rice a day—was not a reasonable approach to enlightenment. Prince Siddhartha Gautama accepted the care of others, regained his health, shed his emaciated appearance and set out for the crest of Pragbodhi Mountain. There he decided to seek enlightenment. Descending the mountain ridge, he discovered a cave halfway down, sat in the dark facing the cave opening to the west, and said to himself: “If I’m to cultivate awakening, let there be some spiritual manifestation”.

Surprise, surprise—skies darkened, clouds drizzled, earth shook and the whisper within whispered: “This is not the place where any Buddha of past, present or future cultivate awakening”. I asked, “What’s wrong?” Desolate and barren of vegetation, rocks thrust precipitously into the air, stones and boulders tumbled down the mountain and the cave faced the setting, not the rising, sun.

To 5th century Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, Pragbodhi had ‘bad’ *feng-shui*. In the awakening allegory, this was the refutation of landscape considered unsuitable for spiritual awakening. Accordingly, Siddhartha left the cave, descended the mountain and walked along the Nairanjana River towards the grove of trees circumscribing Bodhgaya and the *Diamond Throne*.

Lifetimes before, Siddhartha came across this landscape and was struck by its beauty and peaceful setting. He took pleasure in Nairanjana River’s pure waters, flowing gently between grassy banks. With glimpses into neighboring hamlets, sited neither too far nor too near the river, he was delighted by the seclusion and remote distance of the verdant woods from turmoil. Seeing all this, his mind became exceedingly calm—certainly a place to cultivate awakening. In the awakening allegory, this was the recipe for landscape considered most suitable for spiritual awakening; the primordial expression of the Buddhist sacred landscape.

Finding the *Diamond Throne* at the base of the Bodhi Tree, he asked: “Now, on which side under the Tree to sit?” In a clockwise direction he stopped at the north, south and west and felt the earth tremble—certainly not directions at which to sit. On the east side, all remained still. He circled the Tree three times in honour of previous Buddhas, spread *kusa* grass at the base and, facing the east and the long vista through the Sal trees to the glistening beach of the crystal river with the Bodhi Tree at his back, slowly sat upon the firm indestructible *Diamond Throne*, where all Buddhas cultivate awakening. *Landscape as spiritual teaching* (Barua 1975; Poppe 1967).

As a Buddhist seeking Buddhist precedence for design of landscape, I would be drawn to the Buddha’s first monastic residence, the Veluvana in the city of Rajgir. What other landscape could serve more effectively as an expression of his fundamental teachings on impermanence than the Bamboo Forest, whose growth and dying changed the character of landscape moment by moment? *Landscape as spiritual teaching*.

As a Buddhist seeking Buddhist precedence for design of landscape, I would be drawn to a landscape of unimaginable, dreamlike topography, Vulture’s Peak above the city of Rajgir. In what other terrain than a landscape of distinctly sharp, vertically bedded quartzite rocks shooting almost vertically into the sky could the Buddha have taught the assembly of disciples the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*? To essentially refute everything he had previously taught—that ordinary appearances are like illusions, their apparent nature is to be questioned, appearing to exist inherently, whereas they do not. *Landscape as spiritual teaching*.

As a Buddhist seeking Buddhist precedence for design of landscape, I would be drawn to the Jetavana Monastery at Sravasti, where he had taught all teachings of the Foundation, Perfection and Vajrayana Vehicles. On occasion, he had transformed the lands, waters and skies into a landscape of garlands of jeweled trees and radiant flowers, rivers of fragrant

waters, cloud-palaces of music and song and flower ornaments pervading all of space. The problem was, his disciples could not see it; they had not cultivated the virtues. Exactly the point, the Buddha profoundly pointed out—how could anyone and their landscape be separate entities? There'd be many layers of reasoning. *Landscape as spiritual teaching* (Winters 1987).

Spiritual geography painted as physical geography, I would be drawn to Mount Kailas in Western Tibet, the physical embodiment of Mt. Meru, centre of cosmology for one billion Buddhists, Hindus, Bon-po and Jain. Core of the Buddhist mandala landscape purified of all obstacles and hindrances, where disciples would witness appearance of the Buddhist awakened mind as luminosity and knowing in tantric embrace, emblem of the Two Truths of ultimate and relative nature of all things and thoughts, their non-inherence and dependent-arising.

Surrounding the centre of cosmology, the composition of twenty-four sacred sites of the mandala—originally of Hindu persuasion, subsequently converted into that of the Buddhist—each of the twenty-four landscapes attributed to a specific body part of divinity. Spiritual geography painted as physical geography, twenty-four body parts of Heruka and Vajravarahi, embodiment of wisdom in tantric embrace, materialized as twenty-four sacred Buddhist landscapes—mountains, rivers, fire and wind as divinity, tantric couple and spiritual landscape as one, each landscapes a teaching to orient adherents both dwelling here and on pilgrimage.

In Vajrayana Buddhist practice, having overcome physical, mental, emotional and spiritual obstacles; having cultivated equanimity, compassion and loving kindness for all animate and inanimate things and beings; having realized the ultimate and relative truths of Buddhist philosophy—harnessing the Spark of Awakening—an adherent experiences fruits of practice, visualizing themselves as a Bodhisattva, centre of a purified spiritual landscape. *Landscape as spiritual teaching*.

