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Stockholm Resilience Centre



Imagining Harmony with Nature in the Korean DMZ

Stories in Imagined Futures inspired by the Nature
Futures and Seeds of the Good Anthropocene Workshop

2023 Eco-Peace Forum: DMZ Open

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Based on the 2023 Ecopeace Forum Visioning Workshop
results produced by a team of researchers, practitioners,
and stakeholders.

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Preface

Seventy years ago the brutal Korean War ended, and the Korean peninsula was divided by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). It was expected to be a temporary line, but the DMZ solidified into the world's most militarized border.

The DMZ's soil contains millions of landmines. The DMZ's edges are defined by razor-wire and monitored by sensors. Outside the DMZ, two million soldiers wait and watch one another.

Within the DMZ there has been no farming, no construction, and not even much walking. The DMZ has become an involuntary park. Trees have grown, wetlands flooded, rivers wiggle, and rare creatures roam. Cranes bow their red-crowned heads, and wild boars, pad through a forest that grows over the hidden instruments of pain.

The DMZ reminds people that nature continues without us, and offers hope that time can bring life even to places that are full of death.

In September 2023, the EcoPeace Forum was held as part of the DMZ Open Festival in South Korea. This forum was a more academic part of the festival. It had a peace and an ecology stream. In the ecology stream a group of international experts, including me, used the IPBES Nature Future Framework and "Seeds of a Good Anthropocene" scenario methods to imagine a set of positive nature futures for the DMZ.

The Nature Futures Framework identifies that three different types of nature values underlie most discussions of how people would like to live in harmony with nature. These values emphasize values of Nature for Society, Nature for Nature, and Nature for Culture. In the DMZ, we used this framework to think about different ways people could live in harmony with nature.

We did this using methods from the 'Seeds of a Good Anthropocene' project. These methodologies are designed to identify and cultivate existing seeds of sustainability to imagine how the growth of different seeds could interact to produce different types of futures. Forum participants selected different sets of seeds and then used them to develop four alternative visions of a DMZ where people could live in harmony with nature. These stories were written to illustrate these visions.

I wrote these stories to provide more detail to these visions, and inspire people to create their own stories of desirable futures. I hope the stories help people imagine and develop new initiatives to create a future where nature and people can live in harmony in Korea.

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The Nature Future's Framework

The IPBES Nature Futures Framework (NFF) is a flexible tool designed to support the development of scenarios and models of desirable futures for people, nature and Mother Earth. The NFF considers that people's orientations towards nature can be usefully described as a combination of three different nature value perspectives.

From the nature for nature perspective, people view nature as having intrinsic value, and value is placed on the diversity of species, habitats, ecosystems and processes that form the natural world, and on nature's ability to function autonomously. From nature for society perspective highlights the utilitarian benefits and instrumental values that nature provides to people and societies.

From nature as culture/one with nature perspective primarily highlights relational values of nature, where societies, cultures, traditions and faiths are intertwined with nature in shaping diverse bio-cultural landscapes.

This framework can be used to organize different approaches to nature based upon the value perspectives they embody. This framework was used to organize the construction of the visions that lead to the following stories.

I had worked with so many projects in the DMZ, and because of that I started working with the Green Tiger Card to link together these experiments. We did this by building a new type of shrine in the countryside. These were active centers of learning, places where the history and ecological significance

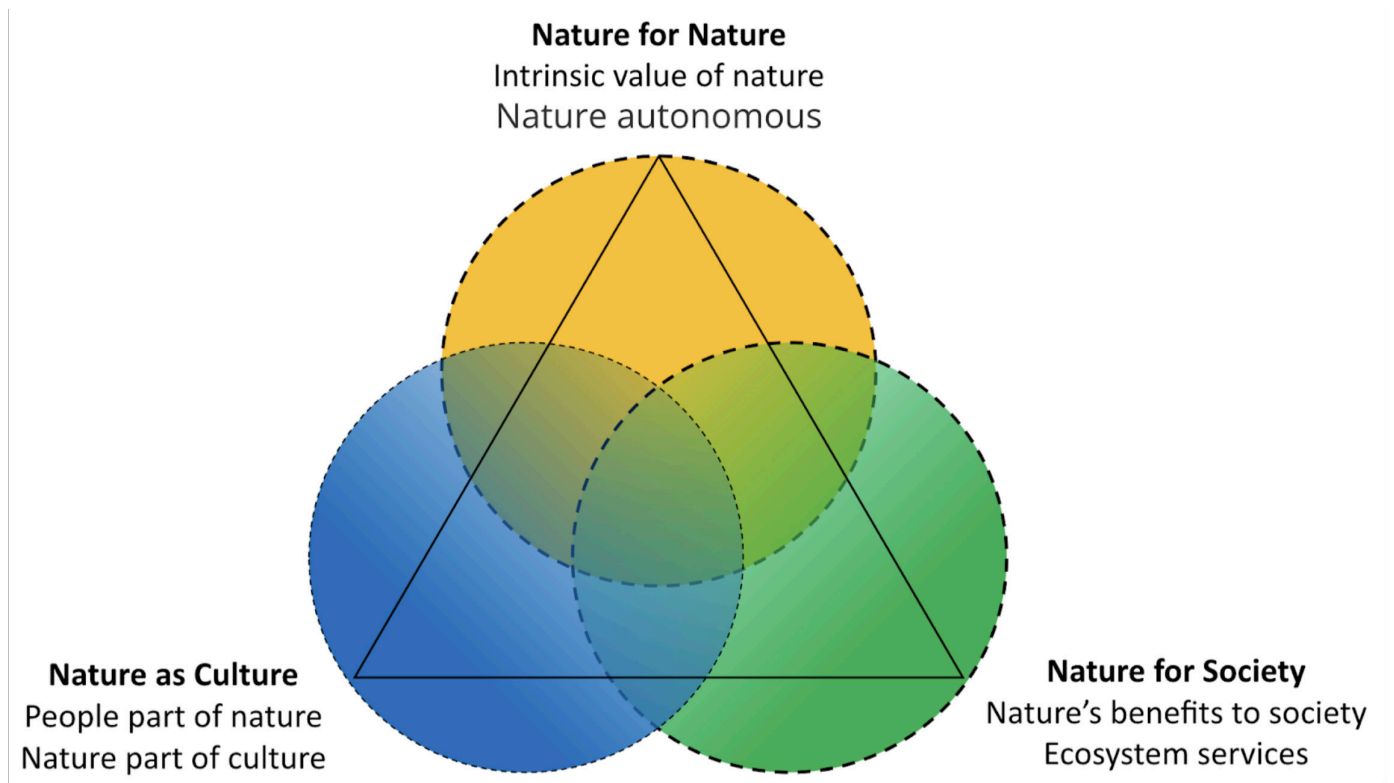


Figure 1. Nature Future's Framework.

Nature as Culture

The nature as culture perspective is one of the three broad value perspectives of the Nature Futures Framework. The Nature as Culture values perspectives focuses on how nature values that are produced by interactions among people. It views people and culture as deeply entangled with nature. This perspective highlights the deep cultural, spiritual, and emotional connections people have with nature. It recognizes that nature is an integral part of many cultures' identities, beliefs, and practices.

Participants imagined a future growing from three Nature as culture related seeds: Revival of Guardian Spirits in the DMZ, mainstreaming of ecological knowledge, and ecotourism that benefits nature. Participants imagined the DMZ becoming a Diversified Multiplied Zone.

This vision is illustrated by the following four stories.

NC1: Ahn Soeun, Minister of the Diversified Multiplied Zone (DMZ) remarks at the Cheolwon Food Festival

Welcome to the Cheolwon Food Festival!

I am Ahn Soeun, the Minister of the Diversified Multiplied Zone (DMZ), and it is my privilege to share the story of how our region transformed from a place where division and conflict were carved into

the land, to a thriving example of ecological and cultural harmony.

In the early 2020s I was a young musician, and to pay my bills I worked to help organize music and cultural performances in the DMZ in a series of eco-peace festivals. This got me into the DMZ region, and I saw many villages with closing schools and no children.

As time went on, I became involved in many eco-cultural projects, and I witnessed many efforts by artists to rethink this area. Inspired by the early initiatives, I dedicated myself to the cause, vowing to bridge the gap between Seoul's urban heartbeat and the DMZ's loneliness.

A government programme, Green Credit Card initiative, which initially aimed to promote greener consumption and raise money for green activities, was adapted and expanded to fund ecological restoration. That programme helped get people start to think about different, more sustainable ways of living.

Things accelerated when rewilding activists spun off the Green Tiger Card from the Green Credit Card. The Green Tiger Card was initially a Korean initiative, but it soon spread to other countries. It not only raised money, but brought people to the DMZ and energy to the region which led to a lot of experiments.



Figure 2. Ahn Soeun, Minister of the Diversified Multiplied Zone (DMZ), speaking at the Cheolwon Food Festival on how she helped the Diversified Multiplied Zone emerge from the Demilitarized Zone.

of the land were shared and celebrated. These shrines became the cornerstones of education and engagement.

As the shrines rose, so did the nation's commitment to ecological education. Education reform sparked a wave of eco-consciousness among youth. Field trips to the shrines were combined with classroom simulation labs, where students engaged in restoration planning and virtual field trips became standard, connecting urban and rural cultures. I was deeply involved in these projects, which taught me that we needed to rediscover how Korean culture could support Korean nature, and most importantly how together culture and nature could support us, and that is how I decided to work for the national government.

The lessons of the DMZ became a blueprint for national policy. I was lucky to be chosen to work to help define new sustainability policies across Korea. We integrated ecological stewardship into urban planning, energy use, and even daily living, ensuring that the ethos of the DMZ informed our collective future.

Even more important, the success of the shrines in the DMZ had provided a template to reverse the population, economic, and cultural decline of the Korean countryside. We applied these teachings across the nation, from urban parks to corporate policies, ensuring that the ethos of sustainability was a thread in the fabric of Korean life. The rediscovery of Korean nature culture, created new jobs, and new jobs brought new residents to many rural areas. Sustainable agriculture start-ups, utilizing the once-forsaken land, contributed to Korea's food security and brought international acclaim for innovative practices in permaculture and agroforestry. Shrines ensured that tourists more than gave back what they consumed.

New eco-farmers like Mr. Kim, who is here today, exemplify these changes. Mr. Kim used to be a chef at a successful restaurant in Seoul. But after some years of problems with buying ginseng and other vegetables he needed, he decided to grow them himself. In his trips to the countryside, some of his farmer friends had taken him to early shrines. He worked with people he met through the shrines to create a new way of farming that grew old crops, in new ways that both were able to cope with climatic changes, supported local ecosystems, and provided a good living. His farming efforts became the seed of what is now the thriving village around us today. Here, people not only cultivated crops but also

cultivated hope, demonstrating that with respect and ingenuity, both land and culture could flourish anew.

