EDUCATING FOR VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY:
TOWARD SUSTAINABLE AND CREATIVE WAYS OF LIFE
THROUGH AN EASTERN IDEA OF *LIVING-LEARNING*

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a sound theoretical framework for educational initiatives that would enable us to transform our current consumer-oriented lifestyles into ways of life that are not only ecologically and culturally sustainable, but also fulfilling and creative. More specifically, in this study I will undertake to explain how the theory and practice of *voluntary simplicity*, as a way of life, address the significant educational issues involved in moving today's ecologically and culturally unsustainable world toward an improved state of ecological balance. Choosing simple living can be seen as a practical step toward living well in harmony with others—humans and other sentient beings, the local/global ecosystem, and our planet Earth as a whole.

This study will consider the interrelationship among the following topics: (1) today's sustainability problems and educational efforts to cope with them—sustainability education; (2) the theory and practice of voluntary simplicity as a way of life, and its ecologically/culturally sustainable orientation; (3) the educational value of voluntary simplicity as sustainability education—education for simplicity; and (4) the theoretical framework of integration/transformation of acquired knowledge and everyday action based on one's concrete experience—an Eastern idea of *living-learning*, which is emphasized in sustainability education and voluntary simplicity.

Through these analyses, this study attempts to facilitate an understanding of sustainability education and voluntary simplicity as an experiential learning for life. The study will show how active learning/education for voluntary simplicity could prove to be a concrete and useful methodology for sustainability education through its connection with the concept of *living-learning*.

If I shift perspective and explain the core concepts of this thesis with respect to the Buddhist point of view, a three-fold logic emerges: (a) Ground—Interlocking crises that signal a need for radical change; (b) Path—Voluntary simplicity as sustainability education informed by concept of *living-learning*; and (c) Fruition—Sustainable, creative, just, equitable, fulfilling ways of life and world.

One contribution of this study is its reading of Whitehead's views on education in light of *living-learning* and the reverse as well. This section expands upon the basic points that (a), to effect profound change, abstract knowledge must become part of how we perceive and feel as well as how we think, speak, and act; and (b), that interconnectedness and interdependence should be a feature, not only of the *content* of sustainability education, but also of the *process*. Key features of the process are that it is *voluntary*; that is, *mindful* and *aware* in the Buddhist sense of those terms, in addition to being *disciplined* and *open-ended*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction: Background

Ten years have transpired since the inception of my academic journey that begun in Canada, earning me a Ph. D. degree in a foreign country. In Japan, I was an instructor of outdoor and environmental education after completing both undergraduate and graduate programs at Tokyo Gakugei University (TGU), a principal teacher's college of Japan. Before moving to a suburb area of Tokyo to study at TGU, I grew up in a country city called Hadano-shi, surrounded by beautiful mountains in Kanagawa prefecture during high school. Until graduating from high school, I was an astute baseball enthusiast for more than ten years. I approached this pastime with the same zeal as Samurais and their sons were historically known to polish up both the body and mind by performing the ascetic practices of swordsmanship. Living in the suburbs while developing and honing my abilities playing baseball set in motion my interest in exploring harmonious coexistence of nature and humans. Meanwhile, I set up a set of goals for myself which I have persisted over the years without giving up.

My academic background was in outdoor education, primarily in the field of physical education at TGU. I encountered this special study field at the third year (undergraduate course). At that time, I felt that outdoor education in Japan focused primarily on pursuing certain knowledge about biological, geographical, and geological information, effective skills in the wilderness, and recreational opportunities through camping. Similarly, research tended to emphasize psychological approaches which use mathematical, experiential, statistical, or quantitative modes of investigation, and the

trend is still the mainstream today. I grew up in this Japanese environment and academic setting during my formative years.

Environmental education in Japan, like many other cultures, has tended to focus on informing students about nature's utility for human interests, and nature's influence on human beings. Learning in Japanese schools tends to take the form of merely memorizing facts and accessing more accurate and detailed information about environments, but it does not address everyday practices. During my studies and instruction in Japan, I found that something was missing in both outdoor and environmental education and research. They lack a critical perspective on the ways in which human beings have despoiled their relationships with the natural environment, while neglecting practical approaches to how human individuals and society could achieve greater ecological harmony. That is to say, both styles of education lacked a critical understanding of everyday life and its consequences for the environment, and why people should live in an ecological balance with nature.

In contrast to the traditional Japanese priorities, the main foci of my interests were ethical perspectives, critical questions, value-based approaches to understand human relationships with other species, and nature as a whole, and how we should behave in the natural world. In educational terms, I was primarily interested in teaching and learning how people could/should build harmonious relationships with nature, understand this relationship, and take everyday action in such ecological balance to sustain our societies. Additionally, my approach to environmental concerns was primarily from an outdoor-based point of view, which emphasizes hands-on experience and learning in the natural environment, rather than merely acquiring abstract knowledge in classroom. For

these reasons, I believed that my core motivations and interests would not be satisfied in Ph.D. courses of Japan related to the study area of outdoor/environmental education; in fact, there were many fewer doctoral programs in educational fields as compared to natural sciences in those days. Accordingly, I decided to obtain my higher education in a foreign country and complete a formal doctoral program in Canada.

I, however, could not go directly into a Ph.D. program at a Canadian university, Therefore, I enrolled in a master program in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), after a one-year ESL program in Saskatchewan. Although I had a master of education degree from a Japanese university (TGU) already, the U of S program was a good opportunity for me to study my educational concerns from different perspectives and to learn conceptual or theoretical methods of inquiry. At U of S, I realized that outdoor and environmental education in Japan is based upon and limited by a mechanistic worldview rooted in "scientific materialism" (Birch, 1996, pp. 8-11). Since then, I have studied new developments in educational theory and practice that challenge scientific materialist assumptions, and set out to create more ecologically sustainable cultures 'in action'. Especially influenced by Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy, Fritjof Capra's holistic worldview, David Orr's idea of ecological literacy, and Arne Naess' theory of deep ecology, I have also learned that the notion of 'interconnectedness' is fundamental to ecological education, and that human feelings at the core of our concrete experience are indispensable to appreciating this interconnectedness. This concrete, yet subjective human experience is the basis for understanding reality and the changing events which comprise it. Concrete knowledge gained through feelings and experience is fundamental to understanding our

relationships and connectedness with nature.

After completing my masters program at the U of S, I went on to doctoral studies in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Today, needless to say, we are facing many interrelated problems and crises that challenge, not only our prospects for healthy and peaceful living, but our very survival as well. This dissertation is the result of my search for an educational response to the crisis of sustainability, about which more will be said in the following chapter. As a final point of introduction, I should report that the theoretical positions developed in this dissertation have informed and been informed by my educational practice in outdoor environmental education. Since starting my doctoral program at UBC in 2001 I have been teaching during the summers (May to August, in Japan) and developing the theory during the winters (September to April, at UBC, Canada). This process of moving back and forth between theory and experience is one form of the integration or transformation of idea and practice that I call '*living-learning*' (my translation of an Eastern educational principle, as you will see below). In this way, the dissertation has resulted from the very process it seeks to recommend.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a sound theoretical framework for educational initiatives that would enable us to transform our current consumer-oriented lifestyles into ways of life that are not only ecologically and culturally sustainable, but also fulfilling and creative. More specifically, in this study I will undertake to explain how the theory and practice of voluntary simplicity, as a way of life, helps to address the

significant educational challenges involved in moving today's ecologically and culturally unsustainable world toward an improved state of ecological balance. This will involve illustrating how, by integrating ideas and action, voluntary simplicity is a process of experiential learning about how to live well in harmony with others and the natural environment.

1.3 Why Sustainability Education?

We need to change in order to survive. Recent scientific research shows that, whether we realize it or not, the human race is experiencing various severe social, environmental and ecological problems that require solutions if we are to survive (Burke, et al., 2000; Dauncy & Mazza, 2001, pp. 6-19; Hartmann, 1998/2004, p. 1; Matthews, Payne, Rohweder, & Murray, 2000; Revenga, Brunner, Henninger, Payne, & Kassem, 2000; White, Murray, & Rohweder, 2000; Williams, 2004; Wood, Sebastian, & Scherr, 2000). In response to this unstable situation, a notion of 'sustainability' has been developed since the 1970s (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003; Redclift, 1987). Especially since World War II, Western capitalism has promoted and justified consumerism with reference to the market economic imperative, commonly known in the West as 'development'. On this view, because social development is equated with economic growth, through market development, possessing and consuming 'more and more' with no 'limitation' is strongly believed to be a good thing (Durning, 1992, pp. 19-36; Sachs, 1999; Shiva, 1992; Shumacher, 1973). This value system is a worldwide trend today, still justified with reference to the global competitive market economy (McMurtry 1998; Mander & Goldsmith, 1996; Sachs, 1999, chap. 3; Stiglitz, 2002).

The imperative of development associated with the market economy is

exceeding the productive capacity of our planet that provides for our livelihood. Its orientation is counter to ecologically sustainable living because the system fails to appreciate 'limits to growth'—its insatiable avarice for 'more and more' ignores the Earth's physical limitations (D. H. Meadows, Randers, & D. L. Meadows, 2004; Durning, 1992; Sachs, 1993; Sachs, 1999).

In addition to overshooting the Earth's ecological limits, the development-driven, consumer-oriented economic, political, and social system of advanced capitalism has resulted in a large and widening inequality between rich and poor nations (or, "the North" and "the South") in terms of their access to the natural resources required to sustain life. In other words, an unjust distribution of wealth on the planet exists between the haves and the have-nots (Elgin, 1993, pp. 39-40; Sachs, 1999).

In this respect, our world has not yet attained a proper system to fairly share Earth's capacity. This is unjustifiable in light of the following statistics: (1) if one per cent of the income of the wealthiest nations could be applied to the needs of the poor every year, the worst influences of poverty could be highly decreased, which would enable all of the poor to have sufficient foodstuff and basic services such as health care and education, to diminish infant mortality rate, and to avoid the most serious effects of pandemic diseases (Sachs & Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Williams, 2004, p. 47); and (2) today's world produces enough food every year to feed all of its residents, which further means that all people could have enough to eat if the food were equally shared with them (Millstone & Lang, 2003). The current system is unjust: we have the resources, but they are not equally shared.

Sharing the world's resources more equally cannot mean that the poor attain the

same level of material prosperity as the rich, because of the ecological limit problem described above. To live sustainably within the Earth's limited carrying capacity, humanity requires a sense of 'limits to growth' in contrast to the endless avarice underlying mass-consumer society (Meadows, et al., 2004; Sachs, 1999, pp. 185-186). Furthermore, and equally important, such moderation is indispensable to achieving a sense of fulfillment in life (Durning, 1992, pp. 143-144). Such fulfillment is significant as the very source of energetic living that is associated with such positive feelings as self-actualization, vitality, relaxation, freedom, and happiness (Andrews, 1997, pp. 147-15; Sacks, 1999, p. 212). Without moderation based on a sense of limits, one can never reach satisfaction. For example, during meals, if our stomachs lacked the ability to detect fullness, we would eat and eat, and never feel full, a situation which would leave us feeling constantly unsatisfied. No satisfaction is possible without an appropriate sense of limitation. Similarly, so long as our contemporary mass-consumer society is supported by an underlying belief that 'more and more' is necessary for social and economic development, we will find it very had to feel a sense of satisfaction in the face of limitless demands (Durning, 1992, p. 22). Indeed, psychological surveys show that material consumption does not necessarily contribute to fulfillment (Csikszentmihali, 1990, 1993, & 1997 quoted in O'sullivan, 1999; Dominguez and Robin, 1992, pp. 141-142; Durning, 1992, pp. 38-48; Kohn, 1990, quoted in Elgin, 2000, pp. 72-73). For example, although people who lived in the 1990s were on average four-and-a-half times richer than their great-grandparents who had lived around the turn of the century (Maddison, 1989), they were not four-and-a-half times happier (Durning, 1992, p. 23). Likewise, there are other, more telling statistics—e.g., high rates of suicide, drug-addition, depression, and so forth

(see Williams, 2004; WHO, 2000).

In this study, educational initiatives to promote just and sustainable ways of life will be referred to collectively as 'education for sustainability' or simply 'sustainability education' (Sterling, 2001). Because sustainability education has much to do with matters of survival, well-being and bettering quality of life for all—not simply for humans, but also for all forms of life—it should be integrated into many and diverse educational contexts, formal or otherwise, such as families, workplaces, communities, and schools.

1.4 Toward Voluntary Simplicity and Education: A Form/Process of *Living-learning* for Sustainability

To achieve its educational mission, sustainability education must enable people to recognize the value of moderation and develop a sense of sufficiency, or the feeling that "enough is enough". The understanding that individual and collective ways of life should have a sense of sufficiency based on moderation is not an especially new idea, or practice. In all traditions of indigenous teachings across the world, it has been said that living in a simpler manner rooted in sufficiency, or having less, is fundamental to living properly (Durning, 1992, pp. 143-144). Today, positively taking such a lifestyle based on a simpler way of life is called '*voluntary simplicity*' (Burch, 2000, pp. 21-22; Elgin, 1993, pp. 46-53 and 2000, pp. 80-81, Hartmann, 1998/2004). However, espousing this view is one thing; putting it into practice quite another. Existing forms of environmental and ecological education have attempted to help people recognize the need for less consumerism, rather than helping them to actually adopt more sustainable lifestyles. For this reason, it is important to examine the potential of voluntary simplicity as a process of

learning how to live in ways that are, not only ecologically and culturally sustainable, but also fulfilling and creative.

Voluntary simplicity as a way of life—including both idea and practice—naturally involves an ongoing educational process; that is to say, coming to understand and practice simplicity is an experiential process of learning how to live in a sustainable manner (Elgin, 1993, p. 159). Conversely, one cannot readily understand and relate to simplicity as a mode of living without firsthand experience. Within this context, voluntary simplicity is both *an ideal goal* and *a process of learning* how to approach that ideal. Thus, practicing voluntary simplicity is one important and effective way in which people can move toward more sustainable living by engaging with related issues in the context of their own life (Burch, 2000, p. 10 and p. 81).

In this context, the proposed project of understanding voluntary simplicity as an educational process is a contribution to the larger goal of social transformation toward a culturally and ecologically sustainable approach to life. The focus will be on how aspiring to simpler lifestyles joins theory and practice in everyday life. In other words, the focus is on voluntary simplicity as a concrete methodology of 'practice' that makes possible actual changes in lifestyle in which the "heaven" of abstract or theoretical knowledge is brought to the "earth" of day to day living.

1.4.1 Voluntary Simplicity: Living More Lightly and Intentionally

Intentionally choosing a simpler way of living is the goal of a social movement known as 'voluntary simplicity' (Shama & Wisenblit, 1984). Associated with the 1970s counterculture, this movement has entered the mainstream in the last two decades

(Zavestoski, 2002). Although the term was first coined by Richard Gregg in 1936, a student of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings, the notion and goals of voluntary simplicity have deep roots in human history (Elgin, 1993, 46; 2000, p. 81). Indeed, an ethic of intentional simplicity can often be found in traditional societies in which people know the ecological limits of the natural world used to satisfy their needs. They not only share harvested foods and energy sources equally with everyone, they understand that sharing these limited resources and practicing methods of simplicity are fundamental to sustaining their lives (Badiner, 1990; Hartmann, 1998/2004; Norberg-Hodge, 1991; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992).

Currently, the concept of voluntary simplicity is used in different ways according to which of its aspects is stressed by different people. However, there has been a basic concept in common, which the movement groundbreaker Elgin shows. It is that, literally, voluntary simplicity as a way of life means integrating simplicity (a simpler way of living) into our lives in a more deliberate, or voluntary manner. To live more simply is to establish a more direct, light, and less-stressful relationship with all aspects of our lives, which advocates one living in harmony with others and the natural environment, in an ecologically friendly manner with less consumption and fewer possessions (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-55 and pp. 143-157; Schut, 1999). The voluntary component of living with simplicity involves living more consciously, which implies living purposefully. This intentional sense is a more positive approach to living that can also be viewed as a creative activity essential to everyday life (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-55 and pp. 123-142), which often brings about the positive sense of self, such as self-sufficiency (Iwata, 2001; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984; Zavestoski, 2002), self-determination (Dominguez & Robin,

1992/1999; Johnston & Burton, 2002), or mindfulness (Burch, 2000, chap.7).

In this context, the generally and widely recognized interpretation of voluntary simplicity is "a manner of living that is outwardly more simple and inwardly more rich, a way of being in which our most authentic and alive self is brought into direct and conscious contact with the living" (Elgin, 1993, p. 25; also see Andrews, 1997, p. 22). Hence, it is said that voluntary simplicity has the potential for enabling individuals to culturally modify their lives along a more ecologically sustainable and peaceful path, within a personal and social context (Andrew, 1997; Burch 2000; Elgin, 1993; Pierce, 2000). Both the idea and the practice of voluntary simplicity as a way of life are often seen as having the potential to positively impact the status quo. This is accomplished by counteracting contemporary, unstable social systems that are the source of a multitude of unnecessary personal, cultural, and ecological problems; furthermore, they stem directly or indirectly from capitalism's goal of consumerism based on the systemic underlying and unbridled drive for 'more and more' (Burch, 1995, p. 4 and p. 20; also see Burch, 2000, Etzioni, 1998, Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Schumacher, 1973, pp. 56-66).

1.4.2 Choosing Simplicity as an Eastern Idea of Living-learning: the Unity of Idea and Action

Eastern philosophies, especially those concerned with learning, have long recognized the need for integration of general knowledge and everyday practice, which is connected to the goal of learning how to live well with others in society through personal cultivation (one's internal enlightenment). This direct transference of idea into practice, or applying knowledge into action, can be well captured in an Eastern core idea of

living-learning, proposed by Yasuoka (1998, 2002a, and 2002b), one of Japan's most noted Eastern philosophers based on an eclectic school of thought. By *living-learning*, simply put, Yasuoka means that one's study must not be merely accumulation of information to develop human intelligence alone, but learning must be utilized for one's living and society in an affirmative manner (Tanaka, 2002, pp. 3-10).

In this study, I will draw upon traditional understandings of *living-learning* (a) to illuminate how voluntary simplicity functions and also (b) to re-affirm the importance of concrete experience as the basis for such learning. In my analysis, there are three successive stages in the process of *living-learning* (based on one's experience) through which people become motivated to change their attitudes and values from consumerism to simplicity. More specifically, then, in this thesis I undertake to show how '*awareness*', '*inquiry*', and '*praxis*' are stages in a cyclical and creative process based on hands-on experience, in which each of the stages continuously evolves upon repetition. This will involve showing how the three stage model of *living-learning* compares to the circulative three steps process described in deep ecology theory—deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment (Harding, 1997). Through these explanations I hope to show how understanding voluntary simplicity as a learning process will advance the goal of sustainability education to create ecologically and culturally just, stable, and peaceful ways of living in any personal and collective terms (Burch, 2000). Because sustainability is key to the survival and well-being of all sentient beings, humans and otherwise, current and future generations could tremendously benefit by being exposed to the concept of simplicity by its very practice as a voluntary, yet important educational initiative.

1.4.3 Education for Simplicity as Living-learning for Sustainability

Because there has not yet been much literature on voluntary simplicity in itself due to its relatively young history, studies of its educational potential are limited. What studies there are, are found mostly in the field of adult education. For example, freelance writer, speaker and teacher Mark Burch explains the core concept of voluntary simplicity and the guidelines for a study circle program in his books, *Simplicity: Notes, stories and exercises for developing unimaginable wealth* (1995) and *Simplicity study circles: A step-by-step guide* (1997). Burch himself holds a workshop that aims to provide a better understanding of the different dimensions of voluntary simplicity. Dr. Cecile Andrews, author of *The circle of simplicity: Return the good life* (1997), is a community educator and the foremost leader in the development of voluntary simplicity study circles. In her book, Andrews shows how to organize one's own simplicity study circle so as to improve personal living within the overall community. She focuses on the importance of the study circle as a learning tool, the idea of democracy in action, and the value of community. Jim Merkel, the author of *Radical simplicity: Small footprint on a finite Earth* (2003) offers a more personal guide for learning that enables one to recognize the reality of ecological limits to growth. It is based mainly on the use of "Ecological Footprint" analyses developed by Wackernagel and Rees (1996), and "Your Money or Your Life" strategies innovated by Dominguez and Robin (1992/1999). Through the use of these tools, Merkel emphasizes the importance of living a simpler way of life that moves society toward more sustainable living grounded in personal endeavor and awareness. Lastly, Northwest Earth Institute (www.nwei.org), a Pacific Northwest-based organization, offers a course in voluntary simplicity, along with other related courses (e.g., deep ecology, bio-regionalism,

global warming, sustainable living, etc.), through workplace seminars and discussion group presentations throughout the region.

These professional leaders and adult education organizations have implemented their own unique programs, mostly in informal settings such as study circles, workshops, or discussion groups. However, the systematic foundation of 'educating for voluntary simplicity' in more formal and general occasion of learning, such as in public schooling and university, has not been well proposed because of the fact that little attention has been given to conceptualizing how voluntary simplicity can be integrated with and in formal education. This study attempts to contribute to developing the theoretical foundations underling 'learning for voluntary simplicity' and showing how the theory can generate curriculum for higher education.

For example, the important objective of understanding voluntary simplicity is to achieve individual and social changes towards sustainable living in a practical manner. Then it is indispensable for an integration of theory and action, i.e. ultimately emerging 'practice' making possible the change. In this regard, the Eastern core idea of *living-learning*, which is coined by Yasuoka as well as originally stems from Yang-Ming philosophy[1], refers to the importance of the unification of idea/knowledge and practice in the Eastern world (1988, 2002a, and 2002b).

This Eastern idea of *living-learning* should be applicable to the wide scope of educational settings and occasions, whether formal or informal, as the theoretical basis for personal and social transformation in the creative manner. This might be the general

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[1] The School of Mind (Yang-Ming philosophy) is one of major Two Schools in Neo-Confucianism in China (960-1644 A.D.)—another school is the School of Laws or Principles (Osborne, pp. 158-163; Liu, 1998, pp. 113-130).

aspect of learning theory for voluntary simplicity pursued in my research. Also, this view of *living-learning*—applying acquired knowledge into everyday practice can help achieve the ultimate goal of sustainability education that enables one to transform self and society towards being more attuned to sustainability based on one's everyday practice. The mainstream of environmental education has often lacked this regard for concrete transformation. Therefore, *living-learning* as a theory can help environmental education succeed where it now fails.

In addition to the general or fundamental scheme of the learning, such as the idea of '*living-learning*', a specific aspect of educational theory and practice for voluntary simplicity is also proposed and developed in this study. This might be interpreted as applying the general theory in a concrete way so that learners can effectively understand the values of simper living and come to choose the life-way in motivating them. In this respect, it seems that outdoor educational programs based on one's hands-on life experience provide the ideal opportunity in which to embrace the idea of voluntary simplicity and its importance to incorporating a communal way of living (Karen, Sakofs & Hunt, Jr., 1995). Research studies on outdoor-based education have been conducted in several (overlapping) contexts, such as recreational, environmental and therapeutic, for over fifty years (Ewert, 1983). This study, additionally, contributes to providing some new cultural values for educational programs based on one's hands-on life experience, in terms of 'educating for voluntary simplicity' needed for transforming towards a more realistic and sustainable living on our Earth.

1.5 Methodology: Theoretical Inquiry

My purpose in this study, simply stated, is to contribute to a theoretical framework for sustainability education based upon voluntary simplicity, the goal of which is both to inspire people individually and collectively to choose simpler ways of living and to help them translate inspiration into practice. Accordingly, my method is a conceptual or theoretical inquiry that "attempts to generate new knowledge through the analysis, critique, extension, and integration of existing theories and empirical research" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 141). As Coombs and Daniels (1991) observe, in order for the product of conceptual inquiry to be defensible, "[t]he new conception must be potentially more fruitful in guiding our thinking about curricular research, policy, or program development" (p. 35) as well as being internally and external coherent (Vokey, 2001). This dissertation will develop a theoretical framework for sustainability education by integrating the conceptual resources of the following bodies of literature:

(1)　Discussions of the emerging notion of *sustainability* as it is interpreted in light of a particular understanding of the root causes of human attitudes and behaviours that lead to both social and environmental crises;

(2)　The literature on education for sustainability; in particular, what it presents as the key features of educational initiatives that will help establish more secure and peaceful conditions in the personal, social, human and ecological terms; and

(3)　Print and on-line publications concerning voluntary simplicity and its role in promoting the goals of sustainability education, including how learning

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simplicity as a way of life both helps motivate people to change and gives

them means to do so.

Key concepts will be illustrated through concrete examples, focusing on the ways in which voluntary simplicity enables people to change their attitudes and take action toward sustainable living. In this way, this theoretical study will be *hermeneutic*, in a sense that it "involves a reinterpretation of the meaning of, and intentions behind, prior theoretical work" and "involves the interpretation and evaluation of existing theoretical or textual evidence for the generation of new theory" (Bentz & Shapiro,1998, p. 144).

In general, methods can be regarded as the "ways of understanding and interpreting data" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 83). In my review of relevant bodies of literature I will use three methods proposed by Coombs and Daniels (1991): "concept interpretation," "conceptual structure assessment," and "conceptual development." Summing up, the first method of 'concept interpretation' is a process that involves "discovering the meanings persons attach to the concept (p. 34)" in order to achieve "interpretations that are both accurate and sufficiently rich to capture the complexity of the concepts…" (p. 29). As for the second method of 'conceptual structure assessment':

> The purpose of conceptual structure assessment (CSA) is not simply to understand the conceptual structure underlying a theory, model, argument or research program, but to determine its adequacy for use in curriculum research and development. Basically, such assessments are comparative. (Coombs & Daniels, 1991, p. 35)

The third method of 'conception development' is "designed to develop and defend a conception or conceptual structure" (Coombs & Daniels, 1991, p. 28). Throughout this study, results from the use of these methods will be integrated to achieve my research

objectives.

Last, I would like to emphasize that, although the methodology of this study is largely hermeneutic interpretation and dialectical analysis of materials, its content also incorporates creative ideas, lines of inquiry, and interpretive standpoints generated largely by my own teaching experience and engagement with students, from elementary school to university/college, as well as with instructors, especially during the last seven years.

1.6 Chapter Outline

To capture the importance of the idea of sustainability today, chapter two will examine (1) the social background of the emerging notion of sustainability as it corresponds to the unstable world of today and its misinterpretation based on the Western-oriented idea of development, (2) the need for a comprehensive understanding of sustainability to inform action toward a better quality of life for all in a just, equitable, and peaceful manner, and (3) the link between ecological and cultural sustainability.

Chapter three will explore the educational approach to sustainability issues, which is generally recognized as 'sustainability education', in line with the historical background. This chapter considers what kinds of perspective are necessary to support the preferable idea of sustainability education chiefly from two points of view; (1) some of the conceptually essential factors indispensable for forming a notion of sustainability education as the entire theory and (2) the understanding of the notion of interconnectedness, or wholeness, underlying the essential concepts above.

Chapter four will develop its argument in three sections.. Firstly, this chapter addresses the 'failure of environmental education'. This failure makes us recognize the

importance of a learning process that will enable learners to 'practice' a more ecologically and culturally sustainable way of life—namely, how to apply acquired knowledge into everyday practice. Secondly, based upon the analysis of the failure of environmental education, an Eastern core idea of '*living learning—*human learning based on the mutual transformation of knowledge/idea and everyday practice—will be explored. This Eastern view can help achieve sustainability education's ultimate goal of enabling one to transform self and society towards being more attuned to sustainability. In this second section arguing the idea of *living-learning*, lastly, the process philosopher Whitehead's notions of education will be shown to support the emerging concept. Whitehead's concept of education also stresses another important implication—the value of 'concrete experience and human feelings' as the basis for forming one's concrete knowledge capable of linking to everyday practice.

In chapter five, then, I will propose that the Eastern idea of *living-learning* involves three evolutionarily successive stages based on concrete experience with feelings: 'awareness', 'inquiry', and 'praxis'. The perspective of three deeps in deep ecology theory—deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment, gave me a clue for the idea of three stages.

Chapter six will describe and analyze the philosophy of voluntary simplicity under three main headings: (1) historical background, (2) general theory, and (3) characteristics as inherent features. Voluntary simplicity involves a wide range of self-understandings and practices, but across its variations there are some common values shared by its practitioners and advocates. What I call such values underlying voluntary simplicity in common is 'inherent features' as the positive application of voluntary

simplicity, which can be led by the previous (second) analysis of its general conceptual structure. To consider the key concept of voluntary simplicity, I will mainly refer to one of its best-known researchers, Duane Elgin, as the main source.

Chapter seven will discuss learning for simplicity as sustainability education. Simplicity could be a concrete and effective idea as well as a method for implementing sustainability education with the *living-learning* process. The manner of intentionally choosing simplicity as a fundamental approach to living naturally involves an ongoing educational process, since coming to understand and practice simplicity is an experiential process of learning on how to live in a sustainable manner. This section attempts to examine the fundamental as well as more inclusive theoretical framework of 'education for voluntary simplicity' as '*living-learning* for sustainability'. Its discussion includes: (1) the previous educational efforts, (2) two main orientations as the general educational theory—an overview of 'holistic education' and 'ecological education', and (3) new approach to education for simplicity—a link to outdoor-environmental education as more intensive and helpful occasion in its learning and teaching.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANING OF *SUSTAINABILITY*:
TOWARD A MORE COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING

As noted earlier, scientific research shows that modern people face various societal problems that require solutions for our survival, whether or not we realize it. In light of modernity's unstable situation, a notion of 'sustainability' has been developing since the 1970s.

In particular, this chapter will consider the following concepts and show their relationship: (1) the emerging notion of sustainability as it corresponds to the unstable world of today and its misinterpretation based on the Western-oriented idea of development; (2) the need for a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability—i.e., ecological as well as cultural perspectives on a better quality of life for all in a just, equitable, and peaceful manner; and (3) the link between ecological and cultural sustainability.

2.1 The Background and Meaning of Term

2.1.1 The Need for Sustainability

Many features of our local and global contexts show that humanity's very survival is in peril. The following summarizes our predicament:

- Within the last century, the Earth has endured a destruction of nature's diversity, in which: (1) half of the world's wetlands disappeared, (2) 80 percent of grasslands and 40 percent of the planet's land surface suffered from soil degeneration, (3) half the planet's forests vanished, (4) 70 percent of the planet's major marine fisheries were depleted, and (5) the world's freshwater systems deteriorated severely (Wood, et al., 2000; Matthews, et al., 2000; White, et al., 2000; Revenga, et al., 2000; Burke, et al., 2000).
- In a single 24-hour day, humanity encounters ecological and human

catastrophe in which: (1) more than 200,000 acres of rainforest are destroyed, (2) a total of 13 million tons of toxic chemicals are released, (3) more than 130 plant/animal species become extinct as a result of human activities, and (4) more than 45,000 people die of starvation, 38,000 of whom are children (Hartmann, 1998/2004, p. 1).

- Over the last century, 175 million lives have been lost in wars. Globally, the annual military expenditure is $780 billion, $380 billion of which is spent by the United States (Bell & Renner, 2001). "The Gulf War of the 1990s killed between 160,000 and 220,000 Iraqi people while 19 Americans died" (Merkel, 2003, pp. 8-9; also see Lugwid, 2001).

- As far as the Earth's capacity, the current population has already overshot ecological capacity by 40 percent in terms of over-consumption and overuse (Rees & Westra, 2003, p. 111). If the poor population, 80 percent of the earth's population, were to enjoy the same standard of living as the top 20 percent, we would have needed the resources found in about two additional planets by 1995 when the world population was 5.8 billion (Wackernagel & Rees, 1996, p. 91), and about four additional planets around 1999 when the world population was 6 billion (Burch, 2000, p. 79). In 2040, when the world's population reaches 10 billion, approximately six to 12 additional planets will be necessary (Wackernagel & Rees, p. 91).

- An unequal distribution of wealth on the planet exists, in which relatively rich individuals of the world's population (about 20 per cent) consume more than four-fifths of the planet's resources, while the remaining poor population (about 80 per cent) must share the rest-only one-fifth-of the resources (Banuri, 1993, pp. 50-51; WWF, 2002). One indication of this is that only about 8 per cent of world population-the majority in the North and small elites in the South-has a car (Sachs, 1999, p. 30).

- While people in rich nations are excessively taxing the Earth's capacity, people in poor nations have to live with insufficient resources to fulfill their basic needs. Since the end of World War II, the gap between the rich and poor has not dwindled. Although the majority of political leaders have claimed that the Western operation of development could improve this gap, in actuality, it has widened (Elgin, 1993, p. 40; Merkel, 2003, p. 61; Sachs, 1999, p. 29). As is generally known, the majority of people in poor nations are still facing the chronic problems of poverty, famine, disease, and conflict. This is because of the unchanging position of limited access to the necessities for survival, such as fresh food and clean water, energy, shelter, and medical care (Williams, 2004, 47-50 and 130-134).

These are not isolated problems; rather, they are closely interrelated problems that have been developing for years, locally, and globally (Elgin, 1993, p. 41)—the detailed interrelationships among these problems will examined in the following section.

Ecological degradation is not merely an environmental problem. It is a devastating crisis for humanity, because the ecosystem, or planet's capacity, supports the primary needs of human life.

Taking the aforementioned problems into account, it becomes clear that our current ways of life are not sustainable. However, it is only natural for all humans to want more a healthy, stable, secure, and peaceful condition and to live in a humane world now, and in years to come. Wrestling with these ecological and socio-cultural problems in order to change them into a more beneficial situation requires us to structure sustainable living and society in the local and global context, currently called "sustainability."

2.1.2 The Brief History and Fallacious Understanding of the Term 'Sustainability'

The term 'sustainability' has often been used in quite distinct ways. In order to comprehend the full meaning of sustainability, it is important to recognize the historical background to the appearance of limited conceptions.

According to Redclift (1987), the notion of sustainability was first introduced in the 1972 U.N. Stockholm Conference and the "limits to growth" discussion of the 1970s. The notion of sustainability gradually spread through the seminal work of three people: Dr. Wes Jackson, a leader of the international sustainable agriculture movement; Lester Brown, one of the world's most influential environmental analysts and author of *Building a Sustainable Society* (1981); and Robert Prescott-Allen, author of *How to Save the World* (1981) (Orr, 2004, p. 81).

The most frequent international use of the term "sustainable development" appeared in 1987 in *Our Common Future,* the Report of Brundtland Commission—also

known as the Brundtland Report—published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD). It defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WECD, 1987, p. 43). By 1991 the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) slightly altered the WECD's definition and proposed the current definition, "to improve the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of ecosystems" (IUCD, 1991). As Agyeman, Bullard, and Evans (2003) point out, however, "neither the WECD or IUCN definitions specifically mentions justice and equity" (p. 5).

Forty chapters of *Agenda21* (UNCED, 1992a) and *The Rio Declaration*'s (UNCED, 1992b) 27 principles[2] both address the themes of "sustainable future" and "sustainable development." In these documents, the issue of sustainability encompasses a broad range of social problems, including poverty, discrimination, inequity, and youth issues (in addition to the previous topics of environmental conservation and preservation, nourishment, resources, and energy). However, the view did not address the profound issue of justice, or the interrelationship among these subjects. Instead, on the pretext of sustainable development, it focused more on the inherent value of physical growth, such as the effective management of raw materials and environmental conservation, largely in terms of economic expansion (Sachs, 1999, pp. 27-46).

This trend of physical development emphasizes the fact that sustainability has often been defined in terms of a very limited understanding of the economic imperative, commonly known in the Western-oriented view as "development"; in this sense, people

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[2] *Agenda21* and *The Rio Declaration* were adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Earth Summit of 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro.

and nations have tended to strongly believe—especially since World War II—that it is, first and foremost, important and necessary to "participate in the development race and catch up with the lead runners" in competing for a better position on the GDP or GNP scale—namely, expanding material growth and wealth (Sachs, 1993, 4, 1999, pp. 3-5). This value system might be just like a myth of the modern era because such a belief of economic growth has doubtless been taken for granted as the primary tool for securing a stable life.

However, has this Western-oriented construct of development really contributed to sustainable living on a global basis? Analyzing the historical evidence of more than 40 years of Third World plight, it would be hard to say that the answer is positive. Shiva (1992) notes, "Sustainability is a term that became significant in development discourse in the 1980s because four decades of the development experience had established that 'development' and its synonym 'economic growth,' which were used to refer to a sustained increase per capita income, were unsustainable processes" (187). This observations is echoed by Sachs (1999) illustrating that, after 40 years of development based on economic expansion,

> The gap between front-runners [developed countries] and stragglers [developing countries] has not been bridged – on the contrary, it has widened to the extent that it has become inconceivable that it could ever be closed….: during the 1980s, the contribution of developing countries (where two-thirds of humanity live) to the world's GNP shrank to 15 percent, while the share of the industrial countries, with 20 percent of the world population, rose to 80 percent. (pp. 29-30)

Besides, their points are supported by the more recent statistics from World Bank Report (2000/2001) indicating that GDP of the richer 20 countries was 18 times that of the poorest 20 in 1960, but the different range had become 37 times in 1995. The data from U.N. Human Development Report (2003) further show the gap between the rich and

poor is widening. While some developing nations are getting richer than before, many others are getting poorer. In the 1990s, although the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty (defined an income of less than $1 a day) slightly declined from 30 percent to 23 percent—especially in China—the income level in 54 developing countries fell during the 1990s.

Even within the countries with declining poverty levels, such as China and Mexico, the gap between the rich and poor in those nations has expanded. This expanding gap that creates a larger class of poorer people is problematic because chronic poverty and a constant lack of living necessities tends to trap the poor in a vicious cycle of other chronic issues such as famine/hunger, malnutrition, illness, conflict, income shortages, and inadequate education (Williams, 2004). This causal connection will be explored in the subsequent section.

Why, then, was it unsuccessful for such a value system in the name of sustainable development underlying Western-oriented idea of development? On this point, Shiva (1992) claims, "There are, quite clearly, two different meanings of sustainability"—nature's and people's sustainability and market sustainability. The idea of nature's and people's sustainability actually indicates that "[s]ustaining nature implies maintaining the integrity of nature's process, cycles and rhythms," which is the basis for supporting "our lives and livelihood and is the primary source of sustenance."

Conversely, market sustainability is defined as "maintaining supplies of raw materials for industrial production" and growth (p. 192). Shiva shows that, in the modern sense of the word, the essential meaning of sustainability (nature's and people's sustainability) has been largely neglected. Instead, it has been replaced with the idea of

market sustainability as the primary tool for economic growth, and maintaining and developing society (pp. 182-192). However, the problem with market sustainability is, essentially, that it has not been able to sustain individual livelihoods or entire societies. This is caused by the inherent features of market sustainability that assert; (1) everything, including nature, is converted into material values, such as monetary profit that cannot directly provide human sustenance, and (2) this sort of economic activity essentially degrades the ecological capacity, crucial in supporting people's survival (McMurtry, 1998, especially see pp. 5-37).

As for the market economy of modern society, Shiva further states, "[S]ince industrial raw materials for market commodities have substitutes, sustainability is translated into substitutability of materials, which is further translated into convertibility into profits and cash" (pp. 192-193). Although this view of market sustainability stresses "ensuring the supplies of raw material, the flow of commodities, the accumulation of capital and returns on investment," these factors alone do not directly translate into sustenance, the very basis upon which human survival depends (p. 193). In other words, we cannot eat money itself in order to survive.

In addition, mainstream market sustainability aims for economic growth through market development that is also regarded as social development in and of itself (Nei, 1999). Economic discourse is predicated on loosely regulated competition, and it encourages people to possess and consume more without limitation, which is considered beneficial from a consumer standpoint. This system is a global trend today and illustrates how a competitive market economy is based on a mass-consumption society that holds to the principle "more is better" (Dominguez & Robin, 1992/1998, pp. 13-19; Durning,

1992).

In this context, intense competition to gain precious raw materials from anywhere on the planet so that one can possess more with no limitation to stimulate the economy, contributes to people blindly consuming just to possess 'materials' for the common good, and vice-versa. People will often overlook the interconnectedness of resources, such as food, water, energy, and other products originally derived from the Earth, that sustain human life within the confines of ecological capacity (McMurtry, 1998; Mander & Goldsmith, 1996; Sachs, 1993 and 1999; Stiglitz, 2002). However, this mode of human activity, devoid of any sense of limits, is not sustainable. The more avariciously people consume finite resources and materials from the earth for development or economic growth, the more "we are losing [the sustenance] by impairing nature's capacities to support life" (Shiva, p. 193).

Efforts to achieve market sustainability do little to maintain our basic needs, much less promote a higher quality of life. Rather, they jeopardize it. This contradiction has been inherent in the well-used words of sustainable development as the misconception of sustainability that has not been able to promote the core value of sustainable living as supporting ecological stability as well as human sustenance. Rather, its value system has depleted nature's capacity, as showed in the data cited earlier, and also expanded the problematic gap between the rich and poor because of consequential chronic social issues like poverty. Shiva sums up this situation briefly:

> Development was unsustainable because it undermined ecological stability, and it destroyed people's livelihoods…. Economic growth had promised to create abundance. It had promised to remove poverty. Instead, by causing the destruction of livelihoods and life-support systems in the Third World, growth itself became a source of poverty and scarcity. (p. 187)

In this way, the aforementioned understandings of sustainable development (the sense of sustainability based chiefly on economic growth with no ecological limitation) is not viable. Rather, it is destructive of human life. "Sustainable development" is a fallacious concept because defining sustainability in terms of market expansion, which erodes nature's capacity to support human livelihoods, makes human survival barely possible.

2.2 Toward a More Comprehensive Understanding of Sustainable Ways of Living

To avoid the error of interpreting sustainability only in terms of economic growth, the notion of sustainability requires more inclusive and intertwined understanding in which its different dimensions are woven together—such as ecological dimensions (organic activity of the earth, and nature in all its forms), social dimensions (politics, economy, legislation), and cultural dimensions (education, health care, recreation, welfare, life-way). We need an understanding of sustainability that appreciates how "ecology cannot be separated from equity, nor equity from ecology" (Sachs, 1998, p. ix). In other words, we need to appreciate the interrelationships between socio-cultural matters such as equity and welfare on the one hand and ecologically-related issues on the other. People's basic needs—food, water, energy, and primary materials for clothing, shelter, or tools—all originate with nature's blessings. In contrast, losing ecological stability—degrading the natural environment—directly endangers the very source of livelihood as well as the quality of life. Within this context, to make sustainable living possible, everyone must—at minimum—be able to access nature's capacity in one's region supporting the basic needs of a humane existence and have the opportunity to

enhance their abilities and quality of life.

On this view, the fundamental meaning of sustainability embraces a more comprehensive sense of improving the quality of life for all of any generation at all levels of a living system, without viewing it as a narrow idea—merely as a national or household economy and its development. This sense of sustainability also involves a progressive feature as "not merely about 'sustaining' the quality of our lives," but also "about *improving* it" (Roseland, 1998, p. 2). For this reason, the notion of sustainability only in terms of "environmentally-related issues," is not enough to examine the issues of quality of our lives for all. The socio-cultural discussions also should be embraced in thinking about and practicing sustainability.

Regarding such social- and cultural-related issues that we should undertake, a journalist and television producer for the BBC, Jessica Williams, clearly reveals the statistical evidence in her work, *50 Facts That Should Change the World* (2004). I pick some up below:

- "Infant mortality rates in many countries remain high. In Sierra Leone, 157 babies out of every thousand will die before their first birthday" because of insufficient public health infrastructure (p. 5);
- There is an inequity between the rich and poor in terms of the "distribution of wealth across the world's people" in a way that "[t]oday, the world's richest 1 percent receive as much income as the poorest 57 percent" (pp. 48-49);
- "Every day, one in five of the world's population – some 800 million people – go hungry" while "the rich world is enjoying the benefits of scientific and medical research and looking forward to long, prosperous lives" today…. "Two billion people suffer from chronic malnutrition. Eighteen million die each year from hunger-related diseases. Around half of the deaths of children under five (10 million each year) are associated with malnutrition…. Nutritionists consider that a healthy diet provides 2,500 calories of energy a day. In the USA, the average person consumes 3,600 calories a day. In Somalia, they get 1,500" (p. 130);
- "Worldwide, the ILO [International Labor Organization] estimates that there are 246 million child labourers aged between five and seventeen. Of those, 171 million are working in hazardous situation; roughly 8.4 million are involved in

what the ILO terms 'the unconditional worst forms of child labor', including forced and bonded labour, armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and other illicit activities" (p. 67);

- Whether going to war in Iraq or not was discussed by the U.S.A. and its allies, "more than a third of the world's population were already involved in conflict. In 2002, 30 countries around the world were fighting in 37 armed conflicts—a combined population of 2.29 billion people" (p. 140) and;

- All legislations banning slavery—such as the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the 1926 Slavery Convention (by League of Nations), or the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (by the United Nations)—have not "ensured an end to slavery in the modern world." As a matter of fact, "[t]here are more slaves in the world today than there have been at any other time in history. Anti-slavery groups estimate that there are some 27 million slaves, on every continent except Antarctica, producing goods that we in the Western World use every day." (p. 218)

Contrary to the promotion of sustainable living as improving the quality of life for all, the conditions above could not be recognized as secure and stable in any sense or context.

To sum up, the concept of sustainability should include socio-cultural elements of sustainability, or simply *cultural sustainability*, in addition to the concern for ecological sustainability.[3] It refers to socially and/or culturally related issues, such as more human-creating ideas, decisions, practices, systems, and everyday life—the matters of social welfare (public health, learning opportunity, basic amenity) and justice (equity, discrimination, famine/hunger, poverty, security, civil peace) and the economic-political system capable of social affairs. Within this view, the concept of sustainability in this thesis is defined as one that involves every facet of human life, including biological diversity and independence, natural beauty, earth's blessings (natural resources), politics,

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[3] Although I use the phrases "ecological sustainability" and "cultural sustainability" ("socio-cultural sustainability"), I just expediently use each as the viewpoint to argue my assumption in an organized way. Therefore, I do not mean to provide each of them with a strictly independent meaning, but rather they are interlinked with each other as shown in the following main discussion.

economy, lifestyle, education, thought, and action, uphold honorable methods of satisfying our needs, while achieving our aspirations. The goal of sustainability, defined in this way, is to ensure a better quality of life for all in a just, equitable, and peaceful manner, without reducing the opportunities of current and future generations, while living within the ecological limits, or productive capacity of the planet (Capra, 1996, p. 297; Agyeman, et al., 2003, p. 5).

2.2.1 Ecological Sustainability and Its Features

The concept of ecological sustainability implies a balanced relationship between humans and nature. This balance, in turn, involves humans coexisting with nature in a greater harmony that recognizes a sense of ecological "limits to growth" (Sachs, 1999, p. 39). Viewing sustainability from the standpoint of ecological limitations is effectively illustrated by an analytical method called an "ecological footprint," proposed by Dr. Mathis Wackernagel and Dr. William Rees (1996). The ecological footprint is "an accounting tool that enables us to estimate the resource consumption and waste assimilation requirements of a defined human population or economy in terms of a corresponding productive land area" [4] (Wackernagel & Rees, p. 9). An ecological footprint indicates "the corresponding population's total 'appropriated carrying capacity'" and "the continuing material dependence of human beings on nature" (Wackernagel & Rees, p. 11), or material consumption, and possessions. In this analysis, an ecological

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[4] The productive land (and water) includes various standpoints—"the land needed for growing food, fiber, and timber" as well as "land for buildings, land to absorb wastes from manufacturing and energy consumption, and land for public areas like parks, shopping center, and streets" (Burch, 2000, p. 78; also see Meadows, 2004, pp. 291-292). In general, it can be categorized by seven types of area: (1) Cropland; (2) Pasture; (3) Forest Land; (4) Sea Space; (5) Built-up Land; (6) Fossil fuel; and (7) Wilderness Land (Merkel, 2003, pp. 79-80; also see Wackernagel & Rees, pp. 51-52 and 88-89).

footprint represents ecological limitations, which then provide the degree of moderation required at various levels, from smaller units, such as individual and family life,[5] to larger units like communities, nations, even the entire earth.

Consequently, an ecological footprint is quite a useful tool to bring "this emerging reality [ecological depletion] to consciousness" (p. 55). It allows us to "plan for sustainability" not only in a more national and global sense, but also when it involves "individual and institutional decision making" (p. 28). Indeed, the ecological footprint is used globally in many diverse applications today. Specifically, the ecological footprint of most nations of the world has been included in the *Living Planet Report* (1998/2000/2002/2004), containing "a comprehensive overview of planetary sustainability," that has been published biannually by The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for Nature International since 1998 (Merkel, p. 77). Based on the ecological limitations derived from this ecological footprint analysis, we become more conscious of pursuing new options for sustainable living.

Ecological sustainability within physical limits depends on abiding by, and maintaining, the earth's laws as the dynamic system—ecological reproducibility and diversity supporting survival for all living things on our planet. This principle should guide human thought and action, rather than economic imperatives entrenched in the idea that more is better, which, as we have seen above, places unlimited demands on limited natural systems. Sustaining ecological reproducibility is a continual process in nature that

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[5] There is an easy and helpful method called the "Ecological Footprint Quiz" to calculate a relatively accurate Ecological Footprint for individual life (and family) that is comprised of "12 easy questions you'll be able to compare your Ecological Footprint to what other people use and to what is available on the planet" (Merkel, 2003, pp. 87-94). This simple questionnaire is provided by Redefining Progress (California and Washington, D.C.; http://www.redefiningprogress.org/ & http://www.redefiningprogress.org/footprint/). Redefining Progress also updates the footprint of nations and puts the report on the Web site.

can replenish resources through the cycle of the seasons as long as human, economic

activities satisfy three conditions that Dr. D. H. Meadows, Randers, and D. L. Meadows

(2004) describe in their well-known work of *Limits to Growth*, referring to famous

ecological economist Prof. Herman Daly's observation, as the following:

- The rate at which renewable resources are consumed does not exceed the rate of regeneration.
- The rate at which nonrenewable resources are consumed does not exceed the rate at which sustainable, renewable substitutes are developed; and,
- The level of pollution emissions does not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment.

(p. 254; also see Daly, 1991)

This process of natural or ecological reproduction is closely related to another

important feature of ecological diversity—biodiversity inherent in Earth's dynamic

system. That is to say, the stable process of nature's reproduction can be sustained within

the secure condition of biodiversity. This is a logical outcome because ecological

reproduction can be regarded as the result of the balanced interaction among all the

entities dwelling on the planet and their secure events (Hunter, 1996; Leakey & Lewin,

1995).

Ecological diversity, or biodiversity, can be viewed in the complex

interrelationship among all entities and their events, and its secure balance. In terms of

biology:

> Biodiversity is the diversity of life in all forms (plants, animals, fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms) and at all levels of organization (gene, species, and ecosystems). Biodiversity includes these structural components as well as functional components, that is, the ecological and evolutionary processes through which genes, species, and ecosystems interact with one another and with their environment. (Hunter, 1996, p. 30)

Therefore, sustaining biodiversity implies the fact that the delicate ecological

connection and balance that makes stability possible consists of intimate and harmonious

relationships among a variety of entities and related events, which is also the basis for the secure process of nature's reproduction, as described above.

For example, deforestation not only endangers various creatures supported by and enriching the woods, but also reduces rivers, ocean, and air quality, as well as the quality of life for all the life forms living in each environment (Field Science and Research Center, Kyoto University, 2004). Within this view, humans, who are involved in these ecological events as inhabitants of this planet, also can be regard as an integrated part of earth's biodiversity. In fact, the maintenance of human living is directly connected to sustaining the natural environment around them. For instance, fishermen have long known that, because woodsy nutrition can nurture sea creatures sufficiently, it's important to protect lakeshore, riverside, and seacoast forests to increase the number of fish and shellfish (Matsunaga, 1993).

On the contrary, if humans degrade the quality of forest land, river, sea and all creatures ranging there, the living sources procured by their healthy conditions—such as secure water, air, and food that support the quality of human life, will be also depleted. Hence, maintaining ecological diversity further emphasizes the importance of coexistence and integrated prosperity among species, as well as each of their living systems on the planet.