In the 8th century, priests of the Hachiman sect of Japanese Buddhism transformed the Kunasaki Peninsula of Kyushu Island into the physical expression of the *Lotus Sutra*. On the deeply dissected twin volcanic peaks of the circular-shaped peninsula, mountain ascetics visualized the eight major valleys as eight scrolls of the scripture. They constructed twenty-eight temples for the twenty-eight chapters organized according to sutra rituals and 69,380 Buddhist statues for each character of the Chinese version of the sutra. Living on the mountain was to abide in the *Lotus Sutra*—walking the mountain paths became the essence of the text. *Landscape as spiritual teaching* (Grapard 1986, pp. 21–50).

As a Buddhist seeking non-Buddhist precedence for design of spiritual landscape, I would be drawn to streams of Hesiod's 8th century BCE Greek *Theogony*, citing parentage of the Sea:

“Now vast Okéanos surrounded the earth.

Now vast Okéanos was deemed hospitable for habitation.

Now vast Okéanos united with Tethys

Their consummation was cause for

all facets of life & death to nurture & nourish—

all offspring of flux & motion

all immortals & mortals—

Three-thousand slender-ankled daughters who roamed & hunted the earth

& depths of waters alike—the many tumbling & rushing rivers

& seas & springs & deep wells.

All offspring of Okéanos & Tethys

the extent & expanse of their numbers & habitats so difficult for mortals

to recite their sum & the total of their names”.³

As a Buddhist seeking non-Buddhist precedence for design of spiritual landscape, I would be drawn to Plato's *Timaeus*:

"Why would Creation make this world of generation? Creation was Good, and free from jealousy and fear of being overtaken, as father would be by the son. Creation could make all things like itself, that is, the copy like the original. All phenomena, all landscape, as far as possible, could be entirely good without negativity. This was the truth of the inspiration for the origin of the world. So, Creation rejoiced at what the Operations of Nature had produced as landscape, for the thoughts and revolutions of the universe were the same naturally akin to the divine principle within each animate and non-animate thing. That inspired the Goddess to select and settle that spot of earth—embodiment of herself—most likely to produce others like herself".⁴

And I would be drawn to Dionysius Areopagite, 6th century CE Christian mystic and Platonic student, offering the Divine Names of God—beginning with 'Goodness' and 'Beauty', signifying the Spirit of Consciousness and the Operations of Nature. The Divine Names of God as the unbound, undefinable all-encompassing spirit of consciousness in consort with Landscape—the arising, abiding and dissolution of mountains, stones, rocks, water, fire, dew, cloud, air, animal and vegetable, sun, spirit, being and non-being, their measures, orders and numeric principles—all Divine Names of God. Continuing his offering of Light, Being, Love, Ecstasy, Zeal and Nature, their unities and their differences, their identities and their opposites—all Divine Names of God.

Dionysius Areopagite further added that, of all names for Divinity, 'Goodness' is the most profound in the theocratic lexicon. The foundation and expanse of the heavens and of the earth owe their origin to the 'Good'. Likewise, Good is revered as 'Beautiful'. Beautiful is the creative cause of the world landscape, of all existence, of ecological communities and relationships of affinity and differentiation, expressed as *Eros*. Beautiful is the creative cause of arising, abiding and dissolving in cyclic time. In the same way, the creative cause of the intellect, soul, the cosmological and celestial bodies in and around the heavens and earth—the waters, skies, oceans and landscape arising, abiding and dissolving—each a creative result of Beautiful in its own manner.

"Known as Beautiful and Good, the whole of Nature moves together in rest and motion, brought into existence through Divinity" (See [Areopagite 1920](#), chp. 4).

As a Buddhist seeking non-Buddhist precedence for design of spiritual landscape, I would be drawn to Prince Regent Shotoku Taishi's Edict of 607 CE:

"We are told that our imperial ancestors, in governing the nation, bent humbly under heaven and walked softly on earth. They venerated the *kami* of heaven and earth, and established shrines on the mountains and by the rivers, whereby they were in constant touch with the power of nature. Hence the winter and summer elements (*yin* and *yang*) were kept in harmony, and their creative powers blended together. We know that heaven gives good omens as a response to the good rule of the sage king. Not only such birds and animals as the phoenix, unicorn, white pheasant and tortoise, also herbs and trees are chosen by Heaven and Earth as instruments of good omens. So, now during our reign, it would be unthinkable to neglect the veneration of the *kami* of heaven and earth" ([Kitagawa 1969](#), p. 241).

Having been declared in the year 607 CE, how much have we regressed?

As a Buddhist seeking non-Buddhist precedence for design of spiritual landscape, I would be drawn to *The Canticle of Brother Sun* of St. Francis of Assisi:

"All praise be yours, my God, through all that you are,
First, as Brother Sun, who brings the day and the light you give us.
All praise be yours, my God, through Sister Moon and Stars,
In the heavens you are, bright, and precious and fair". ([St. Francis of Assisi 1999](#), n.p).

And to Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*:

“God is Beauty, and Beauty and Good are grounded in landscape form and space”. See (Eco 1988, p. 34).