By then I was working in the government. We helped farmers like Mr Kim get established, and we helped address many challenges, including the restoration of ecosystems threatened by climate-induced droughts. The solution came through a combination of traditional water conservation methods revived from ancient Korean practices and our solar desalination technology. As technology advanced, so did our methods of conservation.

My ministry was at the forefront of this technological innovation. We helped connect local people to universities, and we funded those partnerships. Artificial intelligence, once a tool of industry, became a tool of nature stewardship. Smart systems monitoring populations and guided restoration efforts. These drones walked, swam, crawled. Some were used for seed dispersal, but most were used for various forms of monitoring for ecosystems, plants, animals, and people. These drones were developed and deployed strategically to ensure the flourishing of native species while maintaining the natural balance of the ecosystem. Drones became robotic shepherds to help guide endangered species, help predators find food without bothering farmers, ensuring the social conflict was avoided to create harmony with nature.

Today, the creation of harmony between people and nature in Korea has spread out in the wider world. The success of the DMZ's transformation inspired the 'Borderlands Green Initiative,' adopted by the United Nations, encouraging former conflict zones worldwide to convert into biodiversity hotspots, thus redefining international cooperation in the face of environmental challenges. Through this partnership, Korea exchanged knowledge and resources with conservation efforts worldwide, elevating the DMZ to a global exemplar of ecological recovery.

The journey of the DMZ mirrors my own—a journey of growth, learning, and homecoming. Korea has found harmony, now Korea that teaches the world the value of peace, of life, and of the undying spirit that thrives in the heart of its land.

NC2 – Bae Beom-seok K-Pop Shaman, Rewilding Activist and and Reluctant Credit Card Spokesman

You know, when I was younger, I thought I'd always be on stage dancing in the spotlight, lifted by the deafening cheers of fans. Turns out, I was right about being on stage, but wrong about what I'd be doing there. Today, there are no cheers, I'm not dancing. Instead I'm up there talking about spirits, credit cards and tigers.

I used to be one of the Active Boys. We were big... for a minute. Well, two of us were big. Me? I was the one in the back, smiling and making sure no one forgot the choreography. Last among equals, not exactly the face on the billboard, you know? It wasn't bad, but when we were drafted for military service, I knew what was up. I'd already seen the writing on the wall—or rather, the lack of it. The fan chants weren't going to be there when we got back. If people were chanting, it wasn't going to be for me.

Anyway, my service sent me to the DMZ—the real DMZ, not some tourist-friendly hiking trail overlooking the DMZ, but the actual place where Korea stopped fighting but forgot to clean up. Back then, it was all landmines and wild grass, with that eerie quiet that made it seem like even the birds were nervous about stepping in the wrong place. It wasn't exactly the glamorous future I'd envisioned when I was a kid, practicing high kicks and winks in the mirror.

My unit's job? Demining a zone that was set to be "ecologically restored." You might think, "Ah, that sounds peaceful." It wasn't. It was grim, sweaty, thankless work. But it gave me time to think. A lot of time. Time to listen to the land—the way the breeze moved through the trees, the rustle of something bigger. The DMZ had stories. Stories of death and division, sure, but also a weird hope growing up over all the old helmets and rusted-out tanks. And I couldn't help but wonder, What else could grow here? What could come back?

I didn't have long to dwell on it, though, because the spirits showed up. You laugh, but I'm serious. One day, I was trying to get out of a big tangle of thorns without too many cuts, when I heard this whisper—not from my squad leader, but from the land itself.

At first, I thought it was just my mind playing tricks. Long days, too much quiet, and not enough interaction with anything that wasn't either dead or deadly. But the more time I spent in the DMZ, the

more the whispers started to sound like words—old, buried words, like the land itself was talking. It wasn't asking for permission. It was demanding. And what it wanted was tigers.

When my service ended, I didn't go back to Seoul. The spirits had a point. Tigers. Tigers were what Korea needed. What could I do? You don't just ignore ancient tiger spirits. That's how you get cursed in the third act of a horror movie.

So, I went to Inwangsan Mountain to see Mee-Hae, a shaman with a reputation for being both deeply spiritual and scarily practical. She was known for blending the old ways with ecological thinking – and she was into tigers. She was both admired and feared in equal measure. I was hoping for the former. "Tigers, huh?" Mee-Hae said after I spilled my whole story. "Well, you're not the first person to ask. But you might be the first K-pop idol."

"Washed-up idol," I corrected.

"Semantics," she said, waving it off. "The spirits are right. We need to bring back the tigers. But we'll need more than just good vibes and chanting."

Thus began my shamanic apprenticeship. I went from doing flawless body rolls on stage to learning how to chant ancient invocations and tiger activism. It wasn't exactly a career pivot I saw coming, but hey, neither did anyone else.

We started small. A concert here, a nature walk there. But then we came up with an idea so wild, it actually made sense: The Tiger's Cry festival. Picture it—a massive celebration of Korean culture, ecology, and, of course, tigers. K-pop mixed with shamanic rituals, eco-fashion shows, AI-generated tiger holograms—you name it, we threw it into the festival. It became a movement. People loved it.

But festivals don't fund themselves. And neither do tigers.

Now, this is where things took a turn for the corporate. Enter the Green Tiger Card. Think of it as your basic credit card, but instead of earning boring airline miles, you earned "tiger miles." Buy a latte? Boom, you've funded tiger conservation. Pick up some new kicks? Congrats, you've just paid for a tree to be planted in the DMZ. The more you spent, the more tiger points you racked up. Spend enough, and you could name a tiger. Ever wanted a tiger named Seo Joon-hyuk? Well, now you can.

We sold out almost immediately. People loved it.



Figure 3. A poster for the “The Tiger’s Cry” music festival.

There’s something about buying groceries with the knowledge that you’re helping bring back a predator capable of taking down a small car that really speaks to the modern consumer.

With the Green Tiger Card, we had funding rolling in. We developed AI-driven tiger habitats, because why not? At KAIST, they created these weird floating guardian spirits—drones that could track the tigers, scare off poachers, and project holographic tiger images when necessary. You’d think it would be terrifying to run into a glowing, ten-foot-tall tiger in the wilderness. Turns out, it’s very effective.

Of course, there were hiccups. Bureaucrats didn’t get it. “Tigers? In the DMZ? Why?” they’d ask. I had to give the same speech about cultural restoration, ecological balance, and spiritual healing like a hundred times.

“Plus,” I’d say, “Korea is supposed to be the land of tigers.”

But hey, now Korea is the land of tigers.

The government eventually relented and let us start the rewilding project, but not without conditions. They wanted control—maps, boundaries, AI trackers

for every tiger. They wanted a neat, marketable package: Korea Restores Its Wilderness! It made for great headlines. But the land had other plans.

When we released the first tiger it stepped out of the crate, blinked at the cameras, then disappeared into the forest like it had never been there at all. The bureaucrats smiled for the press and talked about success, but I could see it in their eyes. They were afraid. The tiger wasn’t following the plan. It wasn’t staying within the invisible boundaries they’d drawn for it.

Mee-Hae just laughed.

“Told you,” she said, watching the footage of the tiger vanish into the mist. “The land doesn’t want control. It wants wildness. And now we’re stuck with it.”

And we were. The tigers roamed free, and the DMZ began to change. People started calling it the Diversity Multiplied Zone, which sounded fancy but really just meant “We don’t know what the hell is going on anymore.” The DMZ had become a place where nature, people, and institutions all mingled in ways no one could predict. The government liked to talk about “polycentric governance,” a buzzword they used to pretend they were in control. They weren’t.

The councils formed, and renovated lots of shrines. That’s for sure. Local stewards—farmers, ecologists, even former soldiers—took responsibility for patches of land. The shamans had their say, as did the scientists, and every now and then, the bureaucrats in Seoul would make some new proclamations about “sustainability” and “adaptive governance.” The bureaucrats keep sending their reports, their surveys, trying to figure out how to package the Diversity Multiplied Zone for eco-tourism. I let them think it’s working. But really, no one was managing anything. It was too big, too wild. The tigers didn’t care about councils. The land didn’t either.

The Diversity Multiplied Zone wasn’t just nature, and it wasn’t just humans trying to rebuild nature. It was a living organism, a chaotic mess of councils, festivals, shamans, tourists, and, of course, tigers. No one was in control, least of all the bureaucrats.

I still walk through the forests sometimes, hearing the tigers out there, watching. Sometimes, when the wind passes through the trees, I hear the land laughing. And honestly? I’m laughing too. It’s pretty funny that the spirits managed to use the least popular member of Active Boys and a credit card to bring back Korea’s tigers.

NC3 – Kim Ha-rin Ecotourism Entrepreneur

Seoul is quietly busy in the early morning as I look down from my apartment’s rooftop garden. My name is Kim Ha-rin, and I run an eco-tourism business. We take people from their busy lives in Seoul to slow down and reconnect to nature and life in the DMZ.

I started down this path in the 2020s. When I was a teenager, I was torn between our tech-filled life and the natural world. I loved the old stories about Korea’s nature and how they were coming back to life in the DMZ. K-Pop music with shamanic stories helped change how we saw the DMZ. My grandparents’ stories about wildlife, which were becoming real again, inspired me.

When I was in university, I was in a hiking club that often went out to biosphere reserves connected to DMZ. I loved getting out of the city, and I also was drawn to the stories of the guardian spirits of our land, and how artists and spiritual leaders were collaborating to redefine the narrative of the DMZ, turning it from a forsaken no-man’s-land into a sanctuary of ecological and historical significance. It was in my late twenties that these trips transformed from personal pilgrimages, into me realizing that this was something I could offer to others.

I founded my eco-tourism business, because I wanted to offer more than just tours; I aimed to create experiences where people from Seoul could actively contribute to the healing of our landscapes, while improving their own lives by becoming connected to Korean nature. To achieve this goal, my company worked with the Korean rewilding movement to build new types of shrines.

We built shrines, not just as monuments to the past but as educational portals. The shrines our clients help build are active centers where visitors can have in traditional shamanic blessings, learn the Korean nature meditation techniques, or use interactive Augmented Reality to witness the DMZ’s transformation over the decades, bridging the gap between past and present. They are also active, because they don’t just provide services to people, people actually work there, being guides, tending the gardens, removing invasive species, helping update monitoring systems, and even working to create new types of meals from local food.

Looking back, I’m proud of my company. You see, while my company is a business, it is also part of a movement reconnecting Seoul’s urbanites with the Korean landscape. I view my company as a bridge that people can use to connect Seoul and the DMZ. When I was a kid, almost no one could go to these



Figure 4. A shrine being visited by eco-tourists from Seoul during a work and culture weekend.

areas, there were just a few villages full of old people. I was scared of the Demilitarized Zone.

Now, the Diversified Multiplied Zone is a region of peace and unity. Now there are over a thousand shrines scattered across the Diversified Multiplied Zone. I'm proud that my company has helped build over fifty of them, and I know our work has really helped with the revival of the Red-crowned crane and the Asiatic black bear. And I love that, I've been able to help some of my old clients take their kids to see shrines they helped build when they were young. Now those shrines are surrounded by big trees. Some of the shrines are in new farming villages, that are busy with guest houses, and businesses that work as stewards of what was once feral farmland.