Human beings, however, have degraded the biodiversity (as shown earlier in the statistical data). It is also said that "[b]ecause of the presence of over five billion humans on the planet, we are losing species at a rate of 17,000 to 100,000 a year (depending on whose numbers you use): a worldwide implosion of plant and animal life that has only been equaled five times in the past five billion years (the last time being the

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death of the dinosaurs)" (Hartmann, p. 55; also see, Leakey & Lewin, 1995, pp. 240-241).

According to Dr. Richard Leakey (1995), the well-known paleoanthropologist, this trend can be recognized as a mass extinction and has jeopardized a secure balance of all of nature. Furthermore, he illustrates that—as the animal at the top of the pyramid—it would be possible for human species, which extinguished those species supporting and feeding it, to in turn face a mass extinction of its own if things do not change soon (chap. 13 and 14, pp. 232-254). Additionally, in terms of material use and consumption "humans consume 40 percent of net primary productivity (NPP) on land; that is, the total energy trapped in photosynthesis worldwide, minus that required by the plants themselves for their survival," which refers to a further fact that "of all the energy available to sustain all the species on Earth, *Homo sapiens* takes almost half" (Leakey & Lewin, p. 239).

This statistical evidence implies that humans have been depleting Earth's biodiversity—the destruction of the secure balance and connection among species as the basis for making secure living and the entire planetary system possible. Needless to say, this is problematic to sustain the earth and each of species living here—including human beings.

As with the loss of ecological diversity, our socio-cultural dimensions of diversity—cultural diversity—seem to have declined, too. The cultural diversity can be seen as an interaction among societies, races, or nations in human communities as one of all other species' categories on this planet. Like biodiversity supporting survival for all, thinking about cultural diversity refers to recognizing a balanced relationship and connection among every cultural form (community, group, country, etc.) as necessary so that everyone can sustainably coexist. Yet, this sort of cultural diversity is imperiled in the

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imbalance and unfairness of power and wealth. The conditions contributing to the loss of cultural diversity can be seen in the following observations based on the statistics from the United Nations Development Program:

- The difference in wealth between the world's richest and poorest people slowly grew over the first two-thirds of this century. But in 1960, an explosion began: between then and 1989, the distance between rich and poor doubled.
- As of 2003, the richest 20 percent of the world's population controlled over 87 percent of the world's wealth, whereas the poorest fifth of the world had access to only 1.4 percent. That's a ratio of 60:1. We approached such an imbalance just before the stock market crash of 1929 (around 40:1), but other than that time, such an imbalance has never been seen in a "democratic" economy that survived, although it's common in ones that have flipped from democracy to dictatorship or anarchy, such as numerous African nations, pre-World War II Germany, pre-Revolutionary France, etc.
- The Northern Hemisphere countries (North America, Europe, northern Asia) contain only 25 percent of the world's population, but they consume over 70 percent of the world's total energy stores, eat more than 60 percent of its food, and consume over 85 percent of its wood.
- While we're accumulating wealth and consuming resources at this incredible rate, thousands of people die from hunger worldwide every hour.

(Hartmann, 1998/2004, pp. 55-56)

The active disregard of disadvantaged people and cultural groups by dominant economics appear to be similar to human behavior toward other species as well as the earth (as seen in biodiversity problems). In short, contemporary ways of thought and action seem to be based on something about the same value standard—"[i]f taking the resources of other species is acceptable, why not take the resources of other humans, too? If exploiting other species is a good thing, why not exploit other humans, too?" (Hartmann, 1998/2004, p. 55).

It would be hard to recognize that the unfair condition above is proper for cultural diversity, whose tendency can be seen rather as unstable and insecure at the global level. Conversely, maintaining cultural diversity, as well as biodiversity, seems to

be indispensable to consider sustainability for all. This is because such a loss of cultural diversity as in harmony or imbalance among each social/cultural group or nation (e.g., war, political and economic unfairness, unequal access to material use, etc.) has created negative effects on sustainably sound ways of life—hunger, poverty, and illness in generating a tremendous gap between the rich and poor. It becomes more difficult for poorer people to sufficiently meet basic human needs as well as standard wealth. Also, this depressing situation leads to other conflicts to gain their sources for survival (Williams, 2004). In addition to this fact, the discord among the cultures, more often than not, is potentially related to the depletion of ecological diversity (biodiversity) as earth's secure system and her various entities in balance.

Within this context, to sustain cultural diversity, each person, group, society, and nation must consider its connection with others, not in a violent and destructive manner, but in a more co-creative and prosperous manner. In taking such a secure, peaceful, and constructive path in harmony with others, it is necessary to involve caring about an issue of "inequity – of income, of opportunity, of power" existing "between the rich, industrialized world and the poorer, developing nations," whose problem is tightly connected to the worldwide issues of poverty, illness, hunger, and insufficient social well-being (basic human needs, public health, basic education) in the poorer people and countries (Williams, p. 1). I will show the more details about how to link these factors in the following section.

2.2.2 Cultural Sustainability and Its Interrelationship to Ecological Issues

As viewed in the previous section, ecological sustainability, more or less relates

to socially and culturally sustainable issues related to matters of justice and welfare that is here called "cultural sustainability." Sachs (1998) points this out that "[t]he crisis of nature and the crisis of international justice are interlinked" (p. ix). There are some links between them below.

2.2.2.1 Ill Health and Poverty

Ecological issues, health, economics, are closely interrelated. Improving one will generally benefit the others, ultimately, and vice versa. For example, the more people overuse and contaminate air, rivers, oceans, trees or woods, and soil, the more health conditions will worsen, heightening the risks of disease and epidemics. This is generally regarded as "pollution disease" that humans have historically experienced mainly in the areas where politics has pushed modernization as well as industrialization under the name of development based on limitless economic growth, since the Industrial Revolution began in the 18th Century.

Illness is also closely linked to poverty, defined as an income of less $1 a day. It's a sad fact that "[o]ne in five of the world's people lives on" poverty meaning, "[t]he cycle of ill health and deprivation is hard to break" (William, p. 47). For instance, such poor people "do not get access to medicine or health care" diminishing "their years of healthy life" while sick people, needless to say, cannot work to make enough money for food and basic services such as medicine and education (William, p. 47). Many of people living in such a condition are seen in poor countries. As noted above, however, even within poor countries, there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor, three-quarters of whom live in rural areas where agriculture is the major source of

livelihood as compared to an urban area commercial town (Rijsberman, 2004, p. 498). In other words, "[e]ven in countries where poverty levels are declining, there are inequities which mean not everyone is benefiting from those advances" (Williams, p. 49). For example, the U.N. Human Development Report 2003 (2003) reported that China's development strategy focuses much more on industry rather than on agriculture, so people in the richer coastal areas profit more and more at the expense of the rural poor. In Mexico, the south region that has much less trading and employment opportunity due to its distance from the U.S., is the poorest, which have generated such a tremendous gap that 10 percent of the richest people earn 35 times more than the poorest 10 percent. The data also show "children in the lowest income groups are three times more likely than children from the wealthiest families to suffer some kind of psychiatric problem" (Williams, p. 247).[6] In poverty "[w]here there is no security of food or income, people cannot make choices," which constantly makes them vulnerable and voiceless (William, p. 47).

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[6] This is a Britain case, reported in "The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain" by Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics in 1999, showing that "poverty in the West is defined differently from poverty in the developing world" without "looking at a pure income threshold – the $1 a day level often used by aid agencies. For instance, "poverty in Europe is defined using relative standards" as "a minimum acceptable standard of living" in terms of "all a person's resources – material, cultural, and social" (Williams, p. 246). More importantly, poor children in UK—even though it is one of the highest industrialized countries (the world's fourth-largest economy)—come to hold some of the mournful trends that are likely to be similar for poor children in developing countries: (1) "Children born into poverty are more likely to die in the first year of life, are more likely to die from childhood accidents, and will live shorter lives than children," (2) They are more likely to live in cramped homes with damp problems and lack of heating; in the UK, 750,000 families with children live in poor housing," (3) "Poor children are much more likely to be excluded from social activities like school trips and leisure services, and (4) "[Y]oung people living in persistent and severe poverty are more likely to have strained relationships with their parents, and are less likely to be happy with their appearance and their lives as whole" (Williams, 2004, 246; also see, End Child Poverty Campaign (retrieved October 24, 2008 from www.ecpc.org.uk) for the first and second factors, and Save the Children UK (2003). *New horizons: Annual report 2002/03*, for the third and fourth factors)

2.2.2.2 Conflict/Warfare – Its Relation to Resource/Water/Food Security Problems

The issues of ecological capacity and its stability—such as natural resource and its scarcity—have much to do with contemporary issues of conflict. Indeed, "[i]n about a quarter of the roughly 50 wars and armed conflicts of recent years, natural resources helped to trigger or exacerbate violent conduct, or helped to finance its continuation" (Williams, p. 161), which resulted in more than 5 million deaths in the 1990s (Worldwatch Institute, 2003). The natural resources—energy, nutrition, and material goods—are the very basis for our sustenance. But they are easily replaced with monetary profits especially in competitive global markets of capitalistic economic societies (McMurtry, 1998), triggering many legal fights. For example, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country that yields plentiful mineral ores of gold, diamonds, and columbite-tantalum (used in mobile phones and computers), had occurred by the scramble among neighboring countries for the bountiful resources that "provided a means of paying for the military campaigns, and a rich source of revenue for unscrupulous governments." A United Nation report in October 2002[7] showed the armies of Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Uganda illegally despoiled the DRC's rich natural resources in a manner that the "armies had fuelled inter-ethnic battles within the DRC as a means of justifying their own presence in mineral-rich areas" (Williams, pp. 161-162).[8] Likewise, in Columbia, cocaine as the natural resource has sown the seeds of strife between the

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[7] Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo, report to the U.N. Security Council, 16 October 2002.

[8] Against the accusation by the U.K. report, although Rwanda protested it, it did not make sense due to the fact that "Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, had famously said the war in DRC was 'self-financing'" (Williams, p. 162).

government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebel group for about 40 years. Although FARC refers to itself as a peasant revolutionary group, American officials regard them as narco-terrorists, because they earn about $400 million every year from the cocaine trade.[9] FARC as well as other antigovernment armed group sell "drugs, gems, and gold, and buy arms to fuel the war."[10] The U.N. panel of experts came to the conclusion that "illegal exploitation remains one of the main sources of funding for groups involved in perpetuating conflict" (Report to the U.N. Security Council, 28 October 2003).[11]

On one hand, these conflicts in DRC and Columbia are rooted in an abundance of resources. But, at the same time, it is often assumed that the scarcity of natural blessings also causes such conflicts. Ongoing human behavior of degrading the natural environment, as shown previously, implies further degradation of ecological capacity despite the fact that humans have already met the overshoot – the current world's population has already over-consumed and overused the Earth's capacity by 40 percent (Rees & Westra, 2003, p. 111). The more that nature's capacities are depleted, the more we see energy, food, or water decrease.

The desire to obtain decreasing natural resources for survival has led to harrowing battles. In fact, experts foresee conflicts could increase as the result of scarcity of resources in the coming years. For example, oil reserves could be exhausted around 2025 to 2040 (Hartmann, 1998/2004, pp. 16-19). They might be captured by invading

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[9] Also see, the related article in the website of the Council on Foreign Relations (retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.cfr.org/publication/9272/).

[10] Since Colombia's government cannot sufficiently control outside major cities, "FARC and other rebel groups have been able to set up sophisticated trading networks" for such natural resources (Williams, 2004, p. 162).

[11] Quoted in Williams, 2004, p. 162.

countries. For instance, we could look to "the 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and the Western world's swift response, to see that" (Williams, 2004, p. 162). This is because, since the first discovery in early 1860s (Pennsylvania), contemporary society and its economy totally have come to depend on the oil as non-renewable energy in wide-ranging ways that "[w]e need to petrol to fuel cars, aeroplanes and ships; we need crude oil to provide energy for electricity generation and as a raw material in plastics, solvents, fabrics, and detergents" (Williams, 2004, p. 146).

More than that, however, there is another flash point of key resource seen as a strong possibility to foment a conflict: water. Obviously, water is indispensable for the maintenance of life as about 60 to 70 percent of the fat-free mass of our human body is made of water. Additionally, human civilizations—cultures and society—historically have developed around rivers, lakes, springs, and natural wells since ancient times.[12] The reason: water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for agriculture to produce food.

Political scientist Libiszewski (1999) makes the similar point that "[s]ecuring an adequate water supply is,..., an essential precondition of socio-economic development, as well as a central aspect of social contract between people and the state" (p. 115). As for worldwide everyday water consumption, the "92 percent is accounted for by economic activities" (agriculture, industry and commerce) and a person drinks two to four liters on average (Libiszewski, p. 115); however, 2,000 to 5,000 liters of water is used to produce a person's daily food (Molden, Fraiture, & Rijsberman, 2007, p. 42). Another example of the relationship between water usage and food production (agriculture) indicates that to

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[12] As for the representative example, there are so-called the Four Great Ancient Civilizations ('Mesopotamia' between the Tigris River and the River Euphrates, 'Egypt' around the Nile, 'China' around the Yellow River or the Yangtze River, and 'India' (Indus valley civilization around the Ganges), 'Maya civilization' with natural fountains, 'Inca civilization' around Lake Titicaca, and so on.

harvest 1 kilogram of cereal, 1 to 5 cubic meters of water are needed, and 15 cubic meters of water are needed to produce 1 kilogram of beef (FAO, 2003, p. 203). These data shows that water is most highly consumed in agricultural affairs. Indeed, about 70 percent of the world's fresh water is used in agriculture, and over 80 percent in poor countries.[13]

As with oil, however, the amount of water is not limitless. As a practical matter, there are about 45,000 cubic kilometers of fresh water resources, defined as theoretically possible to use for drinking, hygiene, agriculture, and industry, which is only 0.003 per cent of the total amount of world's water—about 1,400 million cubic kilometers of water. Further, only about 9,000 to 14,000 cubic kilometers are economically available for human use—in other words, just a teaspoon in a full bathtub when compared to the total amount of water on earth (FAO, 2002, p. 1). This limited supply of water never increases, but merely circulates on the dynamic mechanism of this planet again and again. Put simply, the sun makes water on the earth's surface (rivers, lakes, oceans, ground etc.) rise to the sky in the form of vapor. The water vapor cools and transforms to clouds that, in turn, become rain and snow, landing in the surface and being a part of world's water again. Despite this fact of this physical limitation, our water consumption has increased every year. For example, Prof. Rijsberman (2004) indicates that "[t]he world population tripled in the last century, but water use grew sixfold" (p. 498).

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) reports that, if the present rate of water consumption continues, a water shortage will have an impact on one-third of the world population by 2025. African nations could be

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[13] This series of statistics on water is presented in the database of The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Land and Water Development Division, Water Resources, Development and Management Service (AGLW). For more details, see the Web site; http://www.fao.org/landandwater/aglw/mandate.stm. The data showed in the statements are retrieved October 24, 2008 from the article; ftp://ftp.fao.org/agl/aglw/docs/**aquastat_e**.pdf.

most affected leaving "as many as 500 million people without access to clean water.[14]"

Furthermore, a lack of clean drinking water will naturally lead to food-production challenges, "with a 23 percent shortfall of crop yields expected" (Williams, 2004, p. 163). Most African nations are economically poor, so they "will be unable to finance the food imports they need" as the rich countries can, resulting "in widespread hunger and malnutrition" (Williams, 2004, p. 163). That is to say, water shortages and its related serious issues—e.g., conflict, food insecurity and hunger, insanitation, illness, poverty, etc., have been recognized by water experts for several decades and by policymakers and the public at large for the last 5 to 10 years. This is generally viewed as "the water crisis," interpreted as "the lack of access to safe and affordable water for more than 1 billion people and lack of access to safe and affordable sanitation for close to half the world population" (Rijsberman, 2004, p. 498).[15]

In the near future, this sort of the water crisis is where struggles could arise as the 6th U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali once warned in 1985 when he was Egypt's minister of state for foreign affairs. "[T]he next war in the Middle East will be fought over water, not politics" (Williams, 2004, p. 163).[16] As a matter of fact, "the most likely area of conflict is the Middle East, where 5 percent of the world's population lives on just 1 percent of its water" (Williams, 2004, p. 164). Some countries in this region already have sparked trouble over the procurement of water resource several times before. Likewise, the Nile and the River Ganges could become the source of contention about

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[14] CGIAR press release, 2 November 2003 (http://www.cgiar.org/; also see, the article retrieved October 24, 2008 from
http://www.arabnews.com/?page=6&section=0&article=47768&d=3&m=7&y=2004).
[15] For example, see; 'Water scarcity: A looming crisis?', BBC News Online (retrieved October 24, 2008 from; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3747724.stm).
[16] I refer to Williams' quotation. The sentence, however, is quoted originally in the article
'Middle East Water – Critical Resource', *National Geographic*, May 1993.

water use among neighboring countries (Williams, 2004, pp. 163-164).[17] Also, there are similar water hotspots across the world, such as the Ogallala aquifer in Mexico City and the Aral Sea in Southern Australia, and more.[18]

In addition to the problems of how a conflict damages natural resources, warfare itself destroys the natural environment. In other words, once modern high-tech bombs, missiles, and chemical agents are used, not only people but also the land is destroyed, sweeping out the ecological system and diversity there—trees, rivers, soils, flora, and fauna (Bertell, 2001; Suliman, 1999). This doesn't even include the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II, or the low-cost landmines (as little as £2, about $4, each) that are still commonly placed in war zones around the world and are not removed even after the conflict ends. These mines kill one person an hour and destroy vegetation in the minefield where agriculture is also impossible (Williams, 2004, pp. 62-65). Furthermore, some other catastrophic damages by the warfare can be seen in the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS, U.S.) documentary

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[17] As for the conflicts among surrounding countries in the Middle East, Williams (2004) explains that "in the mid-20th century Israel sent tanks and aircraft to destroy Syrian bulldozers trying to divert tributaries of the River Jordan, and in 2002 it threatened action when Lebanon started pumping water from a river feeding the Jordan. Palestinians complain that Israel's control over water allocation leads to an erratic and expensive supply, and that the underground aquifer they share has become damaged through overuse. Israelis in the West Bank use four times as much water as their Palestinian neighbours" (p. 164). And Williams sees the Nile that intricately runs through 10 countries, as the big flash-point because the "half the population lives below the poverty line" and the population "is expected to double in the next 25 years," which unsurprisingly makes their "tensions even higher" (p. 163). Regarding the River Ganges, India maps out a plan for interconnecting more than 30 rivers in the country by waterways so as to divert water toward drought-prone areas. By India's plan, however, there would be a potential for water shortages in Bangladesh, whose government regards its plan as a "weapon of mass destruction in the offing" (see the article retrieved October 24, 2008 from; http://southasia.oneworld.net/article/view/69335/1/.)

[18] For more details, see; 'Map: The World's Water Hotspots', BBC News Online (retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3754520.stm).

Environmental Impact of War (1991)[19] as follows:

- U.S. forces sprayed the defoliant Agent Orange over jungle areas and farmland in the Vietnam War. Today, 25 years later, those areas are still polluted and unable to grow food.
- Two-thirds of Kuwait's groundwater is still contaminated by oil spilled during the First Gulf War.
- As the result of NATO bombing campaigns in Kosovo that targeted chemical plants and oil refineries, black rains fell on the attacked city of Pancevo, radiating such carcinogenic chemicals as dioxin in concentrations many thousands of times higher than recognized safety levels. The contaminated rains further poisoned the soil and crops, as well as people who ate them.

As mentioned earlier, warfare badly affects food security. According to U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 18 African nations faced food emergencies in 2001. Eight were undergoing civil war and three more were tormented by the aftershock of conflict.[20] This is mainly because, in addition to the fact that the armed conflict itself destroys and pollutes the land and water resources needed to grow food, "a government will divert resources away from food production in favor of the military effort" during the conflict. Moreover, it is also too difficult to properly distribute food and too dangerous to engage in agriculture in the battlefield (Williams, 2004, p. 131). In Rwanda in 1995, in fact, war displaced three-quarter of the farmers and cut the yield in half.[21] It's also all too true that warring factions use hunger as a tool of war. To cut off the supply of food, one side attempts to disrupt the other's food stock and divert food aid to the military. There are also cases where warring parties laid mines on lands and deliberately polluted water

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[19] The award-winning film produced by the Center for Defense Information (CDI), 29 August 1999, and awarded a prize (Gold Award) by Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival 2000 (www.worldfest.org/). For the documentary film of CDI, see the information retrieved October 24, 2008; www.cdi.org/adm/awardstable.html.

[20] Resource from 'Why Famine Stalks Africa', BBC News Online, 12 November 2002 (retrieved October 24, 2008 from; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2449527.stm).

[21] Date from U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), retrieved October 24, 2008 from www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/food.pdf.

sources.[22]

2.2.2.3 Hunger/Famine – Its Relation to Poverty and Ill Health Issues

Armed conflict greatly jeopardizes ecological capacities – most importantly, water, and food security as the basis for everyday sustenance. As an inevitable consequence, most people who live in rural areas of poor countries – with little access to basic living requirements or money to obtain them, suffer severe hunger-/famine-induced malnutrition. This, in turn, leads to illness.

These unhealthy surroundings produce a chronically vicious cycle of poverty, seen mostly in rural areas. In analyzing the relationship among socially and culturally catastrophic problems underling contemporary world, Prof. Rijsberman (2004) concludes:

> As a result, poor people suffer diarrhoeal diseases that kill some 2 million people each year, over 90 percent children under the age of 5. For others, the crisis is that poor and malnourished people in rural areas do not have access to water to grow their food and sustain their livelihoods. Some three-quarters of the 1.2 bn [billion] poor and the 800 m [million] malnourished people in the world live in rural areas, with agriculture as their sole or primary source of food and income. (p. 498)

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2000) reports that hunger and malnutrition are among the most serious problems for the world's people living in poverty. However, appropriate nutrition and health are essential human rights for all people as set forth in Article25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). "[E]veryone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food."

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[22] Showed in the article 'Armed Conflict and Hunger' (retrieved October 24, 2008 from; www.worldhunger.org/articles/fall2000/messer1.htm).

Overcoming hunger would be fundamentally necessary to enable poorer nations to develop sustainably. This is because people with adequate nutrition are able to keep their health and work better, which allows them to reliably earn more for supporting sustenance. Indeed, a study in Republic of Sierra Leone indicates that, "on average, a 50 percent increase in calories per consumer equivalent would increase output by 16.5 percent, or 379 kg" (FAO, 2001, p. 64).[23]

2.2.2.4 Basic Education

The FAO estimates that some 300 million poor children in the world not only suffer from hunger and malnutrition but also either do not attend school or do not receive a meal during the school day—even though basic education appears to be the most effective tool to reduce the state of hunger/famine.[24] In fact, in countries with an adult literacy rate of 40 percent, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) averages $210; when the education rate was at least 80 percent, per capita GDP jumps to $1,000 and more.[25] Additionally, girls who go to school tend to marry later and have fewer children. That leads to declining birthrates and a correspondingly lower impact on food/water consumption. Furthermore, farmers who have a minimum of four years of education are up to 10 percent more productive.[26]

However, the basic education challenge for children living in poverty is that

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[23] This reference is retrieved October 24, 2008 from www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X9800E/X9800E00.HTM.

[24] The data from the article 'Food Aid to Save and Improve Lives', retrieved October 24, 2008 from the FAO; www.fao.org/newsroom/en/facts/index.html or www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/wfp.pdf.

[25] The data retrieved October 24, 2008 from the UNESCO figure, quoted by FAO; www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/wfp.pdf.

[26] The data retrieved October 24, 2008 from the World Bank figure, quoted by FAO; www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/wfp.pdf.

"[r]ather than staying in school or receiving training, children are sent out to work" to earn their bread and butter even if wages are low (William, 2004, p. 47). The U.N. International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that throughout the world, 250 million children (aged 5 to 17) work full time—155 million in Asia alone. In India where two-fifths of people live in abject poverty, for example, the ILO estimates that there are 44 million child workers—a matter of necessity for most of them.[27] However, "[u]nofficial child labor estimates are as high as 100 million, which is roughly equivalent to official estimates of the number of out-of-school children (aged 5 to 14)"[28] (The Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, 1998, p. 16).[29] Irrespective of which number is correct, an important fact to recognize is that "millions upon millions of Indian children are working – and their education, health, and future will suffer because of it" (Williams, 2004, p. 66).

In addition, it is easy to recognize that people living in war-torn areas neither can conduct educational activities, nor receive instruction—obtaining knowledge and skills in many contexts (personal, common, social, cultural, traditional, etc.). In Southern and Western Africa and Central America, where conflicts constantly continue, it is too hard to learn and teach any farming skills between generations.[30] The absence of those

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[27] The data come from; Global March against Child Labor (www.globalmarch.org). In India, "[w]here caste and lack of education make well-paid jobs hard to come by, children may be forced to go out and work so they can contribute to the family." For example; "[t]here are children at work weaving saris, cleaning sewers, making glass. [T]here are girls who work as domestic help in other people's homes, and children who take on the major responsibility in their own families for caring for younger children." What is worse is that "[t]he work they get is often hazardous, and the conditions can be close to inhuman" (Williams, 2004, p. 66).

[28] As for the number of child workers in India, the estimates vary broadly. In addition to the indicated figure in context (44 million), the government reports that 12.6 million children (aged 5 to 14) are in full-time employment. In general, many NGOs and international organizations use 44 million to 55 million as the working number.

[29] The article retrieved October 24, 2008 from; www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/sweat5/.

[30] Showed in the article entitled 'Armed Conflict and Hunger' (retrieved October 24, 2008

traditional skills is also implicated in a higher incidence of HIV/AIDS cases.

There is a vicious cycle between hunger/malnutrition caused by diminished agricultural activities in battlefield areas and "an earlier onset of Aids symptoms after HIV infection," which "increases the likelihood of opportunistic infection – thus further shortening the lifespan of the sufferer". And once one or both parents becomes sick, "the family will lose valuable income and may be forced to sell assets like livestock to pay for healthcare and burials," which makes children "leave school in order to work or care for sick relatives." Then, "[t]he specialized knowledge that parents might have hoped to pass on to their children may be lost" (Williams, 2004, pp. 131-132).[31]

In areas or countries of strife, furthermore, even children who should get their education are often used as child soldiers by unscrupulous armies. The only reality these children know is conflict. The only training they have is not basic education, but combat techniques. Children under 18 are fighting in almost every region of the world. They have participated in ongoing or recent conflicts in some 33 countries.[32] Today, there are more than 300,000 child soldiers fighting in conflicts around the world. They are "[o]ften poor, displaced, or separated from their families, children whose communities are involved in violent conflict are easy prey for recruiters" (Williams, 2004, p. 195).

Armies will try to manipulate children, promising them food or shelter or respect, drawing them into conflicts that they are too young to understand (Williams, 2004, p. 195). Far from receiving a basic education, child soldiers are always in peril

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from; www.worldhunger.org/articles/fall2000/messer1.htm).

[31] This vicious cycle also can be seen in some articles in Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, HIV/AIDS and Food Security, http://www.fao.org/hivaids/ (e.g., the related article retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/004/y6059e.htm, etc.).

[32] The data from Human Rights Watch, 'Facts about Child Soldiers' (retrieved October 24, 2008 from; www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/facts.htm).

from violence. A 15-year-old girl who had escaped from the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda gave researchers a message. "Please do your best to tell the world what is happening to us, the children. So that other children don't have to pass through this violence."[33]

2.2.2.5 Summary

I have indicated how ecological instability (depletion of resources, capacity) is interrelated with culturally sustainability issues (e.g., poverty, hunger/famine, health, malnutrition, conflict, agriculture, and education) within a problematic context of the tremendous disparity between the rich and poor that is still widening. Expressed another way, there are limited opportunities for the poor to access ecological/physical sources, making it far too difficult to obtain basic necessities for human life (food/nutrition, clean air and water, energy, and materials). It is true that some developing nations are getting richer, but many are getting poorer.[34] Even within the countries with declining poverty levels, the gap between the rich and poor has expanded (as seen in the aforementioned cases in China and Mexico). This expanding gap is problematic because chronic poverty traps the poor in a vicious cycle of other chronic issues such as famine/hunger,

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[33] Quoted at the article retrieved October 24, 2008 from; http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ACT76/014/1999/en/dom-ACT760141999en.html.

[34] In the 1990s, the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty—defined as living on an income of less than $1 a day, declined slightly from 30 percent to 23 percent, especially in China, where more than 150 million people have risen from poverty in the past decade (U.N. Human Development Report, 2003). In 54 developing countries, however, the income level fell during 1990s. Twenty of these were in sub-Sahara Africa and 17 were in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In 2000, the United Nations proposed in its Millennium Development Goals to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2050 (Sachs & Fukuda-Parr, 2003). However, the U.N. warns that although the overall goal is reachable thanks to the improvement rate of two large countries—China and India—the remaining countries will not. At current rates, for example, it will take until about 2150 for sub-Sahara Africa to halve its the population living in poverty (U.N. Human Development Report, 2003).

malnutrition, health, conflict, reduced income, inadequate education, and more. Figure 1 illustrates the complex relationships among these major factors underlying the unsustainable orientation of contemporary society.

One major reason for this irreducible gap: the negative result of neoliberal economic globalization. I assume that globalization itself—defined as the expansive process of interconnecting the world—is not an improper, but rather a natural trend. If it were regulated in a more appropriate manner, in which people cooperated on the basis of shared values to create something better for all, we might take effective steps toward solving problems. Unfortunately, globalization has been chiefly promoted under the guise of 'global economy'—the expansion of worldwide market economies mostly by richer nations and transnational companies to gain more profits across the earth, while ignoring the negative impacts on the poor. This implies, that is to say, that "rich nations have been able to use globalization as a further tool of exploitation, imposing tough barriers on poorer countries while lavishly propping up their own economies, while corporations use cheap labour and materials in poorer nations to further maximize their profits" (Williams, 2004, p. 1).

Many of the world's problems, Williams suggests, "are caused by the grotesque inequalities" between the rich and the poor (2004, p. 1). I also assume that to consider the world issues—how we can improve the world in a sustainable manner—it is essential to pay initial attention to the matter of equity—the fair opportunity or accessibility to obtain everyday basic needs and welfare. Indeed, as has been seen with the data above, such chronic social issues as poverty, hunger/malnutrition, illness and disease, and violence
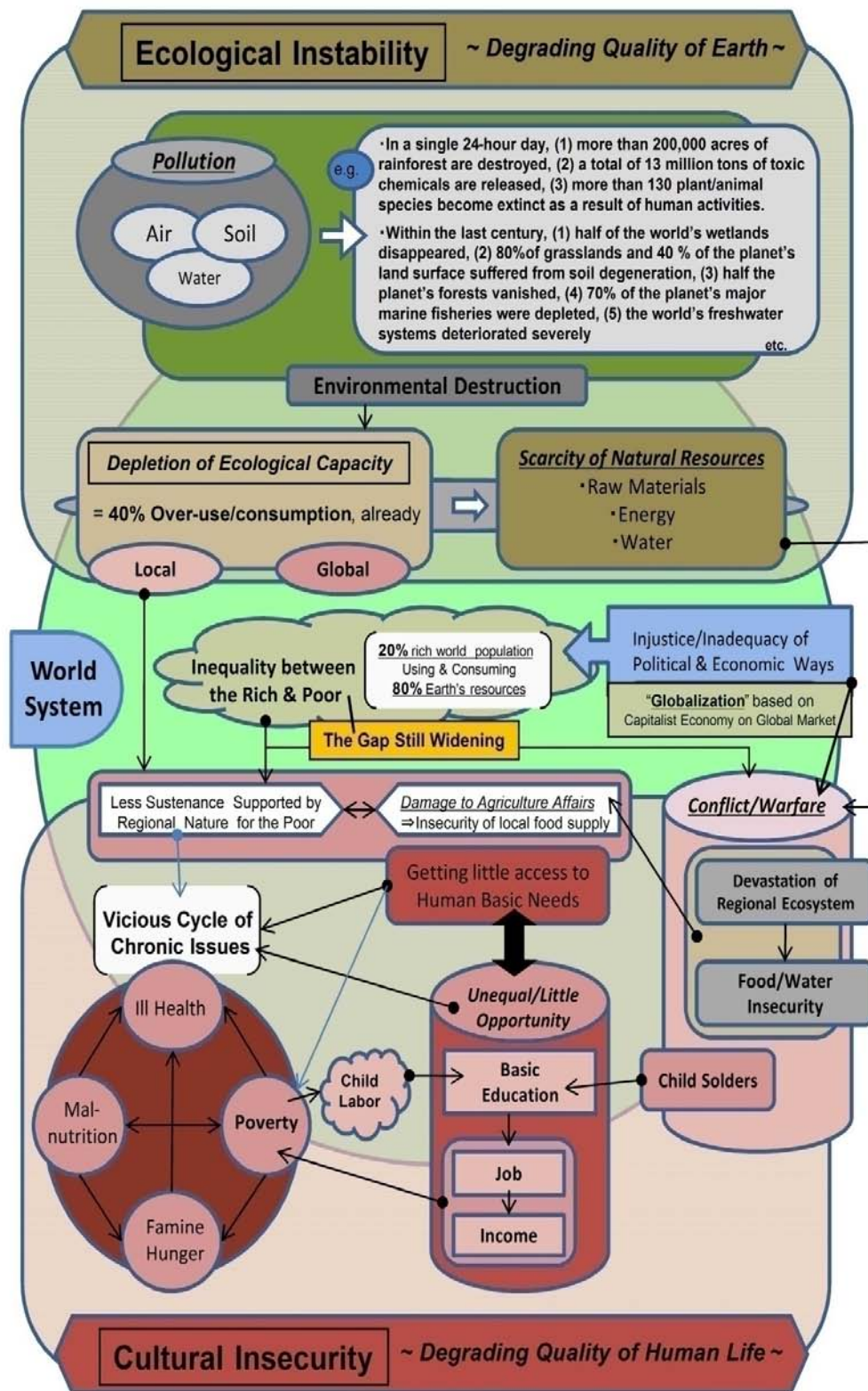
Figure 1. Unsustainability Correlation Chart

underlying poor nations largely can been seen as the result of the unfair access to and use of nature's capacity between the rich and poor, which is closely linked to unequal distributions of energy/material sources, income, power, or opportunities (education, medical care, and more).

Conversely, focusing primarily on the matter of equity could become a first step to tackle the creation of a more sustainable world. As we have observed, it is statistically said that making good use of less than 1 percent of the income of the wealthiest nations each year, the worst effects of poverty could be highly reduced, for example (Sacks & Fukuda-Parr, 2003). In doing so, then, "[p]eople would have enough to eat, basic services like health and education would be available to all, fewer babies would die, pandemic diseases could be brought under control" (Williams, 2004, p. 47).

Although hunger and malnutrition are seen as the most serious issues for those living in poverty, the cause is not food shortages, but distribution challenges. In fact, the world produces enough food each year to feed all people on this planet if it were shared equally (Millstone & Lang, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, the public good—nature's blessings, common material possessions, accessibility to public services and security, civil power, etc.—should be shared evenly among all, without inclining toward only the small number of people/groups/nations.

In assuring such human basic needs that reduce anxiety about tomorrow, provide distressed people with peace of mind, and give them hope for the future, we could start to build a more sustainable way of living. Resolving this view of equity in terms of opportunities, consequently, is the very foundation of living in peace and security in a world that has less poverty, hunger, illness, conflict, and misallocation of

resources (material/energy/food/water source, wealth, opportunity).

The practice of voluntary simplicity is choosing a simpler way of living. The way of life emphasizes the idea of sufficiency—the sense that enough is enough and things should be shared with others, which can be derived from the view of ecological 'limits of growth'. This orientation encourages people to live with equal opportunity to access basic needs for everyday life to avoid socio-cultural issues, such as poverty, illness, hunger, and conflict. Furthermore, the simplicity lifestyle is contradictory to a culture of superfluous economic globalization. Unfortunately, the current culture is based on a sense that more is better with no physical limitations that take into account the needs of earth. This popular, but environmentally destructive notion has been one of the fundamental factors causing global ecological breakdown and, as a result, an unsustainable world, as noted earlier. In this school of thought, preventing wasteful excess of scarce planetary resources continues to take a backseat to intense international pressure to gain maximum profit at all cost—for short-term gain. Voluntary simplicity seems to have some potential as a counterculture to combat economic globalization and its resulting negative outcomes ramifications, which will be explored in a later chapter.

Education, as shown above, may be the most important factor to diminish hunger; however, there has been not such a kind of education now. It is an effective way to contribute to ameliorating other problems underlying society and the entire world, and then to transforming toward the more sustainable orientation. I will turn next to exploring the educational point of view for creating sustainable ways of living on the earth.

CHAPTER 3

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION:
AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS IS THE CORE

3.1 Sustainability Education: Past Challenge and Future Possibilities

Historically, education has widely been considered as the fundamental path towards life success, opportunity, and transformation in any discipline. Thus, many believe that, via education, more ecologically sustainable and culturally friendly living conditions on the planet can be achieved. Such educational objectives and methods are generally referred to as 'education for sustainability', or simply 'sustainability education'.

In terms of the international efforts for sustainability education, the UNESCO, designated as the lead agency, has promoted Resolution 57/254 on the 'United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development' (2005-2014, UN-DESD), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2002. The UN-DESD started 1 January 2005 and will run until the end of year 2014. Its core educational goal, in a large sense, is "to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 5). The UN-DESD also coincides with Goal 2 (Achieve universal primary education) of 'Millennium Development Goals' that states: "Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (United Nations, 2003, p. 3).[35]

Before the UN-DESD, the perspective on sustainability education reflected the history of sustainability in international works—such as the United Nations Conference

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[35] Also see, the data retrieved October 24, 2008 from
http://devdata.worldbank.org/gmis/mdg/list_of_goals.htm.

on the Human Environment in 1972, the publication *Our Common Future* (also known as *Brundtland Report*) by the Word Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987, and the publication *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* by the World Conservation (IUCN), the United Nations Environmental Programme, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in 1991. The major observations of 'education for sustainable development', however, can be identified in 'Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21*' (UNCED, 1992a) on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Their perspectives, then, have been expanded upon in the Work Programme of the UN Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD), as provided in the reports of the main UN Conferences of the 1990's, such as in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, and so on. In the United Nations summit in Johannesburg in 2002 (the 2002 Johannesburg Summit), more recently, the vision of sustainable development was broadened, and the educational objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for all Darker Framework for Action were re-affirmed. The 2002 Johannesburg Summit emphasized the agenda of more practical goals, and then proposed the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

My argument in this thesis is that concrete practice implementing behavioral change in everyday life is the basis for development toward a sustainable society, which is what sustainability education should seek to accomplish. The more recent educational

effort of the aforementioned UN-DESD makes similar points. For example, UNESCO's

publication *UNDESD 2005-2014 International Implementation Scheme* (2005) states:

> ESD is fundamentally about values, with respect at the center: respect for others, including those of present and future generations, for difference and diversity, for the environment, for the resources of the planet we inhabit. Education enables us to understand ourselves and others and our links with the wider natural and social environment, and this understanding serves as a durable basis for building respect. Along with a sense of justice, responsibility, exploration and dialogue, ESD aims to move us to adopting behaviours and practices that enable all to live a full life without being deprived of basics. (p. 5)

This statement seems to endorse both ecological and cultural sustainability

agendas. More clearly, the ESD is explained as involving the "important perspectives

provided by human rights, peace and human security, gender equality, cultural diversity

and intercultural understanding, health, HIV/AIDS, governance, natural resources,

climate change, rural development, sustainable urbanization, disaster prevention and

mitigation, poverty reduction, corporate responsibility and accountability, and the market

economy" (p. 6). In the following sections of the text, furthermore, the main concept of

ESD is described in terms of three major perspectives that each include sub-viewpoints;

(1) "Socio-cultural perspective"—human rights, peace and human security, gender

equality, (2) Environmental perspectives—natural resources (water, energy, agriculture,

biodiversity), climate change, rural development, sustainable urbanization, and disaster

prevention and mitigation, and (3) Economic perspectives—poverty reduction, corporate

responsibility and accountability, and market economy (pp. 19-22). With respect to the

UN-DESD vision of a more practical scheme, the detail of action plans

("implementation") are proposed from four points of view; (1) "Local (sub-national)

level," (2) "National level," (3) "Regional level," and (4) "International level" (33-44).

Even though these are merely abstract, which, of course, are incapable of embodying a sustainable society by its conceptual form alone, it also would be true that the concept of ESD requires more attention to concrete action than before, not only to environmental-related values, but also to socio-cultural values as well.

The effort of the UN-DESD, needless to say, is quite valuable, as well as necessary to take a step towards yielding some good results of a sustainably-sound society/the world for the prosperity of present and future generations. An important point for understanding the notion of 'Education for Sustainable Development', however, is for us not to hold the simple notion that merely regards education as a mechanistic combination of our teaching/learning practice and 'sustainable development' idea, simply based on the previously-mentioned myth of Western-oriented development; rather, the notion of sustainability has been confused with chiefly expanding market and capitalist economy as the major way to maintain one's living and society, as well as country. Yet, this system of sustainable development without a proper understanding of maintaining sustenance at the bottom is fallacious, as has been described in the former chapter. As can be seen, this notion of sustainability is not the kind that will actually be sustainable for worldwide populations—the reality emerging from the myth of sustainable development has not been able to make all people and countries evenly approach a sustainable way of living; rather, most of the poorer countries have been experiencing unsustainable conditions as poverty, hunger, conflict, and ill health grip them, while the gap between the rich and poor keeps expanding. In this context, learning and teaching about such a fallacious view of sustainable development cannot be regarded as leading learners to sustainable ways of everyday thinking and action.

In this thesis, therefore, I intentionally avoid using the term 'sustainable development' to avoid any confusion. Rather I intentionally use the word 'sustainability' as the more essential meaning that implies certain human effort for enabling all people equally to have opportunities to meet their everyday basic needs, to better their quality of life and future prospects. As with the argument about the relationship between sustainable development and sustainability in the fallacious or desirable context, I attempt to use the phrase 'sustainability education', or 'education for sustainability', rather than 'education for sustainable development'. Although the words 'education for sustainable development' is internationally recognized and used, it is often misused within the fallacious meaning of 'sustainable development'. In this context, the words of sustainability education/education for sustainability, as based upon the essential and comprehensive meaning of sustainability, is used in this thesis.

The goal of this chapter is about the attempt to propose my own observation as a theoretical foundation capable of supporting the desirable concept of sustainability education that also recognizes and is confirmed by the past failure. It must be derived from the more essential and all-inclusive meaning of sustainability that refers to enabling all people to have equal opportunities to access basic needs for enhancing one's quality of life and potentials, as discussed early. This interpretation of sustainability is based upon the notion of avoiding its misunderstanding that stem mostly from the myth of Western development. For this discourse of sustainability, recognizing the more holistic approaches (ecological, social, cultural, etc.) and its interrelationship among them are necessary at the core. In so doing, the perspective of sharing the earth's capacity with all the world populations within the ecological framework that respect nature's physical

limits is critical to the survival of humanity. In order for us to capture this sort of idea of sustainability education, it is assumed that the notion of 'interconnectedness' should be fundamental to its education theory and practice. This assumption of mine for sustainability education, then, could make some contributions eventually to the promotion of the UN-DESD's vision and plan at the basis. In other words, my theory of sustainability education could support the UN-DESD's attempts that now come to emphasize ultimately nurturing the sense of concrete action too, in terms of what kinds of worldviews and learning/teaching can make one take the action needed for building sustainable ways of one's own lifestyle with the greater context of networked society, nation, and the world, in the practical sense. In doing so, this thesis also would show additional vision for sustainable path on our earth at present and in the future, as one of many ways.

Within this context, this chapter examines what kinds of perspective are necessary to support the desirable idea of sustainability education I propose, largely from two points of view. First, I will show some of the conceptually essential factor indispensable for forming a notion of sustainability education as the entire theory. The second argument is about the understanding of the notion of interconnectedness underlying the essential concepts above. Within this context, furthermore, I would like to take a look at an overview of 'holistic education' and 'ecological education' as the major orientation of sustainability education that embraces the essential factors with the well-understanding of idea of interconnectedness/wholeness at the basis.

3.2 Essentials of Sustainability Education: Reflection on the Holistic Concept of Sustainability and Its Implications

Some essentials of education for sustainability should be considered from the more holistic understanding of the idea of sustainability as the proper meaning that I have described in the previous chapter. In a broad sense, there could be overall four conceptual elements as the basis for supporting the desirable notion of sustainability education. The first two factors are derived from the desirable ideas of sustainability, which were previously discussed. The latter two concepts are implied by the previous two observations. Metaphorically speaking, these four essential concepts are like human bones and muscles needed to steadily construct the whole human body (if I look the entire theory of sustainability education as a human body).

The first factor is an understanding of holistic *meaning* that embodies multiple senses (essential, ecological, social, and cultural), and the interrelationships among them. As explained in the former chapter, by *holistic*, I mean the comprehensive conception of sustainability that refers to enabling all people equally to have opportunities to meet their sufficient basic needs and to better their quality of life. In a way, it does not diminish the prospects of future generations. Then this comprehensive view, best of all, must be based on the fundamental meaning as maintaining sustenance.

More precisely, sustainability means sustaining our fundamental human needs on a daily basis, which refers to maintaining an ecological balance between both nature's/earth's capacity and people's living conditions, because human sustenance is primarily produced by the blessings of nature. Its education, then, requires more all-inclusive and intertwined understanding—such as, ecological dimensions (organic

activity of the earth, and nature in all its forms), social dimensions (politics, economy, legislation, etc.), and cultural dimensions (education, health care, recreation, welfare, life-way, etc.). To put it differently, sustainable education should address a learning/teaching process for; (1) ecologically-related sustainable matters and issues (e.g., nature's capacity and stability, all events and entities taking place in her, etc.), (2) socially and/or culturally related sustainable issues, such as human-creating ideas, decisions, practices, systems, and lifestyle, which embrace matters of 'social welfare' (public health, learning opportunity, basic amenity, etc.), 'justice' (equity, poverty, famine/hunger/malnutrition, ill health, security/violent behavior, civil peace, discrimination, etc.), and 'the economic-political system' capable of social affairs.

More importantly, each subject should not be taught and learned in a fragmentary manner, but should be addressed in reciprocal relationships with other subjects. For example, it would be necessary to consider such socio-cultural matters as equality or welfare in terms of interrelation to ecologically-related issues—sharing nature's capacity equally so that everyone can access daily essentials to sustain their lives. This idea in sustainability education can be captured by Sterling's (2001) central idea of "sustainable education" as a transformative paradigm in education that "both develops and embodies the theory and practice of sustainability," which "values, sustains and realizes human potential in relation to the need to attain and sustain social, economic and ecological wellbeing, recognizing that they are deeply interdependent" (p. 22).

In this way, sustainability education requires encouraging learners to comprehend the reciprocal relationships among ecological, social, and cultural matters in dealing with particular issues. In doing so, sustainability education should enable every

learner to determine how to solve problems and achieve objectives in her or his life context. To tackle ecologically-related and culturally-related issues, as suggested in the very last part of the previous chapter, paying sufficient attention to the matter of equal opportunity for all could become a key for action toward them as the very first step.

The second factor for sustainability education, therefore, is to consider equal opportunity for all – that is to say, how we will make it possible for everyone to have everyday basic needs for better quality of life. From another point of view, thinking about this matter of equality also means seeing the background that such chronic social issues as poverty, hunger/malnutrition, illness and disease, and violence underlying poorer people and countries should be thought as the result of the unfair distribution of wealth and global resources.

Considering this interpretation of equality, we should remember is that the earth's resources are not infinite and that it has physical/ecological limitations, in terms of its productivity, and regenerative function, for instance. This fact further means that the matter of equality as proper distribution of world wealth should be discussed within the context of reality of the ecological/physical limitation. For example, today's world population has already overshot the ecological capacity by 40 percent around 2003 (by 20 percent in 1999) in terms of over-consumption and overuse (Rees & Westra, 2003, p. 111; Meadows, et al., 2004, pp. xiv-xv). Referring to this practical number, then, we can come to know about our level of using resources over the limitation, and about what we should do and how much degree we share the capacity with all the world population within the limitation. Therefore, considering the regard of equity—sharing the earth's capacity with all, requires the understanding of the idea of so-called "limits to growth"

(Meadows, et al., 2004), which embraces the argument of problems of physical/ecological limitation on our planet capable of supporting our very sustenance.

In this way, sustainability education requires helping learners to consider the issue of equal opportunity for all in the understanding of social background causing the inequity, which should involve the idea about how to share the earth's capacity within the ecological limits—limits to growth. In light of the ecological limits problem, then, an idea and method of ecological footprint could be a quite useful tool for learners to recognize and understand nature's capacity as well as its limitation. Also, it allows us to understand our contemporarily overshooting the capacity in its over-consumption and overuse.

Two of the afore-mentioned observations for sustainability education are the reflection of the desirable concept of sustainability in the previous chapter. There, then, are two more points for sustainability education, as implications that can be derived from the former two views. First (third of overall four points), as noted above, the notion of sustainability and its education require embracing such all-inclusive matters as natural environment, cultural affairs, and social activities—in short, all aspects of life. Therefore, sustainability education in itself is the process of learning for living throughout one's whole life, put more formally, lifelong learning. If so, sustainability education, as related to all aspects of life, should not be limited to a particular program or organization. Rather, a learning process that has so much to do with survival should be integrated into all realms of educational opportunity throughout one's whole life, whether formal or informal, including family, workplace, community, schools, and so forth. In formal schooling (primary, junior high, and high school in general), particularly, the curriculum

of every subject should to a certain degree include the sustainably-related topics.

Everyone could be a leader in education for sustainability education, which requires a more inclusive approach in the educational process. In terms of school education, this learning process tries to avoid the pitfalls of teaching sustainability as one more subject in an already dense curriculum, or relegating it to only the realm of environmental issues, where it becomes merely a transmission of abstract and technical data related to the natural environment. The UN-DESD recognizes the same point: "ESD is for everyone at whatever stage of life they are," which "takes place, therefore, within a perspective of lifelong learning, engaging all possible learning spaces, formal, non-formal and informal, from early childhood to adult life." Furthermore, ESD is regarded as a learning process in "interdisciplinary and holistic: learning for sustainable development embedded in the whole curriculum, not as a separate subject" in a way that "everyone is a stakeholder in education for sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6).

Last aspect, most importantly, is the transformation of idea and knowledge into 'action' needed for concrete 'social change' toward the sustainable world. More precisely, sustainability education must be a sort of learning and teaching process that can make learners eventually take everyday action in an ecologically and culturally harmonious manner. To transform the contemporary world toward a more sustainable form in a practical sense, concrete action at all levels (personal, family, community, local, national, international) is needed at the very bottom because only the concept and theory cannot embody the agenda. For example, we cannot practically eat pie in the sky; we must take action that makes a pie to have it in reality. In other words, sustainability education should emphasize the process of teaching and learning for applying knowledge in action.

In order for us to transform our ways of life, there should not be a separation between knowledge and practice, but the integration of two dimensions. Whitehead (1929/1957a) recognizes this importance as the "art of the utilization of knowledge" in education (p. 4), which means that education is a process in which people learn a way of cultivating and creating the life of the self and society by using knowledge in a practical ways. Consequently, sustainability education should enable learners to be 'literate in sustainability', where 'sustainability-literate' means being capable of transforming knowledge about the holistic understanding of sustainability into everyday practices needed to build one's way of living in ecologically and cultural harmony. Orr's notion of "ecological literacy" makes a similar point from the ecological point of view in education (1992, pp. 86-95). Orr emphasizes that, for people to become ecologically literate, they need to master practices through their acquired knowledge. This view of using acquired idea or knowledge in a practical ways will be examined in greater depth in the following two chapters.

