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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to offer a new approach to holistically understand the human-nature relationship studies. Human beings' relentless invasion into nature has been a significant negative influence on the natural environment. Lack of understanding of our relationship with nature is one of the causes that has given birth to our many current environmental problems. Modern culture tries to distance from nature, as nature is seen as imperfect, uncivilized, underdeveloped, and as a result humans' relationship with nature is more individualistic, functional, and utilitarian than holistic and more anthropocentric than nature centric. In modern society, the relations with others have taken a shape of capitalistic activity called networking; relationship, as a whole, have become an activity of give and take. In current social and psychological studies, human-nature alienation is considered a risk, and it is crucial to conduct studies that help further the knowledge on how nomads and indigenous cherish their relationship with nature and the re-recognition of human-nature relationship.

Environmental ethics studies make an attempt to disclose the human's destructive effects on nature and underline the importance of this research, by understanding the life of Mongolian nomads, the human nature relationship in nomads' world is analyzed through the three nature-valuation systems, intrinsic, instrumental, and relational value, advocated by environmental ethics studies. Intrinsic and instrumental value attempts to answer why human beings should preserve and protect nature; relational value tries to understand the relationship of human with nature by understanding the physical, psychological, and philosophical relationship that people have with nature. This study advances human-nature relationship by reclaiming the radical ways in which nomad relates to nature. The primary purpose of this study is to support the importance of holistic intrinsic value practiced in nomads' relationship with nature. Through a comprehensive analysis of nomads' relation with nature, this thesis attempts to prove that nomads relationship with nature can best be explained through 'holistic intrinsic value' which is the original contribution of this research.

Mongolian respect, awe, and worship of nature and their syncretic, and interactive relationship with nature provide a profound and provocative understanding of the radical human and nature connection. To illustrate the relationship between humans and nature in the nomads system, three focus areas, 'migration, Shamanism, and land usage' in Inner Mongolia, have been analyzed in this thesis. The migration, Shamanism, and common land-use habits are a better illustration that explain the need for a holistic intrinsic approach towards understanding nature. The process of land privatization is one of the powerful models that

can address the current over-emphasizing of instrumental value. Migration, Shamanism, and land tenure are chosen to emphasize a need for a holistic intrinsic relationship, and I have argued in the thesis that it is best to approach human nature relationship through a combination of holism with intrinsic, relational, and instrumental value and a rejection of instrumentalism and reductionism.

There are a bunch of studies that have focused on three valuations separately. Still, few of them have synthesized and compromised these theories to a group of ethnic people's environmental thought to examine their limitations. The majority of current mainstream societies' environmental studies tend to ignore nomads and indigenous culture's understanding of nature and human relationships, which is a big gap. Looking for an understanding and inspiration outside of the dominant mainstream way of nature-human relationship might contribute to understanding human beings' proper place in nature, which I suggest distinguishes this thesis from the mainstream environmentalism and it has the potential of enriching current environmental thought.