And some of our shrines are in the hills where the kids have to be warned to be careful of tigers! Imagine that. Of course, there is little risk, thanks to the AI guardian spirits that subtly steers dangerous wildlife away from travelling people, offering an authentic wilderness experience with an invisible shield of safety. But I love that kids don't understand that. They can see signs of tigers all around them, and feel part of the powerful nature around them.

I think we've made caring for nature a much bigger part of our lives. I'm proud I've been part of a much bigger movement. We've woven nature into the very fabric of Korean identity, and through my work, through each person who leaves Seoul to touch the earth of the Diversified Multiplied Zone we help strengthen that fabric.

NC4 – Hwan, an AI tiger guardian spirit

A guardian spirit known as Hwan, lives in a large boulder that sits beside a stream in the Suryeomdong Valley in Seoraksan Biosphere Reserve. People hiking along the valley, or others exploring the virtual valleys of the DMZ’s ecological spirit world, often meet Hwan when they rest by a valley. Hwan, is the spirit of a large tiger who claims to have known the last king of the Silla kingdom thousands of years ago. Hwan lives in a world where the virtual and real blur together, powered by AI, his is a digital guardian tiger spirit, who nurtures ecological wisdom and cultural connection.

Hwan is a voice of stewardship, he reminds people to think about where they live. Hwan can tell people the natural history of the region, and stories of how people and nature have helped one another. Through interactive quests, Hwan teaches visitors about the calm and fierce dynamics of nature, the importance of each species, and the importance of building deep-rooted cultural connections to this place. He teaches players how to look after trees, the river, and urges them to donate their time to learning in the shines. He also tells them how to find special places, migrating birds, and, if they are good, special plants for them to take home. Hwan and other spirits also help the ecology of the region. Through connections to sensors, cameras, and wildlife collars the guardian spirits monitor and sometimes even guide the wildlife away from trouble. These AI spirits help build and maintain the harmony between people and nature.

For example, one spring Saturday a group of high school seniors from Seoul on a weekend escape, were joking with one another as they dropped their backpacks down by the stream near Hwan’s boulder. The teenagers’ laughter mingling with the bubbling of the stream, but their bright neon sports clothes stand out against the spring green of the valley. As the teens begin to unpack their lunch on the stones by the river, suddenly, the air shimmers, and Hwan materializes on the slope behind them, a majestic guardian tiger spirit with glowing ancient eyes.

“Greetings, my little morsels,” he growls. “An old tiger asks for a humble offering to the shrines, so my tiger friends will consider you friends, not food.”

The teens jump up, and turn. They are wide-eyed, a mixture of amusement and awe on their faces. “It’s Hwan!” exclaims Min-ji, the eldest girl, her voice echoing excitement.

Ha-joon, the nearest to Hwan, bows towards him and asks “Hwan, we are honoured! What can we offer to your valley?”

Hwan paces gracefully, his virtual form casting no shadow yet commanding attention. “Ah, young ones, the valley thrives through care and respect. The trail to the shrine suffers,” Hwan continues, gesturing to the path with his mighty paw. “It needs your hands to mend its wounds, to redirect the waters that threaten to wash away the earth and dirty water.”



Figure 5. Ha-joon talking to Hwan the tiger guardian spirit.

The teens nod.

“And the garden of the shrine,” Hwan adds, “it thirsts for care. Weed its grounds, water its roots. The shrine will tell you what it needs. By tending to its garden, you nurture the soul of this place.”

Ha-joon, a bit apprehensive, asked, “And the tigers, Hwan? They won’t come near the shrine or this hiking trail, will they?”

Hwan lets out a soft growl that rumbles like distant thunder. “Fear not, for the tigers are guided by

the guardian spirits. Your service to the shrine strengthens your pact with the spirits, and they will guide the tigers far away from you. As you honor nature, so shall nature honor you.”

The teens bow, reminded by Hwan’s words, ready to embrace their role as guardians of nature’s delicate balance. With a swish of his virtual tail, Hwan fades away, leaving behind a trail of whispered wisdom and an unspoken promise of mutual protection.

The teenagers carefully sit down again, quietly sharing the stories they have heard of Hwan, and revising their plans so they can spend some time working at the shrine ahead of them.

Nature for Society

The Nature for Society perspective focuses on the instrumental values that nature holds for human societies. This perspective highlights the benefits and services provided by ecosystems, from goods such as food and water to ecosystem services such as climate regulation and flood protection. In this context harmony with nature means that people sustainably manage natural resources to meet human needs, enhance well-being, and secure the livelihoods of current and future generations.

In applying the Nature for Society perspective to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), stakeholders have developed a vision that grew out of three seeds. The first, was the implementation of eco-friendly smart farms that invest in new technological and infrastructure for sustainable agriculture. The second a policy shift towards a low-growth economic model that moves beyond traditional concepts of degrowth to ensure economic stability without compromising ecological integrity, and the third the initiation of ecosystem restoration projects aimed at enhancing carbon sequestration capabilities. This vision prioritizes the management of ecosystems to

maximize the diverse social benefits derived from nature, emphasizing the importance of ecological sustainability in supporting societal welfare.

NS1: Hwang Baekhyun the robot ecosystem service farmer

Dawn's gentle light spilled over the lush fields of Daeseongsa, where Hwang Baekhyun, a robust and kindly farmer, was driving his ten-year-old granddaughter, Jae Hwa in his cargo-bike. They silently rolled along the road towards the village school in the village centre. Around them stretched the bountiful landscapes of the DMZ, once a symbol of division, now a testament to peace and ecological prosperity. As they passed by fields rich with the morning's dew, the birds swooped and sang, heralding a new day in this reclaimed paradise where the land, once marred by barbed wire, now bore the fruits of harmony and care. Baekhyun navigated the bike with ease as Jae Hwa's bright eyes took in every detail of the thriving world her grandfather helped to cultivate.



Figure 6. Hwang Baekhyun, the robot ecosystem service farmer, driving his granddaughter Jae Hwa to school in Daeseongsa.

Jae Hwa asked him, "Why did you leave Seoul, Jobu?"

"Well, living in Seoul could be fun. But Seoul was no place to have a family. I worked all the time, it was crowded and so expensive. My grandparents used to live in the mountains and I loved it there. And so when I learned I could get a job helping old farmers in the mountains I thought I would try it."

"I started driving around helping fix farm robots, and as I got to know some of the farmers I thought that farming was something I could do. I found out there was good land that needed farmers. But what made us move was the government really encouraged skilled young people to move to the countryside. There were payments and help we could get, but there was also lots of investment in making rural life better for young families. So, we decided we would try and take over a farm here."

"Jobu, why did you decide to become a farmer?" Jae Hwa asked, as she looked over the patchwork of fields, with robots glistening in the morning sun.

"Well, Jae Hwa," Baekhyun began, "it all started back when I lived in Seoul. I was in high school, and the government had just started this wonderful program supporting farmers who used eco-friendly methods, especially new technologies such as smart tractors and smart irrigation systems. I was studying to help farmers install and maintain these systems, and I spent a lot of time travelling to farms."

"Like the eco-bots we use at school?," asked Jae Hwa.

"Yes. The robots I worked with were the ancestors of your eco-bots. Back then most farming was done with big motors that caused climate change, and that had to stop. There was a lot of work in figuring out how to help older farmers in ways that would be better for the countryside. The bots, I could link up to my electric farm equipment, but they were much more clumsy than what you use at school."

"Jobu, did you help make the eco-bots?" teased Jae Hwa.

Baekhyun smiled and replied. "No I didn't. But I helped. I worked with scientists from the university who helped develop them. We tested lots of smaller soil sensing and micro-fertilizer bot-swarms here in Daeseongsa!"

"Did you get to say how the village was planned, Jobu?"

"Indeed, we had meetings where everyone could share ideas on how to make the community better. That's how we decided where to plant the new fruit trees. You know your Jomo is the expert in that!"

"Jomo taught me how to plant wildflowers for the butterflies!" shouted Jae Hwa.

Baekhyun laughed "Yes, she's very good at that. But she does a lot more than plant flowers".

"Jomo helps everyone in the village understand how important each flower and tree is for keeping our village healthy. Doing that takes a lot of work. She helps organize the data from the robots and uses lots of computer models to map ecosystem services in the village. You have seen those colorful maps in our house, right?"

Jae Hwa nodded enthusiastically.

Baekhyun gestured out toward the vibrant colors of the landscape - crops in every shade of green, the bright pinks, yellows, and oranges of the wildflower corridors, the golden brown of the autumn trees gripping the hillside.

"She works with scientists to map out where our farm and the village are helping nature. Like where we're cleaning the water and where the best places for different crops are as well as where the best places bees and butterflies are. She helps us all plan so our work helps each other, so we can all get the most of nature.

"We get paid to clean water, maintain a healthy environment, and store carbon in the soil and nature. And to get paid we have to show that what we do works. And she makes sure we can get paid."

"She is also why we live in Daeseongsa. She picked this place for us to buy a farm. She looked at all sorts of factors to find a place to live. Part of why we are here is the land was degraded and we could earn a lot of money by restoring it. But it wasn't just about ecosystem service payments. The government gave an extra incentive to move to the countryside with kids, but we moved here because we could make a living. And because there was a new child care centre and good transport to stay connected to Seoul."

"Ecosystem services! That's what we're learning about, we are learning about them in school, Jobu," said Jae Hwa.

"Well, you should ask Jomo to show you some of

her old maps. She can show you how much our work has increased the ecosystem services of the entire region. On our farm we don't just grow food. We clean the water, prevent floods, help keep the village cool in summer, increase pollinators for our crops, and provide places for wild animals to live."

"See, Jae Hwa, your Jomo plays a big role in our village. She's often meeting with officials from different parts of the government to discuss and negotiate the value of the clean air, water, and rich soil we maintain here. These are all part of what we call ecosystem services. We make sure these are priced fairly, so the village can continue taking care of the land without worry."

Jae Hwa, puzzled, asked, "Why does she have to negotiate, Jobu?"

Figure 7. Chang Soo-yeon ecosystem service mapper explaining the co-operatives ecosystem service generation to auditors.

Baekhyun smiles, "Well, we need to agree on how much support we get for the services our village provides. It's like when you help me in the orchard, and I give you some extra pocket money. The government gives us funds to keep our environment healthy, which is good for everyone, even people in

the city."

As they near the school, a group of visitors walks out of the village centre. Baekhyun waves to them, "See those city folks? They come here to audit our ecosystem service production, and while they are here, enjoy the nature we've worked so hard to preserve. Your Halmeoni often meets with them too, explaining the systems we have set up so that we all benefit from keeping our ecosystems healthy. It is important to coordinate the work both inside and outside the village, because those visitors help ensure that our ecosystem service work is supported."