My assumption is that these essential factors forming the conceptual framework of sustainability education can be further supported by the idea of interconnectedness at the bottom. Metaphorically, the view of interconnectedness also can be seen as a part of bone structure as well as the conceptually essential factors we have seen above. Essentially, the interconnectedness permeates the human body, as in the case of the backbone, having a very physical and functional central bone maintaining the structure of the other bones as well as the entire body (as sustainability education). Put differently, the idea of interconnectedness can be regarded as the foundation of a house, and other conceptual essentials as frames and walls (baked-mud, boarding, etc.) of the house (if an

entire house is like the concept of sustainability education). Figure 2 shows this interrelationship among the fundamental idea of interconnectedness and four conceptual essentials in sustainability education. I will next examine the notion of interconnectedness at the very core (the backbone) for the theory of sustainability education (a whole body).
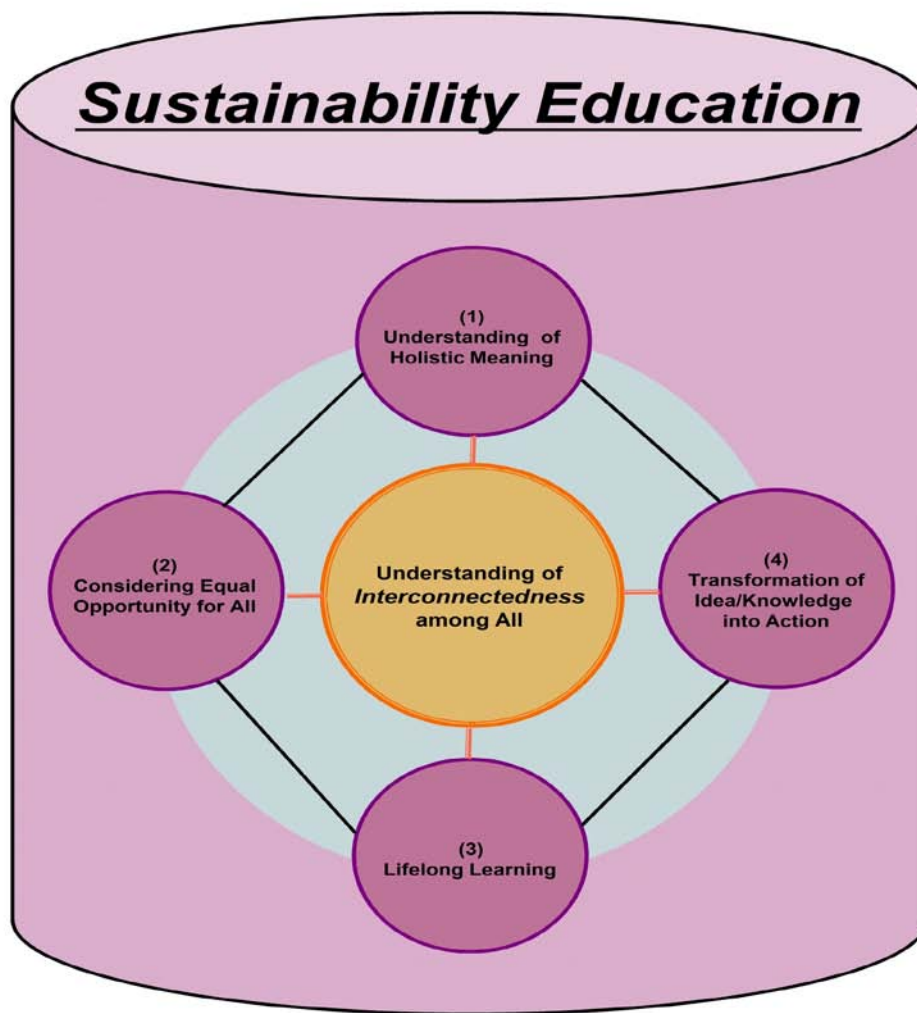
Figure 2. Sustainability Education Essentials

3.3 Interconnectedness as the Basis of Sustainability Education

This section analyzes the meaning of interconnectedness of all beings, the sense of integrated whole (wholeness) or kinship among all entities and events, as the basis of sustainability education. I begin by examining the fundamental importance of the meaning of interconnectedness in Whitehead's process philosophy, and then show that sustainability education emphasizes the concept of interconnectedness that also involves the sense of human connectedness with nature, as being important.

3.3.1 The Understanding of Reality of Interconnectedness of All Entities and Events

The notion of '*interconnectedness*', or wholeness, refers to an organic and dynamic view that mutual relationships among all entities and events are constantly taking place in the world or universe (Jungerman, 2000, pp. xiii-xv). More precisely, one is an integral part of a larger whole system such as (regional) nature, the earth and a cultural group (community, society, nation) where one is living; hence, all beings are mutually related to one another in this universe. In other words, one can never be separated from others and the larger system, and everything is influencing everything else. Interconnection is thought to be a fundamental feature of both the natural and cultural worlds. The relationship between discrete individuals and wholeness or interconnectedness resembles the cohesive nature of the symbiotic relationship of the human body, where discrete structures are connected to the whole, as in the case of the nose and face. Further, the same may be said, no doubt, of the relationship between discrete face and whole body, and any other relationships, too.

This organic view of interconnectedness, or wholeness, can be regarded as opposite to the dominant modernist worldview of so-called 'scientific materialism' that was inherited from the seventeenth century science as the new discoveries—the Scientific Revolution—shaped by Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Bacon, Newton, especially in the field of physics, astronomy, and mathematics (Capra, 1996, p. 19; Jungerman, p. 4). Descartes regarded "the entire universe" as "a giant machine, and this machine-like nature echoed all the way down to the smallest level" as an independently isolated part, which led to another idea that people could always operate nature as if it were a mechanical matter. In this sense, it was natural for them to even assert that "animals were just biological machines, incapable of feelings or emotions" (Hartmann, 1998/2004, p. 134). Theoretical physicist and systems theorist Dr. Fritjof Capra (1982/1983) refers to this perspective as the "Cartesian-Newtonian" or "mechanistic" worldview.

This scientific materialist worldview, moreover, has reinforced the trend toward human relationships with the earth or nature that have little emotional and spiritual connection because, in this worldview, people are seen merely as machine-like inanimate matter (Vokey, 2001). Without an intimate relationship to nature or the earth such as care, sympathy, concern, and so forth, there is no physically and psychologically sufficient connection with her, but rather separation. Similarly, there is hardly a physical and mental communication with someone who you do not well know, unlike such well-known people as family members and close friends who you are involved with. Since the lifeless machine does not have no sensation such as pain within the context of human disconnection from the natural world, which underlies the modern worldview, people can easily handle, manipulate, abuse and destroy nature or the rest of life-forms

for human ends just as doing the same thing to such an inorganic matter as mechanical devices and plastic tools (Kinder, 1994). The newly emerging field called 'ecopsychology' [36] is the very study area to address this trend of negative human behaviors and the problems. In his books *The Voice of the Earth* (1992) and *Ecopsychology* (1995), Theodore Roszak elucidates how modern people are disconnected from the natural world in physical, mental, and spiritual regards, which causes the contemporary issues of environmental degradation as well as our illness. Conversely, he shows that reconnecting with nature can be thought as a significant therapeutic process both for the individual and for society.

Within this context, the sense of interconnectedness can be seen in stark contrast to the scientific materialistic worldview dominant still in today's society. In other words, its organic and dynamic idea is a counter-perspective to the mechanistic and reductionistic understanding of the world. Capra (1982/1983) observes this trend as the necessarily perspective transformation toward "the system view of life" that involves the idea of "the essential interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena" (p. 265). Further, he describes it as "a new perception of reality" that implies "[t]he new paradigm may be called a holistic worldview, seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a

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[36] According to an article "Toward a More Radical Ecopsychology," by Dr. Andy Fisher (1996), also known as the author of *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, "Ecopsychology is a promising new discipline that seeks to synthesize psychology and ecology. It suggests that the violence we do to ourselves and to the natural world results from our psychological and spiritual separation from nature. By ecologizing psychology and bringing psychological insight into the ecology movement, it seeks to understand the psychological dimension of the environmental crisis and to help us recover our capacities to care for the earth and each other. By its very nature, ecopsychology challenges the human-centered status quo of mainstream psychology and demands of environmental activism a more psychologically-sophisticated approach" (p. 22).

dissociated collection of parts" (Capra, 1996, p. 6). Therefore, the sense of connectedness among all can be often rephrased as the idea of wholeness or integrated whole.

According to Jungerman, this idea of interconnectedness, or wholeness, is best explained by Whitehead's cosmology of the space-time continuum (pp. 3-14). Interconnectedness, the interdependence or kinship among all entities and events, is a fundamental feature of both the natural and cultural worlds. Interconnectedness, as we have seen, stands in contrast to the basic assumptions of scientific materialism where "massy atoms" are the most elementary entities. In this world-view, "particles of matter are solid points isolated from one another by space acting as an insulator," and "objects are contained within it and separated from one another" (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 27). The Newtonian notions of space and time hold that "all motion takes place within absolute space (Whitehead, 1923/1961) and change occurs when solid objects collide with one another, causing 'various separations and new associations and motions… [among] these permanent particles'" (Newton, 1730) (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 27).

In contrast, process philosophy holds that "particles cannot be considered as isolated points" because no solid pieces of matter are separable from one another by absolute space, but rather "are complex events that establish their own rhythm by entering into a set of relationships with their environment" (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 27). This notion of the space-time continuum holds that space can only be "experienced" as a "process of transition," as a living event that changes constantly and is hence situated in time (Whitehead, 1938/1966, p. 15). Moreover, the character of these living events "varies according to the manner in which they are related to other events" (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 27). Entities and living organisms are not divided from one another by space and

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time as a set of isolating/isolated points. Rather, they are connected with different events that are constantly taking place in the space-time continuum. Interconnectedness is fundamental to space, time, matter and the experiences taking place in all three (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 29), and it enables the world to be felt as both a unitary reality in which all entities and events are interconnected, and a plurality of events in a continuous process of transformation in space and time (Whitehead, 1929a/1957; Regnier, 1996, p. 89).

Within this notion of a space-time continuum that is both unified and diverse, all entities and events as well as their experiences are interconnected or related to one another. Put differently, each entity can only be comprehended in terms of how it is interwoven with other entities as an integrated whole (Whitehead, 1941/1966, p. 687; Birch, 1996, p. 10), for "relationships connecting entities within events define everything" (Benson & De Leeuw, 1996, pp. 1-2)—human beings, their experiences, and the natural and cultural worlds in which they live.

Within the scientific context, systems theories, or systems thinking, echo Whitehead's observation of the idea of connectedness or wholeness. As for systems thinking, most of the core criteria had been formulated by organic biology, Gestalt psychology, and science ecology by 1930, all of whose "exploration of living systems—organisms, parts of organisms, and communities of organisms—had led scientists to the same new way of thinking in terms of connectedness, relationships, and context" (Capra, 1996, p. 36). Furthermore, this new way of thinking and understanding of living systems, including the ecological/earth's system or our living world, can be corroborated by "the revolutionary discoveries in quantum physics in realm of atoms and

subatomic particles" (Capra, 1996, p. 36). Although I do not examine all the detail for systems thinking because the fuller discussion lies outside the scope of my main topic in this chapter, the following summarizes key traits related especially to the idea of interconnectedness and wholeness, according to Capra's (1996) explanation.

First, the perspective of systems thinking is "the shift from the parts to the whole," which captures living systems as "integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller parts" because "[t]heir essential, or 'systemic', properties are properties of the whole, which none of the parts have" (p. 36). In this sense, second, since "[t]he properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties but can be understood only within the context of larger whole," systems thinking can be viewed as "'contextual' thinking; and since explaining things in terms of their context means explaining them in terms of their environment" (p. 37). Therefore, third, "[t]hroughout the living world we find systems nesting within other systems, and by applying the same concepts to different systems levels—for example, the concept of stress to an organism, a city, or an economy …" (p. 37). Within this context, fourth, as quantum physics demonstrates that ultimately, "there are no parts at all," 'a part' can be regarded as "a pattern in an inseparable web of relationships," which further leads us to the view of "a shift from objects to relationships." Indeed, "the relationships are primary," and "[t]he boundaries of the discernible patterns ('objects') are secondary," for the systems thinker (p. 37). From these viewpoints, the last aspect is that nature, as well as our living world, can be captured as "interconnected web of relationships" that could be "described in terms of a corresponding network of concepts and models, …" (pp. 40-41).

These perspectives of connectedness and wholeness seen in Whitehead's account as well as systems thinking is further supported by the concept of a particle in quantum mechanics. A particle is no longer conceived of as a substance, but as a web of relationships: "an elementary particle is not an independently existing enigmatic entity. It is, in essence, a set of relationships that reach outwards to other things" (Davis, 1984, p. 49). Furthermore, particles are indistinguishable from energy and are constantly in the process of changing (Capra, 1991). Quantum mechanics, or modern physics, shows that particles are constantly in the process of "becoming" through their changing relationships in space and time and are not "matter as solid points in space and time" as suggested by Newtonian physics (Woodhouse, 1996, p. 33). Quantum mechanics recognizes particles, not as independently existing entities, but rather as entities identifiable through relationships or connections to other such particles. All entities and events, which are made up of the most elementary particles, are constantly changing in space and time, and are identifiable through their relationships with other entities and events. Quantum mechanics and process philosophy concur that time and space are constituted by the rhythm of changing relationships among entities, and are both relative to this ongoing process of becoming.

According to the Whiteheadian account of interconnectedness, an entity—whether a human or not—is intricately intertwined with the other ones and events taking place around oneself, and can be identified by its interrelationships in complex ways. Furthermore, we can see the same thing to other various relationships—e.g., between human beings and entire nature/the earth, humans and other-than humankind

(animated or otherwise), one being or kind and another in other-than human community, one group and another—communities, societies, and nations in the human world, etc.

This idea of interconnectedness or wholeness not only indicates the matter of relationship but also designates an important understanding of oneness as an integrated whole in harmonious relationship, which is capable of leading to a stable condition. Namely, since a thing, or part, is influencing the others in a way that all things are interrelated one another, an entire "stable" world can be created by a condition that all things are coexisting in balance.

This way of thinking has been represented since ancient times, especially in East Asia, in terms of the concept of polar opposites *yin* and *yang*—an originally Indigenous Chinese idea that has deeply permeated other Asian areas affected by Chinese culture. The *yin* refers to the metaphor of 'rest' (black: Earth; below; minus sign; yielding; soft; dark; wet; quiescent; female; intuitively complex "female" mind, etc.) while *yang* refers to the metaphor of 'movement' (white: Heaven; above; plus sign; active; hard; hot; bright; assertive; male; clear/rational "male" mind, etc.). In this view, all phenomena in this world/universe are interpreted as manifestations of the dynamic interplay between the *yin* and *yang*; furthermore, the entireness (circle) brought by the combination of the *yin/yang* is understood as the harmony. Thus, the balance of the *yin* and *yang* creates a harmony, which refers to peace, stability, and so on. In contrast, the imbalance of the *yin/yang* eventually brings about something disharmonious, which implies disaster, suffering, etc. (Callicott, 1994, p. 72; Capra, 1991, pp. 118-121, pp. 126-129, and p. 130).

The notion of interconnectedness has been observed as a significant worldview in contrast to the reductionist or materialistic one. The challenge is not merely to conceive interconnectedness, but to experience it as well. Education and human experience assists in the process by emphasizing sustainability, which will be examined below.

3.3.2 Interconnectedness Fundamental to Sustainability Education

Sustainability education should acknowledge the understanding of interconnectedness of all beings capable of creating harmony as having fundamental importance. More importantly, sustainability education promotes individual empowerment, not only to conceive, but also to experience the reality of 'interconnectedness'. This is because a form of culture—community, society, or nation—that emphasizes the idea of interconnectedness tends to show sustainably-sound ways of living in peaceful manner in terms of both the natural world and other cultural groups (Hartmann, 1998/2004).

The recognition of interconnectedness, or wholeness, is a significantly traditional belief in many religions and cultures (Gottlieb, 1996). Indeed, indigenous cultures across the world consider the strong sense of interconnectedness, or integrated larger whole, to be of fundamental importance (Abram, 1996; Battiste, n.d., pp. 27-28; Inglis, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992); for example, Chief Seattle of the Suquamish tribe says, "All things are connected like the blood which unites one family (p. 277)" which "[a]ll their [Native American] traditions agree on …" (Hughes, 1983, pp. 14-15; also see Cajete, 1994 and Sioui, 1992, p. xxi). Likewise, the idea of

interconnectedness, or oneness, is essential in overall Eastern religion and philosophy (Nash, 1989, pp. 112-117), which can be captured very well in Buddhist and Taoist worldviews. For instance, Watts (1958), a practicing Buddhist influenced highly by Buddhist scholar and teacher Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, recognizes that each entity or event is interdependent to each other, forming a "seamless unity" in the world (p. 4 and pp. 7-8; also see Badiner, 1990; Jungerman, p. 6). In addition, a Taoist master Lao-Tzu (1972) says, "These things from ancient times arise from one: The sky is whole and clear. The earth is whole and firm. The spirit is whole and strong. The valley is whole and full. The ten thousand things are whole and alive. Kings and lords are whole. And the country is upright. All these are in virtue of wholeness" (THIRTY-NINE; also see Chuang-Tzu, 1964, p. 38).

The important point is that such a type of group—community, culture, society—stressing the understanding of interconnectedness among all has generally shown sustainably-sound ideas, practices and lifestyles in the ecologically and culturally peaceful ways. On this point, Hartmann illustrates this trend in terms of a distinction between "Older Cultures" ("how we used to be") and "Younger Cultures" ("how we are today"). Regarding these cultures, "Older Cultures are older because they have survived for tens of thousands of years. In comparison, Younger Cultures are still an experiment, and every time one has been attempted (Sumeria, Rome, Greece), however great its grandeur, it has self-destructed, while tribes survive thousands of years" (Hartmann, 1998/2004, p. 135). Older Cultures met "extraordinary cultural change" about seven thousand years ago: "after 100,000 years of living cooperatively with each other (and nature) [Older Cultures], people began dominating and enslaving each other (and nature)

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[Younger Cultures]" (pp. 117-118). Based on this distinction of two cultures, Hartmann (1998/2004) further points out:

> Prior to the emergence of Younger Cultures about seven thousand years ago, the anthropological record shows that not one culture believed itself to be separate from and superior to nature. We find the remnants of these Older Cultures in tribal peoples around the world such as the San, the Kogi, the Ik of Uganda, the Navajo, the Hopi, the Cree, and the Ojibwa—living in harmony with the world around them, the people around them, and seeing all life as sacred. The San bushman don't even qualify as Stone Age since they've never used stone implements, only tools made from wood, and yet they were successfully pursuing their way of life 40,000 years (and perhaps 100,000 years) before Aristotle. They leave behind few traces, as they are such masters of resource management.
> That's sustainable and, contrary to the stories [a set of very specific myths, beliefs, and paradigms] of our culture, it was and is often a happy and comfortable life. (p. 177)

Characteristically, anthropological evidence indicates that these cultures are grounded in the understanding of the sense of 'connectedness of all beings', not separation—"We are part of the world", whose view also embraces the sense of 'cooperation with the rest of others (whether human or non-human beings) in respecting each other', not domination (Hartmann, p. 176). Within this context of cooperative and peaceful relationship, the idea that "everybody was responsible for everybody" or "we cared for one another, is emphasized in a way that "the measure of wealth in such societies was security" (e.g., "If anybody had food, everybody had food; if anybody had a diseased child or an infirm parent, everybody had a diseased child or an infirm parent," etc.) (p. 177).

People living especially in modernized/industrialized society have often regarded this sort of tribal culture (Old Cultures) as primitive; however, "as any careful read of the literature of anthropology or a visit to tribal people will tell you," Hartmann writes, "the depth of human experience is no different between 'primitive' and 'modern' people" – indeed, both hold "identical ranges of expression and emotion," "cultures that

are clearly defined with standards and norms for behavior," "rituals and religions that are deeply meaningful to their citizens" (pp. 174-175). More importantly, Hartmann goes on describing the prime differences between them that "the 'primitive' people generally have more leisurely lives, less poverty, almost no crime (certainly no police or prisons among those who have not adopted 'the white man's way'), a more diverse and healthy diet, less degenerative disease, better psychological health, and a culture that holds as its primary values cooperation (rather than competition), mutual respect (rather than domination), long-term renewable care for resources (rather than exploitation for a quick buck), and equality (between people, between the sexes, and between humans and nature) rather than power" (p. 175).

In addition to this fact of Old Cultures, Eastern traditions, especially such as Buddhism and Taoism that comprehend the idea of interconnectedness/wholeness as important at the bottom, also demonstrate ecologically and culturally sustainable thought and action. For the Taoist view, simply put, how people should live is to follow the *Tao*. The *Tao* is an ultimate reality underlying the universe in Chinese culture, which is interpreted as literally/originally 'way' or 'road' and metaphorically 'the laws of nature/universe' (Atokinson, 1994, 148-149; Callicott, 1994, p. 68 and 72, Capra, 1991, pp. 116-117; Ip, 1986, p. 98). Therefore, 'Follow Nature' as the order of the universe is the core idea seen in Taoism, which is "throughout ecologically oriented; a high level of ecological consciousness is built into it, and it provides the practical basis for a way of life" (Sylvan & Bennett, 1988, p. 148). Based on the ecologically-oriented thinking and acting, the writing of *Lao-Tzu* essentially advocates "pacifism" in many places throughout the writing (Hachiya, 1987, p. 154).

As for the Buddhist perspective, it is said that "Buddhism is a 'righteous path'," which refers to the idea that "purely dedicated of Buddhism is to bring about peace and harmony in the world" (Sinha, 1990, p. 83). Furthermore, Buddhism is deeply connected with the natural world at many points. As for Buddhist attitudes and teachings about nature, the early Buddhist community lived in the forest under large trees, in caves, and in mountainous areas, and Buddhists directly depended on nature and cultivated great respect for the beauty and diversity of their natural surroundings. Additionally, the sense of respect, nonviolence, gentleness, compassion, gratitude, care, and friendliness toward all the essential elements of the natural world are the ecological stance of Buddhism (Callicott, p. 65; Halifax, 1990, pp. 34-37; Kbilsingh, 1990, p. 8 and 11; Silva, 1990, p. 14). Therefore, this Buddhist view of nature can be summarized as ecologically harmonious orientation.

In this way, we can see a certain tendency that the understanding of the notion of interconnectedness would be an important factor as the basis for a sustainably-oriented idea and action in an ecologically and culturally peaceful manner. Sustainability education should pay sufficient attention to this view of interconnectedness to promote a culturally and ecologically sustainable life for society and the earth. To do so, sustainability education should involve the process of the teaching and learning for traditional wisdom—the form of knowledge and practice that enable people and society to live in ecologically and culturally sustainable ways as Old Cultures demonstrated. People often misunderstand this thing as simply going back to the past, but it is not like that. It is just like a well-known idea around Eastern Asia affected strongly by a Confucian teaching (Book2, XI) in *Analects* (*Confucian Analects*, 1956, trans. Pound),

which says, "If a man keep alive what is old and recognize novelty, he can, eventually, teach" (p. 15). More precisely, this idea means 'an attempt to discover new things, or truths, by studying the past through scrutiny of the old'. Namely, what sustainability education tries to find is a guide into tomorrow by taking lessons from the past—wisdom—traditional ways of thought and action that should be also embraced as one of the important teachings and learning process throughout its education.

3.3.3 Human Connectedness with Nature in Sustainability Education

Regarding this understanding of reality of interconnectedness—more specifically, the view of the relationship between human and the natural environment—human connectedness with nature, becomes a core for understanding concept sustainability as well as for sustainability education. Human connectedness with nature implies that humans are an integral part of the natural world (the earth's ecological system), and depend on it in a variety of complex ways (emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical); everything is interrelated with everything else, all influencing each other. Older Cultures, with few exceptions, recognize this perspective on the natural world as "a fundamental concept" in the belief that:

> [W]e are not different from, separate from, in charge of, superior to, or inferior to the natural world. We are part of it. Whatever we do to nature, we do to ourselves, we do to the world. For most, there is no concept of a separate "nature": it's all us and we're all it. (Hartmann, p. 190)

Culture, therefore, can be understood as the outgrowth of complex relationships among the various events as well as entities, and is intimately related to and shaped by them, and these relationships are evident in all those bioregions where people live

(Kroeber, 1939; Basso, 1990). Human connectedness with nature is indicative of the physical, psychological, and spiritual relationships experienced by human beings in their dealings with the many natural systems of which they are a part (Harding, 1997, p. 16; Goldsmith, 1996, pp. 14-15). Human connectedness with nature refers to the simple reality that people are embedded in the local natural systems in which they live their everyday lives.

In this sense, each cultural form responds to the particular ecosystem on which human beings are dependent. This recognition of human connectedness with nature is the basis for fostering ecologically harmonious practices and lifestyles. Indeed, many "cultures that have demonstrated their sustainability have often developed highly specific practices well suited to the characteristics of their particular region" (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 4). Sustainability education promotes learning based on a deep understanding of human connectedness with the natural environment—especially, each particular bioregion. Consequently, sustainability education should emphasize that the understanding of human connectedness with particular local ecosystems is the very basis for its teaching and learning for ecologically harmonious ways of living and ecologically sustainable cultures.

Another important point is that, because such cultures recognize the reality of human connectedness with the local bioregion, they comprehend the notion of sufficiency—the sense that enough is enough, which can be derived from the perspective of 'limits of growth', as the second essential of sustainability education, which should be a guiding principle of human action (Sachs, 1999, p. 39). Respecting these limits to growth means depend on abiding by the earth's dynamic work of regeneration and maintaining nature's diversity, as noted in the previous chapter, rather than focusing on

economic imperatives based on the idea of "efficiency". Efficiency implies unlimited demands on natural systems with the goal underlying our living in the modern world, such as "product innovation, technological progress, market regulation, science-based planning" (Sachs, p. 88). For example, the idea of sufficiency involves not taking more energy or food from nature than people need, a concept that can often be found in traditional societies based on the recognition of human interconnectedness with nature, where people knew the limits to which nature could be used to satisfy their needs, using harvested foods and energy only when they needed them. They understood that the notion of sufficiency, based on the limits of growth, was fundamental to sustaining their lives (Badiner; Norberg-Hodge; Knudtson & Suzuki).

An example for agricultural practice of the Kayape, a tribe living in the rainforests of northern Brazil, can tell us the important fact of how this sense of sufficiency is necessary to sustain society in terms of agriculture—food supply, as basic needs. In fact, the Kayapo have been living in the forest at least two thousand years. Many researchers assumed that "they've lived in that area for as long as eight thousand to ten thousand years," whose "way of life has been continuous for that entire time . . . until recently." Their way of agriculture as the basis for supporting their life is based on the "idea that you can take what you need from the forest or fields, and even manipulate the forest and fields so they produce more human foods and medicines, but that you cannot do this in a way that injures the land" (Hartmann, p. 190). In this context, the understanding of sufficiency (with the sense of limits of growth) can be seen as an important point of view to consider the way of sustainable living and its education. Therefore, sustainability education should require this view of sufficiency with the

understanding of the sense of interconnectedness—more specifically, human connectedness with nature, in the teaching and learning practice.

I assume that how these important points I have described so far—especially, the understanding of interconnectedness among all and applying knowledge/idea into practice toward creating sustainable society—are important can be well captured by learning from the negative results of environmental education—the failure of environmental education. Environmental education can be seen as one of the largest educational arenas by taking charge of developing a sustainably-oriented society from proposing the term of sustainable development in 1970s. However, it has been said that, despite the attempts over the past thirty-years, its mainstream has not sufficiently enabled learners to understand important ecological and cultural issues—practical transformations which build sustainable culture in ecological balance. This trend is regarded as a basic flaw in much environmental education inherited from scientific materialism, or mechanistic worldview that values abstract forms of knowledge about just environmentally-related matter, rather than concrete knowledge about more comprehensive affairs (ecological, social, cultural, etc.) without the important understanding of basic reality of interconnectedness among all beings, or wholeness, as well as human connectedness with nature (Elliot, 1991, pp. 19-38 and 1995, p. 33; Kaza, 1999. P. 147; Palmer, 1997, pp. 3-4; Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 3; Strauss, 1996; Williams & Taylor, 1999, p. 83). In his work *Sustainable Education: Re-visioning Learning and Change*, Dr. Sterling (2001) recognizes the similar point that, although environmental education and, more recently, education for sustainable development (ESD), have become important trends; they are not sufficient to reorient and transform

education as a whole that is undermined by a managerial and mechanistic paradigm. Moreover, from this past reflection, he argues that the entire education requires changing toward a more learning and teaching process that acknowledges an ecological view of educational theory, practice and policy capable of assisting the concrete transformation toward a sustainable society within a framework that considers the interdependence of social, economic and ecological well-being.

This missing regard has made us recognize some important points in the learning process that should be ultimately enable learners to 'practice' a more ecologically and culturally sustainable and responsible manner—namely, how to apply acquired knowledge into everyday practice. On this point, I found that the Eastern notion of '*living-learning*' could be seen as very much such a concept and practice of human learning that requires the indispensable interlink between knowledge/idea and action in order to create something better. Also, what further important scheme implied by its failure is the matter of concrete experience and human feelings (collectively referred to as five senses, emotions, affections, thoughts, etc.) that forms the basis for more concrete knowledge. It is important because, as compared with abstract knowledge, such a concrete form of knowledge derived from direct experience with human feelings could be regarded as the essential factor to connect to concrete action needed for practical transformation toward a sustainable way of living and society, which sustainability education really emphasizes.

In the following chapter, I will chiefly take a look at these key points and their interrelationships; the failure of environmental education, Eastern idea of *living learning*, and the vital role of concrete knowledge and experience with human feelings to nurture

the integration of new insights into everyday practice.

CHAPTER 4

AN EASTERN IDEA OF '*LIVING-LEARNING*' AS UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION: BEYOND THE FAILURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCAITON

4.1 Introduction: The Background of the Failure of Environmental Education from the Viewpoint of Sustainability Education

Agenda 21 (1992), adopted in UNCED, first paid attention to the idea of sustainable development in educational terms, and its educational point of view was largely centered in environmental concerns. There has been a historical background where the view of maintaining 'environment' has been treated as almost synonymous with the word 'sustainability', or sustaining society, under the name of sustainable development. The idea of sustainability originally started from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, where the main focus was merely on the natural environment—effective conservation/preservation and resource/energy use for the natural environment in terms of economic growth. In the following years, this trend influenced other international conferences. In this view, the notion of sustainability, or sustainable development, was fundamental to the perspective that effectively protecting and using the 'natural environment' could maintain economic growth as the fundamental source capable of 'sustaining society' by diminishing such human hardships as poverty and famine. For this reason, there seems to have been a tendency toward the notion that sustainably-related education primarily concerns matters of natural environment; thus, it is generally covered in the field of so-called 'environmental education'.

Concerning mainstream environmental education, including the sense of education for sustainable development, however, there seems to be something overlooked.

Despite efforts over the past thirty years, in brief, mainstream environmental education has not paid sufficient attention to understanding the 'belief' and 'action' underlying our worldviews, which should embrace the matter of justice, as necessary for enabling one to practice sustainable ways of living not only in the environmental-related but also in socio-/cultural-related contexts (Sterling, 2001). In other words, environmental education, even in the case of learning sustainability, in the narrowest sense of sustainability, i.e., only environmental-related issues, has failed to sufficiently enable students to change their lives and societies to a sustainable level of harmony with the natural world and others (in a human community or otherwise) (Bonnett, 2003, pp. 551-553; Ellicott, 1991, pp. 19-38; Palmer, 1998, p. ix). Based on the mechanistic worldview, rather, its education has primarily focused on making them merely acquire abstract or technical knowledge about such environmental facts as the historical and scientific data, which rarely involve socio-cultural issues; e.g., equal opportunities for wealth, power, resources, conflict/insecurity, minimum daily needs and welfare (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 3; Ellicott, 1995, p. 33; Kaza, 1999, p. 147; Palmer, 1997, pp. 3-4; Smith, 1992, p. 11; Strauss, 1996; Williams & Tylor, 1999, p. 83).

In the previous chapter, I argued that sustainability education should emphasize the understanding of a more organic idea of interconnectedness among all beings—the mutual relationships among all entities and events, which involves the important reality of human connectedness with nature. The notion of 'interconnectedness' refers to the fact that one is an integral part of a larger whole system such as (regional) nature, the earth, and a cultural group in which she/he is living; therefore, everything is influencing everything else in a way that one can never be separated from others and the larger

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system. The reason this view of interconnectedness is fundamental to sustainability education is that such an idea can be seen as a key understanding that enables people to foster the harmonious relationship with other people, other life forms, and the entire nature/earth. This fact can be captured by the tendency of traditional forms of cultures or the Older Cultures (in Hartmann's words) holding the view of interconnectedness as the core with the sense of human connectedness as the unique bioregion that has sustained their own way of life and local society in an ecologically and culturally peaceful manner for more than 100,000 years. Therefore, throughout the entire process of learning and teaching, sustainability education respects traditional or indigenous wisdom as well as practice and its method of educating that has made it possible for culturally and ecologically sustainable living in the regional land for such a long period. Sustainability education especially stresses the understanding of human connectedness with the unique local ecosystem (bioregion) supporting the people's survival because many people of each culture have demonstrated their sustainability in developing everyday practices well suited to the characteristics of their particular bioregion. This links to the importance of cultural diversity, and gives indigenous languages that contain local knowledge.

This concept of interconnectedness, however, stands in contrast to the mechanistic worldview of seeing things as being manipulated like parts of a machine, and the concept of nature as a set of phenomena separate from human beings which has often typified the approach of environmental education that includes the sense of education for sustainable development (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 4). In this view, general environmental education based on the mechanistic perspective has not fully recognized the reality of interconnectedness of all beings as the basis for developing ecologically and

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culturally harmonious practices. As a result, it acknowledges an abstract form of technical knowledge as the primary means of understanding nature/the earth and the world, rather than a concrete form of knowledge and idea emerging from subjective hands-on experience and feelings (collectively referred to as five senses, emotions, affections, thoughts, etc.) (Birch, 1996, p. 18; Palmer, 1997, pp. 3-4). It also reinforces the continued domination of the natural environment as well as other beings, whether human or non-human (Hartmann, 1998/2004, pp. 140-143).

It is true that learning for abstract knowledge is necessary, but I assume that certain kinds of concrete knowledge created by one's direct experience and feelings are oftentimes essential for providing a means to integrate into the day to day living process by creating more sustainable manners (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 3; Williams & Taylor, 1999, p. 83). Therefore, concrete knowledge derived from human experience and feelings could be regarded as more fundamental than theory to the learning process when change in behavior is desired (Whoodhouse, 1995, p. 353; Whitehead, 1929/1957, pp. 2-3). If so, the matter of concrete experience and human feelings forming the more concrete knowledge also should be stressed in our learning, which has been often neglected in general environmental education as well (Komori, 2000, p. 28 and chapter 5).

These commonly overlooked facts are what I take to be 'the failure of environmental education'. The desirable education for sustainability must include these missing dimensions, learning from past experience to see a more adequate path today and in the future. Considering this failure, especially, what sustainability education requires is to eventually nurture everyday sustainably-oriented 'belief' and 'action' at all levels (personal, local, regional, national, international, etc.). Put differently, sustainability

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education must enables learners to be 'literate in sustainability (sustainability-literate)', which means being capable of transforming acquired knowledge about sustainability into everyday practices needed for creating a concrete and sustainably-oriented life pattern and society in ecological and cultural harmony. This lack of integration of knowledge and practice is the fallacy into which the mainstream of environmental education has gotten trapped.

For this important view of the unification of knowledge and action in human learning, in my understanding, Eastern philosophy can be thought as one of the strong belief systems that emphasize it as indispensable to the learning process. It might be defined as '*living-learning*'.

Moreover, the concept of *living-learning* echoes the process philosopher Whitehead's notion of education as "the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge" in practical ways (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 4). This educational view values both our connectedness with the cultural and natural, and concrete experience with human feelings that enables one to create concrete knowledge. Such a subject of the connection between direct experience and education or learning above, is generally identified as experiential education as well as experiential learning as the often-used phrase "learning by doing" (Bunting, 2006, p. 5). Regarding the concept of experiential education, philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey is the most well-known proponent of applying direct experience into education. In his most influential writings—*Experience and Nature* (1929), *Art as Experience* (1934), and *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey examined the value, quality, level, and structure of experiential education and his entire philosophy in terms of experience (e.g., he proposes two

different but interconnected aspects of all experience—primary experience and secondary/reflective experience in *Experience and Nature*) (Hunt, Jr., J. S, 1995, pp. 26-27). Dewey's works have affected many other influential experiential education models and advocates (e.g., founder of Outward Bound School Kurt Hahn, father of modern critical pedagogy Paulo Freire, action learning, active/hands-on learning, cooperative learning, service learning, work-based learning, etc.) (Boss, 1999, p. 2), and today "experiential education has become a field of study with an international following" (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, & Ewert, 2006, p. 9). For example, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) has been the most well-known international professional organization whose study topics relate to experiential education and learning until today. AEE defines experiential education as "philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values" (Bunting, p. 5).[37]

Dewey's theory of experiential education as well as learning has been studied by many educators and scholars, who have reaped rich harvests by their efforts. However, my study is not adding to the theory of experiential education, nor by exploring Dewey's philosophy, but by integrating the afore-mentioned perspectives of an Eastern view of *living-learning* and Whiteheadian educational philosophy.

In the following, consequently, I will examine three points. The first point is the failure of environmental education. The intent is not to attack existing initiatives within environmental education or education for sustainable development. Rather, by drawing attention to the aspects these initiatives overlook, the intent is highlight what is

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[37] Retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.aee.org/about/whatIsEE.

important—i.e., in this case, eventually enabling students to take 'action' toward an ecologically and culturally peaceful manner, which environmental education has missed. The second point is the relevance of an Eastern core idea of '*living-learning*—human learning based on the mutual transformation of knowledge/idea and everyday practice. This Eastern view can help achieve sustainability education's ultimate goal of enabling individuals to transform themselves and their society in service of sustainability. In this second section arguing the idea of *living-learning*, the process philosopher Whitehead's notions of education will be shown to support the emerging concept. Whitehead's concept of education also stresses another important implication—the value of 'concrete experience and human feelings' as the basis for forming one's concrete knowledge capable of linking to everyday practice. For the third point, I will propose the Eastern idea of *living-learning* might involve evolutionarily successive three stages based on the concrete experience with feelings—'awareness', 'inquiry', and 'praxis'.

4.1.1 The Failure of Environmental Education

The goal of environmental education is to learn about the environment and the relationships between humans and other-than-human life forms. An internationally recognized interpretation of environmental education is available in the definition prepared by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources UNESCO (IUCN) meeting on "Environmental Education in the School Curriculum" held in Nevada, USA, in 1970:

> Environmental education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among man, his culture, and his biophysical surroundings. Environmental education also entails practice in decision-making

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and self-formulation of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality. (IUCN, 1970)

This general definition seems to acknowledge value-based learning in regard to what knowledge people should acquire and what attitudes they should develop towards the natural environment. This definition has been widely adopted around the world, and since the meeting, it has been used to formulate educational objectives and principles as well as to develop national and community policies, programs, and resources. Ideas about environmental education have been codified in documents, such as *The Belgrade Charter* (UNESCO, 1975), *The Tbilisi Declaration* (UNESCO, 1977), *The World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN, 1980), *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987), and *Agenda 21* (UNCED, 1992) (Palmer, 1997, pp. 3-4; also see Palmer, 1998, pp. 5-19).[38]

The IUCN definition of environmental education offers a widely accepted interpretation that identifies the importance of values, decision-making, social affairs, and practices that involves the importance of human relatedness to nature. In addition to this definition, environmental education has generally covered the educational concept including sustainably-related matters since 1992 when UNCED adopted *Agenda 21* discussing the idea of sustainable development in educational terms. That is to say, there is a tendency that the sense of maintaining 'environment' has been seen as equivalent to the idea of 'sustainability', or sustaining society.

There seems to be several reasons for this trend. First, the origin of the idea

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[38] Key to Acronyms: IUCN—International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (The World Conservation Union); UNCED—The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: The Earth Summit; UNEP—United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Development; WCED—World Commission on Environment and Development; WWF—World Wide Found for Nature (World Wildlife Found).

related to sustainability can be seen in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, which merely focused on the matter of the 'natural environment' for human ends—preservation/conservation and resource management especially in context of economic development. Second, there is another historical background, in addition to the previous one, that the "term *sustainability* was first coined in the environmental field by Lester Brown, founder of the Worldwatch Institute, in the early 1980s" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 16), whose trend has been very influential for the following years. Last, the word sustainability could be easily replaced with that of 'environment', due to the fact that its word ambiguously holds various meanings (natural, social, life, human environment, etc.). And, because of the historical understanding (the previous reasons), the term is usually understood especially within the sense of 'natural' environment—resource management, effective energy use, etc., even though the essential idea of sustainability' should treat the wide scope of sustainably-related issues (natural, cultural, social, etc.), as noted above. Then, the major focus of the UNCED came to be on the natural environment, based on the afore-mentioned fallacious idea of Western-oriented development—how to effectively protect and control 'natural resource or energy' for only human ends and the world (economic) development, defined and measured mostly in quantitative terms.

In any case, however, a crucial and simple problem remains. Such environmental education fails to articulate a deep understanding of the reality of interconnectedness of all beings as the basis for fostering an ecologically and culturally sustainable society (Smith & Williams, pp. 3-4). Although environmental education seems to have resulted in some environmentally sound directions in human behavior such

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as recycling, conservation/preservation, and effective resource/energy use, the basic ideas and approaches in this form of education are too narrow. Many environmental education initiatives advance science and technology as the solution to environmental issues and crises without sufficiently recognizing such socio-cultural matters as justice and welfare, and changing human attitudes, feelings, and actions (Birch, 1996, p. 18).

Technical knowledge is distinct from concrete knowledge derived from concrete human experience in everyday life. Technical knowledge abstracts facts from human experience and often presents them as secondhand information in textbooks and other media. These objectively verified and precisely defined forms of knowledge exclude the concrete experience and feelings that connect students with the realities they study (Oliver & Gershman, 1989, pp. 14-15). Whereas concrete knowledge can come directly through the experience of: "the birth of a baby in a delivery room . . . [which reveals] the essential truth of the happening," for example, technical knowledge consists of "the terse technical statement written for the medical file" (Oliver & Gershman, p. 14). In another example, concrete knowledge can come from the direct experience of wind and rain in a storm, while technical knowledge consists of "the technical description and tracking of great storms on television, where experts surrounded by computers and radar equipment are asked, in substance, to give final witness to the event" (Oliver & Gershman, p. 14).

Smith and Williams point out that the use of technical knowledge in environmental education is evident where classes focus primarily on "scientific analysis" and "social policy." In these classes, students often consider topics of "issues related to the degradation of the environment as problems capable of being solved through the

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collection of better data, the framing of regulatory legislation, or the development of institutional procedures aimed at reducing waste" (p. 4). More precisely, for example:

> Children are exposed to information regarding environmental problems and explore such topics as endangered species, the logging of tropical rainforests, or the monitoring of water quality in local streams and rivers. Some adopt manatees or whales, or raise funds to purchase a small piece of forest in Costa Rica or Brazil. Others create school-wide recycling programs to encourage their classmates to become more thoughtful about resource use. A few move into the legislative domain and participate in writing legislation to regulate the disposal of toxic wastes (Lewis 1991). (Smith & Williams, p. 3)

While these efforts may be valuable, they tend to stay only within the narrow confines of technical knowledge with little emphasis on action based on the students' own concrete experience. Classes in environmental education largely fail to develop students' ecological concerns in ways related directly to their lives and the everyday practices derived from these concerns (Elliott, 1991, pp. 19-38). That is, although students could be expert in their interpretations of technical knowledge about environmental issues and crises as well as the relevant laws, they tend not to understand practically how they might act in order to tackle these problems in their everyday lives.

Many attempts at environmental education based on technical paradigms make students' understanding of nature, or their world, too narrow. Williams and Taylor (1999) point out that "[l]argely predefined by syllabi and textbooks approved by school districts, environmental education has been subjected to the same dominant culture that requires mastery of textbook facts or mastery over information processing" (p. 83). Furthermore, Ellicott (1995) points out that environmental education is considered as one more subject added to an already dense curriculum and is reduced to the transmission of technical knowledge related to nature or environmental studies (p. 33). The problem is that

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environmental studies in schools and universities focus largely on technical knowledge about "objective science" and "legalistic policy" rather than "philosophy or values-based humanities approaches" (Kaza, 1999, p. 147; also see Strauss, 1996). That is to say, questioning and pursuing issues or values related to learners' own lives are largely neglected.

Technical knowledge often facilitates the domination of nature by assuming that natural entities and events are mere objects separated from the human self. Because technical knowledge "often comes out of a highly controlled settings" (Oliver & Gershman, p. 14) that distances us from any holistic apprehension of nature and the world/universe, human beings can easily disregard natural and life events as devalued matter or inorganic material, and consider them as no more than a grand machine which they attempt to control and manage for their own ends:

> Technical knowing is expressed in the analytic/linear explicit language and diagram required to delineate the environment within which one copes and survives. This capacity to break down the environment into its various parts, as well as the hypothetical manipulation of these parts comprises a major source of human power to manage "nature" (Oliver & Gershman, p. 15)

This perspective of a machine-like nature or the world/universe, with human beings controlling it, is a general trend reinforced through present society's preoccupation with acquiring technical knowledge. Furthermore, human beings can easily manipulate and abuse nature and life events when they are valued simply as a means to increasing their power and wealth.

In contrast to technical knowledge, experiential or concrete knowledge based on human feelings and experience provides a tangible foundation for understanding reality and apprehending events continuously in development. Our concrete idea about

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one's world or life events and nature, and our realization of the reality of our interconnectedness of one another, or our connectedness with nature, are best derived from directly feeling and experiencing everyday living world and nature, not necessarily from technical knowledge. Students who do not pay sufficient attention to their own lives will not be interested in the natural and world events in their lives, and they will not be able to respond to those ecological and living events that are part of their ongoing lives. It is possible to understand intellectually the importance of the sense of interconnectedness as well as human connectedness with nature, yet be unable to live practically without concrete knowledge arising from one's experience and feelings. The memorization of ideas about how fresh air, water, and trees sustain human life from textbooks or from instruction for exams, for example, does not enable students to relate such ideas to practice in their own live.

Within this technical framework, environmental education tends to define environmental issues narrowly and proposes technically grounded instrumental action as a 'solution to all problems'. Indeed, people often regard environmental issues such as energy conservation, pollution, and the destruction of non-renewable resources (Palmer, 1997, p. 4), as beyond the scope of practical, concrete action and as resolvable only by science and technology. Many educators do not recognize the origins of environmental issues and crises as residing in the human idea, language, behavior, practices, and values which originally produced the problems. Birch (1996), who is a process philosopher, calls the dominant trend in modern society "technological optimism with its proclamation that 'Science will solve it'" (p. 18). The problem with this assumption that scientific and technological knowledge can solve all problems is that society imputes the major causes

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of important ecological and socio-cultural problems to deficiencies in science and technology, and not to the way we live and consume in our everyday lives. In this view, people try primarily to improve science and technology rather than to understand human connectedness with nature, and they propose to solve environmental and socio-cultural issues by manipulating a machine-like nature or other life events.

Applied science and technology does not always take into account the human and cultural causes of ecological and social crises. For example (an environmental regard), many people optimistically believe in the idea of the 'paperless office' in which the latest electronics with computer technology will make the amount of paper used to decrease. This decrease is viewed as a means of saving forests because people will use email to communicate each other through their computers or save their documents onto electrical files in their computers without the need for paper. Unfortunately, the opposite is true, and computer use has increased paper usage substantially (Sarantis, 2002, pp. 2-3).[39] This example shows that, without considering human behavior (our everyday idea and action) itself within the context of life, it can be concluded that scientific-technological approaches do not necessarily provide solutions to environmental problems. I am not indicating that the effort for reducing the consumption of paper use like paperless office is unimportant. It is true that one can make good use of computers to save paper if one is a thoughtful person who thinks critically about how paper and computer use is related to our life and the entire world. However, unreflecting computer usage could be closely related to the destruction of forests which create fresh air and water and comfortable living environments, and influence the quality of life. Dominated

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[39] Copy retrieved October 24, 2008 from
http://environmentalpaper.org/documents/REDUCE-BUSINESS-GUIDE.pdf.

by assumptions imbued by naïve optimism, learners come to regard science and technology instead of their own everyday ways of thinking, feeling, and acting as the primary and most important means for solving critical issues and crises underlying our everyday life and the world.

In summary, environmental education grounded in learning about technical knowledge fails to recognize the reality of interconnectedness of all beings—more specifically, human connectedness with nature. It overlooks human experience and feelings as the connection to one's ongoing life, and leads to interest in the world. Much environmental education has not cultivated an understanding which leads to action that recognizes practices in ecologically and culturally harmonious manner. Why, then, has environmental education focused largely on technical knowledge, and insufficiently recognized the reality of interconnectedness with the sense of human connectedness with nature? The answer to this question can best be understood through an analysis of "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness," which I analyze next.

4.1.2 The Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness and the Failure of Environmental Education

The failure of environmental education can be traced through Whitehead's notion of the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" to the scientific materialism of seventeenth century. This fallacy acknowledges only the narrow abstractions of science as being real, and excludes concrete experience derived from human feelings and the sense of interconnectedness as well as human connectedness with nature. The fallacy is evident in environmental education inclined toward the mastery of nature on the basis of

technical knowledge. This following part examines Whitehead's notion of the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" as the major reason for the failure of environmental education.

Scientific materialist assumptions, as typified by the Cartesian view of machine-like universe/nature, still shape the dominant paradigm of knowledge in modern society. These assumptions are based in seventeenth century science, as noted above (Whitehead, 1925/1953, chap.3; Regnier, 1997, p. 249; Woodhouse, 1995, p. 355). Whitehead (1925/1953) states:

> The answer … which the seventeenth century gave to the ancient question of the Ionian thinkers, 'What is the world made of?' was that the world is a succession of instantaneous configurations of matter – or of material, if you wish to include stuff more subtle than ordinary matter, the ether for example . . . . The great forces of nature, such as gravitation, were entirely determined by the configurations of masses. Thus the configurations determined their own changes, so that the circle of scientific thought was completely closed. This is the famous mechanistic theory of nature, which has reigned supreme ever since the seventeenth century. It is the orthodox creed of physical science. Furthermore, the creed justified itself by the pragmatic test. It worked. (p. 50)

In other words, scientific materialism assumes that matter obeys physical laws in fully determined mechanistic ways that can be measured quantitatively on the basis of methodologies that combine empirical and mathematical analytic techniques. Scientific materialism reduces all phenomena to abstractions of their component parts in the belief that these then represent reality as a whole (Edward, 1962, pp. 179-188). Whitehead comments: "This simple location of instantaneous material configurations is what Bergson has protested against, so far as it concerns time and so far as it is taken to be the fundamental fact of concrete nature" (p. 50). Indeed, reality is represented by abstract concepts and mathematical formulae, which are regarded as having primary importance, whereas concrete experience based on human feelings is totally excluded. Only what is

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objectively measurable and reducible by quantitative analysis is regarded as real and, hence, as having any value (Regnier, 1997, pp. 246-250; Woodhouse, 1995, p. 355). In contrast, Bergson and Whitehead regard the creative flow of time from past through present to future as 'the fundamental fact of concrete nature.'

Whitehead regards this worldview of identifying abstractions as concrete or real as "the expression of more concrete facts under the guise of very abstract logical construction." Whitehead calls this mistaken notion "The Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" (Whitehead, 1925/1953, p. 50). By reducing all events and entities to abstractions based on the laws of mechanics, this fallacy assumes that human beings have "some machine-like qualities." However, the tendency is to ignore human experience and feelings because machines do not have them (Birch, 1996, p. 14), and hence the very feelings at the core of human experience are regarded as illusory while the rather narrow abstractions of seventeenth century science are mistakenly thought of as the only true reality (Brumbaugh, 1982, p. 121; Regnier, 1994, p. 130; Whitehead, 1925/1953, pp. 16-17).

When the fallacy is combined with the belief that matter is itself inert like a machine, the world grounded in scientific materialist assumptions is viewed "as dull, lifeless, and requiring human intervention in order to get it moving" (Woodhouse, 1995, p. 355). Any direct relationship between subject and object is separated by the scientific materialist method. This method excludes knowledge of reality derived from concrete experience and feelings and "asserts that the subject is only acquainted with representations of reality rather than reality itself" (Woodhouse, p. 355; also see Whitehead, 1925/1953, pp. 54-55). All events and entities are identified through this

mechanistic approach, without any consideration for the reality experienced through human feelings (Birch, 1996, p. 14).