I would be drawn to William Blake’s *Vision of the Last Judgment*:

“‘What’, it will be Question’d, ‘When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?’ ‘O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty’”⁵

And to Carl Jung’s autobiography:

“At first, Nature seemed, like myself, to have been set aside by God as non-divine, although created by Him as an expression of Himself. Rather, in fact, it seems that the high mountains, rivers, lakes, trees, flowers and animals far better exemplify the essence of God than men with their ridiculous clothes, meanness, vanity and abhorrent egotism. But, as you know, my relationship with reality is not necessarily brilliant”⁶

2. Setting Terms on the Table

Setting terms on the table, let us regard *Landscape* as both vast and intimate fields of questions. Questions concerned with ‘external’ matters like: Of what are you composed? How were you formed? What geological time has it taken? How long as you evolve?⁷ ‘Internal’ matters like: Who are your ancestors? What rituals and stories keep you alive? Why do you look so familiar, a comforting personage, or the opposite as a disquieting creature? And the ‘subtle’ matters like: What drives the profound relationships among you, Gaia’s inhabitants and Divinity?

Setting terms on the table, it is difficult to simply speak of *Landscape* as mere geological phenomena composed of rock layers and masses, animate and inanimate forms, lenses of lava and water; and the spaces enclosing or enclosed by such geological structures. Setting terms on the table, let us regard Landscape as the operations of nature—the lands, waters and skies of the earth—*intimately coupled* with the spirit of consciousness of the animate and inanimate with which is intimately engaged. I hear William Blake:

“Each grain of sand Each herb & each tree
Every Stone on the Land, Mountain, hill earth & sea,
Each rock & each hill, Cloud, Meteor & Star
Each fountain & rill Are Men (and Women seen from Afar”⁸

I hear Japanese Shingon Buddhist Kobo Daishi:

“Differences exist between mind and matter (landscape), but their essential nature remains the same. Matter (landscape) is no other than mind; mind is no other than matter (landscape). Without obstruction, they are interrelated. The subject is the object; the object is the subject. The seeing is the seen, and the seen is the seeing. Nothing differentiates them” (Kukai 1972, n.p.).

And philosopher Paul Brunton:

“Unable to hold existence and the perception of existence apart, they are not two, rather indissolubly one. Experiences of mind appearing as visible things taken to be outside are admittedly existent, but the character of these things are other than commonly thought. Consequently, the internal perception and the presence of external material objects (landscape) as separate is a false analysis of sensation” (Brunton 1977, pp. 266–67).

Setting terms on the table, let us regard *Spirituality* as the noble paths of seeking, becoming aware, knowing, witnessing, engaging with and understanding the intimate relationships among oneself, Landscape and Divinity. Spirituality as boundless wonder, inquiry and reverence coupled with thoughts and actions to benefit all animate and inanimate species and things—not at the expense of others. Spirituality as the operative engagement

among searcher, the searching and object of the search—as one. Derived from Latin's *spiritus*, “the breath of life”, Spirituality as an all-embracing engagement—outer, inner and secret—of life, itself. This makes sense to me.

Setting terms on the table, I am struck by the multi-millennial search and the host of presentations across the spectrum, the multiplicity of Divinities' manifestations, attempts for coming to terms with *Divinity*, and wonder if there is anything for me to add to the mélange. As to what is Divinity, is an answer possible? An answer suggests the positing of a definable thought or thing, which by its nature, precludes that which it is not.⁹ To my mind, this obviates the undeterminable sense of Divinity. Additionally, the proclivity for definition precludes a potential ecumenism to the vast storehouse of thoughts to which I am not presently privy. By posturing with a conjured answer, do I merely offer a set of beneficent and rewarding terms by which I would proudly identify, even in meditation? For such adroit answers can be merely product of a limited mind. Perhaps I am stuck with an illogic that if I attempt to define Divinity, regardless of all that makes sense to me, I will merely be painting a limited picture of myself. So, perhaps better create some distance, invoke references to expressions and manifestations of Divinity as *questions* that, at best, allude to Divinity rather than attempt a run of sophomoric *answers* to set terms.

Among all traditions of which I have taken note, the word ‘boundless’ appears as the operative ‘nature’ of Divinity. What does ‘boundless’ mean? In the contexts presented, ‘boundless’ refers to a nature unlimited by time—owing to the non-existence of time, or by existence in all times without beginning nor end. See (Melamed 2016, p. 1). And boundless refers to a nature unlimited by dimension and distance of form and space.

I am struck by the exhaustive search to align this boundless Divinity with an *arche*, a beginning of ordered existence, Divinity as Creator. I am struck by thoughts on the evolution of the phenomenal world through the positing of ‘Creator–Creating–Created’. By Plato's ‘Being–Space–Becoming’. By Christianity's ‘Father, of God–Holy Spirit, of God–Son, of God’. By Esoteric Vajrayana Buddhism's ‘Dharmakaya–Sambhogakaya–Nirmanakaya’. By the ‘Spirit of Consciousness–Operations of Nature–Landscape’. By ‘Teacher–Teaching–Student’.

I am struck by Anaximander's *arche* of ‘apeiron’, of which one definition is presented by Aristotle as ‘boundless’—of neither beginning nor end—from which all phenomena arise, abide and dissolve. I am struck by its comparison with the Buddhists' meaning of Space (*ākāśa*)—“space-like realization so-called because just as space is the mere absence of obstructive contact . . . ” See (Hopkins 1983, p. 66). As the Buddhist *Prajnaparamita Sutra* states, “Development of perfect wisdom is like development of space (Conze 1979, p. 303),” so did Aristotle write of Anaximander's *apeiron*, of neither beginning nor end, as Divinity.