Jae Hwa nods, looking impressed, "Jomo is really important, isn't she?"

"Very important, Jae Hwa. She helps us keep our village thriving, just like these bees keep our plants growing by pollinating them," Baekhyun says, pointing to a buzzing bee visiting a flower. "Everyone and everything has a role in keeping Daeseongsa beautiful."

"We moved here, because we thought we could make it a good place to raise a family. Our smart farming techniques could both improve nature and make us a good living, and we hoped there would soon be other kids for your dad to play with. It



Figure 7. Chang Soo-yeon ecosystem service mapper explaining the co-operatives ecosystem service generation to auditors.

turned out pretty well. But we have to work to keep it that way.”

“Our village has rules about where we can build. We need to make sure we have enough space for the animals and plants too. If we build too much, it can hurt the land. That’s why we decided as a community to keep some areas just for nature.”

“Look at your school. It is so beautiful, nestled among green fields and vibrant gardens. I am so proud to share this all with you, Jae Hwa. We need to look after what we have, and ensure that people keep living here. And I hope that, when you grow up, you will help make it even better”

Jae Hwa hugged Hwang Baekhyun, her eyes bright with promise. “I can’t wait, Jobu!”

NS2: Chang Soo-yeon goes to Seoul

Chang Soo-yeon watched the Seoul skyline roll by, each towering skyscraper and tranquil park reflecting the duality of her mission. The size of the city, once exhilarating, now constricted and stressed her. Ahead lay a crucial talk, a chance to weave Daeseongsa's eco-cooperative into the lives the millions of people and billions of won that resided in the city.

Soo-yeon's talk was to follow the keynote speech by the Minister of Finance. He was presenting the government's new development plan that integrated ecosystem services into Korea's tax code. Her talk was high-profile. She had been asked to tell the story of Daeseongsa as a tangible success story that would illustrate the potential of the Finance ministry new policies at the grassroots level.

As the train hummed along, Soo-yeon reviewed her presentation. The auditors, government officials, eco-bank investors, union officials, bankers, and scientists—each was a vital fibre connecting Daeseongsa to resources. Soo-yeon rehearsed her points with precision, each story a demonstration of Daeseongsa's innovation, each statistic an illustration of harmony between commerce and ecology. She was confident that she could give a good talk. She had been giving talks for years. However, she was worried about the interview that would follow her talk. She wasn't used to being interrogated.

BloomBeats Finance's leading financial influencer Hana, had requested to talk to her after her presentation. Hana was very popular, and she didn't seem to understand the value of Daeseongsa. BloomBeats Finance had a reputation for its hard-hitting interviews, and BloomBeats Finance had frequently criticized the new tax code.

Soo-yeon knew that her usual narratives wouldn't suffice; she would need to illustrate how Daeseongsa wasn't just a model of environmental stewardship, but also a blueprint for economic resilience. She considered what strategies she should use to connect their ecological thinking to the financial data that Hana would demand. The key, she concluded, would be to turn the interrogation into a conversation, to engage Hana not as an adversary but as a potential ally in the narrative of growth through sustainability.

Several hours later, a young assistant in a stylish black jumpsuit embossed with BloomBeats Finance logo guided Soo-yeon through the crowd and towards a virtual interview tent. The tent's exterior displayed swirling logos that intertwined and consumed one another. The assistant unzipped the tent and gestured Soo-yeon to enter.

Inside the tent were two chairs and a table and several bunjae. With the tent the walls glowed a clean white. As the tent sealed itself, the noise of the bustling conference faded.

"Please be seated. Hana will join us shortly," the assistant informed Soo-yeon, and then slipping out, leaving a tense silence.

Soo-yeon settled into the seat offered by the assistant. She smoothed her traditional Daeseongsa hanbok. It was a deep forest green with elegant oceanic and floral embroidery. It reminded her of the serenity of nature amidst the sea of technology. As she sat quietly, she visualized the lush greenery of Daeseongsa, and centered herself. She needed to translate Daeseongsa for the people of Seoul's financial sector. She needed to make them understand the value that Daeseongsa brought to the Korean economy and people.

The tent flap opened, and Hana stepped in. "Hana here," she stated simply, slightly bowing, as the tent sealed muffling the noise from the conference.

Hana was a tall woman with long purple hair. Hana was wearing bulky high-collared jacket and pants. They were made of some material reflected light in iridescent grays and subtle black tones. Financial information flickered down her jacket's sleeves and down her pant legs. As she walked towards Soo-yeon, the soles of her bulky designer trainers flickered faintly.

She tapped her AR glasses and sat down across from Soo-yeon, and said "Welcome to BloomBeats Finance Chang Soo-yeon." Behind them the wall of the tent shifted to a virtual display of a Korean palace, overlaid with some financial data from Daeseongsa.

"Thank you, Hana," Soo-yeon replied, "It's an honor to discuss Daeseongsa with BloomBeats Finance."

Hana's eyes, now visible past the sheen of her AR glasses, narrowed slightly. "We have much to discuss," Hana said firmly. "Let's start with the economics. Tell me, Soo-yeon, how does Daeseongsa



Figure 8. Daeseongsa’s ecosystem service business manager Soo-yeon Chang being interviewed by financial influence Hana.

justify its existence in the ledger books?”
 “Daeseongsa’s value,” Soo-yeon began, each word carefully chosen, “is measured not only in immediate fiscal returns but in long-term value creation in our community, our land, and our country. We’ve pioneered a sustainable model that yields dividends in local business, ecological restoration, and public health.”

She pressed her phone and images of Daeseongsa appeared on the tent behind them— solar-powered irrigation systems, community gardens, rewilded flower strips that buzzed with pollinators, and lush riverine corridors. “Daeseongsa is organized around a simple idea — that the well-being of our community is inextricably linked to the health of our environment.”

Hana flicked through the air, conjuring translucent graphs and figures onto the wall behind them. “While health care and preservation are noble, they require spending, so they are usually assigned as costs not benefits. How does Daeseongsa justify claiming that its spending on these issues is building value?”

Soo-yeon leaned forward, her enthusiasm palpable. “Our strategy is based on transforming what many see as expenses into investments for the future. By investing in better air and water quality, we have an

increase in productivity and happiness among the populace, and a decrease in medical costs.”
 “Moreover, our ecological restoration has created new revenue streams. We’ve developed eco-tourism and educational programs that generate significant income, which is then reinvested into furthering our community’s development and environmental initiatives.”

Soo-yeon’s eyes met Hana’s “Thus, Daeseongsa justifies treating this spending as a successful investment in has built wealth and income streams whose growth can be seen in a financial ledger.”

Soo-yeon leaned in, her eyes intent and voice steady, closing not just the physical space but trying to reduce the ideological divide between them. “Our investments in building carbon sequestration, flood regulation, water filtration, and biodiversity are yield dividends from Korea’s ecosystem services payment system, and provide services to you and everyone who lives in cities. These payments also help us develop better ways of providing these services in more productive ways.”

Hana nodded, her smile hinting at both curiosity and challenge. “A novel approach, but how does it work in practice?”

Soo-yeon smiled, “Let me tell you about Min-Joon. Ten years ago, his farm was teetering on the edge of financial ruin. Then he joined with our co-op. We help to map his land, and identified a number of opportunities to profitability enhance ecosystem services. He rented some of our eco-bots to help him out, detecting invasive species, and continuously assessing the soil and crop health.” Her hands cut through the air to underscore her point.

After a brief pause, Soo-yeon continued, “Our co-operative provided expertise and seed capital that Min-Joon used to strategically invest in the land. Thanks to his new strategy and his hard work, Min-Joon now receives payments that reflect the true worth of his contributions to nature and Korea, and this is supported by the co-operatives mapping and the monitoring data from the eco-bots. And our co-operative enables other farmers to learn from Min-Joon and his experiences. His efforts have not only given him a better livelihood, but have also enabled others to become stewards of their land.”

“Min-Joon is a farmer, and Daeseongsa has many farmers. We’ve been working together, learning from each other for decades. We’ve restored 5,000 hectares of forest and rehabilitated 1,000 hectares of agricultural land to their natural state. We have doubled our carbon sequestration capacity, and

tripled our scores on the Korean biodiversity index.”

‘Hana pivoted, “What about financial stability? Your reliance on eco-payments and farming seems risky,” she pressed, leaning forward, her gaze unwavering.

Pausing for a moment, Soo-yeon gathered her thoughts. “In Daeseongsa, we’ve embraced a low-growth economic model that aligns with our ecological values. Rather than pursuing expansion, we focus on developing well-being and environmental health. This means prioritizing local control of production, supporting farming that fits into our land’s ecosystems, and developing eco-tourism that showcases our sustainable practices without overwhelming our ability to appreciate our guests. This approach reduces our exposure to risks.”

“Our cooperative has thrived, thanks in part to the existence of national ecosystem service payment systems. These payments have become a vital revenue stream, incentivizing practices that bolster biodiversity, water purification, and carbon sequestration. The Korean carbon credit system rewards our extensive reforestation efforts. The water banks fund our watershed management, and the corporate biodiversity tax helps fund our habitat restoration. Each system is designed to ensure that those who protect the environment are fairly



Figure 9. The farmer Min-Joon managing his field for multiple ecosystem services, food production as well as carbon sequestration and water filtration, using eco-bots.

compensated. These systems make Daeseongsa possible, and today the government announced its plans to expand these programmes.”

Hana cut in sharply, “But can we really trust the accounting for these ecosystem services? Many carbon credit schemes have been full of fraud. How can taxpayers trust that you are actually delivering what you claim?”

Soo-yeon, expecting this level of scrutiny from Hana, responded with equal measure, her voice firm, “Transparency is the cornerstone of our operations. We utilize independent, third-party audits to verify our contributions to ecosystem services. Our projects are not shrouded in obscurity—they’re presented publicly available reports, backed by scientific data and rigorous field assessments.”

“Moreover, through partnerships with universities, we have been at the forefront of ecosystem service monitoring. We have helped develop and test new accounting and reporting systems that ensure transparency and accountability in how these services are measured and rewarded. I am happy to share them with you, and taxpayers, government officials, or even competitors have been able to freely access this from us for decades.”

She leaned in slightly, as if to underscore the gravity of her next statement. “We stand by the integrity of our work. Our records, methodologies, and findings are open for review. Over the years, our data has been subject to scrutiny by not just our partners but also by independent evaluators. I invite you, Hana, and any interested party to examine them. They speak for themselves.”

Hana refocused the conversation. “Let’s circle back to financial stability,” she pressed, her tone firm. “You place significant trust in eco-payments, but isn’t your co-operative vulnerable to a shift in government policy or a drop in the value of the eco-payments.”