The fallacy is also evident in environmental education. Students conditioned by the fallacy do not show interest in their own feelings and everyday experience as a form of valuable knowledge, but proceed as if technical knowledge were the only possible basis for human knowledge. They tend to acquire only a partial understanding of the world, one that excludes knowledge they gain from their feelings and experience of nature (Whitehead, 1925/1953, pp. 54-55 and 197-199). Environmental education dominated by the fallacy of misplaced concreteness emphasizes the acquisition of technical knowledge in textbooks rather than through concrete experience and feelings, and engages in action through "scientific analysis" and "social policy" rather than through concrete action toward ecological and cultural sustainability in students' lives (Smith & Williams, p. 3; Williams & Taylor, p. 83).

Direct human relationships with one's natural environment are based on human feelings that constantly flow like energy from the objective to the subjective poles of experience, linking one directly to other entities and events like human beings, plants, animals, rocks, sunsets, etc. Feelings constitute the reality of unity between the objective and the subjective poles of experience (Whitehead, 1929/1957b, p. 105; Fidyk, 1997, p. 75). These feelings, at the base and forefront of our everyday concrete experience of the world, connect us directly to create individual reality. Without feelings at the core of our concrete experience, the one's connectedness with nature is not direct. Even though students can learn about connectedness between humans and nature through technical knowledge, this learning about connectedness remains secondary to their direct

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experience of their own connectedness. Students who do not learn about subject matter that relates directly to their lives run the risk of learning in ways that "ideas become 'inert' and knowledge remains 'dead'" (Whitehead, 1929/1957b, p. v.).

As a consequence, students limited to learning within the framework of the fallacy of narrow abstractions and technical information are less likely to show interest in ecologically and culturally harmonious practices that transform their society/world than those educated to understand their connectedness to others, everyday life world, and nature (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. v, p. 54, and pp. 57-58; Woodhouse, 1995, p. 355). For example, those students who do not learn about water quality based on their own experience are less likely to develop an interest in and action to maintain or improve the quality of water. Because students do not learn about the meaning of water quality within the context of their own lives based on their experience, they are unlikely to care for and know what to do practically in the specific place where they live. Students' interests derived from their direct experience in life are an important basis of practical action, and without any interest in natural and social events arising from direct connection with their lives, they are unlikely to engage in everyday ecologically and culturally-oriented practice or begin to act in more ecologically and culturally harmonious ways.

In this context, the following section will consider the value of an Eastern core idea about human learning based on the mutual transformation of knowledge/idea and action, defined as *living-learning*, to help achieve sustainability education's goal of enabling one to transform self and its society toward a better way in service of sustainable ways of living. For Eastern philosophy and the notion of learning, I mainly use Eastern

(Japanese) philosopher Yasuoka's theoretical concepts, as one of the eclectic scholars[40] who broadly cover the major Eastern traditions or philosophies, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. To support as well as develop his concepts, the process philosopher Whitehead's notions of education and human feelings and experience are appropriately taken up in this paper.

4.2 The Eastern Notion of '*Living-learning*' and Whitehead's Concept of Education

4.2.1 Living-learning as the Core Idea in Eastern Philosophy

'Eastern philosophy' embraces various traditions of philosophical assumption which have been developed in the broad geographic area of Asia, stretching from the Far East to the Middle East and Near East (Osborne, 1996, p. 4). In this sense, Eastern philosophy is so diverse that it is difficult to fully capture its coherent structure (Izutsu, 1983, p. 428; Nakagawa, 2000, p. 20). Yet, there seems to be some essential characteristics that Eastern traditions philosophically have in common—for example, "Indian philosophy is different to Chinese, and both are different to certain Japanese, Korean or Tibetan approaches," which, however, "are all noticeably more concerned with the whole and the cosmic, … and yet also concerned with everyday life" (Osborne, p. 4); Eastern philosophy does not see even the physical universe as the "all-embracing ultimate

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[40] Masahiko Yasuoka (1898-1983) is generally known as a Japanese philosopher/scholar of Yang-Ming School (The School of Mind), one of two major Neo-Confucian schools (the other is The School of Laws), because of his first publication titled *Ōyōmei Kenkyu* [A study on Wang Yang-Ming], which has made his name widely known in Japan. However, Yasuoka's observations in his literature address is not only Yang-Ming theory but rather the wide scope of Eastern perspectives in a multiple way, including Buddhism, Taoism, entire Confucianism (whether the classic or Neo-Confucianism), and Shintoism, which are regarded not as respectively independent, but rather essentially complementary at its core approach to pursuing self and the world/universe. Therefore, I assume that it is reasonable to see Yasuoka as an eclectic scholar based on Yang-Ming philosophy, rather than a mere specialist who is especially focused only on its academic area.

reality," but "is concerned with the deepest aspects of Non-Being (Nakagawa, p. 3; also see Suzuki, 1997[41])," based on "ideas of *multidimensional reality* or *vertical depth*," whose multidimensional view "always have acknowledged the deepest dimension of reality as well as other surface and intermediate dimensions" (Nakagawa, p. 4; also see Izutsu, p. 429). In this paper, Eastern philosophy means the multiple traditions of Eastern thought patterns that "co-exist but are entangled with each other in complicated ways" (Izutsu, p. 428, trans. Nakagawa, p. 20). More recently, since the East geographically involves "vast areas from the Near East through the Middle East and the South East to the Far East" (Nakagawa, p. 8; also see Cambell, 1972/1993, p. 61). Sufism, developed in the Near East, is also regarded as one tradition of Eastern school of thought. Although I consent to the division, this paper focuses more on Indian and Chinese philosophies as two mainstream of Eastern philosophy (Yasuoka, 2002a). In particular, I introduce ideas derived from Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism as major proponents of the view I wish to explore here.

An eminent Eastern philosopher, especially well-known as a Zen Buddhist scholar, Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki (1997), in one of his works *Toyoteki na mikata* [Eastern perspective], suggests that, in principle, Eastern philosophy has been closely and constantly related to a way of ordinary life and also has paid more attention to one's spiritual enhancement in actual life (p. 29; also see, Yasuoka, 2002a, pp. 158-162). In this Eastern perspective, everyday living is as equivalent to the search for perfection of one's character as well as the universal path in itself, which is especially emphasized in Zen Buddhism (pp. 15-16, p. 56). In general, Suzuki writes, "Eastern people have been less concerned with something about which is mostly useless for the actual life itself" to

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[41] Especially, pp. 12-13, pp. 20-28, p. 33, and pp. 166-176.

cultivate one's spirituality (p. 29, trans. Komori). In Eastern cultures, namely, there has been a general tendency that people believe that developing oneself can or should be brought about by something closely related to daily life.

In this sense, Eastern philosophy is very practical based on everyday living all the time. For example, what Hindu and Buddhist Indian philosophies have in common from the very earliest times is not "a philosophy of mind," but "a philosophy of life" in a practical way to seek "self-enlightenment through the search for identity [true self]" (Osborne, p. 37). The central goal of Chinese thought is similar: "Chinese philosophy is not about accumulating [abstract] facts, but about elevating human nature (Osborne, p. 96)" in this world; In other words, the central question that Chinese philosophy seeks to address is: "How could man improve himself and aspire to greatness on this earth?" (Osborne, p. 106). Thus, three main principles of Confucianism—"1) *Jen*, human-heartedness (goodness, proper being), 2) *Li*, etiquette (propriety, rules), and 3) *Chih*, righteousness (proper behaviour)" serve as a moral compass for the way one lives (Osborne, p. 112; Shiratori, 2005, pp. 2-6). Although there is a tendency that "the Taoist generally wanted to escape from the world, not interfere with it," due to "their position on the forces of nature and the ultimately unchanging reality that lay behind all change" (Osborne, p. 128), their teachings also never stray away from the question of how to live ordinary life. Indeed, the Taoist purpose of life is said as living in the concrete way of "simplicity and harmony with Tao" (Osborne, p. 129; also see, p. 131).[42] That is to say, on the one hand Taoist ideas address broad cosmological questions, but at the same time they also never separate those ideas from certain practical indications of how one should

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[42] "Tao" is generally interpreted as "'Way' or Universal Path," as the fundamental principle or "the force that governs the Universe" (Osborne, p. 127; also see, Hachiya, 1987, pp. 113-114).

actually live according to *'Tao'*, or the Universal Path. This trait is especially seen in the

Tao Te Ching, supposedly written by Lao-Tzu, as compared to *Chuang-Tzu,* undoubtedly

written by Chuang-Tzu's [43] pupils (Hachiya, 1987; Osborne, p. 126 and p. 133). [44]

Consequently, the practice of how to live well in everyday life can be understood as the

key concern of Eastern philosophy, in a broad sense.

Although Eastern perspectives focus more on personal concerns, in terms of

spiritual cultivation leading to a better way of living, they are never separated from

communal concerns as well, such as a way of carrying on politics, economy, education,

human relationship, and so on. Dr. Fung, [45] in his text *A Short History of Chinese*

Philosophy, states that one of the chief themes in Chinese philosophy is "a notion of

'Sageliness within and Kingliness without'," which generally means that "Chinese

philosophy [especially Confucianism] is down-to-earth" and "not concerned with God, or

with absolute truth, but with the question of how to live properly on earth, with ethics, the

principles of social living and government" (Osborne, p. 96; Kaizuka, 1964, pp. 37-57

and 177-194). Confucianists were concerned with not only "individual integrity" but also

"social harmony," with emphasis on the aforementioned three principles—*Jen*, *Li*, and

Chih (Osborne, p. 112). Confucian teaching also paid sufficient attention to a way of

human education and politics (Osborne, p. 111; Kaizuka, pp. 23-35 and 117-157). *Great*

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[43] Chuang-Tzu is "another great exponent" who further developed Taoism after Lao-Tzu and "reputedly lived as a hermit" (Osborne, p. 133).

[44] Above all, Lao-Tzu's philosophy (the *Tao Te Ching*) holds the bilateral character – less down-to-earth (a metaphysically cosmological understanding of the world) and down-to-earth view (an art of living well, as well as politics—especially, by sainthood) (Hachiya, pp. 38-39 and p. 57). Chuang-Tzu's philosophy (the *Chuang-Tzu*) is said as about much less down-to-earth argument (much more theoretical concept) to become a person as living according to the way of nature in seeking for the truth of this world (pp. 156-185). However, Chuang-Tzu also indicates how to live well in the practical way, which is showed in the more epistemological understanding of the world (Hachiya, pp. 186-222).

[45] Quoted in Osborne, 1996, p. 96.

Learning (*Ta Hsüeh*), one of the Four Books (the Four Chinese Classics)[46] as the basic text of Confucianism, "summed up the Confucian educational, moral, and political programs" (Liu, p. 56; also see Morohashi & Nakamura, 1979, pp. 9-11). Taoism is no exception, in this regard, though its worldview is often understood as a less down-to-earth philosophy. Its teaching, however, represents a way of politics (especially prominent in *Tao Te Ching*) as well, based on the main idea of '*Tao*' and its related notion of '*We-Wei*'[47] (Hachiya, pp. 120-139) that means "letting be" (Osborne, p. 128), "following the way of nature" or "less human-induced idea and action" (Hachiya, especially see pp. 36-37, 50-51, and 104-120). Although Buddhism is not directly mentioning a better way of society such as a political style and climate, peace building, and so on, the five prohibitions against murder, lust, theft, lying and intemperance can be understood, not only as a guidance for personal ways of living, but also as the principles of peaceful social relationships (Shiratori, p. 12). As well as being a basis for spiritual development, ethic would be a core factor making an entire community or society secure and stable by avoiding any unnecessary friction. In very truth, a prominent Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, has made an effort to build a

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[46] The Four Books (the Four Chinese Classics) is comprised of *The Great Learning* (*Ta Hsüeh*), *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yung*), *The Analects*, and *The Book of Mencius*, which is regarded as the important Confucian scripture. Furthermore, Professor Liu (1998) explains: "*The Great Learning* (*Ta Hsüeh*), and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yung*) are actually two chapters of *The Book of Rites* (*Li Chi*), which were extracted from the *Rites* by the Ch'eng brothers, Ch'eng Hao (1032-1085) and Ch'eng I (1033-1107). Chu His (1130-1200) [who completed The School of Laws, as one of two major streams in the Neo-Confucianism] followed them and grouped these two chapters together with *The Analects*, and *The Book of Mencius*… He wrote *Commentaries* for them and they became the basis for civil service examinations from 1313 to 1905" (p. 57; for more details on *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, see chap.4 and on *The Analects* and *The Book of Mencius*, see chap.2-Confucius and chap.3-Mencius).

[47] For the relationship among three important ideas in Taoism—*Tao*, *Te*, and *Wu-Wei*, "To follow the way of the Tao, to exercise the power of the Tao (the Te) is to practice Wu-Wei" (Osborne, p. 131).

more peaceful society/world in terms of environmental and social justice is a well-known fact, as his concrete action (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 85).[48] Regarding such an understanding of one's forming better relationships with others to create the social harmony, Confucianism, put simply, stresses the idea of "*Jen*,"[49] whose way is to practice *Chung*, "the positive side of *Jen*"—"Do to others what you wish yourself" and "*Shu,* the negative side of *Jen*—"Do not do to others what you do not wish yourself" (Osborne, pp. 112-113).

In order to achieve individual and social development in a practical manner, what is significant here is 'practice' that integrates theory and action. Yasuoka (2002a), one of Japan's most noted Eastern philosophers, shows the importance of the unification of idea/knowledge and action in the Eastern world, citing a Buddhist notion of "*rygyō -ninyū*" (Japanese) as a justification for it (67-71)—literally, two entries (*ninyū*) [to master something]; theory (*ri*) and action (*gyō*). By '*rygyō -ninyū*,' he means that, on the one hand, a theoretical idea (*ri*) will be applied to an action, but on the other hand an action (*gyō*) will be applied to theory even if one begins with either way of learning about concept or action, which is seen as a mutual transformation of theory and practice. Yasuoka further points out that this unity "enables one to understand true self and to live

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[48] For example, "The Dalai Lama, when talking about how to solve world problems, said, 'But first we must change within ourselves …. If there were another method that was easier and more practical, it would be better, but there is none'." (quoted in Merkel, 2003, p. 9); and "The world grows smaller and smaller, more and more inter-dependent..... today more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life."

[49] Practicing *Jen*—human-heartedness (goodness, proper being), is related to what "one must behave properly in all human relationships, but particularly within the five that are stipulated in traditional culture: 1) Between father and son, 2) Between ruler and minister, 3) Between elder and younger brother, 4) Between husband and wife, and 5) Between friend and friend" (Osborne, p. 112).

in a true life (2002a, p. 70, trans. Komori),"[50] and "constantly attempting to cultivate

one's potentials and its life by the unification of thought and action is fundamental to

Eastern moralities and religions" (2002a, pp. 70-71, trans. Komori).

This mutual transformation of "view" and action can be well captured in the

theory of "*chikō-gōitsu*" (Japanese) suggested by the School of Mind,[51] or Yang-Ming

philosophy, as it is referred to especially in Japan (Yasuoka, 2002b, p. 52). Literally, the

term '*chikō-gōitsu*' exactly means the 'unity of knowledge and action' in itself as follows:

the word '*gō-itsu*' is the combination of join (*gō*) and one (*itsu*); and the word '*chi-kō*' is

the combination of knowing (*chi*, knowledge) and doing (*kō*, action). The School of Mind

(Yang-Ming philosophy) is one of major Two Schools in Neo-Confucianism in China

(960-1644 A.D.)[52]. Another school is the School of Laws or Principles (Osborne, pp.

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[50] Pursuing one's/our true self (one's own nature) can be seen as a core goal and practice in Eastern religions and thoughts, whose understanding is also regarded as enabling one to know the way of world/universe (Osborne, 1996, pp. 4-5 and p. 8). By living in a true life, Yasuoka (1988 & 2002a) means passing one's days in developing the true self.

[51] The School of Mind "concerns that big question of external objects and how we perceive them." Its philosophers "argue that the mind is Li [regarded as "the basic law of everything" that "is eternal and self-caused" (Osborne, p. 157)], and a world of abstraction outside it does not exist, as the School of Laws holds"; To take a single example for this idea, "Lu Chu-Yuan (Hsiang-Shan, 1139-93 A.D.), one of consummators for the School of Mind (overall two consummators), said: "The Universe is my mind; my mind is the Universe." The philosophical debate between the School of Mind and Laws "was clearly going to run and run, just as it did in the West" (Osborne, 162). The argument for intuitive knowledge the other consummator Wang Yang-Ming (Shou-Jen, 1472-1529 A.D.) made was "based on the Unity of Thought and Action [called '*chikō-gōitsu*'].... He stressed that very Chinese, and Eastern, idea of the unity and interconnectedness of all things" Yang-Ming's philosophy was followed by the *Empirical School*. Tai Chen (1723-77 A.D.) was the greatest exponent" in the school, advocating a return to the classic teaching of Confucius [552/551-479 B.C.] and Mencius [371-289 B.C.?], which "sought to re-establish a more practical philosophy" (Osborne, p. 163; for more details, see Liu, 1998, chap. 11).

[52] The entire philosophy appeared from North Sung dynasty (960-1126 A.D.) to Ming dynasty period (1368-1644 A.D.) might be regarded as the 'Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy' (Liu, 1998, pp. 113-128). There have been main Two Schools, started by Ch'eng brothers, for the Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy. One is The School of Laws or Principles begun by the younger brother Ch'eng Yi (1033-1108 A.D.), which was completed by Chu-Hsi (Chu-Tzu, 1130-1200 A.D.) "called the St. Tomas Aqunas of China" (Osborne, p. 159); Another school is The School of Mind begun by the big brother Ch'eng Hao (1032-1085 A.D.), which was

158-163; Liu, 1998, pp. 113-130). Likewise, according to a professor of Chinese philosophy Liu (1998), '*chikō-gōitsu*' means that "knowledge [*chi*] and action [*kō*] are one [*gōitsu*] in the sense that once an ultimate commitment is made, one's behavior has to change accordingly; otherwise, the knowledge attained cannot be said to be true knowledge" (p. 150). In other words, one's knowing can be viewed as, or can become, "true knowledge" in a case that one's doing it on purpose ("commitment"), which was brought about by the knowing, promotes certain "change" to well-being. For Yang-Ming philosophy (the School of Mind), and its core notion of *chikō-gōitsu*, such a change to something better by one's purposefully doing in the process of knowing is emphasized (Yasuoka, 2002b, p. 52; also see Yasuoka, 2000a). Historically, Yang-Ming philosophy indeed can be captured as a scholarship and concept to strike a note of warning against the crisis for social change through making people realize the social/cultural issues (Yasuoka, 2002b, pp. 16-21). In fact, the ideas of Yang-Ming philosophy played an important role in making possible some social transformations based on civic action in Chinese and Japanese histories (Saito, p. 1982).

Yasuoka (1998, 2002a, and 200b), who was highly affected by the Yang-Ming philosophy, importantly acknowledges the theory of integration of knowledge and action that is based on the understanding of *chikō-gōitsu*. Yasuoka proposes such an idea of human learning as '*living-learning*' in his own words—a translated Japanese term "*katsu-gaku*." Literally, the term '*gaku*' simply means 'learning' in English. More importantly, the term of '*katsu*' is interpreted as having the multiple meanings of 'to live',

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completed by Lu Chu-Yuan (Hsiang-Shan, 1139-93 A.D.) and Wang Shou-Jen (Yang-Ming, 1472-1529 A.D.) (Osborne, pp. 158-163; Liu, pp. 113-130). In Japan, the School of Mind is recognized more as 'Yang-Ming philosophy' named after Wang Yang-Ming as a great exponent who developed the foundation of the philosophical theory including the concept of the unity of Thought and Action—'*chikō-gōitsu*' (Yasuoka, 2002b).

'livelihood', 'biosis', 'active', 'alive or living', and 'to utilize something or to make something/someone alive in life'. In my view, the English word 'living' seems to be able to best embrace the Japanese word of '*katsu*'. Therefore, I translate the word '*katsu-gaku*' into '*living-learning*' in this study.[53]

By *living-learning*, Yasuoka means that one's study must not be merely accumulation of information to develop human intelligence alone, but learning must be utilized for one's living in a practical manner (Tanaka, 2002, pp. 3-10). That is, the acquired idea through learning should bring about power to live—shortly, cultivating "human life force, passion, remarkable character, spiritual peace, and one's own whole life in recognizing one's divine decree" (Yasuoka, 2002a, p. 29, trans. Komori; also see Yasuoka, 1988, pp. 98-100). However, Yasuoka (2002a) never suggests that acquired intellectual knowledge is not important, but acknowledges it is "helpful for humans because such knowledge can develop their learning" (p. 29, trans. Komori). What he emphasizes is that certain ideas become valuable by being applied to actual lives to create something better in a practical way, whereas "the merely intellectual idea is not essentially valuable in itself" (p. 29, trans. Komori). For example, rote memorization of the vocabulary of a foreign language for the purpose of advanced interpersonal communication can only be useful if applied daily in a pragmatic manner.

On this view, one's personal cultivation should never be separate from social development. Rather, it should foster stability and prosperity in the society or nation. Yasuoka emphasizes this inseparable connection between personal enhancement and social development—put differently, society cultivation through, or based on, personal

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[53] There has been no existing English translation for the words '*katsu-gaku*' in English literature related to Eastern philosophy as long as I have investigated.

cultivation (1988, pp. 109-118 and 2002a, pp. 33-34 and 81-85). This perspective can be most expressed in such a Confucian idea that *one can make other people [including the sense of social life—one's family, nation, and the world, is involved] peaceful through bettering oneself* (Morohashi & Nakamura, 1976, pp. 8-9; emphasis added).

To transform abstract knowledge/idea to everyday practice in a better manner, Yasuoka (2002a) also argues that a study must be engaged, not in a passive approach to learning, but in the positive approach. He elucidates these two contrasting approaches to learning—negative and positive, excerpting from Zen Buddhist ideas; "*kokyō-shinsyō*" (Japanese)—literally, an old teaching/knowledge (*kokyō*) enlightens one's mind/idea (*shinsyō*) and "*shinsyō-kokyō*"—literally, one's own mind/idea enlightens an old teaching/knowledge (pp. 24-25). More precisely, the idea of '*kokyō-shinsyō*' implies a passive attitude of one's study in which one is limited to developing intellectuality alone in merely absorbing ready-made ideas or knowledge in literature. This is necessary, but not enough process for human learning in terms of cultivating one's life in a practical way (p. 24). By contrast, the idea of '*shinsyō-kokyō*' means a positive approach to human learning that one further develops ready-made ideas without settling on merely memorizing the abstract knowledge (developing one's intellectuality alone), which, in turn, inspires learners to apply the acquired knowledge/idea into everyday practice (pp. 24-25). Imaginably, the passive approach to human learning in the less practical manner—'*kokyō-shinsyō*', hardly makes one lead to the aforementioned important factors for one's practical cultivation in everyday life—"human life force, passion, remarkable character, spiritual peace, and one's own whole life in recognizing one's divine decree" (p. 29). On the contrary, the positive approach ('*shinsyō-kokyō*') enables one to nurture them

in making acquired knowledge/idea vitalize one's living in a practical way (p. 25). The *living-learning*, Yasuoka emphasizes, must be based on this positive sense of human learning—the Eastern idea of '*shinsyō-kokyō*'.

The *living-learning* approach to life, which embodies abstract knowledge/idea in a better orientation, can be regarded as a certain creative process in human learning. This idea of human learning as a creative activity is largely based on an Eastern concept of change or creativity. For an Eastern way of thinking, Yasuoka (2002a) observes that "this universe and human life are never static, but they are constantly changing – put differently, creating something, every day and every night. Since observation of the natural world shows that everything becomes something new day after day [every day is a new day in continuous state of transition and transformation], the stillness [immutability] is contradictory to the innate traits of all the entities and events of this planet and universe" (p. 149, trans. Komori). This view of repeated change or creativity seems to be quite natural in the Eastern worldview because Eastern thinking, most of which is a product of an agricultural tribe, basically views nature, not as antagonistic, but as fruitful to them in the intimate connection to each other, as compared to modern, secular Western thinking that generally understand the human-nature relationship as confrontational (Morohashi & Nakamura, pp. 98-111; Suzuki, 1997, pp. 226-227; Yamamoto, 1996, p. 113; Yasuoka, 1988, pp. 198-199). Namely, a view that all entities and events are constantly changing becomes reasonable for Eastern people and their perspectives, which traditionally tend to follow the way of the natural world with emphasis on the harmony with her, as all the entities and events in the natural world show it (Morohashi & Nakamura, pp. 98-100). This sense can be seen especially in Taoism

(Atokinson, 1994, pp. 148-149; Bennett & Sylvan, 1988, p. 148; Callicott, 1994, p. 68 and 72; Capra, 1991, pp. 116-117 and p. 129; Ip, 1986, p. 98), Buddhism (Badiner, 1990; Jungerman, 2000, p. 7; Halifax, 1990, pp. 29-31), and Shintoism (Umehara, 1995, pp. 33-36 and 192-194; Yasuoka, 1988, pp. 200-203). Based on this perspective of constant change or creativity in the natural world/universe, Eastern philosophies hold the idea that "a person, as a part of nature, should constantly create oneself everyday, as well" (Yasuoka, 2002a, pp. 149-150; trans. Komori). Chinese philosophical traditions especially stress this view of continuous personal creativity. For example, professor Liu shows:

> The idea of Heaven as the ultimate creative ontological principle was further developed in the *Commentaries* of the *Book of Change*. It is said that 'the great characteristic of Heaven and Earth is creativity [*sheng*]'. [54] Again, 'The successive movement of yin and yang[55] constitutes the Way (Tao). What issues from the Way is good, and that which realizes it is the individual nature'.[56] From these sources we can trace the development of a creative metaphysics, which holds that through the realization of the self the creative message of Heaven can become manifest. (p. 183)

By the same token, Yasuoka (1988) remarks a similar (Confucian) idea of "*konzen-tyūsyō*" (Japanese). It means that, although it is true that each person who arose from Heaven and Earth as father and mother is just a tiny entity 'admixed in all things under the sun (*konzen*)', each individual is also an invaluable being who is 'creating self as the process of evolving and bettering for ever and a day (*tyūsyō*)', and it is important

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[54] *The Book of Changes*, Appended Remarks, pt. 2, ch. 1; See Chan, *Source Book*, 268, with slight modification.

[55] According to *The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* (1989), put simply, the *Ying and Yang* is "two polar energies that, by their fluctuation and interaction, are the cause of the universe. Yin and yang are polar manifestations of the Tao of the supreme ultimate (*t'ai-chi* ["'ridge beam'; a term denoting the supreme ultimate" (p. 347)]), their concrete manifestations being Earth and Heaven" (p. 428).

[56] *The Book of Changes*, Appended Remarks, pt. 1, chap. 5; See Chan, *Source Book*, p. 266.

for one to attempt to do so as nature/universe is such (188-191). This concept also can be expressed in an instructive story written in *Huai-nan-tzu* (*Huainanzi*), [57] one of philosophical treatises on Taoist ideas (for the details, see Yasuoka, 2002a, pp. 149-152).

Furthermore, the aforementioned creative process can be performed by the unification of acquired knowledge/idea and everyday practice. This can also be captured by Neo-Confucian idea of "*giri-saisei*" (Japanese)—originally, a Zen-Buddhist idea. Namely, "'*gi*' means the moral practice, and '*ri*' is its conceptual theory; human beings can 'become new, or different, self day after day (*saisei*)', applying both the moral practice (*gi*) and conceptual theory (*ri*). In other words, people are constantly cultivating themselves—one's changing and creating self to a better way, in accordance with the order of nature/universe [that everything is changing all the time]" (Yasuoka, 1998, p. 106, trans. Komori).

Interestingly, this Eastern idea and practice of *living-learning*, as the transformation of idea/knowledge and everyday practice toward self and society cultivation, is very similar to a Western philosopher Whitehead's core concept of education. His idea of learning derived from the education view supports the development of the Eastern notion of *living-learning*. I turn now to the account of his

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[57] According to *The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* (1989), the *Huani-nan-tzu* is a "philosophical treatise dating from the 2d century B.C.E.; more specifically, a collection of writings by scholars gathered around Liu An, the prince of Huai-nan, who later became involved in a conspiracy against the ruler and committed suicide in 122 B.C.E.... the *Huani-nan-tzu* is an analytical compilation of the teachings of philosophical schools prevalent during the 2d century. It accords special emphasis to Taoist ideas. Of particular importance are its chapters on the origin of the cosmos, because they are clearer and more lucid than relevant passages in other works. In addition, the *Huani-nan-tzu* deals with the doctrine of the five elements (*wuhsing*) and with the yin-yang" (p. 142). The five elements (*wuhsing*) means "'five corpses'; five types of contaminated (impure) energy found in the five internal organs of the human body (to which the colors red, green white, yellow, and black are allocated). Because the presence of these impure energies within the body reduces a person's life span, a Taoist practitioner wishing to attain immorality must eliminate the five corpses by meditative practices and fasting" (p. 418).

notion of education and learning and the related-important implication for human feelings and concrete experience capable of forming concrete knowledge.

4.2.2 Whiteheadian Idea of Education: Concrete Experience and Human Feelings as Linking to Practice

This section makes some points about how the mutual relationship between knowledge and action advocated by Whiteheadian education—which also acknowledges the idea of interconnectedness—might encourage learners to engage in practical, ecologically and culturally-peaceful action. As mentioned above, practice joins abstract ideas with concrete experience, which includes subjective experience with human feelings.

An education that values both human experience and our connectedness with life events and nature would, according to Whitehead, be both practical and "religious." What he means by this is best understood from a couple of brief quotations from *The Aims of Education*. "Education," writes Whitehead, "is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 4). Hence, education is a process in which people learn the art of using knowledge in practical ways. For Whitehead, "art" is the process of creating and cultivating the life of the self. Individuals constantly have abstract ideas that reflect concrete life experience. This relationship between abstract ideas and concrete experience undergoes an ongoing process of change. For example, when the apples I eat for dessert taste so delicious, I may entertain the idea of making an apple pie. Then, I might make it on another occasion. It is from the concrete experience of eating apples that the idea of making the pie emerges. This example shows that there is

an ongoing and changing relationship between 'knowledge' and 'action' where knowledge can afford greater scope to action, and where knowledge, is itself, transformed into concrete practice.

This mutual relationship between knowledge and action as the process of utilizing knowledge in practical ways continually transforms both knowledge and action. For example, a student who learns to speak English in their own home country may become very interested in English and want to speak with native speakers of English or study abroad. Usually, a trip to the country provides firsthand experience and knowledge. If one decides to experience an Anglophone nation, one will learn not only about language, but also about different kinds of food, sport, weather, and architecture. Immersive experience in another country is a multi-dimensional creative process. In fact, the knowledge generates a broader understanding, which may lead to further action. This ongoing cyclical process of learning how to use knowledge in practical ways continues throughout one's life. In this sense, learning a language is not necessarily an exercise in spelling, pronunciation, grammar, reading, writing, and speaking. In the broader sense, fluency training expands one's mental universe by experience knowledge, viewpoints, and behavior from an entirely different culture that developed the underlying language. It comprises the art-like process—creating and cultivating the self as a work that becomes increasingly open to more comprehensive forms of thought, feeling, and action (Whitehead, 1938/1966).

This conception of education as the art of using knowledge is also related to Whitehead's notion of "religious education . . . which includes duty and reverence." By duty, he means that sense of responsibility which "arises from our potential control over

the course of events" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 14). By "the course of events," Whitehead means the history and evolution of all life on this planet, and by "control over the course of events" he means the kinds of human intervention that result in forms of control over human and non-human life. From his statement, I assume that two notions of 'control' emerge: on the one hand, control can mean a self-disciplined intervention which nurtures and supports life in its many forms. On the other hand, control can mean the domination of other human beings and of nature for the purpose of maintaining power or making money. Because we are capable of both kinds of control, Whitehead advances the idea of "duty" as a sense of responsibility in relation to our potential to affect nature and the future history of human beings. Our duty is to appreciate all the world events and entities in nature's or earth's complexity and subtlety in order to recognize our responsibilities in enhancing rather than destroying her growth.

Indeed, reverence also involves recognition of the value of nature/the earth itself, both for what it is and for her connectedness with everything else, including human and non-human beings. The intrinsic value of nature transcends any utility it may have as a means to maximize money profits for private corporations (McMurtry, 1998), and reverence recognizes this value. Whitehead regards the "foundation of reverence" as a form of recognition in which "the present holds within itself the sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 14). The basis of duty and responsibility lies in our reverence towards all of existence backwards and forwards through time. This emerges from a humble, respectful, and loving realization that the flow of time, which people experience in the present, also embodies the past and the future, and hence is immortal. The present

moment embodies the culmination of all experience garnered from the past as well as the hopes and fears, thoughts and actions entertained in the present and those "alternative possibilities" for the future which will eventually become concrete events. All past experience is reflected in the present, some of which is transformed into future concrete actuality, while other aspects of experience remain possibilities, at least for now. Experience in the present moment is deeply affected by the past and is capable of transforming the future. The present living moment as experienced has value because it is real and is related to all other events. To this extent, it embodies eternity.

Because the present moment embodies both the past and different possibilities for the future, it is eternal, impregnated with value and is hence "holy ground" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 4). Hence, human beings should realize this sacredness of the present moment and be humble toward it because of its significance for human life. If one believes that somebody's teaching is sacred, for example, one will be humble and respectful toward what is learned because of its unique worth. Furthermore, one will come to love such teaching and learning as the present moment, which is itself sacred. This realization about the sacred present moment which constitutes reverence, involves a feeling of love towards nature and all of existence, including humans. The reason for this is that value is embedded in the present moment itself, and nature and all the entities existing in the present moment, have intrinsic value and are likewise sacred.

For Whitehead, then, the goal of learning is to enhance "the growth of the self as an entity capable of integrating and unifying experience into a coherent pattern of feeling, understanding, and knowing" (Woodhouse, 1995, p. 353). What is learned should be based on students' "concrete experience" as "a stream of events which pours through

our life," – namely, as "that stream . . . which forms our life" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, pp. 2-3). In other words, concrete experience, or our everyday experience of the world, is the basis of human learning. This is the deeper meaning of the point that, if learners do not learn subject matters related to their concrete experience, "ideas become 'inert' and knowledge remains 'dead'" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. v.).

Whitehead recognizes that concrete experience as the basis of human learning is derived from "bodily feelings." What he means by "bodily feelings" is central to my own conception of "interconnectedness," which lies at the core of sustainability education. Bodily feelings, according to Whitehead, are "an ongoing flow of energy that links the world with us on a preconscious level, making possible the conscious level of emotions, hopes, desires and mental activities" (Fidyk, 1997, p. 74). Feelings constantly flow from the objective to the subjective poles of experience, linking one directly to other entities such as human beings, plants, animals, rocks, and sunsets. Whitehead regards feelings as "vectors," ebbing and flowing in a stream of energy constantly linking the objective and subjective poles of a common experience. The vectoral nature of bodily feelings enables all entities to feel "what is there" (the objective pole), and transform those feelings into "what is here" (the subjective pole), making possible a unity between the two poles of experience (Whitehead, 1929/1957b, p. 105; Fidyk, 1997, p. 75). On this view, "the subjective and the objective pole of experience are internally related as members of a common felt experience," and the organic link between the two poles makes possible a unity of feeling (Fidyk, 1997, pp. 75-76). Prof. Mark Flynn (1995) gives the following example of such a unity of feeling:

> As I stand in the yard on a fall afternoon I may feel the presence of a tree as the objective pole to the bodily feelings at the core of my experience. My bodily

feelings, in this case, are the subjective pole of a unified feeling event, a fall afternoon. Moreover, my presence is reflected in the feelings experienced by the tree towards a human being engaged in appreciating its beauty on this fall day. In this way, both organisms are objective and subjective conjoined by the flow of feelings between them. (p. 374)

In other words, "a unified feeling event" has occurred in which a flow of bodily feelings connects a tree in his yard (the object of Flynn's experience) with his own awareness of its beauty (the subjective pole). Bodily feelings at the core of concrete experience enable Flynn to apprehend reality in direct ways that connect him to the beauty of a tree on a fall afternoon. A concrete appreciation or knowledge of such beauty is primarily derived from this unity of experience in which one feels connected directly to the world through the flow of bodily feelings. 'Self' and 'other' are distinctions internal to phenomenal experience.

In this way, by bodily feelings Whitehead means a certain human fundamental force before our mental activities—like essences to develop them, which refers to five senses in general as well as "a ongoing flow of energy" at the same time, so as to constantly link us to other entities and events taking place around ourselves; therefore, bodily feelings also should include not only the general five senses, but also such a sixth sense as intuition and inspiration seen as one of essences as the stream of energy. However, my use of human feelings in this thesis implies the more broad meaning in addition to Whitehead's meaning of bodily feeling. By (human) feelings, I mean including such mental activities as human emotion, affection, thought, and so on derived from the human force of bodily feelings. All the aspects of mentality and bodily feelings emerging from direct experience can be regarded as indispensable to promote concrete ideas or knowledge at the basis for ultimately giving rise to the related-practice, which I

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focus on in this thesis. Education, as a process of learning to apply knowledge in practical ways that create oneself and one's life, should also be grounded in learners' concrete experience and the human feelings at its base and forefront. Only an education of this kind can enable learners to recognize the reality of their connectedness with nature, other entities, and life events around themselves, which, of course, is the goal of sustainability education.

4.2.3 Living-learning, Whitehead's Education Concept, and Sustainability

From Whitehead's views on learning above we can derive an implication that our concrete human feelings are also important for *living-learning*, which aims at enabling one to cultivate self and its living world in a better way. In order to better oneself and society in the mutual transformation between knowledge/idea and practice—that is, the concept and practice of *living-learning*—one should acknowledge the significance of concrete experience in which one fully engages with the human feelings that Whitehead describes. The distinction between concrete experience and non-concrete, or abstract experience, is demarcated by how fully one uses such human feelings (collectively referred to as five senses, emotions, affections, thoughts, etc.) in order to understand a subject. For example, to know something about a foreign country, one just watches the TV program introducing the people and lifestyle; however, a more adventurous mind visits the country and sees firsthand, speaks with, listens to, touches, and smells the people, way of life, food, architecture, and so on. The former is more 'non-concrete' experience based on indirectly knowing about the abstract information of subject through media; the latter is more 'concrete' experience based on directly

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acquiring the practical knowledge about subject through human experiential learning described earlier.

This sort of learning based on concrete experience would be indispensable to such an education that should emphasize our human and social changes to well-being in a practical way. Therefore, sustainability education that aims at concretely bettering one's living and society should be based on a combination of the Eastern core idea of *living-learning* with Whitehead's notion of education as "the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, p. 4). Such an education, or a process of learning, could transform the view of interconnectedness (with the sense of human connectedness with nature) and ecologically and culturally-related knowledge into the creation of an ecologically and culturally sustainable world.

The importance of concrete experience with human feelings for such an idea of *living-learning* as creative work that develops the art of the utilization of knowledge is also well expressed in Whitehead's observation of "hand-craft." Hand-craft, for Whitehead, "expresses both the knowledge and technique which the learner can express in concrete form on the basis of her experience" (Fidyk, 1997, p. 45). Hand-craft transforms one's thoughts into manual skills and the "coordinated action of hand and eye," and comprises "manual activity into thought" (Whitehead, 1929/1957a, pp. 50-51). By fully using one's hand and eye one can link abstract ideas to concrete activities by creating something tangible while such concrete action develops one's ideas even further. Such coordination reflects a reciprocal relationship between thought, action, and skill, and transforms one's knowledge or ideas into constructive activities involving the body, hand, eye, and brain. That is to say, learners' concrete experience and feelings are the

basis on which they can create something that combines headwork and handiwork into a work of beauty (Fidyk 1997, p. 46).

Like hand-craft, sustainability education with *living-learning* based on concrete experience and human feelings that promotes a sustainably-oriented way of living enables people to understand the reality of our mutual connectedness with others and nature/the earth at the core for its education concept by energizing these feelings into action. In this case, however, the coordination of feeling, thought, language, and action involves constructive activities, the goal of which is balanced and harmonious relationships among all existing entities/events—e.g., human beings and nature/the earth, between human and other-than human beings, between one human community (culture, society, nation) and another, between oneself and all the others (humans or otherwise), etc. Like hand-craft, sustainability education aims for the creation of a unique object of beauty; but, in this case, the object is no less than the kind of sustainability that will ensure the survival of both the human species and the diverse cultures which it has created (Shiva, 1993). This creative work for nurturing a sustainably-oriented society by sustainability education, in my view, holds a cyclic process of three stages in the context of *living-learning*, which will be discussed below.

CHAPTER 5

THREE SATEGES IN THE PROCESS OF *LIVING-LEARNING* FOR SUSTAINABILITY: AWARENESS, INQUIRY, PRAXIS

The process of *living-learning*, as described, should be based on one's first-hand experience with human feelings that could serve as a foundation for creating concrete knowledge that leads to actual results. In my analysis, there are three successive stages ('awareness', 'inquiry', 'praxis') in the process of *living-learning* for sustainability, referred to as sustainability education, a process through which people can become motivated to improve their attitudes and values with healthier habits and living patterns. More specifically, I undertake to show how acquired knowledge can be transformed into practice so that these three stages, based on hands-on experience, could be cyclically repeated in a creative manner. This evolutionary course will involve showing how this successive model for change or creativity can be elucidated by a circulative process comprised of three steps observed in deep ecology theory—deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment. For instance, introducing ecologist Stephan Harding's (1997) thoughts in his article entitled "What is Deep Ecology: Through deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment emerges deep ecology" would be helpful to fully show each of these three stages inferred in the idea of *living-learning* for sustainability based on human feelings and experience—namely, the learning process of sustainability education. Therefore, I shall articulate these three stages seen in the process of *living-learning*, using Harding's accounts.

5.1 The First Stage: Awareness

The first stage is what I call 'awareness', which is a process of knowing about and considering issues of sustainability-related facts or problems as illustrated in Chapter 2. One's concrete experience often could be cue for this process. This stage could be expressed best by the following idea of deep experience—one of three processes in deep ecology theory, which Harding (1997) shows as "what gets a person started along a deep ecological path" (p. 14). To elucidate it, Harding uses a story by Aldo Leopold[58] in his work *Sand County Almanac* (1986), as a well-known classic for today's environmental ethics in which he first coined the phrase "land ethic" (pp. 237-264).

Harding (1997) writes that, in the 1920s, "[a]s wildlife manager of those times, Leopold adhered to the unquestioning belief that humans were superior to the rest of nature, and were thus morally justified in manipulating it as much as was required in order to maximize human welfare" (p. 14).

One day, Leopold went out the mountains with some friends, carrying their rifles to shoot some wolves when they had the opportunity. The wolves were animals identified for eradication by US government policy at that time. Thus, sport hunters were encouraged to hunt wolves instead of deer. During lunch time, the hunters encountered a pack of wolves and shot indiscriminately into the pack. Eventually they brought down an old wolf and approached her to gloat over their success. However, what Leopold actually

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[58] Also Leopold (1886-1948), along with such early noted American ecologists/environmentalists as Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), John Muir (1838-1914), Rachel Carson (1907-1964), is one of the groundbreakers that advanced contemporary environmentalism, i.e. environmental movement. Leopold is especially well-known as the forerunner of environmental ethic, which is derived from the first coined words "land ethic" (pp. 237-264) in his writing *Sand County Almanac* (1986). Leopold describes the basic notion of land ethic as: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community [collectively mentioned as 'the land']. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (p. 262).

experienced about her death was a "fierce green fire dying in the wolf's eyes" (Leopold, p. 138). Leopold writes that: "there was something new to me in those eyes, something known only to her and to the mountain. I thought that, because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view" (pp. 138-139). According to Harding (1997), what Leopold means by this impression in his mind is that: [c]learly, he is using the word 'mountain' as a metaphor for the wild ecosystem in which the incident took place: "the ecosystem as an entirety, as a living presence, with its deer, its wolves and other animals, its clouds, soils and streams." It is the first time for him to feel "completely at one with this wide, ecological reality." That is to say, Leopold seemed to experience the "ecosystem as a great being, dignified and valuable in itself," which further refers to "a moment of tremendous liberation and expansion of consciousness, of joy and energy – a truly spiritual or religious experience." In this view, "Something in the dying eyes of the wolf reached beyond Leopold's training and triggered recognition of *where he was*," and Leopold's "narrow, manipulative wildlife manager's mind" which "saw nature as a dead machine, there for human use, vanished" (pp. 14-15). Harding remarks that, due to this concrete experience, Leopold "saw the world differently, and went on to develop his land ethic, in which he stated that humans are not a superior species with the right to manage and control the rest of nature, but rather that humans are 'plain members of the biotic community' [collectively referred to as 'the land']" (pp. 15-16). In this way, we can view Leopold's first-hand experience with the dying wolf to be charged of "sufficient intensity to trigger a total reorientation in his life's work as a wildlife manager and ecologist" (p. 14). This sort of experience can be referred to as

'deep experience'.

As seen in the dimension of deep experience, the first stage of 'awareness' in *living-learning* for sustainability embraces processes enabling an individual to understand and begin reflecting on personal philosophy, worldview, as well as sustainability-related issues and ideas. In the previous sections, I have remarked that one's concrete appreciation, idea, or knowledge of entities/events around self is primarily derived from subjective human experience in which one feels connected directly to the reality in the world through human feelings. The evoked recognition or ideas through this stage of knowing as well as thinking, thus, could and should be led by such a "sufficient intensity" as concrete experience that fully includes feelings towards entities and events taking place around oneself.

Consider this example related to sustainability. During a school holiday, a male university student X, who grew up in one of the wealthy nations in the Northern Hemisphere, traveled to an inland located in the South Pacific Ocean with some friends for about a week. Student X and his friends stayed in one of the nice hotels built along the beach that is especially attractive for foreign travelers from rich countries. On the third day of the trip he went to the beach and spent the whole day there alone. After enjoying the beautiful sunset, although student X wanted to return to the hotel immediately, he lost his way and unexpectedly wandered off into a back street that is in the proximity of a host of hotels. Then, he observed that there were many poor people who lived in an aging hut. Student X could easily infer their poverty from their shabby appearance. The fancy hotels towering just in front of them were definitely another world, he felt, even though both sides neighbored each other. The gap between them gave him a jolt, which made him

raise a question as follows—"Is this right?" or "This is something unjust going on." Although student X also had already known that there were some gaps between rich and poor nations intellectually from his reading a textbook before he came to the island, the topic did not affect him. In short, he just knew the fact as one piece of abstract knowledge, but there was no special thing to feel and think in his mind in those days. Through his concrete experience of seeing the gap, however, student X came to ask himself about whether its disparity was right or not and then to think something was taking place here, which was perhaps improper. Later, student X came to recognize it as something unfair.

In addition, I would suggest that this process of personal awareness can be derived from a realization of some facts. This is traced to feelings that involve the process of widening and enhancing one's consciousness and perspective. To borrow a remark from Harding, Leopold's experience must lead to "a moment of tremendous liberation and expansion of consciousness, of joy and energy – a truly spiritual or religious experience" in a way that he thought "ecosystem as a great being, dignified and valuable in itself" (p. 15). In terms of deep ecology theory, such an "expansion of consciousness" is, more specifically, defined as "*wide identification*" derived from human feelings and concrete experience. The idea of wide identification refers to the implication that "the sense of self is no longer limited by the personal ego, but instead encompasses greater and greater wholes," whose expanded sense of self is called the "*ecological self*" by Arne Naess, the founder of deep ecology (Harding, 1997, p. 16). Harding (1997) points out that "[w]hen such deep experience occurs, we feel a strong sense of *wide identification* with what we are sensing," which "involves a heightened sense of empathy and an expansion of our concern with non-human life" in a way that "[w]e realize how dependent we are on

the well-being of nature for our own physical and psychological well-being."[59] As a result, "there arises a natural inclination to protect non-human life" (p. 16). Thinking in the afore-mentioned student X's journey, for the rest of his trip, student X became more observant of the living conditions for local people—such as food, clothing and shelter, in addition to the local scenery that so many tourists flock to see; however, student X realized that there were few local people who enjoyed the beach like the tourists and felt that the life and natural environment for their inhabited area did not provide a proper quality of life because of dirtiness due to a lack of a sewage system, a garbage-strewn street, a contaminated river foul with refuse, with few green pastures. Also, student X came to think about how the inhabitants have to earn a livelihood with so few opportunities. For instance, a basic or public education appeared to be unavailable because he saw many children who were on the street that foraged in the trash pile throughout a regular school day. So, by losing his way, he ended up witnessing the "dark side" of the beautiful island. This is in contrast to the vacation aspect of the island, which was great for enjoying the ocean and the tropical weather. As a result, his worldview was expanded, permanently altering his life and philosophy.

In this way, this initial stage—'awareness'—is a process of becoming cognizant

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[59] Harding (1997) goes on writing about the notion of wide identification in terms of intrinsic value for all, whether humans and other-than humans, as follows: "We understand that other beings, ranging from microbes to multicellular life-forms to ecosystems and watersheds, to Gaia [Earth] as a whole, are engaged in the process of unfolding their innate potentials," whose process is defined as "*self-realization*" in deep ecology. This notion of self-realization "involves the development of wide identification," and [s]ince all beings strive in their own ways for self-realization, we recognize that all are endowed with *intrinsic value*, irrespective of any economic or other utilitarian value they may have for human ends" (p. 16). Within this context, "There is a fundamental equality between human and non-human life in principle" in a way that "[o]ur own human striving for self-realization is on an equal footing to the strivings of other beings" In deep ecology, this equal observation between humans and non-humans is regarded as "*ecocentric*," which "contrasts with the anthropocentric view which ascribes intrinsic value only to humans, valuing nature only if it is useful to our own species" (p. 16).

of events and entities affecting an individual's life. However, initially in this stage the depth of thinking can be shallow, yet fertile for growth. This newfound awareness that can be acquired by ideas through one's thinking in this stage could be further enhanced in the next level—becoming more profound, precise, and holistic, even though they, more or less, have already changed and widened as compared to the previous status.

5.2 The Second Stage: Inquiry

The second stage in *living-learning* for sustainability is what I call 'inquiry', which is implied by the idea of 'deep questioning' (the second process of three deeps) in deep ecology theory. According to Harding, "THE NEW SENSE of belonging to an intelligent universe revealed by deep experience often leads to deep questioning, which helps to elaborate a coherent framework for elucidating fundamental beliefs, and translating these beliefs into decision, lifestyle and action" (p. 16). The aspect of action is especially stressed in the entire theory, which makes deep ecology distinguished from other ecophilosophies (ecologically-related philosophy). Harding goes on to point out that "[b]y deep questioning, an individual is articulating a total view of life which can guide his or her lifestyle" in a way that "[i]n questioning society, one understands its underlying assumptions from an ecological point of view" (p. 16).