“And this they say is the divine, for it is immortal and imperishable, as Anaximander and most of the writers on nature call it”. (Guthrie 1962, p. 88).

I am struck by Plato's reference to Divinity in *Symphony 211e* as that which is eternal and changeless, removed from phenomenal space and time, thus aligning the roles of his three fundamental states of existence of *Timaeus*—‘Being’, the intelligible pattern always the same; ‘Becoming’, the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible; and ‘Space, the receptacle of all phenomena, with the *demiourgos*, or demiurge, to which he also referred as ‘God’, ‘Creator’ (*theos*) and ‘Begetter’. See (Plato 1937, pp. 28–32).

And from this, I am struck by the evolution of Augustine's thought, as a Platonic scholar, towards his Trinity of *The Father, of God—the Son, of God—the Spirit, of God*, and all creation of landscape, waters and skies with all animate and inanimate inhabitants as emanations of this Divinity of the Trinity. As Augustine wrote in *City of God*:

“How we must understand that breathing of God by which ‘the first man was made a living soul’ and by which the Lord conveyed his Spirit to His disciples when He said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Spirit’”.

“We must understand in what sense man is said to be in the image of God, and yet is dust, and to return to dust. The former is spoken of the rational soul,

which God by His breathing, or, to speak more appropriately, by His inspiration, conveyed to man". (Augustine 1948, pp. 233–35).

I am struck by the Tibetan Buddhist's Divinity as the profound state of consciousness associated with the most subtle spiritual experience, comprised of the wisdom of non-inherence and dependent-arising conjoined with metamorphic transformation through the cultivation of pure action, compassion and wisdom.

Now, if 'boundless' is the operative nature of Divinity, how could Divinity be expressed as Landscape, which most definitely has limits? And if boundless is the operative nature of Divinity, how could we, owed to our limited sense of self as not worthy of Divinity's nature, place Divinity outside ourselves, making Divinity 'other than us'? Here is where I question the other side of the coin, so to speak: to Plato's 'becoming', the phenomenal arising, abiding and dissolving of 'being'. And to Augustine's Father, of God: "By this Good have all others been created". See (Augustine 1948, pp. 152–53). And for Buddhists, 'boundlessness' as the natural condition of the mind; and landscapes' arising in dependence upon causes and conditions as the operation of 'boundlessness', an aspect of non-inherence.

In this light, as an aside, I take note that the regard for thoughts of Divinity to not exclude things or thoughts—by which a surfeit of spiritual adherents theoretically abide—does not generally align with the actual practices by which they engage: seemingly among the most complicit in the inconceivable devaluation, denudation and destruction of Divinities' works—the lands, waters and skies on which we all live and depend—at all our expense. In such spiritual darkness, how could these same adherents actively respect and engage with Landscape as direct manifestation of the Divinity to which they pay obeisance, to say nothing of valuing themselves and others as manifestation of Divinity? The prevalence of such ignoble regard seems to obviate the sense that Landscape and Divinity are spoken in the same breath. As such, I put such ignobility aside here as an aside to strive for a more profound approach to viewing the possible depth of relationship with both.¹⁰

Accordingly, setting terms on the table, can we not regard expressions and manifestations of Divinity as God; Jehovah; Tao; Manitou and Wakan Tanka? Can we not regard expressions of Divinity as the Spark of Awakening, the Buddhist core of luminosity and knowing of every sentient being? Divinity as meditations on the Awakening Mind? Divinity as the Operations of Nature and the Spirit of Consciousness? Divinity as Consciousness and Karma; Voidness and Dependent-arising; the Beautiful and the Good; the *Trimurti* of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; the *Triple Gem* of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; the *Trinity* of father, Holy Ghost and Son, of God? Whatever your belief. Expressed as landscape. Such questioning makes sense to me.

Setting terms on the table, can we not regard expressions and manifestations of Divinity as Boundlessness, Wholeness, Totality, Entirety, everything in all aspects, the full catastrophe, infinitely and eternally; the symphony of a stream; the kindness of a breeze; the caress of a butterfly? Whatever your belief. Expressed as landscape. Such questioning makes sense to me.

"Sh'ma Yisra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.

Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One". (*The Holy Scriptures* 1957)¹¹

Setting terms on the table, can we not regard expressions of Divinity as whatever is unable to be expressed:

"The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao;

the name that can be named is not the eternal Name". (Lao Tsu 1999, chp. I).

And:

"Clearly & thoroughly scrutinize the five aggregates as merely non-inherent

Form as non-inherent & non-inherence as form

non-inherence none other than form

form none other than non-inherent

Similarly—

Feeling Discernment Formative Factors & Consciousness
also non-inherent

Likewise Shariputra are all things & thoughts merely non-inherent” ¹²

And the mere word, ‘G-d’.

Setting terms on the table, can we not say that Divinity does not segregate actions and thoughts of everyday life, as those of varied persuasions consider ‘profane’, from invocations to seek ‘higher states of consciousness’, ‘numinous transcendence’, ethereal emanations and experiences, considered ‘sacred’? Doesn’t segregating these essential parts of our lives negate the spiritual richness and beauty of the landscape in which we live—our home?