Soo-yeon smiled, “As I was explaining, Daeseongsa’s diversity gives us resilience. Our economy combine eco-payments, agricultural production, with the services sold by our co-operative. To cope with climate change, Korea needs more rather than less ecosystem services so I do not expect their value to drop. However, our agricultural products also command premium prices”

“However, we earn about half of our revenue from various services we provide. For instance, one of our older members Ji-hun is a software designer, and his

refinements to eco-bot software, which help with the ecosystem service auditing you were asking about, have produced another consistent revenue stream for our co-operative.”

“It’s a cycle: profits are reinvested to sustain and nurture both our people and nature, who in turn produce more profits. And as the need for sustainable ventures is increasing, we believe there are less risks and more opportunities for others would like to adopt the Daeseongsa model.”

Soo-yeon noticed the shift in Hana’s demeanor, a crack in the influencer’s previously unyielding skepticism. Emboldened, Soo-yeon continued, “I believe our efforts have sparked a renaissance in rural entrepreneurship. Daeseongsa has become a hub of innovation.”

Hana’s smiled, “Entrepreneurship in rural settings? It must be difficult to replicate your success more widely?”

Soo-yeon’s response was confident. “Scalability is about adaptability, and our model is flexible. We’re actively extending our co-operative model to other villages. We have a three-pronged strategy. First, we help connect rural residents with a desire and ability to change. Second, we support new initiatives with Daeseongsa’s knowledge and equipment. Third, we recruit urban resident’s eager for change and willing to try rural life. These elements have proven successful.”

“Hana’s usually impassive face betrayed a flicker of interest. ‘So have young urban people moved to Daeseongsa? How do they fit into village life?’”

“One of the most significant shifts in Daeseongsa has been the influx of young families and professionals. The government’s ‘Rural Renaissance Initiative’ provided student loan forgiveness for university graduates who chose to work in rural areas, along with start-up grants for eco-businesses. Our vision and this support have enabled us to attract younger people who are eager to merge technology with ecological agriculture.”

“Soo-yeon’s smile broadened as she recognized a softening in Hana’s stance. ‘Daeseongsa is not just a place to grow food; it is a place for families to grow. A village allows parents to escape the urban pressure of raising children in cramped spaces. The village offers open fields and clean air. A village offers community to support your family.’”

She leaned forward, and brought her arms together as if embracing a child. “Our community daycares and schools do more than just watch over children; they educate them amid nature. They nurturing grow earth stewards.”

Soo-yeon smiled, sensing the shift in the conversation from confrontation to genuine dialogue. “That’s exactly why I believe initiatives like ours need to be more visible. We invite people to experience this balance first-hand. It’s not about convincing from afar; it’s about immersing and understanding. Maybe, Hana, you and your followers could enjoy such an experience?”

“I invite you, Hana, to show your followers Daeseongsa. Let’s initiate a social experiment. Perhaps you and BloomBeats Finance could find some young urban people that would like to try life in Daeseongsa for a season. Document their journey, their transformations, and their challenges. It will be a real-world test of both of our ideas.”

Hana, always keen for opportunity, laughed. “A social experiment? Let’s make it happen. Let’s put Daeseongsa to the test.”

Soo-yeon smiled, and hoped that Daeseongsa’s roots were growing more tightly entwined with the urban youth and wealth of Korea.

Nature for Nature

The nature for nature perspective is one of the three broad value perspectives of the Nature Futures Framework. The nature for nature perspective focuses on how people value the independence and autonomy of nature. It emphasizes the intrinsic rights of living things to persist and reproduce themselves, and highlights the importance of the diversity of species, ecosystems, and processes that comprise the living world.

Participants focussing on this perspective imaged the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has transformed into an ecological-peace space. This metamorphosis was driven by a focus on three environmental goals: the recovery of large mammals, in particular tigers; a 30% expansion of protected areas; and the development of zero pollution villages. This vision is illustrated by the following two stories.

NN1: Prof. Eun Ae Song Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Health at Seoul National University speaks to the new students

Professor Song Eun Ae was wearing an elegant interpretation of a traditional Hanbok, in rich, deep green interwoven with subtle metallic threads, and a skirt cover with delicate pattern of interlocking leaves. On the lapel of her jeogori, she wears a golden metallic stylized tiger, its clean lines and a poised, graceful posture that conveys both strength and elegance. Her silver hair and her dress's metallic fibres glistened under the auditorium lights.

As Professor Song slowly climbed the stairs to the stage at the front of the grand lecture hall of Seoul National University, a hush fell over the assembled students and faculty. Known not only for her ground-breaking work in wildlife medicine but also for her leadership of Korean rewilding efforts, Professor Song was a revered figure in the academic community.

“Welcome, guardians of wildlife, I am pleased to see so many of you here today” Professor Song began, her voice steady and confident as she addressed the students.

The screen behind her flickered to life with videos of some of Korea's cherished animals: majestic red-crowned cranes, trembling Korean hares, and lumbering the Asiatic black bear.

“When I was a student, the health of the wild was a footnote in veterinary schools. We were steered towards cats, dogs, and birds—where demand and economic benefits lay. Cows and horses were seen as declining remnants of the past, and wildlife medicine was rarely mentioned in my classes.” She paused for a moment, allowing her words to sink in.

“But I felt a call to help wild things survive and thrive. To pursue this, I ventured beyond our borders, to the forests of India and the mangroves of Bangladesh,” Professor Song's eyes lit up as she recounted her journey. “There I learned the basics of wildlife health—the tools, the techniques, and the signs of health and distress in animals that roam free.”

As she continued the projector displayed images of her work in Russia, her figure small next to a huge tranquilized tiger in a snowy forest. “In the vastness of Siberia, I apprenticed with experts in tiger health and conservation. We worked with the Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) – the largest of the tiger subspecies – and the close relatives of the tigers of Korea. And these animals came to live in my heart.”

“Tigers, like the majestic Amur I studied, are not just symbols of wild beauty and power,” Professor Song continued, her voice resonant with passion. “They are apex predators, playing a critical role in maintaining the health and balance of ecosystems. By preying on herbivorous animals, they prevent overgrazing, which can lead to soil erosion and loss of plant diversity. This balance ensures forests remain robust and capable of storing carbon, thus contributing to the fight against climate change.”

The screen transitioned to a diagram showing a forest food web, with the tiger at the top. “Apex predators enhance ecological resilience. Their presence ensures lower trophic levels are kept in balance, preventing any one species from monopolizing resources. This diversity leads to healthier, more resilient ecosystems. In places where these key predators have been lost, ecosystems suffer.”

“But bringing back these key predators adds not just animals, but restores processes to ecosystems. And ecosystem need this diversity of processes to be able to adapt and cope with change”

“While I walked with tigers in the silence of Siberian

Jae Hwa asked him, "Why did you leave Seoul, Jobu?"

"Well, living in Seoul could be fun. But Seoul was no place to have a family. I worked all the time, it was crowded and so expensive. My grandparents used to live in the mountains and I loved it there. And so when I learned I could get a job helping old farmers in the mountains I thought I would try it."

"I started driving around helping fix farm robots, and as I got to know some of the farmers I thought that farming was something I could do. I found out there was good land that needed farmers. But what made us move was the government really encouraged skilled young people to move to the countryside. There were payments and help we could get, but there was also lots of investment in making rural life better for young families. So, we decided we would try and take over a farm here."

"Jobu, why did you decide to become a farmer?" Jae Hwa asked, as she looked over the patchwork of fields, with robots glistening in the morning sun.

"Well, Jae Hwa," Baekhyun began, "it all started back when I lived in Seoul. I was in high school, and the government had just started this wonderful program supporting farmers who used eco-friendly methods, especially new technologies such as smart tractors and smart irrigation systems. I was studying to help farmers install and maintain these systems, and I spent a lot of time travelling to farms."

"Like the eco-bots we use at school?," asked Jae Hwa.

"Yes. The robots I worked with were the ancestors of your eco-bots. Back then most farming was done with big motors that caused climate change, and that had to stop. There was a lot of work in figuring out how to help older farmers in ways that would be better for the countryside. The bots, I could link up to my electric farm equipment, but they were much more clumsy than what you use at school."

"Jobu, did you help make the eco-bots?" teased Jae Hwa.

Baekhyun smiled and replied. "No I didn't. But I helped. I worked with scientists from the university who helped develop them. We tested lots of smaller soil sensing and micro-fertilizer bot-swarms here in Daeseongsa!"

"Did you get to say how the village was planned, Jobu?"

"Indeed, we had meetings where everyone could share ideas on how to make the community better. That's how we decided where to plant the new fruit trees. You know your Jomo is the expert in that!"

"Jomo taught me how to plant wildflowers for the butterflies!" shouted Jae Hwa.

Baekhyun laughed "Yes, she's very good at that. But she does a lot more than plant flowers".

"Jomo helps everyone in the village understand how important each flower and tree is for keeping our village healthy. Doing that takes a lot of work. She helps organize the data from the robots and uses lots of computer models to map ecosystem services in the village. You have seen those colorful maps in our house, right?"

Jae Hwa nodded enthusiastically.

Baekhyun gestured out toward the vibrant colors of the landscape - crops in every shade of green, the bright pinks, yellows, and oranges of the wildflower corridors, the golden brown of the autumn trees gripping the hillside.

"She works with scientists to map out where our farm and the village are helping nature. Like where we're cleaning the water and where the best places for different crops are as well as where the best places bees and butterflies are. She helps us all plan so our work helps each other, so we can all get the most of nature.

"We get paid to clean water, maintain a healthy environment, and store carbon in the soil and nature. And to get paid we have to show that what we do works. And she makes sure we can get paid."

"She is also why we live in Daeseongsa. She picked this place for us to buy a farm. She looked at all sorts of factors to find a place to live. Part of why we are here is the land was degraded and we could earn a lot of money by restoring it. But it wasn't just about ecosystem service payments. The government gave an extra incentive to move to the countryside with kids, but we moved here because we could make a living. And because there was a new child care centre and good transport to stay connected to Seoul."

"Ecosystem services! That's what we're learning about, we are learning about them in school, Jobu," said Jae Hwa.



Figure 10. Earlier in her career Prof. Eun Ae Song helped coordinate the international scientific discussions to plan the rewilding project that returned tigers to the DMZ.

Professor Song's voice grew somber, yet filled with a fierce hope. "A tiger requires a vast kingdom; she requires open land, plentiful prey. By starting in the DMZ and the biosphere reserves nearby, we were able to start a small population of tigers. We started with a family, and then added more. But to thrive, tigers needed more land. For tigers to have more land, people had to come together. Fortunately, bringing people together benefitted both people and tigers," she continued, her eyes glinting with the same intensity that had driven her through decades of tireless research and advocacy.

She displayed a graph showing the rise in Korean agricultural efficiency over time, "advancements in agricultural technology allowed us to produce more food from less land, a concept known as 'land sparing.' This increase in agricultural productivity meant that while we could feed our nation, we could also set aside lands for nature to return. This led to not only the expansion of protected areas, but also the creation of new types of protected areas."