As the process of deep questioning focuses on some point above, the stage of 'inquiry' in *living-learning* for sustainability is a process of considering and well-comprehending the topics led by the previous stage of 'awareness'. This stage includes a judgment process that s/he selects and determines what is better or worse for our lives in light of ecological and cultural sustainability. In the case of student X, what

he saw gave rise to the judgment that the situation was unfair, with feelings that communicated such unfairness is wrong. His new worldview compels him to seek a better understanding of problems even after coming back to his own country from abroad. To do so, an individual like student X continually needs to build his knowledge on topics and problems related to sustainability. In comparison to the initial way of thinking, this way of thinking in the second stage is more reflective, which means that one comes to study in depth without taking things for granted. In order to pursue related facts s/he questions, the individual may seek further knowledge by reviewing literature at the bookstore or library, use the Internet to check and obtain the information, attend a public lecture, and so on. In doing so, one comes to reassess assumptions underlying one's society because one realizes that humans need to resolve some issues and find an ecological and culturally harmonious balance. One also needs to appreciate more and more deeply the connections among those problems and to think reflectively about them in terms of daily lifestyle. As Harding (1997) describes it, during the stage of deep questioning in deep ecology theory

> One looks at the collective psychological origins of the ecological crisis, and the related crises of peace and social justice. One also looks deeply into the history of the West to find the roots of our pernicious anthropocentrism as it has manifested in our science, philosophy and economics. One tries to understand how the current drive for globalization of Western culture and of free trade leads to the devastation of both human culture and nature. (p. 16)

In student X's case again, after his decision to pursue the issue of injustice, he tries to understand the gap between rich and poor countries mainly by reading related books, visiting such international NGO websites as U.N. and UNISEF via the Internet, taking a course offered by his university, and so on. By considering this topic, a deeper

understanding of some of the related facts become apparent; namely, a misdistribution of wealth on the planet exists, in which about 20 percent of the world's population, chiefly comprised of relatively rich individuals, consume more than four-fifths of the planet's resources, while the remaining 80 percent faces chronic poverty, famine, and disease; the gap between the rich and poor has not decreased. Rather, it has been widening through economic globalization, in which rich nations lavishly expand their own economies without limit. While imposing hard barriers on poor countries, transnational corporations squeeze cheaper labor and natural resources from poorer nations to further maximize their profits. In other words, rich nations (about one-fifth of the world's population) enjoy material prosperity by standing on the shoulders of poorer countries (about four-fifth of the world's population). This grotesque inequity—that always involves chronic poverty, famine, and disease as well—is one of the fundamental factors underlying many other serious issues, whether local or global, such as conflict/war, ecological degradation, resource/energy depletion, and lack of basic education, as I argued in chapter two. In order to transform the world towards a more secure and stable orientation, those with economic privilege must nurture ecologically and culturally sustainable-oriented behaviors and lifestyles—ways of everyday thinking and doing by considering all the dimensions (political, economic, social, livelihood, etc.).

If carried to completion, this stage of decision-making and reflective-thinking leads to actions, such as one's talking and writing about the nature of problems, in terms of what are necessary and important, and how people may strive to create a sustainable life. This is a more concrete as well as creative aspect as compared with the abstract activities in one's mind such as selection, decision, and thought. At the same time, this

activity of writing can have an influence beyond the individual, since words can make an impact, as the wolf's eye did. To take an example seen in Leopold's story again, after his firsthand experience of shooting the wolf, "he saw the world differently, and went on to develop his land ethic, in which he stated that humans are not a superior species with the right to manage and control the rest of nature, but rather that humans are 'plain members of the biotic community' [collectively mentioned as 'the land']" (Harding, pp. 15-16). Also, Leopold left his famous dictum in his writing: "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (p. 262). As a result of his thinking and understanding of the social and world problems he has paid attention to, student X also comes to talk about the on-going negative reality and our need to create better ways to live for his friends and family if there is a chance. Additionally, he might try to write about class papers focusing on the topics as much as possible.

Awareness does not always lead to the inquiry stage, which may depend on the degree to which the direct experience impacts the individual to take action. I hypothesize that there is a direct relationship between the level of the excitatory stimulus and the chance to motivate an individual into inquiry. Thus, an experience that stimulates all five human senses could make a greater impact on people than secondhand experience based only on 2-dimensional media experience. Also, the awareness brought about by the experience is repeated again and again might be an important factor for people to step up to the inquiry process even though a first realization is not strong enough to move to the next stage.

5.3 The Third Stage: Praxis

Talking and writing as human activities derived from thoughts might lead further to more substantial action. This is the third stage of 'praxis' in *living-learning* for sustainability, in which deep commitment is "the result of combining deep experience with deep questioning." It is natural that, "[w]hen an ecological world-view is well developed, people act from their whole personality, giving rise to tremendous energy and commitment" in the "peaceful and democratic" manner that "will lead towards ecological sustainability" (Harding, 1997, p. 17).

What *living-learning* emphasizes is that one's action should become a pattern in day-to-day life. Certain action that is brought about by one's acquired ideas or knowledge through the previous processes of knowing (awareness) and considering (inquiry) must not end in being a three-day wonder. Conversely, one's action should become more repeated behavior in one's 'everyday' living from merely single-action or fragmental. Then it is preferable that one's repetitive practice would be eventually the lifestyle per se. This is because this third stage involves 'praxis,' which connotes the meaning of "*customary* practice or conduct" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2005; emphasis added).

Moreover, this action stage itself involves a learning process based on one's concrete experience as practice—shortly, a process of 'learning in action,' that refers to obtaining something about further ideas, knowledge, or action, through doing. In student X's case, his first-hand knowledge about the unfairness between the rich and poorer during the 'inquiry' stage compels student X into purchasing fair-trade products as much as possible. Through such his action, then, student X further knows what kinds of

products had been so far mainly treated in contemporary business and which companies promote the fair business. Additionally, when student X sees his product's package that says the package material is recyclable, and that biodegradable inks are used for the prints on it, he also realizes that most of the corporations caring for the fairness also pay sufficient attention to behaving in an environmentally friendly manner. After he makes this connection he attempts to buy, not only fair-trade products, but also environmentally friendly goods and foodstuffs from carefully selected corporations. In this context, such learning through action' could also lead to further developing one's concrete practice, which can be also regarded as another learning occasion called 'learning for action'. Practicing based on certain action that s/he learned will become an occasion of 'learning in action'. In this way, the relationship between both processes—'learning in action' and 'learning for action'—is interactive in a cyclic way. By intentionally recognizing this circular process, it could inspire certain single-action to be become more a pattern that, in turn, helps to become everyday lifestyle itself.

Through this cyclic process of learning in this action stage, the quality of one's action would involve a step by step evolution. Evolving the quality of action is two-fold. The first regard is an expansion of one's practice. The sphere of one's activity might be gradually expanding to more social matters without necessarily gravitating merely on personal concerns. For example, in his initial condition of what he was doing, student X's action is limited merely within such his personal life as buying items related to something about matters of sustainability. One day, however, he decides to take part in a volunteer activity for tree planting by being recruited by a poster put on the notice board in a café treating fair-trade coffee beans that student X always buys. Furthermore, invited by a

friend who he met during his first volunteer activity, he was also involved in doing other volunteer work by gathering old clothes and unused stationary products and sending them to poorer nations.

In addition to this aspect, the second dimension is that one's practice is deepening in the cyclic process. Deepening one's practice can be captured here in contrast to the meaning of 'shallow.' By shallow practice, for instance, I mean that one positively recycles used paper, cans, bottles and so on, or becomes a green consumer who does shopping in consideration of environmental issues; however, the lifestyle itself hardly veers yet because one's worldview, ideology, and value judgment underlying everyday living remains profoundly unchanged with no doubt about the ongoing social systems (politics, economy, welfare, etc.). Although student X comes to intentionally buy fair-trade products as much as possible and to participate in volunteer work related to something about sustainability issues, he does not go far enough to change his whole, or a major part of, life path, by challenging the norms that his society takes for granted.

On the other side of the coin, what I mean by 'deep' is that student X starts making grassroots changes from the bottom up in society, in areas such as politics, economy, education, and welfare. If student X resolves to change his personal life path and makes an actual attempt to fundamentally alter it, he has shown his understanding that he regards himself as an essential component of global society. Also, student X tries to be involved in more political activities in order to improve the quality of the economy, education, natural environment, and welfare in taking part in such regional organizations as NPOs or NGOs. He could do this within his living context as much as possible. In this vein, X positively creates his everyday life in more ecologically and culturally sustainable

ways with enthusiasm and motivation, as the fundamental step of social transformation. On this point, X has become importantly a transformative or creative agent in regarding himself as such. Consequently, by 'deep' practice, *living-learning* means ultimately becoming a 'creative agent' for social transformation toward better quality of living for oneself as well as for all in an ecologically, as well as culturally, sustainable manner.

5.4 Cyclic Process of Three Stages: A Creative Process in *Living-Learning*

The successive process of three stages seen in *living-learning* describes how an acquired idea or insight can be applied in everyday practice based on concrete experience with human feelings. Its progression is not linear, but circular, as each of the stages continuously evolves upon repetition. The third stage of *praxis*, as just described, involves the reciprocal process between 'learning in action' and 'learning for action'. Needless to say, this action stage itself is based on an individual's first-hand experience and also an occasion to glean some knowledge from it. Therefore, the third stage is going to, or itself becoming, the next first stage of 'awareness' as the process of an individual experiencing something firsthand and subsequently being affected by it to the point of influencing his worldview. Then, the whole process from 'awareness', 'inquiry', to 'praxis' is repeated in this manner. The more this successive process is repeated, the more one's idea, knowledge, or practice is widened and heightened. In Harding's words, in terms of deep ecology, "Uncovering the ecological self gives rise to joy, which gives rise to involvement, which in turn leads to wider identification, and hence to greater commitment" and which further "leads to 'extending care to humans and deepening care for non-humans'" (p. 17), and this series of activities is conducted again and again in

repetitively (p. 16).

Living-learning is creative since abstract knowledge is transformed into concrete forms of action. Also, the acquired ideas, knowledge, words, and actions are expanding from personal to more social dimensions. Furthermore, they will imbue the individual over time with a new sense of direction and understanding. Throughout these series of human learning experiences—whether intellectual or practical—s/he, as a transformative/creative agent, is going to develop her or his own life in ecologically and culturally better ways—namely, sustainable living. This creation, more or less, means a certain contribution to changing society or the world where one is living as the part, affecting others around oneself. Figure 3 shows the entire flow of this successive process of three stages involved in *living-learning*.

Although I divide the *living-learnin*g process into three categories, it does not mean learners have to strictly follow them in a special order or sequence. In my idea, this successive process of a learning model refers to a certain 'outline' or 'key-point of recipe', and it should be flexible. For example, one might more directly move to a 'praxis' stage right after the 'awareness' stage without staying in the 'inquiry stage' that might be conducted within the 'praxis' stage together. Also there might be a case that one who has already had an extreme interest in a topic could go to an 'inquiry' or 'praxis' stage without especially strong hands-on experience as the core of an 'awareness' stage. Therefore, which stage one starts from (or takes longer than others) would depend on one's life background, what problems one is more particularly concerned about, and so on. However, it surely is much easier to complete any type of work, such as writing a document or preparing a meal, if an outline or recipe is provided beforehand.

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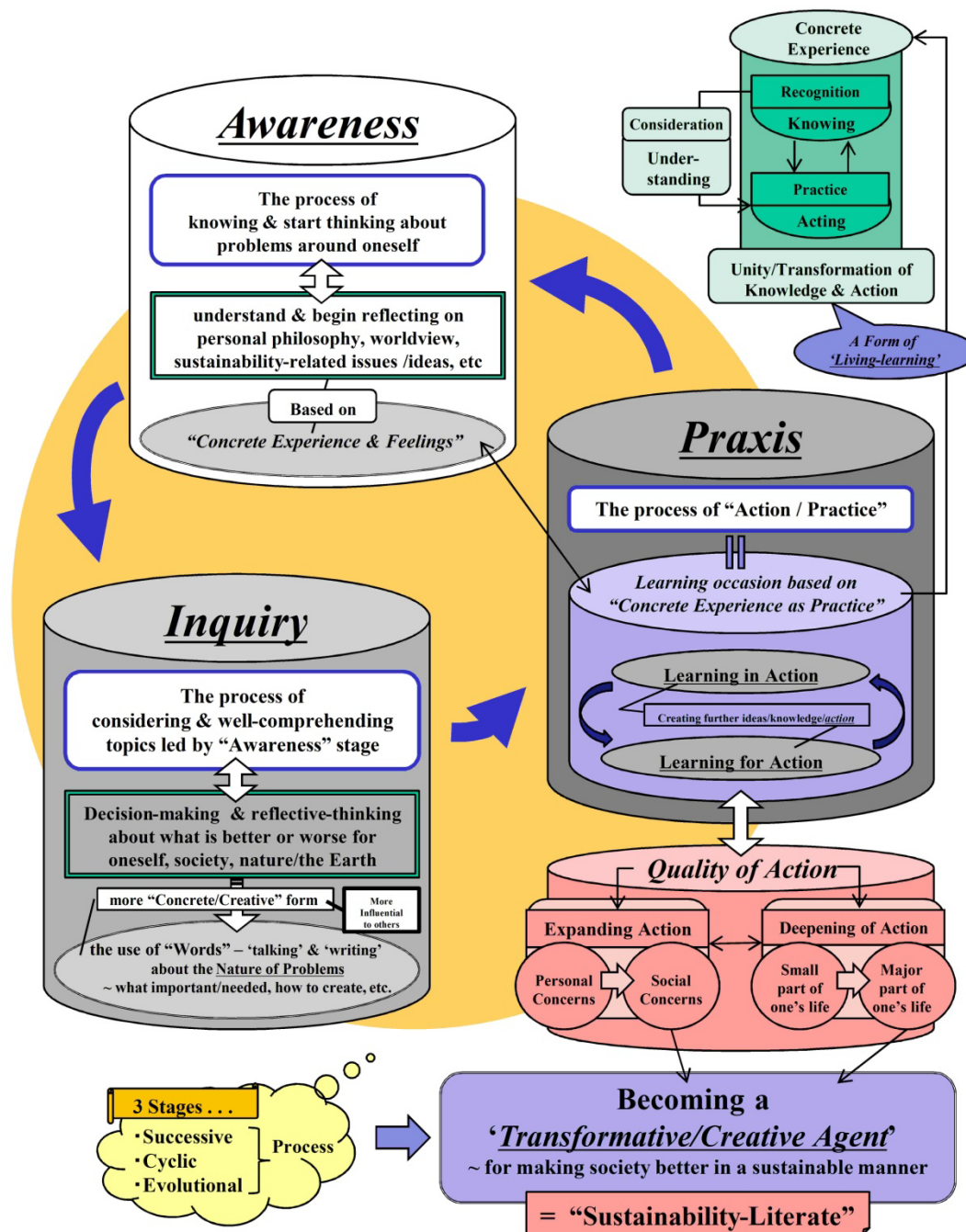
Figure 3. The Flow of Three Stages in the *Living-learning* Process

Furthermore, the divided three portions proposed in a learning process do not mean that there is a perfect boundary line among three stages in a way that every stage individually exists in separate manner; rather, there could be the case that three stages overlap one

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another according to circumstances as shown above, such that the third stage of praxis includes first-hand experience that enables one to open up thinking and knowing about something one impressively feels, which can be seen as the first stage of awareness.

What, then, is the advantage for viewing the process of *living-learning* within the context of three stages—'awareness', 'inquiry', to 'praxis'? In my understanding, the standpoint of three stages could allow us to recognize where we are and plan to go, what and how we could learn and teach, and so forth, in terms of education practice. For example, each of the three stages is like a 'checkpoint' for recreational orienteering that a cross-country hiking in which each participant attempts to head for a destination by navigating between one's own checkpoints along an unfamiliar course with the aid of a map and compass. Each of the checkpoints is a divided objective point as a sub-goal to fulfill along the way to the ultimate goal without straying from the main path. Namely, the checkpoints help participants to be able to effectively recognize the place where they are now and in order to reach their destination. By the same token, three stages in the *living-learning* process are viewpoints capable of providing learners and teachers with ideas about where to be now within the whole process, which direction to go from the current point, what to need, and how to arrange it in order to get to the next point or ultimate goal. More concretely, by recognizing each of the three stages, a learner or teacher could create some educational visions, plans, and contents as a partial/entire curriculum, study/action procedure, goal-setting, and evaluation, in order to attain one's overarching goal he is pursuing.

5.5 Summary and Implications: Sustainability Education as *Living-learning* Based on Human Feelings and Concrete Experience

Based on reflection of the past failure of environmental education, sustainable education requires 'concrete' transformation toward sustaining one's living and society through one's 'everyday practice'. To make sustainable living and society possible in the practical sense, the learning and teaching process for sustainability should ultimately reflect nurturing everyday sustainably-oriented 'action' at all levels—personal, regional, national, international, and global. In other words, a concrete steps toward the creation of sustainable lifestyles is indispensable as the way that education for sustainability must enable learners to be 'sustainability-literate', which implies being capable of transforming acquired knowledge and ideas about sustainability into everyday practice. Knowledge without action will never be able to make anything substantial. For example, even though someone, who knows how to cook very well (acquired knowledge) and who has sufficient foodstuff and cooking utensils (material/tool), really wants to take a meal motivation, that person never gets to eat without making something (action) in using the cooking knowledge and materials (application of acquired knowledge into action). This sort of learning process that emphasizes the unity of knowledge/idea and practice can be found in one of the core ideas in Eastern philosophy, identified as the notion of *living-learning*.

As for the acquisition of knowledge, sustainable education should consider, not only abstract knowledge, but also learners' concrete knowledge as connecting them to the related action. Such concrete knowledge of our mutual connectedness with nature, life events, and other beings, emerges from learners' feelings and concrete experience.

Knowledge derived from a process of *living-learning* through this concrete experience is the basis for linking abstract ideas or knowledge to everyday practice. To fully cultivate oneself and then create ecologically and culturally sustainable ways for one's life and society based on its personal cultivation requires *living-learning*—the process of learning and teaching about the natural and life world in which one lives through learners' concrete experience and human feelings which are at the core of their own connectedness with nature, with everyday living events, and with other human and non-human beings. More precisely, one's acquired idea or knowledge based on human feelings and concrete experience could be transformed to everyday practice needed for sustainable living through a cyclic process of three stages in *living-learning*. These three are called the stage of 'awareness', 'inquiry', and 'praxis', which should be successively repeated in a creative manner.

Sustainability education, as repeatedly described in the previous chapter, thereby reflects a growing understanding of the concept of interconnectedness among all, with the strong sense of human connectedness with nature, by situating one being (a person, a society, a nation) in a context where one's own well-being is dependent on others (humans or otherwise) as well as the rhythms of the natural world. This view of interconnectedness represents a more organic understanding of the world than scientific materialism, the predominant paradigm of contemporary western-oriented society. Also, the sense of 'interconnectedness' involves, like two sides of a coin, the view of 'wholeness' that one is an integral part of a larger whole system. This idea of interconnectedness among all should be fundamental to sustainability education because its comprehension is like a seed that will generate the harmonious relationship with other

people, other life forms, and the entire nature/earth based on the idea that everything is influencing everything else in a way that one can never be separated from others and the larger system within the context of interconnectedness of all. Then such a harmonious idea, in turn, could promote culturally and ecologically peaceful results through a disciplined regimen practice on a daily basis, with an idea of sufficiency. This social trend has been demonstrated by the traditional form of communities and societies (Old Cultures) across the world for over 100,000 years.

This view of peaceful relationships among all derived from the view of interconnectedness further makes us recognize another important perspective on 'sufficiency' based on the idea of equal opportunity for all. This is very important because of the ecological limitations of the Earth, and the necessity for living within the limits to growth. Consequently, it is also an indispensable idea to share the limited nature's or earth's capacity with all living in her, whose attempt of creating equal opportunity is regarded as the cornerstone in the concept of sustainability and its education to locally, as well as globally, better the world in an ecologically and culturally harmonious manner.

This understanding on how to structure one's life and society with a sense of sufficiency based on limits of growth is not an especially new idea, or practice, but rather a basic way to sustain both nature and society supported by her in traditional form of cultures, as noted above. In all traditional and indigenous thought and teachings across the world, furthermore, it has also been said that living in a 'simpler manner' rooted in the idea of sufficiency, or having less, is fundamental to living properly (Burch, 2000, pp. 21-22; Durning, 1992, pp. 143-144; Elgin, 1993, pp. 46-53 and 2000, pp. 80-81). Sharing these limited resources and practicing methods of simplicity grounded in ecological limits,

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were fundamental to sustaining life and society. The very notion of choosing simplicity intentionally as a way of life, appears, itself to be a learning process experienced in everyday situations. In order to readily understand and relate to such modes of living, one must practice them through firsthand experience. In this way, practicing voluntary simplicity is a valuable tool useful in moving toward more sustainable living and its education practice with the *living-learning* process, in which everyone can engage these issues in the context of their own life, anywhere at anytime.

Today, choosing simpler living is well illustrated by a notion of voluntary simplicity practiced in everyday life. In general, voluntary simplicity can be captured as the unity of 'living more simply' and 'living more voluntarily'. In other words, its lifestyle is based on lighter/less stressful ways of living to oneself, others, and the Earth in deliberate, conscious, positive and purposeful manner (Elgin, 1993, 24-25). In this context, voluntary simplicity as a way of life has also been identified as a social movement pursued by dedicated individuals who seek an alternative way of life to better our living in both individual and social terms (Shame & Wisenblit, 1984). In this thesis, we explore educational initiatives that explain how we can make personal transformations that lead to a more sustainable life, society, and world. Therefore, it is crucial to consider voluntary simplicity as a viable choice as propounded in this paper. This process will be analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

6.1 Introduction

Voluntary simplicity, considered to be "both a system of beliefs and a practice (Zavestoski, 2002, p. 149)," is a social movement defined by people who choose an alternative lifestyle based on a simpler lifestyle (Shama & Wisenblit, 1984) as a way to improve an individual's personal and social life (Pierce, 2000 and 2003; Andrew, 1997). In this sense, voluntary simplicity is a value-based life philosophy as well as practice; the two aspects of idea and action are inseparable. People that take part in voluntary simplicity are often called 'voluntary simplifiers'[60] or "simple livers" (Grigsby, 2004, p. 1). Currently, the term *voluntary simplicity* is used in different ways by different people according to which of its aspects are stressed. However, there is a common core of meaning, as the movement groundbreaker Elgin shows. Literally, voluntary simplicity as a way of life means voluntarily adopting a simpler way of living. Living more simply is an attempt to have a more direct, light, and less-stressful relationship with all aspects of our lives, which involves living in harmony with others, whether humans or nonhumans, and the natural environment, in an ecologically friendly manner, with less consumption and fewer possessions (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-55 and 143-157; Schut, 1999). The *voluntary* component of living with simplicity involves living more consciously, which implies living purposefully. This intentional sense is a more positive approach to living that can also be viewed as a creative activity essential to everyday life (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-55 and

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[60] The term 'voluntary simplifiers' is especially used in psychological research (Caraig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Huneke, 2005; McDonald, Oates, Young, & Hwang, 2006; Shama & Wisenbilt, 1984; Shaw & Newholm, 2002)

123-142), which often brings about 'positive personal characteristics', such as self-sufficiency (Iwata, 2001; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984; Zavestoski, 2002), self-determination (Dominguez & Robin, 1992/1999; Johnston & Burton, 2002), or mindfulness (Burch, 2000, chap.7).

To examine the core idea of voluntary simplicity, I will mainly use the work of one of its best-known proponents, Duane Elgin, because his texts have provided the basis for the later movement and research (Shi, 1985, 1986).

6.2 Historical Background

Intentionally choosing a simpler lifestyle in order to improve quality of life is the goal of a social movement known as 'voluntary simplicity' (Shama & Wisenblit, 1984). The word 'voluntary simplicity' was first coined in a 1936 article by Richard Gregg, a student of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings, who described it as follows:

> Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for purpose. (Gregg, 1936[61])

Noted transcendentalist thinker Henry David Thoreau's work *Walden* (1845/1971) is regarded by many as the classic text on the subject of voluntary simplicity for

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[61] The article entitled "Voluntary Simplicity" was originally published in the Indian journal *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* in summer 1936 and later reprinted in the alternative living publication *The Co-Evolution Quarterly* in summer 1977. In 2004, this article was further electronically republished as the Pendle Hill Pamphlet #3 (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications) whose title was slightly changed to "The Value of Voluntary Simplicity." The article is retrieved October 24, 2008 from: www.pendlehill.org/resources/free_downloads.php; www.pendlehill.org/resources/files/pdf%20files/php003.pdf.

contemporary simple lifestyles, although Thoreau did not himself use that phrase. Reflecting his soulful tone practicing the simple life on Walden Pond, Thoreau eloquently expresses the kind of search for purpose that attracts people to the voluntary simplicity movement in his oft-quoted statement:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to confront all of the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, to discover that I had not lived. . . . I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. . . . (p. 90)

According to the historian of simple living David Shi (1985 and 1986), the essential ideas of simplicity can be traced back to around the time of the founding of the United States, and have experienced ups and downs for the last three hundred years. More recently, "In the 1960s," the so-called hippie era, Duane Elgin (2000) writes, "voluntary simplicity was a lifeway adopted by a handful of social mavericks" primarily in the United States (p. 81; also see, Grigsby, 7). Associated with the 1970s counterculture, this movement has entered the mainstream in the last two decades (Zavestoski, 2002). That is to say, voluntary simplicity has been "a mainstream wave of cultural invention involving millions of people" today—more than thirty years after the beginning of the movement in the 1960s (Elgin, 2000, p. 81). In fact, Elgin (2000) shows the results of the random survey conducted by Paul Ray in 1995: "In the United States, a conservative estimate is that in the late 1990s, 10 percent of the adult population—or more than 20 million people—are opting out of the rat race of consumerism and into soulful simplicity (p. 81)," which also means "choosing to live in a way that integrates a strong interest in their inner or spiritual life with an equally strong concern for living more in harmony with nature" (p. 82; also see, Ray, 1996). This trend can be further understood by the comment

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by Gerald Celente (1997), president of the Trends Research Institute, stating: "Never before in the institute's seventeen years of tracking has a social trend grown so quickly, spread so broadly and been embraced so eagerly," which implies "how the voluntary simplicity trend is growing throughout the industrialized world" (Elgin, 2000, p. 81). In forming the simplicity movement in the 1970s and 1980s as the important experiences, Shi (1986) regards Elgin's work entitled *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* (1993) as an important basis leading to "ecological simplicity movement" (also see, Grigsby, p. 7). The interesting characteristic of this movement is, according to sociologist Dr. Mary Grigsby (2004), that "[u]nlike some alternative movements which advocate withdrawing from or rejecting the mainstream, the voluntary simplicity movement advocates remaining in contact with the mainstream in some ways, such as through volunteer work, property ownership, investment, and buying goods and services from locally owned business" (p. 6).

Although the modern view of voluntary simplicity appears to be a relatively new development in recent history, its principle "has been recognized for thousands of years" (Elgin, 2000, p. 81). A simplicity teacher Mark Burch (2000) says that "the practice of simplicity is all about sufficiency or there being enough – what the ancients called 'the Middle Way' or 'the Golden Mean'" which "has to do with finding a graceful balance in life" (p. 111). Indeed, an ethic of intentional simplicity can often be found in traditional societies based on the notion of sufficiency—the sense that enough is enough. This notion of sufficiency, as described in previous chapters, implies that people need to live within the physical/ecological limits of nature's capacity. Thus, bounded by their needs without indulging in excess and waste, they not only share harvested foods and

energy sources equally with everyone, they understand that sharing these limited resources, while practicing methods of simplicity grounded in ecological limits, are fundamental to ecologically and culturally sustaining their lives peacefully (Badiner, 1990; Hartmann, 1998/2004; Norberg-Hodge, 1991; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). Regarding the sense of sufficiency, Durning (1992) notes, "The philosophy of sufficiency, by contrast [to consumerism—not moderation], is deeply rooted in the human past," which shows that "[m]aterialism was denounced by all sages, from Buddha to Muhammad, and every world religion is rife with warnings against the evils of excess" (p. 143).

By the same token, historically, Gregg (1936) remarks: "Voluntary simplicity of living has been advocated and practiced by the founders of most of the great religions—Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tse, Moses, and Mohammed—also by many saints and wise men such as St. Francis, John Woolman, the Hindu *rishis*, the Hebrew prophets, the Moslem *sufis*; by many artists and scientists; and by such great modern leaders as Gandhi. It has been followed also by members of military armies and monastic orders—organizations which have had great and prolonged influence on the world. Simplicity has always been one of the testimonies of the "Mennonites and of the Society of Friends" (p. 20).

Elgin (1993) echoes Gregg's observation that the principle of simplicity "has deep roots in human experience (p. 46)," which refers to the fact that "[a] common basis for living simply can be found in all the world's spiritual traditions and is expressed in the 'golden rule', . ." (p. 47). Elgin provides a brief historical overview[62] of voluntary

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[62] This historical overview is treated much more adequately in David Shi's work entitled *The simple life: Plain living and high thinking in American culture* (1985).

simplicity in light of Christian views (pp. 46-48), Eastern views (Taoist, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions) (pp. 48-50), early Greek views (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) (p. 50), Puritan views (pp. 50-51), Quaker views (pp. 51-52), and Transcendentalist views (Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau) (pp. 52-53). Here are some of the examples that Elgin (2000) provides: "The Bible speaks frequently about the need to find a balance between the material and the spiritual side of life, such as in this passage: 'Give me neither poverty nor wealth' (Proverbs 30:8). From China and the Taoist Tradition, Lao-tzu said that 'he who knows he has enough is rich'. In Buddhism, there is a conscious emphasis on discovering a middle way through life that seeks balance and material sufficiency" (pp. 80-81). For Thoreau, his inspiration of simple living also was influenced by the Oriental traditions (Shi, 1985, p. 4). More comprehensively, the Table 1 summarizes some of the traditional teachings related to ideas of simplicity, including Elgin's (1993) observations in Durning's table on the "Teachings of World Religions and Major Cultures of Consumption" (1992, pp. 143-144).[63] Given this perspective, all traditional and indigenous thought and teachings across the world have sought and valued a 'simpler life' rooted in the idea of sufficiency, or having less, as fundamental to achieving happiness. The contemporary social movement that argues against consumer excess under the banner of voluntary simplicity is thus one of a long line of teachings that rediscover and redefine the value of "enough is enough" within particular cultural contexts.

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[63] The sources are originally compiled by Worldwatch Institute (retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.worldwatch.org/).

Table 1. Teachings of World Religions and Major Cultures on Sufficiency/Simplicity

Religion/Culture	Teaching and Source
Tribal (Old Culture) Views	"In Older [tribal, indigenous] Cultures, the goal of the entire community is to bring every person in the community to the 'enough point" (Hartmann, 1998/2004, 275)
	- "Miserable as we seem in thy eyes, we consider ourselves . . . much happier than thou, in this that we are very content with the little that we have." (Micmac chief)
Eastern Views	"Eastern spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism have also encouraged a life of material moderation and spiritual abundance." (Elgin, 48)
Buddhist	- "Whoever in this world overcomes his selfish cravings, his sorrows fall away from him, like drops of water from a lotus flower." (*Dhammapada*, 336)
Hindu	- "That person who lives completely free from desires, without longing . . . attains peace." (Bhagavad-Gita, II. 71) - Mahatma Gandhi: "Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment." (Quoted in VandenBroek (Ed.), 1978, 60)
Taoist	- "He who knows he has enough is rich." (*Tao te Ching*)
Confucian	- "Excess and deficiency are equally at fault." (*Confucius*, XI. 15)
Judeo-Christian Views	"The Bible speaks frequently about the need to find a balance between the material and the spiritual side of life , . . ." (Elgin, 46)
	- It is "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (*Matthew* 19: 23-24) - "Give me neither poverty nor riches." (*Proverbs* 30:8) - "Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, where it grows rusty and moth-eaten, and thieves break in to steal it. Store up treasure in heaven. . . . For wherever your treasure is, there will you heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21) - "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25) - "If a man has enough to live on, and yet when he sees his brother in need shuts up his heart against him, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in him?" (John 3:17)
Early Greek Views	"Most Greek and Roman philosophers were emphatic in their praise of simple living, as were the Hebrew prophets and Jesus." (Shi, 1985, 4)
Socrates & Plato	- "Nothing in Excess." (Inscribed at Oracle of Delphi) - "Socrates advocated a golden mean between poverty and wealth, and so, too, did his famous pupil Plato" (Shi, 1985, 4). Socrates insisted, "Men are to be esteemed for their virtue, not their wealth." (quoted in Shi, 1985, 4)
Aristotle	- Aristotle observed "carefully balanced life of material moderation and intellectual exertion," and also that "temperance and courage, . . . are destroyed by excess and defeat and preserved by [following the golden] mean." (quoted in Shi, 1985, 4)
Trans-cendentalist Views	"The transcendentalists believed that a spiritual presence infuses the world and, by living simply, we can more easily encounter this miraculous and vital Life-force." (Elgin, 52)
Emerson	- "By communing with nature, Emerson felt that people could become 'part and parcel with God', thereby realizing the ultimate simplicity of oneness with the divine. Thoreau also viewed simplicity as a means to a higher end." (Elgin, 52)
Thoreau	- "a man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone." (Thoreau, 1845/1971, 82)
Puritan Views	With their "'puritan ethic', which stressed hard work, temperate living, participation in the life of the community, and a steadfast devotion to things spiritual," the early Puritans "stressed the golden mean by saying we should not desire more material things than we can use effectively." (Elgin, 51)
Quaker Views	With Quaker's "belief that material simplicity was an important aid in evolving toward spiritual perfection," they "emphasized the virtues of hard work at one's calling, sobriety, and frugality." (Elgin, 51)
Islamic	- "Poverty is my pride." (Muhammad)

6.3 General Theory

First of all, what does *voluntary simplicity* mean in terms of actual lifestyle?

The interpretation of this ideal varies according to which particular aspect is emphasized

and to what degree by practicing philosophers, scholars, and individuals, some of these different aspect can be observed in the following comments:

> Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another. . . . The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself. (Gregg, 1936, p. 4)

> People are attracted to this movement for a lot of different reasons. Many are looking for more time. Some are looking for ways to save money, to find techniques for living on less. Most are searching for more meaning. (Cecile, 1997, p. xiv)

> . . . it becomes clear that there are no rigid rules to this approach to life. When thinking about simple living, some people envision moving to the country, growing their own food, chopping wood for fuel, and living in isolation. Others might picture a life in the city, living in a small, sparsely furnished apartment with no job. (Pierce, 2000, p. 25)

> Thus, a wide range of individuals practice voluntary simplicity for multiple reasons. (Shaw & Newholm, 2002, p. 169)

Thus, the lifestyle of voluntary simplicity cannot be strictly defined (Pierce, 2003). However, it is also true that most voluntary simplifiers have something in common as Dr. Cecile Andrews (1997) points out: "Almost all [simple livers] are concerned about the environment, for they realize that our lifestyle is leading to the destruction of nature. They're all searching for ways that help them feel excited about life when they awake each morning, ways that help them find joy in the moment, a sense of purpose in their work, ways that help them feel a sense of connection with all of life" (pp. xiv-xv).

For the purposes of education, we need to find ways to identify the core structure of voluntary simplicity. As Elgin is generally and widely recognized to be the movement groundbreaker, it is appropriate to start with his account based on the two elements of its literal meaning—"to live more voluntarily" and "to live more simply."

Literally, voluntary simplicity as a way of life means integrating simplicity—'living more simply', into our lives in a more deliberate, or voluntary manner—'living more voluntarily'. By living more voluntarily, Elgin (1993) means "to live more deliberately, intentionally, and purposefully—in short, it is to live more consciously" (p. 24). To put it differently, living in a more voluntary manner involves living more consciously, which implies living purposefully in a "'life-sensing' manner." Specifically, this view of living more purposefully requires us to "'taste' our experience of life directly as we move through the world" (1993, p. 157). In order for us to direct our full attention to our everyday lives, we must be "conscious of the choices before us (the outer world)" as well as "be conscious of ourselves as we select among those choices (the inner world)" (Elgin, 1993, p. 123). This intentional awareness is a more positive approach to living that can also be viewed as a creative activity essential to everyday life. In other words, to follow this way of life is to pursue the art of living by taking a more philosophically conscious approach to ordinary life. It enables individuals to take an active role in cultivating themselves within the general society of which they form an essential part (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-35 and also see pp. 123-142).

On the other side of coin, what Elgin (1993) means by 'living more simply' is a way of life "with a minimum of needless distraction" (p. 24) and "to unburden ourselves" (p. 25), which further implies establishing "a more direct, unpretentious, and unencumbered relationship with all aspects of our lives: the things that we consume, the work that we do, our relationships with others, our connections with nature and the cosmos, and more" (p. 25). That is, this orientation refers to a way of living lightly—a way of life that places less stress on the biosphere as well as upon oneself, physically and

mentally. This can be accomplished by avoiding stress and cultivating harmonious conditions within everyday personal, family, and work relationships. On this view, to live more simply is to live as much as possible in tune with the rhythms of the natural environment, avoiding the excess of possessions that upset the ecological balance of the planet. This way of life strengthens our sense of compassion for other life forms that share our regional environments, which helps us be more joyful and energetic in everyday life, which further establishes more helpful, harmonious, and peaceful relationships with other people as well as other life forms. This lifestyle that promotes natural conditions—following nature's rhythm and system—could help us relieve our physical and mental stress, as well (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-35 and also see pp. 143-157).

These two key elements of the concept of voluntary simplicity—that is, 'voluntary' and 'simple' ways of life—roughly correspond to another way in which it's core features are described, which is in terms of the psychological boundary between "*inner* and *outer* aspects of life" (Elgin, 1993, p. 24; emphasis added). Living more voluntarily, or consciously, corresponds to the more 'inner' aspect of life, while living more simply, or lightly, corresponds to the more 'outer' aspect of life, in general. This combination is captured in Elgin's oft-quoted definition of voluntary simplicity as living: "outwardly more simple and inwardly more rich" (p. 25). This sense also can be inferred by Gregg's account in the afore-cited quotation: "Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition" (1936). More precisely, by the aspect of "outwardly more simple," Elgin (1993) implies that "[a] progressive refinement of the social and *material* aspects of life (p. 159)," which is concerned with more public, cultural affairs and its development – 'social cultivation'; meanwhile, the aspect of "inwardly more rich" implies that "[a]

progressive refinement of the *spiritual* or consciousness aspects of life (p. 159)," which is concerned with individual matters and its enhancement based on the inner growth – 'personal cultivation'.   Dr. Cecile Andrews (1997), a community educator (simplicity circles), represents a similar perspective when he observes that understanding and practicing simplicity will "lead to both personal fulfillment and social change" (p. xviii).

In his recent articles, Elgin (2005 and 2007) proposes ten approaches to voluntary simplicity that provide a useful summary of how the term applies to our contemporary complex world: (1) choiceful simplicity—choosing one' way in conscious, deliberate, and intentional manner without blindly being attracted by consumer culture; (2) compassionate simplicity—taking a path of cooperation and fairness among people, other species, and future generations in feeling "such a sense of kinship that we 'choose to live simply so that others may simply live'"; (3) ecological simplicity—choosing ecologically harmonious ways of life through appreciating our deep interconnection with the web of life; for example, reducing our ecological footprint by addressing such issues "as climate change, species-extinction, and resource depletion"; (4) economic simplicity—choosing "many forms of 'right livelihood', such as meeting the rapidly growing market for healthy and sustainable products and services of all kinds—from home-building materials and energy systems to foods"; (5) elegant simplicity—living in an understated manner which, in contrast to the excesses of then consumerist lifestyle, selects more "natural materials and clean, functional expression, . . . found in many of the hand-made arts and crafts from this community"; (6) family simplicity—"opting out of the fast track of life out of concern for the well-being of their children and the integrity of the family" by reducing the clutter and complexity; (7) frugal simplicity—seeking to

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achieve greater financial freedom through living with less, which employs frugality and careful financial management to decrease "the impact of our consumption upon the Earth and frees resources for others"; (8) political simplicity—promoting change in all areas of public life (transportation, education, architecture, municipal and regional planning, economics, etc.) not only by living more lightly on the Earth but also promoting a (mass) media politics as "the primary vehicle for reinforcing—or transforming—the mass consciousness of consumerism; (9) soulful simplicity—cultivating experience of intimate connection with life, which means being "more concerned with tasting life in its unadorned richness than with a particular standard or manner of material living"; and (10) uncluttered simplicity—managing a life toward not too busy, too stressed, and too fragmented ways through "cutting back on trivial distractions, both material and non-material and focusing on the essentials—whatever those may be for each of our unique lives." In light of the inner-outer distinction introduced above, '*choiceful simplicity*', '*elegance simplicity*', '*family simplicity*', '*frugal simplicity*', '*soulful simplicity*', and '*uncluttered simplicity*' would be associated primarily with living more voluntarily/consciously; while '*compassionate simplicity*', '*ecological simplicity*', '*economic simplicity*', and '*political simplicity*' would be associated primarily with the "outer" dimension of social change.

Other authors have undertaken to identify and categorize the key elements of voluntary simplicity in terms of priorities, practices, and purposes can also be organized in terms of the distinction between personal (inner) and social (outer) cultivation. Based on their analysis of key words in the literature on voluntary simplicity, Johnston and Burton (2002) suggest four perspectives: self, relationship, society, and the earth. The

first point of view, 'self', is interpreted as self-interested focuses upon the good life, life purpose, personal growth, self-determination, and choiceful living. The other three perspectives have a more "outward" focus. The second point of view, 'relationship', is concerned about matters of family, friends, and community as a critical part of oneself. The third viewpoint, 'society', is concerned with social issues related to social service and justice. The fourth point of view, 'the earth', concentrates on the appreciation of relationships with the natural world that includes a realization of how our over-consumption causes the ecological distresses of the modern world (also see Crisfield, 2006, p. 42). Clearly, although the first viewpoint is considered to be a matter of personal cultivation—the personal/inner aspect of life refinement, the third and fourth ones are a matter of social cultivation—the social/outer aspect of life refinement. The second point of 'relationship', however, provides a perspective with an overlap between both focus viewpoints. This is done in a way that concerns relating to close relationships that are concerned more with personal cultivation, in contrast to collective matters as community involving social cultivation.

Similarly, McCormick (1997) suggests that voluntary simplicity holds "three fundamentally different messages: simplicity is about frugality, simplicity is about stress management, and (most rarely) simplicity is about social and ecological justice" (pp. 46-47). These three points, especially the aspect of "social and ecological justice," seem to be more relevant to my larger objectives of this thesis of how our education creates a more ecologically/culturally sustainable world by practicing simpler living.

The first message of 'frugality' is about reduction in spending and consumption from a marketing or economic viewpoint, which is a focus of most of the simplicity

literature (Crisfield, 2006, p. 43; also see, Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Zavestoski, 2002).

Dominquez & Robin's (1992/1999) well-known work entitled *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming your relationship with money and achieving financial independence* is often regarded as one of the representative writings about this 'frugality' perspective in the simplicity concept (McCormick, p. 47). This view of frugality is essentially the same as Elgin's account of 'frugal simplicity', and could be clearly seen as a concern for one aspect of personal cultivation.

The second message of 'stress management' suggested by McCormick is about trying to "remove the clutter and complexity of your overstressed life" and to "reestablish some of your basic priories—family, friends, and perhaps even a rich interior life" (p. 48). This perspective, responding to "overwork, time binds, and high stress," can be also imparted by many authors, including Andrews (1997), Elgin (1993), Davis and Stover (1996), and Heffern (1994) (Crisfield, p. 43; McCormick, p. 48). This second view of 'stress management' can overlap Elgin's proposal that concern his ideas of family, soulful, and uncluttered simplicity, which can be regarded as the aspect of personal cultivation, as well.

The third message of 'social and ecological justice' could be directly understood as the aspect of social cultivation, which is also associated with Elgin's observations as compassionate, ecological, economic, and political simplicity. In this third perspective, it is said that there is a tendency that simple livers who consider environmental problems mindfully select more durable and natural products, buy fewer things, and use fewer resources. Furthermore, green consumers might be able to relieve the economic rift created between prosperous and developing nations and resolve some of

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the fundamental problems created by the tug-of-war between the "haves" and the "have-nots" (Crisfield, pp. 43-44; also see, Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Durning, 1999; Schut, 1999).

So far, perspectives have been introduced that classify simplicity factors and their relationships among them in light of the inner/personal aspect associated with living more voluntarily and the outer/social aspect associated with living more simply. All the factors of simplicity living, of course, cannot be strictly classified under just one of those two aspects. Rather, there is somewhat overlap between them. For example, the way of living more simply that is linked to social cultivation also involves a personal cultivation based on some of the concerns such as work-time, human-relationship, and heath with less stress. Also, the afore-mentioned Johnson and Burton's (2003) account for the classification view of 'relationship' has both aspects of personal and social cultivations as described. The Figure 4 indicates the interrelationships among the afore-mentioned factors with other writers' views, in terms of two aspects of cultivations—personal (inner) and social (outer)—as the basis.

In summary, the general notion of voluntary simplicity can be identified as a way of life that embraces both aspects of living more voluntarily and living more simply in order to seek and embody the good life in the personal (spiritual, mental, physical) as well as social (political, economic, cultural, ecological) context. To live more voluntarily implies that one attempts to live in more purposeful manner, which enables one to pay more attention to one's inner aspect (spiritual, psychological, mental, etc.) as well as entities and events taking around self (family, friends, sustenance, etc.) and to try to make them better. This way of living can be seen as one's creative process of living in the more
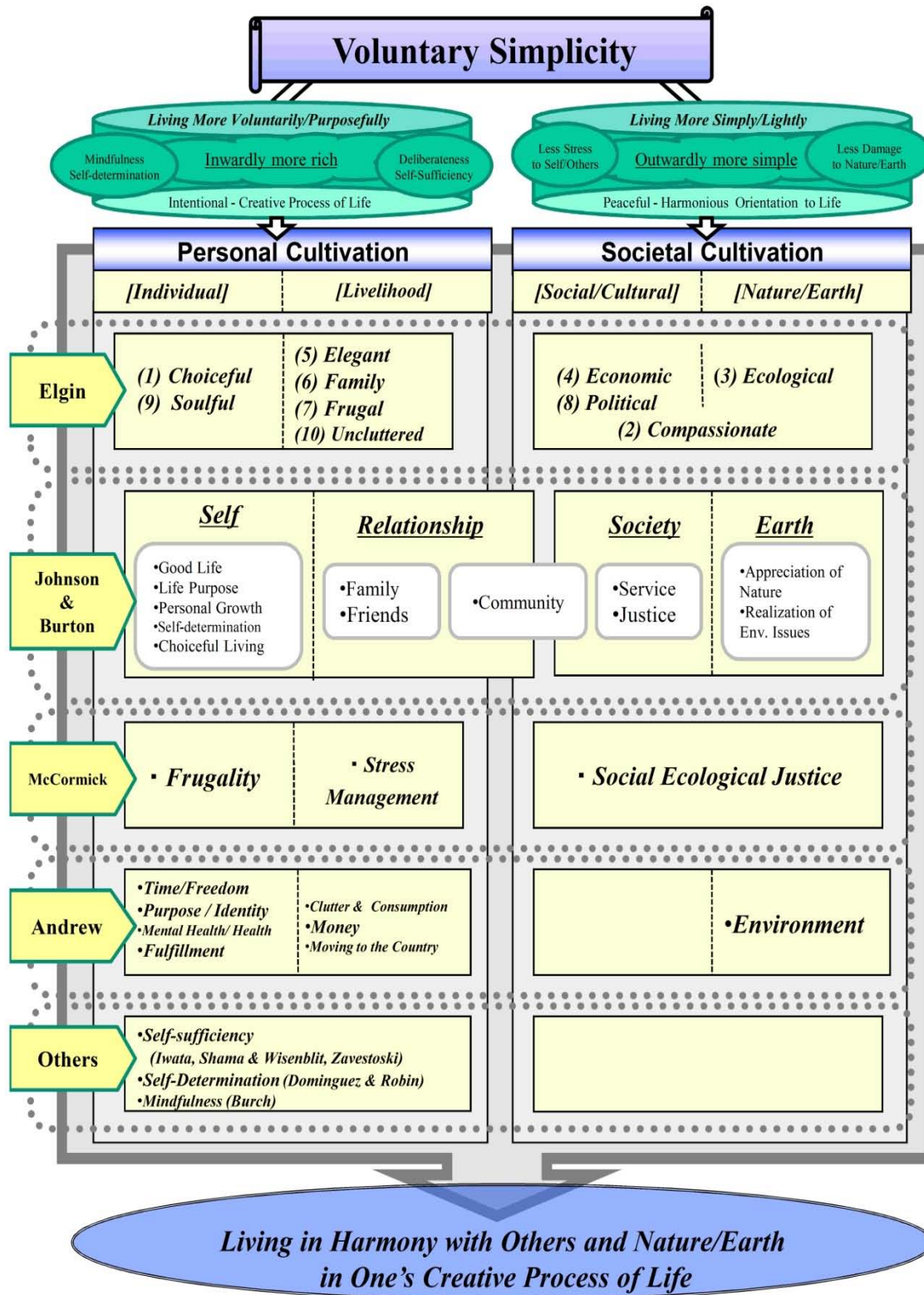
Figure 4. Voluntary Simplicity Factor Relation

intentionally positive orientation.

6.4 Characteristics: Inherent Features

Voluntary simplicity, as seen so far, is a social movement that embraces "diversity and richness" in which "there are many values congruent with voluntary simplicity—that radiate out, so to speak, touching global as well as close-to-home issues, idealistic as well as practical matters, and worldly along with personal concerns" (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977 and 2003, p. 147). While there is considerable variation among how its advocates interpret and practice voluntary simplicity, there are also some common values that are shared by simple livers (Burch, 2000, p. 11). What I call such values underlying voluntary simplicity in common here is 'inherent features' as the positive application of voluntary simplicity, which is implied by the above analysis of its general structure. These inherent features, which are interrelated to one another, are: (1) art of life—integration of both idea and practice; (2) a potential to better the personal/social aspect of living; (3) a rediscovery way of life; and (4) learning process for good life itself. My analysis of these inherent features is necessary to bridge the previous with the following section on educational initiatives of voluntary simplicity in terms of sustainability.

6.4.1 Art of Life: Integration of Both Idea and a Practice

Familiarity with the key elements of the concept of voluntary simplicity is a necessary but not sufficient condition of full appreciation of its point and purpose as a personal practice and social movement, which must derive from daily life experience.

Elgin (1993) points this out by indicating that "a simpler way of life is not a utopian dream but a practical possibility," and by observing that it is a "down-to-earth and realistic approach to living that has already taken root in a number of developed nations" (p. 108). In this sense, voluntary simplicity is similar to the process of producing works of art by applying knowledge, skills, and innovative ideas in practical ways. So to speak, voluntary simplicity is a creative activity, an 'art of life' with better quality of experience—not quantity of possessions—at its core.

Although practicing voluntary simplicity as the art of living involves abandoning consumerism and adopting frugality, it does not involve any denial or rejection of beauty, although this is a common misconception of simple living. Although people sometimes regard the simple lifestyle as "a primitive approach to living that advocates a barren plainness and denies the value of beauty and aesthetics" (Elgin, 1993, p. 30), it is not true. On the contrary, voluntary simplicity seeks beauty in life by following nature's ways (e.g., its dynamism, diversity, reproducibility, capacity) in "freeing things from artificial encumbrance" (Elgin, 1993, p. 31). As Pablo Picasso once said, "art is the elimination of the unnecessary" (quoted in Elgin, 1993, p. 30), a sense of beauty that can also be found in the motions, performances, and works of artists, master craft-makers, and performers (including athletes).

Another common misconception regarding voluntary simplicity is that it entails impoverishment or deprivation. Living without such basic needs as adequate food, shelter, clothing, and essential social services (medical care, education, etc.) is not voluntary simplicity, but involuntary poverty (Pierce, 2000, pp. 24-25), which undermines our spiritual/mental/physical health in generating "a sense of helplessness, passivity, and

despair." By contrast, voluntary simplicity fosters "a sense of personal empowerment, creative engagement, and opportunity" (Elgin, 1993, p. 27) by intentionally and positively seeking "the golden mean—a creative and aesthetic balance between poverty and excess" (Elgin, 1993, p. 28). Indeed, the uncluttered life has traditionally been understood to promote a better quality of life socially as well as personally. Consequently, the deprivation of 'involuntary poverty' should never be confused with the frugality of 'voluntary simplicity'.