And can we not say that Divinity does not abide as, in nor of a distinct transcendent state? Does not such a view of Divinity as transcendent produce a barrier with both immediate and distant landscape that animates and energizes who we are and what we do? See (Winters 2021b, p. 1). A denial of immediate presence here and now from the landscape that so embraces us, and the intimate relationship we have with it? Is it true that neither God, Heaven nor Pure Land are outside our actuality? Isn’t this world, just as it is, that Psalm 84 of which they speak? Isn’t the Pure land, just as it is, this world? See (Shin’ichi 1997, n.p.). Such questioning makes sense to me.

3. Expressions of Sacred Landscape

What is sacred landscape? What makes landscape sacred? What makes a spiritually engaging landscape? In terms of landscape, what is the spiritual experience? How does it come to be? What is it that happens there? In dialects of spiritual practice and philosophical view, how to express and experience boundless wonder, inquiry and reverence. To be naked, in silence and the unbearable lightness of space?

We speak of special places in the world to which we travel on pilgrimage. Engaging hardship, alighting with possibility, we receive blessings of landscapes that, with their magical and mysterious qualities, captivate and move us to increased awareness—places energizing feelings and thoughts attending the spiritual dimensions of life.

To the ancient Chinese practitioner cited by Andrew March:

“At a true site . . . there is a touch of magic and light. How so magic? It can be under stood intuitively, but not conveyed in words. The hills are fair, the waters fine; the sun handsome, the breeze mild, and the sky has a new light—another world. There is peace amid confusion, a festive air amid peace. One’s eyes are opened upon coming into its presence. If one sits or lies, one’s heart is joyful. Here the breath gathers and the essence collects. Light shines in the middle and magic goes out on all sides, while above or below, to the right or left, it is not there. Try to understand!! It is hard to describe” See (March 1968).

And geologist/theologian Tom Berry:

“This is the kind of landscape where we are most aware of being present in the universe; where we are most ourselves in the context of our relationship with others” See (Berry 2006, pp. 39, 115, 123).

I hear Pope Francis, quoting his namesake, inviting us to see landscape:

“As a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of infinite beauty and goodness. The entire material universe speaking of God’s love and boundless affection in us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God . . . linked to particular places that take on an intensely personal meaning” See (Franciscus 2015).

Subtleties of Landscape and Divinity spoken in the same breath: Incontestably dramatic and in-your-face candid or subtly camouflaged, spiritually charged landscapes amplify spiritual engagement. Where you awaken the depths of your heart to find you are

truly in accord with the spirit of consciousness and the operations of nature. Where you are most closely akin to the wind and the clouds, the heat of the sun, the rain nourishing the ground, the animating earth, the rivers, mountains and prairies, and all its inhabitants living around you, if that is your belief. Where you are most likely to awaken to the way-that-can-not-be-told, if that is your belief. Most likely to awaken to the nature of reality and the reality of nature, if that is your belief. Where you are most readily to speak with God, if that is your belief. Where you most readily feel ‘this is where I’m most me.’ And where you cry:

“I am alive; I am this moment

My future is here and now” See ([Ozeki n.d.](#)).

Hiking in Western Tibet on a devotional circumambulation path, my teacher, Zasep Rinpoche, in my thoughts, I had asked:

“Rinpoche, does divinity live in the landscape? Is divinity the landscape itself?”

Zasep Rinpoche replied, “Depends on you.”

“Why?”

He laughed:

“Let me finish. Don’t ask me why until I finish. A typical western question—‘Why? Why? Why?’ Divinity is the landscape all the time. If you’re a believer, you can see, you can feel, and you can get the benefit. And, if you’re a non-believer, it doesn’t matter. For a non-believer there’s nothing there, just landscape. Even though Divinity is there it doesn’t have the meaning and benefit to a non-believer” ([Winters 2014](#), pp. 232–33).

Landscape concordant with this consciousness is cultivated as the Awakened mind. Such a landscape of thoughts and acts of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appears as the embodiment of pure action, compassion and wisdom. Described in the *Vimalakirti Sutra* and *Prajnaparamita Sutra* as a Pure Land, this landscape is Divinity, itself. Divinity as Landscape of Six Perfections—landscape as a field of generosity; landscape as a field of virtuous application; as a field of patience; of meritorious effort; of concentration; of wisdom realizing the Nature of Reality and the Reality of Nature. Landscape as Divinity as an active verb, rather than a definable noun. See ([Conze 1979](#), n.p.; [Shin’ichi 1997](#), n.p.).

Jamgon Kongtrul’s 19th century Tibetan Buddhist *Pilgrimage Guide* says:

“For those not on a spiritual path, places provoke raw undisciplined passion.

To aberrant minds, landscape is just earth, stone, water, and trees.

To mistaken intellects, it appears as solid, inanimate objects.

To practitioners, it appears with no intrinsic nature.

To pure vision, it is a celestial palace full of deities.

To realization, it is the radiant luminosity of innate awareness.

And among the signs of confidence that a landscape is truly a sacred place

Are self-arisen landforms as compassion and wisdom” ([Zangpo 2001](#), pp. 158, 179, 181).

Now, Divinity may be all around us; even so, not all landscape is created equally. Some places simply stand out—a distinct form in space, or a distinct space surrounded by form. Some seem about to proposition me—close encounters with spiritually charged landscape; flights more than fancy. Places of pilgrimage held sacred owing to unique features appearing in natural formations of earth, waters and skies, and energies emanating from the presence of revered sages who taught and meditated at these spots.