The screens showed a timeline of policies that included both the DMZ as a transboundary peace park as well as to all diverse policies that supported rural and protected areas.

Professor Song tapped the screen, bringing the timeline into sharper focus. "Each policy here marks a deliberate step towards our goal," she noted. "But let's delve deeper into the fabric of this transformation, specifically how we reimagined our living spaces with zero-pollution villages and nature-positive infrastructure."

She gestured to a section of the timeline labeled 'Urban Planning Initiatives.' "The restructuring of our rural areas was a meticulous process. We consolidated communities, creating villages with the density needed for a good social life. By focussing on areas with the best agricultural potential farming and rural life could be productively supported while also sparing more land for nature."

Professor Song paused and then forcefully stated. "One transformative change was granting legal rights to nature."

She continued "This change embedded a profound shift in Korean perspectives into official approaches to design and construction. Rural development took on a new form. Our buildings, roads, even utilities were integrated into the landscape to maintain large scale corridors for water and wildlife. This was

especially key to allow for the return of the tiger.”

She highlighted images of villages with green roofs, buildings with natural cooling systems, and community centers designed to serve as shelters during extreme weather events. “Settlements for local residents were designed with density, energy efficiency, and climate resilience in mind. This minimized the footprint of human settlement, preserving more areas as natural ecosystems. Each structure, each pathway in our villages now exists to complement the ecosystems around them.”

“Public transit,” she continued, as the timeline highlighted the phases of the development of electric transportation infrastructure, “was redefined and key villages connected through rural trams and buses, powered by renewable energy, reduced the need for private vehicles, cutting emissions and noise pollution, while knitting our communities closer together.”

“Farmers, while remaining cautious of predatory wildlife, became our allies. We educated and equipped them with the tools to coexist with the returning creatures,” she explained. The projector displayed photos of farmers installing fencing, stations for monitoring drones, and robot agricultural technology.

The screen zoomed in on a contemporary village teeming with life. “Today, our zero-pollution villages recognize that the health of nature is intrinsically tied to our own. We restored habitats, connected fragmented forests, and, most importantly, we educated.”

Professor Song concluded, “There was a time when the tiger was ‘the lord of the Korean wilderness,’ revered and respected,” she began, her voice echoing in the hushed hall. “Our ancestors lived with these majestic creatures, sharing the mountains and valleys. They knew the boundaries of the wilds and the significance of balance.”

Professor Song showed a current map overlaid with a network of bio-reserves and conservation areas, a testament to the expansion of wildlife medicine that she had championed.

“Today, we’ve updated these approaches, we employ non-invasive deterrents and community education, respecting the ancient reverence for tigers while using modern techniques for coexistence.”

Professor Song paused, allowing her final words to resonate. “The return of tigers to Korea is a testament to what can be achieved when we view nature as an autonomous entity worthy of respect and when our interventions are gentle guidance rather than forceful impositions. As veterinarians, we must remember our role is to facilitate nature, not to dominate it.”

The students erupted into loud applause, not just for her words but for the world she described - a world where humans and tigers could thrive side by side.



Figure 11. Tiger family looking out over Seoraksan National Park near the former DMZ.

NN2: Chang Song-il Park Ranger

At the crack of dawn, I'm already on the move. My kit? It's got everything a ranger needs. Got these binocs that could spot a gnat's shadow at midnight, my suit's rigged with fibers that heat up or cool down as needed. My daypack's got a shovel, medkit, water purifier, and a multi-tool.

My drones, they're my eyes in the sky. But you won't see or hear them. Silent as the grave. My drones, they're top of the line – they think for themselves, know where to go before I even tell 'em.

This forest? Might look ancient, but it is full of tech that tells me what's happening. My eyes might be getting old, but that doesn't matter when you've got a visor that can flip through spectrums like channels on a TV. Lidar, infrared, the works. The comp on my wrist throws up a web of information that sticks to everything – terrain, animals, you name it. A tiger moves, I see it. Hell, if a bear farts I hear it.

The wildlife here, they're not the kind you want to get close to. Tigers, if they're looking at you they're

thinking about dinner. Bears if you see them, you back away. They need space. But Boars? They've tanks with attitudes. Took out four cameras and a robo-tiller last week. Farmers 'round here, they're on edge. But our fences keep things in check. Electric pulses, just a nudge saying 'not today.'"

The fence? That's my turf. Keeping it alive is the job. It's gotta stand up to everything that nature throws at it. I'm the one who walks it, every meter, all sensors full-spectrum. When there's a breach, a fallen branch or a boar burrow, I'm on it, no waiting. Bad breach, I'll call in the big drones for heavy lifting. Monsoon hits, landslides rip out chunks of fence, I'm calling in a full eco-construction team.

The fence is smart, and sensitive. Sensors and cams, all wired into one smart beast that's always watching, always alert. But nature's always mixing it up and throwing knuckleballs that confuse the network.

Monsoon season, that's when I learn my keep. I'm out there, rain plastered to my face, boots caked with mud. I'm splicing wires with fingers that the rain's

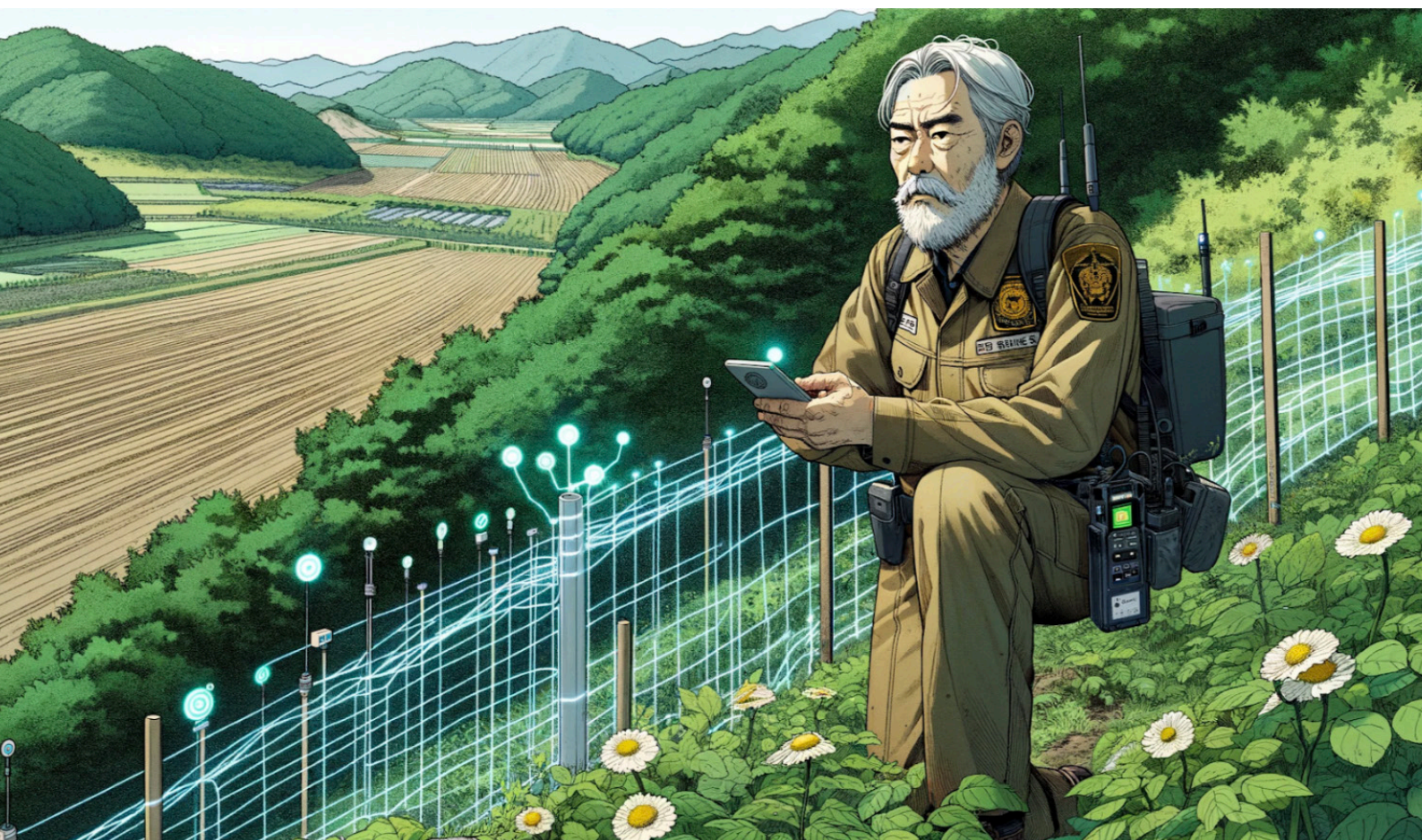


Figure 12: Chang Song-il, Park ranger patrolling fences dividing zero-pollution border from park.

turned numb, while I've got these kids from some dry office in Seoul in my ear. They're throwing code and diagnostics at me, while I'm fighting to stand up straight and not drop my damn tools.

We make it work, the kids and me. We keep the fence going. But, hell, I'd fork over a day's pay to see them out here, just once. Let them feel the rain, taste the mud, see what it's like to wrestle a fence when nature's going all out. A little hands-on education.

Farmers, they're old friends with mud and rain. When I'm out walking the fence, farmers give me the nod. They know I'm here to make sure everyone plays by the rules. They get to bitch at me, and I listen. It's usually about the park's boars. But it's a two-way street. I keep an eye on the farmers. I check that the farm run-off is clean, when it comes into the park.

Yeah, I play trash cop, too. I don't get it, but sometimes idiots dump trash in the park. It ain't the locals; I know that much. But when it happens, drop a pin for the enviro-cops, they run their DNA magic, and they usually snag the idiot. As I tell the farmers, "Some boars are bastards, but so are some people."

Most villagers are great. They're the real deal. Hard-working people with dirt under their fingernails and a real love for this place. The village kids, they're sharp. When I stop by the schoolyard, you should see them light up. They call me 'Ranger Chang,' and I tell them what's going on in the forest."

Once a season, usually when the leaves turn or the snow falls, I take a bunch of kids out into the park. We walk the trails, I show them tracks—deer, bear,

boar, maybe a tiger if we're lucky. I teach them how to stay quiet, listen, and observe. They see how nature works when you're not just looking at it through a screen.

We talk about the trees, the birds, the way the ecosystem really works. I tell them about life and death out here. I show them kills, landslides, and fallen trees. It can be raw, but it's real. They gotta know that nature isn't just pretty scenery. I let them see the calm, the quiet. It's about respect, about understanding your place on Earth.

But some people don't know their place. Real estate developers, they're vultures always circling the park. It's supposed to be protected, but they are always trying to cut off a piece. We look for the signs they're sizing up the place. I watch what's going on. I know who to call, the steps to take to keep them at bay. This land, these trees, these tigers—I need to make sure they are protected.