By likening voluntary simplicity to an art practice, sociologist Dr. Amitai Etzioni's (1998) account of three variations indicating "different levels of intensity" in voluntary simplicity practice can be compared to different levels of artistic activity—what kind of an artwork one is making, as well as one's position or degree in the creative process of the activity. The three levels are termed "downshifters," "strong simplifiers," and "holistic simplifiers." Simply put, first, "downshifters" refers to a moderate form of simplicity "in which people downshift their consumptive rich lifestyle, but not necessarily into a low gear" (Etzioni, 1998, p. 621). At this level, although people try to practice voluntary simplicity in some ways—mainly in terms of somewhat changing work and consumption patterns—they continue their lifestyle without major change. Next, "strong simplifiers" represent those "who have given up high-paying, high-stress jobs as lawyers, business people, investment bankers, and so on, to live on less, often much less, income. These people give up high levels of income and socioeconomic status". People at this level change their work and consumption styles to a greater degree than do downshifters. Last, what Etzioni (1998) calls "holistic simplifiers" are those who "adjust their whole life patterns according to the ethos of voluntary

simplicity" (p. 625), which "differs from the downshifters and even strong simplifiers not only in scope of change in their conduct but also in that it is motivated by a coherently articulated philosophy" (Etzioni, 1998, p. 626). This final group is in the most comprehensive level of intensity for simpler living.

Although Etzioni does not directly mention this point, distinguishing three levels does not mean an individual is always limited to only one as there can be mobility between them. In practicing simple living as in making art there is the possibility of reaching greater sophistication through repeated experience or practice. This upward trend is, of course, not for everyone, but depends on the inspiration of each simple liver. Generally, however, people who start on the voluntary simplicity path eventually go deeper—gradually expanding their daily views and practices. This underlines the connection between voluntary simplicity and the educational process of *living-learning* in which the interplay of ideas and experience brings new levels of realization.

6.4.2 Potential to Better the Personal/Social Aspect of Living

The creativeness seen in voluntary simplicity as art of life can be applied to both personal and social enhancement. McCormick (1997) points out that "voluntary simplicity is not a form of self-improvement or—purification; it is an integral part of a personal and communal response to the social and ecological injustices that confront us at the end of the second millennium" (pp. 48-49). Based on the theoretical structure argued above, practicing voluntary simplicity has the potential to allow us to be mindful of all our affairs—from our personal concerns (such as mental/physical health, work, religion/spirituality, education, emotional satisfaction) to matters related more to our

family, friends, and community, and beyond to social affairs local and global (politics, economy, justice, ecology, etc.). Based on the project survey from *The Pierce Simplicity Study*,[64] indeed, Pierce (2000) sums up the personal aspect of life briefly, "For some people, the primary focus of voluntary simplicity is to enhance the quality of their lives. . . . They have found that living simply brings them inner peace." It is concerned with "the joys of personal freedom, precious moments living in the present, relief from stressful or unsatisfactory work, deeper spirituality, and greater intimacy with family and friend" (p. 26). The social aspect of life is summarized in the following comment: "Others view voluntary simplicity as a means to experience a deeper connection with all other life on the planet," which is concerned with "taking action to preserve the earth's resources, working towards the realization of global, social and economic equality, and building strong, local communities of interdependence by sharing resources" (p. 26). Pierce's observation can be similarly seen in Elgin's (1993) accounts for a general pattern of behaviors and attitudes that simplifiers show (pp. 32-35) and in Burch's (2000) remarks about nine characteristics, regarded also as the tendency, of voluntary simplicity that are abstracted from simplifiers' opinions through "delphi exercise"[65] conducted by

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[64] As for this project (The Pierce Simplicity Study), the survey was conducted by Linda Breen Pierce between 1996 and 1998. 211 people from 40 states of U.S. and eight countries participated in the study (survey), which does not include spouses and other family members. Basically, an Internet survey was used to ask about what has happened in simple livers in the study. Pierce (2000) "corresponded with the study participants via e-mail to further clarify and understand their experiences," and also "conducted in-depth telephone or face-to-face interviews with 40 participants in the study" (p. 18). The questionnaire used in the survey is available from the appendix of Pierce's work entitled *Choosing Simplicity: Real People Finding Peace and Fulfillment in a Complex World* (2000). For more details about participants' life background (age, gender, marital status, children, education, income, work hours, geographical locations, etc.) and the summary of the statistical findings of the study, retrieved October 24, 2008 from: http://www.gallagherpress.com/pierce/stats.htm and also see: http://www.gallagherpress.com/pierce/index.htm.
[65] Burch's "delphi exercise" is based on the 'delphi method' that "was invented in the 1970s by social researchers to provide a vehicle for large numbers of people knowledgeable about a certain

him. Table 2 summarizes their comments with the interrelationship between them (pp. 11-21).

Its extension by many to social affairs notwithstanding, the practice of voluntary simplicity has tended to focus more on such individualistic agendas as self-enlightenment and personal financial management than on a "politics of simplicity," which has resulted in some critiques of the movement (Segal, 20003; also see Crisfield, 2006, pp. 48-49). On this point, author of *Graceful Simplicity: The Philosophy and Politics of the Alternative American Dream* Jerome Segal (2003) maintains that the "simple living movement, . . . needs to develop into a politics that goes beyond the bounds of a self-help movement" with the distinct understanding that practical actions leading to social change is important (p. xii). Concerns about social regard are also found in Etzioni's (1998) comment that "voluntary simplicity is embraced as a lifestyle by a given population, the greater the potential for realization of a basic element of social justice, that of basic socio-economic equality" (p. 639). He further states that voluntary simplicity "provides a socially approved and supported lifestyle that is both psychologically sustainable and compatible with basic socio-economic equality" (Etzioni,

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subject, but having different opinions on it, to arrive at a consensus. A delphi process begins with a standard set of questions to which all participants respond. The responses are collated in various ways and then fed back to participants. The participants read the summaries of all the responses and then answer the same or similar questions again. Through successive rounds of this process, a consensus of views tends to emerge, not necessarily reflecting complete agreement on all points but clearly indentifying 'core' areas of agreement on the subject at hand" (Burch, 2000, p. 187). Burch conducted this way of research related to voluntary simplicity in 1997. He "invited participants in an Internet discussion group on voluntary simplicity to take part in such a delphi process," which "was opened with three questions: (1) What do you think are the *essential values* of voluntary simplicity? (2) What do you think are the *essential practices* comprising voluntary simplicity? (3) What do you think are the *key benefits* of voluntary simplicity?" It had overall six delphi rounds among participants in the process . He notes, "While the results of this process certainly do not purport to be representative of the North American population as a whole (the process was not conducted with the rigor required for truly reliable social research), they were nonetheless interesting" (Burch, 2000, p. 187).

Table 2 General Patterns & Traits of Simple Livers - Elgin & Burch Views

	Elgin	Burch
Personal	Tend to invest the time and energy feed up by simpler living in activities with their partner, children, and friend (walking, making music together, sharing a meal, camping, etc.), or volunteering to help others, or getting involved in civic affairs to improve the life of the community. (32)	• Development of a conscious, intentional approach to living rather than acting on unconscious impulses. (19)
	Tend to work on developing the full spectrum of their potentials: physical (running, biking, hiking, etc.), emotional (learning the skills of intimacy and sharing feelings in important relationships), mental (engaging in lifelong learning by reading, taking classes, etc.), and spiritual (learning to move through life with a quiet mind and compassionate heart). (32-33)	• Mindfulness, spirituality. (14) • Practices that develop one's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, interpretation, and esthetic potentials. (17)
	Tend to lower their overall level of personal consumption—buy less clothing (with more attention to what is functional, durable, aesthetic, and less concern with passing fads, fashions, and seasonal styles), buy less jewelry and other forms of personal ornamentation, buy fewer cosmetic products and observe holidays in a less commercialized manner. (33)	• Self-reliance, socially responsible autonomy, personal authenticity, and wholeness. (12)
	Tend to reduce undue clutter and complexity in their personal lives by giving away or selling those possessions that are seldom used and could be used productively by others (clothing, books, furniture, appliances, tools, etc.). (34)	• Sufficiency, minimalism; anti-consumerism; deliberate reduction of consumption, clutter, noise, social over-commitment, superfluous ornamentation, and scale. (11)
	Tend to alter their patterns of consumption in favor of products that are durable, easy to repair, nonpolluting in their manufacture and use, energy-efficient, functional, and aesthetic. (33)	
	Tend to develop personal skills that contribute to greater self-reliance and reduce dependence upon experts to handle life's ordinary demands (for example, basic carpentry, plumbing, appliance repair, gardening, crafts, etc.) (34)	
	Tend to prefer smaller-scale, more human-seized living and working environments that foster a sense of community, face-to-face contact, and mutual caring. (34-35)	
	Tend to appreciate the simplicity of nonverbal forms of communication—the eloquence of silence, hugging and touching, the language of the eyes. (35)	• Practices contributing to a wholistic approach to personal health. (19)
	Tend to participate in holistic health-care practices that emphasize preventive medicine and the healing powers of the body when assisted by the mind. (35)	
Social	Tend to feel an intimate connection with the earth and a reverential concern for nature. In knowing that the ecology of the earth is a part of our extended "body," people tend to act in ways that express great care for its well-being. (33)	• Connection, interdependence; co-operation with the Earth, other beings, nature, and other people. (13)
	Tend to feel a compassionate concern for the world's poor; a simpler life fosters a sense of kinship with people around the world and thus a concern for social justice and equity in the use of the world's resources. (33)	• Practices that build strong, intimate, non-violent, and compassionate relationships with people and with nature that contribute to the personal and common good. (18)
	Tend to involve themselves with compassionate causes, such as protecting rain forests and saving animals from extinction, and tend to use nonviolent means in their efforts. (35)	
	Tend to pursue a livelihood that directly contributes to the well-being of the world and enables a person to use more fully his or her creative capacities in ways that are fulfilling. (34)	
	Tend to alter male-female roles in favor of non-sexist patterns of relationship. (35)	
	Tend to shift their diet away from highly processed foods, meat, and sugar toward foods that are more natural, healthy, simple, and appropriate for sustaining the inhabitants of a small planet. (34)	• Deliberate reduction in the number of material possessions and the amount of consumption, reduction of clutter and unnecessary complexity, and a conscious re-direction of consumption decisions in favor of more environmentally sustainable forms of transportation, food production, housing, and entertainment. (16)
	Tend to recycle metal, glass, and paper and to cut back on consumption of items that are wasteful of nonrenewable resources. (34)	
	Tend to use their consumption politically by boycotting goods and services of companies whose actions or policies they consider unethical. (34)	
	Tend to change transportation modes in favor of public transit, car pooling, smaller and more fuel-efficient autos, living closer to work, riding a bike, and walking. (35)	

Resource

Elgin, D. (1993). *Voluntary simplicity: Toward a way of life that is outwardly simple, inwardly rich*. New York: Ouill, William Morow and Company Inc.

Burch, M. A. (2000). *Stepping lightly: Simplicity for people and the planet*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.

1998, p. 641).

Consequently, voluntary simplicity can involve the social aspect of systemic change with due considerations to social justice, natural environment, equal opportunity, and so on. From this angle, it would be wrong to think that the voluntary simplicity movement implies turning away from social progress in economic or technological terms (Elgin, 1993, p. 28). Practicing voluntary simplicity also involves the pursuit of progress, but the direction and quality are different from today's mainstream pursuit of social progress, which seeks unlimited material/physical growth based on consumerism with the sense that more is better. By contrast, voluntary simplicity recognizes that our planet's capacity is finite and that lifestyles within the earth's carrying capacity should be a basis for establishing ecologically sustainable living. Indeed, the goal of living more 'lightly' is to cause less damage and consumer fewer resources, and to replace "more is better" with "enough is enough"—a creative and aesthetic balance between poverty and excess. Such a sense of sufficiency is healthier for the human mind and body as well as the Earth, contributing to self-sufficiency, self-determination, self-fulfillment, and so on (Burch, 2000, chap.7; Dominguez & Robin, 1992/1999; Iwata, 2001; Johnston & Burton, 2002; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984; Zavestoski, 2002).

By social progress, hence, voluntary simplicity means that collective society and individuals' lives as the component should evolve according to nature's/Earth's system and capacity, based on personal satisfaction and refinement in everyday life. Therefore, politics, economy and technology, as the tools for living and social enhancement, must be developed and utilized within that scope. In this context, practicing voluntary simplicity does not mean a retreat from progress, but a commitment to 'positive

progress within an ecologically sustainable manner'. Elgin (1993) makes the point in this way: "Ecological living [as a way of life involved in voluntary simplicity] does not imply turning away from economic progress; rather it seeks to discover which technologies are most appropriate and helpful in moving toward a sustainable future. Since ecological living is not a path of 'no growth', it can be viewed as a path of 'new growth', which includes "both material and spiritual dimensions of life" (p. 28).

This view of progress can be illustrated by the ongoing story of a real village called Gaviotas, located on the desolate plains of Vichad (eastern Columbia), founded in 1971 by Paolo Lugari in an attempt to create a form of sustainable living. For more than three decades, the village of Gaviotas has built a sustainably-oriented communal life in cultural and ecological harmonious ways by using environmentally-friendly "appropriate technologies" developed by a group of scientists, engineers, doctors, university students, and advisors assembled by Lugari himself. In spite of the constant threat of Colombian's political instability, Gaviotans have invented wind turbines that convert mild breezes into energy, solar collectors that work even in the rain, soil-free systems to raise edible and medicinal crops, and high-efficient as well as easy-to-use pumps to draw water from deep underground. Also, they have planted roughly two million Caribbean pine trees as a renewable crop that further has unexpectedly and amazingly resulted in the regeneration of an ancient native rain forest. Moreover, everyone earns the same salary (above minimum wage) and no one is charged extra for such basics of life as food, shelter, health care, and education for children (Weisman, 1988). Elgin (2000) observes that "Gaviotans have transformed one of the most resource-starved regions in the country into a sustainable economy, a nurturing community, and a flourishing ecosystem. In doing so,

they have given us a brilliant example of just how rich and fertile the human imagination can be" (p. 147).

More generally, Elgin (2000) argues that "choosing to live more simply" is essential for the social progress, quoting noted historian Arnold Toynbee's theory, below:

> A life-way of voluntary simplicity is a direct expression of our growth as a maturing civilization. After a lifetime of studying the rise and fall of more than twenty of the world's civilizations, the highly esteemed historian, Arnold Toynbee, concluded that the conquest of land or people was not the true measure of a civilization's growth. The true measure, he said, was expressed in a civilization's ability to transfer an increasing population of energy and attention from the material to the nonmaterial side of life to develop its culture (such as music, art, drama, and literature), sense of community, and strength of democracy. Toynbee called this the 'Law of Progressive Simplifications'. (Elgin, 2000, p. 93)[66]

In Toynbee's (1947) words, true growth involves "progressive and cumulative increase both in outward mastery of the environment and in inward self-determination or self-articulation on the part of the individual or society" (p. 208). I wholeheartedly agree with Toynbee's view, and with Elgin's (2000) belief that "outward mastery will be evident by living ever more lightly upon the Earth, and our inward mastery will be evident by living ever more lightly with gratitude and joy in our hearts" (p. 93). I find support for these beliefs in the example of so-called 'eco-villages'—each a collective form of sustainable living on a small scale consistent with the philosophy and practice of voluntary simplicity. Although a detailed study of eco-villages is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I will provide a brief account to illustrate one possible path a more sustainable way of life.[67]

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[66] Elgin refers to page 198 of Toynbee, A. (1947). *A study of history* (Abridgement of vols. I-VI, by D. C. Somervill). NY: Oxford University Press.

[67] Although there are only a handful of eco-villages in North America, EcoVillage at Ithaca in upstate New York is one of the largest and most noted eco-villages across the world. See co-founder Liz Walker's *Ecovillage at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture* (2005).

Each eco-village, generally comprised of one hundred to several hundred people, has developed "a distinct character, architecture, and local community," most of which "would likely contain a childcare facility and play area; a common house for meetings, celebrations and regular meals together; an organic community garden; a recycling and composting area; some revered open space; and a crafts and shop area" (Elgin, 2005, p. xv). In this way, each eco-village has created "the possibility for doing meaningful work, raising healthy children, celebrating life in community with others, and living in a way that seeks to honor the Earth and future generations," offering "a variety of types of work to the local economy—such as the arts, health care, child care, a non-profit learning center for gardening, green building, conflict resolution, and other skills – that provide fulfilling employment for many" (p. xvi). In doing so, eco-villages have evolved "a strong, decentralized foundation for society and a way of living that has the potential for being sustainable for everyone on the planet," which can be seen as representing "a healthy response to economic globalization" (p. xvi). This orientation to living based on such values as equal access to social facilities and services, harmony with other peoples, and respect for nature is broadly compatible "with both the village-based cultures of indigenous societies and 'post-modern' cultures [meaning more sustainable 'post consumer' cultures]" (p. xvi).

Based upon the accounts I have cited of individual and collective conscious efforts to live more simply and 'lightly', I submit that intentionally living simply benefits oneself and one's society in various ways. Simplifiers tend to be self-sufficient; healthy in spiritual, mental and physical terms; and socially peaceful, sympathetic, friendly, and considerate of other people, other life-forms, and the Earth. Such creative, progressive,

just, and harmonious orientations to life are necessary factors in achieving sustainability. To put it differently, through adopting the values and practices of voluntary simplicity, individuals can learn to gradually replace unstable social and economic systems with 'right relations' to all sentient beings and the ecosystem as a whole. I have thus come to agree with Etzioni's (1998) view that:

> Voluntary simplicity, if more widely embraced, might well be the best new source to help create the social conditions under which the limited reallocation of wealth, needed to ensure the basic needs of all, could become politically possible. The reason is as basic and simple as it is essential: to the extent that the privileged (those whose basic creature comforts are well sated and who are engaging in conspicuous consumption) will find value, meaning, and satisfaction in other pursuits, those that are not labor or capital intensive can be expected to be more willing to give up some consumer goods and some income. The 'freed' resources, in turn, can be shifted to those whose basic needs have not been sated, without undue political resistance or backlash. (p. 640)

Etzioni remarks that simplicity practice provides socially supportive and harmonious manners—"to ensure the basic needs of all" within some personally affirmative conditions—to "find value, meaning and satisfaction," which can "result in increased environmental sustainability and social justice" (Grigsby, 2004, p. 12).

As can be elicited from Etzioni's account above, each of the personal and social enhancements, however, occurs not in independent but in an interactive manner. Elgin (1993) indicates that two dimensions of the progress "builds upon the other and promotes the progressive refinement of each" (p. 159). In this regard, Pierce (2000) points out, adding to the previous comments on the personal and social aspects of life enhancement, that "the personal sense of fulfillment is wedded to the goal of contributing some of themselves to make this a better world" (p. 26). In this various as well as interactive ways, I assume that every person can contribute to creating a better society, or social change,

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toward ecological balance by embarking on one's very own personal transformation toward self improvement in each living, cultural, belief/value context. In this sense, the individual effort appears to be quite a small contribution to change or creativeness, indeed. However, overall, this small transformation is not only an indispensable resource, it is a primary step created by the power of individuals, involved in the constant process of creating, or changing, the entire society (Meadows, et al., 2004, p. 270).

6.4.3 A Rediscovery Way of Life: Accessible for Anyone

The idea, or practice, of voluntary simplicity revolves around individualized action within the unique context of each person's life. It can be utilized by anyone, anywhere, at any time without any particular skills, level of education, financial resources, or support from others. Burch (2000) stresses this point:

> Voluntary simplicity begins in *personal action*. It has little meaning apart from how it configures individual lives. Anyone can understand it. Anyone can practice it in some way, regardless of income, cultural background, or educational attainment. Practicing simplicity requires no special training, expert advice, or official sanction. (p. 10)

> Voluntary simplicity is a very 'simple', low-tech, individualized way of doing this. Anyone can understand it. Everyone can apply it. Its practice can be shaped and 'sized' to fit each person's way of life, family responsibilities, and geographic location. It requires no new technological development. It is equally accessible to all people. It costs nothing. (p. 81)

These features of voluntary simplicity suggest that it would be possible for members of today's pluralistic societies to understand and adopt its teachings about more prosperous ways of living without compromising their own beliefs, values, religion/spiritual tradition, and so on and without having to meet any special requirements (time, money, skills). This sheds lights on why "they [teachers in the East and West]

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almost unanimously recommended adherence to the principle of simplicity in the conduct of life" (Sachs, 2000, p. 212). However, it does not refer to a principle far removed from ourselves. Rather, it is readily accessible and can become a culturally integrated aspect of one's own belief/value system that emphasizes the importance of simplicity in modern life. This is another reason why the idea and practice of voluntary simplicity as a way of life has the potential to counteract contemporary unstable social conditions that manifest as various personal, cultural, and ecological problems (Burch, 1995, p. 4 and 20).

A similar point is that voluntary simplicity can be implemented in a wide variety of social and geographical contexts—it is a common misconception that voluntary simplifiers have to live in an isolated and rural area. This mistake can be attributed in part to the frequent references to Thoreau's sojourn in the woods by Walden Pond as a paradigm of the simple life (Elgin, 1993, p. 29). It is true that some simple livers opt to move from city to more rural environments. Pierce (2000) reports that "[s]ome people were inspired to move back to the land by homesteading visionaries such as Scott and Helen Nearing, authors of *Living the Good Life: How to Live Simply and Sanely in a Trouble World* (1970)". However, the fact is that the vast majority of them "choose more conventional lifestyles" in ways that "they hold traditional jobs and reside in cities, suburbs, and small towns" (p. 162). Indeed, this movement does not reject the mainstream or move into the country, but rather advocate practices in connection with the mainstream society (Grigsby, 2004, p. 6).

Furthermore, there has been often a critique that voluntary simplicity can be applied only to the wealthier folk, who have more than enough in meeting basic needs (Etzioni, 1998). This critique might be viewed as "a defensive reaction of that dominant

discourse [consumerism]" (Crisfield, p. 47). It is true that the movement has been promoted mostly by such wealthier people in richer nations, but it is not always applied only by the rich. A more simple life-style can be adopted by most individuals and social groups, including those with low incomes, in accordance with their own value/belief system or teachings underlying each tradition and society. Indeed, at its best, voluntary simplicity as a social movement includes the aspiration that all people will have opportunities to enjoy a good quality of life: excess is renounced precisely so no one will so poor as to lack the necessities of life. Hence, adopting voluntary simplicity as a way of life implies caring for the Earth as the very basis of life, which is in the real best interests of all, regardless of their present income. In fact, based on his survey data, Elgin (2000) notices that all the citizens living on this planet—whether the rich or the poor—are equally concerned with the natural environment and its stable condition as follows:

> In 1993, the Gallup organization conducted in twenty-four nations a landmark global survey of attitudes toward the environment. In writing about the survey, its director Dr. Riley E. Dunlap concluded that there is 'virtually worldwide citizen awareness that our planet is indeed in poor health, and great public concern for its future well-being'.[68] The survey found that residents of poorer and wealthier nations express nearly equal concern about the health of the planet. Majorities in most of nations surveyed gave environmental protection a higher priority than economic growth, and said that they were willing to pay higher prices for that protection. There was little evidence of the poor blaming the rich for environmental problems, or vice versa. Instead, there seems to be a mature and widespread acceptance of mutual responsibility. When asked who is 'more responsible for today's environmental problems in the world', the most frequent response was that industrialized and developing countries are 'both equally responsible'. (Elgin, 2000, pp. 83-84)

However, it might be also true that it is difficult for the poor to improve the environmental conditions and then to nurture such quality of life by themselves alone. In

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[68] Quotation from Dunlap, R. E. (1994). International attitudes towards environment and development. In Bergesen, H. O. & G. Parmann (Eds.). *Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development* (pp. 115-126). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

addition to individuals' efforts to better both their local nature and lives in poverty, therefore, it is also more necessary for wealthier neighbors, communities, and nations to politically and economically support poverty groups and to share life needs with have-nots in removing the excess of consumption and usage in both personal and public contexts, even though the survey result says that both the rich and the poor think of equally having responsibility for contemporarily environmental problems.

On this point, the practice of simpler living, whether by the wealthier or by the poor, that tends to "begin to reduce their impact on the environment, free up resources for others, and to find alternatives to destructive consumption pattern" (Crisfield, 2006, p. 48), may largely contribute to such a public commitment as socially responsible action. Taken in this light, other misconceptions exist, such as a defensive observation of today's mainstream of consumerism that regards simpler living as a irresponsible lifestyle abandoning the duty to the economic well-being of others (Vanderbilt, 1996) and also as a retreatist life-way that "[p]rovided you have enough of it, money can buy you the choice of renouncing consumerism to attend to things that really make you happy" (Tylor-Gooby, 1998, p. 646). Remarking only on a very small aspect of simplicity, these sharp critiques miss the point of this lifestyle in general.

6.4.4 Learning Process for Good Life Itself: A Form of Sustainability Education

To choose simplicity intentionally as a way of life is to embark upon a learning process involving everyday situations. As noted above, in order to fully understand and appreciate voluntary simplicity requires firsthand experience, since a 'way of life' must, by definition, be a pattern of action as well as a system of belief or philosophy. When

ideas and values are understood intellectually as hypothetical possibilities that are not translated into action, they are like a bicycle without a rider. As one cannot get to one's destination without actually riding the bike, one cannot experience the benefits of a life philosophy without moving from theory to practice. In the context of voluntary simplicity as a way to seek the good life, therefore, understanding and practicing simplicity can be viewed as involving itself in a learning process based on everyday life experience.

Taking the afore-mentioned simplicity features into consideration, it further implies learning how to sustainably live in an ecological and cultural harmonious manner through one's efforts for both personal and social cultivation. Voluntary simplicity thus can be considered as a more tangible process of understanding and practicing the notion of sustainability education. That is to say, this learning process becomes a practical tool within the more conceptual framework of sustainability education based on the *living-learning* process. Therefore, its learning methodology consists of contributions that create sustainable living in a personal and social context. The following chapter will examine its educational applications more fully.

CHAPTER 7

LEARNING FOR SIMPLICITY AS SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION:
TOWARD EVERYDAY PRACTICE OF SIMPLER LIFE-WAYS
AS *LIVING-LEARNING* IN ONE'S CREATIVE PROCESS

7.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to argue that voluntary simplicity is a theoretically sound and practically feasible way to undertake sustainability education with the *living-learning* process. The manner of intentionally choosing simplicity as a fundamental approach to living naturally involves an ongoing educational process, since coming to understand and practice simplicity is an experiential process of learning on how to live in a sustainable manner (Elgin, 1993, p. 159). Conversely, one cannot readily understand and relate to simplicity as a mode of living without firsthand experience. Thus, practicing voluntary simplicity is one important way in which people can move toward more sustainable living by engaging with related issues in the context of their own life (Burch, 2000, p. 10 and 81).

In this context, the proposed project of understanding voluntary simplicity as an educational process is a contribution to the larger goal of a social transformation toward a culturally and ecologically sustainable approach to life. The focus will be on how aspiring to more basic lifestyles joins theory and practice in everyday life. In other words, the focus is on voluntary simplicity as a concrete methodology of 'practice' with a process of knowing and understating that is regarded as *living-learning*. Sustainable education as *living-learning* emphasizes the possibility of actual changes to lifestyles in which the "heaven" of abstract or theoretical knowledge is brought to the "earth" of day to day living. The relationship among these three concepts—sustainability, sustainability

education as *living-learning*, and voluntary simplicity - could be figuratively described as a 'trekker who has a map and handbook on a destination Sustainability (as a region, metaphorically)'. Figure 5 shows these relationships. In this example, the destination 'Sustainability' is located in the center of the entire map that shows one's living world, whether local or global. Next, 'sustainability education' is like one of the paths to the destination on the map in which there are many paths to the goal of Sustainability. There are some of important waypoints on the path, each of which is an essential perspectives to comprehend in sustainability education (showed in chapter 3)—e.g., holistic understanding, equal opportunity, lifelong learning, transformation of knowledge into action. The trekker should pass through every point to get to Sustainability without deviating. '*Living-learning*', then, is like an annotation throughout the entire process to the destination, which shows the basic manner of walking to be sufficient to successfully reaching the goal. Last, 'voluntary simplicity' is like a handbook with concrete action based on it at the same time, which helps one to get to the destination through the process of knowing and acting in a practical manner. This handbook on voluntary simplicity, however, is not a descriptive type with lots of information, but rather a simpler one with basic ideas about more everyday life-related matters—such as meals, shelter, clothes, tools, products, belongings, transportation, etc. In addition, this sort of handbook has enough white space so that one can write down acquired knowledge or ideas gained through one's experience of the journey. That is to say, this handbook is a kind that the trekker can/should create by his/herself from the reflection of what s/he has done. More importantly, to live using knowledge from the basic handbook is indispensable for the matter of voluntary simplicity. Otherwise, the trekker will not be able to attain the goal in
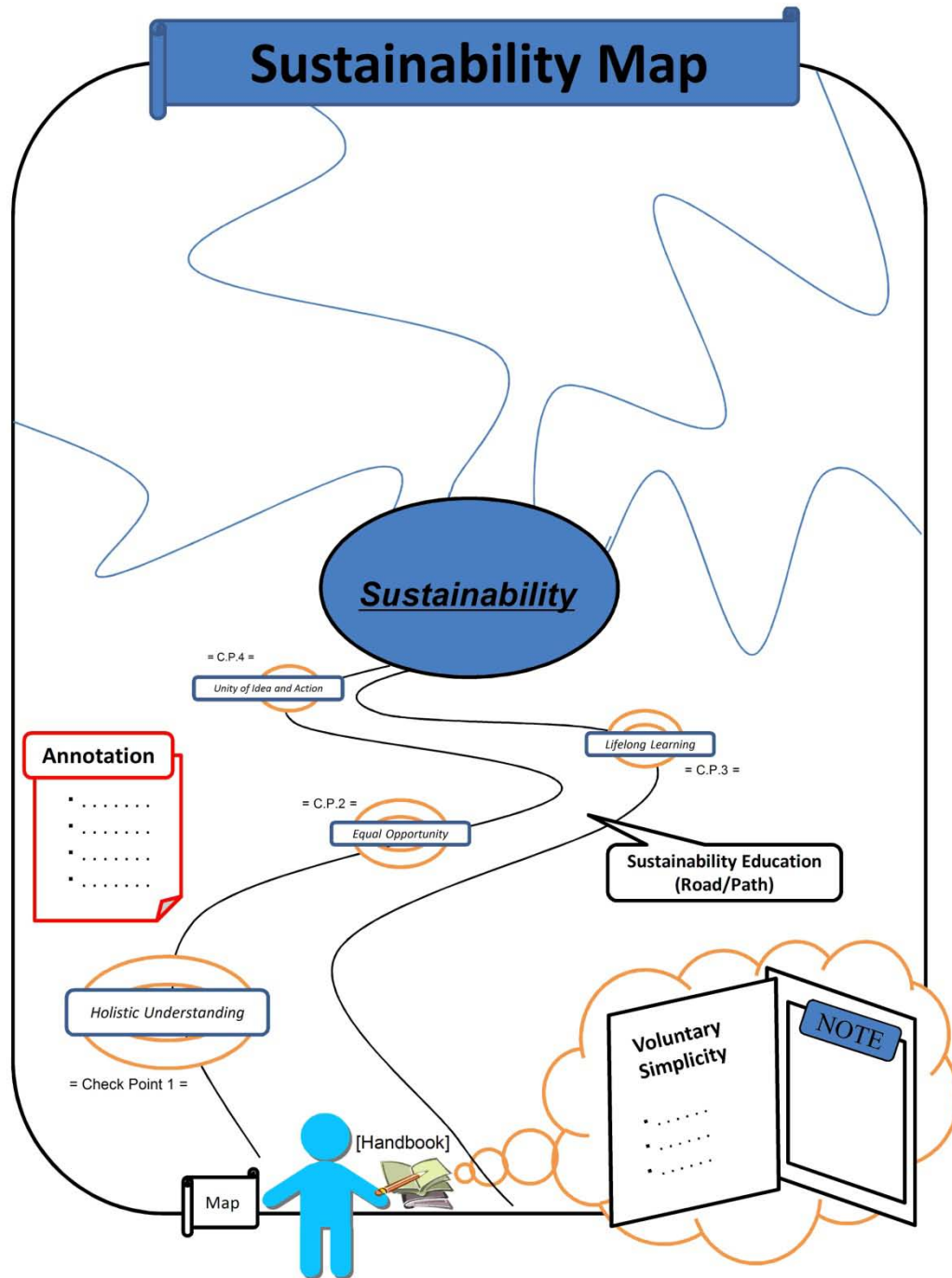
Figure 5. Sustainability Map: Correlation among Sustainability/Sus. Ed./V.S.

actuality. Regarding the way of thinking about voluntary simplicity, in this way, it refers

not only to a helpful idea, but also to action itself in a way that two aspects of

idea/knowledge and concrete action should be regarded as one-set of human activity

without the separation. In another metaphor, voluntary simplicity is like actively drawing a picture called 'Sustainability' with a basic guideline that holds useful knowledge about what kinds of tools (e.g., canvas, palette, brush, paint, etc.) are more necessary and better to successfully complete the picture in fact.

As argued in chapter 4, the core Eastern idea of *living-learning* refers to the direct transference of idea into practice, or applying knowledge into action in terms of three stages—awareness, inquiry, and praxis. It is closely associated with the learning process of how to live well with others in society through personal cultivation (one's internal enlightenment). Through these explanations, in this chapter, I hope to show how understanding voluntary simplicity as a learning process will advance the goal of sustainability education as *living-learning* to create ecologically and culturally just, stable, and peaceful ways of living in any personal and collective terms (Burch, 2000). As sustainability is key to the survival and well-being of all sentient beings, humans and otherwise, current and future generations could tremendously benefit by being exposed to the concept of simplicity by its very practice as a voluntary, yet important educational initiative.

This section attempts to further draw both the fundamental and the more inclusive theoretical framework of 'education for voluntary simplicity' as *living-learning* for sustainability. Previous educational efforts will also be considered.

7.2 The Previous Education Practice of Voluntary Simplicity

Around 1993, some now well-known simplicity-related books were released (e.g., Elgin's ground-breaking book *Voluntary Simplicity*, originally published in 1981;

Dominguez and Robin's best-selling *Your Money or Your Life* published in 1992). Burch (2000) writes, "many new books and resources, . . . have started to appear on the subject of simpler living" (p. 36). The relatively recent field of simplicity research has produced only a small amount of academic work. More prevalent are the personal "how-to" prescriptive texts, and self-help style books.

The understanding of voluntary simplicity itself can be seen as involving a learning process through the hands-on experience of life; in other words, most of those writing about voluntary simplicity seem to embrace the perspectives of learning for simple living to some extent. Therefore, it is likely to be hard to clearly distinguish who (or which literature, organization) addresses the matter of education for voluntary simplicity. Some of them, however, have been seen mostly in the field of adult education in more informal settings, such as a study circles, workshops, and discussion groups. In my opinion, there have been some educators, scholars, or organizations which focus intentionally on voluntary simplicity from an educational point of view. I now select, as examples, educational efforts made by three people and one organization.[69,70] The samples chosen are all interested in both personal concerns (money management,

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[69] As for another well-known education-related organization, there is 'New Road Map Foundation' (retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.newroadmap.org), which offers some study circles called 'Your Money or Your Life: A Study Guide for Groups', and so on. In my sense, however, its central focus seems to be on more personal concerns based on self money management, so I do not herein include this organization in this topic.

[70] At the time of December 1, 2008, I conducted literature searches and carried out a search on the Internet for books, articles, magazines, websites, and organizations related to the notion of voluntary simplicity, or simplicity. Furthermore, some research was also done on its educational theory and practice made by those who live in Western countries. Especially, most of the well-known authors and groups can be seen in the North America; in fact, although Pierce (2000) comprehensively introduces many resources for information about simpler living (books, websites, workshops, magazines, organizations, etc.) at the end of her book *Choosing Simplicity*, most of them are Canadian and American (pp. 327-342). As for other than Western nations, or even in my home country Japan as one of the most westernized nations, there has been less such well-acknowledged literature and organized institutes seen in North America at this point.

mental/physical health, self-enlightenment, etc.), and also social concerns (equity between haves and have-nots, ecological stability, social services, etc.). They are: (1) Mark Burch, (2) Cecile Andrews, (3) Linda Pierce, and (4) The Northwest Earth Institute. The details of each program cannot be covered within the scope of this thesis; however, the following is a brief overview of some of the ongoing programs. In doing so, I attempt to show how the general trend of education for simplicity has been so far, so that we can understand the background of relationships between simplicity and education.

7.2.1 Mark Burch

A freelance writer, speaker and teacher Mark Burch explains the core concept of voluntary simplicity and the guidelines for a workshop exercise and study circle program in his books, *Simplicity: Notes, stories and exercises for developing unimaginable wealth* (1995) and *Simplicity study circles: A step-by-step guide* (1997). Burch himself holds a workshop or study circle that promotes a better understanding of the different dimensions of voluntary simplicity.

The latter text provides a study circle program based on ten sessions featuring different dimensions of voluntary simplicity. The topics in learning are: (1) What is Voluntary Simplicity, Anyway? (2) Simplicity and Personal Growth, (3) The Best Things in Life, (4) Simplicity: The First "R" (as in *reducing*), (5) Getting Started: "De-Junking" Your Life, (6) Time & Treasure Check-Up: Time (7) Time & Treasure Check-Up: Money, (8) Simplicity & Community, (9) Enough is Enough Already, (10) Inner Simplicity: "De-Junking" Mind and Heart.

In the former text, Burch mainly shows some exercises for study circles and

workshops to "help clarify personal values and open new alternatives" in a way that encourages some learners to explore their present way of life and for others, it enables them to think about "new possibilities for themselves and their family" (65). There are nine exercises presented in total: (1) Here and now—"to increase a little bit our awareness of the totality of our life situation here and now" (pp. 66-68); (2) The best things in life—to understand "what we value and what is best for us" in terms of both material and non-material aspects of living (pp. 68-70); (3) Logging the daily round—to become mindful of what we are doing (pp. 71-74); (4) The uses of nothing—to recognize "our intrinsic powers as human beings to experience pleasure and meaning in life apart from consuming, owning, an possessing" (pp. 74-76); (5) I want it now!—to examine "our needs and how we are currently trying to meet them, how successful these efforts are and what alternatives we might imagine" (pp. 77-80); (6) My planet for a cup of coffee—to think about "the meaning of material progress, diminishing returns, and the consequences of focusing so much creative effort on generating economic profit" (pp. 80-83); (7) To my children's children's children—to understand creating sustainable future with sense of the intergenerational equity in becoming aware that "we are part of a long flow of historical event" (pp. 83-85); (8) Where the money goes—to examine where our money actually goes in considering "how your purchasing decisions have affected your quality of life" (85-89); and (9) Visioning a well world—to "seek personal visions of a healthy world" in imaging a well world in the right direction (pp. 89-93). In convening the workshop as an alternative to study circle, Burch illustrates the concrete details about how to organize—"purpose," "time required," "materials and equipment," and "process" (pp. 98-113) with some agendas for the short-term workshop—a "ONE EVENING,"

"ONE DAY," and "TWO DAYS" workshop (pp. 114-123).

These exercises, whether for study circle or workshop, are not always completed in entirety, and it is possible for each of the exercises to be organized as an independent program. It is better, of course, to take the exercises in a successive fashion. Through these exercises, the participants aim; "*to become more awake and mindful of our experience*, to learn *to live lightly on planet Earth*, and to learn *to relate more fully and richly with others in pursuit of our highest values*" (p. 97). I think that Burch's texts are very practical based on his own experience, which is very helpful for educators to organize and implement a workshop and study circle.

7.2.2 Cecile Andrews

Dr. Cecile Andrews, author of *The Circle of Simplicity: Return the Good Life* (1997), is a community educator and the foremost leader in the development of voluntary simplicity study circles. In her book, Andrews shows how to organize one's own simplicity study circle that preferably consists of at least ten weekly sessions for about two hours with six to eight people (the ideal group size) so as to improve personal living within the overall community. The topics of ten learning sessions are: (1) Introductions–to get to know each other and share the meaning of voluntary simplicity in your life, (2) Understanding Study Circle—to talk about ways to cut back on your own activities and to discuss the philosophy of the study circle method of learning, (3) Transforming Personal Consumption—to understand why there is a need to reduce consumption, why we consume, and how we reduce consumption, (4) Finding Your Passion—to discover the thing you would like to do, (5) Passion, Continued—to think of ways to earn money from

your passion, (6) Building Community—to learn and think about how to build more community in our lives, (7) Community, Continued—to understand the system of how society discourages community and to think about how to encourage community at work, (8) Living Mindfully—to understand ways to slow down and live mindfully, (9) Transforming Work—to think of how to improve your work situation, and (10) Planning for the Future—to discuss public policy issues and to decide the form the simplicity circle will take for those planning to continue (especially see, pp. 203-241).

Throughout these sessions by study circle as a learning tool, Cecile emphasizes the importance of the idea of democracy in action and the value of community. As compared to Burch's ways, in my view, Cecile's study circle method emphasizes smaller group learning and its advantages that seem to help people become more involved and practical.

7.2.3 Linda Pierce

Linda Breen Pierce is the founder of The Pierce Simplicity Study and author of *Choosing Simplicity: Real People Finding Peace and Fulfillment in a Complex World*. In her latest work entitled *Simplicity Lessons: A 12-Step Guide to Living Simply* (2003), Pierce presents a learning course that is comprised of twelve lessons: (1) Why simplify?; (2) Do you own your stuff or does it own you?; (3) Making friends with money; (4) Home is where the heart lives; (5) Where did all the time go?; (6) Working with Passion; (7) Moving about at home and abroad; (8) Awakening the spirit within you; (9) Minding your health and well-being; (10) Finding joy in friends and family; (11) Embracing community; and (12) Caring for our home, the Earth.

The course is designed as a learning process for individuals, two people, and eight to twelve people for a study group. The study groups can first choose all twelve lessons or six or more to study. Later they can also choose to continue to study the rest of lessons. Through these lessons, learners attempt to understand the meanings of simplicity not only for individuals and family, but also for society and the Earth as a whole.

It seems to me that Pierce's way of learning is very flexible to fit learners' situations in terms of the number of study groups and content. It makes them accessible to learn voluntary simplicity in accordance with their interests and living conditions.

7.2.4 The Northwest Earth Institute

The Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) was founded in Portland, Oregon in 1993 by Dick and Jeanne Roy. To emphasize the powerful effect of personal change, the mission is to inspire people to take responsibility for the Earth by motivating individuals to: (1) examine and transform personal values and habits, (2) accept responsibility for the Earth, and (3) act on that commitment. The Northwest Earth Institute has been recognized as the US's national leader in developing innovative programs that help individuals and organizations to protect the Earth.

The NWEI programs have been offered in workplaces, homes, faith centers, neighborhoods, and community centers, and have been held in more than nine-hundred communities in all fifty states of America and some of Canada. In a broad sense, the programs attempt to enable participants to understand their values, attitudes, and actions through discussion with others. Also, the courses emphasize individual responsibility, the importance of a supportive community, and the need to live lightly/simply on and to take

action for the Earth based on three core principles: (1) an earth-centered ethic promoting individual responsibility for the earth, (2) the practice of engaged simplicity to enrich life and reduce personal impact on the earth, and (3) a dedication to living fully in place and protecting the unique bioregion in which you live. More precisely, at the inception of this institution, NWEI initially offered three course packages to understand the ideas of 'deep ecology', 'voluntary simplicity', and 'bioregionalism' (Smith, 1999, p. 216). Until today, however, NWEI has provided seven study curriculums based on discussion courses and workplace seminars for small groups: (1) Voluntary Simplicity; (2) Choices for Sustainable Living; (3) Exploring Deep Ecology; (4) Discovering a Sense of Place; (5) Menu for the Future; (6) Healthy Children-Healthy Planet; (7) Global Warming: Changing CO_2urse.

The course of 'Voluntary Simplicity', on which we focus in this thesis, is organized by eight sessions with the text *Discussion Course on Voluntary Simplicity* (1997), which is mainly held in the workplace, faith center, or home. This course addresses the distractions of modern society that keep us from caring for ourselves, our relationships, and our environment. The course includes: (1) The Meaning of Simplicity—"To clarify the meaning of inner simplicity and outer simplicity" and "to explore how our lives might be enriched by simplicity (I – pp. 1-8)," (2) Living More with Less—"To understand when possessions add satisfaction to our lives and when they distract us from what is most important" and "to explore why we want to own so many things (II – pp. 1-12)," (3) Your Money or Your Life—"To consider the point at which pursuit of money or wealth may interfere with a satisfying life," "to evaluate whether work-related activities are aligned with our purpose and values," and "to examine the

balance between the need to make a living and the desire for a simple life (III – pp. 1-14)," (4) Do You Have the Time?—"To consider whether our time is spent on what we value most," and "to consider alternatives to a fast pace of life (IV – pp. 1-8)," (5) How Much is Enough—"To encourage a growing awareness of our patterns of consumption, their origins, and their effects" and "to explore definitions of 'needs' and 'excess' (V – pp. 1-12)," (6) Swimming Against the Tide—"To consider the individual practice of simplicity in a society that makes it difficult" and "to recognize ways in which the economy, advertising, and technology direct our lives (VI – pp. 1-13)," (7) The Practice of Simplicity—"To consider the steps we can take to change our attitudes and habits" and "to form an individual action plan to move toward voluntary simplicity (VII – pp. 1-11)," and (8) Celebration—"The final meeting of the class is an informal celebration. After spending weeks together, exploring new ideas, and sharing information and observations, it's time to celebrate!" (VIII – p. 1).

Each session of the text includes excerpts from a variety of authors and guidelines for the facilitator. Through these eight lessons, this course has three major ends that enable learners to: understand the meaning of voluntary simplicity; explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the earth, and; acknowledge the connection between our lifestyle choices and the condition of the earth.

I think that the big advantage of NWEI is, on a parallel with voluntary simplicity class, to offer other courses—the main theme of deep ecology, bioregionalism, global warming, ecological/cultural sustainability, healthy food, and education matter. Their topics are interrelated to one another, so learners can easily have other opportunities to

continually learn and expand their ideas and motivations in accordance with their interests.

These professional forerunners and adult education organizations have implemented their own unique programs mostly in such informal settings, as a study circle, workshop, or discussion group. However, the systematic foundation of 'educating for voluntary simplicity' in more formal learning, such as in public schooling and university, has not been well proposed because of the fact that little attention has been given to conceptualizing how to integrate voluntary simplicity within formal educational institutions. This study attempts to contribute to developing the theoretical foundations underlying 'education or learning for voluntary simplicity'. For example, the important objective of understanding voluntary simplicity is to achieve individual and social changes towards sustainable living in a practical manner. To make possible such changes, an integration of theory and action—i.e. ultimately emerging 'practice'—is necessary at the core.

7.3 Theoretical Framework: Education for Simplicity

I have so far outlined some of the previous educational efforts to promote voluntary simplicity. These educational attempts focus mainly on teaching adults in non-formal settings, such as study circles and workshops. In their own unique way, each organization teaches the precepts of voluntary simplicity. All these educational efforts recognize the various issues underlying personal and community living that must be improved through 'individuals' belief and action' in order to effect social change. They

introduce voluntary simplicity as an effective way by which anyone can tackle these issues within the context of his or her own life. However, learning for simplicity should not be limited to adult education arenas when we think about sustainability education. Teaching/learning voluntary simplicity as part of sustainability education is a more holistic way of emphasizing its importance within the context of any educational process as lifelong learning/education. In other words, teaching of/learning for simplicity could be made better use in the practice of sustainability education with the concept of *living-learning*. I would now like to consider the more inclusive theoretical framework of education for voluntary simplicity that should be reflected by the afore-mentioned concepts and features of voluntary simplicity and sustainability education as *living-learning*. To examine this subject of this sub-section, there are three points of view to consider that; (1) learning for simplicity is the process of *living-learning,* per se, (2) teaching of/learning for simplicity can be identified as sustainability education, and (3) voluntary simplicity's perspectives can be applied into sustainability education.

7.3.1 Learning for Simplicity as the Process of Living-learning

First, the point I wish to emphasize is that learning for simplicity can be interpreted naturally as the way of *living-learning*. Since doing voluntary simplicity conjoins one's ideas and behaviors—namely, lifestyle per se, there should be no separation between life event and its understanding of life-way. Thus, teaching of and learning for simplicity based on one's life experience could be basically identified as a sort of *living-learning* that holds a cyclic, creative three-stage process—awareness, inquiry, and praxis, based on one's concrete experience. Learning voluntary simplicity,

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consequently, helps people become committed to applying this three-stage cyclical process in *living-learning*, to their experience of everyday life directly. I will try to consider it, mainly showing some of sample comments in the Simplicity Survey (Elgin, 1993, pp. 60-110).[71] This survey that was included in an article on voluntary simplicity (by Duane Elgin and Arnold Mitchell) in a journal *Co-Evolution Quarterly* published in 1977 is based on "more than 420 questionnaires and over 200 letters (totaling more than 1,000 pages)" from the readers, many of whom "have adopted ecological ways of living," (Elgin, 1993, p. 60). These respondents' background is:

- People from all walks of life responded—lawyers, teachers, social workers, students, government bureaucrats, firemen, carpenters, factory workers, retired couples, white-collar workers, and more.
- Responses were received from forty-two states in the United States as well as from several European countries, Canada and Australia.
- A board spectrum of age was represented—from seventeen to sixty-seven. The average age was roughly thirty, and 75 percent were under the age of thirty-five.
- Nearly all respondents were white.
- Overall income levels tended to be somewhat lower than that of the general U.S. population.
- Most were highly educated-roughly 70 percent hand completed college.
- A majority (56 percent) lived in cities and suburbs, 13 percent lived in smaller towns, and 32 percent lived in rural areas.
- Most grew up in relatively affluent homes (71 percent had a middle-class economic background and 22 percent had an upper-class economic background)

(Elgin, 1993, p. 61)

Those who have already practiced a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity are regarded as those in the praxis stage of three stages. Then, how do simple livers take the path to the action stage as a goal? If assimilating the three stages into the triple jump—*hop*, *skip*, and *jump* (track and field athletics), we can regard the 'awareness stage'

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[71] The questionnaire of survey is available from the appendix of Elgin's work entitled *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* (1993).

as *hop,* the 'inquiry stage' as *skip*, and the 'praxis stage' as *jump*. First, the *hop*—'awareness stage' as the process of becoming knowledgeable and opening up thinking about problems around the self, refers to the start or trigger. In other words, why do simple livers come to choose a way of living in simplicity? The reasons or motivations are various, as indicated below:

> I believe in the imminent need for the skills and resources I am developing now. I am not sure how it will come about, whether economic collapse, fuel exhaustion, or natural disaster, but whichever it is, I (and my family) will need all of whatever self-sufficiency I or we can develop.
> *(man, twenty-nine, married, rural, West)*   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 66-67)

> I believe voluntary simplicity is more conductive to personal and spiritual growth. I live this way because I am appalled that half the planet lives in dire poverty while we overconsume. And people think they are "Christian." I think it is "spiritual" to make sure that everyone has adequate food, shelter, and clothing and to take care of the planet.
> *(woman, twenty-five, married, big city, Midwest)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 67)

> I sincerely believe that voluntary simplicity is essential to the solution of global problems of environmental pollution, resource scarcity, socioeconomic inequalities and existential/spiritual problems of alienation, anxiety, and lack of meaningful lifestyles.
> *(man, thirty-two, married, suburb, South)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 67)

> I have less and less to blame on other people. I am more self-reliant. I can both revel in the independence and be frustrated by me shortcomings—but I get to learn from my own mistakes. Each step is progress in independence; freedom is the goal.
> *(man, twenty-six, married, small town, East)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 67)

> The main motivation for me is inner spiritual growth and to give my children an idea of the truly valuable and higher things in this world.
> *(woman, thirty-eight, ingle, small town, East)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 68)

> I feel more voluntary about my pleasures and pains than the average American who has his needs dictated by Madison Ave. (my projection of course). I feel sustained, excited, and constantly growing in my spiritual and intellectual pursuits.
> *(woman, thirty, living together, rural West)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 68)

> Why simplicity? I see it as the only moral, economic, rational, humanistic goal.

Besides, it's fun.

  (man, twenty-three, single, small city, Midwest)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 68)

I felt the values involved in consumerism to be false, use-less, and destructive. I prefer to appear as I am. People are complex enough to understand without excess trappings. I was also influenced by the values of the feminist and ecological movements.

  (woman, twenty-five, married, suburb, South)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 69)

It is highly rewarding way to live. It forces you into a relationship with a basic reality. . . . It also forces you to deal with some direct anxieties and rely on and be thankful to a benevolent deity. It succinctly points out your frailty and clearly delineates your dependencies. It also reinforces your strength and independence.