How can one express such places of magic and mystery with which you resonate. Where you are most likely and inclined to acknowledge presence in and among physical expressions of Divinity, its teachers and teachings, places such as those best known among those who know them—Sinai’s burning bush, Kailas’ centre of cosmology, Amaranth’s

Shiva cave, Mount Olive's Calvary, Jabal al-Nour, Wanuskewin Gathering Place. The island in the Canadian Shield we call The Cathedral.

Other than those historically and culturally cited, how would you know you are in the midst of a close encounter with a spiritually charged landscape? A Heaven on Earth? Can such landscape even be present as form and space? What are its physical features? What would it look like; what would you see? Must you be privy to burning bushes? Caves of smoking dragons? Ethereal garlands of jeweled trees and radiant flowers, rivers of fragrant waters, cloud-palaces of music and song, flower ornaments pervading all of space? See (Cleary 1987, n.p.). Landscape of raw, sublime, unimaginable beauty? Contrary to wistful imagery and belief, such landscape may not necessarily appear like this. Nor abide anywhere else, in any other ethereal realm or time. No Twilight Zone, this utopia Landscape of Heaven on Earth. Just as it is, this landscape best be sought right here, this place, this realm, this time.

Look closely for landscape where geologically, topographically or ecologically significant phenomena has taken place, recognized and revered for the natural forces that cause it to arise, abide and eventually dissolve: igneous erratics, deep reservoirs, ancient forest groves. *Landscape as Divinity*.

Look closely for landscape noted for abounding energy, animation, good *feng-shui*—sites nestled in the embrace of the hills; the meeting of ridges and congruence of streams; unique topographic formations, margins of glacial advance: where *chi*, or life force, is released to the landscape. *Landscape as Divinity*.

Look closely for the liminal landscapes that amplify spiritual engagement—the conjunction of dissimilar landforms; the intersection of geological chapters; the hinterland of ecological systems; the topographic frontier. The contact between form and space, between peak and slope, hill and valley, climb and descent—where mountain edge meets level plain, outcrop overhangs valley, river cuts through gorge and flows over embankment, rock strata deformed in recumbent folds, winds rising on the windward side and falling over the leeward. *Landscape as Divinity*.

Not unlike the moments of celestial solstice and equinox, when you become acutely aware of the seasonal values at play during the course of the year, these liminal landscapes are transactional grounds where landscapes meet and speak with one another, revealing the essence of nature's divine operations. *Landscape as Divinity* . . .

Where awareness of life forms
associated with female nature broadens
by meeting with life forms
associated with male nature.
Where sensitivity to rising heightens
by meeting with descent of falling;
where sensitivity to motion magnifies
by meeting with repose.
Where sensitivity to solidity strengthens
by meeting the modulation of softness;
where dry meets wet, where heat meets cold.
Where space meets form.
Where growth and life meet decay and death.
Where the essence of the subtle energies
rides through the earth, in the waters and on the winds.

These are the transactional grounds where pilgrims make sacred pacts with Landscape as Divinity, charging the atmosphere with the power of those pacts; absorbing the energy

of the landscape, breathing it—and as it flows through their veins, strike chords in their hearts to make them sing (Winters 2014, pp. 203–4).

How does landscape come to be considered sacred? According to classical Buddhist perspectives, a sacred landscape is a place transformed as a medium for pilgrims' devotional practices through the caveat of a four-fold ordination process, where spiritual experience becomes tangible as form and space.

First, the landscape arises through geological, atmospheric and ecological forces—orogeny, tectonics, glacial morphogenesis, mass-wasting, fluvial erosion—producing distinct physical qualities and characteristics accorded to a sacred landscape. Particular landscapes reveal the essence of these natural forces, where people acutely sense landscape's power and are drawn for spiritual renewal, not unlike celestial moments of transformation when people became acutely aware of time.

Second, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas empower these particular landscapes with dignity by purifying the landscape of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual afflictions and delusions. Esoteric Shingon Buddhism posits Buddha as inseparable from Nature, having the ability to manipulate the operations of nature so that a natural landscape is transformed into sacred landscape.

Third, special things happen there—a spiritual teacher discovers a sacred landscape empowered by a Buddha or Bodhisattva and consecrates the lands, waters and skies by their personal presence and purification practices. The teacher serves as a medium, or a messenger of power. Tibetan Buddhist texts call this blessing 'opening the sacred landscape', whereby the natural sacred landscape is designed as an artistic expression of spiritual teachings. Stories and legends are told about the teachings and feats performed by these teachers, what they did to overcome difficulties and obstacles.

According to 'the code', even if a landscape is considered extraordinary, whether physically apparent or esoterically subtle, landscape is considered everyday space, unrecognized unless officially acknowledged.

"Certainly, there are many power places by geomantic definition, but unless they have been consecrated by tradition they lack the association with Buddha-mind that endows them with particular sanctity. When both geomantic and human factors are optimized, the result will be a great power place, a sacred place" (Dowman 1997, p. 148).

Fourth, continued reverence by pilgrims and disciples maintain the sacred landscape. Although the landscape produced by the awakened mind is considered a permanent phenomenon, its physical manifestation as impermanent phenomena is dependent upon reception by disciples. Buddhas' teachings last only if disciples continually cultivate the karmic predispositions to receive them see (Winters 2015, p. 150).