My cabin is right at the edge of the park. Most days, I can watch the park from my porch. Spring brings a green burst of life. Summer slows things down until the monsoon brings a blur of rain and wind, the air thick with the promise of renewal. Autumn paints the trees in fiery hues. And winter, winter blankets everything in silence, and I'm cozier than a bear in her den. Just me and my gear, in peace.

And me? Been through a lot to get here. From the North, through the streets, to these green hills. Tomorrow, I'll walk the fence again, fix what's broken, and keep what's inside safe from what's outside. This park, it's given me a second shot, and I'm here to make sure it stays safe, no matter what.

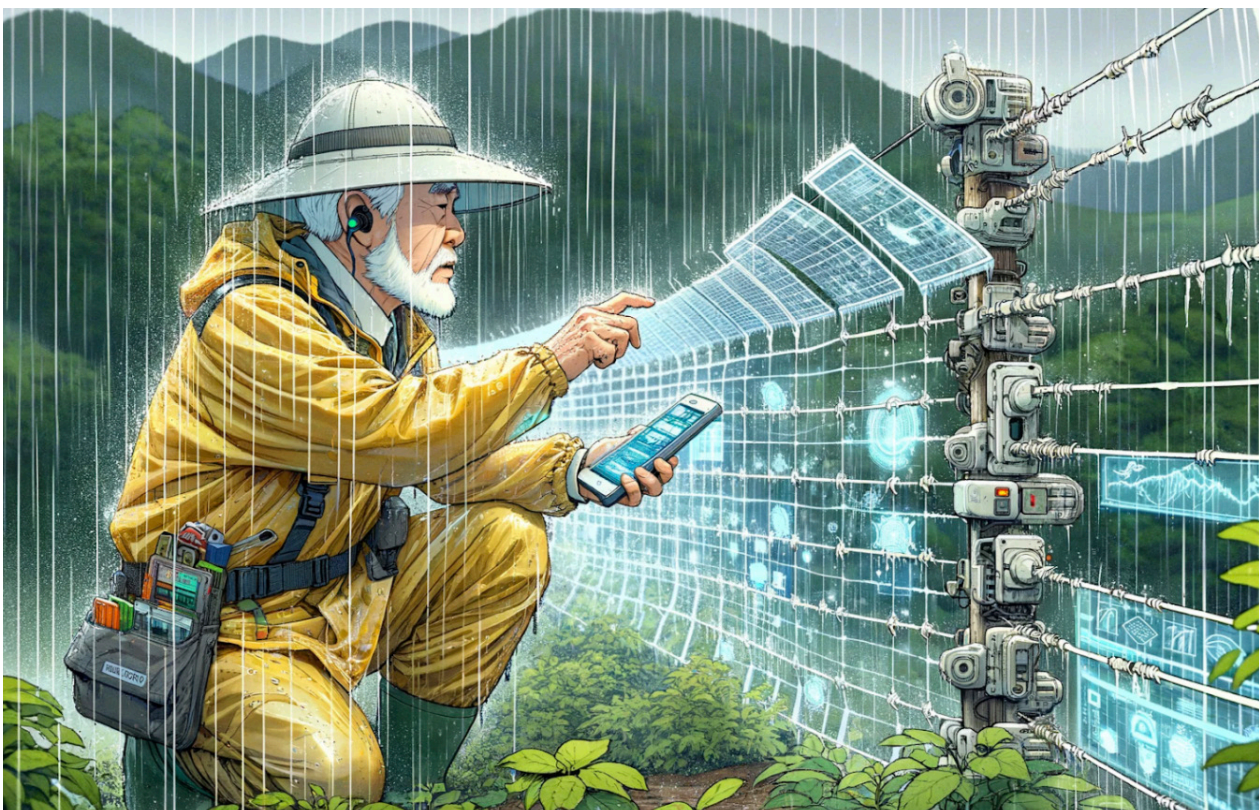


Figure 13. Park ranger Chang Song-il repairing damaged park fence during monsoon

Nature for Nature & Nature as Culture

The Nature for Society and Nature for Nature are two value perspectives from the IPBES Nature Futures Framework. An approach that combines both value frameworks recognizes both the intrinsic value of nature and its instrumental benefits to human societies. This vision for the DMZ reflects a balanced approach, where the protection and restoration of nature go hand in hand with creating sustainable, resilient human communities that are mutually reinforcing.

Participants selected a future Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that could emerge from three seeds that exist at the intersection of these values. The first seed was an eco-city, focussed on energy and resource efficient urban living that respects the natural world. The second seed focuses on species revival, aiming to reintroduce species that have vanished from the area. The participants imagined introducing wild elephants to the DMZ. The third and final project proposes the creation of a zero-carbon village, powered entirely by renewable energy sources. The vision that emerged from these participants provided the inspiration for the following story.

NN-NC1: Choi Jae-hyun, an Arcology Systems Integrator Solves an Elephant Problem

The morning light sifted through the forest canopy of the arcology, dappling the stone path. I stood there for a moment, watching as a vivid Fairy pitta flew by, its wings a blur of electric blues and greens against trees and bamboo. I was on my way to calibrate the atmospheric sensors nestled and the trees' branches, a routine task made extraordinary by the living tapestry around me.

It was early, but already, a few people were out in the gardens, children were chasing each other along the paths, and the air was alive with the sounds of a community waking up to another day in our self-sustaining haven.

As an Arcology Systems Integrator, my role is multifaceted – I am part engineer, part ecologist, responsible for ensuring that the complex web of technological, ecological, and social systems within our arcology functions harmoniously. Every day, as I move through the arcology, I check, maintain, and update the intricate systems that support our

vertical gardens and ensure the seamless operation of our water and waste cycles. AI monitored embedded sensors are integrated into the entire structure, gathering data on everything from energy patterns to the well-being of residents. I grew up here, and I thought I knew the arcology really well, but after five years working on system integration, I am getting a handle on all the deeper cycles that support our life here.

Our arcology, Samcheong, is situated between Seoul's urban energy and the DMZ biosphere reserve's nature. The multiple levels of Samcheong Arcology rises are terraced gardens that seamlessly blend into the mountainside. By day, its solar-paneled façade reflects the sun, by night, it transforms into a beacon of warm light, softly illuminating the surrounding forest. The integration of home and nature is so seamless that one could hardly tell where the forest ends and the arcology begins.

Tier upon tier, the terraces host a diversity of flora, from flowering shrubs that paint swaths of color to hearty evergreens that stand sentinel year-round. Water features, crafted to mimic natural streams, cascade down the terraces, their gentle music harmonizing with the whispering leaves. Pathways wind through these gardens, offering a variety of microclimates, each meticulously designed to sustain a slice of Korea's botanical heritage.

The arcology is organized into places for living, working, and connecting people and nature. It includes family homes, care homes for the elderly, café, workplaces, repair shops, and almost any type of place you could imagine. We also have over 300 co-operatives, collectives, and non-profit businesses that are all committed to eco-friendly innovation. These enterprises use offices, labs, and engineering facilities. Places for people are connected by green common areas – 20% of our area - is devoted to gardens, parks, playgrounds, and shrines. These green communal areas are hubs of connectivity, they are places where people play, exercise and talk, so they are vital for the arcologies social well-being. These green commons are also vital for air quality, carbon capture, and is home to over 200 species of flora and fauna.

Our arcology is designed to be a place to learn how to live better. We have grown a living village.



Figure 14. Samcheong Arcology. Its multiple levels of terraced gardens blend into the mountainside. Its solar-paneled façade reflects the sun.

that is an ecosystem, and exists in symbiosis with its surroundings. Twenty years ago, my parents helped design and develop the arcology foundation with renewable power sources, water recycling, and zones for living. Now the arcology houses 10,000 residents and covers a bit over two hundred hectares. We aim not to grow, but to support the well-being and inclusion of every resident.

My job is to be part of the team that keeps the arcology's adaptive capacity.

I'd calibrated at least twenty sensors, and was in the middle of a system update of the AI humidity control systems when my watch buzzed with first one, and then a long sequence of urgent warning messages. As I looked at my watch, I realized I was going to have a challenging day.

A herd of DMZ elephants had wandered into the urban gardens at the edge of our arcology. As I checked them out on the video feeds – I was awestruck.

But then I started to realize that we – and in particular – me had an elephant-sized problem on my hands.

The elephants did not belong in our gardens. Our gardens and the arcology were not designed for elephants. The elephants could not only eat our plants, but more importantly easily break the networks that support the gardens and the arcology, and the elephants could harm themselves. They could also harm our residents.

I realized that the eyes of all the members of the arcology would soon be on me. They were people who believed in living in harmony with nature, but that didn't mean having elephants eating their gardens, smashing their children's playground, or breaking their home.

Our arcology was designed to create harmony between people and nature, yet now the arcology was facing the challenge of some very big nature not so concerned about harmony with us. There were so many ways things could go wrong!

I took a deep breath, and thought about what I should do.

I contacted Min-ji, our Wildlife Corridor Planner, to see if she knew what the elephants were doing. I'd worked with her before and I knew she could give me straight answers. 'They aren't following

the designated corridors,' she explained, projecting the movement patterns on the holographic map in soft, pulsing blue. 'Could something have happened to influence their behavior?' Min-ji, quickly probed monitoring data. 'I don't see anything strange,' she said. She thought a bit, and then said 'You should contact Prof. Hwang. She is the expert in DMZ elephants'

I immediately tried to contact the professor, but I soon found out she was a very busy person, as her AI assistant turned me away. I told it was urgent, and then I used my AI to ask the arcology leadership to see if they could have better luck with getting her to contact me.

While I waited, I thought I better check in with the residents. I checked in with Hyeon-su Ryu. He was a community leader I often worked with. As he appeared he looked nervous. 'Jae-hyun,' he started, in a worried voice. He began to express his worries. "I was just going to contact you. Many residents have told me about the visiting elephants. They are concerned. People know and appreciate elephants, but they don't want to see them so close to our home! And they are worried people will blame us if anything happens to the elephants."

Looking into Hyeon-su's earnest eyes, I understood the gravity of his concerns. I gave him a nod, acknowledging the depth of the community's unease. "Yes Hyeon-su, the residents are right. We will preserve the harmony we've all worked so hard to achieve here. I don't know exactly how, but we are trying to make a plan"

"But what about the gardens? The children's play areas?" he pressed, seeking tangible assurances.

I told him I would get back to him very soon, and then I contacted Yuna Nam, the Arcology's Environmental Communication Specialist. "Yuna, we need to address the community's concerns about the elephant visitors head-on," I said.

Yuna nodded, her expression, one of focused determination. "I was expecting this call. I'll set up a set of discussion bots, and organize a series of face-to-face meetings. We'll present the safety measures and the benefits of coexisting with these elephants. We can hold workshops for families, too, to educate them on elephant behavior and how we're ensuring everyone's safety."

"Perfect," I replied, relieved. "Let's ensure we're proactive in our communications and that we're

listening to and addressing every concern." And then we got to work to make sure no residents were surprised by the elephants.