  (married couple, thirty-seven and thirty-two, rural, West)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 69)

I wanted to remove my children from the superficial, competitive (East Coast) value system. Wanted a family venture to draw us closer and a community that was stable. Also wanted to provide the children with a learning experience that exposes them to alternatives to the "rat race" system, plus I wanted out from the typical pressures of maintaining material acquisitions that were meaningless to me.

  (woman, thirty-six, single, rural, West)   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 66-70)

I am becoming tuned to these ideas and lifestyle changes, partly as a feminist who sees a need for more bridge from the new age to feminism. . . . Behind this, of course, the relationship of our alienation/destruction of our mother, the earth, is parallel to our alienation/control of our mothers, the women.

  (woman, thirty, marred, big city, Canada)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 95)

In addition to these sample comments, *The Pierce Simplicity Study* shows the statistics of "the events and influences that motivated the study participants to seek a life of simplicity," most of whom "were motivated to simplify by several events and influences" (Pierce, 2000, p. 56): 27 %—Process of inner growth and/or spiritual learnings; 26%—Stress (generally, or in connection with a job, or due to a pace of life that is much too fast; 23%—Worry about money, or burdened with too much debt; 21% — Desire for freedom and autonomy; 20%—Desire to spend higher quality time with family; 15%—Wanted a higher quality of life, generally. Time and energy to stop and

smell the roses; 15%—Reading one or more books that made a substantial impact; 13%—Concern about the earth; 11%—Burdened by too much stuff, wanting to reduce the role of consumption and materialism; 8%—Has always lived simply (either because of family upbringing or values developed as a young adult); 7%—Loss of a job; 6%—serious illness or injury; and 5%—Death of a loved one (pp. 56-57). Pierce (2000) summarizes the views of this result: "[w]hile money worries and stress were strong motivators, equally strong were the less tangible aspects of life"—e.g., "inner growth and spiritual learnings, the desire for freedom, autonomy and a higher quality of life in general were mentioned with high frequency" (p. 57).

As a result, we note that the motivations behind voluntary simplicity depend on each person. However, what is in common is that understandably, simple livers' reasons for choosing simplicity are concerned with very practical matters underlying everyday life. Elgin points this out that "a simpler way of life is not a utopian dream but a practical possibility," which refer to the "down-to-earth and realistic approach to living that has already taken root in a number of developed nations" (1993, p. 108). Based on this fact, moreover, the triggers to choose simplicity are concerned with two aspects of cultivation in the general classification – personal and societal/public. The concern arising from personal matters (inner development, family care, etc.), for example, can be seen in some of the comments of the sample—such as: "all of whatever self-sufficiency I or we can develop" (p. 67), "existential/spiritual problems of alienations, anxiety, and lack of meaningful lifestyles" (p. 67), "more self-reliant" (p. 67), "inner spiritual growth and to give my children an idea of the truly valuable and higher things in this world" (p. 68), "the only honest way to effectively make my feelings, actions, and life congruent" (p. 69),

"a relationship with a basic reality" (p. 69), "to remove my children from the superficial, competitive (East Coast) value system" (p. 69), and so forth. In Elgin's words, he summarizes that their comments about the "most common reasons given for choosing to live more lightly" is; "to provide one's children with more humane value systems and life experiences that are appropriate to the emerging world they will have to live in," "to find a much higher degree of independence and self-determination in a mass society of alienating scale and complexity," "to establish more cooperative and caring relationships," "to develop the personal skills and know-how to survive a time of severe economic and social disruption," and "to create the personal circumstances of life in which one's feelings, thoughts, and actions can come into alignment" (1993, p. 70).

On another front, the dimension of societal cultivation associated with concerns to environmental disasters, equal opportunity, economy, politics, public education, healthcare, etc., can be described in the statements as follows: "I am appalled that half the planet lives in dire poverty while we overconsume" (p. 67), "[V]oluntary simplicity is essential to the solution of global problems of environmental pollution, resource scarcity, socioeconomic inequities" (p. 67), "Our interest in simpler living dates to overseas tours with the U.S. embassy in underdeveloped nations—we know firsthand what the problems are" (p. 69), "I felt the cause involved in consumerism to be false, useless, and destructive" (p. 69), "to provide the children with a learning experience that exposes them to alternatives to the 'rat race' system" (p. 69). In light of these social concerns seen, Elgin (1993) points out that the reason for their choice of living simply is; "to search for a workable and meaningful alternative to the emptiness of society obsessed with material consumption and display," "to acknowledge and, in small but personally meaningful

ways, begin to reduce the case inequalities between the rich and poor around the world," "to cope in a personal manner with environmental pollution and resource scarcity," and "to foster nonsexist ways of relating" (p. 70).

Next, the 'inquiry stage', metaphorically understood as the *skip* in the triple jump, is a process of considering and comprehending the issues in one's mind. In the sense of simplicity with the idea of *living-learning*, this occasion can be also interpreted as a process for simper livers to gradually mature their own primary ideas about simplicity. It also involves some challenges as counter-culture to create alternative to, or change and improve, the mainstream culture in personal or public terms. To borrow Elgin's phrase, "the journey into this [simpler] way of life seems to be a relatively slow, evolutionary process, one that unfolds gradually over a period of months and years." This process may be done in a way that "[t]he initial stages are a time of exploring and moving back and forth between traditional and innovative patterns of living and consuming" and that "[g]radually a person or family may find they have made a number of small changes and acquired a number of slightly different patterns of perception and behavior, . . ." (1993, pp. 73-74). This way of developing the ideas about simpler living can be seen in the following comments of the survey:

> As my spiritual growth expanded and developed, voluntary simplicity was a natural outgrowth. I came to realize the cost of material accumulation was too high and offered fewer and fewer real rewards, psychological and spiritual.
> *(man, twenty-six, single, small town, South)* (Elgin, 1993, p. 63)

> We are moving toward a life of greater simplicity from within, and the external changes are following—perhaps more slowly. We are seeking quality of life—and a path with heart.
> *(woman, age unspecified, married, suburb, West)* (Elgin, 1993, p. 71)

> Voluntary simplicity must evolve over a lifetime according to the needs of an individual. . . . The person must grow and be open to new ideas—not jump on a

bandwagon, but thoughtfully consider ideas and see how they relate to oneself.
(woman, twenty-one, single, small city, Midwest)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 71)

To me, voluntary simplicity as a lifestyle is not something you take up in one moment, but occurs over a period of time due to: (1) consciousness raising; (2) peer group support; (3) background; (4) inner-growth interest; and many other factors. My wholehearted commitment to a certain spiritual path finds outer expression in a simple, gentle, humane lifestyle.
(woman, twenty-five, married, small town, East)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 72)

It wasn't a slam-bang, bolt-from-the blue, overnight change. I'm still growing and learning. The most important goal I have is inner development with a good blend of living with the here and now on this planet.
(man, twenty-five, married, small town, East)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 72)

My idea and my practice of voluntary simplicity have been and I hope will continue to be a gradual process of evolution and growth. From early adolescence on I tended to prefer simplicity.
(woman, twenty-one, single, small city, Midwest)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 72)

Various flirtations with yoga, meditation, drugs, and radical politics gave me exposure to, and some personal experience with, "inner growth" possibilities. I began living my life freely, following no preconceived roles, and gradually discovered my overriding interest in quality: the environment, life, the universe.
(man, twenty-nine, married, small town, East)   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 73)

My understanding is that this evolutionary process is usually accompanied with deepening the understanding of concerns evoked through the primary interest in simplicity. To borrow Elgin's words, "Like spokes that reach out from the hub of a wheel, this way of life radiates outward from an inner core of experience to touch every facet of life" (1993, p. 108). To take an example showed in simple livers' comments:

I became interested in simplicity . . . primarily because of ecological concerns. However, since then my interest has become concentrated on metaphysics, self-realization, and so on, with the same end results.
(woman, thirty-eight married, big city, Midwest)   (Elgin, 1993, p. 73)

I took up voluntary simplicity after leaving my last (hopefully) male-dominated relationship, where I was supported financially by a man. A year of feminism and consciousness raising . . . convinced me that I would never be free to even know a man truly unless I could be free of dependency. . . . So supporting myself, seeing

how I really wanted to spend my waking hours, coupled with the concept of right livelihood, ecological awareness, yoga study, all led in one direction.

(woman, thirty-four, single, rural, West) (Elgin, 1993, pp. 95-96)

I was drawn to simplicity because of my environmental concerns. Before simplicity, my environmental work was outward directed—lobbying, writing protest letters, organizing, producing programs. But the connection of how much driving a car affects global warming, or how quickly our resources (minerals, oil, top soil, etc.) are being depleted by rampant consumerism, or how much each person wastes per day, was not being made. How could I tell others what to do—what laws to enact or repeal—without looking at how my lifestyle, my day-to-day behavior, impacted the health of the planet? Now that I'm into simplicity, I see this lifestyle is much broader than promoting environmental values. It is about putting joy and meaning back into life through dear and loving relationships and spending more time creating and playing. Buying used or less, I use fewer resources and have more money to donate. My spending is becoming more and more conscious, considering the environment, social, human, c communal and justice implications of my purchases. My motto is "enough" not only for me but that all people would have enough to have a good life. "Enough" has an upper as well as a lower threshold.

[Claire Mayer, Morristown, New Jersey] (Pierce, 2000, p. 61)

Regarding this latter comment, Pierce (2000) observes, "Claire was initially drawn to simplicity because of her love for the earth," and then "discovered other jewels of the simplicity lifestyle—more meaningful relationships, expanded creativity, and a hope for social justice in the world" (pp. 61-62). That is to say, one's concern does not necessarily stay in one place, and may extend to other, related matters according to one's interests. For another example: a primary concern—'environmental degradation and energy/resource depletion by our over-consuming the already insufficient materials' gives rise to a secondary interest/idea—'caring for the grotesque inequity between the rich and poor anywhere as well as thinking about the world peace or harmonious action to others'; again – a secondary concern—'considering environmental conservation or earth's health, ecological stability' derives from a primary interest/idea—'keeping one's better health by eating more natural/organic food or less using car but rather more bicycling or walking;

and so forth. Moreover, these concerns—primary and secondary—are not always limited into only one. Rather, one naturally has more than two ideas from the beginning and further develops them. It depends on each of simple livers; however, what is in common is that "[s]implicity does not turn us into simple creatures; rather, it expands our life experience in which "[w]e are complex creatures, ideally always learning and growing" (Pierce, 2000, p. 62).

In light of simple livers who themselves are practitioners of voluntary simplicity, it is reasonable to suggest that the afore-mentioned development of one's ideas about simplicity can be effected, not simply by one's intellectual activity in the inquiry stage, but also by action in the 'praxis stage', as *jump* stage. This third stage is a process allowing one to apply the acquired ideas into practice. Also in this stage, a practical experience of simpler living creates another experience that evokes further ideas as well, and then both the ideas and the practice are evolving and deepening in accordance with the accumulation of experience. The following comments from the survey show cases in which simple livers have already tackled voluntary simplicity through multidimensional efforts.

> . . . quit smoking, stopped eating meat, now run about eight miles a week, stopped saving legs, stopped using scented products, stopped buying stylish haircuts, buy less clothing, buy looser, freer clothing, regularly take vitamins, gave away a lot of things, eat 90 percent more fruits and vegetables, meditate, walk a lot, read humanistic psychology, study Sufism, feel strong affinity for all animals, weave, write.
> *(woman, thirty-three, single, big city, West)*   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 74-75)

> I quite my forty-hour-a-week slavery and got a twenty-hour-a-week job that I love (working in a library). I started learning how to grow food in the city and make compost. I became conscious of what I was eating and how I was spending my money. I started learning to sew, mend, and shop secondhand, and I've stopped eating meat.
> *(woman, twenty-three, married, small city, West)*   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 75)

I do not own anything more than I need. The things that I do own are selected on the basis of their utility, rather than their style or the fact that they are currently faddish. I attempt to make things last. . . . I am nursing my car past 100,000 miles. I am doing political work, notable in opposition to nuclear power. . . . I am planning to build my own house, and the plans include small-scale technology aimed at promoting self-sufficiency, such as passive solar design, a greenhouse, compositing toilets, windmills, and so on.

(man, thirty, single, suburb, West) (Elgin, 1993, p. 75)

Change include smaller house, wear clothe longer (except when in court; I'm a trial lawyer, feel it necessary to "play the role" when actually engaged in formal professional activity) recycle and buy secondhand when possible, bike and hike . . . live with a nice lady, have more time for children . . . human relationships, though fewer, are closer.

(man forty-two, living together, rural, East) (Elgin, 1993, pp. 75-76)

I am doing what Bucky Fuller calls doing more with less. He also speaks of education as the process of "eliminating the irrelevant," dismissing all that is not furthering our chosen articulation of value—eliminating wasteful speech as well as costume, dietary habits as well as information addictions that do not further the evolution into that simple (not to say "noncomplex" but only "noncomplicated") life of adaptive progress to more and more diversified environments.

(man ,twenty-seven, single, small city, East) (Elgin, 1993, p. 76)

I recycle cans, bottles, and newspapers. We're very careful with water. . . . I buy used and handmade things as much as possible. . . . We've always been frugal in the way we furnish our house. We've never bought on time, which means we buy fewer things. We wear other people's hand-me-downs and we buy used furniture when possible. . . . A large percentage of our spending goes for classes (music, dance, postgraduate courses for my credential), therapy, and human-potential experience.

(woman, forty-seven, married, big city, West) (Elgin, 1993, pp. 75-76)

We have a care car but seldom use it, preferring to use bicycles because of a car's pollution and energy consumption. I am not into fashion and attempt to wear things till they are worn out—buy mostly serviceable work-type clothes, sometimes secondhand from friends. . . . Am vegetarian . . . belong to a food cooperative . . . everybody contributes four hours per month to working to the store/restaurant. This co-op forms an important hub in our community for most alternate social and spiritual activities. Learning about gardening . . . buy tools and appliances that are durable . . . avoid buying plastic and aluminum whenever possible. NO throwaways . . . I attempt to use my buying power politically . . . strongly support appropriate technology . . . strongly motivated to understand myself and others—involved in meditation for awareness . . . the spiritual-search components is the major driving force in my life. . . . I always try to acquire new

self-help skills: sewing, car repair, and so forth.
   (woman , twenty-five, living together, city, Canada)   (Elgin, 1993, pp. 76-77)

It would appear that, in these cases, living simply was a lifestyle that resulted, not from any overnight effort, but from an incremental, selective process based on the accumulation of experience. In one comment by the simple liver below, who has been implementing simplicity more than forty years, we can see very organized notions of voluntary simplicity that have been evolving over a long period of time.

> It was the injustice and not the lack of luxury during the Great Depression that disturbed me. I took up this way of life when I was seventeen. I remember choosing this simplicity—not poverty—because: (1) it seemed more just in the face of deprivation—better distribution of goods; (2) more honest—why take or have more than one needs? (3) much freer—why burden oneself with getting and caring for just "things" when time and energy could be spent in so many other more interesting and higher pursuits? (4) but I wanted a simplicity that would include beauty and creativity—art, music, literature, an aesthetic environment—but simplicity.
>   *(woman, sixty, married, suburb, West)*   (Elgin, 1993, p. 68)

The way of thinking here is not something made overnight. It would appear to require continuing efforts in everyday life. I have so far argued how voluntary simplicity itself involves the process of *living-learning*. My exposition has made reference to the three stages inherent in the idea of *living-learning* as a matter of convenience to the analysis. This does not mean, however, that the process of simpler living and its learning are always completely distinguishable into the three divisions—awareness, inquiry, and praxis stage. Rather, since voluntary simplicity is not only an idea, but simultaneously a practice of living per se, this means that there is no separation between idea and action in simpler ways of living. The relationship between idea and action in voluntary simplicity is inextricably linked—like the two sides of a coin. In this context, we could see that the

awareness stage, as acquired idea process, and the praxis stage, as action process, can be performed not in an independent but in an interactional way, as has been suggested in the praxis stage of simplicity right above. In other words, if each process of three stages is expressed as circle, the scope of awareness stage and praxis stage overlaps each other for the most part. In this inseparable interaction between idea and action, the inquiry stage as the process of nurturing idea can be performed in a way that simple livers attempt to evolve further concerns related to simplicity which must be accompanied by the concrete idea of action—namely, how to practice.

7.3.2 Teaching/Learning Simplicity as Sustainability Education with the Living-learning Process

Second, what I would like to stress is that teaching of and learning for simplicity as embracing a *living-learning* process is itself a form of sustainability education at its root. Voluntary simplicity, as described, is an idea and at the same time, a secure, stable, and harmonious lifestyle. The effort to live more simply naturally involves the process of understanding and practicing based on one's life experience. The lifestyle of voluntary simplicity—such both idea and practice as leading to personally/socially peaceful conditions—is sustainably-oriented lifestyle with one's experiential learning process. In other words, conducting the way of living based on the idea of voluntary simplicity can be identified as enabling one to be more creative through learning for life, which could also contribute to making one's community/society better in a sustainable manner. In this view, conducting simpler life—one's living within the idea of voluntary simplicity refers to constantly involving one's learning as well as practice based on

everyday life experience—shortly, the process of *living-learning*. This type of learning and action can be captured as sustainable in an ecologically and culturally harmonious manner within the both individual and public contexts. This observation of mine might be seen in Elgin's following comment:

- A progressive refinement of the social and *material* aspects of life—learning to touch the earth ever more lightly with our material demands; learning to touch others ever more gently and responsively with our social institutions; and learning to live our daily lives with ever less complexity and clutter.

- A progressive refinement of the *spiritual* or consciousness aspects of life—learning the skills of touching the world ever more lightly by progressively releasing habitual patterns of thinking and behaving that make our passage through life weighty and cloudy rather than light and spacious; learning how to 'touch and go'—to not hold on—but to allow each moment to arise with newness and freshness; and learning to be in the world with a quiet mind and open heart.

(1993, p. 159)

Although Elgin does not directly mention the relationship between voluntary simplicity and its learning, his observation above indicates that practicing simpler living involves the occasion for human learning per se. The possibilities for learning are explained in two aspects; the first concerns one's inner events (mental, emotional, etc.) as a "progressive refinement of the *spiritual* or consciousness aspects of life," and the second speaks of one's outer events (public, physical, etc.) as a "progressive refinement of the social and *material* aspects of life."

The understanding of voluntary simplicity is closely associated with educational process of sustainability within the individual as well as public context at the basis; therefore, I assume that teaching of and learning for simplicity can be captured as a more effective, as well as concrete method (tool, viewpoint) of sustainability education in a way that simplicity's perspectives are utilized in sustainability-oriented teaching and

learning.

7.3.3 Applying Simplicity's Perspectives into Sustainably-oriented Teaching/Learning

The last point to emphasize is that the core perspectives underlying the idea of voluntary simplicity might provide teachers with more concrete viewpoints in their teaching of sustainability-related topics based on each student's life experience. Since sustainability education is concerned with all aspects of our living—namely, our survival or how to improve the quality of our everyday life, as described in the chapter three—it is a discourse of lifelong learning that should be integrated into all realms of educational opportunity, whether formal or informal. Formal schooling can to a certain degree include the essential views of sustainability into the curriculum of every subject through the ingenuity of teachers to assist students in realizing the need for sustainability and to grasp the meaning of lifestyle choices. Generally speaking, public schooling (primary, junior high, and high schools, in general) is thought as harder to set up a more original or specific class for sustainability into the already dense curriculum than higher education (e.g., university, college) or informal education discourses for adults (e.g., community learning, study circle, workshop, etc.) that could be relatively easier to focus on the theme of sustainability in building the special course/class that have been tried so far. Regarding the case of public education, however, teachers can try to integrate sustainability-related topics into their teaching of any subject (not only general such as national language, arithmetic/mathematics, nature study, and social study, but also special subjects such as fine arts, housecraft, health and physical education, and so on), as I illustrated in the chapter three. To take an example shown in the case of social study class, even though the

textbook does not necessarily address matters of sustainability, some topics of sustainable living related to economy, politics/geopolitics, agriculture, food production, transportations, material flow, international relations, resource/energy usage, and history, could be embedded into the main body by teachers' intention to show the sustainability-oriented topic according to the text contents—i.e., teachers can help learners to focus more on; what is sustainable manners of resource use and how they can use in a study unit of the energy system; what is sustainable ways of food production and consumption and how they should buy and eat in a study unit of the agriculture system, etc.

　　　Within the context of such a way of teaching, I assume that the afore-mentioned perspectives of voluntary simplicity (personal/societal cultivation and many important factors involved in its lifestyle) could provide teachers with the more concrete viewpoints to teach their students. If teachers have an understanding of voluntary simplicity they can be more instructive when an opportunity presents itself. Take the aforementioned case of food and agriculture in social study class for example. Above all things, we try to begin with seeing voluntary simplicity as involving two main frameworks of cultivation as promoting sustainability—bettering personal and societal (public) aspects of living in culturally/ecologically sustainable manners. In addition, its understanding echoes some essences of simpler living—i.e., the ideas of sufficiency (enough is enough), circular manner (less disposable but recyclable/reusable ways), sharing things (or excesses) with others, peaceful relationship with others (whether human or non-human beings) in supporting each other, ecologically harmonious lifestyle (clothing, food and housing), supporting behavior with less impact on the ecosystem (living lightly on the earth),

fullness of life derived from inner peace or mental stability (self-fulfillment, contentment, mindfulness) in less stress but more relaxing, free-time and slower pace, etc. In light of personal growth which is based on the sustainable lifestyle, the idea of voluntary simplicity is a process that leads an individual to something positive and creative, which enhances the quality of life. To take these standpoints in consideration, teachers could think more precisely about the relationship between food/agriculture condition and personal living quality in terms of which factors are capable of maintaining and improving healthier lifestyle based on the promotion of mentally and physically good health, without damaging the regional nature as well as earth's ecosystem as a whole. For those factors to do so, we could see the key words as vegetable-centered diet, organic/natural food, locally-produced food, slow food rather that fast food, no leftover and waste, and use of no disposal but reusable stuff (container, tableware, bag), for example.

Regarding societal dimension in terms of sustainability, what voluntary simplicity stresses is to nurture the idea of sufficiency with the sense of ecological limits to growth that is, in turn, concerned with the attitude of the equal opportunity for all. Also the orientation of living simpler refers to living more lightly in both mental and physical terms. The way of living, in the collective sense, implies creating a form of societal group or community with less negative stress to the ecosystem as well as other groups/communities, whether humans or other life forms, now and in future years—in other words, forming society in ecological balance as well as in peaceful relationships among societies (from local to global) with the view of inter-generational equity to live well. In this context, teachers can attempt to make some points to show how sustainable

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relationships are possible. Those teachable points would include; the promotion of organic farming, development of environmentally-secure system of food production and supply, political/economic management of food consumption with a minimum of waste, reinforcement of agricultural policy capable of maximum food self-sufficiency and of adequate food stock just in case of famine and (natural) calamity, proper establishment of national and international strategy for sharing excess food production and for being able to equally access basic nutrition for all.

Teachers can utilize these viewpoints in their teaching as the tools allowing learners to realize and ponder this issue within the context of sustainability. Some existing resources related to simplicity—such as the handbooks, websites, and study/action guides could be helpful for teachers to obtain the more important standpoints to instruct according to the themes and topics in subjects or curriculums.[72] Something else to be born in mind here is to make learners take those points within the interconnection between personal and societal points of view, which sustainability education stresses as described. To take one example, if one tries to buy natural/organic food products as much as possible, its individual effort will not be just personal, but can support the more expansion of organic farming in society. This will then be healthier for both people and the natural environment because of the diminished usage of pesticide and chemical fertilizer. That is to say, one's positive action can to a certain degree contribute

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[72] The resource guide to the understanding of voluntary simplicity as the tools for sustainability education can be usefully found in the list at the end of Linda Breen Pierce's book titled *Choosing Simplicity: Real People Finding Peace and Fulfillment in a Complex World*. Regarding the representative website to introduce the way of simpler living as the practical tool of, there are; The Simplicity Resource Guide [retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.gallagherpress.com/pierce/index.htm], and The Simple Living Network [retrieved October 24, 2008 from http://www.simpleliving.net/main/default.asp] as well-known and effective.

to transforming society toward better orientation in a sustainable manner from the bottom up. Additionally, the interrelationship between topics beyond subjects is also important to consider. To buy more local food is connected to supporting the more agricultural system without the use of less chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or such other chemicals as food preservative and artificial color, so as to keep good of the products during a long trip beyond the national as well as international borders for commercial purpose, which is also concerned with promoting natural/organic farming in each region. This is linked to reducing waste of energy or natural resource by avoiding longer distance transportation to carry the products, as well. Furthermore, the advantage of taking natural/organic food that is learned in social study class can be addressed in nature study class (e.g., in light of understanding scientific mechanism of the ecosystem, etc.). It can be also treated in a class of health education (e.g., in light of understanding the health of both humans and the natural environment, and the mutual connection between them).

Second, teachers need to be able to provide students with sustainability-related topics within the context of their life experience in order that the idea or acquired knowledge is not considered by students, merely abstractedly, but rather as relevant to them and their own problems.

Third, although I have so far illustrated educating simpler living from the point of view of teachers, this is even truer of students' learning. That is to say, since understanding of simplicity is really one's everyday process of *living-learning* that refers to the successive course that each individual recognizes, ponders, and practices through one's own unique experience, the process stresses the attempt of self-learning as more fundamental than somebody's teaching. Therefore, the afore-mentioned viewpoints seen

in voluntary simplicity would be also useful for students to comprehend and conduct simpler living in the context of *living-learning*.

In the following I would like to provide an overview of general educational theories that seem to be forms of *living-learning* for simplicity as sustainability education, as I have defined it so far. It might involve some of the afore-mentioned essentials based on the understanding of idea of interconnectedness among all at the bottom and the way of learning through human feelings as the core of concrete experience. In my understanding, regarding such a way of sustainability education with the sense of simplicity, two major orientations might be recognized: Holistic education and ecological education.

7.4 Two Main Orientations in Learning for Voluntary Simplicity through *Living-learning* for Sustainability

7.4.1 Holistic Education: Understanding of Interconnectedness, Holism, and Ecological Sensibility

Contemporary holistic education has emerged as "a countercultural movement seeking radical, far-reaching changes" in North America since the late 1970s, based on the notion of *holism,* that "is, literally, a search for wholeness in a culture that limits, suppresses, and denies wholeness" (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 7) because mechanistic science is reductionistic. This educational orientation has developed under the influence of humanistic and transpersonal psychology that, since the 1960s, has enlarged our understanding of the full potential for human development. This trend held that "human psyche is far more complex, dynamic, and creative than the dominant

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schools of psychology," which regarded a human being's mentality and development as machine-like mechanisms (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 195). The belief of humanistic psychology was soon incorporated into teaching practice. Its theory of education advocated perspectives such as that "true learning involves the whole person, including feelings, concerns, and creativity; that the human being aspires toward growth and integration, but needs an emotionally supportive environment that encourages exploration and self-discovery; and that every student, and every teacher, should be respected as a unique and precious person and not forced into role-bound behavior by rigid and extrinsic goals" (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 195; also see Rogers, 1969). Later, transpersonal education derived from transpersonal psychology affirmed the psychologist Clark's claim that "learning is not geared to the acquisition or transmission of knowledge, but to participation in the process of unfolding from within" (in Roberts, 1975, p. 499). Contemporary holistic education inherited the mantle of these humanistic and transpersonal psychologies and their beliefs about learning. Within this context, contemporary holistic educators "have attempted to establish all-inclusive comprehensive worldviews in which the entire enterprise of education can be located" (Nakagawa, 2000, p. 3).

If 'holistic education' is broadly understood "as approach to the wholeness of the human being in education (Nakagawa, 2000, p. 71)", this sort of education is not especially new, but has existed across all ages and cultures throughout the world. For example, Ron Miller (1990/1992/1997) shows that such historically prominent educators in Western cultures, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (pp. 92-94), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (pp. 94-99), and Friedrich Froebel (pp. 99-101), the American Transcendentalists Ralph

Waldo Emerson (101-109), Henry David Thoreau (pp. 109-111), A. Bronson Alcott (pp. 111-118), and Francis W. Parker (118-124), the founder of progressive education John Dewey (pp. 125-152), and pioneers that found a original educational theory and practice Maria Montessori (pp. 158-167) and Rudolf Steiner (pp. 167-176), can be regarded as holistic educators. In general, all of them attempted to understand learning for human growth as the art of cultivating a human being comprehensively, attending to our moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 92). Likewise, the traditional ways of education in other-than-Western cultures, such as indigenous education and learning practices in the East, are also recognized as holistic-oriented education (Cajete, 1993; Nakagawa, 2000; Norberg-Hodge, 1991).

According to Nakagawa (2000), "What differentiates contemporary holistic education of the past decade from the other forms of holistic education (p. 71)" is an emphasis on the understanding of 'interconnectedness of all beings'. This is because of the concept of 'wholeness' derived from 'holistic', which implies that "a whole (a phenomenon-in-context) is always greater (more complex, more integrated, more meaningful) than the sum of its parts (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 81)," as the well-known adage says. This sense of wholeness further means that "[n]othing is whole in isolation (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, p. 81)"—another way of affirming 'interconnectedness' among all events and entities in the universe. Consequently, the notion of 'interconnectedness' can be identified as a organic and dynamic view in mutual relationships among all entities and events (Jungerman, 2000, pp. xiii-xv). Moreover, this sense of connectedness among all can be often rephrased as the idea of 'wholeness' or "integrated whole" (Capra, 1996, p. 6), as I mentioned above.

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Contemporary holistic education emphasizes this understanding of the idea of interconnectedness of all beings, or wholeness, as having fundamental importance (Nakagawa, p. 72). On this point, Ron Miller (1990/1992/1997) suggests, "A holistic perspective is rooted in an epistemology of wholeness, context, and interconnectedness" (p. 81). As described before, how we identify discrete individuals in such a sense of wholeness where everything is interconnected is similar to how we recognize a part connected to a whole, e.g. nose connected to the face. The emphasis on this holistic view in education also can be supported by John P. Miller's observation (1988/1996) that "[h]olistic education … involves exploring and making connection. It attempts to move away from fragmentation to connectedness" (p. 8).

Based upon the idea that "all aspects of human life are fundamentally interconnected," Ron Miller (1990/1992/1997) further states that holistic education "must respect the dynamic and mutually supporting relationships between intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic/creative, and spiritual qualities of every person" (p. 219), seeing each human as "a complex existential entity made up of many, many different layers of meaning" (Miller, R. 1999, p. 193). For holistic ways of learning, hence, each person is regarded as an indispensable entity that holds individuals' unique talent and value, rather than defining human possibilities narrowly (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, pp. 195-209). That is to say, each person's abilities should be deemed much more complex than mechanical measures of test and standardization, while being considered to be much more than merely labor, as in a mechanical part, to build up national strength (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, pp. 211-218). Therefore, such a comprehensive view of learning and practice cannot, or should not, be "reduced to any

single technique" or curriculum (Miller, R. 1994, p. 196). Rather its learning process "can

be applied in diverse ways" (Miller, 1992, 21), which embrace the understanding of

reverence for life, ecological sensibility, human spirituality, and global concern (Miller,

1991a, p. 2).

The afore-mentioned holistic conception of human learning and development

could be further understood from the following account of 'holism' proposed in "The

Chicago Statement on Education," issued by Gang, Clark, Ron Miller and associates in

1990:

> Holism emphasizes the challenge of creating a sustainable, just, and peaceful
> society in harmony with the Earth and its life. It involves an ecological
> sensitivity–a deep respect for both indigenous and modern cultures as well as the
> diversity of life forms on the planet.
> Holism seeks to expand the way we look at ourselves and our relationship to the
> world by celebrating our innate human potentials—the intuitive, emotional,
> physical, imaginative, and creative as well as the rational, logical, and verbal.
> (Published in *Holistic Education Review*, 3(4), Winter, 1990, p. 65)

This idea of 'holism' attends to both cultivations–personal ("ourselves") and social ("our

relationship to the world"), and their integration. More precisely, holistic education

attempts to build a better-oriented society/world—"the challenge of creating a sustainable,

just, and peaceful society," through ecological balance. The ecological balance indicates

"harmony with the Earth and its life," meaning that "a deep respect for both indigenous

and modern cultures as well as the diversity of life forms on the planet." This social

transformation should be brought about by a personal transformation through seeking

"our innate human potentials—the intuitive, emotional, physical, imaginative, and

creative as well as the rational, logical, and verbal." This pursuit of one's life value in the

all-inclusive orientation described could be regarded as a lifelong learning/education in

itself by going through this holistic learning process about oneself, related events, and the world.

As the idea of "ecological sensibility" is mentioned in the previous quotation of 'holism', holistic thinking especially emphasizes ecological perspectives as having fundamental significance; therefore, contemporary holistic education essentially embraces such ecologically-oriented thoughts, learning, and practices as the harmonious relationship with the natural world/Earth and all of her forms, based on the understanding of the reality of interconnectedness of all beings. Hutchison (1998) indicates this point that "the holistic philosophy would seem to forward an *ecologically sensitive view of the education process*" (p. 52; emphasis added). Likewise, this ecological point of view can be also observed in the notion of voluntary simplicity at the core, as we have seen, that emphasizes our living lighter on Earth—namely, living with less stress and in harmony with nature. Besides, Ron Miller (1990/1992/1997) observes that the "underlying belief" in holistic education is that "human existence is delicately cradled in the womb of nature and ultimately depends upon intricate, often unconsciousness and nonrational connections to the natural world for physical, psychological, and spiritual nourishment" (pp. 76-77). John Miller (1988/1996) presents a similar idea at the very beginning of his book *The Holistic Curriculum* in the following way:

> Holistic education attempts to bring education into alignment with the fundamental realities of nature. Nature at its core is interrelated and dynamic. We see this dynamism and connectedness in the atom, organic systems, the biosphere, and the universe itself. (p. 1)

Ron Miller and John Miller both bring up the reality of our intimate connection to the natural world (or the Earth), human connectedness with nature, as the basis on holistic

education. In this regard, Nakagawa points out, "The term 'holistic' is often interchangeably used with 'ecological'" (p. 76). This is what Nakagawa mentions that "a large part of holistic education can be seen as *ecological holistic education* [eco-holistic education]" (p. 76), as the integration of two educations.

For such an ecologically-oriented learning that voluntary simplicity also stresses, there has been indeed an independent field of educational theory and practice called 'ecological education' with emphasis on the sense of interconnectedness of all beings.

7.4.2 Ecological Education: Becoming Eco-literate

Since Orr (1992 and 1994) proposed the idea of "ecological literacy" in the early 1990s, some educational scholars, who consider the need for a cultural change toward more ecologically sustainable living, have selectively used the term and notion of 'ecological' education (Bowers, 1993, 1995, and 2001; Hautecoueur, 2002; Smith & Williams). Such ecological educators (including myself) see the current social difficulties and their fundamental causes never as superficial problems that could be fixed by minor technological or political adjustments, but as the more profound problems of human thought and action that have created them. Based on this view, they think that it is necessary for a social change toward more stable ways of living in harmony with nature or the Earth and that education has a vital role to play in the cultural transformation.

Ecological education, as well as holistic education, emphasizes the understanding of interrelationships among all (or more specifically, human connectedness with nature/Earth), as having fundamental importance. Smith and Williams (1999) insist

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that: "[E]cological education connotes an emphasis on the inescapable embeddedness of human beings in natural systems" (p. 3). However, they do not mean by "inescapable embeddedness" that there are only causal deterministic relationships between human beings and nature. Rather, Smith and Williams recognize that ecological education requires seeing humans as "place-based creatures as much as the animals," and it requires viewing cultures as a "response to the demands and opportunities" of particular places in which we live (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 3). The response of various cultures to ecosystems is evident in the particular technologies, dwellings, economic practices, cooking, and clothing which are closely connected with natural capacities available in particular places. In addition, spiritual, religious and moral systems, as well as languages and stories, arise from intimate connections to local places that are not reducible to simple cause-effect mechanics (Kroeber, 1939; Basso, 1990).

Ecological education is well captured by Orr's (1992) notion of "ecological literacy" for sustainable living (pp. 86-95). According to Orr, "knowing, caring, and practical competence constitutes the basis of ecological literacy" based on "a broad understanding of how people and societies relate to each other and to natural systems, and how they might do so sustainably" (p. 92). That is, ecologically literate people can have "the knowledge necessary to comprehend interrelatedness" between humans and nature, and "an attitude of care." Furthermore, such people can also have "practical competence" to put ecological knowledge and sense of care into action needed for ecological and cultural sustainability (p. 92). Orr emphasizes that, for people to become ecologically literate, they need to ultimately master practices through their acquired knowledge.

Capra's (1996) following observation recognizes the same point:

> For this task [building and nurturing sustainable communities] we can learn valuable lessons from the study of ecosystems . . . To understand these lessons, we need to learn the basic principles of ecology. We need to become, as it were, ecologically literate. Being ecologically literate, or "ecoliterate," means understanding the principles of organization of ecological communities (ecosystems) and using those principles for creating sustainable human communities. (p. 297)

In other words, ecological education enables students to be ecologically literate which means being capable of transforming knowledge about principles at work in organizing natural systems into practices needed to build human communities that are sustainable in balance with these same natural and cultural systems. Ecological education thereby reflects the Whiteheadian concept of interconnectedness in terms of human relatedness with nature/Earth by situating human beings in a context where our own well-being is dependent on living harmoniously with the rhythms of nature/Earth. This concept of human relatedness with nature/Earth stands in contrast to the concept of nature as a set of phenomena separate from human beings and to be manipulated like parts of a machine.

The term 'ecology' (initially 'oecology') was coined by the German biologist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel in 1866 (Fox, 1990, p. 31), and is derived from the Greek 'oikos', which refers "originally to the family household and its daily operations and maintenance" (Worster, 1977, p. 192). Appling this image of "family" and "household" (home) to the entire planet refers to the image of an intimate kinship, among all entities as 'one family' on planet Earth, as the 'entire home'. Then the image of "daily operations and maintenance" implies deliberate care for every entity as family, and treating Earth as home to sustain our living in everyday practice. In other words, all entities are interdependent on and interrelated to one another in the same living place even though different kinds of community exist (including communities of animals, trees, rocks, and

humans) and its importance of sustainable-oriented action and livelihood. Ecology is based on "principles of unity in diversity, spontaneity, and the nonhierarchical nature" (Bookchin, 1985, p. 62). Within this view of ecology, ecosystems are "ecological communities," defined as "sustainable communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms," namely, all entities on this planet Earth (Capra, 1996, p. 297). "The principles of organization of ecological communities" refers to ecological knowledge as nature's laws underlying the ecosystems that are formed by interrelationships among each community on this planet. In this context, I assume that ecological knowledge is not merely limited to the understanding of relationships among human and other-than human beings; moreover, it also involves the mutual relationships among people themselves and among their life activities—e.g., relationships among any cultural communities (nation, religion, race, ethnic group, sexuality, etc.) or among their social activities (political, economic, education, welfare, healthcare, art, etc.).

Consequently, ecological education aims at enabling students to be "ecoliterate," or capable of transforming idea/knowledge into everyday practices that are needed to create ecologically and culturally sustainable communities on Earth. That is to say, in order to build more secure and better quality of living in both ecological and cultural terms, ecological education challenges students to take everyday action to make it on the basis of an understanding of the reality of interconnectedness among all. Consequently, ecological education can be largely regarded as sustainability-oriented learning and practiced in some concrete ways—put differently, 'sustainability education'.

In this context, the ecological education as a learning process of sustainability requires more comprehensive and multiple understanding to humans and the world based

on the idea of interconnectedness of all beings. This 'holistic' approach in ecological education shows many links to holistic education at its core, which looks like two sides of the same coin—i.e., ecological education with the holistic discourse or holistic education with ecological sensibility. Next, I would like to consider important implications for sustainability education, which emerges from what holistic education and ecological education both emphasize.

7.4.3 Sustainability Education toward Integration of Knowledge and Practice: Insights from Holistic and Ecological Education

Some equivalent educational values can be recognized in both contemporary holistic and ecological education. What their pedagogies have in common is the underlying views of (1) the interconnectedness of all beings (or wholeness), as the counter-perspective to the scientific materialistic worldview dominant in the modern world, which involves an all-inclusive scope of understanding of ourselves (humans), nature or the Earth and all her forms, and our life world, and (2) personal and social cultivation in the more comprehensive context with emphasis on ecological sensibility. Namely, both educations emphasize all beings are interrelated to one another, seeing the world as an integrated whole, as of fundamental importance. And based on this organic worldview, their educations recognize the importance for human learning to create individual enhancement inclusively—physically, psychologically, emotionally, morally, spiritually, and create a better community/society of which one is an integrated part. Their educators believe that this educational practice could play a vital role in transforming contemporary society towards a more culturally and ecologically stable way of living.

If there were any differences, they seem to be due to what is especially emphasized in every educational context; as both sides of a coin show a different pattern, but they basically hold the same value in one form. In my understanding, contemporary holistic education emphasizes the aspect of developing individuals' innate potentials, seeing every person as "unique and valuable," which means that "[e]ach individual is inherently creative, has unique physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs and abilities, and possesses an unlimited capacity to learn [a part of the No. II statement in ten principles of holistic education, proclaimed in *Education 2000: A Holistic Perspective*[73]]" (GATE, 1991).[74] The holistic way of learning requires the multiple human development toward "the intuitive, emotional, physical, imaginative, and creative, as well as the rational, logical, and verbal" abilities (*Holistic Education Review* 3(4), p. 65), recognizing that "each academic discipline provides merely a different perspective on the rich, complex, integrated phenomenon of life [a part of the No. III statement in ten principles, proclaimed in *Education 2000*]" (GATE, 1991). On the contrary, ecological education addresses the need to enable learners to integrate acquired knowledge or idea with everyday practice and be an active agent in creating sustainable living in one's life context. The concept of sustainability involves the wider scope of human activities, not only ecological matters in human-nature relationships but also all-inclusive cultural matters, although ecological education especially emphasizes the understanding of ecological sensibility as the harmonious relationship between people and nature/the

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[73] *Education 2000: A Holistic Perspective*, a position paper issued in 1991 by GATE [the Global Alliance for Transforming Education; also see below] members, proclaims ten principles of holistic education (Miller, R., 1990/1992/1997, pp. 205-207). For details on the entire statements, see the Appendix.
[74] GATE – the Global Alliance for Transforming Education, was founded in 1991 after the Chicago conference, the first major academic meeting of holistic education, where eighty holistic educators, including Philip Gang and Ron Miller I quote in this paper, gathered at a retreat center near Chicago in June 1990.

Earth.

What, then, is an important notion of eco-holistic education, contemporary holistic education reflected by ecological education? I believe that the holistic development of "innate human potentials" should be integrated with concretely building better-oriented community or society in ecological balance with nature/the Earth and all of her forms. What I mean by 'better-oriented' is culturally and ecologically secure, stable, peaceful, and democratic ways of living in harmony with others, whether human or non-human beings. That is, such a notion of sustainability involves not only ecological concerns in human-nature relationships, but also cultural matters like justice and welfare (Sachs, 1998, p. ix). Voluntary simplicity also holds the view that an ecological and culturally sustainable world could be led by the integration of personal and societal cultivation, as we have seen. This is a human challenge to create holistic well-being for all events and entities interconnected in context to this planet in the twenty first century.

More precisely, the comprehensive understanding of sustainability refers to the idea that sustainability requires that every facet of human life, including politics, economy, lifestyle, education, thought, and action, uphold honorable methods of satisfying our needs, while achieving our aspirations. The goal is to ensure a better quality of life for all, in a just, equitable, and peaceful manner, without reducing the opportunities of current and future generations, whilst living within the ecological limits, or productive capacity of mother Earth (Capra, 1996, p. 297; Agyeman, et al., 2003, p. 5). This understanding of sustainability involves dimensions of sustaining and further evolving better living conditions for all human beings or otherwise—the enhancement of political, economic, cultural, and ecological stability (e.g., the regard of social justice—

non-discrimination, non-violence, anti-starvation and—poverty, global equity; accessible public service—medical care, education, park, communal facilities; domestic and international security management; respect for ethical and biological diversity and its prosperity; (natural) resource and energy maintenance and its renewable use; etc.). This meaning of sustainability must not be reduced to only one or two agendas, such as matters of economic development or environmental preservation/conservation alone for only human ends (Shiva, 1992), but be appreciated from diversified and reciprocal viewpoints. Several statements of holistic education declared in *Education 2000* show this point:

> [VII]. We call for a truly democratic model of education to empower all citizens to participate in meaningful ways in the life of the community and the planet.

> [VIII]. We believe that each of us – whether we realize it or not – is a global citizen…. We believe that it is time for education to nurture an appreciation for the magnificent diversity of human experience….

> [IX]. We believe that education must spring organically from a profound reverence for life in all its forms. We must rekindle a relationship between the human and natural world that is nurturing, not exploitive. (GATE, 1991)

Based on the idea of interconnectedness, eco-holistic education should acknowledge this all-inclusive understanding of sustainability and attempt to create its way of living through the learning process to be able "to nourish the inherent possibilities of human development," which holistic educators "assert that the primary—indeed the fundamental—purpose of education [a part of the No. I statement in ten principles of holistic education, proclaimed by *Education 2000*]" (GATE, 1991). This is an educational attempt of social transformation toward more sustainable ways emerging from personal creative process of life in the holistic way.

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This type of sustainability-oriented learning with personal cultivation requires concrete action or everyday practice to make sustainable living possible, which ecological education highly mentions as one of the important goals. Therefore, ecological or holistic knowledge and idea through the learning process should be put into everyday practice that is necessary for 'concretely' building sustainable community/society where one lives. This view is also emphasized in the idea of *living-learning* for voluntary simplicity as sustainability education, as described before.

In summary, acquired knowledge or ideas to effect change, must be applied in actions oriented toward creating a sustainable way of life in ecological harmony. To embody such sustainable society in a concrete sense, needless to say, this transformation of knowledge into practice is indispensable—never separation between two aspects, which I often have so far emphasized as an indispensable regard, one of four essentials—the fourth point, in sustainability education (illustrated in chapter three).

We have provided an overview of holistic education and ecological education, as general educational theories that appear to involve a sense of *living-learning* for simplicity as sustainability education. The discussion of voluntary simplicity has shown that sustainability education could, and should, be embedded in every dimension of the educational process. In what follows I will argue, based on my experience, that: (1) a comprehensive approach to sustainability education would be strengthened by providing students firsthand experience in working toward simplicity; and (2) that programs in the tradition of outdoor education are perfectly suited to this task.

7.5 New Approach to Educating for Voluntary Simplicity: Outdoor-based Learning through Human Feelings as the core of Concrete Experience

In addition to the general or fundamental scheme of the learning for simplicity based on the '*living-learning*' process, a specific aspect of educational theory and practice for voluntary simplicity is also briefly proposed and developed in this study. This might be interpreted as that in which learners can effectively understand the values of simper living and come to choose its lifestyle. In this respect, it seems to me that outdoor-environmental education**,** or simply outdoor education, programs provide the ideal opportunity to embrace the idea of voluntary simplicity (Warren, et al., 1995). This is because outdoor education involves not only the intellect, but also the emotions and the five senses. Another point can be made though drawing the analogy between outdoor programs and the camps that sports teams have to effectively develop their performance by intensive training before the important game or regular season. In the former as well as the latter case we can expect that lodging and working together will help people to focus more on their common goals. The case for outdoor education can also take inspiration from Henry David Thoreau's account in *Walden* (1845/1971 of how to put simplicity to practice in the heart of nature's bountiful blessing, the woods. Thoreau's attentive engagement with his natural environment resembles outdoor-based experiential learning—a process of recognizing, knowing, understanding, and practicing, although there is a marked difference between solitary and communal living. Outdoor-based education conducted in the communal life context has more possibilities for learners to gain experience with various social skills—such as nurturing cooperative and caring relationships with others—whether with humans or otherwise and with the nature around

oneself.

7.5.1 Outdoor/Outdoor-environmental Education

The use of nature in education through direct experience, has a long history. Thames, an Egyptian king about 3000 B.C. recognized that true memory and true learning occurred not by writing and reading alone, but also through experimentation and experience (Eby & Arrowood, 1934). Also, to calculate height from shadows and distance by triangulation, the Greek scientist Thales (624 B.C.-546 B.C.), the first person to apply geometric principles to practical use, was teaching his pupils by using the same principles and techniques in various hands-on learning activities in the outdoors (Ford, 1981, 3). Plato (424/423 B.C.-348/347 B.C.), Socrates' pupil as well as Aristotle' teacher, put high value on outdoor experiences for developing healthy souls in healthy bodies, seeing the end of physical education, not primarily as enhancing physical skills, but as involving a higher educational value: "[t]he moral value of exercises and sports far outweighed the physical value" (1920, p. 6). Since these ancient times, "there have been advocates of using the natural environment as a means for teaching materials relevant to all other facets of education" throughout history (Ford, 1981, p. 3). More recently, especially, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), a French philosopher as well as composer, and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a Swiss pedagogue, refer to the importance of learning in the natural environment (Ford, 1981, p. 3). For example, Rousseau (2006), in his famous work entitled *Emile*, wrote, "Instead of keeping him mewed up in a stuffy room, take him out into a meadow every day; let him run about, let him struggle and fall again and again, the oftener the better; he will learn all the sooner to pick himself up" (p. 61),

"Give your scholar no verbal lessons; he should be taught by experience alone" (p. 80), "Teach your scholar to observe the phenomena of nature ; you will soon rouse his curiosity" (p. 183), "he who obeys his conscience is following nature and he need not fear that he will go astray" (p. 344), and so on. Also Rousseau encouraged teachers to use the "Socratic process – letting the learners answer questions by analysis, synthesis, and logical reasoning" with "discovery approach, a method used widely today" (Ford, 1981, p. 3). Similarly, Pestalozzi placed emphasis on learning more through one's hands-on experience in the out-of-doors than through lecture approach (Ford, 1981, p. 4).[75]

Today, outdoor education can be literally interpreted as "learning or teaching in the outdoors" (Ford, 1981, p. 2). In a broad sense, then, the term outdoor education is a collective term that means an education theory and practice through outdoor activities. It involves the broad range as well as various qualities of human activities as hands-on experience with all the senses. Namely, the activities are associated with physical, intellectual, mental, and artistic. Also they involve various levels of risk and skill—from low-risk to high-risk level and from more recreational to athletic level. The activities are held in all the land-sea-and-air environments—richer natural environments as out-of-doors (Tsukahara, 1993, pp. 165-166). Therefore, the phrase 'outdoor education' has been defined and used in many contexts (Priest, 1988a). However, its widely accepted traditional definition is provided by Donaldson and Donaldson (1958), which is one that "outdoor education is education *in*, *about*, and *for* the outdoors (p. 17)," inspired by L. B. Sharp's dictum, "Those things which can best be taught outdoors should there be taught" (quoted in Donaldson & Donaldson, 1958, p. 17). Education 'in' the outdoors refers to the

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[75] These historical points seem to be very interesting, but I do not concerned here with the details because to argue the topic would carry us too far away from the main subject of this section within the context of purpose of this study.

location and process, 'about' to the topic or subject matter (natural resources, outdoor skills, other knowledge related to the natural world/the Earth and entities living in her etc.), and 'for' to the purpose, which involves broader meanings—"perpetuation of the outdoors by our conscious effort to understand and to use it wisely" (e.g., "For *use* of the outdoors – wise use for leisure pursuits, wise use for economic purposes," and "For *understanding* the outdoors—understanding the relationship of natural resources to world survival, understanding the importance of a sense of stewardship, understanding our historical and cultural heritage, understanding the aesthetics of the outdoors") (Ford, 1981, p. 12).

Until today, the interpretation of outdoor education has taken up various topics in which its education has not treated as one large educational framework. Rather, outdoor education has been broken into other related study arenas, each of which has the slightly different specific goal and emphasis in the philosophy and method. For example, there are such closely related education and study fields as environmental education, adventure education, challenge education, experiential education, and expeditionary education, outdoor pursuits/recreation, and eco-tourism (Lappin, 2000), whose consensus about the meaning of these fields may vary among cultures. Therefore, the meaning of outdoor education has been relative to time and place (Brookes, 1991). Research studies on outdoor education have been conducted in several (overlapping) contexts, such as personal/social development, recreational, environmental, risk management, and therapeutic, for over fifty years (Ewert, 1983).