Giving language to the quality of sacred landscape is equivalent to giving language to an individual's character and the capacity for full awakening. What it takes to turn an ordinary landscape into a spiritually engaged landscape speaks to the quality of an individual's mind. It speaks to both where one is and who one is. My task as a landscape architect in this regard is to create gardens that incite raw emotion; sensuous and spiritual exchanges between person and landscape, subtle expressions of who one wishes to be. And to devise an interpretive system that enumerates characteristics of sacred landscape.

Devising an interpretive system that enumerates characteristics of sacred landscape, thus linking Divinity and landscape design, I would hear *The First Avalokita Sutra of the Mahavastu*, a 3rd century Indian Buddhist text of the Mahasanghika sect assign a physical and verbal language equivalent to the capacity of landscape to awaken an adherent. Its equivalence to the capacity of one to be awakened reaches into the depth of the subtle relationship between a person and landscape. In other words, what the external and internal landscape can look like:

"From the moment that bodhisattvas become completely endowed with steadfast activities of body, speech and mind they go to that spot of earth where they sit to

overcome all hindrances. That spot of earth (the Diamond Throne) has sixteen characteristics: (1) at the end of the world it is the first to be burnt; (2) at the beginning it is the first to be established and (3) stands there conspicuously in the centre; (4) it is not situated in the outer provinces but in the central province; (5) It is level; (6) with good proportions; (7) and even like the palm of the hand; (8) in its pools bright lotuses of various colours grow; (9) it is renowned and is used by powerful people; (10) it is impregnable and is invincible; (11) it has no evidence of afflictive emotions; (12) it is favoured by devas; (13) it is known as a throne; (14) it is like a diamond; (15) it is covered with soft grasses; (16) it is the only place chosen for such renown" see (Jones 1952, pp. 247–48).

A list more attuned to the esoteric rather than exoteric, sixteen characteristics offer a mouthful of nourishment from which to identify sacred landscape, as well as to design a spiritual centre. Just one of several lists from which to fold into my 'Six Signs of Sacred Landscape'.

Devising an interpretive system that enumerates characteristics of sacred landscape, thus linking Divinity and landscape design, I would hear classicists like Plotinus and Aristotle—their determination that Divinity orders the universe in accord with number, weight and measure. So that Beauty is expressed in all form through ideal proportions exhibited in divine operations of the universe: $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$ and the Golden Mean of 0.618:1 and 1:1.618. I would hear Plotinus in *The Enneads*:

"All Beauty of this world, all of Nature, comes by Communion in Ideal-Form. From what does Beauty draw its grace, showing itself in material form: Symmetry of parts towards each other and towards a whole. What standard of measurement can be used? The Soul, by the Truth of its Nature, when seeing its kin, thrills with delight" see (Plotinus 1991, p. 47).

And Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, and also *Poetics*:

"The path to knowing the truth of landscape is through the study of change. So it is in the arts, where the sequence of change is most clearly enunciated by rhythm, language, and harmony. Accordingly, the chief forms of Beauty are order, symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree" see (Aristotle 350 BCE).

Devising an interpretive system that enumerates characteristics of sacred landscape, thus linking Divinity and landscape design, I would hear Dionysius Areopagite:

"In the whole of landscape are the magnitudes, measures, proportions, connections, compositions and infinity, moved together in rest and motion, derived and brought into existence from the Beautiful and the Good, divine names of God" see (Areopagite 1920, chp. IV).

And Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*, whose list closely corresponds to that of Aristotle:

"God is Beauty, and Beauty and Good are grounded in Form. Three things are necessary for Beauty: first, integrity or perfection; second, proportion or consonance; and third, clarity, for we call things beautiful when they are brightly coloured" see (Eco 1988, p. 65).

Devising an interpretive system that enumerates characteristics of sacred landscape, thus linking Divinity and landscape design, I would benefit from texts on garden-making—the 11th century *Sakuteiki*, and the 13th century *Illustrations for Designing Mountain, Water and Hillside Field Landscapes*.

Informed and inspired by enumerations of these physical qualities linking Divinity and landscape design, I would draw up my 'Six Signs of Sacred Landscape', a qualitative index of physical features that accord with their spiritual components; basis for designing contemplative and healing gardens that correlate with procedures in meditation and

Buddhism's Six Perfections. Or what it takes for Landscape as Divinity to help reveal the stuff of what one truly may be made inside and out.

One: Of Favourable Context—location and selection of the sacred grounds: a place of refuge, nestled in the embrace of the landscape, embodies balance and harmony of the world; gifts offered by earth, waters and skies. Sited to absorb auspicious life forces and mitigate negative ones. Transactional grounds for spiritual renewal, offered in its entirety.

Two: It is Contained—formulation and analysis of the landscape relationship with the surrounding physical and social environment; cleaning of the meditation place: A distinct form in space or a distinct space surrounded by form. Silence cradled by sound; light cradled by night. Visually uncomplicated and easily identifiable to contrast with the chaos of its nebulous surroundings.

Three: It is Coherent—organization of the framework; arrangement of the meditation grounds. Defined and organized to help a spiritual journey make sense, comprising (a) Enclosure, a refuge where busyness and confusion can be left outside; (b) Gateway, the transition marking entry into sacred space; (c) Paths, directing guided, focused movement. Slowly, slowly, every step a prayer.

Four: It is Composed—creative design of the focus; formulation of the meditation procedure. An intentional arrangement of form and space in nature's lyrics of flora, deer scat, earth, water, fire, wind and space; and architecture's scores of ordering principles, balance and sacred geometry. Features, patterns and operations of nature telling one's story, paying attention with joyous effort.