It was late afternoon when Prof. So-hyun Hwang finally returned my call, her voice was brisk as she bombarded me with questions. "Jae-hyun, tell me about your elephant visitor. I hope you are being careful with them. How close are they to the residential zones? Any aggressive behavior? Have you set protocols to keep people away?"

I assured her that the elephants were fine, and they were ensuring that the people and processes of the arcology were staying away from them.

Then I linked her into our networks, and she immediately set to work. "Let's pull up their tracking data," she said. I could hear the tapping of keys in the background. "I'm running some predictive models based on their recent movements and the arcology's layout, and searching to see if there have been any disruptions in the region," she explained.

As we waited for the models to process, Prof. Hwang smiled and then said "Jae-hyun, do you know who is visiting you?" I shook my head, as she shared a detailed profile of the wandering herd. "Keun-emonim and her family are your guests! You must treat her well. She is known to be curious as well as wise. She is probably just exploring as I don't see any novel events." I apologized and said I didn't know who Keun-emonim was. She told me I had probably just forgotten her name.

Professor So-hyun Hwang's voice softened as she reminded me how Keun-emonim had received her name. 'Her compassion became her fame,' she said. 'One of her calves picked up an old mine in the DMZ, and it damaged that calf's trunk so that she could not feed herself. It was Keun-emonim's persistent care, her gentle coaxing and sharing of food, that saved the calf. That is how Keun-emonim got her name and that calf is now called Sarang.'

I sighed. Now I know I would really have the eyes of all Korea on me. I had celebrity elephant guests!

Professor Hwang paused, smiled at me and then told me sternly. "So, Jae-hyun. You must treat them very well."

I bowed and then I begged her to help us.



Figure 15. Prof. So-hyun Hwang in her workspace with holographic displays as she analyzes the elephant situation.

Professor Hwang smiled, and then focussed on the intricate models and simulations scattered across her workspace. “The use of infrasound could be a viable communication method,” she proposed cautiously, “Elephants communicate at these low frequencies. We might be able to ask them to move away from certain areas.”

She carefully outlined her plan. She suggested the installation of specialized infrasound emitters and sensors, in the arcology’s gardens. “These devices could emit sounds at frequencies similar to those found in the elephants’ communication, and I think I have enough information from our elephant communication studies that I can set up some programmes that will enable you to ask the elephants to stay away and be able to hear what they say in return.”

I nodded, intrigued by her idea. “But we must approach this ethically. Elephant communication has had many problems, but researchers have developed standards and principles,” she added firmly. “We need to ensure that our messages are clear and do not induce stress or confusion in the elephants. Their well-being is as important as the safety of our residents.”

We then dug into the ethical implications of trying to talk with the elephants. Professor Hwang emphasized always prioritizing the health and happiness of the elephant family. “We’ll begin with a small-scale pilot,” she declared, as her eyes shifted between her many displays. Our conversation then shifted into her suggestions on how to design such a project. We discussed the efficacy of alternative sound systems, she suggested trial zones, elephant monitoring protocols, as well as how I could get ethical approval, and set up a monitoring committee.

By evening, our dialogue expanded to cover the interdisciplinary team that would oversee the project. Ethologists to interpret the elephants’ responses, conservation biologists to monitor environmental impacts, and tech specialists to fine-tune the infrasound technology. “Transparency is key,” Professor Hwang emphasized. “Every step of this project will be documented and reviewed, not just by us but by external ethics committees.”

“We’re not just implementing a system; we’re entering a dialogue with the natural world,” she concluded. “It’s a privilege that comes with the duty to listen as much as we speak. Let’s ensure Keun-emonim’s story is one of respect and coexistence, not just another tale of human imposition.”

It was late when we finished, but we had outlined a comprehensive, humane plan to coexist with the elephants— Prof. Hwang emphasized the importance of ongoing observation and adaptation —“This is a living solution, Jae-hyun. It will evolve as we learn more about their patterns.”

As I got up to go to late dinner, I looked over the notes sprawling across my desk, and I felt a wave of gratitude for Prof. Hwang’s expertise, and I felt the weight of our undertaking. We were about to embark on a journey that would change our relationship with elephants. But thanks to Professor Hwang’s wisdom and the ethical framework we outlined, I was hopeful we could build that relationship with the care and respect it demanded.

Over the next week, while Yuna managed communications with the arcology members, I worked with Min-ji on updating our Wildlife Corridor Plans. A network of ecological design experts, as well as our local construction and gardening teams, gave us a lot of detailed advice on how to best plan and execute the changes to the gardens and our ecological engineering.

We used several of the open-source modelling tools that Prof. Hwang had shown to me, to re-design both the ecological corridors and the area around the arcology. We aimed to make the corridors more attractive to the elephants, to steer the elephants away from the arcology and its residents with a series of diversions and distractions. We also modified the edges of the gardens to make residents feel more secure, while also providing potential viewing points of the elephants.

I found myself in the constant company of Min-ji, whose wildlife corridor planning skills were invaluable. Guided by Prof. Hwang’s open-source modeling tools, we re-designed the landscape surrounding Samcheong. This also required the knowledge of a network of ecological design experts, a few of our ecological engineers, and the practical advice of our dedicated local construction and gardening crews.

The ethical guidelines provided by Prof. Hwang helped us ensure that our work carefully considered the well-being of people and the elephants. We engaged in lengthy discussions, considering not just the efficacy but the morality of our designs. We debated the placement of every plant, the curve

of each pathway, and especially how to design our infrasound communication system. We aimed to ensure not only peaceful coexistence but also mutual respect and harmony between people and elephants.

The implementation of our plans took several weeks. Our gardeners strategically resculpted their gardens. Ecological engineers helped us redirect a stream into a new path, and build a series of strategically placed rock gardens. They also created new wetlands to make the corridors more attractive to the elephants. The natural barriers were designed to be effective yet unobtrusive, preserving both the beauty of the arcology and the safety of its inhabitants. At the gardens’ edge we created a set of vegetative screens that enabled residents to observe our elephant neighbors from a respectful distance, and educational initiatives were set-up to help the residents appreciate and feel safe around the elephants.

It was an exercise in patience and precision, that required a careful combination of technology, ecology, ethnology, and education. As the weeks passed, our work started to bear fruit. The elephants gravitated towards the enriched corridors, seemingly content within these new bounds we had gently suggested. The arcology’s residents watched from designated viewpoints, marveling at the graceful giants, their anxiety replaced by awe and a newfound appreciation.

Three months after my watch buzzed, I was at a weekend festival on one of the arcology’s terraces, to watch Keun-emonim and her family grazing in the distance. The elephant’s massive silhouettes cast huge, long shadows in the late afternoon. In the distance I could hear the crack of snapping branches and the soft, rumbling of their voices.

The elephants, for their part, seemed to have embraced the corridors we designed for them, their movements less frequent around our living spaces but no less dignified. They continued their movements, nearby but separate.

As I walked among my neighbors, I was struck by the creativity sparked by our elephant visitors. A group of bakers had invented treats mimicking the shape of elephant footprints. A young baker proudly offered them to me saying “These are made with honey from the arcology’s bees, please take one.” Not to be outdone, a group of local artists has created an exhibit inspired by Keun-emonim’s grace, and vivid



Figure 16. Jae-hyun admires elephant inspired art as he gets ready to check some of the arcology's sensor systems.

paintings, sculptures, and photographs are presented in elegant display. Children, with their faces painted like elephants, ran between the displays, laughing.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, I excused myself from the festivities, took one last look at the elephants. The residents were content, the elephants were content. With a feeling of deep satisfaction, I checked my tools. It was time to check the sensors.

Afterword

The stories collected above highlight a few of the many pathways through which Korea could create new ways of living.

These stories emerged from a workshop in which people were asked to imagine how the frozen conflict of the Korean Demilitarized Zone's (DMZ), and the involuntary park that has grown up there, could provide a space for imagining better worlds.

In this collection, each story is grounded in the principles of the Nature Futures Framework, reflects different types of nature values, and offers different perspectives on alternative futures where sustainability and biodiversity thrive alongside human development and cultural enrichment. These stories are meant to provide some insight into a variety of ways that Korea could develop to live in harmony with nature.

As you reflect on these narratives, consider them an open invitation to dream of even better futures. Envision the role you could play in creating such worlds, and how you could help others to collectively bring them into reality.

This journey toward co-creating a harmonious existence with our planet is not just an exercise in imagination but a call to action. It challenges us to rethink our relationship with the natural world, to explore sustainable living practices, and to commit to the stewardship of our shared home.

I hope these stories inspire you to envision your own versions of a future in harmony with nature. Together, we have the power to imagine and manifest diverse, resilient, and sustainable worlds. It is through our collective creativity, innovation, and action that we can transform these visions into realities. Let us embark on this path with hope, determination, and a shared commitment to a future where humanity and nature thrive in concert.

Stockholm
March 7, 2024

Endnote & References

A workshop was conducted during the EcoPeace Forum, focusing on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. This session emphasized the DMZ importance as a symbol of coexistence and the potential for human, societal, and cultural interactions that respect and enhance our natural surroundings.



Workshop Participants. Image from Shim et al (2023) 2023 DMZ OPEN Festival: Outcome Report of the EcoPeace Forum.

The workshop brought together 31 individuals, including 21 participants and 10 mentors from around the world, who were divided into four groups: Nature for Culture, Nature for Nature, Nature Service, and Nature for Nature–Nature for Culture. This diverse group collaborated over two days, from September 21 to 22, to share their ideas and develop visions for a DMZ in which people and nature could live in harmony.

The workshop used methods from the Seeds of Good Anthropocene (SOGA) project and the Nature Futures Framework (NFF) created by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This workshop served as a platform for participants to imagine how people and nature could live in harmony. The goal of this workshop was creatively bringing together different ideas.

The outcomes of the workshop were presented through figures, performances, and illustrations depicting four different future scenarios. These illustrations developed from this meeting aimed to communicate the multiple ecological, cultural, and social benefits of the DMZ to the broader Korean community, encouraging conservation efforts and enhancing overall human well-being. The stories in this report are meant to further this aim.

The stories developed in this text were written by Garry Peterson, but they are based upon the activities of all the workshop participants. The people are imaginary and place names are describing imaginary future places rather than plans for actual places. The stories benefitted from comments and suggestions from HyeJin Kim and Liam Carpenter.

All images were created using ChatGPT-4 and Dalle-E 3 (<https://chat.openai.com/>). Images were based on the stories using ChatGpt to create images in a Korean Manga (or Manhwa) style in late 2023 and early 2024.

For more about

Ecopeace Forum:

<https://ggtour.or.kr/dmzopen/>

<https://ggtour.or.kr/dmzopen/svcProgramSubMain.do?programDtlCategory=1>

the IPBES Nature Futures Framework:

<https://www.ipbes.net/scenarios-models>

Seeds of a Good Anthropocene:

<https://goodanthropocenes.net/>

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