In this way, the relative emphasis of the meanings varies from one program to another; however, some typical goals of outdoor education are often understood in the

following three regards—(1) self, (2) others (around oneself—other people, non-human forms, communities/societies/cultures, etc.), and (3) nature /the Earth, which derives from the multiple interpretations of outdoor education (D. Hammerman, W. Hammerman, & E. Hammerman, 1985; Outdoor Edinburgh, n.d.; Priest & Gass, 1997; Smith, Roland, Havens, & Hoyt, 1992). In general, first, the cultivation of 'self' aspect involves developing matters of outdoor survival skills, problem-solving skills, overcoming adversity, reducing recidivism, physical and mental health promotion/healing, and so on (Ewert, 1989, p. 49; Priest, 1990, p. 114). Second, the enhancement of 'others' aspect further holds two schemes; (a) the matter of other individual entities around the self (whether humans or non-humans)—such as developing leadership skills, teamwork, friendship, sense of respecting for others, etc., and (b) the matter of collective publicness of which one is a part—such as creating a secure group/community/communal living in a peaceful and cooperative manner (Ewert, 1989, p. 49; Priest, 1986, p. 13). Third, the enhancement of 'nature/the Earth' aspect refers to nurturing deeper understandings of natural environments, intimate and harmonious relationship with the natural world, the sense of preservation/conservation, responsibility and care for nature (Duenkel 1994; Ford, 1981, p. 18; Priest, 1986, p. 13). Each outdoor education program should aim towards one, or more, of these goals. There seem to be some general tendencies that the first two aspects (self, others) are often seen as the major purpose in adventure, challenging, and expeditionary education as well as outdoor pursuits/recreation, and that the last regard (nature/the Earth) can be found in the aim of environmental education and eco-tourism.

With these basic ideas of outdoor education in mind, the following observations

derived from my teaching experience is intended to illustrate its educational potentials, and also to articulate its connection to voluntary simplicity. In doing so I would like to provide some new cultural values involved in outdoor educational programs in terms of promoting voluntary simplicity as itself *living-learning* process.

7.5.2 Mutual Link between Outdoor Education and Voluntary Simplicity

Experiencing the learning process through outdoor-environmental education programs over several days in nature is often the perfect occasion to comprehend the value of voluntary simplicity. From my personal experience as an outdoor and eco-holistic educator for more than fifteen years, outdoor education involves living with other companions in a close-knit relationship with the natural environment epitomizing a simpler way of life within a microcosm of the larger community. People can acquire several positive tendencies as a result, although the effectiveness of such activities is no guaranteed.

First, living in close contact with the natural environment through concrete experience raises people's awareness of the impact they have on other life forms and the regional ecosystem. This promotes ecologically sensitive behavior, so that they do not damage ecological capacity, crops and other resources, that sustain them. This idea or way of action is often called 'minimum impact', or 'leave no trace' and is an important common sense maxim in the context of outdoor-environmental education and outdoor pursuits or recreation (Cunningham, 1971; Lisowski & Disinger, 1991; Dresner, & Gill, 1994; Higgins, 1996; Mittelstaedt, Sanker, & VanderVeer, 1999; Will, 1997). This perspective of minimum impact is similar to one of simplicity's idea of living

lightly—with less stress/damage—in nature/the Earth.

Besides, this sense of living closer to nature implies making do with less and provides people with many opportunities for being active and creative in various capacities. Of course, the simplicity of a more natural environment means living with less convenience, automation and technology, traffic, electric devices, stores, and electric power, than that of city life. However, this does not equate to deficiency; instead, it presents people with a positive opportunity to make things themselves and to overcome adversity, which teaches them how to live effectively when certain necessities are in short supply in life. If nothing else, people realize their potential to create something indispensable to their very survival. This positive orientation also can be found and stressed in simplicity's feature of the art of living. Also, the view corresponds with the fundamental trend of creativeness inherent in the way of 'living more voluntarily' as indispensable one wings of voluntary simplicity.

Second, the benefit (being active and creative) also tends to enable one to establish more intimate, beneficial communication skills (teamwork/group-work development) that foster more responsible, cooperative, equal, and peaceful relationships with others (Mitten, 1995; Kerr & Gass, 1995; Kate, 1995; Gass, 1995; Boss, 1999). In more natural environments where there are much opportunities for people to make or build something and to contrive to cope with facing issues with the minimum impact principle, the sense of cooperation and thoughtfulness in being responsible, caring, and respecting for one another become essential to survival as well as improving the standard of living for all with less conflict (Fouhey & Saltmarsh, 1996). This is a significant factor in stabilizing the entire ecological community, including the natural system of the region.

Therefore, in the small communal lifestyle one is encouraged to live in harmony with others, including other organisms, so the entire community can enjoy the same level of prosperity. Within this context, in order to ensure harmonious relationships, individuals are also encouraged to share and help one another in a cooperative manner. This way of building as well as maintaining peaceful relationships and conditions in the entire community as collective society is the same as harmonious and cooperative ideas and practices that drive from another wing of voluntary simplicity—living more simply: that is to say, the simpler way of living involves the understanding of a sense of helping, sharing with, and respecting for one another, whose positive and responsible perspectives derive from the idea and practice of less stress/damage to others as well as nature supporting oneself and other people and life-forms (Elgin, 1993, pp. 32-35 and 143-157).

Last, this outer, social kinship among entities, humans or otherwise, often becomes the means through which people tend to fully examine themselves, further enabling the enrichment of their inner self (Brown, 1983; Stringer & McAvoy, 1995; Gass, 1995; Hatiie, Marsh, Neil1, & Richards, 1997; Neill & Richards, 1998; Willson & Lipsey, 2000; Russell & Moore, 2002). This third view harkens to Thoreau's (1845/1971) two-year experience of living alone at Walden Pond, where he built a cabin and made note of his ideas and activities in a journal; then, he left a famous dictum saying his pursuit of solitude as a opportunity "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life" (p. 90). Indeed, many outdoor education programs strongly emphasize personal growth based on the inner enrichment (e.g., self-understanding, awareness of self/others/nature, private dream/vision quest, sense of wonder/awe, contemplation, self-confidence, etc.) that might be reflected by the various activities through contacting

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with others and the local nature (Henley, 1989, pp. 71-86; Herman, Passineau, Schimpf, & Treuer, 1991, pp. 91-99). To facilitate the effective growth of individual participants, therefore, some sub-programs are constructed to include opportunities for them to be alone and look inwardly. There would be daily activities (e.g., everyday writing journal at the very end of a day, etc.) (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, & Ewert, 2006, p. 99; Herman, et al., 1991, p. 96) and independent activity (e.g., so-called 'Solo'[76]) (Henley, 1989, pp. 81-86; Gilbertoson, et al., 2006, pp. 144-145).

Likewise, voluntary simplicity as itself *living-learning* also emphasizes this aspect of personal cultivation with inner development based on everyday life experience. By nature, as voluntary simplicity implies an understanding of lifestyle in "outwardly more simple and *inwardly more rich* (Elgin, 1993, p. 25; emphasis added)," nurturing oneself based on our inner enrichment through simplicity living is one of two cornerstones inherent in voluntary simplicity as often described. Therefore, the regard of cultivating inner self as the basis for the entire humanity constantly underlies the process of learning for simplicity based on one's life experience. In this connection, there is a similarity between outdoor education and voluntary simplicity; outdoor education practices could be an effective occasion to engender understanding of voluntary simplicity through examining oneself based on the affirmative experience with communal living in bountiful nature—building closer as well as better relationship with others and the regional nature, which is the basis of cultivating the inner aspect and also one's whole humanity. The slower pace of a lifestyle derived from living in nature's tranquil rhythm also contributes to give people elbowroom to experience various things and reflect on

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[76] solo – each individual participant alone spend for a given period of time—varied from one program intention to another—at the favorite, or designate, place with nature, such as woods, waterside—river, lake, sea, field, bush, and so on.

themselves.

All things considered, practicing outdoor-environmental education based on experiential learning processes within the engagement of living a simpler way in nature has the potential for allowing students to become aware of, think about, and practice toward ecologically and culturally sustainable ways of life, based on one's creative and harmonious action toward others and the regional ecosystem of the community. In this respect, the link between these educational practices and voluntary simplicity as the *living-learning* process becomes obvious. For this reason, outdoor-based education has potential to be an effective means of developing the practice of voluntary simplicity as it applies to sustainability education. It could be replaced with another term—'learning for simplicity based on one's concrete life experience' or '*living-learning* for sustainability based on voluntary simplicity'.

In the following sub-section I would like to briefly add one more important implication—a concept of '*Friluftsliv*', which is reflected by the relationship among simplicity, sustainability education, and outdoor-based experiential learning.

7.5.3 'Friluftsliv': An Implication as Future Study on Simplicity, Outdoor Education, Sustainability

'*Friluftsliv*', coined by Henrik Ibsen (Gelter, 2000, pp. 77-80), [77] is a Norwegian, as well as Scandinavian, [78] traditional philosophy that literally means

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[77] Henrik Ibsen (1826-1906), major Norwegian playwright, first used the word to print with the line in a 1859 poem, "And friluftsliv for my thoughts" (quoted in Reed & Rothenberg, 1993, p. 12).

[78] Among the Scandinavian countries, "Norway is probably the one where friluftsliv has the strongest standing in terms of culture and daily life style" (Björn, 2006). Likewise, Dr. Gelter (2000) writes, "the use of a special word for it [*friluftsliv* as a specific philosophy], is unique for

"free-air-life" (Faarlund, Dahle, & Jensen, 2007, p. 394). It has been generally translated as "open air life" and "nature life/life in nature" (Naess, 1989, p. 178; also see Reed & Rothernberg, 1987) based on the idea that "*Nature is the Home of Culture*", which further leads to another important understanding that "*Friluftsliv is a Way Home*" (Farrlund, et al., p. 393). In this sense, *Friluftsliv* as "a way home to open air (Faarlund, 1993, p. 157)" is a "living tradition for recreating nature-consonant lifestyle" in especially the Norwegian context (Faarlund, 1993, p. 164). Thus, it can be further understood as a "value-based life philosophy (Gurholt, forthcoming/2008)"[79] that implies the lived experience of simpler life in "not an escape from urban pressures, but surfacing of a free, nature-inspired lifestyle, not an escape departing from a village/city but an actual arrival to authentic home" (Henderson, 1997, p. 3). This view of *friluftsliv* related to how-to live is intimately associated with "teaching practical skills, craft, and lore of living in and with nature, which "avails oneself to seeking meaning and direction from nature" (Henderson, 1997, p. 3). Therefore, this *friluftsliv* concept as the lived experience of nature life has been interpreted as a Norwegian tradition of outdoor pursuits, recreation and their education practices—so-called outdoor education (Henderson, 1997, p. 3).

However, what is more important to recognize in *friluftsliv* philosophy can be found in a certain difference from the general understanding of outdoor education as well as activities including a sports, recreation, and tourism that are often closely associated with lucrative and commercial ends (Farrlund, 1993, p. 164). For example, Potter and

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Scandinavia, especially in Norway and Sweden. . . . In Norway *friluftsliv* is an important part of most people's lives and a way of living close to the beautiful landscapes of the country. In Sweden and Denmark the word recently has obtained a more technical meaning in outdoor activities and has lost its philosophical dimension" (p. 79).

[79] The article is retrieved October 24, 2008 from
http://www.uni-marburg.de/fb21/ifsm/aep/downloads/cultdimension07/Pedersen07b.

Henderson (2004) points out that the aforementioned 'nature as home' metaphor seen in *friluftsliv* concept is a "far cry from the 'nature as machine' or 'nature as challenge arena'—as 'sparring partner', that can dominate adventure education" (p. 75). Likewise, *Friluftsliv* as a value-based life philosophy with ecologically harmonious practice is "contrast to the more commercial, skill and risk oriented outdoor education of English speaking cultures" (Gurholt, forthcoming/2008; also see, Faarlund, et al., p. 395). Therefore, while *friluftsliv* can be regarded generally as an "outdoor educational/recreational movement" in today's context, it should involve a strong sense of "shift from a vacationer's superficial sensibilities" (Henderson, 1997, p. 3) and instead, of a development of "ability to experience deep rich and varied interaction in and with nature" (Naess, 1989, p. 179). Moreover, a leading proponent of this philosophy, Nils Faarlund (1993), adds the social concern for which *friluftsliv* is "not meant to shore up our modern way of [individuals'] life but to help us – as individuals and as a society – *out* of it" in which the individual can be understood as "transformational tool" to create "an ecologically sensitive society" (p. 164). *Friluftsliv* and voluntary simplicity share certain similarities in that both emphasize this integration of social and personal development—i.e., the sense of making society better based on personal growth.

Finally, a further important point I find is that teaching/learning of this idea of *friluftsliv* is a required course in compulsory education today; therefore, university students who want be a physical education teacher have to complete one-year *Friluftsliv* program in Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education (Maeda, 2000, pp. 85-86). This fact implies that it is generally embedded in basic curriculum in public schooling. This ongoing education practice serves as a useful reference to my focus in

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this study—'learning for sustainability', or 'education for simplicity' as its concrete educational method, which attaches weight to experiential learning reflected by everyday life—*living-learning*, and applying it into every educational occasion in public schools, colleges/universities, and teacher training. In the future I might go on to an even more detailed consideration of the concept of *friluftsliv* and its significant application to voluntary simplicity and its educational practices—such as, development of curriculums in formal schoolings, informal programs such as study circles, workshops, intensive courses, and education for leadership.

To sum up, teaching and learning for voluntary simplicity could be a more practical and helpful way (viewpoint, method, etc.) to effectively implement sustainability education through '*living-learning*. More precisely speaking, teaching and learning for voluntary simplicity means taking steps in one's daily life toward ecologically and culturally sustainable ways of living in personal as well as social contexts. Therefore, the understanding of the notion of voluntary simplicity through learning and teaching processes might be identified as an important contribution to make sustainability-oriented living in the terms of both perspective and practice.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This study has undertaken to contribute toward a sound theoretical framework for educational initiatives that would enable us to transform our current consumer-oriented lifestyles into ways of life that are, not only ecologically and culturally sustainable, but also fulfilling and creative. More specifically, this study has elucidated how the theory and practice of voluntary simplicity as a way of life addresses the significant educational challenges involved in moving today's ecologically and culturally unsustainable world toward an improved condition of ecological balance and peaceful relationships. This has involved illustrating how, by integrating ideas and action, voluntary simplicity is a process of experiential learning about how to live well in harmony with others—people, other life-forms, society, nations, as well as the Earth as a whole.

The method of the study is primarily based on "*conception development*," a form of theoretical inquiry that generates new conceptual frameworks through the analysis, critique, extension and integration of existing theories and empirical research. As noted in the first chapter, the results of conceptual inquiry are defensible if the resulting theoretical framework improves upon its predecessors by being "potentially more fruitful in guiding our thinking about curricular research, policy, or program development" (Coombs and Daniels, 1999, p. 35) as well as being internally and externally coherent (Vokey, 2001). In my conclusion I will review the key contributions of this study to thinking about sustainability and sustainability education, acknowledge its limitations, and develop its implications for future research.

8.1 Review

(1)   The background of emerging notion of 'sustainability'

The notion of 'sustainability' has developed since 1970s in an environment marked by various serious social/cultural and environmental/ecological crises. All of these problems have occurred, not independently, but interdependently: ecological instability (depletion of resources, pollution, etc.) is connected to culturally-driven sustainable issues (e.g., poverty, hunger/famine, health, malnutrition, conflict, agriculture, and education) within a problematic context of the grotesque disparity between the rich and poor. Some poor nations are getting richer (e.g., China and India), but many are getting poorer. Even within the countries with declining poverty levels, the gap between the rich and poor has expanded (e.g., China and Mexico). This expanding gap is problematic because chronic poverty traps the poor in a vicious cycle of other chronic issues such as famine/hunger, malnutrition, health, conflict, inadequate education, and more.

One major reason for the widening gap is power and profit-driven neo-liberal economic globalization. If globalization was driven by a different set of priorities—such as sharing one's culture and wisdom with others to create something better for all—we might take effective steps toward solving problems. However, in reality, globalization has been chiefly promoted under the guise of 'global economy' based on the central goal of expanding worldwide market economies mostly by richer nations and transnational companies to get them much wealthier in gaining more profits across the Earth while ignoring the negative impacts on the poor. Many of the world's problems, then, can be

understood as being caused by—or, at least, directly related to—the tremendous inequalities, or unequal opportunities, between the haves and have-nots.

(2) Equality: A key-point to resolve world issues derived from the grotesque gap

To consider how we can improve the world in a sustainable manner, therefore, it is very important to focus on providing everyone with fair opportunities to meet their basic needs. To put it the other way around, paying initial attention to the matter of equity could become a first step in tackling the creation of a more sustainable world. In fact, certain statistical data shows that making good use of less than 1 percent of the income of the wealthiest nations each year, the worst effects of poverty could be highly reduced. Also, studies indicate the world produces enough food each year to feed all people on this planet if it were shared equally, which implies that the cause of hunger and malnutrition is not food shortages, but distribution challenges. Therefore, I join those who believe that public goods—nature's blessings, common material possessions, accessibility to public services and security, civil power, etc.—should be shared more equitably among all peoples and nations.

By meeting basic needs to provide distressed people with some peace of mind and hope for the future, we could start to build a more sustainable way of living. Redressing the widening economic disparity among people within and across nation states is therefore the very foundation of living in peace and security in a world that has less poverty, hunger, illness, and conflict.

(3) Toward more comprehensive understanding of sustainability

Taking all of the aforementioned viewpoints into consideration, the notion of *sustainability* should be understood comprehensively as dealing with every facet of human life, including politics, economy, lifestyle, education, thought, and action. Accordingly, to pursue sustainability is to seek a better quality of life for all, in a just, equitable, and peaceful manner, without reducing the opportunities of current and future generations, whilst living within the ecological limits, or productive capacity of mother Earth. This understanding of sustainability involves dimensions of sustaining and further evolving better living conditions for all human beings or otherwise. This meaning of sustainability must not be reduced to only one or two agendas, such as matters of economic development or environmental preservation/conservation alone for only human ends, but be appreciated from diversified and reciprocal viewpoints.

Just, equitable, and sustainable ways of life will not be achieved without many different forms of education. Today, educational theories and practices that attempt to create more culturally and ecologically sustainable ways of life are generally referred to as 'education for sustainability', or simply 'sustainability education'.

(4) The background of 'sustainability education'

The perspective of sustainability education reflects the history of sustainability idea in international works—such as the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the publication *Our Common Future* (*Brundtland Report*) by the Word Commission on Environment and Development (WCED; 1987), and the publication *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* by the World

Conservation (IUCN), the United Nations Environmental Programme, and the World Wide Found for Nature (WWF; 1991). The major observations of 'education for sustainable development', however, can be identified in 'Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21*' on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED; 1992). Their perspectives, then, have been expanded upon in the Work Program of the UN Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD), as provided in the reports of the main UN Conferences of the 1990's, such as in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD; 1994), Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), World Education Forum in Dakar (2000), and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit.

The most recent international effort to promote sustainability education is 'United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development' (2005-2014, UN-DESD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2002, which the UNESCO has promoted. The UN-DESD began on 1 January 2005 and will extend to the end of year 2014, whose core educational goal, in a large sense, is "to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 5).

(5) Four essentials in sustainability education

I have argued that, to achieve the goals of sustainability education, educational initiatives must have the following four characteristics. First, they must be based upon the holistic understanding of sustainability summarized above in which (1) the essential

meaning is maintaining sustenance—both nature's/earth's capacity and people's living which avoids the narrow market/economic development-oriented sustainability, and (2) sustainability is understood to have, not only ecological, but also social/cultural dimensions.

Second, sustainability education should be a way of teaching and learning that generates both a commitment to addressing inequity and concrete ideas on how to do so. This is because addressing the equity problem is the very first step toward resolving related issues such as poverty, famine/hunger, and illness; and thus is the cornerstone of ways of life that will improve the quality of life for all. In light of comprehending the issue of equal opportunity, we must fully acknowledge a fundamental reality that there is an ecological/physical limitation on this planet, never unlimited; indeed, the contemporary world population has over-consumed and over-used the earth's capacity by 40 percent already. Furthermore, this view of placing a ceiling to growth should be grounded in the idea of 'sufficiency', in reference to the perspective that 'enough is enough'. The notion of sufficiency involves not taking more of nature's capacities like energy or food than people need. This way of understanding can often be found in traditional societies based on the idea of interconnectedness—especially in this case, the view of human connectedness with nature, where people knew the limits to which nature could be used to satisfy their needs, using harvested foods and energy only when they needed them. They well understood that the notion of sufficiency, based on the limits of growth, was fundamental to sustaining their lives in practicing everyday in such a way. From a different perspective, this fact shows that the idea of human connectedness with nature is an important understanding as the basis for enabling people to recognize the

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notion of sufficiency based on limits of growth, and to sustain their own living and society. These two observations for sustainability education are the reflection of the aforementioned desirable concept of sustainability. The other two points (the third and fourth), then, are the implications that can be derived from the former two views.

Third, sustainability education whose aim is to embrace all dimensions of world events (natural, social, cultural, etc.) would be a process of learning for all aspects of life—in short, a sort of "lifelong" and "lifewide" learning process. Thus, sustainability education should not be limited to a particular program or organization, but rather should be integrated into all the possible spaces throughout a lifetime, whether formal or non-formal and informal including family, workplace, community, schools, and so forth. In formal schooling (primary, junior high, and high school in general), the curriculum of every subject should, to a certain degree, include sustainably-related topics. In terms of school education, this learning process tries to avoid the pitfalls of teaching sustainability as one more subject in an already dense curriculum, or relegating it to only the realm of environmental issues, where it becomes merely a transmission of abstract and technical data related to the natural environment. Regarding this, it is not always necessary to require a special subject or course of sustainability teaching and learning to the ongoing curriculum; instead, teachers or schools could attempt to integrate sustainably-related/-oriented topics into their language (oral, written) and materials within the context of their teaching such general subjects/classes as national language, arithmetic/mathematics, nature study, and social study, as much as possible when given a chance.

In line with these essential concepts, the fourth and most important aspect of

sustainability education is nurturing everyday sustainably-oriented 'action' at all levels (personal, local, regional, national, international). Put differently, sustainability education should enable learners to be 'sustainability-literate', which means being capable of transforming acquired knowledge about sustainability into everyday practices needed for creating ways of life in ecological and cultural harmony.

(6) The understanding of the idea of 'interconnectedness'/'wholeness' as the core factor to sustainability education

These four essential characteristics of sustainability education can be further developed by seeing 'interconnectedness', or 'wholeness' as their foundation. Sustainability education should help us understand and experience the organic idea of interconnectedness among all beings—the mutual relationships among all entities and events, which involves the important reality of human connectedness with nature. The notion of 'interconnectedness', or 'wholeness', refers to the fact that one is an integral part of a larger whole system such as nature, the earth, and a cultural group in which one is living; therefore, everything is influencing everything else in a way that one can never be separated from others and the larger system.

This organic view of interconnectedness, or wholeness, can be regarded as opposite to the dominant modernist worldview of so-called 'scientific materialism', or 'mechanistic worldview', which was inherited from seventeenth century science. This mechanistic worldview sees the entire universe as a giant machine (Vokey, 2001). Traditional cultures in which interconnectedness is a core belief have sustained ways of life for thousands of years. In contrast, the dominant modernist worldview based on

scientific materialism has not be able to achieve sustainability. Along with its benefits it has produced a range of negative outcome leaving humanity facing unsustainable conditions today. Throughout the entire process of learning and teaching, therefore, sustainability education respects traditional or indigenous wisdom as well as practice; and in particular indigenous forms of education that have made it possible for culturally and ecologically sustainable living over a long period. Accordingly, sustainability education especially stresses the deep understanding of human interconnectedness with the unique local ecosystem or bioregion.

(7)   Learning from the past – 'the failure of environmental education'

Despite their attempts over the past thirty-years, environmental education initiatives have not sufficiently enabled learners to understand important ecological and cultural issues enough to achieve a sustainable culture in ecological balance. These results (or lack of them) are due in part to a basic flaw in environmental education inherited from scientific materialism. The flaw is to emphasize abstract forms of knowledge about environmentally-related topics, rather than concrete knowledge about more comprehensive issues (ecological, social, cultural, etc.) informed by a deep understanding of interconnectedness among all beings, or wholeness, as well as human connectedness with nature. The failure by the mainstream of environmental education to effect substantial change is called 'the failure of environmental education' in this study.

(8)   Eastern idea of '*living-learning*' – the unity of knowledge and action as vital

The failure of environmental education has made us recognize that learning processes should ultimately enable learners to 'practice' a more ecologically and culturally sustainable and responsible manner—that is, to apply acquired knowledge to everyday life. On this point, the Eastern notion of '*living-learning*' could be seen as fitting such an concept and practice of human learning that requires a dialectic between knowledge and action in order to create something better. The term *living-learning* is a translation of *katsu-gaku* (Japanese) proposed by Japanese Eastern philosopher Masayoshi Yasuoka, who refers highly to the idea of *chikō-gōitsu* (Japanese) in Yang-Ming philosophy (the School of Mind), whose literal translation in English means that knowledge [*chi*] and action [*kō*] are one [*gōitsu*]—the 'unity of thought/knowledge and action/doing'. This sort of understanding of *living-learning*—human learning based on the integration of knowledge/idea and practice—can be seen not only in Yang-Ming philosophy, but also in other major Eastern philosophies—especially, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. In these traditions, learning properly is inseparable from a process of self-understanding (acquiring ideas about oneself) and self-transformation (everyday behaviors), which means a personal cultivation with no contradiction between one's idea and practice in ordinary life. Furthermore, the Eastern idea of *living-learning* has been closely associated with the essential idea of how to live well with others in society through one's internal enlightenment or personal cultivation.

(9) **Whiteheadian idea of education based on concrete experience with human feelings that support the notion of *living-learning***

The concept of *living-learning* echoes the process philosopher Whitehead's notions of education as "the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge" in practical ways. This educational view values both our connectedness with culture, nature, and concrete experience with human feelings (collectively referred to as five senses, emotions, affections, thoughts), which form the basis for more concrete knowledge. It is important because, compared with abstract knowledge, such a concrete form of knowledge derived from direct experience with human feelings could be regarded as the essential factor to connect thought to concrete action toward a sustainable way of living, which sustainability education really emphasizes. Therefore, concrete experience might be more powerful than abstract knowledge in terms of its ability to motivate action, though the latter remains important. Conversely, acquiring fragments of abstract knowledge about the environment alone, without understanding interconnectedness, is not enough in order to achieve a more culturally and ecologically sustainable society.

Whitehead's observations on learning leads us to believe that our concrete experiences with human feelings are also important for *living-learning*, which aims at enabling one to cultivate self and its living world in a better way. In order to better oneself and society in the mutual transformation between knowledge/idea and practice, that is, the concept and practice of living-learning, one should acknowledge the significance of concrete experience and human feelings. This sort of learning would be indispensable to such an education that should emphasize our human and social changes to well-being in a practical way. Therefore, sustainability education that aims at

concretely bettering one's living and society should be based on the Eastern core idea of *living-learning* as well as Whitehead's notion of education as "the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge." Such an education, or a process of learning, could help transform the view of interconnectedness (with the sense of human connectedness with nature) and ecologically and culturally-related knowledge into the creation of an ecologically and culturally sustainable world.

(10) Three stages of *living-learning* process – '*awareness*', '*inquiry*', '*praxis*'

Three evolutionary cyclic stages—'*awareness*', '*inquiry*', '*praxis*'—in the process of *living-learning* for sustainability are proposed in this study. The successive process should originated in one's first-hand experience with human feelings that could serve as a foundation for creating concrete knowledge that helps to lead to actual results. Through the process, at the same time, people can become motivated to improve their attitudes and values with healthier habits and living patterns. The first stage of '*awareness*' is a process of knowing and starting to think about issues relating to sustainability through one's concrete experience with human feelings that could trigger this process. This stage in *living-learning* for sustainability embraces processes enabling an individual to understand and begin reflecting on personal philosophy, worldview, as well as sustainability-related issues and ideas through becoming cognizant of events and entities affecting an individual's life. However, initially in this stage the depth of thinking is shallow, yet fertile for growth. This newfound awareness can be acquired ideas through one's thinking in this stage could be further enhanced in the next level—becoming more profound, precise, and holistic.

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The second stage of '*inquiry*', therefore, is a process of considering and comprehending the topics led by the previous stage of 'awareness'. This second stage involves a decision-making process in which one selects and determines to be better or worse for the lifestyle of the individual, society, or the Earth, in an ecologically and culturally sustainable manner. Through this process of decision-making and reflective-thinking, furthermore, one might come to perform certain human activities as the action form—such as one's 'talking' and 'writing' about the nature of problems, in terms of what are necessary and important, and how people may strive to create a sustainable life. This sort of action is a more concrete as well as creative aspect as compared with the abstract activities in one's mind such as selection, decision, and thought, whose first-hand human activity of using 'words', at the same time, is more influential to others.

The third stage of '*praxis*' is one's action or practice process as the more substantial form led by "wording"—talking and writing—that derived from one's thoughts in the previous two stages. This action stage itself involves a learning process based on one's concrete experience as practice—shortly, a process of 'learning in action'. The learning activity in action could also lead to further developing one's concrete practice, which can be also regarded as another learning occasion called 'learning for action'. Practicing based on certain learned actions will become an occasion of 'learning in action'. In this way, the relationship between both processes—'learning in action' and 'learning for action'—is interactive in a cyclic way. Through this cyclic process of learning in this action stage, the quality of one's action would involve a step by step evolution—two-fold.

The first regard is an expansion of one's practice, which means that the sphere of one's activity might be gradually expanding to more social matters from previously attending only to personal concerns. The second dimension is that one's practice and awareness are deepening through the cyclical process of *living-learning*; that is, the worldview, ideology, and value judgments underlying one's everyday living are called into question and revised in light of their perceived connections to larger political, economic, and social problems. 'Deep practice', then, can be contrasted to making relatively shallow changes in lifestyle—taking up recycling, perhaps, or buying more fair-trade products—without continuing to take dominant social norms (consumerism) for granted This sort of 'deep practice' refers to ultimately becoming a 'creative agent' for social transformation toward better quality living for oneself as well as for others in an ecologically, as well as culturally, sustainable manner.

The successive process of three stages seen in *living-learning* describes how an acquired idea or new insight can be applied in everyday practice based on concrete experience with human feelings. Its progression is not linear, but circular, in which each of the stages continuously evolves upon repetition. This successive course is creative, since abstract knowledge is transformed into concrete form as words and action. Also, the acquired ideas, knowledge, words, and actions are expanding from personal to more social dimensions. Furthermore, the knowledge then imbues the individual over time with a new sense of direction and understanding. Throughout these stages of human learning—whether intellectual or practical, s/he, as a transformative/creative agent, will develop in ecologically and culturally better ways—namely, sustainable living. This

creation, more or less, means a certain contribution to changing society or the world where one is living as the part, affecting others around oneself.

The three divided portions proposed in a learning process, however, do not mean that there is a perfect boundary line among three stages in a way that every stage individually exists in separate manner; rather, there could be the case that three stages overlap one another according to circumstances, such that the third stage of praxis includes first-hand experience that enables one to open up thinking and knowing about something one impressively feels, which can be seen as the first stage of awareness. The standpoint of three stages allows us to recognize where we are and plan to go, what and how we could learn and teach, like a 'checkpoint' for recreational orienteering. By recognizing each of the three stages, a learner or teacher could create some educational visions, plans, and content as a partial/entire curriculum, study/action procedure, goal-setting, and evaluation, in order to aid attaining overarching goals.

(11) Toward the philosophy of 'voluntary simplicity'

Based on this way of *living-learning*—the evolutionary successive process of three stages, sustainability education attempts to promote ways of living in ecological balance by inspiring learners to take action in every-day life. A growing appreciation of the reality of interconnectedness among all, or wholeness, with the strong sense of human connectedness with nature, should be fundamental to sustainability education because this realization is like a seed that will generate harmonious relationships with other people, other life forms, and the entire biosphere. Sustainability education promotes deeper and

deeper appreciation that everything is influencing everything else in a way that one can never be separated from others and the larger system.

This view of peaceful relationships among all derived from the view of interconnectedness further makes us recognize another important perspective view of 'sufficiency'—the sense of having less/there being enough/no excess over our needs, with the idea of equal opportunity for all. This is very important because of the ecological/physical limitations to the Earth, and the necessity for living within the limits to growth. It is also an indispensable idea to share the limited earth's capacity with all. This understanding about how to structure one's life and society with a sense of sufficiency based on limits of growth is a basic way to sustain both nature and society supported by her. In other words, 'simpler manner' rooted in the idea of sufficiency is fundamental to living properly. Today, choosing this simpler way of living is well illustrated by a notion of voluntary simplicity practiced in everyday life. The very notion of choosing simplicity intentionally as a way of life can be thought as itself a learning process experienced in everyday situations. In order to readily understand and relate to such modes of living, one must practice them through firsthand experience. In this sense, practicing voluntary simplicity is a valuable tool useful in moving toward more sustainable living and its education practice with the *living-learning* process.

(12) The background, general theoretical framework, and inherent features of voluntary simplicity

Voluntary simplicity, both a system of beliefs and practices, is a way of life that literally means integrating simplicity (a simpler way of living) into our lives in a more

deliberate, or voluntary manner. It has been a social movement defined by people who choose an alternative lifestyle based on a simpler way of living, to seek the better life, personally and socially especially since 1960s. The idea of voluntary simplicity based on the sense of sufficiency that has been recognized as the 'Middle Way' or the 'Golden Mean' in all the world's tradition, is a notion that is rediscovered within the cultural context of each individual at the present day.

This life-way also can be understood as a way of life that is 'outwardly more simple' as well as 'inwardly more rich'. While 'outwardly simple' means by refining outer aspect of life—the social, material matters, 'inwardly rich implies by refining inner aspect of life—the spiritual, consciousness, conception matters. In this study, the refinement of inner aspect is called 'personal cultivation', and outer aspect is called 'societal cultivation'. In this way, voluntary simplicity is interpreted as a manner of living in a way that one lives in more harmony with others and the natural world/the earth—the aspect of 'societal cultivation', within one's creative process—the aspect of 'personal cultivation'. This manner of intentionally choosing simplicity as a fundamental approach to living lightly involves an ongoing educational process, since coming to understand and practice simplicity is an experiential process of learning on how to live in a sustainable manner—namely, '*living-learning* for sustainability'. Voluntary simplicity holds some common values, which I called 'inherent features' as the characteristics in this study. They are that voluntary simplicity is: (1) art of life; (2) a potential to better the personal/social aspect of living; (3) a rediscovery way of life; and (4) a learning process for good life itself, which are interrelated one another.

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(13) Education and voluntary simplicity – *Living-learning* for sustainability

This study considers the more inclusive theoretical framework of education for voluntary simplicity from three points of view—learning for simplicity as; (1) the *living-learning* process, (2) sustainability education, and (3) utilizing simplicity's perspectives in curriculum development.

First, learning for simplicity can be regarded as itself the process of *living-learning* (including three stages of awareness, inquiry, praxis) though simple livers who have already practiced a lifestyle of simplicity are basically regarded as those in the praxis stage of three stages. The first 'awareness' stage in voluntary simplicity can be seen in simplifiers' reasons or motivation to choose the way of simpler living, which are very various and depends on each person. What is common, however, is that they are concerned with the very practical matters underlying everyday life, which is classified into two main dimensions—personal cultivation (inner development, family care, etc) and societal cultivation (environmental disaster, equal opportunity, economy, politics, education, healthcare, social service, etc.). Next, the 'inquiry' stage in voluntary simplicity implies a process for simper livers to gradually develop their own primary ideas about simplicity, which also involves some challenges to create alternatives to the mainstream culture in personal or public terms. Furthermore, one's concern might extend to other related matters as secondary, according to one's interests. The final stage of 'praxis' in voluntary simplicity is a process in which the acquired ideas of the previous two stages are put into practice. Also the practical experience creates another experience that evokes further idea as well, and then both the idea and practice gradually are evolving as well as deepening in accordance with the accumulation of experience.

Since voluntary simplicity is not only an idea, but also at the same time practice of living per se in simpler ways of living, the relationship between idea and action in voluntary simplicity is inextricably linked. Consequently, if each process of three stages is expressed as circle, the scope of awareness stage, as acquired idea process, and of the praxis stage, as action process, overlaps each other for the most part. In this inseparable interaction between idea and action, the inquiry stage as the process of nurturing idea can be performed in a way that simple livers attempt to evolve further concerns related to simplicity which must be accompanied by the concrete idea of action—namely, how to practice.

(14) Learning for simplicity as sustainability education in utilizing simplicity perspectives into education

In the context of the first point above, second, learning for simplicity as embracing a *living-learning* process is itself a form of sustainability education at the basis. The understanding of voluntary simplicity is closely associated with the educational process of sustainability within individual and public contexts. Consequently, teaching of and learning for simplicity can be captured as a more effective as well as concrete method (tool, viewpoint) of sustainability education for those who think about making our society more culturally and ecologically stable, just, and peaceful.

In connection with the second point, third, the perspectives of voluntary simplicity (personal/societal cultivation, and many important factors involved in its lifestyle) could provide teachers with more concrete viewpoints to present to their students. If teachers have an idea of voluntary simplicity when an occasion to teach a

sustainability-related topic arises, they can create more details about sustainable ways to prepare for teaching in accordance with the perspectives of voluntary simplicity. In doing so, it is also important for teachers to make learners take their topics within the interconnection between personal and societal points of view, as well as the interrelationship between topics beyond subjects, which sustainability education does stress. Besides, it is important that teachers provide students with sustainability-related topics within the context of their life experience in order that the idea or acquired knowledge is not be merely abstract as something irrelevant, but rather be concrete for learners as a part of their own problems.

Although the example above is described from teacher's point of view, the same observation applies to standpoint of students—their own ways of learning. One comes to understand and appreciate voluntary simplicity through the day-to-day process of *living-learning*, a unique and creative experience. The key to sustainability education, then, is supporting self-learning much more than delivering a mandatory curriculum.

(15) Holistic education and ecological education – Two major orientations of existing education theory regarded as sustainability education with the concept of Voluntary Simplicity

'Holistic education' and 'ecological education are analyzed as two major orientations of *living-learning* for simplicity as sustainability education in this study. Both educational traditions emphasize that all beings are interrelated to one another, seeing the world as an integrated whole, as of fundamental importance. Based on this organic worldview, both recognize the importance for human learning to promote personal development inclusively—physically, psychologically, emotionally, morally,

spiritually, etc. Both educational traditions also acknowledge that the learning process should promote comprehensive understanding of humans and the physical world oriented toward harmony with others, humans and otherwise. Their educators believe that this educational practice could play a vital role in transforming contemporary society towards a more culturally and ecologically stable way of living.

Some slight differences between two educations can be seen in what is especially emphasized in every educational context. Holistic education emphasizes more personal aspects—developing individuals' innate potentials in which the holistic way of learning requires the multiple human development toward the intuitive, emotional, physical, imaginative, and creative, as well as the rational, logical, and verbal" abilities. On the contrary, ecological education stresses more understanding of ecological sensibility as the harmonious relationship between people and nature/the Earth, ultimately leading to everyday action based on the sense, which has potential to transform toward more sustainable society in harmony with the natural world. In this context, holistic education or ecological education can be identified as 'eco-holistic education'—holistic education reflected by ecological education, and vice versa.

A further important point implied by eco-holistic education is that the holistic development of 'innate human potentials' should be integrated with concretely building better oriented communities in ecological balance with nature/the Earth and all of her forms. This type of sustainability-oriented learning with personal cultivation requires concrete action or everyday practice to make sustainable living possible. Therefore, acquired knowledge or ideas about one's lifestyle are constantly applied into everyday action directed towards creating a sustainable way of culture in ecological

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harmony—never separation between two aspects, which is highly emphasized as an indispensable regard in sustainability education—the fourth point of four essentials.

This study focuses on two education streams (ecological/holistic education) as the major orientation of sustainability education with the essential concept of voluntary simplicity. However, such other study fields as 'transformative learning/education' (O'Sullivan, 1999, 2001, and 2004), 'education for a culture of peace (partnership education)' (Eisler, 2000), and 'life-enriching education' (Rosenberg, 2003) appear to be also closely concerned with the more comprehensive understanding of sustainability in both ecological and cultural terms. They overlap ecological education and holistic education, or eco-holistic education, in many parts, as well. In my future direction of the study, therefore, I would like to go to develop the theory of sustainability education by analyzing the concept of transformative education, education for a culture of peace, and any other educational approaches intimately related to sustainability.

(16) Outdoor education as an effective way of promoting and practicing voluntary simplicity

In addition to the general or fundamental scheme of the learning for simplicity based on the '*living-learning*' process, this study proposes that being introduced to voluntary simplicity through outdoor-environmental based education programs over several days in nature is potentially the perfect occasion for students to experience the benefits of voluntary simplicity. The benefits related to simpler living can be found in several points. First, living in close contact with the natural environment raises people's awareness of the impact they have on other life forms and the regional ecosystem, which

promotes ecologically sensitive behavior, so that they do not damage ecological capacity, crops and other resources that sustain them. Besides, this sense of living closer to nature implies making do with less and provides people with many opportunities for being active and creative in various capacities. Second, being active and creative also tends to enable one to establish more intimate, beneficial communication skills that foster more peaceful relationships with others, a significant factor in stabilizing the entire ecological community, including the natural system of the region. Last, this outer, social kinship among entities, humans or otherwise, becomes the means through which people tend to fully examine themselves, further enabling the enrichment of their inner self.

Regarding this point—utilizing outdoor education occasion as learning for simplicity (*living-learning* for sustainability), I briefly show the overview of potentials in proposing the link between outdoor and simplicity education from three points of view above. Also Norwegian value-based life philosophy of *Friluftsliv* tradition, as the lived experience of simpler life in nature, is shortly introduced as an important notion to examine in my future study on outdoor-based education as the useful method of education/learning for simplicity and sustainability by *living-learning*.

(17) Voluntary simplicity as sustainability education through *living-learning*

It follows from what has been said that knowing and practicing voluntary simplicity has the potential to enable one to live in greater harmony with others, the natural environment, and the Earth. It has this potential because voluntary simplicity—both the belief system and the way of life—has an ecologically/culturally peaceful and productive orientation as its basis for building a sustainable society. Using

this standpoint, I have come to the conclusion that education for voluntary simplicity—understating simple living as a learning/educational process—becomes an effective methodology of 'sustainability education' through the process of '*living-learning*'. Its educational position also implies inspiring and enabling one to be 'sustainability-literate,' as a 'transformative/creative' agent in integrating acquired ideas/knowledge and everyday action as part of a move towards a sustainable world.

8.2 Contributions of the Study

How does this study improve upon the theoretical frameworks it has surveyed? The main contributions of study are the fourfold. Firstly, this study articulates and defends the kind of comprehensive understanding of the meaning of sustainability that effective sustainability requires. Its comprehensive conception captures the links between ecological, social, cultural, economic, political, and philosophical concerns. Because the fundamental goal of sustainability education is to better the 'quality of life' for all, and because multi-faceted problems require multi-faceted solutions, it is important to recognize how ecological and socio-cultural problems are entangled. Secondly, building upon its comprehensive conception of sustainability, this study integrates insights from the theory and practice of voluntary simplicity into the general framework of educational theory. The success of this social movement gives reason to hope that a similar emphasis upon day-to-day experiential learning will help environmental education initiatives effect change. Thirdly, this study forges new links between complementary traditions of educational thought by introducing the Eastern idea of *living-learning* (*katsu-gaku,* in Japanese) and then developing it in light of complementary insights from deep ecology in

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a way that enriches both. In particular, inspired by the "three deeps" in deep ecology theory—deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment—this study identifies three stages in *living-learning*—awareness, inquiry and praxis—that elaborates the notion of 'learning by doing' central to theories of experiential education. Lastly, this study illustrates the synergistic potential of designing outdoor-environmental education programs to promote appreciation of both the personal and social-ecological benefits of voluntary simplicity, showing the relevance to this project of the Norwegian traditional view of *Friluftsliv*.

8.3 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

8.3.1 Limitations

The constellation of conceptions presented in this study and corresponding educational recommendations are intended primarily for the relatively privileged minority who must bear particular responsibility for current ecological and social crises, as opposed to those denied equitable opportunities to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, its account of sustainability education is intended to support and further inspire those who already have some inspiration to promote more equitable, just, satisfying, and sustainable ways of life. It thus leaves open the question of how best to work with individuals and groups currently unwilling to change. Additionally, while this study offers a general theoretical framework for sustainability education, it deliberately leaves it to educators familiar with the needs and opportunities of particular contexts to translate the framework into policies, curricula, and pedagogical practices.

8.3.2 Future Directions

In light of the limitations of this study noted above, I intend to pursue further research in three main directions to develop and test its conception of sustainability education. One priority is to create curricula for Japanese schools in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and policy makers who interested in sustainable issues; the second and closed related project is to share key conclusions of the study with exemplary practitioners in K-12 schools to see if its conception of sustainability education provides a framework to integrate 'best practices' emerging 'in the field'; the third project is to further explore the links between my conception of sustainability education and the Norwegian tradition of '*Friluftsliv*'.

8.4 Closing Comment: Toward Social Change -- Creating the Sustainable World

Through writing this thesis, the following phrases became relevant for me.

When the last tree is cut down,
the last river poisoned,
the last fish caught,
then only will man discover
that he cannot eat money.   (In the words of the Canadian Cree)[80]

He who knows he has enough is rich.   (Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*)

We "choose to live simply so that others may simply live."   (Gandhi)[81]

The problem of sustainability and the value of choosing simplicity to cope with this predicament can be condensed into the above simple, but significantly insightful statements.

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[80] Quoted in Hautecoueur, 2002, 47.
[81] Quoted in Elgin, 2007, whose article is retrieved October 24, 2008 from
http://www.awakeningearth.org/content/view/54/48/ or
http://www.simplicityforum.org/files/Garden_of_Simplicity_4.0-Elgin.pdf.

Figuratively speaking, this study with a conceptual/theoretical inquiry is like Oriental medicine based on causal therapy or radical treatment, as compared to modern (Western) medicine based on symptomatic treatment. In other words, this study attempts to suggest some fundamental ideas which could contribute to promoting more sustainable conditions in our society/world/planet; namely, it chiefly addresses a way of human thinking and views certain practices as the cause and origin that eventually build collective society through which such sustainably-oriented beliefs and ideas, in turn, form certain behaviors or actions in sustainable manner. This is similar to the fact that Oriental medicine mainly attempts to improve patience's constitution itself as the very basis for sickness to cure it. In contrast, study areas such as natural science and engineering, which try to mechanically and technologically fix problematic phenomena—such as air/water pollution and energy depletion—would be likened to Western medicine, which cures sickness and injury in its application of drugs and surgery. I do not mention which method is best, but note that both seem important in tackling problems and promoting a better direction for ourselves, our society and future, and our nature and the Earth.

Also, this study indicates that there is a need for social change towards more sustainable ways of living by educational initiatives. It advocates today's social movements in order to develop a just, secure, stable, and peaceful world community as a resistance against contemporary mainstream of society in ecologically and culturally unsustainable orientation, as described in chapter two.

As a final point, I should briefly note the relationship between mainstream and social movements, referring to Dr. Palmer's (1998/2007) suggestive observations on this point.

Palmer (1998/2007) says, "The counterpoint to institutional resistance [resistance against the mainstream] takes the form of social movements" (p. 170). I assume, however, that such an emerging movement does not necessarily reject the mainstream at all levels. Rather, "[o]rganizations" as a mainstream and "movements" as social change "both play creative roles," and "[a] health society will encourage interplay between two" as Palmer describes (p. 171). According to Palmer, "[o]rganizations represent the principle of order and conservation" and "[m]ovement represents the principle of flux and change: they are the processes through which a society channels its energies for renewal and transformation" (pp. 170-171). As for the method by which movement takes place for social change, while "many people give up in the face of institutional resistance," others hold "movement mentality" that regards "that resistance as a source of energy for the campaign." In this mentality, resistance can be understood as "the place where everything begins, not ends." That is to say, we can conjecture by affirming that "not only does change happen in spite of institutional resistance, but resistance helps change happen" (p. 171). In this context, "[t]he resistance itself points to the need for something new, which "encourage[s] us to imagine alternatives" (pp. 171-172).

As we can see in Palmer's observation above, the most likely and essential approach is to contemplate and practice an alternative to the mainstream that no longer works well. It means further expanding the original ideas and practices as well as complementing the weakness of existing society to improve the current condition. Like the afore-mentioned relationships between Western and Oriental medicine, even though Western medicine, as the symptomatic treatment, is not necessarily the best paradigm for

providing effective treatments for all illness, we can never think that it is useless. Instead, we could say that it lacks essentials that comprehensively promote health body and mind. Thus, we could try something alternative—Eastern medicine based on casual therapy, considered to be a more radical approach, as a supplement to Western medicine. Within this context, the something alternative means not completely something new, but something expansive based on the previous condition—mainstream. In this sense, the mainstream is like an energy source as necessary for us to understand which direction we go, what are needed to go well, and how we should/could do to make the conditions better. The important thing is to recognize the disadvantage—missing in the mainstream—and to attempt to conceptualize and put something new or alternative vision into words.

In this way, "The genius of social movement is paradoxical: they abandon the logic of organization so that they can gather the momentum necessary to alter the logic of organization" (p. 172), as Palmers (1998/2007) illustrates. In order for us to demand a movement for change, we have to know where we are now and where we intend to go; Palmer writes, "we must also learn the logic and movement, learn how a movement unfolds,..." (p. 172). For the logic of movement development, Palmer offers four stages based on his reflection of former studies of social movements[82]. Because to argue each of four stages would carry us too far away from the purpose of this final section, it is not necessary to enter into the detailed discussion. We need mention here only the essence of four stages:

Stage 1. Isolated individuals make an inward decision to live "*divided no more*,"

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[82] Palmer (1998/2007) has studied "the civil rights movement; the women's movement; the movements for freedom in eastern Europe, South Africa, and Latin America; and the movement for gay and lesbian rights" (p. 172).

finding a center for their lives outside of institution.

Stage 2. These individuals begin to discover one another and form c*ommunities of congruence* that offer mutual support and opportunities to develop a shared vision.

Stage 3. These communities start *going public*, learning to convert their private concerns into the public issues they are and receiving vital critiques in the process.

Stage 4. A system of *alternative rewards* emerges to sustain the movement's vision and to put pressure for change on the standard institutional reward system.

<div align="right">(Palmer, 1998/2007, pp. 172-173)</div>

What is more important to note here is that Palmer's view of four stages is very useful for us to understand how movements work, which helps us taste the ongoing process of movements for change. Similar to the metaphor of 'Sustainability Map' explained in the previous chapter, therefore, one's recognizing each stage in a movement process is like a trekker, as a practitioner, with a map that tells us where we are and which direction we should go to reach a goal. It also provides us with relief, motivation, and energy to go forward. In Palmer's (1998/2007) words,

> By understanding how movements work, we may discover that we are already actors in movement,... We may discover that if one is on an inner journey, one is on the threshold of real power—the power of personal authenticity that, manifested in social movements, has driven real change in our own time. When we know that such power is within our reach, we may be less tempted to succumb to organizational gridlock, less tempted to indulge ourselves in the sweetness of despair. (p. 173)

It would be very nice, even in some small way, if this study could inspire people to take action toward changing today's unstable society and also contribute to developing the movements for improving our communities, our ecosystems, and our planet. I believe that small changes, in both personal and public terms, are important in creating, or transforming society towards ecologically/culturally sustainable behaviors. At this point I am reminded of famed cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead's statement, which I find continually inspiring:

<div align="center">273</div>

Never doubt the power of a small group of committed individuals to change the world. Indeed, that is the only thing that ever has.

(Quoted in Meadows, et al., 2004, p. 270)

In my life—whether personal, social, or scholarly, I wish to always be one of the

"committed individuals" who contribute to bettering the world.

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