Five: With Clarity—illumination of the design intent; luminosity in meditation. A simple format to help cultivate concentration and insight; pointing to less in order to see more; unwavering attention to just one thing, A single story in a single design vocabulary, present and mindful each moment.

Six: An artistic expression of Contemplation—conveyance of the narrative with a deliberate design vocabulary; referring to insight through analytical meditation. Poetic image of profound wisdom and compassion; pure abode of divinity; unique dialect of subtle design. Revelation of Landscape as Divinity as mandala, pure land, paradise, nature, breath, God, silence. Presented with the glory of awakening, how will you inhabit this divine sacred space? see (Winters 2015, pp. 154–61).

I hear Emerson's "Essay on Nature":

"Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact, and

Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue" (Emerson 1957, p. 32).

4. Envoi

Responding to the design of God's home as Heaven on Earth, or as a Pure Land, and enumerating these characteristics, still do not quite answer His Holiness' questions—What is the basis for design? From where does it come; what is its source?"

I hear H.H. the Dalai Lama say that the innermost subtle consciousness act as causes to produce both internal elements as well as the evolution of the external elements, both of our bodies and of the landscape (Gyatso n.d., n.p.). In other words, the thoughts and actions undertaken through the collective karma of sentient beings produce the physical landscape of the Earth. And just as body and mind have the potential to alter qualities of landscape, so does landscape have the reciprocal potential to alter one's body and mind. They mirror each other.

I hear H.H. the Dalai Lama teach on Chandrakirti's *Guide to the Middle Way*:

"An undisciplined state of mind gives rise to delusions, causing negative actions that produce a dismal mundane landscape in which one would be subject to live. Whereas a disciplined and virtuous mind gives rise to insight, enabling performance of positive actions of body, speech and mind, producing an enticing, productive, beautiful landscape in which to live".¹³

As a Buddhist, I find myself drawn to the fundamental teachings on Buddha-Nature, the Spark of Awakening—the subtlest faculty of mind at the core of every sentient being, basis for cultivating illumination and penetration into the cessation of suffering. The source of wisdom and spiritual fulfillment, of virtuous activities, happiness, kindness and love; of the capacity to cry at the sight, sound and touch of beauty. The source of artistic expression. Accordingly, highlighted as the same essence of the awakened mind of Divinity.

In his *Uttaratantra*, Aryasanga spoke of the Spark of Awakening in the same light as a Buddha—thoughts and actions arising through the ignition of the Spark of Awakening equivalent to thoughts and actions of a Buddha. Like space, the Spark of Awakening is naturally free of obstacles; like water, unpolluted and clear; like a jewel, arises, abides and dissolves with clarity—like the mind of a Buddha. The evidence for the Spark of Awakening? Simply, the dissatisfaction with ordinary, unsophisticated ways of being with others in the world, the desire to change these relationships, and the resultant aspirations and engagements that serve to transform one's habitual life patterns.

Harnessing the Spark of Awakening leads to boundless intimate and unimaginable positive effects. So that making pilgrimage with the cultivation of an 'exterior' pure landscape mirrors that of an 'interior' pure landscape is a reflection of the Spark of Awakening. Discovering landscape endowed with Divinity, and enabling others to be availed to the spirituality of landscape are reflection of the Spark of Awakening. Endowing one's surroundings as fields of generosity; fields of virtuous application; fields of patience; fields of meritorious effort; fields of concentration; fields of wisdom are reflection of the Spark of Awakening. Ignited by the Spark of Awakening to realize the Nature of Reality and the Reality of Nature serve to produce Buddha's Pure Land in one's heart. As declared by Psalm 84, to design this Heaven on Earth. Igniting the Spark of Awakening serves as the basis for its design. The source from which it comes. This speaks to H.H. the Dalai Lama's question. This makes sense to me.

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¹ My iteration. See (*The Holy Scriptures* 1957, p. 836).

² My iteration. See (Soseki 1994, p. 33; 2015, pp. 247–49).

³ My iteration. See (Hesiod 1983, pp. 18–19).

⁴ My iteration. See (Plato 1937, pp. 12–14).

⁵ (Blake 1979, p. 21) "Vision of the Last Judgement".

⁶ (Jung 1989, p. 45). The last sentence is derived from Jung's 22 October 1959 interview on BBC *Face to Face*.

⁷ See (Bloom 1992, pp. 11–16) Three categories (structure, process, time) are used to categorize landforms as units of systematic analysis.

⁸ My layout of the quote. See (Blake 1979, p. 804). Letter to Thomas Butts 2 October 1800.

⁹ See (de Saussure 1959, pp. 118–19). "In the language itself, there are only differences, *and no positive terms* . . . In a language, as in every other semiological system, what distinguishes a sign is what constitutes it, nothing more. Difference is what makes characteristics, just as it makes values and units".

¹⁰ See (Berry 2006, pp. 25–28) for his views on "How and why our present devastation of the Earth? . . . The first thing that makes us vulnerable is a *transcendent, personal, monotheistic creative deity*".

¹¹ See (*The Holy Scriptures* 1957, p. 221). 'The Shema' in Deuteronomy 6:4.

¹² See (Winters 2021a). My iteration.

¹³ Oral teaching by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama on Chandrakirti's *Guide to the Middle Way*.

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